# DECCAN

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA VISAKHAPATNAM | TUESDAY | 16 FEBRUARY 2021

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#### WEATHER Max: 31.8°C Min: 18.4°C RH: 69% Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Fog. Max/Min temp.

# COVID-19

**DEATHS** (+84)(+9,447)

1,09,25,278 1,55,840

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+99)(+2)TS: 2,96,666 1,618 (+1)(+30)AP: 8,88,899 7,163

CASES AROUND THE WORLD



worldometers.info/ coronavirus

#### ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttarayana Tithi: Magha Shuddha Panchami till 5.46 am (Wednesday) Star: Revati till 8.58 pm Varjyam: 7.44 am to 9.30 am Durmuhurtam: 9.04 am to 9.49 am; 11.14 pm to 12.04 am Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm **HIJRI CALENDAR** 

Rajab 3,1442 AH **PRAYERS** Fajar: 5.50 am **Zohar:** 1.30 pm **Asar:** 4.45 pm

Maghrib: 6.15 pm

Isha: 8.15 pm **SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.23 AM SUNSET TODAY 5.58 PM MOONSET** TODAY 09.53 PM **MOONRISE** TOMORROW 09.22 AM



minister. But don't worry. They will come to your house shortly!

### SHORT TAKES

#### **SC** notice to **Centre, WhatsApp**

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

# **Urban local body** polls on March 10

### SEC notification to resume electoral process

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

Election State Commission issued notification to resume the paused election process for conducting elections to urban local bodies, including 12 municipal corpora-tions and 75 municipali-ties/nagar panchayats. Elections would be held from 7 am to 5 pm on March 10

The SEC, in a statement released here on Monday, stated that though it issued notification for conduct of elections for 12 municipal corporations

municipalities/nagar pan-chayats on March 9 of last year, and had completed 'scrutiny of nominations' on March 14, the process was stopped because of fears amid Covid-19. The SEC said that it had decided to resume the paused election process from the stage of 'withdrawal of candidature' and issued notification for conduct of

As per election schedule, date of commencement of withdrawal of candidature is from 11 am to 3 pm

DC CORRESPONDENT

Andhra Pradesh would

host the 29th edition of the

Southern Zonal Council meet in Tirupati on March 4. The meeting will

be chaired by Union home

The SZC comprises

Telangana state, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil

Nadu and Puducherry

Territories like Andaman

the Lakshadweep would be special invitees. Chief

ministers/Lt. governors,

chief secretaries, govern-

ment advisers and senior officials will attend the

DC CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, FEB.

with agency inputs

Non-bailable

chief secretary

**2 MORE ACTIVISTS TO BE ARRESTED** 

**OVER GRETA TOOLKIT CONTROVERSY** 

Pradesh,

minister Amit Shah.

Andhra

VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

Southern Zonal

meet in Tirupati

on March 2; last date for withdrawal of candida-ture is March 3; date of publication of the list of candidates after 3 pm on March 3; polling date March 10; re-poll, if any, on March 13 from 7 am to 5 pm while date of counting of votes is from 8 am on March 14.

With the issue of notification, model code of conduct has come into force in the urban areas in the

Election will be held in 12 municipal corporaincluding Vizianagaram, Greater Visakhapatnam, Eluru, V i j a y a w a d a , Machilipatnam, Guntur, Ongole, Chittoor, Tirupati, Kadapa, Kurnool

and Anantapur.
Election will be held in 75 municipalities/nagar panchayats including district-wise: Srikakulam-Ichapuram, Palasa-Kasibugga and Palakonda; Vizianagaram-Bobbili, Parvathipuram, Salur and Nellimarla; V i s a k h a p a t n a m Narsipatnam Yelamanchili; East Godavari-Amalapuram.

Adityanath Das reviewed

the arrangements for the SZC meet with officials

here on Monday. He

called for steps to facili-

tate darshan of Lord

Tirumala for about 100

participants through the

He called for fool-proof

security arrangements,

high-speed internet with

wi-fi and Lan facilities

along with laptops and

He advised the health

authorities to keep Covid-

19 testing kits, masks,

Covid-19 protocol for the

requirements as

and other

offices of the nala Tirupati

Venkateswara

Tirumala

venue.

sanitizers

participants.

Devasthanam.

Samalkot, Ramachandrapuram Peddapuram, Yeleswaram, Gollaprolu Mummidivaram; and West Godavari-Narsapur Nidadavole, Kovvur and Jangareddygudem; Krishna-Nuziveedu, Pedana, Vuyyuru, Nandigama and Tiruvuru; G u n t u r - T e n a l i Chilakaluripet, Repalle

Macherla, Sattenapalli Vinukonda and Piduguralla; Prakasam-Markapur, Chirala, Chimakurthy Addanki, Kanigiri and Giddalur; Nellore-Venkatagiri, Atmakur, Sullurpet and Anantanur Naidupet, Hindupur, Guntakal Tadipatri, Dharmavaram, Kadiri, Rayadurg, Gooty Kalyanadurgam

Puttaparthi Madakasira; Kurnool-Adoni, Nandval. Yemmaganur, Nandikotkur, Gudur (K) Allahabad and Atmakur (K); Kadapa-Proddatur, P u l i v e n d u l a , Jammalamadugu, Badger, Rayachoti, Mydukur and Yerragunta and Chittoor-Madanapalle, Punganur, Palamaneru, Nagara and

### **HC CLEARS DOOR DELIVERY OF RATION GOODS**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

headed by Justice DVSS Somayajulu after a hearing in the case on Monday issued an inter-Commission's earlier order disallowing door commodities in rural areas as it would amount to violation of poll code

Now the civil supplies

### **MAP ACCESS**

New Delhi, Feb. 15: In

Andhra Pradesh High Court allowed door delivery of essential commodities under public distribution system in rural areas in the state. A single judge bench,

im order suspending the in the wake of ongoing gram panchayat polls.

authorities can continue supply of essential commodities under PDS at the doorstep of the beneficiaries even in rural areas in the state. The court posted the next hearing to March 15.

## **MADE EASIER**

sweeping changes in the country's mapping policy, the Centre on Monday announced lib-eralisation of norms governing acquisition and production of geospatial data, a move that will help in boosting innovation and create a levelplaying field for public and private entities.



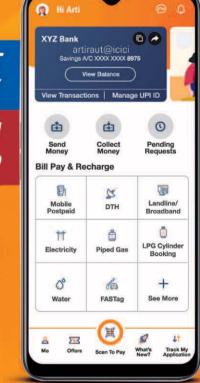
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\*Offer valid till February 28, 2021 for the first 1 lakh users, on transaction value above ₹150, Offer is not applicable on fund transfer made to self. Terms and Conditions of ICICI Bank as at www.icicibank.com and third parties apply. ICICI Bank is not responsible for third party products, goods, services and offers. Nothing contained herein shall constitute or be deemed to constitute an advice, invitation or solicitation to purchase any products / services of third parties. Screen shown here is a modified representation.

#### to the farmers' protest on the social media, the Delhi police said Monday, two

warrants

was issued against two more people for allegedly sharing a "toolkit" related days after it arrested climate activist Disha Ravi over the case.

Meanwhile, hitting out at the police and other official agencies, scores of social activists and envi-

ronmentalists called for the immediate release of Ms Ravi, asking the government to stop targeting India's youth. This Delhi police action triggered a war of words between the Opposition parties and the ruling BJP.

The police procured a non-bailable warrant warrant from a local court against lawyer Nikita Jacob and environmental Shantanu Muluk over the protest "toolkit" shared by Swedish teen activist Greta Thunberg to support farmers' protests.

### **REALTY I MATTERS** Jagan proposes clear titles at affordable rates

# CM plots middle class sop

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has called for providing plots with clear titles at an affordable price to the middle class people. They should be free of any dispute or litigation, he insisted

He held a review meeting on urban housing and solid waste management with minister for municipal administration Satyanarayana and other senior officials at his camp office here on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, he directed officials to provide plots having all requisite permissions at an affordable price and on a **CHIEF MINISTER Y.S.** Jagan Mohan Reddy asked officials to make all efforts to provide high living standards to the middle income group families.

non-profit basis to the middle income group people. He said providing plots must be a continuous process in the

Jagan Mohan Reddy called upon officials to come up with plans in order to provide plots to the eligible beneficiaries as and when they seek such plots. He asked officials to make all efforts to provide high living standards to the middle income group families.

The officials briefed about town plans being implemented in various states and how they could create a land bank for the scheme and alongside dev-elopment of infrastructure.

They proposed ring roads around towns and felt the need to prepare designs of ring roads in such a way that they should benefit both the government and the people who give their land for construction. They suggested smart town lay-

outs around the ring roads. As per the plan, 18 layouts would be developed in 12 towns initially and the design of smart towns to be at least in 25 to 200 acres area depending upon the size of the local population.

Moreover, the layout has to prepared within 18 months after the works begin. With regard to solid waste management, the government will start a 'Clean Andhra Pradesh' with a 100-day gramme action plan in order to keep the state clean.

There are plans to rope in NGOs and the general public in the programme. There will be 3,825 garbage collection vehicles, auto-tippers and over 6,000 bins and waste management facilities would be set up in the municipalities.

Jagan Mohan Reddy asked the officials to start bio-mining and felt the need for a total change in maintenance of cleanliness in the state.









































**MLA ACCUSES YSRC** 

**HINDUPUR VOTERS** 

Film star and Hindupur

MLA Nandamuri Balakrishna has accused

YSRC government of unleashing terror before

the gram panchayat elec-

tions in his Hindupur

assembly constituency.

"The situation is no dif-ferent in all parts of the

state. People of Hindupur are ready to

teach a lesson to YSRC

government for large-

scale misuse of power",

The film star-turned-

politician is on a two-day

tour of his Hindupur

where gram panchayat

elections are scheduled to be held in the fourth

YSRC party leadership

has set its eyes on

Hindupur assembly seg-ment, which has been a stronghold of Telugu Desam Party ever since the party had been

Balakrishna is touring

his constituency to counter any moves the

ruling party may make to wean away TD voters.

