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THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | MONDAY | 1 FEBRUARY 2021

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Vol. 84 No. 31 Established 1938 | 20 PAGES | ₹6.00

Where darling daughters can splash around with friends...



Clubhouse with pool

Image used is for illustrative purpose only

79977 88383 / 70953 33335 aparnaconstructions.com

The Famili-Perfect Gated Community @ Kompally APARNA SERENITY

₹5549/sqft.
BOOK TODAY

Marketing Office
Open on Sundays also

TS RERA Reg. No.: P02200002386

WEATHER

Max: 29.5°C
Min: 20.2°C
RH: 51%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 31/19 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+8,662)	(+135)
1,07,52,872	1,54,397

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+163)	(+1)
TS: 2,94,469	1,599
(+116)	(+0)

AP: 8,87,836	7,153
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CASES AROUND THE WORLD

10,33,06,428	DEATHS
22,33,104	

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES	219
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worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttarayana

Tithi: Pushya Bahula Chavithi till 6.23 pm

Star: Uttara till 11.56 pm

Varijyan: 8.04 am to 9.34 am

Durmuhuram: 12.52 pm to 1.37 pm to 3.07 pm to 3.52 pm

Rahukalam: 7.30 pm to 9 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR

Jamadi- ul- Akhir 18,1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajr: 5.46 am

Zohar: 12.40 pm

Asar: 4.35 pm

Maghrib: 6.17 pm

Isha: 7.26 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.11 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.47 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 9.29 AM

MOONSET TODAY 9.42 PM

COUNTER POINT

Let's hike the prices of placards, banners, flags, tents... to control rallies!

Shah takes aim at Didi for promoting nephew

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, JAN. 31

MODI TO LAUNCH 3 BIG TICKET PLANS IN WB

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, JAN. 31

Making dynasty politics and nepotism the prime weapon of the BJP against the Trinamul Congress, Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday took on Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee allegedly giving priority to *bhatija kalyan* (nephew welfare) over *jan kalyan* (public welfare), in an oblique reference to her nephew: Abhishek Banerjee.

Shah also accused the Trinamul Congress government of trying to make the young Diamond Harbour MP the successor of Mamata Banerjee as Chief Minister.

Shah told a BJP rally at Dumurjola Stadium in Howrah, which he was earlier supposed to attend in person, virtual-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on his second visit to West Bengal, will inaugurate three big ticket central projects totalling ₹4,552 crores at Haldia next week in what appears to be a curtain raiser of his campaign to brighten the BJP's prospects in the ensuing Assembly polls.

■ Full report on Page 7

ly from New Delhi, "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra



Expelled AIADMK leader V.K. Sasikala leaves a hospital after she recovered from Covid-19 in Bengaluru on Sunday. — PTI

Sasi uses Jaya's car, ADMK flag

G. BABU
JAYAKUMAR | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 31

Sending the message that she is indeed in charge of the AIADMK, V.K. Sasikala sat on the front seat of the Toyota MUV used by the late J. Jayalalithaa as she rode the distance in Bengaluru, from the Victoria Hospital to a farmhouse in the outskirts, with the AIADMK flag fluttering on the bonnet on Sunday.

Acknowledging the cheerful welcome by supporters, who showered flower petals on the

vehicle and raised slogans in her praise, Sasikala waved at them and greeted all those who were around even as she was escorted to her temporary residence by a convoy of vehicles.

As an augury to what might happen in Tamil Nadu politics, Sasikala's nephew and the founder of Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam, T.V. Dinakaran, explained the use of the AIADMK flag by saying that she was indeed the general secretary of the party.

■ Page 2: Sasikala may upset AIADMK's plans

ETALA PLANS COUNSELLING ON VACCINE FEARS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 31

The Telangana government is planning to set up a counselling mechanism to encourage health workers to receive Covid-19 jab after several of them tried to pull themselves out of the vaccination drive.

"Some people are worried about taking vaccine shots because of fears arising from unreliable and unscientific claims being circulated about the safety of vaccines, and the government will take steps to address this issue," state health minister Etala Rajendar said.

"Today, 25 to 30 per cent of the health workers in the state have not been vaccinated," he said, adding that it was to boost confidence to everyone that he had volunteered to be the first in the state to receive the vaccine.

Though the Covid-19 vaccine is an mRNA based one and it behaves differently in different countries and environments, like all vaccines, the Covid-19 mRNA vaccines have been rigorously tested for safety before being authorised for use," the minister said.

■ Page 2: TS requested more doses from Centre

PM cites veg mart to promote power from waste

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH I DC
HYDERABAD, JAN. 31

Employees, workers and vegetable vendors of the Bowenpally vegetable market were on cloud nine on Sunday after they heard Prime Minister Narendra Modi speak about them.

In his first broadcast of the year, through *Mann ki Baat*, Modi was all praise for the efforts made by officials at the market yard. The innovative practice takes vegetable waste and converts it into biogas through a plant established on the premises.

"We have a waste-to-energy plant, which has a capacity of 10 tonnes. Our market yard generates close to four or five tonnes of vegetable waste a day. So to meet our target of ten tonnes, we get waste from other nearby fruit markets and super-



A woman dumps vegetable waste on a conveyor belt that takes them to a biogas plant and a power plant at the Bowenpally vegetable market in Hyderabad. — DC

However, it wasn't just powering the market yard that was a priority. Over the last fortnight, officials have also begun generating biogas from the waste. "We have generated 600-odd kgs of gas, which is being supplied to a canteen for hamalis, vendors and other staffers of our yard," he said.

While they were unsure of the source of fuel for the canteen, hamalis say they are happy that the gas for the canteen helps cook their food. "We don't know much about electricity. It is good to know that vegetables we consider useless are being put to use," said Karunakar, a hamali of the market.

This project was a joint collaboration between the department of biotechnology and the state government. It was designed by IIT and executed by Ahuja Engineering.

"Vegetable waste generates electricity for us. We supply it to our market yard, among other places. We earlier had a power bill run-up to ₹3 lakh to ₹3.5 lakh per month. Now, using the new power, we have cut our electricity spend to ₹1 lakh per month," he said.

■ Page 2: L. Srinivas, grade secretary, AMC Bowenpally, said.

The energy generated from waste is close to between 250 to 400 units of electricity. This energy is used to run offices, cold-room, lighting in the market, among other spaces.

■ Page 2: L. Srinivas, grade secretary, AMC Bowenpally, said.

Tikait seeks respectable solution to end farm stir

Refuses to agree under pressure, seeks mid-way resolution

SANJAY KAW | DC
NEW DELHI, JAN. 31

MODI SAYS COUNTRY IS SADDENED BY 'INSULT' TO NATIONAL FLAG ON R-DAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 31

With more farmers streaming into the protest sites at Delhi's borders, Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait said on Sunday that the farmers' unions were ready for a "respectable solution", but they would "never agree to anything under pressure".

In Punjab, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has called an all-party meeting on Tuesday to show unity with the protesters and evolve a consensus on the way forward on the three contentious agricultural laws.

As the stream of farmers heading for Delhi's borders remained incessant on the 67th day of the massive agitation, Mr. Tikait said the Republic Day violence was part of a conspiracy and that the government should nab all those behind it. "The violence on January 26 was part of a conspiracy.

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CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE PROPERTY

COMMERCIAL

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY Banjara Hills Road No.11, Prime location surrounded by commercial area, 104sq.yards for sale G+2 with 2shutters. Clear Title. Contact: 8885050014. (HYMM/2021/C06227)

COMMERCIAL PLOT 1600sqft for sale at Shamshabad. East facing BT-road. Inside to ORR. surrounded by Amazon and Flipkart warehouses 9398255061 (HYMM/2021/C06281)

FARM HOUSES-SITES

CUSTOMIZE VILLAS - 35L, 30sqyds, farm houses, resorts, sandalwood, 10acres community, Rs. 5999 offer 4200 per sqyd, Mumbai highway sadashivpet, 7416613247 (HYMM/2021/C06399)

FLATS

DOUBLE BEDROOM

BANJARAHILLS ROAD NO:4, 2 BHK Penthouse renovated in December 2020, 70 undivided share of land. With Good Interiors and tastefully done Outdoor deck, place for Barbecue. Outdoor sitting with open air & privacy. Contact: 9908520019 (A/2021/C00529)

INDEPENDENT HOUSE

DUPLEX INDEPENDENT Villa for sale at CSK Villas, Shadnagar on 267 sq.yards, 1550 sqft construction, South facing with Municipal construction permission HMA layout North East corner Entrance, immediate registration Ph:9666173447 (W/2021/AT001005)

THREE & MORE

KHISMATHPUR, 4 BHK, covered car parking, marble flooring, folseroofing, German waterproof, modular kitchen. Beside Prestige Royal Woods. Ready to move in. Bank Loan available. Contact: 9908520019. (A/2021/C00527)

PREMIUM VILLAS in Gated community for Sale at Mokila @ 1.70 crs (Special Offer available) Contact: 7353585368 (HYMM/2021/C06215)

PLOTS

MACHABOLLARAM NEAR 7temples lakkidatti, alaval, E/F, 300yds 3plots @/pyd: 38,000/-& Eshwarpuri beside Lakeview 300yds S/F, p/yd:25,000/- & 200yds commercial near. sainikpuri. Ph:9849055557 (HYMM/2021/C06280)

3600 SQUAREYARDS (plot/entire block) for sale with 4 roads at Maheswaram (4kms) with approval, 9000/- per plot. Residential Zone - 7032376171 (HYMM/2021/C06295)

191 SQ.YDS., Mansurabad, Sai Nagar Colony, Hyderabad, Plot No.8, Survey No.100. Contact: 9912989999. (S/2021/C02107)

MEDCHAL PLOT for sale 605, 1210, 1500, 2000 near Medchal, Rail Station, east facing and 4000 sqft and for development suitable for apartment and villas. Ph:9177924290, 7799848599. (S/2021/C02101)

GOVT APPROVED DTPC Plots @ Mucherela Pharma City, Sriyalan Highway Facing per sq.yard 12,999/- Best price for group booking. Ph : 9 9 5 1 8 9 4 6 2 9 . (HYCL/2021/C02578)

GENUINE HMDA plots Available @ Taramparipet ORR, Exit No. -10) Surrounded by Nalg. RFC, Infosys and Aims. Ph:9948438722 (HYMM/2021/C06053)

RENTALS

COMMERCIAL

COMMERCIAL SHOPS for lease. 3000 to 6000 sqft sizes available. Best suited for all types of showrooms. Location: Abids Contact: 90159817167 (W/2021/AT001013)

COMMERCIAL SHUTTER 600 Sqft suitable for Godowns/ Workshop for Rent at Fathenagar, Balanagar and total 20nos 1 BHK Flats for Rent or Lease. Suitable for Hostel/ Hotel/ Service Apartments. Contact: 9436752523, 9010593194. (A/2021/C00528)

KARIMNAGAR NAKA Chourastha to Peddappally Road, between SFS Function Hall, 4 storied building (Each Floor 6000 SF)for Rent. Useful for offices/ Banks/ Supermarket/ Showroom. 2 side road, lift available. Total building or Each floor also given. contact: 7569888893/ 9866386777 (R/2021/C00014)

KUKATPALLY, NEAR Phase 9 Golki Society, 9 Two Bedroom Flats, EACH Flat 900sqft, Rent 1500/- Plus Maintenance, only for Offices, Hostel, Bachelors. Ph:9264024021, 9505611112. (HYCL/2021/C02638)

COMMERCIAL PLOT, for lease/ rent, 1020sqy, opp Jawhar Navodaya school, nallagandla, lingampally, Hyderabad, with compound wall, gate, water and power. Contact: 9818515003 (HYMM/2021/C06240)

SHOP/ OFFICE space for rent, second floor, C. Block 227, Cheney Trade Centre, Parklane, Secunderabad. Contact 9246163559. (S/2021/C02126)

VIDYANAGAR MAINROAD 2shops, each shop 500sqft, rent 3000/-, for any Business, Hotel, Showroom Ph: 9505611112, 9701239999. (HYMM/2021/C06325)

1000 SQ.FT commercial space at West Maredsally, G.F, road facing, suitable for offices, clinics etc. Call: 9502044449, 8179413677. (S/2021/C02090)

OPEN LAND (DTPC Approved) 50,000 Sqft, Available in Yadagirigutta For Rent For Warehouse 2/ Per St, Hurry. Ph:7702539941 /7677025084 (HYMM/2021/C06286)

INDEPENDENT HOUSE

DOUBLE BEDROOM

2BHK MLA colony for rent 32k/ month 1500sqft recently renovated semi furnished ground floor independent house carparking 24/7 water Ph:9848533987 (HYMM/2021/C06241)

THREE & MORE

INDEPENDENT ROW house in Jubilee hills, Road No.44 available for Rental with 5 Bedrooms along home theatre, total 5000 sqft with all facilities. Ph:9849986861. (B/2021/C00898)

LEASE

COMMERCIAL

WAREHOUSE SPACE available at Medchal &kalakal main road 20000 to 30000sqft @9rupees/sqr ft Ph:9393834321 (HYMM/2021/C06201)

BAR PREMISES 5000sqft Fully Furnished With Kitchen&Tables, Chairs Available On Lease. At Htc Cross Roads, Hyd Ph: 7732003000. (HYMM/2021/C06279)

CUSTOMIZE VILLAS - 35L, 30sqyds, farm houses, resorts, sandalwood, 10acres community, Rs. 5999 offer 4200 per sqyd, Mumbai highway sadashivpet, 7416613247 (HYMM/2021/C06399)

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MULTIPLE VACANCIES

WALK-IN INTERVIEW: Incredible Exhibition and Event Management Services. Venue: Rent a desk, 2nd floor, Flora apartments Banjaraheills Rd#3, Date 3rd Feb 2021, 10am-6pm. Good opportunity for all candidates in exhibition& event industry. Health& Fire safety officers, Event managers/ Traffic marshalls/ Security officers, House keeping staff. For Details: 7993750247/ 7411350989. Email: e.m.s.g.o.b.l.a.t.o.r.e.m.p.t@.g.mail.com (HYMM/2021/C06370)

EXPERIENCED FEMALE

RECEPTIONIST age 20-25, &Office Boys. Sampradaay Traditional Designer Boutique Studio, North Vayupuri, Bus Stop, Sainikpuri. Ph:9001044111/ 8008441444. (HYCL/2021/C02574)

TEACHERS

WANTED TEACHING and Non-Teaching Staff: for Arkia International School, Music Instrumental and Vocal, Lady Coach, Gymnastics, Skating, French, Floor Incharges, Telugu (Primary), Pre-primary Teachers with training (Primary, Montessori, Indian and Computer, Artificial Intelligence, Arkia International School, Belgaum Post resumes on or before 5th of February 2021. Email: s.e.b.e.l.g.a.u.m@gmail.com (HYCL/2021/C02575)

SBG GROUP, BELGAUM

WANTED PG, B.Ed &above minimum of 10years experience as principal. Visionary, Dynamic, Dedicated work in ICSE school, Belgaum Post resumes on or before 5th of February 2021. Email: s.e.b.e.l.g.a.u.m@gmail.com (HYCL/2021/C02575)

WALK-IN

DELIVERY BOYS

Walk-in interview @logistics office at Road.12, Banjaraheills. From 25th-30th Jan'21

timings 10am-6pm. Boys required at multiple locations, Balanagar,

Hafeezpet, Manikonda, Karwan,

Nacharam, Saroorang. Minimum

qualification SSC must. Earn up to

45,000/- per month. Additional

Target Bonus* & Insurance will be

given. Ph:+91-6309550098,

8330267087 (HYCL/2021/C06338)

WALK-IN INTERVIEWS

<p

SHORT TAKES**TWO MINORS ARRESTED OVER ATM ROBBERY**DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 31

Two minors who were trying to break open an ATM in Shamshabad on Saturday night were caught by a police patrol that noticed them inside the kiosk.

According to the police, the two boys had allegedly spent almost an hour attempting to extract money from the machine. "They were caught on the spot and brought to the station," said the police, adding that their attempt was caught on the CCTV cameras installed inside the kiosk. The Shamshabad police took the two minors into custody and started an investigation.

**Sheer negligence**

A youth tries to escape a traffic jam on Necklace Road by crossing a median. There was heavy rush at the People's Plaza where the 9th Grand Nursery Mela was underway on Sunday in Hyderabad, taking police by surprise. — P.SURENDRA

Iron Age dolmens in TS under threat**Experts worry that destruction of burial sites are being bulldozed for agri needs**DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 31

Picture shows the pothole on the Shadnagar old National Highway, which caused the accident.

