DECCAN • onicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA **ANANTAPUR | WEDNESDAY | 17 MARCH 2021**





Forecast: Cloudy sky. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 38/19 °C

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttarayana Tithi: Phalguna Shuddha Chaviti till 11.29 pm Star: Ashwini till 7.30 am Varjyam: 6.20 pm to 8.08 pm Durmuhurtam: 12 noon to 12.48 pm

Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm **HIJRI CALENDAR** Sha'ban 3,1442 AH **PRAYERS** Fajar: 5.08 am **Zohar:** 12.05 pm

Maghrib: 5.47 pm **Isha:** 7.02 pm **SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.32 AM** SUNSET TODAY 6.28 PM **MOONSET 09.41 AM**

Asar: 4.11 pm





Quick! Let us invite her to campaign for us before anyone else approaches her!

Lower juvenile

age, says panel

New Delhi: A parliamentary panel headed by Congress MP Anand Sharma has recommended to the government to consider bringing down the juvenile delinquency age from 18 to 16 in cases under the POCSC Act, noting that minor sexual offenders may commit more serious and heinous crime if left untreated and uncounselled. The report was submitted to the Raiva Sabha on Monday

Upper limit for

abortion raised

New Delhi: The Rajya Sabha on Tuesday passed the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020 to amend an old legislation for raising the limit for permitting abortions from the present 20 weeks to 24 for "special categories of women" including rape survivors, victims of incest, minors and differently-abled.

1L vacancies in

paramilitary

New Delhi: There were 1,11,093 posts lying vacant across the Central Armed Police Forces and the Assam Rifles, with the majority of such vacancies at the constable-rank, the government informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. The recruitment process was hit by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, MoS home affairs Nityanand Rai informed the Lok Sabha.

Sinovac a must

to visit China

New Delhi: The Chinese embassy in Delhi said on Tuesday that it has started issuing visas to travellers who have taken Chinese-made Covid-19 vaccine such as Sinovac on submission of vaccination certificate. The categories for which visas are being granted since Monday, March 15, include those going to China on employment contracts and their family members, foreigners who are family members

of Chinese citizens or

Chinese visa holders.

NATION 5



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WORLD 7

Haaland, 1st Native, **OKayed as Interior secy**

MD ILYAS I DC

VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

The AP Crime Investig-

ation Department (CID) on

Tuesday issued notice to

Telugu Desam president and former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu to

attend an inquiry into the Amaravati lands scam

A team of the investigation agency reached Naidu's Hyderabad resi-

dence on Tuesday morn-

ing and served him a

Naidu, after receiving the notice, is consulting legal experts about his

future course of action. Since the CID has asked

him to appear in person

for inquiry, he is reportedly discussing conse-quences of attending the

inquiry and also consider-

ing challenging the notice

The TD turned up in

arms and all leaders, including TD AP presi-

dent K. Atchannaidu, con-

demned the issuing of

An FIR was registered by

the CID, under Sections

120b, 166,167, and 217 of the

notice by the CID.

in a court.

notice to join the probe.

SPORTS 8

Sindhu eyes title at **All England Open**



Vol. 22 No. 205 Established 1938 | 16 pages | ₹6.00

CID's notice to TD

chief in land case

Naidu was asked to attend CID inquiry in

IPC into the Amaravati

land scam case over alleged irregularities in

acquisition of lands in

Amaravati and their ille-

gal transfer. The CID

asked Naidu to attend the

Amaravati lands scam case on March 23

Tributes to Sriramulu



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy pays tributes to Potti Sriramulu on the occasion of his birth anniversary at the camp office in Vijayawada on Tuesday. Ministers Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy (right), Vellampalli Srinivas (second from left), and MLAs Malladi Vishnu (left) and Jogi Ramesh (centre) are also seen.

Don't displace without rehab: HC

PIL claims nearly one lakh Polavaram-hit will go homeless

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Nearly one lakh families living in 371 habitations in the East and West Godavari districts will be displaced by the Polavaram project. Problem is also that some of the rehabilitation and resettlement centres being readied for them do not have proper amenities, the AP High Court has been told.

A PIL said some 55 per cent of the total 1,88,012 project affected.

project-affected people belong to scheduled tribes, 15 per cent scheduled

DC CORRESPONDENT

With six more students

along with four faculty

Patashala, in Dharmagiri

at Tirumala, reportedly testing positive for Covid-

19, the parents of other

students are getting jit-

Only last week, 57 stu-

dents had tested positive at the school. When the

school was reopened after

the lockdown, all the 435

students had submitted negative RT-PCR reports

On March 9, however,

when a second round of

rapid antigen tests was

conducted on all students,

57 tested positive and were

admitted at the SVIMS

Hospital for treatment. In

view of this, the TTD also

carried out tests to the

remaining 378 students

for Covid-19.

TIRUPATI, MARCH 16

castes, 17.5 per cent backward classes and the rest are from the other categories. While they are forced to abandon their homes and hearths, there is no guarantee yet they will get due entitlements or even part payments. "This is causing them seri-

ous agony and trauma." Nearly 112 habitations would be displaced in the first phase covering a 41.15 meters plus contour while the remaining 259 habita-tions identified as submerging habitations over a 45.72 plus meters contour

would be moved out in a

Parents worried as 10 more

test Covid+ at TTD school

and 10 faculty and every-

one tested negative.
When the TTD authori-

ties conducted another

round of spot rapid anti-

gen tests, six more stu-

dents and four faculty

members tested positive on Monday. They were immediately taken to the

SVIMS Hospital for treat-

ment. They are said to be

asymptomatic and doing

Health minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas

(Nani) inquired about the

health of the students and

faculty and instructed

Chittoor district medical

and health officer Dr M.

Penchalaiah and SVIMS

Hospital superintendent

Dr R. Ram over phone to

provide best treatment,

according to a release from the minister's office.

On the other hand, over

1,000 employees of TTD

were administered vac-

phased manner.

Taking note, the high court principal bench headed by Chief Justice Arup Kumar Goswami has directed the state government not to go ahead with the displacement of these people unless proper amenities as per law were provided at the rehab colonies. When government pleader C. Sumon tried to convince the court about this with an oral submission, the court asked him

to submit it in writing. The tribals, through the PIL, alleged that they were being forced to move to the

cine in 10 days and no one

reported side effects. On Tuesday, TTD additional

Srivari temple chief priest

Venugopala Deekshitulu

also took their Covid-19

In the ongoing first

phase, the employees who

crossed 45 years and have

comorbidities are being

vaccinated; 302 employees

took the jab in the TTD Central Hospital and

while 710 at the Aswini

Meanwhile, a 14-day par-

lockdown

imposed at Kammapalli

village of RC Puram man-

dal in Chittoor district,

after five people tested

positive for the virus.

Around 37 cases were

reported in the district by

Tuesday morning. At pre-

sent, there are 484 active

Hospital in Tirumala.

vaccines at Tirumala.

Reddy

executive

officer A.V.

rehabilitation colonies even as these do not have bare minimum facilities. They said that at Devipatnam mandal, there was no grave yard attached to the rehabilitation colony. The tribals had to beg the local tehsildar to provide them a place to bury the dead, the PIL said.

The tribals also alleged that the authorities were demolishing their houses in several villages and were even warned against taking up any cultivation.

have no toilets or water: PIL

MLC TEACHERS POLL RESULT TO BE OUT TODAY

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA/KAKINADA, MARCH 16

All is set for counting of votes polled for electing two MLC to AP Legisla tive Council from teachers' constituencies of Krishna-Guntur East-West Godavari districts. Counting will commence from 8 am on Wednesday. Authorities of Krishna-Guntur districts have made elaborate arrangements for counting of votes at the Andhra Christian College in Guntur. Fourteen counting tables have been set up. A tahsildar rank official will be counting supervisor for each table. A deputy tahsildar and two village revenue officers will function as counting assistants. Counting staff will work in three shifts, each shift lasting for eight hours.

tears to farmers ■ Page 2: Rehab colonies **D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC** phere, enticing farmers to KURNOOL, MARCH 16

have crashed to ₹610 per tonne at Kurnool Agricultural Market Yard, bringing tears for their growers. What sold for ₹100 per kg is now selling for ₹6 in the wholesale market.

Kurnool market yard is one of the biggest points for onion trading in the two Telugu states. There has been steady flow of arrivals from various parts of Kurnool in AP and Mahbubnagar in TS since the past few days, resulting in price crash.

sow the crop this year too. This year too has been belied.

Kurnool market yard R. said Vijaya secretary Lakshmi increasing area under onion cultivation and rains leading to a bumper crop, at least 3,000 quintals of onions are arriving into the market every day. Moreover, markets in AP, TS. Karnataka, Orissa and Maharashtra are witnessing arrivals of locally grown onions.

Vijaya Lakshmi said ₹1,530 per quintal is the highest price on Tuesday. the model price being ₹1,310 and lowest quoted at ₹610 per quintal.

Ramnjanevulu, a farmer from Juturu village in Pathikonda, said he was hoping he will get at least ₹20 per kg. But just ₹6 means it will be really difficult for him to survive.

Another farmer K Giddaiah from Anugonda village in Kodumuru mandal said he had sown two acres with onions spending ₹60,000. He had sent 10 quintals of onions through a tractor to Kurnool market yard but had received just ₹6,500, working to ₹6.50 per kg.

that a set of middlemen. who were also part of the conspiracy, falsely led the farmers to believe that they were at risk of losing their assigned lands to the government without any compensation.

investigation on March 23. The CID registered a case against Ponguru. Narayana, former TD minister for municipal administration and ex vice-chairman of the AP Capital Region Development Authority, who was also named in the FIR.

According to the FIR YSRC Mangalagiri MLA A. Ramakrishna Reddy submitted a complaint to additional director general of police of the CID, P.V. Sunil Kumar, on February

24. The complaint claimed that some farmers from the Mangalagiri constituency had approached him with complaints that "influential persons" from the previous TD govern-ment had "cheated them by taking their lands illegally", fraudulently, by keeping them "under confusion and fear" of insecu-

rity about their lands.
The complaint alleged

Ramakrishna alleged that irregularities committed by Naidu and Narayana irreparable loss" to people belonging to the SC and ST communities and other weaker sections in the assigned lands issue.

Based on a preliminary inquiry into the complaint, a report was submitted by CID DSP S. Surya Bhaskar Rao on March 12, which revealed that cognisance of the offence was made out. Based on the inquiry

report, an FIR was registered against Naidu and Narayana on March 12, under Sections 166, 167, 217 and 120B of the Indian Penal Code (Indian Penal Code), read with Sections 34, 35, 36 and 37 of the IPC, as well as relevant sec tions of the SC/ST Act and Section 7 of the AP Assigned Lands (Prohibition of Transfers) Act, 1977.

GOVT GRANTS

₹93.32 CR FOR

Onion price at ₹6 per kg brings

Wholesale prices of onion

When prices were ruling high, many farmers had sown the crop spending huge money on fertilisers and labour charges. But they are now regretting

The only difference is that earlier, it was customers who had tears in their eyes and now, it is the turn of onion farmers. Market yard officials and traders fear the prices may further crash as low as ₹2 per kg, if the trend of onion arrivals continues for the next couple of weeks. During the lockdown, prices of onions had reached the stratos-

CAUSEWAY ON PENNAR RIVER

DC CORRESPONDENT **NELLORE, MARCH 16**

The AP government has accorded administrative sanction for ₹93.32 crore for the construction of a submersible causeway across the Pennar river between Mudivarthi and Mudivarthipalem of Vidavaluru and Indukurpeta mandals of Nellore district on Tuesday.

A causeway is similar to a barrage to store water but also has a road which links the two banks of the river.

According Kovur legis lator Nallapareddy Prasannakumar Reddy, one of the major advantages of the project is groundwater recharge in coastal mandals which are combating the seepage of saltwater from the sea.

The seepage of saline water has been polluting both irrigation and drinking water sources in the coastal mandals abutting the river. The areas that will benefit from the proposed cause way include Indukur-Vidavalur, Kovur, and Kodavalur mandals.

This will help connect coastal mandals and save time from detours to provide succor to the people during natural calami-

POLL | REFORM | Single poll for all elected bodies to save money, says committee

Panel builds case for one nation-one poll

Bat-ting for holding of simultaneous elections in the country, a parliamencommittee Tuesday said this will reduce the burden on the exchequer, expenditure of political parties and also

ensure that human resources are optimally utilised. "The committee also believes that simultaneous elections will reduce voters apathy of frequent elections and will enthuse general population and voters in particular which will

ultimately enhance voters

participation in the electoral process," the department-related standing committee on law and justice, and personnel min-istries said in its report on demands for grants for the law ministry.

The report was tabled in both Houses on Tuesday. The committee said it is of the view that the idea of 'One Nation, One Election' or simultaneous elections is not new to the country as the first three Lok Sabha elections in 1952, 1957 and

1962 were held simultane-

ously and it can be brought

Panel said certain provisions of the Constitution need to be amended to have fixed terms for local bodies. legislative assemblies and the Lok Sabha for holding simultaneous elections. back with suitable amend-

ments to the Constitution. "In view of this, certain provisions of the Constitution may be amended to have fixed terms for local bodies, legislative assemblies and the Lok Sabha for

holding simultaneous elections. The terms of legislative assemblies and Lok Sabha are also required to be synchronised with one another and the mechanism in this regard requires to be evolved with political consensus as the term of the respective state assemblies need to be reduced or increased," the report said.

