

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | TUESDAY | 16 FEBRUARY 2021

WEATHER

Max: 33.2°C
Min: 19.5°C
RH: 31%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Misty likely.
Max/Min temp. 33/19 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+9,447)	(+84)
1,09,25,278	1,55,840
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+99)	(+2)
TS: 2,96,666	1,618
(+30)	(+1)
AP: 8,88,899	7,163

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

10,95,45,726
DEATHS
24,14,794
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
219

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Uttarayana
Titthi: Magha Shuddha Panchami till 5.46 am (Wednesday)
Star: Revati till 8.58 pm
Variyam: 7.44 am to 9.30 am
Durmuhurtam: 9.04 am to 9.49 am; 11.14 pm to 12.04 am
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm
HJRI CALENDAR
Rajab: 3,1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.42 am
Zohar: 12.40 pm
Asar: 4.41 pm
Maghrib: 5.23 pm
Isha: 7.31 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW: 6.41 AM
SUNSET TODAY: 6.18 PM
MOONSET: 10.13 PM
MOONRISE: 9.41 AM

COUNTER POINT



You can't meet any minister. But don't worry. They will come to your house shortly!

SHORT TAKES

SC notice to Centre, WhatsApp

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre and WhatsApp to reply to a fresh plea alleging lower standards of privacy for Indians in comparison to European users saying it is the duty of the judiciary to protect citizens' privacy. People have grave apprehensions and it is our duty to protect them, SC said.

WPI inflation rises to 2.03%

New Delhi: The wholesale price-based inflation rose sharply to 2.03 per cent in January on costlier non-food manufactured items and experts are projecting further uptick in the rate of price rise in the next few months. The wholesale price index inflation was 1.22 per cent in December, 2020 and 3.52 per cent in January last year.

Kerala scribe gets 5-day bail from SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday granted 5-day interim bail to journalist Siddique Kappan, arrested on his way to Hathras where a young Dalit woman had died after being allegedly gang-raped, to visit his ailing mother. The court, however, said that during his visit he shall not give any interview to the media, including social media.

NATION | 4

Assam key to Act East Policy: EAM



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

WORLD | 5

Suu Kyi custody to be extended



SPORTS | 8

FIR against Yuvraj Singh over casteist remarks



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Ashwin has a ball with bat



Ravichandran Ashwin plays a shot during the 3rd day of second cricket test match between India and England at M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Monday.

— PTI

13 dists turn Covid-free in TS

Only GHMC, Ranga Ranga district report cases in double digits

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

One-thirds of Telangana state's 33 districts have reported zero fresh cases of Covid-19 even as the total cases for Sunday fell to less than a hundred.

According to the state health department, the 13 districts, including Narayanpet that had been Covid-19 case-free for around two weeks now, did not report any fresh cases. The rest, 20 districts including Hyderabad, reported 99 new cases for Sunday.

However, the department also reported two more deaths from Covid-19 in the state. It may be recalled that on Friday and Saturday, Telangana state did not report any deaths from the disease.

As on Sunday, the total fatalities from Covid-19 in the state stood at 1,618, while the total cases so far were 2,96,673, the department said.

Hyderabad district along with the rest of the GHMC area, reported 24 new cases, while Ranga Reddy district with 10, was the

only other district with cases in the double digits for Sunday.

The districts that reported zero cases are Bhadadri-Kothagudem, Jogulamba-Gadwal, Kamareddy, Kumrum Bheem Asifabad, Mahbubabad, Mulugu, Nagarkurnool, Nalgonda, Narayanpet, Peddapalli, Rajanna Sircilla, Wanaparthy and Yadadri Bhoingir.

The state, the department said, had 1,676 active Covid-19 cases as on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Union

health minister Harsh Vardhan said that no new COVID-19 case has been reported in 188 districts of the country in the last seven days and in 21 districts in 21 days.

He, however, urged the people to keep following Covid-appropriate behaviour. "It is crucial that people continue to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour which I call social vaccine, along with real vaccines," he said.

He insisted the Covid vaccines are safe and effective.

3 MORE BODIES RECOVERED FROM U'KHAND TUNNEL

Tapovan/Dehradun, Feb. 15: Three more bodies were recovered Monday from the Tapovan tunnel, taking the toll in the Uttarakhand flash flood to 54 as hopes of finding survivors there over a week after the disaster dimmed.

So far nine bodies have been pulled out from Adit tunnel at the NTPC's Tapovan-Vishnupur project site, choked by debris after the February 7 flood which ripped into two hydel plants in the Alaknanda river system.

Apart from the confirmed 54 dead, 150 others are still missing. The rescue efforts in Chamoli are focusing on the Tapovan tunnel where about 30 workers were feared trapped.

— PTI

■ Full report on Page 4

Centre makes accessing local data for maps easier

New Delhi, Feb. 15: In sweeping changes in the country's mapping policy, the government on Monday announced liberalisation of norms governing the acquisition and production of geospatial data, a move that will help in boosting innovation in the sector and create a level-playing field for public and private entities.

Under the new guidelines, the sector will be deregulated and aspects such as prior approvals for surveying, mapping and for building applications based on that have been done away with. Department of Science and Technology Secretary Ashutosh Sharma said.

For Indian entities, there will be complete deregulation with no prior

HARSH VARDHAN said due to this policy, the whole sector will open up in a big way and geospatial data of value of ₹1 lakh crore can be acquired and used by 2030.

approvals, security clearances, licenses, for acquisition and production of geospatial data and geospatial data services, including maps, he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the liberalisation of policies governing the acquisition and production of geospatial data is a "massive step in government's vision for an Aatmanirbhar Bharat".

The reform will benefit the country's farmers, start-ups, private sector,

public sector and research institutions to drive innovations and build scalable solutions, he said.

Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan in a press conference said the easing of norms will greatly help in several sectors that were suffering because of non-availability of high quality maps.

Under the new guidelines, terrestrial mobile mapping survey, street view survey and surveying in Indian territorial waters will be permitted only to Indian entities irrespective of accuracy.

Vardhan said due to this policy, the whole sector will open up in a big way and geospatial data of value of ₹1 lakh crore can be acquired and used by 2030.

— PTI

TECH | PLAN

GHMC plans to embed dog vaccination in chips; fake pet owners to be punished

RFID chips to track missing pet dogs

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

Good news for pet owners! The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) plans to inject radio-frequency identification (RFID)-based chips in dogs and other animals to enable owners locate them in case they are found missing.

The chips would have a reader in which the vaccination and other details of dogs/animals would also be included. The corporation would provide the chips at a nominal cost of ₹100.

The corporation has also decided to launch the GHMC ABC application

which is currently under final stages of testing.

According to GHMC officials, the corporation is receiving numerous dog-missing complaints. Therefore, before issuing the pet licence, the corporation plans to get the service provider inject the chips into dog's body. The agency will also provide the dog owner with equipment to read the data.

The chip will be provided with a unique ID number. Information including the names of the pet and the owner, his/her residential address, history of the dog's vaccination, the next vaccination date, and the latitude and longitude information will be stored

BEFORE ISSUING the pet licence, the GHMC plans to get the service provider inject the chips into dog's body. The agency will also provide the dog owner with equipment to read the data.

In the chip. The corporation will intimate the next vaccination date through a text message to the owner. Officials would check the database at regular intervals. If the vaccination data is not updated for a period of a year, the pet owner will be prosecuted.

In case of any dog missing complaint, the GHMC would press its teams into

action. With the help of the RFID reader, the dog squads can easily identify the dog, its location and go through the medical history.

"Once we place the RFID reader near the chip, the history of the pet will be displayed with a beep sound on the monitor. If we detect a fake ownership, the guilty will be prosecuted. The pet owner should immediately report to the GHMC in case a pet dog is found missing," a GHMC official said.

He said a Noida-based company has given the representation on the chip's functioning. The firm has promised to provide quality chips with a nominal

price of ₹100. The price might even come down. "The RFID tags would likely be used in a month's time. It is yet to receive the final nod from the higher authorities." The IT wing has done multiple testing, he said.

The GHMC has developed an ABC application to minimise the stray dog menace. Dog catchers should take live photos using the app, in which the locational longitude and latitude will be marked. After performing animal birth control (ABC) and anti-rabies vaccination (ARV) programmes, the dogs have to be left in the same location, through live photos, for approval from the appl.

The official said that this data will not only help the corporation squads track the location of stray dogs but also control the menace in the GHMC limits.

GHMC would spend ₹1,500 on each dog in the city limits for vaccination and birth control operations.

After implementing a pilot project pertaining to the ABC and ARV programmes, the civic body would, in conformity with the Animal Welfare Board of India and Animal Birth Control (Dogs) Rules 2001, invite tenders and shortlist five animal welfare organisations to sterilise about 10,000 stray dogs for a year, officials said.

New Delhi, Feb. 15: A

Mumbai lawyer and a Beed engineer joined arrested climate activist Disha Ravi in creating a protest toolkit backing the farmers' agitation with the aim of tarnishing the image of India and collaborated with pro-Khalistani elements, Delhi Police officials said on Monday.

Non-bailable warrants have been issued against lawyer Nikita Jacob and engineer Shantanu Muluk, who are absconding. On January 11, 15 days ahead of the Republic Day violence in the national capital, the two attended a Zoom meeting organised by pro-Khalistani group Poetic Justice Foundation, said Joint Commissioner of Police (Cyber) Prem Nath.

The meeting decided the modalities to create the toolkit titled "Global Farmer Strike" and "Global Day of Action, 26 January", Nath said at a press conference.

As the case added layers, polarising views on social media and outside, offi-

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Ravi, Jacob and Muluk created the toolkit and sent it to others, officials alleged as a fierce political debate broke out between the opposition and the ruling BJP over the action against 21-year-old Ravi in the case related to the toolkit Google doc, which came to light when it was shared by global climate campaigner Greta Thunberg.

— PTI

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AP TO HOST SOUTH ZONAL COUNCIL MEET ON MARCH 4

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

Andhra Pradesh would host the 29th edition of the Southern Zonal Council meet in Tirupati on March 4. The meeting will be chaired by Union home minister Amit Shah.

The SZC comprises Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry while the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Lakshadweep would be special invitees. Chief ministers/Lt. governors, chief secretaries, government advisers and senior officials will attend the meet.

AP chief secretary Adityanath Das reviewed the arrangements for the SZC meet with officials here on Monday. He called for steps to facilitate darshan of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala for about 100 participants through the good offices of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam.

He called for fool-proof security arrangements, high-speed internet with wi-fi and Lan facilities along with laptops and big-size LEDs at the venue. He advised the health authorities to keep Covid-19 testing kits, masks, sanitizers and other requirements as per Covid-19 protocol for the participants.

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SHORT TAKES

TS READIES
REPORT FOR NITI
AAYOG MEETINGDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar on Monday directed officials to prepare a brief note highlighting the achievements of Telangana State to be submitted to Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao ahead of the February 20 Niti Aayog meeting.

He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will preside over the sixth governing council meeting of the Niti Aayog, which Rao will participate via video conference.

Somesh Kumar directed the officials to prepare a table indicating the ranking of the State in various indicators as envisaged by Niti Aayog.

The state government's inputs on key issues and policies should be presented in the report based on Rao's vision, he said. He specifically mentioned that initiatives like TS-iPASS, KCR Kits, Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bima and the areas where the state is at the forefront, should be highlighted.

The meeting was attended by senior bureaucrats Rani Kumudini, K. Ramakrishna Rao, Sunil Sharma, Arvind Kumar, Jayesh Ranjan, B. Janardhan Reddy, S.A.M. Rizvi, Navin Mittal, Christina Z Chongthu and Divya.

322 HEALTH
WORKERS GET
COVID VACCINEDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

The second round vaccination against Covid-19 for health care workers in the state continued on Monday with the state health department reporting a 78 per cent compliance on Monday from among those who received their first dose in mid-January.

It may be recalled that Telangana state launched the Covid-19 vaccination drive on January 16 for health care workers as part of phase-I of the programme. Along with providing the second dose shots for those who received their first dose earlier, the state is also continuing with vaccinating front line workers from other departments such as the police, revenue, panchayat raj and municipalities.

On Monday against a target of 13,968 second dose vaccinations, 10,932 shots were given to health care workers. From among the front line workers, 322 received their first Covid-19 vaccinations on Monday, the department said. So far, 2,79,258 healthcare workers from government and private hospitals, and frontline workers have received their first vaccination shots, the department said. No case of any adverse reaction was reported on Monday, it added.

TRS BETRAYING
PEOPLE, SAYS
CONGRESSDC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, FEB. 15

City Congress president Komatireddy Narendar Reddy on Monday condemned comments of Karimnagar Municipal Corporation (KMC) mayor Y. Sunil Rao that Congress party leaders are on padayatra to gain political mileage for themselves.

Addressing a press conference here, Narendar said that the mayor had enjoyed all major posts in Congress before joining TRS for his own political benefit and becoming Karimnagar city's mayor. Such a person has no right to comment against committed leaders of Congress party.

Pay salaries or face revolt: Bandi to pvt. colleges

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

BJP state president and MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Monday slammed corporate colleges for not paying salaries to faculty members.

A delegation of private colleges' lecturers and teachers met him and brought to his notice the problems they were facing from college managements.

Stating that they were in a financial crisis, he warned of intensified agitation against all such educational institutions. BJP would stand by teachers and lecturers and fight for their

issues, he asserted. Sanjay Kumar charged that several corporate colleges were running without permission from the government. If BJP is provoked further, then the party would expose all such irregularities and agitate till the institutions are ordered closed.

Meanwhile, he urged the aggrieved lecturers not to commit suicide but fight the injustice collectively. He reminded that BJP leaders, including district presidents, have gone to jail while fighting for the people and their rights.

Stating that the fight for justice would continue, the

KCR likely to skip SZC meeting

Home minister Amit shah will chair the meet to resolve issues between southern states

L. VENKAT RAM
REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

Uncertainty persisted over Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's participation in the 29th Southern Zonal Council meeting in Tirupati on March 4, which will be chaired by union home minister Amit Shah.

The Centre convened the SZC meeting regularly to resolve various issues between the states. KCR skipped all these meetings in his first term as CM, from 2014 to 2018.