LORRY RAMS INTO 35-YR-OLD, ROAD OFFICIALS BOOKEDDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 31

The Shadnagar police of Cyberabad booked road authorities after a 35-year-old was run over by a lorry while attempting to avoid a pothole on the old National Highway on Sunday.

According to the police, the victim, Narasimha, a daily wage labourer, swerved to the right suddenly in an attempt to avoid the pothole and was run over by a lorry coming from the opposite direction.

"Following a complaint from the lorry driver and after an inspection, we booked cases against the authorities under Section 198-A (failure to comply with standards for road design, construction and maintenance) of the Motor Vehicle Act as the road was causing inconvenience to the commuters and nothing is being done to fix it," said Shadnagar inspector A. Sreedhar Kumar. He said will decide whether to penalise the officials responsible or to punish them.

Since it was not known which department was responsible for the road, sources said the police would find out the details and submit the case in court.

AP SEC'S VOTER FORM REJECTED IN HOMETOWNDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 31

Guntur district officials have started enquiring into the rejection of voting rights to State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar at his native place Duggirala in Guntur district.

Ramesh Kumar visited his ancestral house at Duggirala on Sunday where he told the tahsildar that he wanted to clear doubts of officials about getting voting rights. Ramesh Kumar had earlier applied for a voter ID in Duggirala but his application was rejected as he was living in Hyderabad.

According to norms, voter ID is issued to the individual based on the place where one lives.

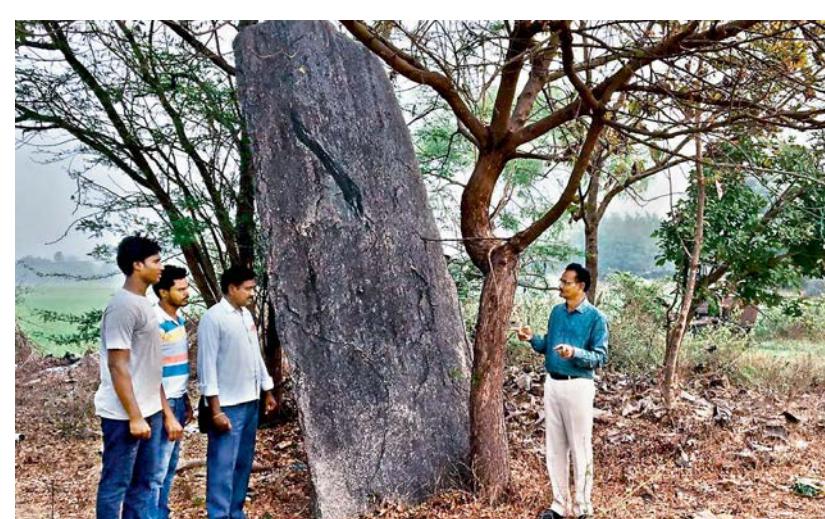
As Ramesh Kumar's permanent address is in Hyderabad, officials in Duggirala refused his application to register his name as a voter.

The SEC has rented a house in Vijayawada and he lives there only on working days. Ramesh Kumar appealed to the Guntur district collector to use his discretionary powers and give him voting rights in Duggirala, where he has never lived.

Ironically, the SEC himself admitted this during a press conference and stated that he would move the court for his voter ID from Duggirala.

Guntur district officials informed that an enquiry into the issue was on and it would be resolved soon.

ACCORDING TO norms, voter ID is issued to the individual based on the place where one lives.



Archaeologist E. Sivanagi Reddy inspects the pre-historic Iron Age structures at Padurivipalem near Chandupatla village in Nakrekal mandal in Nalgonda district on Sunday.

Road safety drive to be held todayDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 31

The Rachakonda police will be conducting a road safety awareness rally on Monday at Saroor nagar Indoor Stadium as part of the National Road Safety Month, which is being observed in India for the 32nd time.

According to the police, a motorcycle rally will start from the stadium and proceed till Victoria Memorial, take a U-turn there and return to the stadium.

"The event will also see a photo exhibition, with an aim to bring about awareness on traffic safety and inculcate the sense of adhering to traffic rules among drivers. A troupe will highlight issues related to road safety. Our goal is to

ACCORDING TO the police, a motorcycle rally will start from the stadium and proceed till Victoria Memorial, take a U-turn there and return to the stadium.

make 2021 an accident-free year," said Rachakonda commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat.

He asked professional drivers and road-users to make use of this programme to educate themselves on road safety.

Ministers Mahmood Ali, Puvvada Ajay Kumar, Sabitha Indra Reddy, LB Nagar MLA D. Sudheer Reddy, DGP M. Mahendar Reddy were among those who attended the event.

PD ACT INVOKED AGAINST GANJA PEDDLERDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 31

Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat on Sunday invoked the Preventive Detention (PD) Act against an interstate ganja peddler, Pramila Babu Mogree, from Mumbai, Maharashtra.

He has been detained and lodged in Chanchalguda special prison for women. "She was arrested on November 22, 2019, by the Visakhapatnam police with 20 kilos of ganja.

After her bail, she continued to peddle drugs and was caught by the special operations team of Rachakonda, along with the Upal police, in November 2020. They seized 18 kilos of marijuana and ₹5,100 cash from her," said the police.

62-yr-old hit in the eye, dies during treatmentDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD JAN. 31

A 62-year-old man died while undergoing treatment on Sunday after he was allegedly punched by a man while trying to sort out a family dispute at Kundanbagh, Panjagutta.

The victim, identified as Vishwa Sunder Shukla, had gone with his son Vedantha Shukla, to talk to the newly-wed wife of their relative who had eloped with her lover and was staying in the city.

The Panjagutta police said that a complaint was received from Vedantha Shukla

on Sunday, who stated that his cousin Ankit and his wife used to live in the Puranapuri area, when they got acquainted with one Yogesh Attal.

Last year, Ankit and his wife moved to Indore, Madhya Pradesh. After a few months, the wife was reported missing and an FIR was lodged in the local police station. After an investigation, it was found that she had eloped with Yogesh and they were living in Kundanbagh.

"The woman's husband Ankit, along with his in-laws Ved Prakash Vajpayee and Raksha, went to Kundanbagh on Friday evening, accompanied by Vedantha and his father Vishwa Sunder Shukla. After a heated argument, Yogesh punched Vishwa Sunder in the right eye, who collapsed on the ground. He was rushed to a hospital where the doctors told me that there is an internal injury. On Sunday morning, Vishwa Sunder died while undergoing treatment," said the police.

Based on the complaint, a case was booked under Section 302 (murder) of the IPC and an investigation was launched. The body was shifted to the morgue for post-mortem examination.

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to
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Principal Secretary to Govt., Deptts of Industries & Commerce and IT, Telangana

Sri. Ramesh Kaza
Sr. MD, Country Head - IT, State Street India

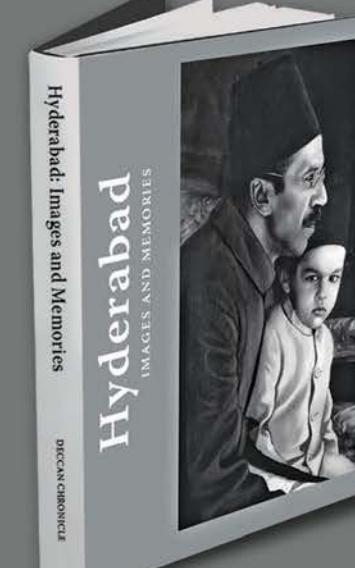
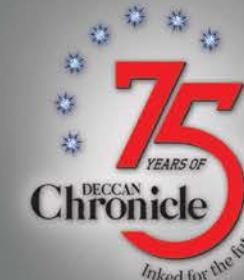
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Hyderabad IMAGES AND MEMORIES

We wrapped up our celebrations to mark the 75th anniversary of Deccan Chronicle on May 15, by bringing a special compilation of seventy-five stories filled with intrigue and delight from the final days of the Nizamshahi, titled *Hyderabad: Images & Memories*

From the palace mysteries and murder plots to the Nizam's 3,000 wives and how the ruler faced allegations of kidnapping his bride, all under the watchful eyes of the British, it is all there.

We scoured the archives and collected anecdotal evidence from several actors of that era to discover delightful asides like how the motichur laddus got their name, how an aide saved the Nizam's legendary treasures for the royal family and how Indira Gandhi floored the Nizam.

There are more than 75 pictures, a few of them rare and perhaps being published for the first time.

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SHORT TAKES

KAVITHA GIFTS MACHINERY TO WOMAN MECHANIC

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 31

TRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha on Sunday came out in support of Adilaxmi, the first woman mechanic from the state, who helps her husband in running their unit.

Kavitha provided assistance to Adilaxmi for buying the required machinery besides assuring the family of supporting the education of their daughters.

During an interaction with the family, the MLC applauded Adilaxmi's determination and the hard work she has put in to support her family.

Later, Kavitha Tweeted, "Adilaxmi and her story has inspired me. Her determination to break the predetermined shackles and to walk that extra mile for her family is so heart melting. Saluting her courage!"

The 30-year-old Adilaxmi works with her husband in their automobile repair shop at Sujanagar, near Kothagudem. Their daughters are aged seven and nine years. The story of this dedicated mother and wife, who wanted two additional machines at her automobile unit, caught the attention of Kavitha, who instantly expressed her desire to help Adilaxmi.

STREE NIDHI SURAKSHA-B TO EMPOWER WOMEN

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, JAN. 31

Panchayatraj minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao announced that the state government is implementing a scheme for women called Stree Nidhi Suraksha - B. Under it, eligible beneficiaries pay a one-time fee of ₹690 to become a member of the scheme. Needy women will then become eligible to avail loans, which can be repaid in easy installments over a period of three years.

In case a member enrolled under the scheme dies, her family will get an amount of up to ₹1 lakh, the minister explained.

Addressing women beneficiaries of Stree Nidhi at Thorur and Peddavangara mandals in Mahabubabad district on Sunday, he reiterated that the government is committed to development of women.

"Development of your family, society and country is in your hands. You must ensure that loans you take support your growth. During 2020-21, the state government is providing loans totalling to ₹2,400 crore under Stree Nidhi. So far, ₹1,140 crore have been given to 2.74 lakh women members in the state. Authorities have been directed to pay the remaining amount by March 31, 2021," Dayakar Rao underlined.

Loans totalling to ₹19.9 crore under Stree Nidhi were handed over to 1,500 members of Mahabubabad district on Sunday. Of this, ₹14.02 crore were for purchase of dairy cattle, ₹75 lakh for electric vehicles and the remaining for other purposes.

The minister suggested that beneficiaries buy cattle of better breed that yield more milk. For the purpose, the loan amount could be increased from ₹60,000 to ₹75,000.

DRDA project director Vidya Chandana, DPOs, MPPs, ZPTCs, sarpanches, MPTCs, ward members were present at the meeting.



Police watch as BJP activists protest outside the house of Parkal TRS MLA Challa Dharma Reddy on Sunday.
— BY ARRANGEMENT

BJP men stone TRS MLA house

MLA: BJP receipts for temple funds fake

ANUDEEP CEREMIAL DC
WARANGAL, JAN. 31

Keep away from TRS: KTR to BJP

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, JAN. 31

Parkal TRS legislator Challa Dharma Reddy on Sunday once again spoke on the Ram mandir in Ayodhya, the second time in four days, alleging that the BJP was using Lord Rama for political gains and was giving receipts from fake books after collecting money.

He is the second TRS MLA to speak against the fund collection drive, after party colleague from Korutla, K. Vidyasagar Rao.

Dharma Reddy alleged that fake books were prepared to collect funds in the name of the Ram temple at Ayodhya. He asked where the funds collected for the Ayodhya temple are going.

"The BJP has tried physical attacks in the past. Beyond the rational criticisms in politics, the BJP's repeated incursions into physical attacks are not at all desirable for Telangana politics. The TRS party wants value politics to continue in Telangana," he said.

Rama Rao called for all democrats to condemn the BJP's attempt to make its point across by means of physical attacks on other parties instead of convincing the people with their argument.

"When the government spent ₹2,900 crore for the Sardar Patel statue, why can't it spare another ₹11 crore for Ayodhya," he said.

On January 28, the MLA had said, "We have Lord Rama in Bhadrachalam. Why do we need our Lord Rama in Ayodhya?"

On Sunday, Dharma Reddy said, "It is outrageous that the BJP leaders are collecting donations. Only after showing the proper documentation of the funds must they resume collecting funds. The people are being intimidated in the name of donations. I am a true devotee of Lord Rama and built a temple for Him in my hometown," he said.

Following the comments, BJP leaders led by BJP Warangal Urban district president Rao Padma pelted stones at the residence of Dharma Reddy in Hanamkonda on Sunday.

Raising slogans of "Jai Challa Dharma Reddy," the TRS workers who came on two-wheelers broke the window panes of the BJP office besides damaging an arch.

Vehicles of the BJP leaders parked outside the Subedari police station too came under attack.

Demanding action against the TRS activists, BJP Warangal Urban district president Rao Padma and others staged a protest in front of the police station.

At the building.

The BJP activists resorted to throwing stones and damaged the glass panes of the house and also the flower pots. Police forces rushed to the spot and baton-charged the angry mob.

A scuffle ensued as the police tried to arrest the protesters and shift them in vehicles.

On January 21, TRS legislator K. Vidyasagar Rao had asked the people not to donate money for the construction of the Ram mandir.

"Why should people from the state give money for the temple in Uttar Pradesh? Are we not capable of constructing Ram mandirs in our villages," he had asked.

Party activists in large numbers, chanting the 'Jai Shri Ram' slogan, tried to force themselves into the house of the MLA but were prevented by the police. They squatted in front of the house and raised slogans against the MLA. They broke the furniture in front of the house and threw

it at the building.

The BJP activists resorted to throwing stones and damaged the glass panes of the house and also the flower pots. Police forces rushed to the spot and baton-charged the angry mob.

A scuffle ensued as the police tried to arrest the protesters and shift them in vehicles.

Meanwhile, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is contesting both seats, is brimming with confidence following the impressive showing in Dubbaka and GHMC elections.

The party cadre is in good spirits and this can help them on D-Day, analysts opine. N. Ramachander Rao, the MLC for the HRRM constituency, is eyeing an encore while the party is yet to finalise its nominee for NKW constituency.

Meanwhile, the Opposition front is planning to support the Congress, in return, in the HRRM seat. It is believed that TRS will face stiff competition if such an arrangement materialises.

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SHORT TAKES

RAMANNA TO PAY AND INSURE LANDLESS POOR

PILLALAMARI SRINIVAS
1 DC
ADILABAD, JAN. 31

TRS Adilabad legislator Jogi Ramanna is likely to launch a 'health insurance scheme' with ₹5 lakh cover on behalf of Jogi Ramanna Charitable Trust for the landless poor in his Assembly constituency.

The unique aspect is that he will pay an annual premium of up to ₹1,000 per policy to one landless member from each family. Death due to ill-health or accidents will be covered under this scheme.

Presently farmers who own land get ₹5 lakh insurance money in case of death under Rythu Bheema scheme being implemented by the state government. Ramanna told Deccan Chronicle that landless poor are not eligible for Rythu Bheema and hence deprived of insurance cover.

"I want to fill this gap between the landless poor and land owners. Many poor landless families suffer when the sole bread earner dies. There is no financial security to such," he said.

The MLA said, "We are identifying family members of the landless poor for the scheme and also the insurance company for the purpose. We are finalising the yearly premium and insurance cover by consulting various insurance companies."

In many cases, landless poor families are unable to arrange for funerals and generally approach local political leaders for some financial help to complete the ritual.

However, political leaders cannot extend financial help to the bereaved families for a long time. It is said that such families can survive if they get ₹5 lakh as insurance following the bread-earners death.

Ramanna is also planning to provide free meals to 200 poor people from Adilabad town at the MLA camp office every day from Vasanta Panchami. Many poor people from villages visit the district headquarters and some of them may not afford a meal. The free lunch will be helpful to such people.

It is said that TRS MLAs are questioned by landless and tenant farmers whenever they go to villages as they were getting nothing from Rythu Bandhu and Rythu Bheema schemes.

Party leaders say that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao may consider the demand to also extend Rythu Bandhu benefits to tenant farmers.

IMPROPER MIXING OF ETHANOL SHOCKS USERS

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, JAN. 31

Improper blending of 10 per cent of ethanol and lack of awareness were leading to embarrassment for vehicle owners and fuel-filling stations where water is present in petrol.

As per guidelines, 10 per cent of ethanol should be blended with petrol and even if a few drops of water

fall into the fuel tanks, the entire ethanol turns into water as it is hygroscopic and absorbs moisture from air.

