

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VISAKHAPATNAM | WEDNESDAY | 17 MARCH 2021

WEATHER

Max: 34.6°C
Min: 22.4°C
RH: 84%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Mist.
Max/Min temp.
34/22 9C



NATION | 5

P.C. Chacko
to join NCP



WORLD | 7

Haaland, 1st Native,
OKayed as Interior secy

SPORTS | 8

Sindhu eyes title at
All England Open



Vol. 36 No. 292 Established 1938 | 16 PAGES | ₹6.00

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttaraayana
Tithi: Phaguna Shuddha
Chavitt 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'b'an 3,1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajr: 5.50 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 4.45 pm
Maghrab: 6.15 pm
Isha: 8.15 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.07 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.03 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 9.23 PM
MOONSET TODAY 8.29 AM

Don't displace without rehab: HC

PIL claims nearly one lakh Polavaram-hit will go homeless

SAMPAT G. SAMIRITAN | 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 people belong to scheduled tribes, 15 per cent scheduled

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 serious agony and trauma."

Nearly 112 habitations would be displaced in the first phase covering a 41.15 meters plus contour while the remaining 259 habitations identified as submerging habitations over a 45.72 plus meters contour would be moved out in a

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

rehabilitation colonies even as these do not have basic 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.

■ Page 2: Rehab colonies have no toilets or water: PIL

CID's notice to TD chief in land case

Naidu was asked to attend CID inquiry in Amaravati lands scam case on March 23

MD ILYAS I DC
VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

The AP Crime Investigation 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 case.

A team of the investigation agency reached Naidu's Hyderabad residence on Tuesday morning and served him a notice to join the probe.

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 consequences of attending the inquiry and also considering challenging the notice in a court.

The TD turned up in arms and all leaders, including TD AP president K. Atchannaidu, condemned the issuing of notice by the CID.

An FIR was registered by the CID, under Sections 120b, 166, 167, and 217 of the

IPC into the Amaravati land scam case over alleged irregularities in acquisition of lands in Amaravati and their illegal transfer. The CID asked Naidu to attend the 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 government had "cheated them by taking their lands illegally", fraudulently, by keeping them "under confusion and fear" of insecurity about their lands.

The complaint alleged 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.

Ramakrishna Reddy alleged that irregularities committed by Naidu and Narayana "caused 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 sections of the SC/ST Act and Section 7 of the AP Assigned Lands (Prohibition of Transfers) Act, 1977.

Tirupati Lok Sabha bypoll on April 17

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

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.

■ Full report on Page 2

HC REJECTS SEC ORDER TO PROBE NO-VOTE POLLS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

The 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 and threats.

The HC directed that the election of such candidates, whose announcement has been held back, shall be immediately declared / certified as per the Conduct of Election Rules.

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OTHER STORIES

HC COMMENDS SEC'S ROLE IN ELECTIONS

From Page 1

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 election tribunal constituted under the law. The court observed that Rule 66 proviso prohibits SEC from entertaining any complaint till the 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 authority, 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 action.



Botsa Satyanarayana

GOVT COMMITTED TO DEVELOP THREE CAPITALS: BOTSA

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, MARCH 16

Municipal administration minister Botsa Satyanarayana reiterated that YSR government is committed to develop three capitals as announced by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, including Amaravati as the legislative capital, Visakhapatnam as administrative capital and Kurnool as judicial capital.

He underlined that the previous TD government had resorted to insider trading in developing Amaravati as the capital. He ruled out that booking of the case against Chandrababu Naidu was an act of vengeance against the previous TD regime.

BY-ELECTION TO TIRUPATI LS SEAT ON APRIL 17

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

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 come into force with immediate effect in the district over which the parliamentary constituency is spread.



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy pays tributes to the portrait of Potti Sriramulu to mark the latter's birth anniversary at his camp office in Tadepalli on Tuesday. Ministers Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy (right), Velappalli Srinivas (second from left), MLAs Malladi Vishnu (left) and Jogi Ramesh (centre) are also seen. — DC

State creates record in MGNREGS workdays

Construction of 15.60 lakh houses to start on April 15

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

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 Pedalarikiri 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. MGNREGS 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 MGNREGS works by logging 2,427 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 construction materials

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 as YSR Pre Primary Schools under Nadu Nedu.