It said having continuous elections around the year whether it is for local bodies, state assemblies or Lok Sabha, put a big strain on the state machinery which

governance. The first, second and

third elections after promulgation Constitution were held simultaneously. However, premature dissolution of some legislative assemblies in 1968 and 1969 caused discontinuation of holding simultaneous elections, it noted. The renewed emphasis on the concept of simultaneous elections was made in 1983 when the Election Commission brought out its first annual report.

Tirupati Lok Sabha bypoll on April 17

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Tuesday announced the schedule for conduct of by-election to Tirupati (SC) Lok Sabha constituency.

As per a press release issued by the Election Commission on Tuesday, the bypoll will be conducted on April 17.

A Gazette notification for the by-election will be issued on March 23. The last date for filing nominations by contestants is

nominations will be on March 31 and April 3 the last date for withdrawal of nominations. Polling will be on April 17 and counting of votes on May 2. The Election Commiss

ion said that electoral rolls prepared and published on January 1, 2021, will be used for conduct of the by-election. EVMs with VVPATs will

be used at all polling stations for smooth conduct

Full report on Page 2

OTHER STORIES

HC DIRECTS SEC TO DECLARE MPTC, ZPTC RESULTS

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Andhra Pradesh High Court has set aside State Election Commission's order to review unanimous elections to MPTCs and ZPTCs and directed the SEC to declare their results immediately.

A single judge bench headed by Justice D.V.S.S. Somayajulu heard a batch of petitions on Tuesday filed against the commission's order directing district collectors to inquire into cases of forced withdrawal of nominations by MPTC, ZPTC contestants through coercion

The High Court directed that the election of such candidates, whose announcement has been held back, shall be immediately declared / certified as per Rule 16 and Rules 62 to 64 under Conduct of Election Rules, 2006. The court observed that it would be open for opponents of these candidates to file appropriate proceedings in the court / tribunal constituted under law.

Though the court appreciated the endeavour of SEC for its efforts to curb intimidation, it observed that the commission does not have the power to interfere and set aside the election. The court further said such power is given to the elec-tion tribunal constituted under the law. The court observed that Rule 66 proviso prohibits SEC from entertaining any complaint till declaration of results. It said neither the commission nor the district collectors can decide on such controversial issues once the election

process is over.
Earlier, SEC's counsel N.
Ashwani Kumar maintained that the commission could not be a mute spectator when allegations of fraud and coercion are made. The counsel said being a constitutional authori-

ty, SEC is bound to act. Senior counsel C. V. Mohan Reddy pointed out that the role of SEC would become functus officio after formal declaration of results is made and it would then have no power to take any

GOVT COMMITTED TO DEVELOP THREE **CAPITALS: BOTSA**

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, MARCH 16

administration minister Botsa Satyanarayana reiterated that YSRC government is committed to develop three capitals as announced by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, including Amar avati as the legislative capital, Visakhapatnam as administra tive capital and Kurnool as judicial capital. He ruled out that booking of the case against Chandrababu Naidu was an act of vengeance against

BY-ELECTION TO TIRUPATI LS SEAT ON APRIL 17

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

the previous TD regime.

Election Commission of India (ECI) has announced the schedule for conduct of by-election to Tirupati (SC) Lok Sabha

constituency. As per a press release issued by ECI on Tuesday, the by-poll will be on April 17. Gazette notification for the by-election will be issued on March 23. The last date for filing nominations by contestants is March 30. Scrutiny of nominations will be on March 31 and April 3 the last date for withdrawal of nominations. Polling will be on April 17 and counting of votes

on May 2. ECI said electoral rolls prepared and published on January 1, 2021, will be used for conduct of the by-election. EVMs with VVPATs will be used at all polling stations for smooth conduct of polls.

Electoral Photo Identity card will be the main document for identification of a voter. Alternate documents will be Aadhaar card, MNREGA job card, bank / post office passbooks with a photograph, health insurance smart card issued by union ministry of labour, driving licence, PAN card, Indian passport, pension document with a photograph, service identity cards with photographs issued to employees by central or state governments and PSUs, apart from official identity cards issued to

MPs, MLAs and MLCs. Consequent on announcement of Tirupati by-poll, Model Code of Conduct has into force with immediate effect in the district over which the parliamentary constituen-



Workers busy in preparing the GVMC Council Hall at GVMC Main Building in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. The GVMC Council Hall was not used in a big way for over nine years in Visakhapatnam.

State creates record in **MGNREGS** workdays

Construction of 15.60 lakh houses to start on April 15

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said on Tuesday that Andhra Pradesh has created a record in the national employment guarantee scheme by providing 2,427 lakh workdays by March 15 and paying nearly ₹6,000 crore to the workforce under the scheme.

The Chief Minister announced that construction of houses under the mega housing scheme Pedalandariki Illu would start on April 15. As many as 15.60 lakh houses would be constructed in the first phase of the housing scheme for the poor. The CM was holding a Spandana review meeting with district collectors and SPs.

During the meeting held on video conference mode, Jagan discussed with officials several matters and gave them the welfare calendar for April. MGN-REGS works, house site patta distribution, Nadu Nedu in schools and anganwadi centres, creation of multi-purpose facility centers, construction of medical colleges, roads and buildings, the YSR Cheyutha, the Jagananna Thodu, the YSR Bhima, the YSR Asara Pragathi, the crop procurement scheme, and the schedules of the programmes for April were the major issues that

came up at the meet. The CM said he couldn't connect with district collectors over the past few weeks because of the civic elections. Once the remaining six days' process of MPTC&ZPTC elections is completed, focus could be laid on vaccination, administration and developmental activities, he said.

The CM congratulated district collectors for achieving a record in MGN-REGS works by logging 2,472 lakh working days by March 15 and it would total 2,525 lakh working days by end of the financial year. Around ₹6,000 crore has been paid to labourers through this scheme.

The CM said the government would construct 15.60 lakh houses in the first phase and directed the officials to complete the required process. He asked them to expedite the

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Minister for Panchayat

Ramachandra Reddy said

that two deputy mayors

and two vice-chairpersons

would be appointed in

municipal corporations

Peddireddy

Ministers, MLAs, officers told to visit one constituency every day

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy has directed the officials to ensure that the works on the first phase of the Nadu Nedu in schools are completed by March 31.

During a review with the district collectors, SPs and officials in the Spandana programme on Tuesday, the CM said 10 types of facilities are being provided in schools through Nadu- Nedu and added that the paint works in the schools must be taken care of. He said Anganwadi centres are being revamped YSR Pre Primary

Schools under Nadu Nedu. The CM gave a list of the welfare activities to be implemented in April. The Jagananna Vidvakanuka scheme will be implemented on April 9 and the volunteers across the state would be felicitated on April 13. The ministers, MLAs, collectors and SPs should visit one constituency every day and felicitate the volunteers with awards of Seva Mitra, Seva Ratna and Seva Vajra.

He said the YSR Zero Interest scheme for farmers would be implemented on April 16 and the same scheme for DWCRA women would commence on April 20. He said the Jagananna Vasati Devena would be implemented on

April 27.
The CM said the state government has laid spe-

preparatory works for construction of the houses and added that water and electricity facilities should be arranged in the layouts by April 15. The construction of houses will start on April 15, he stressed

Jagan Mohan Reddy said a model house should be constructed in every layout and building materials should be provided to those who want to build the houses on their own. The beneficiaries will get construction materials

and municipalities across

Speaking to the media

here on Tuesday, the min-

ister said that an Ordinance will be sent to

the Governor in this

regard of appointing two

deputies instead of one, as

The CM said the YSR Zero Interest scheme for farmers would be implemented on April 16 and the same scheme for DWCRA women would commence on April 20. He said the Jagananna Vasati Devena would be implemented on April 27.

cial focus on children below six years and on preprimary schools. He asked the officials to focus attention on identifying land for construction of permanent buildings and also on training for Anganwadi teachers. Jagan Mohan Reddy said

the government has been setting up one medical college along with a nursing college in each parliamentary constituency. Officials must speedily complete the process of identification and acquisition of land for these colleges. The state government is taking steps to start con-struction of medical colleges in six places -Pulivendula, Piduguralla, Amalapuram, Palakollu, Adoni and Machilipatnam

– in April. The CM said multipurpose facility centres are being set up under RBKs and 0.5 to 1 acre of land is required for each facility centre. He asked officials to identify the land and hand it over to the concerned department.

Facilities such as godowns, cold storages, and drying platforms should

like cement, steel and metal at low cost as the government purchases them in bulk. He asked officials to utilise the services of engineering assistants, digital assistants and welfare assistants in Village Secretariats as

also of the Volunteers.
The CM said the construction of village/ward secretariats should be completed on a war-footing by May 2021. District collectors must focus attention on completing the construction of RBKs and

vide better governance for the people. He said that as per the SEC schedule,

Chairpersons and Deputy-

Mayors,

Governor's

cured at farm gates. YSR village health clinics. He said the distribution of leftover house site pattas should be completed soon. The new applicants should receive the patta in 90 days. Distribution of house site pattas to 11,334 newly identified eligible beneficiaries should be completed soon and verification of the remaining applications should be

be provided at village level

for ensuring better price to farmers. Officials must

identify 10-15 acres of land

in each constituency and

the land would be used for

food processing. Officials

must create a special cell for the acquisition of the

required land for National

He said insurance will

be paid on April 6 to nomi-

nees of 12,039 people who have died naturally or in

accidents, whose families

are not enrolled in banks.

He asked officials to

arrange special DCC meet-

ings to ensure every eligi-ble person is benefitted

through the Jagananna

The CM asked the distri-

ct collectors of East Godavari and West Godavari to

be well-prepared to ensure

supply of irrigation water

to every acre and they mu-

st co-ordinate these mat-

ters with water resources

He said procurement of

Rabi crop has been started

and officials must ensure

efficient use of the CM

APP in crop procurement.

He said that the 1907 call

center should work effi-

process for procurement

pleted and the list of farm-

ers who have completed e

cropping should be displayed for social audit

under each RBK. MSP

should be displayed in

RBKs and officials must

ensure the crops are pro-

paddy should be com-

The registration

Thodu scheme.

officials

ciently.

Highways projects.

done fast. He also asked officials to speed up the identification and purchase of the required land for house sites from April.

Govt proposes 2 deputy mayors, 2 vice-chairpersons be selected in ULBs. The minister stated that people will support YSRC in Tirupati bypoll, even

though BJP comes up with

Mayors will be elected on a Hindutva card. March 18 and after getting He said that YSRC will approval, retain its seat with trianother Deputy Mayor umphant victory in the

Notice to Naidu political conspiracy, says TD

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

The Telugu Desam party on Tuesday objected to issuance of notice to party chief N. Chandrababu Naidu by the AP CID in the Amaravati assigned lands case, terming the action "politically moti-

Party AP state president K. Atchannaidu said that assigned lands were taken with approval of farmers for the capital, according to norms and rules. He questioned whether YSRC MLA Alla Ramakrishna Reddy belongs to the SC or ST to file a case under the prevention of atrocities against SC and ST.

Responding to the news of notices being issued by CID to the former chief minister, Atchannaidu called the move an "act of vengeance" by the ruling

Questioning if any for-mer CM has been booked under the SC, ST PoA Act in the history of the country, he questioned if such

dent K. Atchannaidu said that assigned lands were taken with approval of farmers for the capital. according to norms and

a case could be registered based on a complaint from Alla Ramakrishna Reddy, who himself does not belong to the SC or ST

community.

He said that the YSRC government was occupy-ing lands assigned to poor farmers for cultivation to use them for the government's housing scheme for the poor.

Atchannaidu said that the-then TD government had offered the same package to assigned land farmers in the capital, which was offered to general patta lands. He said that land pooling took place in 2015. "It is vengeance to file a

case against it now, and issue CID notices," he

He alleged that Chief

and party general secre-

tary Nara Lokesh often

used the term "A-1" when

they referred to Jagan and A-2 to Vijayasai.

Tables have now turned

The case against the for-

mer CM was filed by the

state CID, which also made former TD minister

Ponguru Narayana as A-

2, the second accused.

on the father-son duo.

Minister Y.S. Jagan Reddy has a history of building houses on assigned lands under which hundreds of assigned lands were confiscated in the name of housing. He further alleged that Mr Reddy has a history of using assigned lands in Idupulapaya for decades and has provided no compensation to the Vadarevu

Nizampatnam Industrial Corridor (VAN-PIC) land victim farmers till date. Atchannaidu Mr claimed that Jagan's father Y.S. Rajashekhara amended the Assigned Land Transfer Prohibition Act in 2007 to grab lands from poor and allowed them to be occu-

pied by his henchmen. He recalled that Rajashekhara Reddy told the AP state Assembly as Chief Minister that 610 acres were being returned the government after the matter came to light and then broke his prom-

NAIDU TURNED A-1 FIRST TIME IN 40 YEARS OF POLITICAL HISTORY

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Signifying a change of season, Telugu Desam chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu has been named as first accused in a case this, for the first time in his 40-year-long political innings. The case relates to the Amaravati assigned land scam.

