DECCAN 1 CLE

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

NELLORE | SATURDAY | 27 FEBRUARY 2021





Forecast: clear. Max/Min temp. 32/23 ºC

Sarvari; Uttarayana

ASTROGUIDE

Tithi: Magha Shuddha Pournami till 1.43 pm Star: Magha till 11.15 am Varjyam: 6.41 pm to 8.10 pm Durmuhurtam: 6.39 am to 8.12 am Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am **HIJRI CALENDAR** Rajab 14,1442 AH PRAYERS (SHAHI MASJID) Fajar: 5.17 am **Zohar:** 12.23 pm Asar: 4.39 pm Maghrib: 6.17 pm Isha: 7.28 pm SUNSET TODAY 6.17 PM **SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.27 AM**

MOONRISE TODAY 5.30 PM MOONSET TOMORROW 6.29 AM



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

SHORT AKE

TN CM vows gold

loan waiver

Chennai: Loans availed from cooperative societies by pledging jewels upto six sovereigns and pending loans of women members of Self Help Groups in co-op banks and societies would be waived, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami announced here on Friday. The decision was taken after representations made by SHG mem bers that they were not in a position to repay the

Terrorist hideout

busted in J&K

Jammu: Security forces busted a terrorist hideout in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district on Friday and seized a huge cache of arms, ammunition and explosive materials, officials said. A huge cache of arms and ammunition, including an AK-47 rifle with two magazines and 150 cartridges, a rocket launcher, 16 UBGL grenades, four hand grenades, besides two VHF radio sets with antennas.

Tax settlement

deadline extended

New Delhi: The income tax department on Friday extended the deadline for filing declarations and making payment under direct tax dispute resolution scheme Vivad Se Vishwas (VsV) till March 31 and April 30. "CBDT further extends the date for filing of declarations under the #VivadSe Vishwas Act, 2020 to 31st March. 2021." the I-T department tweeted

US to indict Saudi prince

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

Report on Page 5



NATION 4

Bandaru manhandled by Congress MLAs

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



WORLD 5

US strikes Iran militia in Syria

SPORTS 8

Ignored Yusuf Pathan retires from cricket



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Magh mela



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

HC okays urban local polls

Judge dismisses petitions against polls; Elections on March 15

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 26

The Andhra Pradesh High Court has allowed the State Election Commission to go ahead with the holding of urban local body polls as per schedule. The court dismissed a batch of petitions challenging the latter's order to resume the conduct of polls on Friday.

A single judge bench headed by Justice D.V.S.S. Somavajulu heard the batch of petitions.

court observed that Rule 7 conferred the power to the SEC to modify or alter the election pro-

TTD'S DECISION

TO HIKE ALIPIRI

TOLL GETS NOD

DC CORRESPONDENT

The toll fee collected at

the Alipiri toll gate in

Tirupati has been sub-

stantially raised by the

state government on Friday, on the basis of a

recommendation from

The revised rates are:

All LCV/LMVs includ-

ing taxis: uniform toll of

₹50 from the existing fee

of ₹15, ₹30, ₹25 and ₹60

based on classifications

of vehicles and seating

capacity. LCV two-axle,

mini buses, lorries and goods vehicles will be

charged ₹100 as against

current ₹50-₹60, while

lorries, JCBs and other

heavy vehicles ₹200 as

against the current ₹100.

DC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan

Mohan Reddy has proposed to award volunteers of

the state government

under three categories -

Seva Vajra, Seva Ratna

and Seva Mitra – which

would include cash rewards and special badges. The

awards will be presented

The CM was presiding

over a review meeting on

YSR Aasara, Cheyutha,

on occasion of Ugadi.

VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 26

■ Page 3: Hike aims at

reducing congestion

the TTD trust board.

TIRUPATI, FEB. 26

gramme for urban local bodies for valid reasons. The prevalence of Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant administrative issues were a valid reason for the SEC to defer the polls.

Moreover, the court said, the SEC was given the responsibility to conduct elections, and hence it was up to it to resume the suspended elections and fulfill its constitutional man-

petitioners challenged the notification issued by the SEC on repruary 15 to resume the process for corporations

and municipalities or

nagara panchayats. The need be resumed in con-SEC had earlier issued a notification, on March 9 last, for conduct of polls and then deferred them due to the Covid-19 pandemic, on March 15.

Senior counsel Vedula Venkata Ramana argued that the State Election Commission was not having the power, on its own, to either postpone the election or resume the election process.

Advocate general N. Ranga Reddy informed the court that the Supreme Court ala not interiere the elections and said the postponed elections would sultation with the state government.

SEC's counsel Ashwani Kumar said the Supreme Court approved the order of the SEC to resume the deferred the election

process.
Earlier, the SEC issued a notification resuming the conduct of elections to 12 municipal corporations and 75 municipalities and nagar panchyats from the time o commencement of withdrawal of nominations on March 2, 2021. Date of polling is March 10 with the postponement of from 7 am to 5 pm and counting on March 14

5 poll results to be out on May 2

18.68 cr to vote from March 27 to April 29

VINEETA PANDEY I DC

stage is set for Assembly elections in two states in eastern India, and two states and a Union territory in the south, as the Election Commission announced the voting days in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Assam and Puducherry UT. The Assembly polls for 294 seats in West Bengal will be conducted over a record eight phases, from March 27 till April 29, and that of Assam's 126 seats in three phases from March 27 to April 6. Γhe southern states and the UT will hold polls in a single phase on April 6. The counting of votes for all five states/UT will be

held on May 2. Kerala has 140 Assembly seats, Tamil Nadu 234 and Puducherry 30. The term of the Assemblies in Ass-am, TN and West Bengal will end in May, while that of Kerala and Puducherry expires in June.

Nearly 18.68 crore voters are expected to cast their votes at 2.7 lakh polling stations for 824 Assembly seats across Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, POLL DATES A West Bengal: 聚聚294 Mar 27 April 17 April 1 April 22 April 6 April 26 April 10 April 29

Assam: SEARS 126 March 27 April 1 April 6 **APRIL 6, 2021** Tamil Nadu **TOTAL 234** Puducherry TOTAL 30 140

Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said. He added that all officials and other personnel on poll duty will be vaccinated against Covid-19 before the polling begins. The Election Commissi-

on has decided to appoint two special observers for West Bengal and a third may also be sent if required, Mr Arora said. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee,

however, questioned the

rationale behind the eightphase Assembly polls announced by the EC one more than the seven phases in the last election.

West Bengal has in the past seen major political violence during elections, and accordingly, a huge deployment of security forces has been put in place to prevent that. The CEC said webcasting will be done at polling stations in critical and vulnerable areas, while adequate deployment of Central armed police forces will be ensured. He added that all critical and vulnerable areas have been identified and advance teams have already been deployed across the four states and one Union territory.
The CEC said that in

view of the Covid-19 safety protocols, candidates can file their nominations online and voting will be allowed for an additional hour. Door-to-door campaigning will be restricted to five persons, including the candidate, while roadshows will be allowed with a maximum of five vehi-

The EC has decided to issue a "Voter Informa-tion Slip" in place of the "Photo Voter Slip".

Economy exits Covid-induced recession in Q3

MADHUSUDAN SAHUC NEW DELHI, FEB. 26

The road to recovery appears to be in sight for the Indian economy, with the country's gross domestic product growing by 40 basis points or 0.40 per cent in the October-December quarter. The size of the economy had shrunken in April-June quarter and July-September quarter, pulling down the country into a technician recession. However, the positive growth — though not very strong yet — has taken the Indian economy out of the recession.

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

"The GDP at constant (2011-12) prices in Q3 of 2020-21 is estimated at ₹36.22 lakh crore, as against ₹36.08 lakh crore in Q3 of 2019-20, showing a growth of 0.4 per cent," data released by the min-

by the government to contain spread of the Covid-19 have impacted data collection mechanisms, NSO expects sharp revision in growth figures in due course.

AS MEASURES taken

istry of statistics and programme implementation showed on Friday.

The Indian economy had grown at the rate of 4.7 per cent in the same quarter last year.