The CM gave a list of the welfare activities to be implemented in April. The Jagananna Vidyakanuka 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-

cial focus on children below six years and on pre-primary 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 construction of medical colleges in six places — Pulivendula, Piduguralla, Amalapuram, Palakkollu, 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

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 Highways projects.

He said insurance will be paid on April 6 to nominees 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 meetings to ensure every eligible person is benefitted through the Jagananna Thodu scheme.

The CM asked the district collectors of East Godavari and West Godavari to be well-prepared to ensure supply of irrigation water to every acre and they must co-ordinate these matters with water resources officials.

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 efficiently. The registration process for procurement of paddy should be completed and the list of farmers 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 procured 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 done fast. He also asked officials to speed up the identification and purchase of the required land for house sites from April.

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

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 minister stated that people will support YSR in Tirupati bypoll, even though BJP comes up with a Hindutva card.

He said that YSR will retain its seat with triumphant victory in the coming polls.

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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 motivated".

Party AP state president K. Atchannaidu said that assigned lands were taken with approval of farmers for the capital, according to norms and rules.

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 occupying 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.

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

"It is vengeance to file a case against it now, and issue CID notices," he said.

He alleged that Chief

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 and Nizampatnam Industrial Corridor (VANPIC) land victim farmers till date.

Mr. Atchannaidu claimed that Jagan's father Alla Ramakrishna Reddy, who himself does not belong to the SC or ST community.

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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 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

actively meeting party leaders and different groups in the seven Assembly segments which constitute the Tirupati constituency, seeking their support.

Panabaka Lakshmi is a four-time MP and former Union minister, lost the 2019 Lok Sabha election on a TD ticket. She has inaugurated the party's parlia-

mentary office in Tirupati and completed a round of 'Dharma Parikshana 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 party chief secretary Ratna Prabha, former central services officer Krishna Prasad and local leaders Munikrishnaiah, Dr Sree Hari Rao. BJP supporters expect th-

The Congress has also 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.

LS | SEAT



COUNTER POINT



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

IN BRIEF

FUNDS FOR AP'S EDU INSTITUTIONS SOUGHT

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Narasaraopet MP Lavu 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 discussion on education budget in the Parliament on Tuesday, he said that Central Government had given an IIT, IIIT, NIT, IIM, IIISER, Central University, 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 had been continuously ignored. He stated that the students were in senior secondary 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.

Devarayalu 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.

FARMERS' BID TO STALL LAND 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 sur-

vey for acquisition of land for developing the airport, farmers from Byreddipalem and Mudasarpalpetta villages of Bhogapuram mandal, arrived there in large numbers and raised protest for giving meagre compensation and demanded for relief.

Farmers demand state to procure all paddy varieties

DC CORRESPONDENT

NELLORE, MARCH 16

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.

The farmers also found fault with the agriculture, marketing, and civil supplies departments for not addressing their problems.

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 district.

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

rainfall of 1,015 mm to date from June last year.

The groundwater department has disclosed these details in the backdrop of the weeklong Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Department scheduled between March 16 and 22.

According to the department, Piezo Meters have been installed at 135 locations in SPSR Nellore district under a national

Anyone possessing smartphone can access the information on water levels through Piezo meters from a website <http://www.apwrimis.ap.gov.in> or <http://apswd.ap.gov.in>

level Hydrology Project to detect the groundwater levels.

Before the advent of

Piezometers, groundwater 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.apwrimis.ap.gov.in>

or <http://apswd.ap.gov.in> or CM dashboard <http://core.ap.gov.in>

The information on water levels would help study the short term and long term changes in the water levels and identify the areas affected by the excess withdrawal of groundwater and contain the situation, groundwater department officials said.



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 Visakhapatnam on Tuesday.

— K. MURALIKRISHNA

State reports 261 Covid cases

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Andhra Pradesh registered 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 infected with Covid-19. Out of a total number of 1,45,80,783 samples tested so far in the state, 8,92,269 persons were found infected with the virus and of them, 8,83,505 were recovered

No new Covid-19 deaths were reported, and the death toll remained unchanged at 7,185.

The state health authorities discharged 125 Covid-19 patients

while undergoing treatment and 1,579 are still active with the virus.

Among daily cases of Coronavirus infections, Guntur reported the highest of 41, followed by 39 in Visakhapatnam, 37 in Chittoor, 34 in

Krishna, 28 in East Godavari, 25 in Anantapur, 20 in Kurnool, 11 in Nellore, 10 in Kadapa, seven in Prakasam, six in Sriakulam, three in West Godavari and zero cases in Vizianagaram.