During this period, the 26th meeting was held in Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh) in December

2015, the 27th meeting in Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala) in December 2016 and the 28th meeting in Bengaluru (Karnataka) in September 2018. These meetings were chaired by then Union home minister Rajnath Singh.

However, KCR had deputed ministers and officials for these meetings on his behalf.

This is the first meeting being chaired by Amit Shah after he took charge as home minister in May 2019. Since it is being held in the neighbouring Telugu state, it assumed political significance and led to a debate as to whether KCR would turn up for the event.

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The SZC comprises Andhra Pradesh,

Telangana state, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry while the Union Territories like Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Lakshadweep would be special invitees. Chief ministers/Lt. governors, chief secretaries, government advisers and senior officials will attend the meet.

Though there was never a complete attendance of all CMs in any SZC meeting earlier, the CMs of

other states participated at least once. If KCR attends the meet this time, it would be his

Farm laws not anti-farmers: Kishan HC reserves orders
over division of
Lalapet dairyVUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

Telangana High Court on Monday heard the over five-year-old dispute between sibling states of Telangana and AP over division of assets belonging to Andhra Pradesh Dairy Corporation Development (APDDCF) head office in Lalapet area of Hyderabad between the two states.

Advocate generals of both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh advanced their arguments claiming their shares. Following this, the division bench comprising justices M.S. Ramachandra Rao and T. Vinod Kumar reserved its orders.

APDDCF has been listed under Schedule IX of the AP Reorganisation Act. Andhra Pradesh government had approached the then united High Court in 2016 challenging Telangana state's GO declaring the premises, infrastructure and machinery at Lalapet head office of APDDCF as belonging to Telangana government.

The TS government had also gone on to take over possession of the property in Lalapet including buildings and machinery.

Aggrieved, AP approached the then joint High Court asserting that assets of APDDCF should be shared in 58:42 ratio, because it belonged to both states, as it was constructed and developed in united AP.

Andhra Pradesh advocate general Sriam submitted that according to the AP Reorganisation Act, headquarters of Schedule IX institutions should be shared on basis of the population ratio of 58:42 between the two states. He said this applies to all assets of office headquarters located in Hyderabad.

Whereas, Telangana advocate general B.S. Prasad argued that as per Section 53 of the Act, properties situated within the vicinity of the respective state belong to that state, except the administrative office buildings. Prasad submitted that Telangana has never claimed any operational units of APDDCF situated in Andhra Pradesh.

He maintained that the Lalapet unit is an operational centre and thus belongs to Telangana. He, however, conceded that Andhra Pradesh can claim its stake in Vijay Bhavan, the administrative office of APDDCF.

Prasad's argument centred around headquarters not including all assets in Hyderabad but only the principal administrative building of an institution or organisation. He also underlined that milk and dairy products of Vijaya Dairy are generally supplied throughout Telangana, from Lalapet unit, as and there are no major units in Telangana. So Lalapet should be treated as an operational unit.

TS to not reduce
fuel pricesDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

Telangana government has no plans to reduce petrol and diesel prices in the state like its Assam counterpart. The BJP-led regime in Assam has slashed petrol and diesel prices by ₹5 per litre by withdrawing additional cess on petrol and diesel. This was announced in Assam Legislative Assembly as part of the state's 2021-22 Budget on Saturday. Petrol and diesel prices in Telangana are continuing to break all

time records since past six days. On Monday, petrol in Hyderabad cost ₹92.26 per litre and diesel ₹86.23.

In January 2015, TS government had added ₹2 on every litre of petrol and diesel to the then existing VAT of 31 percent and 22.25 per cent respectively. However, in February of the same year, it removed the ₹2 per litre hike while raising the VAT rate to 35.20 per cent and 27 percent respectively on petrol and diesel. These VAT rates have continued to remain in force for over six years now.

NO MIXOPATHY
WE'VE ENOUGH
DOCTORS: IMADC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 15.

The Indian Medical Association on Monday called on all allopathic doctors to continue their protests against the 'mixopathy' plans of the Central government that seek a convergence of traditional medicine such as Ayurveda, Unani and Homeopathy with Allopathic care. The IMA, which was strongly opposed to these plans from day one, on Monday said one of the reasons that the government gave for promoting mixopathy was shortage of doctors in rural areas and that the organisation was ready to attend to this issue.

lying vacant in various departments. He said the delay in the recruitment process has deprived thousands of students, who participated in the Telangana movement, from getting a government job.

Similarly, the Congress leader said that the TRS government lured jobless youth in 2018 Assembly elections by promising them a monthly unemployment allowance of ₹3,016. However, this promise too has not been fulfilled, even after nearly two-and-a-half years. He alleged that the Chief Minister has been openly cheating jobless youth ever since he came to power in June 2014.

Mr Reddy also alleged that gross injustice was being done to government employees. He said that the revision of pay scales was long overdue. He further said that the new PRC has disappointed employees by recommending a fitment of a mere 7.3 per cent. He reiterated the demand that employees be given a fitment of not less than 43 per cent.



Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy inaugurates the meet on women entrepreneurs, academicians and intellectuals, organised by the BJP Mahila Morcha at in Hyderabad on Monday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

the Modi government reforms on tax, 'one nation, one tax' system, and demonetization had served a death blow to terrorist groups and their activities in India. He said that the new education policy (NEP) has helped students and encouraged local languages.

Mr Reddy alleged that opposition parties were misleading farmers through "false propaganda" against the union government. He pointed out that the Telangana government too had made allegations against the Centre to instigate

them. Mr Reddy asked farmers to defeat the TRS party and the KCR-led government for its anti-farmer behaviour, reminding them of incidents where farmers were handcuffed and arrested for demanding their rights.

In another meeting of women intellectuals, the union minister praised women, who comprise half the population and had risen to institutions positions in all sectors and great institutions on the dint of their hard work and talent.

He praised the Modi's government for appoint-

ing a woman as a defence minister, saying, the BJP always stood for women empowerment and had initiated a plethora of pro-woman legislations. He said that it is sad that some laws, which had been implemented by the imperial British government before independence, were still in vogue, he said the Union government was contemplating comprehensively amending these laws, including the CRPC and IPC.

Kishan Reddy said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, the union government had



TPCC chief N. Uttam Kumar Reddy hands over B forms to MLC candidates G. Chinna Reddy and Ramulu Naik in Hyderabad.

— DC PHOTO

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president and Nalgonda MP N. Uttam Kumar Reddy asked graduates and employees to vote for the Congress party if they wanted a rollback of the PRC recommendations on house rent allowance and fitment.

Mr Reddy Uttam Kumar Reddy appealed to people to elect Congress candidates to "restore morality in politics" and "democracy in Telangana".

He expressed confidence that the Congress would win elections for the Mahabubnagar-Rangareddy-Hyderabad and Khammam-Warangal-Nalgonda graduates' constituencies of Telangana Legislative Council.

Mr Reddy said that both their party candidates, Chinna Reddy and Ramulu Naik, were highly capable of serving people, especially in addressing the needs of graduates, including state employees and jobless

youth.

"Telangana became a reality due to the struggle and sacrifices made by students. Thousands of government employees too risked their jobs and careers of their children by participating in the Sakala Janula Sammelan over 40 days to achieve statehood. However, neither students nor employees benefited after the formation of Telangana.

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and his family took control of all resources and

neglected everyone else," he alleged.

The TPCC chief said that "educated youth must unitedly defeat the corrupt and unethical regimes" of the TRS and BJP.

Criticising Chief Minister Rao, Mr Reddy said that the promise to fill one lakh vacant posts in government department before the 2014 elections still remains unfulfilled.

The Pay Revision Commission, in its recent report, has disclosed that over 1.91 lakh posts were

members to teach a lesson to TRS in the coming MLC elections.

Bandi Sanjay alleged that illegal cases were being filed against tribals in Huzuranga constituency. Pointing out that they had organised Sant Sewalal Jayanti in the party office, he alleged that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao had failed to allot three acres of land for dalits and had defaulted on the 10 per cent reservation to them.

He regretted that the state government had not allotted lands to tribals in Gurrampodu despite orders from the High Court.



BJP spokesperson N.V. Subhash hands over a cheque of ₹20 lakh to party state president Bandi Sanjay on Monday for the construction of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

— P. SURENDRA

Karimnagar MP said corporate colleges cannot buy BJP leaders like they do

with those from other parties. He called upon all faculty

● **IN-CHARGE** district veterinary officer of Vikarabad, V. Sadanandam, said, "These wild animals are scared of humans as also sounds and lights.

sequently released in the Amrabad Tiger Reserve. According to Rajendranagar police inspector K. Kanakaiah, the forest department is investigating the incident of leopard sighting. As per Ch Shivaiah, forest divisional officer of Shamshabad, "Our team patrolled the area and did not find any pugmarks. We have placed nine camera traps to try and get a picture of leopard movement in the area. We will also place trap cages."

Resident Ragadampalli Shraavan said the area where the leopard attack on cows had happened was full of scrubs, with vast campuses of government institutions,

open areas and hillocks. "This is an ideal place for a wild animal to take shelter, as most of the other areas around the city have been taken over by real estate agents," he said.

In-charge district veterinary officer of Vikarabad, V. Sadanandam, said, "These wild animals are scared of humans as also sounds and lights. The leopard might have travelled for the prey and taken the refuge in the hillocks. Leopards usually travel during the nights and can cover a distance of upto 20-30km a night."

He added, "The Amangal forest areas as well as Vikarabad forests are not far off from Rajendranagar. Amangal is about 30km away and Vikarabad forests 60 km away, distances that a leopard can cover easily under the cover of darkness."

OTHER STORIES

TIGER KILL FOUND
IN KUKUNDA,
VILLAGERS PANICDC CORRESPONDENT
KOMARAM BHEEM ASIFABAD,
FEB.15

A tiger-kill was found in the rivulet on the outskirts of Kukunda village in Bejjur mandal of this district on Monday. Villagers found the carcass of the cow was half-eaten by a wild animal.

The incident spread panic among the villagers. The forest staff visited the spot and verified the pugmarks of the tiger to identify the direction in which the tiger moved after killing the cow. An alert has been sounded for the area.

BJP WILL WIN
MLC ELECTION,
SAYS PREMENDERDC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, FEB. 15

G. Premender Reddy, BJP candidate for Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduate constituency said that the Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao failed to provide jobs to the unemployed graduates in Telangana.

He said that the TRS government is also doing injustice to the employees of the pay revision commission report. He said that the graduates are looking towards BJP and the party will win in the constituency. Premender Reddy, who staged a walk in Wyrasaid that the party activists would meet all graduate voters before the election date.

He said that the party chalked out a plan to reach the voters of the constituency.

16 NODAL OFFICERS
FOR GRADUATE
ELECTIONDC CORRESPONDENT
KOTHAGUDEM, FEB. 15

Bhadradi district collector and district election officer M.V. Reddy announced the names of sixteen nodal officers for the Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduate constituency election to be held on March 14. These nodal officers will look after arrangement and poll affairs in Bhadradi district for the election.

B. Arjun, district irrigation officer, is appointed as nodal officer for training management to the polling staff and L. Laxmi Ramakanth district panchayat officer to look after polling station arrangements. I.K. Satya Prasad, assistant director of animal husbandary and veterinary, will supervise the printing of ballot paper and postal ballot and dummy ballot.

K. Abhimanyu, district agricultural officer, was asked to look after material management and K Michael Bose, district cooperative officer to monitor model code of conduct.

I. Bhima, district road and buildings officer and Vidullatha, CEO of Zilla Parishad was asked to make arrangements for observers and workforce management respectively. Different responsibilities have been entrusted to the eight other officers.



TRS leaders pose for photos at We love KCR frame in Warangal on Monday.

—BY ARRANGEMENT

TRS leaders set up TS
agitation photo gallery

Leaders, activists and people were moved by the memories

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, FEB. 15

A photo gallery organised in Warangal on the 67th birthday of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao in the Ramlaxman garden is gaining applause from the locals. Warangal East MLA Nannapuneni Narender who organised the photo exhibition said it showcases the photos of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's struggles and the agitation for achieving Telangana state. "There are photos from the founding of Telangana Rashtra Samithi through the struggles of Telangana statehood agitation and the achievements of the TRS till date," he said.

Leaders, activists and the people who visited the exhibition were moved by the memories. Apart from that, the 67 feet tall vertical cut out of CM KCR too attracted everyone. Local leaders posed for photos near the 'We love KCR' frame set up on the venue.

Boinapalli Vinod Kumar, the vice-chair-

Mass plantation
on CM's b'dayDC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, FEB.15

To mark the birthday of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao on February 17, a mass sapling plantation programme will be conducted. The officials and ruling TRS party leaders are making arrangements in this regard. Saplings are readied in nurseries for plantation on Wednesday 10 am to 11 am. After the Telangana Hariitha Haram programme, it would improve green cover in urban and rural areas.

As part of the Green India Challenge programme, saplings will be planted in Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts. Panchayat and forest department officials

man of the state planning commission, said the photo gallery brought back memories

are coordinating to take up the plantation programme. 1000 saplings in each Gram Panchayat will be planted on February 17. 5.26 lakh saplings in 526 gram panchayats in Kamareddy district and 5.30 lakh saplings in 530 GPs in Nizamabad district will be planted.

The saplings reached respective gram panchayats and it will be planted at Vaikuntadhamam, Prakrithi Vanam and dumping yards. Series of meetings conducted for sarpanches and village secretaries to make success of the programme. Gram panchayat officials invited elected representatives and non-governmental organisations to participate in the programme.

of the statehood movement. He congratulated MLA Nannapuneni Narender for setting up

● **WARANGAL EAST** MLA Nannapuneni Narender who organised the photo exhibition said "There are photos from the founding of Telangana Rashtra Samithi through the struggles of Telangana statehood agitation and the achievements of the TRS till date,"

● **BOINAPALLI VINOD** Kumar, the vice-chairman of the state planning commission, said the photo gallery brought back memories of the statehood movement.

The photo exhibition. A meeting of the TRS party chief functionaries and membership registration was held later. Speaking on the occasion, Narender urged the cadre to ensure more number of membership registration in the constitution. He made it clear that there are no groups in the TRS in Warangal East constituency. "We all walk the same path directed by Chief Minister KCR," he said.