According to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), farming, manufacturing, construction, electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services have

entered positive zone. Trade, hotels, transport, communications and services related to broadcasting continued to bore the brunt to post-Covid consumer behaviour. These segments posted a 7.7 per cent contraction in the third quarter.

While the third quarter data suggested buoyancy in the economy, the NSO revised its growth projection for the fiscal 2020-21 marginally downwards by 30 basis points or 0.30 per

Minister directed bankers

to ensure immediate dis-

bursement of loans for pen-

ding applications under

The bankers said Andhra

Pradesh is far ahead com-

pared to other states in

implementation of these

Jagananna Thodu.

schemes.

DC IMPACT

POLICE SEIZE 30 DONKEYS BEING SMUGGLED FROM R'STHAN

VADREVU SRINIVAS I DC KAKINADA, FEB. 26

The Dachepalli police of Gurazala circle in Guntur district rescued 39 donkeys which were being illegally transported to Cherukupalli near Chirala from Rajasthan on Friday night and arrested four persons for smuggling the animals.

This comes on the day Deccan Chronicle had highlighted the practice of slaughtering of donkeys on Thursday. Following this, People for Animals and the Animal Welfare Board alerted the state police to the illegal practice, following which DGP Gautam Sawang gave directions to the superintendents of police concerned to keep a watch.
Guntur Rural SP

Vishal Gunni told this reporter on Friday after the seizure that when the donkevs were being illegally transported, the police caught the gang near Dachepalli and shifted the donkeys to a rescue home. Four accused including the vehicle driver were arrested.

Gurajala circle inspec tor R. Umesh said that following the report by *Deccan Chronicle*, police had gone on the alert on the borders with Telangana and caught the gang and rescued the animals. He said that the donkeys would be shifted to a sanctuary at Kakinada for their protection. Umesh said the don-

keys were being taken to Cherukupalli near Chirala for slaughtering. He said that some animal welfare organisations had helped the police department.

Donkeys, which are in the extinction list, are slaughtered because it is believed that their meat can cure respiratory and breathing problems and increase sexual poten-

Desam cadre in Kuppam demands Jr NTR re-entry

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, FEB. 26

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

TD supporters who attended the roadshow raised slogans in support of Jr NTR and asked the TD chief to bring in the Tollywood hero and late NTR's grandson for a TD roadshow in Kuppam.

In a video that went viral on media, Naidu was seen nodding as TD supporters shouted "Jai Jr NTR" slogans. Naidu did not pay

Jagananna Thodu, employ-

ment guarantee scheme

and volunteer system at

his camp office in Tadepalli on Friday. The volunteers will be

selected under three cate-

gories. Those who have

served continuously for

one year will be considered

in Level 1. Five people from every mandal or town

will be considered in Level

2 and five volunteers from

every constituency will be

considered for being felici-

tated under Level 3. The

■ TD supporters who attended the roadshow raised slogans in support of Jr NTR and asked the TD chief to bring in the Tollywood hero and late NTR's grandson for a TD roadshow in Kuppam.

■ Some party activists had erected flexes in Chittoor and Prakasam districts during the Sankranti festival, inviting Jr NTR into active politics to save the party.

A few TD leaders have on occasions also said if Jr NTR is projected as the next CM candidate, the party would get a new lease of life in the 2024 elections.

GOOD I WORK Volunteers to get cash award, special badge for their service to people and state

slogans, though, and continued with his road show. Notably, Naidu has been trying his best to establish his son Nara Lokesh as the new face of the party while a section of TD leaders and party supporters feel Jr NTR can be the only saviour of the party in a sink-

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

ing mode. much attention to these

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Seva Ratna and five

for Seva Vajra.

Seva Vajra.

five people from every

from each constituency

cash award for Seva Mitra

will be ₹10,000, ₹20,000 for

Seva Ratna and ₹30,000

Reviewing implementa-

categories — those who

Jagan plans Ugadi state awards for volunteers tion of livelihood programmes opted by women beneficiaries under YSR Cheyutha and Aasara schemes, the Chief Minister said bankers and officials should work in tandem to

support beneficiaries.

Officials informed him that 66,702 retail outlets had been proposed under Cheyutha and Aasara schemes, 98 per cent of which have been established. Another 16.25 lakh people have opted for small businesses in textiles,

handicrafts, food products, jewellery and chemicals. They will be provided employment opportunities in these fields in partnership with reputed compa-

Reviewing Jagananna Jeevakranti, officials said goats and sheep will be distributed to another 70,719 people by December 2021.

On Jagananna Palavelluva, additional 1,06,376 units of goats and sheep will also be delivered by December 2021. The Chief

started.

GA, officials said the state government has logged 2,328 lakh working days in 2020-21, which is the highest since the programme

With regard to MGNRE-

OTHER STORIES

TWO INDEPENDENTS WITHDRAW FROM **BIENNIAL POLLS**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 26

Two independent candidates withdrew their nominations to contest in biennial election to AP legislative council from two teachers' constituencies on Friday.

They are Didde Ambedkar rom East-West Godavari teachers' constituency and Chandu Vijaya Lakshmi from Krishna-Guntur teachers' constituency.
There are 11 contestants in

fray from East-West constituency and 19 from Krishna-Guntur constituency.

On the other hand, no nomination was filed to contest in biennial election to AP legislative council by MLAs to fill up five vacancies on Friday.

POLAVARAM SPILLWAY BRIDGE SLAB COMPLETED

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 26

The multipurpose Polavaram irrigation project's spillway bridge slab at a length of 1,128

meters was completed.
Following the direction from the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to complete exe cution of whole project by end of 2021 and ensure supply of water to the farmers for cultivation of crops for kharif season in 2022, the project executagency Engineering

Infrastructures Limited expedite works on several key components of the project. The execution works on spillway bridge began on Sept. 9, 2020 and despite facing floods and Covid-19 pandemic, were completed by Friday. Nearly 5,200 cubic meters of concrete and 700 tonnes of steel was used for the spillway bridge.

Along with laying spillway bridge, hydraulic cylinders were set up at 29 crest gates so far and power pack rooms are also being set up to secure the power packs meant to operate the crest gates.

TD MANIFESTO **ASSURES BETTER CIVIC AMENITIES**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 26

The Telugu Desam released its manifesto with ten promises for the ensuing municipal elec-

Party general secretary and MLC Nara Lokesh, after releasing the manifesto on Friday, asserted that YSR Congress leaders had no moral right to ask for votes in the municipal elections as the Jagan Mohan Reddy government has ignored civic amenities like roads, drainage, drinking water, health and housing needs of the people across cities and

Lokesh appealed to the people to realise what damage the YSRC had done to the State

since coming to power. Addressing a press conference, he maintained that they had framed the manifesto after conducting a three-month long survey to understand the expectations of the urban people. He explained that the manifesto contained 10 promises beginning with their commitment to reopen Anna canteens

BJP SEEKS FRESH NOMINATIONS FOR AP CIVIC POLLS

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 26

Former BJP state president and senior party leader Kanna Lakshminarayana has sought that State Election Commission (SEC) give chance to file fresh nominations for the forthcoming municipal elections in Andhra Pradesh. In support of his suggestion, he alleged that ruling YSR Congress leaders had forcibly stopped many aspirants of opposition parties from filing their nominations when polls were originally announced last vear before the Covid-19 pandemic. Lakshminarayana was speaking after a joint meeting of BJP and Jana Sena leaders on Friday over the municipal polls in Guntur district. Leaders of the two parties discussed how they should move forward in the upcoming munic-

The senior BJP leader said many candidates belonging to opposition parties had been forcibly prevented by the ruling party leaders from filing their nominations in majority of the

ipal elections.



Vizag-south MLA, Vasupalli Ganesh Kumar takes part in a campaign rally for the upcoming GVMC elections at the 35th Ward near Poorna Market in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

Civic polls: Tough time for TD as leaders flock to YSRC

3 candidates who filed nominations for TD, shift to oppn

DC CORRESPONDENT ANANTAPUR, FEB.26

Telugu Desam faces a tough situation in the municipal corporation polls here as the YSRC is seeing an influx of leaders and candidates from the TD in the context of differbetween rival groups in the party.