With regard to the cumulative active Covid-19 cases, Chittoor continued to be the worst hit with 484 followed by 214 in Krishna, 193 in East Godavari, 154 in Guntur, 120 in Prakasam, 72 in Sriakulam, 66 each in Anantapur and

Kurnool, 60 in Kadapa, 59 in Sriakulam, 53 in Nellore, 22 in West Godavari and 16 in Vizianagaram.

No new Covid-19 deaths were reported, and the death toll remained unchanged at 7,185.

The state health 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 population and registered a positive rate of 6.12.

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 on Tuesday.

Principal chief conservator of forests N. Prateep Kumar launched the e-bikes at the zoo premises to prevent noise pollution. Speaking on the occasion, the head of forest forces said that the launch of e-bikes would help reduce usage of diesel/petrol vehicles.

for acquisition of land for developing the airport, farmers from Byreddipalem and Mudasarpalpetta villages of Bhogapuram mandal, arrived there in large numbers and raised protest for giving meagre compensation and demanded for relief.

NMDC Limited
(A GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ENTERPRISE)
'Khanij Bhavan', 10-3-311/A, Castle Hills,
Masab Tank, Hyderabad - 500 028
CIN: L13100TS1958GOI001674

CONTRACTS DEPARTMENT

Tender Enquiry No: HO (Contracts)NISP/TSC&HSM/OMW/768

Dt: 17/03/2021

NMDC Limited, A "NAVARATNA" Public Sector Company under Ministry of Steel, Govt. of India, invites online bids from experienced domestic bidders for providing Technological Assistance for Operation & Mechanical Maintenance of Thin Slab Caster, Tunnel Furnace & Hot Strip Mill (TSC & HSM) for a period of 2 years for 3.0 MTPA Integrated Steel Plant at Nagarnar, near Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh State.

The detailed NIT and Bid documents can be viewed and/or downloaded from NMDC website <http://www.nmdc.co.in>. Central Public Procurement portal <https://www.eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app> and MSTC portal <https://www.mstccommerce.com/eprochome/nmdc> from 17/03/2021 to 07/04/2021.

For accessing the bid document from MSTC portal, bidders to visit MSTC website and search Tender Event No. NMDC/HO/137/20-21/ET/884.

The Bidders, on regular basis are required to visit the NMDC's website/CPP Portal/MSTC websites for corrigendum, if any, at a future date.

For further clarification, the following can be contacted.

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

Chief General Manager (Contracts)

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AP reconstitutes tender committee for liquor, beer

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

The state government has reconstituted a tender committee to be headed by the retired high court judge Justice A. Gopal 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 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 committee is entrusted with 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 IMFL, foreign liquor and beer.

Chargesheets were served 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.

The accused, including noted Kapu leader Mudragada Padmanabham, Tuni MLA Dadiseti 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 accused in the case.

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

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

However, he survived the attempt and attended the court hearing.

Later, the Tuni MLA Dadiseti 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.

Applications are invited from Retired officers of Central Government, SPMCL or other Central PSUs for empanelment as INQUIRY OFFICERS for the purpose of conducting departmental inquiries for a period of 3 years.

For further details with respect to Eligibility, Experience, Desirable Qualifications etc., applicants are advised to visit the website <https://igmhyderabad.spmcl.com/~>Careers Tab>. Last date for submission of filled in applications is 30.04.2021.

Deputy General Manager (HR)

KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LTD.
(A Government of India Undertaking)

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

Chief Engineer, Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd., invites Open Tender in Single Packet System through E-Tendering on IREPS portal from eligible contractors for the following work. Name of Work : Metallizing and Protective Painting to Bottom Chord, Middle Chord and Top Chord Members of Steel Girder Spans of Zuari Bridge under SENIMAO Section of KRCL in Goa State. Tender Notice No.: KRW/09/2020/09. Advertised Cost of the Work: ₹ 144.96 Lakh (exclusive of GST). Closing Date/Time: 07/04/2021 up to 15:00 hrs. for submission of Online Offers/Bids. Completion Period : Eleven (11) Months including monsoon. Manual offers shall not be accepted. Please visit [www.ireps.gov.in](http://ireps.gov.in) for details/participation. Corrigendum/addendum will be hosted in this website only.