Curiously, TD leaders used to call Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy as "A-1" (first accused) and YSRC Rajya Saba member V. Vijayasai Reddy as "A-2" vis-a-vis the quid pro quo case probed by the CBI in the past. TD leaders including Chandrababu Naidu

Curiously, the CID did not refer to Chandrababu Naidu as Leader of Opposition or TD national president, in the notice it served on him on

Tuesday. referred to Naidu as the "Kuppam MLA residing at Jubilee Hyderabad."

Lokesh: Jagan in sheer frustration stooping to the lowest levels

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Telugu Desam national general secretary Nara Lokesh was provoked enough to accuse the Jagan Mohan Reddy government of "stooping to the lowest level" of filing an SC-ST Atrocity case against Chandrababu Naidu, and said this was "out of sheer frustration over the deadlock in the capital shifting".

Lokesh said in a statement that Jagan Reddy's 'silly cases" were "laughable" and would not cause any damage to the TD chief. "The CM might come out with any number of devious plans to kill Amaravati. However, the pious capital would save and preserve itself on the strength of justice and ethical values.

Lokesh noted that the courts had stated many times that there was no 'insider trading' in the Amaravati lands issue. "The YSRC tried very hard for over 21 months and finally failed to find evidence to book the TD chief in the capital lands cases. Now, they lowered

TD OBJECTS TO CID

DC CORRESPONDENT

NOTICES TO NAIDU

NELLORE, MARCH 16 TD senior leader and party politburo member Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy took strong objection to the notices served by the CID to the TD chief. He lambasted the government for booking cases under 10 sections, including under SC, ST Act, while stress-

> of the government. He observed that the YSRC was attempting to hound Naidu by booking cases as they did in the case of TD state president K. Atchennaidu a few months back.

ing that it is a heinous act

themselves to the cheap level of threatening a former CM with an SC-ST at-

rocities case," he said. TD leaders Varla Rama-iah, P. Sudhakar Yadav, and K.S. Jawahar strongly objected to the CID notices and asked how an SC-ST atrocity case could be filed against Naidu.

ise by saying he will return only 300 acres. **REHAB COLONIES HAVE NO TOILETS**

From Page 1

OR WATER: PIL

The project-affected people from Gubhalampalem complained that there were no facilities like drinking water, toilets, roads, drains, stre-etlights at the rehabilita-tion colonies given to them at Kumbhalampalem of Devipatnam mandal. So was the case with the affected people from Yenugulagudem who we re sent to the rehabilitation colonies in Indukuru of Devipatnam man-

The affected people from Thustivarigudem said water pipes were not laid for supply of water, and there were no drains, no graveyard, no school, no temple and no community hall. The houses remained in a half-built state.

It was a Rampachodavaram-based NGO Sakti (Search for action and knowledge of tribal ini-tiative) that moved the AP High Court, seeking its intervention, saying the authorities have not settled the forest rights of the project-affected people in Godavari dis tricts now living in habi tations located up to the 41.15 meter plus contour and also below the 45.72 meters plus contour, and left the rehabilitation process incomplete.

The NGO's director Dr P. Sivaramakrishna said this was illegal and unconstitutional as the authorities started fixing dam gates and taking up other works which might result in an impound ing of water. This would seriously affect the peo-ple. The petitioner wanted the court to issue an order against taking up any construction activity for the Polavaram project that could lead to impounding of water, as this would resulting in displacement of people in 371 villages/habita-

YSRC DEFENDS CID SENDING NOTICE TO NAIDU IN LAND SCAM

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

The YSRC has defended is-

suing of notice to N. Ch-

andrababu Naidu in Amaravati assigned lands case. Speaking to media here, civil supplies minister Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao alias Nani said the

tion. It will do justice to Dalits, whose lands had been deceptively taken Chandrababu Naidu. Ňani asserted that the goal of YSRC government is to do justice to all sections of people.

firmly deal with corrup-

Ruling party legislator from Mangalagiri Alla

pointed out that the TD leaders had acquired lands assigned to Dalits in Amaravati at throwaway prices.

Then Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu also played a role by issuing a government order allowing assigned lands to come under the Land

LS SEAT

Suspense continues over BJP candidate even after Jana Sena sacrifices seat; Cong yet to take decision

YSRC fields Dr Gurumurthy as candidate for Tirupati bypoll

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, MARCH 16

Soon after the Election Commission released the notification for the byelection to the Tirupati (SC) Lok Sabha constituency, the ruling YSRC announced Dr M. Gurumurthy as the party candidate.

The byelection was necessitated after the death of YSRC MP Balli Durga Prasad in September last The Opposition

Telugu Desam was the first to announce its candidate — Panabaka Laks-hmi. The BJP has not yet named its candidate. Dr Gurumurthy is a ph-

ysiotherapist by professi-on and associated closely with Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy during his Praja Sankalpa Yatra. Even before the ruling party had officially announced his name, Dr Gurumurthy had opened his office in the city and was



seeking their support.

and was actively meeting party She has inaugurated the party's parliamentary office in Tirupati

Panabaka Lakshmi is a ders and different groups four-time MP and former in the seven Assembly seg-Union minister, lost the ments which constitute 2019 Lok Sabha election on a TD ticket. She has inauthe Tirupati constituency, gurated the party's parlia-

mentary office in Tirupati and completed a round of Parirakshana Yatra', mulled by the TD to protest against the spate of attacks on temples, She has toured all Assembly segments. On the other hand, the

BJP could only convince its alliance Jana Sena after a long time to field its own candidate. There is confusion over who the BJP candidate could be. BJP supporters expect th-

retired IAS officer, would be fielded in view of the state leaders forwarding his name to the central leadership. However, inquiries revealed the names of a few more persons who are in race for the BJP ticket: Karnataka former chief secretary Ratna Prabha, former central services officer Krishna Prasad and local leaders

Munikrishnaiah, Dr D.

Sree Hari Rao.

at Dasari Srinivasulu, a

The Congress has not yet made any announcement on its candidate but the six-time MP and CWC special invitee Dr Chinta Mohan started campaigning a couple of days ago. Meanwhile, Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan said the party had sacrificed the seat for BJP. This has apparently dampened the spirits of his party workers, who are openly venting their anger over social media.

AMC may have mayor

DC CORRESPONDENT

ANANTAPUR, MARCH 16

Ruling YSRC high command is understood to be looking for a suitable candi-

date from the minority com-

munity for electing him as

mayor of Anantapur Municipal Corporation

In this regard, speculation is rife that M. Vasim Saleem, corporator from

38th Division, could bag the

post. However, members

from other communities are also contending to be the mayoral candidate of the

Chavva Rajasekhar Reddy,

senior leader and close aide of late Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy's family, is making

serious efforts to convince

party high command about

his candidature. He had ear-

lier tried his luck to become

(AMC).

ruling party.

from minority community

general

justice to him.

LIVE-IN COUPLE **ENDS LIFE IN**

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, MARCH 16

A couple, supposedly in a livein relationship, has allegedly committed suicide at a lodge in Renigunta town near Tirupati. The deaths came to light on Tuesday morning after the hotel staff sensed a foul smell and informed the

police about the incident. According to police, the duo was identified as Venkat Goud, 35, a native of Venkatagiri in Nellore district but had been residing in Tirupati for the last 15 odd years and Anitha, 31, a resident of Satyana-rayana Puram in Tirupati. They both were fruit vendors.

The couple were in a live-in relationship, as per the family members of Venkat Goud. They took two separate rooms in the lodge two days ago. According to CI Anju Yadav, Venkatesh was found to have consumed pesticides and committed suicide, while Anitha was found to have hanged herself to death in her room.

The police have registered a case, and further probe is underway. They have sent the bodies for autopsy and have contacted their family members for further investigation. Police are trying to find out

TENDER PANEL FOR LIQUOR, BEER **RECONSTITUTED**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

The state government has reconstituted a tender committee to be headed by the retired high court judge justice A. Gopala Reddy as its chairman to finalise the tenders for procurement of IMFL, foreign liquor and beer.

The state government issued an order here on Tuesday to reconstitute the tender committee with the chairman as its head and two others as its members. Retired IAS officer D. Varaprasad and chartered accountant Marideswara Rao Kasi Reddy to serve as members of the committee.

The tender committee is mandated to scrutinise the offers/tenders received by the AP State Beverages Corporation Limited/commissioner of Prohibition and Excise on behalf of the government and negotiate with the offers. It has to recommend the price of various liquor brands to the APSBCL for procurement of IMFL, foreign liquor and beer. The tender the task of fixation of price for such products/brands as and when referred to it by the Board during the course of Rate Contract Year. The Board of APSBCL is permitted to refer to the committee such cases that do not fall within the guidelines laid down by the tender committee for fixation of the price of IMLF, foreign liquor and beer.

FUNDS FOR AP'S EDU INSTITUTIONS

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Narasaraopet MP Srikrishna Devarayalu sought the Union government to allot required funds for educational institutions of AP, which were sanctioned under the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014. Addressing during a discus-

sion on education budget in the Parliament on Tuesday, he said that Central Government had given an IIT, IIIT, NIT, IIM, IISER, Central Petroleum University, Agricultural University Tribal University, NIDM to AP. He said that sadly, not even a single university except for AIIMS is functioning from its permanent campus. He stated that the fund utilisation for these Universities has been consistently low, and for Central University, AP, only ₹83 crore have been allocated since 2018-19, which show the poor allocation of funds.

MP Devarayalu lamented that the education needs of Andhra Pradesh's students been continuously ignored. He stated that the students were in senior second-ary school when these institutes were promised. He further stated that these students had finished their higher education, but the Institutes are not completely functional. He sought the Union government to give a timeline about when these Institutes will be fully functional and further hoped to fulfil their demand for the release of required funds without pending.

Groundwater levels up by 4.01 metres in Nellore dist

The rainfall was 1,305 mm as against the normal rainfall of 1,015 mm

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, MARCH 16

Heavy rains during the water year 2020-2021 contributed to the increase of groundwater level to 4.43 metres as of February 2021 as against 8.44 metres in February last year at SPSR Nellore dis-

During the water year, the rainfall was 1,305 mm as against the normal

date from June last year. The groundwater department has disclosed these details in the backdrop of the weeklong

Golden

Celebrations of the Department scheduled between March 16 and 22. According to the department, Piezo Meters have been installed at 135 loca-

tions in SPSR Nellore dis-

trict under a national

Jubilee

Employees from various Public Sector Banks display placards during a protest meeting against the central

government move on the privatization of Public Sector Banks near GVMC Gandhi Statue junction in

State reports 261 Covid cases

Krishna, 28

Anantapur, 20 in Kurnool, 11 in Nellore, 10 in Kadapa, seven in

Srikakulam, three in

West Godavari and zero

cases in Vizianagaram.

With regard to the cumulative active Covid-

19 cases, Chittoor con-

tinued to be the worst

hit with 484 followed by

214 in Krishna, 193 in

East Godavari, 154 in Guntur, 120 in

Visakhapatnam, 72 in

Prakasam, 66 each in

six

Godavari,

Prakasam,

No new Covid-19

and the death toll

The state health

authorities discharged

125 Covid-19 patients

while undergoing treat-

ment and 1,579 are still

Among daily cases of

Coronavirus infections,

Guntur reported the

highest of 41, followed

by 39 in Visakhapatnam,

active with the virus.

deaths were reported,

remained unchanged at

rainfall of 1,015 mm to • Anyone possessing smartphone can access the information on water levels through Piezo meters from a website http://www.apwrims.ap. gov.in or http://apsgwd.ap.gov.in

> level Hydrology Project to detect the groundwater Before the advent of

Piezometers, groundwater wing used to depend on one among the potable water wells in each area to study the water levels. There were 79 such wells in the district before the Hydrology project was launched.

Anyone possessing smartphone can access the information on water levels through Piezo meters from a website http://www.apwrims.ap.g

http://apsgwd.ap.gov.in or CM dashboard http://core.ap.gov.in

information water levels would help study the short term and long term changes in the water levels and identify the areas affected by the groundwater and contain the situation, groundwater department officials

CHARGESHEETS SERVED ON 41

Chargesheets were served

the case will begin.

Meanwhile, one of the accused in the case G. Durga Rao hailing from Ainavilli in East Godavari, attempted to commit suicide by consuming pesticide. However, he survived

 Tuni MLA Dadisetti Raja alleged that they were implicated in the false case

ACCUSED IN TUNI

The accused, including Mudragada accused in the case.

the attempt and attended

TRAIN BURNING

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

to all the 41 accused in the train burning case in Tuni when they appeared for hearing before the seventh metropolitan magistrate court on Tuesday.

