

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | TUESDAY | 23 FEBRUARY 2021

## WEATHER



Max: 33.0°C  
Min: 19°C  
RH: 37%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.  
Misty morning. Max/Min  
temp. 33/19 °C

## COVID-19 COUNT

CASES (+10,705)  
DEATHS (+77)  
1,10,15,776 1,56,495

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+114) (+1)  
TS: 2,97,712 1,625  
(+41) (+0)  
AP: 8,89,339 7,167

### CASES AROUND THE WORLD

11,21,09,295

DEATHS 24,80,757

COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES 219

worldometers.info/coronavirus

## ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Uttarayana  
Tithi: Magha Shuddha Ekadasi till 5.59 pm  
Star: Arudra till 12.25 pm  
Variyam: 12.48 am to 2.27 am (Wednesday)  
Durmuhurtam: 9.01 am to 9.47 am; 11.15 pm to 12.04 am (Wednesday)  
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm  
HJRI CALENDAR  
Rajab 10,1442 AH  
PRAYERS  
Fajar: 5.39 am  
Zohar: 12.40 pm  
Asar: 4.43 pm  
Maghrib: 6.27 pm  
Isha: 7.34 pm  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.37 AM  
SUNSET TODAY 6.20 PM  
MOONSET 3.18 AM  
MOONRISE 2.36 PM

## COUNTER POINT



He is promising an underground Metro in every village!

## SHORT TAKES

### Modi seeks a rise in defence output

**New Delhi:** India is working hard to enhance its capabilities and capacities in the defence-manufacturing sector at a fast pace, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday as he urged the private sector to come forward for designing and manufacturing of defence equipment. He noted that there were many ordnance factories before independence with large-scale weapons export in both world wars but this system was not strengthened thereafter.

## NEGATIVE VIBES

### No safety precautions taken during inauguration

## Mayor breaches Covid rules

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 22

Mayor-elect Gadwal R. Vijayalaxmi and her deputy Mothe Sripathi Reddy assumed office amid fanfare and jubilation here on Monday. Covid-19 protocols were breached as TRS leaders from across the state thronged the event.

The spirited event was held at the Mayor's chambers in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) headquarters near Tank Bund.

Several senior leaders including home minister

Mahmood Ali, minister Talsani Srinivas Yadav, MP K. Keshava Rao, MLC Prabhakar Rao and former mayor Bonthu Rammohan were present.

However, very few were seen wearing face masks and cared two hoots about social distancing and use of sanitizers even as the number of Covid-19 cases saw a fresh increase in the state in recent days. Some leaders even breached the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) unmindful of the presence of the returning officer just 100 metres away.

The GHMC staff with strong political leanings made it a point to prominently place photographs of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and Municipal Administration and Urban Development minister K.T. Rama Rao, in the backdrop.

Vijayalaxmi performed special rituals at the GHMC office before she took charge. A second-time corporator and daughter of TRS parliamentary party leader Keshava Rao, the 56-year-old Vijayalaxmi retained the Banjara Hills division in the GHMC polls

on December 1 by defeating former BJP MLA Baddam Balreddy's son Mahipal Reddy.

In the mayoral elections held on February 11, Vijayalaxmi and Sripathi Reddy, both TRS nominees, secured 100 votes (56 of TRS and 44 of MIM) and walked away with the Mayor and deputy Mayor posts.

The Mayor did not speak to the media after the event. Information was passed on that she would interact with them three days later, after acquainting herself with the problems of various wings of the GHMC.

## TRS leader sues own government for land TS minister Kamalakar disses CM land reforms

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 22

In a rare event, prioritising his land claims over loyalty to his government and party, Gangula Kamalakar, Telangana state minister for civil supplies and BC welfare in, approached the High Court against his own government to protect ownership of a disputed 15 acre-property in the outskirts of Karimnagar city.

After hailing the new Revenue Act, brought into force by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and Dharani portal initiative in several public fora as "revolutionary" and "fool proof", the



Gangula Kamalakar

minister challenged the "illegal and arbitrary decision" of the government to include in Dharani portal, a disputed property from the prohibitory register.

The matter is listed for hearing before Justice P. Naveen Rao on Tuesday.

The minister pleaded with the Telangana High Court to order the deletion of the property, situ-

ated in survey number 126 of Khazipur village of the Kothapalli mandal in Karimnagar district from the prohibitory list. He made Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, the district collector of Karimnagar, the State Wakf Board and other revenue officials as respondents.

Page 2: Wakf board claims land for long time

## Cong govt falls in Puducherry

Puducherry, Feb. 22:

The Congress government in Puducherry fell on Monday after chief minister

V. Narayanasamy resigned ahead of the confidence vote sought by him in the Assembly after his government was reduced to a minority following a spate of resignations of party MLAs and a DMK legislator in the past few days. Narayanasamy met Lt Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan and submitted the resignation of his cabinet, even as the ruling side's strength was reduced to 11 as against 14 of the opposition.

The Opposition, led by NR Congress chief and Leader of Opposition N. Rangasamy said it has no plans to form the government as of now and that discussions would be held. Soundararajan had earlier summoned the one-day special session Monday, mandating that its agenda be confined only to the trust vote, after the opposition petitioned her last week saying the government had been reduced to a minority due to resignations.

A fresh bout of resignations on Sunday took the tally in the last few days to three and cumulative since last month to six and further reduced to - Congress 9 (including the Speaker), DMK 2, All India NR Congress 7, AIADMK four, BJP 3 (nominated but with voting rights) and one independent who supported the government.

After mounting an attack on the Narendra Modi-led centre and former Lt Governor Kiran Bedi with whom he had



V. Narayanasamy

had frequent run-ins on administrative matters, Narayanasamy led his colleagues out of the Assembly after a debate over the rights of nominated members to vote during the floor test. Subsequently, Speaker VP Sivakolundhu announced that the motion for a confidence vote moved by the chief minister in the morning was defeated, even as it was not taken up for either voice vote or division.

"Our view that only the elected members can vote in the House was not accepted by the Speaker. So we walked out of the assembly and met the Lt Governor and gave the resignation letter of my cabinet," Narayanasamy told reporters later in the day. Narayanasamy said he was accompanied by his ministers, Congress and DMK MLAs besides the independent legislator who had earlier supported the government. It was up to the Lt Governor to decide on their resignations, he added. There was no word on the future course of action from the Lt Governor who will obviously await word from the Centre on the next step in the UT.

— Agencies

## WORLD | 5

### Italian envoy killed in Congo attack

## SPORTS | 8

### Pacer Anderson sceptical of Ahmedabad strip



## KCR tells TRS to canvass 18 lakh jobs he created

TRS to fight MLC polls by publicising employment generation

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 22

The ruling TRS has decided to take up an aggressive campaign on the jobs created during its reign to counter the Opposition parties in the upcoming graduate MLC elections for two seats, according to TRS chief and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Monday.

The '18 lakh jobs created in the last six years' will be the main poll plank of TRS to attract and seek votes of graduates and youth in these elections, Mr Rao said.

The party supremo instructed his two MLC candidates — Surabhi Vani Devi and P. Rajeshwar Reddy — to counter the criticism of the Pposition parties that the TRS government had failed to create many jobs for youth in the last six years, by aggressively bringing this out during their poll campaigns.



Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao gives the B form to Surabhi Vani Devi, who is contesting for the MLC seat in Hyderabad-Ranga Reddy-Mahbubnagar constituency on the TRS ticket in Hyderabad on Monday.

— DC

According to sources, CM Chandrashekar Rao gave a detailed account of TRS government's achievements in providing jobs to youth. As per the CM's presentation, 1.31 lakh jobs were provided in the government sector, 2.11 lakh jobs created in the IT/

ITES sector and 14.59 lakh jobs were provided in the private sector, due to the faster approvals given to industries under the TS-iPASS since he assumed assumed office more than six-and-a-half years ago.

The TRS government has decided to distribute pam-

phlets, put up banners and other harness public display mechanisms. Besides the two candidates, senior party leaders and cadre were told to strive hard to highlight the 18 lakh jobs provided by the TRS government. They were asked to distribute these pamphlets, particularly among graduate voters, in educational institutions and hold debates on the issue at several platforms.

In the ongoing MLC elections, all the Opposition parties are targeting TRS on the issue of lack of jobs to students and youth in Telangana.

Opposition parties argue that the 'tagline' of Telangana statehood agitation was "jobs, funds and water". Students and youth had sacrificed their lives and careers to fight for Telangana statehood, with a hope of getting jobs, once the statehood was achieved.

Page 2: Opposition says TRS failed youth

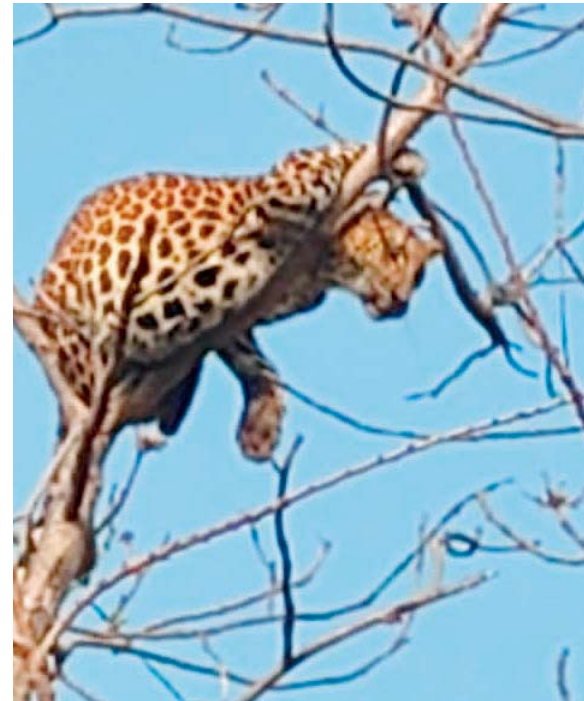
## 86.3% COVID CASES FROM 5 STATES: MHA

DC CORRESPONDENT  
with agencies inputs  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 22

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday held a meeting with senior officials of the Home and Health ministry and the Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan to review the Covid-19 situation in the country in the wake of a sudden spike in cases in a few states.

India on Monday reported steepest one-day increase in active Covid-19 cases since November-end. This sharp rise is due to a high number of daily cases coming from five states - Maharashtra, Kerala, Punjab, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. Maharashtra continues to report the highest daily new cases at 6,971, followed by Kerala (4,070) while Tamil Nadu reported 452 new cases. In fact, 86.3% of the new cases are from these five states. On Monday, 14,199 new cases and 83 deaths were reported from all over India. During the meeting, the ongoing vaccination drive and the steps needed to check further spread of the virus were discussed. The possible assistance to be offered to the affected states was also discussed, senior officials said.

Meanwhile, nearly 1,100 travelled between Banihal and Baramulla railway stations as train services resumed,



The leopard seen by villagers atop a tree in Kongala village on Monday.

## Panic in Kongala as leopard climbs tree

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARGANGAL, FEB 22

Inhabitants of Kongala in Vajedu mandal of Mulugu district spotted a leopard relaxing on a treetop about 2km away from the village, close to the Kongala waterfalls in the forest area, on Monday.

By the time forest officials reached the spot, the leopard had disappeared. They installed trap cameras in the area in the hope to capture it.

District forest officer Pradeep Kumar Setty said the leopard is a resident of this forest area for the past two or three years.

"We are creating awareness among the inhabitants of the forest's fringe villages about the movement of the leopard.

The forest officials will remain vigilant. We would take assistance of the local police and revenue officials if needed," he said.

The DFO added that all the required steps would be taken to ensure there is no man and animal conflict in the area. "Currently, the leopard has moved back into the forest," he said.

The terrified villagers are remaining indoors after the sighting of the leopard.

## Varavara Rao gets bail for 6 months

**Mumbai, Feb. 22:** Granting interim bail for six months to poet Varavara Rao on medical grounds, the Bombay High Court said on Monday though he was accused of serious offences under the stringent Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), the court must take a humanitarian approach on account of his ill health.

A bench of Justices SS Shinde and Manish Pitale said that though UAPA imposes stringent restrictions on grant of bail under

ordinary circumstances, in Rao's case, the court could not be a "mute spectator" to the deteriorating health condition of the octogenarian, an accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case. It imposed a string of conditions while granting bail to Rao, who is in jail for more than two years now.

"We are of the opinion that this court, as a Constitutional Court, cannot be a mute spectator to the undertrial being sent to prison and then to Government Hospitals where his health deterio-

rates further, to be ultimately shifted to the Private Superspecialty Hospitals, upon intervention of courts.

"And such movements of the undertrial continue back and forth only because his bail application has been turned down on merits under Section 43D(5) of the UAPA," it said. The bench went on to observe that persons booked under UAPA, an anti-terror act, could be granted bail if their continued incarceration was "endangering" their lives.

"The onset of old age and concomitant debilitating effect on the mental and physical conditions is an aspect which assumes great significance in the context of keeping such old aged persons behind bars," the bench said about Rao.

"Even if such old aged prisoners with various health conditions are accused of serious offences, the question is as to whether they can be forced to live (in) a subhuman existence behind bars, only because they stand accused?" it said. — PTI



## IN BRIEF ATTEMPT MADE TO MURDER ME, ALLEGES HC LAWYER

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, FEB. 22

A High Court advocate Durga Prasad alleged that some unidentified persons tried to kill him by chasing and hitting his car with a lorry while he was on his way to the Warangal court from Hyderabad on Monday.

The lorry hit the car he was travelling in at Yeshwanthpur and dragged it for several metres before coming to a halt. The truck driver, who tried to escape, was caught by local villagers and bashed up.

Durga Prasad lodged a complaint in Jangaon police station and said the lorry driver claimed that the accident took place because of brake failure. "If that is true, how was his vehicle brought to the police station? I deal in land-related cases and I was to be present in a case related to a land issue in Warangal. A lawyer couple was murdered in Peddapalli last week and today I was attacked. We, lawyers, are unsafe and we may be compelled to leave our profession if such life-threatening circumstances remain," he said.

## STARTING TROUBLE FOR VANI WHILE FILING NOMINATION

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 22

Political newbie Surabhi Vani Devi, the TRS official nominee for the Hyderabad, Rangareddy and Mahabubnagar graduate constituency and daughter of late prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, ran into some starting problems while filing her nomination.

