

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
KARIMNAGAR | SATURDAY | 27 FEBRUARY 2021



**NATION | 4**

**Bandaru manhandled by Congress MLAs**



**WORLD | 5**

**US attacks Iranian ultras in Syria**

**SPORTS | 8**

**Ignored Yusuf Pathan retires from cricket**



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

Vol. 20 No. 272 Established 1938 | 16 PAGES | ₹6.00

## WEATHER

**Max:** 36°C  
**Min:** 18.6°C  
**RH:** 23%  
**Rainfall:** Nil

**Forecast:** Cloudy sky. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 36/19°C

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Uttarayana  
**Tithi:** Magha Shuddha Pournami till 1.43 pm  
**Star:** Magha till 11.15 am  
**Variyam:** 6.41 pm to 8.10 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 6.39 am to 8.12 am  
**Rahukalam:** 9 am to 10.30 am  
**HJRI CALENDAR**  
**Rajab** 14,1442 AH  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 5.36 am  
**Zohar:** 12.39 pm  
**Asar:** 4.43 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6.27 pm  
**Isha:** 7.35 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY** 6.22 PM  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW** 6.35 AM  
**MOONRISE TODAY** 6.32 PM  
**MOONSET TODAY** 6.39 AM

## COUNTER POINT



**We will save 99% of election expenses by campaign on bicycles!**

## SHORT TAKES

### Digital currency can transform: RBI

**Mumbai:** Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) has the potential to bring about a sea change in payment transactions and quicken transmission, says a report released by the Reserve Bank of India. However, the virtual currency poses a risk of disintermediation of the banking system, the Report on Currency and Finance (RCF) for the year 2020-21 released on Friday said.

### VsV scheme last date extended

**New Delhi:** The Income-Tax Department on Friday extended the deadline for filing declarations and making payment under direct tax dispute resolution scheme Vivad Se Vishwas (VsV) till March 31 and April 30. "CBDT further extends the date for filing of declarations under the #VivadSeVishwas Act, 2020 to 31st March, 2021. Date for payment without additional amount under VsV extended to 30th April, 2021," the I-T tweeted. The last date for filing declaration was February 28.

### 95% appear for IIT JEE-mains

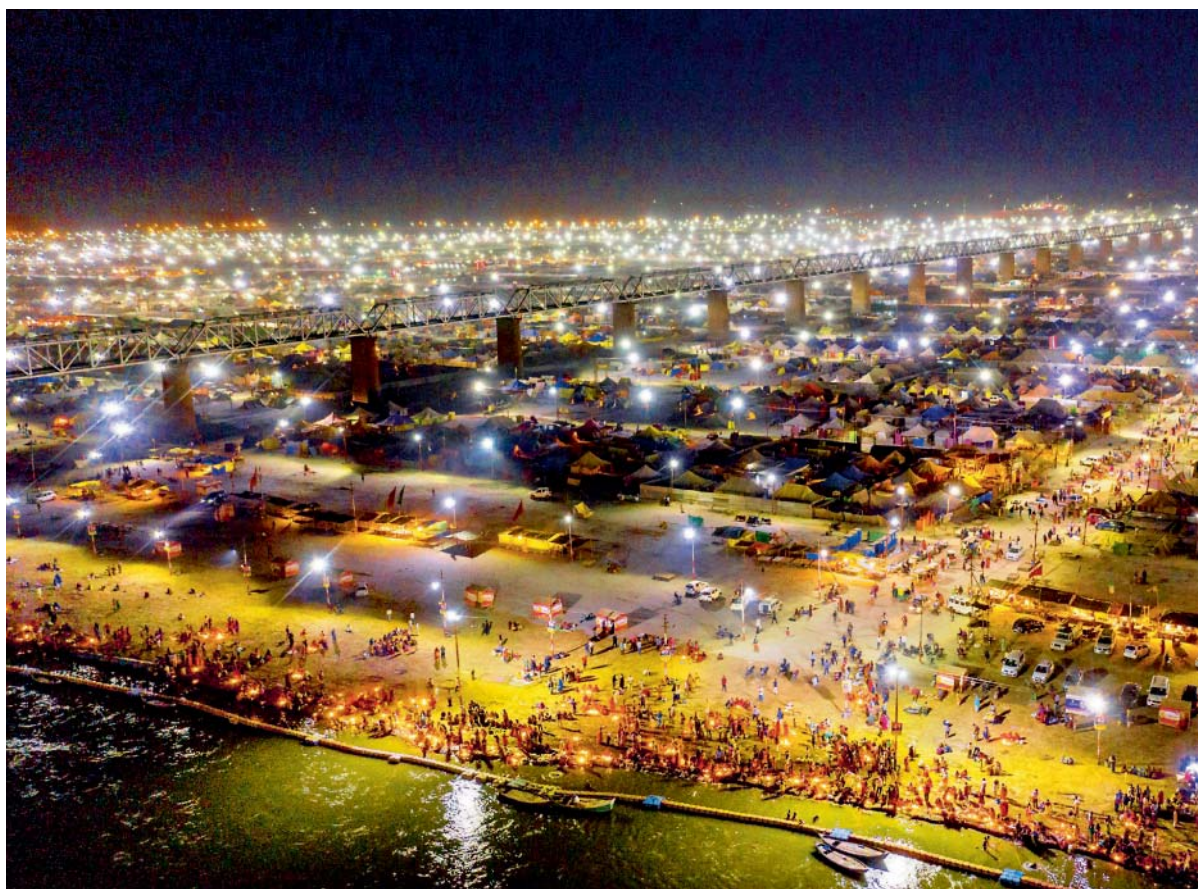
**New Delhi:** The first phase of the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE)-Mains for admission to engineering colleges in the country saw a 95 per cent attendance, Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal "Nishank" said on Friday. "Happy to note that the attendance in JEE first phase exam was 95%. I hope NTA will conduct the exam successfully in future also," he said in a tweet. The entrance exam commenced from Tuesday.

## INSIDE

**STATE... PAGE 2**  
**Covid cases on the rise in Hyd, adjoining areas**

**CITY... PAGE 3**  
**Make Dharani portal user friendly: CM**

## Magh mela



Devotees offer prayers after taking holy dips in the Sangam, confluence of rivers Ganges, Yamuna, and mythical Saraswati, on the eve of the Maghi Purnima, or the full-moon day during the annual traditional fair of "Magh Mela" in Prayagraj on Friday. Hundreds of thousands of devotees are expected to take holy dips at the confluence during the astronomically auspicious period of over 45 days celebrated as Magh Mela.

— AP

## Jr NTR slogans at Naidu meet TD supporters at roadshow want actor back in party fold

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
TIRUPATI, FEB. 26

Telugu Desam chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu on a three-day mission to repair the damage done to his party by YSR Congress in panchayat polls in his home turf Kuppam faced a tricky situation on Friday when he was addressing the public at Santhipuram mandal.

TD supporters who attended the roadshow



Jr NTR

raised slogans in support of Jr NTR and asked the TD chief to bring in the Tollywood hero and late

NTR's grandson for a TD roadshow in Kuppam.

In a video that went viral on media, Naidu was seen nodding as TD supporters shouted "Jai Jr NTR" slogans. Naidu did not pay much attention to these slogans, though, and continued with his road show.

Notably, Naidu has been trying his best to establish his son Nara Lokesh as the new face of the party while a section of TD leaders and party supporters feel Jr

NTR can be the only saviour of the party in a sinking mode.

Some party activists had erected flexes in Chittoor and Prakasam districts during the Sankranti festival, inviting Jr NTR into active politics to save the party. A few TD leaders have on occasions also said if Jr NTR is projected as the next CM candidate, the party would get a new lease of life in the 2024 elections.

## LOOKOUT NOTICE ON FAKE PASSPORT HOLDERS

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NIZAMABAD, FEB. 26

Police have issued lookout notices against the accused in bogus passport case at Bodhan in Nizamabad district.

Initially, police had found that around 72 persons had managed to illegally get passports from Bodhan, of whom 19 managed to leave India. These Bangladesh nationals had allegedly entered West Bengal and got Aadhaar cards. They transferred their Aadhaar cards to Bodhan and got passports citing various addresses. Shockingly, two special branch policemen had cooperated with the culprits in getting passports.

■ **Page 2: Accused tried to board Dubai flight**

## Azad takes 'rebel' Cong leaders to Jammu show

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 26

Just a fortnight after his retirement from the Rajya Sabha, senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad headed to Jammu to address a series of public meetings. His outing is being seen as a show of strength to the party high command as several leaders who had written a letter to Congress president Sonia Gandhi demanding organisational changes are accompanying him. These include Kapil Sibal, Anand Sharma, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Vivek Tankha and Manish Tewari.

Most of these leaders have been sidelined in the party and none of them are involved in preparing for Assembly elections in

**MOST OF** these leaders have been sidelined in the party and none of them are involved in preparing for Assembly elections in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Puducherry and Assam. **THE CAMPAIGN** for elections is being led by Rahul Gandhi

Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Puducherry and Assam.

Mr Azad, who is well versed with the working of the DMK, was not sent to negotiate seat sharing. Instead, Randeep Surjewala was. This has added to the angst of Mr Hooda who was hoping to get support from the party

to topple the Khattar government. Mr Anand Sharma is also hurt as he was overlooked for the post of Leader of Opposition, which went to Mallikarjun Kharge.

The change seekers in the party realise that their "constructive suggestions" are being ignored. Even after a marathon meeting with Mrs Sonia Gandhi in the last week of December there has been no movement.

The campaign for the upcoming Assembly elections is being led by Rahul Gandhi. If the results are in the Congress' favour, it will be a major boost for the high command. Else the G-23 will again ask for sweeping changes in the party and this time they may just find many more supporters.

## Economy exits Covid-induced recession in Q3

**MADHUSUDAN SAHOO**  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 26

The road to recovery appears to be in sight for the Indian economy, with the country's gross domestic product growing by 40 basis points or 0.40 per cent in the October-December quarter.

The size of the economy had shrunk in April-June quarter and July-September quarter, pulling down the country into a technician recession.

However, the positive growth — though not very strong yet — has taken the Indian economy out of the recession.

A consistent growth in consumer demand, festive spends and a jump in government expenditure appear to have supported the Covid-battered economy to spring back into the positive territory. Expenditure trend, however, remains weak as government and private consumption expenditure continued to contract in the third quarter.

"The GDP at constant (2011-12) prices in Q3 of 2020-21 is estimated at ₹36.22 lakh crore, as against ₹36.08 lakh crore in Q3 of 2019-20, showing a growth of 0.4 per cent," data released by the ministry of statistics and programme implementation showed on Friday.

The Indian economy had

## POLL DATES

**West Bengal:**  
**TOTAL SEATS 294**  
Mar 27/April 17  
April 1/April 22  
April 6/April 26  
April 10/April 29

**Assam:**  
**TOTAL SEATS 126**  
March 27/April 1  
April 6

**APRIL 6, 2021**  
**Tamil Nadu:**  
**TOTAL SEATS 234**  
**Puducherry:**  
**TOTAL SEATS 30**  
**Kerala:**  
**TOTAL SEATS 140**

June. Nearly 18.68 crore voters are expected to cast their votes at 2.7 lakh polling stations for 824 Assembly seats across Assam, WB Kerala, TN and Puducherry, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said. He

added that all officials and other personnel on poll duty will be vaccinated against Covid-19 before the polling begins.

The EC has decided to appoint two special observers for West Bengal and a third may also be sent if required, Mr Arora said. The CEC said that in view of the Covid-19 safety protocols, candidates can file their nominations online and voting will be allowed for an additional hour. Door-to-door campaigning will be restricted to five persons, including the candidate, while roadshows will be allowed for maximum of five vehicles.

Meanwhile, in order to enable the voter to know the serial number of the electoral roll of his/her polling station, date of poll, time, etc, the EC has decided to issue a "Voter Information Slip" in place of the "Photo Voter Slip" which will include all such information but will not have the photograph of the voter.

## RSS CHIEF TELLS FARMERS TO UNITE WITHOUT AGITATIONS

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
MANKAPUR (ADILABAD), FEB. 26

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Friday called upon farmers to unite and solve their problems while in distress but avoid embarking on agitations. However, he said he has no objection to the present farmer protests as such agitations will go on.

He was addressing a gathering of 1,500 farmer families practising organic farming in erstwhile Adilabad district. The event was organised by the Ekalavya Foundation (NGO). He performed a 'Go Puja' at the event.

Bhagwat stressed on the need for agriculture-based employment and business to strengthen the national economy. Organic farming can create both employment and business.

He shared his experiences during his visits to the continents of Africa, Europe and America. "The vegetable there were tasteless due to excessive use of chemicals and fertilizers. Vegetables used to be tasty in India at that time," he said. The RSS chief said the country will become stronger and farmers will be liberated from debts and distress.

Bhagwat hoped that the cause of organic farming will be spread across the country. "India will become a role model to the world in the near future," he said and appreciated the efforts being made by Venugopal Reddy of the Ekalavya Foundation for encouraging farmers in organic farming.

He described the farmers of India as "scientists" and agriculture fields as "laboratories". He added: "Farmers are doing experiments and Indian farmers are having more traditional knowledge than the scientists of any agriculture university."

Bhagwat said farmers would do well to take up organic farming though they did not get much yield and profits.

■ **Page 2: There is pro-BJP wave: Ramchander**

■ **Page 2: RSS chief insists on crop rotation**

## ELECTION | FEVER

### Entry of Vani Devi, charisma of Prof Nageshwar fails to make dent in prospects

## BJP lawyer ahead in Hyd-RR-MBMR MLC poll

**SRIRAM KARRI | DC**  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 26

The electoral race for the member of the Legislative Council representing the Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy and Mahabubnagar (HRRM) graduates constituency has just started acquiring its contours after the last minute entry of Surabhi Vani Devi, daughter of former prime minister late P. V. Narasimha Rao, academic, artist and educationist, into the fray, but all

indications show that she has a lot of ground to cover to catch up with incumbent MLC, lawyer and the easily accessible and affable Naraparaju Ramchander Rao of the BJP.

Making the contest fascinating is an equally simple person, known, like his other two rivals, for his integrity, charisma and passion: academic, former MLC and political analyst Prof K. Nageshwar; and the Congress candidate G. Chinna Reddy, former

minister and AICC secretary. The constituency, which is large, diverse and heterogeneous, with several different sets of voters, all with clearly different yet focussed concerns, is tough to conquer. Employees of central and state public sector enterprises, retired employees, employed and unemployed students make for a tough lot to access together. Party affiliations are relevant but not deciders. Interestingly, while

Ramchander Rao says the pro-BJP wave in the state and a prevailing narrative that it will not only challenge but prevail against the TRS in the next Assembly elections, the positive image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government and his own work for the graduates, unemployed youth and state employees will make him a clear winner, all the others feel the fight is respectively between them and the BJP candidate.

Prof. Nageshwar said, "The fight is between BJP's Ramchander Rao and I. While his strength is based on the party's rising tide, and money power of an organised party in power, I am facing him based on my passionate championing of causes dear to the constituents. Several unions, student bodies and my fans on social media are augmenting my chances. I am confident I will defeat him."

Vani Devi, dismissing all

talk of being late to the race or being a novice, says, "I have a better understanding of issues and an undeniable track record as a professor at JNTU, as an educationist who has started and run several educational institutions." While she feels the race is between her and the BJP's incumbent and popular lawyer, she feels in the end, she will triumph.



## SHORT TAKES

RSS CHIEF  
INSISTS ON  
CROP ROTATION

From page 1

“With organic farming, farmers become self-reliant in terms of preparing their own seeds, natural manure and pesticides with cow dung and urine as fertilizers and pesticides.”

“Organic farming will reduce the cost of investment and make farmers self-reliant. They will not have to depend on businessmen and money-lenders for agricultural inputs and investment,” Bagwat said.

The RSS chief insisted on crop rotation to get rid of pest attacks and use of natural manure to keep the soil fertile for more years. He added that doing agriculture is a tradition of Hindu Dharma.

Bhagwat said he himself was involved in agriculture-related activities in his childhood. His father and forefathers were engaged in agriculture.

Some of the farmers practising organic farming have shared their experiences on the dais in the presence of the RSS chief. Religious leader Narayana Guru said the kind of food people took will shape their character. “People will become ‘sathvik’ if they took satvik food.”

Tight security arrangements were evident for the event in view of Mohan Bhagwat’s presence.

Ekalavya Foundation representative Keshav Reddy also spoke.

The RSS chief arrived at Nimal on Thursday night and had interaction with local RSS members and leaders. BJP MPs Dharmapuri Aravind, Soyam Bapurao and BJP district president Payal Shankar and Palvai Harish Babu were among those who met Bhagwat.

ACCUSED TRIED  
TO BOARD  
DUBAI FLIGHT

From page 1

The issue came to light, when three of the accused tried to board a Dubai flight from Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) in Hyderabad in the first week of February.