The star has also been

holding meetings with

Telugu Desam leaders

within his constituency

Speaking to media, the Hindupur MLA accused

YSRC party of terroris-

ing Telugu Desam work-ers and leaders in all

parts of Hindupur area.

Balakrishna, however,

asserted that TD cadres

will thwart all moves of

ne ruling party suc

TTD'S PLANS TO

**WITHDRAW PINK** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

NELLORE, FEB. 15

**DIAMOND CASE HIT** 

The Tirumala Tirupati

Devasthanams (TTD) Trust Board is in a fix

over withdrawing a defamation case filed

against former chief priest of TTD Ramana

Deekshithulu and Rajya

Sabha member Vijaya

Sai Reddy for their allegations on the missing pink diamond during the TD regime. The TTD had filed a

defamation case for ₹100

crore each on Vijaya Sai

in this regard.

phase on February 21.

he remarked.

assembly

**OF TERRORISING** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

ANANTAPUR, FEB. 15

#### **HC APPOINTS AMICUS CURIAE IN NANI GAG ORDER**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

The Andhra Pradesh High counsel P. Sri Raghuram amicus curiae to assist the court concerning free speech and restrictions imposed on it in a case dealing with gag order served on minister for civil supplies Kodali Sri Vekateswara Rao by the State Election Commission.

A division bench headed by justice D.V.S.S. Somayajulu held hearing here on Monday, on a house motion moved by the minister on Saturday chal-lenging the SEC's gag order on him until completion of gram panchayat polls on February

The court was not satisfied with the video footage and other material placed before it by both the parties with the minister denying any derogatory remarks made on SEC and also on the State Election Commissioner at a recently held press conference while the SEC wanted the court to take the video footage of the entire press conference into consideration instead of spe-

cific remarks.

The court adjourned the hearing to February 17 for want of proper video footage to find out who went wrong. It appointed the amicus curiae to help it pursue on free speech and restrictions imposed on it.

#### PADMA PRESIDENT **OF KAKINADA MAHILA MORCHA**

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, FEB 15

Guturu Padma has been appointed president of BJP Mahila Morcha of Kakinada parliamentary district

BJP Kakinada parliamentary district president Ch. Ramkumar has issued orders appointed her as the mahila morcha president.

Chodisetti addition, Ramesh Babu has been appointed as treasurer of BJP's Kakinada parliamentary district.

#### **CORPORATOR'S MURDER ACCUSED** ARRESTED

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, FEB. 15

The Sarpavaram police have arrested two persons, accused murdering 9th Corporator of Kakinada rnors Kampara Ramesh recently

Kakinada DSP V. Bhima Rao told the reporters on Tuesday venkata Satyanarayana (Chinna) and his minor brother were arrested in the early hours of Tuesday Pithanurar Pithapuram.

He said that clashes took place for the past one week between Chinna and the deceased Ramesh. He said that Chinna had decided to kill Ramesh and came to the car washing centre to kill Ramesh on the night of February 11. He quarrelled with Ramesh and killed him by running the car on Ramesh. He said that Chinna's minor brother also assisted him in killing Ramesh. He said Chinna would be produced before Special Judicial First Class Magistrate Court at Kakinada and the minor boy would be sent to Juvenile Court. He said they will make use of the CC footage as important evidence in the case. All evidence would be produced before the court.

after thorough investigation. He said three teams, headed by the Kakinada Rural Circle Inspector

Muralikrishna, Sarpavaram Circle Inspector Nunna Raju and others have succeeded in nabbing the accused in the case. He said Superintendent of Police Adnan Nayeem Asmi appreciated the police officials to trace the accused.

The Sarpavaram police registered a case and investigating.

Clashes took place for the past one week between Chinna and the deceased Ramesh. He said that Chinna had decided to kill Ramesh and came to the car washing centre to kill Ramesh on the night of February 11. He quarrelled with Ramesh and killed him by running the car on Ramesh. He said that Chinna's minor brother also assisted him in killing Ramesh. He said Chinna would be produced before Magistrate

# **Greyhounds, CRPF officials** deployed for agency polls

### Closure of polling time reduced to 1.30 pm from 3.30 pm

DC CORRESPONDENTS VISAKHAPATNAM/ KAKINADA, FEB. 15

Greyhounds, paramilitary forces and armed state police have been deployed in agency tracts in East Godavari Visakhapatnam districts

following a boycott call given by the outlawed Maoists. Taking the threat seriously, no candidates filed

their nomination papers for Nenjeri gram panchay at in Peda Bayulu mandal Visakhapatnam dis-

Reports said nearly 1,500 personnel from Greyhounds and CRPF personnel have been deployed in Rampachodavaram and Yetapaka divisions for conducting the third phase elections in agency areas in East Godavari

Police officials are coordinating with their counterparts from Sukuma (Chhattisgarh) Malkangiri (Odisha) and other places in the two States and also Visakhapatnam district to prevent any untoward incidents.

**ADDL FORCES** 

**DEPLOYED FOR** 

**GP ELECTIONS** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

Chittoor

deployed route mobile

parties, special striking

forces, and enhanced the

intelligence network in

the villages for the third

and fourth phase of elec-

Police S. Senthil Kumar

has revealed this while

adding that they have

also installed CCTV

cameras in some places for maintaining law and

During an interaction

Chittoor on Monday, he

explained that they had conducted first and the

second phase of polls held on February 9 and

13 peacefully in Chittoor

and Madanapalli divi-

"District Police had

paid special attention to

hypersensitive villages

and motivated the elec-

torate to ensure free and

fair elections. We had coordinated with all

other government departments to conduct

the Gram Panchayat

elections smoothly," the

He said they had deputed 2,224 personnel for the third phase.

**DEFEATED SEEKS** 

**RECOUNTING** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

A candidate of Velanki

Kirlampudi mandal of

East Godavari district,

has urged the State

Election Commission to

re-evaluate the votes held on February 9.

Daveedu said he has

contested in the election

with "Cot" symbol and

another person Rayudu

Swamy contested with

while two others were

also in the contest. He

said that when the votes

were counted, Rayudu

Swamy got 1,185 votes and he got 1,180 votes

and Swamy got five

votes of majority. But,

Daveedu said he and his

counting agents demanded the polling

personnel for recount-

ing and the officials

made recounting. In the

recounting, Daveedu won by one-vote majori-

ty. But due to the strong

pressures from the other

declared Swamy elected.

He requested the author-

ities to re-evaluate the

votes and do justice to

basket" symbol

panchayat

elections

Daveedu

village

KAKINADA, FEB. 15

**OF VOTES** 

sarpanch

Devara

Velanki

SP said.

Superintendent

police

NELLORE, FEB. 15

authorities

Taking the outlawed Maoists threat seriously, no candidates filed their nomination papers for Nenjeri gram panchayat in Peda Bayulu mandal of Visakhapatnam district.

Polling would be held in 237 gram panchayats and 1,465 wards on Wednesday. Around 4,36,103 people would be participating in the elections. The district administration has deployed 6,029 polling personnel

mandals

considered

Gurthedu

extremist-affected areas

but the attention is more

on Chinturu, Yetapaka,

He said that the closure

Kunavaram, Gurt and other 25 villages.

East

11

The tribal areas in Visakhapatnam remained sensitive in all the elections and in the fresh call, the Maoists termed the local body elections as bogus and appealed to the people to oust the exploitative parties.

Godavari East Godavari District Superintendent of Police Collector D. Muralidhar Adnan Nayeem Asmi said Rampachodavaram and that security personnel are taking all steps to ensure peaceful polling in agency areas. He said that reviewed arrangements with ITDA project officer Praveen Adhithya on Monday. Rampachodavaram and Visakhapatnam, Yetapaka divisions are

armed police personnel would be deployed in all the 237 of 244 gram panchayats going to polls in Paderu division. The tribal areas remained sensitive in all the elections and in the fresh call, the Maoists termed the local body elections as bogus

to oust the exploitative

parties.
"We are not taking any chances and deploying armed personnel at every polling station," said Visakhapatnam superintendent of police B. Krishna Rao. More attention would be paid to sensitive mandals like Chintapalle, GK Veedhi and Paderu, he said.

Talking to reporters in Visakhapatnam after a review meeting with project officer of ITDA Dr S Venkateswar, joint collector Venu Gopal Reddy and senior revenue officials on poll arrangements,

Vinay Chand polling would be held in 237 gram panchayats and 1,465 wards on Wednesday. Around 4,36,103 people would be participating in the elections. The district administration deployed 6,029 polling personnel, 198 micro-level observers and 82 videogra-

Polling hours have been restricted from 6.30 am to 1.30 pm and counting would begin from 2 pm onwards. The collector said 543 vehicles have

### and Solid waste management at the camp office on Monday Min ridicules Naidu

for false statements

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, FEB. 15

**Review meeting** 

Industries minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy took potshots at TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu for his statement that his party candidate had won the gram panchayat seat in Brahmanapalli village, which is the Minister's native place.

Flashing a certificate issued by the returning officer to showcase that his follower, who was present with the minister, won with 1,088 votes, he demanded the TDP to produce evidence of their candidate's win.

Speaking to media persons here on Monday, Reddy said that TD had no candidate for the Brahmanapalli seat.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy conducts review meeting on Urban housing

Maintaining that four TD candidates had joined YSRC soon after being elected as sarpanches on Sunday, he said that the four-decade experience of Naidu is only useful to make atrocious claims but not for the development of Andhra Pradesh He advised media personnel to verify the veracity of Naidu's statements

before reporting them. Reddy said YSRC bagged 24 panchayats in his native Marripadu mandal besides 90 per cent of seats in six mandals falling in Atmakur constituency represented by him.

