

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | FRIDAY | 26 FEBRUARY 2021

WEATHER

Max: 34.4°C
Min: 18°C
RH: 72%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Misty morning. Max/Min
temp. 34/19°C

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Uttarayana
Tithi: Magha Shuddha
Chaturdasi till 3.44 pm
Star: Ashlesha till 12.30 pm
Varjyam: 11.52 pm to 1.23 am
(Saturday)
Durmuhurtam: 9 am to 9.46 am;
12.52 pm to 1.39 pm
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon
HIJRI CALENDAR
Rajab 13,1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.37 am
Zohar: 12.39 pm
Asar: 4.43 pm
Maghrib: 6.27 pm
Isha: 7.35 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.21 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.36 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 4.32 PM
MOONSET TODAY 5.03 AM

COUNTER POINT



Not bail papers, he is
distributing party tickets
to potential candidates!

SHORT TAKES

Green Card curbs lifted by Biden

Washington: US President Joe Biden revoked a policy issued by his predecessor during the pandemic that blocked many Green Card applicants from entering the US. Indian IT professionals in the US on the H-1B work visas, suffered the most due to immigration system which imposed a seven per cent per country quota on allotment of the coveted Green Card or permanent legal residency.

FASTags on TS highways too

Hyderabad: FASTags are all set to be made mandatory on Telangana highways too soon. As of now, they are mandatory only on national highways. However, FASTags are in force since March 2019 on the Hyderabad Outer Ring Road. The Telangana government has initiated steps to make FASTags mandatory on state highways from March. TS plans to initially make them compulsory on the Rajiv Rahadari.

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Covid mutations spread,
causes concern

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Owaisi criticises Didi for
singling out MIM

INFORMATION | ALERT

Resume Covid bulletin: HC

VUJJINI
VAMSHIDHARA | DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

Responding strongly to the sudden stoppage in issuing daily health bulletins, which contain numerical data of the total number Covid-19 cases in the state, and include other details like deaths, recoveries etc., the Telangana High Court on Thursday ordered the Telangana state government to “immediately recommence the exercise of

issuing daily bulletins from Friday onwards”.
A division bench of the High Court, comprising Chief Justice Hima Kohli and Justice B. Vijayen Reddy, while dealing with public interest litigations (PILs) related to Coronavirus issues, learnt that the issuance of daily bulletin has been stopped.

The Court directed the Director of Public Health and other officials concerned to immediately recommence the exercise.

The Bench expressed concern over the huge public gatherings and congregations, which have been witnessed in the state. The Court directed the government and Telangana police department to scale-down gatherings. Chief Justice Kohli said, “newspapers have reported that there was a bereavement function in Khammam recently, and at least 20 per cent of people who participated were affected with Coronavirus. Further, the

state government has given permission to open up cinema halls, public parks etc., but preventive measures it has put in place are not adequate.” These gatherings should be scaled down as we are witnessing a rise in cases in neighbouring states like Karnataka and Maharashtra. Inter-state transport could lead to a spike in infections here too, the Chief Justice observed.

■ Page 2: HC wants fresh status report by March 18



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SUV with explosives
near Ambani house



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Xi claims victory on
poverty reduction

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Prithvi slams record
227 in one-dayer



Short & Sweet



Indian captain Virat Kohli, Ajinkya Rahane, Cheteshwar Pujara, Rishabh Pant and R. Ashwin celebrate the wicket of England's Jack Leach on the second day of the third cricket Test match against England at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Thursday. India registered their second Test win inside two days overhauling a meagre target of 49 against England to take an unassailable 2-1 lead in the four-match series on Thursday. Spin duo Axar Patel and Ashwin swung the match in India's favour. England's previous Test loss inside two days came way back in 1921 against Australia. ■ Reports on Page 7

— PTI

Centre tightens rules for social media, OTT

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, FEB. 25

Weeks after a spat with Twitter and the fracas over the series *Tandav*, the government on Thursday announced the tightening of rules governing social media and streaming firms, requiring them to take down contentious content immediately, appoint grievance redressal officers and assist investigations by revealing the originator of a message or tweet. The new Code of Ethics and self-regulation mechanism for video streaming services mean that anyone who misuses social media and over-the-top (OTT) platforms will be under the strict vigil of the government and is liable to face punishment.

As part of new rules to regulate online content, the government will ask the platform to reveal the originator of a message/tweet, and WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and other social media firms as well as streaming services such as Netflix, YouTube and Amazon Prime Video will be

DIGITAL MEDIA & OTT GUIDELINES

5 categories into which OTT platforms must classify content: U (universal), U/A 7+, U/A 13+, U/A 16+, and A (adult).

3-level grievance redressal mechanism established under the rules with two levels of self regulation. Level 1 Publisher themselves Level 2 Self Regulatory Body Level 3 Oversight Mechanism under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

NEWS PUBLISHERS on digital media must implement Norms of Journalistic Conduct of the Press Council of India and the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks Regulation Act

required to quickly take down any contentious content flagged by the government or legal order.

They also have to appoint executives to coordinate with law enforcement and remove, within 24 hours, content depicting nudity or morphed pictures of women.

They also have to now appoint a resident grievance officer who shall

register complaints in 24 hours and file monthly compliance reports. User grievances have to be resolved within 15 days. Social media platforms, on being asked by court or government, will be required to disclose the first originator of the mischievous information that undermines the sovereignty of India, security of the state, or public order.



PLATFORMS must implement parental locks for content classified as U/A 13+ or higher

RELIABLE age verification mechanisms for content classified as 'A'.

MOODY'S SEES 13.7% GROWTH IN NEXT FISCAL

New Delhi, Feb. 25: Moody's on Thursday upped India's growth projection for the next financial year from April 1, to 13.7 per cent, from 10.8 per cent estimated earlier, on the back of normalisation of activity and growing confidence in the market with the rollout of Covid vaccine.

For current fiscal, the US-based rating agency expects the economy to contract 7 per cent, lower than its previous estimate of 10.6 per cent contraction.

Moody's Investors Service associate managing director (Sovereign Risk) Gene Fang said, “We expect a rebound of 13.7 per cent growth in the next fiscal on normalisation of activity and base effects.”

The large rebound incorporates the view that recovery in activity will continue, with the rollout of vaccines and growing confidence in the market that activities are coming back to normal, Fang said in an online conference on India Credit Outlook 2021.

— PTI

Confusion over EWS quota

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

Confusion prevails over implementation of the 10 per cent reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in education and employment in Telangana.

Official sources in the Secretariat said the state government would appoint a committee to study implementation of

EWS quota in various states and make recommendations to the state government. The implementation of EWS quota is delayed by over two years in the state.

In January 2019, the Narendra Modi government at the Centre passed a Constitutional amendment Bill in Parliament seeking to provide 10 per cent reservations for EWS in education and

employment. However, the Centre left the decision to states on when to implement the EWS quota and whether to implement it at all.

While several states started implementing this in 2019 and 2020, the TS government is yet to act.

Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao had on January 21 this year announced the state government's decision to

implement EWS quota. Accordingly, chief secretary Somesh Kumar issued a government order on February 8. However, no guidelines were issued so far.

To implement 10 per cent EWS quota, the state government needs to create supernumerary seats and jobs.

■ Page 2: TS confused on which model to follow

COVID CASES RISE AGAIN IN TS AS PER CENTRAL DATA

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB 25

There are 107 new cases in Telangana according to the data updated by the central ministry of health and family welfare on February 25. With no classification it is not clear which districts are recording more cases. With 213 new cases recorded on February 24, the load of patients in Gandhi Hospital saw a rise.

■ Report on Page 2

Nirav can be extradited

UK judge says diamantaire must answer Indian courts

London, Feb 25: In a comprehensive extradition win for the Indian authorities, a UK judge ruled on Thursday that fugitive diamantaire Nirav Modi not only has a case to answer in the Indian courts but that there is no evidence to suggest he would not receive a fair trial in India.

Nirav Modi, wanted in India on charges of fraud and money laundering in the estimated \$2-billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) scam case, lost his legal battle against extradition on all grounds as District Judge Samuel Goozee also concluded that there are no human rights concerns that his medical needs would not be addressed as per several Indian government assurances.

The 49-year-old appeared via video link at Westminster Magistrates'



Nirav Modi

Court from Wandsworth Prison in south-west London, dressed in a formal suit and sporting a thick beard, and showed no emotion as excerpts of the judgment were read out in court. “I am satisfied that there is evidence upon which NDM [Nirav Deepak Modi] could be convicted in relation [to] the conspiracy to defraud the PNB. A prima facie case is established,” the judge noted.

He similarly concludes a prima facie case to have been established on all counts of charges brought by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) — money laundering, intimidation of witnesses and disappearance of evidence. “I am not required to exclude all Mr Modi's various alternative theoretical possibilities and narratives; nor exclude his personal interpretation of the evidence, in order to find a prima facie case has been established,” the judge noted, referring to the extradition case of former Kingfisher Airlines boss Vijay Mallya as precedent.

He accepted that while Nirav's mental health had deteriorated due to the lengthy incarceration in a London prison, exacerbated by the Covid pandemic,

his risk of suicide does not meet the high threshold to satisfy him that his mental state is such that it would be “unjust or oppressive” to extradite him.

Under the UK Extradition Act 2003, the judge will now send his findings to the Secretary of State for Home Affairs, Priti Patel. It is the UK Cabinet minister who is authorised to order an extradition under the India-UK Extradition Treaty and has two months within which to make that decision. The home secretary's order rarely goes against the court's conclusions, as she has to consider only some very narrow bars to extradition which are unlikely to apply in this case, including the possible imposition of a death penalty.

■ More reports on Page 6

India, Pak agree to ceasefire along LoC from midnight

PAWAN BALI AND SRIDHAR
KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, FEB. 25

The Indian and Pakistan armies on Thursday announced that they would strictly observe a ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) and all other sectors from February 24 midnight in a major de-escalation move.

The announcement comes after 2020 had seen a 18-year record high of 5,133 truce violations at the LoC and the international border with Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir. In contrast, there were 3,479

such violations in 2019 and 2,140 in 2018. The tensions at the LoC had risen after the terror attack on CRPF convoy in Pulwama in February 2019, and the revoking of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019. There have been nearly 600 violations in first two months of 2021.

India's director-general of military operations (DGMO), Lt. Gen. Paramjit Singh Sangha, and his Pakistani counterpart, Maj. Gen. Nauman Zakaria, held discussions over the hotline, and the two sides reviewed the situation along the LoC and all other

sectors in a “free, frank and cordial atmosphere”. A joint statement issued by both armies read: “In the interest of achieving mutually beneficial and sustainable peace along the borders, the two DGMOs agreed to address each other's core issues and concerns which have the propensity to disturb peace and lead to violence.” It said both sides agreed to the strict observance of all agreements, understandings and cease firing along the Line of Control and all other sectors with effect from midnight February 24-25, 2021.

People on border in J&K relieved

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, FEB. 25

Tired of unending military tensions and frequent bouts of skirmishes between the facing troops, the border residents of Jammu and Kashmir have heaved a sigh of relief over India and Pakistan agreeing to strictly observe all agreements on ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) and other sectors.

“It has come as a great relief to us. We hope and pray that both sides will really ensure strict observance of all agreements, understandings and cease firing along the LoC,” said Irshad Ahmad Khawaja, a resident of Uri while speaking to this newspaper over the phone.

He said that the border residents were happy. Echoing their and his own sentiment, he said, “If the two countries' armies follow the promise we won't suffer any further human and property losses. *Kam se kam chen ki sans ley payengay* (At least, we will breathe in peace).”

Bashir Ahmed Wathloo,

chairman of Rural Development Society, Uri said, “I will get a good night's sleep now. My joy knows no bounds today.”

However, Bashir Ahmad Dar, who lives at Balkote, a hamlet at a stone's throw from the LoC, said he would keep his fingers crossed. D

ar who lost his wife Farooqa Begum, 35, in cross-LoC shelling in November last year said, “I feel lost since I have lost my spouse. Had the two sides abided by the ceasefire agreement they had reached in 2003, my world would not have been ruined.”

Though the two countries pushed on with the ceasefire agreement signed after months of tortuous negotiations in 2003, the facing armies and border guards have often clashed both along the LoC and International Border (IB), the 198-km stretch of the 2,912-km India-Pakistan border from Gujarat to J&K called “Working Boundary” by Islamabad as it passes through a “disputed region” particularly.

PAK NSA: NO BACK CHANNEL DISCUSSIONS

SRIDHAR
KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, FEB. 25

Hours after India and Pakistan agreed to a “strict observance” of the ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC), Pakistani National Security Advisor (NSA) Moeed Yusuf made it clear that there had been “no back-channel” talks between him and India's NSA Ajit Doval but nevertheless added that the “welcome development on the LoC is a result of discussions through the established channel of DGMOs” and that “obviously these are by their very nature not in the public eye and done privately and professionally through the direct channel”. The Pakistani NSA insisted that that “there is nothing more than meets the eye here”.