For instance, a tense situation prevailed at a petrol bunk in Anantapur a couple of days back when many vehicle owners ransacked the fuel station for mixing water with petrol.

The Union government has emphasised on achieving energy security of the country with a target of reducing import dependence. Ethanol is an agro based product and a by-product of sugar industries and contains 35 per cent oxygen, which when mixed with fuels result in complete fuel combustion and non-toxic, water soluble and is easily biodegradable.

The Ethanol Blended Petrol programme was launched by the Centre in January 2003 in nine States and four Union Territories, including AP.

Analysts say about 200 litres of ethanol will be blended with 2,000 litres of petrol at the outlet's stock point. "If a few drops of water fall into the tank the entire 200 litres of ethanol becomes water," said Dr. Suresh Babu, president of Federation of Residential Welfare Association of Anantapur. He stressed the need to create awareness among vehicle owners and fuel outlets to take appropriate blending measures.

"Our outlets are constantly monitoring water dips in petrol tanks to ensure that there is no water presence," Virupaksha Reddy said.

Dogs given for adoption



Dog lovers gather at Neredmet, opposite Rachakonda police commissionerate, on Sunday to collect Indian breed dogs which were being given for adoption.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

Eco Survey language on health scary: Doc

Survey suggests health sector may not get more funds

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, JAN. 31

Amidst widespread hopes among public health policy experts and state governments that the Centre will make good on the headline 'Healthcare takes centre stage, finally!' in the Economic Survey 2020-21, released on Friday, it has been pointed out that some of the language the report employs is alarming.

It is worrisome that the Economic Survey repeats the phrase "healthcare policy must not become beholden to 'saliency bias,'" according to Dr Ranga Reddy Burri, president of Infection Control Academy of India.

This phrase, he said, and the further explanation "where policy overweights a recent phenomenon that may represent a six sigma event that may not repeat in an identical fashion in the future" is really alarming. 'Six sigma event' refers to an extremely rare happening, and saliency bias is the tendency to focus on prominent items.

"If the policy is going to be centred around this thinking and Budget allocations are made accordingly, then we are condemned to go for next healthcare emergency unprepared. We can predict with high certainty that next and further healthcare emergencies

in the country all time ready for any health emergency, he said.

The Covid-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in the country's public healthcare system that were major impediments in India's Covid-19 containment strategy.

Health minister Etala Rajendar has said that there was hope that the Union budget, to be presented in Parliament on Monday by Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, will have substantial allocations of funds for the healthcare sector in the country and that the Centre will ensure good funding for the states.

"With Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaking about the state of healthcare infrastructure, we hope that in addition to good allocations, there will also be subsidies for the states that will help

the latter build the required medical infrastructure," Rajendar said.

Speaking to reporters after inaugurating the state chapter of the National Integrated Medical Association here on Sunday, Rajendar said even in the upcoming State budget, it is expected that allocations for the health sector will improve.

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao has been stressing on improving health infrastructure and the state government will work towards this goal, the health minister further said.

for adding more beds in the public sector, strengthening of primary and secondary health centres, improving healthcare worker to population ratios, improving surveillance and monitoring of infectious diseases, and investing in research and development of pharmaceuticals and vaccines, are required.

Non-communicable diseases too need allocations that will together make the country all time ready for any health emergency, he said.

CENTRE MAY GRANT MORE FUNDS FOR HEALTH SECTOR, HOPES ETALA

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 31

will be yet another zoonotic origin infection," Dr Ranga Reddy said.

The section, 'Covid-19 and India's Health Care Policy', in Chapter 5 of the Economic Survey, says "pandemics represent rare events." This, Dr Ranga Reddy said, represents outdated thinking with the likes of the World Health Organisation, Centres for Disease Control and the United Nations, among others, "untiringly voicing that the next pandemic is around the corner and we need to gear up."

Instead of attributing decisions to a 'saliency bias', India, Dr Ranga Reddy said, needs to prioritise policies and budgetary allocations around communicable diseases to tackle the current pandemic that is nowhere near the "beginning of its end." India needs a robust pandemic preparedness plan oriented towards an approach that preempts and mitigates future health emergencies.

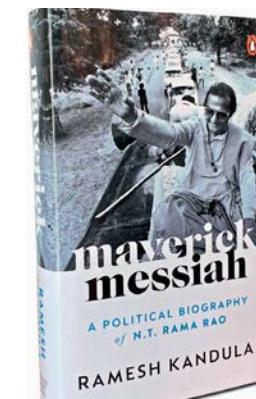
With Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaking about the state of healthcare infrastructure, we hope that in addition to good allocations, there will also be subsidies for the states that will help

were major impediments in India's Covid-19 containment strategy. Though private healthcare players stepped in to fill some gaps, the high cost profit oriented private sector is not adequate to deal with a crisis strikes, he said.

Dr Ranga Reddy hoped that the government's healthcare spend that stayed at around 1 per cent of GDP for close to 15 years, will be increased to at least 2-3 per cent over the next three years. Substantial allocations are needed

for adding more beds in the public sector, strengthening of primary and secondary health centres, improving healthcare worker to population ratios, improving surveillance and monitoring of infectious diseases, and investing in research and development of pharmaceuticals and vaccines, are required.

Non-communicable diseases too need allocations that will together make the country all time ready for any health emergency, he said.



The book has been well-received for its critical insight and diligent research.

Chiranjeevi's was more style than substance. I think Pawan Kalyan also suffers from the same failings (as his brother). Actors cannot succeed in politics unless they carry a serious political message.

As for the tag of messiah, NTR burst on to the political scene in 1982 as a ray of hope and captivated the imagination of the Telugus like no other leader. His campaigns were the greatest spectacles of democracy in action. Shortcomings notwithstanding, NTR

maverick kind?

An interesting aspect of NTR's mythologies were that they were Pan-Indian stories, and not directly related to Telugu nationalism and pride that NTR propounded politically. During NTR's time, screen adaptations of mythologies became known for a distinctive Telugu, which was formal and ceremonial. As several researchers have pointed out, NTR's mastery over language, considered a quintessential Telugu experience, did help in his emergence as a Telugu cultural symbol.

My hypothesis is that NTR carried over the linguistic identity of these films into his political campaign, but not his screen 'divinity'. His political credibility was not a by-product of his playing godly characters.

He worked towards it consciously both in his film career and later on in politics.

As for the tag of messiah, NTR burst on to the political scene in 1982 as a ray of hope and captivated the imagination of the Telugus like no other leader. His campaigns were the greatest spectacles of democracy in action. Shortcomings notwithstanding, NTR

emerged as a larger-than-life personality and brought a sea-change in the socio-political landscape of AP.

The maverick apart, NTR was a man of strange contradictions. He believed in the power of people, but his democratic credentials were suspect because he had no qualms in turning his party into a one-man show. He was secular to the core but exhibited a peculiar religious streak. He entered politics on the plank of regionalism but remained a committed nationalist throughout.

Q. How did people relate to his dramatics and eccentricities?

A. His dramatics entertained the masses but some sections of people intensely disliked the theatrics he brought into politics. He carried this urge to be the centre of attraction from reel to public life. However, common folks were not particularly put off by this, because of his ability to convey seriousness of intent. Despite the nickname 'Drama Rao', NTR was a very serious man in private and rarely cracked a joke. But a common person felt warmth in his presence.

NTR, unlike Chiranjeevi, never took people for granted, says biographer

PART -1
A recently launched biography of the late N.T. Rama Rao, titled 'Maverick Messiah', written by journalist Ramesh Kandula, chronicles and analyses the political life of NTR and its impact on both the state and the nation. An objective assessment of the late leader, the book has been well-received for its critical insight and diligent research.

What set NTR apart from later day movie stars entering politics? Is the Telugu Desam a Kamma party meant to empower the community and is it dying? In this two-part interview with Sriram Karri, author Kandula defends the party and explains what set NTR apart.

Q. Why did NTR remain the last real actor phenomenon to achieve political success? Tamil superstar Rajnikant has now announced he won't enter politics, while Chiranjeevi and Pawan Kalyan had great fan networks but could not convert them into political parties that could debut with electoral wins.

A. Film actors who entered politics in the

100 aircraft for Indian Coast Guard by 2025: Pathania

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JAN. 31

The Coast Guard (ICG), with a meagre force and two vessels in 1977, has now grown into a major coastal security force with 156 ships and 62 aircraft. The force also became the fourth largest in the world after the ones in the US, the UK and South Korea. It proposes to have 200 vessels and 100 aircraft by 2025.

Briefing media on the eve of its 45th Raising Day, additional director-general VS Pathania, Coast Guard commander of the Eastern Board, said the ICG has played a significant role in securing Indian coasts and enforcing regulations within the maritime zones of India. True to its motto "Vayam Raksham," meaning "We Protect", the service has so far saved over 10,000 lives and apprehended 13,300 miscreants since its inception in 1977. On an average, Coast Guard saves one life every second day at sea, Pathania underlined.

The Coast Guard, despite restrictions imposed by

about 40,000 fishermen got escorted to safe harbours. "In anticipation of disasters during cyclones, our forces had been sent to vulnerable areas in advance, so that no time is lost in rescuing fishermen at sea, including during cyclones Amphan and Nivar," the commander pointed out.

Listing out achievements of last year, he said the Indian Coast Guard created a maritime history by dousing a raging fire onboard 333 meters long Very Large Crude Carrier MT New Diamond, with about 3 lakh metric tonnes of crude oil off Sri Lanka Coast, preventing a major ecological disaster.

ICG is also collaborating with littoral countries to combat transitional maritime crimes and enhance maritime safety in its area of responsibility and in the region.

At the ground level, ICG is conducting periodical awareness among local fishermen on use of modern gadgets which would alert them in times of disaster, Pathania added.

Ahead of AP local polls, candidates, kin kidnapped

DC CORRESPONDENTS
SRIKAKULAM, KAKINADA,
ANANTAPUR, JAN. 31

chayat election. However, the police said that no complaint has been lodged regarding the incident.

According to sources, Srinivasa Reddy wanted to field his wife Pushpa Veni for the sarpanch post. In the wee hours of Sunday, when he came out of his house and was drinking water, some unknown persons came and covered his face with a hood.

Reports said Atchannaidu filed his nomination from Nimmada in Srikakulam district, home village of Kinjarapu family on Sunday.

Reports said Atchannaidu called Appanna, who also happens to be his nephew, asking him not to file his nomination. Appanna refused stating his wife had lost her government job during TD regime and his family also did not benefit much from Telugu Desam party.

After Appanna expressed his determination to file his nomination, TD workers and close followers of Atchannaidu rushed to YSRC leader's residence and prevented him from coming out of his house to file nomination papers.

This led to commotion with the two groups of people almost coming to blows. Police personnel rushed to the spot and dispersed the crowd. Appanna finally filed his nomination papers under police escort.

Elsewhere, one Sabella Srinivasa Reddy of Gollalakunta village in Jaggampeta mandal of East Godavari district, who switched over to Telugu Desam from YSR Congress on Saturday, was kidnapped and dropped in a forest between Bhavaram and Govindapuram villages after being tied with ropes.

The incident went viral and created havoc in the district. Telugu Desam leaders alleged that he had opposed marking the village as 'unanimous' for the gram panchayat.

Eeranna was at Molakalmur bus stand in Karnataka, about 30 km from his village, when a group of unidentified persons dragged him into car and took him into deserted fields away from Molakalmur town. Eeranna said he escaped from the abductors at Morampalli.

भारत सरकार Government of India परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग Department of Atomic Energy द्रगेटरी एं पर्चर डिपार्टमेंट Directorate of Purchase & Stores			Date: 29/01/2021
S. No.	Tender Number	Brief Description	Date of submission UPTO 2.30 pm
1	DPS/CPU/09/D1/1279/19-20/209	Supply, Installation, Commissioning and training of Simultaneous Inductively Coupled Plasma-Optical Emission Spectrometer (ICP-OES)	12/03/2021
2	DPS/CPU/09/D1/2085/TPT	Supply, Installation / Commissioning and warranty of induced polarization resistivity ground surveying system	30/03/2021

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DECCAN Chronicle

1 FEBRUARY 2021

Pass a resolution on MSP, drop cases against farmers

In his address to the all-parties' meeting on the eve of the first sitting of the Budget Session of Parliament, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday that the government's offer on farm laws still stands, and that agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar was "only a phone call away". This is the first signal after the violence and chaos of January 26 in the national capital that the government remained open to the idea of resuming talks with the agitating farmers. The impression had formed that talks with the farmers had collapsed following the events of Republic Day.

While the prospect of talks re-starting is no bad thing, the first thing is that the perspective should be clear. Here it is necessary to understand that the "government's offer" to keep the three controversial farm laws in abeyance is in reality a suggestion of the Supreme Court and no generosity of the government. The farmers, of course, had not accepted the idea of an 18-month reprieve since the government left no stone unturned to impress upon all concerned that it was not prepared to write the idea of the availability of MSP into law.

While a government can repeal a law passed by Parliament, it has no authority to 'suspend' a law

There is a further legal hurdle to be crossed. It appears that while a government can repeal a law passed by Parliament, it has no authority to "suspend" a law. The most it can do is to delay framing the rules for the implementation of laws. But what's to happen after 18 months? The government's refusal to yield on the MSP question makes the gap between the government's stand and that of farmers unbridgeable.

Perhaps a way forward can be found through the resolution route. A suitable resolution, which reposes faith in the idea of an MSP for agriculturists, can be passed by Parliament. The wordings of this can be cleared with the farmers through discussions. Then, it should be permitted to gain the concurrence of the non-NDA parties so that it can be passed unanimously. Indeed, if other parties are brought on board and not just the government parties, the Budget Session can be conducted with mutual suspicions abating as between the government and its opponents. The farmers' issue has brought up a wall between the government and the Opposition parties. This was on view when 20 parties boycotted the President's Address to the joint sitting of the two Houses to inaugurate the Budget Session.

However, in order to create a congenial atmosphere for the resumption of talks with the farmers, the government must immediately drop cases lodged against the farmers' leaders, accusing them of the Republic Day violence. These are the same individuals who had been holding talks with the farmers. How can they be invited for fresh talks with the sword of criminal cases hanging over them? Enough material is now available that indicates that the main body of farmers remained peaceful on January 26 and only a very small group of *agents provocateurs* took the law into their own hands. There is much to be gained if the government accepts this proposition.

Judicial correction

The Supreme Court collegium has reportedly withdrawn its recommendation to make an additional judge of the Bombay high court permanent following a series of back-to-back controversial judgments she recently delivered, of which two have attracted national attention, and condemnation. In one order, the judge decided that a person accused of groping a 12-year-old girl should not be given the maximum punishment under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act), 2012, because there was no skin-to-skin touch. In the second, she concluded that a man holding the hands of a minor girl and opening the zip of his pants cannot be convicted for "sexual assault" under POCSO Act but for "sexual harassment" under Indian Penal Code. The Supreme Court stayed the first order the very next day but its collegium chose to send the recommendation of the collegium to make her permanent. It has gone back on that decision now.

The two judgments triggered widespread outrage among the general public as well as the legal circles. The two judgments triggered widespread outrage among the general public as well as the legal circles. And there are many sound reasons, too. The judge refused to understand the legislative intention of POCSO Act, a special Act brought to protect the interests of children, one of the most vulnerable sections of society. The apex court is right in deciding that the judge needed better sensitisation on the subject.

This is not the first time that a judgment has assaulted the sense of justice of fair-minded people. A Supreme Court judgment referred to satisfying the "collective conscience of society" while confirming a death penalty. This is not the first time a well-thought-out piece of legislation has been turned upside down; the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014, which sought to replace the self-made collegium system of appointing judges in the higher judiciary, is a prime example. It is time the judiciary started taking steps to correct itself, and this could well be a major step towards that direction.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

K. SUDHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

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

Kishwar Desai
London Diary

King of Spices to be dearly missed; Boris really hated the 'L' milestone

We have had every kind of weather in London — but then that is the norm isn't it? It snowed one early morning and we woke up to white blankets on our road and trees and grass. Then there have been days when the sun shone brightly warming us all up though only for a few hours. Otherwise, the dull days of winter are only tolerable because there is no place to go but home! One cannot imagine that London — where the city never slept, where every form of entertainment was available 24/7, would be like this!

The lockdown continues and our death toll crossed 100,000, the worst in Europe and higher per million people than even America. Boris Johnson has always fancied himself as Winston Churchill, the wartime leader with Britain standing alone (apart from armies of India, Canada and Australia-New Zealand). But this was a milestone he hated announcing. For once he was sombre, nearly in tears at his press conference, when he had to pronounce the hated 'L' word.