RGIA police have issued lookout notice for bogus passport holders. CCS police of Nizamabad and Cyberabad police in Hyderabad are investigating the case from different angles.

KAVITHA PLANS  
HANUMAN  
CHALISA EVENTDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 26

Nizamabad MLC K. Kavitha announced to organise Hanuman Chalisa recitations programme at Hanuman temples across Telangana for 41 days.

Kavitha announced her decision to perform Hanuman Chalisa Parayanam for 41 days from chinnna Hanuman Jayanti to pedda Hanuman Jayanti, after having darshan at the famous Kondagattu Anjaneya Swamy temple located in Muthyumpeta village of Mallial Mandal in Jagtial district on Thursday.

She said all arrangements were made to perform Hanuman Chalisa Parayanam across the state with Kondagattu as the focal point. She said she took the decision following the advice of priests of Hanuman temple in Kashi.

BJP lawyer leads race  
despite Vani’s entry

Prof’s charisma falls short to win Hyd-RR-MBNR MLC poll

SIRIRAM KARRI | DC  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 26

The electoral race for the member of the Legislative Council representing the Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy and Mahbubnagar (HRRM) graduates constituency has just started acquiring its contours after the last minute entry of Surabhi Vani Devi, daughter of former prime minister late P. V. Narasimha Rao, academic, artist and educationist, into the fray, but all indications show that she has a lot of ground to cover to catch up with incumbent MLC, lawyer and the easily accessible and affable Naraparaju Ramchander Rao of the BJP.

Making the contest fascinating is an equally simple person, known, like his other two rivals, for his integrity, charisma and passion: academic, former MLC and political analyst Prof. K. Nageshwar; and the Congress candidate G. Chinna Reddy, former minister and AICC secretary.

The constituency, which is large, diverse and heterogeneous, with several different sets of voters, all with clearly different yet focussed concerns, is tough to conquer. Employees of central and state public sector enterprises, retired employees, employed and unemployed students make for a tough lot to access together. Party affiliations are relevant but not deciders.

AGRICULTURE  
VARSITY TO  
HAVE COEDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 26

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Friday announced the setting up of a centre of excellence (CoE) in the Prof Jayashankar Telangana State Agriculture University on the city outskirts, and allotted it 300 acres on the campus.

The decision came during a review meeting that the Chief Minister chaired on drafting a horticulture policy with senior officials at Pragathi Bhavan on Friday.

The Chief Minister said that there was a need to do more research to expand the cultivation of horticulture crops and introduce modern methods in horticulture farming and the CoE would be helpful in achieving this goal. He directed officials to draft the horticulture policy keeping in mind the needs and weather conditions. He stressed the need for strengthening agriculture university for the purpose. Rao assured that he would sanction more funds to the agriculture university in the upcoming Budget.

● **EMPLOYEES OF central and state public sector enterprises, retired employees, employed and unemployed students make for a tough lot to access together. Party affiliations are relevant but not deciders.**

Interestingly, while Ramchander Rao says the pro-BJP wave in the state and a prevailing narrative that it will not only challenge but prevail against the TRS in the next Assembly elections, the positive image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government and his own work for the graduates, unemployed youth and state employees will make him a clear winner, all the others feel the fight is respectively between them and the BJP candidate.

Prof. Nageshwar said, “The fight is between BJP’s Ramchander Rao and I. While his strength is based on the party’s rising tide, and money power of an organised party in power, I am facing him based on my passionate championing of causes dear to the constituents. Several unions, student bodies and my fans on social media are augmenting my chances. I am confident I will defeat him.”

Vani Devi, dismissing all talk of being late to the race or being a novice, says, “I have a better understanding of issues and an undeniable track record as a professor at JNTU, as an educationist who has started and run several educa-

tional institutes.”

While she feels the race is between her and the BJP’s incumbent and popular lawyer, she feels in the end, she will triumph. Ramchander Rao also exudes confidence when he says, “There is a pro-BJP wave across Telangana as much as an anti-TRS wave. The people are still barely recovering from the shock of the double murders in Manthani of the lawyer couple. Yet, there has not been a single word of condemnation from the TRS chief and CM. The elections will see the BJP win with a resounding majority. The race is really between the others for second place.”

Speaking about the crucial P.V. Narasimha Rao factor, Ramchander Rao says, “Everyone can see through the political game of KCR. Trying to distract attention from his failures, by invoking the name of the illustrious late PM he won’t get away. Giving a losing ticket to the daughter of PV is a great disservice to the family.”

Prof. Nageshwar also dismisses the factor, saying the appeal of Narasimha Rao is one of respect, not charisma of a kind either NTR or YSR had to get votes in his name. “People, especially the Brahmin community, will not vote based on caste.”

The Congress leader, who started with a strong campaign, is losing out because of the high stakes and resources being pitched in by the two leading parties — the BJP and TRS.



Shops remain closed in view of Bharat Bandh to protest against the new GST rules and hike in petrol and diesel prices in Hyderabad on Friday.

— P. SURENDRA

Traders bandh evokes  
mixed response in TSDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 26

The ‘Bharat Vyapar bandh’ on Friday, called for by the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) to protest against rising fuel prices and provisions of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) law evoked mixed response.

Several merchants, both kirana and wholesale, downed their shutters, the bandh had its impact on the transport sector with most trucks going off the roads.

Traders and shop owners from some parts of the city, including Begum Bazaar, took out a rally to the office of the Hyderabad collector and submitted a memorandum with a list of demands including roll-back of fuel prices and rationalising GST norms among others.

The Hyderabad Merchants Association, the Telangana Lorry Owners Association, and the Hyderabad Tyre Dealers Association (HTDA) were among

those who took part in the protests and shut down their businesses. “All our members took part in the protest today and gathered at Siddiambar Bazaar for a demonstration,” said Khemchand Wadhvani, the HTDA secretary. “Our appeal is that tyres be brought into a lower tax bracket from the 28 per cent slab,” he added.

In LB Nagar, workers and leaders of the CPI-M and other Left parties organised a dharna in support of the traders bandh.

WILL EXPOSE KCR’S SCAM AS  
LABOUR MINISTER: BANDIDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 26

State Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Bandi Sanjay on Friday alleged that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao had committed a “big mistake” during his tenure as Union labour minister in the UPA government which he will “expose” soon.

In an informal interaction with mediapersons here, Sanjay said that he had gathered evidence to prove how Chandrashekar Rao had committed the mistake on a “particular issue” and how he had misled Parliament.

Incidentally, Kapilavai Dileep Kumar, who served as personal secretary to Chandrashekar Rao

when he was Union minister, joined the BJP in the presence of Sanjay on Friday.

Dileep Kumar withdrew his MLC nomination as independent candidate earlier in the day. Extending his support to BJP MLC candidate N. Ramchander Rao, Dileep Kumar made the startling claim that he had credible information that the Enforcement Directorate would soon raid Chandrashekar Rao and his close aides to probe the irregularities during his stint as Union labour minister.

“I will seek the Lok Sabha Speaker’s approval to expose this issue. If the Speaker permits, I will reveal all those details on the floor of the House,” Sanjay stated.

Harish Rao in spotlight as  
poll in-charge for RR dist.DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 26

TRS boss and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao appears to have taken the upcoming MLC election for Hyderabad-Ranga Reddy-Mahbubnagar graduate constituency quite seriously as he has fielded former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao’s daughter Surabhi Vani Devi as the party candidate.

Rao appointed three ministers as in-charges for each of the three districts on Friday in addition to local ministers of respective districts to ensure Vani Devi’s win.

Incidentally, it is after a long time that finance minister T. Harish Rao is back in focus as election in-charge for Ranga Reddy district. The decision was taken by Chandrasekhara Rao during a meeting with ministers to devise the strategy for MLC polls. Immediately thereafter, Harish Rao convened a meeting with party leaders and cadre of Ranga Reddy district. Harish Rao was confined as election in-charge in the undivided



T. Harish Rao

Medak district, his home district, after the TRS came to power in 2014. IT minister K.T. Rama Rao has led the party in all elections since 2014. The TRS chief used to assign each and every election task from 2001 to 2014 to Harish Rao, who is known as ‘trouble-shooter’ and ‘tough task-master’. He ensured the party’s victory in every election.

However, the latest decision to bring him as election in-charge for Ranga Reddy district has come as a surprise to party leaders and cadre.

Meanwhile, civil supplies minister Gangula Kamalakara will be in-charge

● **CHIEF MINISTER K. Chandrasekhara Rao** has reportedly warned ministers against any complacency saying that the party could no longer afford to lose MLC polls. It may be noted that although TRS swept all the polls in Telangana since its formation, it suffered setbacks in MLC polls.

for Hyderabad district while roads and buildings minister Vemula Prashanth Reddy will hold the position for Mahbubnagar district.

Local ministers Talasani Srinivas Yadav, Ch Malla Reddy and Mohd Mahmood Ali, Sabitha Indra Reddy and Singireddy Niranjan Reddy were appointed in-charges for their respective districts earlier.

Chandrasekhara Rao has reportedly warned ministers against any complacency saying that the party could no longer afford to lose MLC polls. It may be noted that although TRS swept all the polls in Telangana since its formation, it suffered setbacks in MLC polls.

## There is pro-wave: Ramchander

From page 1

Ramchander Rao also exudes confidence when he says, “There is a pro-BJP wave across Telangana as much as an anti-TRS wave. The people are still barely recovering from the shock of the double murders in Manthani of the lawyer couple. Yet, there has not been a single word of condemnation from the TRS chief and CM. The elections will see the BJP win with a resounding majority. The race is really between the others for second place.”

Speaking about the crucial P.V. Narasimha Rao factor, Ramchander Rao says, “Everyone can see through the political game of KCR. Trying to distract attention from his failures, by invoking the name of the illustrious late PM he won’t get away. Giving a losing ticket to the daughter of PV is a great disservice to the family.”

Prof. Nageshwar also dis-

misses the factor, saying the appeal of Narasimha Rao is one of respect, not charisma of a kind either NTR or YSR had to get votes in his name. “People, especially the Brahmin community, will not vote based on caste.”

The Congress leader, who started with a strong campaign, is losing out because of the high stakes and resources being pitched in by the two leading parties — the BJP and TRS.

“Even though she is my aunt and family, and I respect her, I am sure my party will win. The TRS did a bad thing by making her a scapegoat,” said N.V. Subhash, BJP leader and grandson of Narasimha Rao.

Vani Devi dismisses these contentions saying, “If they respect my father so much, let them withdraw from the elections.”

As Prof. Nageshwar says, “She won’t be a major factor in these polls. As such, there is a strong anti-TRS wave in

the state. Yet, the election to this constituency won’t be a referendum on the KCR government as much as about who is the right candidate to represent this diverse constituency. She has never been in public life and none of the voters will believe she can fight for them.”

Ravi Srivatsa, a graduate constituency voter from Hyderabad, said, “Based on the campaign and whatever I have seen of the candidates, I think, at least in the city, the BJP is clearly ahead. But how differently do voters think, in say Mahbubnagar, I cannot be sure. In absence of any ability to decide based on candidates most people would vote for a party.”

While the BJP’s lawyer will enjoy the thought, the others, including the educationist and daughter, professor, former minister and other independents would be hoping otherwise and they have not just a few weeks to change it.

Lawyers murder case:  
Cong. seeks CBI probeDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 26

Lead by N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, president of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC), a delegation of the state Congress met Governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan at Raj Bhavan here on Friday and requested her to direct a court-monitored Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the murder of the lawyer couple Gattu Vaman Rao and P.V. Nagamani.

“Gattu Vaman Rao and his wife P.V. Nagamani were hacked to death by TRS activists in broad daylight at Ramgiri on February 17. The couple, appearing as counsels in different cases, had filed a public interest litigation (PIL) about the alleged custodial death of Seelam Rangiah, a Dalit man, in the Manthani police station of Ramagundam police commissionerate. During a recent hearing of the matter in the High Court, Vaman Rao, who was appearing as counsel in the PIL filed by his wife, had stated that they were being harassed with false cases and threatening calls from police and others,” Uttam Kumar Reddy informed the Governor in the representation.

The TPCC chief told the Governor that the brutal double murder of the advocate couple in broad daylight in public glare proves that there is a total collapse of law and order in Telangana state.

“The general public does not believe that local police would carry out a fair or neutral investigation into the double murder,” he said, while urging the Governor to order a court-monitored CBI investigation into the matter. Speaking to mediapersons later, Reddy alleged that accused persons in the murder case were reportedly close to Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhara Rao. He also alleged that local police were trying to shield Telangana Rashtra Samiti

● **THE TPCC chief** told the Governor that the brutal double murder of the advocate couple in broad daylight in public glare proves that there is a total collapse of law and order in Telangana state.

(TRS) leaders involved in brutal murders.

“The lawyer couple’s murder is directly linked to Manthani’s custodial death, which is again linked to the sand mafia, backed by top TRS leaders.

However, local police are trying to suppress facts to protect TRS leaders involved in the murders,” he said, adding that police commissioner Satyanarayana was “acting like an agent” of TRS leaders. Uttam Kumar Reddy said that although the High Court had directed the Telangana police to submit a report on March 1, the local police could not be trusted as they were being pressured by the ruling party to hush up the matter. “Chief Minister Rao did not issue a single-line statement condemning the brutal double murders. This clearly shows that KCR is giving a free hand to sand, land and mines mafia to establish their control, using murders as a tool to instil fear among common people,” Reddy said.

The TPCC chief said the Congress would also write to the Chief Justice of India, president of the Bar Council of India and other authorities regarding the lawyer couple’s murder.

Congress MLC T. Jeevan Reddy, MLAs Sridhar Babu and Jagga Reddy, TPCC SC department chairman N. Preetam and senior leader Annaiah Goud were part of the delegation. Later, the Congress leaders met Director General of Police M. Mahendar Reddy and requested him to expedite the investigation into the double murder case. They also requested the DGP to take necessary steps to ensure protection of the family of the victims.

VICTIM’S DAD  
ALSO WANTS  
CBI PROBEDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 26

Expressing apprehensions that the police may not probe the murder of the lawyer-couple Gattu Vaman Rao and P.V. Nagamani in a fair manner, his father, Gattu Kishan Rao, has filed a writ petition seeking a direction to the state government to transfer the probe to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

The couple was killed in broad daylight near Manthani on February 17. The case was registered with the Ramagiri police. In his petition, Kishan Rao stated that Vaman Rao and Nagamani were eliminated by anti-social elements in collusion with Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) leaders and police officials as the couple was questioning the illegal activities resorted to by Putta Madhukar, the zilla parishad chairman of Peddapalli, and his wife Shailaja, chairperson of Manthani municipality.

The petitioner informed the court that Madhukar and his wife developed animosity towards Vaman Rao and Nagamani as their illegal activities were questioned by the advocate couple.

Nagamani had filed an election petition challenging the election of Madhukar in a lower court in Karimnagar and brought to light the lock-up death of Sheelam Rangiah, who had information regarding the sand and mining mafia in Manthani. Nagamani had previously addressed a letter to the Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court, praying that the alleged lock-up death be taken up suo motu.

Covid cases on the rise in  
city and adjoining areasBALU PULIPAKA | DC  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 26

Covid-19 cases appear to be on the upswing in Hyderabad city and other areas in the GHMC jurisdiction, as well as in Ranga Reddy, and Medchal-Malkajgiri districts.

Fresh Covid-19 cases, since February 21, the last day the state health department issued a bulletin, have been averaging 223 a day, up from the 180s and 190s each day till February 21.

As on Thursday, the state had a total of 2,98,453 Covid-19 cases, while on February 21, the total cases stood at 2,97,712. Between February 22 and 25, the state recorded 741 new cases.

It may be recalled that the department had announced on February 23 that it would stop issuing daily bulletins but had to amend the decision

INCREASE IN COVID-19 CASES												
	Feb.	19	20	21	22	23	24	25				
GHMC area:	27	29	24	23	31	33	31					
RANGA REDDY:	13	12	12	11	13	17	16					
MALKAJGIRI:	15	11	8	12	18	17	19					

after the High Court pulled it up and made it clear on February 25 that the bulletins must be issued every day. Meanwhile, according to the daily case data in the bulletin issued on Friday, the past three days saw fresh cases averaging 30s in the GHMC area, up from the daily cases in their 20s before that.

On Thursday, Telangana state recorded 189 new cases and two deaths taking the toll to 1,632. Of the new cases, GHMC jurisdiction, includ-

ing Hyderabad, recorded 31 new cases, with Medchal-Malkajgiri reporting 19, and Ranga Reddy districts reporting 16 cases. Five districts — J o g u l a m b a - G a - d w a l - Narayanpet, Mulu-gu, Nirmal, and Yadadri-Bhongir — had zero cases.