SOCIAL WORKER
N. SRINIVAS
PASSES AWAYDC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, FEB. 15

Consumer council and Right to Information activist, social worker and president of Loksattha Udhayama Samstha, Naredla Srinivas passed away while undergoing treatment for Covid-19 at a private hospital in Karimnagar on Monday.

Srinivas, who crusaded against the corruption and other public issues, was admitted to the hospital after being tested positive for Coronavirus on February 2. He is survived by his wife and two sons.

He filed around 9,000 cases on consumers in the consumer forum across the state and the district and was responsible for sanctioning Rs 20 crore penalty amount to the people. He also filed eight Public Interest Litigation (PIL) cases in the High Court. He saved about Rs.500 crore government money by filing more than 1,000 cases under the Right To Information (RTI) act.

Srinivas had won accolades for his services to the customers as the UBI employee until his retirement. He was the Karimnagar consumers council founder, and the Loksattha Udhayama Samstha (Voluntary Organisation) established film societies in Karimnagar, Jagtial and Rajanna Sircilla districts.

Many of his well-wishers, politicians, doctors and others expressed condolences to the bereaved family members.

₹2 L insurance cover is the
clincher, assert TRS leadersPILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS
ADILABAD, FEB. 15

The Rs two lakh insurance cover being provided to them has drawn appreciation from all TRS workers, who are confident that this will help in surpassing the 50,000 enrollment target set for MLAs during the ongoing membership drive.

Senior leaders appointed as observers for the membership drive in each Assembly constituency are motivating the cadre and second-rung leaders to

explain about the benefits of the enrolment as a party member and how the insurance cover helped many families to withstand tragedies caused by death in road accidents.

Many party workers received the amount within a few days of submitting the death certificate to the state office through the district committee.

On the occasion of party membership drive in Nirmal, Minister Allola Indrakaran Reddy said it is only TRS party that is pro-

viding Rs two lakh insurance cover to its members. He appealed to members to persuade villagers to take party membership.

Meanwhile, they all have intensified the membership drive since the last date for enrollment is set for February 26.

Leaders point out that when the top leadership is spending huge money on their welfare measures, the money being collected as membership fee is meagre, comparatively speaking.

NEW BC LAWS ONLY
AFTER TAKING
FEEDBACK: MINISTERDC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, FEB. 15

Minister for Backward Classes welfare and civil supplies Gangula Kamalakara said that new laws will be enacted only after taking feedback from different communities in the state.

"Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao directed us to interact with various communities to know their aspirations on laws for welfare schemes," he said.

The Minister, along with MLCs Kalvakuntla Kavitha, VG Goud and Akula Lalitha, and Nizamabad urban MLA Bigala Ganesh Gupta interacted with leaders of 34 BC communities here on Monday. He said that only based on the requirements and feedback of the socially and economically backward classes, would new laws be enacted.

Kamalakar said that the Chief Minister recognised the Most Backward Communities (MBC) and nomadic groups for their welfare in the state. He dared BJP MPs Bandi Sanjay and Dharmapuri Arvind to either try for the BC welfare ministry in the Union Cabinet or work for the development of Telangana state with Central funds.

Kavitha said that a BC Bhavan will be constructed in Nizamabad and it will be named as Savithribai Phule Bhavan. TRS government is giving utmost importance for the development of BCs and MBCs in the state.

To ensure self-respect of socially and economically backward communities, they have been provided education and welfare schemes, she explained.

JP chairman Dadannagari Vittal Rao, vice-chairperson Rajitha Yadav, Dharpally ZPTC member Bajireddy Jagan, NUDA chairman C.Prabhakar Reddy, BC welfare association district president Narala Sudhakar and others were present.

● **MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha** said that BC Bhavan would be constructed in Nizamabad and it will be named as Savithribai Phule Bhavan. TRS government is giving utmost importance to the development of BCs and MBCs in the state.



Himachal Pradesh governor Bandaru Dattatreya is offers pooja to serpentine God diety at Nagoba temple in Indravelli mandal on Monday.

—BY ARRANGEMENT

HP Gov. Dattatreya
offers pooja in
Nagoba templeDC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, FEB. 15

The Himachal Pradesh Governor Bandaru Dattatreya performed special puja to the serpentine god diety at Nagoba temple in Keshapur in Indravelli mandal on Monday.

Addressing the occasion, along with BJP MP Soyam Bapurao, Bandaru Dattatreya said the state government should focus on the Adivasis' health and education to empower them. He said the state government should also take steps to issue pattas to the podu lands being cultivated by the Adivasis for a long time and added that they were making an effort to protect the Adivasis' unique culture. Meanwhile, Endowment Minister Allola Indrakaran Reddy and

Telangana state SC and ST Commission chairman Errolla Srinivas also performed special puja to the serpentine deity at Nagoba Jatara in Keshapur village in Indravelli mandal.

Collector Sikta Patnaik and Superintendent of police Vishnu S. Warrior and BJP leaders Payal Shankar and Suhasini Reddy, Ravularamnath and Rama Devi and others were present. Mesram clan and Nagoba temple Samstan elders felicitated Badaru Dattatreya, Indrakaran Reddy and Errolla Srinivas.

Later, Telangana SC and ST Commission Chairman Errolla Srinivas visited Marlavai village in Jainoor mandal and felicitated Padma Shri awardee Kanaka Raju. Commission members Kusram Neela Devi and B. Vidyasagar were present.

ADILABAD AIR OBSERVES RADIO KISAN
DIWAS, FELICITATES FOUR FARMERSDC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, FEB. 15:

The Adilabad AIR has observed Radio Kisan Diwas and felicitated the four progressive farmers on Monday. The AIR is creating awareness through its programs among the farmers about the best practices and new technologies in agriculture.

The AIR is also clearing doubts among the farmers about various issues related to agricul-

ture with the experts through a phone-in program. AIR officials felicitated the progressive farmers Kumra Keshav Rao, Boosi Bhumanna Budde Vijaykumar, Duguta Tirupati.

The Adilabad AIR program executive Remshwar Kendre and retired executive officer Sumanaspati Reddy were present. Director Engineer of Adilabad AIR Dr Vi. Rajeshwar presided over the function.

ABVP | PROTEST

Government should open SC, ST and BC hostels

Solve issues in edu system: ABVP

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, FEB. 15

Demanding the resolution of issues of the state's education system, the ABVP staged a protest at the Ashoka Junction here on Monday. They raised slogans against the KCR Government for its failure in resolving the problems in schools and colleges.

ABVP State secretary Ambala Kiran said that it was a huge disappointment for the people who hoped for quality education to their wards after the formation of Telangana. "Seven years after coming to power, the state government is yet to take control over the education sector despite the private and corporate institutions fleeing the parents with exorbitant fees," Kiran said.

Stating that people were economically hit due to coronavirus lockdown, he demanded the government issue orders to the private institutions to collect the tuition fee month-wise. The government which



Police arrest the ABVP protester at the Ashoka Junction in Warangal on Monday.

—BY ARRANGEMENT

reopened junior and degree colleges are yet to open the SC, ST and BC hostels. As a result, the students belonging to these sections are in distress to find accommodation and boarding, he said, demanding the government to reopen the hostels.

ABVP State joint secretary

Punnam Venu accused the government of trying to privatise the aided educational institutions. Instead of doing so, the government should ensure basic amenities besides filling teaching and non-teaching posts in the aided institutions, he demanded.

Venu demanded the government to release the pending fee reimbursement and scholarships amounting to ₹2,900 crore.

After the protest disturbed the traffic on the busy highway, police arrested the protesting students and cleared the traffic.

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IN BRIEF

FOREIGN SECRETARY TO VISIT MOSCOW

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB 15

Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla will visit Moscow on a two-day official visit beginning Wednesday to hold the next round of India-Russia Foreign Office Consultations with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov, during which “the two sides will review the entire gamut of bilateral relations, including the forthcoming high level exchanges”, New Delhi announced on Monday.

Russian President Vladimir Putin was initially expected to visit India last year for the India-Russia Annual Summit but both the visit and Summit could not take place then due to the Covid pandemic. Both India and Russia are time-tested friends and continue to have a strong relationship especially in the defence and civil nuclear sectors.

In a statement on Monday, the MEA said, “Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla will pay an official visit to Moscow on 17-18 February 2021 at the invitation of Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Igor Morgulov. Foreign Secretary will hold the next round of India-Russia Foreign Office Consultations with Deputy Foreign Minister Morgulov, during which the two sides will review the entire gamut of bilateral relations, including the forthcoming high level exchanges.”

COVID: NIGHT CURFEW IN 4 GUJ CITIES EXTENDED

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB 15

Amid a significant decline in the number of active cases of Covid-19 in the country, particularly National Capital Delhi, the government has asked all Central government employees to start attending offices as it was before lockdown.

There will be no exemption to any category of employees, except for those living in the containment zones. Such staff and officers will work from home and come to office only after their containment zone is de-notified. Offices will, however, follow staggered timings to avoid overcrowding in work-places and meetings will be largely conducted through video conferencing. Biometric attendance for the time being will remain suspended. All department canteens too will be opened with safety protocols in place to avoid crowding.

The country on Monday registered 11,649 fresh cases and 90 deaths. While new cases in most of the states are on a decline, in a major worry Maharashtra has once again started reporting high number of cases.

India till now has vaccinated 85.16 lakh persons.

Meanwhile, Gujarat announced to extend its 12 am to 6 am curfew in four cities – Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodra, and Rajkot - till February 28.

SPURIOUS LIQUOR CLAIMS 4 LIVES IN MADHYA PRADESH

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, FEB 15

Four people died after consuming ‘spurious’ liquor in Chhatrapur district, police said on Monday. The incident took place in the village of Paretha.

According to the police, around 150 people had gathered at the place of one Shital Ahirwar (60) in the village for a party on February 9.

Some of them procured liquor of brand “Dilse” from a liquor contractor hailing from Uttar Pradesh.

Many of them who consumed the liquor were taken ill, according to the police.

While Ahirwar’s son died on Friday, he succumbed on Saturday. Two more people, Tulcidas Brar and Laluram Ahirwar, died on Sunday night.

“Viscera of the four deceased were sent for tests”, Chhatrapur district superintendent of police Sachin Sharma said. A team of district officials and police officers rushed to the village to ensure proper medical treatment of the affected people.

The incident comes in the wake of the death of 24 people caused by spurious liquor in Morena district in Chambal division in the state last month.

SC TELLS FB, WA: YOU MAY BE \$2-3 TR COMPANY, BUT...

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, FEB. 15

Holding that people’s privacy is more important than money, the Supreme Court on Monday issued notice to the Centre, WhatsApp and its parent company Facebook on a plea challenging its new privacy policy about which reservations have been voiced in certain sections.

“You may be a \$2-3 trillion company, but people’s privacy is more valuable and it is our duty to protect their privacy,” said a bench headed by Chief Justice Sharad A Bobde, noting that the people have grave concerns about privacy.

The Court was hearing a plea seeking to restrain WhatsApp from implementing its new privacy policy in India. The application has been moved by two college students - Karmanya Singh Sareen and Shreya Sethi in a matter pending before a Constitution bench wherein 2016 policy is under challenge.

The petition sought a direction to the web service platforms to apply the same privacy policy which is made applicable to the users in the European Union region.

Senior lawyer Shyam Divan, appearing for the petitioner, told the apex court that WhatsApp has in January “come up with a new privacy policy.”

“One set of privacy standards apply to Europe and a different set of standards apply to Indians. This happens when the Personal Data Protection Bill is pending,” Divan said while asserting “there is a huge differentiation between Europeans and Indians”.

Senior counsel Kapil Sibal, who appeared for WhatsApp, denied that the users’ data would be compromised by the new policy.

“This 2021 policy is applicable everywhere apart from Europe as it has a law. If India has a law, we will follow the same,” he said.

At this the CJ asked him to put that on oath.

WhatsApp had earlier in January renewed its terms of service and privacy policy.

Covid cases jump in Maha



A Royal Bengal Tiger jumps from a pond inside an enclosure at the Byculla Zoo in Mumbai on Monday. The zoo reopened on Monday after 11 months of closure due to the coronavirus pandemic. The “3T formula” of tracing, testing and treatment will have to be implemented strictly to tackle a rise in Covid-19 cases in some parts of Maharashtra, state health minister Rajesh Tope said in Aurangabad on Monday.

- PTI

BJP, Oppn clash over climate activist’s arrest

Vij calls for ‘extermination of seeds of anti-nationalism’

Chandigarh, Feb 15: The action taken by the Delhi Police on an FIR related to a toolkit shared by climate campaigner Greta Thunberg in support of the ongoing farmer protests has triggered a war of words between the Opposition and the ruling BJP.

Accusing the government of “murdering democracy” by using force against a 21-year-old, the Opposition on Monday said the voice of India cannot be silenced even as the BJP defended the action, saying a crime is a crime no matter at what age.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi led the Opposition offensive following the arrest of 21-year-old Disha Ravi in the case and said the country will not be silenced.

“Your lips are free to speak. Say that the truth is still alive. They are scared, not the country,” he said in a tweet in Hindi.

“India will not be silenced,” he added.

Delhi Chief Minister

Arvind Kejriwal said, “Arrest of 21 year old Disha Ravi is an unprecedented attack on Democracy. Supporting our farmers is not a crime.”

RJD leader Manoj Jha said democracy is under threat. “I am worried about democracy, as it is passing through the most difficult times,” he said.

Union minister and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Gajendra Singh Shekhawat tweeted: “If age is the criteria then Param Veer Chakra Second Lt Arun Khetarpal, martyred at 21 is who I am proud of. Not some toolkit propagandists.”

BJP general secretary B L Santosh tweeted, “21 year old...environment activist...student...Are these credentials for becoming a part of breaking India forces? How does she get the access for editing tool kit...? Why she is part of anti-national WhatsApp groups...? Many questions...But only one answer...21 year old.”

“Bengaluru, Greta Thunberg, Vegan, sole bread winner, student, 21 year old, passionate activist...so many attempts to white wash a sin...! Not one anarchist ready to answer the question...How 21 year old student got access to edit Toolkit,” he asked.

Meanwhile, in a comment on the arrest of climate activist Disha Ravi, Haryana Home minister Anil Vij on Monday urged “extermination from the roots” wherever seeds of anti-nationalism found.

The minister’s remarks came two days after Disha Ravi was held by the Delhi Police for allegedly sharing with climate activist Greta Thunberg the toolkit related to the farmers’ protest against the Centre’s farm laws.

