

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | THURSDAY | 25 MARCH 2021

WEATHER

Max: 35.5°C
Min: 23.8°C
RH: 26%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Maximum/Minimum temp. 36/24°C

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Uttarayana
Tithi: Phalgun Shuddha
Ekadasi till 9.43 am
Star: Ashlesha till 10.43 pm
Varjyam: 11.42 am to 1.16 pm
Durmuhurtam: 10.21 am to 11.10 am; 3.11 pm to 3.59 pm
Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm

HILARI CALENDAR

Sha'ban 11, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.16 am
Zohar: 12.32 pm
Asar: 4.43 pm
Maghrib: 6.34 pm
Isha: 7.41 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.28 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.15 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 3.14 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 3.41 AM

COUNTER POINT



Don't panic! Not extortion. I am only collecting party fund!

SHORT TAKES

Adani wins highway contract

New Delhi: Adani Road Transport Ltd (ARTL) on Wednesday said it has won a ₹1,039.90 crore highway project from NHAI in Telangana. "We are pleased to inform you that ARTL has received a letter of award (LOA) for ...four laning of NH-365A from Kodad to Khammam in the State of Telangana under Bharatmala Pariyojana on Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM)," the company said in a BSE filing.

Haryana bans Holi in public

Chandigarh: The Haryana government on Wednesday banned public celebrations of upcoming Holi festival in the wake of the rise in the number of coronavirus cases in the recent weeks. "The Haryana government has banned public celebrations of Holi in view of (rise in number of cases of) corona..." home and health minister Anil Vij said in a tweet.

Cargo ship blocks Suez Canal

Dubai: A cargo container ship that's among the largest in the world has turned sideways and blocked all traffic in Egypt's Suez Canal, officials said, threatening to disrupt a global shipping system strained by the Coronavirus pandemic. The *MV Ever Given*, a Panama-flagged container ship that carries trade between Asia and Europe, was grounded.

Sensex plunges 871 points

Mumbai: The Sensex plunged 871 points to mark its worst single-session fall in nearly a month on Wednesday as investors moved to the sidelines amid rising coronavirus cases in the country. At the closing bell, the BSE Sensex was quoted at 49,180.31, a drop of 871.13 points — its biggest one-day fall since February 26. The NSE Nifty dived 265.35 points or 1.79 per cent to settle at 14,549.40.

NATION | 5

BJP promises law against love jihad

deccanchronicle.com, facebook.com/deccannews, twitter.com/deccanchronicle

No Indian is outsider, BJP's 'son of soil' to be CM: Modi

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, MARCH 24

Hammering at West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's slogan of "bohiragoto" (outsiders) against the BJP on a nationalistic pitch, Prime Minister Narendra Modi accused the Trinamul supremo on Wednesday of "defaming" Nandigram, the hot seat of the Assembly election where she is contesting from.

With her nemesis Suwendu Adhikari on the dais at his mega rally at Contai in East Midnapore, Mr Modi also promised the crowd that the BJP will pick a "son of this soil" as the Chief Minister if it comes to power in the state.

In a virulent speech, Mr Modi said: "Didi is now talking of bohiragoto in Bengal, which stitched the whole of India with *Vande Mataram!* *Amra Sobai Ei Bharatbhumi Sontan. Ei Bhumi te Kono Bharatbasi Bohiragoto Noy. Bolun Bharat Mata Ki Jai, Vande Mataram!* *Ekhane Kono Bharatbasi Bohiragoto Noy. Sob Bharatmatar Sontan* (All of us are the children of the land of India. No Indian is an outsider on this land. Hail Mother India, we worship Mother India. No Indian is an outsider here. All are the children of Mother India.)"

Invoking the national anthem, Mr Modi asked Ms Banerjee: "How dare you to talk of bohiragoto in that very Bengal from where Gurudev stitched all Indians in one bond and said from this soil what we repeat daily? How can you? While labels of 'tourist' are made, fun is made and insults are hurled. The people from



Prime Minister Narendra Modi exchanges greetings with party candidate for Nandigram seat Subhendu Adhikari during an election campaign rally for the upcoming West Bengal assembly polls, at Kanthi in East Midnapore district on Wednesday.

— PTI

All of us are the children of the land of India. No Indian is an outsider on this land. Hail Mother India, we worship Mother India. No Indian is an outsider here. All are the children of Mother India."

NARENDRA MODI, Prime Minister

the soil of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore do not see anyone as bohiragoto here. This is the call of the soil. In Bengal, the CM of the state government of the BJP that you are going to build will be a son of this soil. After all,

the land is Bengal."

The Prime Minister continued: "Didi, Apni Khela Korben. Amra Seva Korbo. Khela Noy Seva Hobe (Didi, you will play while we will serve the masses. Service, not a game, will take place.) Didi is nervous because her game has been exposed. The TMC is resorting to lies and fake allegations on Nandigram. Didi, Nandigram gave you so much dignity and honour. But you are defaming Nandigram before the whole country by making false claims! The people of Nandigram will not tolerate it. Aware of their dignity, they will punish you certainly for your insult in this election."

SC DIRECTS PARAMBIR TO APPROACH HC

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, MARCH 24

Former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh will move the Bombay High Court against state home minister Anil Deshmukh after the SC termed his allegations against the minister "very serious" and told him to approach the HC first.

A division bench of justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Justice Subhash Reddy of the Apex Court on Wednesday asked former Mumbai Police chief Param Bir Singh to approach the Bombay High Court with his plea seeking CBI investigation in the alleged corrupt malpractices of Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh.

The court, however, asked him as to why Anil Deshmukh, the person against whom they have made serious allegations hasn't even been impleaded as a party.

WORLD | 6

No clear winner in Israel exit poll

deccanchronicle.com, facebook.com/deccannews, twitter.com/deccanchronicle

SPORTS | 8

Delhi captain Shreyas hurt, in doubt for IPL



Vol. 20 No. 298 Established 1938 | 16 PAGES | ₹6.00

CJI Bobde recommends Ramana as his successor

New CJI to take charge on April 24 for 1-yr 4-month tenure

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 24

The Chief Justice of India, Justice Sharad A. Bobde, on Tuesday recommended Justice N.V. Ramana — the senior most judge after him — to be appointed as the next Chief Justice of India when he demits office on April 23, 2021.

Justice Ramana will be the 48th Chief Justice of India and will have a tenure of one year, four months and five days. He was elevated as a judge of the top court on February 17, 2014.

Justice Ramana will take over as Chief Justice of India on April 24, a day after incumbent CJI Bobde demits office.

While recommending the appointment of Justice Ramana as next CJI, the Supreme Court also rejected a complaint by

Andhra Pradesh chief minister Y.S. Jagan



Justice N.V. Ramana

Mohan Reddy against him relating to the Amaravati land scam.

A statement issued by the top court said, "A complaint dated 6th October, 2020, sent by the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh to the Supreme Court was dealt with under the 'in-house procedure' and the same, on due consideration, stands dismissed. It be noted that all the matters dealt with under the 'in-house procedure' being strictly confidential in nature, are not liable to be

Justice Ramana was born in a farmer's family in undivided AP on August 27, 1957, in Ponnayaram village, Krishna district.

He got enrolled as an advocate on February 10, 1983. He appointed the judge of the AP High Court in 2000.

Justice Ramana will be the second Telugu speaking Chief Justice of India.

Born in an agricultural family in undivided Andhra Pradesh on August 27, 1957, in Ponnayaram village, Krishna District, Justice Ramana did his B.Sc., B.L. and was enrolled as an advocate on February 10, 1983. Prior to him Justice Koka Subba Rao, the 9th Chief Justice of India, was from AP and was in office from June 30, 1966, to April

11, 1967. Justice Subba Rao did his graduation from Govt. College, Rajahmundry, B.L. from Law College, Madras, and had practised in Madras High Court, 1926 onward. Though initially Justice Subba Rao was appointed as a judge of Madras High Court, he went on to become the Chief Justice of AP High Court.

CJI Bobde recommended Justice Ramana as next Chief Justice of India going by the principle of seniority — the senior-most judge after the CJI succeeding the incumbent CJI upon his retirement.

He was appointed as a permanent judge of the Andhra Pradesh high court on June 27, 2000. He functioned as acting Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh high court from March 10, 2013, to May 20, 2013. He was appointed Chief Justice of Delhi High Court in September 2013.

Covid double mutant surfaces

CCMB to study how two variants are able to live together

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

A new double mutant variant of the Coronavirus has been found in India along with several other "variants of concern" that have already been found in 18 states.

So far, some 771 variants of concern have been detected from 10,787 samples collected from different states and UTs, the Union health ministry said on Wednesday. It said among these were 736 samples of the UK variant, 34 of the South African variant and a single sample of the Brazilian variant.

The ministry, however, stressed that no sufficient link has been established between the recent surge of Covid-19 cases in India and the new Indian variant with E484Q and L452R mutations. "The double mutant Coronavirus and other variants of concern were identified in a few samples but the numbers are not sufficient to establish a relationship to explain the rapid increase in cases in some states," the ministry said.

Maharashtra also has this variant and the tested samples revealed that, compared to December 2020, there is an increase in infection rates by 15 to 20 per cent.

"Both these mutations were found together, in these samples. The L452R mutation was detected in US in November 2020. The other, E484Q, was detected in Brazil and South Africa. We need to take more samples, study and understand how these two variants are living together," said CSIR-CCMB director Dr Rakesh Mishra.

SSC, Inter exams unlikely this year

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

The Telangana state government is likely to cancel the SSC and the Intermediate public exams this year, as was done last year on several grounds. These grounds were of fewer working days, incomplete syllabus and poor attendance of students after schools were reopened in February. The schools were reopened in February after the 10-month lockdown and a closure of all educational institutions from March 24.

As per schedule, the Inter theory exams should be held from May 1 to 19 and SSC exams from May 17 to 26.

During the meeting held by Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and education minister P

Sabitha Indra Reddy on Tuesday to take a call on the closure of institutions, the Inter Board officials opined that the situation was not conducive to holding the inter-ethics exam on April 1, environmental exam on April 3 and inter practical exams from April 7.

The SSC officials said out that only formative assessment-1 (school-level exams) was completed till date and it was not possible to hold SSC exams. This fueled doubts over the fate of Inter, SSC exams this year.

For inter students, ethics and environmental exams are mandatory. With closure of all institutions from March 24, the chances of holding exams, just a week away, look remote.

Page 2: Govt students at disadvantage in exams

DEGREE, PG EXAMS TO BE POSTPONED IN TELANGANA

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

In view of the shutdown of education institutions and rise in the number of Covid-19 cases in the state, the higher education department has postponed all offline degree and Post Graduate exams in all universities in Telangana. The collegiate education department has advised registrars of all universities, including JNTUH and Osmania University, to conduct only online classes and examinations, if any, as per schedule.

Syed Omar Jaleel, commissioner of collegiate and technical education said all offline classes and examinations may be rescheduled in view of the orders issued by the state government.

Page 2: TSCHE to review situation with varsities

ARMY | RULES

Defence ministry's decision to ease discontent among officers

Retd SSC officers can use military ranks

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 24

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has decided to allow the retired Short Service Commission (SSC) officers of the Indian Army to use military ranks.

The Short Service Commission (SSC) officers, after completion of their mandated terms and conditions of service, were not authorised to use the military ranks. This had been

causing dissatisfaction and discontentment among the SSC officers who serve under the same service conditions and face similar hardships as Permanent Commission officers with similar service profile.

"This decision of the government will not only remove dissatisfaction and discontentment among the retired SSC officers, but will serve as a big boost to the young aspirants," said defence ministry in a state-

ment on Wednesday. It said that this decision will act as morale booster for the existing SSC officers.

The demand for use of military ranks by Short Service Commission (SSC) officers after release from service has been pending since 1983.

THE DEMAND for use of military ranks by Short Service Commission (SSC) officers after release from service has been pending since 1983.

THE SSC officers form the backbone of the support cadre of the Army.

THE SSC officers form the backbone of the support cadre of the Army. They serve for a period of 10-14 years to make up the deficiency of young officers in units. There have been several attempts of making the

SSC attractive. Permission to allow use of military ranks by these officers has been one of their major demands. Unlike in the past when SSC officers used to serve for a period of five years, now they serve for a tenure of 10 years, further extendable by four years. The SSC officers provide a support cadre to the officers' cadre of the Army and has been created primarily to provide young officers to the units.

Page 2: What is Insacog

IN BRIEF

Sharmila to hold rally on April 9

Hyderabad: Y. S. Sharmila, daughter of former chief minister Rajasekhara Reddy and sister of AP Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, has on Wednesday announced that she will contest the next assembly elections in Telangana from Paleru constituency in Khammam district. Addressing a press conference here, Sharmila, who is proposing to launch her party in Telangana, said her new party will work for development of people in Telangana. "Like the way late Rajasekhara Reddy developed Pulivendula constituency, I hope to ensure all-round growth in Paleru constituency," she maintained. Sharmila said prior to launch of her party, they will be holding a huge public meeting in Khammam on April 9.

TSCHIE TO REVIEW SITUATION WITH VARSITIES

From Page 1

Adding to this, TSCHIE chairman Prof. Papi Reddy said they will review the situation with all universities on when the rescheduled examinations can be conducted.

Meanwhile, all entrance examinations like TS-EAM-CET, TS-ECET 2021 will be held as per schedule now and there is no discussion over its postponement, said Prof. Papi Reddy.

FOLLOW COVID PROTOCOLS, SAYS SAJJANAR**DC CORRESPONDENT**
HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

Cyberabad police commissioner V. C. Sajjanar has appealed to public and recovered Corona-virus victims to donate blood and plasma, apart from following Covid-19 protocol, as cases of the dreaded disease are rising.