But his luck has turned. The Vaccine Wars have broken out! The EU is imposing export control on vaccines manufactured on its territo-

stronger and smarter.

Whitehall may have done many things wrong but it was very smart at ordering vaccines in advance. The Oxford project was the first to announce their intentions so Boris ordered 100 million in a real gamble. Then when the Pfizer vaccine glimmered on the horizon, UK ordered 60 million. Quick approval followed and by early December, the above-80s and care workers began getting inoculated. By now eight million have been inoculated.

The European Union, on the other hand, has had a slow start. Their regulators took their time. After all, they have 27 countries to worry about. So now they are on a warpath with the UK, whom they feel has booked up all the vaccines, and the EU wants a large chunk of them. The vaccine can be invented in Oxford or Vienna but they are manufactured in many locations round the world. AstraZeneca who manufacture the Oxford vaccine have some assembly locations on the continent and others in UK. Same for the Pfizer.

The Vaccine Wars have broken out! The EU is imposing export control on vaccines manufactured on its terri-

to being exported to UK. Boris can at last put on his helmet and police the coastline to wait for 'our' vaccines to come to us. So be assured that the memoirs of Boris/Churchill (no doubt being already dictated) will be a bestseller.

But no country can afford to be complacent. Yes, the vaccination programme is ongoing — with huge inequalities. Some countries are moving ahead and others have barely started. The Vaccine Wars may yet take a wider, global form.

That apart, Covid has also created new stars, and put pressure on old ones! Entertainers and influencers are hatching more and more bizarre schemes to remain in the lime-light, as there are no public platforms except the Internet which is getting very crowded. Our newspapers are full of desperate looking people in costumes, weird cookery columns, unimaginable YouTube hits and unbelievable Instagram displays. You have to feel sorry for these people with no early chance of theatres or cinemas or music festivals restarting. And now musicians need separate visas for each EU country they want to perform in.

The British government in their hurry to Brexit forgot people need the bigger audience in Europe to earn their living. You can only do so much Zoom.

Meanwhile, some stars have even gone to the extent of breaking the lockdown rules openly. Rita Ora booked a restaurant in Notting Hill, invited friends, persuaded the restaurant to black out all the CCTV cameras and partied. The photos taken by her publicity staff were obviously much more glamorous than the CCTV cameras'. She was fined £5000 — and her name was splashed in all media. Now was it because she could never have managed so much publicity for so little? Hmmmm.

A real rags-to-riches story which transformed the British perception of India and Indian food came to a sad end last week when Kirit Patak, the owner of Patak Spices, died. Those of us who arrived here and craved Indian food know how much the Patak brand meant for our taste-buds. His parents had arrived in the mid-50s with the proverbial £5 in their pocket from Kenya. They worked the usual 16 hours a day preparing Indian recipes — samosas, pickles, ground

spices — even selling their products door-to-door. Kirit abandoned his college studies but brought management savvy to the business selling the stuff to White British — and not just Indian — families. This was in the 70s when Madhur Jaffrey's book on Indian cuisine came out and British middle classes were trying to make *masala dosa* at home. It was all about Patak spices, sauces and pickles. Kirit Patak eventually sold his business in UK for £60 million and retired to Dubai. Patak (shortened from Pathak to make it easy for the locals to pronounce) remains and will continue to remain an iconic brand.

Kishwar Desai is an award-winning author. The Longest Kiss: The Life and Times of Devika Rani is her new book.

Subhani



Elite clubs bastions of hereditary entitlement

Mohan Guruswamy

The control of the prestigious Delhi Gymkhana Club is now a bone of contention with the Central government seeking to take over its managing committee. Recently, a petition was filed by the ministry of corporate affairs in the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) seeking action under Sections 241 and 242 of the Companies Act, which allows a member of a company or the government to seek relief if the affairs of the entity are being run in a manner "prejudicial to public interest" or is "oppressive", among other things. The government had used the same provisions of the Companies Act to get NCLT approval to supersede the board of the bankrupt IL&FS in October 2018.

Incredibly, the Central government had cited "parivarvaad", or nepotism, financial irregularities, misuse of allocated land and issues related to membership, as the primary reasons for it to acquire the club. While it is at it, it might as well take a look at all other such elite clubs where nepotism is more rampant and where the real estate is often bigger and more valuable.

Every major city in India has such clubs. Most of the better-known ones are relics of the Raj and were meant as a private place for the ruling elite to socialise and fraternise. Being the ruling elite, they gave themselves tracts of public land for their private enjoyment. At a time when the whole country was for their private enjoyment, this raised few questions. After the white man departed, these clubs turned into a preserve of the new Indian elite — many called them the "brown

sabhs". The brown sabhs too have long gone and cannot aspire to memberships. Unlike the clubs of the past, which were extensions of a ruling hierarchy, today's clubs are mostly watering holes for the well-born, and more for card games than field games.

Generally speaking, an

elite means a more capable group of people. In sociological terms, an elite is a group of people who control a disproportionate share of wealth or power. C. Wright Mills in *The Power Elite* describes the power elite as "those political, economic, and military circles, which as an intricate set of overlapping small but dominant groups share decisions having at least national consequences". But most of our "elite" clubs defy such descriptions and have ceased to be based on social or official hierarchical or professional considerations, where membership was dependent on attainments and achievements. They are increasingly an association of neither the more capable people or a social elite or a power elite. They are just social clubs where membership is dependent on birth. The term "parivarvaad" used by the government in its petition describes a uniquely Indian system that combines dynastic succession and clan nepotism.

Clubs all over India are being increasingly been taken over by a hereditary membership. Most of these clubs have framed rules for themselves, which automatically confer their children membership, by virtue of being dependent members, a classification for members' children of a certain age group. Since these dependents are given priority, it is almost impossible for a non-dependent to become a

member. Most people who become members through the direct route do so late in their life, which means their children invariably cannot become dependent members.

The constitutionality of

hereditary membership is questionable, but who among the members will go out and challenge it? There are other implicit issues as well. Many of India's clubs are private clubs enjoying public land or land that could be deemed as "commons". The term "commons" refers to the cultural and natural resources that should be accessible to all members of a society, including natural materials such as air, water, and a habitable earth. The "common good" is a utilitarian ideal, which means "the greatest possible good for the greatest possible number of individuals". Many, like the philosopher Michael Sandel, believe that promoting the "common good" should be the main ideal of a democracy. Implicit in this is that the "commons" must only be for the "common good".

In 2014, Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, then making an entrance into national politics, specifically referred to the Delhi Golf Club as a prime instance of corruption and cronyism that allowed a small number of people to take possession of public property. Like the Delhi Gymkhana, the Delhi Golf Club promoted by the Telangana government on 105 acres of the Golconda fort's 155 acres. Though good part of its membership members, of which 2,295 have made the cut by virtue of being members' children. Incidentally, this club only has 173 ladies as permanent members.

In a few decades, these public commons too will become the preserve of a hereditary elite. It has even gone one better than most such clubs by making its membership fungible, affording indigent members a soft landing by transferring membership rights to their descendants.

In a few decades, these public commons too will become the preserve of a hereditary elite. It has even gone one better than most such clubs by making its membership fungible, affording indigent members a soft landing by transferring membership rights to their descendants.

It's only in the fitness of things that a government headed by a *chauvala's* son is now challenging this growing system of hereditary legitimacy.

The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

Rs 4.4 crore relief granted to city

HYDERABAD, JANUARY 31 The Central Government had sanctioned Rs 4.4 crore towards various measures for providing relief to the victims of the floods in the twin-cities.

It has sanctioned another sum of Rs 2.5 crore for flood relief works in Nizamabad district.

Chief Minister Mr K. Brahma Reddi, who returned from Delhi here today, told reporters that the amount sanctioned for the twin cities, Rs 230 lakh was marked for repairs to the surface and underground drainage systems including the embankments of the Musi river and Rs 75 lakh for repairs to roads and buildings.

The vaccine wars have broken out! The EU is imposing export control on vaccines manufactured on its territory from being exported to the UK.

spices — even selling their products door-to-door. Kirit abandoned his college studies but brought management savvy to the business selling the stuff to White British — and not just Indian — families. This was in the 70s when Madhur Jaffrey's book on Indian cuisine came out and British middle classes were trying to make *masala dosa* at home. It was all about Patak spices, sauces and pickles. Kirit Patak eventually sold his business in UK for £60 million and retired to Dubai. Patak (shortened from Pathak to make it easy for the locals to pronounce) remains and will continue to remain an iconic brand.

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SHORT TAKES**MP COP TOUCHES BJP LEADER'S FEET, STIRS ROW**

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JAN. 31

A police inspector in Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh stirred a row when he touched the feet of state BJP president V.D. Sharma late on Saturday evening.

A video showing Madhav Nagar police station in-charge Dinesh Prajapati touching Sharma's feet as the latter landed in Ujjain by a bus on Saturday evening to attend a party meeting in the city, went viral on Sunday.

The video showed Sharma patting the cop on his shoulder after being received by the latter in Ujjain. Later, the police inspector was seen touching Sharma's feet, in the video.

The cop later conceded that it was not proper on his part to touch feet of the BJP leader when he was in uniform.

"But, there is a human being behind the uniform. I touched his (Sharma's) feet since he was my senior in our college days. We also have family relations," he explained before the reports while trying to justify his actions.

Incidentally, a circular has been issued by the inspector general of police of a region in Madhya Pradesh asking the police to do away with the practice of touching feet of seniors while receiving them.

Congress has taken a jibe at ruling BJP over the incident.

MAOIST LEADER GUNNED DOWN IN ODISHA

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, JAN. 31

A Maoist leader was on Saturday night killed during an encounter with a combined team of Special Operations Group (SOG) and District Voluntary Force (DVF) in a forest near Nunkhari in Odisha's Kandhamal district, reports said on Sunday.

The Malkangiri district police sources said the security forces reportedly received "concrete inputs" about the presence of the Maoists' presence and their camp in Nunkhari forest and consequently launched an operation.

Soon after the combined forces raided the camp, the rebels opened fire at them. The security personnel immediately retaliated. The gun battle continued for around three hours. Unable to face the undiscriminating fire of the joint forces, the Maoists fled the area and slipped into the wilds.

The security personnel recovered the body of the slain extremist near the camp. The deceased Maoist, believed to be a senior rank leader, was yet to be identified.

Sources said that the rebels had set up a camp in the forest and planned to unleash fresh violence in the nearby areas.

NADDI SLAMS CONG OVER GRAFT IN PUDUCHERRY

Puducherry, Jan. 31: BJP president J.P. Nadda on Sunday asserted his party would sweep the coming Puducherry Assembly elections and assured people of the Union Territory a corruption-free and development-oriented government.

Alleging that corruption was rampant under the Congress government led by Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy, he said the BJP would win 23 of the 30 seats in the Union Territory Assembly in the polls, likely in the next few months.

The BJP in the UT has received a shot in the arm with former minister A. Namasivayam joining the party along with a former MLA recently.

"For the last 35 years under the Congress rule, 52 per cent of the population in the UT is below the poverty line," Nadda claimed, adding corruption extended to admissions in colleges offering professional courses as well.

Addressing a grand first election public meeting here, Nadda said the Congress government did not conduct local body elections for a long time and Central seats in colleges were not allotted to Puducherry students "due to corruption".

While 70 per cent was the grant in aid to Puducherry from the Centre during former prime minister A.B. Vajpayee's tenure, it was cut to 30 per cent when Narayanasamy became a minister at the Centre, he claimed.

Don't want govt to bow down: Tikait

Naresh Tikait says government must prepare an environment conducive for talks

New Delhi, Jan. 31: Farmer leader Naresh Tikait on Sunday said that protesting farmers will honour the dignity of the Prime Minister, but are also committed to protect their own self-respect, a day after Narendra Modi said his government was just a phone call away for talks with them.

Tikait said the government should release our men and prepare an environment conducive for talks.

A respectful solution should be reached. We will never agree to anything under pressure, he said at the Ghazipur border between Delhi and Uttar Pradesh.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had on Saturday said his government's offer on agri laws made to protesting farmers still stands and it was a just phone call away for talks, days after violence broke out in parts of the national capital on Republic Day.

"We will honour and respect the dignity of Prime Minister. Farmers don't want that the government or Parliament bows down to them," Tikait said.

"Will also ensure that the self-respect of farmers is protected. A middle way should be found. Talks should be held," he added.

During their January 26 parade, many of the protesters, driving tractors, reached the Red Fort while some of them hoisted religious flags on its domes and the flagstaff at the ramparts, where the national flag is unfurled by the Prime Minister on Independence Day.

Tikait said, The violence on January 26 was part of a conspiracy. The Tricolor is over and above everything. We will never let anyone disrespect it. It will not be tolerated, he said.

The Delhi Police has registered nearly 40 cases and made over 80 arrests in connection with the violence. The government should release our men and prepare an environment conducive for talks. — PTI

While Singh was later released, the police arrested Punia on Sunday. The



Farmers hold a tricolor to protest against the new farm laws at Ghazipur in New Delhi on Sunday. — PTI

Scribes held: Media bodies flay action

New Delhi, Jan. 31: Media bodies on Sunday condemned the police action against two journalists who were picked up during the farmers' protests at Delhi's Singhu border for allegedly misbehaving with police personnel.

They said such crackdowns impinge on the media's right to report freely and interferes with its right to freedom of expression, and freedom of the press as guaranteed by the Constitution of India, the bodies said in a joint statement.

They said Punia has been reporting on the farmers' agitation right from the beginning and his arrest "is part of the government crackdown on journalists to prevent them from doing their job independently and freely." — PTI

Indian Women's Press Corps, Press Club of India and the Press Association demanded Punia's immediate release and said no journalist should be disturbed while carrying out their duties at any place.

"Such crackdowns impinge on the media's right to report freely and interferes with its right to freedom of expression, and freedom of the press as guaranteed by the Constitution of India," the bodies said in a joint statement.

They said Punia has been reporting on the farmers' agitation right from the beginning and his arrest "is part of the government crackdown on journalists to prevent them from doing their job independently and freely." — PTI

Cong hits out at govt for FIRs on journosDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 31

The Congress on Sunday launched a scathing attack on the arrest of a journalist who was covering the farmer protest at the Singhu border. Senior leader Rahul Gandhi

said journalists covering the farmers' movement are being arrested, cases are being slapped against them and the internet is being shut down in many

places. She tweeted, "The BJP government wants to trample upon the voice of the farmers, but they have forgotten that the more you suppress, the more voices will rise against your atrocities."

On Saturday also the Congress had hit out against BJP governments for filing cases against journalists and Congress Lok Sabha MP Dr Shashi Tharoor.

Priyanka Gandhi had tweeted in Hindi "Respecting democracy is not the government's prerogative but it is its responsibility. The atmosphere of fear is like poison for democracy. The BJP has torn to shreds the dignity of democracy by FIRs against senior journalists and public representatives."

SISODIA SLAMS BJP FOR FAKE KEJRIWAL VIDEODC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 31

Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia on Sunday lashed out at Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and said that the viral video of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal promoting farm laws is doctored.

While addressing a press conference, Sisodia said,

"Yesterday the BJP and its spokesperson posted a doctored video of Arvind Kejriwal ji stating benefits of farm laws. I was furious over it, but also felt sad for BJP that it had to post a distorted video clip of Arvind ji to establish the credibility of the laws."

Sisodia further targeted the Centre and said that it has lost its credibility.

"Today, not only BJP, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also lost credibility. BJP understands this very well, that is why they posted a doctored video of Arvind Kejriwal ji," he added.

In a tweet in Hindi, the national spokesperson of BJP Sambit Patra on Saturday shared a video of Arvind Kejriwal and said, "Sir ji (Arvind Kejriwal) counts the benefits of three farm laws. The government has always backed the rationale behind the farm laws but their implementation has already been stayed by the Supreme Court.

Modi said, "The country was saddened by the insult to the tricolour on Jan. 26 in Delhi. We have to infuse the times to come with new hope and novelty. Last year, we displayed exemplary patience and courage. This year too, we have to work hard to attain our resolves. We have to take our country forward at a faster pace."

On India's Covid vaccination drive, Modi said: "Our vaccination programme too is turning out to be exemplary to the world."

PM SADDENED BY 'INSULT' TO NATION FLAG ON REPUBLIC DAYDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 31

Breaking his silence on the shocking events that took place at the Red Fort just after the majestic Republic Day parade on January 26, when unruly elements brandishing swords and sticks had attacked policemen and hoisted a flag other than the national tricolour at the iconic venue, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that the "country was saddened by the insult to the tricolor on January 26 in Delhi".