Kapu leau. Padmanabham, Tuni MLA Dadisetti Raja and others, appeared before Judge K. Suresh Babu. However, the defence lawyer Ventrapragada Uma Maheswari moved a petition under Rule 37 of Criminal Rules of Practice, seeking the court permission to allow only a select few accused to be present before it for hearing instead of all the

The court accepted it and posted the next hearing to April 6, when the trial in

the court hearing.
Later, the Tuni MLA
Dadisetti Raja alleged that they were implicated in the false case of the train burning, which occurred on 31 January 2016 near Tuni in East Godavari.

of the train hurning

Sacrifices of Potti Sriramulu recalled

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL, MARCH 16

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Andhra Pradesh regis-

tered 261 fresh Covid-19

cases and no death in

the last 24 hours.

The state health authorities reported on Tuesday that out of 23,417 samples tested.

261 persons were infect-

ed with Covid-19. Out of

a total number of

1,45,80,783 samples test-

ed so far in the state,

8,92,269 persons were

found infected with the

virus and of them,

observed the birth anniversary of Potti Sriramulu on Tuesday at Collectorate in the city. The district collector, along with officials, gar-landed the statue of Potti Sriramulu at Children Park and floral tributes were paid to mark the occasion. District collector G. Veera Pandian called upon the people to emulate high ideals espoused with the great leader of Potti Sriramulu,

DC CORRESPONDENT

ANANTAPUR, MARCH 16

Anantapur

against

Protests have been wit-

nessed in several parts of

against ruling party MLA

from Dharmavaram over

SC/ST and revenue

employees associations,

MRPS and several other

organisations have resent-

ed the comments made by

The Dharmavaram legis-

lator had accused collector

Gandham Chandrudu for

being the cause for disputes

hetween different castes in

Chillavaripalli village of

The controversy arose

after district administra-

tion denied permission

for taking out a proces-

sion from a temple with

the YSRC MLA.

Tadimarri mandal.

Gandham Chandrudu.

Venkatrami Reddy

adverse remarks

district

collector

The district administration

who sacrificed his life for the formation of Andhra Pradesh and reach targeted goals by following moral val-

Meanwhile he life sacrifice of Potti Sriramulu for a separate state to Telugu speaking people was recalled during his 120th birth anniversary celebrations in Ongole and Nellore. Prakasam collector Pola Bhaskar said Sriramulu was taken up the agitation, upset with the discrimination being faced by Telugu speaking people in

Protests held over MLA's

comments against collector

Mahashivratri. The dis-

pute was over Boya com-

munity making tradition-

al offerings on a horse to Lord Kata Koteswara

Swamy. This dispute has

been going on since past

six years between the

same Boya community

but belonging to different

villages. To avoid the con-

troversy, the collector

ordered cancellation of

Dharmavaram MLA's

outburst against the collector came following can-

cellation of the celebra-

tion. Venkatrami Reddy

went on to allege that the

officer was not consider-

ing recommendations of

MLAs, MPs and even the

district minister from the

Revenue

Employees Association condemned the legisla-

tor's comments against

SC/ST

BC community.

the celebration itself.

idols on the next day of the district collector who,

20 E-BIKES LAUNCHED AT ZOO PARK

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, MARCH 16

Twenty e-bikes were launched for the benefit of visitors at Indira Gandhi Zoological Park here Tuesday.

Principal chief conservator forests N. Prateep Kumar launched the e-bikes at the zoo premises to prevent noise pollu-

it said, was working for

welfare of people. "The

adverse comments show

there is no protection for a

collector and district mag-

istrate. How can lower

level revenue officials

then expect security," the

association state unit

Rayalaseema zonal in

Babu and others asked.

charge A. Nithyananda

The association demand

ed that the MLA tender

apology to the collector.

threatened that they will

otherwise stage a protest

opposite the MLA's resi-

activists set fire to the

employees staged protests

in all parts of the district

by wearing black badges.

effigy as Revenue

Rao,

leaders

president

Madhusudhan

Association

Meanwhile,

Uravakonda.

dence.

Farmers demand state to procure all paddy varieties

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, MARCH 16:

Kurnool, 60 in Kadapa,

59 in Srikakulam, 53 in Nellore, 22 in West Godavari and 16 in

Covid-19

health

Vizianagaram.

The

new

deaths were reported,

and the death toll

remained unchanged at

state

authorities discharged

125 Covid-19 patients

after recovery in the last

24 hours. AP conducted Covid-19

tests on 2,73,048 samples

per one million popula-

tion and registered a

Farmers Associations demanded the state government purchase MTU 1010 variety of paddy stocks directly from the farmers during a round table meeting held at Nellore on Tuesday.

The meeting was held in the backdrop of harvesting in progress concerning paddy cultivated in about eight lakh acres this year in the district.

The participants felt that the guidelines on paddy procurement are not followed properly at the 200 odd Paddy Purchase Centres established in the district by the administration. They alleged that the lack of coordination between Rythu Bharosa Kendra and the PPCs have been causing inconvenience to the farmers.

farmers also found fault with the agriculture, marketing, and civil supplies departments for not

addressing their prob-lems of paddy stocks lying with them.

The difficulties highlighted by the farmers during the meet include the shortage of gunny bags and rejection of paddy under the pretext of high humidi ty levels in paddy. They alleged that 100-150 kg of paddy is levied per putty (850 kg), citing excess humidity in the

The farmers said they are forced to dispose of the stock for meagre prices because of a lack of storage facilities.

Lamenting over the PPCs stand against procuring MTU 1010 variety of paddy, citing the government's directions, farmers associations appealed to the officials to resolve the issue.

President of Rythu Sanghala Samakhya A.V. Ramanaiah Naidu, AP Rythu Sangham executive body members P. Sriramulu, B. Venkat-eswarlu, Radhakrishna Naidu

FARMERS' BID TO STALL SURVEY FOR BHOGAPURAM AIRPORT

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, MARCH 16

Farmers tried to stall the land survey for developing Bhogapuram airport in Vizianagaram district on Monday.

Learning about the arrival of revenue officials for conduct of survev for acquisition of land for developing the airport, farmers from Byreddipalem Mudasarlapeta lages, arrived there in large numbers.

Chief General Manager (Contracts), NMDC Limited. Hyderabad, Fax No. +91 040- 23534746, Tel No. +91 040-23532800, email: steelcontracts@nmdc.co.ir

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5Posts, Contact With 19th-March-Proces &Accumulators Pvt Ltd, 59A

also in the race for mayor's post. He had tasted defeat twice from Anantapur Assembly segment as TD candidate. Subsequently, he shifted loyalties to YSRC six years ago and tried for urban Assembly seat under

Kapu quota. He has now

YSRC candidate from the Anantapur Urban constituency. With mayor's post

of Anantapur allotted to

Rajasekhar Reddy is hoping

Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan

Mohan Reddy will now do

Another leader Mahalakshmi Srinivas, who

is from Balija community, is

category.

been elected as corporator from 25th division and hopes to become the mayor. Yet another corporator Kogatam Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy is wishing to become the mayor.



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For further clarification, the following can be contacted.

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Chronicle

17 MARCH 2021

Competitive, compulsive: TN's 'poll freebie' culture

In Tamil Nadu the promise of freebies mark poll time and much of governance seems to revolve around delivering on populist measures that sustain vote banks favouring either of the Dravidian majors. The 2021 polls, slated for April 6, have triggered an even more frenetic push to promise freebies by the ruling AIADMK and the Opposition DMK, parties that have established a virtual duopoly in the 234-seat Asseathed. The freebie culture has been ingrained in the psyche of the people of Tamil Nadu since the mid-1960s when the DMK came to power on top of a promise of three *padis* (measuring roughly 4.5 kg) of rice for a rupee, later watered down to one kg for a rupee due to financial constraints.

The 2021 freebie promise has been the most extensive on record with AIADMK offering a washing machine for each of about two crore families, besides a solar stove to go with the mixer grinder, fans and other house hold goods that went towards fulfilling Jayalalithaa's concept of easing the burden of housewives and working women of chores at home and winning them over. Besides white goods, lap-

There is even a promise of monetising housewives' work in the manifesto of fringe political player Kamal Haasan's party, which is to show how the aim for votes also somehow serves the purpose of creating a social net buttressed by health insurance and an almost free lunch that is nearly unique

tops for students are free as well as data Consider the promise of ₹1,500 a month for women, free TV cable service and affordable housing for the needy and it completes a comprehensive household package including free rations, condiments, spices and festival hampers that should ease lives. And for livelihoods there is an offer of one government job for each household, never mind if the government wage bill runs upwards of one lakh crore rupees

The DMK's competitive offerings include ₹1,000 for women, 75 per cent reservation in private sector jobs for locals, a year's maternity leave and food, fuel and milk subsidies. How all the freebies add up is anyone's guess as the state is already burdened with public debt of ₹4.87 lakh crore as of March 31, 2020,

on top of revenues earned from a highly industrialised state. There is even a promise of monetising housewives' work in the manifesto of fringe political player Kamal Haasan's party, which is to show how the aim for votes also somehow serves the purpose of creating a social net buttressed by health insurance and an almost free lunch that is nearly unique. There is no denying the state has been a forerunner in keeping students interested in learning in class through free eduction and midday meals.

The financial profligacy may create a burden that may never go away for seven crore people of the state. The concern for women, who constitute nearly 50 per cent of voters, does not, however, extend to political representation as the low number of seats, less than 10 per cent, allocated to them by major parties indicates. The outlier status of Tamil Nadu is further stressed as DMK and Congress promise to take state students out of the central medical entrance test NEET and emphasise their opposition to CAA as AIADMK, despite being in the NDA, has done too. Competitive freebie offers are a bizarre feature but that takes away only a little from the model welfare state Tamil Nadu has aspired to be and is in many ways

Soul-search for Sarah

o dramatic — and disturbing — have recent events been in London in an overtly police versus citizen polarity that there is a risk that the emonstrations of women, and social media interventions by thousands of them following the kidnap and murder of a 31-year old woman, Sarah Everard, may end up being narrowly compartmentalised.

The London Metropolitan Police have arrested a policeman in the kidnap-

murder case. Ms Everard was walking home from a friend's house to her own address on March 3 evening and apparently vanished. The remains of her body were found afterward. A large number of women gathered to lay flowers in her memory. The police, gathered in strength, manhandled the women,

dragging some on the floor, tackling them violently, pinning some down.

The video of this is distressing. The police trotted out banality: unlawful gathering, Covid-19 restrictions. Not a word about men police attacking a peaceful assembly of condoling women.

In India, or in countries outside Western Europe and North America, such happenings will be criticised but will not be unusual. But in Britain?

The whole catechism of an advanced capitalist, liberal democratic, order-free speech, free assembly, gender parity, right to protest- went out of the window. In citizen versus state, the state was seen to be grotesque.

The Everard story is well beyond being a common crime. It underscores violence against women in public places. According to a UN report, 70 per cent of British women complain of sexual harassment in public. The outpourings of anger, grief, even helplessness, of thousands of British women on social media in which they detail the lengths to which they go to keep themselves safe (taking longer but better-lit routes, wearing bright clothes for visibility), are compelling. In this grim background is also discernible the spirit to challenge and

change. As a movement, "Reclaim Our Streets" is catching on in Britain. There have been protest marches, one in Parliament Square. We need this in India too. Ask any girl or woman. Of course, London Police must be held to account as the police in urban India, both infamous for "institutionalised

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India needs hate crimes law on lines of Scotland



Sunanda K. Datta-Ray

Reflections

ndia, with its increasingly assertive majoritarian culture, would benefit from an equivalent of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill that the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh's Holyrood House passed last week by 82 votes to 32, following the previous day's five-hour debate when legislators considered a raft of amendments. In a nutshell, the controversial new measure will extend protection to vulnerable groups and take a far stricter view of the offence of "stirring up hatred'

As Victoria Atkins, a junior minister in the British government, said in another context recently, the minorities and marginalised communities need such protection. Such Indian groups need it far more than quotas and reservations which, as wise observers have pointed out repeatedly, create a vested interest in backwardness. Indians who would qualify under Ms Atkins's definition are Muslims, the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, Sikhs and people from the Northeast who do not fit into the common man's notion of the national stereotype. Myanmar's Rohingyas are a tragic illustration of the outsider in this sense, as were Jews and the gypsies in pre-World War II Europe.

"Through the passing of this landmark bill, Scotland's Parliament has sent a strong and clear message to victims, perpetrators, communities and to the wider society that offences motivated by prejudice will be treated seriously and will not be tolerated", declared Scotland's justice minister Humza Yousaf. Around 18 hate crimes are committed every day in the kingdom; 6,448 were recorded in 2019-20. "I am delighted Holyrood has backed this powerful legislation that is fitting for the Scotland we live in" Mr Yousaf

Although born in

Glasgow, Mr Yousaf is of Pakistani origin and can be expected to bring a measure of personal commitment to the cause of equal treatment for people of all creeds and colours. "The bill's passage has shown Holyrood at its very best — a collaborative, diverse and determined Parliament which we should all be proud of", he says. "Robust scrutiny has ensured we have met the right balance between protecting groups targeted by hate crime and respecting people's rights to free speech."