The Returning Officer (RO) objected to the nomination papers being submitted in the older format. Following this, Vani Devi spent some time at the chamber of the RO. Several TRS leaders complained of feeling claustrophobic while others scamped.

## KISHAN TO CENTRE: DECLARE RRR AS NH

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 22

A BJP delegation led by Union minister of state for home affairs G. Kishan Reddy met Union minister Nithin Gadkari in Delhi on Monday with a request to declare the Regional Ring Road (RRR) as a national highway.

Kishan Reddy said the RRR will boost development of Telangana. "There is already an outer ring road in Hyderabad. This ring road will benefit various districts. With RRR, it is possible to connect the Bangalore-Varanasi and Vijayawada-Mumbai national highways without touching Hyderabad. This saves time and fuel for passengers."

The RRR project is likely to pass through Tupran, Gajwel, Jagdevpur, Turkapally, Bhubaneswar, Pochampally, Chautaupalli, Sansthan Narayanpur, Yacharam, Kadthal, Shadnagar, Parigi, Pudur, Chevella and Shankarpally zones. This would stretch to a length of 354km.

The land acquisition would involve 12,000 acres.

## NON-DIVISION OF INTERMEDIATE BOARD ANGERS HC

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 22

Enraged over the six-and-half years delay in division and allocation of Intermediate Board employees between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, a division bench of Telangana High Court, comprising Justice M.S. Ramachandra Rao and Justice T. Vinod Kumar observed that the higher authorities, who have responsibility to look into such issues, are behaving like emotionless people.

The bench upbraided administrations of both States for impeding allocation of employees and division of properties and obligations. More than 100 organisations were listed in IX Schedule and most of them have been pending without any reason. This is affecting employees, who are at the crossroads and many of them are not getting their salaries, the bench said. "But, you (higher authorities) are enjoying getting timely salaries," slammed the bench, which reserved its judgment on the petition filed by Intermediate Board staff seeking a final allocation.

# TS targets \$100 bn in life sciences by 2030

KTR says city's position as vaccine capital of world bolstered by making Covid jabs at 18th edition of BioAsia

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 22

Minister for industries K.T. Rama Rao, while inaugurating the 18th edition of BioAsia here on Monday, said that the government of Telangana was aiming to grow the life sciences sector into a \$100 billion industry by 2030.

The life sciences sector in Telangana has attracted investments worth ₹3,700 crore in the last one year, with an employment potential for over 14,000 jobs, he said.

Rama Rao, addressing the gathering, said, "Our vision of growing the life sciences industry to over \$100 billion looks plausible and we remain committed to it. I would like to highlight that even after widespread health and economic distress caused by Covid-19 pandemic, players in the sector in Telangana have responded with resilience and registered tremendous growth during the year."

Referring to manufacturing of vaccines for Covid-19 in Hyderabad, Rama Rao said that Hyderabad's position as the "vaccine capital of the world was bolstered further".

"I take pride in saying that Hyderabad rose to the occasion and made an impact for the entire world to witness. It is a matter of pride that the world is looking to India and Hyderabad," he said.

"The visit of foreign envoys from over 60 countries, and of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Genome Valley in Hyderabad is a testimony to the cluster's significance in a global context," he said.

While lauding Bharat Biotech's contribution and commitment to develop India's first indigenous vaccine for Covid-19, he appreciated the efforts of Biological E and Indian Immunologicals.

Hetero Pharma and Dr Reddy's are also augmenting the global supply by manufacturing and distributing Russian vaccine Sputnik.

Further, Autrobindo Pharma is

● "I TAKE pride in saying that Hyderabad rose to the occasion and made an impact for the entire world to witness," K.T. Rama Rao said.

building a world-class vaccine manufacturing facility, with a capacity of about 450 million doses.

"All these highlight the position of Hyderabad. A significant part of the global population will be immunised with vaccines produced in Hyderabad," he said.

"A feather in our cap has been the approval of Umbralisib for cancer treatment. It is historic because this is the first drug ever discovered in India to be approved by the US-FDA (food and drugs administration). I am extremely proud that the discovery of Umbralisib is led from Incozen's facility in Genome Valley," Rama Rao said.

The Medical Devices Park in Hyderabad continues to be the destination-of-choice, where 40 companies are establishing their manufacturing and R&D facilities, he said.

Rama Rao emphasised, "on the pharma industry front, we remain committed to grounding the Hyderabad Pharma City project soon to support India's pharma industry regain its leadership position in APIs (active pharmaceutical ingredients) and KSMs (key starting materials), offering significant cost and value benefits."

The BioAsia inaugural saw the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the state government and Cytya to set up a Biopharma scale up facility, B-Hub, in the Genome Valley.

As eight out of 10 top selling drugs globally today are biopharmaceuticals, B-Hub will help Telangana and India in accelerating the growth of the biopharmaceutical sector. He added that he was confident that Telangana would emerge as the biopharmaceutical capital of India.



Minister K.T. Rama Rao shares a lighter moment with the chairman and MD of Bharat Biotech Krishna Ella and Suchitra Ella while giving the Genome Valley award to them for the Covid-19 vaccine at the inauguration of 18th edition BioAsia 2021 in Hyderabad. Satish Reddy of Dr Reddy's lab and Jayesh Ranjan, principal secretary of the Industries & Commerce (I&C) of Telangana, are also seen.

## Safety protocols priority for 2021

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 22

"We are nowhere close to herd immunity; and for the rest of 2021, safety protocols and vaccination must be a priority" stated Dr Soumya Swaminathan, deputy director general for programmes of World Health Organisation at the BioAsia 2021 event.

In a virtual conference with scientists, government officials and manufacturers of vaccines, it was noted that the different variants or mutations of SARS-Cov-2 virus remained a serious concern.

There is also a concern whether the vaccine will work against these new mutant strains. With the cases in Maharashtra and Kerala rising, there is again the fear of lockdowns and a nationwide spurt in infections.

"People are tired and worried because of the new strains. But it is important that they follow the safety protocols and also trust the vaccine.

### W.H.O. CLASSIFIES NEW VARIANTS

● WHO would soon release names of the new variants around the world. However, it does not want the names of the countries to be identified with the variant. The stigma towards countries as in the UK, South Africa and Brazil variants is "not appropriate," it has said.

● Hence these virulent variants will be given a formal name.

● Scientists hope that whatever name WHO proposes, the peoples across the world will be able to pronounce it properly.

● Virologists stated that the virus is mutating as it is also under pressure to survive. While humans are using medicines and other means to kill the virus, it is coming out in a different form by way of a survival mechanism. For this reason, there will be many more variants.

● WHO is now classifying the variant of concern and variant of interest. These classifications will make tracking and tracing easy by sharing data about the different mutations. It is also expected to help in evaluating the efficacy of the vaccine.

● Will the vaccine be able to protect against the new variant? Only time will tell.

Vaccines are safe and the hesitancy must go. WHO is communicating to people about the safety of vaccines. If we have to fight the new strains,

there is the need for us to trust science and move forward," Swaminathan said.

At present, 10 major institutes in India are car-

rying out genome sequencing. "So far, only the samples from international travellers were collected. Now samples from the new clusters in Maharashtra and Kerala are also being collected," explained Dr Nivideta Gupta, senior scientist at Indian Council of Medical Research.

New variants of the virus posed a challenge as they will not make the medicines and therapeutics work. Some of them are emerging stronger as they were being suppressed by medicines. Initial data is also showing specific mutations in clusters, leading to a viral escape from the body.

While all variants are not virulent, those in this category need to be isolated, say scientists.

There are 10 vaccines already. While India has approved two vaccines for emergency use authorizations, there are others in the pipeline. More vaccines would be approved for emergency use to ensure that there is maximum protection to people.

## Bizman held for cheating firm of ₹4.43cr

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 22

A businessman from Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu was arrested by the Hyderabad CCS police for cheating a firm to the tune of ₹4.43 crore.

The accused was identified as R. Ramesh Babu, said the CCS police. The arrest was made following a complaint from Daniel Solomon, who is a partner in Arpitha Diagnostics at Habsiguda, wherein he stated that as per the requirements of medical

equipment, Dr Arpitha, the other partner, approached Astler Medics, represented by its business manager Ramesh Babu to supply GE 1.5 Tesla Supercon MRI equipment. "Babu agreed to supply the said equipment with purchase order/quotation and the total amount for the purchase was to the tune of ₹4.43,10,000, which was paid by the victim's firm through its banker i.e. Bank of Maharashtra, SD Road, to the account of Astler Medics. The victim firm paid the said amount

by availing loan from Bank of Maharashtra. But Babu failed to supply the said equipment with malafide and dishonest intention to cheat the complainant firm and caused huge loss," said the police, adding that the accused is reportedly absconding since registration of the FIR.

The enquiries revealed that he has also taken about ₹10 lakhs from one Bala Murugan of Krishnagiri, SD Road, to the account of Astler Medics. The victim firm paid the said amount

On receipt of credible information about movements of the accused in Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu, a special team from CCS is deputed to apprehend him.

"However, by the time the team reached there, the accused anticipating his arrest moved place to place Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Selam, Thanjavur, Trichy of Tamil Nadu. The police then tracked him and arrested him with the assistance of local police in Chennai and brought him to Hyderabad," added the police.

## Revanth urges Vani to withdraw

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 22

The TRS party fielded S. Vani Devi, educationist and daughter of former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, only to tarnish the image of the Pamulaparthy family, Congress MP A. Revanth Reddy said on Monday.

Reddy said that if Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao had any love or respect for the family of late P.V. Narasimha Rao, he should nominate her under either the

Governor's quota or send her to Rajya Sabha.

He questioned why Chandrashekar Rao offered her an MLC seat in which she would certainly be defeated. Rao had on Sunday announced former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's daughter Vani Devi was the official TRS candidate for the Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy and Mahabubnagar graduates MLC poll.

Revanth Reddy reminded that it was the Congress party

## 90 file papers so far

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 22

As many as 90 persons have so far filed their nominations for contesting from the Mahabubnagar-Rangareddy-Hyderabad MLC Graduate constituency. Nominations will be accepted till Tuesday. While Congress candidate G.

Chinna Reddy has already filed his fourth set of nomination papers at Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) headquarters, BJP nominee N. Ramchan der Rao and TRS candidate S. Vani Devi, daughter of former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, filed their nominations on Monday.

From Page 1

Inquiries by *Deccan Chronicle* revealed that the State Wakf Board has been claiming ownership of the land for a long time. Some individuals have also approached the local revenue authorities for issuance of 'Ownership Right Certificate (ORC)', treating the property as inam land. Mr G. Kamalakara, as an MLA, made a representation to the district authorities for issue of the ORC.

While the Revenue Divisional Officer rejected the plea for an ORC, the joint collector allowed the same in favour of individuals. Subsequently, and thus, Kamalakara became the owner of the property. The State Bank of India disbursed a loan of ₹95 lakh, after obtaining a mortgage of 15 acres through a registered mortgage deed (9115/2014). The property was released from mortgage (8027/2019) after the loan was repaid. "As the Wakf Board has a

strong case to prove its ownership, it has been advised to approach the court against the joint collector's order," a senior revenue official told this correspondent. But, it did not act against the joint collector's order; the official added.

Meanwhile, the government, while switching over to Dharani portal, changed the registration process, and the property over which the minister was claiming ownership, got included into the pro-

hibitory register, by virtue of its mention in a Wakf Gazette.

The minister also brought to the notice of the Court the inaction of the Wakf Board in taking steps to de-notify land from the list of Wakf properties in the Gazette notification, based on the report of the district collector in letter no F1/4675/2016 dated May 8, 2020.

The TRS minister even accused the KCR-led government of "violating Article 14 of the Indian

Constitution".

When contacted, the minister said about 70 acres in the village were owned by small and marginal farmers since 1953, as per local revenue records. But the Wakf Board has included the survey number in the list of properties owned by it, he said. Farmers have been agitating against Wakf the Board for a long time. After I purchased the land in 2008, I have also been petitioning the government, he said.

## Think, vote for BJP MLC, says Bandi

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 22

BJP state president and MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar has urged intellectuals to think and vote for BJP candidate G. Premender Reddy in the forthcoming MLC polls.

Speaking to media on occasion of Premender Reddy filing his nomination papers in Nalgonda, the state BJP chief accused Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao of having an adamant mentality that suppressed the voice of people.

He said only BJP has the guts to face KCR and capture the state, so that it can be taken on the path of development. He said though KCR became CM after thousands of students sacrificed their lives, he is now neglecting all communities. The Chief Minister has cheated people with his unfair promises, Sanjay stated.

Asking graduates to vote for BJP, he warned them against choosing TRS candidate Palla Rajeswar Reddy. Rajeswar, if elected, will spend all his time at Chief Minister's farmhouse ser-

## FASTER ROLLOUT DUE TO REMOVAL OF 'DEAD SPACES' IN VAX DEVELOPMENT

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 22

One of the outcomes of the race against time to develop vaccines for Covid-19, has been the realisation that there was a lot of "dead space" between various stages of vaccine development. And eliminating these dead spaces cut down the time taken to get a vaccine from the lab to the people much faster than the time taken in pre-Covid-19 pandemic days.

Explaining this process, Dr Peter Marks, director of the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research at the US Food and Drug Administration, taking out the time periods between the different phases of vaccine development and making the process seamless with respect to conduct of trials, has helped in faster arrival of the vaccines into the market.

Delivering the keynote address online at the BioAsia 2021 on Monday, Dr Marks said vaccine manufacturers too were willing to scale up production in anticipation of being successful. This was an acceptable risk for them in a pandemic condition, he said.

The emergency use authorisations, however, were based on sound knowledge generated from well designed and well conducted clinical trials. The authorisations, he said, were issued without compromising on vaccine safety, and not requiring large scale clinical outcome studies and by adopting a transparent process to increase confidence in the vaccines.

To a question on India's role in vaccine distribution globally, Dr Marks said the US needs to export Covid-19 vaccines as much as possible and India too needs to produce as much as it can to help the rest of the countries. "The two countries should use our mutual pharmaceutical manufacturing capacities to bring an end to this pandemic," he said.