The Delhi Police had claimed that the 21-year-old activist was an editor of the “toolkit Google doc” and “key conspirator” in the document’s formulation and dissemination.

In the document, various urgent actions, including

creating a Twitter storm and protesting outside Indian embassies, were listed to support the protest.

“Whoever harbours the seeds of anti-nationalism in their mind, that has to be destroyed from the roots (*samool naash*), be it #Disha.Ravi or anyone else, Vij said in a one line tweet in Hindi.

Later, the minister posted a response from the Twitter after a complaint was filed regarding his tweet. The response from Twitter read, We have received a complaint regarding your account, @anilvijminister for the following content (Vij’s particular tweet in Hindi (*Desh virodh ka beej* Whoever harbours the seed...).

We have investigated the reported content and have found that it is not subject to removal under the Twitter Rules or German law. Accordingly, we have not taken any action as a result of this specific report, the response said.

- PTI

DYFI worker, hurt in police lathicharge, dies

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, FEB. 15

A DYFI worker Moidul Islam Middya (31), who was critically wounded allegedly in the police lathicharge during last week’s Nabanna rally of the Left parties’ youth wings demanding jobs, succumbed to injuries at a private nursing home, prompting the CPI(M), it’s ally Congress and the BJP in the Opposition to accuse the Mamata Banerjee government of his “murder.”

The auto-rickshaw driver from Kotolpur in Bankura was the breadwinner of his family.

On February 11 he participated in the DYFI-SFI march which turned violent as the rallyists and police clashed with each other. With deep injuries Moidul was rescued from Esplanade. He was rushed to a clinic from where he was later shifted to a private nursing home run by CPI(M) leader and doctor Fuad Halim.

Dr Halim said, “On February 13 morning, Moidul was admitted after his medical tests showed development of an acute kidney failure. It happens only when muscles get hit continuously to become wounded and it’s internal protein comes out and blocks the kidney through blood. He had massive muscle injuries from the lathicharge by the police.”

CPI(M) MLA Sujana Chakraborty claimed, “A bright youth was murdered and turned into a corpse.”

Leader of the Opposition Abdul Mannan alleged, “It is a brutal murder which reflects unlimited atrocities of an autocratic government.”

State BJP president Dilip Ghosh said, “This is unfortunate. Trinamul Congress government has lost its control over everything.”

Wondering if Mr Chakraborty talked of getting her call about the DYFI worker’s death first, the chief minister however said, “Any death is sad and unfortunate. Post mortem report will reveal the cause of death. But the police was neither informed nor complained about it. Family of the deceased was not

MAA KITCHEN: DIDI LAUNCHES MEALS FOR ₹5

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA, FEB. 15

In what appears to be yet another attempt by her to outclass the BJP with sops for the voters in poll-bound West Bengal, chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday launched a scheme ‘Maa Kitchen’ offering daily meal at ₹5 to the poor.

The menu includes rice, daal, vegetables and egg (one piece) curry in a plate available on a first come first served basis from 1 pm to 3 pm.

Kickstarting the project from Nabanna, Ms Banerjee informed that her government would bear a subsidy of ₹15 per plate in the initiative which would be run by self-help groups and would expand across the state.

Two outlets have been started in South Kolkata.

“It is a unique idea which was announced in the state budget. I will go to taste the food one day. This programme is aimed for the common people. It will create a business set-up,” Ms Banerjee said about the concept which is the brainchild of election strategist of the ruling Trinamul Congress: Prashant Kishor. The move resembles to ‘Amma Kitchens’ launched by late AIADMK leader J Jayalalithaa in Tamil Nadu.

informed also though the youth was admitted to a hospital two days ago. He might have had a kidney or any other ailment before his death.”

“Any hospital is mandated to share information with the local police station in such cases. But it was not done. I told Mr Chakraborty that I am ready to provide a job and financial assistance to the family of the deceased,” she added. Post-mortem report, however, indicated of assault only on the legs of the deceased, according to the police.

Agitated over his death, some DYFI cadres heckled a cop and torn apart his uniform during a protest in the city.



S Jaishankar

EAM: ASSAM IS SPRINGBOARD OF ACT EAST POLICY

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, FEB. 15

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar here on Monday said that Assam is the springboard of India’s Act East Policy which aims at to create connectivity that will make the state more energetic, contributing and employed.

Asserting that all-round development of Assam is central to the success of the policy, the minister told reporters that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is deeply committed to the development of Assam, and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)-aided projects in the state are examples of how international partnerships can contribute to the development of states. The minister, accompanied by Japanese Ambassador Satoshi Suzuki, was here to review JICA-assisted projects.

Security up along other parts of Indo-China border

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB 15

Even as Indian and Chinese forces have started the disengagement process in the Ladakh sector, Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), which is the Indo-China border guarding force, is clearly not taking any chances.

It has further increased its deployment along other parts of Indo-China border like North-East, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh to ensure that the Chinese Peoples’ Liberation Army (PLA) “does not open a new front and confrontation zone” in these areas.

Home Ministry sources said that the ITBP has

taken timely action by enhancing deployment along the Indo-China border so that the Chinese security personnel do not try any transgression exercise in other sectors.

“We had some information that in an attempt to deflect attention from the ongoing disengagement process in Ladakh, Chinese PLA could create problem in some other areas along the border. So we have deployed additional ITBP troops in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, higher and remote areas of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. Our security forces are alert and we will not let PLA create any further mis-

chief,” a senior Home Ministry official remarked.

Both Indian and Chinese security forces agreed on a withdrawal formula in the Ladakh region following prolonged negotiation lasting several months. But Indian security forces remain on “very high alert” all along Indo-China border.

Sources said that all sector commanders of the ITBP are taking daily reports from even advance and remote check posts on Chinese activity in their respective zones. These daily reports are then compiled and a detailed analysis is being sent to the Home Ministry.

U’KHAND | TRAGEDY Toll stands at 54 while officials say 150 people are still missing

Atmosphere in Tapovan village grim as kin lose hope

Tapovan, Feb 15: As bodies are being continually pulled out of the muck-filled power project tunnel here, the atmosphere outside is getting grimmer with families of the missing people losing hope of seeing them alive. Every time a body is brought out of the adit tunnel, families waiting outside for over a week, take some time to pluck up the courage to see if the mortal remains are of a loved one or not.

And the temporary relief of not finding a family member among the dead is brief as they are soon gripped by despair when

they see rescue personnel battling through tonnes of sludge choking the tunnel and are reminded that eight days have elapsed since the calamity happened. Nine bodies have so far been recovered from the tunnel at Tapovan Vishnugad hydel project site taking the toll in the tragedy to 54, while officials say 150 people are still missing.

Out of the three bodies recovered from the tunnel on Monday one is of Satyapal Singh Bartwal from Masoli village in Pokhri area of Chamoli district. “We hoped

Satyapal would return alive. But now we will have to return home with my brother’s body. It’s unbearable,” said his elder brother in a choked voice.

Over a dozen relatives of Bartwal including his brother, who had been camping at Tapovan village since the day the tragedy struck, broke down inconsolably after identifying the body.

The crowd of disheartened relatives at the tunnel site has begun to disperse. Those who remain are found hanging around the mortuary where the bodies are being brought

one after another.

Relatives of Jitendra, a resident of Jammu brought out dead from the tunnel on Sunday are also packing up to leave.

“Seven of us had come from Jammu after we heard of the glacial disaster in Chamoli on February 7 and my brother’s phone was switched off. We had been scouring different areas of Tapovan and Joshimath for four days in search of Jitendra until his body was brought out of the tunnel on Sunday. It’s tragic,” Jitendra’s younger brother Pavan said.

- PTI



Mother Chuttku Devi and other family members of Mithilesh Kumar, who has been missing after flash floods in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, at her village Chokad, in Ramgarh district of Jharkhand on Monday.



SHORT TAKES

RUSSIAN CARGO SHIP LAUNCHED TO ISS

Moscow, Feb. 15: An unmanned Russian cargo ship launched successfully Monday with a load of supplies for the International Space Station.

The Progress MS-16 cargo ship blasted off as scheduled at 09:45 am (0445GMT) from the Russia-leased Baikunur launch facility in Kazakhstan and reached a designated orbit en route to the station.

It is carrying water, propellant and other supplies and is set to dock at the space outpost Wednesday.

The space outpost is operated by NASA's Kate Rubins, Michael Hopkins, Victor Glover and Shannon Walker, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency astronaut Soichi Noguchi and Russian Space Agency Roscosmos' Sergey Ryzhikov and Sergey Kud-Sverchkov.

NICKI MINAJ'S FATHER KILLED IN HIT-AND-RUN

New York, Feb. 15: The father of rapper Nicki Minaj has died after being struck by a hit-and-run driver near New York City, police said Sunday.

Robert Maraj, 64, was walking on a road in Mineola, Long Island at 6:15 pm (2315 GMT) on Friday when he was hit, Nassau County Police Department said in a statement.

The driver left the scene of the accident, and Maraj was taken to hospital, where he was pronounced dead on Saturday. "The investigation is ongoing," police added.

The statement did not specify Maraj's relationship to Minaj, but a police spokesman confirmed he was her father.

Minaj, 38, was born in Trinidad and Tobago and raised in the Queens borough of New York City.

The rapper has been nominated for 10 Grammy awards during her career.

SUSPECT HELD IN NYC SUBWAY STABBINGS

New York, Feb. 15: A 21-year-old Brooklyn man was arrested in the fatal stabbings of two people on New York City subway trains, police said Sunday.

Rigoberto Lopez was taken into custody Saturday night and was formally arrested Sunday on charges of murder and attempted murder, police said. One of the victims was discovered dead on a train in Queens late Friday with several stab wounds to his neck and torso, police said. Two hours later, a 44-year-old woman was found stabbed to death in a subway car in upper Manhattan. Two nonfatal attacks — one involving a 67-year-old man and the other involving a 43-year-old man — also occurred in upper Manhattan.

Authorities believe all four victims were homeless. Police said they believe Lopez may have committed all of the attacks. It wasn't clear if he had an attorney who could speak for him. Police leaders said they would deploy an additional 500 officers into the subway system to guard against future assaults.

LANDSLIDE IN INDONESIA: 10 DIE, 9 MISSING

Nganjuk (Indonesia), Feb. 15: Torrential rains triggered a landslide on Indonesia's main island of Java that killed at least 10 people, with rescuers digging desperately with their bare hands and farm tools on Monday to locate nine missing people.

Dozens of soldiers, police and volunteers took part in the search in the village of Selopuro in East Java's Nganjuk district, National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesperson Raditya Jati said.

The mud that rolled down from surrounding hills late Sunday struck at least eight houses, injuring 14 people and leaving 21 people buried under tons of mud. Two were rescued on Sunday.

Rescuers on Monday found bodies buried under as much as 6 metres (10 feet) of mud and were searching for the nine people still missing, Nganjuk district chief Novi Rahman Hidayat said. Heavy equipment arrived later to help in the search.

Overnight rains caused rivers to burst their banks in other districts of the province on Monday, sending nearly 1 metre (about 3 feet) of muddy water into some residential areas and flooding hundreds of people to flee from their submerged homes, Jati said.

Myanmar rattled by army movements, Net shutdown

People around the country flout orders to protest military's seizure of power

Yangon, Feb. 15: Sightings of armored personnel carriers in Myanmar's biggest city and an internet shutdown raised political tensions late Sunday, after vast numbers of people around the country flouted orders against demonstrations to protest the military's seizure of power.

Public concern has already been heightened for the past few nights by what many charge is the military's manipulation of criminals released from prison to carry out nighttime violence and stir up panic. Ambassadors from the United States and Canada and 12 European nations called on Myanmar's security forces to refrain from violence against those protesting the overthrow of their legitimate government. They condemned the arrests of political leaders and activists as well as the military's interference with communications.

"We support the people of Myanmar in their quest for democracy, freedom, peace, and prosperity, they said in a joint statement issued late Sunday night. The world is watching.

The military seized power on Feb. 1, detaining the country's elected leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, and members of her government and preventing recently elected lawmakers from opening a new session of Parliament.

The junta, led by Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, said it was forced to step in because the government failed to properly investigate allegations of fraud in last year's election, which Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party won in a landslide. The state election commission



Protesters raise their hands with clenched fists during an anti-coup rally in front of the Myanmar Economic Bank in Mandalay, Myanmar on Monday.

found no evidence to support the allegations.

There was no official word about why armored personnel carriers traversed the streets of Yangon in broad daylight Sunday, making their way through busy traffic. As night fell, there were videos and other reports on social media of the movement of trucks packed with soldiers, and in the central city of Mandalay as well.

An order that appears to be from the Ministry of Transport and Communications told mobile phone service providers to shut down internet connections from 1 a.m. to 9 a.m. Monday.

Suu Kyi detention extended

Yangon, Feb. 15: Myanmar's military leaders have extended their detention of deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi, whose remand was set to expire Monday and whose freedom is a key demand of the crowds of people continuing to protest this month's military coup.

Suu Kyi will now be remanded until February 17, when she will likely appear in court by video conference, according to Khin Maung Zaw, a lawyer asked by Suu Kyi's party to represent her.

The Nobel laureate remains under house arrest on a minor charge of possessing unregistered imported walkie-talkies.

Suu Kyi's extended detention is likely to further inflame tensions between the military, which seized power during a Feb. 1 coup, and the protesters who have taken to the streets of cities across the Southeast Asian nation seeking the return of the government they elected.

Protesters continued to gather across Myanmar on Monday following a

night in which authorities cut the country's internet access and increased the security presence in major cities seeking to curtail demonstrations.

Thousands of engineers marched on the streets of Mandalay, the country's second-largest city, chanting and holding signs that read: Free our leader, Who stands with justice? and Stop arresting people illegally at midnight.

In Yangon, the country's most populous city, fewer protesters gathered on Monday.

Virus: Tougher travel rules come into force in Britain

Briton breaks S'pore quarantine order

Singapore, Feb. 15: A British citizen pleaded guilty on Monday to violating a coronavirus quarantine order in Singapore by visiting his fiancée several times in another hotel room. They are to appear in court for sentencing on February 26, and face a possible sentence of up to six years in jail and a fine of 10,000 Singapore dollars (\$7,500) on each charge. Skea Nigel left his room at The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia Singapore hotel on three occasions in September, according to the charge sheets. He was not wearing a mask.