It is to be noted that Cyberabad police, along with Cyberabad Security Council, has set up a Covid-19 Control Room, which functions round the clock to assist people affected by Coronavirus. The control room facilitates regular drives across Hyderabad, Rachakonda and Cyberabad through a dedicated website for donating plasma and blood.

FEROZ KHAN QUILTS CONGRESS, JOINS BJP**DC CORRESPONDENT**
HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

In a shocker for city Congress, minority leader Feroz Khan joined the Bharatiya Janata Party in Delhi on Wednesday in presence of Telangana BJP affairs in-charge Tarun Chugh and state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar.

There were rumours several months ago that Feroz Khan, who contested as Congress candidate the last State Legislative Assembly elections from Nampally constituency in the city, was joining the saffron party. He had then condemned the news. But the latest development confirms his long-held intentions.

Feroz Khan is a popular senior person among Muslims in Hyderabad. Earlier, he had also contested from the Hyderabad Lok Sabha constituency.

ADOPT FARM MECHANISATION: AGRI MINISTER**DC CORRESPONDENT**
HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

Minister for agriculture S. Niranjan Reddy on Wednesday said that the state government will soon launch a new scheme to encourage farm mechanisation and to address the shortage of farm labourers in the state.

Replying to queries during the Question Hour in the Legislative Assembly, he said the new scheme is being formulated to provide modern farm equipment to farmers at subsidised prices.

"Under the new scheme, the state government is aiming to double farm mechanisation from the existing 45 per cent to 90 per cent over the next three-four years in order to tackle shortage of farm labourers," Niranjan Reddy said. The minister stated that a cluster-wise farm inventory is being prepared to identify the needs of farmers for every 5,000 acres.

Farmers, Oppn slam state govt over 'failed' promises

Reopen Nizam Sugar Factory, demand protesting sugarcane farmers

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

Opposition parties and farmers unions tried to lay siege to the state assembly on Wednesday, demanding that the TRS government fulfill the promises the party made before the elections. Tension prevailed at the assembly area and the police deployed heavy force to control the agitators.

Telangana Congress Committee working president and former MP, Ponnampalapati Jayaram Reddy led the protest march that started from the Osmania Gate. They reached up to the assembly in private vehicles and attempted entry to the legislature complex. The police took them into preventive custody and sent them to the Chikkadapally police station. Ponnampalapati said Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Naidu cheated the Karimnagar

TN NEEDS THIRD POLITICAL FRONT, SAYS OWAISI**ATHER MOIN | DC**
HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi on Wednesday expressed hope that the political alliance headed by T.T.V. Dhinakaran will emerge victorious in Tamil Nadu elections. He said his party's aim was to ensure the win of those with whom the AIMIM has allied with for the polls.

Addressing an election meeting in Vellore, he said Tamil Nadu requires a third political front and criticised the DMK for what he called a lapdog of the BJP.

"In the Lok Sabha when I moved amendments against the Citizens Amendment Act, I got only nine votes and the BJP got 324 votes. What stopped DMK and Congress MPs from supporting my amendments. Now they have the cheek to say that we are dividing votes in Tamil Nadu," he said.

He said in Tamil Nadu as far as Muslims minorities are concerned, their population is 7% and 11% of Muslims are languishing in jails. Who is responsible for this, he asked. The ratio of dropouts in Muslims is very high. He asserted that the people of Tamil Nadu want a secular alliance. "We should not only stand to represent the hopes and aspirations which are mentioned in our constitution of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice, but to also ensure the dreams of Anna Periyar and Amma be realized in Tamil Nadu," he said.

● **HE SAID** in Tamil Nadu as far as Muslims minorities are concerned, their population is 7% and 11% of Muslims are languishing in jails. Who is responsible for this, he asked. The ratio of dropouts in Muslims is very high. He asserted that the people of Tamil Nadu want a secular alliance.

ANGRY | MOOD**DC CORRESPONDENT**
HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

As many as 400 family members of Telangana martyrs are planning to contest the upcoming Nagarjunasagar Assembly by-elections to protest against the injustice meted out to them by the state government in extending financial assistance even after more than six years since the State's formation and to raise the issue at the national level.

Similarly, few unem-



Police personnel stop BJP activists outside the state assembly on Wednesday. The party members were protesting against the state government. (Right) Security personnel detain Congress workers who were holding an agitation against the TRS government outside the Assembly on Wednesday.

people on various issues and failed to fulfill the promises he made during the last assembly poll campaign.

BJP SC MORCHA: The BJP SC Morcha also held a protest near the assembly demanding that a statue of Dr BR Ambedkar be installed at NTR Marg. Morcha state president Koppu Bhasha

and national secretary S. Kumar alleged the chief minister failed to fulfill his promise to do so in the last seven years of his rule. They complained that Mr Rao used the Dalits to win polls but did little for the welfare of the marginalised sections. The Morcha leaders demanded that the government sack IPS officer RS Praveen



Kumar from the post of social welfare secretary as he had "insulted Hindu gods".

SUGARCANE FARMERS: Meanwhile, sugarcane farmers under the Rythu Aikya Vedika held a protest in front of the assembly seeking reopening of the Nizam Sugar Factory. Farmers Krishna Rao from

Korutla and Jagapathi Reddy from Jagtial district alleged that the TRS government did not take this matter seriously and said the government surrender the factory to the Nizam sugarcane farmers' association, which would run it. The farmer leaders were taken into custody and sent to the Ramgopalpet police station.

TS VACCINATION DATA IS DISMAL, SAYS DASOJU**DC CORRESPONDENT**
HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

AICC national spokesperson Dr Sravan Dasoju on Wednesday criticised Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao for his negligent attitude towards curtailing the spread of the deadly Coronavirus in the state and wondered how a rich state like Telangana has such a poor track-record in Covid-19 vaccination.

The senior Congress leader, while referring to Centre's vaccination data, questioned why Telangana State had restricted itself to administering just nine lakh doses of vaccine when other states are far ahead.

"Eight states, including Kerala (25,58,544 doses), MP (26,66,064), Karnataka (28,46,344), West Bengal (41,25,209), Gujarat (41,86,828), U P (46,53,705), Maharashtra (47,43,837) and Rajasthan (47,52,984 doses) account for 80 per cent of the cumulative five crore doses given so far in the country whereas Telangana is much lower with 9,93,030 doses. Chandrababhan Rao and K.T. Rama Rao claim that the state is rich. Why is this not reflected in Covid-19 vaccination?" he asked.

He pointed out that the government was keen on running 'Bar and Beer' shops to squeeze money from the people.

Congress leader from Mudhole joins BJP

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

Congress in Telangana received another jolt as senior party leader and former MLA of Mudhole constituency, Mohan Rao Patil Bhosale, joined Bharatiya Janata Party at its headquarters in Delhi in presence of TS BJP in-charge Tarun Chugh and state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar.

Chugh termed Bhosale's entry as a big boost for BJP and indication of how Congress is becoming irrelevant



Mohan Rao Patil Bhosale

as a political party in Telangana. "This is a shot in the arm of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose welfare schemes are becoming popular among people across the country," he

observed.

Telangana MPs Arvind Dharmapuri and Soyam Babu Rao, MLC Ramchander Rao and other party leaders were present on the occasion.

The BJP TS in-charge said entry of Mohan Rao Patil, brother of former MLA Narayan Rao Patil, into the saffron party will see many other senior Congress leaders moving to BJP in Telangana.

Recently, senior Congress leader and former MLA Kuna Srisailem Goud had joined BJP.

PRC is a TRS political ploy, alleges Aruna

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

BJP national vice-president D.K. Aruna on Wednesday stated that worried that the TRS would have no future if they lose MLC and civic body elections, Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan had warned the employees with the PRC before the elections.

The PRC was not because of any concern for the employees but

more a bait aimed at boosting his party's survival prospects by winning over the trust of employees, she said.

Speaking to the media, she alleged that the ruling party had spent ₹100 crore on each seat in the MLC elections. She demanded the state government to release all arrears that were due to employees. She contended that employees would be severely disadvantaged if the PRC is implemented from this

April. She also demanded equal pay for similar work to all contract and outsourcing employees.

Aruna said Chandrababhan Rao's move to increase the retirement age of employees would be a body-blow to the unemployed people, who were eagerly waiting for employment notification. Meanwhile, she appealed to the people to strictly follow the Covid protocol as there were fears of a second wave.

Centre ignoring TS, says KTR

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

Industries, IT and municipal minister K.T. Rama Rao alleged on Wednesday that the BJP government at the Centre was playing politics by announcing new projects and extending financial assistance to states that are poll-bound.

The minister said the

Telangana government is making repeated requests and submitting representations to the Centre seeking nod for various projects and funds, but the Centre is giving such to only the states that are set for polls.

Referring to the setting up of the Turmeric Board, he said the state government had been requesting the Centre for

long to set this up in Nizamabad. "A BJP MP candidate even went to the extent of promising the setting up of the turmeric board and signing on a bond paper during the 2019 Lok Saba poll campaigning that he would resign if the board is not set up. "He won but the turmeric board did not come about even after nearly two years. In the end, Tamil Nadu is

now being assured of the turmeric board as an election promise," Rama Rao said in the state assembly on Wednesday.

Pointing out that Hyderabad had emerged as the vaccine capital of the world, he said diplomats from 70 countries had recently visited the Genome Valley. "This speaks volumes of the importance they attach to the city."

What is INSACOG

From page 1

The Ministry of Health had established on December 25 the INSACOG, a grouping of 10 national laboratories, for carrying out genomic sequencing and analysis of circulating Covid-19 viruses, and correlating epidemiological trends with genomic variants.

Genomic variants of various viruses are a natural phenomenon and are found in almost all countries, the ministry said and added: "Since INSACOG initiated its work, 771 variants of concerns (VOCs) have been detected in a total of 10,787 positive samples shared by states and UTs."

"The analysis of samples from Maharashtra has revealed that, compared to Dece-

mber 2020, there has been an increase in the fraction of samples with the E484Q and L452R mutations," the ministry said.

Such mutations confer immune escape and increased infectivity. These mutations have been found in about 15-20 per cent of samples and do not match any previously catalogued VOCs, the ministry pointed out.

Added the ministry: "These have been categorized as VOCs but require the same epidemiological and public health response of increased testing, comprehensive tracking of close contacts, prompt isolation of positive cases and contacts as well as treatment as per National Treatment Protocol by the states and UTs."

ACTIVISTS: NEED TO DEMARCATATE LAKES PROPERLY

From page 1

As it turns out, the report filed by the TSPCB notes: "GHMC authorities have removed municipal solid waste, which were earlier dumped along the Bum-Rukn-Ud-Dowla Lake.

The GHMC has removed construction and demoli-

tion waste, which were dumped along the Bum-Rukn-Ud-Dowla Lake earlier."

City-based environmentalists like BV Subba Rao note that to prevent such discrepancies of the full-tank level from taking place, the water body must be demarcated properly.

Govt students at disadvantage in writing exams

From page 1

Official sources said that the Tamil Nadu government had already announced the cancellation of SSC and Inter exams, citing corona pandemic, and the Telangana government too is considering this proposal seriously.

While ordering closure of all educational institutions from March 24, the state government cited states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh etc to justify its decision.

Officials say if exams are held as scheduled under these circumstances, the students in government schools and junior colleges will be worst-hit, while students in private institutions will have the advantage.

This is because the syl-

labus in private institutions was completed by conducting online classes, while the syllabus in government institutions was not completed even to the extent of 50 per cent due to the delay in launching online classes and lack of access to online education to students from disadvantaged sections of the society.

Officials say the current conditions do not ensure a 'level playing field' for government and private students if public exams are conducted by taking into consideration just 40 days of classroom teaching in the entire academic year (2020-21) so far.

Officials say conducting public exams would be possible only if the government permits classroom teaching at least for SSC and Inter students till the April fourth week.

Students up in arms as varsities close hostels

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

The decision to close colleges, as well as hostels in the state following a spurt in Covid-19 cases led to protests by students on some campuses while others, with schools and colleges shut beginning Wednesday, made their way to bus stands to return to their native places.

On a day when Osmania University authorities made it clear that hostellers on its sprawling campus cannot stay beyond lunch on Thursday, some OU students, demanding that the hostels and messes be kept open, were taken into custody by the police. The OU authorities, in their instructions to students, said that the last meal to be available at the messes on campus will be lunch on Thursday following which the hostellers will have to vacate their rooms.

This did not go down well among the students and some of them, staged a

protest in front of the NCC Gate of the campus with a demand to run the hostels.

Following the information about the protest, Nallakunta police patrol team reached the spot and detained 14 students under preventive custody as per 'regular protocol', the police said. The students were advised to follow the university instructions.

While state run universities began shutting down as per the Telangana government's instructions on Tuesday, the University of Hyderabad adopted a different approach announcing that the 1,200 students already on the UoH campus would be allowed to stay in the hostels as they complete their practical/laboratory/project/thesis work before they graduate in June.

All work will continue by following strict Covid protocols.

The UoH, however, said that it will not allow any more students to come to the campus.

ETALA: BASTI DAWAKHANAS IN THREE MORE CITIES SOON

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

Basti Dawakhanas, which provide free treatment and medicines to the poor and which have received overwhelming response in GHMC limits, will soon be extended to other cities in the state.

Health minister Etela Rajender on Wednesday said that the government has decided to set up Basti Dawakhanas in Warangal, Khammam and Karimnagar soon. Replying to queries during the Question Hour in the Legislative Assembly, Rajender said that 225 Basti Dawakhanas

have been established under GHMC limits.

"The Chief Minister has given approval to set up 350 across the state. Of them, 225 are functioning in GHMC limits. We will soon have them in Warangal, Khammam and Karimnagar. Some more cities and towns will be covered in a phased manner," he said.