### Poll officials gear up for 3rd, 4th phase

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, FEB. 15

Officials of Nellore and Prakasam are gearing up for the third and fourth phase of elections in gram panchayats of their respective districts on February 17 and 21. Senior officers have directed returning officers to take all steps to ensure transparency, apart from free and fair elections. Arrangements should be such that results of elections are

election day. SPSR Nellore district K. collector Babu instructed returning officers to taking a decision on recounting of votes from applicants within 15 minutes of concluding the counting process. He asked officials to examine reasons for delay in

announcement of results in the first and second phases of elections. This will help them in check ing any lapses in the next two phases of gram pan-chayat elections.

The collector returning officers to opt for lottery system and declare results if two candidates in fray receive equal number of votes. He ordered officials to arrange fir webcasting in 100 polling stations of Gudur division and 50 in Naidupeta division dur-

Election observer Basanth Kumar warned action will be taken against polling officers who delay announcement of results with a vested interest. He underlined that State Election Commission will be close monitoring election process in every panchayat.

### **MLC ELECTION NOTIFICATION FOR TEACHERS' CONSTITUENCY TODAY**

DC CORRESPONDENT

East Godavari district collector D. Muralidhar Reddy said election notification for Teachers seat in State Legislative Council from East and West Godavari districts will be issued on Tuesday. Nominations will be received till February 23.

can withdraw their nominations on February 26. Polling will be held on March 14 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Counting of votes

The collector said there are total 17,285 voters in the Teachers constituency, 9,560 in East Godavari district and 7,725 in West Godavari. Convening a meeting with political parties here on Monday, Muralidhar Reddy sought their cooperation in ensuring smooth and fair

#### Reddy and Ramana Deekshithulu in 2018 on allegations of tarnishing the organisation's image Against this backdrop, the Tenth Additional District Court dealing

with the case in Tirupati admitted two petitions filed by Telangana Hindu Jana Sakti Welfare Association and an advo-cate, Haribabu, to become parties in the case.

They have been arguing that the proposal to withdraw the case would hurt the Hindu devotees' sentiments all over the world.

Sources in the TTD said that the latest development is a setback to the organisation which is trying to take back the case and resolve the through Lok Adalat.

The TTD had filed a defamation case for ₹100 crore each on Vijaya Sai Reddy and Ramana Deekshithulu in 2018 on allegations of tarnishing the organisation's image then.



Minister Velampalli Srinivasa Rao conducting election campaign at One Town after

# No civic body polls for Rjy and 4 municipalities

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, FEB. 15

As per notification issued by the State Election Commission, there will be no elections for five civic bodies

Rajamahendravaram Municipal Corporation in East Godavari district and four municipalities of Bhimavaram, Palakole, Tanuku Tadepalligudem in West

Godavari district. According to sources, this is on account of nearby villages having been merged with these towns. But demarcation of various wards has not been done taking into consideration the merged villages. Notifications for elections to these five civic bodies will be issued only after

As a result, many aspircandidates Rajamahendravaram Municipal Corporation (RMC) and four municipalities of West Godavari have been left disappoint-

respective wards are

boundaries of

### MCT officials gear up for Civic polls

**DC CORRESPONDENT** NELLORE, FEB. 15

Municipal Commissioner of Tirupati, PS Girisha said the civic body election process will resume from where it was halted

last year. Referring to the notifica-tion issued by the State Election Commission on

Girisha said that a total of 333 nominations were filed for all the 50 wards of which nine were rejected at the scrutiny stage. As of

ed. "We had been waiting for the notification to contest elections. We are disappointed that RMC has

now, the number of nominations filed stands at 324. Around 249 polling stations will be set up to enable approximately 2,66,762 voters to exercise enable their franchise.

Of the total 2,66,762 voters, 1,32,577 are male voters, 1,34,200 female and 55 voters in the others cate

Tirupati, ference Girisha said that the model code of conduct (MCC) will come into with immediate force effect.

not been included in the

#### KAKINADA, FEB. 15 Monday for holding the The voters' list which municipal elections, he was updated in January Election notification for constituency made it clear that no new 2019 will be followed. teachers' will be on March 17. nominations will be Addressing a press conallowed.

Scrutiny will be on February 24. Candidates

#### HC reserves orders over Lalapet dairy **VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA** APDDCF has been listed ed and developed in united has never claimed any

HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

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

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

under Schedule IX of the Andhra Pradesh advo-AP Reorganisation Act. Andhra Pradesh govern-

ment had approached the then united High Court in 2016 challenging Telangana state's GO declaring the premises, infrastructure and machinery at Lalapet head office of APDDCF as belonging to Telangana government. The TS government had also gone on quarters to take over possession of Hyderabad. the property in Lalapet including buildings and Whereas,

Aggrieved, approached the then joint High Court asserting that assets of APDDCF should be shared in 58:42 ratio, because it belonged to both states, as it was construct-

machinery.

cate general Sriram submitted that according to the AP Reorganisation headquarters Schedule IX institutions should be shared on basis of the population ratio of 58:42 between the two states. He said this applies to all assets of office headlocated

Telangana advocate general B.S. Prasad argued that as per Section 53 of the Act, properties situated within the vicinity of the respective state belong to that state, except the administrative office buildings. Prasad submitted that Telangana

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

Prasad's argument centred around headquarters not including all assets in Hyderabad but only the principal administrative building of an institution or organisation. He also underlined that milk and dairy products of Vijaya Dairy are generally supplied throughout Telangana, from Lalapet unit, as

its in Telangana. So Lalapet should be treated as an operational unit. "The headquarters, that is, principal office of the undertaking is to be apportioned as per population ratio. Operational units are to be divided on location basis, TS AG contended. division bench, The while reserving its orders,

observed that the union government has no power to interpret the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act or decide on a dispute arising out of bifurcation. The central government can, however, resolve the dispute amicably by arranging talks between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, the bench observed.

IN BRIEF

#### **THREE CHILDREN DROWN IN TANK NEAR NH-16**

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, FEB. 15

Three children belonging to Bujabuja Nellore went missing when they ventured into a for swimming at Chemudugunta located close to NH-16 in the outskirts of Nellore city late on Sunday evening.

Parents of the kids launched a search for the trio when they failed to return home on Sunday night and complained to the police after their efforts failed. The incident came to light when police deployed swimmers to locate the bodies when they noticed their cycles and dress on the banks of the tank near Nakkala Colony on

Monday morning.
The deceased have been identified as SK Aleem, 13, of Samatha Nagar, Parlapalli Venkata Sai, 13, of Vikalangula Nagar and Mopur Rajesh, 13, of Bhagath Singh Colony at Bujabuja Nellore in Venkatachalam mandal

#### **MINISTERS VOW AID TO KIN OF ACCIDENT VICTIMS**

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, FEB. 15

Panchavat minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister K. Narayana Swamy assured government support to survivors in the ghastly road accident near Kurnool.

They were speaking to media persons after presenting the financial assistance provided by the government to two families who lost their breadwinners at Madanapalle on

Monday. They promised to take care of the children of the deceased who survived in the accident. They consoled the family members of the deceased at Madanapalle, Tarigonda

Gurramkonda mandal) and Thummanamgunta B.Kottakota mandal) where the bodies are buried.

Peddireddy Legislators Dwarakanath Reddy, Nawaz Basha among others were

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CONTACT FOR

## VSP: TD's dharna on Feb. 18

Naidu asks TD leaders and cadre to hold state-wide protests

**DC CORRESPONDENTS** VIJAYAWADA/VISAKHAPA TNAM, FEB. 15

Telugu Desam chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu has called upon the party leaders and cadre on Monday to hold protests all over the state on February 18, Thursday, against privatisation of the Visakha Steel Plant.

In a statement here on Monday, the former CM stressed on the need for a relentless struggle against the ruling YSR Congress and "its plans" to have a deal with the South Korean steel giant, Posco. He alleged that CM Jagan was trying to save himself from the disproportionate assets case and bent on handing over the steel plant, the pride of AP and the nation, to private entities.

Naidu said Jagan entered into a "secret deal" to grab the surplus land of the steel plant. The land is having a very high value in market, he said, and added that the CM was "prostrating" before the Centre on the

steel plant issue. The TD chief deplored the way the steel plant was being denied the exclusive allotment of mines for raw materials, in the name of privatisation, and called upon the people to raise their voice

and "save" the steel plant. Naidu said the steel plant was providing livelihood directly to over 40,000 people and was also indirectly supporting the survival of nearly 50,000 people. He vowed that the stir against the plant privatisation would continue until the Centre abandoned its present

plan. Naidu would arrive in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday to address a huge gathering of party men at the TD office in Gajuwaka where former MLA Palla Srinivasa Rao is on an indefinite fast



GVMC contract employees demonstrate during the Vanta-vaarpu programme in protest against the CPS system by the government outside the District Collectorate

### Learn from farmers, CPM Raghavulu tells agitators

DC CORRESPONDENT SAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 15

Politburo member of CPM B.V. Raghavulu asked the steel plant agitators to intensify their movement on the lines of farmers agitation which has been going on for last one and half months.

Raghavulu called on the

Atchannaidu

plant issue.

announced that Naidu

would give new direc-

tions on how to go hold

the agitation on the steel

against the privatisation

Atchannaidu announced

here on Monday that

Naidu would give new

directions on how to go

chief K.

TD

strike at the Kurmannapalem junction close to the steel plant main gate on Monday. Addressing a huge gathering, Raghavulu said the

trade unions who have

launched a relay hunger

tral leaders will come down so easily. The agitation has to be more spread all over the state to bring pressure on the

central leaders remained firm on the farm laws even though 500 farm unions are camping,

He appealed to the ruling party members to

resign from their elected

posts if they were serious

about stopping the pri-

vatisation move, and

assured them that that

TD would not put up any

candidate in the by-elec-

hold the agitation on the tions. steel plant issue. Though Former home minister N. Chinarajappa, former mayor and TD leader Rao was earlier infected with coronavirus, he was firm in his determination Sabbam Hari and former stage the hunger Devineni

> called on fasting Palla Srinivasa Rao. Another district-level leader Pasarla Prasad prayers Simhachalam temple seeking blessings for the good health of Palla Šrinivasa Rao.