Three candidates had filed nominations from TD prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. They have now quit Telugu Desam and shifted their allegiance to the YSRC. Lakshmi Reddy, sitting corporator from Third Road had filed nomination papers as TD candidate but quit the party and joined YSRC in the presence of urban MLA Ananta Venkatrami Reddy. Jolted, the Telugu Venkatrami is reportedly unable to find another

ALL SET FOR

MARCH 10

URBAN LOCAL

BODY POLLS ON

DC CORRESPONDENT

Armed with the High

Court nod, the State

Election Commission

(SEC) is to go ahead with

the conduct of urban

local body polls for 12

municipal corporations

and 75 municipalities

and nagar panchayats

Accordingly, the SEC will hold regional con-

ferences at Tirupati

February 27, 28 and

March 1 respectively, to

review preparedness of

the district administra-

tions for conducting

elections. The SEC will

also interact with repre-

sentatives of registered

political parties with reserved symbols at the

state-level around 9.30

am on March 1. The

thrust of the meeting

will be on the implemen-

tation of model code of

conduct and conducting

elections in a free and

fair manner. Each party

can nominate one repre-

sentative for the meet-

ing.
SEC secretary K. Kanna

Babu, in a statement

issued here on Friday,

stated that state election

commissioner N. Ramesh

Kumar will hold a region-

al conference at Tirupati

on Saturday. He will separately meet district offi-

cials and representatives

from political parties from Chittoor, Anantapur,

Kadapa, Kurnool and

Nellore. Similarly, he will

Vijayawada the next day with those from West Godavari, Krishna,

Guntur and Prakasam.

On March 1, he will meet

officials and political

party representatives from Srikakulam, Vizia-

atnam and East Godavari

in Visakhapatnam. The

focus of the regional con-

ferences will be on imple-

mentation of poll code and preventing distribu-

tion of money and liquor,

measures to ensure high

voter turnout and distri-

bution of authenticated

photo voter slips.

nagaram.

Visakhap

on March 10.

Vijayawada

Visakhapatnam

VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 26

AFTER YSRC ANNOUNCES LIST, MANY QUIT DESAM, JOIN RULING PARTY

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 26

The YSRC high command on Friday released a list of 44 candidates who would be contesting from various wards of the corporation.

The list contained the names of candidates contesting in Anakapalle, Bhimili, Visakhapatnam North and Visakhapatnam West assembly constituencies. The list contained names of five candidates

candidate to field from the area.Meanwhile, internal bickering between Lok Sabha area in-charge JC Pavan Reddy and urban assembly in-charge Chowdary from Anakapalle constituency, 8 in Bhimili, 17 in Visakhapatnam North and Visakhapatnam West 14.

Meanwhile, active members of Telugu Desam joined YSRC at a gathering held in Visakhapatnam north constituency and in the presence of Sabha member Satyanarayana. A group picture containing the new joining was circulated in the media on

worsened during the ongoing civic polls, as both groups tried to field their own candidates.

A senior leader from the 1st Road area of New port to an Independent candidate, instead of the TD nominee, saying the decision by the in-charge was one-sided. "Voters in our division are against our division are against the former corporator as he had failed to serve the area well," the leader said and announced that his group would back an inde-

pendent candidate.

Even after differences emerged in the party, the YSRC high command entrusted responsibilities to urban MLA Ananta Ventakatrami Reddy to select candidates from all divisions. Former MLA Gurunath Reddy, though a close aide of the YSR family, had shifted base to the TD during the last polls but re- joined the YSRC, saying he had not been heard during selection of candidates for mayor and

Top YSRC leaders threaten Independent candidate

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, **FEBRUARY 26**

Top leadership of the ruling YSRC allegedly threat-ened an independent candidate contesting in 21st ward where mayoral aspirant Vamsi Krishna Yaɗav was pitted against him in a one to one battle.

Observers said the inde-Mohammed Ghouse is likely to win the elections as he has strong support from the local people. His wife Unnisa won as independent in 2007 elections and on the request of former chief minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy she supported Congress mayoral candidate Pulusu Janardhana

Family members of Mohammed Ghouse told this correspondent on Friday that a person belonging to a minority community claiming to be a police officer came to their house late in the evening on Wednesday asked Ghouse to accompany him to his car. After he sat in the car, the man called a person and put the phone in speaker mode.

Initially there was a gentle request to withdraw from the elections and support YSRC candidate. When Ghouse kept mum another person in a harsh tone warned him of consequences and said the election would be manipulat-

MINISTER AVANTI CAMPAIGNS FOR DAUGHTER

party fold.

months.

ter.Addressing people at

different places, the min-ister said YSRC would

win the majority of the

wards in the corporation

as the people were impres-

sed with the welfare sche-

mes launched by Jagan

Mohan Reddy govern-ment during the last 21

Balaraju said it would be

a good advantage for the

people if they elected

Priyanka, who is a doctor

by profession. The ward

would also witness devel-

opment, he added.

DC Correspondent

Visakhapatnam,
February 26: Minister for
Tourism Muttamsetti

A large number of party workers including women walked along with the Rao (Avanti) minister and his daughcampaigned for his Muttamsetti daughter Priyanka, who is contesting for ward no 6 in

Visakhapatnam. She is pitted against TD candidate Pothina Seetha, who is strongly backed by former mayor Sabbam

The minister took out a rally from the cricket stadium, Madhuravada and reached Gayatrinagar. On the way the minister welcomed Pothina Prasad, a strong TD leader of Madhuravada, into the

ed in ruling party favour. Even if party candidate failed to get majority, the returning officer would declare him as winner.

"I did not speak then. The caller also said plainclothes men would follow him if he resumed campaign and send the reports to the party high command," Ghouse said.

He said they did not campaign for two days due to a death in the family but resumed from Friday. Ghouse said he has support of even Yadavs to which the official YSRC candidate Vamsi Ksishna Yadav belonged.

The ward has 17,830 votes and of them the community strong Rellis having a voter strength of 1500 and minorities with 800 and a sizeable Yadavs would vote for him.

"My wife Unnisa won with a good majority and I will repeat the same,' Ghouse said with a confident note. Observers said for Vamsi

Krishna Yadav it would be do or die battle. If loses, his political career and the dream of becoming first mayor of the capital designated city would

Jagan tells town planners to be ready for challenges reiterated that his government will take forward all suggestions and rec-

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 26

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has called upon town planners to come up with solutions for emerging challenges with a futuristic outlook, in accordance with susdevelopment tainable goals set up by the United Nations.

Inaugurating the 69th Town National Planners online at Conference Vishakhapatnam Friday, the CM said that he is looking forward to their recommendations on affordable housing for lower-income groups and reducing financial burden on the government owing to growing cost of land.

ommendations that the conference makes after deliberations and put them to best use.

He expressed confidence that the three-day meet will come up with solu-tions pertinent to the state and country vis-a-vis the 17 sustainable goals set by the United Nations for

Jagan Mohan Reddy said the issue of increasing greenhouse gases is a matter of serious concern. Water management is another issue requiring comprehensive planning, as cities are growing in

stated that the government is looking forward to develop the coastal region, utilising the vast stretch of 974 km of seashore. Visakhapatnam will be

one of the beneficiaries of an integrated coastal development plan, he stated.
The Chief Minister reit-

erated that his govern-ment will take forward all suggestions and recommendations that the conference makes after deliberations and put them to best use. The meeting, organised by the Institute of Town Planners of India, is being attended by town planners, academics, researchers and directors of institutes from across the country.



NAIDU FAILED TO PROVIDE WATER TO KUPPAM

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 2

YSR Congress state officials spokesperson and MLA Ambati Rambabu said that Chandrababu Naidu is frustrated after the Kuppam debacle in panchayat polls and termed Telugu Desam Party manifesto for civic polls a farce and impracticable as it cannot implemented by the Leader of Opposition.