He has been at pains to reassure everyone that the new law will not try to instigate any kind of witch hunt. Nor will it curb free speech. Asked about racist jokes and drunken anecdotes, he was quick to stress that the "behaviour has to be threatening or abusive and intended to stir up trouble, so a racist joke is clearly not going to reach that threshold. There will be no prosecutions under the new law.

"If your unreconstructed uncle comes in, has too sherries Christmas dinner and says something they shouldn't do, which creates great offence to his bisexual niece, for example, that is not going to be prosecuted." He fleshed out the point by recounting an abusive tweet he had received but would ignore. "The beauty of the Hate Crime Bill is that you can say that all day long (not that I'd encourage it!) and it would not be

a criminal offence. That may seem like a

The bill anticipates religious bigotry and defangs bigots in advance by abolishing the offence of blasphemy. Actually, modern Scotland is a liberal and civilised nation which has not known any blasphemy prosecution for over 175 years. **Relations Act made** it illegal to refuse housing, jobs or services to anyone on the grounds of race or national origins. The expectation was that the law would change people's outlook, and indeed, it has been transformed.

tolerant and sensibly

The 1968 Race

lenient attitude to take. Yet, leniency can be mistaken for tacit official sanction or condonation. Nazi anti-Semitism did not spring up overnight. German and Austrian culture had a long history of anti-Semitic witticisms which may have concealed a real societal bias. Nirad C. Chaudhuri recalls a Bengali rhyme in which the people of Odisha and Bihar are presented in negative terms to illustrate insularity. Similarly, the English have "jokes" at the expense of the Scots and the Welsh. Believing laughter to be

the best antidote to hatred, the British once offered prizes to comedians who could tell jokes about their own communities. The 1968 Race Relations Act made it illegal to refuse housing, employment, or public services to anyone on the grounds of colour, race, ethnic or national origins. The deeper expectation was that the law would change people's outlook because the lawabiding British would avoid anything illegal. And, indeed, race relations and social attitudes have been completely transformed. The three Race Relations Acts (two others followed in 1976 and 2000) accomplished what the old laws could

Stirring up racial hatred has been an offence in Scottish — and British — law for decades. But the old laws were not regarded as providing adequate protection to minority groups. Hence Scotland's Hate Crime Bill was introduced in April 2020 following an independent review by Lord Bracadale, a distinguished Scottish judge, who recommended that all the old laws on the subject be consolidated into one new bill. The mea-

entities protected by the law while also expanding the list. It also identifies new "stirring up of hatred" offences that apply to all the categories age, disability, race, religion, sexual orienta-tion, transgender identity and variations in sex

characteristics — that the bill mentions. It is also noteworthy that the bill anticipates religious bigotry and defangs bigots in advance by abolishing the offence of blasphemy. Actually, modern Scotland is a lib eral, secular and civilised nation which has not known any blasphemy prosecution for more

than 175 years. But the

authorities are taking no

chances. "I look forward to over-seeing the implementa-tion of this legislation which will ensure Scotland's justice system can bring perpetrators to account and provide suffi-cient protection for individuals and communities harmed by hate crimes, Mr Yousaf promises.

There is no reason why he should be disappointed provided freedom of speech is not curbed and justice is speedy and effective. India has not forgotten the 1968 Kilvenmani massacre when 44 Dalit men, women and children were burned alive, and an appeal court acquitted the convicted murderers on the ground that landlords of their status did not commit such crimes. A new law must also punish rumour mongering about beef, killing cattle and romance across religious borders.

India demonstrates that the law by itself is simply not enough. It must also be administered by politicians of goodwill and integrity.

> The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author

India has not forgotten the 1968 Kilvenmani massacre when 44 Dalit men, women and children were burned alive, and a court acquitted the convicted murderers on the ground that landlords of their status did not commit such crimes

YSRC'S CLEAN SWEEP

The clean sweep by the

ruling YSR Congress and its large margin of vote share in the recently-held Urban Local Bodies polls is due to the speedy implementation of several welfare schemes and developmental works in record time by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy (YSRC gets 53% vote, BJP, Jana Sena gain at TD cost , DC, March 16). At the same time, the verdict shows that now expectations of the people are running high and the ruling party in AP needs to resolve vigorously the issues of 'Three Capitals of AP' and 'Visakhapatnam Steel Plant's privatisation by the Centre'. In these elections, the Jana Sena is just taking its first baby steps towards its future

Dr C. Ghanshyam Visakhapatnam

MEAN OF AMIT SHAH

It's quite mean and unbecoming on the part of home minister Amit Shah for mocking West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Baneerjee (Shah mocks Didi campaign in wheelchair, DC, March 16). After the immediate acrimonious out-burst on conspiracy theory for her injury, Mamata retracted her allegations to a mere accident caused inadvertently due to the surging crowds around her. The issue should have rest there instead of raising all sorts of sarcasm by almost all BJP stalwarts as if to push her into Abhimanyu's chakravyuh.

K. Nehru Patnaik Visakhapatnam

50 YEARS AGO IN hronicle **Hymns from Gita** over Dacca Radio

CALCUTTA, March. 16 The "Dacca Betar Kendra" for the first time in its history broadcast hymns from the Gita this morning amply substantiating Awami Leader Sheikh Mujibar Rehman's declared policy of secu-

Another was special classes for patriotic songs. One of the songs begins thus: "its your land and my land — our soil. On it together — we are to it." Another songs runs: "crossing the days of darkness, we have reached the dawn of a new day. Unity is dignity, unity is strength. Fear of the jour ney has ended. We now move fearlessly, defiantly... we are the torch bearers of a new path, we want to embrace the new day.'

Dilip Cherian Dilli Ka Babu



Fresh push for lateral entry of babus likely

Arvind year, Panagariya, former vicechief of the government Niti Aayog, wrote in his book, India Unlimited — Reclaiming the Lost Glory, that Indian babus suffered from the socialist hangover, which has slowed down the pace of reforms the Modi sarkar wishes to introduce. To support his view, he cited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative for lateral entry at the top levels of the bureaucracy. According to Mr Panagariya, babus slowed down the process to the extent that at the very end of his term only nine officers could be inducted from outside. But the government has not given

up, yet. It is making another push to induct 30 more private sector specialists into different government departments at the crucial decision-making level of joint secretaries and directors on a contract basis. The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) will shortlist

the candidates for interviews.
Prime Minister Modi has introduced the mechanism of recruiting fresh talent in the bureaucracy from the private sector during his first tenure. But the first round hasn't been the success that the government was expecting. It could recruit only nine of the 10 domain experts it had selected, and one of them, Arun Goyal, who had joined the commerce ministry as joint secretary, put in his papers barely a year later. It appears that far from changing the system, the lateral entrants are more likely to be subsumed by it. Further, a year after their appointment, the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) had issued a notice to the UPSC after a petition from whistleblower Indian Forest Service (IFoS) officer Sanjiv Chaturvedi alleged irregularities in the recruitment of three of the nine lateral entrants by the

government. The government is catching flak already. Some Opposition leaders are calling for the policy to be withdrawn. Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad has threatened to "gherao" Parliament, calling the government's move a violation of constitutional rights. Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejaswi Yadav has said that UPSC's lateral recruitment an injustice to the youth.

Will the Modi sarkar overcome the political resistance from outside and from the babus within who may try to defend their turf?

ED AND KERALA POLLS The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has reportedly registered a case against senior officials of the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) for alleged FERA violations. But things get blurred around election time when the stakes are high. Questions are being raised about the timing of the probe, with the ruling LDF claiming the ED action as a "political conspiracy" by the BJP, which is trying hard to make a dent in the

Sources say that ED has served notices to KIIFB CEO Dr K.M. Abraham, former chief secretary of Kerala, and deputy managing director Vikramjit Singh, a serving IPS officer of the Kerala cadre. As it happens, chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan is chairman of the board. Not surprisingly, therefore, the ruling party has linked the ED action to the forthcoming elec-

tions. The LDF leaders have said that the ED moved only after Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman's statements against the Board.

The Centre has denied the allegations. It is being said that ED's investigations discovered that the board earned ₹2,100 crores by issuing bonds for infra projects, but the money was used by cultural, fisheries and tourism departments. Besides, the state government issued the bonds without the Centre's permission, which violated rules

Politics, or not, the dust will only settle once the state elections are

> Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@ Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

After Waze's arrest,

BJP wants Maha

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC

State Home Minister Anil

Deshmukh by demanding

his resignation. The party

has started a campaign highlighting his 'failure'

to take action in several major crimes in the state.

The BJP on Tuesday

"#ResignAnilDeshmukh"

on Twitter saying politics in Maharashtra has been

criminalised. Citing vari-

ous crime cases, the party asked Mr Deshmukh

mentioned several cases

like a woman being burnt

Wardha district, the

lynching of Sadhus at

Palghar, the Pooja Chavan

death case in which Shiv

Sena minister Sanjay Rathod resigned, the con-

troversial speech of activist Sharjeel Usmani

at Pune etc to demand Mr

Deshmukh's resignation.

found himself in the soup

in the Ambani security scare case, in which an explosive-laden vehicle

was found near the indus-

Antillia on February 25.

The vehicle belonged to auto parts dealer

Mansukh Hiren, who was

later found dead in a

creek in Thane district on

March 5. The National

Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested Mr

Waze on March 13 in con-

nection with its probe of

However, Maharashtra

trialist's

Deshmukh has

residence

hashtag

started

MUMBAI, MARCH 16

SHORT

AMARINDER TO **MEET SIDDHU AGAIN**

Chandigarh, March 16: Chief Amarinder Singh is expected to meet former minister Navjot Singh Sidhu over lunch on Wednesday, amid specula-tions that the cricketer-turned-politician might be given an important role ahead of the 2022 state polls, official sources said.

This will be the second luncheon meeting between the leaders. The first such meeting had taken place in November last, seen as the first step to break the ice between the two

Singh had then said that he and Sidhu would continue to

have cordial meetings.
Another meeting between the two leaders assumes significance as the Congress central leadership has been trying to rehabilitate Sidhu who had resigned as minister after he was divested of the Local Bodies portfolio in 2019.

Congress leader and Punjab affairs in-charge Harish Rawat has been pushing for an important position for Sidhu. Rawat had met Sidhu on March 10. After the meeting, Sidhu had said, "was summoned by Harish Rawat ji.

Had a cordial meeting."
For the past several weeks, party circles have been abuzz with the speculation that Sidhu could be re-inducted into the state cabinet with some key portfolios. There have also been talks of the possibility of appointing him as party state unit president.

NINE SAD MLAS FROM PUNJAB

Chandigarh, March 16: Nine Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) legislators from Punjab have been booked for their alleged attempt to gherao and confront Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar outside the Assembly here last week, officials said on Tuesday.

The booked legislators are former ministers Sharanjit Singh Dhillon and Bikram Singh Majithia, Baldev Singh Khaira, Sukhwinder Kumar, Harinder Pal Singh Chandumajra, Kanwarjit Singh Barkandi, Manpreet Singh Ayali, Gurpartap Singh Wadala and N.K. Sharma.

The Shiromani Akali Dal termed the registration of case against its MLAs an "unfortunate and undemocrat-

ic step". The Chandigarh police registered the case against the SAD MLAs under relevant IPC secions including 186 (obstruct ing public servant in discharge of public functions), 323 (punishment for voluntarily causing hurt) and 341 (punishment wrongful for restraint), according to a copy of the FIR.

The SAD legislators had confronted Khattar outside the Assembly hall on March 10 and had demanded that a resolution be passed in the Haryana Assembly against the Centre's three new farm laws. Thereafter, the Haryana Assembly secretariat had decided to lodge an FIR against the group of Punjab MLAs for allegedly misbehaving with Khattar.

MAJOR FOREST FIRE RAGES ON IN ODISHA

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, MARCH 16

A major fire broke out on Tuesday at Charikharia forest adjacent to Chandaka Wildlife Sanctuary on the outskirts Bhubaneswar. Fire services personnel rushed to the spot and started dousing the flame, which was reportedly spread ing quickly towards the sanctuary. The reason behind the outbreak of fire was yet to be ascertained.

Similar fire was reported at Barunei hill forest in Khordha district, couple of days ago.

The forest fire in the Similipal National Park in Mayurbhanj district was brought under control few days ago, thanks to rainfall in the region. Reports from Similipal National Park in Mayurbhanj district said that though wildfire had been contained at most of the places, fire incidents were reported from Podadiha, Dubrigarh, Jarada, Manikpur, Balma and Barehipani. The SNP which also houses the Similipal National Tiger Reserve has reported wildfire from more than 500 spots in the past two weeks. At most of the places, the wildfire got doused because a few spells of rain on March 10.