The active Covid-19 cases stood at 1,910 and of them 818 were in isolation at home or in institutions. The rest, 1,092, were in different private and government hospitals.



## OTHER STORIES

## MAKE DHARANI PORTAL USER FRIENDLY: CM

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 26

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao will hold an emergency meeting of district collectors and senior revenue officials in a day or two to resolve issues being faced by people in carrying out transactions over the Dharani portal.

Although the CM launched Dharani on October 29 last year to make property transactions completely online and check corruption in the revenue department, people are continuing to suffer because of several procedural hurdles with regard to land transfers, mutations, errors in land data, land extent, ownership and so on.

Since its launch, several new features had been added to Dharani portal over the past three months. But some features had been removed abruptly without any notice, causing confusion and anxiety among property owners.

Even a feature to raise grievances was added on Dharani portal under 'Applications for Land Matters' in January. Following this, over six lakh complaints had been made from all districts in the state. However, without any notice, this link was removed all of a sudden recently.

As a result, people are now worried about the status of their grievances. Those who want to raise fresh complaints are also tense and anxious as they find no scope to register their grievance.

That more than six lakh complaints had been made within a span of three weeks shows the magnitude of problems being faced by property owners due to Dharani.

The CM is calling for the meeting at Pragathi Bhawan to guide district collectors and revenue staff on making Dharani more user-friendly.

As of now, the Dharani portal is dealing only with agricultural land transactions. There is no clarity over when non-agriculture properties will be brought under Dharani due to a case pending in the High Court. For the time being, non-agriculture property transactions are being done under the old method.

# 2nd preferential vote is key to MLC victory

There are 5,05,565 lakh voters in constituency

A. RAVINDRA SESHU  
KHAMMAM, FEB. 26

The second preference votes are expected to turn as a key factor for winning of the candidate in the Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduate constituency election.

There are instances that no candidate will win in the election directly with first preference votes. The candidate, who got above fifty percent of votes in the polled votes, will be declared as winner.

If no candidate failed to achieve 50 percent votes, the election officials will count second preference votes and they will go to third preference in case no candidate got above 50 percent votes even after completion of second preference votes.

Even Palla Rajeswara Reddy, the present MLC,

won as MLC from the same constituency in 2015 with the second preference votes. Candidates, who are in the fray, started concentration on getting more second preference votes.

About 71 candidates remained in the fray after three persons withdrew their nominations on Friday: Bhukya Kotyua, Samala Sasidhar and Belgam Nagaraju withdrew their nominations. Nominations of two persons were rejected due to different reasons.

There are 5,05,565 lakh voters in the constituency including 1,29,871 votes in Khammam and Bhadradi districts.

The candidates from BJP, TRS and Congress and Telangana Jana Samithi are relying more on second preference votes. These candi-

dates are trying to get the second preference votes of persons, who are committed to certain political parties.

These candidates are making efforts to get their promise on casting their second preference votes for them.

BJP candidate Gujjula Premender Reddy said that they took the second preference votes as important and he evolved a plan to get more second preference votes. Kodanram and Palla Rajeswara Reddy too are concentrating more on these votes.

Enugu Venkateswarlu, a poll expert said, "Second preference vote will play a key factor in MLC election.

There are occasions where the candidate, who got more second preference votes than the first preference votes, wins in the poll".



Students wait for buses at road side as the city bus stop is still under construction at Telanganaga chowk in Karimnagar on Friday.

—DC

## Youth Congress intensifies stir on TRS, BJP policies

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, FEB. 26

The Congress is all set to intensify protests through its youth wing against the "anti-people" policies of the state and central governments.

After noticing that the BJP is mobilising its youth, the Congress has chalked out a similar plan to organise youths and enliven the protests against various governmental policies. The Congress aims to attract more of unemployed educated youths and students from universities to the party.

For instance, Youth Congress activists will stage protests across the state against the hike in the prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas, and demand a monthly dole for the unemployed youth as also large-scale recruitment for government jobs in Telangana.

● **FOR INSTANCE,** Youth Congress activists will stage protests across the state against the hike in the prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas, and demand a monthly dole for the unemployed youth as also large-scale recruitment for government jobs in Telangana.

The Congress youths will also demand a reduction in the retirement age to 57 from 60 for government employees.

Recently, the Youth Congress had conducted a training camp here for its leaders drawn from across Telangana. Top leaders from Delhi came and addressed the camp. The move came in the context of the elections for two MLC graduates constituencies in the state.

The Congress youth

wing plans to hold protests across the state under the guidance of senior leaders in the first week of March.

Rupesh Reddy, Adilabad district general secretary of the Youth Congress who attended its meeting in Hyderabad, said the leaders who came from Delhi enlightened the youths on various issues and gave them directions for their future action plan.


He said serious efforts were being made to strengthen the frontal organisations of the Congress party to expose the 'anti-people' policies of the state and central governments.

District presidents of the Youth Congress have been asked to submit details of their plans for protests to the party high command as part of an attempt to revitalize the Youth Congress from the grassroots level.

## AYURVEDIC MEDICINE DISTRIBUTED

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NIZAMABAD, FEB. 26

Infertility medicine of Ayurveda distributed to around 700 couple at Indur Tirumala temples on Friday. On the auspicious occasion of Magha Pournami, the medicine is being distributed for brood of couples yearly once at temple premises. The couples from undivided Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Adilabad and other places reached to get the medicine at free of cost.


**ANDHRA PRADESH STATE FINANCIAL CORPORATION**  
 (Incorporated under the State Financial Corporation Act, LXIII of 1951)  
**KARIMNAGAR BRANCH**  
 Door No.2-7-373, Opp: Collectorate Complex, Mukarampura, Karimnagar Town & District- 505001  
**E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE**  
**SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT, 2002**  
**(Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)**

In exercise of powers conferred under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 and pursuant to the possession of the secured assets of the borrower(s)/ mortgagors mentioned hereunder, the public and all concerned including the concerned borrowers/mortgagors, their legal heirs/ representatives, as the case may be are hereby informed that offers are invited by the Authorised Officer of the ANDHRA PRADESH STATE FINANCIAL CORPORATION (APSF) for purchase of the properties listed below.

Borrower & Guarantor	Amount Out Standing as on 31.01.2021	Description of Property	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession	Reserve Price (Rs. In lacs)	EMD (Rs. In lacs)	Bid Multiple Amount
<b>Borrower:</b> M/s. GOLD STONE IMPORTS & EXPORTS, Prop: Smt. Sugureddy Sandeepa Reddy, D.No.8-5-480, Kothirampur, Karimnagar Town & Dist.	Rs. 35,50,404/-	Freehold interest in vacant site & shed Land admeasuring 382.22 Sq.yards & 273.38 Sq.yards and total land admeasuring 655.60 Sq. yards covered by House No.3-1-747/1, & 3-1-747/1/A Plot No.79 in Sy.No.1037 situated at Vavilapally, Karimnagar Mandal & District together buildings constructed/ to be constructed thereon and Commonly bounded by:	10.07.2018	08.05.2019	Rs. 150.45 Lakhs	Rs. 16.72 Lakhs	Rs. 10,000/-
<b>Guarantor:</b> Sri Theepreddy Laxma Reddy & Sri Theepreddy Anil Kumar Reddy, H.No.8-5-479, Kothirampur, Karimnagar Town & Dist.		<b>North:</b> 30' wide Road, <b>South:</b> Sri Laxmi Hospital & Commercial Complex belonging to Dr. Shiva Rama Krishna and Manideep Complex, <b>East:</b> Land belongs to Dr.Shiva Rama Krishna & (Sri Laxmi Hospital), <b>West:</b> Open land belongs to late Smt. Teeppreddy Shankunthala Reddy.					
<b>Borrower:</b> M/s. SRI RAMA NATURAL AROMATIC OIL INDUSTRY, Prop. Sri Donekena Mallesham, Sy.No.143, Arkandla (V), Shankarapatnam Mandal, Karimnagar District.	Rs. 26,66,805/-	RCC Commercial Building with Cellar floor plinth area 644 Sq.ft.s and Ground floor plinth area 952 Sq.ft.s covered by H.No.1-28, Sy.No.248/B, Land admeasuring 150 Sq.yds situated at Main Road, Keshavapatnam (Shankarapatnam) Village and Mandal, Karimnagar District and bounded by:	06.12.2019	11.02.2020	Rs. 29.73 Lakhs	Rs. 3.30 Lakhs	Rs. 5,000/-
<b>Guarantor:</b> Sri Donekena Narayana, S/o. Veeraliah and his legal-heirs, H.No.1-28, Keshavapatnam (Shankarapatnam) Village & Mandal, Karimnagar District.		<b>East:</b> Commercial Shop bearing H.No.1-28/A belongs to Sri P.Kanakiah, <b>West:</b> Commercial Shop bearing H.No.1-27/H belongs to Sri Parandamaya, <b>North:</b> Open place of T. Rajkumar & Others, <b>South:</b> PWD Road leading from Karimnagar to Warangal.					

**LAST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF TENDER DOCUMENTS : 30.03.2021 at 5.00 PM**  
**DATE & TIME OF OPENING OF TENDERS : 31.03.2021 at 11.00 AM**

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE:**

- The e-auction is being held on "AS IS WHERE IS" and "AS IS WHAT IS" basis.
- The secured asset will not be sold below the Reserve Price.
- The e-auction Sale will be online through e-auction portal.
- The e-auction will take place through portal <https://www.bankauctions.in> on 31.03.2021 from 11:00 AM to 12:45 PM onwards with unlimited auto extension of 5 minutes time.
- To the best of knowledge and information of the Authorized Officer, there is no encumbrance on any property. However, the intending bidders should make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of property/ies put on e-auction and claims/rights/dues effecting the property, prior to submitting their bid. The e-auction advertisement does not constitute and will not be deemed to constitute any commitment or any representation of the Corporation. The property is being sold with all the existing and future encumbrances whether known or unknown to the Corporation. The Authorized Officer/ Secured Creditor shall not be responsible in any way for any third party claims/rights/dues.
- It shall be the responsibility of the bidders to inspect and satisfy themselves about the asset and specification before submitting the bid. The inspection of property/ies put on e-auction will be permitted to interested bidders at sites as mentioned against each property description.
- The interested bidders shall submit their bid along with proof of having deposited the EMD through Web Portal: <https://www.bankauctions.in> (the user ID & Password can be obtained on free of cost by registering their names with <https://www.bankauctions.in>) through Login ID & Password. The EMD shall be payable through NEFT/RTGS in the following Account:- Syndicate Bank, Account No No:33003070002963, (IFSC Code: SYNB0003300), before 5:00 PM on 30.03.2021. Please note that the Cheques/Demand Draft shall not be accepted as EMD amount. After Registration (One Time) by the bidder in the Web Portal, the intending bidder/purchaser is required to get the copies of the following documents uploaded in the Web Portal before the Last Date & Time of submission of the Bid Documents viz.
  - Copy of the NEFT/RTGS Challan
  - Copy of PAN Card and
  - Proof of Identification/ Address Proof (KYC) viz. self-attested copy of Voter ID Card/ Driving License/ Passport/ Ration Card etc., without which the Bid is liable to be rejected. The interested bidder who requires assistance in creating Login ID & Password, uploading data, submitting bid, training on e-bidding process etc., may contact M/s. 4 Closure, Block No.605 A, 6th Floor, Maitrivanam Commercial Complex, Ameerpet, Hyderabad, and Contact Sri U.Subbarao (814200061/66), Support e-mail ID: [subbarao@bankauction.in](mailto:subbarao@bankauction.in) and for any property related query may contact Karimnagar Branch/ Authorized Officer on the telephone/mobile No.8897255433.
- Only buyers holding valid User ID/Password and confirmed payment of EMD through NEFT/ RTGS shall be eligible for participating in the e-auction process.
- The interested bidder has to submit their Bid Documents specified against each property [EMD (not below the 10% of Reserve Price) and required documents (mentioned in Point No.7)] on or before 30.03.2021 up to 5:00 PM, after going through the Registering Process (One time) and generating User ID & Password of their own, shall be eligible for participating in the e-auction Process, subject to due verification (of the documents) and/ or approval of the Authorized Officer.
- During the Online Inter-se Bidding, Bidder can improve their Bid Amount as per the 'Bid Increase Amount' (mentioned above) or its multiple and in case bid is placed during the last 5 minutes of the closing time of the e-auction, the closing time will automatically get extended for 5 minutes (each time till the closure of e-auction process), otherwise, it will automatically get closed. The bidder who submits the highest bid amount (not below the Reserve Price) on the closure of the e-auction Process shall be declared as a Successful Bidder by the Authorized Officer after required verification. The sale is subject to confirmation of secured creditor.
- All the tenderers who have submitted the tenders shall participate in e-auction process irrespective of their quotes mentioned in the tender form. Mere submission of highest tender in the tender form does not entitle the tenderer to claim as highest bidder without participating in e-auction process.
- The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) of the successful bidder shall be retained towards part sale consideration and the EMD of unsuccessful bidder shall be refunded. The Earnest Money Deposit shall not bear any interest. The successful bidder shall have to deposit 25% of the sale price, adjusting the EMD already paid, within 24 hours after the acceptance of bid price by the Authorised Officer and the balance 75% of the sale price on or before 15th day of sale or within such extended period as agreed upon in writing by and solely at the discretion of the Authorised Officer. In case of default in payment by the successful bidder, the amount already deposited by the bidder shall be liable to be forfeited and property shall be put to re-auction and the defaulting borrower shall have no claim/ right in respect of property/ amount.
- The prospective qualified bidders may avail online training on e-auction from M/s.4 Closure, prior to the date of e-auction. Neither the Authorised Officer/Secured Creditor nor M/s.4 Closure, shall be liable for any Internet Network problem and the interested bidders to ensure that they are technically well equipped for participating in the e-auction event.
- The purchaser shall bear the applicable stamp duties/ additional stamp duty/ transfer charges, fee etc. and also all the statutory/ non-statutory dues, taxes, rates, assessment charges, fees etc. owing to anybody.
- The Authorised Officer is not bound to accept the highest offer and the Authorised Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject any or all offer (s) or adjourn/postpone/cancel the e-auction without assigning any reason thereof.
- The bidders are advised to go through the detailed Terms & Conditions of e-auction available on the Web Portal of M/s.4 Closure <https://www.bankauctions.in> and [www.apsf.com](http://www.apsf.com) before submitting their bids and taking part in the e-auction.
- The Publication is subject to force majeure clause.
- Bidding in the last moment should be avoided in the bidders own interest as neither the Corporation nor Service provider will be responsible for any lapse/failure (Internet failure/power failure etc.) in order to ward-off such contingent situations. Bidders are requested to make all necessary arrangements/ alternatives such as power supply back-up etc, so that they are able to circumvent such situation and are able to participate in the e-auction successfully.
- In case the date of deposit of EMD & e-auction date is declared holiday then the date will be automatically extended to the very next working day.
- For the conditions not covered, the decision of the Authorized Officer shall be final.

Sd/- AUTHORISED OFFICER  
**ANDHRA PRADESH STATE FINANCIAL CORPORATION**  
 Karimnagar Branch

Station: KARIMNAGAR  
 Date : 26.02.2021

## IMPLEMENT GO NO. 46, DEMANDS SFI

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, FEB. 26

Students Federation of India demanded the government to implement the Government Order no.46 that was issued directing all private schools affiliated to the State Board, Central Board of Secondary Education, ICSE and other international boards not to increase fees during the academic year 2020-21. SFI district secretary Jammi Ashok said that the private schools and colleges started collecting high fees from the students and the parents are suffering a lot with the attitude of these private institutions.


**PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.**  
 Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001  
 Corporate Identification No. U40109PB2010SGC033813 | Website: [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in)  
 (Contact No. 96461-22185)


<b>Tender Enquiry No.:</b> 226/SS-II(D)	<b>Dated:</b> 25.02.2021
Dy.CE/Substation Design/ TS Organization, PSPCL, C-1, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala invites E-tender for Design, Manufacture, Testing, Supply & Delivery of 100 nos. 66KV SF6 Gas Circuit Breakers. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to <a href="https://eproc.punjab.gov.in">https://eproc.punjab.gov.in</a> from 04.03.2021 (11:00 AM onwards).	
<b>Note:</b> Corrigendum and amendments, if any will be published online at <a href="https://eproc.punjab.gov.in">https://eproc.punjab.gov.in</a> C-86/21 RO : 76155/12/127/2021/1961	


**FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA**  
 16-20, Barakhamba Lane, New Delhi-110001  
**RECRUITMENT NOTICE**

The Food Corporation of India (FCI), One of the largest Public Sector Undertakings ensuring the food security of the Nation, invites only **ONLINE APPLICATIONS** for the posts of **ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER (GENERAL ADMINISTRATION / TECHNICAL / ACCOUNTS / LAW) and MEDICAL OFFICER** for its Offices spread all over the Country from eligible candidates who fulfil the prescribed qualification, age, experience etc.