Addressing a press conference on Friday, Mr Rambabu stated that in Kuppam, TDP had won only 14 of the total 89 seats as people were fed up with Chandrababu Naidu for four long decades. He commented that since TDP lost in the polls, Naidu came running to town ahead of Municipal polls, otherwise he would have never visited Kuppam even for filing nominarecalled He

Chandrababu Naidu had failed to implement the promises gave during the 2014 municipal elections while in power for five years, leaving people and welfare to winds. stated Chandrababu Naidu had failed to recognize the services of his party workers, including Jr NTR. He recalled that Chandrababu Naidu, who had earlier taken iunior NTR for an election campaign, had side-lined him after the defeat. Mr Rambabu said that Chandrababu Naidu should ashamed to demand water for Kuppam in spite of serving as a Chief Minister for 14

Mr. Ambati Rambabu has also hit out at Nara Lokesh for his abusive comments made on Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, saying that people have faith in the Chief Minister and reminded him of the defeat in Mangalagiri.

People will turn against YSRC soon, says Naidu **DC CORRESPONDENT**

Nara Chandrababu Naidu has objected to Chief Mohan Reddy and YSRC leaders asserting that they have won big in Kuppam. Naidu retorted that TD cadres know how ruling party leaders tried to suppress them and will repay YSRC with interest

Telugu Desam supremo

As part of the three-day tour of his Kuppam constituency, Naidu asserted that he will stay put in Kuppam till the ZPTC, MPTC elections to ensure that ruling party candidates do not even get their deposit in the forthcom-

by defeating it in the

future.

ing civic body elections.
Charging YSRC leaders of intimidating his party candidates during panchayat elections Punganur to make the elections unanimous, the former chief minister said he will ensure that minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy loses his deposit in the election from Punganur.

'Peddireddy is not only illegally trading in precious red sanders but is also smuggling sand in an the party. more wealth. He has utilised his money earned through illegal activities



to ruin democracy in Kuppam, observed.

He further said: "The capital issue has gone, status Polavaram project have become a thing of past and now Visakhapatnam is facing threat of clocontinue under such circumstances," he asked. The TDP chief visited

Poduru village in Kadapally panchayat to console family members TDKrishnappa, who had died in a road accident recently. He assured that the family of Krishnappa will be taken care of effort to amass more and announced a financial assistance of Rs. 50.000

the

family

R&B GUESTHOUSE IN KUPPAM HIT BY POWER OUTAGE FOR 2 HOURS

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, FEB. 26

The R&B guest house in Kuppam constituency, where Telugu Desam Chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu was staying as part of his three-day tour to Kuppam, has been allegedly hit by a power outage for almost two hours on Friday. Former minister and

TD leader N. Amaranth Reddy came down heavily at the ruling party, when he spoke to the media persons in Kuppam on Friday, alleging that the YSR Congress led government has intentionally cut the power to the R&B guest house in a bid to force the opposition to call off his tour to Kuppam. 'Jaganmohan Reddy's

government was resort- ernment", he said.xy

ing to vindictive and revenge politics by target-Chandrababu Naidu and creating obstacles for his public tour and meetings. This is clearly visible in Kuppam today, as the power was cut to the guest house on purpose. At least they didn't even provide a generator or a battery", Mr Reddy

alleged.

He warned of giving more shocks to the ruling party in the coming days. The YSRC government is causing trouble to the TD leaders. Even the officials are not following protocol during the visit of the TD Chief and Kuppam MLA. These kinds of events never happened before, but they are happening now at the behest of the Jagan gov

RISING | TRADE | Excise dept earned ₹1,473.91cr from Feb. 1 to 21, whereas it was ₹1,380.58cr last year

Liquor earnings soar during panchayat polls ing lakhs of liquor bottles

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, FEB. 26

Sale of liquor in the first three weeks of February, during the gram panchayat elections, has come as a blessing for the excise department, as the value of liquor sold went up by 6.76 per cent when compared to the same period

last vear. Going by the sales report of the excise department, the overall consumption of alcohol and alcoholic bev-

erages has fallen drastically but the department ₹1,473.91 crore from February 1 to 21, whereas it was ₹1,380.58 crore during the same period last year. Around 14.15 lakh cases

of Indian made foreign liquor (IMFL) were sold, marking a 22 per cent decrease over the sale of 18.23 lakh cases during the same period last year. Similarly, 4.57 lakh beer cases were consumed this year – 22 per cent less than

• ON THE OTHER hand, the Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB), police and excise department personnel arrested over 5,000 bootleggers, besides seizing lakhs of liquor bottles, destroying fermented jaggery wash, ID liquor and other freebies, which were reportedly meant for distribution to voters.

(5.89 lakh cases) last year. In all, five districts -Visakhapatnam, East Guntur, Godavari, West and Godavari — accounted for nearly 53 per cent of all

the corresponding figure liquor sold in the state during this three-week period, together marking a whooping sale of ₹793.71 crore. This is against last year's sales of ₹732.19 crore in the five districts. On an average, liquor

worth ₹70 crore was sold in the state during the three-week election period. This is besides the locally made illicit arrack and liquor smuggled from Telangana state, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, that was supplied by candidates in rural

areas. On the other hand, the Enforcement Special Bureau (SEB), police and excise department personnel arrested over 5,000 bootleggers, besides seiz-

destroying fermented jaggery wash, ID liquor and other freebies, which were reportedly meant for distribution to voters. Meanwhile, the gram

panchayat election has thrown up a new trend with some people, especially youth, going to the extent of demanding liquor rather than money This trend is expected to play a crucial role in the ensuing MPTC, ZPTC and civic body polls.

SHORT TAKES

HIKE AIMS AT REDUCING CONGESTION

From Page 1

All two-wheelers were exempted from payment of toll fee. The TTD had, in February last year, sent a letter to the government seeking its approval for the classification of vehicles at Alipiri tollgate per National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) reg ulations and fix the fee accordingly. It had also proposed a complete exemption of toll for

two-wheelers. The TTD has been operating two ghat roads between Tirumala and Tirupati and collecting toll fees as per rates approved by the state government in September 1996.

In pre-Covid times, about 8,000-10,000 vehicles passed through this toll plaza on normal days and 12,000 vehicles on special occasions and week-

The TTD has been netting a revenue of ₹2.5 lakh to ₹3.5 lakh on an average a day in the form of toll collections. Around 35.33 lakh vehicles have passed through this toll plaza in 2019 and a toll fee of ₹7.47 crore was collected, sources said.

The temple body had proposed to enhance the toll in December 2000 through a resolution 656, but TTD could not implement the revised rates. After a gap of many years, the TTD trust board, in February last year, again proposed to enhance the toll fee through resolution 300 and sent a letter to the government seeking its nod for the new rates.

In August last year, the special chief secretary to the government, revenue, suggested to the TTD board to further enhance the tariff for fourwheelers in a bid to reduce the congestion and pollution atop Tirumala.

The TTD trust board, in its second round of discussions on this subject, however, felt that its earlier decision was good enough and saw no reason to enhance tariff on fourwheelers and conveyed the same to the government.

In December last, the TTD executive officer again sent a letter to the government, seeking its approval for the first proposal.

In response, the principal Revenue, passed GO 45 on Friday, approving the TTD res-olution to enhance the toll fee and give complete exemption

In August last year, the special chief secretary to the government, revenue, suggested to the TTD board to further ennance the tariff for fourwheelers in a hid to reduce the congestion and pollution atop Tirumala.

NTR varsity without executive council

Several projects held up as no council for two years

and initiation of welfare schemes for students.

University sources say lack of EC meant no major decision could be taken as in a change of curriculum

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 26

The Dr NTR University of Health Sciences (NTRUHS) has Executive Council for the last two years, affecting its functioning and hold-ing back the implementation of several academic programmes.

The Executive Council will be having 14 members with the Vice-Chancellor as its chairman, the registrar as convener and secretaries of finance and health, commissioner of health and family welfare, directors of health and medical education and some others as nominated

The term of the EC lasts three years. The

VSP SIGNS 25

MoUs WORTH

₹30,000 CRORE

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 26

Trust on Friday signed

MoUs with various sta-

keholders for the upcom-

ing Maritime India Summit, 2021, to be held from March 2.