Nigel climbed an emergency stairwell and entered a room that his Singaporean fiancée had booked. The two spent nine hours together. Most travellers have to stay in an assigned hotel room or at home for 14 days after arriving in Singapore under Coronavirus quarantine rules. They receive meals and regularly record their temperatures.

Nigel arrived at the State Courts on Monday with Agatha Maghesh Eyamalai, whom he has since married. The Briton said he was guilty of two charges for flouting the rules. Four other charges against him were temporarily withdrawn. The prosecution asked that Nigel be jailed for four weeks and fined 1,000 Singapore dollars (\$750).

— AP

who has been in a high-risk destination on the UK's red list — comprising 33 hotspots with Covid-19 variants in circulation — will have to enter England through a designated port and have pre-booked a quarantine package to stay at one of the government's "Managed Quarantine Facilities".

Non-residents are currently not part of the essential-only travel rules of

the Coronavirus lockdown. The government said it has tough measures already in place requiring all travellers into the UK, from any location, to provide proof of a negative Covid-19 test taken no more than three days before departure and non-UK residents from the 33 red list countries are already banned from entering Britain.

— PTI



Shah Mahmood Qureshi

CLASH IN S. ASIA COULD THREATEN STABILITY: SMQ

Islamabad/Karachi, Feb. 15: Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said on Monday that any military conflict in South Asia could endanger stability in a region that is critical for global trade flows and security.

Addressing the 9th International Maritime Conference (IMC 21) in Karachi, Qureshi also said that the Indian Ocean offers promising potential for mutual cooperation and collaboration.

"The international community needs to be cognizant of the fact that any military conflict in South Asia could endanger stability in a region that is critical for global trade flows and security," he said.

The foreign minister also alleged that India has nuclearised the Indian Ocean and was continuing to induct advanced weapons systems and naval delivery platforms. He said Pakistan is an important stakeholder in the Indian Ocean security framework.

— PTI

Israeli hit kills 9 fighters in Syria

Beirut, Feb. 15: Israel fired several missiles early on Monday targeting areas near the Syrian capital, Damascus, Syria's state news agency reported. An opposition war-monitoring group said the strikes killed nine Iran-backed fighters.

The SANA news agency claimed that Syrian air defences shot down most of the missiles, which it said were fired from Syria's Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor with a network of activists on the ground, said the strikes hit positions of the Syrian army's Fourth Division in the mountains near the highway that

links Damascus with the Lebanese capital of Beirut. It said another strike hit Syrian army positions in Kisweh, just south of Damascus.

The Observatory said that of the nine Iran-backed fighters killed, seven were near the Damascus-Beirut highway and two in Kisweh. Weapons depots were also struck in both areas, it added.

Syria's foreign ministry filed a complaint with the UN Security Council and called on the international community to condemn Israel and prevent it from carrying out such attacks in the future. Israel has launched hundreds of strikes against Iran-linked military targets in Syria over the years.

— AP

Meghan again in the family way

London, Feb. 15: Britain's Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle are expecting their second child, their spokesman said in a Valentine's Day announcement on Sunday. The couple released a black and white image of them under a tree, all smiles, with Markle, 39, showing signs of pregnancy.

"We can confirm that Archie is going to be a big brother," the spokesman said, referring to the couple's son. "The Duke and Duchess of Sussex are overjoyed to be expecting their second child." Meghan and Harry, 36, who is Queen Elizabeth II's grandson, quit frontline royal duties in March last year and now live in California. The news follows Markle's disclosure in *The New York Times* in November that she had suffered a miscarriage in July.

A Buckingham Palace spokesman said: "Her Majesty, Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales and the entire family are delighted and wish them well." Misan Harriman, a friend of the couple who took the photograph they released, wrote on Twitter: "Meg, I was there at your wedding to witness this love story begin, and

my friend, I am honoured to capture it grow." The couple's departure last year — dubbed "Megxit" by the British press — was a far cry from 2018, when they married in a ceremony at Windsor Castle watched around the world. The mood soured as reports circulated about a rift between Harry and his brother Prince William, second in line to the throne.

Since leaving, they have launched several legal cases against news outlets alleging invasion of privacy — including one that ended on Thursday with a victory against Associated Newspapers in the UK. The cases have attracted criticism from some, as the couple are also launching themselves into the public eye with high-profile commercial projects. Last year they launched a non-profit organisation, Archewell, after giving up a "Sussex Royal" brand as part of the terms of their departure from frontline royal duties. They have started other ventures, including signing a deal with Spotify to produce podcasts that tell "uplifting and entertaining stories".

— PTI

Oz: Google near media pay deals

Canberra, Feb. 15: Google and Facebook were close to striking "significant commercial deals" to pay Australian media for news ahead of Australia creating world-first laws that would force the digital giants to finance journalism, a minister said Monday. Parliament is scheduled to consider the draft laws on Tuesday after a Senate committee last week recommended no changes to the proposed regulations that Google and Facebook have condemned as unworkable.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg, one of ministers responsible for the legislation, said he had discussions at the weekend with Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Sundar Pichai, chief executive of Alphabet Inc. and its subsidiary Google. Frydenberg had also spoken with Australian news media executives. "We've made real progress, I think, in

the last 48 to 72 hours and I think we're going to see some significant commercial deals which could be of real benefit to the domestic media landscape and see journalists rewarded financially for generating original content, as it should be, and this is a world-leading reform," Frydenberg told Nine Network television.

"No other country has stepped in like we have. It's been a difficult process. It's still ongoing, so let's not get ahead of ourselves. But the discussions to date have been very promising indeed," Frydenberg added. Frydenberg later told Australian Broadcasting Corp. deals were "very close." Google and Facebook did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Google has ramped up its campaign against the proposed law, telling the Senate committee that scrutinised the draft.

— AP

4-LEGGED | INHABITANT

Ex-PM David Cameron recruited the cat to deal with rats seen near his official residence

UK's chief mouser celebrates 10 years on the prowl

London, Feb. 15: Larry the cat, a four-legged inhabitant of London's 10 Downing St., is marking a decade as Britain's mouse-catcher in chief on Monday. The tabby cat was recruited by then-Prime Minister David Cameron to deal with a pack of rats seen scuttling close to the British leader's official residence, and entered Downing Street on Feb. 15, 2011. The former stray, adopted from London's Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, was given the title Chief Mouser to the Cabi-

net Office, an unofficial pest control post.

He was the first cat to hold the rat-catching portfolio since the retirement of Humphrey in 1997, and has loyally served three prime ministers. But it seems like yesterday that Larry was just another cat — as opposed to a media superstar — said Lindsey Quinlan, the head of cattery of Battersea.

"Throughout his time at Number 10, Larry has proven himself to not only be a brilliant ambassador for Battersea but also demon-

strated to millions of people around the world how incredible rescue cats are," she said. "His rags to riches tale is yet more proof of why all animals deserve a second chance — one minute they may be an overlooked stray on the streets, the next they could become one of the nation's beloved political figures, with fans around the world."

Larry, who has met a number of world leaders, has been largely unfriendly to men but took a liking to former US President Barack Obama. When former President Donald Trump visited in 2019, Larry took a nap under his car. His grip on the public im-

agination is clear — and political leaders know better than to ignore that popularity. The tomatcat was a sentimental topic of conversation in Cameron's final appearance in Parliament as prime minister when he said he wanted to quash a rumour that — he didn't like Larry. And just to prove it, he whipped out evidence: A picture of Larry lying on his lap. "He belongs to the house and the staff love him very much — as do I," he said at the time, explaining why

he wasn't taking Larry with him after leaving office. After the December 2019 election, rumours swirled that Larry might be headed for retirement with the news that the new prime minister, Boris Johnson, was a dog man. However, despite the prime minister moving Jack Russell cross Dilyn into Downing Street, Larry remained in office.

Reports of his rodent-killing abilities vary. Larry became known for his occasional scraps with neighbouring cats — especially Palmerston, chief mouser to the Foreign Office across the street — and fondness for sleep. Palmerston has retired to the country, so things have been a bit quieter of late.

These days Larry, now 14, is often seen by photographers patrolling his turf. Visitors to the building can sometimes find him napping on a ledge above a radiator or sleeping on a floor, where dignitaries occasionally have to step over him. At the heart of government, he specialises in power naps.

— AP

DECCAN
Chronicle
16 FEBRUARY 2021

21-year activist's arrest is a blot on India's democracy

While it's in the fitness of things to expect the judicial system to speak up to protect a citizen against the State's over-reach and high-handedness, it is no surprise that civil society across the country should be furious over the arrest of the 21-year-old Bengaluru climate activist Disha Ravi by the Delhi police over the weekend.

In a Kafkaesque act, a Delhi police team swooped on Ms Ravi at her home in the southern metropolis, whisked her to Delhi without even informing her parents, and produced her before a magistrate without the benefit of counsel, a legal requirement. The activist was charged with being part of a conspiracy with "Khalistan" proponents and is being held for sedition and causing disaffection against the State.

Ms Ravi appears to be a supporter of the ongoing farmers' agitation in the country. In support of this and to oppose the high-handed police action over it, global celebrities, including teenaged Swedish environment activist Greta Thunberg, sent out tweets, unleashing a ferocious campaign, much to the discomfort of the government. FIRs were filed against Ms Thunberg and others for sedition. In the government's eyes, she is guilty of spreading the idea of a "toolkit" to back the farmers' agitation.

In order to understand the maliciousness, indeed the enormity, of what the Indian State has done by arresting Ms Ravi (and two others), making itself a laughingstock among democracies, it is important to be aware that this so-called "toolkit" is not a handbook of terrorism.

In fact it's no more than guidelines on ways to propagate the farmers' cause through the social media, and is a common expression among activists of all kinds. Indeed, it's no more than what the Hindutva brigade, including the ruling party, have been doing. The difference is that the causes of the climate activists and the Hindutva group are vastly different, with the latter identifying with vile ones like the so-called "love jihad", false propaganda of cow killing against Muslims and dalits, spreading fabrications against their political opponents, and disseminating hate against all voices that call for social harmony and sanity. Ms Ravi's "crime" is that she edited two lines of Ms Thunberg's "toolkit". It is for this that the Delhi police is calling her an "editor" of the "toolkit". Since an outfit called the Poetic Justice Foundation, which apparently supports the idea of "Khalistan", a woolly-headed thought in the minds of some persons of Indian origin in the West, also backs the farmers' cause, all supporters of Indian farmers are being mischievously sought to be equated with "Khalistan" supporters. The practice of such sleight-of-hand by the government is clearly meant to discredit the farmers' agitation. This is a sign of the government running out of ideas about how to contain it. It is not inconceivable that the ground is also being prepared to play the State violence card against the farmers and their leaders, and Ms Thunberg or Ms Ravi, and others like them, are just collateral damage.

But taking unlawful actions against a young woman barely out of her teens can backfire. To many ordinary people, it seems that the Delhi police, which directly operates under the Union home ministry, is degenerating into becoming the praetorian guard of the government in power.

Trump escapes conviction

Former US President Donald Trump may have escaped conviction by the Senate, but history will judge him culpable for the attack on democracy. Only seven Republican Senators voted to convict, like 10 Congressmen had done in the House of Representatives vote to impeach him for the second time. The action of 43 other Republican senators to vote against his conviction wasn't due just to partisanship. Self-preservation was their primary motive, petrified as they were by the prospect of a backlash by the Trump loyalists of a party that has been hijacked by the far right and swears blind loyalty to a President who subverted hoary democratic norms that embroiders American history.

The impeachment managers had built a compelling narrative in the House and laid before the Senate a body of irrefutable video evidence of the armed insurrection on January 6 that Mr Trump may have helped unleash through his bizarre hold on a highly motivated section of conservatives. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell chastised Mr Trump in a telling comment after the vote but hid behind a fig leaf of technicality in the presumed illegality of putting on trial an ex-President. The law may still get Mr Trump for his big lies on the election result, his overt canvassing of officials to overturn the popular verdict and his open embrace of retaliatory violence in egging on supporters.

Evidence has it that Mr Trump did little to act as legislators in the joint session of Congress at Capitol Hill and his own vice-president, Mike Pence, were scared for their lives. It is a comment on the popular vote in today's America that Mr Trump drew 76 million votes, the most after Joe Biden. Truth may have caught up with Mr Trump already. It is also reflected in the world's highest death toll as the President abdicated his responsibility in dealing with the coronavirus as he stood for re-election. What we have to fear is the Trump legacy of alternative facts, conspiracy theories and brazen thuggery. Democracy may have to face many more battles for survival against Trumpism.

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KAUSHIK MITTER
Editor

K. SUBHAKAR
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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

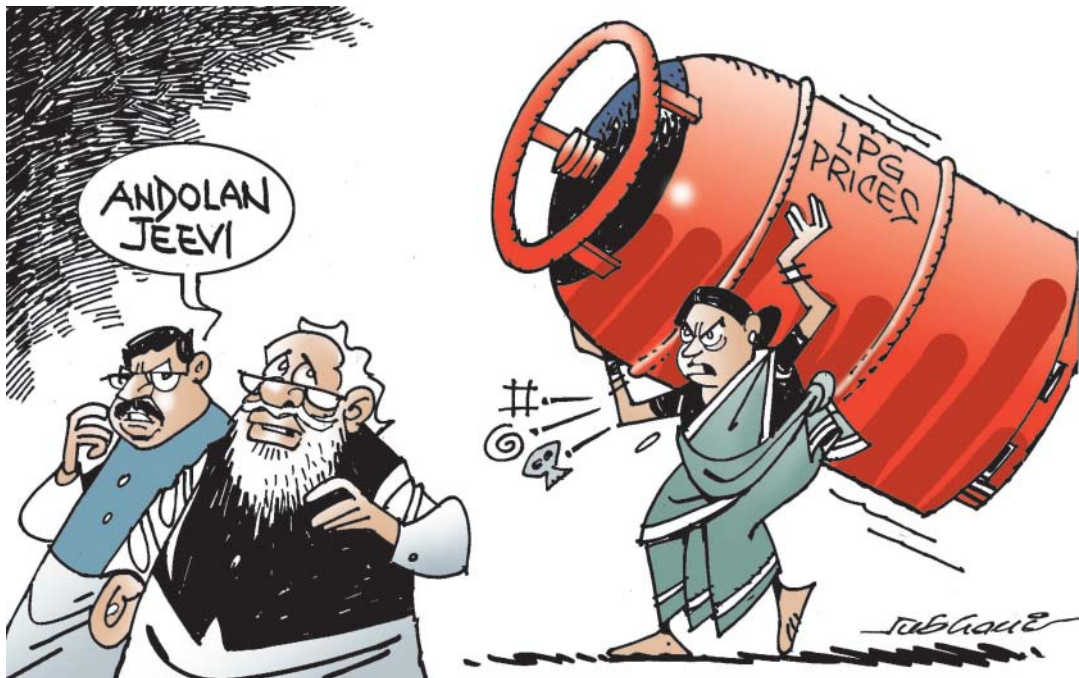
Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilapalli Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433

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

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

Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255
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Subhani



How PM can win hearts, keep bills, end protests



Sriram Karri

A political stalemate deadlocked in a seeming binary is dangerous. It is erroneous, an optical illusion, which often arises out of a bankruptcy of ideas premised in possibilities, leaves both sides strongly entrenched in a zero-sum game. The binary has left its predictable trail of bitterness on both sides of the current battlelines.