He said Basti Dawakhanas were being set up where there is no availability of urban primary healthcare centres (UPHCs) or at a distance of three kilometres from UPHCs. Rajender said Basti Dawakhanas were set up to cover 10,000 population in a radius of three kilometres.

IN BRIEF

Dy tahsildar in ACB net

Vemsoor (Khammam): Deputy tahsildar Upender and surveyor Mutheswara Rao were caught red-handed by the ACB sleuths in Vemsoor mandal office on Wednesday while receiving ₹1 lakh cash from a farmer for surveying his land. As per the details, Thota Sambasiva Rao, a former approached the deputy tahsildar Upender and surveyor Muktheshwara Rao to conduct a survey on his 25 acres land in Vemsoor. The two revenue officials demanded ₹3 lakh for it and agreed to take ₹1 lakh.

SHARMILA PUBLIC MEETING IN KHAMMAM

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, MARCH 24

The Khammam police has given permission to Y.S. Sharmila to organise public meeting on April 9 in Khammam.

The police asked the organisers to conduct the meeting following all the Covid-19 guidelines. The meeting will be held between 5 pm and 9 pm on April 9 and the police permit 5,000 to 6,000 people for the meeting.

YSRC Khammam district president Lakshmineni Sudheer said that the party will follow all norms in organising the meeting.

MAN WHO OPENED FIRE ATTEMPTS TO END LIFE IN JAIL

DC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, MARCH 24

Former Adilabad municipal vice-chairman Farooq Ahmed who had opened fire against his rivals a few months ago has reportedly attempted suicide inside the district jail and was immediately shifted to RIMS, Adilabad and from there to Hyderabad for better treatment on Wednesday.

Farooq Ahmed had opened fire with his pistol against his rivals in Adilabad town on December 18, 2020 and subsequently one Syed Zameer who was injured in the firing died later while undergoing treatment in Hyderabad.

It is said that Farooq Ahmed attempted to commit suicide by hanging himself with the 'Lungi'. It is also said that Farooq might have consumed something poisonous.

The jail staff who noticed the suicide attempt by Farooq Ahmed and foiled his attempt and immediately shifted Farooq Ahmed to Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Adilabad where doctors treated him and later shifted to Hyderabad for better treatment. Family members of the Farooq Ahmed alleged harassment against the local MLA Jogu Ramanna and also the local police. Police refuted the allegations made by Farooq Ahmed's family members.

MAN NABBED WITH ₹1 CRORE FOREIGN NOTES

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel seized foreign currency worth ₹1.03 crore from a passenger at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) in Shamshabad on Wednesday.

According to officials, the passenger, Mohammed Mustafa, aged about 37, is a resident of Hyderabad and was supposed to travel to Dubai by IndiGo Airlines.

Head constable Jitender Kumar of CISF surveillance team noticed him acting suspiciously while entering the terminal building. Mustafa was diverted to a random X-BIS machine point, for a thorough check of his luggage.

"During x-ray screening, Ajit Kumar Yadav, Assistant Sub-Inspector of CISF, observed suspicious images inside his bag and referred the bag for physical checking. Upon doing so, foreign currency of various countries were found concealed inside sweet-boxes," said officials, adding that Mustafa could not produce any valid document for carrying such foreign currency.

● The passenger, Mohammed Mustafa, aged about 37, is a resident of Hyderabad and was supposed to travel to Dubai by IndiGo Airlines

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav



Collector K. Shashanka, addl collector G.V. Shyam Prasad Lal, Police Commissioner Kamalasan Reddy, Municipal Commissioner Valluru Kranthi participate in 3K Freedom Run as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav in Karimnagar on Wednesday. — YELABAKA RADHAKRISHNA

Closure of schools a conspiracy: Students

They criticised the govt for hiking retirement age

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, MARCH 24

Student leaders in Kakatiya University alleged on Wednesday, that the closure of educational institutions was a conspiracy to distance education from students in the name of coronavirus threat. They demanded the government to reopen the schools and colleges and run them under the Covid-19 guidelines.

NSUI, MSF, ABSE, SFI, PDSU, BSE, TVV and other unions took part in the protest demanding filling up of vacant posts, in front of the Vice-chancellor's building.

The students raised slogans against the State Government for its decisions taken on the floor of the Assembly. They criticised the government for increasing the retirement age from 58 years to 61 years, even though the number of unemployed is on the meteoric rise.



Students going to their home due to closure of schools and colleges in Karimnagar on Wednesday. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

It's nothing but vindictiveness that the rulers were showing against the unemployed youth, they said.

The student leaders demanded the government to release notification to fill at least one lakh jobs with immediate effect.

Referring to the closure of schools, the students demanded the government to fulfil its assurance of providing unemployment allowance to the jobless with immediate effect. Further, the students said that they will intensify their agitation if the government

fails to give unemployment allowance.

Aluvala Karthik, Wadde-pally Madhu, Manda Bhaskar, Manda Naresh, Ganesh, Srikanth, Prasanna, Md Pasha, Manda Shyam, Manasa, Iaxmi and Kalyan were present among others.

Villagers looking for officials' intervention in drinking water

DC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, MARCH 24

The drinking water problem hit the villages with soaring temperatures and people of interior areas are depending on rivulets and streams. While officials concerned have failed to come to the rescue of the people.

People of interior areas are eagerly waiting for the help from the officials in getting drinking water following the soaring temper-

atures and water bodies are getting dried up.

The drinking water problem is much visible in the villages located in the hilly area in the ertshile Adilabad district.

The local bodies elected public representatives also expressed their anger against officials and staff of concerned departments during the recent Zilla Parishad general body meeting for neglecting the drinking water problem in the villages.

Talamadugu ZPTC Goka Ganesh said villagers in Punaguda were facing drinking water problem for the last 15 days due to damage of water pipes but officials did not make effort to repair the pipes to supply drinking water to the villagers.

He said the panchayat raj officials give instructions to use gram panchayats to use their funds to solve the drinking water problem and the funds spent will be reimbursed later.

The drinking water problem is high in the villages located on the hillock and the drinking water is not being supplied due to various reasons.

While Adilabad District Mission Bhagirata officials say that they have given to tap connection to 1,49,998 houses of a total of 1,50,646 and Mission Bhagirata works have been completed in 980 villages out of a total of 1,231 villages in Adilabad district.

INDIAN HERITAGE

TRS leaders petitioned Union minister on two temples

Centre urged to restore temples

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, MARCH 24

MLC Pochampally Srinivas Reddy, along with MPs Joginapalli Santosh Kumar, Banda Prakash and Maloth Kavitha handed over a petition to Union tourism minister Prahlad Singh Patel in New Delhi on Wednesday appealing timely restoration of the Thousand Pillar Temple in Hanamkonda, and the Comprehensive Development of the Ramappa Temple in Mulugu.

In the letter, Pochampally Srinivas Reddy described that Ramappa is the only temple in India which is named after the sculptor. The main structure is made of red sandstone, but the outer pillars have large brackets of black basalt rich in iron, magnesium, and silica. These are engraved with images



Ramappa Temple complex in Palampet of Mulugu district.

of mythical animals, dancers and musicians. Kakatiya artefacts, their delicate sculpture, and sensual poses are very popular.

In fact, in 2019, the tem-

ple was also added to the "provisional list" of the proposed Unesco World Heritage Site. "The Glorious Kakatiya Temples and Gateways", he mentioned in the peti-

tion. "There is an urgent need for the renovation of these two historic temples. Even though the Ramappa temple is still intact after wars, natural

disasters, looting and destruction, partial damage was caused by an earthquake in the 17th century. Some structures have fallen into disrepair due to neglect. The Kameshwara temple on the right was demolished. The main entrance to the outer wall of the temple was also damaged," he explained.

Reddy also noted that in 2005, the Archaeological Survey of India removed the pillars for the reconstruction of the "Natya Mandapam" to the south of the 800-year-old 1000 pillar temple. However, restoration work has been going on at a slow pace.

"It was supposed to be completed within 18 months but a decade and a half had passed with the works still incomplete. These works need to be completed immediately," he stressed.

Remember the sacrifices made for Independence

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, MARCH 24

Mahbubabad district collector V.P. Gautam on Wednesday asked people to remember the sacrifices made in the struggle for the independence of the country.

As part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a freedom run was held in which District SP N. Koti Reddy along with ASP Yogesh Gautam participated.

The collector flagged off the freedom run at NTR Stadium in Mahabubabad town. Athletes were joined by officials in the rally by following the Covid-19 regulations.

The freedom run, which started from the stadium, concluded at the tahsildar's office at Nehru Chowk with the participants waving national flags and chanting slogans that evoked a sense of nationalism.

On the occasion of the completion of 75 years of independence, the government is conducting celebrations in various modes for 75 weeks, Gautham noted.

In Warangal Rural district, district collector M. Haritha inaugurated the run from the mini stadium in Narsampet. Speaking after the conclusion of the run at the Ambedkar centre, she urged everyone to take part in the celebrations to mark 75 years of independence.

In Jayashankar Bhupalpally district, the rally was held from the Ambedkar statue to the Ambedkar stadium with youth and officials taking part.

RDO Srinivas said that on this occasion, apart from remembering the contributions of the freedom fighters, one must also note the

● On the occasion of the completion of 75 years of independence, the government is conducting celebrations in various modes for 75 weeks, Gautham noted.

● In Warangal Rural district, district collector M. Haritha inaugurated the run from the mini stadium

importance of sports and fitness which are very useful for physical and mental health.

He urged the authorities, children and people to build a healthy society by focusing on yoga, meditation and even sports, in addition to getting good nutrition in their daily lives.

Jangaon collector K. Nikhila who took part in the run held from the bus stand junction to the collectorate said as part of this programme, the district administration intends to hold Kavi Sammelanam on April 3 and asked enthusiasts to participate.

Meanwhile Bhadradi district collector M.V. Reddy said that the people of India have been enjoying freedom due to the sacrifice of hundreds of leaders in the Independence Movement.

Participating in the Freedom run from Yellandu Crossroads to KNM in Kothagudem on Wednesday, the collector said that India will witness 75 years of Independence by August 15, 2022 and the state and central government are organising various programmes in the name of Azadi Ka Amritha.

Mahatma Gandhi launched Dandi March on March 12, 1931 not caring for the British police caning. The white clothes of the activists witnessed blood due to lathicharge.

NORTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED
CIN No. U40109TG2000SGC034119.

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Name of the work "Annual maintenance Service contract of ductable Air Conditioners and all other Window, Split and Floor Mounted Air Conditioners (Without Compressor) at Corporate Office (TSNPDCL/Warangal)" for the financial year 2021-22. For further details regarding detailed tender notice & schedule please visit www.tsnpdcl.in.

Sd/- Chief General Manager/Proj/NPDCL/Warangal.

SHORT TENDER NOTICE NO. 07/ 2020-21 OF DEE/ OP/ Bhoopalpally
SPECIFICATION No. 01/ 2020-21

Sealed tenders are invited by the TSNPDCL registered contractors of Bhupalpally District for the various works in Bhupalpally Division. The details of the work and other information can be obtained from our website www.tsnpdcl.in.

Sd/- Divisional Engineer Elect., Operation, Bhoopalpally.

SHORT TENDER NOTICE NO. 05/ 2020-21 OF SE/ OP/ KARIMNAGAR
WITH SPECIFICATION No. 11/ 20-21 TO 17/20-21

Sealed tenders are invited by the TSNPDCL registered contractors of Karimnagar District for the Spot Billing works in Karimnagar Circle. The details of the works and other information can be obtained from our website www.tsnpdcl.in.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Operation, Karimnagar

SHORT TENDER NOTICE NO. 02/ 2020-21 OF DE/ OP/ Warangal.
WITH SPECIFICATION No. 01/ 2020-21

Sealed tenders are invited from TSNPDCL registered contractors of Warangal District for the various works in Warangal Division. The details of the works can be obtained from our website www.tsnpdcl.in.

Sd/- Divisional Engineer Elect., Operation, Warangal(T).

CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION VACANT ACCOUNTS & FINANCE

NANDINI ENTERPRISES is looking for a Male B.Com with 1 or 2 years of experience in Payment Collection, Documentation, followup with PSU's in Vizag. Work place is at Vizag. Please send resume to sudhakar@nandini-automation.com (S/2021/C02766)

HRD & ADMINISTRATIVE

LOOKING FOR a experienced retail store manager for new store near forum mall, Kukatpally. Minimum 6 years in retail store experience. Fluent in English, Hindi, Telugu. Please call /WhatsApp number 8105710333, below 8179012959 (HYMM/2021/C08539)

EDUCATIONAL

CAREER/ENTRANCE COURSES

✓ONE-SITTING / Fasttrack: Graduations (All), Post-Graduations (All), PG Diplomas, Polytechnic Diplomas, Secondary (10th) & Senior Secondary (12th). Provided Online results & Online verifications. Eligible for Private & Abroad. Ph:9912540011, 7337291133, www.hyderc.com (A/2021/IC00125)

DISTANCE EDUCATION

✓CONTACT FOR NCTE: Recognised: B.Ed./M.Ed. No Advance Fee. Only For Educational Consultants. Students Please no call. Contact

regarding any Educational Problem/ Guidance. Shiksha Bharti.Varanasi.Email:shikshabharti88@yahoo.com Mob: 9519759663, 9915103781. (HYMM/2021/C08531)

NOTICE

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

DECCAN Chronicle
EDITION CENTRE : KARIMNAGAR
H.No.1-21/12/1, Cherlabhukur Road, Mugdampur Village, Karimnagar - 505 186

FOR DISPALY / CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS
9121183123, 90006 50508

FOR COPIES / SUBSCRIPTION
9100715345, 90004 20630

DECCAN
Chronicle

25 MARCH 2021

Shot eligibility expansion
route out of return wave

The decision of the Union government to open up the vaccination programme against pandemic Covid-19 further and include all those who are aged 45 years and above is a welcome move as it comes in the nick of time. India is on the verge of a second wave of the pandemic with more than 47,000 people contracting the virus on Tuesday alone. The daily caseload has been hovering above 40,000 for the last couple of weeks. Several states have already gone back to or are contemplating re-introducing lockdown in varying intensities to check the spread of the virus.