West Bengal CM and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, sitting on a wheelchair, addresses an election campaign rally ahead of Assembly polls in

Dissent over tickets in **Bengal has Shah worried**

Takes party leaders in WB to task over low turn out in poll rallies

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, MARCH 16

A growing and fierce revolt within the BJP over the distribution of tickets Congress turncoats for the Assembly election in West Bengal and low turnouts in the party's poll cam-paign rallies forced Union home minister Amit Shah instead of New Delhi from neighbouring Assam qui-etly on Monday night and pull up the party leaders for their role during a "marathon class'

Finishing his two-state visit on Monday afternoon, Shah went to attend a programme in the evening in Assam from where he was supposed to return to the capital later. However, he flew from Guwahati to Kolkata, checked into one of the two hotels, which have become favourite destinations for the party leaders for poll preparations in the city, at Rajarhat and chaired a

sources, he came down heavily on the party func-

AASU TO HOLD

ANTI-CAA STIR

ON MARCH 20

MANOJ ANAND | DC

GUWAHATI, MARCH 16

Just a week before the first phase of polling, the influential All

Assam students' Union

(Aasu) has announced a

mega statewide anti-

Informing that Aasu

activists are going to

take out mega bike ral-

lies across the state to

educate and remind the

voters about the CAA

introduced, Aasu presi-

dent Dipanka Nath told

reporters, "Our aim is to make all, especially those living in the rural

areas, aware of the dra-

conian CAA introduced

by the BJP government.

We will reach out to all

and make them aware of how the CAA is a threat

to the identity and cul-

The students body has

also decided to issue

directives to its mem-

bers at the state execu-

tive meeting on March

21, to indirectly cam-

paign in favour of the

two new regional par-

ties, the Assam Jatiya

Parishad and Raijor Dal,

for the Assembly elec-

Aasu, which claims to

be an 'apolitical' organi-

sation, for the first time

took a 'political stand'

by backing the forma-tion of AJP to oust the

BJP-AGP combine from

power. The movement

against the controver-

sial CAA, which started

in December 2019, gave

rise to a call for a new

political party.

ture of Assam.'

protest on March 20.

CAA

Amendment

(Citizenship

Act)

P.C. Chacko to join NCP

can't think of becoming a

member of the CPM or the

BJP. I wish to be with a

party which has Congress

culture. And while being in that party I would like

to extend support to the

Chacko, 74, quit the party on Wednesday in protest against the intense groupism in the organisa-

tion. Chacko, 74, who has

held various crucial posi-

tions in the party, alleged

that there was no internal

in

Left Front," he said.

ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 16

leader P.C. Veteran Chacko who quit Congress last week is all set to join NCP. Chacko, who arrived in New Delhi on Tuesday, called on NCP supremo Sharad Pawar to discuss his entry into the party. Pawar's party is a constituent of LDF in Kerala. Before meeting Pawar he told mediapersons.

Hastings, which saw

also, and the districts.

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, MAR 16

The Shivraj government

on Tuesday announced to

do away with eggs and introduce milk in the

menu of midday meals

provided in the anganwadi Centres in

Madhya Pradesh to com-

bat malnutrition among

The decision taken by the state cabinet held here

under the chairmanship

of chief minister Shivraj

Singh Chouhan overrides

the proposal mooted dur-

ing the Kamal Nath gov-

ernment to add eggs in the

menu of anganwadi mid-

The Opposition BJP had

children.

tionaries, who painted a also expressed displeasure rosy picture of poll prepaover thin crowd at Circus rations to the top leader-ship, and sought their explanation over massive Ground in Jhargram which he had to address virtually from Kharagpur. protests by the rank and He wanted to know the file against distribution of reason behind the flop tickets to the former TMC leaders throughout the day in the city including the party's election office

democracy

show, sources said. The prominent TMC turncoats, who are in the eye of storm in the BJP for getting tickets, include according to demonstration on Tuesday Rajib Banerjee at Domjur ten bigger than the requ-

then accused the Kamal Nath government of attempting to change the dietary habits of children

belonging to a particular

community by adding

eggs in the menu of mid-

day meals in the anganwa-

The party had then

warned that it might lead

to cultural conflict in the

state. The state cabinet

approved the proposal to provide milk to children

in the age group of 3 and 6

in the anganwadi centres

thrice a week, state home

Mishra told reporters

to shun eggs and intro-

duce milk in anganwadi midday meal has drawn

Mr Chouhan's decision

Narottam

di centres.

minister

Rabindranath tacharya at Singur and Ghoshal in Besides Uttarpara. Besides demands of changing candidates at three more constituencies in South 24 Parganas and some other

He alleged seats had

been divided between the

"A" and "T" groups led by former chief minister Oommen Chandy and opposition leader Ramesh

Chennithala respectively.

The two factions had com-

plete control over ticket

allotment for each constituency. Under these cir-

cumstances there was no

point in continuing in the Congress, he had stated

after resigning from the

The sources pointed out that the number of ticket aspirants in BJP has gotand his aide Mohit Ghanti ired number of candidates Mr Shah, sources added, at Panchla in Howrah, while people in rural areas

criticism from child health experts as well as the Opposition Congress.

"Availability of milk cou-

pled with shelf-life of the

liquid food raises question

mark over feasibility of

the decision to add milk in the menu of midday meals

in the anganwadi cen-

tres", child health expert

Sachin Kumar Jain has

also slammed the Shivraj

government for reversing

the decision taken by the

Kamal Nath government

to add eggs in the menu of

'Egg is known to be a

anganwadi midday meal.

high protein diet. Egg in

diet can effectively combat

malnutrition among chil-

dren. Milk is not a com-

Congress

Opposition

MP govt decides to include milk

in anganwadi meals, not eggs

districts have been raised.

Amit Shah is frustrated as his rallies have registered poor turnout. Instead of running the country, he is sit-ting in Kolkata and hatching conspiracies to harass TMC leaders. What do they want? Do they want to kill me?"

> — MAMATA BANERJEE, West Bengal CM

remain busy in farming, instead of political rallies, this time of the year. But their arguments only fell flat before the former BJP chief. On Tuesday morning when BJP president J.P. Nadda landed in the city on a campaign tour, he also attended the second

While leaving the city later, Shah summoned Ghosh, Roy and others to Delhi at night for picking up suitable candidates for

plete nutrient. The Kamal

Nath government had introduced eggs as well as

milk in the menu of

anganwadi midday meal,

leaving it to the benefici-

aries to choose between

menu of anganwadi mid-

day meal, then an alterna-

tive of compensatory

value should have been added in the menu

of anganwadi midday

meal to combat malnutri-

tion among children"

Congress spokesman here

He accused the state BJP

government of unneces-

sarily dragging religion

and culture in a sensitive

matter like this for politi-

Bhupendra Gupta said.

If egg is dropped in the

them.

round of meeting by Shah.

Justice Maheshwari and Justice Krishna Murari, in the order passed on Tuesday

request for adjournment will be entertained'

HM's removal **NIA COURT REJECTS WAZE'S** After the arrest of police officer Sachin Waze in the industrialist Mukesh Ambani security scare case, the Maharashtra BJP has now targeted **PLEA ON ARREST**

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, MARCH 16

Controversial Mumbai police officer Sachin Waze could not get any relief from the special NIA court, as the judge dismissed his contention that being a police officer he was protected from arrest without a prior sanction.

The court, however, has partially allowed his plea seeking presence of his what action he has taken in these cases so far. The saffron party has lawyer during interrogation but the lawyer could remain present at the distance where he can see Waze but his questioning alive at Hinghanghat in is inaudible.

Waze's lawyer contended that as per a notifica-tion May 23, 1979 consent is required under section 45 (1) of the CrPC hence he demanded his arrest be declared illegal. One of the other reasons seeking his arrest as illegal was that he was not produced before the court within 24 hours of his arrest.

NCP chief Jayant Patil has ruled out the possibility of Mr Deshmukh's resignation. "There is no question of home minister being replaced. There is no cabinet reshuffle happening," Mr Patil said. Action would be taken against those found guilty in the case of the recovery of SUV as well as the mysterious death Thane businessman Mansukh Hiran,

SC to hear plea by Zakia on April 13

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

The Supreme Court on Tuesday fixed April 13 to hear a plea by Zakia Ehsan Jafri challenging the clean chit to the then Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi and oth-Investigation Team (SIT) for their alleged inaction in 2002 post-Godhra riots including attack on Gulberg society.

Zakia Ehsan Jafri widow of Congress leader and former member of parliament Ehsan Jafri has challenged October 5, 2017 order of Gujarat High Court upholding the magistrate court order rejecting Jafri's protest petition challenging the SIT report giving clean chit to top political leaders and state functionaries for the alleged larger conspiracy. Ehsan Jafri was among

the 68 people killed at Gulberg Society in Ahmedabad on February 28, 2002. Justice A.M. Khanwilkar heading a bench also comprising Dinesh "Put this case for hearing on April 13. No

The hearing on Zakia Jafri's petition that is pending before the top court since 2018 was adjourned to April 13

ior lawyers are busy in the Maratha reservation case being heard by a 5judge Constitution Bench. The SIT had filed the closure February 8, 2012, giving a clean chit to Modi and 63

after senior counsel Kapil

Sibal told the court to

hear the matter sometime

in April since several sen-

government officials, saving there was "no prosecutable evidence" against The SIT in earlier hearings while raising preliminary objection to Zakia Jafri plea had opposed it

others, including senior

saying "it is an issue of facts and for how long it can go on. The court has also been told in the earlier hearings that there were con-

current findings of the magistrate court and the High Court as well rejecting Zakia Jafri's plea. The SIT was set up by

the top court, and it had come to the conclusion that no case was made out and the same was accepted by the magistrate and reiterated by the High Court. The petition by Zakia

has said that the High Court refused to interfere with the magistrate court order "despite large amount of documentation and contemporaneous evidence that existed which made out a triable case against all

FIGHTING I CORONA India records 24,492 fresh cases of Coronavirus in last one day

Covid cases up, night curfew returns in MP, Guj the highest number of

BHOPAL, MAR 16

Madhya Pradesh governannounced other cities in the state.

Chief minister Shivra Singh Chouhan ordered the measures after reviewing the pandemic situation in the state at a high level

Tuesday. However, the duration of night curfew was vet to be decided.

ordered closure of shops after 10 pm in the cities of Jabalpur, Gwalior, Ujjain, Ratlam, Chhindwara, Burhanpur, Betul and Khargone. The government has also barred celebration of Holi in public, but allowed the revelers to observe the festival individually. Madhya Pradesh has reported 797 fresh coronavirus positive cases in the last 24 hours taking

Ahmedabad, 10 pm to 6 am, an official statement said. The curfew timings earlier were from 12 am to 6 am.

official meeting here on the tally of cases to on Tuesday in the core England will be played Tuesday. However, the 2,69,391. The death toll has committee meeting of the without any spectators at committee meeting of the task-force coronavirus headed by Chief Minister Vijay Rupani.

The state government has decided to impose curfew from 10 pm to 6 am in view of the increasing cases of coronavirus," the government said in the statement. The restrictions will be in place till March 31, it added. The Gujarat Cricket

Association (GCA) on Monday said the next T20 matches between India

without any spectators at the Narendra Modi Stadium here in view of rising cases of coron-

Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation also asked eateries, restaurants and malls in eight wards of the city to close down at 10 pm.

Gujarat on Monday reported 890 new cases of Covid-19, taking its tally to 2,79,097. Last month, the was reporting around 200 cases daily.

Surat has been reporting

Covid-19 cases in the state, followed by Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Rajkot, as per official data.

Meanwhile, India has recorded 24,492 fresh cases of the coronavirus in the last one day out of which 15,051 cases are from Maharashtra while 1,818 from Punjab and 1,054 from Kerala. Cases have also started rising in Delhi and Gujarat. The number of active cases in the country has increased to more than 2.23 lakh while 131 deaths were reported.

cal mileage.

DC CORRESPONDENT

impose night curfew in Bhopal and Indore from Wednesday in the wake of sudden spurt in coronavirus cases in the state. The state government has also ordered closure of shops after 10 pm in 8

The state government

reached 3,890 in the state. Similarly, to contain the surge in Covid-19 cases,

the Gujarat government on Tuesday decided to increase the night curfew timings in four major cities of the state by two hours. The curfew will now remain in force in Surat, Vadodara and Rajkot from

The decision was taken

Monday,



TAKES

PHILIP LEAVES HOSPITAL AFTER TREATMENT

London, March 16: Britain Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, on Tuesday left King Edward VII's Hospital in central London after a month since he had been admitted there and went on to have a 'successful heart procedure".

The 99-year-old husband of Queen Elizabeth II was pictu-red being driven out in a black BMW after a 28-night stay, his longest spell in hospital. He was first admitted to the King Edward VII Hospital on Feb. 16 before moving to a National Health Service (NHS) specialist St Bartholomew's Hospital two weeks later, where he underwent a procedure for a pre-existing heart condition.