Hail George W. Bush, the modern proponent of the equation: You are with us or against us! But this is actually from a more ancient playbook.

It was the general-aristocrat from Athens who would famously terrorise opponents and convert every debate into a seesaw for testing loyalties as he would thunder: Whose side are you one? Cleon, clearly, in 430 BC, was ready for Twitter trolling.

You are either with the farmers, a monolith, with one voice and demand, or with the government — says the modern commandment — no debate or amendment. This law limiting our positions and possibilities for a resolution to a mere binary isn't going away.

What follows is stereotyped playing the player, not the ball. You are a Khalistani anarchist, anti-Indian, out to destroy India's sovereignty at the behest of a neo-international cabal or a puppet of a fascist Hindutva government, out to pledge the farmers' destiny to a corporate crony club.

Even Arundhati Roy, who famously opposed Mr Bush's binary of having to choose between a "malevolent mullah or a mad Mickey Mouse" in the war against terror early in the new millen-

ium, sees no third option now.

There are several hostages to the etched in stone binary: the first is truth. The second is India's farmers' future. The third is the start of a resolution and solution, which can never be ours unless we set aside the mistaken notion that in the pitched battle on Delhi's borders, only one of the two — protesting farmers or the Narendra Modi government — can win. One must step down, after defeat, to ensure the other side wins.

But there is another possibility — the farmers can ensure Mr Modi wins, and the PM can strive to make the protesting farmers triumph — without either side having to make a moral compromise. Let's begin with the position of common belief, since we lost sight of it: there is an accumulating agrarian crisis in India, marked by smaller landholdings, an unabatingly steep agflation (inflation of agri inputs like the price of seeds, fertilisers, urea, pesticides), transmission losses and unviable costs of financing (most farmers don't get bank loans, private money rates are backbreaking), self-defeating subsidies (loan waivers not applicable to most small farmers and landless tenant farmers), the impact of climate change in a largely rain-fed agri-sector, and unviable farmers (even rich farmers don't have cash to pay for health, education).

With the acknowledgment of a common problem comes an alignment of purpose — to solve the problem, reducing farmers' costs, reducing overall costs of production, eliminating waste, and increasing farmer incomes without making food too expensive for a nation of over 1.3 billion.

A benevolent surgical strike on farmers' hearts Enough commentary has flowed through editorials, columns, feisty television debates and vituperous social media exchanges about the transformed nature of the agitation. Not just Sikhs from Punjab but Jats, predominantly BJP voters and building blocks of Hindutva, are now resolved to stay put on the ground till the bills are withdrawn. After Republic Day and the tearful breakdown of Rakesh Tikait, the bills have been reduced to a backdrop, an excuse. The protests are no longer primarily about fears around the potential reduction or doing away with minimum support prices (MSPs), or ending of the mandi system, or the visceral paranoia around corporates getting legal backing to do contract farming or store grain — it is now about hurt farmers set against the hubris of the government.

If the farmers were not emotionally hurt, their pride not invested in staying put on the ground, they would have been convinced by Narendra Modi's defence in Parliament of the three bills. Mr Modi has put the cart ahead of the horse in trying to logically convince people who are plain angry and see the government as arrogant. The resolution can only begin by appealing to the hearts of the Jat farmer protesters with an act to show that the government is not arrogant.

In the next many days, on any day and at any hour of his choosing, Mr Modi should just walk into a protest site and spend several hours. Let him make some rotis at

the langar, let him listen and to the ladies cutting vegetables, sit on the ground with the leaders as they pass the hookah. Ask them if they are comfortable, if they have everything they need for now. Let him break bread with them, the ice will break on its own.

Yes, that's all it might end up taking to end these protests. Just that. Mr Modi is capable of magic with some sections of people and the protesting Jat and Sikh farmers are part of that section. Once they are no longer angry, and his humble arrival at the protest site will convince them that neither he nor his government is actually arrogant, the stalemate will lead to a thaw.

It is then that Mr Modi can explain that the existing policies have failed the farmer for 50 years and expecting a different result with the same policies would be an Einsteinian measure of insanity. The BJP can talk about how corporate and cooperative procurement of milk have enriched farmers in the dairy sector; and how this policy wishes to replicate the same success for grain.

Prime Minister Modi in their midst will be a visual story for all farmers, the soothing touch needed, the surgical strike on their hearts. It will calm farmers in all protest sites and those elsewhere simmering with anger with a new belief in his leadership, and that his government cares for farmers everywhere. Before he leaves the protest site, having told the world he was there himself, he can throw in a final gesture of affection by asking for some jalebis and rotis to be packed for his dinner — the entire gamut of security and Covid-19 precautions set aside — and he will leave with their hearts.

A little haggling, a little willingness to give in on an odd thing here or there; and the farmers will be happy to leave, with the optics of victory, their pride intact, and return home, their heads held high.

In the next many days, on any day of his choosing, Mr Modi should just walk into a protest site and spend several hours.

LETTERS

FREE WATER SUPPLY

House owners are enjoying free water, but what about tenants? Several owners are collecting water charges from tenants apart from trying for new connection. Earlier, tenants paid the bill but now there is a fixed charge every month for drinking water. The benefits from government never reach the common people and the rich enjoy.

Ravi Sharma
Hyderabad

INSPIRING DOCTOR

Kudos to the Odisha doctor who is selflessly devoting his time and energy in serving the ailing people putting his life in jeopardy (*Odisha doctor opens 'One-Rupee' clinic to serve poor, DC, Feb. 15*). Patients rely on doctors. There is nothing better than some soothing words and a touch of humanity. This will go a long way in building the bond.

Fatima Zafar
Secunderabad

PARKING LOTS

The fault for poor parking spaces in commercial buildings lies with the municipal corporation and their corrupt practices (*Activities demand parking lots at commercial areas, DC, Feb. 15*). People need to think twice before taking out their vehicles.

P.J. David
Hyderabad

ZOO INITIATIVE

Kudos to Nehru Zoological Park for such initiatives (*Boost for animal adoption scheme, DC, Feb. 14*). Epur's family members have shown us the path by adopting the animals.

Dr Shankar Chatterjee
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN
Chronicle

Supplies along Ho Chi Minh trail cut

KHE SANH, February. 15 South Vietnamese forces in Laos have totally stopped the movement of troops and supplies along the Ho Chi Minh trail, the General directing the operating said here today.

Lieutenant General Hoang Xuan Lam, commander of the estimated 13,000 troop in Laos told newsmen South Vietnamese soldiers were at the junction of the main road of the trail and had stopped any movement along it.

The allocation for Ayushman Bharat (dubbed "Modicare" by Amit Shah) was the same for 2022, ₹6,400 crore, as it was for the year before. There was no provision for minimum wage and health insurance for the Anganwadi and Accredited Social Health Activist (Asha) workers, the individuals whom Mr Modi had called "Covid warriors".

The numbers are not going to improve themselves. They will need external intervention from the government, but that has not happened in this Budget. Whether it was wise on an issue that concerns crores of our children we will not know till the government conducts the next survey.

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

Aakar Patel



Vital areas in kids' health left ignored in Budget 2021

The Union Budget delivered earlier this month was praised for two things. First, that it was spending money in the right place: capital expenditure, which would create value over the long term. And second, that it was transparent. The deficit is three times what it should be, but at least the government has accepted it. Perhaps these two things are enough to make it a good Budget, though one doesn't know. There has not really been any Budget I can remember that made any difference to most people's lives, except perhaps one, and that was in 1991.

However, it is clear the Budget has ignored something that was really urgent. The National Family Health Survey 2019-20, conducted by the government, revealed some terrible numbers.

On four key metrics which represent the nutritional status of children, states recorded a significant fall in 2019-20 compared to the levels in 2015-16. In states like Gujarat, Maharashtra and West Bengal, the share of anaemic and wasted (low weight for height) children was significantly higher than the levels recorded 15 years earlier in 2005-06.

This indicated a reversal of progress that had been hard to win. Even in states such as Kerala, which continued to lead in these indicators, the levels recorded in 2019-20 were poorer than the 2015-16 figures.

The survey put out data for 22 states and Union territories and an analysis of 10 major states was conducted. Anaemia among children was higher in all the 10 states in 2019-20 compared to 2015-16. In Gujarat, Himachal, Maharashtra and West Bengal, a higher percentage of children were anaemic in 2019-20 than were in 2005-06. The percentage of wasted (low weight for height) children was higher in half of the 10 states. In Assam, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra and West Bengal, a higher percentage of children were wasted in 2019-20 compared to 2005-06. In 7 of the 10 states analysed, a higher percentage of children were underweight (low weight for age) in 2019-20 compared to 2015-16.

Stunting (low height for age) was higher in six out of the 10 states compared to 2015-16. The study also found that the incidence of diarrhoea had increased in half the states, including Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and West

Bengal. In Bihar it was up from 10.4 per cent in 2015-16 to 13.7 per cent in 2019-20. This is the reality of the situation. We can debate what has caused this and that can wait for another day. The problem is that the Budget that was presented by Nirmala Sitharaman did not acknowledge and therefore didn't accommodate this problem. The mid-day meal scheme, on which crores of children depended for their one good meal of the day, found its budget cut from ₹13,400 crore in FY 2021 to ₹11,500 crore in 2022. This was lower in nominal terms than what it had been seven years earlier. Inflation adjusted, it was 38 per cent lower. The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), meant to provide pre-school children with food, education, primary health-care, immunisation, health checkups and referral services to children under six and their mothers, was also lower in nominal terms, at ₹16,888 crore in FY 2022 versus ₹18,691 crore in 2014-15. The programme, running rural anganwadis or creches, is meant to improve the nutritional and health status of children "to lay the foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child", to "reduce the incidence of

mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school dropouts", and "to enhance the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child through proper nutrition and health education".

Inflation adjusted, this figure was 36 per cent lower for 2022 than it had been the year Prime Minister Narendra Modi took over.

Poshan Abhiyan, the flagship programme meant to improve nutritional outcomes by 2022, was also damaged. The government had released only 46 per cent of the annual outlay by October 31, and for 2022 the budget was cut by 27 per cent.

The drinking water and sanitation department saw its budget officially rise from ₹21,000 crore to ₹60,030 crore, but of that ₹50,000 crore was for the "Central road and infrastructure fund", suggesting a fudge to avoid embarrassing questions. The numbers seemed deliberately made hard to compare with previous spends. ICDS was clubbed with Poshan Abhiyan, the Scheme for Adolescent Girls and the National Creche Scheme, and the whole thing was called Saksham. Its budget for 2022 was less than the previous year's

budget for ICDS alone. The Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, the Centre's maternity benefit programme, was clubbed with the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme for girls' education, the Mahila Shakti Kendra and other general gender budgeting, and the whole thing was called Samarthyaa. It received ₹2,522 crore for 2022, less than the ₹2,858 crore allocated in 2021.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	52,154.13	1.18
Nifty 50	15,314.70	1.00
S&P 500*	3,934.83	0.47
Dollar (₹)	72.68	0.09
Pound Sterling (₹)	101.02	-0.69
Euro (₹)	88.19	-0.12
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,826▼19	0.04
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	63.13	1.12
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.022	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.210	0.00

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Exports rise 6% in Jan; trade deficit narrows

Growing for the second consecutive month, the country's exports rose 6.16 per cent year-on-year to \$27.45 billion in January following healthy growth in pharma and engineering sectors. Commerce ministry data showed trade deficit narrowed to \$14.54 billion from \$15.3 billion a year ago. The deficit was \$15.44 billion in December. Imports in January 2021 rose 2 per cent to \$42 billion.

WPI inflation rises to 2.03%, food prices ease



The wholesale price-based inflation rose sharply to 2.03 per cent in January on costlier non-food manufactured items and experts are projecting further uptick in the rate of price rise in the next few months. The WPI inflation was 1.22 per cent in December 2020 and 3.52 per cent in January last year. Food inflation in January stood at (-) 2.8 per cent, against (-) 1.11 per cent in the previous month.

RBI sets up panel on urban coop banks

The Reserve Bank set up a committee to draw a vision document for strengthening urban cooperative banks and exploring the potential of consolidation in the sector. The committee, to be headed by former RBI deputy governor N. S. Vishwanathan, will suggest effective measures for faster rehabilitation and resolution of UCBs and also assess their potential for consolidation in the sector.

IT industry to grow by 2.3% in FY21: Nasscom

The Indian IT industry revenues are set to grow by 2.3 per cent to \$194 billion in FY21 and the exports will go up by 1.9 per cent to \$150 billion, industry lobby Nasscom said. The industry remained a net hirer in the fiscal year, with 1.38 lakh new jobs added to take overall employment to 44.7 lakh. "We have emerged more resilient and more relevant from the crisis," the body's president Debjani Ghosh said.



JLR to spend \$3.5 bn annually on electrification Jaguar cars to become all-electric from 2025

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, FEB. 15

Tata Motors-owned British luxury car maker Jaguar Land Rover, or JLR, plans to make its coveted Jaguar brand to be an 'all-electric luxury brand' to rival Tesla from 2025.

The move will see Jaguar completely axe the petrol engines that made its name within the next four years.