The government decision comes amid demands made by several state governments to include more categories of the population under it. The Delhi government has demanded that everyone above 18 years be given the jab while Punjab wanted the norms for the second phase where only those above 60 years were eligible for the vaccine be done away with. Its chief minister is particularly worried as 81 per cent samples that under-

The US has vaccinated 37.83 of every hundred people while China's number stands at 5.21 against India's 3.54

went genome sequencing from the state showed B117 virus, the UK strain of Covid-19. The government has of late ratcheted up the daily numbers in the inoculation programme, and the number of people who got a dose of the vaccine touched 33 lakhs on Tuesday. This is a commendable achievement compared with the slow progress the programme made in the initial phase. The total number of people who have got at least one dose of the vaccine has become 4.5 crores

now but only less than 80 lakhs have got both their doses. The percentage of people who have got the vaccine is far too low compared with that in the US and Britain: the US has vaccinated 37.83 of every hundred people while China's number stands at 5.21 against India's 3.54. At this rate, India will take months on end to get a sizeable share of the population inoculated. This would mean some region or the other being under lockdown or debilitating restrictions. But the nation cannot afford to keep its economic activity in chains for long.

It has been one year since Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared a national lockdown to tame the virus and flatten the curve. One year on, India has suffered immensely at the hand of the microorganism. Crores of people found it difficult to make ends meet but the governments at the Centre and in most states offered very little in the form of immediate relief. Lakhs of people were made to flee their temporary abodes in the towns and trek thousands of miles on their way back home, creating one of the most heartrending and shameful episodes of Independent India. One year down the line, India is still the country with the third largest number of Covid cases and deaths after the United States and Brazil.

There cannot be a repeat of the same this year. The government must further strengthen the inoculation programme and at the same time strictly impose Covid-appropriate protocol across the country. Any laxity on these counts will cost the nation heavily.

Lanka: A lost opportunity

In abstaining from the vote on the United Nations Human Right Council resolution against Sri Lanka, India may have been attempting to find a pragmatic balance. But, in not claiming the moral high ground on the issue of human rights violations against Sri Lankan Tamils, the country lost an opportunity to be the conscience keeping leader of the region. There may have been inhibiting reasons in voting for the resolution like respect for the territorial integrity of the island nation, but none was so compelling as to impose an ambivalent position on how Sri Lanka tamed LTTE's secessionist movement towards the end of the civil war when it brazenly carried out executions, including that of the minor son of LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran.

It is clear that India chose the path of lesser resistance in joining the abstainers rather than the 22 nations who voted for the resolution and 11, including Pakistan and China, voting against.

are in the realm of the pedantic.

There is no doubt the nearness of April 6 elections in Tamil Nadu influenced the decision to abstain. The perception of New Delhi varies vastly from that of Tamil Nadu, obviously influenced by the romanticism of a Tamil Eelam, or homeland. The fact remains that New Delhi voted thus only with an eye on the Tamil Nadu voter rather than the empathetic first principles in favour of a people residing in northern Sri Lanka who are discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity. No Indian on Tamil can influence the court of post-war events in Sri Lanka. But to remain a silent spectator to human rights abuses reflects moral bankruptcy.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER
EditorK. SUDHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

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

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

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

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

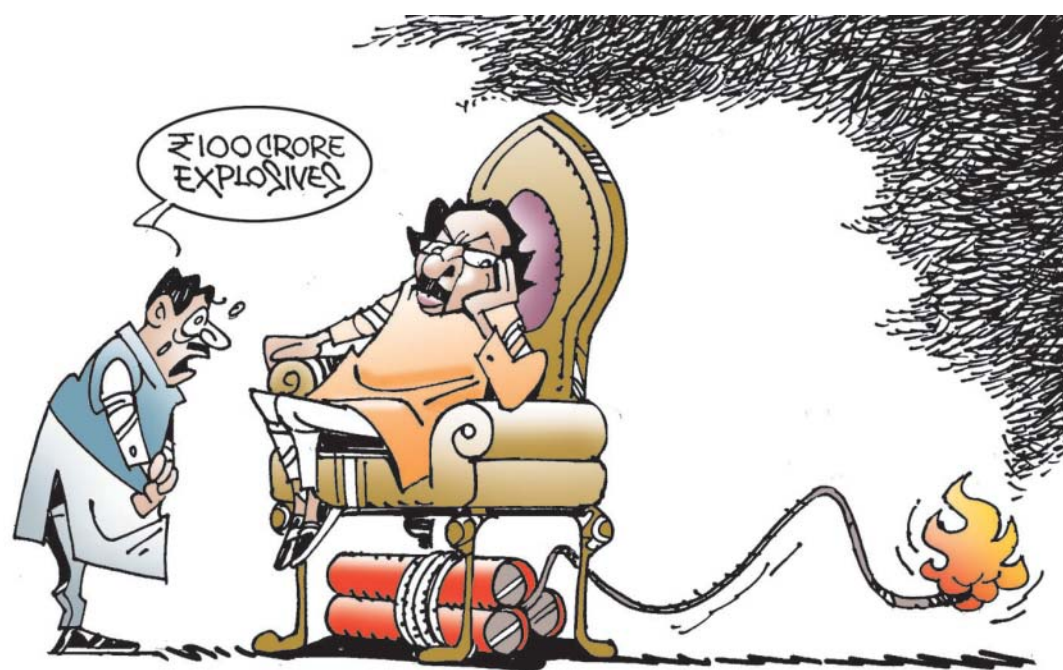
Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilalapally Colony, Jagtilya Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433

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

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

Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255
Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08

Subhani

Halt Covid complacency:
Be vigilant, keep all safePatralekha
Chatterjee

Dev 360

Around this time last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a nationwide lockdown to stop the spread of the coronavirus. Indians were given four hours' notice before the order took effect. "From 12 midnight tonight, the entire country will go under a complete lockdown," Mr Modi said. "To save India and every Indian, there will be a total ban on venturing out of your homes." The initial clampdown was for 21 days.

A year on, where are we? That question is the big story in our lives.

Many of us have lost loved ones, jobs, watched our savings evaporate, been sick ourselves. Most of us have no choice but to tap our inner strengths as we cope with everyday challenges in the time of a pandemic.

It is not a totally bleak picture. Vaccines are available now and we are likely to see a huge scale-up in the government's immunisation drive in the coming weeks.

But alongside, worryingly, we are also seeing a big surge in Covid-19 cases in many parts of the country and a disconcerting general disregard for safety protocols. India's new Covid-19 cases had peaked at nearly 100,000 a day in September and had been declining steadily until late last month.

Two recent surveys give us a sense of just how bad the economic situation is.

The first one relates to the situation in New Delhi, the nation's capital.

According to a recent survey by the Delhi government, the unemployment rate in Delhi was 11.1 per cent before the onset of the pandemic and it shot up to 28.5 per cent during October-November 2020, an increase of 17.4 per cent. The male unemployment rate was 8.7 per cent before the pandem-

ic; it increased to 23.2 per cent, an increase of 14.5 per cent. The female unemployment rate was 25.6 per cent before the pandemic and went up to 54.7 per cent, an increase of 29.1 per cent, in the same period. The average monthly income of employed persons in the city before the pandemic was ₹16,511. It dipped to ₹15,383, a reduction of 6.8 per cent in the average monthly income during October-November last year.

In the past year, on the whole, the worst-affected sectors have been construction, food and beverages, service activities, education, wholesale and retail trade, services to buildings and landscape activities, information service activities, land transport, security and investigation activities, human health activities and wearing apparel manufacturing.

The survey was conducted last year, and arguably things have improved since then.

But here is the catch, signs of economic activity do not necessarily mean that workers are getting their due wages. From my personal conversations with scores of people in the informal service sector, I know that many are still getting a fraction of their former wages and many who are without work.

In January this year, I met Naresh Kumar, 55, in one of the "pagoda" style temporary refuges in winter in the Bangla Sahib shelter run by an NGO. Mr Kumar told me

Let's face it — we are in the middle of two crises — the coronavirus pandemic and the one impacting the economy. Both intersect. We have the vaccine. But as scientists keep reminding us, it doesn't herald a full stop to the pandemic just yet.

A spike in coronavirus cases in India would dent the green shoots of the economic recovery as fresh curbs will kick in to prevent a new wave from gaining momentum. We must do everything we can to ensure that does not happen.

he used to earn his living as a waiter, mostly at weddings. For the last one and half months, he had been at the shelter. He had no work for the past year. He was picked up by a rescue van and brought to the shelter. He had no identity documents. Naresh Kumar feared going back to sleeping in the streets once the temporary shelter closed down. I wonder where he is today....

Even in tony South Delhi enclaves, it is not uncommon to find people in the beauty, wellness and hospitality industry complaining of getting less than their salary. They can't quit their jobs because there are few new opportunities in the market.

Though the unemployment rate is gradually decreasing in the city, the implementation of a job guarantee scheme is very much needed to revive the national capital's economy scarred by the coronavirus pandemic.

The survey tells us that people at the bottom of the income hierarchy were among the worst affected. Those with no or minimal education lost jobs in far greater numbers than those with a simple diploma.

This is not just in Delhi or India's big cities. Across the country, not only have the number of the poor increased, leading to a sharp spike in the global increase in poverty, a new Pew Research Centre analysis talks about the retreat of India's middle class in 2020. The middle class in India is estimated to have shrunk by 32 million last year as a direct fallout of the economic downturn, compared with the number it may have reached without the pandemic, it says.

Understandably, people are tired and craving for normalcy and economic recovery.

But let's face it — we are in the middle of two crises — the coronavirus pandemic and the one impacting the economy. Both intersect. We have the vaccine. But as scientists keep reminding us, the vaccine doesn't herald a full stop to the pandemic just yet.

Nicholas Christakis, a physician, epidemiologist, and sociologist at Yale University, says the coronavirus pandemic will continue to affect our lives through 2021 and beyond. He talks about it in detail his new book *Apollo's Arrow: The Profound and Enduring Impact of Coronavirus on the Way We Live*.

When the virus is surrounded by people who are vaccinated, it has nowhere to go and thus outbreaks are suppressed, he says. Until such a state of herd immunity is reached, mask wearing, hand washing with soap and social distancing will have to necessarily remain. A lot has changed since 2020. For many, hugging a loved one is a fantasy with restrictions on mobility still in place. New protocols for health safety have drastically changed our everyday lives in the past year. No one knows just how long it will take us to bounce back psychologically, socially and economically in the long term. There are still many uncertainties about the virus and variants are popping up.

But we know that a spike in coronavirus cases in India would dent the green shoots of the economic recovery as fresh curbs will kick in to prevent a new wave from gaining momentum. We must do everything we can to ensure that does not happen. We must beat the virus, but that can happen only if everyone sees it as a shared interest and shared fate. If we become complacent, and drop our guard, infections can rise. That affects us all.

The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@gmail.com

LETTERS

PRIVATE TEACHERS

The TRS government's unanimous decision to close all educational institutions in the wake of rising Covid cases is good (*TS shuts all schools, colleges, DC, March 24*). However, life of private teachers will become critical without sufficient salaries. I don't understand why the government doesn't care about private teachers as much as government teachers.

Naresh B. Hyderabad

ONE-DAY VICTORY

Swashbuckling battling by Shikhar Dhawan, K.L. Rahul, Virat Kohli and Krunal Pandey steered India to magnificent victory at the Pune One-Day (*Extraordinaire, DC, March 24*). I am optimistic that India will do well to clinch the series against England.

Dr Manthena Damodara Chary Hyderabad

CASTE RESERVATION

The theory of caste seemed to work wonderfully with the superstitious people. It was an effective instrument to dominate and exploit people and keep them ignorant and submissive by increasing divisions among them. It also worked as a vote bank. Reservations are meant only to correct historical injustice against Dalits.

G.R. Narsing Rao Secunderabad

KUDOS TO KCR

Hats off to KCR for his timely decision to select Vani Devi and Palla Rajeswara Rao as MLCs candidates and give 30% fitment for Govt Employees, teachers, etc. It was like killing 2 birds with 1 shot.

Annappurna Putha Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN
ChronicleDefence spending
hiked

NEW DELHI, MARCH. 24

The Finance Minister, Mr. Y.B. Chavan, presenting his first though interim budget to Lok Sabha today, announced a provision of Rs. 50 crores to support a country-wide programme of creating more employment opportunities with a productive bias.

There are no new tax proposals in the budget for 1971/72 drawn up at existing levels of taxation, but Mr. Chavan gave unmistakable indication of additional resource mobilisation measures in the Budget proper to be presented in May next. Defence expenditure met from revenue next year is estimated at Rs. 1094 crores.

Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka BabuWill J&K-AGMUT
cadre merger solve
Valley's problem of
sparse governance?

The merger of the Jammu and Kashmir cadre into the UT cadre, among other things, is meant to address the old problem of the acute shortage of IAS officers in the Union territory. The erstwhile J&K cadre had a stipulated strength of 137 IAS officers but currently has merely 58, of which nine are on Central deputation. The result is that practically every IAS officer in the UT is handling several portfolios, which is not exactly great news for good governance.