- Candidates may apply Online through [www.fci.gov.in](http://www.fci.gov.in)
- For details regarding eligibility criteria, reservation, age, etc., candidates may please refer to the detailed advertisement published in 'Employment News/Rozgar Samachar' dated 27th February, 2021 or in the FCI website [www.fci.gov.in](http://www.fci.gov.in)
- Submission of online Application Form will commence from 01.03.2021, 10:00 Hrs. The last date for Online application is 31.03.2021 till 16:00 Hrs.

**राष्ट्र के खाद्य सुरक्षा प्रहरी**



# CLASSIFIEDS

**FOR SALE**  
**PROPERTY**  
**COMMERCIAL**  
 ✓ **FOUR STORIED** building plinth area 9000sqft 3 sides road 220 sqyds Commercial use for sale - Srinagar colony Yellareddiguda Hyderabad Contact: 9848014329 - 9.00am to 6.30pm (W/2021/AT001183)

**INDEPENDENT HOUSE**  
 300 SQ.YDS West facing independent house ground and first floor 3400 sqft constructed in 1991, plot dimensions road side 30/60 with all amenities @ 3 Crores, situated in Secunderabad Cantonment area in a colony at West Marredpally. Ph:9393199193. Site visit only on Monday and Thursday. No brokers. (S/2021/IC00189)

**RENTALS**  
**COMMERCIAL**  
 L1LB1/BUILDING FOR rent 3 floors for hostel and tutorial near aurora degree college Chikkadpally intrested person can contact Pradeep agarwal 9391039861 (W/2021/AT001182)

**LEASE**  
**COMMERCIAL**  
 CYBER TOWER KPHB road beside Smiline Dental Hospital, opp: King's Drive-in G+5, 17, 280sqft building with cellar for Lease/Sale. Suitable for educational institute, hospital, residential school, IT office. Contact: 7207107999, 7702907020, 7702986786. (HYMM/2021/C07385)

**SITUATION VACANT**  
**MEDICAL**  
 WANTED MBBS Doctors to work in Chattisgarh Municipal Corporation MMU's Salary 70k Negotiable & Accommodation Terms & Conditions Apply. Contact: 9440048509, Mr.Satish, Project Head (HYMM/2021/C07400)

**BUSINESS OFFER**  
 EARN DAILY unlimited income with our membership cash back offer small investment thru BankFDs, E-Commerce, Electronic gift items, Insurance policies, Sharemarket, Realstate, Tourism, Media, OTT, Films, Kirana, FMCG,

**PLOTS**  
 HYDERABAD NEAR Kompally IT Parks @ Medchal Just 5Km from ORR.18,000/- per sqyd HMDA, Fully Developed, Gated Community, Bank Loans Available Contact: 8866785050 (HYMM/2021/C07396)

**FARM HOUSES-SITES**  
 EAST GODAVARI, 2500 Sq.yds Land, near NH5 & GIET Engg College, 4 kms from GSL Medical College. Suitable for Farm house, Villas & Commercial at Rajanagaram Mandal (under GUDA). Contact: 8247700389/ 8099047505. (A/2021/C00621)


**FLATS**  
 GACHIBOWLI, FINANCIAL District, 15 mts drive 2 & 3 BHK luxury flats in gated community @ just Rs.2750/- per sqft in pre-launch offer including club house, swimming pool, free amenities & car parking in the heart of Tellapur, Hyderabad near 200 ft road surrounding upcoming Villas & Apartments. Call: 7995108999. (S/2021/IC00188)

**REAL ESTATE**  
**PLOT REQUIRED**  
 PLOTS PURCHASE Kowkoor, Priyadarshini Enclave, Golf Enclave, Yaprail, Sai Krishna, Indus School, Sree Enclave, Registration Colony, Kapra, Saket, Silent Wald, Oorjita Projects, Thumkunta Shamirpet, and Surrounding areas Contact: 8074203475. (HYMM/2021/C07416)

**WATER PROOFING**  
 YONA WATER Proofing solutions for bathrooms, walls, terrace, water tanks, sumps & other leakages. 100% guarantee. Dr.Fixit Applicator. Jousha: 9505752971, 8897602102. (S/2021/IC00190)

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

**DISTANCE EDUCATION**  
 ONLY For Educational Consultants/ Academies. No Advance Fee. Students please no call. Contact for Verifiable +Fast Track :Graduation (15,000)/B.Ed.-M.Ed. -NCTE-Recognised (30000)/BBA-MBA- BCA-MCA (20-25,000)/from Government University. WES Documentation & Attestation Support Available. 47-years Educational Experience. Shiksha Bharti. Varanasi. Mobile:9519759663, 9915103781. Email:shikshabhar-


**BOOK YOUR CLASSIFIED / DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENTS at**  
 EDITION CENTRE :  
**KARIMNAGAR**  
 H.No. 1-21/12/1, Cherlabhaktur Road, Mugdumpur Village, Karimnagar - 505 186  
**900650508**  
 e-mail: [krmadvnt@deccanmail.com](mailto:krmadvnt@deccanmail.com)  
**9121183123**



## SHORT TAKES

## CAMPAIGNING FOR GUJ LOCAL POLLS ENDS

**Ahmedabad, Feb 26:** Campaigning for polls to various local bodies of Gujarat ended on Friday evening with voting scheduled for February 28. Counting of votes for elections to 81 municipalities, 31 district panchayats and 231 taluka panchayats will take place on March 2, a release by the State Election Commission said.

While the BJP is riding high after winning all six civic corporation polls held recently, the Congress believes the hike in fuel prices and public disenchantment with the ruling party will turn the tide.

On the last day of campaigning, Gujarat BJP president C R Paatil led a road show in Navsari, while Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, Pares Dhanani, took part in a motorcycle rally in Amreli.

Aam Aadmi Party head and Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal sought votes during a road show in Surat.

For the first time, the All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen has fielded candidates in minority-dominated seats in Godhra, Modasa and Bharuch municipalities, with party chief Asaduddin Owaisi holding public gatherings in Modasa and Godhra two days ago.

State Director General of Police Ashish Bhatia said over 44,000 policemen, including State Reserve Police and 12 companies of CAPF, along with 54,000 homeguards will be deployed on February 28 to ensure incident-free voting in 23,000 booths.

## ON BIKE, IRANI LEADS RALLY FOR WB POLLS

**Sonarpur (WB), Feb 26:** Riding a scooter, Union minister Smriti Irani led a rally of the BJP on Friday as she campaigned for the upcoming West Bengal elections in the South 24 Parganas district.

Taking part in the BJP's state-wide 'Poriborton Yatra', Irani along with BJP MP Roopa Ganguly and Agnimitra Paul began the campaign in Gangajora near Garia on the party's 'rath' - a bus decked up with slogans and photos of the leaders.

After covering a short distance, the minister got down from the 'rath' and took to a scooter, wearing a black helmet and a mask.

"When we began the 'rath yatra' on Friday, the administration deliberately tried to delay it. We will ride two-wheelers, walk on foot because West Bengal is on the march towards change," Irani said.

Enthusied by the minister's spontaneity, scores of BJP workers followed Irani on two-wheelers, chanting "Jai Shri Ram" and "Khela Hobey", meaning 'game on' - a slogan first raised by the Trinamool Congress, which has now become the catchphrase of this election season.

## EVERYONE ON POLL DUTY TO GET COVID-19 VACCINE

**New Delhi, Feb 26:** Everyone on election duty for the upcoming polls for five assemblies will be vaccinated against Covid-19 before polling day, the Election Commission said on Friday.

Voting will take place for 126 seats in Assam, 234 in Tamil Nadu, 294 in West Bengal, 140 in Kerala and 30 in Puducherry.

Nearly 18.68 crore electors will be eligible to vote at 2.7 lakh polling stations for 824 seats in five assembly elections, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said at a press conference here.

Arrangements will be put in place for candidates to file their nominations online for the five assembly polls. Voting will be allowed for an additional hour, keeping in mind Covid-19 safety guidelines, he said.

Also, webcasting arrangements will be in place at polling stations in critical and vulnerable areas, while adequate CAPF (Central Armed Police Forces) deployment will be ensured for the assembly polls, Arora said. All critical and vulnerable areas have been identified and advance teams have been already deployed across all four states and one union territory Puducherry going to the polls, he added.

He said door-to-door campaigning will be restricted to five persons, including the candidate, while roadshows will be allowed with a maximum of five vehicles.

## Mamata questions 8-phase elections in West Bengal

Are poll dates announced as per suggestions of Modi, Shah, asks Didi

**Kolkata, Feb 26:** Questioning the eight-phase assembly elections in West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Friday that she suspects that the dates were announced as per the suggestions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah for better management of the BJP's poll campaign.

Addressing a press conference at her residence in Kalighat, Banerjee said the Election Commission should not look at the state "through the eyes of the saffron camp" a reference to the BJP.

"With all due respect to the Election Commission, I want to say that questions are being raised on why elections will be held in so many phases in Bengal while other states will be voting in one phase. If EC doesn't provide justice to the people, where will the people go," she said.

"I request the Election Commission to consider West Bengal as their own state," the Trinamool Congress chief said.

Banerjee also raised questions on the way the phases were divided.

"They have divided our stronghold districts such as South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas into three parts. This is unprecedented," she said.

Banerjee said that despite "all these tricks", she will win the elections.

"I have information from my sources that the poll dates are similar to the ones BJP wanted. Have the dates been announced as per Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah's suggestions? The PM and the home minister cannot misuse their power for the state elections," she



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addresses a press conference at Kalighat in Kolkata on Friday. She has taken exception over the EC appointing two special police observers for West Bengal. - PTI

added. Banerjee also urged the EC to stop the misuse of money power. "The Union home minister should work for the country. He cannot misuse his powers for the elections here. We welcome the PM, but he cannot misuse his powers for West Bengal polls," she said.

Her comments came just minutes after the Election Commission announced that voting for the five assembly elections will begin on March 27, with West Bengal having the maximum eight phases continuing till April 29, while counting of votes for the four states and one Union Territory will be on May 2. Cautioning the

● **ELECTIONS FOR the West Bengal assembly will be held in eight phases, up from seven last time.**

● **AFTER HAVING a limited presence in the politically polarised state for decades, the BJP has emerged as the TMC's main rival over the last couple of years, managing to win 18 out of 42 seats in the Lok Sabha polls of 2019 and following it with inducting popular TMC MLAs and ministers into the party**

Centre against "misuse of power", Banerjee said it would prove detrimental

for the BJP. "Centre can't misuse their powers for a state election. If they do it, then it will be a big blunder and they will have to face the music. We are common people, we will fight our battle. I request the EC to stop the misuse of money. BJP has sent money to all the districts through agencies," she alleged.

Banerjee also took exception over the EC appointing two special police observers for West Bengal - Vivek Dubey and M K Das. "Vivek Dubey is the same man who was the observer for Bengal during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. We all know the role he had then played then,"

she said. Banerjee said she is the daughter of the state and knows Bengal better than the BJP, exuding confidence about her party Trinamool Congress winning the elections.

Banerjee's allegations drew sharp reactions from the BJP, which alleged that she is perplexed over the eight-phase elections as her party won't be able to intimidate the voters.

"Why is she so worried about eight-phase elections? Is she worried because TMC goons won't be able to influence the elections? We welcome the EC's decision for eight-phase elections to ensure free and fair polls," BJP leader Rahul Sinha said.

## AAP SETS EYES ON 2022 GUJ ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

**Surat, Feb 26:** Buoyed by the Aam Aadmi Party's good performance in the recently-held Surat civic polls, party chief Arvind Kejriwal has now set his eyes on the 2022 Gujarat Assembly polls.

Kejriwal, who arrived in Surat on Friday, said that AAP would seek votes from the people of the state in the next Assembly polls based on the performance of the party's 27 newly-elected corporators in the city.

Polls to six civic bodies in Gujarat, including in Surat, were held on Sunday.

While the BJP retained power in the Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) by winning 93 seats, the AAP bagged the remaining 27 seats. The Congress failed to win even a single seat.

During his address to the party corporators here, Kejriwal said, "The people of Gujarat are watching you with great hope. In our first attempt, AAP won 28 Assembly seats in Delhi and came to power. People trusted us because they knew that we are true patriots, as we were associated with Anna Hazare's agitation."

"In the 49 days of our rule, we did a lot of pro-people work. As a result, the people of Delhi gave us 67 seats in the second election. Now, six crore people of Gujarat will observe the work of 27 AAP corporators. If you perform well, I am sure there will be a huge revolution in 2022," the Delhi chief minister added.

Fearing a "poaching attempt", Kejriwal warned the elected representatives to inform the party leaders if "anyone from the BJP" contacts them over phone and gives an offer to switch sides. —PTI

## Disengagement at all friction points necessary, says India

**SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, FEB. 26**

India has now told China clearly that the disengagement of troops "at all friction points" in the Ladakh sector alone will lead to the restoration of peace and tranquility between the two countries, adding that

"both sides should now quickly resolve the remaining issues along the LAC in eastern Ladakh" after the "successful" disengagement at the northern and southern banks of Pangong Tso lake. This was made clear by India's external affairs minister S. Jaishankar in a 75-minute phone call with Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi on Thursday afternoon, when the two ministers also agreed to establish a hotline between them.

Jaishankar told the Chinese minister that "bilateral relations have been impacted severely over the last year, adding — in an obvious reference to the deadly Galwan Valley clash last June — that "disturbance of peace and tranquility, including by violence, will inevitably have a damaging impact on the relationship". But seeking to put the blame on India,

the Chinese foreign minister claimed that "there has been some wavering and back-peddalling in India's China policy, and practical cooperation between the two countries has been affected".

Significantly, while India stepped up the pressure on China to disengage from all friction points, Beijing — in a statement put out by the Chinese foreign ministry — only said "it is imperative for the two sides to cherish the hard-won relaxation... further ease the situation and improve the border management and control mechanisms". But China did say that "India wants more dialogue and consultation with China to realise quick disengagement at the remaining points".

In a statement on Friday, the external affairs ministry said, "The external affairs minister and the state councillor and foreign minister of China, Wang Yi, had a phone conversation yesterday afternoon. It lasted 75 minutes. The two foreign ministers discussed the situation along the LAC in eastern Ladakh and also issues related to overall India-China relations. EAM... noted that the bilateral relations have been

## CPM eyes repeat win, UDF hopes to return to power

**GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEB. 26**

With the Election Commission announcing single phase poll for Kerala on April 6, the principal parties are left with just 38 days for devising strategies, selecting candidates and venturing out on the ground to campaign.

The three major Fronts: CPM-led ruling LDF, opposition Congress-led UDF and BJP-led NDA which were going slow on candidate selection, will have to expedite the process and introduce their contestants before the electorate at the earliest.

The CPM district committees have already finalized the preliminary list of candidates which will be vetted by state committee, the UDF has decided to prepare the list within a week while the BJP-NDA also plans to do it by next week.

The ruling LDF is making an all out attempt to repeat 2016 victory, something which is considered impossible for any Front in the state. The LDF under former chief minister V.S. Achuthanandan came very close to doing a repeat in 2011, when it won 68 seats leaving the UDF with a majority of just four seats including Speaker. However, in the last elections the LDF secured a clear majority winning 91 seats and the UDF got only 47 and BJP 1. However, this time its going to be a tight contest with the UDF giving a tough fight to the ruling Front.

The LDF is fighting the elections on the government's performance. Infrastructure development projects, national highway widening, gas pipeline, social security

● **THE CPM district committees have already finalized the preliminary list of candidates which will be vetted by state committee, the UDF has decided to prepare the list within a week.**

initiative including welfare pension for the poor and marginalized and ration kits for families during Covid pandemic are some of the achievements it is highlighting among the electorate.

The UDF on the other hand is focusing on he failures of the government, corruption, gold smuggling case involving chief minister's former principal secretary, money laundering, back-door appointments and unemployment. But the latest issue regarding the clandestine MoU signed with an American company for ₹5000 cr deep sea trawling project is seen by the UDF as their trump card in polls. There are 40 constituencies in the coastal belt and about 10 constituencies lying close to coastal areas. Of these the LDF had won 30 in the last elections. The UDF could bag only nine.

The UDF has scaled up the campaign against the MoU which has now been scrapped, accusing the LDF of plotting the sell out of precious marine wealth to US company. The UDF is taking out two jathas from March 1, along the Kerala coast to campaign on the issue.

The LDF is wary of UDF campaign. It has decided to organise public meetings in coastal areas to contain the damage.

The BJP-led NDA which had secured nearly 15 per cent votes in the last elections and managed to open its account in Kerala Assembly, is trying hard to expand its base.



Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, HP Governor Bandaru Dattatreya and State Legislative Assembly Speaker Vipin Parmar arrive to attend the budget session in Shimla on Friday. - PTI

## Bandaru Dattatreya 'manhandled' in Assembly complex

**Shimla, Feb 26:** Himachal Pradesh Governor Bandaru Dattatreya was allegedly manhandled by some Congress members in the Assembly complex on Friday, following which five MLAs were suspended for the remainder of the Budget Session.

The incident took place outside the Speaker's office when the Governor was leaving for the Raj Bhavan after he cut short his address in the House following a ruckus create by the Congress on the opening day of the Budget session.

Speaker Vipin Parmar said the Opposition members tried to stop the Governor, who was accompanied by Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, when he was going towards his cavalcade.

They hit on the Governor's back with copies of his address. They also hit the bonnet of the Governor's car, the Speaker said, adding that he is examining the Assembly rules to lodge an FIR against the Congress legislators.

The Speaker said that this is for the first time in the history of the Himachal Pradesh Assembly that a Governor was manhandled by Opposition members. —PTI

After the incident, the Speaker suspended Leader of Opposition Mukesh Agnihotri and four other Congress MLAs Harsh Vardhan Chauhan, Satpal Raizada, Sunder Singh and Vinay Kumar for the entire Budget session till March 20 on a motion moved by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Bhardwaj.

Earlier, the Congress MLAs created a ruckus in the House during the Governor's address. He then skipped to the last sentence after reading that the entire speech should be deemed as read. Suspended Congress MLA Harsh Vardhan Chauhan said that they were waiting outside the Speaker's office and just wanted to ask the Governor why he cut short his address but they were not allowed to do so.

He alleged that it was Deputy Speaker Hans Raj who manhandled the MLAs, a charge denied by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Bhardwaj, who said the Congress legislators had planned to create a scene. Chauhan also said they did not have any intention of manhandling the governor. —PTI

## RIGHTS ACTIVIST NAUDEEP KAUR GRANTED BAIL

**Chandigarh, Feb. 26:** Around six weeks after her arrest in a criminal case filed under several charges including attempt to murder, labour rights activist Nauddeep Kaur was on Friday granted bail by the Punjab and Haryana HC.

"The court accepted the bail application of Nauddeep Kaur. She has been granted bail by the High Court," her counsel Arshdeep Singh Cheema said. Kaur was arrested in Haryana's Sonapat for allegedly gheraoing an industrial unit. —PTI



## SHORT TAKES

7 DEAD, 1 HURT  
AFTER PRISON  
OUTBREAK

**Croix-Des-Bouquets:** At least seven people were killed and one injured on Thursday after several inmates tried to escape from a prison in Haiti's capital, witnesses said. The incident occurred in northeast Port-au-Prince at the Croix-des-Bouquets Civil Prison, which is known for a 2014 breakout in which more than 300 inmates escaped. Residents in the area who declined to be identified out of concern for their safety said that they observed a group of heavily armed men start shooting at prison guards before the inmates began to flee.

ISRAELI SHIP  
EXPLODES IN  
TENSE MIDEAST

**Dubai:** An explosion struck an Israeli-owned cargo ship sailing out of the Middle East on Friday, an unexplained blast renewing concerns about ship security amid escalating tensions between the U.S. and Iran. The crew and vessel were safe, according to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, which is run by the British navy. The explosion forced the vessel to head to the nearest port. The site of the blast, the Gulf of Oman, saw a series of explosions in 2019 that the U.S. Navy blamed on Iran against the backdrop of steeply rising threats between former President Donald Trump and Iranian leaders. Tehran denied the accusations, which came after Trump abandoned Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers and reimposed harsh sanctions on the country. In recent weeks, as the administration of Joe Biden looks to re-engage with Iran, Tehran has escalated its breaches of the nuclear accord to create leverage over Washington. The deal saw Tehran agree to limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of crippling sanctions.

HEAVY FIGHTING  
KILLS 27 IN  
CENTRAL YEMEN

**Sanaa (Yemen):** Heavy fighting between rebels and government forces in Yemen's oil-rich Marib has killed at least 27 people, tribal leaders and security officials said on Friday, amid a resurgence of violence in the area.

The Iranian-backed Houthis rebels earlier this month renewed their attack on Marib, a stronghold for Yemeni forces allied with the internationally recognized government. The rebel offensive has faced stiff resistance and made little progress so far. The officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to talk to the media, said the uptick in violence came over the past twenty-four hours, adding that most of the dead were rebel fighters. Yemen's stalemated civil war began in 2014, when the rebels seized the capital of Sanaa and much of the country's north.

A Saudi-led coalition — with US backing — intervened months later to restore the internationally recognised government's authority.

4 DIE IN SWEDEN  
AFTER FALLING  
ON ICEY LAKE

**Stockholm:** Four people were killed when they fell through the ice on a lake in southern Sweden on Thursday, police said, as the country experiences a spell of unseasonably mild weather.

Four men aged between 65 and 75 were found in a hole in the ice on Savsjo lake, south of the town of Jonkoping, and could not be resuscitated after being pulled out of the water, a local police spokesperson said.

The exact circumstances of the incident were yet to be determined, she said.

Accidents caused by people walking across unstable ice are common in Sweden, but it is rare for the death toll to be so high. After several weeks of intense cold throughout most of the country, which drew walkers to frozen lakes and estuaries, parts of Sweden have seen a rapid hike in temperature over the past few days.

A national heat record for February was set on Thursday, according to the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute. A temperature of 16.8 degrees Celsius (62.2 degrees Fahrenheit) was registered in Kalmar, in the southeast of the country.

## US strikes Iran militias in Syria

It is the first military action against Iran-linked groups since Joe Biden became president

**Beirut, Feb. 26:** The US military has struck Iran-backed militias in eastern Syria, killing at least 22 fighters according to a war monitor, in what the Pentagon said was a message from the new administration after recent rocket attacks targeting US troops in Iraq.

In its first military action against Iran-linked groups since Joe Biden became president five weeks ago, the Pentagon said it had carried out air strikes on Thursday at a Syria-Iraq border control point used by Iran-backed groups, destroying "multiple facilities".

"At President Biden's direction", the US raids targeted "infrastructure

utilised by Iranian-backed militant groups in eastern Syria", spokesman John Kirby said in a statement.

"These strikes were authorised in response to recent attacks against American and coalition personnel in Iraq, and to ongoing threats to those personnel," he said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least 22 fighters were killed when the strike hit three trucks loaded with munitions coming from Iraq near the Syrian border town of Albu Kamal.

Militia border posts were also destroyed, the war monitor said.

It said all the dead were from Iraq's state-sponsored Hashed al-Shaabi

paramilitary force, an umbrella group that includes many small militias with ties to Iran.

Kirby said the location was used by Kataeb Hezbollah and Kataeb Sayyid al-Shuhada, two Iraqi pro-Iran groups operating under the Hashed umbrella.

Kataeb Hezbollah has yet to formally comment but an official with the group said one of its fighters was killed.

"One of our fighters was killed and a small number wounded by two missiles targeting one of our points along the Syrian-Iraqi border" he said on condition of anonymity.

Syrian state television condemned the "American

aggression" against the Iraqi fighters, who are allied with the Damascus government.

The US action followed three rocket attacks on facilities in Iraq used by US and coalition forces fighting the Islamic State group.

One of those strikes, on a military complex in the Kurdish regional capital Arbil on February 15, killed a civilian and a foreign contractor working with coalition forces, and wounded several US contractors and a soldier.

The attacks in Iraq laid down a challenge to the new Biden administration just as it opened a door to resumed negotiations with Tehran over its nuclear

programme.

Last week, the administration offered talks with Iran led by European allies as it seeks to salvage a 2015 nuclear deal, left on the brink of collapse after Biden's predecessor Donald Trump withdrew from it.

But the administration has also made clear it will not brook "malign activities" in the region by Iran.

Although Kataeb Hezbollah did not claim responsibility for the attacks, US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said that the powerful pro-Iranian group was behind them.

"We're confident in the target we went after. We know what we hit," he told reporters on the plane back to Washington after a

tour of the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz off the California coast.

"We are confident that the target was being used by the same Shia militia that conducted the strikes" against US interests in Iraq, he said.

Iran is believed to be searching for an opportunity to avenge the US assassination of top general Qasem Soleimani one year ago. Soleimani, a senior Revolutionary Guards commander, was Iran's key liaison to its allies in Iraq and Syria, and elsewhere in the region.

He was killed in a US drone strike just as he arrived in Baghdad for meetings with top Iraqi officials.

—AFP

RUSSIAN B-77  
LANDS IN  
EMERGENCY

**Moscow, Feb. 26:** Russian media report said that a Boeing 777 plane made an emergency landing in Moscow in the early hours of Friday after the pilot reported a problem with the engine.

The Interfax news agency cited an anonymous source saying that the pilot on the flight from Hong Kong to Madrid reported a failure of one of the left engine control channels and requested an emergency landing at the Moscow Sheremetyevo airport.

The plane landed safely and no one was injured, the report said. It was carrying out a "cargo-passenger" flight, Interfax said. The flight tracking website Flightradar24 confirms that the plane operated by Russia's state-funded Rossiya airline landed early Friday at the Moscow airport.

Earlier this month, a Boeing 777 operated by United Airlines had to make an emergency landing in Denver after one of its engines blew apart, spewing huge chunks of wreckage that landed in neighbourhoods and sports fields.

The investigation is focusing on a fan blade that appeared to be weakened by wear and tear, a development reminiscent of a fatal failure on board another plane in 2018.

The event caused authorities to ground Boeing 777 models that use that engine, the Pratt & Whitney 4000-112. Flightradar24 identified the plane that landed in Sheremetyevo on Friday as a Boeing 777-31H model, which does not use the Pratt & Whitney engines. Instead, that model uses the General Electric GE90-115B engines, according to fleet tracking site Airfleets.net.

—AP

US intel report  
to name MBS for  
Khashoggi killing

**Washington, Feb. 26:** The US director of national intelligence is expected to release a damning report on Friday that fingers Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for the brutal murder and dismemberment of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October 2018.

The classified report is believed to say that, based on intelligence collected by the CIA and other spy bodies, the kingdom's de facto leader directed the assassination of the respected US-based writer in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

The prince has steadfastly denied a part in the murder, even as some of his closest advisors have been shown to be deeply involved.

Intent on strengthening relations with Riyadh, previous US president Donald Trump's administration avoided making the report public or naming Prince Mohammed in the case.

Its declassification and release comes just as President Joe Biden endeavors to reset US relations in the Middle East and return principles of human rights to a prominent position in US policy.

Ahead of the release, Biden spoke on the telephone Thursday with

● **THE CLASSIFIED** report is believed to say that, based on intelligence collected by the CIA and other spy bodies, the kingdom's de facto leader directed the assassination of the respected US-based writer in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

Saudi King Salman, Prince Mohammed's father, in their first discussion since he became president five weeks ago. A White House statement on the call did not mention the Khashoggi report, but Biden said Wednesday that he had read it.

A respected veteran Saudi journalist and editor, Khashoggi was in self-exile and residing in the United States, writing articles critical of the crown prince when he was assassinated on October 2, 2018.

The 59-year-old writer had been told by Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States to go to the Saudi consulate in Istanbul if he wanted to obtain documents for his forthcoming marriage to a Turkish woman, Hatice Cengiz.

There, he was killed and his body dismembered by a team sent from Riyadh under the direction of a top aide to Prince Mohammed, Saud al-Qahtani. —AFP

IS bride loses bid to return  
to Britain for citizenship

**London, Feb. 26:** The UK government on Friday won a major legal battle as the Supreme Court ruled against allowing a London-born 21-year-old woman of Bangladeshi descent, who ran away to Syria as a teenager to join the Islamic State (ISIS) terror group, to return and fight her citizenship case.

The unanimous decision — with all five top court justices in agreement — comes six years after the then 15-year-old schoolgirl, Shamima Begum, ran away with two other friends to join the Islamic State (ISIS) group in February 2015. Begum had her British citizenship revoked on national security grounds shortly after she was found in a Syrian refugee camp in February 2019.

"The Supreme Court unanimously allows all of the Home Secretary's appeals and dismisses Ms Begum's cross-appeal," said Lord Robert Reed, the President of the Supreme Court. "The right to a fair hearing does not trump all other considerations, such as the safety of the public," he said.

Begum was born in the UK to parents of Bangladeshi heritage. Begum, dubbed an ISIS bride in reference to her marriage to Dutch ISIS



Shamima Begum's sister holds her picture. — AFP

fighter Yago Riedijk, was one of three schoolgirls from Bethnal Green in east London who travelled via Turkey to ISIS headquarters in Raqqa.

When discovered in a refugee camp two years ago, she had already lost two children and was heavily pregnant with her third who died shortly after being born. Begum had challenged the UK Home Office's decision to remove her British citizenship and wanted to be allowed to return to the UK to pursue that appeal. She is currently in a camp controlled by armed guards in northern Syria.

Initially, the UK Court of Appeal said she should be allowed to return to fight the case but in July last year it allowed a Home Office appeal and found that the case must go ahead to the Supreme Court before she is allowed back into the country because the case raised a

FB SIGNS PAY  
DEALS WITH 3  
OZ PUBLISHERS

**Canberra, Feb. 26:** Facebook announced on Friday preliminary agreements with three Australian publishers, a day after the Parliament passed a law that would make the digital giants pay for news.

Facebook said letters of intent had been signed with independent news organisations *Private Media*, *Schwartz Media* and *Solstice Media*. The commercial agreements are subject to the signing of full agreements within the next 60 days, a Facebook statement said.

"These agreements will bring a new slate of premium journalism, including some previously paywalled content, to Facebook," the statement said. Schwartz Media chief executive Rebecca Costello said the deal would help her company continue to produce independent journalism.

"It's never been more important than it is now to have a plurality of voices in the Australian press," Costello said in the Facebook statement. *Private Media* chief executive Will Hayward said the new deal built on an existing Facebook partnership.

Australia's Parliament on Thursday had passed the final amendments to the so-called News Media Bargaining Code.

Nigeria gunmen kidnap  
over 300+ girl students

**Lagos, Feb. 26:** Hundreds of girls are missing after a large group of gunmen raided a school in northern Nigeria early Friday morning, residents say. The Government Secondary Jangebe School in Zamfara state was the scene of the latest mass abduction of school children in northern Nigeria.

Nasiru Abdullahi told *The Associated Press* that school records show 300 girls are missing. His daughters, aged 10 and 13, are among them. Resident Musa Mustapha said the gunmen also attacked a nearby military camp and checkpoint, preventing soldiers from interfering while the gunmen spent several hours at the school. It was not immediately clear if there were any casualties.

Several large groups of armed men operate in Zamfara state, described by

● **SEVERAL LARGE** groups of armed men operate in Zamfara state, described by the government as bandits, and are known to kidnap for money and for the release of their members from jail.

the government as bandits, and are known to kidnap for money and for the release of their members from jail. "We are angered and saddened by yet another brutal attack on schoolchildren in Nigeria," said Peter Hawkins, UNICEF representative in the country. "This is a gross violation of children's rights and a horrific experience for children to go through." He called for their immediate release.

The West African nation has seen several such attacks and kidnappings over the years, notably the

mass abduction in April 2014 by jihadist group Boko Haram of 276 girls from the secondary school in Chibok in

Borno state. More than a hundred of the girls are still missing.

Friday's attack came less than two weeks after gunmen abducted 42 people, including 27 students, from the Government Science College Kagara in Niger State. The students, teachers and family members are still being held. In December, 344 students were abducted from the Government Science Secondary School Kankara in Katsina State. They were eventually released.

Anietie Ewang, Nigeria researcher at Human Rights Watch, noted the recent abductions and tweeted that "Strong action is required from the authorities to turn the tide & keep schools safe." —AP

**ACSmith** | Water Purifiers | Water Heaters

# Hot is the new healthy

## Warming up to 2021

**Get Purified Hot Water with**

- Instant Purified Hot Water
- Baby-Safe\* water with 8-stage purification
- Double protection with 100% RO+SCMT

As we warm up to 2021, let's make Hot the new Healthy, with instant purified Hot water served directly from your A. O. Smith Water Purifiers.

8 Stage purification with RO+ SCMT

Mineralised Hot Water at 45°C and 80°C

Saves 9000 Litres of water annually\* with ART™MAX

Peace of Mind 1-year comprehensive warranty\*\*

Call 1800 103 2468 / 1860 500 2468 for a free demo today or visit [www.aosmithindia.com](http://www.aosmithindia.com)

Available Easy EMI\* with **BAJAJ FINSERV** | **HDB FINANCIAL SERVICES**

\*Terms and conditions apply. \*\*Inclusive of all filters and RO membrane. \*Compared to any ordinary RO water purifier. For details visit [www.aosmithindia.com](http://www.aosmithindia.com). ART™MAX: Advance Recovery Technology™ (Patent Applied).