VPT chairman K. Ra-

ma Mohan Rao said

MoUs were signed with

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd worth

₹26,264 for expansion for

which 110 acres of land

was allocated, Arcelor

Mittal Nippon Steel Ind-

ia Ltd worth ₹600 crore

for expansion of pellet plant for which 167 acres

of land was allocated,

Dredging Corpo-ration

of India ₹125 crore for

sand trap dredging and beach nourishment at

RK Beach for five years,

Department of Fish-

eries of Andhra Prad-

esh ₹100 crore for devel-

opment of fishing harbour and ₹38 crore for

harbour mobile crane.

Visakhapatnam

term of the last EC ended two years ago. Since

then, no new EC was constituted by the state government due to various reasons.

University sources say lack of EC meant no major decision could be taken as in a change of curriculum and initiation of welfare schemes for students. Though the university

planned to come up with a plan to hold exams in remote mode for the university college and all its constituent and affiliated colleges, it was unable to

ance and sanction of funds from the EC. The project was estimated to cost more than ₹2 crore.

Similarly, the university proposed to enter into MoUs with several states as also national and international research institutes to share knowledge and expertise, facilitate good exposure to students and help them come up with innovative

This too did not materialise as no EC existed for grant of nod.

The university planned to sign an MoU with the National Institute of

Nutrition in Hyderabad but that too remains on paper for the same rea-

Sources say that several programmes, projects, agreements and welfare activities for students are held back due to lack of mandatory clearance and financial concurrence of the EC.

government sources conveniently sought to put the blame on the civic polls. They said though there was a move to constitute an EC for NTRUHS recently, the model code of conduct announced by the state election commission in the run-up to the gram panchayat and urban local body polls came in the way and delayed the process further.



Eastern Navy Flag Officer Commanding in chief, Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain and his wife Devina Jain met Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy at the camp office on Friday.

CM lauds Velcheru on Sahitya Akademi Award win DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 26

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has congratulated Velcheru Narayana Rao for winning the Central Sahitya Akademi Award for his contributions to the literary field.

The CM pointed out that Narayana Rao has to his credit, translations of various books and research

In a separate programme, endowment Vellampalli Srinivasa Rao and Srisailam temple executive officer K. S. Rama Rao called the Chief Minister and invited him for Mahashivaratri Brahmotsavams at Srisailam from

March 4 to 14.

Mohan Reddy released the book Srisailakhandam, which depicts the times and glory of the Srisailam tem-

Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain, Flag Officer Comm-anding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command (ENC), along with his wife Devina Jain, too called on the Chief

On the occasion, Jagan

Minister at his camp office here on Friday. PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.
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राष्ट्र के खाद्य सुरक्षा प्रहरी

do this for want of clear-

High Court Chief Justice Arup Kumar Goswami plays cricket to mark the inauguration of 1st South India Advocates Cricket Tournament at Mulapadu in Krishna district on Friday.

CJ PLAYS IN ADVOCATES CRICKET

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 26:

AP High Court chief justice Arup Kumar Goswami played cricket and enthralled audiences for some time during the first South India Advocates Tournament held in the ACA cricket stadium at Mulapadu on Friday. Justice Arup Kumar Goswami, with other judges, inaugurated the tournament and later showed his batting skills. HC judge justice Praveen Kumar donned

the role of a bowler and Justice Goswami turned batsman. Justice Goswami asserted the need for physical fitness to the advocates suggesting them to play sports to keep them mentally and physically

fit.
The tournament was conducted by Andhra Pradesh Advocates Cricket Association in which advocates from Andhra Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka states

As several states like Maharashtra and Kerala witness a surge in Covid-19 infections, Andhra

NEAR

lar trend in the last few days. A look at the daily persons tested and infec-

Pradesh is no exception 20 onwards show, rise in Feb. 20, out of 26,436 persons tested, 54 found infected with the virus.

ns tested-88 were positive.

AP witnesses surge in Covid cases

reports on the number of tions reported from Feb. On Feb. 21-31.680 perso-

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Commodore Raju new AP naval in-charge Base in Visakhapatnam

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 26

Commodore M. Goverdhan Raju took over as the Naval Officer-in-Charge (Andhra Pradesh) from Commodore Sanjiv Issar at a ceremonial parade held in the Naval

alumnus of Sainik School, Korukonda and Natio-nal Defence Academy, Khadakwasla, was commissioned into Indian Navy July 1, 1989 and is a specialist in navigation and direction. **VSU INTRODUCES MBA PROGRAMME FOR STAFF**

on Friday. Cmde Raju, an

Tirupati: In-charge vice chancellor of Vikrama Simhapuri University, Prof. M. Chandraiah on Friday announced the introduction of a two-year executive MBA course for the employees by the business management department of the

Speaking to media persons, the in-charge VC said the new course will

upgrade their skills and get promotions. Head of the department Dr J Vijetha said that any graduate in the cadre of executive having five years of experience are eligible for joining the course. She said they are conducting evening and week-end sessions for the convenience of employees.



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SHORT TAKES

CAMPAIGNING FOR GUJ LOCAL POLLS ENDS

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

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

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

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

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

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

ON BIKE, IRANI **LEADS RALLY FOR WB POLLS**

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

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

After covering a short distance, the minister got down from the 'rath' and took to a scooter, wearing a black hel-

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

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

EVERYONE ON POLL DUTY TO GET COVID-19 VACCINE

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mamata questions 8-phase elections in West Bengal

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

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

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

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

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

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

"They have divided our stronghold districts such as South 24 Parganas and as South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas into three parts. This is unprecedented," she said. Banerjee said that despite "all these tricks", she will win the elections.

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



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

urged the EC to stop the misuse of money power.

"The Union home minister should work for the country. He cannot misuse his powers for the elections here. We welcome the PM, but he cannot mis-use his powers for West Bengal polls," she said.

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

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

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

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

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

Banerjee also took exception over the EC appointing two special police observers for West Bengal Vivek Dubey and M K Das. "Vivek Dubey is the same man who was the observer for Bengal dur-ing the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. We all know the role she said. Banerjee said she is the daughter of the state and knows Bengal better than the BJP, exuding confidence about her party Trinamool Congress winning the elections. Banerjee's allegations

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

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

CPM eyes repeat win, UDF hopes to return to power

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEB. 26

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

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

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

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

The LDF is fighting the elections on the governperformance. Infrastructure development projects, national highway widening, gas pipeline, social security THE CPM district committees have already finalized the preliminary list of candidates which will vetted by state committee, the UDF has decided to prepare the list within in a week.

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

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

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

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

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



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

Bandaru Dattatraya 'manhandled' in Assembly complex

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

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

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

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

The Speaker said that this is for the first time in the history of the Himachal Pradesh Assembly that a Governor was manhanthat Opposition handling the governor.

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

Earlier, the Congress MLAs created a ruckus in the House during the Governor's address. He then skipped to the last sentence after reading initial few pages and stated that the entire should speech deemed as read.

Suspended Congress MLA Harsh Vardhan Chauhan said that they were waiting outside the Speaker's office and just wanted to ask the Governor why he cut short his address but they were not allowed to do so. He alleged that it was

Raj who manhandled the MLAs, a charge denied Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Bhardwaj, who said the Congress legislators had planned to create a scene. Chauhan also said they did not have any intention of man-

Deputy Speaker Hans

AAP SETS EYES ON 2022 GUJ ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Disengagement at all friction points necessary, says India

KUMARASWAMI | DC

India has now told China clearly that the disengage-ment of troops "at all friction points" in the Ladakh sector alone will lead to the restoration of peace and tranquility between the two countries, adding that "both sides should now quickly resolve the remaining issues along the LAC in eastern Ladakh" after the "successful" disengage-"successful" disengagement at the northern and southern banks of Pangong Tso lake. This was made clear by India's external minister

Jaishankar in a 75-minute phone call with Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi on Thursday afternoon, when the two ministers also agreed to establish a hotline between them.

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

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

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

lence, will inevitably have a damaging impact on the relationship.

The MEA added, "Noting the completion of disengagement in Pangong Lake area, EAM emphasised that both sides should now quickly resolve the remaining issues along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh. EAM said that once disengagement is completed at

all friction points, then the two sides could also look at broader de-escalation of troops in the area and work towards restoration of peace and tranquility... It was therefore necessary that the two sides should work towards early resolution of the remaining issues. It was necessary to disengage at all friction points in order to contemplate de-escalation of forces in this sector. That alone will lead to the restoration of peace and tranquility and provide conditions for progress of our bilateral relationship."