The problem has lingered for several years, with the result that officers of the Kashmir Administrative Service have long been handling posts reserved for IAS officers, without being promoted to the IAS. For instance, the post of district magistrate (DM) can only be filled by an IAS officer, but in

Kashmir, nine out of 20 district magistrates are from the state administrative service.

Apparently, no state administrative service officer has been inducted into the IAS since 2012, which has only accentuated the problem. While in other parts of the country there is a 37 per cent reserved quota for state service officers, in Kashmir it has become 50 per cent!

The cadre merger, the Centre hopes, will allow officers in the AGMUT cadre to be posted in J&K and Ladakh, and vice-versa. Until that happens it is the state service babus who will continue to hold most of the administrative positions in the Union territory.

A HIGH-PROFILE EXIT
P.K. Sinha, senior advisor to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, quietly put in his papers but cannot stop

P.K. Sinha, senior advisor to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, quietly put in his papers but cannot stop tongues from wagging. It is being said that Mr Sinha could be the next lieutenant governor of either Delhi or Puducherry.

tongues from wagging. It is being said that the former Cabinet secretary is being primed for another role by Mr Modi. Among the theories doing the rounds, it is being speculated that Mr Sinha could be the next lieutenant governor of either Delhi or Puducherry.

This may not be without precedent. Recall 2019 when Nripendra Misra, the then principal secretary

to the PMO, similarly resigned "for personal reasons" but was soon named chairman of the prestigious Ram temple construction committee.

BABU'S MIXED LEGACY

Economic affairs secretary Tarun Bajaj has been given an additional charge of revenue secretary after the retirement of A.B.P. Pandey last month. However, Mr Pandey's exit hasn't been as quiet as he may have expected. As soon as he retired, media reports appeared around the lack of progress in filling more than 400 vacancies of income tax commissioners and others, some of which have been hanging fire since 2019. It was somehow hinted that Mr Pandey did not do enough during his stint as revenue secretary to fill these vacancies. Further,

sources say, Mr Pandey drew the ire of Odisha-based IT chief commissioner D.P. Kar, who reportedly wrote to the Prime Minister demanding an inquiry against Pandey.

Yet, others point out that the same Mr Pandey was among the few babus who successfully led three crucial institutions of the Modi *sarkar* — department of revenue, goods and services tax network and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). As revenue secretary, Mr Pandey led significant tax reforms undertaken by the government. The detractors waited for the man to retire before raising issues that troubled them during his tenure.

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

SHORT TAKES

EC FILES FIR AGAINST BJP CANDIDATE

DC CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI, MARCH 24

The Election Commission (EC) has filed an FIR against BJP candidate in Assam for his remarks on beef during an election meeting. The FIR has been lodged at the Gauripur police station in Western Assam's Dhubri district.

BJP candidate Banendra Kumar Mushahary, who is contesting from Gauripur, claimed that beef is the "national dish of India". In an obvious bid to appease the minority voters he made this remark at an election meeting in a Muslim-dominated area of the district.

"How can anyone ban beef? It is the national dish of India," he said at the meeting.

Contrary to frequent campaigns of the saffron party to ban beef across the country, he went on saying, "The beef is an international dish and "educated Muslims in the rural areas of Assam should understand that no one can ban the sale of beef in Assam or anywhere in India."

Mushahary, a veteran politician, joined the BJP in December 2020. He was first elected to the Assam Legislative Assembly in 1996 as an independent candidate from Gauripur in Dhubri district.

In 2011, he was elected as an AGP candidate from Gauripur. Later, he joined the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) and was elected as an MLA for the third time.

Meanwhile, BJP workers in the districts have expressed deep anguish over Mushahary's remarks and demanded an unconditional apology for his remark.

BJP WORKER FOUND DEAD IN COOCHBEHAR

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA, MARCH 24

Close on the heels of a boy's death in a crude bomb blast pre poll violence claimed another life in West Bengal as a BJP worker was found dead under mysterious circumstances at Dinhat in Coochbehar of North Bengal.

The deceased, Amit Sarkar, was the Dinhat Town Mondal president of the party. He was found hanging by a rope tied around his neck at the verandah of a state-run veterinary hospital and his feet almost touching the ground on Wednesday morning.

Angry BJP workers initially stopped the police from taking away the body for post-mortem.

BJP MP Nishith Pramanik, contesting from Dinhat, alleged that the TMC goons first killed Sarkar and then hanged the body to pass it as a case of suicide.

Pointing fingers at TMC MLA and his rival candidate Udayan Guha, he demanded a CBI probe into the case.

ORDER ON ELECTORAL BONDS RESERVED

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, MARCH 24

The Supreme Court on Wednesday reserved its order on a plea by NGO Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) seeking stay of the opening any further window for sale of fresh electoral bonds from April 1 ahead of the ongoing Assembly elections in five states.

Reserving the order, a bench headed by Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde and also comprising Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian, however, expressed concerns over the possible misuse of bonds and asked the Centre to examine it.

"If a political party gets ₹100 crore worth bonds what is the control over the use of these bonds for illegal activities or purposes outside political agenda," the court asked in a poser to the government.

The court asked Attorney General K.K. Venugopal that they would like the government to look into the angle of misuse of the funds coming through electoral bonds.

The Attorney General however, said after the electoral bonds scheme was launched in 2018, black money in election funding has been kept under check as no cash is collected. These bonds can be purchased only through cheque or Demand Draft, he said.

The court was hearing a petition by the ADR seeking to stall the sale of fresh electoral bonds starting from April 1.

EC TRANSFERS COIMBATORE COLLECTOR, TOP POLICE OFFICER

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC
CHENNAI, MARCH 24

Cracking the whip, the Election Commission of India suddenly transferred the Coimbatore District Election Officer and Collector, K. Rajamani, and Coimbatore Commissioner of Police Sumit Sharan to non-election posts on Wednesday and ordered the Chief Secretary to report compliance by noon.

S. Nagarajan would take over as the Collector and Davidson Devasirvatham as the Commissioner, the ECI order said, adding that the decision was taken 'on the basis of various input received.'

It is alleged that the two officers were close to a State Minister that gave rise to many complaints of partiality that were forwarded to the Election Commission.

In another crackdown, authorities seized ₹1 crore cash hidden in the Toyota-Innova MUV displaying a MLA sticker on the windscreen. The sticker had been issued for Musiri AIADMK MLA M Selvaraj.

The vehicle, when it was stopped at the Petavaihalai check post near Trichy, had three occupants other than the driver.

All the three men, said to be AIADMK party functionaries, reportedly told the police that they were not aware of the currency bundles inside the car.

The seized cash was taken to the office of the returning officer in Srirangam at midnight and it took two hours for the officials to count the ₹500 bundles using cash counting machines. The money was handed over to the Income-Tax department, which would take up the investigation of the case since the seized currency exceeded ₹50 lakh.

Another Income-Tax raid in Chennai on Wednesday made tongues wag about the possibility of the authorities trying to figure out a possible money distribution channel for a political party. The raids were at the houses and offices of a railway union leader and his son.

When the I-T sleuths tried to storm into the house of Prakash, son of Southern Railway Mazdoor Union long time general secretary, N. Kanniah, in the morning they faced resistance. Police reinforcements were requisitioned and the officials gained entry into the house. Soon, I-T officials were at the house of Kanniah and offices of the SRMU and that of Prakash, who own IT companies. Kanniah is also the head of Railway Employees Urban Bank. Though a union leader, he is known for his ostentatious lifestyle.

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, MARCH 24

National Investigation Agency on Wednesday invoked Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act against suspended Mumbai Police officer Sachin Waze. The Maharashtra ATS also handed over the two accused and the case papers of Mansukh Hiran murder case to the NIA after a court order. The NIA had approached the court saying that despite Central government transferring Hiran murder case to NIA the ATS is not handing over the case documents to them.

Under this stringent UAPA law, the investigating agency can avail police custody of an accused up to 30 days and also the probe agency can get an extension of 90 days to file a charge sheet (additional to the usual 90 days). Securing bail will also be much more



A BJP supporter holds party flag during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's election campaign rally ahead of the Assam Assembly polls at Sipajhar in Darrang district on Wednesday. - PTI

Cong's Mahajut is a 'Maha jhooth': PM

Says Cong did nothing for tea workers during their rule

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, MARCH 24

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday accused the Congress of making false promises to the people of Assam.

Coming down heavily on the Congress-led grand alliance - Mahajut (grand alliance), Prime Minister while addressing a public meeting at Bihpuria said that it's not Congress' Mahajut but it's Congress party's 'Maha jhooth' (Biggest lie).

"A Maha jhooth that guarantees illegal immigrants in Satras, Namghar, National Parks, a mahajhooth which guarantees poaching and corruption. It is a mahajhooth, who for their own sake, can defame Assam's pride and even tea in the whole world," said Mr Modi.

Speaking about the promises made by the Congress to improve the condition of tea workers, Mr Modi said that the Congress did nothing for those working in the tea gardens when the party was in power. "In 15 years regime, they could not hike the tea workers wages above ₹100," he said. He alleged that Congress never worked for the uplift of tea garden workers while the NDA government has increased and doubled their wages.

"Immediately after coming to power, we will work extensively to make their life better. The NDA government is committed to providing a dignified life to the women of tea gardens," said Mr Modi. The BJP leader said that Congress can do anything for votes. "Today, Congress' hand is with those who are set to destroy the identity of Assam. Congress can do

New Delhi, March 24: Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien on Wednesday condemned as "distasteful" BJP leader Dilip Ghosh's purported remarks against the West Bengal chief minister suggesting that she should wear Bermuda shorts to display her injured leg, and said such comments were "not acceptable" in politics.

Participating in a debate on the Finance Bill in Rajya Sabha, O'Brien said his party condemns this kind of remarks against anyone. "There is decency, there is courtesy which we always try to extend. Doesn't matter man, woman... So I am little disturbed...most distasteful statement was made about a woman saying that she should not wear a saree anymore but she should wear Bermuda shorts," the Trinamool MP said. He said the statement was made by a parliamentarian who is a state president of the BJP.

"This is not acceptable in politics. This was said by an MP and state pres-

anything for votes. They can stand with anyone and can even betray anyone," he alleged.

"The Congress, which has been a symbol of discrimination against indigenous people of Assam, is asking people to hand over Assam to them again. I have come to wake you up. Congress has its hands with such people, whose objective is to destroy the identity of Assam. Will you let

● A VIDEO clip of Ghosh apparently suggesting Mamata should wear Bermuda shorts to display her injured leg has triggered a controversy. While no one was named in the purported speech by Ghosh, known for his controversial comments, most commentators took the comments to be directed at Banerjee. In the video, the veracity of which could not be confirmed by PTI, Ghosh was seen stating at an election meeting in Purulia on Monday that after the cast was taken off and the foot was bandaged, she is displaying the leg to everyone.

ident of the BJP. We condemn this kind of remarks against anyone," the leader said.

He said there may be political differences among parties but that does not mean that they are political enemies.

"...so what if there are political differences...we have major differences on ideology. I respect Ma'am and every other MP. They are our political rivals. We are not political enemies..." he said referring to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

A video clip of Ghosh apparently suggesting West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee should wear Bermuda shorts to dis-

play her injured leg has triggered a controversy.

While no one was named in the purported speech by Ghosh, known for his controversial comments, most commentators took the comments to be directed at Banerjee. In the video, the veracity of which could not be confirmed by PTI, Ghosh was seen stating at an election meeting in Purulia on Monday that after the cast was taken off and the foot was bandaged, she is displaying the leg to everyone.

"...she is wearing saree with one leg covered but kept another open for viewing. Haven't seen anyone draping a saree in such a way... If she has to display her leg for viewing, she can very well wear Bermuda shorts. That will help to have a better view," the BJP MP was purportedly heard stating.

O'Brien targeted the Centre over the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme. "It is bad, poor and pathetic governance when 60 per cent funds of the scheme are spent on advertising," he said.

this happen? Will you let your culture and tradition be destroyed?," said the Prime Minister.

He claimed that those 'Satras' and 'Namghars' of Assam were captured by illegal immigrants during Congress rule, are now free from encroachments and even Assam's pride - Kaziranga has been freed from the clutches of Congress and its cronies. Referring to the

illegal migrants, he said, "Indo-Bangla Border in Dhubri is now sealed, to tackle illegal infiltrators." He said that Lakhimpur is famous for Bao Dhan (Red Rice) and under 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan', the BJP government is working to take this rice to the world. He also claimed that the BJP has built eight medical colleges in the last five years.

Kerala: BJP promises law against love jihad

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 24

The BJP which is making an all out effort to improve its electoral prospects in Kerala, got a boost on Wednesday with the participation of union home minister Amit Shah in road shows and election meetings.

The BJP which had just a lone member in the 140 assembly in Kerala is hopeful of doing better this time though various opinion polls have predicted just one to three seats for the party. "We will perform in a much better way in Kerala in the coming elections. The people of Kerala are fed up with the corruption of LDF and UDF. They are desperately looking for an alternative. The BJP will provide them the alternative," union home minister Mr Amit Shah told mediapersons on the sidelines of his roadshow in Tripunithura in Ernakulam district.

Mr Shah put five questions to the chief minister in connection with the gold smuggling case which included: was your principal secretary not involved in gold smuggling and money laundering? Didn't you pay 3.5 lakh salary to the accused? Didn't the main accused travel on government expense? Didn't

the principal secretary call up to save the accused? Didn't you apply pressure on Customs?

In the last elections the BJP-led NDA had secured nearly 15 percent of the votes. It managed to retain the same percentage of vote even in the local bodies poll held in December.

In a bid to improve its vote share and convert the votes into seats, the BJP had made an attempt to reach out to the Christian community. The party has even given tickets to Christians this time hoping to make some dent in the Christian belt of Central Travancore. However, the attempts to woo the Christian community received a setback following an attack on the nuns in Jhansi who were travelling by train.