3 DIE WHEN CAR HITS 9 PEOPLE IN SAN DIEGO

San Diego, March 16: A driver plowed through a crowd on a sidewalk in downtown San Diego on Monday morning, killing three people and injur-ing six others, including two who are hospitalised in criti-

who are hospitalised in criti-cal condition, police said. The driver — whom authori-ties identified only as a 71-year-old man — appeared to be driving while impaired when his car suddenly veered off the street shortly after 9 a.m. near a community college and went up onto the sidewalk briefly before returning to the road, said San Diego Police Chief

David Nisleit.
Nisleit said the driver identified himself to police and he was arrested. Earlier police had stated that he had tried to flee. Multiple ambulances responded to the scene near

UGANDA OPPN LEADER ARRESTED

Kampala, March 16: Ugandan opposition leader Bobi Wine was arrested on Monday as he took part in a protest in the capital, according to a post on his Twitter page. The 39year-old popstar-turned-presi-dential contender last week had called on Ugandans to "rise up peacefully and unaragainst President Yoweri Museveni who won a sixth term in office following disput-

ed elections in January.
"Bobi Wine arrested as he led MPs and other leaders in a peaceful protest against the abduction, torture and murder of his supporters," said the post. Around 15 MPs and activists from Wine's National Unity Platform political party took part in the protest which was quickly halted by police officers and soldiers.

DUTCH PM'S ELECTION LEAD SHRINKS

Amsterdam, March 16: The Mark Rutte's conservative party in polls continued to shrink Tuesday according to a new survey published ahead of the second day of voting in coronavirus-affected national

Rutte's People's Party for Freedom and Democracy still retains a lead of some 10 percentage points over its nearest rival, the anti-immigration Party for Freedom led by anti-Islam firebrand Geert Wilders According to the respected Peilingwijzer survey. Rutte's party is in line to win between 34 and 38 seats in the 150-seat

lower house of parliament. On the other hand, Wilders' party is forecast to win about 17-21 seats

INDIA GIVES TRAINING AIDS TO LANKAN NAVY

Colombo, March 16: India's envoy in Sri Lanka has underlined the importance of close cooperation between the navies of the two countries as an essential part of the overall bilateral engagement, as he handed over training aids worth 22 million LKR (about ₹81.00.000) to the island natio-

n's Navy for capacity building. High Commissioner Gopal Baglay, during a visit to the Northern and Eastern Provinces, formally handed over the training aids to the Commander Eastern Naval Area of the Sri Lanka Navy at a ceremony held on Sunday at the prestigious Naval and Maritime

Academy (NMA) Trincomalee Baglay reiterated the importance of close cooperation between the two navies.

Japan to share China worry

Tokyo, March 16: Japan and the United States joined forces Tuesday to criticise China's "coerci-on and aggression" in Asia as senior ministers from both countries held their first in-person talks since President Joe Biden took office in January.

Aside from the sharp rhetoric aimed at Beijing, the meeting in Tokyo and a planned stop next in Seoul are as much an effort by the Biden administration to reassure worried allies in Asia after four years of occasionally con-frontational dealings with the Trump adminis-tration. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, after holding the so-called "two plus two" security talks with Defence Secret-ary Lloyd Austin and their Japanese counterparts — Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi — said democracy and human rights in the region are being challenged and the United States will push with its partners for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Blinken said the Biden administration is committed to work with US allies and those in the region as they face challenges from China and its ally North Korea, which is pursuing an illicit nuclear weapons programme. "We will push back if necessarv. when China uses

LEADER'S SISTER WARNS U.S.

Seoul, March 16: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's influential sister warned the United States against actions that could make it "lose sleep", state media reported Tuesday, as top Biden administration officials began a visit to key allies Tokyo and Seoul. Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Japan on Monday on their first overseas trip, aimed at rallying military alliances as a bul-wark against China and cementing a united front armed North.

-AFP

coercion or aggression to get its way," he said. In a joint statement released after the talks, the ministers shared strong worry over Beijing's human rights violations in Xinjiang, "unlawful maritime claims and activities in the South China Sea" and "unilateral action that seeks to change the status quo" over the Japan-controlled East China Sea islands that China also

Myanmarese flee martial law area

Yangon, March 16: Residents of a protest flash-point district in Myanmar's biggest city fled on flatbed trucks and tuk-tuks forces escalated the use of lethal force against anti-coup protesters, despite international appeals for restraint.

Much of the country has been in uproar since the military ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi last month, with hundreds of thousands taking to the streets to demand a return to democracy.

Police and soldiers have lets and live rounds to subdue crowds in neardaily crackdowns, along with blanket nightly internet shutdowns to stop protesters from mobilising. Monday saw fresh violence by security forces in several cities, leaving at least 20 dead, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), a local monitoring group that has been tracking arrests

and fatalities.
It followed the deadliest day so far in the six weeks since the army deposed Suu Kyi's government, with the AAPP reporting 74 killed on Sunday after the violent suppression of anti-coup unrest across

Myanmar. Many of those deaths came from the impoverished Hlaing Tharyar township in Yangon, a garment-producing area in the commercial hub mostly Chineseowned factories - several of which were razed on Sunday. The junta reacted by imposing martial law over the area and five

other townships that are home to around two million people -- more than a quarter of the sprawling city's population.

Anyone arrested there faces trial by military tribunal, with sentences ranging from three years hard labour to execution. Myanmar law expert

Melissa Crouch said the martial law declaration effectively gave complete control to military com-manders and sidelined civilian administrators "The use of martial law

is extremely troubling cant decline in the situation in Myanmar," the University of New South Wales academic said.

The AAPP said in a statement that even civilians who were not participating in anti-coup protests had died in crossfire on Monday.

By Tuesday morning, local media outlet *The* Irrawaddy published photos of residents fleeing the township, crowding onto flatbed trucks stuck in columns of snaking

Some carried their pets on the back of motorbikes, while others crammed their belongings in vinyl

bags on tuk-tuks.
"We can see the people on the roads for as far as one's eye can see," reported local outlet *Democratic*

Voice of Burma. A resident confirmed the mass exodus to AFP. saying that people wanted to leave at dawn and protesters removed makeshift barricades — erected to slow security forces down -- to let them out.

Tokyo talks: US, Sweden is latest country to stop using AstraZeneca vax

Country takes step amid reports of dangerous blood clots in some recipients

Berlin, March 16: Sweden on Tuesday became the latest European country to pause use of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine amid reports of dan-gerous blood clots in some recipients. The company and international regulators continue to say the vaccine is safe, however, and many countries else-where in the world are forging ahead with their vaccination campaigns.

The move by the Swedish Public Health Agency is pending an investigation by the European Medicin-es Agency. "The decision is a precautionary measure,' Swedish chief epidemiologist Anders Tegnell said in a statement.

Germany, France, Italy and Spain were among countries that suspended use of the vaccine on Monday. AstraZeneca's formula is one of three vaccines in use on the European continent. But the escalating concern is another setback for the European Union's vaccination drive, which has been plagued by shortages and other hurdles and is lagging well behind the campaigns in Britain and the US.

The EU's drug regulatory agency will review experts' findings on the Astra-Zeneca shot and decide whether action needs to be taken. Much of Asia has shrugged off concerns ab-out the AstraZeneca jab, with Thailand's prime minister receiving a shot at the start of the country's use of the vaccine on Tuesday. "There are people who have concerns," Prayuth Chan-ocha said after his vaccination. "But we must believe doctors, believe in our medical professionals." Thailand initially was the first country outside Europe to temporarily suspend using the AstraZeneca vaccine.

But Thailand's health authorities later decided to go ahead with it, with Prayuth and members of his Cabinet receiving the first shots. Indonesia suspended use of the vaccine



Workers clean the exterior of Bang Khae Market, after more than a hundred residents in the district tested positive for the Covid-19, in Bangkok on Tuesday.

on Monday, saying it was waiting for a full report from the World Health Organisation regarding pos-

sible side effects.
AstraZeneca has developed a manufacturing base in Asia, and the Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine maker, has been contracted by the company to produce a billion doses of the vaccine for developing nations.

Hundreds of millions
more are to be manufactu-

red this year in Australia, Japan, Thailand and Sou-th Korea. AstraZeneca has said there have been 37 reports of blood clots out more than 17 million people vaccinated in the 27-country EU and Britain. The drugmaker said there is no evidence the vaccine carries an increased risk of clots. In fact, it said the incidence of clots is much lower than would be expected to occur naturally in a general population

WHO: Vaccine rollout unaffected by concerns Geneva, March 16: The "I would like to say this

UN health agency said its global rollout of Coronavirus vaccines remains unaffected even as a growing number of countries, especially in Europe, suspended use of AstraZeneca's vaccine on Monday amid concerns about blood clots in some people who recei-

red it.

The World Health Organisation says the AstraZeneca vaccines for its COV-AX programme, which is shipping vaccines mostly to low- and middle-income countries, are being produced in India and South Korea — and the suspensions have been ordered over batches made in Europe. "We understand these are precautionary measures," WHO assistant director-general Mariangela Sito countries from other regions that are not Europe: That the vaccines (at issue) so far are from European manufacturing not vaccines that are provided through the COVAX facility." Germany, France, Italy and Spain joined the growing list of mostly European countries — starting with Denmark last week — that temporarily halted use of the AstraZe neca vaccine in recent days to investigate cases of

Others include Thailand and Congo. "This does not necessarily mean these events are linked to vacci-nation," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a news

blood clots that occurred

after vaccination.

GERMANY TO POSTPONE VAX VIRTUAL SUMMIT

Berlin, March 16: The German government said Tuesday it will postpone a virtual summit on the country's vaccination eff-orts until after the European Medicines Agency has met over reports of dangerous blood clots in some recipients of Astra-

Zeneca's Covid-19 vaccine. A growing number of European countries including Germany, France, Italy and Spain - suspended use of the AstraZeneca vaccine on Monday, though the company and international regulators say there is no evidence the shot is to blame. The German government and the country's 16 state governors had planned to meet Wednesday for a vir-

HAALAND, 1ST NATIVE, OKAYED **AS INTERIOR SECY**

Washington, March 16: The Senate has confirmed New Mexico Rep. Deb Haaland as interior secretary, making her the first Native American to lead a Cabinet department and the first to lead the federal agency that has wielded influence over the nation's trib es for nearly two centuries. Haaland was confirmed by a 51-40 vote on Monday, the narrowest margin yet for a Cabinet nomination by President

Joe Biden. Four Republicans voted yes: Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan of Alaska, Susan Collins of Maine and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina. Democrats and tribal groups hailed Haaland's confirmation as historic, saying her selection means that Indigenous people — who lived in North America before the United States was created — will for the first time see a Native American lead the powerful

Will block Twitter in a month, threatens Russia

drug sales.

Moscow, March 16: Russian authorities said Tuesday they would block Twitter in a month if it doesn't take steps to remove banned content, a move that escalates the Russian government's drawn-out standoff with social media platforms that have played a major role in amplifying dissent in Russia.

Russia's state communications watchdog, Roskomnadzor, last week announced it was slowing down the speed of uploading photos and videos to Twitter over its alleged failure to remove content encouraging suicide among children and information about drugs and child pornography. The agency said Twitter has failed to remove more than 3,000 posts with banned content, including more than 2.500 posts encouraging suicide among minors.

The platform responded by emphasizing its policy of zero tolerance for child sexual exploitation, promotion of suicide and

On Tuesday, deputy chief of Roskomnadzor Vadim Subbotin argued that Twitter still wasn't complying with the demands the Russian authorities. "Twitter doesn't react to our requests appropriately, and if things go on like this, then in a month it will be blocked, on an out-of-court basis," Subbotin told the Interfax news agency, adding that Roskomnadzor at this point "is not registering specific steps by Twitter to remove

prohibited content." Twitter did not respond immediately to an email request for comment. Authorities have criticized social media platforms that have been used to bring tens of thousands of people into the streets across Russia this year to demand the release of opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

The wave of demonstrations was the largest in years and posed a major challenge to the Kremlin. The authorities alleged social media platforms fa-

in the West Bank.

They are some of the ear-

iled to remove calls for children to join the protests. Russian President Vladimir Putin has urged police to act more to monitor social platforms and to track down those who draw the children into illegal and unsanctioned street actions." The government's efforts to tighten control of the internet social media date back to 2012, when a law allowing authorities to blacklist and block certain online content was adopted. Since then, a growing number of restrictions targeting messaging apps, websites and social media platforms have

been introduced. In 2014, authorities adopted a law requiring online services to store the personal data of Russian users on servers in Russia and have since tried to make Facebook and Twitter comply with it. Both companies have been fined, first small amounts of around \$50 and last year the equivalent of \$63,000 each. -AP

the contents safe and

intended to come back for

Organic material like the

wood used for the basket

typically decays, but this

unprecedented discovery

was preserved by the

Judean's desert's dry cli-

mate and protective condi-

Cohen added that very

little is known about the

tions in the cave, he said.

them, Cohen said



Bidya Devi Bhandari

3 NEPAL EX-PMs DON'T ATTEND ALL-PARTY MEET

Kathmandu, March 16: Nepal's three former prime ministers on Tuesday boycotted an all-party meeting called by President Bidya Devi Bhandari to discuss contemporary issues amid the political crisis that has gripped the country.

Former premiers Baburam Bhattarai, Madhav Kumar Nepal and Jhala Nath Khanal skipped the meeting called by President Bhandari at Shital Niwas, questioning her role in the row of the erstwhile Nepal Communist Party (NCP), My Republica newspaper reported. While both Khanal and Nepal belong to the rival faction of the ruling Communist Party of Nepal (UML), Bhattarai heads the federal Samajbadi Party.