Umamaheswara Rao also

cooking, and agitating, which has drawn the

"I do not think the cen-

and

should

government.

world attention.

Raghavulu said.

### **WL JOINS GANTA TO INTENSIFY RINL AGITATION**

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 15

Former minister and Visakhapatnam north MLA Ganta Srinivasa Rao and retired IPS official V.V. Laxminarayana, popularly known had discussions on strategies to intensify the agitation on the privatisation of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant and make it a statewide movement.

Laxminarayana tested 2019 general elections for Visakhapatnam Lok Sabha constituency representing Jana Sena party and came in the third place after YSRC candidate M.V.V. Satyanarayana, who won the election, and TD candidate M. Sri Bharat.

He quit the party in January 2020 after differ-ences arose with the party founder president Pawan Kalyan.

Staying away from active politics, he started Join for Development Foundation and began working in agriculture, rural development, youth innovations and environment and related areas.

"Laxminarayana agreed to mobilise intel-lectuals, students and non-political organisations all over the State while I will deal with the political parties trade unions," Srinivasa Rao said.

He said Laxminarayana initially would discuss with the students, teachers and intellectuals in Visakhapatnam and later tour other places in the

The senior leader said he was worried about the municipal elections' impact on the steel plant agitation.

### CM intervention sought into polls of Kabaddi association

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

Andhra The former Kabaddi Association secretary K.P. Rao sought the intervention of the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to conduct elections to it and also to enable it to hold the prestigious YSR World Cup in Kabaddi in Visakhapatnam.

In a letter addressed to the Chief Minister here on Monday, Rao alleged that two groups were heading the AKA- with one comprising K.E Prabhakar and Veeranalkaiah while another one led by Y. Srikanth and added that they were not eligible to conduct Kabaddi state-level championships for the reason that the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh did not recognise them He alleged that both the

groups were using the letterheads with the same registration number 115/2010 against Andhra Pradesh Societies Registration Act norms. He turned critical on the SAAP for failing to implement sports code strictly in the state resulting in the disputes among district-level associations and said that the prevalence of such an unfavourable situation was not paving the way for conducting the elec-

tions to the state-level body He said that the three men in the two groups were not even qualified to hold any post as per sports code either in AP or India.

Referring to the support being extended to these two

groups by a section of legis-lators and leaders, he called it unfortunate because they were doing so without knowing the facts. He said that the players were vic-timised as the tournaments conducted by these two groups were not authorised. He added that the groups medals and recognition were not helping the players get admission in educational institutions and employment under sports quota in addition to denial of award

ing cash incentives to them. Rao requested the CM nominate an administrator, preferably a retired high court judge or a district judge, to conduct elections to the Andhra Kabaddi Association. He added that it would help the body to conduct YSR World Cup in Kabaddi at an estimated cost of ₹25 crore with nearly 30 countries to take part and providing live coverage to more than 250 countries

### AP records 30 new Covid cases, 1 death

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

Andhra Pradesh registered 30 fresh cases of Covid-19 and one death in the last 24 hours.

On Monday, the state health authorities reported that out of 18,834 samples tested, 30 persons were confirmed with Covid-19. Out of

a total number of 1.35,65,062

samples tested, 8,88,899 persons were found infected with the virus and of them 8,81,041 recovered while undergoing treatment while 695 are still active with the virus.

Among the daily cases of Covid-19, Kadapa registered seven followed by five in Guntur, four each in Chittoor and Nellore, three in East Godavari.

### **Kunda Chaturdi** observed

**Nellore:** As part of its promotion of Hindu Sanatana Dharma, TTD mulled month-long Magha Masa Puja.

On Monday evening, Kunda Kusumarchana was observed with religious fervour Dhyanaramam in Tirupati by SV Vedic University scholars on the auspicious day of Magha Chaturthi. The unique feature about this fete is that the giant Shiva Linga was offered Abhishekam.

4K DOLBY
QUARTET SPEAKERS



Endowments assistant commissioner G.V.D.N. Leela Kumar presents Silk robes at Subrahmanyeswara Swamy temple at Mopidevi in Krishna district on Monday.

### **Brahmotsavams** begin on a grand note at Mopidevi

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

The annual Brahmotsavams of Sri Valli Devasena Sametha Subrahmanyeswara Swamy began on a grand note in Mopidevi village in Krishna district on Monday. Lord Subrahmany-

eswara was decorated as a groom, and the deity Valli Devasena as a bride amidst chanting of Vedas under the supervision of endowments assistant commissioner G.V.D.N. Leela Kumar and temple chief priest B. were present.

Pawan Kumar and spe cial pujas were performed to the couple.

The endowments assistant commissioner offered silk robes to the lord and deity with temple honours amidst chanting of Vedas and slokas on behalf of the department of endow ments.

The temple priest helped the official to offer the silk robes ceremonially to the lord and deity. Temple superintendent A. Madhusudhana Rao and other officials V.S.K. Malleswara Rao

### TTD PLANS TO DEVELOP VEDA PATHASHALA IN KEESARAGUTTA

**DC CORRESPONDENT** NELLORE, FEB. 15

Students of Veda Pathashala in Keesaragutta at Telangana alleged that they are not considered for employment in Vedic related posts by Endowments Department of Telangana State though

they have become accomplished pundits after pursuing the 8 long Vedic years Course

They poured out their

woes before the TTD EO Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy when he inspected the Pathashala on Monday.

Reacting to this, the EO told them that he will definitely discuss the issue in the ensuing TTD Trust Meeting which is slated on February 27.

After his inspection. the EO instructed the Engineering officials concerned to send pro posals to take up development works of the Vedic institution.



BUREAU OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY
(A Statutory body under Ministry of Power, Government of India)
4th Floor, Sewa Bhawan, R. K. Puram, New Delhi — 110066
Website: www.beeindia.gov.in, Ph: 011-26766700



#### KIND ATTENTION: ENERGY USERS IN 13 NOTIFIED SECTORS

Submission of Report on the Status of Energy Consumption under Energy Conservation Act 2001 (52 of 2001)

All users/class of users of energy in the following energy intensive sectors having Annual Energy Consumption of and above the specified limit shown against the following energy intensive sectors are notified as designated consumers vide S.O. 394 (E) dated the 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2007, S.O. 3542 (E) dated 29<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2015, S.O. 1388(E) dated 02<sup>nd</sup> May, 2017 and 502147 (E) Dated 17th June, 2020, under clause (e) of section 14 of the Energy Conservation Act (52 of 2001).

5. No.	Notified Sector	Threshold Energy Consumption in metric tonne of oil equivalent (mtoe) per year
1.	Aluminium	7,500
2.	Cement	
	(a) Integrated Cement Unit	30,000
	(b) Cement Grinding Unit	10,000
3.	Commercial Buildings or Establishments	
	(a) Hotels	500
	(b) Airports	500
4.	Chlor-Alkali	12,000
5.	Electricity Distribution Companies (DISCOMs)*	-
6.	Fertilizer	30,000
7.	Iron & Steel	20,000
8.	Pulp & Paper	20,000
9.	Petroleum Refineries	90,000
10.	Petrochemical units having gas crackers or naphtha crackers or both	1,00,000
11.	Railways	
	(a) All Zonal Railways (Traction)	70,000
	(b) Workshops	750
	(C) 8 Production Factories of Railways namely, ICF,	-
	RCF, CLW, DLW, DCW, RWF, MCF & RWP	
12.	Textile	3,000
13.	Thermal Power Stations	30,000

\* All entities having issued distribution licence by State/Joint Electricity regulatory commission under electricity Act, 2003 (36 of 2003) are Notified as Designated Consumers (DCs) vide S.O. 3445(E) dated 28.09.2020.

All units/establishment consuming more than the listed threshold energy consumption under respective sectors, notified by the Central Government under S.O. 687 (E) dated the 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2012, S.O. 1264 (E) dated 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2016 and S.O. 998(E) dated 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2017, S.O. 1409(E) dated 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2018, S.O. 1473(E) dated 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2019, S.O. 1254(E) dated 13th April, 2020 are requested to submit to the concerned designated agency, with a copy to the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, a report on the status of Annual Energy Consumption, together with their annual production, for the last two years, namely, 2018-19 and 2019-20 in Form 1 notified under clause (I) of Section 14 of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001 (52 of 2001), duly authenticated by the Energy Manager/Chief Executive

A copy of the required sector applicable Pro-forma or Form-I could be downloaded from BEE website: https://beeindia.gov.in/content/pat-performa

If any person fails to submit a report on the status of annual consumption etc by 31st March, 2021, he shall be liable to a penalty under clause 26 of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.

For more information/query please contact us on 011-26766700 or send mail on newdc@beenet.in. **Mission Director** 

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email













IN BRIEF

#### **FOREIGN SECRETARY TO VISIT MOSCOW**

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB 15

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

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

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

#### **COVID: NIGHT CURFEW IN 4 GUJ CITIES EXTENDED**

DC CORRESPONDENT

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

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

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

India till now has vaccinated 85.16 lakh persons.

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

#### **SPURIOUS LIQUOR CLAIMS 4 LIVES IN MADHYA PRADESH**

**RABINDRA NATH** CHOUDHURY I DC BHOPAL, FEB 15

Four people died after consuming 'spurious' liquor in Chhatarpur district, police said on Monday. The incident took place in the village of

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

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

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

While Ahirwar's son died on Friday, he succumbed on Saturday. Two more people, Tulsidas Brar and Laluram Ahirwar, died on Sunday

"Viscera of the four deceased were sent for tests", Chhatarpur district superintendent of police Sachin Sharma said. A team of district officials and police officers rushed to the village to ensure proper medical treat-

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

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

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, FEB. 15

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

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

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

under challenge.