Meanwhile, Union minister Prakash Javadekar on Wednesday released the NDA manifesto for Kerala elections.

The BJP promised to bring in a law to curb love Jihad, an exclusive law for protecting the rituals and customs of Sabarimala temple, six free LPG cylinders to the BPL families every year, social welfare pensions to be raised to ₹3,500.

It may be noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to address five public meetings in Kerala next week.

RAJYA SABHA CLEARS DELHI L-G BILL

New Delhi, March 24: The Rajya Sabha on Wednesday approved the Bill giving primacy to Delhi's Lieutenant Governor (L-G) over the elected government after high drama in the House that saw uproar by the Opposition and a walkout by MPs of parties like the BJD, SP, Congress and the YSR-Congress.

The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021 that seeks to make it clear that the "government" in Delhi means the "Lieutenant Governor" was passed

by Lok Sabha on March 22.

The legislation was passed in Rajya Sabha by a voice vote on Wednesday. However, a division was sought by the Opposition when the government moved the bill for consideration. During voting, 83 members were in favour while 45 opposed the Bill. Just before the passage of the bill, the Congress too walked out. Earlier, RS witnessed uproar by Opposition members who termed the Bill as "unconstitutional" and demanded that it be sent to a Select Committee for scrutiny. — PTI

Career Chronicle

GURU RAGHAVENDRA INFRASTRUCTURES
Regional Office: No. 8-2-268/1/A4, Plot No# 340
Arora Colony, Road No. 3, Banjara Hills, HYDERABAD

We require the following staff for our Irrigation/Ports Projects

S.No	Designation	Experience	Field Experience
1	General Managers	20 Yrs above	
2	AGM for Planning & QS	15 Yrs above	
3	Project Managers	15 Yrs above	
4	Quantity Surveyors	6 Yrs above	
5	Surveyors	6 Yrs above	
6	Liaison Officer	10 Yrs above	
7	Sr. Engineers	6 Yrs above	
8	Jr. Engineers	Freshers	
9	Safety Officers	6 Yrs above	
10	Engineer-QC	6 Yrs above	
11	Stores	6 Yrs above	
12	Sr Managers- Accounts	15 Yrs above	
13	Project Managers	15 Yrs above	Construction of Ports and Fishing harbours
14	Senior Engineers	10 Yrs above	

Interested candidates may send your resume to the below mail ID: hrgrhdy@gmail.com with in 15days, interview date will be intimated through mail. Contact HR- Manager, Phone No : 040-48575222, 7330888855, Website: www.grinfrastructures.com

WANTED URGENT KUWAIT FOR LARGEST INTEGRATED CEMENT PLANT CLIENT INTERVIEW WITH FOREIGN DELEGATES SHORTLY

- MANAGER - Clinkerization
- MECHANICAL FOREMAN
- ELECTRICAL TECHNICIAN
- PREHEATER ATTENDANT
- CCK OPERATOR - KILN / MILLPROCESS ENGINEER / FOREMAN
- SHIP UNLOADER OPTR
- BELT VULCANIZER
- SAFETY GUARD
- MECHANICAL FIELD OPERATOR
- PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE ENGINEER

Report with CV: Original passport, copies of educational & working certificates 2 PP Photos to GLOBAL MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT OFFICE, #229, 2ND FLOOR, DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL COMPLEX, NEAR LOTUS HOSPITAL, LAKDI KA PUL, HYD-4. EMAIL: globalmana788@gmail.com
Tel:- 9502049800, 9849290583. REG NO- B-0159/MUMPART1000-58748/2011

राष्ट्रीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान, कुरुक्षेत्र
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, KURUKSHETRA
(Under the Ministry of Education (Shiksha Mantralaya), Govt. of India)
KURUKSHETRA-136119 (HARYANA)
Advt. No. 03/2021
RECRUITMENT TO THE POST OF REGISTRAR

National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra invites applications in the prescribed format from the Indian Nationals for filling up of one post of Registrar in the Institute on deputation (including Short Term Contract) basis. The prescribed Application form and other details can be downloaded from the Institute Website www.nitkr.ac.in. Applications duly filled in all respects along with self attested photocopies of certificates and the prescribed application fee payment receipt should send through proper channel so as to reach on or before 05.05.2021 by Speed Post/Registered Post. Applications received after the last date due to postal delay or any other reasons will not be considered.

No. - Gen-I/Advt./3860/1289 Registrar I/c

Defence Electronics and Beyond

भारत इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स
BHARAT ELECTRONICS
Bharat Electronics Limited
(A Govt. of India Enterprise under the Ministry of Defence)
(CIN: L32309KA19545G000787)

Bharat Electronics Limited, a Navratna and India's Premier Professional Electronics Company requires **STAFF NURSE** on permanent basis for its Hyderabad Unit. For detailed advertisement and application form, please visit Careers tab on our website www.bel-india.in. The duly filled-in applications in the prescribed format shall reach us on or before **24.04.2021**.
"Har Ek Kaam Desh Ke Naam"

SHORT TAKES

DUBAI'S DY
RULER PASSES
AWAY AT 75

Dubai: Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum, deputy ruler of Dubai and the finance minister of the United Arab Emirates, has died, his brother said on Wednesday. He was 75.

Sheikh Hamdan served as deputy leader of Dubai under his brother, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the hereditary ruler of the city-state who also serves as prime minister and vice president of the UAE. Emirati officials announced his death without specifying the cause. Sheikh Hamdan had been in poor health for several months.

VIRGINIA GOV. TO
SIGN LAW ENDING
DEATH PENALTY

Jarratt (US): Governor Ralph Northam is set to sign historic legislation that will put an end to the death penalty in Virginia, a state with a long and prolific history of carrying out executions.

Northam scheduled a tour on Wednesday of the death chamber at the Greensville Correction Center, then planned to sign the landmark legislation abolishing the death penalty.

The legislation marks a dramatic shift in a state that has executed more people than any other. Virginia has put to death nearly 1,400 people since its days as a colony. In modern times, Virginia is second only to Texas in the number of executions it has carried out, with 113 since the US Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976.

GILANI'S POLL
RESULT PLEA
DISMISSED

Islamabad: A Pakistani court on Wednesday dismissed former prime minister Yusuf Raza Gilani's petition challenging the results of the Senate chairman election which he lost in a keenly-fought contest.

Gilani filed the petition on Monday in the Islamabad High Court which was accepted for hearing by Chief Justice Athar Minallah. During the hearing, Minallah noted that the proceedings of the upper house of parliament were "immune from the interference" of the high court.



AP journalist Thein Zaw waves outside Insein prison after his release Wednesday, in Yangon, Myanmar.

— AP/PTI

Hundreds set
free in Myanmar

It is first gesture by the military to try to placate the protest movement

Yangon, March 24: Hundreds of people imprisoned for protesting last month's coup were released Wednesday in the first apparent gesture by the military to try to placate the protest movement.

Witnesses outside Insein Prison in Yangon saw busloads of mostly young people, looking happy with some flashing the three-finger gesture of defiance adopted by the protest movement. State-run TV said a total of 628 were freed.

The prisoners appear to be the hundreds of students detained in early March while demonstrating against the Feb. 1 coup that ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

One lawyer, speaking on condition of anonymity because she doesn't want attention from the authorities, said all those released were arrested on March 3. She said only 55 people detained in connection with the protests remained in the prison, and it is likely they will all face charges under Section 505(A) of the Penal Code, which carries a penalty of up to three years in prison. Myanmar's Assistance Association for Political Prisoners says it has confirmed the killings of 275 people in connection with the post-coup crackdown, with additional deaths still unverified.

It also says that as of Tuesday, it had verified arrest or charges against 2,812 people, of whom 2,418 remain in custody or with outstanding charges. Demonstrators on Wednesday tried a new tactic that they dubbed a silence strike, calling on people to stay home and businesses to close for the day.

The extent of the strike was difficult to gauge, but social media users posted photos from cities and towns showing streets empty of activity save for the occasional stray dog. The online meme posted to publicise the action called silence "the loudest scream" and explained its purpose was to honour the movement's fallen heroes, to recharge protesters' energy and to contradict the junta's claims that "everything is back to normal."

The new tactic was employed after an extended onslaught of violence from security forces. Local media reported that a seven-year-old girl in Mandalay, was among the latest victims on Tuesday.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners included her in its list of fatalities. "Khin Myo Chit was shot in the abdomen by a soldier while she sat in her father's lap inside her home in Aung Pin Le ward," the online news service Myanmar Now reported, quoting her sister, Aye Chan San.

The report said the shooting took place when soldiers were raiding homes in her family's neighborhood. The sister said a soldier shot at their father when he denied that any people were hiding in their home, and hit the girl.

Aye Chan San said the soldiers then beat her 19-year-old brother with their rifle butts and took him away.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners recorded three killings in Mandalay on Tuesday, though some other reports said there were five.

— AP

Cargo ship turns sideways, blocks Suez

Dubai, March 24: A cargo container ship that's among the largest in the world has turned sideways and blocked all traffic in Egypt's Suez Canal, officials said Wednesday, threatening to disrupt a global shipping system already strained by the coronavirus pandemic.

The MV Evergreen, a Panama-flagged container ship that carries trade between Asia and Europe, became grounded Tuesday in the narrow, man-made waterway dividing continental Africa from the

Sinai Peninsula. It wasn't immediately clear what caused it to turn sideways in the canal. GAC, a global shipping and logistics company, described the ship as suffering "a blackout while transiting in a northerly direction," without elaborating. Evergreen Marine Corp., a major Taiwan-based shipping company that operates the ship, said in a statement provided to The Associated Press that the ship had been overcome by strong winds as it entered the Suez Canal

from the Red Sea but none of its containers had sunk.

A Egyptian official, who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity as he wasn't authorised to brief journalists similarly blamed a strong wind in the area for the incident. Egyptian forecasters said high winds and a sandstorm plagued the area Tuesday, with winds gusting as much as 31 mph. "All crew are safe and accounted for," said Bernhard Schulte Shipmanagement, which manages the ship.

"There have been no reports of injuries or pollution." The Evergreen's bow was touching the canal's eastern wall, while its stern looked lodged against its western wall, according to satellite data from MarineTraffic.com. Several tug boats surrounded the ship, likely attempting to push it the right way, the data showed.

An image in Instagram by a user on another waiting cargo ship appeared to show it wedged across the canal.

— AP



No winner in Israel exit election

Jerusalem, March 24: Israeli parliamentary elections have resulted in a virtual deadlock for a fourth time in the past two years, exit polls indicated, leaving Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with an uncertain future and the country facing the prospect of continued political gridlock.

The exit polls on Israel's three main TV stations indi-

cated that both Netanyahu and his religious and nationalist allies, along with a group of anti-Netanyahu parties, fell short of the parliamentary majority required to form a new government. That raised the possibility of an unprecedented fifth consecutive election later this year.

The poll was seen as a referendum on Netanyahu's po-

larising leadership, and the initial results showed the country remains as deeply divided as ever, with an array of small sectarian parties dominating the parliament. The results also signalled a continuing shift of the Israeli electorate toward the right wing, which supports West Bank settlements and opposes concessions in peace talks with the Palestinians.

That trend was highlighted by the strong showing of an ultranationalist anti-Arab religious party. After three previous inconclusive elections, Netanyahu had been hoping for a decisive victory that would allow him to form a government with his traditional ultra-Orthodox and hard-line nationalist allies and seek immunity from corruption charges.

— AP

Surgeon General:
Senate okays Murthy

Washington, March 24: Indian-American physician Vivek Murthy has been confirmed by the Senate as President Joe Biden's surgeon general, a role in which his top priority would be responding to the Coronavirus pandemic that has severely hit the country. Dr Murthy, 43, would occupy the position of America's Surgeon General for the second time. In 2011, president Barack Obama tapped him to serve on the advisory group on prevention, health promotion, and integrative and public health.

"I'm deeply grateful to be confirmed by the Senate to serve once again as your Surgeon General. We've endured great hardship as a nation over the past year, and I look forward to working with you to help our nation heal and create a better future for our children," Murthy said on Tuesday soon after the Senate confirmed his nomination by 57-43 votes.

In 2013, Obama nominated Dr. Murthy to be the surgeon general. He was the youngest ever to hold the office at the age of 37. However, he had to abruptly leave the position during the Trump administration. As US Surgeon General, Dr.

Murthy will advise President Biden on the Coronavirus pandemic and will be the federal government's leading voice on public health.

Seven senators from the opposition Republican Party voted in support of Dr. Murthy. He was an adviser to the Biden campaign and transition.

Senator Joe Manchin said that during his previous tenure as Surgeon General, Dr. Murthy worked to create a culture of public health promotion grounded in nutrition, physical activity and emotional well-being to help prevent conditions like obesity and diabetes.

Dr. Murthy also released a report outlining plans to reduce opioid prescriptions and expand access to treatment for those suffering from a substance use disorder, he said. He understands the issues facing this nation including the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the drug epidemic and protecting rural healthcare.

Covid-19 has taken the lives of several members of Murthy's extended family. During his confirmation hearing in February, he said that seven of his family members in India and America have died due to Covid-19.

— PTI



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	49,180.31	-1.74
Nifty 50	14,549.40	-1.79
S&P 500*	3,919.66	0.23
Dollar (₹)	72.56	-0.17
Pound Sterling (₹)	99.61	0.16
Euro (₹)	85.90	0.28
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	44,350✓149	0.33
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	64.43	5.99
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.152	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.642	0.004

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Covid health policies can be renewed till Sept.