In its separate statement on the conversation, the Chinese foreign minister "state

been some wavering and ary question may take time led to the situation last year back-pedalling in India's to resolve, but that the dis- at the China-India bound-China policy, and practical cooperation between the quility, including by viodeep contemplation. There has been some wavering and back-pedalling in Indi a's China policy, and practical cooperation between the two countries has been affected. This does not ser ve the interests of either side. Decades of experiences have shown repeatedly that heightening differences does not help solve problems, and that it only erodes the basis of mutual trust."

Beijing added, "Wang said that the frontline troops of the two countries have recently completed disengagement in the Pangong Lake areas. The situation on the ground has been noticeably eased. It is imperative for the two sides to cherish the hard-won relaxation, and work together to consolidate the progress, keep up the consulta tion momentum, further ease the situation, and improve the border management and control mechanis ms. The two sides also need to advance the boundary talks to build up mutual trust and realise peace and tranquility in the border

Police make public 'threat letter' to Mukesh Ambani

SHAHAB ANSARI |DC MUMBAI, FEB. 26

The Mumbai police on Friday made public content of the letter found inside explosives laden car parked near billionaire Mukesh Ambani's residence and said that it was a threat letter terming the incident as trailer and warning of returning with more preparation next time to target

According to the police, it is a handwritten letter in a broken English, addressed to Mukesh Ambani and his wife Neeta Ambani. The

police has stated that there are grammar mistakes in the letter and the writer is either not much educated or is pretending to be so. The letter was found on

next to driver's seat. Scanning of the CCTV has also revealed that even though the said SUV was parked on the Carmichael Road near Ambani's residence Antilia at around 1am however, the driver of the car sat in the car post 3am. The driver came out of the car from the rear door of the car but could not be identified, as he was wearing a mask as well as a

hoodie. The police is scanning CCTVs of nearby areas to locate the driver. The police will enhance the quality of the CCTV footage to identify the suspect.

Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh has said that if needed security cover of Ambani family will be enhanced.

It may be recalled that a car carrying unassembled explosive materials was abandoned found Carmichael Road in South Mumbai on Thursday evening, near the house of Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani.

RIGHTS ACTIVIST NAUDEEP KAUR GRANTED BAIL

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

"The court accepted the bail application of Naudeep Kaur. She has been granted bail by the High Court," her coun-Arshdeep Singh Cheema said. Kaur was arrested in Haryana's Sonipat for allegedly gheraoing an industrial



FB SIGNS PAY DEALS WITH 3 AUSTRALIAN NEWS PUBLISHERS

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

Rc.G5/1539/2021

Facebook said letters of intent had been signed with independent news organisa-PrivateMedia, Schwartz Media and Solstice Media. The commercial agreements are subject to the signing of full agree-

ments within the next 60 days, a Facebook statement said. "These agreements will bring a new slate of premium journalism, including some previously paywalled content, to Facebook," the statement said.

ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ ప్రభుత్వము జిల్లా కలెక్టరు వాలి కార్యాలయము, నెల్లూరు

ఫారం నెం. VI (ఎ)

(2013 సంవత్సరం 30వ చట్టం వలన భూసేకరణ, పునరావాసం, పునఃస్థాపనలో న్యాయపరమైన నష్టపరిహారం పొందే హక్కు పారదర్శకత చట్టంలో పెక్షన్ 11(1) మరియు ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ నియమావళీ 2014లో రూల్ 19, సబ్ రూల్ (1) ననుసరించి) ప్రాధమిక (పకటన

ఈ దిగువ నుదహరించిన షెడ్యూల్ దాఖలా ఎ.6.16 సెంట్లు భూములకు నెల్లూరు జిల్లా ఓజిలి మండలం, పున్నేపల్లి గ్రామమ నందు ప్రజాహిత ఉపయోగార్ధం అనగా విశాఖపట్నం - చెన్నై ఇండక్షిన్షియల్ కారిడార్ రోడ్ము కొరకు భూమి కావలయునని శ్రీయుత జిల్లా కలెక్టర్, శ్రీ పొట్టి శ్రీరాములు నెల్లూరు వారు ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ ప్రభుత్వము భావించినందున, 2013 సంవత్సరం 30వ చట్టం వలన భూసేకరణ, పునరావాసం, పునఃస్థాపనలో న్యాయపరమైన నష్టపరిహారం పొందే హక్కు పారదర్శకత చట్టంలో సెక్షన్ 11(1) నిబంధనలననునరించి ఇందుకు సంబంధించిన యావన్మందికి ఇందుమూలముగా నోటీసు ఇవ్వడమైనది.

శ్రీయుత జిల్లా కలెక్టర్, శ్రీ పొట్టి శ్రీరాములు నెల్లూరు వారు పైన పేర్కొనిన చట్టంలో సెక్షన్ 12(3జి) క్రింద ఇవ్వబడిన అధికారమ లను వినియోగించి శ్రీయుత రెవెన్యూ డివిజనల్ అధికారి, నాయుడుపేట వారికి, వారి సిబ్బందికి మరియు పనివారలకు ఆ భూముల బూసేకరణకై పై సెక్షన్ క్రింద ఇవ్వబడిన అధికారములను వినియోగించుటకు అధికారము ఇవ్వబడినది.