They have publicly alleged that President

society that lived in the "From this ancient period, we have nothing: We Bhandari had failed to act as a custodian of the Constitution, supporting even unconstitutional moves taken by Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli who had dissolved the House of Representatives in December. PM Oli, CPN (Maoist

Centre) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda, Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba, Chairman of Janata Samajbadi Party Mahanta Thakur, and former Chairman of Council of Minister Khil Raj Regmi attended.

SIGNIFICANT | FIND | Most of the text is in ancient Greek, a widely used language at the time

Israel unearths 2K-yr-old biblical scroll fragments

Jerusalem, March 16: Israel on Tuesday unveiled fragments of a biblical scroll dating back some 2,000 years, in what experts described as the most significant such find since

the Dead Sea Scrolls. The artifacts were unearthed during excavations by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) in the Judean desert, which spans parts of southern Israel and the occupied West Bank. In a site known as the "Cave of Horrors," archaeologists found fragments of a scroll with a

Greek translation of the

Hebrew bible, the first

such find since the early

1960s. "For the first time in approximately 60 years, archaeological excavations have uncovered frag-ments of a biblical scroll," the IAA said.

Oren Ableman, an IAA curator, said parts of the same scroll from the Book hets were first discovered in the Cave of Horrors by Bedouins in the 1950s.

The Cave of Horrors took its name from the numerous skeletons found inside it and the treacher-

ous terrain nearby. Most of the text is in ancient Greek, a widely used language at the time, but the word Lord appears • OREN ABLEMAN, an IAA curator, said parts of the same scroll from the Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets were first discovered in the Cave of Horrors by Bedouins in the 1950s.

in ancient Hebrew script. Oren said that among the most striking features of the new fragments is a deviation with all other known versions of the Old Testament: in one passage, the word "gates" is replaced by the word "streets." The significance of that deviation is "what we are

trying to discover now," he said. Yosef Garfinkel, head of the Institute of Archaeology at Jerusalem's Hebrew University, described the find as "exciting," telling it could enrich the "study of the history of the Greek translation of the bible." The items were discover-

ed in a cave believed to rebelling against ba revolt. find to the extraordinary

liest biblical texts ever found. The Judea desert excavation also unearthed a cache of rare coins, a six-millennia-old skeleton of a child and a basket described by the IAA as "likely the oldest in the

have been used by Jews Romans during the failed second-century Bar Koch-

The IAA compared the

Cohen said. The woven basket was discovery of the Dead Sea found remarkably intact, Scrolls, some 900 manuscripts found between 1947

with a rock resting on its top — an indication that

world", which been car-

bon-dated to 10,500 years

after the basket was found,

IAA archaeologist Chaim

old. "I shook for days,"

can tell, and I want to be very cautious, that they are likely nomads or half-nomads," he said. — AP

area at the time.

and 1956 in the Qumran its users wanted to keep caves above the Dead Sea the contents safe and

Messi levels Xavi

record for Barca

Madrid: Lionel Messi scored a spectacular double the same night he equalled Xavi Hernandez's appearance record for Barcelona, the Argentinian inspiring his team to a 4-1 win

over Huesca on Monday. Messi tied Xavi's 767 games in all competitions for Barca and marked yet another milestone with a brilliant brace, a curling effort in the first half flying in off the crossbar before a late shot nestled in the corner.

Antoine Griezmann had earlier followed suit with another impressive shot into the top corner before Huesca pulled one back, Rafa Mir converting a doubtful penalty on the stroke

of half-time. But Messi helped Barca pull away, sending in a cross for Oscar Mingueza to head in and then scoring his second as the Catalans moved to within four points of league leaders Atletico Madrid. — AFF

Dhanalakshmi

defeats Dutee

Patiala: National record holder Dutee Chand was beaten to second place by S. Dhanalakshmi while Hima Das was disqualified after a false start in a much-anticipated women's 100m sprint final in the Federation Cup Senior **National Athletics** Championships on Tuesday. The 22-year-old Dhanalakshmi, of Tamil Nadu, took the gold by clocking 11.39 seconds ahead of Dutee (11.58) of Odisha to become the fastest woman of the championships. Another Tamil Nadu runner Archana Suseendran was third in 11.76. This was after Hima, who was running in the shorter sprint races of 100m and 200m instead of her per event 400m, was disqualified after a false start. The much-anticipated final did not live up to the expectations as Hima was shown the red card, while

Dutee and Dhanalakshmi did

not come anywhere near the

Olympic qualification mark of

11.15 seconds. — *PTI*



State chairman Allipuram Venkateshwar Reddy (left) greets Finance Minister Harish Rao at the Secretariat in Hyderabad on Tuesday, ahead of the State Budget. Mr Reddy petitioned the FM and the Chief Minister for enhanced allocation of funds for the sports department in this year's budget which would boost Telangana in sporting circles across the world.

Hockey trials for Medchal district

Hyderabad: Medchal Hockey is conducting selection trails at 4 nm on Wednesday at the Gymkhana Hockey Ground to pick the district side for the upcoming 5th Senior Women's Inter-District Tournament to be held in Hyderabad from March 26 to 28. Further details contact G. Yashwanth on phone number 9866711724.

Live on TV

India vs South Africa women: Fifth ODI from 9 am on Star Sports 2

All England Open: Round of 32 matches from 2.30 pm on Star Sports 2 HD, Star Sports 3

FOOTBALL

Italian League: Torino vs Sassuolo from 7.30 pm on Sony Ten 2; Juventus vs Napoli from 11.15 pm on Sony Six, HD

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

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BUTTLER HOUSE Best chance for

India fall to Jos fire in third encounter, England take lead

Ahmedabad, March 16: Virat Kohli's brilwasn't good enough to paper over an otherwise inept Indian batting performance as England humbled the hosts by eight wickets in the third T20 International to take a 2-1 lead in the five-match

series, here on Tuesday. unleashed his fast bowlers Mark Wood (3/31) and Chris Jordan (2/35) to restrict the hosts for 156 for 6, which

the visitors surpassed

easily in 18.2 overs, rid-

ing on Jos Buttler's unbeaten 83 off 52 balls. Skipper Kohli had mistakenly said at the toss that his team led 2-1 but Morgan, in his 100th T20 International appearance, made sure that opposite happened.

Buttler showed mastery in white ball format after Kohli singlehandedly carried the team to a reasonable score with an unbeaten 77 off 46 balls.

Buttler Powerplay pounced on Shardul Thakur and Yuzvendra Chahal in successive overs and England were never in danger of falling behind the run-rate after that.

He played the pacers and spinners with comforting ease, playing slog sweeps reverse between interspersed ` the lofted straight hits into the empty stands. In all, Buttler hit five fours and four sixes

More than the Buttler's blade, the difference between two sides was the sheer pace generated by England pacers after Morgan won another good toss

Mark Wood rocked the Indian top order during the Powerplay overs and even Kohli's magnifi-cence wasn't good enough to save the night for the 'Men In Blue'.

Wood's thunderbolts at 90 plus miles per hour found the younger Indian batsmen in con-siderable discomfort.

He didn't do anything extra but bowled fast and straight, mixing the well disguised short pitched stuff to get them into a

Kohli, other Save youngsters found



England batsman Jos Buttler (right) is greeted by teammate Dawid Malan on scoring a half-century during the third T20 against India at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Tuesday.

it difficult to put bat to ball as pace and bounce off the pitch worked wonders for English speed merchants.

The Indian skipper with his near perfect technique fought fire with fire, playing pull shots and the lofted hits, shuffling towards leg stump to make room for

He was lucky when his mis-timed flick off a short ball from Jofra Archer fetched him a six but then the second flick Chris Jordan was perfectly dispatched to the longest corner for a maximum.

But the shot of the night was a straight six Wood, which made the bowler take his time to finish the over. Not to forget the shape which he was in while executing a ramp shot off

His partnership with Hardik Pandya (17 off 15 halls) fetched 70 runs off just 5.3 overs but it was all about Kohli for the better part.

SCORECARD

India: Rohit Sharma c Jofra Archer b Mark Wood 15, K.L. Rahul b Mark Wood 0, Ishan Kishan c Jos Buttler b Chris Jordan 4, Virat Kohli (not out) 77, Rishabh Pant run out (Jos Buttler/ Sam Curran) 25, Shreyas Iyer c Malan b Mark Wood 9, Hardik Pandya c Jofra Archer b Chris Jordan 17. Extras (b-1, lb-5, w-3) 9. Total (for 6 wkts, in 20 overs)

FoW: 7-1, 20-2, 24-3, 64-4, 86-5, 156-6. Bowler: Adil Rashid 4-0-26-0, Jofra Archer 4-0-32-0, Mark Wood 4-0-31-3, Chris

Jordan 4-0-35-2, Ben Stokes 2-0-12-0, Sam Curran 2-0-14-0.

England: Jason Roy c Sharma b Chahal 9. Jos Buttler (not out) 83, Dawid Malan st Pant b Washington Sundar 18, Jonny Bairstow (not out) 40. Extras (b-4, lb-2, w-2) 8. Total (for 2 wkts, in 18.2 over) 158. FoW: 1-23, 2-81.

Bowling: Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-0-27-0. Shardul Thakur 3.2-0-36-0, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-41-1, Hardik Pandya 3-0-22-0, Washington Sundar 4-0-26-1.

UAE players banned for bid to fix

Dubai, March 16: The ICC on Tuesday slapped eight-year bans on United Arab Emirates (UAE) cricketers Mohammad Naveed and Shaiman Anwar Butt for their attempted role in trying to fix matches in

the T20 World Cup qualifier in 2019. The bans are backdated to October 16, 2019, when they were provisionally suspended for attempting to corrupt matches and found guilty of breaching global body's Anti-Corruption Code.

The 33-year-old former captain and right arm pacer Naveed has played 39 ODIs and 31 T20 Internationals for his country. while 42-year-old middle-order batsman Butt has played 40 ODIs and 32 T20s.

"Mohammad Naveed and Shaiman

Anwar represented their adopted country, the UAE at the highest level in cricket. Naveed was the captain and leading wick et taker. Anwar was the opening bat. Both had long international careers and were well versed in the threat from match fixers. That they both chose to engage with this corrupt activity was a cynical betrav al of their positions, their teammates, and all supporters of UAE cricket," Alex Marshall, ICC General Manager —

Integrity Unit, said in an ICC release. Naveed was also found guilty of breaching two counts of the Emirates Cricket Board Anti-Corruption Code Participants of the T10 League 2019.

Sindhu to excel

Birmingham, March 16: World champion P.V. Sindhu will look to shrug off her demoralising Swiss Open final defeat and take advantage of a depleted field when she spearheads India's challenge at the prestigious All England Open Badminton Championships, beginning here on Wednesday.

Sindhu looked a pale shadow of herself in her defeat against Carolina Marin, going down without much fight as she struggled to contain errors.

Carolina, the three-time world champion from Spain, though has pulled out of the prestigious tournament due to an injury, taking some shine off of Also missing in action

will be the Chinese, Koreans and Chinese Taipei shuttlers, who decided not to compete in the Super 1000 event as it is not part of the Tokyo Olympic qualification peri-od. It affects the quality of the competition but also provides the 19-member Índian contingent an opportunity to go deep in the draw and recapture the trophy which has been won by just two Indians so far the legendary Prakash

Carolina Marin, the three-time world champion from Spain, though has pulled out of the prestigious tournament due to an injury, taking some shine off of the event. Also missing in action will be the Chinese, **Koreans and Chinese** Taipei shuttlers.

Padukone (1980) and P. Gopichand (2001).

While former world number one Saina Nehwal had a runner-up finish in 2015, Sindhu's best finish was a semifinal in 2018. Sindhu will again be one

of the top contenders but Saina is nowhere near her best with just two quarterfinal finishes to show in the last two years.

Among other Indians, former No. 1 Kidambi Srikanth and young men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, current-ly ranked 10 in the world, doubles had a good run in Swiss Open and will look to put their best foot forward.

Fifth seed Sindhu will kick off her campaign with a clash against Malaysia's Soniia Cheah.



Players of the Bhadradri team are jubilant after winning the TCA U-16 Inter-Districts Championship on Tuesday.

BHADRADRI ARE CHAMPIONS

Hyderabad: Bhadradri emerged winner of the TCA U-16 Inter-Districts Championship at the Bhadradri Stadium in Manuguru. In the finals played on Tuesday, they chased down Warangal Urban's modest 138 with five wickets in hand.

Batting first, Warangal Urban rode on useful knocks by Pardipan (40) and Hardik (35). In reply, Ranadheer steadied Bhadradri and saw them safely home. **BRIEF SCORES**

■ Warangal Urban 138/8 in 25 overs (Pardhipan 40, Hardik 35, Jashwanth 3/23) lost to Bhadradri 139/5 in 22.2 overs (Ranadheer 37, Ratna Arya 32).

Man of the Match: Jaswanth (Bhadradri).

Man of the Tournament: J. Pardipan (Warangal Urban).



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