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

Constitution bench wherein 2016 policy is

Senior lawyer Shyam Divan, appearing for the petitioner, told the apex court that WhatsApp has in January "come up with a new privacy poli-

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

Senior counsel Kapil Sibal, who appeared for WhatsApp , denied that the users' data would be compromised by the new policy. "This 2021 policy is

applicable everywhere apart from Europe as it has a law. If India has a law, we will follow the same," he said.

At this the CJI asked him to put that on oath. WhatsApp had earlier terms of service and priCovid cases jump in Maha



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

# BJP, Oppn clash over climate activist's arrest

### Vij calls for 'extermination of seeds of anti-nationalism'

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

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

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

silenced.
"Your lips are free to speak. Say that the truth is still alive. They are scared, not the country," he said

in a tweet in Hindi. silenced," he added.

Delhi Chief Minister

BJP general secretary B L Santosh tweeted, "21 year old...environment activist...student...Are

credentials for becoming a part of breaking India forces? How does she get the access for editing tool kit ...? Why she is part of anti-national Many questions...But only one answer...21 year old."

Arvind Kejriwal said, "Arrest of 21 year old

Disha Ravi is an unprece-

attack Democracy. Supporting our farmers is not a

RJD leader Manoj Jha

said democracy is under

threat. "I am worried

about democracy, as it is passing through the most difficult times," he said.

Union minister and Bharatiya Janata Party

(BJP) leader Gajendra

Singh Shekhawat tweeted:

"If age is the criteria then

Chakra

Veer

Khetarpal, martyred at 21

is who I am proud of. Not some toolkit propagan-

dented

crime.

Param

Second

dists.

"Bengaluru, Greta Thunberg, Vegan, sole bread winner, student, 21 old, passionate activist...so attempts to white wash a sin...!! Not one anarchist ready to answer the question...How 21 year old stu-

dent got access to edit Toolkit," he asked. Meanwhile, in a comment on the arrest of climate activist Disha Ravi, Haryana Home minister Anil Vij on Monday urged "extermination from the roots" wherever seeds of

anti-nationalism found. The minister's remarks came two days after Disha Ravi was held by the Delhi Police for allegedly sharing with climate activist Greta Thunberg the toolkit related to the farmers' against

Centre's farm laws. The Delhi Police had claimed that the 21-yearold activist was an editor of the "toolkit Google doc" and "key conspirator" in the document's formula-

In the document, various report, the response said. urgent actions, including

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

protest.
"Whoever harbours the seeds of anti-nationalism in their mind, that has to be destroyed from the roots (samool naash), be it #Disha\_Ravi or anyone else, Vij said in a one line tweet in Hindi. Later, the minister post-

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

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

# DYFI worker, hurt in police lathicharge, dies

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC

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

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

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

Dr Halim said, "On February 13 morning, Moidul was admitted after his medical tests showed development of an acute kidney failure. It happens only when muscles get hit continuously to become wounded and it's internal protein comes out and blocks the kidney through blood. He had massive muscle injuries from the lath-icharge by the police." CPI(M) MLA Sujan Chakraborty claimed, "A

bright youth was murdered and turned into a corpse." Leader

Opposition Abdul Mannan alleged, "It is a murder which reflects unlimited atrocities of an autocratic government.

State BJP president Dilip Ghosh said, "This is unfortunate. Trinamul Congress government has lost its control over every-

thing."
Wondering if Mr
Chakraborty talked of
getting her call about the DYFI worker's death first, the chief minister however said, "Any death is sad and unfortunate. Post mortem report will reveal the cause of death. But the police was neither about it. Family of the deceased was not

### **MAA KITCHEN: DIDI LAUNCHES MEALS FOR ₹5**

DC CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA, FEB. 15

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

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

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

Two outlets have been started in South Kolkata. "It is a unique idea which was announced in the state budget. I will go to taste the food one day. This programme is aimed for the common people. It will create a business setup," Ms Banerjee said about the concept which is the brainchild of election strategist of the ruling Trinamul Congress: Prashant Kishor. The move resembles to 'Amma Kitchens' launched by late AIADMK leader Jayalalithaa in Tamil

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

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

Agitated over his death, some DYFI cadres heckhis uniform during a protest in the city.

### 3 forest guards attacked by timber mafia in MP

**BHOPAL, FEB 15** 

Three forest guards were brutally attacked by timber mafia in a wildlife sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh, officials said on Monday.

The incident occurred inside Panna National Park on Saturday.

According to local subdivisional officer (SDO)(forest) Dinesh Singh Gaur, the three forguards, Chatrapal hi, Swamideen Kushwaha and Govind Singh Yadav, spotted a gang of timber smugglers Vishramgang range under Panna National Park.

They challenged the goons who were armed with axes and other sharp weapons. who unarmed confronted them, leading to attack on them by the timber mafia goons.

Chatrapal, however, somehow managed to escape from their clutches and saved himself by hiding in a nearby bush.

His two other colleagues were brutally attacked with axes by the goons, causing grievous injuries to them. He later alerted his higher authorities about the incident.

Later, the injured guards were rushed to the nearby government hospital.

The condition of two injured officers is stated to be critical.

Three suspects were picked up from the nearby village for interrogation in connection with the incident, the forest officer

This was the second attack on forest guards by the goons in the last 10

On February 5, a forest identified as guard. Madanlal Verma (52), was shot dead by the poachers in Ratanpura forest range under Punjapur reserve forest in Dewas district.

He had filmed his own murder on his cell phone camera while challenging

### Security up along other parts of Indo-China border

DC CORRESPONDENT **NEW DELHI, FEB 15** 

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

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

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

tion that in an attempt to deflect attention from the ongoing disengagement process in Ladakh, Chinese PLA could create problem in some other areas along the border. So we have deployed additional ITBP troops in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, higher and remote areas Uttarakhand Himachal Pradesh. Our security forces are alert

and we will not let PLA

create any further mis-

Ministry remarked Both Indian and Chinese

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

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



S Jaishankar

### **EAM: ASSAM IS SPRINGBOARD OF ACT EAST POLICY**

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, FEB. 15

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

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

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

### Atmosphere in Tapovan village grim as kin lose hope

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

And the temporary relief

of not finding a family

member among the dead is

brief as they are soon

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

Out of the three bodies recovered from the tunnel on Monday one is of Satypal Singh Bartwal from Masoli village in Pokhri area of Chamoli district. "We hoped gripped by despair when district.

to return home with my brother's body. It's unbearable," said his elder brother in a choked voice. Over a dozen relatives of

Bartwal including his brother, who had been camping at Tapovan vil-lage since the day the tragedy struck, broke down inconsolably after

identifying the body.

The crowd of disheartened relatives at the tunnel site has begun to disperse. Those who remain are found hanging around the mortuary where the bodies are being brought one after another. Relatives of Jitendra, a resident brought out dead from the tunnel on Sunday are also packing up to leave.

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



and

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

Israeli hit kills 9

### SHORT TAKES **RUSSIAN CARGO** SHIP LAUNCHED

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The driver left the scene of the accident, and Maraj was taken to hospital, where he was pronounced dead on Saturday. "The investigation is ongoing," police added.
The statement did not speci-

Maraj's relationship to Minaj, but a police spokesman confirmed he was her father.

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

The rapper has been nominated for 10 Grammy awards

#### SUSPECT HELD **IN NYC SUBWAY STABBINGS**

New York, Feb. 15: A 21-yearold Brooklyn man was arrested in the fatal stabbings of two people on New York City sub-way trains, police said Sunday. Rigoberto Lopez was taken

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

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

#### **LANDSLIDE IN INDONESIA: 10** DIE, 9 MISSING

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

from surrounding hills late Sunday struck at least eight houses, injuring 14 people and leaving 21 people buried under tons of mud. Two were res-

bodies buried under as much as 6 metres (10 feet) of mud and were searching for the nine people still missing, Nganjuk district chief Novi Rahman Hidavat said. Heavy equipment arrived later to

Monday, sending nearly 1 met-

# Myanmar rattled by army movements, Net shutdown

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

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

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

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

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

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

**POWER CUT AS** 

**BLANKET TEXAS** 

Dallas, Feb. 15: A win-

tricity for short periods

as temperatures fell into

the teens near Dallas

and 20s (about minus 5

degrees Celsius) around

"We urge Texans to put safety first," the council

tweeted as it urged resi-

dents to reduce electrici-

ERCOT manages the

flow of electric power in

the state. "Traffic lights

and other infrastructure

may be temporarily wit-

hout power," ERCOT

said. Officials in Hous-

ton had warned people

to prepare for outages

and hazardous roads —

conditions similar to

what residents might see

in the wake of a Cate-

Nearly 120 crashes,

including a 10-car pileup

on I-45, were reported

Sunday, Houston Fire

gory 5 hurricane.

Chief

tweeted.

Houston.

**SNOW, ICE** 



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

found no evidence to support the allegations.

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

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

### Suu Kyi detention extended

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

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

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

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

Protesters continued to gather across Myanmar on Monday following a night in which authorities cut the country's internet access and increased the security presence in major cities seeking to curtail demonstrations

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

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



Shah Mahmood Qureshi

### **CLASH IN S. ASIA COULD THREATEN STABILITY: SMQ**

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

flows and security. Addressing the 9th International Maritime Conference (IMC 21) in Karachi, Qureshi also said that the Indian Ocean offers promising potation and collaboration.

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

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

# fighters in Syria

fired several missiles early on Monday target-ing areas near the Syrian capital, Damascus, Syria's state news agency reported. An opposition warmonitoring group said the strikes killed nine Iran-backed fighters.

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

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

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

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

### Meghan again in the family way

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

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

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

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

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

### Oz: Google near media pay deals

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

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

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

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

Nganjuk (Indonesia), Feb.

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

The mud that rolled down cued on Sunday.

Rescuers on Monday found help in the search.