JLR will invest about 2.5 billion pounds (\$3.5 billion) annually into electrification and related connected technologies, the company said on Monday.

It plans to introduce six fully electric Land Rover variants in the next five years and aims to electrify all its models by 2030, it said.

JLR's new chief executive officer Thierry Bollere made the announcement on Monday, with the new 'Reimagine' strategy also committing to retaining its production facilities in the UK. Bollere said Land Rover will phase out diesel engines from 2026 and invest more heavily in hydrogen fuel cell technology.

JLR said it will have prototypes using hydrogen fuel cells on Britain's roads within the next year, as part of a long-range investment plan.

JLR has introduced plug-in hybrid variants of models, including the Range Rover Sport and new Defender, but its only fully electric vehicle is the I-Pace SUV, which it started selling in 2018.



RENAULT KIGER STARTS AT ₹5.45 L

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, FEB. 15

French car giant Renault has introduced its all-new Kiger, compact SUV at Rs 5.45 lakh at pan-India showroom, disrupting the growing B-SUV segment in Asia's third biggest car market.

Renault's first compact SUV is sold in four trim levels and four engine-gearbox combinations in the Rs 5.45 lakh to Rs 9.55 lakh range.

Renault's aggressive pricing means that the new Kiger undercuts all its compact SUV rivals. Apart from its Nissan sibling, the Magnite, the Renault Kiger rivals

other sub-4m SUVs like the Hyundai Venue, Kia Sonet, Mahindra XUV300, Tata Nexon, Ford EcoSport, Maruti Suzuki Vitara Brezza and Toyota Urban Cruiser.

"With this outstanding pricing, Renault Kiger is surely set to radically alter the dynamics in the B-SUV segment," Venkatram Mamillapalle, country CEO & MD at Renault India, said.

Renault Kiger is designed with collaboration of France and India teams. It is developed and produced in India, for Indian customers first, before it is taken globally.

Car companies the world over are following zero-emission strategies to meet tough carbon dioxide emission targets in Europe and China.

Jaguar Land Rover is one of the hardest hit by the downturn in demand for

diesel vehicles in recent years.

Its range of models across both brands relied heavily on diesel engines, which have seen sales tumble in the years since the German Volkswagen emissions cheating scandal rattled the industry in 2015.

Ballore was drafted into JLR last July.

TESLA EYES PLANT NEAR BENGALURU

SARITHA RAI
FEB. 15

Tesla Inc is closing in on an agreement to make electric vehicles in India, opening up a new growth front after founder Elon Musk set up plants in the US and China. Tesla has picked Karnataka for its first plant, the state's chief minister said over the weekend. The automaker has been negotiating with local officials for six months and is considering car assembly in the suburbs of Bengaluru, people familiar with the matter said.

Tesla is conducting due diligence for office real estate in the region and plans to set up an R&D facility. Tesla has focused on Bengaluru because it's shaping up to be a hub for electric vehicles and aerospace manufacturing talent, they said. —Bloomberg

Financials push Sensex above 52K

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, FEB. 15

Resumption of business activity close to the pre-pandemic level and positive global cues, macro data and earnings season triggered more than one per cent gains for market benchmarks Sensex and Nifty-50.

The Sensex crossed 52000 for the first time, closing with 610 points, or 1.18 per cent, higher at 52154.13. The Nifty-50 closed at 15314.70, up 151.40 points, or 1 per cent.

"The Nomura India Business Resumption Index picked up to 98.1 (provisional) for the week ending



14 February from 95.9 of the preceding week, which suggests business activity is now only around 2 points below pre-pandemic levels, said the Japanese brokerage. Inflation and IIP data released last week were also encouraging for the market.

"After a brief pause last week, the market resumed upward momentum on the back of global optimism and encouraging macro

GULF EXODUS: S&P WARNS OF RISKS AHEAD

FARAH ELBAHRAWY
FEB. 15

S&P Global Ratings said Gulf Arab economies suffered population losses as a result of an "exodus" of expatriate workers, warning the outflow could complicate their diversification in the long run.

The population across the Gulf Cooperation Council may have declined

by 4 per cent last year, according to a report on Monday.

The share of foreigners relative to citizens is set to drop through 2023 "because of subdued non-oil sector growth and workforce nationalisation policies," S&P credit analysts led by Zahabia Gupta said.

"GCC countries' productivity, income levels, and economic diversification

numbers. Monday's move was mainly propelled by the financial space as the top seven contributors in Nifty were from this space only," an analyst said.

Even in the Sensex pack top nine gainers were from the financial space.

The Nifty Bank Index gained 3.32 per cent. The top gainers included Axis Bank (6.21 per cent) and ICICI Bank (4.17 per cent).

Realty, Telecom and Healthcare stocks also made sound gains.

Foreign portfolio investors were net buyers of equities by Rs 1,234.15 crore while the domestic institutions were net sellers by Rs 1,048.55 crore.

Babus out? Govt mulls new panel to speed privatisation

SIDDHARTHA SINGH
FEB. 15

India is considering setting up a body comprising independent experts that will take over the role of privatising state-run companies once the government decides to divest, according to people with knowledge of the matter.

The panel will replace bureaucrats, who currently manage privatisation, as well as minority stake sales, the people said asking not to be identified because the discussions

are private. The proposal is at an early stage and a final decision hasn't been taken, they said.

An external panel will help accelerate the asset sale process and bypass red tape, according to the people. India still hasn't manage to find a buyer for debt-ridden Air India Ltd even after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cabinet approved the sale in 2017.

A finance ministry spokesman declined to comment.

The government earlier this month said it will

keep a "bare minimum presence" by running companies in atomic energy, space & defence; transport & telecommunications; power, oil & coal; banking & financial services, according to the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management.

India plans to raise 1.75 lakh crore (\$24 billion) selling stakes in state-run firms next fiscal, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said while presenting the budget.

—Bloomberg

Smartphone sales clock record growth in Q4

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, FEB. 15

The fourth quarter of year 2020 saw record sales of smartphones in India at 45 million units. However, for the year as a whole, the smartphone market de-grew 1.7 per cent—the first decline after several years of runaway growth. But the online channel continued to grow even during the pandemic-hit year.

According to global market intelligence firm IDC, the October-December quarter posted record fourth-quarter smartphone shipments of 45 million devices, growing 21 per cent over the same quarter in 2019.

A total of 150 million smartphone units were sold in 2020, which was 1.7 per cent less than what was sold in 2019. Stay-at-home mandates, remote

work, remote education, travel restrictions and manufacturing shutdowns led to a sluggish H1'20, which saw a 26 per cent decline over the same period in 2019.

However, H2'20 recovered with 19 per cent growth as markets reopened gradually. Lockdowns and restrictions rendered an urgent need for devices supporting activities such as entertainment, work from home, and remote learning, resulting in more devices per household, and leading to a resurgence in demand for consumer devices including smartphones, consumer notebooks, and tablets in 2020.

The online channel outpaced the overall market, growing by 12 per cent annually, with a 48 per cent market share in 2020. The segment clocked a record 51 per cent share in

4Q'20.

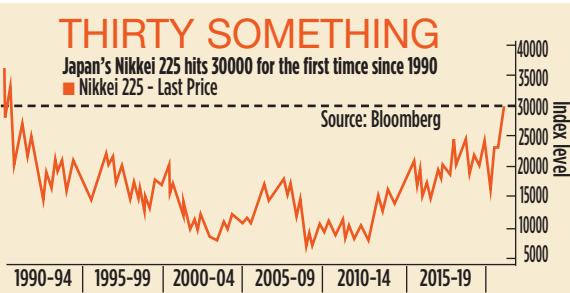
Further, the market saw 5G smartphone shipments crossing 3 million in 2020, with Chinese OEMs rolling out aggressively-priced devices. But adoption was limited due to higher prices and the lack of a 5G network.

Xiaomi continued to lead the smartphone market in volume terms with a market share of 27 per cent. But the brand registered a 6 per cent drop in sales.

Samsung held 20 per cent market, but sales declined by 4 per cent. Online channel registered strong 65 per cent growth, while the offline channel shipments declined by 28 per cent.

Vivo in the third slot with 18 per cent market share, recorded growth of 12 per cent. Realme too grew by 19 per cent and held a market share of 13 per cent.

Japan sights recovery, Nikkei at 1990-high



GEAROID REIDY &
TOSHIO HASEGAWA
FEB. 15

Japan's Nikkei 225 Stock Average touched 30000 for the first time since August 1990 on signs economic recovery is intact at home and on progress with the US stimulus package.

The gauge rose as much as 1.6 per cent on Monday, taking it a step higher on the climb back to its bubble-era levels. While equities globally have hit new heights in recent months, the Nikkei 225 still needs to gain almost another 30 per cent to surpass its record of 38915.87. That was reached in the final trading session of 1989, before the index went on to lose

more than half its value in three years after the economic bubble burst.

The brief breach of the 30,000 shows "all sorts of investors are jumping in to buy Japanese equities with a totally bullish view," said Shoji Hirakawa, chief global strategist at Tokai Tokyo Research Institute.

In data announced Monday, Japan's gross domestic product (GDP) grew an annualised 12.7 per cent from the prior quarter in the three months through December, as exports continued to roar back, businesses started to invest again and government stimulus fuelled consumer spending despite the coronavirus.

—Bloomberg

HUL expects Covid-hit products to rebound



New Delhi, Feb. 15: FMCG major Hindustan Unilever expects its "Covid impacted" product categories, such as ice-cream and vending solutions, to rebound strongly in 2021 with increase in mobility.

In an investor presentation, the company said categories such as skin care and colour cosmetics, which slowed down last year, will also rebound.

"These categories remain structurally attractive for us," HUL said in its presentation.

On the other hand, the company said "Covid obsessive" categories such as hand sanitiser and hand wash, which saw a sharp surge during the pandemic, are expected to normalise this year. The hand sanitiser category surged 16 times in 2020 compared to 2019, while the hand wash category grew 1.5 times.

Categories such as hand, body and face care, classified as "Covid resistant" items are expected "to normalise with increase in mobility in 2021."

From a peak decline of 73 per cent in the second quarter of the calendar year 2020 during the lockdown, these have recovered with the gradual unlocking that the country went through, to a decline of 51 per cent in the third quarter and 30 per cent in the fourth quarter.

Similarly, the company said "Covid impacted" categories, which include ice cream, food solutions business and vending business are also expected "to rebound strongly in 2021 with increase in mobility". —PTI

MILK-FREE | CHOCOLATE

Demand for plant-based food growing

Going Vegan: Nestle plans rice-based KitKat

CORINNE GRETHER
FEB. 15

Nestle SA is adding its first vegan milk chocolate to its products as the world's biggest food company expands beyond meat alternatives.

The Swiss food giant will start offering plant-based KitKat bars this year, called KitKat V, according to Alexander von Maillot, head of Nestle's confectionery business. The product will be for sale online and at selected stores in a handful of markets including the UK as a test run before a possible wider rollout.

The bar, which uses a rice-based formula as a milk substitute, took about two years to devel-



op. The main challenge in making alternatives to milk chocolate is ensuring it blends well with cocoa and sugar for a creamy texture. Other substitutes, such as soy or almond formulas, can create off-notes, von Maillot said.

While there are quite a few small labels that make vegan milk chocolate, most

announced plans to make plant-based milk chocolate.

"Demand for plant-based food is growing everywhere," von Maillot said in a phone interview. "KitKat was a logical choice, as it's by far the biggest brand and a global brand."

Confectionery is one of Nestle's last categories to join the plant-based trend. Nestle Purina last year introduced a blended pet food line, adding insects and plant protein from fava beans and millet to the meat protein.

Nestle introduced sausage substitutes last year and also makes plant-based mince and non-dairy ice cream and coffee products.

—Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Rahul climbs to 2nd spot in T20

Dubai: India's K.L. Rahul moved up a place to second, while his captain Virat Kohli retained the seventh spot in the latest ICC men's T20I rankings for batsmen released on Monday. With 816 rating points, Rahul is behind leader Dawid Malan (915) of England, while Kohli has 697 points in his kitty. Australia white-ball skipper Aaron Finch (808) also improved a rung to be placed third while Pakistan captain Babar Azam (801) slipped to fourth place. Rahul and Kohli are the only two Indians to feature in the top-10 among batsmen. No Indian also featured in the top-10 among bowlers and all-rounders in the latest T20I rankings. Among bowlers, South Africa spinner Tabraiz Shamsi grabbed a career-best second position. — *PTI*

Lukaku shines as Inter go atop

Rome: Romelu Lukaku scored twice to reach 300 career goals as Inter Milan moved above AC Milan to the top of Serie A with an impressive 3-1 home win over Lazio on Sunday. Lukaku's brace came in the first half as Inter made the most of their city rivals' surprising 2-0 loss at Spezia on Saturday. Inter, bidding for a first Scudetto since winning the treble under Jose Mourinho in 2010, are now one point clear of AC Milan. The stage is set for a mouthwatering Milan derby at the San Siro next Sunday. Earlier, Roma beat Udinese 3-0 to climb back to third. — *AFP*

Siva bags best pole diver award

Hyderabad: P. Siva Reddy of Andhra Pradesh was adjudged the best Pole Diver and was awarded with the ₹50,000 for his spectacular show in the KKFI's Super League Kho Kho Tournament at Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi on Monday. Despite Siva's heroics Jaguars went down to Panthers 35-43 in the semifinals. However, Maharashtra's Pratik Waikar continued his phenomenal show at the KKFI 2021 Super League Kho Kho Tournament as Pahadi Billas lifted the trophy with a convincing six points win in the thrilling final against Panthers. KKFI doled out ₹7,85,000 total prize money to players. Also, three Maharashtra players picked the best achievement awards for their fine run in the tournament. Ramji Kashyap of Solapur was adjudged the best chaser and Thane's Mahesh Shinde received the best runner award with each of them receiving ₹50,000. In the women's tournament, Panthers emerged as the winner with a dominating show throughout the tournament.

Ramu, Syed shine as Khammam win

Hyderabad: Ramu, Syed Sajeed and Tarun hogged the second-day's spotlight in the Telangana Cricket Association's U-19 East Zone Inter Districts state championship on Monday. Mulugu's Syed (4/24) bowled well to help his side grab a one-wicket victory over Mahabubabad, who failed to defend 95 runs. Mahabubabad's Tarun also impressed with 5/17 but his effort went in vain. In another match, Ramu (4/18) and Pranay (63) stole the show for Khammam who restricted Warangal Rural to 100 runs and earned a 22-run victory.