Delivering his monthly "Mann ki Baat" address, Modi said "we have to infuse the times to come with new hope and novelty". This was the only direct, but brief, reference to the tumultuous events of that day in his speech, that otherwise focused on India's vaccine programme, the Padma honours for "unsung heroes", innovation, self-reliance and development.

It may be recalled that these shocking events had taken place in Delhi shortly after noon when some irate farmers, mostly from Punjab, Haryana and western UP, had taken out a "tractor rally" as part of their protests against the three farm laws. The government has always backed the rationale behind the farm laws but their implementation has already been stayed by the Supreme Court.

Modi said, "The country was saddened by the insult to the tricolour on Jan. 26 in Delhi. We have to infuse the times to come with new hope and novelty. Last year, we displayed exemplary patience and courage. This year too, we have to work hard to attain our resolves. We have to take our country forward at a faster pace."

On India's Covid vaccination drive, Modi said: "Our vaccination programme too is turning out to be exemplary to the world."

Fish from farms not safe: Report

Patna, Jan. 31: Consumers of fish and shrimps across the country could be staring at a health hazard on account of appalling standards of hygiene and reckless use of chemicals at farms where these are reared, says a study.

Jointly conducted by the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisation (FIAPO) and the All Creatures Great and Small (ACGS), the study is based upon investigation of 250 farms across 10 of the highest fish-producing states.

States like Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Assam were surveyed for freshwater fish while Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Puducherry were covered for both fresh water and seawater varieties.

All the fish farms lacked basic maintenance and were littered, and open defecation is a regular practice near the fish farms. All the fish farms had poor dissolved oxygen levels, which means fish were struggling to survive with high mortality rates.

"We have found shocking conditions in this growing sector. Fish are kept in cramped, filthy enclosures, with no waste management. They are cut up alive. The contaminated water from these fish farms is released into local water bodies and estuaries that spread the parasites further, causing

harm to the fish population as well as humans", Verda Mehrotra, executive director of FIAPO, said in a release.

She said in Bihar, the investigation was carried out in the districts of East Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Begusarai and Patna covering 20 fish farms.

100 per cent of the fish farms had toxic levels of lead and cadmium, scoring extremely poor on the public health hazard scale (0.25/1).

Additionally, cent per cent of fish farms had no outlets, which implied dirty water being re-circulated posing a grave threat to fish and human health.

Several farmers admitted massive losses due to prevalent diseases and massive floods every year.

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"We have found shocking conditions in this growing sector. Fish are kept in cramped, filthy enclosures, with no waste management. They are cut up alive. The contaminated water from these fish farms is released into local water bodies and estuaries that spread the parasites further, causing

"it did not happen in WB".

"The PM provided five kg rice and one kg dal for 80 crore people of the country for eight months during the pandemic, the rations were looted by the party in the state.

Irani deputised for Union home minister Amit Shah at the programme in Howrah district.

Shah's two-day visit to the state was cancelled at the last minute due to the ongoing protest by farmers in Delhi and an explo-

nation.

"We have found shocking conditions in this growing sector. Fish are kept in cramped, filthy enclosures, with no waste management. They are cut up alive. The contaminated water from these fish farms is released into local water bodies and estuaries that spread the parasites further, causing

"it did not happen in WB".

"The PM provided five kg rice and one kg dal for 80 crore people of the country for eight months during the pandemic, the rations were looted by the party in the state.

Modi will meet the LPG requirement in West Bengal, supply gas to Matix Fertiliser Plant at Durgapur as anchor customers, in addition to supplying gas to industrial, commercial and automobile sectors and city gas distribution across all major towns in these states, including cities of Hazaribagh, Bokaro, Dhanbad, Jamshedpur, Purulia, Asansol and Durgapur.

The Prime Minister will also launch LPG Import Terminal, built by Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited at an investment of ₹1,100 crore.

It will meet the LPG requirement in West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, parts of Uttar Pradesh and North Eastern states.

Modi will lay the foundation stone of the second Catalytic Dewaxing Unit, at the Haldia Refinery of Indian Oil Corporation, built at ₹1,019 crore to help augment the lubricant production.

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INDIAN TOP 10
BESTSELLERS

NON-FICTION
1 GHALIB: A WILDERNESS AT MY DOORSTEP: A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY
 Mehr Afshan Farooqi
 Allen Lane, ₹799

2 THE BATTLE OF BELONGING
 Shashi Tharoor
 Aleph, ₹799

3 THE PRESIDENTIAL YEARS 2012-2017
 Pranab Mukherjee
 Rupa, ₹695

4 A PROMISED LAND
 Barack Obama
 Penguin Viking, ₹1,999

5 INDIAN ECONOMY'S GREATEST CRISIS
 Arun Kumar
 Penguin Portfolio, ₹499

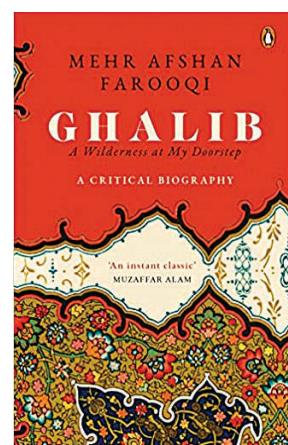
6 VAJPAYEE: THE YEARS THAT CHANGED INDIA
 Shakti Singh
 Penguin Vintage
 ₹599

7 REMNANTS OF A SEPARATION
 Aanchal Malhotra
 HarperCollins
 ₹599

8 JUGALBANDI: THE BJP BEFORE MODI
 Vinay Sitapati
 Penguin Viking, ₹799

9 THE TALE OF THE HORSE: A HISTORY OF INDIA ON HORSEBACK
 Yashaswini Chandra
 Pan Macmillan, ₹699

10 THE KHALISTAN CONSPIRACY
 G.B. Sidhu,
 HarperCollins
 ₹599



FICTION

1 SHUGGIE BAIN
 Douglas Stuart
 Picador, ₹499

2 THE DISCOMFORT OF EVENING
 Marieke Lucas Rijneveld
 Faber & Faber, ₹499

3 THE LAST QUEEN
 Chitra Banerjee
 Divakaruni
 HarperCollins, ₹599

4 A TIME FOR MERCY
 John Grisham
 Hodder & Stoughton
 ₹699

5 WRITERS & LOVERS
 Lily King
 Picador, ₹699

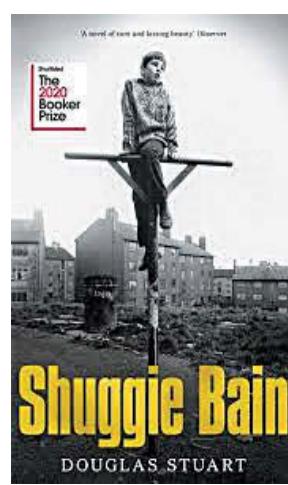
6 HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT
 Jeffrey Archer,
 Pan Macmillan, ₹450

7 HAMNET
 Maggie O' Farrell
 Tinder Press, ₹699

8 THE ARCHER
 Paulo Coelho
 Penguin Viking
 ₹250

9 WHAT THE BODY REMEMBERS
 Shauna Singh Baldwin
 Tara- India Research
 Press, ₹599

10 DAYLIGHT
 David Baldacci
 Pan Macmillan
 ₹650



Mukherjee: A status quoist in the culminating analysis



Anand K. Sahay

review

One may quarrel with the ideas of prominent political figures even when these are published only after their death in keeping with the embargo they placed on their writing being made public. But this does not seem necessary in the case of the late Pranab Mukherjee, whose long career in politics — during much of which he held high executive positions — was based on his elevation to the office of President (2012-17).

The reason is that he takes few unexpected turns. The Constitution is his rulebook and guide, and on the whole he shows himself to be a fairly traditional interpreter of that basic document of the republic he served in so many capacities. At any rate, he shows himself in this book as one who shies away from causing a flutter.

In this volume, the last of five he wrote while being in Rashtrapati Bhavan, criticisms are made in elliptical fashion, and in the end no offence is really meant to be caused. The name of the game is stability at all costs, and this is where the former President may be thought of as being at his most fragile.

Mukherjee's presidential years saw India being convulsed by actions of violent civilian gangs in all parts of the country. These non-state actors

appeared to have the blessing of state actors. In his capacity as Rashtrapati, Mukherjee did indeed express sorrow at these grotesque happenings that mauled the spirit of the Constitution. Yet, in *The Presidential Years* there is no reference to this disturbing phenomenon which, in the reading of careful observers in India and around the world, has placed this country on a slippery path.

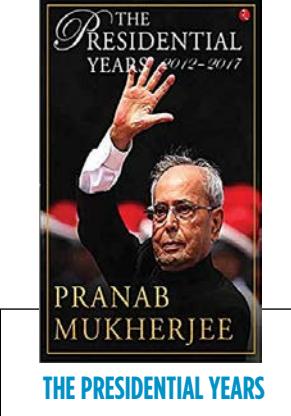
There is "an attempt on my part to place before the readers the functions and duties, and the challenges that I encountered, during my tenure as President," says the protagonist. But in the writing he has gone well beyond his presidency. There are references, for instance, to Balakot, the so-called surgical strike against Pakistan, and to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's return to power in 2019 with a bigger majority than in 2014. And yet, there is no mention of the author's visit to the RSS headquarters in Nagpur in June 2018, eleven months after he demitted office as President, although that event caused agonised debate in the country and his own daughter, who is with the Congress Party, was left criticising her father. This would seem a calculated omission.

Nor is there a reference to the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution in August 2019, which has shaken not just

Kashmir but India, and is arguably a hard-to-ford watershed in the life of the making of India as a republic with the consent of all her people. Did the publishers impose a cut-off date on the author? We shall never know. The introduction, which is in the nature of a preface, is left undated.

The last part of the book, in patches, may elicit the interest even of the discerning reader, as when the author speaks of the India-US-Japan "axis". Since there is no elaboration, it is hard to say if this was unintended or is an example of a Freudian slip. There are also some interesting tidbits here, as when President Barack Obama, in New Delhi as the chief guest for Republic Day in 2015, confounded President Mukherjee with his extempore rendering of the latter's career which was so inaccurate that it made Mukherjee gasp.

The former Indian president also recalls his visit to China



By PRANAB MUKHERJEE
 Rupa
 ₹695

when, at the banquet, President Xi Jinping made the Indian head of state lecture him for one whole hour on India's constitution and its functioning and the Chinese interpreter was kept away, except when the visiting dignitary spoke of the boundary question!

The affair made then foreign secretary (now external affairs minister) S. Jaishankar sweat. If the story speaks of Mr Xi's shrewdness, Mukherjee is silent on whether he probed the Chinese boss-man in turn. At any rate, in the book the former president's rendering of our foreign policy approach seems anecdote. There is an absence of both nuance and gravitas considering that the author was once external affairs minister and played a long hand as cabinet minister with four Prime Ministers.

The early chapters make for dour reading, although there are some interesting reflections. At the start one may even detect some wistfulness that Congress chief Sonia Gandhi did not name Mukherjee Prime Minister, though this is not made quite explicit.

Says the author, "Some members of the Congress have theorised that, had I become the PM in 2004, the party might have averted the 2014 Lok Sabha drubbing. Though I don't subscribe to this view, I do believe that the party's leadership lost political focus after my elevation as president." In the same short section, he contradictorily notes, "I firmly believe that my presence in active politics would have ensured that the Congress wouldn't have faced the drubbing it received in the 2014 general elections."

There is perhaps just one major bold assertion in the

book, and it's at the beginning. If the Lok Sabha election in 2014 had thrown up a hung Parliament, and even if the Congress had emerged "with fewer seats (than the first party) but promised a stable government, I would have invited the leader of the party to form the government, keeping in mind their previous track record in managing coalition governments successfully."

And Mukherjee goes on to say with frankness, "This would have been in contravention of the convention established by the former president, Shankar Dayal Sharma, of inviting the single-largest party to form the government. He had invited Vajpayee to form the government after a hung House in 1996, despite lack of clarity on Vajpayee's numbers. I was convinced even before the 2014 elections that I would not be neutral between stability and instability."

The level of the book would have been lifted if there were more glimpses of candour and clearly enunciated assessments in place of routine descriptions of institutional plodding. Forays into colonial history with references to the early 19th century Subsidiary Alliance and mid-19th century Doctrine of Lapse in the context of the conceptual emergence of the idea of federalism in India are clearly out of place. The editors have been less than alert in overlooking slips such as the year of Afghanistan joining SAARC. All said and done, though, the book will hold a place, being the reflection of one of modern India's most experienced politicians who held nearly every top job in the country except that of Prime Minister.

'Chick lit' that loses plot after promising start



Aditi Sriram

review

Richa S. Mukherjee's third novel, *Excess Baggage*, opens with suspense, sarcasm, and a mother-daughter squabble. The book's cover and opening pages hint at a light read: two opinionated women who can't stop arguing, who vacation in London where they... can't stop arguing. If the book's underlying message is that mothers and daughters are inseparable while irreconcilable, many readers will surely relate.

The mother and daughter here are Smita, an enterprising clothes designer, and Anviksha, a trained anthropologist. Smita has raised Anviksha as a single mother and Anviksha has just divorced her second husband. At first glance, these two protagonists have potential.

Anviksha decides that she needs a change of scene after divorce number two, and books a trip to London. Her mother insists on accompanying her. They argue about this, and finally Anviksha gives in. *Excess Baggage* is the story of Anviksha's no-longer-solo trip, now laden with her mother's personality and demands, not to mention her own emotional baggage. Mukherjee has set up an exciting opportunity for these two characters. Her readers are primed for a comedy of errors and surprises in London.

But this is where the book stops delivering. In spite of a promising set up, and some genuinely funny lines throughout the book, *Excess Baggage* deflates after the characters begin their one-month vacation. Anviksha insists that her trip, although inspired by the 2011 Bollywood movie *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*, will not mimic it. But many scenes seem straight out of a movie. Smita's food-stuffed suitcase is stopped at customs in airport; the crisis ends with her distributing homemade laxatives to stern British officials. A few days later, Anviksha finds that her mother has gathered several Indian men at their lodgings, for a swayamvar. In another scene, Smita ends up in the middle of a flashmob, leading the group in bhangra moves. The duo even spends a weekend in Amsterdam, where they bump into Anviksha's estranged father at a strip club. Each of these scenes is short and often humorous, but they either begin or end with an argument. And while mother-daughter clashes are inevitable, Mukherjee denies either character any space on the page to reflect, reconcile, or properly recover. Their disagreements become boring and repetitive, rather than advance the plot.

Mukherjee's choice of London is also overwhelming. While *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* actually utilises its different settings to evoke exciting new cultures, Smita and Anviksha are mentally trapped in India. Smita prefers her own snacks to eating out; Anviksha spends more time chatting with her friends back in Mumbai, than interacting with the city. In fact, their exposure to British life is surprisingly limited. Even though they are staying with Anviksha's cousin Preeti, Anviksha does not explore the city with her, or meet any of her friends. Instead, they attend Preeti's British boyfriend's teenage brother's birthday party, wasting pages on stereotypical dialogues between garrulous Indian aunties and buttoned up Britshers.

Anviksha is supposedly an anthropologist, but doesn't ever act on those instincts. She visits tourist sites in London, scoffs at her mother's memories of Partition, and writes off her two brief marriages without any introspection. If readers hope to experience a foreign city, or family tensions, through an expert on human behaviour, they will be disappointed.

"Chick Lit" in India, written in English, is at least 20 years old. But Mukherjee's latest work seems neither experimental nor substantial. *Excess Baggage* is trying to be many things at once, which ends up sounding more confused than comical. If you want to vicariously enjoy a trip abroad, follow Anviksha's idea and watch *ZNMD* instead.

Aditi Sriram teaches writing at Ashoka University and has authored Beyond the Boulevards: A Short Biography of Pondicherry (2019)

Maggie Ferguson

review

icy in winter that even men wear gloves, she began to chat to riggers in flock-wallpapered bars as they shuttled on- and offshore. She recorded 103 interviews.

Why do the riggers speak to her? Because they're bored, and she's intriguing. In her early thirties, with a partner or children, she's posh: she eats fish without a coat of batter, and buys rounds of drinks. She pops pills with the toughest of them.

Reading Lasley's prose is like having a long conversation with someone highly intelligent, intuitive and more sensitive than she dares let on. Gradually, a picture of emerges. Their offshore living quarters are so cramped as to drive them near crazy. When you have five men to a cabin, and ten to a bathroom, tiny courtesies loom large: "Wipe your spit off the taps when you clean your teeth; mop your piss off the toilet seat; rinse your stubble away."