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

## Virus: Tougher travel rules come into force in Britain

London, Feb. 15: The UK's tougher new travel rules to contain the spread of Covid-19 variter storm dropping snow and ice also sent temperatures plunging across the southern Plains, prompting a power emergency in Texas a ants came into effect from Monday, involving compulsory hotel quarantines day after conditions canflights for anyone returning to impacted traffic across England from one of the large swaths of the US. 33 high-risk "red list" Rotating power outcountries. Those arriving ages were initiated by will have to pre-book and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, or pay £1,750 to spend 10 days quarantining in governm-ERCOT, early Monday ent-sanctioned hotels, covmorning, meaning thouering the cost of the hotel, transport and two sepasands went without elec-

> Extremely serious breaches of the new norms could result in a 10-year jail term and fines of up to £10,000. Those who have not visited a "red list" country, such as India, must still quarantine for 10 days at home and complete two mandatory Covid-19 tests on the second and eighth day after arriving, "With the emergence of new variants, we must go further. The rules coming into force today will bolster the quarantine system and provide another layer of security against new variants at the border," said UK Health

rate tests post-arrival.

Secretary Matt Hancock. "These new measures are important to protect our vaccination programme, which has now seen 15 million people vaccinated, we all work towards restoring normal life," he said. Starting Monday, any UK or Irish resident

### Briton breaks S'pore quarantine order Singapore, Feb. 15: A booked. The two spent

ilty on Monday to violating a coronavirus quarantine order in Singapore by visiting his fiancée several times in another hotel room. They are to appear in court for sentencing on February 26, and face a possible sentence of up to six years in jail and a fine of 10,000 Singapore dollars (\$7,500) on each charge. Skea Nigel left his room at The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia Singapore hotel on three occasions in September, according to the charge sheets. He was

not wearing a mask. Nigel climbed an emergency stairwell and entered a room that his Singafiancée porean

British citizen pleaded gunine hours together. Most travellers have to stay in an assigned hotel room or at home for 14 days after arriving in Singapore under Coronavirus quarantine rules. They receive meals and regularly record their temperatures.

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

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

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

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

entering Britain.

Samuel Peña

### 4-LEGGED LINHABITANT EX-PM David Cameron recruited the cat to deal with rats seen near his official residence

## UK's chief mouser celebrates 10 years on the prowl

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

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

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

AFTER THE December 2019 election, rumours swirled that Larry might be headed for retirement with the news that the new prime minister, Boris Johnson, was a dog man. However, despite the prime minister moving Jack Russell cross Dilyn into Downing Street, Larry remained in office.

strated to millions of people around the world how incredible rescue cats are," she said. "His rags to rich-

es tale is yet more proof of why all animals deserve a second chance - one minute they may be an overlooked stray on the streets, the next they could become one of the nation's beloved political figures, with fans around the world."

Larry, who has met a number of world leaders, has been largely unfriendly to men but took a liking to former US President Barack Obama. When former President Donald Trump visited in 2019, Larry took a nap under his car. His grip on the public imagination is clear — and political leaders know better than to ignore that popularity. The tomcat was a sentimental topic of conversation in Cameron's final appearance in Parliament as prime minister when he said he wanted to quash a rumour that perish the thought — he

didn't like Larry. And just to prove it, he whipped out evidence: A picture of Larry lying on his lap. "He belongs to the house and the staff love him very much — as do I," he said at the time, explaining why

he wasn't taking Larry with him after leaving office. After the December 2019 election, rumours swirled that Larry might be headed for retirement with the news that the new prime minister. Boris Johnson, was a dog man.

However, despite the prime minister moving Jack Russell cross Dilyn into Downing Street, Larry remained in office. Reports of his rodent-killing abilities vary. Larry became known for his occasional scraps with neighbouring cats — especially Palmerston, chief mouser to the Foreign Office across the street and fondness for sleep. Palmerston has retired to the country, so things have been a bit quieter of late.

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

es in power naps.

# **Chronicle**

**16 FEBRUARY 2021** 

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

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

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

Ms Ravi appears to be a supporter of the ongoing farmers' agitation in the country. In support of this and to oppose the high-handed police action over it, global celebrities, including teenaged Swedish environment activist Greta

ciousness, indeed

State has done by

what the Indian

Thunberg, sent out tweets, unleashing a ferocious campaign, much to the discomfort of the government. FIRs were filed against Ms Thumberg and others for sedition. In the gov-In order to underernment's eyes, she is guilty of spreading the idea of a "toolkit" to back the farmers' agitation. stand the mali-

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

arresting Ms Ravi In fact it's no more than guidelines on ways to propagate the farmers' cause through the social media, and is a common expression among (and two others), it is important to be aware that this soactivists of all kinds. Indeed, it's no more than called "toolkit" is what the Hindutva brigade, including the ruling not a handbook of party, have been doing. The difference is that the **terrorism.** causes of the climate activists and the Hindutva group are vastly different, with the latter identifying with vile ones like the so-called "love jihad", false propaganda of cow

killing against Muslims and dalits, spreading fabrications against their political opponents, and disseminating hate against all voices that call for social harmony and sanity. Ms Ravi's "crime" is that she edited two lines of Ms Thunberg's "toolkit". It is for this that the Delhi police is calling her an "editor" of the "toolkit". Since an outfit called the Poetic Justice Foundation, which apparently supports the idea of "Khalistan", a woolly-headed thought in the minds of some persons of Indian origin in the West, also backs the farmers cause, all supporters of Indian farmers are being mischievously sought to be equated with "Khalistan" supporters. The practice of such sleight-of-hand by the government is clearly meant to discredit the farmers' agitation. This is a sign of the government running out of ideas about how to contain it. It is not inconceivable that the ground is also being prepared to play the State violence card against the farmers and their leaders, and Ms Thunberg or Ms Ravi, and others like them, are just collateral damage.

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

### Trump escapes conviction

ormer US President Donald Trump may have escaped conviction by the Senate, but history will judge him culpable for the attack on democracy.

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

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

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

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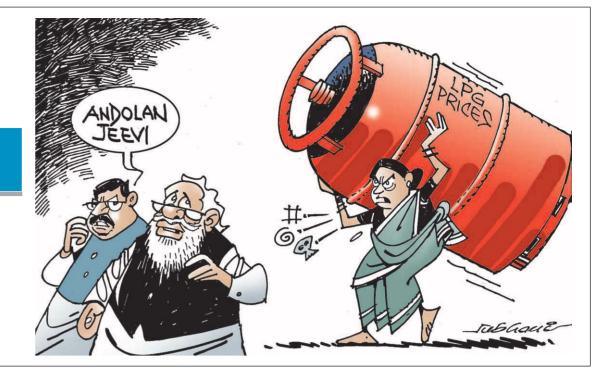
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Subhani



## How PM can win hearts, keep bills, end protests



Sriram Karri

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

the equation: You are with us or against us! But this is actually from a more ancient play

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

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

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

rate crony club. Even Arundhati Roy, who famously opposed Mr Bush's binary of having to choose between a "malevolent mullah or a mad Mickey Mouse" in the war against terror early in the new millennium, sees no third option now.

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

But there is another possibility — the farmers can ensure Mr Modi wins, and the PM can strive to make the protesting farmers triumph — without either side having to make a moral compromise. Let's begin with the

position of common belief, since we lost sight of it: there is an accumulating agrarian crisis in India, marked by smallunabatingly steep agflation (inflation of agri inputs like the price of seeds, fertilisers, urea, pesticides), transmission losses and unviable costs of financing (most farmers don't get bank loans, private money rates are backbreaking), self-defeating subsidies (loan waivers not applicable to most small farmers and landless tenant farmers), the impact of climate change in a largely rain-fed agri-sector, and unviable farmers (even rich farmers don't have cash to pay for health, education).

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

#### A benevolent surgical strike on farmers' hearts

television debates and exchanges about the Sikhs from Punjab but Jats, predominantly BJP voters and building blocks of Hindutva, are now resolved to stay put bills are withdrawn. After Republic Day and the tearful breakdown of

Rakesh Tikait, the bills have been reduced to a backdrop, an excuse. The protests are no longer primarily about fears around the potential reduction or doing away with minimum support prices (MSPs), or ending of the mandi system, or the visceral paranoia around corpo-rates getting legal backing to do contract farming or store grain — it is now about hurt farmers set against the hubris of

If the farmers were not convinced been Narend<sup>\*</sup> not arrogant.

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

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

and to the ladies cutting vegetables, sit on the ground with the leaders as they pass the hookah.

the langar, let him listen

Ask them if they are

comfortable, if they have

everything they need for

now. Let him break bread with them, the ice

Yes, that's all it might

end up taking to end these protests. Just that. Mr Modi is capable of magic with some sec-tions of people and the protesting Jat and Sikh

farmers are part of that

section. Once they are no

longer angry, and his humble arrival at the protest site will convince

them that neither he nor

his government is actu-

mate will lead to a thaw.

It is then that Mr Modi can explain that the

existing policies have failed the farmer for 50

years and expecting a

different result with the

same policies would be an Einsteinian measure

of insanity. The BJP can

talk about how corporate

and cooperative procure-

ment of milk have enriched farmers in the

dairy sector; and how this policy wishes to replicate the same suc-

Prime Minister Modi

in their midst will be a

visual story for all farm-

ers, the soothing touch

strike on their hearts. It

will calm farmers in all

protest sites and those

elsewhere simmering

with anger with a new belief in his leadership,

and that his government

cares for farmers every-

where. Before he leaves

the protest site, having told the world he was

there himself, he can

throw in a final gesture

of affection by asking for

some jalebis and rotis to

be packed for his dinner the entire gamut of

security and Covid-19

precautions set aside — and he will leave with

A little haggling, a little

willingness to give in on

an odd thing here or

there; and the farmers

will be happy to leave,

with the optics of victo-

ry, their pride intact, and return home, their

heads held high.

their hearts.

the surgical

cess for grain.

needed,

will break on its own.

Enough commentary has flowed through editorials, columns, feisty vituperous social media transformed nature of the agitation. Not just on the ground till the

the government.