## HEALTH WORKERS GET SECOND DOSE OF COVID VACCINE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 22

Some 83.4 per cent of the government healthcare workers received a second dose of Covid 19 vaccine on Monday. As many as 18,777 healthcare workers were vaccinated against the targeted 22,502.

Health officials said the total number of health workers who received the second dose of the vaccine in the state were 1,11,409.

● IN HYDERABAD, MLC and contesting candidate N. Ramchander Rao filed his nomination at the GHMC office. He was accompanied by union minister G. Kishan Reddy and senior party leader P. Muralidhar Rao.

ving the CM. However, if BJP wins, it will fight for justice to people and issue of employment notifications for providing jobs to unemployed.

In Hyderabad, MLC and contesting candidate N. Ramchander Rao filed his nomination at the GHMC office. He was accompanied by union minister G. Kishan Reddy and senior party leader P. Muralidhar Rao.

Kishan Reddy said Ramchander Rao is a people's candidate and will work for people every minute. He recalled that Ramchander Rao had won the seat even during the TRS wave. He will again get elected, as there is an anti-incumbency party, the union minister stated.



## OTHER STORIES

## SUSPECTING HER FIDELITY, MAN KILLS WIFE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
JAGTIAL, FEB. 22

A 42-year-old woman was allegedly axed to death by her drunk husband, suspecting her fidelity, in Cherlapally village of Velgatoor mandal of Jagtial district on Monday.

Shankaraiah surrendered to police after killing his wife Ashanaveni Sujatha (42).

According to the Velgatoor ASI, Praveen Kumar, 16 years back, Sujatha, resident of the Ambaripet village got married to Shankaraiah, resident of the Cherlapally village. It is the second marriage to Shankaraiah. After divorcing his first wife, he married Sujatha. They had two small children Abhiram and Ajay.

In search of employment, Shankaraiah went to Mumbai and became addicted to alcohol. Sujathacworking as a farm labourer was nourishing her two children.

A week ago, Shankaraiah came from Mumbai and from then onwards, he started quarreling with Sujatha suspecting her fidelity. On Sunday night, when drunk Shankaraiah started arguing with Sujatha, she left home in fear and stayed at her relatives house.

On Monday morning when Sujatha returned home, Shankaraiah who was in a drunken statw attacked her with an axe and killed her brutally and later went to the police station to surrender himself.

With the complaint filed by Sujatha's brother, police registered the case against Shankaraiah and started n investigation.

## NO COVID VIRUS CHECKING SYSTEM AT TS BORDER

DC CORRESPONDENT  
PATANBORI (MAHARASHTRA),  
FEB. 22

There is no system in Telangana to monitor the people coming into Adilabad from bordering Maharashtra.

The Adilabad district medical and health has not yet set up any 'checking system' on the state borders to keep a watch on the Covid-19 positive patients coming into Adilabad from bordering Maharashtra.

There was abnormal increase in the covid positive cases in the Yavathmal district which is sharing borders with the Adilabad. Maharastra government reportedly imposed lockdown in the Yavathmal and other surrounding districts following the rise in the covid positive cases.

Chennawar Bapurao of bordering village Pimpalkuti of Maharashtra said there were no positive cases in their village but covid positive cases were reported in Yavathmal district.

He said that police are insisting on wearing masks in Patan-Bhori and Pandharkawda towns.

Fisherman Vaman of Bori village of Maharashtra said people were engaging in their day today activities in the rural areas without worrying about the Covid-19 virus but situation is different in the towns.

● **ADILABAD DISTRICT** medical and health has not yet set up any 'checking system' on the state borders to keep a watch on the Covid-19 positive patients coming into Adilabad from bordering Maharashtra.

## Poor facilities at Rims, patients face problems

Pregnant woman, elderly patients are the worst sufferers

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, FEB.22

Many pregnant women going to the Rajig Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences for treatment are experiencing 'labour pain' months before their delivery time. Reason is they have to climb many steps to reach the second and third floors or operation theatres.

All the four lifts are not functional for the past one year, and there was no effort put to repair them. The pregnant woman and elderly patients are the worst sufferers. Pregnant women climb steps to reach their wards located on the second and third floors.

So much untoward is happening at RIMS. Surprisingly, three patients undergoing treatment there had 'accidentally' fallen down from the third floor and died in a span of the last four months. Simply, such incidents demonstrate the poor state of functioning of this premier healthcare facility.

There is no special psychiatry ward for psychia-



In patient blokk in RIMS

try patients at RIMS. Even the patients suffering from cardiac-related problems are forced to climb the steps to reach the wards for treatment.

Though the maternity ward is on the ground floor, pregnant women suffering from anemia get admitted to the women medical wards on the third floor. They have to climb steps.

Patients complain that there is also a huge shortage of emergency medicines and that the hospital is asking them to buy these from outside. The shortage of emergency medicines is resulting in

deaths of patients.

Surgical operations on patients are badly hit due to lack of anesthesia doctors. Many of them have quit their posts and some went on long leave, citing the poor working conditions.

About the three deaths, there are those who suspect these were not accidental deaths. These patients were hugely suffering due to lack of proper treatment at the hospital, and they might have been driven to desperation.

Clearly, there is no proper supervision of the hospital administration from

● **THREE PATIENTS** undergoing treatment there had 'accidentally' fallen down from the third floor and died in a span of the last four months.

the government and district administration side. Attendants are often shifting patients to local private hospitals. This is on the ground that patients are not getting proper treatment at RIMS. Patients in critical conditions requiring emergency medicines do not often get them.

Some security guards and hospital staff of RIMS are said to be having an unholy nexus with local private hospital managements. They advise patients to leave RIMS and go to these hospitals.

Local resident Mahesh of Talamadugu said it is unfortunate the lifts are not working in RIMS and that this is affecting pregnant women as also elderly patients. He said it is high time the state government restored the facilities for patients at RIMS.

## Sports meet



Players of Rural and Urban teams play Kabaddi in Police Sports and games meet in Karimnagar on Monady. —DC

## Sriramanavami at Bhadradri to be low-key this year too

DC CORRESPONDENT  
BHADRACHALAM, FEB. 22

The state government is planning to make the wedding ceremony of Lord Ramachandra Murthy and Goddess Sita a low key affair like the previous year due to reports of resurgent Covid-19 cases in various parts of the country, including Telangana.

District collector M.V. Reddy presided over a meeting on Monday said arrangements to be made for the Sriramanavami on April 21. Officials present at the meeting were doubtful about organising the Kalyanam at the Mithila Stadium given the prevailing situation. However, the temple administration has written a letter to endowments commissioner for

● **DISTRICT COLLECTOR M.V. Reddy** presided over a meeting on Monday said arrangements to be made for the Sriramanavami on April 21.

● **IT IS anticipated** that the government may not give permission to organise the divine wedding in Mithila Stadium in light of increasing instances of Covid-19 in Peddapalli and Karimnagar districts.

a clarification. It is anticipated that the government may not give permission to organise the divine wedding in Mithila Stadium in light of increasing instances of Covid-19 in Peddapalli and Karimnagar districts.

"However, we are yet to get a reply," temple executive officer T. Sivaji said. Sources said the collector, has asked officials to be ready for making all arrangements for the Kalyanam, with welcome arches, first aid centres,

prasadam distribution points and drinking water facilities for devotees.

N. Siddhartha, resident of Bhadrachalam, said, "People, particularly devotees from East and West Godavari districts, are eager to attend the wedding, as last year they missed it because it was organised indoors. So there may be considerable crowds.

It may then become difficult to follow Covid-19 guidelines," he remarked.

## Won't spare those involved in advocate couple's murder: IG Manthani bar assn to boycott court duties

DC CORRESPONDENT  
PEDDAPALLI, FEB. 22

Whoever was involved either directly or indirectly in the murder case of the High Court advocate couple Gattu Vaman Rao and P.V. Nagamani will not be spared, informed the North zone Inspector General of Police, Nagi Reddy in a statement released on Monday.

Nagi Reddy stated that with the investigation done from the past four days several facts were collected by the police from the accused four members Kunta Srinivas, Shivandula Chiranjeevi, Akkapaka Kumar and Bittu Srinu alias Tulasigari Srinu.

Disclosing the facts, Nagi Reddy said that there have been disputes between the families of Bittu Srinu and Vaman Rao for the past five years (2016) onwards. Vaman Rao insulted Bittu Srinu on several occasions by posting on various social media platforms alleging that Srinu is involved in illegal activities in the name of trust which was established by him.

Vaman Rao even targeted Kunta Srinivas who also belongs to the same Gunjapadugu village. By filing cases against Kunta Srinivas, Vaman Rao did not allow Srinivas to construct his house and also Peddamma Thalli temple which belongs to the caste of Kunta Srinivas.

Even Kunta Srinivas also targeting Vaman Rao with the support of villagers removed Vaman Rao's brother from temple committee chairman post of Ramaswamy Gopalaswamy temple situated in Gunjapadugu village and made Veldi Vasanth Rao as chairman to counter him and show his supremacy in the village. Bittu Srinu and Kunta Srinivas were close friends and used to share their all the incidents that happened to them. Chiranjeevi was also used to accompany them regularly in all the works.

About ten months back, Kunta Srinivas decided to murder Vamana Rao and sought help from Bittu Srinu who in turn agreed

DC CORRESPONDENT  
PEDDAPALLI, FEB. 22

With the petition filed by the police officials of the Ramagundam Police Commissionerate in the Manthani court on Monday urging to hand over custody of two more suspects, the investigation in the murder case of High Court advocate couple Gattu Vaman Rao and P.V. Nagamani which created a sensation in the state was speeded up here in Peddapalli district.

The police arrested Kunta Srinivas, Shivandula Chiranjeevi and Akkapaka Kumar who are prime suspects of the murder case on Thursday, February 18 and later Bittu Srinu who arranged weapons and cars on Friday, February 19. They even reconstructed the crime scene by taking all the four accused to the crime spot on Friday night. Since the judge of Manthani court was unavailable on Monday, the remand petition filed by the police was pending.

Meanwhile, the members to help him along with Chiranjeevi. He even prepared weapons and kept them ready at the house of Chiranjeevi. Four months back they even tried but the attempt failed as Vaman Rao was not available alone.

All three who were waiting for the time came to know about the arrival of Vaman Rao and with the perfect plan executed it on February 17 at Kalvacherla village of Ramagiri mandal.

Nagi Reddy said that the police seized the two wheeler and a mobile phone used by Chiranjeevi and continued further comprehensive investigation. There is a need to examine all the evidence with a scientific approach by inquiring some more witnesses.

of the Manthani BAR association on Monday announced that they are going to boycott court until March 1 and decided to issue legal notices to the Commissioner of Police, V. Satyanarayana for the comments that "Legal factionism is going on in Manthani" made by him. They even wrote a letter to the High Court appealing to issue notices for handling over the advocate couple murder case to the CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) and requested BAR associations of other regions not take up the case in support to the culprits.

However, top cop Satyanarayana explained in a statement the comments made by him in which context. He stated that under the Manthani police station limits some people having personal grudge upon one another and to prove supremacy in politics are filing petitions against each other and are continuing legal battle for years along with bringing bad name to police department.

The Ramagundam police, under the special investigation officer Additional DCP (admin) Ashok Kumar and supervision of IPS Pramode Kumar (Incharge of DIG Karimnagar Range, are collecting some more evidences and are also taking the help of experts of Forensic Science lab, Hyderabad and Cyber Crime investigators before coming to final conclusion of murder case of advocate couple.

He appealed to the people who are at crime spot when the murder took place in Kalvacherla village to come forward for conveying the information about what they had seen and hand over videos they had taken. He assured them that the names of the persons will be kept secret.

## TD PROTEST AGAINST HIKE IN FUEL PRICES

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NIZAMABAD, FEB. 22

Telugu Desam Party leaders observed Deeksha here at district collector's office on Monday in protest against steep increase in fuel and LPG prices. Party leaders from across the district took part in the day long deeksha. Speaking at the deeksha shivir, TDP leaders said that hike in petrol and diesel prices adversely affected the people. ₹175

increased on LPG cylinder and subsidy withdrawn, they said. BJP and TRS governments adopted anti people policies, they criticised.

TD leaders demanded immediate rollback of fuel prices and rescued the people. TDP Nizamabad Parliamentary constituency incharge Degam Yada Goud, party senior leaders K. Vinod Kumar, R. Suresh, Koyadi Narsimloo, M.Rajasekhar and others were present.

## LORRY RUNS OVER COUPLE IN ALWAL

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD FEB. 23

A couple was killed on the spot when a speeding tipper lorry ran them over at Alwal in Hyderabad on late Sunday night. The deceased, identified as Numal Bansari, 40, a chef

at a small fast food joint, and Meena Devi Bandari, 35, said the police.

"As usual, the couple was heading home after work on foot at around 11.45 pm when they met with the accident near Shivalayam," said the police.

## CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH

I. SHAKEEL ANWAR S/o. GULAM MOHIUDDIN, age: 54 yrs, Address: H.No. 6-1-18, AshokNagar, Karimnagar, T.S. My correct date of birth is 03-02-1967. My incorrect date of birth is 03-02-1962. Bond S. No. 1580/30-6-2020. Attested by Adtl. Secretary General C.No. 3054/25-07-2020.

## IN MEMORIUM



**Smt. DORIS PATRICIA SMITH**  
"A capable wife who can find She is far more precious than Jewels. Many women have done exceedingly well But you surpass them all".  
—  
Fondly remembered by  
**G. Sekaran & Christopher & Allan**

(S/2021/D01190)

## TRS focused on membership drive

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, FEB. 22

Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) is covering everyone under the membership drive going on in the Adilabad district.

The TRS leaders are enrolling the roadside vendors and people who do petty businesses on footpaths and cell phone repairers, Hamalees and building construction labourers, pushcart labourers and Anganwadis and many other groups with lower income levels.

The TRS leaders, led by Adilabad MLA Jogu Ramanna are focusing on more enrolment of the people into the party and covering various sections of people and professions.

Jogu Ramanna told Deccan Chronicle that they have covered car drivers,

people in tailoring, clothes stores and people who do business on footpaths, roadside vendors.