The insurance regulator permitted all insurers to offer and renew short-term Covid-specific health policies up to September 30, 2021. Accordingly, Corona Kavach policies (standard indemnity-based health policy) and Corona Rakshak policies (standard benefit-based policies) are permitted to be offered and renewed by all insurers upto September 30 said the Irdai. All other terms remain as specified before.

Differential licensing in telecom mullied



The Centre is carrying out a consultation process on differential licensing through which different layers related to telecom services will be dealt separately. Currently, infrastructure, network, and service layers are not segregated and are part of the Unified Licence. "The government is in the process of consultation on the matter of enabling unbundling of different layers," minister of state Sanjay Dhotre told the Lok Sabha.

Tesla to accept Bitcoin as payment for cars

Having stunned the market with its audacious bet on Bitcoin earlier this year, Tesla Inc will now start accepting the world's largest electronic currency as payment for its electric cars. CEO Elon Musk tweeted that "you can now buy a Tesla with Bitcoin" and that paying by Bitcoin will also be available to customers outside the US later this year. He said any Bitcoin paid to the company will be retained as Bitcoin.

RBI ex-deputy gov Khan to leave Bandhan board

Bandhan Bank said former RBI deputy governor Harun Rashid Khan is not seeking re-appointment as independent director on its board after completion of his term later this week. Khan was brought on-board Bandhan Bank from March 26, 2018 for a period of three years. His first term would come to end at the close of business hours on March 26, 2021, Bandhan Bank said in a regulatory filing.



■ Selling pressure drags Sensex by 871 pts Market panics over 2nd wave

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, MARCH 24

Weak global cues and surging Covid cases in India and Europe led to across-the-board selling in the stock market on Wednesday, as investors worried about the impact of fresh lockdowns. The Sensex closed at 49,180, down 871 points, or 1.74 per cent, near a two-month low.

The Nifty-50 Index fell 265.35 points, or 1.79 per cent, to 14,549.40.

The broader market indices fell even more, with the Nifty Mid-cap 50 Index down 2.45 per cent and the Nifty Mid-cap 100 Index down 1.99 per cent.

The second wave of coronavirus infections was causing grave concern in the market, as it would impact the economic recovery process. Mumbai alone crossed 5,000 daily infections, the highest so far, as total fresh cases in Maharashtra stood at 28,699 and the all-India daily cases stood at 47,262.

The Maharashtra government announced a complete lockdown in Beed and Nanded districts from March 25 to April 4.

The foreign portfolio investors turned net sellers of equities worth Rs 1,951.90 crore.

With equity derivatives expiry scheduled on Thursday, market volatility is expected to rise, said analysts.

NSE's India VIX Index surged 8.66 per cent to 22.46, indicating higher market volatility ahead.



"All sectors barring pharma witnessed selling as second and third wave infections in India and Europe, respectively, are bound to hamper economic recovery. Reports of a potential tax hike in the US also impacted the market sentiment," said Vinod Nair, head-research, Geojit Financial Services.

Crude oil prices fell 4 per cent to below \$58 per barrel on global growth concerns, as Europe is experiencing a third wave of Covid infections.

"Sensex and Nifty-50 lost 871 and 265 points on the back of weakness in the commodity prices, lack of FPI flows and tight liquidity conditions due to successive IPOs and QIPs. Defensive sectors like Pharma & IT were relatively stable whereas high beta sectors like metals, banking and mid-cap stocks fell sharply," said Hemang Jani, head-equity strategy, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

Investor wealth on tumbled by more than Rs 3.27

lakh crore as markets witnessed massive selling pressure. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies plunged by Rs 3,27,967.71 crore to reach Rs 2,02,48,094.19 crore at the close of trade.

Binod Modi, head-strategy at Reliance Securities, said, "Domestic equities fell sharply on weak global cues and continued apprehensions among investors from surge in coronavirus cases in the country."

Further, a sharp rebound in dollar index aggravated concerns despite dip in US bond yields and crude prices, he added.

Among the 30 scrip Sensex pack, barring Asian Paints and Power Grid Corporation, all other constituents closed in the red.

The top losers included Mahindra & Mahindra (3.97 per cent), SBI (3.38 per cent), Axis Bank (3.33 per cent), ICICI Bank (3.22 per cent), IndusInd (3.07 per cent) and ITC (2.75 per cent).

SEBI TO ATTACH BANK, DEMAT ACCOUNTS OF RANA KAPOOR

New Delhi, March 24: Markets regulator Sebi on Wednesday ordered attachment of bank accounts as well as share and mutual fund holdings of Rana Kapoor, former MD and CEO of Yes Bank, to recover dues of over Rs 1 crore.

The decision has been taken after Kapoor failed to pay the fine imposed on him.

Sebi, in September 2020, had levied a fine of Rs 1 crore on Kapoor for not making disclosures regarding a transaction of Morgan Credit, which was an unlisted promoter entity of Yes Bank.

By not disclosing about the transaction to Yes Bank's board of directors, Kapoor created an opaque layer between him and stakeholders and violated the provision of the LODR (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulation, Sebi had said in the order.

Further, the Securities and Exchange Board of India issued a demand notice to Kapoor in February this year, although he did not pay any dues.

The pending dues, totalling Rs 1.04 crore, include an initial fine of Rs 1 crore and an interest of Rs 4.56 lakh and a recovery cost of Rs 1,000, the attachment notice showed on Wednesday.

In the notice, Sebi has asked banks, depositaries and mutual funds not to allow any debit from the accounts of Kapoor. But credits have been permitted. — PTI

New bankruptcy filings may resume from April

SHRUTI SRIVASTAVA & BIJOU GEORGE
MARCH 24

India's government is considering resuming fresh bankruptcy filings after the current suspension expires on March 25, people with knowledge of the matter said.

The lifting of the halt would come even as a resurgence in virus cases threatens the nascent economic recovery. It could spark a wave of new insolvencies, pent up from last year when businesses were hurt by India's first economic contraction in decades.

The government last year halted the process of initiating most fresh insolvency proceedings considering a proposal to this effect.



to insulate cash-strapped borrowers hit by the pandemic for six months starting March 25, and that was extended twice during the year.

The suspension is unlikely to be prolonged further because a return to normality is needed, the people said, asking not to be identified citing rules. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman is

considering a proposal to this effect.

A spokesman for the corporate affairs ministry didn't answer calls made to his mobile during business hours.

The move closely follows a Supreme Court ruling on Tuesday that allows lenders to resume classifying bad debt. The two steps together give investors a clearer sense of the impact of the pandemic on the asset quality of local banks.

The move also reopens avenues for lenders to collect on soured debt from delinquent borrowers, allowing them more tools to manage one of the world's worst bad loan piles.

— Bloomberg

Healthcare allocation of states rise

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, MARCH 24

Battling the pandemic, both central and state governments have increased their budget outlays for healthcare expenditure in FY22 compared with budget estimates of FY21. This is good news for the healthcare industry, which is expected to see positive revenue growth from the first quarter of FY22.

Healthcare allocation is to go up by 9.2 per cent in the FY22 budget estimates of 19 state governments that have announced their budgets, while the allocation of the central government in the budget esti-

mate of FY22 has gone up over BE FY21 due to the spending on Covid-19 vaccination of Rs 35,000 crore.

Among the 19 states, 10 have made double-digit increase in allocations for health. These 10 states account for 50 per cent of the spending on health. However, Maharashtra brought down the allocation by 7 per cent and West Bengal by 5 per cent, finds a report by Care Ratings.

In the current fiscal, 13 states have registered double-digit growth in healthcare spending compared to their revised budget estimates of FY21 and RE of FY20. These states account for 70 per cent of

the total spending on health. Uttar Pradesh is the only state where health care spending in FY21 remain at the same level as in FY20.

Meanwhile, the hospital and healthcare industry is expected to grow by about 10-12 per cent in FY22. The industry revenues, which had de-grown the first three quarters of FY21, are estimated to return to normal levels by end of Q1FY22 backed by expected improvement in occupancy rates, footfalls and ongoing vaccination program. Increase in momentum of non-Covid treatments and elective surgeries will support the industry growth in FY22.

Sushil Modi says GST on petrol impossible for next 8-10 years

New Delhi, March 24: Bringing petrol and diesel under the GST regime is not possible for the next 8-10 years as no state is ready to face the annual revenue loss of over Rs 2 lakh crore on this account, BJP member Sushil Kumar Modi said in Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

Speaking in support of the Finance Bill, the former finance minister of Bihar dared the opposition to raise the matter at the GST Council, saying no finance minister from non-NDA ruled states has opposed any decision of the GST Council.

The Centre and states collectively collect over Rs 5 lakh crore tax on petroleum products, Modi said.

The statement assumes significance in view of the outcry over the rise in petrol price for the past over one year that touched Rs 100 per litre in some states and the demand by the Congress and some other parties that petrol and diesel be brought under the GST regime.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had on Tuesday said in Lok Sabha that she would be "glad" to

PETROL SEES FIRST PRICE CUT THIS YEAR

FC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MARCH 24

For the first time this year, state-owned oil marketing companies on Wednesday cut fuel prices by 18 paise on petrol, and 17 paise on diesel, following a steep decline in global crude oil prices. It is widely speculated that the companies may go for further price cut. Petrol and diesel prices remained unchanged at record highs for 24 straight days.

Following Wednesday's cut, the price of a litre of petrol in Delhi now costs Rs 90.99, down from 91.17.

Petrol prices have also declined in other major cities comprising Bengaluru (Rs 94.04),

Chennai (Rs 92.95), Jaipur (Rs 97.56), Hyderabad (Rs 94.61), Kolkata (Rs 91.18), Mumbai (Rs 97.40).

The diesel price in Delhi has now dipped to Rs 81.30, down 17 paise from Tuesday. It has also come down in other major cities like Bengaluru (Rs 86.21), Chennai (Rs 86.29), Hyderabad (Rs 88.67), Jaipur (Rs 89.84), Kolkata (Rs 84.18), Mumbai (Rs 88.42), Bengaluru (Rs 86.21).

Taxes on petrol and diesel are an essential revenue source for the Centre and state governments. Taxes and levies constitute account for 60 per cent of the retail cost for petrol and 54 per cent for diesel.

discuss the issue at the next GST Council meeting.

Modi said, "I have been associated with the GST for a long time. I want to know from the House, that if petrol and diesel are put under the GST regime, who will compensate for

the loss of revenue of over Rs 2 lakh crore to states."

"I want to tell this House that it is not possible to put petrol and diesel under the GST in the next eight to 10 years, as no state is ready to lose Rs 2 lakh crore revenue," he added. — PTI

US mental health app draws big investors

GILLIAN TAN & HEATHER PERLBERG
MARCH 24

Blackstone Group Inc is leading a \$100-million funding round in on-demand and mental-health company Ginger, accelerating a push into fast-growing technology startups.

The funding will be done by the investment firm's growth equity arm, Blackstone and Ginger said. The stake values the San Francisco-based service at about \$1 billion, vaulting it to unicorn status.

Demand for resources provided by Ginger, which connects users to behavioural health experts via a mobile app, is surging in the Covid-19 pandemic. The company's revenue has tripled in the past year.

"There's a widespread prevalence of mental health issues in this country," said Ram Jagannath, who heads health-care investing for Blackstone Growth Equity. "Like other sectors of health care, the pandemic exacerbated the underlying trends and accelerated people's adoption of digital platforms."

Blackstone recently



announced the close of its first growth equity fund at \$4.5 billion. Its New York-based growth vehicle has made several investments, including backing online dating company Bumble Inc, vegan food products maker Oatly, enterprise software provider ISN Software Corp and Epidemic Sound, a royalty-free music company.

Ginger CEO Russ Glass plans to use Blackstone's investment to acquire companies and platforms focused on mental health, or data that could complement what Ginger is already doing.

"There's going to be a massive mental health need for the foreseeable future," Glass said in an interview. "The more we can focus on innovation, everyone who has a need

will get access."

Statistics bear that out. During the week of March 8th, demand for therapy and psychiatry services jumped 365 per cent compared to pre-pandemic averages measured from August 2019 to January 2020, the company said.

In the first half of the year, Ginger plans to extend its reach to underserved populations through new government relationships and collaborations with non-profits, Glass said.

Ginger has already made inroads with large brand-name companies, including Delta Air Lines, Sanofi and Domino's Pizza, which provide Ginger's mental health resources to their employees.

Ginger has also announced a partnership with digital pharmacy Capsule to provide medication delivery to members.

"I see this as an investment, not a cost," said Clint Wallace, the head of human resources for North America at Sanofi. "We can't solve all of people's problems but we can help them give their best."

— Bloomberg

ICICI BANK CUSTOMERS CAN PAY SCHOOL FEES IN EMIS



New Delhi, March 24: ICICI Bank customers can break their high value transactions of over Rs 50,000 into suitable EMIs directly on its internet banking platform to make their purchases more affordable, the lender said on Wednesday.

The facility, offered on savings account, is the first in the industry, the bank added.

It will be applicable on transactions up to Rs 5 lakh and will bear no additional cost on the customers.

Christened 'EMI @Internet Banking', the facility will enable customers to convert their high-value transactions up to Rs 5 lakh into easy monthly instalments, ICICI Bank said in a release.

Customers can purchase gadgets or pay for their insurance premium or school fees in easy EMIs from their savings account using the internet banking platform, it said.

The bank has tied up with online payment gateways BillDesk and Razorpay to enable this facility.

To begin with, over 1,000 merchants in categories like online shopping portals, insurance, travel, education- school fees and electronic chains have been brought on-board.

The bank endeavours to partner with more payment gateway companies, merchants and add categories under this facility in the near future. Customers can select tenures of 3, 6, 9 or 12 months for the EMIs.

Sudipta Roy, head-unsecured assets, hoped the facility will empower millions of the bank's pre-approved customers to purchase or shop for their needs.