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

him make some rotis at

**LPG PRICE HIKE** The LPG price has joined

race with petrol and diesel prices that keep increasing. The domestic gas prices rose by nearly ₹200 in just two months. This will upset budget of middle class. People are meekly tolerating the troubles. Their silence cannot be taken as approval.

> P. Ramakrishna Rajahmundry

#### **NOBLE DOCTOR**

Kudos to Dr Shankar Ramchandani (Odisha doctor opens 'One-Rupee' clinic to serve poor, DC, Feb. 15). One would hope that doctors all over the country emulate him and serve the poor. However, doctors like him are minuscule and not enough to even serve one per cent of population. The government should extend logistical support in this regard so that more doctors can do their bit.

Govardhana Myneedu

#### **PRIVATISATION WOES**

Privatisation is not a panacea for all the ills affecting the economy (BJP helping its corporate friends: CPM, DC, Feb. 15). It calls for a serious debate and discussion in Parliament with a road map to be prepared on a case-by-case basis. Unregulated private sector greediness can wipe it out at once. **Dr C. Ghanshyam** *Visakhapatnam* 

#### FRAGILE DEMOCRACY Yes, democracy is fragile, undoubt-

edly. It doesn't need a Biden to say so. It's so obvious these days, looking at what's happening around us It happened in Capitol Hill and at Red Fort. We must transform fragility into firmness.

K. Nehru Patnaik Visakhapatnam



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

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

Aakar Pate



Vital areas in kids' health left ignored in Budget 2021

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

was cut by 27 per cent. The drinking water and sanitation department saw its budget officially rise from ₹21,000 crore to ₹60,030 crore, but of that ₹50,000 crore was for the "Central road and infrastructure fund", suggesting a fudge to avoid embarrassing questions. The numbers seemed deliberately made hard to compare with previous spends. ICDS was clubbed with Poshan Abhiyan, the Scheme for Adolescent Girls and the National Creche Scheme, and the whole thing was called Saksham. Its budget for 2022 was less than the previous year's

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

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

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

> The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

# quick

52,154.13 1.18 Nifty 50 15,314.70 1.00 S&P 5007 3,934.83 0.47 72.68 0.09 Pound Sterling (₹) 101.02 -0.69 88.19 -0.12 46.826▼19 0.04 Gold (10gm)\* (₹) Brent crude (\$/bbl)\* 6.022 0.00 IN 10-Yr bond yield 1.210 0.00 US 10-Yr T-bill yield \* As of 8:30 PM IST

### **Exports rise 6%** in Jan; trade deficit narrows

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

### **WPI** inflation rises to 2.03%, food prices ease



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

### RBI sets up panel on urban coop banks

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

### IT industry to grow by 2.3% in FY21: Nasscom

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



### ■ JLR to spend \$3.5 bn annually on electrification

# Jaguar cars to become all-electric from 2025

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, FEB. 15

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

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

JLR will invest about 2.5 billion pounds (\$3.5 billion) annually into electrification and related connected technologies, the company said on Monday. It plans to introduce six fully electric Land Rover variants in the next five years and aims to electrify

all its models by 2030, it JLR's new chief exectutive officer Thierry Bollore made the announcement on Monday, with the new 'Reimagine' strategy also committing to retaining its production facilities in the UK. Bollore said Land Rover will phase out diesel engines from 2026 and

ogy.

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

invest more heavily in hydrogen fuel cell technol-

investment plan.

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

and China.

emission targets in Europe Jaguar Land Rover is one

### **RENAULT KIGER STARTS AT ₹5.45 L**

MICHAEL GONSALVES

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

biggest car market.
Renault's first compact SUV is sold in four trim levels and four enginegearbox combinations in the Rs 5.45 lakh to Rs 9.55 lakh range. Renault's aggressive

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

Car companies the world over are following zero-emission strategies to meet tough carbon dioxide

of the hardest hit by the downturn in demand for

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

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

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

diesel vehicles in recent

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

### **TESLA EYES PLANT NEAR BENGALURU**

**SARITHA RAI** FEB. 15

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

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

tled the industry in 2015. Ballore was drafted into JLR last July.

JLR said it was a "on a path towards" a doubledigit operating profit and positive cash flow, and aims to achieve positive cash without debt by 2025.

### Babus out? Govt mulls new panel to speed privatisation

SIDDHARTHA SINGH

India is considering set-

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

The panel will replace bureaucrats, who currently manage privatisation, as well as minority stake sales, the people said asking not to be identified because the discussions are private. The proposal is at an early stage and a final decision hasn't been taken, they said.

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

finance ministry spokesman declined to comment.

The government earlier this month said it will keep a "bare minimum presence" by running companies in atomic energy, space & defence; transport & telecommunica tions; power, oil & coal; banking & financial services, according to the Department of Investment Public Management.

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

—Bloomberg

### Smartphone sales clock record growth in Q4

**SANGEETHA G** CHENNAI, FEB. 15

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

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

A total of 150 million smartphone units were sold in 2020, which was 1.7 per cent less than what was sold in 2019. Stay-athome mandates, remote work, remote education, travel restrictions and manufacturing downs led to a sluggish

H1'20, which saw a 26 per cent decline over the same period in 2019. However, H2'20 recovered with 19 per cent growth as markets reopened gradually. Lockdowns and restrictions rendered an urgent need for devices supporting activities such

as entertainment, work from home, and remote learning, resulting in more devices per house-hold, and leading to a resurgence in demand for consumer devices including smartphones, consumer notebooks, and tablets in 2020.

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

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

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

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

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

**HUL** expects

Covid-hit

products to

rebound

### **BYJU'S NEARS** \$150 MN BUYOUT **OF TOPPR**

**SARITHA RAI** 

India's biggest e-learning startup, Byju's, is close to signing a deal to acquire rival Toppr Technologies in a transaction valued at roughly \$150 million, according to a person million, familiar with the matter.

Toppr provides online learning materials to students in grades 5 through 12 and its backers include Saif Partners and Helion Ventures. It is the latest target for Byju's, which has been expanding aggressively in recent months to capture the surge in demand for online education triggered by the pandemic. In January, it agreed a \$1 billion deal to acquire brick-and-mortar test prep leader Aakash

Educational Services Ltd. Mumbai-based Toppr takes an app-based approach to education with video classes, mock tests, revision cards reminiscent of Instagram Stories and live support for students stuck on a question. It provides its services internationally and counts over 16 million students.—*Bloomberg* 

### Financials push Sensex above 52K **RAVI RANJAN PRASAD**

MUMBAI, FEB.15

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

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

Business Resumption Index picked up to 98.1 (provisional) for the week ending

**FARAH ELBAHRAWY** 

S&P Global Ratings said

Gulf Arab economies suf-

fered population losses as a

result of an "exodus" of

expatriate workers, warn-

ing the outflow could com-

plicate their diversifica-

The population across

Council may have declined

Cooperation

tion in the long run.

the Gulf



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

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

**GULF EXODUS: S&P WARNS OF RISKS AHEAD** 

by 4 per cent last year,

according to a report on

The share of foreigners

relative to citizens is set to

drop through 2023 "because

of subdued non-oil sector

growth and workforce nationalisation policies,"

S&P credit analysts led by

"GCC countries' produc-

tivity, income levels, and

economic diversification

Zahabia Gupta said.

Monday.

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

top nine gainers were from the financial space. The Nifty Bank Index gained 3.32 per cent. The top gainers included Axis Bank (6.21 per cent) and ICICI Bank (4.17 per cent). Realty, Telecom and Healthcare stocks also made sound gains.

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

may stagnate in the long

term without significant

investment in the human

capital of the national pop-

ulation and improvements

in labour market flexibili-

The six nations compris-

ing the GCC—Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar,

Kuwait, Bahrain and

Oman—are fully depend-

ent on foreign workers in

ty," they said.

### Japan sights recovery, Nikkei at 1990-high



**GEAROID REIDY & TOSHIRO HASEGAWA** 

FEB. 15

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

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

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

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

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

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

strongly in 2021 with

also rebound. "These categories structurally remain attractive for us," HUL said in its presentation. On the other hand, the company said "Covid obsessive" categories such as hand sanitisers and hand wash, which saw a sharp surge during the pandemic, are expected to normalise this year. The hand sanitiser category surged 16 times in 2020 compared to 2019, while the hand wash category

grew 1.5 times. Categories such as hand, body and face classified "Covid resistant" items are expected "to normalise with increase in mobility in 2021."

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

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

### **OIL RALLIES AS TEXAS' WINTRY COLD** HITS OUTPUT IN SHALE HEARTLAND

Celsius) production.

The Arctic blast gripping the US is threatening to

crimp crude supplies and unleash a rush for everything from propane to heating oil, fuels that are used in mobile heating devices. In the past few weeks, harsh winter conditions across North Asia and parts of Europe have pushed some oil-product markets into a bullish backwardation structure.

month. move by one or two cents.

"The cold snap, the addi

Going Vegan: Nestle plans rice-based KitKat **CORINNE GRETLER** 

to its products as the world's biggest food com-

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

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

wider rollout.

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

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

of the popular brands haven't yet joined in on the trend. Lindt & Spruengli AG, better known for its Easter bunnies wrapped in golden foil, has started sell-

ing oat milk-based chocolate bars under its Hello label. Mars Inc has introduced a vegan version of its Galaxy bars in the UK. Mondelez International

Inc's Cadbury has also

plant-based milk choco-"Demand for plant-

announced plans to make

based food is growing everywhere," von Maillot said in a phone interview. "KitKat was a logical choice, as it's by far the biggest brand and a global brand. Confectionery is one of Nestle's last categories to

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

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

Bloomberg

SHARON CHO & ROB VERDONCK

Oil rallied to a 13-month high as cold weather in Texas disrupted flows from America's largest shale patch, exposing the fragility of global supplies amid sharp cutbacks by Opec and its allies.