Meanwhile, India on Thursday evening also said it “desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan” and has “always maintained that we are committed to addressing issues.”

PM targets Rahul over his ‘north-south’ India remarks

Puducherry, Feb. 25: Attacking Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his recent ‘north-south’ remarks, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday alleged the party's policy was to “divide, lie and rule.”

Not mincing words, he

said the Congress culture of feudal politics, dynasty politics, patronage politics was ending and people all over the country were rejecting the party.

He also expressed shock over Gandhi's contention that there was no ‘dedicated’ fisheries ministry.

“They are gold, silver and bronze medal winners in telling lies,” Modi said addressing a public meeting in poll-bound Puducherry, as he said people of the union territory were celebrating the “freedom from misgovernance of Congress.” — PTI

SHORT TAKES

KTR NAILS OPPN 'LIES' ABOUT JOBS WITH 'FACTS'

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

Tearing into the opposition for their false propaganda over providing jobs to youth in Telangana, TRS working president and IT minister K.T. Rama Rao on Thursday released the break-up of 1,32,899 job vacancies that have been filled by TRS government since 2014 in various government departments.

Rama Rao hoped that the opposition parties would stop such propaganda and duly go through the facts and figures. He said these details were released with the sole intention of giving clarity and providing the right information to the people of Telangana, especially the youth, who are being misled by the opposition's baseless accusations.

"Opposition parties have started a new drama to confuse people with blatant lies. Congress and the BJP are concealing the truth and deliberately spreading false information about job recruitment in Telangana since the TRS government came to power.

From 2014 to 2020, we have filled 1,32,899 posts in various departments and organisations.

If anyone has doubts about our government's commitment to recruitment, they can approach the respective departments and clarify," Rama Rao said.

"It is sad that even a senior politician like Jana Reddy tends to spread such lies. He promised to provide us with the details on how many jobs were filled during his party's ten-year tenure. I sincerely appeal him to provide those details."

TRS HITS OUT AT BJP, CONG FOR REMARKS ON KCR

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

Ruling party MLAs and MLCs on Thursday warned Congress and BJP leaders against making snide remarks about Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and his government, failing which the party cadre would teach them a befitting lesson.

Legislators G. Vivekananda, Saidi Reddy and MLCs MS Prabhakar Rao, Srinivas Reddy speaking to reporters said that it was unfortunate that the two parties had criticised their MLC nominee. They wanted to know what the sitting MLC from BJP N. Ramchandar Rao had done for graduates in the last six years.

Lashing out at the adamant attitude of Ramachandra Rao, they wondered why he could not bring the ITIR project from the Centre and why the BJP was leveling baseless allegations against the State government on the issue.

TS CONFUSED ON WHICH MODEL TO FOLLOW

From Page 1

However, the government is confused whether to create 10 per cent or 20 per cent supernumerary seats and jobs. This is because the Centre has created 20 per cent supernumerary seats and jobs to implement EWS quota. Of this, 10 per cent is extended to EWS and the rest 10 per cent is distributed among reserved categories.

The state government has to first take a decision on creating supernumerary seats in educational institutions and supernumerary jobs in government departments to ensure that the existing reservations amounting to 50 per cent extended to BCs, SCs, STs and Minorities are not disturbed.

The remaining 50 per cent quota is under open category under which all categories irrespective of caste and religion can compete.

Neighbouring Andhra Pradesh has created 10 per cent supernumerary seats only for EWS. In this backdrop, officials in TS government are confused over which model to adopt.

Indications are that the EWS quota implementation will be delayed further till the committee submits its report.

● **THE REMAINING 50% quota is under open category under which all categories irrespective of caste, religion can compete.**

Owaisi slams Didi for refusing rally in WB

Questions permission for other Oppn parties

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) president Asaduddin Owaisi slammed the Mamata Banerjee administration in West Bengal for refusing them permission to hold an election rally in Kolkata. Owaisi questioned the logic when the same was given to BJP, TMC and Left parties.

Interacting with the media here on Thursday, Owaisi said TMC MPs speak about freedom of expression, Constitution and dissent in the Parliament, but contradict themselves when it comes to their state.

"The secular and liberal people who clap when they listen to the speeches of TMC MPs will have to ponder. This clearly exposes TMC doublespeak and hypocrisy," he added.

"The BJP won 18 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal. How can we be responsible for BJP's win when we did not



AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi addresses media at Darussalam in Hyderabad on Thursday. — DC

contest from there? The larger question is on what grounds are they stopping my party from contesting in West Bengal. We will speak against TMC, Congress, BJP and others. These parties do not understand that there is a desire in Muslim youth that we are politically relevant and have a

political leadership that will strengthen democracy," he said.

"If the police administration refuses to permit us even before enforcement of the Mode Code of Conduct, how can the elections be free and fair? Narendra Modi, Amit Shah and JP Nadda can hold a rally and

Congress, CPM, TMC are also allowed. Why single us out?" Owaisi asked. Owaisi said once the code of conduct comes into force, "We will be compelled to approach the Election Commission, against the continuation of the police officers who rejected permission for rallies in the same post".

On the possible alliance with Furfura Sharif cleric Abbas Siddiqui, who had recently floated Indian Secular Front (ISF), he said they were in discussions with them. He clarified that his party has already handed over him a list of constituencies that it aims to contest and the cleric had clarified his stand about MIM.

On the party's plan for Gujarat, Owaisi said "one of our primary objectives is to fill the political vacuum there. In Gujarat, our party will work with Chhotubhai Vasava's Bharatiya Tribal Party (BTP) and even contest Assembly elections."

SERVICES OF 30 STAFF OF MECCA TO BE DISCONTINUED

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

Services of 30 employees including Imams and Khateeb (sermonizers) of the Mecca Masjid and Shahi Masjid are likely to be discontinued. These employees are, from then on, are expected to be rehired on contract/out-sourced basis. News of this move has irked many in the community.

Both mosques were under the management of the Hindu Endowment Department after merger of Hyderabad into the Union of India in 1948. Later, in 1996, the administration of these mosques was transferred to the minorities welfare department.

This department continued with the services without fixing the cadre strength and pay scale. This meant these employees were not regularised in service.

According to sources, officials of the district minorities welfare office (DMWO), Hyderabad, faced difficulties in clearing the bills of salaries for the employees of both the mosques as the finance department kept seeking various "clarifications" about the appointments and the term of extending their services.

6 HELD FOR SMUGGLING MARIJUANA

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD FEB. 25

The Excise Enforcement team of Hyderabad seized 34.7 kilos of dry marijuana from a gang of six men who were smuggling it inside the city.

The arrested were identified as Narotam Sarkar, Prasanjit Biswas, Debrata Chakrabarty, Khokan Haldar, Kanjara Shiva Shanker, and Syed Sayeed, said the police.

The officials, who received reliable information about the contraband being smuggled in the city, conducted a route watch at Gudimalkapur and the 34.7 kilos of dry marijuana consignment from the gang on Thursday.

KCR owes each youth ₹72K as unemployment arrears: Bandi

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, FEB. 25

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay said here on Thursday that each unemployed youth in Telangana state has a right to get ₹72,000 as unemployment allowance, based on an unfulfilled promise from Chief Minister

K.Chandrashekar Rao in the 2018 Assembly elections. "For the last 24 months, the state government has defaulted in paying the Rs 3,000 as unemployment allowance," he said.

"K.Chandrashekar Rao had promised government jobs for each household in the state and ₹3,000 as unemployment allowance to the youth. Also, minister KT Rama Rao gave false information on jobs provided to the youth."

The BJP chief called upon the youth to question the ruling TRS leaders on non-payment of unemployment allowance and demand it for the past 24 months too.

Banswada assembly constituency Congress leader VMalyadri Reddy and a few TRS and Congress activists joined the BJP in the presence of the party state chief. MP Dharmapuri Arvind, BJP district president, former MLA Aruna Tara, former MLAs Endala Laxminarayana, Kuna Srisaillam Goud, former zp chairman K.Venkataramana Reddy and others were present.

Speaking at a public meeting in Banswada of Kamareddy district, organised by BJP Kamareddy district unit, Bandi Sanjay predicted that the BJP will form the next

government in Telangana in 2023.

"MIM party won 5 MLA seats in Bihar state, where the Muslims population is a mere 12 per cent. "If so, the 80 per cent Hindus in Telangana will as well vote for the BJP in 2023," he asked.

Bandi Sanjay reiterated that the BJP is not against Muslims and Christians, but it would protect the interests of the Hindus.

He recalled that a few party leaders including then Nizamabad BJP district president Revuri Surender was shot dead by Naxalites and their sacrifices will yield results in the next assembly elections.

To end the dictatorship, the corrupt family rule of TRS, BJP will fight courageously," he said.

Spread of new Covid-19 mutants raises concern

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

Approximately 241 different mutations have been found in the country whose response to the existing antibodies is negative and is leading to a rise in Covid-19 cases.

Viruses escaping from the immune system, avoiding antibodies and the body's delayed response to medicines are some of the challenges that the authorities are confronted with.

Although there was no travel history of patients from Amravati, Yavatmal and Akola, it is believed that the mutation spread due to utter disregard for safety protocols.

The N440K mutation was found in Yavatmal, which had emerged in Andhra Pradesh in December.

CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology recorded the presence of N440K in its research paper published in Indian Academy of Sciences.

CCMB had also warned that N440K will spread in southern States if safety measures are compromised.

Dr Rakesh Mishra, director of CCMB, says, "It is a variant that needs to be watched. So far it has not acquired any other properties but could become notorious. With safety protocols not followed, viruses have host bodies to thrive and spread. If it acquires new characteristics, then it will become a matter of concern."

So far the people infected with this mutation in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have recovered after showing mild symptoms. There was also a steady decline of cases from January to the second week of February.

Hence, the behaviour of the virus in the two states did not lead to much concern. But in Maharashtra, the cases have seen a rise with 5,210 reported on February 22. This difference in behaviour is indicative of a change and it requires more sampling and testing.

The other mutation, E484K, is the Brazil variant but the behaviour in three regions of Maharashtra where it is found is mild.

A senior epidemiologist in Telangana, on condition of anonymity, says, "Both the

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

There were 107 new Covid-19 cases in Telangana on Thursday, according to data updated by the central ministry of health and family welfare. It was not clear which districts recorded more cases.

A health official said, "Sample testing from across different districts has increased from Monday. Many people are coming to the centres for testing even as they were suffering from seasonal flu. Many of them were scared."

With 213 new cases recorded on Wednesday, the case load at Gandhi Hospital saw a rise. A doctor said, "Some 36 people came with positive reports. As they were mild cases, all of

● **VIRUSES ESCAPING from the immune system, avoiding antibodies and the body's delayed response to medicines are some of the challenges that the authorities are confronted with.**

variants were present in the southern states but the cases were not like what it was in Maharashtra. Presently, cases are static and there is no major rise in Telangana. But we have to be alert as clusters have been reported in districts like Karimnagar."

The variants are a concern as their behaviour will indicate whether the vaccine is effective or not.

A senior doctor, on condition of anonymity, says, "There has been 60 per cent efficacy in influenza vaccine due to the different variants that it acquires every season.

Is Coronavirus also following the same path? If so, how much efficacy will the present vaccine have?"

Those frontline workers who are vaccinated have to follow safety protocols and also people are urged to not relax or give up on masks, hand-washing and social distancing, say health authorities.

them are not admitted. Cases are being seen but they are mild only."

Similarly, in Osmania General Hospital, suspected cases are being isolated. In private hospitals too, there is a slight rise in Covid patients. Dr Ashish Chauhan, general physician and internal medicine specialist said there was no cause for panic.

"We are now having online consultations and those who are testing positive with mild symptoms are offered home treatment.

Apart from Covid-19, other diseases like diabetes and hypertension must not be neglected.

Many are neglecting the existing disease conditions and this is resulting in complications," he said.

85% FRONTLINE WORKERS GET SECOND DOSE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

Around 85 per cent of the government healthcare workers were administered the second dose of Covid 19 across 31 districts in the state on Thursday. A total of 1,31,391 persons have completed the two-jabs course in the state.

The first dose for the frontline workers (FLWs) and private healthcare workers was done on Thursday.

Only 36 per cent FLWs came forward, resulting in 2,745 vaccinations. The response from frontline workers was too low as the target was 2,57,239.

Private healthcare workers also received the first dose and 59 per cent of them were vaccinated. As many as 1,95,850 beneficiaries received it on Thursday against a high target of 3,31,097. The sessions would continue on February 27 and 28.

HC fumes as state fails to set up social security panel

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

The Telangana High Court admonished the secretary of the labour department for not taking steps to constitute a state-level Social Security Board (SSB) for unorganised workers in the state, despite orders of the Court on December 16 to do so.

The Court directed the official to be present before it (in virtual mode) on the next date of hearing.

"This Court will nail down recalcitrant officers, who have an obstinate uncooperative attitude towards implementing court orders.