He said that TRS is representing all the sections irrespective of caste, creed and religion and profession and it is a political platform to all. However, it is observed that some members and leaders of the frontal organisation of the Left parties who had joined the TRS, are playing a role in luring activists of the left parties into TRS now.

This trend was visible in the membership enrollment into TRS with their presence at the enrolment drive event.

It is also observed that TRS leaders are also focusing on the enrolment of the Muslim minorities in large numbers into the TRS.

## COVID | IMPACT

Income sources of various groups affected with pandemic

## Prices of essential items go up

NARENDER PULLOOR | DC  
NIZAMABAD, FEB. 22

People are worrying over the skyrocketing prices of essential commodities for the last few months. In the backdrop of Covid-19 pandemic, income sources of various groups decreased, but essential commodities prices abnormally increased. There is no mechanism to control the prices in the market, which adversely affected the middle and lower middle-class families.

Compared to last February, essential commodities prices have been increased from 20 to 45 per cent extra. Private employees, tiny businessmen and workers have been facing difficult situations in their day-to-day life. Income source of the majority of people is adversely affect-

● **ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES** prices have been increased from 20 to 45 per cent extra. Private employees, tiny businessmen and workers have been facing difficult situations in their day-to-day life. Income source of the majority of people is adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

ed by the Covid-19 pandemic. A few businesses incur heavy losses and shutters were closed.

Private employees like teachers and others had lost their employment due to Covid-19 pandemic. Cuttings in wages and non-payment of salaries also affected few persons. In this context, prices of essential commodities

abnormally increased. People are unable to purchase basic needs due to high prices.

For instance, red dal price jumped from ₹80 kg to ₹110. On the same lines, ginger, garlic prices touched new highs of ₹50 and ₹140 per kg from ₹35 and ₹80. Palm oil and groundnut oil prices per litre increased from ₹65 and ₹130 to Rs 110 and ₹160 respectively. Groundnuts price has increased ₹130 per kg, its price in last year was ₹85 only. Shockingly, onion prices stand at Rs 45 per kg.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, P. Anjaneya Reddy, a private employee said that they are facing a difficult situation with skyrocketing prices. There is no check up officials on prices of essential commodities, he criti-

cised.

Kg mutton price is reached from ₹480 kg to ₹650 kg, he said. Central and state governments should keep vigil on prices of essential commodities and rescue the lower income group families, he said.

However, traders increased the prices of essential commodities on the pretext of shortage. They justified themselves that there is a huge gap between demand and supply of essential commodities.

"We were forced to increase the prices as we cannot cater to the demand of people as supply is low", a trader said and agreed that few errant traders are minting money exploiting the people during the pandemic period.

## CLASSIFIEDS

## EDUCATIONAL

## DISTANCE EDUCATION

✓ **CONTACT FOR NCTE**  
Recognised: B.Ed./M.Ed.  
No Advance Fee. Only For Educational Consultants.  
Students Please no call, Contact regarding any Educational Problem/ Guidance. Shiksha Bharti, Varanasi. Email: shikshabharti88@yahoo.com  
Mob: 9519759663, 9915103781.  
(HYMM/2021/C07364)

## EDUCATIONAL

✓ **E**XAMS 2021, Join Direct SSC/ Inter, B.A., B.Com, B.Ed., B.Sc., BCA, B.Tech., M.A., M.Com, M.Sc., MBA, MCA Diploma Polytechnic. ANM/GNM/ DPT/BPT/ DMLT/BMLT/ X-Ray Technician/ Dental Technician/ MPH/Ph.D. WES/ IQAS-Applying. "Certificate Attestations For All Countries Possible". Ph: 7981597599/ 7981598278. "Limra Institutions." (HYMM/2021/C07363)

## NOTICE

Readers are advised to make appropriate enquiries while responding to advertisements in these columns. Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. does not vouch for any claims made by the Advertisers. The Printer, Publisher, Editor and Owner of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. shall not be held responsible / liable for any consequences, in case such claims are found to be false.

**Deccan Chronicle**  
**BOOK YOUR CLASSIFIED / DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENTS at**  
EDITION CENTRE :  
**KARIMNAGAR**  
H.No. 1-21/12/1, Cherlabhathkur Road, Mugdumpur Village, Karimnagar - 505 106  
**9000650508**  
e-mail: krmadvt@deccanmail.com  
**9121183123**







SHORT TAKES

OFFICER SHOT AT  
McDees, KIDNAP  
SUSPECT DIES

**Lonoke (US), Feb. 22:** An Arkansas police officer was hospitalised in stable condition after being shot during a confrontation at a McDonald's restaurant with a man who was kidnapping a 14-year-old North Carolina girl.

The suspect died from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound on Sunday after fleeing from authorities, according to the Arkansas State Police. The girl was found safe.

Two Lonoke, Arkansas, police officers confronted the driver of an SUV parked at the fast-food restaurant Saturday night after the vehicle was connected to a North Carolina child abduction case. Lonoke is located about 27 miles east of Little Rock.

EVACUATION  
AMID FLOODS IN  
INDONESIA

**Bekasi (Indonesia), Feb. 22:** Thousands of residents are being evacuated on the outskirts of Indonesia's capital amid flooding after the Citarum River embankment broke.

Bekasi district in Indonesia's West Java province have experienced flooding since Saturday because of heavy rain. "Some embankments are broken, not only from the river embankment but also from the irrigation embankments," Public Works and Housing Minister Basuki Hadimuljono said Monday. Raditya Jati, spokesperson for the National Disaster Mitigation Agency, said that more than 28,000 residents in four villages in Bekasi district and 34 villages in Karawang district are affected.

CHILD SEX ABUSE  
TRIAL OF EX-U.S.  
PRIEST PUT OFF

**Oecusse (East Timor), Feb. 22:** East Timor abruptly postponed the trial on Monday of a defrocked American priest facing allegations he sexually abused young girls at a children's shelter he ran in a remote enclave in East Timor — one of the most Catholic places on Earth. Soon after Richard Daschbach, a former missionary from Pennsylvania, arrived in the courtroom, judges said they needed more time to make revisions to documents and asked the 84-year-old defendant to return on Tuesday.

The former priest is charged with 14 counts of sexual abuse of children under the age of 14, as well as counts of child pornography and domestic violence, according to the country's Prosecutor General.

INMATE ATTACK  
KILLS 1 GUARD  
IN INDIANA

**Michigan City, Feb. 22:** One correction officer is dead and a second is seriously injured after an alleged attack Sunday by a prison inmate, Indiana State Police said.

The attack occurred at Indiana State Prison in Michigan City around 2:40 pm, the agency said in a news release. Tymetri Campbell, 38, faces several preliminary charges including murder, the state police said.

Officials said the officers were attacked in a common area.

The officers were transported to St. Anthony's Hospital in Michigan City, where one was pronounced dead and the second was listed in serious condition. They were not immediately identified.

NZ VOLUNTEERS  
TRY TO RESCUE  
40 WHALES

**Wellington, Feb. 22:** Volunteers in New Zealand were trying to save 40 stranded whales Monday evening by refloating them on the high tide. Nine more whales had already died.

The pod of 49 long-finned pilot whales beached themselves on Farewell Spit, a remote beach on the South Island, the Department of Conservation reported. The whales were first noticed by a tour operator on Monday morning, the department said. About 65 conservation rangers and volunteers worked throughout the day to help the whales by keeping them cool and wet until the water was deep enough to refloat them.

The nonprofit whale rescue group Project Jonah was helping coordinate efforts. Farewell Spit has been the site of previous mass strandings.

Angry youth rattle Spain in  
support of jailed rap artist

Demand roll back of Public Security Law passed by the previous admin

**Barcelona, Feb. 22:** The imprisonment of a rap artist for his music praising terrorist violence and insulting the Spanish monarchy has set off a powder keg of pent-up rage this week in the southern European country. The arrest of Pablo Hasél has brought thousands to the streets for different reasons. Under the banner of freedom of expression, many Spaniards strongly object to putting an artist behind bars for his lyrics and tweets. They are clamoring for Spain's left-wing government to fulfil its promise and roll back the Public Security Law passed by the previous conservative administration that was used to prosecute Hasél and other artists.

Hasél's imprisonment to serve a nine-month sentence on Tuesday has also tapped into a well of frustration among Spain's youths, who have the highest unemployment rate in the European Union. Four in every 10 eligible workers under 25 years old are without a job. "I think that what we are experiencing now with the cases of Pablo Hasél (...) and other rappers politically detained by this regime is a brutal attack against the freedom of speech," 26-year-old student Pablo Castilla said during a protest in Barcelona. "The protests are being brutally repressed by the allegedly progressive national government and the Catalan government. "They are attacking us youngsters because we



A man throws a road sign against police officers protecting a national police station during clashes following a protest condemning the arrest of rap singer Pablo Hasél in Barcelona, on Sunday.

are showing our anger." For many, Hasél's case also represents what they perceive as a heavy-handed reaction by a state whose very structure is in need of deep reform. Hasél's lyrics that strike at King Felipe VI and his father, King Emeritus Juan Carlos I, have connected with a growing public debate on the future of Spain's parliamentary monarchy. Unquestioned outside fr

inge circles of the Left until the past decade, the royal house has been plagued by financial scandal that has reached Juan Carlos himself. Many Spaniards were agast when the former monarch left Spain for the United Arab Emirates amid a court investigation into his alleged fiscal improprieties. As well as shouting its support for Hasél, a crowd that gathered in Madrid on Saturday

chanted "Where is the change? Where is the progress?" and "Juan Carlos de Borbón, womaniser and thief." The debate has caused tensions inside Spain's left-wing coalition government.

While Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and his Socialist Party back the parliamentary monarchy Spain has had since the end of Francisco Franco's dictatorship in the 1970s,

their minor partner, the upstart United We Can party, wants to get rid of the monarchy and has supported this week's protests for Hasél despite their violent turn.

The anti-monarchic streak in the protests cuts across Spain. But in Hasél's home region of Catalonia, an already tense political climate appears to be magnifying the uproar.

Italian envoy  
killed in DR  
Congo attack

**Kinshasa, Feb. 22:** The Italian ambassador to Congo, an Italian carabinieri police officer and their Congolese driver were killed Monday in an attack on a UN convoy in an area that is home to myriad rebel groups, the Foreign Ministry and local people said. The ambush occurred as the convoy was travelling from Goma, Congo's eastern regional capital, to visit a World Food Programme school feeding project in Rutshuru, the UN agency said in a statement. WFP said it was seeking information from local authorities, as the ambush occurred on a road that had previously been cleared for travel without security escorts.

Luca Attanasio, Italy's ambassador to the country since 2017, carabinieri officer Vittorio Iacovacci and their driver were killed. Other members of the convoy were injured, WFP said. The attack occurred in the territory of Nyiragongo, in North Kivu, the same area, known as the "three antennas," where two Britons were kidnapped by unidentified armed men in 2018, said Mambo Kaway, president of a local civil society group. "There were five people aboard the vehicle, including the Italian ambassador," Kaway said.

"The driver died after being shot with several bullets, and others were wounded," he said. "The situation is very tense," he added. The wounded were taken to a nearby UN hospital. The North Kivu governor, Carly Nzanu Kasivita, said that the vehicles were taken hostage and escorted into the bush and that when local people saw them, they alerted the authorities. The Congolese army and park guards for Virunga National Park came to the rescue, he said.

"There was an exchange of fire. The attackers fired at the bodyguard and the ambassador," the governor said, adding that the ambassador later died from his wounds. Attanasio, a 43-year-old career diplomat, leaves a wife and three young children. The attack, a few kilometres north of the regional capital of Goma, was just next to the Virunga National Park. Last month gunmen shot and killed at least six rangers in the Rutshuru area of the park.

Marie Tumba Nzenza, Minister of Foreign Affairs, sent her condolences and promised the Italian government that the Congolese government would do all it could to investigate and find out who is behind the killings. — AP

Stop smearing CPC, halt support  
to separatist forces: China tells US

**Beijing, Feb. 22:** China on Monday urged the US to stop "smearing" the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) and it's one-party political system, lift sanctions on trade and halt Washington's backing of "separatist forces in Taiwan, Tibet, Hong Kong and Xinjiang."

In his annual speech at the Lanting Forum, focusing on China-US ties, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the Biden administration should adjust the headline policy pursued by former President Donald Trump towards Beijing to check its growing influence.

We have no intention to challenge or replace the United States. We are ready to have peaceful coexistence and seek common development with the United States, Wang said.

Likewise, we hope the United States will respect

● **CHINA ON Monday** expressed its support for India in hosting this year's BRICS summit and said it will work with New Delhi to strengthen the cooperation among the five-member grouping of emerging economies.

● **India has assumed the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) Chairmanship for 2021 and is set to hold this year's summit.**

● **On February 19, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar launched India's BRICS 2021 website at the BRICS Secretariat at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan in New Delhi.**

China's core interests, national dignity, and rights to development. We urge the United States to stop smearing the CPC and China's political system, stop coniving at or even supporting the erroneous words and actions of separatist forces for 'Taiwan independence', and stop undermining China's sovereignty and security on internal affairs concerning Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Tibet, he said.

We hope that the US side will adjust its policies as

soon as possible, among others, remove unreasonable tariffs on Chinese goods, lift its unilateral sanctions on Chinese companies and research and educational institutes, and abandon irrational suppression of China, he said.

The relations between China and the US are at an all time low. The two countries are currently engaged in a bitter confrontation over various issues, including trade, the origins of the novel Coronavirus pandemic, the communist

Ground 777s with  
engines that blew  
apart, says Boeing

**Chicago, Feb. 22:** Boeing has recommended that airlines ground all of its 777s with the type of engine that suffered a catastrophic failure over Denver this weekend, as US regulators ordered United Airlines to step up inspections of those aircraft. United said Sunday it is temporarily removing the aircraft from service, a day after one of its planes made an emergency landing at Denver International Airport because its right engine blew apart just after takeoff.