US West Texas Intermediate futures surged as much as 2.5 per cent and rose above \$60 a barrel for first time since January last year. Brent crude in London, meanwhile, rose above \$63. Permian oil production has fallen by as much as 1 million barrels a day as temperatures fall to minus 1 Fahrenheit (minus 18 Midland, Texas, the de facto capital of US shale

Nestle SA is adding its first vegan milk chocolate

There were signs some traders were caught off guard by the cold snap in the US, with the nearest WTI futures contracts surging against the next That gauge known as the prompt timespread— surged by 15 cents at the open when on a normal day it would only

tional Saudi cuts, the fresh US stimulus promise are all helping," said Vandana Hari, founder of Vanda Insights in Singapore.
— Bloomberg

MILK-FREE | CHOCOLATE | Demand for plant-based food growing

Nadal closes in

Melbourne, Feb. 15: Rafael Nadal outclassed

Fabio Fognini to close in

on the all-time Grand Slam

titles record on Monday as

Ashleigh Barty ramped up hopes of becoming the

Australian Open's first

Nadal said his lower-back stiffness was continuing to

improve after his 6-3, 6-4, 6-

2 against the flamboyant

Italian, which set up a quarter-final against

Fognini had registered a five-set win over Nadal at the 2015 US Open, but the

Spaniard cantered to victo-

ry after recovering from 2-4

Nadal is now into his 43rd

Grand Slam quarter-final,

staying on course for a title

match with eight-time win-

ner Novak Djokovic who battled through an abdomi-nal injury to reach the last

Next up for Nadal is

Tsitsipas, who went through on a walkover after Italy's Matteo Berrettini pulled out with

As the action continued

in front of empty stands, top-ranked Barty beat big-hitting American Shelby

Rogers in impressive fash-

ion to reach the last eight.

Barty won 6-3, 6-4 to go

into the quarter-finals without dropping a set as she bids to become the first

Australian champion since

The former French Open

champion next plays Karolina Muchova, who

came through two tight

sets to beat Belgium's Elise

Chris O'Neil in 1978.

an abdominal strain.

number

eight on Sunday.

world

down in the second set.

Greece's

Tsitsipas

home winner in 43 years.

on Slams record

#### SHORT

TAKES

### **Rahul climbs to** 2nd spot in T20

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

#### **Lukaku shines** as Inter go atop

Shamsi grabbed a career-best

second position. - PTI

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

#### **Siva bags best** pole diver award

Hyderabad: P. Siva Reddy of

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

#### **Ramu, Syed shine** as Khammam win

Hyderabad: Ramu, Syed Sajeed and Tarun hogged the secondday's spotlight in the Telangana Cricket Association's U-19 East Zone Inter Districts state cham-

pionship on Monday. Mulugu's Syed (4/24) bowled well to help his side grab a onewicket victory over Mahabubabad, who failed to defend 95 runs. Mahabubabad's Tarun also impressed with 5/17 but his effort went in vain. In another match, Ramu (4/18) and Pranay (63) stole the show for Khammam who restricted Warangal Rural to 100 runs and

**BRIEF SCORES** ■ Mahabubabad 94 in 15.2 overs (Sameer 41 n.o, Syed Sajeed 4/24) lost to Mulugu 97/9 in 20.1

earned a 22-run victory

overs (**Tarun 5/17**) ■ Khammam 122/9 in 20 overs (Pranay Lendi 63, Laxman 2/15) bt Warangal Rural 100 in 16.5 overs (Ramu Ram 4/18)

### Live on TV

Australian Open: Quarterfinals from Six, Sony Ten 2, HD

India vs England: Second Test, Day

Four, from 9.20 am on Star Sports 1

**FOOTBALL** 

Indian Super League: Hyderabad FC Star Sports 2, 3

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# A-SHHHH!

### Ashwin silences pitch critics with batting masterclass

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, FEB. 15

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

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

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

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

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

The partnership between Ashwin and



pushed India's lead past 400. It was one of those rare days when Kohli's well-compiled half-century — 62 off 149 became a mere footnote. Kohli fell to Ali for the second time this match. The skipper was not too pleased with Nitin Menon's lbw call umpire upheld the decision. The way Ashwin nursed the tail-enders Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Siraj en ing three reprieves to route to his century was entertaining. A straight punch past mid-on off Stuart Broad and a slogsweep off Ali had the Kohli — 96 runs off 177 crowd on its feet.

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

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

### **ENGLAND SPIN COACH PRAISES ASHWIN KNOCK**

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 15

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

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

after an 18-month break, England off-spinner Moeen Ali bagged a match haul of eight wickfour in each innings. Jeetan Moeen deserved a five-for.

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

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

### **SCORECARD**

India 1st Innings: 329
England 1st Innings: 134
India 2nd Innings (overnight 54/1): Rohit Sharma st Foakes b Leach 26. Shubman Gill Ibw b Leach 14. Cheteshwar Puiara run out (Ollie Pope/Foakes) 7, Virat Kohli Ibw b Moeen 62, Rishabh Pant st Foakes b Leach 8, Aijnkva Rahane c Ollie Pope b Moeen 10, Axar Patel Ibw b Moeen 7, Ravichandran Ashwin b Olly Stone 106, Kuldeep Yadav lbw b Moeen 3, Ishant Sharma c Olly Stone b Jack Leach 7, Mohammed Siraj not out 16. Extras (b-5, lb-15) 20. **Total (all out in** 

FoW: 1-42, 2-55, 3-55, 4-65, 5-86, 6-106,7-202,8-210, 9-237, 10-286. Bowling: Olly Stone 6.5-1-21-1, Jack Leach 33-6-100-4, Moeen Ali 32-7-98-4, Joe Root 4-0-15-0, Stuart Broad 9-3-25-0, Daniel Lawrence 1-0-7-0.

England 2nd Innings: Rory Burns c Kohli b Ashwin 25, Dom Sible Ibw b Patel 3, Dan Lawrence batting 19, Jack Leach c Robit Sharma b Patel O, Joe Root batting 2. Extras (b-4) 4. Total: (for 3 wkts, in 19 overs) 53. FoW: 1-17, 2-49, 3-50.

Bowling: Ishant Sharma 2-1-6-0. Axar Patel 9-3-15-2. Rayichandran Ashwin 8-1-28-1.

### **NUMBERS GAME**

**ASHWIN'S THIRD ALLROUND DOUBLE IN TESTS** Ravichandran Ashwin recorded his fifth century after scoring 106 off 148 balls in the second innings of the second Test against England on Monday. It was his third century when batting at No. 8. Only one batsman — New Zealand's Daniel Vettori — has scored more hundreds when batting at No. 8 or lower. He has four at No. 8 and one at No. 9.

Ashwin took 5/43 in the first innings. It was the third instance when he scored a century and taken five-for in a Test match

England's Ian Botham hold the record. Botham has done it five times in his 102-Test career. Four all-rounders have achieved this feat two times — West Indian Garry Sobers, Pakistan's Mushtaq Mohammad, South African Jacques Kallis and Banglades's Shakib

Three Indians who have achieved this double in a Test are Vinoo Mankad (184 & 72 and 5/196 against England at Lord's in 1952) and Polly Umrigar (172 not out & 56 and 5/107 against West Indies in Port-of-

- S. PERVEZ QAISER

### When Ashwin was dropped from team for playing sweep

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 15

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

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

Ashwin credited India coach Vikram batting Rathour for his recent

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

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

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

### **RESULTS**

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

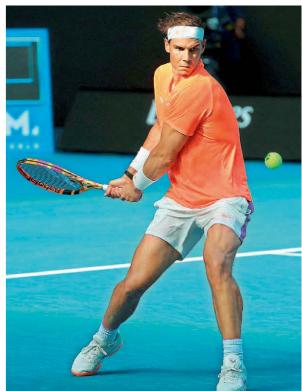
#### **RUSSIANS ARE COMING**

Earlier, unseeded American Jessica Pegula reached her maiden Grand Slam quarter-final with victory over Elina victory over Elina Svitolina, her first over a

top-10 player.
Pegula, whose billionaire father owns the Buffalo Bills NFL team, overcame fifth seed Svitolina 6-4, 3-6 6-3 to set up a meeting with fellow American Jennifer Brady, a 6-1, 7-5 winner against Croatia's Donna

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

Medvedev blew away American world number 192 Mackenzie McDonald 6-4, 6-2, 6-3 to extend his winning streak to 18 matches. Rublev, who is also unbeaten this year, went through when Norway's Casper Ruud retired after losing the first two sets.



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

### FIR against Yuvraj over remarks against Chahal

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **TEAM INDIA MAKE SOLID**

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

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

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

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

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

# Man Utd falter, Auba wins it for Arsenal

Manchester United's faltering Premier League title challenge suffered another blow in a 1-1 draw at struggling West Brom, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang hit a hattrick in Arsenal's 4-2 win

against Leeds on Sunday. United have dropped points in five of their last seven league games to allow Manchester City to pull seven points clear,

with a game in hand. A point was enough to Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men back

above Leicester into second on goal difference. But that was of little consolation to United against a West Brom side

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

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

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

Everton missed

chance to move level with

THE RESULTS PREMIER LEAGUE **SPANISH LEAGUE** 

Southampton (Ings 25) Wolves (Neves 53-pen, Neto 66) (Isak 30) **West Brom** Real Madrid (Diagne 2) Manchester United

(Aubameyang 13, 41-pen, 47, Bellerin 45) (Struijk 58, Costa 69) **Everton** 

(Fernandes 44)

(Maia 48, 65)

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

(Karim Benzema 12, Toni Kroos Valencia Villarreal (Gerard 65-pen) Real Betis

(Nabil Fekir 45. Emerson

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

**DEPLETED MADRID** Real Madrid are celebrat

ing another win — and lamenting yet another injury. Real continued their recent good form with a 2-0 win over Valencia in the La Liga, but coach Zinedine Zidane saw his already depleted squad lose another player due to injury.

Dani Carvajal got hurt before halftime in what had been his return to action after being sidelined since the beginning of the year. "There are too many injuries. I'm worried because when you lose a player, it upsets you," Zidane said.