It is most unacceptable casual behaviour of officials. It is the responsibility of the government to constitute the board, which will be helpful to poor un-

● **IT IS most unacceptable casual behaviour of officials. It is the responsibility of the government to constitute the board, which will be helpful to poor unorganised workers across Telangana," said Chief Justice Hima Kohli.**

organised workers across Telangana," said Chief Justice Hima Kohli.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Hima Kohli and Justice B. Vijayans Reddy was hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by Congress leader C. Damodar Rajanarsimha, seeking a direction to the Telangana government to constitute a state-level SSB for the unorganised workers and its members.

Despite petitioning the government for the last six years to do so, the board has

not been constituted. Even a Court direction has not helped.

During the course of arguments, the Chief Justice Hima Kohli posed a series of questions to the commissioner, labour department, who was present before the Court, asking him to explain the reasons for the undue delay in constituting the said Board.

The commissioner told the HC Division Bench that he has been holding an additional charge of the post, and further, had sent a proposal to secretary, labour department, for constituting the board; but it is pending with the government.

The CJ was not inclined to hear his contentions and termed his contentions as "frivolous and casual". The case has been adjourned to March 18, 2021.

Teach a lesson to TRS and BJP, urges Uttam

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, FEB. 25

TPCC chief N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Thursday said it is time the BJP and TRS are taught a fitting lesson in the upcoming MLC elections.

He said if the BJP is defeated, the prices of petrol and diesel will automatically come down. The TRS government provided jobs to six of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's kin but forgot the rest of

the state, he said. Speaking at an election preparatory meeting in Mahbubabad, he said that the TRS government is exploitative.

"The Congress party is committed to the social class and that is why Ramulu Naik has been fielded as our MLC candidate. There is no social justice in any other party, which all have fielded candidates from the Reddy community," he noted.

"The unemployed youth in the state have

not been given unemployment benefits so far. Chandrasekhar Rao and K.T. Rama Rao should be ashamed to say that they have given 1.3 lakh jobs in the state. TRS leaders work like a gang of thieves. The Congress party will come to power in 2023 and end the TRS corruption in the state," he said.

Ramulu Nayak, former Union minister Porika Balaram Naik and Dr Murali Nayak were present on the occasion.

TSPECET 2021 EXAMS TO BEGIN FROM JUNE 7

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

The Telangana State Council for Higher Education (TSCHE) announced the schedule for the Telangana State Physical Education Common Entrance Test (TS-

PECET 2021) exams on Thursday, for admissions into B.PEd and D.PEd courses in the state.

The physical exams will take place from June 7, 2021, and will go on according to the number of candidates

that registers for the test, the TSCHE said.

The submission of online application forms will begin from March 8 and the last date without any late fee will be May 8. Results will be announced a week after the last day of the test.

High Court seeks report by March 18

From page 1

The HC Bench directed the Telangana government to file a fresh status report by March 18, duly informing it about the steps taken by the government to contain the fresh second wave of Coronavirus prevalence in the state.

Noting that the Telangana government has not conducted a sero surveillance survey (to measure presence of antibodies in people) or studies to track and monitor Covid infection from spreading in the state, on its own, the High

● **WHILE ADJOURNING the PILs to March 18, 2021, the Bench also directed the Telangana government to give wide publicity for the vaccination program initiated by the Central government,**

Court Bench directed the state to conduct a sero surveys in places where the number of cases were high.

The Advocate General submitted that three sero surveys were conducted between June, 2020, and December, 2020, by the Union gov-

ernment. Advocate General B.S. Prasad submitted that 1.03 lakh RT-PCR tests and 4.83 lakh Rapid Antigen Tests were conducted by the state between January 25 and February 12, 2021.

While adjourning the PILs to March 18, 2021, the Bench also directed the Telangana government to give wide publicity for the vaccination program initiated by the Central government, wherein people of different ages would have to register themselves online to get Coronavirus vaccination.

OTHER STORIES

TAKE PREVENTIVE STEPS ON COVID-19, SAYS COLLECTOR

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, FEB. 25

Amid fears of Covid-19 spread in neighbouring Maharashtra state, merely 1 per cent of the Covid-19 cases have been reported in Nizamabad district. Of 794 Rapid Antigen Tests, only nine cases reported as positive in the district on Thursday. The district administration has already tightened the borders with Maharashtra and verifying suspected Covid-19 cases.

According to official data released on Thursday night, 1.57 lakh Covid-19 tests, including RAT 1.52 lakh and RTPCR 5,295 tests, were conducted so far. Around 15,818 persons have tested positive for coronavirus in Nizamabad district since last March. The majority of the people are leading their normal life as usual, and very few people are wearing face-masks and maintaining physical distance.

Districts like Amaravati, Yavatmal, Akola in Maharashtra state-reported huge Covid-19 cases in recent times. Given this, the Telangana state government directed surveillance at Telangana and Maharashtra borders. Medical teams pressed into service to check the suspected Covid-19 cases coming from Maharashtra state at Salura, Kandakurthi and Khandgaon interstate border points.

District collector C. Narayana Reddy directed district medical and health officer Sudarshanam to take all precautionary measures on Covid-19. Collector told the officials that the government is ready to provide all sorts of help to prevent coronavirus cases from neighbouring Maharashtra state. TSRTC, railway officials told to be more cautious about the spread of the virus.

LIC STAFF PROTEST AGAINST PROPOSED IPO OF LIC

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, FEB. 25

Insurance corporation employees union president Akku Jagan, secretary P. Samrat, said that protests would be continued against the privatisation of LIC. They said that protests were conducted at LIC Bodhan branch against a Life insurance corporation's proposed IPO.

Union government proposed to hike FDI in insurance from 49 to 74 per cent, privatisation general insurance corporation and two PSU banks and list LIC in the stock market during this financial year 2021-22, they said.

In the interest of the people, the central government should withdraw its proposals, they demanded.

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Min. urges people not to vote for non-locals

Candidate who knows problems of this region should be elected

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, FEB. 25

Do not be fooled by the deceptive words of the opposition leaders. Those who do nothing for the people will continue to speak whatever they want. Only CM K. Chandrashekar Rao will be able to do nothing for the welfare of the people of the state, said Panchayat Raj, Rural Development and Rural Water Supply Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao.

Speaking at a meeting held as part of the Nalgonda-Warangal-Khammam graduates' constituency MLC elections in Maripeda of Mahabubabad district on Thursday, he said the TRS candidate Palla Rajeshwar Reddy is an educator, head of educational institutions, who knows the problems of the region, a leader who



Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao campaigns for TRS candidate Palla Rajeshwar Reddy at Maripeda on Thursday.

—BY ARRANGEMENT

has the power to solve our problems, and who has access to speak to the Chief Minister KCR should win as a graduate MLC with a huge majority.

He asked the people to assess the condition of the region before and after the arrival of TRS. The development and

well-being of the people have been the paramount agenda for the TRS. "Every household receives at least one of the schemes introduced by CM KCR.

Those who are coming asking for votes do not know the region's problems as they are not from here. It would be of

● **DEVELOPMENT AND** well-being of the people have been the paramount agenda for the TRS government.

no use to elect such people," he said.

Tribal welfare Minister Satyavathi Rathod said with the Telangana state government's arrival, the respect of people from all walks of life has increased, the wages of the employees have increased, and there was a sense of security. The minister asked people to teach a lesson to the people who criticize without making any sense.

MP Maloth Kavitha, ZP Chairperson Angoth Bindu, MLA Redya Naik, TRS leaders Nukala Sri Rangareddy, Kompally Srinivasa Reddy, were present among others.

BJP SUGGESTS NEW TRAFFIC SIGNAL SYSTEM IN KHAMMAM

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, FEB. 25

Khammam town committee of Bharatiya Janata Party has given a memorandum to the traffic police circle inspector Karunakar to ease the traffic in the limits of Khammam Municipal Corporation.

The committee led by BJP Khammam town president Kumili Srinivas suggested of setting up four traffic signals at four cross roads to make convenience to the walkers. The report said that there is need to set up a signal system at Tekulapalli bridge on canal, Rotarynagar Centre, Bypass road and NSP canal Bridge.

Srinivas said that the walkers are suffering a lot to cross the road at these centres and the traffic police should set up a signal system there.

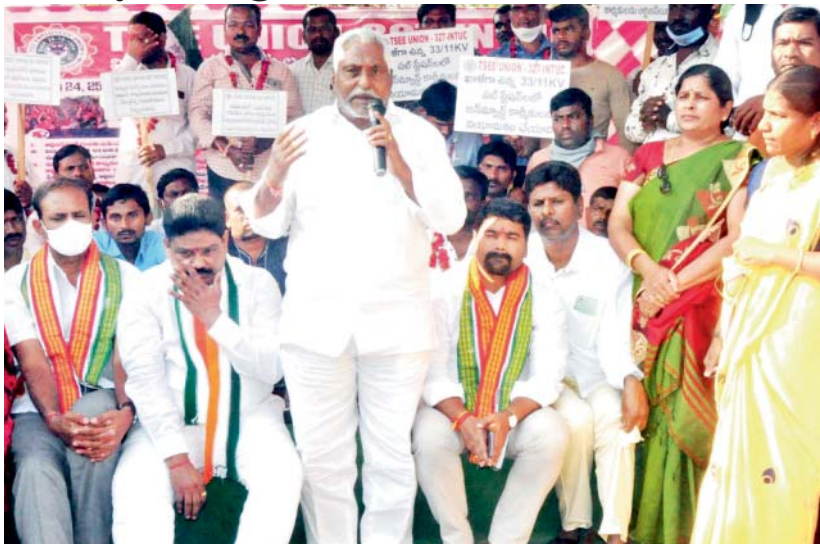
"The traffic of Khammam town is increasing day by day and accidents are taking place in the town due to lack of proper traffic systems", he said.

Thousands of heavy vehicles carrying granite, steel, cement, sand and other industrial goods are plying through Khammam.

The vehicles that had 36 tyres to 120 tyres carrying heavy machines used to witness every day.

Apart from it, the two-wheelers plying by minors are moving erratically in the town.

Relay hunger strike



Congress MLC T. Jeevan Reddy addresses a meeting at Electricity employees relay hunger strike in Karimnagar on Thursday.

—DC

Telangana Inti party asks voters to elect Sudhakar

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, FEB. 25

Telangana Inti Party Khammam district president Bathula Somaiah said that the silence of intellectuals will do more harm to the society and the literates should take active part in exposing the misdeeds of the ruling party for the welfare of the society.

"Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao ignored the aspirations of Telangana youth after coming to the power. People of Telangana expected a lot in separate state and they got distressed

with the state of affairs in the state", he said. Telangana Inti Party state president Cheruku Sudhakar worked a lot to achieve Telangana in the second phase struggle. Sudhakar is contesting as candidate in Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduate constituency and it is need of the hour to vote for him and send in Telangana Legislative Council.

Rights of Telangana people and aspirations of youth will be focused by Sudhakar and dreams of people will be fulfilled if he is elected as MLC.

IND.CANDIDATE SLAMS TRS OVER SILENCE ON BJP POLICIES

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

Prof. K. Nageshwar, an independent candidate in the ensuing MLC elections from Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy and Mahabubnagar graduates constituency, questioned the silence of the Telangana Rashtra Samiti on the Narendra Modi government's policies of privatisation of public sector units. The TRS government criticised the Modi government policies during the GHMC elections but has now become silent, indiscriminate privatisation of the Central Public Sector Undertakings will weaken the national economy he said.



Principal district additional civil Judge N. Narsing Rao plants a sapling on the premises of the newly inaugurated court in Bhupalpally on Thursday.

—BY ARRANGEMENT

Eighth Add. district court inaugurated in Bhupalpally

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, FEB. 25

The newly set up Eighth Additional District and Sessions Court in Bhupalpally was inaugurated virtually by High Court Chief Justice Hima Kohli and High Court Judge Naveen Rao on Thursday.

Principal District Additional Civil Judge Nandikonda Narsing Rao said that it was a matter of great pleasure to participate in

the inauguration program and added that the High Court judges inaugurated the District Court, making it accessible to the public and proving that the judiciary works at the convenience of the people.

"It was the dream of the locals to have a court in the newly formed district. However, it is a historic day for Bhupalpally because the magistrate and sub-judge courts are established in a district first. But the district should

feel honoured to house the additional district judge court. We are thankful to the R&B, revenue, police, Singareni officials for their support in setting up the court here," he said.

Warangal and Parkal Judges K. Jayakumar and Dilip Kumar, Bhupalpally in charge Judge Muktida, District Collector Krishna Aditya, District Superintendent of Police Sangram Singh G. Patil and lawyers were present, among others.

Pesara's research selected for SCERT seminar

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, FEB. 25

The research paper submitted by Pesara Prabhakara Reddy on "Science Education for Developing India" is selected to the seminar to be held on February 28 on online by State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) of Telangana on the occasion of National Science Day.

Prabhakar Reddy working as Biology teacher in Zilla Partishad High School in Jastipalli-Mucharla in Kampepalli mandal, submitted his paper on teaching methods in science.