FNo.I-240/Per/EIO/2020-21/

Dated: 16.03.2021

NOTICE INVITING APPLICATIONS FOR EMPANELMENT OF INQUIRY OFFICERS

Applications are invited from Retired officers of Central Government, SPMCL or other Central PSUs for empanelment as INQUIRY OFFICERS for the purpose of conducting departmental inquiries for a period of 3 years.

2. For further details with respect to Eligibility, Experience, Desirable Qualifications etc., applicants are advised to visit the website <https://igmhyderabad.spmcl.com/~>Careers Tab>. Last date for submission of filled in applications is 30.04.2021.

Deputy General Manager (HR)

DECCAN 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 Assembly. 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 household 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, laptops 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 education 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 a model for India.

Soul-search for Sarah

So dramatic — and disturbing — have recent events been in London in demonstrations 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 assembly, 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 violence".

DECCAN CHRONICLE

K. SUDHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256
Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-255284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555285
Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: 0891-255233/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285
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Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilalapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433
Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burrapur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chennudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580
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Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Rammagam, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255
Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08

Last year, Arvind Panagariya, former vice-chief 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 sec-

retaries 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 is 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 state.

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 so 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-

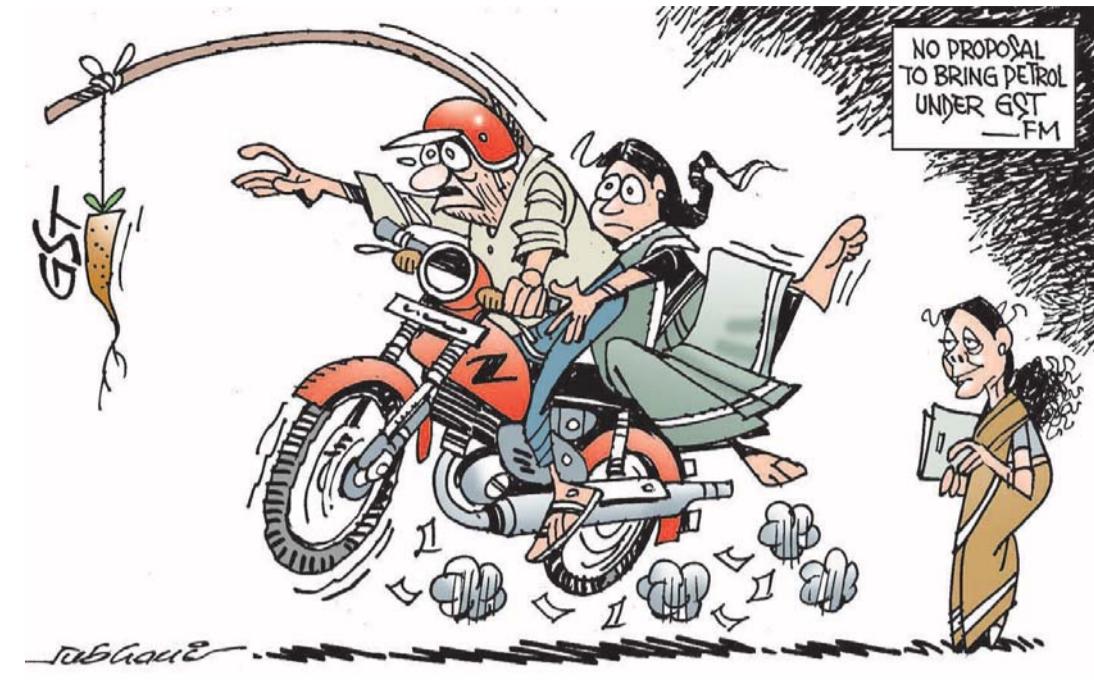
tions. The LDF leaders have said that the ED moved only after Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman's statements against the Board.

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 done.

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

Subhani



India needs hate crimes law on lines of Scotland

Sunanda K.
Datta-Ray

Reflections

India, 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 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 many sherrries at 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 the law would change people's outlook, and indeed, it has been transformed."

"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 added.

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."

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Believing laughter to be the best antidote to hatred, the British once offered prizes to comedians who could tell jokes about their own communities. Similarly, the English have "jokes" at the expense of the Scots and the Welsh.

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.

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.

The 1968 Race 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 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 victimisms which may have concealed a real societal bias. Nirad C. Chaudhuri recalls a Bengal rhyme in which the people of Odisha and Bihar are presented in negative terms to 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.