— PTI

NO | COUPON Investors will receive their capital along with additional payout

First wildlife bond to track rhino populations

ANTONY SGUAZZIN
MARCH 24

A bond designed to raise funds to grow the population of endangered black rhinoceros in South Africa will be sold by the World Bank this year.

The five-year, 670 million rand (\$45 million) security will be the world's first wildlife conservation bond and the aim is to sell it in the middle of the year. Returns for investors will be determined by the rate of growth of the populations of the animals in two South African reserves, according to the Rhino Impact Investment Project, an initiative started by the Zoological Society of London.

If successful, the pro-

gramme could be expanded to protect black rhino populations in Kenya as well as other wildlife species such as lions, tigers, gorillas and orangutans, Rhino Impact said in a document detailing the proposal. It provides an opportunity for people interested in conservation to get a return on their support and possibly reinvest money in new projects rather than the more traditional route where projects are funded by philanthropists or governments.

"The innovative wildlife conservation bond financing mechanism plans to use a World Bank, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development IBRD AAA-



rated bond," it said. Credit Suisse Group AG is advising on the project.

The World Bank will also sell a \$100 million conservation bond at the same time, without specifying what it will be used for.

Under the terms of the rhino bond, investors will forgo an annual coupon and will instead receive

their original capital and an additional payout depending on how much the rhino population has grown over five years. The principal of the bond and the possible payout at maturity will be paid by the Global Environment Facility, which has received donations from more than 40 countries and was formed ahead of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992.

Of the 29,000 rhinos made up of five species globally, about 80 per cent are in South Africa and almost all them are white rhino. Black rhino numbers have dropped to about 5,500 from 65,000 in 1970. The animals are found in four African countries and can weigh

as much as 1.4 tonnes -- much smaller than the white rhino.

Rhinos are under threat from poaching, mostly because of demand in Vietnam and China for the powder from their horns that's believed to cure cancer and improve virility.

"When working on innovative structures like this one, we start small and hope to learn from the first one and then get successfully larger in an ambition to ultimately scale what works," Marisa Drew, chief sustainability officer at Credit Suisse, said.

The two sites selected in South Africa are the Addo Elephant National Park and the Great Fish River Nature Reserve.

— Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Ind shuttler forced out of Orleans tour

Paris: An unnamed Indian woman shuttler was on Tuesday forced to withdraw from the Orleans Masters after a team entourage member tested positive for Covid-19 and she was identified as a close contact. In a statement, the Badminton World Federation (BWF) said that a total of three players have been withdrawn from the event which began with the qualifiers here. "An Indonesian women's doubles pair has been withdrawn after one player tested positive to the mandatory PCR test conducted on Monday," the BWF stated. "An Indian women's singles player has been withdrawn after a team entourage member tested positive to the mandatory PCR test. The singles player was identified as a close contact of the entourage member and as a result the player has been withdrawn from the tournament," it added. — PTI

SAI asks PCI to submit report

Bengaluru: Sports Authority of India on Wednesday sought a report from the Paralympic Committee of India after it emerged that facilities here at the National Para Athletics championship are not wheelchair-friendly and Covid-19 protocols are also "not being adhered to". A qualification event for the Tokyo Paralympics, the tournament to be held from March 24 to 27 was shifted here from Chennai at a short notice on March 20, leading to discrepancies in the conduct of the event. SAI has asked the national federation to immediately sort out the issues. "It has been brought to the notice of Sports Authority of India that the facility in Bengaluru at which the Para Athletics National Championships is not wheelchair-friendly and that Standard Operating Procedures for prevention of Covid-19 are not being adhered to," SAI said in a statement. — PTI

Blatter banned by FIFA again

Zurich: Sepp Blatter was banned for a second time by FIFA on Wednesday for financial wrongdoing, seven months before the 85-year-old former president's first ban expires. Blatter has recently been in poor health and was put in an induced coma for one week after undergoing heart surgery in December. FIFA said its ethics committee banned both Blatter and former secretary general Jerome Valcke for six years and eight months for financial wrongdoing linked to awarding themselves contractual bonuses worth millions of dollars. Both men, who also face criminal proceedings in Switzerland, will start serving the new bans when their current ones expire. Blatter and Valcke were previously banned for six years and 10 years, respectively, in separate cases. Blatter's first ban expires in October and Valcke's initial ban will be served in October 2025. — AP

Printed and Published from Karimnagar by K.Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Deccan Chronicle Press, H.No. 1-21/12/1, Cherlabhukur Road, Mugdumpur Village, Karimnagar - 505 186 Telangana State Regd. No. HSD-22/K RNI Registration No. APENG/2001/04766 Ph: 9121181123 Grams: CHRONICLE Editor: Kaushik Mitter

SHOULDER SLIPS

Shreyas out of England ODIs, likely to miss IPL 1st half

Pune, March 24: India batsman Shreyas Iyer was on Wednesday ruled out of the ongoing ODI series against England and left in serious doubt for the first half of the IPL starting next month after dislocating his left shoulder in the opening game here. The incident happened in the eighth over of the England innings when Shreyas dived on a drive hit by Jonny Bairstow off pacer Shardul Thakur. He looked in tremendous pain as he left the field clutching his shoulder. "It is unlikely he will play first part of IPL," a BCCI source said. On Tuesday, the BCCI had stated, "Shreyas Iyer subluxated (partially dislocated) his left shoulder in the 8th over while fielding. He has been taken for further scans," the source added.

He captains Delhi Capitals in the IPL, which begins on April 9. The Mumbaiaiker had perished for just 6 while batting. Shreyas had led Delhi Capitals to the final in the previous edition of the league. It could take as much as six weeks to recover from shoulder dislocation and much longer in case a surgery is required. In his absence, the DC captaincy could be handed to either Rishabh Pant, Australian Steve Smith or



India's Shreyas Iyer (left) walks off the field after injuring himself while fielding during the first One-Day International against England at Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune on Tuesday. — AP

Ravichandran Ashwin.

EOIN, SAM INJURED TOO

Meanwhile, England skipper Eoin Morgan and Sam Billings are doubtful for the second ODI against India here on Friday after

sustaining injuries in the series-opener, dealing a fresh blow to the side's floundering campaign. The visitors suffered the setbacks in their 66-run defeat after the skipper split the webbing between

his right thumb and index finger that required four stitches. In another incident, Billings injured his collarbone following an awkward dive to stop a boundary. — PTI

NUMBERS GAME

PRASIDH KRISHNA - 1st INDIAN TO TAKE FOUR WICKETS IN DEBUT MATCH

● Prasadidh Krishna became the first Indian and 55th bowler overall to take four wickets on debut in one day internationals. ● The right-arm medium-fast bowler achieved this feat by taking four for 54 in the first one day international match against England at Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium, Pune on Tuesday (March 23). ● Off-break bowler Noel David who took three wickets for 21 runs against West Indies at Port of Spain on April 27, 1997 held the previous record of best bowling on debut for Indian in one day internationals.

BEST BOWLING ON DEBUT FOR INDIA IN ONE DAYERS

● 4-54 — Prasadidh Krishna against England in Ahmedabad on March 23, 2021. ● 3-21 — Noel David against West Indies in Port of Spain on April 27, 1997. ● 3-24 — Varun Aaron against England in Mumbai on October 23, 2011. ● 3-30 — Subroto Banerjee vs West Indies in Perth on December 6, 1991.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER



Chinky Yadav poses with her gold medal in the Women's 25m Pistol event at the Shooting World Cup in New Delhi on Wednesday.

Chinky, Aishwary dazzle with gold

New Delhi, March 24: Chinky Yadav upstaged the experienced Rahi Sarnobat and the fancied Manu Bhaker to win gold as India swept the women's 25m pistol event of the ISSF shooting World Cup here on Wednesday, highlighting the country's depth of talent in the sport. The 23-year-old Yadav prevailed over Sarnobat, 30, 4-3 in a shoot-off after their scores were tied at 32, taking India's gold tally to nine in the event.

Bhaker, aged only 19, shot 28 to settle for the bronze medal before being eliminated, leaving her two other compatriots to fight for the top prize at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range. Yadav led the pack after first 20 targets with a score of 14. She was followed by Bhaker at second with 13. Then, the shooter from Bhopal led with a score of 21 and pulled away from the rest, even as the seasoned Sarnobat clawed her way back into the finals after struggling in bottom half. In the finals, Yadav

shot all the five targets twice — in the first competition stage's second series and the sixth series of the elimination stage — after beginning with two.

Meanwhile, young Indian shooter Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar claimed the gold medal in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions event, consolidating the host nation's top standing in the ISSF World Cup here on Wednesday.

The 20-year-old from Bhopal shot 462.5 to win the top prize ahead of Hungary's star rifleman Istvan Peni (461.6) and Denmark's Steffen Olsen (450.9) at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range. This was India's eighth gold medal at the ongoing marquee event.

The other Indians in the final, veteran Sanjeev Rajput and Niraj Kumar, finished sixth and eighth respectively. After an impressive start following which he led for a while, Tomar slipped in the standings but fought back strongly with a 10.4, 10.5 and 10.3 in the standing elimination stage. — PTI

Super Kings pay tribute to armed forces in new jersey

Chennai, March 24: Three-time IPL champions Chennai Super Kings on Wednesday unveiled a new-look jersey that features camouflage as a tribute to the country's armed forces.

Unveiled ahead of the 2021 IPL season, the jersey also has three stars atop the franchise's logo to denote the three titles won in 2010, 2011 and 2018, besides the camouflage as a tribute to India's armed forces.

It has been on our mind for some time now to find ways to raise awareness about the significant and

selfless role of the armed forces. The camouflage is an appreciation of their service...they are the true heroes," CSK CEO K. S. Viswanathan said in a release.

The IPL team also released a short video of talismanic skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni, launching the new jersey on its Twitter feed.

CSK hold the armed forces close to the heart and showed their appreciation by presenting a cheque of ₹2 crore at the start of the 2019 IPL season, the release said.

That's not all, the cele-

brated Mahendra Singh Dhoni is an honorary Lieutenant Colonel in the Territorial Army and also trained with the Parachute Regiment in 2019.

The jersey has been redesigned for the first time since the inaugural edition in 2008, the release said.

The camouflage on the shoulders is bordered with gold bands that signify the high standards set by the team both in terms of consistency and fair play. CSK have won the IPL fair play award six times in 11 seasons. — PTI



Chennai Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni holds up the team's redesigned T-shirt for the new IPL season. The camouflage on the shoulders is a tribute to India's armed forces. — Twitter

Krunal remembers late Dad after India victory

Pune, March 24: Krunal Pandya had his late father Himanshu's travel bag in the dressing room as he tried to keep him close ahead of his outstanding ODI debut in which he smashed the fastest 50 by a debutant.

Celebrating his 30th birthday on Wednesday, Krunal and his younger brother Hardik Pandya spoke about the close relationship they shared with the Senior Pandya, who died of a heart attack in January.

"So basically the thing is, he passed away on 16th morning and I was playing Syed Mushtaq Ali on that day. He had a habit of

keeping his clothes ready in the night, his shoes, his pant, his shirt, hat as well.

"So what I did was just before the game, I got his bag from Baroda here, and I thought, I know he is not with us, but those clothes, which he was supposed to wear in that game, I thought I'll bring that and keep in the dressing room," Krunal said.

Apart from his 58-run knock, Krunal also picked up a wicket in the game, against England. He broke down while speaking to the host broadcaster after the match.

"Obviously, I worked so hard to be here...not just in cricket, but in terms of

everything, taking care of my diet to fitness, to everything and again this is all dedicated to the old man...his blessings are there with us and obviously it was very emotional for you and me, both of us, and again getting a cap from you," Krunal added.

"...my focus has always been about how I can be the best version of myself, how I can improve, not just as a cricketer, but how can I improve as a human being as well.

"...again somewhere down the line, I just feel his (late father's) blessings are there, just feel more secure...this is for him," said Krunal. — PTI



India's Hardik Pandya (left) greets teammate Krunal Pandya before the start of the first One-Day international (ODI) match against England at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune on Tuesday. — AFP

PT USHA, GURBACHAN NAMED SELECTION COMMITTEE HEADS

New Delhi, March 24: Sprint legend P. T. Usha has been given charge of the junior selection committee, while hurdling great Gurbachan Singh Randhawa will head the senior panel in the latest appointments announced by the Athletics Federation of India.

The 56-year-old Usha won multiple medals in the Asian Games in 100m, 200m, 400m and 4x400m besides finishing fourth in 400m hurdles in 1984 Olympics.

Other members of the junior committee are Soma Biswas, Anand Menzes, Satbir Singh, Sandeep Sarkaria, Sunita Rani, Rama Chandran, Joseph Abraham, Harwant Kaur, M. D. Valsama and Kamal Ali Khan.

The senior selection committee, to be chaired by Randhawa, will have former chief coach Bahadur Singh, Bahadur Singh Saggu, Krishna Poonia, Jyotirmoyee Sikdar, Uday Prabhu, Praveen Jolly and Gopal Saini as other members. Randhawa had won a gold in decathlon in 1962 Asian Games and finished fifth in 110m hurdles in the 1964 Olympics.

"The role of each and every member of selection committee is very important and hence, we have included former athletes who have plenty of experience for this important role," AFI President Adille Sumariwalla said. — PTI

Cyber scams are on the rise, Don't share your OTP, UPI-PIN, Card details and pay a heavy price

Using details shared by you, fraudsters can create your Virtual Payment Address (VPA) and link your bank account with UPI

And easily debit money from your card or bank account. So beware

RBI Kehta Hai... Jaankaar Baniye, Satark Rahiye!

Issued in public interest by भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक RESERVE BANK OF INDIA www.rbi.org.in