"Teaching of science should be as a STEP method (Science Teaching with Experiments and Projects). Teachers should take various examples from the surroundings of the area", he

● **"TEACHING OF science** should be as a STEP method (Science Teaching with Experiments and Projects)", Teachers should take various examples from the surroundings of the area", he said.

said. The Central government designed a new policy for science under Atma Nirbhar Bharat on the concept of 'Learning while Doing'. He said that about 210 teachers submitted their articles to the seminar and the committee selected 30 articles from it. He said that holistic knowledge, of which science is an integral part, is the answer to all the problems. He said that the Central government wants to establish India as a global education destination through New Education Policy.

DRIVER FLEES WITH OWNER'S CAR IN HYD

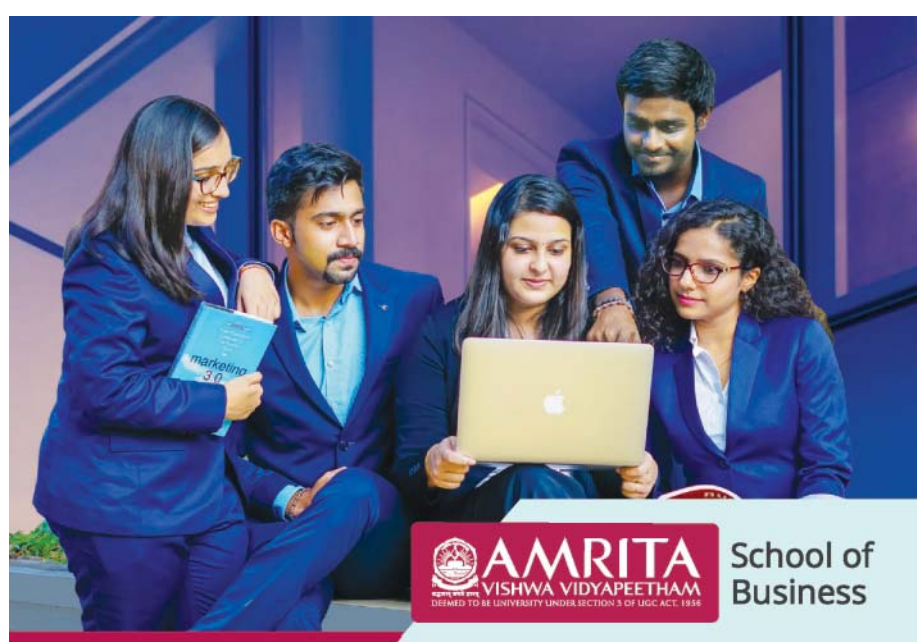
DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

A 35-year-old was arrested by the Banjara Hills, Hyderabad police for taking off in a luxury car belonging to his employer on Thursday.

Police said that the accused, M. Gundappa, a resident of Puppulaguda in Manikonda, has been working as a car driver for Madhusudan Kakani, managing director of Manjushree Polymers, since 2019.

"Gundappa gained the trust of Madhusudan in the last two years and, taking advantage of it, hatched a plan to steal the luxury car and sell it to make money.

Last week, Gundappa in the absence of his employer, stole the car and had been absconding since then," said the police.



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DECCAN Chronicle

26 FEBRUARY 2021

Disha bail order should set welcome precedent

The order of the additional sessions judge of Patiala House Courts, Delhi, granting bail to Bengaluru-based climate activist Disha A. Ravi, arrested for her alleged role in the preparation of a “toolkit” that the police claimed led to the violent incidents in the nation’s capital on January 26, has sought to right two wrongs. One, it has made a timely intervention and stopped the state from using legal tools to put dissenting citizens behind the bars for no end. Two, it has reassured the people that Article 19 (1) of the Constitution which guarantees the freedom of speech and expression has the strength to come to the aid of a legitimate dissenter.

The court demolished the Delhi police’s case by pointing out that it was devoid of material evidence to connect the activist with the case slapped on her; and more importantly, whatever she did was protected by the Constitution. The court found that the investigating agency which charged the activist with sedition has produced “not an iota of evidence” to link her with

It’s an irony that a government manned by people who have participated in the greatest freedom restoration movement in Independent India is resorting to suppressing voices of legitimate dissent

seditions or violent acts; and reminded the police that it cannot resort to “surmises or conjectures” to convince itself of the culpability of an accused. The “scanty and sketchy” pieces of evidence the agency has produced are not enough to send a 22-year-old young woman with absolutely blemish-free criminal antecedents to jail, it said. The strong words on the nature of the evidence were, in fact, a censure of the police, which went overboard picking up a citizen violating the Supreme Court’s guidelines and her basic rights.

The court made a series of observations on the citizen’s rights that a democracy would love the judiciary to assert and protect in the face of state assault. “Citizens are conscience keepers of the government in any democratic nation,” it said. “They cannot be put behind the bars simply because they choose to disagree with the state policies.” In a warning to the self-appointed “patriots” who miss no chance to threaten dissenters with the label “traitor” and the state which has a proclivity to slap sedition charge at the drop of a hat, the court said, “The offence of sedition cannot be invoked to minister to the wounded vanity of the governments.” The court observed that difference of opinion, disagreement, divergence, dissent, or even disapprobation, are recognised legitimate tools to infuse objectivity in state policies. If the Constitution was not enough, the judge referred to the nation’s 5,000-year old civilisation and the Rig Veda to remind everyone that we were “never been averse to ideas from varied quarters”.

It’s an irony that a government manned by people who have participated in the greatest freedom restoration movement in Independent India is resorting to suppressing voices of legitimate dissent. They should not ideally expect the nation to experience the silence of a graveyard when they go about implementing their agenda. They will face, to quote the judge, an “aware and assertive citizenry, in contradistinction with an indifferent or docile citizenry”, which is, “indisputably a sign of a healthy and vibrant democracy”. The refreshing thoughts must set in motion a process to free many more that are languishing in prisons facing similar charges.

An act of sycophancy

The Gujarat Cricket Association succumbed to the temptation of naming the stadium after the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The cricket arena had many earlier monikers like Gujarat and Motera, besides having borne the name of a famous son of the soil in Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

The baptism does break an unwritten law that no edifice should be named after a living person even if it seemed apt to honour a person who headed GCA in the long running Indian tradition of politicians getting themselves elected as presidents of cricket associations. The concept of a magnificent, cricket arena that cost more than ₹800 crores came from his grand vision and its creation was carried out by the other leading contemporary political personality, Union home minister Amit Shah, and his son who is the BCCI secretary, Donald Trump, as US President, even paid a ceremonial visit there just before the pandemic was declared in 2020.

The honour bestowed spontaneously and sentimentally on Narendra Modi is somewhat akin to India’s first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru being awarded the Bharat Ratna by the first President Rajendra Prasad. But it does rankle considering this is a stadium named like this since the Maharashtra politician and chief minister S.K. Wankhede named one in Churchgate in Mumbai after himself in 1974. A second cricket stadium within a stone’s throw of historic Brabourne was owed to a clash of egos between Maharashtra Cricket Association and Cricket Club of India. The era of building an edifice of homage to members of one political family is thought to be well and truly over. And so the Congress playing the Sardar Patel card in criticism seems hypocritical now. The issue, however, is to do with the need for 21st-century India to evolve from a sycophantic, fetishist and neta-worshipping past.

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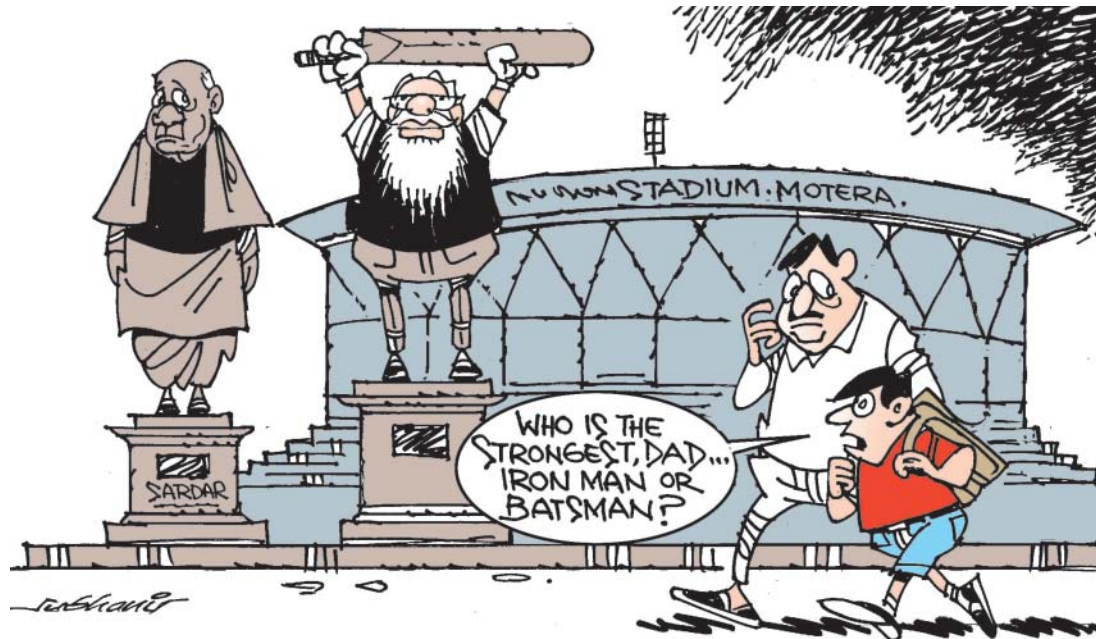
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Subhani



Arrests on flimsy basis undermine democracy



Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr

It has been the bad practice and bad habit of the Indian police and criminal investigators to slap a mountain of charges against any accused in the hope that at least some, or even one, of them would stick. This amounts to indulging in slander in more than a legal sense. And this is what the Delhi police and its investigators have tried to do with the violence that erupted on January 26, 2021 when the farmers’ tractor parade went off the rails at some points. Instead of focusing on what went wrong during the tractor parade, the Delhi police went off on a tangent, distracted by the tweets of American pop singer Rihanna and teenage climate protester/warrior Greta Thunberg. Greta Thunberg put out a toolkit, retracted and put it back again. And it is here that Bengaluru climate activist Disha Ravi, 22, entered the picture. The Delhi police saw it as a good opportunity to nail the international linkages of the imagined conspiracy when they found the toolkit linkage between Ms Ravi and Ms Thunberg. The police discovered that Ms Ravi had a hand in the toolkit when she edited it for Ms Thunberg.

In the heightened atmosphere of the exaggerated nature of the petty violence that broke out at Red Fort on January 26, the reckless overreach of the police under the guidance of an authoritative Union home ministry came into play. The Delhi police went off to Bengaluru, arrested Ms Ravi and brought her to Delhi in total violation of all legal norms in a democratic polity. The courts did not

cover themselves in glory when the legal process was short-circuited in bringing Ms Ravi from Bengaluru to New Delhi as though this country was under martial law and no questions could be raised about the way the Delhi police went about hauling up an ordinary citizen in Bengaluru. The pusillanimity of the courts was further underscored when the police custody of Ms Ravi was readily granted for five days by duty judge Dev Saroha on February 14. This was the police riding roughshod over the law and the judge allowing it

DISHA RAVI & DELHI POLICE

26. Traces of “Khalistani” elements behind the three-month-old farmers’ agitation against the new laws brought by the Narendra Modi government has been the theme song of the government and the ruling party. It seems that the police just follows the lead of their political masters.

The “Khalistani” elements have been simmering beneath the surface for many years now, but it is quite clear that the farmers have nothing to do with them, and the people, whether Indian or foreign, who sympathise with the farmers’ agitation have nothing to do with them either. The government and the police are fully aware

the police to charge Ms Ravi with having associated herself with an illegal entity.

Judge Rana could have avoided the homilies about pluralist Indian civilisation going back to the Rig Veda and rapped the police for creating a faux chargesheet. He did admit that the investigation was on, but the evidence produced by the police so far to oppose bail to Ms Ravi was paper-thin. But in times when the government is keen to spread the pall of fear by invoking demons who are less than paper tigers, Judge Rana seems to have found refuge in pious platitudes about democracy, liberty, and the right of the citizen to dissent. It would however be mistaken to get carried away by Judge Rana’s quiet plaint. Something more serious is amiss in the police’s line of investigation into the violence of January

26. Traces of “Khalistani” elements behind the three-month-old farmers’ agitation against the new laws brought by the Narendra Modi government has been the theme song of the government and the ruling party. It seems that the police just follows the lead of their political masters.

The “Khalistani” elements have been simmering beneath the surface for many years now, but it is quite clear that the farmers have nothing to do with them, and the people, whether Indian or foreign, who sympathise with the farmers’ agitation have nothing to do with them either. The government and the police are fully aware

Judge Rana could have avoided the homilies about pluralist Indian civilisation going back to the Rig Veda and rapped the police for creating a faux chargesheet

that showing support for protesting farmers cannot be an offence and it cannot be deemed sedition. It is only by bringing in the “Khalistani” factor that people like Ms Ravi can be charged with a crime, and even if the charge fails, they can be defamed. It is in this diabolical bid to outlaw dissent and protest that the government and the Delhi police are committing the crime of undermining democracy.