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

LETTERS

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 Banerjee (Shah mocks Didi campaign in wheelchair, DC, March 16). After the immediate acrimonious outburst 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 DECCAN Chronicle

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 Mujib Rehman's declared policy of secularism.

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 song runs: "crossing the days of darkness, we have reached the dawn of a new day. Unity is dignity, unity is strength. Fear of the journey 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



Last year, Arvind Panagariya, former vice-chair 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 sec-

retaries 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 is 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 state.

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 so 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

SHORT TAKES

AMARINDER TO MEET SIDHU OVER LUNCH AGAIN

Chandigarh, March 16: Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh is expected to meet former minister Navjot Singh Sidhu over lunch on Wednesday, amid speculations 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 sides.

Sidhu 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-induced into the state cabinet with some key portfolios. There have also been talks of the possibility of appointing him as party state unit president.

Notably, both leaders had not been on best of terms. The tension between Singh and Sidhu had come out in the open in May 2019 when the CM blamed the former cricketer for "inert handling" of the Local government department, claiming it had resulted in "poor performance" of the Congress in urban areas in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

SC TO HEAR PLEA ON GUJARAT RIOTS 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 others by the Special 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 Justice Dinesh Maheshwari and Justice Krishna Murari, in the order passed on Tuesday said, "Put this case for hearing on April 13. No request for adjournment will be entertained."

The hearing on Zakia Jafri's petition that is pending before the top court since 2018 was adjourned to April 13 after senior counsel Kapil Sibal told the court to hear the matter sometime in April since several senior lawyers are busy in the Maratha reservation case being heard by a 5-judge Constitution Bench.

The SIT had filed the closure report on February 8, 2012, giving a clean chit to Modi and 63 others, including senior government officials, saying there was "no prosecutable evidence" against them.

ANTI-CAA | RALLIES

Aasu to issue directives to its members at state executive meeting

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-CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) protest on March 20.

Informing that Aasu activists are going to take out mega bala rallies across the state to educate and remind the voters about the CAA introduced by the BJP government, the Aasu president Dipanka Nath told reporters, "Our aim is to make all, especially those living in the rural areas, aware of the 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 culture of Assam."

Aasu, which claims to be an 'apolitical' organisation, for the first time took a 'political stand' by backing the formation of AJP to oust the BJP-AGP combine from power.

The mass movement against the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act, which started in December 2019, gave rise to a call for a new political party Aasu and another allied organisation, the

Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) and Rajor Dal, for the upcoming Assembly election.

Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad (AJYCP), played a key role in the formation of AJP.

Later, AJP joined hands with Rajor Dal, floated by Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMS), to keep the BJP-AGP and the Congress-AIUDF led alliance out of power.

"It is very important that AJP and Rajor Dal win to save regionalism from the hands of the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP). Defeating BJP is necessary to save the interests of indigenous communities. The BJP gov-

ernment wants to give citizenship to foreigners on religious lines through CAA. We need new regional parties which can uphold the flag of regionalism," Aasu general secretary Sankar Jyoti Baruah told reporters.

The Congress-led grand alliance of Opposition is also banking heavily on its anti-CAA stand to win over the power in the state whereas the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led alliance is completely silent over CAA.



West Bengal CM and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, sitting on a wheelchair, addresses an election campaign rally ahead of state Assembly polls in Bankura on Tuesday. — PTI

After Waze's arrest, BJP demands Maha home min's removal

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, MARCH 16

After the arrest of police officer Sachin Waze in the industrialist Mukesh Ambani security scare case, the Maharashtra BJP has now targeted 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 started a hashtag "#ResignAnilDeshmukh" on Twitter saying politics in Maharashtra has been criminalised. Citing various crime cases, the party asked Deshmukh what action he has taken in these cases so far.

The saffron party has mentioned several cases like a woman being burnt alive at Hinghant, the lynching of Sadhus at Palghar, the Pooja Chavan death case in which Shiv Sena minister Sanjay Rathod resigned, the controversial speech of activist Sharjeel Usmani at Pune etc to demand Deshmukh's resignation.

Deshmukh has found himself in the soup in the Ambani security scare case, in which an explosive-laden vehicle was found near the industrialist's residence Antilla on February 25. The vehicle belonged to auto parts dealer Mansukh Hirani, 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 connection with its probe of this case.

However, Maharashtra NCP chief Jayant Patil has ruled out the possibility of Deshmukh's resignation.