They work hard: 12-hour shifts for 21 days on the trot. Exhaustion begets mistakes. There are fires, chemical burns, wildly swinging loads. Rigs can and do sink. Explosions cause ripped-apart bulkheads and exposed wiring. If you touch an exposed wire 'your hand will close around it and you'll cling on convulsively until the voltage kills you'. More than 30 years on, the Piper Alpha disaster, in which 167 men died, and a fire raged for three weeks, still haunts them.

But the rigs' greatest casualties are marriages. What the men call 'Intermittent Husband Syndrome' lures wives to stray. When the men get home, meantime, they need to decompress. They drink (not allowed offshore) and throw themselves into wild flings, ramming single beds together in cheap hotels, using burner phones, like on *Line of Duty*. "I fuck her the way I can't fuck my wife," one confesses.

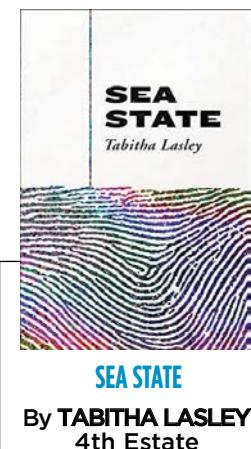
In a move that makes great copy, but is otherwise disastrous, Lasley shacks up with a rigger she calls 'Caden' — married, father of two. He likes *Love Island* and biographies of drug barons, and he's good in bed. Somehow, his wife gets hold of Lasley's mobile number, and bombs her with messages: "I no longer work. I can course you a lot of problems." Caden promises he'll stay with her forever. Then he sets off to pick up his

clothes and possessions, and never comes back.

At this point, *Sea State* morphs from a book about men to one about loneliness, and Lasley's despair post-Caden makes for painful reading. She's reached the age when her friends are not just marrying and having children, but getting divorced. Her mother dishes out desperate, deranged advice: she's heard Robert Peston talking on the radio about how he lost his wife, and would like to marry again. She suggests Lasley find a way of contacting him. And all the while she's stuck in Aberdeen, a rain-soaked city full of drifting shoals of itinerant workers. She'd describe herself as miles from home, but there's no home to go back to.

Lasley is a really talented writer, but her book, for me, had one disappointment. I've spent many summers in the Scottish Highlands, staring out at the oil rigs scattered across the Cromarty Firth. I long to know what it's like to be on one: what does the work actually involve? What is the chain of command? When the winter brings 90-mile-an-hour gales, what stops you falling off? But boarding a rig is — quite reasonably — not in Lasley's remit. So, much though I admire this book, I'd love another, short and preferably illustrated. If *Ladybird* would add a latecomer — *The Rigger* — to the 'People at Work' series, I'd snap it up.

By arrangement with the Spectator



By TABITHA LASLEY
 4th Estate
 £14.99

FAST FACT: I wanted not a window on the world but the world itself, wrote Joan Didion who joined *Vogue* magazine as a promotional copywriter and while there published her first novel, *Rin, River*. But she was to make her name as a critic and memoirist. Didion wrote *The Year of Magical Thinking* in response to the death of her husband, John Gregory Dunne. The memoir about her daughter, Quintana's death, is called *Blue Nights*.

Sridhar Balan

review

There are some books that you get so caught up with reading, even lose a bit of yourself, that you are reluctant for it to come to an end. So you savour it slowly, relishing every page and occasionally reminiscing, as book lovers are prone to do. *The Bookseller's Tale* is one such book and the only reason its reading was completed, was because the deadline for its review was approaching.

One exception was Ram Advani (1920-2016), the legendary *nawabi* bookseller of Hazratganj, Lucknow. Ram, along with Shanbhag of the famous Strand Book Stall in Mumbai, constitutes two very pre-eminent bookmen in India and we deserve a fuller account of their lives. It has always been my great pity that in all the years I knew Ram (he

would have turned a hundred years last year), I never got him to reflect a little more full on his life and put down his reminiscences. I did broach the topic to him on more than one occasion but he always waved it away with a deprecative wave — "who would be interested in my life?" I had to content myself with a chapter on him in my book.

Ram would have loved *The Bookseller's Tale*. He would have seen a bit of himself, too, in some of the pages. More importantly, he would have stocked some copies in his bookshop and with his usual skills, sold a few in spite of its price.

Martin Latham is not the typical bookseller. Currently the manager of the Waterstones bookshop in Canterbury, he has a PhD in Indian History from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. His supervisor was Peter

Marshall whose works on India Ram used to stock. Everywhere in the book we see evidence of Latham's academic training. The book is a virtual 'tour de force' of book history, of legendary booksellers and pedlars, of margin-

alia and scribblings which have a history of their own, of comfort books, of book collectors and libraries, of book-selling histories even amidst adversity in Paris, Venice and England and, above all, of reading. The book is a testament to the power and to the joy of reading. The book was 10 years in the making and in his introduction Latham begins with an account of a book that has not moved a centimetre in 800 years! It is on the tomb of Eleanor of Aquitaine in Fontevraud Abbey near Poitiers. "Her turbulent life is all behind her; as she lies in deep repose, holding up an open Bible. She rests as we all do in bed when, finished with talking or tea, we become one with a book, lost in a private world. Curled up with a book, we continue to find new selves. The story of humanity's love affair with books is, one of our strangest tales."

What follows is a fantastic career in bookselling meeting personalities like Dirk Bogarde, Francis Bacon, Spike Milligan, Umberto Eco and Antonia Fraser, Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes, all of whom gave talks at the various bookshops in which he worked. Finally, Latham joins the Waterstones group, a chain store started by Tim

SHORT TAKES
GUNMEN KILL COP IN PAK

Peshawar, Jan. 31: A Pakistani police officer was killed and two others were injured when unidentified gunmen opened fire on them here on Saturday. Counter Terrorism Department Inspector Khushdil Khan was killed, while Assistant Sub-inspector Bakht Zeb Khan and constable Iftikhar — sustained bullet wounds.

Mexico: 4 out of 19 bodies identified

Ciudad Victoria, Mexico, Jan. 31: Mexico has identified at least four of the 19 bodies found shot and burnt near the US border, prosecutors said Saturday. Two Guatemalans — believed to be migrants — and two Mexicans were identified by their DNA after authorities discovered the bodies on January 22, the prosecutor's office in the northern state of Tamaulipas said.

It said members of the Interior Ministry's national search commission had been added to the investigation for "greater transparency", in collaboration with the foreign ministry and the Guatemalan embassy in Mexico. "It was determined that 16 correspond to the male sex, one to the female sex, and two are pending clarification" due to the severity of the burning, the

prosecutors said. A team of forensics experts, dentists, geneticists and criminology specialists has been formed to identify the victims. Residents of the Guatemalan town of Comitancillo suspect at least a dozen of the victims are their relatives, according to authorities in the Central American country.

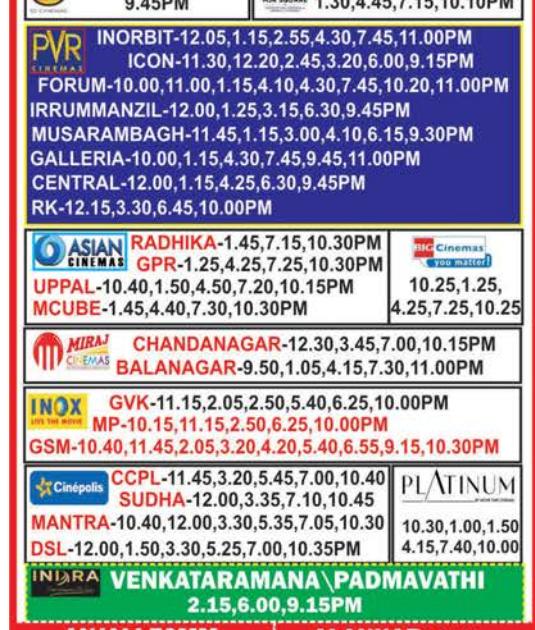
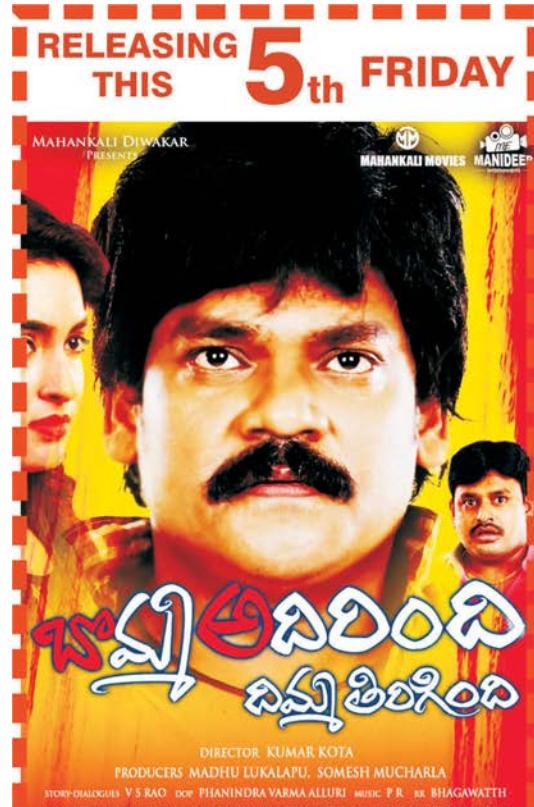
Authorities in Tamaulipas, who worked with the neigh-

bouring state of Nuevo Leon, established that 113 bullets were fired into a vehicle where the bodies were found.

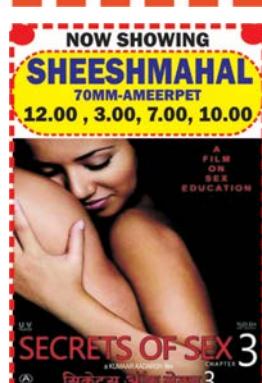
Tamaulipas, on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, is the shortest route to the United States from Guatemala, but it is dangerous because of the presence of gangs that kidnap, extort, and murder migrants.

— AFP

CINEMA



ENJOY COFFEE BREAK
EVERYDAY IN HYDERABAD CHRONICLE



Police detain a man during a rally in support of jailed Opposition leader Alexei Navalny in Saint Petersburg on Sunday. — AFP

3,000 arrested in pro-Navalny stir

Protesters defied govt warnings on rally, demand release of Kremlin critic

Moscow, Jan. 31: Police detained more than 3,000 people across Russia and blocked off the centre of Moscow Sunday in a massive clampdown on protests demanding the release of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

Thousands of protesters defied government warnings to rally from Vladivostok to Saint Petersburg in a second weekend of mass demonstrations over the arrest of President Vladimir Putin's most prominent critic.

Navalny was detained at a Moscow airport in mid-January after flying back to Russia from Germany where he was recovering from an August poisoning he blames on the Kremlin.

The 44-year-old anti-corruption campaigner is being held in a Moscow detention centre and faces years of potential jail time in several different criminal cases, despite calls from Western governments for his release.

44-year-old anti-corruption campaigner, Alexei Navalny, is being held in a Moscow detention centre and faces years of potential jail time in several different criminal cases, despite calls from Western governments for his release.

35 people working for media outlets were also detained on Sunday.

part in the demonstration. Independent monitor OVD-Info said at least 3,062 people had been detained across the country, including 844 in Moscow, and arrests were continuing. It reported more than 4,000 detentions during similar protests last Saturday.

The Russian Union of Journalists said around 35 people working for media outlets were also detained on Sunday.

In moves not seen in years in Moscow, authorities locked down the centre of the capital Sunday, with hundreds of police lining the streets, central Metro stations closed and the movements of pedestrians restricted.

Protesters who had hoped to gather outside the headquarters of the FSB security service were instead scattered to various parts of the city as organisers made last-minute changes in locations.

AFP journalists saw dozens of protesters detained and taken into police vans. It was unclear amid the chaos of how many people took

its affairs and of using "online platforms controlled by Washington" to promote the protests.

Hundreds marched through the centre of Moscow chanting "Freedom!" and "Putin is a thief!" before arriving outside Matrosskaya Tishina prison where Navalny was being held.

Several dozen were detained at the prison, with police chasing down protesters in the snow outside the complex.

"The people in power don't want to listen to anything or to anybody," 34-year-old vet Darya said at the Moscow rally.

In the second city of Saint Petersburg, police closed off the main thoroughfare Nevsky Prospekt, shut Metro stations and police cars were parked all along the centre, an AFP journalist reported.

Police were seen roughly detaining several protesters, including one young man who was left with a bloodied head. Local media reported that police used tear gas and tasers in the city, while one policeman reportedly threatened protesters with his service weapon.

"The whole centre is cordoned off," said Natalya Grigoryeva, who came to the Saint Petersburg rally with her daughter. "And who is this all against, against their own people?" Earlier protesters had rallied in cities including the Pacific port of Vladivostok, where dozens escaped the police on the frozen waters of the Amur Bay and danced in a circle.

— AFP

Pope sets date to honour elders, grandparents

Vatican City, Jan. 31: Pope Francis has established an annual date to honour grandparents and other elders, lamenting that they are often forgotten despite the wisdom they have to offer.

Francis on Sunday announced that every year, on the fourth Sunday of July, the Roman Catholic Church will pay tribute to older adults who have "thoughts and words of wisdom" to offer. This year, Francis will celebrate a special Mass in honour of them on the evening of July 25, pandemic restrictions permitting, the Vatican said.

In customary Sunday noon remarks, Francis noted that each year on July 26, the church honours Saints Anne and Joachim, the parents of Jesus' mother, Mary.

Grandparents, Francis said, transmit "life and faith" experiences to the young. The pope, who is 84 and a frequent booster of grandparents in his remarks for their value to society, cited the "thoughts and

words of wisdom" of older adults.

"Their voice is precious because they sing the praises of God and preserve the roots of peoples," Francis said from the Apostolic Palace Library instead of from a window overlooking St. Peter's Square to discourage crowds from gathering in the Covid-19 pandemic.

"They remind us that old age is a gift, and that grandparents are the ring linking generations, to transmit to young people the experience of life and faith," the pope said.

"Grandparents, so many times, are forgotten, and we forget this richness of safeguarding and transmitting roots," Francis is said. "It's important that grandparents encounter grandchildren and encounter grandparents," Francis said.

He added that "grandparents will dream, will have great desires, in regards to grandchildren, and the young, taking strength from grandparents, will go forward."

— AP

FIJI CYCLONE: ONE DEAD, FIVE MISSING

Suva, Fiji, Jan. 31: At least one person was dead and five were missing Sunday as Fiji was battered by a tropical cyclone for the second time in a month. Cyclone Ana, a Category Two storm, slammed into the South Pacific island nation with winds up to 140 kilometres an hour and heavy rain, causing widespread flooding.

The National Disaster Management Office said a 49-year-old man drowned while four fishermen and a three-year-old boy were missing. More than 7,600 people, many of them rescued from flooded villages, were taking shelter in evacuation centres. Reports said the three-year-old went missing when he accompanied his grandfather to check their boat.

NDMO director Vatsi Soko said people continued to ignore warnings against venturing out. "We are in the midst of a cyclone with widespread flooding throughout the country, yet we continue to receive reports of members of the public, adults and children alike, she said.

In December, four people died and 23,000 people fled their homes when super cyclone Yasa flattened entire villages.