The Disha Ravi case goes much beyond the Delhi police’s cyber-crime cell. It is a blatant misuse of the laws of the land. The police can claim that they investigate charges against people in good faith, and they nurse no animus against anyone. We can readily concede the point if they had gone about the investigation in a sober manner. They could have easily built up more evidence, they could have interrogated MsRavi in Bengaluru without the cheap theatrics of arresting her and bringing her to Delhi.

There is a clear need for the courts to rule clearly and loudly that the police have no right to arrest people as long as they are cooperating with the investigation, and there is no danger of the person absconding. In the case of Ms Ravi, it is self-evident that she would have cooperated with the police investigation. Arresting Ms Ravi was an attempt by the police to humiliate and intimidate her and make an example of her to other dissidents. This just cannot be allowed in a democracy. The powers of the police to arrest people and keep them in custody for 24 hours before they are brought before a magistrate for being remanded smacks of a police state. A citizen’s liberty cannot be left to the mercy of a policeman or police-woman.

The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst

LETTERS

MODI STADIUM

Renaming the Ahmedabad stadium is not in the BJP’s interest, leave alone the Opposition criticism (Narendra Modi stadium in Gujarat faces Oppn ire, DC, Feb. 25). Till now ordinary citizens may have been voting for Modi as he projected himself as ‘Pradhan Sevak’ and ‘Chowkidar’. The logic used by BJP leaders to rename the stadium doesn’t stand as the Pradhan Sevak could have said no to keep his image intact.

Dr Jaspal Singh Bhatia
Hyderabad

It is the height of narcissism. It is rare to name a public property after a living personality. It proves that Narendra Modi is also after fame in addition to power. Actions earn name, either good or bad. There is no need to rename places, roads, buildings and so on. Leaders should not go for name but work for the people sincerely.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao
Hyderabad

MAMATA’S JIBE

The strange attacks by Mamata Banerjee and Narendra Modi looks like a cat and mouse game (Didi: Modi is the biggest rioter, DC, Feb. 25). No PM in Indian history has been bad-mouthed so much. What forced the West Bengal CM to call the PM names is for the nation to think over and debate.

Zakaria Sultan
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

Mulki rules cover all TS appointments

HYDERABAD, February. 25 A full bench of the AP High Court today held that the Mulki Rules constitute a Special Law and appointments contrary to it would be invalid, although reservations for Mulki were not specially made in departmental rules. The full bench consisted of the Chief Justice N. Kumaraya, Justice Gopal Rao Ekbote and Justice Sambasiva Rao.

The petitioners, who were all superintendents of the Government departments, filed a writ petition challenging the rules for appointment of Assistant Treasury Officers and to set aside the appointment to that post by departmental recruitment.

Francis Pike



India, America & China: Can ‘D-10’ forge new relationships?

Is Antony Blinken, US President Joe Biden’s secretary of state, preparing to abandon Barack Obama’s powder-puff Asian foreign policies? It is now widely agreed that Mr Obama, under whom Mr Blinken served as deputy secretary of state, ceded to China uncontested control of the South China Sea. Mr Obama’s so-called “pivot to Asia” was all talk and no trousers. Mr Blinken, who believes diplomacy must be “supplemented by deterrence”, may be about to implement a more aggressive foreign policy in Southeast Asia and elsewhere.

In his first speech as general secretary of the Communist Party of China in 2012, Xi Jinping made his intentions clear. He stated his commitment to “accepting the baton of history and continuing to work for realising the great revival of the Chinese nation in order to let the Chinese nation stand more firmly and powerfully among all nations”. President Xi’s international adventurism, under the umbrella of his “Belt and Road Initiative”, has been most evident in his illegal military occupation of the South China Sea, but it is a global strategy for domination which can be observed in Central Asia, the Indian Ocean, the

Middle East, Europe, even the Arctic. How did Mr Obama respond? He did nothing. He issued platitudes. He vacillated over whether the Mutual Defence Treaty with the Philippines included the disputed South China Sea. By the end of his presidency, it was too late. And weakness in the South China Sea was undoubtedly an invitation for Mr Xi to push elsewhere on Mr Obama’s open door.

There are indications that the Biden administration will seek to construct alliances in Europe and Asia to contain the Chinese and Russian threats. As a former deputy secretary of state, Mr Blinken has long been President Biden’s point man on Europe and is known to be a long-time confidant. For a “multi-lateralist” who speaks fluent French, getting Europe onside will be important.

British PM Boris Johnson has been floating the idea of a “D-10” group: G-7 plus India, South Korea and Australia. Having finally decided to ditch Huawei, and persuaded by China’s crackdown on democracy in Hong Kong, the UK has thrown its hat into the “Stop China” camp. D-10 is a grouping that has some logic. By comparison,

Nato is undermined by the continuing membership of Turkey, now closely aligned with China. Even France’s President Emmanuel Macron said Nato was “brain dead”. But is the D-10 a credible base for an anti-Chinese containment strategy?

A containment strategy needs real military power. Besides the UK and France, the other European nations are largely window dressing. One suspects neither Mr Biden nor Mr Blinken have the cojones to initiate armed conflict to contest China’s already established military control of the South China Sea.

If Southeast Asia is lost, what next? China has already moved on to securing control of the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean and Suez Canal trade routes. Burma is in China’s pocket. Bangladesh, with 165 million people, where in 2016 Mr Xi made the first state visit by a Chinese leader in 30 years, is being increasingly suborned by Chinese infrastructure investment and armaments. In the south, where the Bay of Bengal meets the Indian Ocean, China is entrenched. In 2018, China negotiated a 99-year lease for Sri Lanka’s Hambantota port and 15,000 adjacent acres — just off

India’s coast.

There’s the rub. For China’s Southeast Asia strategy is to contain India, which it sees as its long-term geopolitical rival. Although India lags a distant third to America and China in terms of aggregate GDP, it is also likely to overtake the US in 20 to 30 years. India already ranks fourth in the world in terms of aggregate military power.

As the world’s largest democracies, the United States and India should always be the best of friends. Yet US-Indian relations have rarely worked well. India’s first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, rebuffed President Eisenhower; Nehru’s meeting with President Kennedy was a car crash. (Kennedy later admitted it was “the worst head of state visit I have had”.) Henry Kissinger described Indira Gandhi’s meeting with Richard Nixon as a “dialogue of the deaf”; even the normally polite Kissinger described Mrs Gandhi as “a bitch”.

Relations between American and Indian heads of government have later improved, but their substance has not. Mr Obama liked Dr Manmohan Singh but judging from his autobiography they do not seem

to have discussed much more than “progressive politics”. As for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the ultra-nationalist Hindu head of the BJP, he is, like Donald Trump, a populist with a cult following. Mr Biden may well court Mr Modi too. Noticeably Mr Blinken, like Donald Trump, refers to Asia as “the Indo-Pacific” — a term that the Chinese government detests.

While the geopolitical interests of America and India are clearly in alignment, bringing them into a more formal arrangement may be difficult. India is proudly independent. It does things its own way, and its prickly relationship with the West remains.

While India — currently engaged in border skirmishes with China in the remote Himalayas — is fully aware of the Chinese threat, it may be difficult to lasso the country into a formal mutual defence relationship. The D-10 is one of those neat ideas that might look good in a state department or Foreign Office briefing but, given the difficulties of co-opting India and Germany, can it cut the mustard in the real world?

By arrangement with the Spectator

SHORT TAKES

I-T RAIDS OFFICES, RESIDENCES OF HARYANA MLA

Chandigarh, Feb. 25: The Income Tax Department carried out raids on the offices and residences of Haryana's Independent MLA from Meham, Balraj Kundu, in Rohtak on Thursday, officials said here.

A residential building linked to his relatives in Hisar district and another one in Gurgaon which is connected to the legislator himself were searched as well, they said.

Kundu, a vocal supporter of the ongoing farmer's agitation against the new central farm laws, had in February 2020 withdrawn support to the M.L. Khattar dispensation in Haryana, saying he was "deeply hurt" with the government giving "clean chit" to those involved in the alleged corruption in sugar which he had flagged.

In October 2020, the Haryana Police booked him and three other people in a cheating case. The FIR was registered in Gurgaon based on a complaint from a resident of the city, the police had said.

The MLA had then hit back, saying the FIR, like another one lodged against him in January 2020, was due to "political considerations" and that he had been raising his voice against the BJP-led government in Haryana on various issues. The state police had in January 2020 booked Kundu and his brother Shivraj for allegedly cheating a Rohtak resident.

When the case was registered, Kundu had claimed that he was being framed in the case due to political vendetta at the behest of a BJP leader and former minister from the state. Kundu, who runs a construction company along with his brother, was not answering calls.

MUMBAI MAYOR UNVEILS RESTORED TRAM CAR

Mumbai, Feb. 25: Mumbai mayor Kishori Pednekar on Thursday unveiled a tram car restored by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) in south Mumbai, a civic official said.

The civic body had earlier displayed the tram car on an elevated podium at Bhatia Baug garden next to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, but due to various reasons including the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not open for public viewing.

"The BMC has taken this tram from the BEST and installed it at Bhatia Baug so people could re-experience the past glory of Mumbai," Pednekar said, while unveiling the tram.

The yellow and maroon coloured single-decker tram car is decorated with lights for tourists to enjoy viewing it at night time as well, the mayor said.

Trams were part of Mumbai's public transport system for nearly 90 years and were one of the cheapest and favourite modes of transport for citizens, before they were discontinued from service in 1964.

RSS ACTIVIST'S MURDER: 8 SDPI WORKERS HELD

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEB. 25

The brutal murder of RSS activist in Vayalar in Alappuzha district of Kerala allegedly by SDPI workers, the political arm of PFI, has created tension in many parts of the area.

Nandu N. Krishna, 23, was hacked to death allegedly by SDPI workers on Wednesday night following a political clash between the rival groups. Eight SDPI workers have been arrested in connection with the murder; Suneer, 33, Yasir, 32, Abdul Khader, 52, Mohammed Amaz, 24, Ansil, 33, Riyaz, 38, Nishad, 32, and Shabudeen, 49.

The police said that the murder was well-planned as the assailants had arrived at the spot in a car carrying sharp edged weapons. These weapons were used for hacking the RSS worker.

The BJP and Hindu outfits had called for a dawn to dusk hartal in the district on Thursday against the murder.

The police have clamped prohibitory orders in some areas of Cherthala and Vayalar to check retaliatory attacks by the rival groups.

Nirav: From diamantaire to fugitive

He has been lodged at Wandsworth Prison in south-west London since his arrest in March 2019

● PICTURE PAINTED in court was one of a talented jewellery designer who was only driven by one mission to make the Nirav Modi brand worthy.

expert, told the UK court during the course of the extradition hearing last year.

As someone who had served on the Advisory Board of Nirav Modi's company for three years since 2015, Fritsch was deposed by the defence team to vouch for Nirav's integrity and skills as an entrepreneur and creative person, who was passionate about establishing the first international brand of luxury jewellery out of India.

A gems expert, Dr Richard Taylor, was also fielded to go into the nitty-gritties of the diamond trade and how the Nirav Modi brand had succeeded in making a mark around the world.

"The industry relies on sending out high-value product to companies and to do that they require trust and confidence," said Taylor, in an attempt to establish Modi's credibility in the business.

"India is the largest and most important centre of diamond cutting it was a very significant trend that he [Modi] was part of," he added.

The picture painted in court was one of a talented jewellery designer who was only driven by one mission to make the Nirav Modi brand worthy of competition with the likes of global luxury jewellery brands such as Tiffany or Cartier. And, the accusations associated with the extradition case were painted as nothing more than a commercial dispute.

The CPS, in turn, presented documents and video evidence in an effort to establish a complex web of misuse of a bank credit facility called letters of undertaking (LoUs) and threats issued to so-called dummy directors of front companies to keep them out of the reach of Indian investigative authorities.

Throughout the extradition case in London, Nirav Modi's depression and mental health condition remained at the heart of arguments with his extended incarceration said to have worsened his condition.

Coupled with a severe condition of depression, in my view, he presents a high risk of suicide albeit not immediately, Dr

LONG ROAD TO EXTRADITION

A UK court on Thursday ruled that fugitive diamantaire Nirav Modi can be extradited to India to face charges of fraud and money laundering amounting to an estimated \$2 billion. Following is the chronology of the case and its origin

JANUARY 29, 2018: Punjab National Bank (PNB) files police complaint against Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi and others accusing fraud to the tune of ₹2.81 billion.

FEBRUARY 5: The CBI launches an investigation into the alleged scam.

FEBRUARY 16: The ED seizes a cumulative ₹56.74 billion worth of diamonds, gold and jewellery from Nirav Modi's home and offices.

FEBRUARY 17: The CBI makes first arrest in the case. Two PNB employees and an executive of Nirav Modi's group were detained.

FEBRUARY 17: Government suspends passports of Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi for four weeks in connection with the PNB fraud.