BRIEF SCORES

- Mahabubabad 94 in 15.2 overs (Samer 41 n.o., Syed Sajeed 4/24) lost to Mulugu 97/9 in 20.1 overs (Tarun 5/17)
- Khammam 122/9 in 20 overs (Pranay Lendi 63, Laxman 2/15) bt Warangal Rural 100 in 16.5 overs (Ramu Ram 4/18)

Live on TV

TENNIS

Australian Open: Quarterfinals from 5.30 am, from 1.30 pm on on Sony Six, Sony Ten 2, HD

CRICKET

India vs England: Second Test, Day Four, from 9.20 am on Star Sports 1

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: Hyderabad FC vs Kerala Blasters from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

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A-SHHHHH!

Ashwin silences pitch critics with batting masterclass

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, FEB. 15

It was midway through the morning session. There was a sudden flurry of activity in the India dressing room. Having been reduced to 106 for six, India's second essay was expected to fold soon. When R. Ashwin, at No. 8, walked in to join his skipper Virat Kohli in the middle, the Chepauk crowd greeted their local hero with a rapturous welcome. Over the next few hours, the cheers only grew louder. The roar reached a crescendo when Ashwin celebrated his fifth Test century, punching the air and driving his arms aloft towards the spectators.

It was a carnival at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium, post-tea, with chants of 'Ash-win...Ash-win' reverberating through the stands. His scintillating knock — 106 off 148 balls — not only brought India on the verge of restoring parity in the four-match series against England, but also silenced those who had criticised the pitch.

Set a target of 482, England were in a shambles at 53 for three in 19 overs at stumps. India have two more days to bag the remaining wickets and achieve what will be a roaring comeback.

A day after taking a five-for to bowl England out cheaply, Ashwin delivered a masterclass on batting on turning tracks. It was the third time in his career that Ashwin bagged a five-wicket haul and scored a ton in the same match. Only the legendary England all-rounder Ian Botham has done it more (five times).

The intention was clear from the minute Ashwin took the guard. He swept off-spinner Moeen Ali for a boundary towards midwicket in the second ball he faced. After a couple deliveries, he played reverse-sweep for another boundary. He then pulled, cut and even swatted forehand to punish the bowlers. England were also guilty of giving three reprieves to Ashwin, who was dropped on 28, 56 and 70.

The partnership between Ashwin and Kohli — 96 runs off 177



R. Ashwin celebrates his century against England on the third day of their second Test in Chennai on Monday. — *BCCI*

balls — pushed India's lead past 400. It was one of those rare days when Kohli's well-compiled half-century — 62 off 149 — became a mere footnote. Kohli fell to Ali for the second time this match. The skipper was not too pleased with Nitin Menon's lbw call even after the third-umpire upheld the decision. The way Ashwin nursed the tail-enders Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Siraj en route to his century was entertaining. A straight punch past mid-on off Stuart Broad and a slog-sweep off Ali had the crowd on its feet.

Earlier in the morning, it took Kohli 20 balls to get off the mark after he walked in following Cheteshwar Pujara's bizarre dismissal in the opening over of the day. Rohit Sharma's departure, after being stumped while stretching to defend a Jack Leach delivery, reduced India to 55 for three.

Rishabh Pant who tried to take on Leach perished soon. Ajinkya Rahane's back-to-back boundaries off Ali eased some pressure. But he eventually fell to the off-spinner, giving a simple catch to a short-leg fielder.

ENGLAND SPIN COACH PRAISES ASHWIN KNOCK

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 15

England spin consultant Jeetan Patel was all praise for India all-rounder R. Ashwin who scored a brilliant century on a challenging track on day three.

"Ashwin was fantastic. The way he came out and started sweeping, we had to work our way through in this match. Kohli was fantastic, too, for the way he forced us to bowl in the areas he wanted us to, we can certainly learn a lot from that," said Jeetan.

Playing his first Test after an 18-month break, England off-spinner Moeen Ali bagged a match haul of eight wickets — four in each innings. Jeetan said Moeen deserved a five-for.

"Initially, Moeen showed signs of nerves and was maybe a touch anxious, but as the game got on, he became more positive about his performance. I'm stoked for him — just gutted that he didn't get a five-for. He probably deserved it, if not two. I thought he bowled enough good balls to be able to get that but it just didn't work out for him," said Jeetan.

"I am sure Moeen will be very pleased with that in his comeback Test. To bowl 60 overs, to contribute like he has. The one thing he's got left now is another contribution with the bat."

SCORECARD

India 1st Innings: 329
England 1st Innings: 134
India 2nd Innings (overnight 54/1): Rohit Sharma st Foakes b Leach 26, Shubman Gill lbw b Leach 14, Cheteshwar Pujara run out (Ollie Pope/Foakes) 7, Virat Kohli lbw b Moeen 62, Rishabh Pant st Foakes b Leach 8, Ajinkya Rahane c Ollie Pope b Moeen 10, Axar Patel lbw b Moeen 7, Ravichandran Ashwin b Ollie Stone 106, Kuldeep Yadav lbw b Moeen 3, Ishant Sharma c Ollie Stone b Jack Leach 7, Mohammed Siraj not out 16. Extras (b-5, lb-15) 20. **Total (all out in 85.5 overs): 266.**
FoW: 1-42, 2-55, 3-55, 4-65, 5-86, 6-106, 7-202, 8-210, 9-237, 10-286.
Bowling: Ollie Stone 6.5-1-21-1, Jack Leach 33-6-100-4, Moeen Ali 32-7-98-4, Joe Root 4-0-15-0, Stuart Broad 9-3-25-0, Daniel Lawrence 1-0-7-0.
England 2nd Innings: Rory Burns c Kohli b Ashwin 25, Dom Sibley lbw b Patel 3, Dan Lawrence batting 19, Jack Leach c Rohit Sharma b Patel 0, Joe Root batting 2. Extras (b-4) 4. **Total: (for 3 wkts, in 19 overs) 53.**
FoW: 1-17, 2-49, 3-50.
Bowling: Ishant Sharma 2-1-6-0, Axar Patel 9-3-15-2, Ravichandran Ashwin 8-1-28-1.

When Ashwin was dropped from team for playing sweep

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 15

R. Ashwin who swept his way to a brilliant century in the second Test against England on Monday revealed that he was once dropped from a team for playing that cross-batted shot. "After the last Test, we were thinking of how to counter Jack Leach (left-arm spinner) and bringing sweep to the game. The last time I was sweeping was probably when I was 19 years old. I got dropped from the side for playing a couple sweep shots, and

maybe never played a sweep in the last 13-14 years," informed Ashwin who became the second Indian after Kapil Dev to score a 1,000-plus and 100-plus wicket against England.

Ashwin credited India batting coach Vikram Rathour for his recent improvement.

"I've been practicing that shot (sweep) for the last 10 days under the supervision of Rathour. I am really thankful that the plan has been really paid off. Rathour has been very helpful in trying to explore new options. He

is someone who has helped me to go out there and express myself."

After Kohli's dismissal, Ashwin had to protect his tailenders Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Siraj to complete his century. He forged a 27-run stand with Ishant, while Siraj and Ashwin put on 49 runs for the final wicket.

When Ashwin reached his triple-figure score, Siraj was more jubilant at the other end. "It was exciting to see how excited he was when I got my hundred and that says a few things about how the dressing room is."

Man Utd falter, Auba wins it for Arsenal

London, Feb. 15: Manchester United's faltering Premier League title challenge suffered another blow in a 1-1 draw at struggling West Brom, while Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang hit a hat-trick in Arsenal's 4-2 win against Leeds on Sunday. United have dropped points in five of their last seven league games to allow Manchester City to pull seven points clear, with a game in hand. A point was enough to nudge Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men back above Leicester into second on goal difference. But that was of little consolation to United against a West Brom side

that had conceded 24 goals in taking just one point from their previous seven home games.

At the Emirates Stadium, Aubameyang scored his first ever Premier League hat-trick to get the Gunners back on track after two successive defeats and three games without a win.

Aubameyang has endured a difficult season marred by poor form and his mother's illness, which prompted him to take a leave of absence recently. "The hat-trick means a lot. It's been a tough time for me," Aubameyang said.

Everton missed the chance to move level with

THE RESULTS	
PREMIER LEAGUE	SPANISH LEAGUE
Southampton (Ings 25)	1 Getafe
Wolves (Neves 53-pen, Neto 66)	2 Real Sociedad (Isak 30)
West Brom (Diagne 2)	1 Real Madrid (Karim Benzema 12, Toni Kroos 42)
Manchester United (Fernandes 44)	1 Valencia
Arsenal (Aubameyang 13, 41-pen, 47, Bellerin 45)	4 Levante
Leeds (Struik 58, Costa 69)	0 Osasuna (Budimir 74)
Everton	2 Villarreal (Gerard 65-pen)
Fulham (Maja 48, 65)	0 Real Betis
	2 (Nabil Fekir 45, Emerson Aparecido 52)

neighbours Liverpool in fourth as they were well beaten 2-0 by Fulham. Wolves moved 12 points clear of the drop zone

after coming from behind for a 2-1 win that extended Southampton's six-game losing streak in the league.

— *Agencies*

Nadal closes in on Slams record

Melbourne, Feb. 15: Rafael Nadal outclassed Fabio Fognini to close in on the all-time Grand Slam titles record on Monday as Ashleigh Barty ramped up hopes of becoming the Australian Open's first home winner in 43 years. Nadal said his lower-back stiffness was continuing to improve after his 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 against the flamboyant Italian, which set up a quarter-final against Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas.

Fognini had registered a five-set win over Nadal at the 2015 US Open, but the Spaniard cantered to victory after recovering from 2-4 down in the second set.

Nadal is now into his 43rd Grand Slam quarter-final, staying on course for a title match with eight-time winner Novak Djokovic who battled through an abdominal injury to reach the last eight on Sunday.

Next up for Nadal is world number six Tsitsipas, who went through on a walkover after Italy's Matteo Berrettini pulled out with an abdominal strain.

As the action continued in front of empty stands, top-ranked Barty beat big-hitting American Shelby Rogers in impressive fashion to reach the last eight. Barty won 6-3, 6-4 to go into the quarter-finals without dropping a set as she bids to become the first Australian champion since Chris O'Neil in 1978.

The former French Open champion next plays Karolina Muchova, who came through two tight sets to beat Belgium's Elise Mertens 7-6 (7/5), 7-5.

RESULTS

Men's singles fourth round: Andrey Rublev (RUS x7) bt Casper Ruud (NOR x24) 6-2, 7-6 (7/3), 0-0 retired; Daniil Medvedev (RUS x4) bt Mackenzie McDonald (USA) 6-4, 6-2, 6-3; Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE x5) bt Matteo Berrettini (ITA x9) walkover; Rafael Nadal (ESP x2) bt Fabio Fognini (ITA x16) 6-3, 6-4, 6-2.
Women's singles fourth round: Ashleigh Barty (AUS x1) bt Shelby Rogers (USA) 6-3, 6-4; Karolina Muchova (CZE x25) bt Elise Mertens (BEL x18) 7-6 (7/5), 7-5; Jennifer Brady (USA x22) bt Donna Vekic (CRO x28) 6-1, 7-5; Jessica Pegula (USA) bt Elina Svitolina (UKR x5) 6-4, 3-6, 6-3.

RUSSIANS ARE COMING Earlier, unseeded American Jessica Pegula reached her maiden Grand Slam quarter-final with victory over Elina Svitolina, her first over a top-10 player.

Pegula, whose billionaire father owns the Buffalo Bills NFL team, overcame fifth seed Svitolina 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 to set up a meeting with fellow American Jennifer Brady, a 6-1, 7-5 winner against Croatia's Donna Vekic.

Elsewhere, fourth seed Daniil Medvedev and seventh seed Andrey Rublev both won to ensure an all-Russian quarter-final.

Medvedev blew away American world number 192 Mackenzie McDonald 6-4, 6-2, 6-3 to extend his winning streak to 18 matches.

Rublev, who is also unbeaten this year, went through when Norway's Casper Ruud retired after losing the first two sets.

— *AFP*



Spain's Rafael Nadal en route to his 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 win over Fabio Fognini of Italy in their Australian Open fourth round match in Melbourne on Monday. — *AFP*

FIR against Yuvraj over remarks against Chahal

Hisar (Haryana), Feb. 15: The Haryana Police has filed an FIR against former India cricketer Yuvraj Singh over his alleged casteist remarks against Yuzvendra Chahal during an Instagram chat last year, officials said on Monday.

It was during one of the Instagram live sessions with Indian vice-captain Rohit Sharma that Singh made the offensive comment about Chahal, while talking about his regular social media posts.

Singh (39) had apologised for the remarks, saying he "unintentionally" hurt public sentiments.

"An FIR has been filed against Yuvraj Singh based on a complaint by lawyer Rajat Kalsan at the Hansi Police Station," Hansi Superintendent of Police, Nikita Gahlaut said on Monday.

She said the case was lodged on Sunday under various provisions of IPC and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Kalsan had filed the police complaint last year.

Kalsan had alleged that Singh's comment had hurt the sentiments of the Dalit community, stating that a large number of people had watched the video on social media. — *PTI*

TEAM INDIA MAKE SOLID DEBUT AT ASIAN LE MANS

Dubai, Feb. 15: Racing Team India took their first step to become the first all-Indian squad at the 24 Hours of Le Mans with a solid debut at the opening weekend of the Asian Le Mans Series in Dubai.

The JK Tyres-backed team's ORECA 07 LMP2 car, driven by Narain Karthikeyan, Arjun Maini and Naveen Rao, with technical support from reigning ALMS champions Algarve Pro Racing, finished fifth and fourth in the two four-hour races held at the Dubai Autodrome on Saturday and Sunday respectively.

The team's car showed promising pace throughout the weekend. But their challenge was hampered by racing incidents and a penalty.

The team had to make an extra precautionary pit-stop in Saturday's opening race which dropped the car down the order.

A five-second time penalty for exceeding the speed limit further set it back, forcing the drivers to claw their way back up to fifth, where they had qualified.