— AP

FEEL GOOD LOVE STORY

Don't miss beginning

**SUDARSHAN 35**

(Enjoy 4k laser projection & dolby atmos sound)

RTC X ROADS

11.00, 2.15, 6.00, 9.15PM**MEGHA 70MM-DILSUKHNAGAR****11.15,2.15,6.15,9.15PM****MALLIKARJUNA 70MM****11.30,2.30,6.30,9.30PM****MAHALAXMI COMPLEX****11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM****PRASANTH 70MM-SEC'BAD****11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM****VENKATARAMANA/PADMAVATHI****11.15 & 6.15PM(2 SHOWS)****OAMB****10.30, 10.55, 1.30, 1.45, 4.25, 4.40,****7.10, 7.45, 10.10, 10.35PM****PRASAD MULTIPLEX****11.45, 2.30, 5.15, 8.00, 10.45PM****UPPAL-10.50,1.45,4.40,7.35,10.30****RADHIKA-10.45,1.35,4.30,10.15PM****MCUBE-10.40,1.35,4.30,7.25,10.20PM****GPR-10.40,1.35,4.30,7.35,10.25PM****SIVAGANGA-11.15,2.15,6.15,9.15PM****KOMPALLY-10.50,1.45,4.40,7.35,10.30****ASIAN CINEMAS****10.50,1.45,4.40,7.35,10.30PM****TIVOLI SCREEN****11.00,2.00,4.45,7.40,10.30PM****PVR FORUM-10.40, 11.20, 12.00, 1.45, 03.05,****04.50, 06.10, 07.55, 09.15, 11.00PM****RK PLEX-10.40, 1.45, 04.50, 07.55, 11.00PM****INORBIT-10.00, 11.50, 1.05, 2.55, 4.10, 06.10, 7.15,****09.15, 10.20PM****CENTRAL-10.40,12.05,1.25,1.45,4.50,7.55,11.00****ICON-01.15,4.20,6.10,7.25,9.15,10.30PM****GALLERIA-10.00,12.05,1.05,3.10,4.10,6.15,7.15,****9.20,10.20PM****IRRUMANZIL-12.15,3.20,4.20,6.25,7.25,9.30,10.30****MUSARBAGH-12.00,1.05,3.50,6.10,7.25,9.15,10.30****CCPL-10.30,12.15,3.40,5.30,7.05,10.30****DSL-10.30,12.30,4.00,7.25,9.00,10.50****MANTRA-11.00,12.30,2.25,3.55,7.20,9.00,10.45PM****SUDHA-11.45,3.10,6.35,10.00PM****BIG Cinemas****10.10,1.35,4.40,7.30,11.00PM****ASIAN CINEMAS MALLPUR****11.30,2.30,6.30,9.30PM****S2 CINEMAS MALLPUR****10.50,12.00,3.05,6.10,7.25,9.15,10.30PM****BVK MULTIPLEX LBNAGAR****10.45,1.45,4.45,7.45,10.45PM****PLATINUM****11.00,1.30,4.45,7.15,10.30PM****MIRAJ CINEMAS****CHANDA-12.00,3.15,6.30,9.45PM****BALANAGAR-10.20,11.00,1.30,2.00,4.40,7.50,11.00****KOTHAPET-10.20,11.00,1.30,2.00,4.40,7.50,11.00****INOX****GVK-10:40,12:05,5:30,6:55,9:15,10:20****MP-11:00,12:00,3:25,6:50,9:30,10:15PM****GSM-11:00,12:15,2.30,3:40,6:00,7:00,9:30,10:30****SANGEET 70MM-R.C.PURAM****(Fully renovated with latest equipment)****11.30, 2.30, 6.30, 9.30PM****SRISAIARAM 70MM-MALAKAJGIRI****11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15PM****RAMAKRISHNA 35MM-ABIDS****11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15PM****SUSHMA 70MM****11.15,2.15,6.15,9.15PM****VYJAYANTHI****11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM****RANGA 70MM****11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM****EESHWAR70MM****11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM****BR HITECH70MM****11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM****SREERAMULU****SRIDEVI170-CH.GUDA****11.30,2.30,6.30,9.30PM****SREERAMA****11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM****AMBA70MM****11.30,2.30,6.30,9.30PM****VIJETHA70MM****11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM****SREEPREMA 70****11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM****KRISHNA ALIYABAD****11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM****METRO70MM****11.30,2.30,6.00,9.00PM****GANESH 70MM****11.30,2.30,6.15,9.15PM****SANTOSH IBPATNAM****11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM****SAIPOOJA70****11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM****SRINIVASA70MM****11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM****VENKATASAI****11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM**

Protesters disrupt LA vaccination site

Los Angeles, Jan. 31: Protesters briefly disrupted a Coronavirus vaccination distribution centre at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles, United States media reported Saturday.

Several dozen people carrying signs demanding the end of lockdowns and promoting anti-vaccination conspiracy theories gathered at the entrance to the site, one of the largest in the US, social media posts showed.

"There appears to be



Thousands of Ultra-Orthodox Jews attend a funeral procession for the Head of the Brisk Yeshiva, Rabbi Meshulam Dovid Soloveitchik in Jerusalem on Sunday, following his passing aged 99 due to months-long illness compounded by the Coronavirus. — AFP

Pentagon pauses vaccine plan for Guantanamo detainees

Washington, Jan. 31: The Pentagon said Saturday it was putting on hold a plan to give Covid vaccines to terror detainees at Guantanamo, following an outcry as the United States struggles to deliver jabs to frontline workers and vulnerable elderly Americans.

"No Guantanamo detainees have been vaccinated," Pentagon spokesman John Kirby tweeted. "We're pausing the plan to move forward, as we review force protection protocols. We remain committed to our obligations to keep our troops safe." The Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba houses detainees in the US "war on terror," including top Al-Qaeda figure and alleged 9/11 attack planner Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.

Even among those groups, appointments are extremely difficult to obtain, with Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna shots in limited supply.

— AFP

The Department of Defence told US media earlier in the week that it would offer vaccines to its detainees and prisoners, to be administered "on a voluntary basis." Backlash came from Republican lawmakers, including the party's top congressman, Kevin McCarthy.

"President Biden told us he would have a plan to defeat the virus on day 1. He just never told us that it would be to give the vaccine to terrorists before most Americans," he said on Twitter.

Added New York congresswoman Elise Stefanik: "It is inexcusable and un-American that President Biden is choosing to prioritize vaccinations for convicted terrorists in Gitmo over vulnerable

American seniors or veterans." The United States has been the world's hardest-hit country by the Coronavirus pandemic, in absolute terms, with 436,000 deaths and nearly 26 million cases.

President Joe Biden has pledged to vaccine 100 million Americans in his first 100 days in office, but so far the country's mass inoculation drive has been beset by stumbles, including a shortfall in vaccines and widespread technical difficulties for eligible Americans trying to make appointments.

According to health officials, the US has so far administered just under 30 million of the nearly 50 million doses distributed in the country. — AFP

THOUSANDS JOIN FUNERAL, FLOUT RESTRICTIONS

Jerusalem, Jan. 31: Thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jews defied Israel's Coronavirus restrictions to attend a rabbi's funeral on Sunday, prompting Defense Minister Benny Gantz to demand the community's repeated breaking of lockdown rules must end. A huge crowd, many not wearing masks, packed the streets in Jerusalem for the funeral of 99-year-old Rabbi Meshulam Dovid Soloveitchik, head of the influential Brisk yeshiva, or religious educational institute. Soloveitchik died earlier on Sunday. — AFP

VACCINE DELAYS: GERMANY MULLS LEGAL ACTION

Berlin, Jan. 31: Germany's government on Sunday threatened legal action against laboratories failing to deliver Coronavirus vaccines to the European Union on schedule, amid tension over delays to deliveries from AstraZeneca. "If it turns out that companies have not respected their obligations, we will have to decide the legal consequences," Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said.

"No company can favour another country over the EU after the fact," he added. There has been growing tension in recent weeks between European leaders and the British-Swedish pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca, which has fallen behind on promised deliveries of its vaccine. — AFP

ISRAEL TO GIVE SOME VACCINES TO PALESTINIANS

Jerusalem, Jan. 31: Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz's office says Israel has agreed to transfer 5,000 doses of the Coronavirus vaccine to the Palestinians to immunise front-line medical workers. It is the first time that Israel has confirmed the transfer of vaccines to the Palestinians. Israel is one of the world's leaders in vaccinating its population after striking procurement deals with Pfizer and Moderna. — AP

SINGLE CASE: PERTH IN SNAP LOCKDOWN

Sydney, Jan. 31: The Australian city of Perth will begin a snap five-day lockdown after a security guard at a quarantine hotel tested positive for Covid-19, authorities announced Sunday. Roughly two million residents of the city must stay at home as of Sunday evening, as will those living in the nearby Peel and South West regions. A scheduled return of schools on Monday will be delayed, with locals only permitted to leave their homes for exercise, medical care, essential work or to buy food. The new rules follow the first case of community transmission in Western Australia state for 10 months, officials said. "Our model

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	46,285.77
Nifty 50	13,634.60
S&P 500*	3,714.24
Dollar (\$)	72.94
Pound Sterling (\$)	100.04
Euro (\$)	88.33
Gold (10gm)* (\$)	48,690▲286
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	55.04
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.949
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.071
	2.14

* As of Friday/Saturday

GST revenues touch record ₹1.20 L cr in Jan.

GST collections for January touched an all-time high of Rs 1.20 lakh crore, the finance ministry said. It said in line with the trend of recovery in the GST revenues over past five months, the revenues for January 2021 are 8 per cent higher than that in the same month last year. The gross GST collected is Rs 1,19,847 crore, of which CGST is Rs 21,923 crore, SGST is Rs 29,014 crore, IGST is Rs 60,288 crore and cess is Rs 8,622 crore.

Sitharaman to present Union Budget today



Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday will deliver her promised "budget like no other" that is expected to provide relief to the common man as well as focus on driving the economic recovery through higher spending on healthcare, infrastructure and defence. The ninth budget under the Modi government, including an interim one, is widely expected to focus on boosting spending on job creation and development.

Power demand touches all-time high of 189.6 GW

Power demand touched an all-time high of 189.64 GW on Saturday, power secretary S. N. Sahai said. "Power demand galloping. All India demand: 1,89,644 MW (189.64 GW) at 10.39 hrs today (Jan. 30) crossed the previous highest all-India demand of 1,88,452 MW (188.45 GW) on 28th January," he tweeted. Last week, power minister R. K. Singh had said power demand will cross the 200-GW mark soon.

MF investment in Reits jumps 6-fold to ₹3,970 cr

Emerging investment instrument Reit is finally gaining popularity among investors, with mutual funds investing Rs 3,972 crore in such units in 2020, a six-fold jump from the preceding year. Green Portfolio co-founder Divam Sharma said that with names like DLF, Brookfield and Godrej in the process of launching Reit, more interest from mutual funds in such offerings is expected in the coming years.

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Govt wants to save cash and honour Cairn may be offered fields in lieu of \$1.4 bn

New Delhi, Jan. 31: The government may give Cairn Energy one of the surrendered oil fields such as Ratna R-Series in lieu of the \$1.4 billion it has to pay to the British firm, helping prevent seizure of foreign assets in case of default as well as get an experienced operator in the struggling E&P sector, sources said.

Cairn Energy gave India its biggest onland oil discovery but exited the country after it was slapped with Rs 10,247-crore tax demand using a legislation that gave the government the powers to tax companies retrospectively. The firm has now won an international arbitration against the tax demand and the government has been ordered to return the value of shares of Cairn it had sold, dividends it had seized and tax refund it had withheld to recover the tax demand.

For a government struggling to find revenue to boost a Covid-19 battered economy, options of appeal against the arbitration award are limited and it may not have the financial bandwidth for such a payout, two sources with knowledge of the development said.

"One option is to give Cairn one or more of the oil and gas fields that the government now owns after they are surrendered by operators for various reasons," one of them said. "The government could give the Ratna and R-Series oil and gas field in the Arabian Sea that taken away from Essar Oil



Premier Oil consortium in 2016 because contractual terms had changed."

The Barmer oilfield in Rajasthan, which was originally discovered by Cairn Energy, could be another option. Vedanta Ltd, which now operates the field after it bought out Cairn's Indian subsidiary a decade back, has so far not agreed to the government conditions for getting an extension of contract beyond its original end day of May 2020.

Under Vedanta, which continues to operate the field on monthly extensions till its legal challenge to government conditions is settled, Rajasthan oilfields have seen a steady decline in output.

"It's a win-win—the government settles its liability without paying a single penny or upsetting investor sentiments by not honouring the arbitration award, well before the announcement of its full year earnings on March 9 for clarity of its shareholders, according to the letter to PTI.

—PTI

back," another source said. No major oil and gas discovery has been made in the past seven years since the retrospective tax demand was raised.

In case the government chooses not to honour the arbitration award, it risks the prospect of its assets in foreign countries being seized, just like US oil firm ConocoPhillips did with Venezuela to recoup multi-billion dollar of compensation awarded in arbitration.

Earlier this month, Cairn Energy's chief executive officer Simon Thomson wrote to the Indian government saying that the arbitration ruling is final and binding, and failure to comply would breach the international rules.

Cairn Energy has asked the Indian government for an early indication of implementing the arbitration award, well before the announcement of its full year earnings on March 9 for clarity of its shareholders, according to the letter to PTI.

—PTI

CEA PITCHES FOR PRIVATE SECTOR-LED BAD BANK



K.V. Subramanian

KUMAR DIPANKAR & CHANDRA SHEKHAR

NEW DELHI, JAN. 31

Chief economic adviser K. V. Subramanian has made a strong case for setting up a bad bank led by the private sector to effectively deal with the non-performing assets of the financial sector, which may see a surge once regulatory forbearance to deal with the impact of Covid-19 is withdrawn.

The proposal to set up a bad bank has been under the government's consideration for long and some steps may be announced in Monday's Budget 2021-22.

Bad bank refers to a financial institution which takes over bad assets of lenders and undertakes resolution.

Lenders have been making a case for setting up a bad bank to ease the pressure of bad loans on them in these difficult times.

"The bad bank will certainly help in consolidating some of the non-performing assets. It's important to also think about implementing the bad bank in the private sector that enables (faster) decision making," he told PTI in an interview.

—PTI

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—PTI

Crypto players want to be heard before ban decision

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JAN. 31

As the government plans to ban "private cryptocurrencies", digital currency platforms hope that the government will consult them before taking a decision.

"Since the government is considering introducing the bill during this session of the Parliament, we are sure the government will definitely listen to all the stakeholders before taking any decision. We are talking to other stakeholders and will definitely initiate deeper dialogue with the government and showcase how we can actually create a healthy ecosystem in unison," Sumit Gupta, co-founder and CEO of CoinDCX said.

The digital currency bill, "Digital Currency Bill, 2021," that will prohibit "all private cryptocurrencies" in India. It will also provide a framework for creating an official digital currency that will be issued by the Reserve Bank of India.



Digital Currency Bill, 2021," that will prohibit "all private cryptocurrencies" in India. It will also provide a framework for creating an official digital currency that will be issued by the Reserve Bank of India.

According to him, Bitcoin and most crypto assets are more like gold and not an alternative to government-issued legal tender. Crypto assets and digital government currency can coexist and together, they can bring tremendous benefits to the Indian economy.

"We hope the Lok Sabha members and advisors will consult crypto and blockchain companies as they make their decisions. Millions of Indians have already invested in this new asset class. Millions more want the same opportunity to build wealth that investors in other countries already have. We have faith in the government and hope that this bill will move India forwards, not backwards," he said.

China giant reports \$10 bn fraud

Beijing, Jan. 31: Three units of HNA, once China's most acquisitive conglomerate, said nearly \$10 billion had been embezzled by shareholders, in disclosures to stock exchanges that come amid a government-led probe into the deeply indebted group.

A total of 61.5 billion yuan (\$9.57 bn) had been embezzled by shareholders and other related parties, Shanghai-listed Hainan Airlines Holding Co, HNA Infrastructure Investment Group Co and Shenzhen-

listed CCOOP Group Co listed late on Friday.

The identities of the shareholders were not disclosed in the statements.

The three companies and their subsidiaries had also provided non-compliant guarantees for 46.5 billion yuan in financing, according to the statements filed after creditors of their parent applied to a court for the conglomerate to be placed in bankruptcy and restructured.

The move came after a local government-led working team concluded due diligence at HNA earlier in January, and laid out risk disposal plans, enabling it to move to the next stage of resolving a multi-year liquidity crisis.

The government-appointed working team expects as many as 500 companies linked to HNA Group to go into bankruptcy restructuring, Chinese financial magazine Caixin reported on Saturday, citing sources that it did not identify.

Caixin previously reported that HNA owns more than 2,300 companies.

—Reuters

Trade & hotels to see 21% dip in real GVA

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JAN. 31

growth was almost flattish at 0.7 per cent. However, in the previous two years, manufacturing was growing at 6 and 6.5 per cent.

In the case of financing, insurance, real estate and business services, the decline will be marginal at 0.8 per cent to Rs 28.91 lakh crore. In FY20, these sectors had grown by 4.6 per cent and 6.8 per cent in FY19.

Community, social and personal services, which had grown by 10 per cent in FY20, also will see a decline of 3.7 per cent.

The primary sector, which includes agriculture, fishing, mining and quarrying, is the saving grace. These sectors will grow their real GVA by 0.9 per cent to Rs 23.25 lakh crore against Rs 23.08 lakh crore in the previous fiscal.

Manufacturing might see a decline of 21.4 per cent to Rs 25.77 lakh crore in FY20—a decline of 21.4 per cent. These sectors had recorded a growth of 3.6 per cent in FY20 and 7.7 per cent in FY19.

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The total GVA added at basic prices will decline by 7.2 per cent against a growth of 3.9 per cent in the previous fiscal.