FEBRUARY 21: CBI arrests CFO of Nirav Modi's firm and two other senior executives of his firms. It also seals his farmhouse in Alibaug.

FEBRUARY 22: The ED seizes nine luxury cars belonging to Nirav Modi and his firms.

FEBRUARY 27: A magistrate's court issues a bailable arrest warrant against diamond trader Nirav Modi.

JUNE 2: The Interpol issues Red Corner Notice against Nirav Modi for money laundering.

JUNE 25: The ED moves a special court in Mumbai seeking Nirav Modi's extradition.

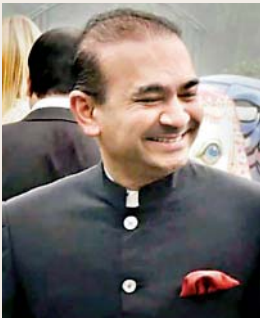
AUGUST 3: The Indian Government sends a request for the extradition of Nirav Modi to the UK authorities.

AUGUST 20: The CBI officials request Interpol Manchester to detain Nirav Modi after the latter informs about his presence in London to Indian authorities.

DECEMBER 27: The UK informs India that Nirav Modi is living in the country.

MARCH 9, 2019: British newspaper 'The Telegraph' confronts Nirav Modi on London's streets and confirms his presence in the country.

MARCH 9: The ED says the government of the UK has sent an extradition request



Nirav Modi

of fugitive diamantaire Nirav Modi to a UK court for further proceeding.

MARCH 18: Westminster Court in London issues arrest warrant against fugitive Nirav Modi after the Indian government request was forwarded to the court by the UK Home Office

MARCH 20: Nirav Modi arrested in London and produced in Westminster Court, which denies him bail.

MARCH 20: Nirav Modi sent to Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Wandsworth till March 29

MARCH 29: A Westminster Magistrates Court in London rejects Nirav Modi's second bail application, saying there are "substantial grounds" to believe that he will fail to surrender. The judge fixes April 26 as the next date of hearing when he will appear via video link from jail.

MAY 8: Nirav Modi denied bail for a third time, to remain in UK jail.

JUNE 12: UK court rejects Nirav Modi's bail for fourth time over fears he would abscond.

AUGUST 22: Nirav Modi's remand extended till September 19, UK extradition trial expected in May 2020.

NOVEMBER 6: UK court rejects Nirav Modi's new bail application

MAY 11, 2020: Nirav Modi's five-day extradition trial in PNB fraud case begins in UK

MAY 13: Indian govt submits more proof against Nirav Modi in money laundering case

SEPTEMBER 7, 2020: UK court given fresh video tour of Mumbai's Arthur Road Jail

DECEMBER 1: Nirav Modi's remand extended, final hearings in 2021

JANUARY 8, 2021: UK court decides to pronounce judgement in Nirav Modi's extradition case on February 25

FEBRUARY 25, 2021: UK court rules Nirav Modi can be extradited to India to face charges of fraud and money laundering.

— PTI



Journalists report the verdict to allow the extradition of Nirav Modi, outside Westminster Magistrates Court in London on Thursday.

— AP

MEA: Govt will liaise with UK for Nirav's early extradition

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 25

India on Thursday evening said that "since the Westminster Magistrate's Court has recommended Nirav Modi's extradition to the UK home secretary, the Government of India would liaise with the UK authorities for his early extradition to India"

On Thursday, the Ministry of External Affairs said, "Nirav Modi is wanted in India in connection with the multi-million dollar Punjab National Bank Fraud case. On the request of CBI and ED, his extradition from UK was sought in August 2018. He was arrested and produced before the Senior District Judge at Westminster Magistrate's court on 20.03.2019. Since then he is facing extradition proceedings while in judicial custody. The final hearing in this case was held on 7-8 January 2021. On Thursday, the Westminster Magistrate's Court in London has pronounced that Nirav Modi be extradited to India to stand trial."

The MEA added, "Dismissing the mental health concerns raised by Nirav Modi, the judge observed that Nirav Modi conspired to destroy evidence and intimidate witnesses. Since the Court has recommended his extradition to the UK

CBI SAYS VERDICT IS REMINDER TO ALL FUGITIVES

New Delhi, Feb. 25: The CBI on Thursday termed the judgement of a UK court in the Nirav Modi's case as "significant" and said it should serve as a reminder to all fugitives, who have indulged in large value frauds, that they cannot escape the law merely by changing their countries of residence.

The CBI said the court order vindicated the painstaking probe carried out by the agency especially since Modi had raised various issues on admissibility of evidence, fairness of investigation, trial, prison conditions, availability of health facilities in India and extraneous consideration, with a view to divert attention from his own acts.

— PTI

Home Secretary, India would liaise with the UK authorities for his early extradition to India."

A senior diplomat at India House said the judgment paves the way for the government of India and the high commission officials to liaise with the UK authorities on the next stages of the procedural matters for extradition.

Vehicle with explosives found near Mukesh Ambani's house

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, FEB. 25

An abandoned vehicle with 20 gelatin sticks was found just metres away from business tycoon Mukesh Ambani's house in Mumbai on Thursday.

The SUV was noticed at around 3 pm after which some people from the vicinity alerted the local police, who rushed to the spot and cordoned off the entire area, sending the state government and the police into a tizzy.

A Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad (BDDS) team reached the spot immediately, he said. It was not an assembled explosive device, he said, adding that further investigation was on.

"A Scorpio with 20 gela-

● THE SUV was noticed at around 3 pm after which some people from the vicinity alerted the local police, who rushed to the spot.

● CCTV FOOTAGE of the area revealed the SUV was parked beside a tree on the Carmichael Road at around 1 am.

tin sticks was found near Mukesh Ambani's Mumbai residence. The crime branch of Mumbai Police is investigating the entire matter and the truth will emerge soon," Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh said.

According to reports, CCTV footage of the area revealed the SUV was

parked beside a tree on the Carmichael Road at around 1 am. More than one person was seen alighting from the car.

Deshmukh said that the car was parked some distance away from Ambani's palatial house. Mumbai Police spokesperson, DCP S. Chaitanya, said, "The gelatin sticks recovered in the SUV were not an assembled explosive device. But details of the risks they posed would be known only after a thorough probe."

Efforts are on to trace the persons who parked the vehicle there, from where they came, what were their diabolic motives, who or what were the exact targets etc., officials said.

Electrifying protest



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee rides an electric scooter during a protest against the hike in fuel price in Kolkata on Thursday. She slammed the BJP-led government at the Centre, "We are protesting against the fuel price hike. The Modi government only makes false promises. They have done nothing to bring down fuel prices. You can see the difference in petrol prices when the Modi government came to power and now."

— PTI

NEW | MEMBER

Chaurasia had earlier pledged to spread Godse's last court statement to 1L people

Godse 'devotee' inducted in MP Congress

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, FEB. 25

A 'devotee' of Mahatma Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse has been inducted in Congress here, much to the chagrin of a strong section of the party.

Babulal Chaurasia who had a few years ago pledged to spread Godse's last court statement to one lakh people was welcomed into the party by MP Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) presi-

dent and former chief minister Kamal Nath here on Wednesday.

The official Twitter handle of MP Congress on Wednesday evening broke the news of Chaurasia being admitted to Congress by sharing the picture of the event in the party HQ here.

Former PCC president of MP Arun Yadav reacted to the development with a one-liner, "Bapu hum sharminda hai" (Bapu, we are ashamed).

He tagged the photo-

graph showing Nath welcoming Chaurasia into the party in his Twitter account, while posting his comment.

Sources in the party said the decision to induct Godse's "follower" in the party has left many senior leaders in Congress flabbergasted.

Chaurasia had quit Congress and joined Hindu Mahasabha in 2014 to contest the local civic body elections in Gwalior.

He was said to be one of the brain behind the tem-

ple built for Godse in Gwalior in 2017.

He was also reportedly present at the 'consecration' ceremony held to install Godse's statue in the temple.

Later, the Gwalior district administration had removed the idol.

Talking to reporters in Gwalior on Thursday, Chaurasia described his joining in Congress as his "homecoming".

"I was not aware then that the idol I was worshipping was that of Godse.

I was pushed into worshipping the idol", he said.

Hindu Mahasabha national vice-president Jaiveer Bhardwaj took a swipe at Chaurasia for disowning his devotion to Godse, saying, "He (Chaurasia) used to be present in almost all the events organised to pay respect to Godse in the last several years".

"It shows Congress is not averse to accommodating people who espouse the nationalistic ideology of Nathuram Godse", he

added. BJP took a jibe at Congress for inducting the Godse 'devotee', saying that this has exposed the grand old party's double standard as far as sticking to its ideology is concerned.

"On one hand, Congress projects itself as the rightful inheritor of Mahatma Gandhi's legacy, on the other the party is not hesitant a bit to embrace a staunch follower of Godse", BJP spokesman Rajneesh Agrawal said.

New Delhi, Feb. 25: A day before Delhi Chief Minister

Arvind Kejriwal's roadshow in Gujarat's Surat, sources in the AAP government alleged on Thursday that his security cover has been scaled down, a charge denied by the Union Home Ministry.

Joint Commissioner (Security) of Delhi Police ID Shukla said Kejriwal has a Z+ security cover and his "complete Z+ security" is being maintained.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES GERMAN POLICE RAID ISLAMIC EXTREMISTS

Berlin, Feb. 25: Hundreds of German police officers conducted coordinated raids early Thursday in Berlin and the surrounding state of Brandenburg in the investigation of an organisation banned over allegations of Islamic extremism.

Some 800 police, including SWAT teams, were involved in the raids of apartments linked to members of the organisation, authorities told the DPA news agency. The raids were carried out with the primary focus of obtaining evidence. No arrests were immediately reported.

DRONE HIT ON SAUDI PALACE WAS FROM IRAQ

Baghdad, Feb. 25: Explosive-laden drones that targeted Saudi Arabia's royal palace in the kingdom's capital last month were launched from inside Iraq, a senior Iran-backed militia official in Baghdad and a US official said. Speaking to *The Associated Press* this week, the militia official said three drones were launched from Iraqi-Saudi border areas by a relatively unknown Iran-backed faction in Iraq and crashed into the royal complex in Riyadh on Jan. 23.

Biden revokes Green Card ban

Lawyers: Was blocking legal immigration

San Diego, Feb. 25: President Joe Biden has lifted a freeze on green cards issued by his predecessor during the pandemic that lawyers said was blocking most legal immigration to the United States. Former President Donald Trump last spring halted the issuance of green cards until the end of 2020 in the name of protecting the Coronavirus-wracked job market — a reason that Trump gave to achieve many of the cuts to legal immigration that had eluded him before the pandemic. Trump on December 31 extended those orders until the end of March. Trump had deemed immigrants a “risk to the US labour market” and blocked their entry to the United States in issuing Proclamation 10014 and Proclamation 10052.

Biden stated in his proclamation on Wednesday that shutting the door on legal immigrants “does not advance the interests of the United States”. “To the contrary, it harms the United States, including by preventing certain family members of United States

citizens and lawful permanent residents from joining their families here. It also harms industries in the United States that utilize talent from around the world,” Biden stated in his proclamation.

Most immigrant visas were blocked by the orders. As many as 120,000 family-based preference visas were lost largely because of the pandemic-related freeze in the 2020 budget year, according to the American Immigrant Lawyers Association. Immigrants could not bring over family members unless they were US citizens applying for visas for their spouses or children under the age of 21.

It also barred entry to immigrants with employment-based visas unless they were considered beneficial to the national interest such as health care professionals. And it slammed the door on thousands of visa lottery winners who were randomly chosen from a pool of about 14 million applicants to be given green cards that would let them live permanently in the United States. The

blocked visas add to a growing backlog that has reached 437,000 for family-based visas alone, said California immigration lawyer Curtis Morrison, who represented thousands of people blocked by the freeze. “I’m thrilled for my clients who are now in a position that they can now enter the US,” he said.

“But that backlog will take years if the administration does not take ambitious measures.” A federal judge last year issued a ruling that all but lifted Proclamation 10052 by allowing temporary foreign workers to enter the United States if their employers are members of the US Chamber of Commerce or several other large organisations that represent much of the US economy. But Proclamation 10014 continued to block thousands of immigrants. Immigration lawyers said they were surprised Biden did not immediately lift the freeze like he did with Trump’s travel ban imposed against people from mostly Muslim-majority countries. —AP

Coup attempt: Armenia PM

Yerevan, Feb. 25: Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan accused the military of an attempted coup and brought supporters to the streets on Thursday, as months of tensions over its defeat in last year's war with Azerbaijan came to a head.

Thousands marched through the streets of the capital Yerevan in support of Pashinyan, with the opposition urging him to step down to avoid bloodshed or even civil war.

President Armen Sarkisian, whose role is largely symbolic, said he was taking

urgent steps to try to defuse the crisis, calling on all involved to “show restraint and common sense.” Under pressure for his handling of the conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, Pashinyan has ignored repeated calls to resign for losing swathes of territory to Azerbaijan in the war.