| ూరి | యెదుట అ | భ్యర్ధనలు | ದಾಖಲು ವೆಸ | రుకొనవచ్చును. పెడు | ျှော | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| | | మొ | భూ | | | | సరి | హద్దులు | | |
| క మ సం. | సర్వే సెం/సబ్ డి.సెం. | త్తం విస్తీర్ణం (ఎ | సేకరణ క్రింద విస్తీర్ణం | సంబందిత ఆసామి పేరు | అనుభవ విస్తీర్ణ ము | తూర్పు సర్వే సెం. | పడమర సర్వే సెం. | ఉత్తరం సర్వే సెం. | దక్షిణం సర్వే సెం. | చెట్లు కట్టడము లు, పంట |
| 1 | 2 | సం) 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 1 | 36-10 | 0.53 | 0.23 | కోటపాటి రామూర్తి నాయుడు | 0.23 | అయ్యప రెడ్డి | 36-9 | పెంగమాం బా పురం | 36-11, | వరి |
| 2 | 36-11 | 0.54 | 0.05 | S/o పెంకట్టప నాయుడు కోటపాటి రామూర్తి నాయుడు | 0.05 | పాళెం అయ్యప రెడ్డి | 36-8 | 36-10 | 37-6 | వరి |
| 3 | 55-3 | 0.95 | 0.04 | S/o పెంకట్టప నాయుడు పేరిమి.భారతి | 0.04 | పాళం 55-4, | 54-1 | 55-1 | 55-5 | వరి |
| _ | 33-3 | 0.33 | 0.04 | W/O పెంకటేశ్వర్లు గట్టమసేని పెంకటేశ్వర్లు | 0.04 | 55-6 | 34-1 | 33-1 | 33-3 | |
| 4 | 55-5 | 1.19 | 0.28 | నాయుడు S/o రోశయ్య Ch. గౌతమ్ పటేల్ | 0.11 | 55-6 | 54-1 | 55-3 | 55-7, 55-8, 55-11 | వరి |
| | | | | S/o మగలాల్ పటేల్ కల్లూరు రవీంద్ర | 0.17 | | | | | -10 |
| 5 | 55-8 | 0.11 | 0.02 | S/o రామయ్య పెనుగుంట.రంగయ్య | 0.02 | 55-11 | 55-7 | 55-5 | 55-10 56-2, | వరి |
| 6 | 55-10 | 0.11 | 0.03 | S/o రామయ్య పాదర్తి కరుణాకర్ రెడ్డి | 0.03 | 55-11 | 55-8 | 55-8 | 56-5 | వరి |
| 7 | 55-11 | 0.18 | 0.18 | S/o చిన్న కస్తూర్ రెడ్డి పెనుగుంట.రంగయ్య | 0.18 | 55-12 | 55-8, 55-10 | 55-5 55-9, | 56-5 | వరి వరి |
| 9 | 56-2 | 0.27 | 0.10 | S/o రామయ్య కల్లూరు. రమణయ్య | 0.10 | 56-5 56-5 | 56-1 56-3 | 55-10 | 56-4 56-8, | వరి |
| 10 | 56-4 | 0.29 | 0.14 | S/o పెంచలయ్య పాదర్తి కరుణాకర్ రెడ్డి | 0.14 | 56-5 | 56-2, | 55-11, | 57-4 56-8 | వరి వరి |
| 11 | 56-8 | 0.46 | 0.31 | S/o చిన్న కస్తూర్ రెడ్డి పాదర్తి కరుణాకర్ రెడ్డి | 0.31 | 55-6 | 56-4 57-4 | 55-10 56-4, 56-5, | 56-9 | వరి |
| 12 | 56-10 | 0.46 | 0.02 | S/o చిన్న కస్తూర్ రెడ్డి దువ్వూరు సాయి మహిధర్ | 0.02 | లయ్యప రెడ్డి | 56-9 | 56-6 56-11 | 160-6 | వరి |
| | | | | S/o చెంచు రెడ్డి దువ్వూరు సాయి | | పాళాం అయ్యప | | | | |
| 13 | 56-11 | 0.28 | 0.13 | మహిధర్ s/o చెంచు రెడ్డి | 0.13 | రెడ్డి పాళాం | 56-9 | 56-9 | 56-10 | వరి |
| 14 | 57-4 | 0.73 | 0.23 | కల్లూరు వీరమ్మ w/o బలరామయ్య | 0.23 | 56-8, 56-9, 159 | 57-3 | 56-3, 56-4 | 159 | వరి |
| 15 | 158-7 | 0.34 | 0.01 | లొక్కు గురవమ్మ w/o చెంచు రామయ్య | 0.01 | 158-5, 163 | 157-4 | 158-6 | 158-8 | వరి |
| 16 | 158-8 | 0.50 | 0.16 | కోటపాటి దామోదర్ S/o రామయ్య నాయుడు | 0.16 | 163 | 157-4 | 158-7 | 164-1, 164-3 | వరి |
| 17 | 160-1 | 0.09 | 0.09 | యల్లసిరి రత్నయ్య S/o పెంకటస్వామి | 0.09 | 160-4 | 159 | 159 | 160-2 | వరి |
| 18 | 160-2 | 0.06 | 0.06 | యల్లసిరి రత్నయ్య S/o పెంకటస్వామి | 0.06 | 160-4 | 159 | 160-1 | 160-3 | వరి |
| 19 | 160-3 | 0.03 | 0.03 | యల్లసిరి రత్నయ్య S/o పెంకటస్వామి | 0.03 | 160-4 | 159 | 160-2 | 160-4 | వరి |
| 20 | 160-5 | 0.20 | 0.04 | నారపు రెడ్డి ప్రభావతమ్మ W/o శ్రీధర్ రెడ్డి | 0.04 | 160-7 | 160-4, 159 | 160-6 | 160-9 | వరి |
| 21 | 160-6 | 0.54 | 0.05 | దువ్వూరు ప్రవీణ్ కుమార్ S/o చంద్రశేఖర్ రెడ్డి | 0.05 | అయ్యప రెడ్డి పాళాం, 160- | 159 | 56-10 | 160-5, 160-7 | వరి |
| 22 | 160-9 | 0.36 | 0.06 | నారపు రెడ్డి ప్రభావతమ్మ W/o శ్రీధర్ రెడ్డి | 0.06 | 13 160-8 | 160-4 | 160-5 | 160-10, 160-11 | వరి |
| 23 | 160-10 | 0.11 | 0.03 | నారపు రెడ్డి ప్రభావతమ్మ W/o శ్రీధర్ రెడ్డి | 0.03 | 160- 11 | 160-4 | 160-9 | 160-11 | వరి |
| 24 | 160-11 | 2.38 | 0.08 | డువ్వూరు ప్రవీణ్ కుమార్ S/o చంద్రశేఖర్ రెడ్డి | 0.08 | 160- 12, 160- 13 | 160-4, 161-2 | 160-8, 160-9, 160-10 | 162-1 | వరి |
| 25 | 161-2 | 0.43 | 0.10 | దువ్పూరు చంద్రశేఖర్ రెడ్డి S/o దశరామిరెడ్డి | 0.10 | 160- 11 | 161-1 | 160-4, 160-11 | 161-3 | వరి |
| 26 | 161-3 | 0.32 | 0.03 | డువ్వూరు ప్రవీణ్ కుమార్ S/o చంద్రశేఖర్ రెడ్డి | 0.03 | 162-1 | 161-1 | 161-2 | 161-4 | వరి |
| 27 | 161-4 | 0.19 | 0.02 | దువ్పూరు సాయి మహిధర్ S/o చెంచు రెడ్డి | 0.02 | 162-2, 162-4, 162-5 | 161-1 | 161-3 | 161-5 | వరి |
| 28 | 161-5 | 0.19 | 0.01 | మెరగ కస్తూరయ్య S/o పెద్ద కస్తూరయ్య | 0.01 | 160-5 | 161-1 | 161-4 | 162-5 | వరి |
| 29 | 164-1 | 0.52 | 0.10 | రామబల్తిన రమణయ్య S/o పెద్ద మస్తానయ్య | 0.10 | 164-3 | 165-8 | 157-4, 158-8 | 164-2 | వరి |
| 30 | 164-2 | 0.50 | 0.16 | రామబత్తిన దుర్గయ్య S/o పెద్ద మస్తానయ్య | 0.16 | 164-3 | 165-8 | 164-1 | 166 | వరి |
| 31 | 164-4 | 0.08 | 0.06 | మెరగ సుబ్రమణ్యం S/o పెద్ద కస్తూరయ్య | 0.06 | 163 | 165 | 158 | 166 | వరి |
| 32 | 148-1 | 0.14 | 0.01 | పెంపులూరు బాలరామయ్య మరియు బట్ట సురేష్ | 0.01 | 148- 13 | 149-1, 149-3 | 151,154 | 148-3 | దారి |
| | | | | S/o పెంకటేష్ కయితేపల్లి పెంకట రమణయ్య | 0.005 | | | | | |
| | | | | రమణయ్య S/o పెంకటయ్య కుమారి కస్తూరమ్మ | 0.005 | | | | | |
| 33 | 148-2 | 0.19 | 0.18 | W/o బాబులయ్య ఓబు వీరయ్య | 0.02 | 148- . 13 | 148-1 | 154 | 148-3 | ఇస్గా |
| | | | | S/o మస్తానయ్య మేరగ పోలయ్య | 0.075 | | | | | |
| | | | | S/o పెద్ద కస్తూరయ్య | 0.08 | | | | | |
| | | | | మద్దూరు లక్ష్మమ్మ W/o . గోపాట్ | 0.05 | | | | | ఇల్లు |

సిమెంట్ రోడు

0.06

1.19

(గ్రామ

0.14

US strikes Iran militias in Syria

22 killed in first military action against Iran-linked groups in Biden's presidency

Beirut, Feb. 26: The US military has struck Iran-backed militias in eastern Syria, killing at least 22 fighters according to a war monitor, in what the Pentagon said was a

message from the new administration after recent rocket attacks targeting US troops in

In its first military action against Iranlinked groups since Biden became president five weeks ago, the Pentagon said it had carried out air

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a Syria-Iraq border control point used by Iran-backed groups, destroying "multiple

facilities' "At President Biden's direction", the US raids targeted "infrastructure utilised by Iranian-backed militant groups in eastern Syria", spokesman John Kirby said in a statement.

"These strikes were authorised in response to recent attacks against American and coalition personnel in

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strikes on Thursday at Iraq, and to ongoing force, an umbrella number wounded by threats to those personnel," he said.

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

Militia border posts were also destroyed, the war monitor said. It said all the dead were from Iraq's statesponsored Hashed al-

Shaabi paramilitary

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group that includes many small militias with ties to Iran.

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

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

"One of our fighters was killed and a small

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two missiles targeting one of our points along the Syrian-Iraqi border" he said on condition of anonymity.

Svrian state television condemned the "American aggression" against the Iraqi fighters, who are allied with the Damascus government.