DECCAN  
Chronicle

27 FEBRUARY 2021

A welcome first sign  
of an India-Pak thaw

The joint statement released by the militaries of India and Pakistan on Thursday, February 25, on observing the ceasefire at the Line of Control and in all other border areas, and respecting previous agreements in this regard, is a positive development that deserves to be built upon.

It marks the first sign of thaw in India-Pakistan relations since January 2, 2016, when Pakistan-based terrorists struck the Indian Air Force base in Pathankot a mere eight days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's surprise visit to Lahore on Christmas Day to celebrate the birthday of then Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif.

Understandably, this was taken as a sign that the Pakistan Army, which calls all the shots in that country, was not comfortable with the potential of an evolving entente between the two countries.

Since then it has been a roller-coaster ride of negativity in bilateral ties, as the Uri terror attack of September 2016, India's "surgical strike" days later, the subsequent Pulwama terrorist attack in early 2019 that killed 40 CRPF personnel, India's retaliatory airstrike across the LoC, and the immediate response of a Pakistani fighter jet crossing the LoC, showed.

Through this sorry saga, in response to overtures by Pakistan PM Imran Khan, New Delhi maintained that "talks and terror cannot go together". Clearly, this left room for the idea that dialogue leading to mutually favourable long-term bilateral outcomes — which will benefit the region as a whole — is indeed possible if terrorism is taken off the menu.

After five years of a hostile stasis in the relationship, Pakistan Army chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajaj, in a February 3 address, attempted to mark a change of course in ties with India. He said: "We stand firmly committed to the ideal of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. It is time to extend the hand of peace in all directions. Pakistan and India must also resolve the longstanding issue of Jammu and Kashmir in a dignified and peaceful manner."

The joint defence statement suggests that India was not unresponsive, and both sides got on to practicalities. Across governments, India has held that it is the Pakistan Army that is the fly in the ointment, and that a turn in a beneficial direction is contingent on the Pakistan Army desiring it. Evidently, Gen. Bajwa's remark has emerged as a possible catalyst.

How the thaw unfolds lies in the future. Over the decades, Pakistan Army has tied itself into knots by cultivating terrorist outfits as its surrogates operating in Kashmir, in other parts of India, and in Afghanistan with which India seeks to deepen its friendship.

If the Pakistan Army chief's initiative has to survive, he must ensure that J&K is out of bounds for terrorism. And this means the message must go down to the homegrown Kashmir outfits as well. Further, terrorist actions against all Indian entities in Afghanistan must also cease.

The joint statement is a military statement. At some point, if things go well, it needs to acquire a political dimension at the level of the two governments. The statement notes that it was "agreed to address each other's core issues and concerns which have (the) propensity to disturb peace and lead to violence". Such a formulation covers terrorism as well as Kashmir. India should not fight shy of taking the "K" word on board in all its dealings with Pakistan.

## Diamonds aren't forever

The decks have been cleared for the extradition from Britain of the diamond merchant Nirav Modi. It is up to India to use its left in pursuing the matter to a conclusion by convincing the UK home secretary Priti Patel to sign off on the court ruling and allow the repatriation of a jewel thief who masterminded one of the great heists of the time in defrauding the Punjab National Bank. The booty to the tune of Rs 14,000 crore (nearly US \$2 billion) is nearly the equivalent of what thieves took from the 1963 Great Train Robbery in the UK.

The Indian people, whose money it is that was swindled from the bank by the illegal use of Letters of Undertaking (LoUs) in connivance with bank officials, would be hoping that the justice system here would ultimately hand down an apt sentence commensurate with the crime. Mr Modi has also added to his repertoire such crimes as intimidation of witnesses in the form of death threats and tampering with the evidence. A jail in India may not, however, be to the liking of the notorious diamantaire as it may not quite match the decorated cell in Her Majesty's Prison in Wandsworth which boasts of flat screen TV, high ceiling fans and a large clean bathroom.

Indian officials have done exceptionally well in pursuing the case with all the documentation necessary for the judge to deliver such a stinging indictment of Nirav Modi's modus operandi. But, in its inability to ferret out a fraud amounting to robbery, the banking industry may not have acquitted itself as professionally. And this is not a case of straightforward business loss like many that have blighted banking to the tune of several lakh crores that have become NPAs in just the last two decades. There could not possibly any grounds on which such a character can claim asylum in Britain either, which means that at least one big fraudster who took India for a ride gets his comeuppance.

## DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER

Editor

K. SUDHAKAR

Printer &amp; Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

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

**Visakhapatnam:** Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285  
**Rajahmundry:** Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208

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

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

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

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

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

Farrukh  
Dhondy  
Cabbages  
& KingsLife on Zoom:  
You learn a lot  
about yourself,  
and others too

"They say all property is theft  
Hence, I own nothing and am  
left bereft  
My ancestors were never Earls  
or thieves  
And depending, then, on what one  
believes  
About making it rich through toil  
and sweat  
It's just not true — so I'll place  
my bet  
On Proudhon who formulated the  
phrase  
With which Marx disagreed — All  
praise, all praise!"

— From Dill Deykey Dildo by  
Bachchoo

To "zoom", a dictionary will tell you, is to travel fast or rise quickly and perhaps noisily. It must have been, I thought with some irony, that the principal instrument I seem to use to confer with anyone in the lockdowns of the plague year was called Zoom. One goes nowhere.

If it is, as I suspect, not a Chinese but an American device, there was probably no ironic intent in naming it. After all, 74 million Americans don't care whether a

person is a self-obsessed habitual liar, misogynist, racist, fraudster, rabble-rousing insurrectionist, anti-democrat and fantasist, they still want to make him President. Not very high on the irony scale, then.

But one must admit that Americans are good on the onomatopoeic front. It was their popular and renowned form of literature, the comic, which gave us words for violence. I suppose "bang bang" may have preceded Amerigo Vespucci's discovery of Trumpistan and may have been imported, perhaps from Ireland, but adding "Chitty Chitty" to it was a stroke of genius attributed to the USA. But I digress.

What I meant was that the comics gave us words for fisticuffs such as "sock" and "pow". Who can't see in their mind's eye the spiked splatter of a powerful punch from Superman or Batpunch landing on the villain's skull as this nasty individual tilts away from the vertical? The words inside the spiked bubbles or splashes, giving visual form to the impact of fists, aren't exactly onomatopoeic, as a punch sounds more like "phut" — but "pow" packs

imaginative power.

So, gentle reader, Zoom, as the name of a device by which you connect to anyone (who has an appropriate electronic device, of course) anywhere in the world, may be a word that is supposed to and successfully conveys the speed of contact between stationary persons — two or a full screen of them.

If Indians had invented the ethereal conversation device and needed an onomatopoeic name for it, they would probably have called it "Dhishoom", because as far as I know it's the only sound word that we have invented. It is of course Bollywood for the sound of a gun going off, and there are always two shots fired so it becomes "Dhishoom! Dhishoom!" The precedent is the Western "bang bang" — because if it's just the one word, it could merely stand for the slamming of a door. I venture to speculate that we would have called our communication device "Dhishoom" because having invented the word, we use it as the name of a chain of very good British restaurants. That's not supposed to represent the explosion of your stomach when you eat there.

My constant, even daily, use of Zoom has given me several useless insights into human behaviour, perhaps not new ones, but ones that confirm what we do and are. It has also reinforced my self-consciousness in a not terribly positive way.

You see, Zoom forces you to see yourself as you speak to others and, depending on the strength of echo in your device, you can even hear yourself speak and, like me, be rather surprised at your lamentable accent, the slight lisp you hadn't noticed before and the stupid fumbles and pauses you thought others made but which your fluency was free of.

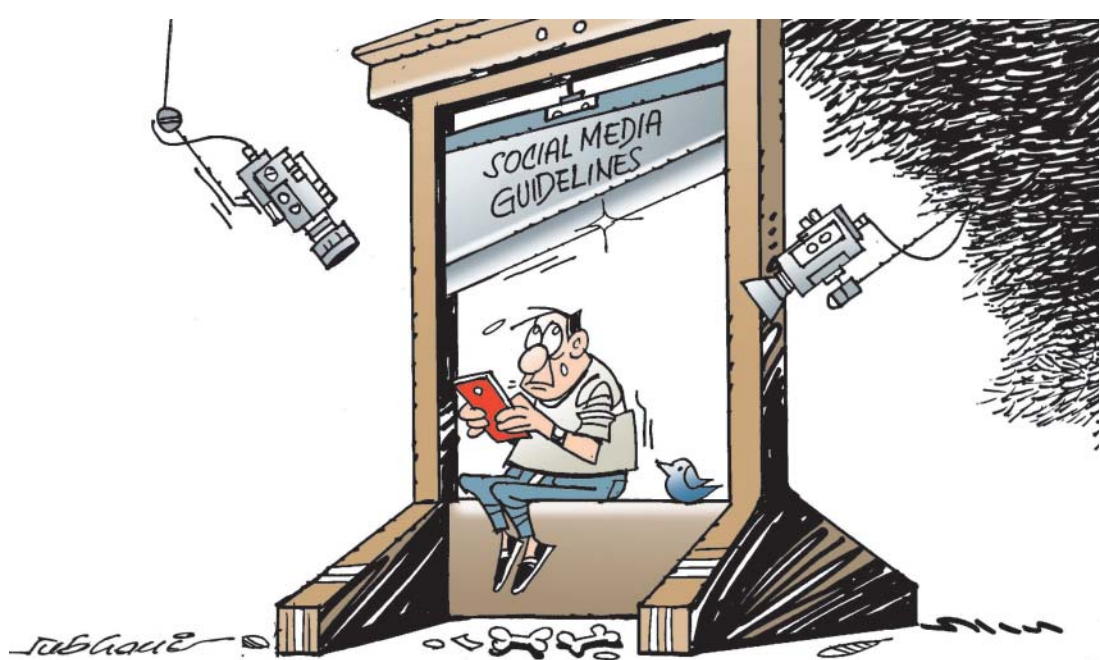
And then there's appearances, of course. Before a Zoom call, I check my hair and brush it this way and that. My creeping baldness (a family inheritance which, as they say, looking on the bright side, allows more space for rude tattoos) and the fact that I haven't had a haircut since the lockdown began does funny things, in my self-conscious perception, to my appearance. The hair in the centre of my head insists on standing upright, as though I was auditioning for the role of TinTin from the French comics.

I used to despise the self-deceivers who brushed their hair forwards to hide their baldness, but now find myself wondering, comb in hand at the mirror, whether it's a good strategy. It's not.

Gentle reader, in my job as a teacher, and then in my short and happy life as an agitator and pamphleteer, I have addressed countless classes, assemblies and audiences. I never began with the old opening: "unaccustomed as I am to public speaking", but perhaps should have. Zoom has demonstrated to me that any conceit I cultivate about my ability to present an argument is precisely that. I have now taken a vow during the Christian Lent to begin speaking on Zoom with that precise and modest caveat. Watch that screen!

Zoom gives one an insight into the rooms that your "zoomists" work or speak from. The convention is to have a bookshelf or some dignified piece of art behind you, but that may only be true of the people I associate with or speak to or watch on a televised Zoom. I wonder if others have dirty pictures or washing hanging up behind them as they interlocute.

Subhani

Judges need to protect  
right to dissent, protestPatralekha  
Chatterjee

Dev 360

At a time when the people's faith in key institutions is plummeting, judicial verdicts that seek to restore the citizens' faith in justice and fair play are hugely welcome. In recent days, two court orders in particular have buoyed spirits because they emit a powerful signal — that the attempts to invoke the law to muzzle freedom of thought and expression and quieten disquiet will not always work.

A Delhi court has granted bail to 22-year-old climate activist Disha Ravi, arrested by the Delhi police on February 13 from her Bengaluru home in the by-now famous "toolkit" case, saying there was just not enough evidence to keep the young woman in custody. Additional sessions judge Dharmender Rana's order set Disha free on bail on the condition of her furnishing two sureties of ₹1 lakh each and with the directive that she cooperate with the investigation into the FIR and not leave the country.

A few days earlier, there was another welcome verdict. The Nagpur bench of the Bombay high court granted interim bail on medical grounds to ailing 82-year-old poet-activist Varavara Rao.

These verdicts are good news; but the questions they raise and the momentum they have generated need to be sustained and leveraged to trigger a public debate on judicial reforms.

As citizens, reading both the verdicts is instructive.

While granting conditional bail on medical grounds to Varavara Rao, an accused in the Elgaar Parishad-Bhima Koregaon case, the Bombay High Court pointed out that the National Investigation Agency (NIA) had kept him in custody for a long period without framing charges.

Senior advocates Indira Jaising and Anand Grover, who argued on behalf of Mr Rao, pointed out that considering his age, medical history, and multiple health complications, the prison atmosphere was absolutely not conducive to his mental and physical well-being. Such well-being is a fundamental right of every prisoner, points out *Leaflet*, a legal website.

The NIA had opposed the bail plea citing a bar under Section 43-D (4) and (5) of the UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act), which says bail cannot be granted to an accused under the anti-terror statute if the prosecution makes out a prima facie case against the accused. Ms Jaising argued that the fundamental right to health of a prisoner could never be ousted by Section 43(D)(5) of the UAPA.

The high court observed that it was a "genuine and fit" case for granting relief in view of the advanced age of Mr Rao and inadequate facilities at the Talaja jail hospital; it argued that if it denied relief to Mr Rao, it would be abdicating its constitutional duties as a protector of human rights and right to health covered under Article 21 of the Constitution.

The arguments undergirding the verdict related to Disha Ravi, arrested on the charge of sedition, are equally important. The court punctured most of the arguments of the Delhi police against Ms Ravi, including her alleged engagement with groups with "dubious" credentials, her links with banned organisations, her alleged role in incitement as well as the destruction of "evidence" and gave detailed reasons for doing so.

While taking the decision to grant bail to Ms Ravi, the court noted that "mere engagement with persons of dubious credentials is not indictable". A key argu-

ment of the prosecution hinged on the charge that a group called "Poetic Justice Foundation" (PJF), which was allegedly pro-Khalistani and secessionist, and people associated with it, was involved in creating the "toolkit" document. The police alleged that two of Ms Ravi's associates, Nikita Jacob and Shantanu Muluk, attended a Zoom meeting in which activists of the PJF also participated along with many others and this somehow made Ms Ravi also culpable.

The court said that no real evidence had been put on record to establish a direct link between Ms Ravi and the PJF activists mentioned. "In my considered opinion, it is not mere engagement with persons of dubious credentials which is indictable, rather it is the purpose of engagement which is relevant for the purpose of deciding culpability," the judge said.

The prosecution had sought to connect Ms Ravi with the violence that rocked Delhi on January 26. The court pointed out that there was no evidence of this. The judge noted that merely sharing a platform with people who oppose a law is not secessionist.

"In the absence of any evidence to the effect that the applicant/accused agreed or shared a common purpose to cause violence on January 26 with the founders of the PJF, it cannot be presumed by resorting to surmises or conjectures that she also supported the secessionist tendencies or the violence caused on January 26, simply because she shared a platform with people who have gathered to oppose the legislation," the order said.

**While granting bail to Varavara Rao, the Bombay High Court pointed out that the National Investigation Agency had kept him in custody for a long period without framing charges**

The crux of the matter, as the court pointed out, is whether Disha Ravi was merely involved in peaceful protest and dissent against the farm laws or if she was actually involved in seditious activities under the guise of protesting against these laws.

The court's view, as articulated in the order, is that citizens cannot be tossed behind bars simply because they disagree with the government of the day.

"Difference of opinion, disagreement, dissent, or for that matter, even disapprobation, are recognised legitimate tools to infuse objectivity in state policies... The offence of sedition cannot be invoked to minister to the wounded vanity of governments," the court said, citing a 1942 ruling.

Another critical observation by the court in the Disha Ravi case pivots around the right to dissent being firmly enshrined in Article 19 and that freedom of speech includes the right to seek a global audience.

These observations are welcome and will have far-reaching implications.

Young Indians, mostly women in their early 20s, have been arrested over the past few years merely for exercising their fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression, by engaging in democratic protests with no intentions of perpetrating violence and with no intention of inciting violence, members of the Delhi High Court Women Lawyers Forum have pointed out in a public letter to the Chief Justice of India and other Supreme Court judges. The letter notes that Disha was brought from Bengaluru to the national capital by the Delhi police without following the prescribed legal procedures.

"We feel that the Bar and Bench cannot watch silently as young people are forced into long incarceration," the letter said.

The judiciary must take heed.

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

## LETTERS

## POLLUTED HYDERABAD

Government should take precautionary measures to prevent Hyderabad from getting polluted like other cities (*Second most polluted city in winter was Hyd, DC, Feb. 25*). We can prevent Hyderabad from getting too polluted.