After largely backing the prime minister for months, the military's general staff on Thursday joined calls for him to step down, saying in a statement that he and his cabinet “are not capable of taking ade-

quate decisions”.

Pashinyan hit back with an accusation that top brass were mounting an “attempted military coup” and fired the chief of the general staff Onik Gasparyan. Hundreds of supporters then joined Pashinyan to march through central Yerevan, chanting “Nikol Prime Minister!”

Speaking to supporters through a megaphone, Pashinyan called for calm, as dozens of police deployed outside the main government offices. “The situation is tense, but we must agree that there cannot be

clashes,” said Pashinyan, who was joined by his wife, daughters, ministers and security detail.

He said the situation in the country was under control and that the military's call had been an “emotional reaction” to his firing the previous day of the deputy chief of the general staff Tigran Khachatryan. Khachatryan had ridiculed claims by Pashinyan that Iskander missiles supplied by Russia — Armenia's main military ally — had failed to hit targets during the war over Nagorno-Karabakh. — AFP

SRI LANKA SEEKS \$2.2 BN FROM CHINA

Colombo, Feb. 25: Sri Lanka is seeking \$2.2 billion from Chinese banks, the government said, in echoes of a borrowing binge more than a decade ago that resulted in the country having to give up a strategic port. Money and capital markets minister Nivard Cabraal said the government was hopeful of finalising a \$1.5-billion swap facility. — AFP

Eradicated poverty in China, says Xi

Beijing, Feb. 25: President Xi Jinping on Thursday declared that China has scored a “complete victory” in its fight against poverty by lifting over 770 million people out of it in the last four decades, calling it another “miracle” created by the country that will go down in history. Absolute poverty has been eradicated in the world's most populous country, Xi announced while addressing a gathering held here to mark the country's accomplishments in poverty alleviation and honour its model poverty fighters.

China has a population of around 1.4 billion. “No country has been able to lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty in such a short time,” Xi said. Xi said that all poor people in rural areas have been lifted out of poverty. With this, China has achieved the UN goal of poverty eradication 10 years ahead of the 2030 deadline, he said.

Over the past eight years, the final 98.99 million impoverished rural residents living under the current poverty line have all been lifted out of poverty. All the 832 impoverished counties and 128,000 impoverished villages have been removed from the poverty list, he said. Since the launch of the reform and opening up in the late 1970s, 770 million impoverished rural residents have shaken off poverty when calculated according to China's current poverty line, he said. China has contributed to more than 70 per cent of global poverty reduction over the same period, Xi, also General Secretary of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), said.

With such achievements,

China has created another “miracle” that will “go down in history,” he said. Xi said since he assumed power, China has invested accumulative fiscal funds of nearly 1.6 trillion yuan into poverty alleviation over the past eight years. He said according to the World Bank's international poverty line, the number of Chinese people lifted out of poverty over the past 40 years accounts for more than 70 per cent of the global total.

China considers extreme rural poor are those with annual per capita income of less than \$620, or about \$1.69 a day at current exchange rates, which compared closely with the World Bank's minimum standard of \$1.90 a day.

Complete eradication of poverty in China was the main goal announced by Xi when he came to power in 2012. At that time, China had about 100 million poor people, mostly living in remote areas. He has made effective use of targeted eradication of extreme poverty besides crackdown against corruption as the main political goals to consolidate his power. In the ruling CPC emerging as its most powerful leader after Mao heading the party, the presidency and the powerful military. With the removal of the two-five-year term rule, Xi, 67, like Mao now has a lifelong tenure in power instead of retiring next year.

His claim of poverty eradication came ahead of the CPC's centenary celebrations this year.

The CPC also boasts of being the world's only Communist Party with longest tenure in power in the one-party state since 1949. — PTI





Dutee Chand (right) flashes a victory sign beside her coach N. Ramesh of Hyderabad.

SHORT TAKES

Dutee, Hima set the track ablaze

Patiala: Sprinter Dutee Chand blazed the track to win the women's 100m in the Indian Grand Prix II athletics at the Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports campus on Thursday. Dutee won in 11.44 seconds, an improvement on the 11.51 seconds she had clocked last week in the first GP. She is hoping to qualify for the Olympic Games by meeting the 11.15 seconds standard. She can also qualify as one of the 56 starters in the Tokyo Games on the basis of her rankings. She is world No. 33 at the moment. Meanwhile, star Indian sprinter Hima Das ran her first competitive race in more than a year and won a gold in the women's 200m in 23.31 seconds. Hima, who is yet to qualify for the upcoming Tokyo Olympics, had run her last competitive race in August 2019. She had suffered a lower back injury at the 2018 Asian Games and that forced her to miss the World Championships in Doha in September 2019. — PTI

Manideep upsets seasoned Savio

Hyderabad: G. Manideep outplayed seasoned player Savio Mendes in the first round to register an upset in the Senior Snooker event of the Telangana State Ranking Snooker & Billiards Championship being played at the Telangana Cue Sports Association premises at Khajaguda on Thursday. Manideep won the opener in straight frames at 3-0 — 55-44, 55-45, 63-33. Meanwhile, Vibhas and Syed Maaz Ali set up the final in junior snooker. In the semis, Vibhas mauled Md Faisal 54-22, 66-10, 57-15; Maaz jinked past Jeetendar 53-13, 41-33, 59-15.

THE SCORES
Senior Snooker first round: Manideep G bt Savio Mendes 3-0 (55-44, 55-45, 63-33); Faisal Zubairi bt Vamsi Krishna 3-0 (69-19, 64-31, 71-31); Md Mo'in Ashrafi bt Syed Ghouse Mohiuddin 3-0 (52-41, 66-23, 68-20); Srikanth bt Dheeraj Kakumanu 3-2 (49-40, 57-32, 29-61, 32-55, 51-33).
Junior Snooker semifinals: Vibhas bt Md Faisal 3-0 (54-22, 66-10, 57-15); Syed Maaz Ali bt Jeetendar 3-0 (53-13, 41-33, 59-15).

Guptill stars in Kiwi victory

Dunedin, New Zealand: Veteran batsman Martin Guptill returned to form with a blistering 97 as New Zealand held on for a nail-biting win over Australia in the second Twenty20 international in Dunedin on Thursday. Guptill's Black Caps set Australia a challenging target of 220 after losing the toss but were made to sweat as Australia came within four runs of victory. Both sides took advantage of University Oval's short boundaries in a thrilling match that featured 30 sixes and 434 runs at an average of 10.9 an over. Marcus Stoinis starred for the Australians with 78 from 37 balls but Guptill's 97 from 50 laid the foundation for New Zealand's win. — AFP
Brief scores: New Zealand 219/7 in 20 overs (Guptill 97, Kane 53, K. Richardson 3/43) bt **Australia 215/8** in 20 overs (Stoinis 78, Santner 4/31).

Live on TV

CRICKET

South Africa T20 Challenge: Cobras vs Lions from 1.30 pm; Dolphins vs Titans from 6 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD.

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: North East United vs Kerala Blasters from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3.

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AXARDHAM

Patel strikes back, makes Motera his own

Ahmedabad, Feb. 25: Left-arm spinner Axar Patel created an illusion of turn with 11 straighter deliveries that put India on the brink of the World Test Championship final with a 10-wicket demolition of England inside two days in the day-night third Test here on Thursday.

In only his second Test, Patel (15-0-32-5), with a match-haul of 11/70, relentlessly hit the good length area and hood-winked England batsmen, who played for turn only to find that there was none on offer from him.

The result was their lowest total against India — 81 all out in 30.4 overs leaving the hosts with a target of 49 which they achieved with minimum fuss taking a 2-1 lead in the four-match series.

At the other end, off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin (15-3-48-4) was an ideal foil, becoming the fourth Indian bowler and second fastest in the world to complete a commendable milestone of 400 Test wickets with the dismissal of Jofra Archer.

Incidentally, after Afghanistan's debut Test in 2018 in Bengaluru, this was the second time that India won a Test match, well inside two days.

This was after England skipper Joe Root's fabulous career-best spell of 6.2-3-8-5 resulted in India's dramatic collapse from 114 for 3 to 145 all out.

India lost as many as seven wickets for only 31 runs after looking solid at 114 for 3 at one stage in the game but England lost all 10 in an entire session in which no pacer was seen in action.

Ironically, it was the non-turning deliveries from Patel that had the England's rank and file pressing the panic button as they pre-empted away turn every time.

Whether it was Zak Crawley, Jonny Bairstow or skipper Root, everyone lost the mind-game as Ashwin also joined the fun with records tumbling one after another.

When Patel sent back Ben Foakes, he became the first spinner to get 11 wickets in a pink ball Test match.

While a bowler might end up getting the man of the match, Rohit Sharma's 66 off 96 balls in the first essay was 24-carat gold given that other batsmen looked like sitting ducks.

But Indian batsmen save Rohit did have a torrid time during an afternoon session when Root and Leach made their lives miserable.

Ajinkya Rahane was rapped on the pads as Leach fired one in and it was not much of an issue for umpire Nitin Menon to adjudge him leg before.

— PTI



Axar Patel of India appeals for England's Zak Crawley's wicket during Day Two of their third Test at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Thursday. — BCCI

SCORECARD

England 1st Innings: 112
India 1st Innings (Overnight 99/3): Rohit Sharma lbw b Jack Leach 66, Ajinkya Rahane lbw b Jack Leach 7, Rishabh Pant c Foakes b Root 1, Ravichandran Ashwin c Zak Crawley b Root 17, Washington Sundar b Root 0, Axar Patel c D Sibley b Root 0, Ishant Sharma not out 10, Jasprit Bumrah lbw b Root 1. Extras (B-2, LB-1) 5. **Total (all out in 53.2 overs) 145.** FoW: 1-33, 2-34, 3-98, 4-114, 5-115, 6-117, 7-125, 8-125, 9-134.
Bowling: James Anderson 13-8-20-0, Stuart Broad 6-1-16-0, Jofra Archer 5-2-24-1, Jack Leach 20-2-54-4, Ben Stokes 3-0-19-0, Joe Root 6-2-3-8-5.
England 2nd Innings: Z. Crawley b Axar Patel 0, D. Sibley c Pant b Patel 7, J.

Bairstow b Axar Patel 0, J. Root lbw b Axar Patel 19, B. Stokes lbw b Ashwin 25, O. Pope b Ashwin 12, B. Foakes lbw b Axar Patel 8, J. Archer lbw b Ashwin 0, J. Leach c Rahane b Ashwin 9, S. Broad not out 1, J. Anderson c Pant b Sundar 0. Extras 0. **Total (all out in 30.4 overs) 81.** FoW: 1-0, 2-0, 3-19, 4-60, 5-56, 6-66, 7-68, 8-80.
Bowling: Axar Patel 15-0-32-5, Ashwin 15-3-48-4, Sundar 0-4-0-1-1.

India 2nd Innings: Rohit Sharma not out 25, Shubman Gill not out 15. Extras (B-8, LB-1). **Total (for no loss in 7.4 overs) 49.** **Bowling:** J. Leach 4-1-15-0, J. Root 3-4-0-25-0.

NUMBERS GAME

RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN JOINS 400-WICKET CLUB IN TESTS:

● Ravichandran Ashwin became the fourth Indian and 16th bowler overall to claim 400 wickets in Tests. The off-spinner from Chennai reached this milestone by dismissing Jofra Archer, leg before, in England's second innings on the second day of the third Test match at Ahmedabad on Thursday (February 25).

● By achieving this feat in his 77th Test match, he is the second fastest after Sri Lankan Muttiah Muralitharan who took his 400th wicket in his 72nd Test match.

● Anil Kumble (619 wickets in 132 Tests), Kapil Dev (434 wickets in 131 Tests) and Harbhajan Singh (417 wickets in 103 Tests) are the other Indians to take 400 wickets before Ravichandran Ashwin.

● Joe Root recorded his best bowling performance by taking five wickets for eight runs in India's first innings. It was first time England skipper has taken five-wicket haul with his off breaks in any type of the game. His previous best in Tests was four for 87 against South Africa at Port Elizabeth in 2019-20.

● India slumped to their joint sixth lowest total against England at home by bowling out for 145 in 53.2 overs. India's lowest against England at home is 83 in 38.5 overs at Chennai in 1976-77.

● Jonny Bairstow became the eighth England batsman to receive ducks in the both innings of a Test match against India. He is only fifth England batsman to achieve this 'unwanted' feat on Indian soil.

● England were bundled out for 81 runs in 30.4 overs. It was first time when England were dismissed under 100 against India in Tests. Their previous lowest against India was 101 in 45.1 overs at The Oval in 1971.

● Axar Patel became the fourth Indian bowler to take 11 or more wickets in a Test match against England. His match figures of 11 for 70 is the fourth best for India against England.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

Kohli bests MS India sit atop as Eng out of WTC

Ahmedabad, Feb. 25: Virat Kohli on Thursday surpassed Mahendra Singh Dhoni's record of winning maximum number of Test matches as captain on home soil after leading the side to a 10-wicket victory over England in the day-night third Test here.