Pieces of the casing of the engine, a Pratt and Whitney PW4000, rained down on suburban neighbourhoods. None of the 231 passengers or 10 crew on board was reported hurt, and the plane landed safely, authorities said. US Federal Aviation Administration Administrator Steve Dickson said in a statement Sunday that based on an initial review of safety data, inspectors "concluded that the inspection interval should be stepped up for the hollow fan blades that are unique to this model of engine, used solely on Boeing 777 airplanes."

The statement said that would likely mean some planes would be grounded — and Boeing said they should be until the FAA sets an inspection regime. Japan, meanwhile, also ordered the planes out of service, according to the financial newspaper Nikkei, while saying that an engine in the same family suffered trouble in December.

NIGERIAN PLANE  
CRASHES, 7 DEAD

**Lagos, Feb. 21:** A military plane crashed in Nigeria on Sunday, killing all seven people on board, said officials. The King Air 350 plane had just taken off from the airport in Abuja, Nigeria's capital, when it reported engine failure and tried to return, said Ibikunle Daramola, a spokesman for the Nigerian Air Force in a tweet.

"First responders are at the scene. Sadly, all 7 personnel on board died in the crash," he said. Hadi Sirika, the minister of aviation, also tweeted that the crash "appears to be fatal," and urged calm as an investigation by the military is carried out.

The plane was headed to Minna city, approximately 100 kilometres (62 miles) northwest of Abuja.

"Everybody there was screaming full of disbelief," Olugbenga Alaade, a government employee who saw the crash, told The Associated Press by phone.

Boeing said there were 69 777s with the Pratt and Whitney 4000-112 engines in service and another 59 in storage. United is the only U.S. airline with the engine in its fleet, according to the FAA, and it had 24 of the planes in service.



**Jeremy Winningham** cleans snow from the windshield as his daughter Courtney drives at Rice Lake, Wisconsin on Saturday.

U.S. HOSPITALS  
GRAPPLE WITH  
WATER CRUNCH

**Houston, Feb. 22:** Hospitals across the South grappled with water shortages as the region carried on with recovery efforts in the wake of a devastating winter storm, and the weather offered a balmy respite — temperatures as high as the mid-60s.

At the height of the storm on Sunday, hospitals were left scrambling to care for patients amid record cold, snow and ice that battered parts of the country more accustomed to going through winter with light jackets and short sleeves.

The icy blast ruptured water mains, knocked out power to millions of utility customers and contributed to at least 76 deaths — half of which occurred in Texas.

At least seven people died in Tennessee and four in Portland, Oregon.

EU weighs troubled Russia ties

**Brussels, Feb. 22:** European Union foreign ministers on Monday will look at options for imposing fresh sanctions against Russia over the jailing of opposition leader Alexei Navalny, as the 27-nation bloc considers the future of its troubled ties with the

country. The ministers will discuss possible names of Russian officials and whether to target them individually or whether to use a new system of measures aimed at human rights abuses.

But they appear unlikely to impose restrictions on

oligarchs close to President Vladimir Putin, as Navalny has requested. "It's clear that Russia is on a confrontational course with the European Union," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said.

"In the case of Mr Navalny, there is a blunt refusal

to respect their engagements, including the refusal of taking into account the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights." Navalny, 44, an anti-corruption investigator and Putin's most prominent critic, was arrested in Moscow last month.

COSMIC | TRIP

Hayley Arceneaux will launch later this year with a billionaire

Bone cancer survivor to go into orbit

**Cape Canaveral, Feb 22:** After beating bone cancer, Hayley Arceneaux figures rocketing into orbit on SpaceX's first private flight should be a piece of cosmic cake.

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital announced Monday that the 29-year-old physician assistant — a former patient hired last spring — will launch later this year alongside a billionaire who's using his purchased spaceflight as a charitable fundraiser.

Arceneaux will become the youngest American in space — beating NASA record-holder Sally Ride by over two years — when she blasts off this fall with entrepreneur Jared Isaacman and two yet-to-be-chosen contest winners. She'll

also be the first to launch with a prosthesis. When she was 10, she had surgery at St. Jude to replace her knee and get a titanium rod in her left thigh bone. She still limps and suffers occasional leg pain, but has been cleared for flight by SpaceX. She'll serve as the crew's medical officer.

"My battle with cancer really prepared me for space travel," Arceneaux said in an interview with *The Associated Press*. "It made me tough, and then also I think it really taught me to expect the unexpected and go along for the ride." She wants to show her young patients and other cancer survivors that "the sky is not even the limit anymore."

"It's going to mean so much to these kids to see a survivor in space," she said. Isaacman announced his space mission February 1, pledging to raise \$200 million for St. Jude, half of that his own contribution. As the flight's self-appointed commander, he offered one of the four SpaceX Dragon capsule seats to St. Jude. Without alerting the staff, St. Jude chose Arceneaux from among the "scores" of hospital and fundraising employees who had once been patients and could represent the next generation, said Rick Shadyac, president of St. Jude's fundraising organisation. Arceneaux was at home in Memphis, Tennessee, when she got the "out of the blue" call in

January asking if she'd represent St. Jude in space.

Her immediate response: "Yes! Yes! Please!" But first she wanted to run it past her mother in St. Francisville, Louisiana. (Her father died of kidney cancer in 2018.) Next she reached out to her brother and sister-in-law, both of them aerospace engineers in Huntsville, Alabama, who "reassured me how safe space travel is."

A lifelong space fan who embraces adventure, Arceneaux insists those who know her won't be surprised. She's plunged on a bungee swing in New Zealand and ridden camels in Morocco. And she loves roller-coasters. Isaacman, who flies fighter jets for a hobby, considers her a per-

fect fit. "It's not all supposed to be about getting people excited to be astronauts someday, which is certainly cool," Isaacman, 38, said last week.

"It's also supposed to be about an inspiring message of what we can accomplish here on Earth." He has two more crew members to select, and he plans to reveal them in March. One will be a sweepstakes winner; anyone donating to St. Jude this month is eligible. So far, more than \$9 million has come in, according to Shadyac. The other seat will go to a business owner who uses ShiftPayments, Isaacman's Allentown, Pennsylvania, credit card-processing company.



## DECCAN Chronicle

23 FEBRUARY 2021

### Withdraw restrictions on academic webinars

In the pre-Covid-19 era, governments used the visa as a tool to prevent individuals from certain countries from taking part in educational, cultural or sporting engagements. India cut a sorry figure when it showed the world that it was ready to demonise an entire nation for political reasons. At other times, it was particular individuals who were targeted for the views they held, regardless of their country.

But what we have just seen is a whole new ballgame. A January 15 order by the education ministry that recently came to light asked all government entities, including publicly funded educational institutions and universities, to “seek approval” of the “administrative secretary” of the concerned department/ministry for organising any “online/virtual international conferences/seminar/training etc”.

On the other hand, those meant to confer approval were required to ensure that the subject matter of an event did not relate to the “security of the State, border, the Northeast states, UT (Union territory) of J&K, or any other issues which are clearly/purely related to India’s internal matters”.

Has the government gone totally insane? Or is this just a way of imposing thought control through the backdoor because we are not — last heard — a country with a totalitarian constitution in which the single ruling party or dictatorial agency (the military, for instance) must decide and control everything, including who hears what and who says what?

In the Covid era, webinars became the lifeblood of intellectual and scientific interactions and exchange of ideas among peers internationally, and it is this which is being sought to be curbed, forcing Indian scholars and students in all fields to be shut in without being able to take recourse to the latest findings and thinking in the various domains around the world. In short, the very idea of discussion is being pushed into a room and the door banged shut in order to please Big Brother.

It is no surprise that the scientific community is not pleased. In a letter to education minister Ramesh Pokhriyal (and others), the president of the Indian Academy of Sciences, Partha Majumder, had called the order “too constraining” for the advancement of science in the country. He has also raised the valid point that frequently, even for domestic webinars, foreign scholars of repute, including Nobel laureates, are invited as interlocutors and discussants as exchanges with them are of extraordinary benefit to our own scholars and students. Are such forums to be classified as foreign?

Besides, even if we shut the doors on international experts, will Indians, when they are discussing crucial issues of science and other fields of scholarship, be wholly free to talk about issues for which the sanction-giving authority must specially look out? The answer seems fairly clear. Indeed, it is likely that it won’t be before long that private institutions of knowledge too will be brought under the mischief of the order.

The instruction must be withdrawn lock, stock and barrel. Seeing that the heads of scientific institutions representing over 1,500 top scientists of the country reacted publicly, principal scientific adviser K. Vijayaraghavan and secretary (technology) Ashutosh Sharma have hinted at a modification of the order. That isn’t enough, the whole thing must be scrapped. It is odd that that the PSA, a man of science, is not repelled by the tone and the meaning of the entire directive.

### Cyborgs of tennis

Novak Djokovic, one of the three knights of modern tennis, turned on his best game on the hard court at the Rod Laver arena he can call his own backyard for having won nine times and never having been beaten in an Australian Open final. His opponent Daniil Medvedev was so much in awe of the champion that he calls him a “cyborg of tennis” alongside Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, who between them have won 58 Grand Slams and 15 of the last 16. And is there a more accurate yardstick than Grand Slam titles to measure who among the three is going to be judged as the greatest tennis player of the professional era?

The Serbian’s spotless returns of serve on a cool Melbourne night could be rated as his greatest weapon in the dismantling of a young challenger even as he played every ground stroke as if he were indeed armed with superhuman qualities. If tennis is all about eliminating errors, then Djokovic is just that champion. Not a crowd favourite because of the stand he has taken on various issues and because he called for leniency from the hard quarantine imposed on all visiting players before the Australian Open, Djokovic also had to battle many who were not chanting “Ole, ole, ole” in his support.

Naomi Osaka is the emerging great of the women’s game who won her fourth Grand Slam in a manner reminiscent of the dominating tennis of Serena Williams, who she beat in the semis before demolishing Jennifer Brady in the final. The youngster may have victories that favour the hard courts of the Australian and US Opens but, on the evidence of her Melbourne showing, she may need only an attitudinal change to win on grass and clay. Having once said that to become a tennis legend was her life goal, the 23-year-old is well on her way now with a polished game and a record of Grand Slams to lend greater weight to the voice to speak up on sensitive social subjects that she has never been afraid of.

#### DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER  
Editor

K. SUDHAKAR  
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

**Hyderabad:** 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax : 040-27805256  
**Vijayawada:** No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234

**Visakhapatnam:** Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285

**Rajahmundry:** Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208

**Anantapur:** Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904

**Karimnagar:** Survey No.1341, Vavilalpally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433

**Nellore:** Survey No.527/2, Burrampur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chennudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580

**Chennai:** SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/ 48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325

**Coimbatore:** 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: (0422 2231255  
Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No/HSD-348/2006-08

Subhani



## Hashtag power: Twitter, govt in fight for survival

Shashidhar Nanjundaiah



An Editors Guild of India webinar on February 12 on reporting from the Naxalite badlands featured song videos, pornography and abusive language. Now, why would an organised group of “unknown persons” like to cyber-bomb a seminar? Perhaps the theme was inconvenient? As the guild pointed out later, the seminar would talk about the excesses of the government and the struggles of the tribals — or Adivasis — at the hands of the left-wing extremists. Open webinars are vulnerable to mischief anyway, and this writer has himself faced tough, disruptive questions during them. But such is the nature of free speech. Where does free speech end? Would we consider the disruption of the guild’s webinar also free speech, or would we find it unreasonable enough to be restricted? Should the guild be held responsible for those who misused the platform?

Gatherings, virtual or physical, promote mobilisation of thought, and that can be problematic. That is why the recent spat between the Centre and Twitter has rich meanings for a researcher.

The Twitter-government conflict is a fight for survival. In Twitter’s constitutional framework, economic survival is founded on a business model of big numbers and a systematic process of ensuring openness and diversity of voices. Let us remember, to be fair, that Twitter’s understanding of freedom of speech is rather American. The courts there allow restrictions posed only from a clear and explicit call to violence or breach of national security.

A landmark judgment in the 2014 Elonis vs US case stated that an explic-

it threat includes one where “reasonable people hearing it will perceive it to be a threat”. No amendments were made, however, in what free speech meant on the social media. Of course, national security is a reasonable restriction in American law too. But the courts relentlessly uphold the free speech rights of an individual. Most courts also rule in favour of protecting the voices of minority groups, unless there is an explicit threat, but Twitter usually watch groups with historical problems more carefully.

Twitter’s country-specific censorship has disabled accounts that were clearly neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic. The site does not usually block accounts that are critical of regimes, whether or not a country is authoritarian. Governments then tend to take action against individuals who may use disagreeable or inconvenient language against a regime about its majority religion. Instances are replete from Turkey, Bahrain, Thailand, and several other countries — not exactly stellar examples of individual freedom-granters.

The social media has two broad roles — the organisational and the dialogic, and it is the former that is spooking nervous governments. By threatening Twitter officials with jail and publicly contemplating the application of media laws to the social media, the government is putting on public display how spooked, rather than concerned, it is. For the Indian government, in particular, irrespective of party, there are several historical precedents — most glaringly so over the last six years. To cry conspiracy on groups of like-minded people who use a convenient technological tool — the hashtag — to

galvanise support and make claims is extremely thin-skinned.

People and political parties — many on Twitter, such is the delicious irony of the social media — have raised doubts about whether the Delhi police wittingly or unwittingly facilitated the Republic Day drama. Should we therefore assume that our government liberally allowed the virtual mobilisation to brew on Twitter, and then failed to protect a public monument where the real action was?

Certainly, history has shown us that mobilisation topples governments even through rhetorical intent. Organisational power can often translate into transactional power — and from Indira Gandhi to Narendra Modi, it poses a human challenge to professed development goals. The social media is just the latest galvanising force that transcends geography.

But can the social media enable a coup in India? But is it possible to argue that it can? Similarly, can a group of people hoist a private flag atop a public building as the police watch? But can the Centre argue that the breach was a security problem? That’s what matters. And the public display of anger is a warning to the rest of us not to rub the government the wrong way. Consider the potent words of BJP leader Anil Vij in Disha Ravi’s context: “Those who even think in anti-national terms must be eradicated”.

Let’s flip a question: Would the flag be hoisted atop Red Fort on Republic Day if the social media had not existed? This sounds like a rhetorical question. Like during the Arab Spring, “hashtag mobilisation” can indeed take on unimaginable, real proportions. But which political leader has not used it to campaign and

**The social media has two broad roles — the organisational and the dialogic, and it is the former that is spooking nervous governments.**

discredit, proclaim and decry, often using clever but false equivalence?