Aditya Bopparaju  
Hyderabad

## RISKING LIVES

Why has the government asked schools to reopen? (*In pandemic year, more students in high school, DC, Feb. 26*). Why are we forced to put our lives in danger? Why can't they reopen schools in the next semester? These questions have been raised by parents of several students. Parents are concerned about the health of children due to Coronavirus mutations hitting TS and other states. Teachers are being forced to put their lives in danger. The government is requested to cancel the order and continue with online classes.

Tanishka Singh  
Secunderabad

## EXCELLENT SHOW

Congratulations to Team India for the grand success against England (*Axardham, DC, Feb. 26*). It took nearly 60 years for the talented Axar Patel to break the record of another great Gujarat spinner Jassu Patel whose guile and wizardry in off spin broke the back of the great Australian team of 50s.

Pradeep Kumar  
Hyderabad

The real villain of this so-called Test match is the atrocious pitch which helped India grab a 10-wicket win in the third Test match against England. If the pitch starts spinning from the first ball, it is not good for a Test match. Why would the public pay to watch 30 wickets falling inside of two days? It is a disgrace to Test cricket and the BCCI.

Phaneendra V.  
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN  
ChronicleAssassination  
threat to PM

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY. 26

The Congress (R) today handed over to police a letter which threatened Prime Minister Indira Gandhi with death if she does not stop criticising the Jana Sangh or the RSS. The letter written in Hindi said: "I want to warn PM Indira Gandhi that if she continues to criticise the Jana Sangh or the RSS, I shall finish her physically — yours, an active worker."



## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	49,099.99	-3.80
Nifty 50	14,529.20	-3.76
S&P 500*	3,853.11	0.62
Dollar (₹)	73.47	-1.42
Pound Sterling (₹)	101.83	0.80
Euro (₹)	88.76	-0.29
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	45,599*342	0.75
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	66.13	-1.12
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.229	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.491	-0.024

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

## Inflation band okay for next 5 years: RBI report

With the next review of the flexible inflation target (FIT) framework coming up soon, the RBI said the current inflation target of 4 per cent with a +/-2 per cent tolerance band is appropriate for the next five years. India adopted the FIT framework in 2016, and the next review of the inflation target is due by March 31. "The current numerical framework for defining price stability...is appropriate for the next five years," it said.

## PFC board okays ₹1 L cr borrowing plan for FY22



Power Finance Corporation said its board has approved a plan to borrow Rs 1 lakh crore under different debt segments. The borrowing will be made in one or more tranches in FY21-22, PFC said. The NBFC plans to raise a maximum of Rs 60,000 crore from long-term borrowing, Rs 20,000 crore from long-term foreign currency borrowing, Rs 5,000 crore from short-term borrowing and Rs 15,000 crore from commercial papers.

## Brazil to buy 20m Covaxin doses from B. Biotech

**Hyderabad:** Bharat Biotech will supply 20 million doses of its Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin to Brazil during the second and third quarters of current year, the city-based vaccine maker said on Friday. It has signed an agreement with the Brazilian government for the supply of the vaccine. The company also said that several countries around the world have expressed strong interest in Covaxin.

## RailTel Corp makes strong market debut

Telecom infrastructure provider RailTel Corporation of India Ltd made a strong debut with its shares zooming over 29 per cent on closing compared with the issue price. On the BSE, the scrip opened on a strong note of Rs 104.6 apiece against the IPO price of Rs 94. In intra-day trade, the stock touched a high of Rs 125.5 before settling at Rs 121.4, higher by 29.15 per cent. The RailTel IPO was subscribed 42.39 times.



## ■ Sensex sheds more than 1900 points US bombing, bond yields spook mkt

**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD**  
MUMBAI, FEB 26

Investors suffered notional loss of over Rs 6 lakh crore as the domestic stock market experienced its worst fall in the last 10 months after the US bombing in Syria and sharp overnight rise in bond yields in the US market.

Rising Covid cases in India also added to negative sentiments in the market, said analysts.

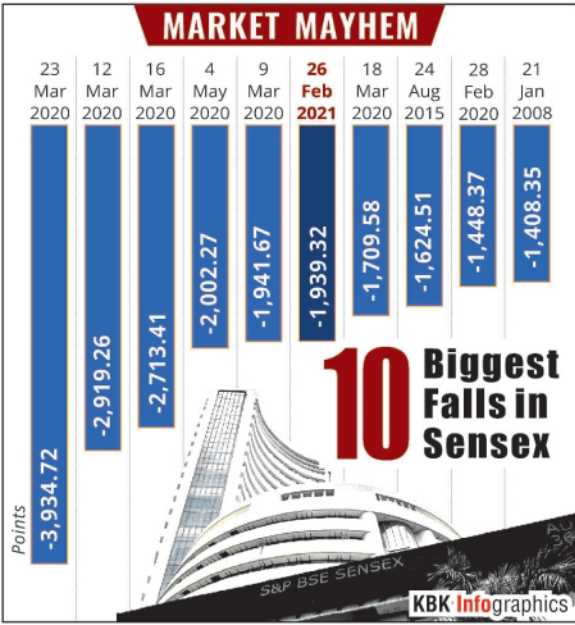
The Sensex fell 3.8 per cent, or 1939 points, closing at 49099 while the Nifty-50 fell 3.7 per cent, or 568 points, to close at 14529.

Intra-day the Sensex fell over 2000 points to a low of 48890.48. All the Sensex and Nifty constituents closed in the red.

Overnight US bond yield rose to a high of 1.61 and finally closed at 1.51 per cent, scaring the global investors. US benchmark indices Dow Jones fell 1.75 per cent and Nasdaq 100 fell 3.56 per cent, setting off negative opening for the Asian markets.

India's 10-year government bond yield also rose sharply intraday to 6.242 per cent and closed at 6.229.

As per provisional data, foreign portfolio investors were net sellers of equities worth Rs 8,295.17 crore. Financials suffered the most among sectoral indices after the recent rally, with the Nifty Bank Index closing down 4.78 per cent. Other big losers were Nifty Auto (-3.12 per cent) and Nifty Metal (-2.70 per cent). NSE's volatility index



## RUPEE DIVES 104 PAISE AGAINST \$

**Mumbai, Feb. 26:** The rupee on Friday posted its biggest single-day fall in nearly 19 months, tumbling 104 paise to close at 73.47 against the US dollar, as a rout in global bond markets weighed on investor sentiments. Besides, rising geopolitical tensions between the US and Syria also led to weaker appetite among investors in domestic forex markets, analysts said. At the interbank forex market, the rupee opened at 72.43 against the dollar, then lost further ground. It finally ended at 73.47.

India VIX shot up 22.93 per cent to 28.14, indicating a volatile market ahead.

The GDP data expected after the market hours also weighed on the market sentiments. "The Q3 GDP growth number at 0.4 per cent is lower than our esti-

mates of 0.8 per cent but quite short of some other estimates which were in the range of 1.4-2 per cent. The equity markets may be a tad disappointed with these data points," said Dhiraj Relli, MD & CEO, HDFC Securities.

Friday. "Enhancement of sterilisation capacity may be necessary to deal with possible surges in capital flows in the future," the report pointed out.

The RBI report recommended further strengthening foreign-exchange reserves, citing the swings in the rupee around the time of the global taper tantrum in 2013. India's stockpile is already close to \$600 billion and exceeds most standard metric requirements.

—Bloomberg

## EMERGING MARKETS BRACE FOR CAPITAL FLIGHT

**LIVIA YAP & LILIAN KARUNUNGAN**  
FEB. 26

Emerging markets are bracing for an exodus of funds as a surge in US treasury yields evokes memories of the taper tantrum of 2013.

After rallying at the start of 2021, developing-nation assets have slumped during the past two days as US treasury yields jumped to the highest level in more than a year, sounding a warning about the outlook for interest rates and inflation. The MSCI Emerging Market Index of shares tumbled as much as 2.8 per cent on Friday.

Emerging-market assets are falling out of favour as expectations for tighter global monetary policy and a revival of inflation reduce the relative appeal of risk assets. This week's surge in US yields is reminding many of the taper tantrum, when the Federal Reserve's announcement that it would start winding back its quantitative-easing policy led to a spike in bond yields around the world.

"It appears the market is pricing in a taper tantrum whatever the Fed says," said Alvin T. Tan, head of Asia foreign-exchange strategy at RBC Capital Markets in Hong Kong. "Like in 2013, it is generally negative for EM FX," he said.

—Bloomberg

## Soon, get discount on life premium paid in advance

**SANGEETHA G**  
CHENNAI, FEB. 26

Life insurance policyholders will soon be able to receive a discount if they pay the policy premium in advance. Also, from April onwards, those buying a personal accident cover would have the option to take a standardised cover, named Saral Suraksha Bima, from all general and health insurers.

Acting on representations from the industry, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) has decided to permit life insurers to offer discounts on regular premiums paid in advance.

As per the draft guidelines issued by the regulator, the discount rate shall be equal to interest rates on savings bank accounts of State Bank of India as on April 1 of each financial year. Further, an addition of at least 100 bps shall be applicable for advance premiums received during the entire financial year.

"The industry has been undertaking several measures to ensure that renewal premiums are paid on time, as persistency is a key metric. By paying premiums in advance of three months or more, the policyholder can get a discount on premium that is higher than the interest rate on a savings account. While the customer will get a discount, we will have the renewal premiums already in the books. We will have to deploy our resources for reminding



**Irdai has asked general and health insurers to offer a standard personal accident insurance product with common coverage and policy wordings across the industry from April 1**

only those people who have not made advance payment," said Atri Chakraborty, chief operating officer, IndiaFirst Life Insurance.

According to him, the discount will be calculated for the number of months the premium is paid ahead of the renewal date. Currently, around 10 to 12 per cent of the policyholders pay their renewal premiums ahead of the due date.

The regulator has, meanwhile, asked general and health insurers to offer a standard personal accident insurance product with common coverage and policy wordings across the industry from April 1, 2021. This product, Saral Suraksha Bima, will have the basic mandatory covers as

specified in Irdai guidelines and will be uniform across the market.

The insurer can determine the price according to the covers offered. The policy tenure of the standard product shall be one year. This policy would also be offered as a group product. Minimum entry age will be 18 years and maximum age shall be at least 70.

The base cover will have to provide a death benefit up to 100 per cent of the sum insured to the policyholder if the death occurs due to injury in an accident, or the person dies within 12 months from the date of accident. The insured will also get 100 per cent of the sum insured for permanent total disablement and 50 per cent for permanent partial disablement.

Hospitalisation expenses arising due to accident shall be indemnified up to 10 per cent of base sum insured. On death or permanent total disability of the insured person, a one-time educational grant of 10 per cent of the base sum insured, per child, should be paid to all dependent children.

## SBI readies MF arm for IPO

**BAJU KALESH & SUVASHREE GHOSH**  
FEB. 26

State Bank of India, the country's largest lender, is preparing for its mutual fund joint venture for an initial public offering, according to people familiar with the matter.

SBI plans to ask investment banks for proposals after discussions with its board and shareholder Amundi Asset Management and kick off the process in the next few months, the people said. The lender could raise about \$1 billion from the offering, one of the people said, who asked not to be identified, as the informa-

tion is private. SBI's mutual fund is now valued at about \$7 billion, another person said.

At \$1 billion, the first-time share sale could be India's biggest since the \$1.4 billion listing by SBI Cards & Payment Services Ltd in March, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. The SBI mutual fund business would also be the third such listing of its kind in the country, joining rivals UTI Asset Management Co and HDFC Asset Management Co.

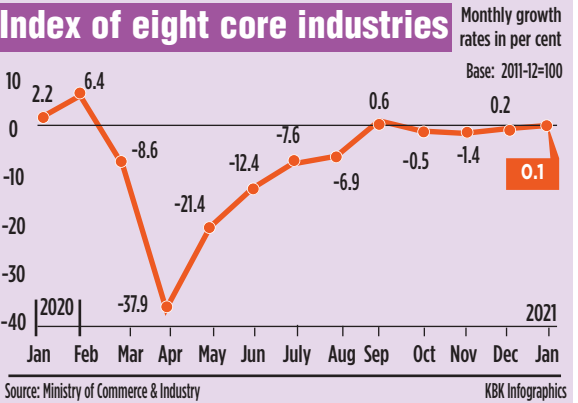
SBI's plan to list the mutual fund arm is part of its strategy to extract more value from its units after divesting some of its stakes in its life insurance

and cards businesses last year.

SBI's mutual fund is the largest in India with Rs 5 lakh crore (\$68.4 billion) of assets under management, according to its website. The fund house posted a net income of Rs 498 crore for the April-December period, according to an investor presentation. SBI holds a 63 per cent stake in the mutual fund business, while Paris-based Amundi owns the rest.

Deliberations are at an early stage and details of the share sale could still change, the people said. A representative for SBI didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

—Bloomberg



## Sony to open PS 5 for storage upgrades

**TAKASHI MOCHIZUKI**  
FEB. 26

Sony Corp. is preparing to open up its PlayStation 5 for internal storage upgrades this summer, lifting a bottleneck that prevents gamers from having more than a few marquee games on their console at one time, people briefed on the plan said.

Adding support for additional drives will be enabled with a firmware update that also unlocks higher cooling-fan speeds to ensure the console doesn't overheat, the people said, asking not to be named because the plans are not yet public. The PlayStation 5 comes with a custom solid-state drive with around 667GB available for storing games,

apps and media—at a time when the latest Call of Duty game needs 133GB of installation space and most major titles take up at least 40GB each.

Sony's latest console has a customised architecture that accelerates loading and processing times, but makes it impractical to plug in an external hard drive, the typical way gamers add storage. Such a drive can only be used for older PS4 games. After the planned firmware upgrade, players need only take a plastic cover off the PS5 and attach a new storage unit to add space.

"We are working to enable M.2 SSD storage expansion for PlayStation 5. The timing has not been announced," a Sony spokesman said.

## HUL aims to achieve 100% plastic waste collection in 2021

**New Delhi, Feb. 26:** Hindu-stan Unilever on Friday said it will achieve 100 per cent plastic waste collection from 2021 onwards as it will collect and process more plastic packaging waste than the plastic in packaging used by it. The company will enable processing of over one lakh tonnes of post-consumer plastic waste through collection from

more than 100 towns across India, said HUL in a statement.

HUL has partnered with various organisations for the collection of plastic waste, including Saahas, Carpe, Recycl, Planet Savers, RaddiConnect, Geocycle and Ramky Enviro.

Through its partners and with support from municipal corporations, the company has reached out to



Sanjiv Mehta

housing societies and commercial establishments to improve the collection of plastic waste.

The company is also working in partnership with the United Nations

Development Programme and the international organisation Xyneto.

Commenting on the development, HUL chairman and managing director Sanjiv Mehta said: "We believe that this is a collective responsibility, and each stakeholder needs to play an active role in managing plastic waste to fulfil the vision of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan."

—PTI

## MOBILE | TO MOBILITY Firm in talks with carmakers to use their plants

## Battered Huawei plans foray into EVs

**JULIE ZHU, YILEI SUN**  
HONG KONG/BEIJING, FEB. 26

China's Huawei plans to make electric vehicles under its own brand and could launch some models this year, four sources said, as the world's largest telecommunications equipment maker, battered by US sanctions, explores a strategic shift.

Huawei Technologies Co Ltd is in talks with state-owned Changan Automobile and other automakers to use their car plants to make its electric vehicles (EVs), according to two of the people familiar with the matter.

Huawei is also in discus-

sions with Beijing-backed BAIC Group's BluePark New Energy Technology to manufacture its EVs, said a separate person with direct knowledge of the matter.

The plan heralds a potentially major shift in direction for Huawei after nearly two years of US sanctions that have cut its access to key supply chains, forcing it to sell a part of its smartphone business to keep the brand alive.

Huawei was placed on a trade blacklist by the Trump administration over national security concerns. Many industry executives see little chance that blocks on the sale of billions of dollars



of US technology and chips to the Chinese company, which has denied wrongdoing, will be reversed by his successor. A Huawei spokesman denied the company plans to design EVs or produce Huawei branded vehicles. "Huawei is not a car manufacturer. However through ICT (information and communications technology), we aim to be a digital car-oriented and new-added components

provider, enabling car OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) to build better vehicles."

Huawei has started internally designing the EVs and approaching suppliers at home, with the aim of officially launching the project as early as this year, the sources said.

Richard Yu, head of Huawei's consumer business group who led the company to become one of the world's largest smartphone makers, will shift his focus to EVs, said one source. The EVs will target a mass-market segment, another source said. All the sources declined to be named as the discussions are private.