Trade, hotels and communication will see the steepest decline of 21.4 per cent in gross value added (GVA) in FY21.

Except the primary sector, which includes agriculture, all the other sectors will see a decline in GVA, finds the Economic Survey.

As per the first advance estimate for FY21, the real GVA at basic prices of trade, hotels, transport and communication sectors will be around Rs 20.26 lakh crore against the provisional estimate of Rs 25.77 lakh crore in FY20—a decline of 21.4 per cent. These sectors had recorded a growth of 3.6 per cent in FY20 and 7.7 per cent in FY19.

Community, social and personal services, which had grown by 10 per cent in FY20, also will see a decline of 3.7 per cent.

The primary sector, which includes agriculture, fishing, mining and quarrying, is the saving grace. These sectors will grow their real GVA by 0.9 per cent to Rs 23.25 lakh crore against Rs 23.08 lakh crore in the previous fiscal.

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Olectra will procure these 350 electric buses from Olectra Greentech and deliver them within seven months. The maintenance of these buses shall also be undertaken by the company during the contract period.

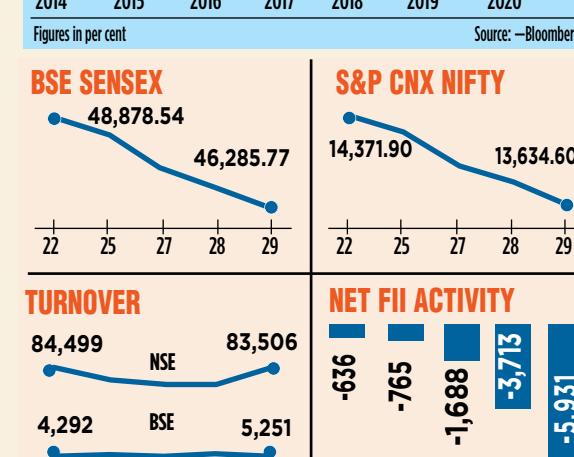
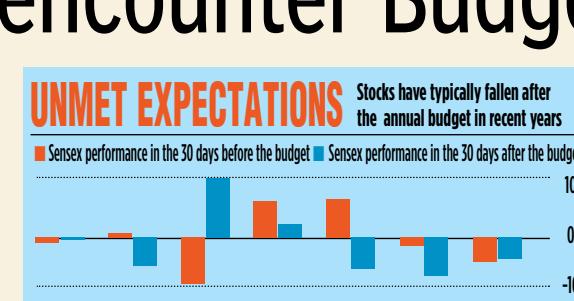
"The value of this order from PUNE is about Rs 600 crore," Sharat Chandra, CFO, Olectra Greentech told Financial Chronicle.

Olectra Greentech, which has been declared as the least quoted bidder for 300 electric buses from the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), is also likely to get the order for a 12-year contract. "The order from BMTC is expected shortly and the value of this tender is about Rs 570 crore to our firm," Chandra said, adding the se 300 buses would be delivered in 12 months.

"We have in hand an order book of 1,250 electric buses to deliver across Indian cities over 12-15 months," he said.

Olectra already operates 150 buses in PUNE.

UNMET EXPECTATIONS Stocks have typically fallen after the annual budget in recent years



SHORT TAKES

Messi's contract biggest in sports

Madrid: Lionel Messi's most recent contract with Barcelona is worth up to 555 million euros (\$673 million) over four seasons, the *El Mundo* newspaper reported on Sunday.

The Spanish daily said it had access to the document Messi signed with the Catalan club in 2017, which included fixed incomes and variables that could reach nearly 138 million euros (\$167 million) each season.

The newspaper said it is the most expensive contract ever agreed with an athlete in any sport.

Messi would have to pay about half of that in taxes in Spain. The report said the 33-year-old player had already secured more than 510 million euros (\$619 million) of the total. Barcelona denied responsibility for leaking the document and said it would take legal action against the newspaper.

Messi did not immediately make any public comments about the report. — AP

Hyderabad FC too hot for Chennaiyin

Vasco: Hyderabad FC strengthened their chances of qualifying for the play-offs with a 2-0 victory over Chennaiyin FC in the Indian Super League, here on Sunday.

Goals from Fran Sandaza (28th minute) and Joel Chianese (82nd) were enough to secure all three points for the Nizams and propel them to third place on the table.

Hyderabad made their intentions clear right from the start, winning a corner in the fifth minute. The promising Asish Rai, who is enjoying a breakthrough season, was the architect of the move, sprinting into the Chennaiyin box and finding Mohammed Yasir.

After Yasir's cross was put behind for a corner, Rai got another chance but sent his cross over.

Hyderabad kept attacking in the first quarter and got their reward just before the half-hour mark when Sandaza broke the deadlock. — PTI

Gill blazes to title in Coimbatore

Coimbatore: Gaurav Gill was in blazing form at the wheels of his Mahindra XUV as he and navigator Musa Sherif showed immense skills and patience to win the Rally of Coimbatore on Sunday and again emerge national champions.

By winning two legs on tarmac in Itanagar last month and coming to the leafy environs of Kethanur 40km outside Coimbatore, Gill showed he was also the king on gravel as well.

For JK Tyre, the return to the rallying scene with a bang after a long hiatus could not have been sweeter. The comeback to the latest season in a year of the pandemic has been simply captivating.

It was a brave decision on part of the FMSCI's INRC and the competing teams to go ahead with the rally season despite fears over the Corona virus. From Saturday to Sunday afternoon, Gill had a lot of problems, though by sheer dint of experience and his large heart he conquered the elements and technical glitches in the car.

Jesus wins it for Manchester City

London: Manchester City opened up a three-point lead at the top of the Premier League with a game in hand to come as Pep Guardiola's men beat

Sheffield United 1-0, while

Manchester United played out a goalless draw at Arsenal on Saturday. Gabriel Jesus scored the only goal inside the first 10 minutes at the Etihad as City extended their winning run to 12 games in all competitions.

Ferran Torres and Jesus were two of five changes made by Guardiola and they combined to make the breakthrough. — AFP

Live on TV

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: Odisha vs Jamshedpur from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

WWE

Raw: Bouts from 6.30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

Regd. No. HQ/SD/509/2021-23

Printed and Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Plot No. 9 Alwal Village, Vallabh Nagar Taluk, Medchal Malkajgiri Dist. Telangana and Published at 36, S.D. Road, Secunderabad-3. RNI Registration No. 3081/1957. Editor: Kaushik Mittra

MOEEN TARGET

England allrounder Ali looks to get Test career back on track

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 31

England all-rounder Moeen Ali has fond memories of the 2016 Test series in India. Moeen had started and ended the series with centuries even though England didn't have much to cheer about, having lost 0-4.

Back in Chennai where he scored his last Test ton, Moeen is now looking to get his red-ball career back on track. England coach Chris Silverwood has hinted that Moeen is in contention to play the Chennai Test.

This would be his first Test since he was dropped during the 2019 Ashes.

"I enjoyed the break and played in a few leagues around the world. But ultimately it is Test cricket that I missed. I've waited long enough," said Moeen.

Nineteen wickets short of joining the 200-wicket club, Moeen has set his sights on completing the milestone in India.

"That is my biggest motivation. I still feel I've got wickets and runs in me and match-winning performances within me. I have small targets I want to achieve first."

"I am not too far away from getting 200 wickets. I know people say they don't look at these things but it would be something I would look at. Then I would set another target after that," said Moeen.

Moeen was part of the England squad that toured Sri Lanka recently, but the 33-year-old spent most of his time in isolation after testing Covid-19 positive.

Moeen said he is fit and raring to go now.

"Once I tested positive, I just wanted to get it over and done with really. It has been tough but I'm a big believer in 'after hardship comes



A file photo of England allrounder Moeen Ali (left). — ECB

He's (Virat Kohli) a great guy and a good friend of mine — we don't talk too much about cricket. I don't know how we're going to get him out because I don't think he has any sort of weakness but we have a good bowling attack, some pace in the line-up.

— MOEEN ALI
England allrounder

ease'. Hopefully there is ease after this," said Moeen.

The off-spinner who took 10 wickets, including that of Virat Kohli, during the 2016 series knows the importance of

removing the Indian skipper early.

"How do we get him out? He's obviously an amazing player, world-class, he's very motivated to do well and I'm sure he'll be even more motivated after they did well in Australia and he had to leave for the birth of his child," said Moeen.

Moeen and Kohli are teammates at Royal Challengers Bangalore.

"He's a great guy and a good friend of mine — we don't talk too much about cricket. I don't know how we're going to get him out because I don't think he has any sort of weakness but we have a good bowling attack, some pace in the line-up," he added.

AFTER FRESH GUIDELINES, 50% SPECTATORS LIKELY FOR 2ND TEST

New Delhi, Jan. 31: Spectators might be allowed in the second India-England Test in Chennai after the central government's fresh Covid-19 guidelines permitted crowd attendance at fifty per cent of capacity at sporting venues.

The BCCI and the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association had deliberated on entry of spectators earlier also before deciding that the first two matches would be held closed doors. But the fresh home ministry guidelines on easing of restrictions on public movement

have changed the scenario. "There is no time to allow entry of spectators for the first Test starting on February 5 as we only received the government notification on Saturday. You can't organise entry of spectators at such a short notice," a senior TNCA official said on conditions of anonymity.

"But yes, now with fresh guidelines, there is every possibility that second Test starting from February 14 might have spectators as per notification," he added.

The Chepauk has a capacity of 50,000. — PTI

Strike-rate doesn't really matter at times: Pujara

New Delhi, Jan. 31: There are times when balls faced matter a lot more than runs scored and the recent tour of Australia was all about that for India's Test batting mainstay Cheteshwar Pujara, who finds the "strike-rate talk" overrated.

Pujara had collected a lot more runs (521 at 41.41 strike rate and three hundreds) in his player of the series performance to ensure a historic win in Australia two seasons ago but considering the "extraordinary circumstances" of the recent showdown that just went by, he rates his effort (271 at 29.20 and three half-centuries) equally special.

"Both tours have been fantastic for the team and personally I did well on both tours but the cir-



Cheteshwar Pujara

cumstances were completely different. This time I was starting up after a long time, almost eight months (due to Covid-19), there were no first class games also," Pujara said.

The 31-year-old stood like a rock through the series, quite literally in the final Test in Brisbane, where he took multiple blows on the body to keep a relentless

Australian attack at bay. "It wasn't easy at all in terms of preparation and the Australian team had a thorough game plan for each of us. To get back into rhythm took a little bit of time but luckily all went positive in the end."

"Numbers wise, it may not look like a very, very good series for me but if you look at the pitches, not many runs were scored this time. It was more challenging than last time without a doubt."

The 81-Test veteran said the balls faced, 928 to 1,258 two years ago, mattered more than runs scored, given the challenging pace attack, nature of pitches and barrage of injuries that the Indian team suffered through the four games.

— PTI

JAIRAM, SRINIKETH SLAM TONS IN DECCAN VICTORY

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 31

Jairam Kasyap and Sriniketh stole the thunder for Deccan Blues on Sunday at the Hyderabad Cricket Association's A-2 division league match in the city.

Splendid centuries by Jairam (144) and Sriniketh (102) proved a double whammy for Hyderabad Public School, Begumpet, who failed to defend their total of 252 and suffered a nine-wicket loss.

In another match, Hyderabad Patriots rode on Balraj's exceptional spell of 4/8 to claim victory against a lopsided Sunshine who were bundled out for a paltry 81 while chasing a target of 182.

Kishoreson also scored a scorching win. They beat Superstar by nine wickets thanks to Hemanth Reddy's modest 68 and Manav Agarwal's unbeaten 50 that helped them overhaul a lowly total of 159.

Brief scores:
A-2 DIVISION (TWO-DAY)
Day-2:
■ Hyderabad Public School Begumpet 252 in 89.1 overs lost to Deccan Blues 256/1 in 55.2 overs (Jairam Kasyap 144 – 174b, 24x4, 1x6, Sriniketh 102 – 116b, 12x4, 1x6). Points: Deccan Blues 5, HPS Begumpet 0.
■ Hyderabad Patriots 181 in 45.3 overs bt Sunshine 81 in 46.3 overs (Mir Syed Ali 46, Balraj 4/8). Points: Patriots 5, Sunshine 0.
■ Superstar 159 in 85.2 overs lost to Kishoreson 160/1 in 51.5 overs (Hemanth Reddy 68 n.o., Manav Agarwal 50 n.o.). Points: Kishoreson 5, Superstar 0.

Hemant Kenkre
Silly Point

The recent news that the Ranji Trophy has been suspended for the 2020-21 season caused a dampener in what has otherwise been a fabulous season for Indian cricket. It has been 86 years since MJ Gopalan bowled the first ball in a first class fixture for Madras (Tamil Nadu) against Mysore (Karnataka) in the inaugural season. The tournament that was conducted unabated since that match played in Madras, has been the lifeline of Indian cricket and is considered the

most important contest to be played by Indian cricketers, barring Test cricket. What began with 14 teams in the inaugural season has now morphed into a mammoth tourney featuring 38 teams from across the country. The decision taken by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to take the tournament that has been weaned on the shorter formats of the game. For Zoomers (Generation Z) whose birth years range from the mid-to-late 1990s to the 2000s, the Ranji Trophy will not have the same importance as shorter tournaments such as the Indian Premier League (IPL) does. And that's what was on show during the series, particularly in the final Test match at the Gabba.

Former Australian great, Greg Chappell commended the domestic structure in India and called it the main reason for the superb

turnaround that was caused by stand-in captain Ajinkya Rahane and team. In his column the former Aussie skipper wrote: "An India wannabe gets the cricket equivalent of the Gurkha military training programme — arguably the toughest physical and mental induction regime in the world." Having coached India for two years, Chappell saw, at first hand, the Indian cricket system (from age-group cricket onwards) and understood the rigours of coming up through the same.

In a summation, Chappell went on to call their young cricketers 'weekend warriors' as compared to their Indian counterparts. He mentioned the cut-throat competition that a young Indian cricketer has to survive from the Under-16 age

DOMESTIC | TWENTY20

TN pip Baroda for second title

Ahmedabad, Jan. 31:

Tamil Nadu reached 61/1 after 10 overs.

However, medium-pacer Babashafi Pathan removed Nishaanth in the 12th over, as he holed out in the deep, to reduce TN to 67/2 and give Baroda a glimmer of hope.

Skipper Dinesh Karthik played his part to perfection with a 16-ball 22 but perished when his side needed 20 runs off 23 balls.

Aparajith and Shahrukh Khan (18 not out) then took TN home. Shahrukh, fittingly, finished the game with a boundary.

Siddharth (4/20) spun his web around the Baroda batsmen to restrict TN to a meagre 120 for 9 and then Tamil Nadu overhauled the target in 18 overs, with opener C. Hari Nishaanth 35, Baba Aparajith 29 not out and Atit Sheth 29/1) as

top-scoring with 35.

Chasing 121 for a win, Tamil Nadu lost opener Narayan Jagadeesan (14) early as pacer Lukman Meriwal (1/34) picked up the first wicket, with the opposition at 26/1.

But Nishaanth continued playing his shots and was joined by Baba Aparajith (29 not out off 35 balls) as

wicket.

Earlier, Siddharth's brilliant bowling upfront enabled TN to restrict Baroda to 120 for 9 on a difficult track.

It was largely due to the

58-run seventh wicket stand between Vishnu Solanki (49) and Atit Sheth (29) that Baroda after being reduced to 36/6 managed a three-figure total. — PTI

BRIEF SCORES

Baroda 120/9 (Vishnu Solanki 49, Atit Sheth 29; M. Siddharth 4/20; M. Mohammed 1/16) lost to

Tamil Nadu 123/3 (C. Hari Nishaanth 35, Baba Aparajith 29 not out; Atit Sheth 1/20) by 7

wickets.

8. The decider was filled with fast and furious rallies — both players yo-yoed up and down the scoreboard — but two late spectacular drop shots were critical in sealing Tai's victory 21-19.

"Before this match today I kept telling myself that I had to play patiently. In the previous matches, all my mistakes were caused (by) my own impatience," Tai said.

Thailand has hosted three consecutive tournaments in a bio-secure bubble to guard against the pandemic.

Axelsen, ranked fourth, couldn't control his nerves — losing the first game 16-21 — his body language showing immense frustration as errors piled up and shots landed wide.

He managed to regroup to win the second game 21-5.

But in the decider Axelsen had all the right answers, triumphing 21-17 to claim the game and the hour-long match against an increasingly ruffled Axelsen. Antonsen is the only man to beat Axelsen in three weeks. — AFP