But false narratives cannot be confused with fake news. It should worry us that instead of seeking to protect its citizens’ privacy (it took the Supreme Court to state recently that privacy is paramount), or protect conventional media businesses like Australia, Spain and several other countries are now doing, the Indian government and its agencies are seeking to use the social media to identify inconvenient people to fit into its narratives that can fuel pseudo-nationalistic frenzy. Disha Ravi’s arrest is only the latest example. As a former SC judge noted on a prominent news channel, it seems the new tendency is to arrest in a hurry, ask questions later — no wonder a judge has questioned the police on its “conjectures”.

Any government should be responsible for creating an ecosystem that enables its citizens to feel involved but secure, responsible but free. Knee-jerk reactions from the State and highly publicised arrests of people who are merely practising their rights tend to inhibit citizens from speaking up. As a medium, the social media does not represent — it merely amplifies.

Meanwhile, the home-grown Twitter, Koo (I understand the onomatopoeic word is a call that people in coastal Karnataka use to catch someone’s attention) has deftly built a base of political support and is a perfect platform for mobilisation. And as expected, the BJP government has taken the lead. Sure, Koo is no less dialogic, but fair dialogue depends on whether the government indeed ends up painting social media in the same brush as the editorial media — and if Koo can adopt editorial interventions that are fair and just to all.

*The writer has led reputed institutes of media and communications, and is the founder of “Being Responsible”, which promotes media literacy. The views expressed here are personal.*

#### LETTERS

##### PETROL VS IPL

The increase in fuel prices or price of IPL ticket has to be borne by middle class or the poor. In order to watch IPL, we must fill our fuel tanks. As for the ruling class, they neither know the cost of fuel or IPL ticket but enjoy perks at the cost of taxpayers.

G.V. Sudhir  
Hyderabad

Blaming the Opposition and predecessors is the favourite pastime of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. For him, Parliament has been reduced to a place to pass Bills to fulfil his personal goals due to the lack of Opposition. He needs to stop talking and serve people to fight hunger and poverty. Trying to erase the past and rewrite history is unbecoming of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Jugal Kishore  
Hyderabad

##### PV’S DAUGHTER

By nominating former prime minister’s daughter Vani Devi, the TRS seems to be trying to encash on the good image of P.V. Narasimha Rao (PV daughter Vani is KCR’s MLC pick, DC, Feb. 22). Interestingly, PV always advocated for united Andhra Pradesh. One wonders why KCR is pitching on the “region” sentiment when the state under his governance is heading towards Bangaru Telangana.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao  
Hyderabad

Though Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao appears to be usurping former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao’s legacy, it is the Congress that lost its claim to it morally in 2004 when his body was not allowed to be placed inside the party headquarters in Delhi for people to pay homage.

S. Nageswara Rao  
Hyderabad

#### 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

##### Opposition writ against PM rejected

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

A combined bid by five Opposition parties for a writ against Government failed in the Delhi High Court. They had alleged that the Prime Minister and other Central Ministers had used Government machinery for furthering Ruling Congress Party’s prospects in the ensuing elections.

Chief Justice Mr. H.R. Khanna dismissed the petition, observing that the petitioners had not proved any violation.

Aakar Patel



### Who’s to blame for ₹100 petrol: Nehru, Indira or Modi Sarkar?

The price of petrol has crossed ₹100 in some parts of India for the first time. A parallel development is that of the total revenue that the government receives — 33 per cent, or one-third, now comes from the tax on fuel. India’s consumers pay the highest rate of tax on the petrol and diesel that they consume. The nations that follow India on the list of those with high taxes are all European nations, plus the United States and Japan. These are of course places where consumers are much better off than us and the government can in fact extract money from them without significant hurt.

In India, the majority of consumers are poor. And a tax on fuel affects all of us equally and hurts the poor disproportionately. The autorickshaw owner and the Uber driver pay the same to fuel up their vehicle as the corporate executive and or business tycoon. This makes very little sense. Ideally, taxation should be focused on those who can afford to pay more, and this is through direct taxes like income-

tax. But this has not happened in India for a variety of reasons. The base of people who file their income-tax returns has gone up, but the actual money that comes in as direct taxes has not gone up proportionally.

The other reason that taxes from fuel have gone up as a proportion of all taxes is what has happened to the Goods and Services Tax. This was meant to replace a series of other taxes and create a single market where more trade and more commerce would happen, expanding the economy. But the GST was not able to produce as much revenue as the taxes it replaced. And the market has not grown. Indeed, in the last 36 months, the Indian economy has slowed significantly, falling from around eight per cent growth in the quarter starting January 2018 to around three per cent in the quarter starting January 2020. And in the period after that, the economy has actually contracted for the first time in decades. And so, the short-term prospects for growth are not good, and the government must look

around for immediate ways in which it can fund itself. The easiest way is through taxes on fuel.

Petrol and diesel had been deregulated before Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office. The logic of deregulation was that the Indian State kept subsidising the consumer even when the price of crude rose globally, putting the mostly state-run oil businesses here at a loss. The consumer was protected no matter what the price of crude was. But now the reverse has happened. The government is protected no matter what the price of crude is. If the price goes down it takes more profits and does not lower the retail rate of petrol and diesel. If the price goes up, it hikes up the rates further. This was not the purpose of deregulation.

The Prime Minister says that it is not his fault and previous governments are to blame for keeping India dependent on imported crude. But that is the case with all the world’s nations who do not have a reserve of oil that can be tapped. Alternative sources of energy are a

recent phenomenon and their ability to match fossil fuels in terms of price is something even more recent. We should know that in the area of petrol and diesel in automobile use, this parity has still not come.

Petrol and diesel are very energy dense. About 50 kg of fuel or a full tank can take the car for about 700 km. For an electric car to do that, it needs a lithium ion battery pack that must be at least 45 or so kilowatt hours. The price of this battery alone is around \$5,000, and so approximately ₹4 lakh. Add the rest of the car and the minimum cost of a vehicle that can do the same range as a petrol or a diesel-driven car can do today is around ₹10 lakh, which is out of the budget for three-fourths or more of India’s car buyers. This will change over time and the cost of battery packs will fall as more and more nations take to electric vehicles for environmental reasons. But it is wrong to assume that it could be done today and certainly wrong to assume it could have been done in the past.

The last aspect is that of infrastructure. Lithium ion batteries in cars take about 10 hours to charge at home, assuming all car buyers have a garage with access to electricity. America, Europe and China have tens of thousands of direct current fast chargers in networks that span their nations.

This enables cars to charge up in about half an hour or so. India does not have these networks because the government has not built them. Even if all cars today were to magically become electric and not dependent on fossil fuel, where would they be charged? That the Prime Minister did not say.

The reality is that no matter what Jawaharlal Nehru or Indira Gandhi or Atal Behari Vajpayee did, we would be dependent today on petrol and diesel. The question is whether the government should extract such a large share of tax from us. That is a question only Narendra Modi can answer and not Jawaharlal Nehru.

*The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist*



## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	49,744.32	-2.25
Nifty 50	14,675.70	-2.04
S&P 500*	3,886.18	-0.53
Dollar (₹)	72.49	0.22
Pound Sterling (₹)	101.39	0.23
Euro (₹)	87.62	0.10
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,013.278	0.60
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	64.53	2.58
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.202	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.345	0.00

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

## Labour surveys to begin across India by April

The Labour Bureau would launch its five all-India surveys, including on migrant and domestic workers, by April 1, as two of the three mandated pre-testings of the studies yielded "encouraging and positive results". Labour Bureau director general D. P. S. Negi said, "We are hopeful to launch all five surveys across the country by April 1 and work on ground to release results in seven to eight month."

## IndRa ups outlook on banking sector to stable



India Ratings & Research revised its outlook on the banking sector to stable for FY22 from negative even as it sees higher stress emerging in the retail loan segment. For PSBs the outlook has been revised to stable from negative and for private banks, the stable outlook is retained. Overall stressed assets (gross NPA+ restructured) could rise 30 per cent for the banking system, almost 1.7 times in the retail segment in H2FY21.

## Smaller realtors hurt in K-shaped recovery: Icra

A 'K-shaped recovery' is underway in the realty sector, where access to credit and demand consolidation has helped large players grow handsomely even as their smaller sized rivals struggle. Their struggle will weigh heavily on the sector as a whole, rating agency Icra said, adding such players hold an 80 per cent market share. Icra said the top-10 listed companies witnessed a 61 per cent growth in the December quarter.

## Hyundai starts new maintenance scheme for users

Hyundai Motor India Ltd said it has launched a new maintenance programme under which customers would be able to replace parts like brakes and clutch across nine models. For the first five years of the purchase, a customer would be able to replace 14 parts such as wipers, bulbs, hose belts and much more across its nine models. Customers can buy the Hyundai Shield of Trust package before the first free service.



## ■ Covid fear, bond yields pull down stocks Sensex sinks below 50,000

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, FEB. 22

The Sensex tumbled below the 50000-mark on negative global cues, as bond yields and crude oil price rose globally. Besides, Covid concerns leading to localised shutdowns in parts of Maharashtra added to the market anxiety.

The Sensex fell 2.25 per cent, or 1145 points, to close at 49744 on sustained selling. Monday's fall is the biggest in the last two months.

The Nifty-50 Index also fell 2.04 per cent, or 306 points, closing at 14,675 points.

This is the fifth straight session the market has fallen over rising bond yields.

BSE's market capitalisation dropped below Rs 200 lakh crore as investors suffered notional loss of over Rs 4 lakh crore in the Monday sell-off.

"Global cues were weak as yields on the benchmark US 10-year Treasury notes rose to a one-year high, worrying investors that money might move away from emerging markets. Further, there were concerns over the risk of higher inflation due to sharp jump in commodity prices, which tempered optimism around a vaccine-led economic recovery," said Siddhartha Khemka, head-retail research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

Except Metals, all other sectoral indices closed in the red. The top losers included the Nifty Bank



## SBI CALLS ON RBI TO MAKE SHORTING BONDS COSTLIER

SUBHADIP SIRCAR  
FEB. 22

The RBI should consider steps to disincentivise short selling, which may have triggered the recent sell-off in the sovereign bond markets, according to the chief economic adviser at SBI Research.

Banks and primary dealers resort to such short-selling when they expect bond prices to fall, and this becomes a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' sometimes with traders borrowing securities from the repo market and rolling them over till yields rise, Soumya Kanti Ghosh wrote in a note to clients on Monday.

"The only way to break such self-fulfilling expect-

(-1.63 per cent), Nifty IT (-2.89 per cent) Auto (-2.28 per cent) and Nifty Realty (-2.80 per cent).

"The recent spike in the Covid cases combined with subdued global cues

tations is for RBI to conduct large scale open market operations to provide necessary steam to the bond market to rally and with the increase in price many short-sold positions will trigger stop losses and market players will scramble to cover open positions," he said.

Yields on the benchmark 2030 debt rose 14 basis points last week amid fears about how the RBI plans to manage the huge government borrowing programme and a rise in global bond yields. The 2030 yield was up 6 basis points to 6.20 per cent on Monday.

Short selling typically involves selling security borrowed from the repo market.

—Bloomberg

is weighing on the sentiment," said Ajit Mishra, VP-research, Religare Broking.

FPIs were net sellers by Rs 893.25 crore and DIIs, by Rs 919.88 crore.

## Kochi firm completes phase 2 trial of Covid drug

Kochi, Feb. 22: The city-based PNB Vesper Life Sciences has successfully completed phase 2 clinical trials of PNB-001 (GPP-Baladrol), its proprietary drug to treat the coronavirus infection and said it will soon move the government for deploying the drug for emergency use.

The company, which has its labs in England, had in early September 2020 received the approval from the Drug Controller General (DCGI) to conduct the phase 2 clinical trial of GPP-Baladrol in patients with moderate infection of the pandemic with oxygen support.

The company on Monday said the clinical trial was initiated in November at BJ Government Medical College and Sassoon General Hospital in Pune, and Victoria Medical College and Research Institute in Bengaluru on 40 patients.

"We will submit the clinical trial report to the DCGI on Monday itself," the company's promoter and chief executive P.N. Balaram said, adding the trial protocol was designed in-line with the solidarity trial conducted by the WHO and other international clinical trials. The Kochi-based was firm the first in the world to begin phase 2 trial for a new chemical entity.

—PTI

## SC halts NCLT okay for Future-Reliance deal

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, FEB. 22

The Supreme Court has on Monday halted regulatory approval by the National Company Law Tribunal for the Future-Reliance deal till further orders. While this comes as a relief to e-commerce giant Amazon, it is a setback for Future Retail, which has been maintaining that it will face liquidation if the deal collapses.

The Supreme Court ordered that the NCLT can continue reviewing the deal and overseeing the approval process, but cannot pass a final order till the court hears Amazon's concerns. The stock exchanges and the antitrust watchdog Competition Commission of India have already cleared the deal.

"In the meantime, the NCLT proceedings will be allowed to go on but will not culminate in any final order of sanction of scheme," the court said in its order. The court has given two weeks to file the counter-affidavit and another week for rejoinder affidavit, if



any. The case will come up for further hearing after five weeks.

Amazon had filed a special leave petition in the Supreme Court against the Delhi High Court's division bench order of February 8. The division bench had stayed the status quo order passed by a Single Judge of the court on February 2, asking Future Group and concerned authorities to maintain status quo in the Reliance-Future deal till it pronounces the final order.

The division bench had said that statutory authorities like NCLT and Sebi should not be restrained from proceeding in accordance with law on Future-Reliance deal.

Future Retail also said the NCLT can issue directions to convene

meetings of shareholders and creditors of applicant companies, including Future Retail, to consider the deal.

Amazon had approached the Delhi High Court last month, seeking enforcement of the October 25 interim order of the emergency arbitrator (EA) at the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) that had restrained Future Retail from going ahead with the deal with Reliance. Amazon alleges that the deal violates an earlier contract between the company and the Future Group.