Kohli now has 22 victories at home in 29 Tests as captain which is one better than Dhoni, who had 21 wins in 30 Tests. Kohli already is India's most successful Test captain with 35 wins.

India chased down a target of 49 runs in only 7.4 overs to win the Test by 10



Virat Kohli

wickets and go up 2-1 in the series.

Sourav Ganguly and Mohammed Azharuddin have 21 and 14 victories to their credit as captains.

— PTI

Ahmedabad, Feb. 25: India knocked England out of contention from the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) final in June with their 10-wicket triumph in the day-night third Test here which propelled the hosts to the top of the standings.

England needed to win the four-match series 3-1 to play the June 18-22 final. New Zealand are assured of a place in the final with 70 percentage points.

If India lose the final Test then Australia will sneak in to make the final.

England have dropped to 64.1 percentage points

on the points table, which is now led by India with 71 percentage points," the ICC stated.

"England are out of the race for a place in the final of the ICC World Test Championship after losing the third Test against India in Ahmedabad," it added.

England needed to win the four-match series 3-1 to play the June 18-22 final. New Zealand are assured of a place in the final with 70 percentage points.

If India lose the final Test then Australia will sneak in to make the final.

— PTI



Mumbai's Prithvi Shaw celebrates his double century against Puducherry in the Vijay Hazare Trophy match at Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur on Thursday.

Shaw smashes domestic record

Jaipur, Feb. 25: Mumbai captain Prithvi Shaw on Thursday became the highest individual scorer in Vijay Hazare Trophy national 50-over championships as he smashed an unbeaten 227 off just 152 balls to help Mumbai beat Puducherry by 233 runs in their Elite Group D game here.

The 21-year-old Shaw, who has played in five Tests and five ODIs, broke the earlier record of the highest individual score held by Sanju Samson (212 not out against Goa in 2019). Puducherry's decision to put Mumbai in to bat backfired badly as Shaw and Suryakumar Yadav (133 off 58 balls) toyed with their bowling attack at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium and post a mammoth 457/4.

Prashant Solanki (5/48) then picked a five-for as Mumbai bundled out Puducherry for 224 to reg-

ister their third win on the trot.

Shaw and Yashasvi Jaiswal (10) added 58 runs for the first wicket to lay the foundation. After Jaiswal was dismissed, Shaw found an able partner in Aditya Tare (56, 7x4) as the duo stitched a 153-run stand for the second wicket. Suryakumar, who came in at No. 4, was in his elements, hitting 22 fours and four sixes. He and Shaw added 201 runs for the third wicket stand and helped Mumbai go past the 400 mark. — PTI

BRIEF SCORES

■ Mumbai 457/4 in 50 overs (Prithvi Shaw 227 not out, Suryakumar Yadav 133; Pankaj Singh 2/79) beat Puducherry 224 (Damodaran Rohit 63; Prashant Solanki 5/48).
■ Himachal 251/8 (Nikhil Gangta 100 not out, Kulwant Kherioliya 2/30) lost to Delhi 252/4 (Kshitiz Sharma 67 not out, Lalit Yadav 52 not out).

Silva, Jesus score in Man City win

Budapest, Feb. 25: Premier League leaders Manchester City closed in on the Champions League quarterfinals after cruising past Borussia Moenchengladbach with a comfortable 2-0 win in Wednesday's Champions League last 16, first leg tie in Budapest.

A first half header from Bernardo Silva and a Gabriel Jesus strike in the second extended a winning streak by Pep Guardiola's high-flying side to 19 games in all competitions.

With six changes from the side which started

Sunday's win over Arsenal City camped inside the Gladbach half for most of the game, moved to Hungary due to Germany's Covid-19 travel restrictions.

Although clear favourites City took time to break down a stubborn German defence however, often foiled by the interceptions of Algeria left-back Rami Bensebaini. Debutants in the Champions League knockout stages, a nervy Gladbach had been urged by coach Marco Rose to be brave against Guardiola's side. — AFP

REDS KEEPER ALLISON'S DAD DIES OF DROWNING

Sao Paulo, Feb. 25: Two Brazilian clubs have expressed condolences following the sudden death of the father of Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson Becker.

Fluminense posted on social media Thursday that it's deeply sorry for the death of Jos Agostinho Becker. Alisson's brother, Muriel, is a goalkeeper at Fluminense. Internacional, where both Alisson and Muriel played, also offered condolences.

Brazilian media reported that 57-year-old Jos Agostinho Becker had drowned after going for a swim on his property in the city of Lavras do Sul, in the south of the country. Local police confirmed the body of man was found on Wednesday night.

The 28-year-old Alisson played at Internacional between 2013 and 2016 before he joined Roma. He left Roma after two seasons to join Liverpool. — AP

Benjamin brilliant; Pratheek, Siddharth hit double tons

Vikram, Rahul, Sahith, Aashlesh, Sachit, Harsha, Saif, Suresh, Advait, Suraj, Yuganand, Gautam, Vasu also do well in league

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

Benjamin Thomas batted and bowled brilliantly to emerge the top performer in the Hyderabad Cricket Association's A-1 Division three-day league matches played on Thursday.

Benjamin hit 115 in 106 balls with 10 fours and two sixes in Sportive CC's second innings and then took five wickets with his off-spin while conceding 25 runs to help his side beat Secunderabad Nawabs.

In another match, G. Vikram Naik (111) and Rahul Buddhi (108) scripted Evergreen's win. The A-2 Division two-day games threw up some top notch performances. M. Sai Pratheek of Acrylic and C. Siddharth Rao of SK Blues hit a double century each while Sahith of Swastik Union took seven wickets.

Pratheek's 206 that contained 28 boundaries and a six propelled Acrylic to 499 for 4 in 90 overs against Adams XI. Siddharth slammed 200 which came off 156 balls and included 36 boundaries as SK Blues piled 540 for 9 against Mayura.

Sahith's 7/34 meant Lords CC crashed to a humiliating 109 against Swastik Union.



Benjamin

Sai Pratheek



C. Siddharth

Aashlesh



Sahith

Sachit Naidu



Advait Reddy

Vasu Deva Raju

Aashlesh Vaman (176) of Vijayapuri Willowmen was the other big scorer while Sachit Naidu of Abhinav Colts took 6/17.

D. Harsha Vardhan (5/9) of Rakesh XI, Adilabad's Md Saif Ali (5/6), Warangal's B. Suresh (5/14), Advait (5/23) of Cheerful Chums, Bharat CC's P. Suraj Rao (5/39), Y. Yuganand Sree (123) of Elegant CC, V. Gautam (105) of Ours CC and Acrylic's M. Vasu Deva Raju (101) were the others who did well in the two-day league.

Brief scores:

A-1 DIVISION (THREE-DAY)
■ Sportive 241 in 85.5 overs & 297/4 in 40 overs (**Benjamin Thomas 115** — 106b, 10x4, 2x6, Abhishek Murgan 56, Shaik Sameer 63 n.o) bt Secunderabad Nawabs 296 in 73.1 overs & 184 in 36.1 overs (Taksht Rao 34, Jaidev Goud 75, Aryan Cariappa 3/43, **Benjamin Thomas 5/25** — 71-0-25-5). **Points:** Sportive 6, Nawabs 0.

■ Evergreen 430/8 in 90 overs & 289/5 in 40 overs (**G. Vikram Naik 111** — 94b, 7x4, 7x6, **Rahul Buddhi 108** — 78b, 13x4, 3x6) bt Combined Districts 288 in 67.3 overs & 228/7 in 40 overs (B. Vikram 76, Rithwik Surya 34, G. Ganesh 53 n.o, G. Aniketh Reddy 3/15). **Points:** Evergreen 6, Districts 0.

■ BDL 329/9 (all out) in 87.5 overs & 211/8 in 40 overs bt Income Tax 188 in 37.5 overs & 235/8 in 38.4 overs (Vamshi Vardhan 74, Harshavardhan 47, Sai Vihari 42, Swaroop 40, Mahendra 3/0). **Points:** BDL 6, Income Tax 0.

■ AOC 247 in 64.1 overs & 64 in 24.5 overs bt Continental 200 in 78 overs & 106 in 35.1 overs (Anirudh Reddy 54). **Points:** Continental 0, AOC 6.

■ Jai Bhagwathi 191 in 65 overs & 104 in 30 overs (Nitin Sai Yadav 3/15) lost to Rohit XI 484/7 in 90 overs. **Points:** Rohit XI 6+02, Jai Bhagwathi 0.

■ Balaaji CC 377/7 in 90 overs & 236/8 in 40 overs (HK Simha 63, B. Raja Shekar 49, Md Zafarullah 3/50) bt Sri Chakra 224 in 86.5 overs & 215/8 in 40 overs (Koushik 41, T. Rohan 36, K. Vikas Rao 42 n.o). **Points:** Balaaji 6, Sri Chakra 0.

A-2 DIVISION (TWO-DAY)
■ Acrylic CC 499/4 in 90 overs (**M. Sai Pratheek 206** — 159b, 28x4, 1x6, M. Jashwant 95, **M. Vasu Deva Raju 101** — 89b, 10x4, Sai Aravind Gona 57) vs Adams XI.

■ SK Blues 540/9 (all out) 80.2 overs (Ibrahim 91, **C. Siddharth Rao 200** — 156b, 36x4, K. Srikar 84, Md Ali 48, K. Anil 30 n.o, Sunil 3/99) vs Mayura 14/2 in 7 overs.

■ Vijayapuri Willowmen 406 in 72.3 overs (**Aashlesh Vaman 176** — 172b, 30x4, 5x6, M. Saketh Reddy 46, M. Ayub Khan 37, Md Nayeemuddin 74, Kiran Paul 3/53) vs Eleven Masters 42/2 in 9 overs.

■ Swastik Union 238 in 66.3 overs (Govardhan 41, Karthik 61, Hasan 4/48) bt Lords CC 109 in 44.3 overs (Jasper 36, **Sahith 7/34** — 18-6-34-7).

■ Noble CC 104 in 30 overs (B. Ambarish 43, **Sachit Naidu 6/17** — 9-0-16-6) lost to Abhinav Colts 106/2 in 16.3 overs (Varun Tej 51 n.o). **Points:** Colts 5, Noble 0.

■ Adilabad District 123 in 34.5 overs (L. Mahesh 35, B. Srinivas 34, **D. Harsha**

Vardhan 5/9 — 6.5-2-9-5) bt Rakesh XI 89 in 39.4 over (**Md Saif Ali 5/6** — 14.4-10-6-5). **Points:** Adilabad 5, Rakesh 0.

■ Saint Sai 56 in 23.3 overs (**B. Suresh 5/14** — 9-3-14-5, N. Pavan Reddy 4/9) lost to Warangal District 59/1 in 5.3 overs (B. Kumar 36 n.o). **Points:** Warangal 5, Saint Sai 0.

■ HUCC 66 in 27.5 overs (**Advait 5/23** — 9.5-3-25-5, TNR Mohit 3/24) lost to Cheerful Chums 68/1 in 12.5 overs (Yash Satwalekar 30 n.o). **Points:** Cheerful Chums 5, HUCC 0.

■ Hyderabad Panthers 179 in 32.4 overs (Rahul Adwala 34 n.o, **P. Suraj Rao 5/39**, Rahul Karthikeya 4/75) lost to Bharat CC 180/7 in 48.4 overs (K. Rahul 38, Adithya Verma 32 n.o, Rahul A. 4/26, Ananya Raj Shekar 3/59). **Points:** Bharat 5, Panthers 0.

■ Elegant CC 229 in 64.2 overs (**Y. Yuganand Sree 123** — 166b, 18x4, Raghavendra 3/36) vs WMCC.

■ Ours CC 312/9 in 90 overs (**V. Gautam 105** — 191b, 14x4, **Kaushik Chevendra 96** vs Nizamabad District 2/1 in 2 overs.

■ Hyderabad Cricket Academy 389 in 86.3 overs (**Pranav 97**, Rishi 38, Zaheer

38, Tejveer 55, Praveen 3/37) vs Manikumar.
■ HBCC 331 in 88.5 overs (Vara Prasad 68, Ryan Rodrigues 67, Vishesh Anand 65, Md Basheeruddin 3/58) vs CC0B.
■ Crown CC 254 in 57 overs (V. Venkatesh 85, K. Surender 42, Anand Prakash 4/56) vs Mega City 141/2 in 33 overs (A. Bhargav 57).
■ Team Speed 201 in 73.1 overs (Rohan Prem 36, S. Deekshit 43, Sujana Kumar 4/33) vs PKMCC 3/1 in 5 overs.

■ National CC 123 in 36 overs (R. P. Praneeth 63, M. S. Karthikeya 3/29, N. Charan 3/11) lost to Venus Cybertech 127/2 in 31 overs (M. S. Karthikeya 39, Shrinoth, Rao 33). **Points:** Venus Cybertech 5, National CC 0.

■ Secunderabad Gymkhana 113 in 32.1 overs (Anish Chandra 32, Md Adil 38, M. Manikanta Charan 4/44, Abhinav 4/4) lost to Vijayanand CC 1

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