"There is no question of home minister Anil Deshmukh being replaced. There is no cabinet reshuffle happening," Patil said.

Action would be taken against those found guilty in the case of the recovery of SUV as well as the mysterious death of Thane businessman Mansukh Hirani, he added. "The government doesn't intend to save anyone," Patil further said.

Besides, Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar on Tuesday also said that the MVA government will not protect anyone.

NIA COURT REJECTS WAZE'S 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 lawyer during interrogation but the lawyer could remain present at the distance where he can see Waze but his questioning is inaudible.

Waze's lawyer contended that as per a notification May 23, 1979 consent is required under section 45 (1) of the CrPC hence he demanded his arrest be declared illegal.

Other reasons seeking his arrest as illegal was that he was not produced before the court within 24 hours of his arrest and neither he was given an opportunity to take the opinion of a lawyer nor his family was informed about grounds of his arrest.

"Action would be taken against those found guilty in the case of the recovery of SUV as well as the mysterious death of Thane businessman Mansukh Hirani, he added. "The government doesn't intend to save anyone," Patil further said.

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P.C Chacko to join NCP

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, MARCH 16

A growing and fierce revolt within the BJP over the distribution of tickets to most of the Trinamul Congress turncoats for the Assembly election in West Bengal and low turnouts in the party's poll campaign rallies forced Union home minister Amit Shah to return to the state instead of New Delhi from neighbouring Assam quietly 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 night-long meeting.

There, according to sources, he came down heavily on the party functionaries, who painted a

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 16

Veteran leader P.C. 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, "I 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 Left Front," he said. Chacko, 74, quit the party on Wednesday in protest against the intense groupism in the organisation. Chacko who has held various crucial positions in the party, alleged that there was no internal de-

mocracy in the Congress. He alleged seats had been divided between the "A" and "B" groups led by former chief minister Oommen Chandy and opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala respectively.

The two factions had complete control over ticket allotment for each constituency. Under these circumstances there was no point in continuing in the Congress, he had stated after resigning from the party.

Q Amit Shah is frustrated as his rallies have registered poor turnout. Instead of running the country, he is sitting in Kolkata and hatching conspiracies to harass TMC leaders. What do they want? Do they want to kill me? Do they think they can win elections by killing me? If they think so, they are wrong."

MAMATA BANERJEE,
West Bengal CM

chief. On Tuesday morning when BJP president J.P. Nadda landed in the city on a campaign tour, he also attended the second round of meeting by Shah.

While leaving the city later, the Union home minister summoned Ghosh, Roy and others to Delhi at night for picking up suitable candidates for the remaining phases of the polls.

FOREST FIRE RAGES ON ODISHA BORDER

Bhubaneswar, March 28: A major fire broke out on Tuesday at Charikharia forest, adjacent to Chandaka Wildlife Sanctuary on the outskirts of Odisha capital Bhubaneswar.

On being informed, fire services personnel rushed to the spot and initiated efforts to douse the flame, which was reportedly spreading quickly towards the sanctuary. The reason behind the outbreak of fire was yet to be ascertained.

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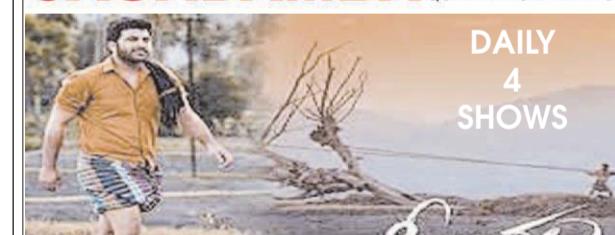
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SHORT TAKES
PHILIP LEAVES HOSPITAL AFTER TREATMENT

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 pictured 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 injuring six others, including two who are hospitalised in critical condition, police said.

The driver — whom authorities 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 City College.

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 39-year-old popstar-turned-presidential contender last week had called on Ugandans to "rise up peacefully and unarmed" against President Yoweri Museveni who won a sixth term in office following disputed 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 lead of Dutch Prime Minister 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 elections.

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 \$81,000,000) to the island nation'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.

Tokyo talks: US, Japan to share China worry

N. KOREAN LEADER'S SISTER WARNS U.S.

Tokyo, March 16: Japan and the United States joined forces Tuesday to criticise China's "coercion 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 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 confrontational dealings with the Trump administration. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, after holding the so-called "two plus two" security talks with Defence Secretary 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 necessary, when China uses

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 claims.