As part of the agreement entered while buying 49 per cent stake in Future Coupons in 2019, Amazon would have a call option to acquire all or part of the promoters' shareholding of 47.02 per cent in Future Retail between the third and tenth year of the transaction and this would be subject to law. Amazon also claims that the 2019 agreement had categorically prohibited Future Retail from selling a stake to Reliance Industries.

## DHFL: AUDITOR UNEARTHS FRESH FRAUD WORTH ₹6,180 CR

New Delhi, Feb. 22: Dewan Housing Finance Corporation (DHFL) on Monday said its transaction auditor, Grant Thornton, has reported another fraudulent transaction of Rs 6,182 crore in the company.

The administrator of the company received an initial report from Grant

Thornton indicating that there are certain transactions which are "undervalued, fraudulent and preferential in nature", DHFL said in a regulatory filing.

"As per the transaction auditor report shared with the administrator, the monetary impact of the above transactions covered under

the application amounts to Rs 5,381.90 crore towards outstanding principal, Rs 589.36 crore towards accrued interest and Rs 210.85 crore towards notional loss of interest on account of charging lower rate of interest," said the filing about the impact on the company.

—PTI

## Goldman sees Brent oil at \$75 as supply response trails demand

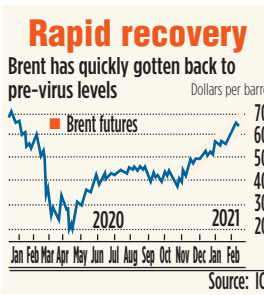
SHARON CHO  
FEB. 22

Oil prices will rally sooner and higher than previously thought as the global energy demand recovery outpaces the supply response from the Opec+ alliance, shale and Iran, according to Goldman Sachs Group Inc.

Consumption will get back to pre-virus levels by late July, while output from major producers is

likely to remain "highly inelastic" to the rising prices, the bank said in a note. Goldman raised its Brent forecasts by \$10 a barrel, to \$70 next quarter and \$75 in the following three months.

"This faster re-balancing during what was expected to be the dark days of winter will be followed by a widening deficit this spring as the ramp-up in Opec+ production lags our above-consensus demand



recovery forecast," bank analysts including

## COMMODITIES FLARING UP

Damien Courvalin said in the note.

Oil's rebound to levels last seen before Covid-19 wreaked havoc on the global economy has been driven by Saudi Arabia's unilateral output cuts together with the improving demand outlook. The rally has also been supported by investors using crude to position for a

reflationary environment, Goldman said. Brent oil traded above \$63 a barrel on Monday and is up around 22 per cent this year.

Supply will keep lagging behind demand for several reasons, the bank said.

Opec+ will fall behind the market rebalancing, especially as the pace of global drawdowns of

stockpiles has accelerated; There are no signs of more activity from most non-Opec+ producers outside of North America, creating a risk supply will fall 900,000 barrels a day short of the bank's estimates in the coming year;

The US earnings season confirms that big explorers and producers, the key drivers of US shale output, remain focused on returning cash to shareholders.

—Bloomberg

## TATA MOTORS SEES DOUBLE-DIGIT GROWTH FOR CAR INDUSTRY THIS YR



MICHAEL GONSALVES  
PUNE, FEB. 22

Tata Motors, India's biggest automaker by revenue, expects domestic passenger vehicles industry to grow in double digits in 2021-22 on account of continued robust demand momentum driven by shift towards personal mobility after the Covid pandemic.

Shailesh Chandra, president at Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles told a virtual media conference on Monday after the launch of its SUV, the new Safari, that sales growth for Tata Motors would be better than the automobile industry.

"There is a market momentum which continues on the demand side because of the shift towards personal mobility," Chandra pointed out, adding that this would remain till everybody gets vaccinated. "We don't know when everyone will get vaccinated."

He said by and large people are and will be cautious and, therefore, there is this gravity towards personal mobility.

As for Tata Motors, he said, "We would expect growth to be much better than the industry."

The new generation Tata Safari is sold in six variants, including options of manual and automatic transmission as well as 6/7-seat configurations.

The prices range from Rs 14.69 lakh for the entry-level XE variant to Rs 20.20 lakh for the top-end XZ+ (Adventure Persona edition) in the manual trims, while the automatic versions of the full-blown SUV cost between Rs 17.25 lakh and Rs 21.45 lakh at Delhi showroom.

## Copper surges above \$9,000 as deficit drives record rally

Feb. 22: Copper rallied above \$9,000 a tonne for the first time in more than nine years on bets that increased demand driven by the recovery from the pandemic will spur a historic deficit, putting the economic bellwether on course for a record run of monthly gains.

Prices climbed more than 3 per cent on Monday and are heading for an unprecedented eleventh monthly rise in February. Base metals are on tear on expectations that post-crisis consumption will outstrip near-term supply, with raw materials like copper and nickel getting an addi-

tional boost from their importance to the clean-energy transition. The furious pace of the advance has market watchers debating whether a new commodity supercycle is now in the offing.

The metal's revival marks a turnaround from earlier in the month, when copper hit turbulence as investors signalled the need for more details about stimulus measures and on concerns about a softening in Chinese demand. But prices rose during China's Lunar New Year as factory production was more buoyant than usual. Expectations for a revival

in inflation have helped, too.

"Market sentiment is heated right now in anticipation of a new cycle of global inflation," Jia Zheng, an analyst with Goldtrust Futures Co, said from Shanghai. "Chinese investors returning from Lunar New Year holidays are waiting for more stimulus from the US and Europe. Fundamentally, Chinese demand has exceeded expectations, as travel restrictions boosted consumption."

Goldman Sachs Group Inc reinforced its bullish stance last week, saying that China's return from the week-long break had

triggered another leg higher for prices. The market is facing the largest deficit in a decade this year, with a high risk of scarcity over the coming months, according to the bank.

There are already signs of emerging tightness on the London Metal Exchange, as spot contracts trade at a premium to futures. That pattern, known as backwardation, was a feature of the market during a record-breaking boom in Chinese demand last year, and suggests that spot demand is once again outpacing supply as exchange inventories run low.

Adding to concerns about a supply squeeze are possible production cuts at a top Chinese smelter. Inventories tracked by the Shanghai Futures Exchange are the lowest for this time of year in more than a decade.

Three-month copper traded at \$9,110 a tonne on the LME at 9:58 a.m. in Singapore after hitting \$9,187, the highest since 2011. In China, the Shanghai Futures Exchange contract hit the daily limit. Other metals rose, with LME tin at the highest since 2011, and nickel rallying toward \$20,000 a tonne.

—Bloomberg

## Potash rally may prod India to cut imports

PRATIK PARIJA  
FEB. 22

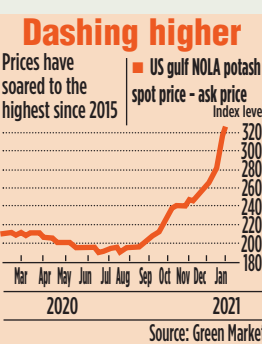
India would be buying less potash after a run-up in prices, according to the country's largest importer of the fertiliser, a move that may undercut expectations for global demand to hit a record this year.

Purchases in the fiscal year starting April may drop from about 5.5 million tonnes the year before, said P.S. Gahlaut, managing director of Indian Potash Ltd, which accounts for almost 50 per cent of the country's imports. He declined to give a forecast, but said

demand will weaken as India still has a sizeable stockpile.

"In India, consumption of potash is very price sensitive," Gahlaut said in an interview. "Whenever prices have gone up, there's an immediate effect on consumption."

Potash is a nutrient that helps plants withstand drought and diseases. Prices have risen amid a surge in agricultural commodities to multi-year highs as this implies farmers will be planting more acres and using more fertiliser. Bloomberg's Green Markets sees global potash demand at a record



in 2021, while Morningstar Inc says it will likely set a new "high watermark."

Weaker India demand could put pressure on potash suppliers such as

K+S AG, Uralkali PJSC and Canpotex Ltd as these companies may have to lower prices for new deals. India is the fourth-biggest user of potash.

India and China recently signed potash contract deals with Belarusian Potash Co at \$247 a tonne. Although that's above 2020 prices, it caused a stir among some producers expecting even higher prices. Nutrien Ltd, the world's biggest fertiliser company, is selling potash in the US corn belt for about \$350 a ton, while prices in Brazil rose \$50 this year.

Stockpiles of Indian companies and traders

still total more than 1 million tonnes, said Gahlaut. The proposed 11 per cent cut in subsidies for imported phosphatic fertilisers and potash will further dent demand and hurt the government's push for balanced use of fertilisers.

Gahlaut said India's potash consumption is already lower than what is required under the policy. The country promotes balanced fertiliser use to improve crop yields, boost profitability for farmers and reduce subsidy burden. Currently there's an excessive use of urea given the higher financial support.

—Bloomberg



## SHORT TAKES

## Anand in Global Chess League

**Chennai:** In what would be a shot in the arm for chess in India, IT giant Tech Mahindra is all set to launch a franchise-based league. Five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand will be the "mentor, advisor and facilitator-in-chief" of the Global Chess League, which will have eight teams competing for the top prize in the inaugural edition. With a first-of-its-kind 'phygital' league — physical and digital — the league organisers are aiming to raise the profile of chess by expanding the fanbase. The league will use new-age technologies such as 5G, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality. Anand expects the global league to be a game changer. "There is a renewed interest in the game of chess and through this unique global league format, we will be able to keep the spirit of chess intact," he said.



Sports Authority of Telangana State chairman Allipuram Venkateshwar Reddy (left) greets Hyderabad Mayor Vijayalakshmi Gadwal after she assumed charge on Monday. Mr Reddy said she assured support for development of sports in the city.

## Kabaddi trials for RR district

**Hyderabad:** The Ranga Reddy District Kabaddi Association is conducting selection trials from 3 pm on Wednesday at the SATS Indoor Stadium in Saroonagar, Hyderabad, to pick the junior boys and girls teams for the 47th Junior Inter-District Kabaddi Championships to be held at Thorur in Mahabubabad district. Boys and girls from Ranga Reddy District should be below 20 years of age and weigh under 70 kg and 65 kg respectively to be eligible for selections. They should report at the venue along with the copy of their Aadhar Card or SSC memo. For further details contact M. Ravikumar, Secretary, Ranga Reddy District Kabaddi Association, on 9849532287.

## TENNI-KOIT SELECTIONS

Selection trials to pick the Telangana State senior men & women and junior boys & girls (under 18 years) tenni-koit teams will be held on February 28 from 7 am at Lal Bahadur Stadium in Hyderabad. Entries should be sent to S. Laxmi Kantham on 8309857074 or A. Yadaiah on 9393053838.

## Team India finish 5th in ALMS race

**Abu Dhabi:** Chasing the Le Mans dream, Racing Team India, the first all-Indian team to compete at the international endurance racing stage, ended its first Asian Le Mans Series campaign fifth in the overall championship standings. The trio of Narain Karthikeyan, Arjun Maini and Naveen Rao, raced their ORECA 07 LMP2 car to a pair of fifth place finishes in the final two races of the season at Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina track.

The results came on the back of the fifth and fourth-placed finishes the team chalked up in the two season-opening races in Dubai.

The team will now have to make a presentation to the ACO next week to get an entry for the '24 Hours of Le Mans'. A committee will vet all the applications before finalising the invitations in March.

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

**South Africa T20 Challenge:** Warriors vs Cobras from 1.30 pm; Lions vs Knights from 5.55 pm on Star Sports Select 2

## FOOTBALL

**Champions League:** Atletico vs Chelsea from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 2; Lazio vs Bayern Munich from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 1

Printed and Published from Karimnagar by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Deccan Chronicle Press, H.No. 1-21/12/1, Cherlabhukur Road, Muggumpur Village, Karimnagar - 505 186 Telangana State. Regd. No. HSD-2/2K RNI Registration No. APENG/2001/04766 Ph: 9121181123 Grams: CHRONICLE Editor: Kaushtik Mitter

## ROOT FOR GRASS

Anderson happy with grass on Motera strip but says it won't be there on match day

**Ahmedabad, Feb. 22:** Veteran fast bowler James Anderson is pretty sure that the newly laid track at the Motera Stadium will be devoid of any grass for the upcoming Day/Night Test against India even though there is a nice green cover on it at the moment.

The third Test under lights will start from Wednesday and for England's premier fast bowler, he doesn't expect it to behave much differently from the second Test track at the Chepauk which India won by 317 runs.

"The pitch, it has got grass on it but I am pretty sure it's not going to be there when we turn up on the match day," Anderson said with a wry smile during a virtual conference on Sunday.

"So we have to wait and watch. As seam bowlers, we have to be prepared to bowl as best we can in any given condition. If it swings, it's great and if it does not, we still have a job to do," Anderson said. He felt that the pink SG Test ball that he bowled with during the net sessions, swung more than its red counterpart.

"Look this is the second pink Test in India and first in February so we don't know how it would behave."

He urged critics of the much-debated rotation policy to look at the "bigger picture", considering the massive amount of cricket to be played by the England team in the coming days.

England did not play Jonny Bairstow and Mark Wood in the first two Tests but have brought them back for the final two games as part of a rotation policy while first-choice keeper Jos Buttler is back home after the opening Test. The idea is to help players cop up with life inside the bio-bubble.

"You have got to try and look at the bigger picture."



Members of the Indian team during a training session at Motera in Ahmedabad on Sunday. — BCCI

The idea was if I missed that one, that would give me the best chance of being fit and firing for the pink-ball Test," Anderson said.

Former players, especially Kevin Pietersen, have criticised ECB's thought process, saying the board must play its best players in a big series like this against India.

Anderson, 38, himself played the series-opener where he took five wickets in England's victory but was rested for the second where India emerged triumphant by a massive 317-run margin.

"I am feeling good and fresh and ready to go again if called upon. It's frustrating to an extent but I can see the bigger picture with the amount of cricket that we have got."

— PTI

## Stokes ready to handle all conditions during Tests

**Ahmedabad, Feb. 22:** Brushing aside the incessant talk around spin-friendly pitches in India, big-hitting England all-rounder Ben Stokes has said that Test players should be proficient in handling all kinds of conditions.