—Reuters



## SHORT TAKES

## Hima inducted as DSP in Assam

**Guwahati:** Star sprinter Hima Das was on Friday inducted as Deputy Superintendent of Assam Police in the presence of chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal and described the moment as a childhood dream coming true. Hima was handed the appointment letter by Sonowal, also a former Union Sports Minister, at a ceremony attended by the top functionaries of the state government as well as from the police department, including the Director General of police. "People here know and I am not going to say anything different. Since my early school days, I harboured a wish to become a police officer one day and my mother also wished that," Hima said. "I got everything due to sports, I will try to work for betterment of sports in the state and try to make Assam one of the best performing states in the country, like Haryana," Hima further added. — PTI

## Deepak stuns world champion

**New Delhi:** Asian silver-winner Deepak Kumar (52kg) on Friday stunned Olympic and world champion Shakhobiddin Zoirov of Uzbekistan to storm into the finals of the 72nd Strandja Memorial Boxing Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria. Deepak clinched one of the most memorable wins of his career with a 4-1 win over more fancied Zoirov, who had claimed the 2019 world championship title beating India's Amit Panghal.

In the quarterfinals on Thursday, Deepak defeated Bulgaria's Darislav Vasilev 5-0. However, former youth world champion Jyoti Gulia (51kg) and Bhagyabati Kachari (75kg) bowed out of the women's competition. With their loss, India's challenge in the women's draw has come to an end without anyone managing to secure a medal. — PTI

## Charlotte to lead cricketers union

**London:** England great Charlotte Edwards has become the first female president of the Professional Cricketers' Association. An outstanding top-order batsman, Edwards scored over 10,000 runs in more than 300 matches during an international career that lasted from 1996 to 2016. Edwards, who succeeds Graham Gooch, another former England captain, was elected for an initial two-year term at Thursday's annual general meeting of the PCA, which represents all professional cricketers playing in England. "I'm hugely honoured to be given such a prestigious title in being the president of the PCA," said Edwards. Edwards was England captain when they won both limited-overs World Cups in 2009, while she remains the country's leading run-scorer in both women's one-day internationals and Twenty20s. — AFP

## Belinda sees off Coco, into final

**Adelaide:** Second seed Belinda Bencic battled for almost three hours before seeing off 16-year-old American Coco Gauff in three sets Friday to reach the final of the Adelaide International. Bencic set up a final showdown against Poland's French Open champion Iga Swiatek with her 7-6 (7/2), 6-7 (4/7), 6-2 win. Fifth seeded Swiatek had a much easier passage to the final, beating Swiss player Jil Teichmann 6-3, 6-2. Bencic went into the semi-final against Gauff as favourite, but the young American has been in good form this week, winning through two rounds of qualifying just to make the main draw. — AFP

## Live on TV

## FOOTBALL

**English Premier League:** Manchester City vs West Ham United from 6 pm; West Brom vs Brighton from 8:30 pm; Leeds United vs Aston Villa from 11 pm; Newcastle United vs Wolverhampton Wanderers from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Star Sports Select 1, HD

**Italian League:** Spezia vs Parma from 7:30 pm; Bologna vs Lazio from 10:30 pm; Verona vs Juventus from 1:15 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2

Printed and Published from Karimnagar by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Deccan Chronicle Press, H.No. 1-21/12/1, Cherlabhukur Road, Muggumpur Village, Karimnagar - 505 186 Telangana State. Regd. No. H/SD-2/2K RNI Registration No. APENG/2001/04766 Ph: 9121181123 Grams: CHRONICLE Editor: Kaushik Mitter

## SURESHOT SPINNER Match-winner Axar says confidence did trick

**Ahmedabad, Feb. 26:** It was a long wait for Axar Patel and it didn't help that everyone around him had just one question for the past three years — "Why aren't you in the Indian team?"

But Patel was unfazed as he knew, his time would come.

"I think it's all about confidence," said the 27-year-old spinner from Anand in Gujarat.

With his record 11 wickets in the day-night third Test against England, the left-arm spinner finally found his big moment in international cricket, seven years after he made his India debut in an ODI against Bangladesh.

Since that day, he has been in and out of the team with the spin all-rounder's spot firmly with Ravindra Jadeja.

In this series too, he made it because Jadeja was out injured. He hadn't been in the national team since 2018 and made his Test debut in the second game against England last week in Chennai.

"I have been out of the team for three years and at that time, I used to think about the areas of my game which need to be worked upon. So, I was working on my bowling and batting," he told Hardik Pandya in a *bcci.tv* interview, thoroughly enjoying his good time.

"When you are out of the team, many people, friends keep asking you 'why aren't you in the team despite doing well?' These things keep coming in the mind," he said.

"So, I told myself 'just wait for the right time and whenever I get an opportunity I will give my 100 per cent,'" he added.

Captain Virat Kohli said England may have been "relieved" when Jadeja was injured.

"But then this guy comes in. Bowls it quicker and from a bigger height as well."

It is a tribute to his hard work, his accuracy," said Kohli.

"It is impossible to sweep him, impossible to defend him all day. If the wicket gives him anything he is just a lethal bowler," Virat added. — PTI

## HUSSAIN SAYS ENGLAND WERE SCARED RABBITS

**London, Feb. 26:** England have lost their batting rhythm after playing on two difficult surfaces and looked like "startled rabbits" in the second innings of the third Test against India, according to former skipper Nasser Hussain.

"Especially on this pitch, where one spins prodigiously and the other skids on, you lose all kind of rhythm. That's what successive Test matches on these sorts of pitches do for your mind-set," Hussain said.

"England looked like startled rabbits in that second innings. I don't think it was an 81 all out pitch but this was a much tougher pitch than Chennai," he added.

"Axar is very accurate. He bowls stump to stump and some balls turn and some don't. Most of his wickets came from balls that didn't turn, so people say 'why not play for those straight deliveries?' but it's the ball before," he added. — PTI



India's star spinner Axar Patel appeals for a wicket during the third Test in Ahmedabad.

## Rohit bats for batting intent

**Ahmedabad, Feb. 26:** Intent to score and not just survive was the key to flourish on the Motera pitch, asserted India opener Rohit Sharma who batted effortlessly on the "interesting but normal" pitch that was declared difficult and challenging by visiting England batsmen.

Rohit attributed his sublime first innings half-century to the positive intent that he displayed during the day-night third Test in which England got thrashed by 10 wickets inside two days on the spin-friendly pitch.

"When you are playing on a pitch like that, you need to have an intent and look to score runs as well. You can't just keep blocking," Rohit said during the virtual conference after the match on Thursday.

**When you are playing on a pitch like that, you need to have an intent and look to score runs as well. You can't just keep blocking. You just need to be slightly ahead at times and try and find ways to score runs.**

— ROHIT SHARMA  
India star batsman



England captain Joe Root and Zak Crawley had earlier described the track as challenging.

The senior opener scored India's only half-century of the game with the home side spinners accounting for 19 wickets. England batsmen were deceived by left-arm Axar Patel's straighter deliveries that skidded straight instead of turning. Rohit felt that during

his innings of 66, he was a step or two ahead of England bowlers.

"You just need to be slightly ahead at times and try and find ways to score runs. My intent was not just to survive but try and score runs as well, while respecting the good balls. That's all I tried to do."

"The pitch was an interesting one and odd ball was just coming in and

some were taking turns. On a track like this, you need to have a clear mind-set, which I think I did until I played that sweep shot," Rohit added.

He felt that Patel's strategy of attacking the stumps paid off well. The spinner ended the game with 11 wickets in his kitty.

"Axar was simply brilliant," Rohit said, lauding the bowler who had big shoes to fill.

"Coming out from nowhere and performing is never easy. He was out injured, slightly down, came back and bowled very well in Chennai. He understands conditions well and how to vary the pace and what lines to bowl," Rohit added.

Coming wider off the crease was also another effective ploy used by Patel. — PTI

## INDIA CAN WIN AGAINST ODDS, SAYS HAYDEN

**Chennai, Feb. 26:** Indian team has all the markings of a great side as it can not only fight it out but win against the odds in all conditions, Matthew Hayden said.

"India have shown that they are a modern team who can not only fight it out but win against the odds in all conditions. This is a mark of all the great teams in history. The ability to win both at home and away," Hayden said. The wickets in Chennai and Ahmedabad came in for sharp criticism during the second and third Test of the ongoing series.

Asked if too much was being made about the pitches especially when they were spin-friendly, Hayden said: "Provided the wickets are not unfairly groomed, reducing the game to only one type of cricket, I don't have a problem with it at all. Conditions should promote an even game."

— PTI

## Coach kills self after sex slur

**Lansing (USA), Feb. 26:** A former U.S. Olympics gymnastics coach with ties to disgraced sports doctor Larry Nassar killed himself, hours after being charged with turning his Michigan gym into a hub of human trafficking by coercing girls to train and then abusing them.

John Geddert faced 24 charges that could have carried years in prison had he been convicted. He was supposed to appear in an Eaton County court, near Lansing, but his body was found at a rest area along Interstate 96, according to state police.

"This is a tragic end to a tragic story for everyone involved," Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel said.

Nessel earlier announced that Geddert was charged with a bushel of crimes, including sexual assault, human trafficking and running a criminal enterprise. The charges were the latest fallout from the sexual abuse scandal involving Nassar, a former Michigan State University sports doctor now in prison.

Geddert, 63, wasn't arrested and transported to court. Rather, Nessel's office allowed him to show up on his own.

"We had no indication that Geddert intended to flee or hurt himself or others. We had been in contact with his attorney and were assured of his cooperation," Nessel spokeswoman Kelly Rossman-McKinney said.

● **US Olympics coach John Geddert faced 24 charges that could have carried years in prison had he been convicted. He was supposed to appear in an Eaton County court, near Lansing, but his body was found at a rest area along Interstate 96.**

said. Calls seeking comment from attorney Chris Bergstrom weren't immediately returned.

Geddert was head coach of the 2012 U.S. women's Olympic gymnastics team, which won a gold medal. He was long associated with Nassar, who was the Olympic team's doctor and also treated injured gymnasts at Twistars, Geddert's Lansing-area gym. Among the charges, Geddert was accused of lying to investigators in 2016 when he denied ever hearing complaints about Nassar. But the bulk of the case against him involved his gym in Dimondale and how he treated the young athletes whose families paid to have them train under him.

The charges against Geddert had "very little to do" with Nassar, said Assistant Attorney General Danielle Hagaman-Clark. — AP



Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang of Arsenal celebrates after scoring his side's third goal against Benfica during their Europa League Round of 32 match at Georgios Karaiskakis stadium in Piraeus port near Athens on Thursday. Arsenal won the match 3-2.

— AP

## Auba nets brace to beat Benfica

**Paris, Feb. 26:** Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored twice including a late winner as Arsenal qualified for the last 16 of the Europa League on Thursday with a 3-2 victory over Benfica in Greece, while Manchester United and Rangers cruised through to the next round. The Gabon striker put Arsenal ahead at the Karaiskakis stadium in Piraeus in their home leg of a tie relocated due to Covid-19 travel restrictions between Portugal and the United Kingdom. Diogo Goncalves levelled the contest with a magnificent free-kick and Rafa Silva gave Benfica a 2-1 lead on the night when he took advantage of an error from Dani Ceballos on the hour.

Kieran Tierney rifled in an equaliser and Aubameyang headed in the decisive goal from Bukayo Saka's cross on 87 minutes, earning the Gunners a 4-3 aggregate victory and saving them from an unusual away goals exit following a 1-1 draw in the first leg in Rome.

Leicester City, who are behind second-placed United in the Premier League only on goal difference, were knocked out after sliding to a 2-0 loss at

THE RESULTS	
<b>Arsenal</b> (Aubameyang 21, 87, Tierney 67)	<b>3</b>
<b>Benfica</b> (Goncalves 43, Silva 61)	<b>2</b>
<b>Manchester United</b> Real Sociedad	<b>0</b> <b>0</b>
<b>AC Milan</b> (Kessie 9-pen)	<b>1</b>
<b>Red Star Belgrade</b> (Ben Nabouhane 24)	<b>1</b>
<b>Napoli</b> (Zielinski 3, Fabian Ruiz 59)	<b>2</b>
<b>Granada</b> (Montoro 25)	<b>1</b>
<b>Slavia Prague</b> (L. Provod 49, Sima 79)	<b>2</b>
<b>Leicester City</b>	<b>0</b>

home to Czech champions Slavia Prague. Lukas Provod fired Slavia in front just after half-time following a goalless draw in the first leg, and Senegalese teenager Abdallah Sima ensured the visitors extended their run in the competition.

Steven Gerrard's Rangers progressed following their 5-2 win over Belgian side Antwerp at Ibrox, with five different players on target for the Scottish league leaders. — AFP

## Allrounder Yusuf retires from all forms of cricket

**New Delhi, Feb. 26:** Out-of-favour India all-rounder Yusuf Pathan on Friday announced retirement from all forms of cricket, saying time has come "to put a full stop to this innings of my life."

The 38-year-old Pathan was part of the inaugural T20 World Cup-winning side in 2007 and also the one that triumphed in the 2011 ODI World Cup at home.

"The time has come today for me to put a full stop to this innings of my life. I officially announce retirement from all forms of the game," he said in a statement posted on Twitter.

"I thank my family, friends, fans, teams, coaches and the whole country wholeheartedly for all the support and love," he wrote.

Pathan, elder brother of former India seamer Irfan, played 57 ODIs and scored 810 runs at a strike-rate of 113.60 with two hundreds and three



**The time has come today for me to put a full stop to this innings of my life. I officially announce retirement from all forms of the game.**

— YUSUF PATHAN  
after announcing his retirement

fifties. He also featured in 22 T20Is where he made 236 at a strike-rate of 146.58 and was also a part of Kolkata Knight Riders' triumphs in the IPL. "I still remember the day when I wore the India jersey for the first time. I didn't only wear the jersey that day, but I took upon my family's, coach's, friends the whole country's and my own expectations on my shoulders as well," Pathan recalled.

"Winning two World Cups for India and lifting Sachin Tendulkar on my shoulders were some of the best moments of my career. I made my inter-

national debut under M S Dhoni, IPL debut under Shane Warne, Ranji debut under Jacob Martin and would like to thank them for believing in me," he added.

Meanwhile, veteran Karnataka medium pacer R. Vinay Kumar, who also represented India and led his state team to successive Ranji Trophy titles, also announced his retirement from international and first-class cricket.

The 37-year-old Kumar played one Test, 31 ODIs and nine T20 Internationals for India, taking 49 wickets across the three formats. — PTI

## Rajat wallops ton to down Andhra

**Indore, Feb. 26:** Rajat Patidar's brilliant century propelled Madhya Pradesh to a facile 98-run victory over an errant Andhra in a Group 'B' game of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Friday.

Riding on Rajat's quick-fire 102 that came off 61 balls, Madhya Pradesh posted a huge total of 316 runs. In reply Andhra could only muster 218 and were all out in 42.3 overs.

Nitish Kumar Reddy (59) was Andhra's top scorer but his efforts went in vain. Karan Shinde was

next best for Andhra with an unbeaten 47.

Meanwhile in Surat, skipper Krunal Pandya's unbeaten 133 formed the cornerstone of Baroda's 13-run win over Chhattisgarh in an Elite Group 'A' game, even as Atit Sheth blazed away to a 16-ball 51.

Opting to bat, Baroda rode on Pandya's hundred and Sheth's big-hitting to post 332/6 after a top-order failure, and then restricted the opposition to 319/9 to record their fourth win on the trot.

Baroda lost openers Kedar Devdhar (12) and Smit Patel (13) cheaply and was teetering at 29/2. Medium pacer Sourabh Majumdar (2/85) accounted for both the wickets.

It became 39/3 after Abhimanyusingh Rajput (5) perished cheaply. But Vishnu Solanki (78 off 99 balls, 8x4) and Pradeep Yadav (32) started the rescue act and added 53 runs for the fourth wicket.

After Yadav departed, in walked skipper Pandya, who was in his element and toyed with the

Chhattisgarh attack.

He smashed 20 fours and three sixes in his whirlwind 100-ball knock while forging a 139-run stand for the fifth wicket with Solanki.

Chhattisgarh pegged Baroda back by taking two quick wickets, but Sheth, who walked in at number eight, smashed seven sixes while helping his team to a formidable total. — PTI

## BRIEF SCORES

■ **Madhya Pradesh 316/8** in 50 overs (Rajat Patidar 102, Shubham Sharma 78,

Abhishek Bhandari 49, K. V. Sasikanth 3/46) bt Andhra 218 in 42.3 overs (Nitish Kumar Reddy 59, Karan Shinde 47 n.o., Shoaib Mohd Khan 32, Mihir Hirwani 4/50).

■ **Gujarat 222/9** in 50 overs (Karan Patel 78, Het Patel 67; T Ravi Teja 4/45) bt Hyderabad 210 in 48 overs (Tanmay Agarwal 54, B. Sandeep 54, Arzan Nagwaswalla 3/36).

■ **Baroda 332/6** (Krunal Pandya 133 not out; Vishnu Solanki 78) bt Chhattisgarh 319/9 (Amandeep Khare 67; Babashafi Pathan 3/73).