— AFP

Myanmarese flee martial law area

Yangon, March 16: Residents of a protest flashpoint district in Myanmar's biggest city fled on flatbed trucks and tuk-tuks Tuesday after security 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 used tear gas, rubber bullets and live rounds to subdue crowds in nearly daily 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 (AAP), a local monitoring group that has been tracking arrests and fatalities.

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It followed the deadliest day so far in the six weeks since the army deposed Suu Kyi's government, with the AAP 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 with mostly Chinese-owned factories — several of which were razed on Sunday. The junta reacted by imposing martial law over the area and five

— AFP

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 tribes 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 department.

— AP

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 dangerous blood clots in some recipients. The company and international regulators continue to say the vaccine is safe, however, and many countries elsewhere in the world are going ahead with their vaccination campaigns.

The move by the Swedish Public Health Agency is pending an investigation by the European Medicines 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 AstraZeneca shot and decide whether action needs to be taken. Much of Asia has shrugged off concerns about 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. — AFP

WHO: Vaccine rollout unaffected by concerns

Geneva, March 16: The 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 received it.

The World Health Organisation says the AstraZeneca vaccines for its COVAX 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 Simao said.

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 efforts until after the European Medicines Agency has met over reports of dangerous blood clots in some recipients of AstraZeneca'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 that the shot is to blame. The German government and the country's 16 state governors had planned to meet Wednesday for a virtual summit.



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 Jhalan 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 council of the Janata Samajabadi Party.

They have publicly alleged that President 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 Samajabadi Party Mahanta Thakur, and former Chairman of Council of Minister Khil Raj Regmi attended.

— PTI

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

● 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.

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.

— AP

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 discovered in a cave believed to have been used by Jews rebelling against the Romans during the failed second-century Bar Kochba revolt.

The IAA compared the find to the extraordinary discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, some 900 manuscripts found between 1947

and 1956 in the Qumran caves above the Dead Sea in the West Bank.

They are some of the earliest 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 world," which had been carbon-dated to 10,500 years old. "I shook for days," after the basket was found, IAA archaeologist Cohen said.

The woven basket was found remarkably intact, with a rock resting on its top — an indication that

its users wanted to keep the contents safe and intended to come back for them, Cohen said.

Organic material like the wood used for the basket typically decays, but this unprecedented discovery was preserved by the Judean's desert's dry climate and protective conditions in the cave, he said.

Cohen added that very little is known about the society that lived in the area at the time.

"From this ancient period, we have nothing. We can tell, and I want to be very cautious, that they are likely nomads or half-nomads," he said. — AP

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

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.

The Cave of Horrors took its name from the numerous skeletons found inside it and the treacherous terrain nearby.

Most of the text is in ancient Greek, a widely used language at the time, but the word Lord appears 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

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SHORT TAKES

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 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. — AFP

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



Sports Authority of Telangana 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 trials at 4 pm 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

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

BADMINTON
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

Regd No.JVM-RNP/72
Printed and Published from Visakhapatnam by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Deccan Chronicle Press, Survey No.1/3A, Beach Road, Near Kailasgiri Rope Way, Sector-9, M.V. Pol, Colony, Visakhapatnam-530017. Phones: 255233/255234/2553806. Fax: 2755285. Grams: CHRONICLE. Editor: Kaushik Mitra. RNI Registration No.44813/58.

BUTTLER HOUSE

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

Ahmedabad, March 16: Virat Kohli's brilliance wasn'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.

Eoin Morgan 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, riding 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 his mastery in white ball format after Kohli single-handedly carried the team to a reasonable score with an unbeaten 77 off 46 balls.

Buttler in the 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 reverse slog sweeps interspersed between 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 magnificence 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 considerable discomfort.

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

Save Kohli, other Indian 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. — PTI

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)** 156.

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.

— PTI

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 wicket 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 betrayal 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 for Participants of the T10 League 2019.

— PTI

ALL ENGLAND | BADMINTON

Best chance for 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 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 quarter-final 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, currently ranked 10 in the world, 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 Sionia Cheah. — PTI



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

BHADRADI ARE CHAMPIONS

Hyderabad: Bhadradi emerged winner of the TCA U-16 Inter-Districts Championship at the Bhadradi 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 Bhadradi and saw them safely home.

BRIEF SCORES

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

■ **Man of the Match:** Jaswanth (Bhadradi).

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

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