Ahead of the day/night Test here starting Wednesday, Stokes wondered how the newly-refurbished Motera strip would behave but at the same time, stressed that top-flight cricketers should be able to deal with whatever they are

faced with.

"The thing about being a Test batsman is that you need to be able to handle all types of conditions. India is one of the places where it is a lot tougher for overseas batsmen to come and be successful, but then so too is England," he wrote in a column for the *Daily Mirror*.

"And that is part of the game, the challenges and why we love it," he said.

The turning tracks in India became a talking point during the ongoing series when some former

England players such as Michael Vaughan asked whether such strips were ideal for Test cricket.

The series is tied at 1-1 after India's brilliant 317-run win in the second Test in Chennai.

Stokes' bowling quota of just two overs in that game raised a few eyebrows but he said it was about

"Don't read too much into the fact that I didn't bowl a huge amount in the second game, I'm sure if it was a green seamer I would have bowled a lot more overs."

— PTI

## BAGAN SNATCH THRILLING DRAW AGAINST HYD

**Vasco, Feb. 22:** Trailing twice in a high-pressure clash, leaders Mohun Bagan fought their way back and played out a thrilling 2-2 draw against 10-man Hyderabad FC in the Indian Super League here on Monday.

Aridane Santana (8') put Hyderabad up ahead before Manvir Singh (57') restored parity for Bagan. The Nizams once again took the lead through substitute Roland Aalberg (75') found the net late (90+2') found the net late to help Bagan snatch a crucial point.

The result effectively means that Bagan will have to wait for either Mumbai City to drop points in their next game or deny the Islanders a win in their last game to secure the League Winners Shield.

A win in this match would have handed Bagan the title.

— PTI

## Hebbar's high as Andhra beat TN

**Indore, Feb. 22:** Ashwin Hebbar slammed an unbeaten 101 and powered Andhra to a seven-wicket win over Tamil Nadu in the second round of Vijay Hazare Trophy on Monday. Andhra bowlers did very well to dismiss TN for 176 in 41.3 overs.

Hebbar was in cracking form and toyed with the opposition to attack to fashion a comfortable win.

Left-arm medium-pacer C. Stephen (3/46), off-spinner Shoaib Mohammed Khan (3/24) and right-arm medium-pacer Girinath Reddy (2/33) struck at regular intervals to restrict a strong Tamil Nadu batting line-up, led by Dinesh Karthik. Girinath Reddy struck an early blow by dismissing left-handed opener C Hari Naishaanth (4). The other opener N Jagadeesan (11), who scored a ton in the opening match, was bowled by Girinath to leave the team at 23 for 2.

Tamil Nadu, winner of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy recently, never really recovered from the early setbacks.

## TANMAY TON IN HYD WIN

Meanwhile in Surat, Gujarat, captain Tanmay Agarwal proved his batting prowess once again as he smashed a swashbuckling century in Hyderabad's seven-wicket victory over Chhattisgarh.

Tanmay followed up his first match score of 86 with 122 on Monday as he stroked 17 boundaries in his 116-ball knock.

Tanmay has been knock-



Tanmay Agarwal

## BRIEF SCORES

■ Tamil Nadu 176 in 41.3 overs (B. Aparajith 40, R. Sonu Yadav 37, R. Sai Kishore 29, Shoaib Mohammed Khan 3/24, Stephen 3/46) lost to Andhra 181/3 in 29.1 overs (Ashwin Hebbar 101 not out, Ricky Bhui 52 not out). Points: Andhra 4, Tamil Nadu 0.

■ Chhattisgarh 242/7 in 50 overs (Shashank Chandrakar 36, Harpreet Singh Bhatia 63, Ashutosh Singh 51, Shashank Singh 31, Mehdi Hasan 3/32) lost to Hyderabad 243/3 in 40.4 overs (Tanmay Agarwal 122 — 116b, 17x4, Tilak Varma 60, Himalay Agarwal 49). Points: Hyderabad 4, Chhattisgarh 0.

ing on the doors of IPL teams but has been overlooked of late. Thakur Tilak Varma (60) played second fiddle while Tanmay's cousin Himalay contributed 49 as Hyderabad cantered to victory with almost 10 overs to spare.

Electing to bat, Chhattisgarh could only muster 242 in their stipulated 50 overs. Mehdi Hasan (3/2) was the pick of the Hyderabad bowlers.



The tournament's youngest players Viyan (from left), Eshwar Sai and woman player Maanasvi pose ahead of the Telangana State Ranking Snooker & Billiards Championship in Hyderabad on Monday.

## Colour on table as TS snooker starts

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 22**

Bharat Choudhary, Vibhas, Sai and G. Srikanth made winning starts at the Telangana State Ranking Snooker & Billiards Championship which got underway at the Telangana Cue Sports Association premises at Khajaguda on Monday.

In the junior snooker category, Bharat Choudhary beat Maanasvi in straight frames 59-14, 42-20 while Vibhas too registered an emphatic 51-23, 65-24 win over Mohammed Sami.

In other matches, Sai had it easy against Mohit 58-21, 50-26 and G. Srikanth clawed back to beat Venkat Sai Ram 31-56, 53-43, 52-20 in the first round of the event in which more than 200 players are competing for top honours in the junior as well as senior categories.

## THE RESULTS

■ **Junior Snooker first round:** Bharat Choudhary bt Maanasvi 2-0 (59-14, 42-20); Vibhas bt Md Sami 2-0 (51-23, 65-24); Sai bt Mohit 2-0 (58-21, 50-26); G. Srikanth bt Venkat Sai Ram 2-1 (31-56, 53-43, 52-20).



Medallists at the 4th Telangana Master Games Table Tennis event pose at the presentation ceremony along with TMGA secretary Prabhakar Rao (left) at MLRIT.

## MANOHAR IS TT MASTER

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 22**

B. Manohar, five-time State champion and No.7 among world veterans, continued his winning run to emerge victorious in the 40+ category of the 4th Telangana Master Games — Table Tennis Event conducted at MLRIT in Dundigal near Hyderabad.

Manohar from Oriental Insurance silenced Shayamal 3-0 — 11-9, 11-6, 11-6 to stamp his authority in the final. He is now eyeing the World Masters to be held in Japan next year. Vishal Reddy won the 30+ singles category by blanking Vishal Jaiswal 3-1 — 11-9, 6-11, 11-7, 11-8 while Hemanth took the 50+ singles title with a 3-0 — 11-6, 11-8, 11-6 win over Suresh in the summit clash.

In the 60+ singles, N. Thair beat Natraj Sharma 3-1 — 12-10, 3-11, 13-11, 11-9 and S. Ramesh took the 70+ title by defeating Jagannath 3-1 — 11-9, 4-11, 11-8, 11-2.

## BLACK CAPS CON KANGAROOS TO WIN FIRST T20

**Christchurch (New Zealand), Feb. 22:** A Devon Conway batting masterclass inspired New Zealand to a 53-run win over Australia in the opening Twenty20 international in Christchurch on Monday.

Conway smashed an unbeaten 99 off 59 balls as the Black Caps overcame a shaky start to finish on 184/5 after losing the toss and being put in to bat.

In reply, the tourists were all out for 131 after 17.3 overs, with Black Caps spinner Ish Sodhi taking four wickets for 28 to give the hosts an early edge in the five-match series. Australia captain Aaron Finch refused to blame the loss on his team's two-week Covid-19 quarantine upon arrival in New Zealand. — AFP

**Brief scores:** New Zealand 184/5 (Conway 99 n.o., Phillips 30, J. Richardson 2/31) beat Australia 131 (Marsh 45, Sodhi 4-28, Southee 2/10).

## Paddler Snehit dumps defending champion

**Panchkula, Feb. 22:** SFR Snehit could not have asked for a better platform than the 82nd National Table Tennis Championships to showcase his growing confidence. The 20-year-old from Telangana first slayed defending champion Harmeet Desai 4-0 and then accounted for sixth-seed Sushmit Sriram 4-1 in the quarterfinals, at the Tau Devi Lal Indoor Stadium here on Monday.

The Hyderabad lad drubbed Harmeet 11-9, 11-7, 11-9, 11-5 in the pre-quarterfinals before beating Sriram 8-11, 12-10, 11-9, 11-8, 11-3 in the quarters.

They were the result of his fitness, speed and power that he could add to his game. Besides, he had been seeing a psychologist to increase his mental strength. All of these, Snehit admitted



SFR Snehit in action at the TT Nationals on Monday.

after the match, have brought windfall gains to him.

## THE RESULTS

■ **Quarterfinals:** SFR Snehit bt Sushmit Sriram (TTFI) 8-11, 12-10, 11-9, 11-8, 11-3; A. Sharath Kamal (PSPB) bt Anthony Amalraj (TTFI) 11-8, 11-3, 5-11 13-11, 11-2; Manav Thakkar (PSPB) bt Ronit Bhanja (Ben) 11-7, 12-10, 12-10, 11-6; G. Sathyan bt Sanil Shetty (PSPB) 11-9, 11-9, 11-13, 11-8, 11-6. **Pre-Quarterfinals:** SFR Snehit bt Harmeet Desai (PSPB) 11-9, 11-7, 11-9, 11-5; A.

Sharath Kamal bt Sougata Sarkar (LIC) 7-11, 11-7, 11-9, 9-11, 11-9, 11-5; Anthony Amalraj bt Soumyajit Ghosh (Har) 9-11, 12-10, 9-11, 11-8, 11-8, 11-5, Ronit Bhanja (Ben) bt Sudhanshu Grover (Del) 13-11, 7-11, 6-11, 11-7, 9-11, 11-8, 15-13; Manav Thakkar bt Nitin Thiruvengadam (TNTTA) 11-9, 8-11, 11-5, 11-9, 11-5; Sushmit Sriram (TTFI) bt Arjun Ghosh (Ben) 6-11, 11-8, 8-11, 8-11, 12-10, 11-9, 11-9; Sanil Shetty bt Sarthak Gandhi (TTFI) 11-4, 7-11, 8-11, 11-7, 11-9, 11-7; G. Sathyan bt Manush Shah (Guj) 11-8, 12-14, 11-9, 11-8, 13-11.

## Shetty slams 3rd ton on trot in 2-day league Gopi gets double ton, Nishanth, Srinivas also do well in local cricket

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 22**

G. Gopi Krishna Reddy, Srinivas, Arvind Shetty, Nishanth Reddy, Vishal Dhumal, Noman Ahmed and E. Srikanth led the Monday's performers in the Hyderabad Cricket Association's A-2 and A-3 division league matches.

Arvind Shetty (100) smashed his third consecutive century and Srinivas took a fiver (5/54) as Canara Bank beat Anu CC by 7 wickets in their two-day game.

In another match, captain Nishanth slammed 137 to boost SN Group's total to 409 against Kishorecons.

In an A-3 division one-day match, Gopi's double ton (202) propelled M. L. Jaisimha to 317 for 9 in 50 overs. In reply, St Andrews were all out for 170 as Dheeraj Goud took 4 for 58.

In another match, Vishal (5/6) ripped through Team Kun's batting line-up as Victory CC justified their name by overhauling a dwarf target of 94 runs.

Noman (135) of Southend Raymonds and MP Blues' Srikanth (101) were the other top performers who helped their sides emerge victo-



Arvind Shetty



Nishanth Reddy



E. Srikanth

## Brief Scores:

## A-2 DIVISION (TWO-DAY) LEAGUE

## Day-1

■ Anu CC 170 in 45.3 overs (Sachin 36, Rizwan 62 n.o., Rasheed 30, M. A. Jaweed 4/66, Srinivas 5/54 (16.3-5-54-6) lost to Canara Bank 172/3 in 23.5 overs (Arvind Shetty 100 — 55b, 21x4, 2x6, Suresh 30). Points: Canara Bank 5, Anu CC 0.

■ SN Group 409 in 84.3 overs (M. Gaurav 67, Aryanam Thakur 35, Nishanth Reddy 137 — 167b, 14x4, 1x6, Ritwik 54, Atharva 34, Ghanraj 4/44) vs Kishorecons 170/0 in 7 overs.

## A-3 DIVISION (ONE-DAY) LEAGUE

■ ML Jaisimha 317/9 in 50 overs (G. Gopi Krishna Reddy 202 n.o., Gnana Prakash 32, R. Vedvyas 4/63) bt St Andrews 147 in 37.3 overs (Aditya 37, SM Hussain 41, Dheeraj Goud 4/58). Points: ML Jaisimha 5, St Andrews 0.

■ Team Kun 93 in 39 overs (Vishal Dhumal 5/6) lost to Victory CC 96/3 in 17.3 overs (Harikiran 34 n.o.). Points: Victory 5, Team Kun 0.

■ Southend Raymonds 312/4 in 47 overs (Koushik Reddy 69, Noman Ahmed 135, CH Rahul 3/55) bt AB Colony 71 in 29.3 overs (Md Irfan 3/13, Md Khaleel 3/24). Points: Southend Raymonds 5, AB Colony 0.

■ MP Blues 305/8 in 47 overs (S. Raju 73, E. Srikanth 101 n.o., Naveen 60) bt Mahesh CC 182 in 36.3 overs (Sudharshan 32, Vinay Reddy 32, Yesudas 3/51, Satish 4/40). Points: MP Blues 5, Mahesh CC 0.

■ Red Hills 130 in 44 overs (Meraj 31, Naresh 4/24) lost to PPMCC 132/3 in 39.3 overs (Sanju 35, Pavan 58 n.o.). Points: PPMCC 5, Red Hills 0.

■ Dhruv XI 101 in 29.2 overs (Praveen 4/24) lost to Lal Bahadur CC 102/2 in 24.1 overs (Pranav 58 n.o.). Points: Lal Bahadur 5, Dhruv XI 0.

■ All Saints 191 in 34.4 overs (Koushik 30, Ronith 49, Chandra 4/25) lost to Youth CC 192/5 in 39.1 overs (Harshvardhan Reddy 32, Parikshit 74). Points: Youth 5, All Saints 0.

■ LNCC 248 in 40 overs (Pranav 30, Gopi 45, Yashwanth 35 n.o., Advit 4/44) bt Starlets 122 in 38.3 overs (Praneeth 42, Prathap 3/24, Lalit 3/5). Points: LNCC 5, Starlets 0.