The US action followed three rocket attacks on facilities in Iraq used by US and coalition forces fight-

ing the Islamic State

strikes, on a military complex in the Kur dish regional capital Arbil on February 15, killed a civilian and a foreign contractor working with coalition forces, and wounded several US contractors and a soldier. The attacks in Iraq

group. One of those

laid down a challenge to the new Biden administration just as it opened a door to with Tehran over its nuclear programme.

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Khashoggi killing

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

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

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

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

Its declassification and release comes just as President Joe Biden endeav-

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

ors to reset US relations in the Middle East and return principles of human rights to a promi-nent position in US policy. Ahead of the release, Biden spoke on the tele-phone Thursday with Saudi King Salman, Prince Mohammed's father, in their first discussion since he became president five weeks ago.

A White House statement on the call did not mention the Khashoggi report, but Biden said Wednesday that he had read it. A respected veteran Saudi journalist and editor, Khashoggi was in self-exile and residing in the United States, writ ing articles critical of the crown prince when he was assassinated on October 2

Nigeria gunmen kidnap 300+ girls

Lagos, Feb. 26: Hundreds nap for money and for the Friday morning, residents say. Government Secondary Jangebe School

in Zamfara state was the scene of the latest mass abduction of school children in northern Nigeria. Nasiru Abdullahi said

that school records show 300 girls are missing. His daughters, aged 10 and 13, are among them. Resident Musa Mustapha said the gunmen also attacked a nearby military camp and checkpoint, preventing soldiers from interfering while the gunmen spent several hours at the school. It was not immediately clear

Several large groups of armed men operate in Zamfara state, described by the government as ban-

of girls are missing after a release of their members large group of gunmen from jail. "We are angered raided a school in north- and saddened by yet another brutal attack children in Nigeria.' Peter Hawkins, UNICEF representative in the country. "This is a gross violation of children's rights and a horrific experience for children through." He called for their immediate release.

The West African nation has seen several such attacks and kidnappings over the years, notably the mass abduction in April 2014 by jihadist group Boko Haram of 276 girls from the secondary school in Chibok in Borno state More than a hundred of the girls are still missing.

Friday's attack came less than two weeks after gunmen abducted 42 people including 27 students, from the Government Science College Kagara in Niger

IS bride loses bid to return to Britain

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

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

the Home Secretary's

appeals and dismisses Ms



Shamima Begum's sister holds her picture.

said Lord Robert Reed, the President of the Supreme Court. "The right to a fair hearing does not trump all other considerations, such as the safety of the public,'

Begum was born in the UK to parents of Bangladeshi heritage. Begum, dubbed an ISIS bride in reference to her marriage to Dutch ISIS fighter Yago Riedijk, was one of three schoolgirls from Bethnal Green in east London who travelled via Turkey to ISIS headquarters in Raqqa.

CMYK

DECCAN CHRONICLE | NELLORE | SATURDAY | 27 FEBRUARY 2021

Chronicle

A welcome first sign of an India-Pak thaw

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

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

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

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

diate response of a Pakistani fighter jet crossing the If the Pakistan Army chief's initiative has out of bounds for

terrorism. This means the message must go down to the homegrown Kashmir

LoC, showed. to survive, he must by Pakistan PM Imran Khan, New Delhi main**ensure that J&K is** tained that "talks and terror cannot go together". Clearly, this left room for the idea that dialogue leading to mutually favourable long-term bilateral outcomes — which will benefit the region as a whole — is indeed possible if terrorism is taken off the menu.

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

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

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

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

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

Diamonds aren't forever

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

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

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

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K. SUDHAKAR

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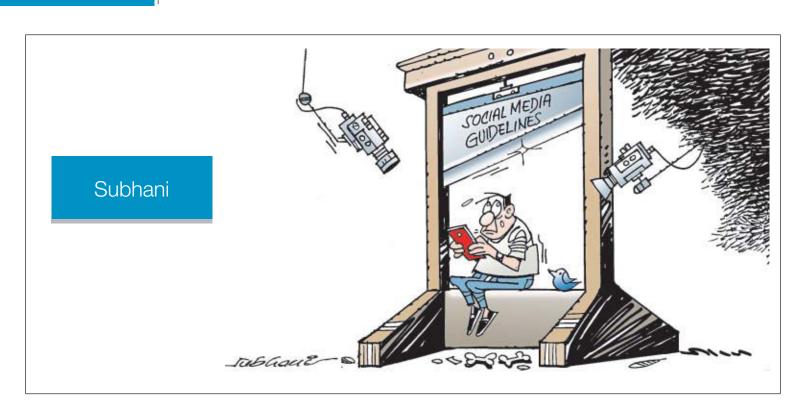
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Judges need to protect right to dissent, protest



Patralekha Chatterjee

Dev 360

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

reasons for doing so. While taking the decision to grant bail to Ms Ravi, the court noted that "mere engagement with persons of dubious credentials is not indictable". A key argument of the prosecution hinged on the charge that a group_called "Poetic Justice Foundation" (PJF), which was allegedly pro-Khalistani and secessionist, and people associated with it, was involved in creating the "toolkit" document. The police alleged that two of Ms Ravi's associates, Nikita Jacob and Shantanu Muluk, attended a Zoom meeting in which activists of the PJF also participated along with many others and this somehow made Ms Ravi also culpable. The court said that no real evidence had been put

on record to establish a direct link between Ms Ravi and the PJF activists mentioned. "In my considered opinion, it is not mere engagement with persons dubious credentials which is indictable, rather it is the purpose of engagement which is relevant for the purpose of deciding culpability," the judge said. prosecution had

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

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

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

While granting

the court pointed out, is whether Disha Ravi was merely involved in peaceful protest and dissent against the farm laws or if she was actually involved in seditious activities under the guise of protesting against these laws. The court's view, as articulated in the order, is that citizens cannot be tossed

behind bars simply because they disagree with the government of the day. "Difference of opinion, disagreement, dissent, or for that matter, even disap-

probation, are recognised legitimate tools to infuse objectivity in state policies... The offence of sedition cannot be invoked to minister to the wounded vanity of governments," the court said, citing a 1942 ruling.

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

These observations are welcome and will have farreaching implications. Young Indians, mostly

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

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

The judiciary must take

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

MODI STADIUM

Now that the die is cast and Motero stadium is renamed as Narendra Modi **Cricket Stadium replacing** Sardar Patel, it's no use to crib because the trend of changing names of cities, railway stations, was the order of the day since

NDA's rule in 2014. **K. Nehru Patnaik** Visakhapatnam

AXARDHAM

The Motera pitch has been the focus of attention after the pink ball Test match ended in a little more than 5 sessions (Axardham, DC, Feb. 26). The English team failed to read the pitch. Their rotation policy and the team selection was surprising on the eve of a crucial match with respect to reaching WTC final. Local boy Axar was brilliant and made good use of the conditions. His impactful debut in Test cricket would give selectors trouble once Jadeja returns.

Sajid Farooq

DEFECTION POLITICS

The unprecedented defections from political parties, especially in certain states that are going to polls in the years ahead is a matter of con-cern as there does not seem to be any ideology in politics. Being the Prime Minister, Modi's personal campaign for the BJP does not augur well as he has powers to take vengeful actions. This trend was never seen in decades.

Someshwar Siripuram, Visakhapatnam

KILLING DONKEYS It is distressing to read donkeys are

wrongfully being butchered Eluru (Meat love threatens donkeys in Eluru, DC, Feb. 26). It is a concern that donkeys are on the way to become extinct. Authorities concerned and Animal rescue organisations need to step in immediately. Dr C. Ghanshyam

Visakhapatnam

YEARS AGO IN Chronicle **Assassination**

threat to PM

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY. 26

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

Dhondy **Cabbages** & Kings

Life on Zoom:

You learn a lot

about yourself,

and others too

Farrukh



"They say all property is theft Hence, I own nothing and am

My ancestors were never Earls And depending, then, on what one believes

About making it rich through toil It's just not true — so I'll place my bet On Proudhon who formulated the

With which Marx disagreed — All

— From **Dil Deykey Dildo** by Bachchoo

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I used to despise the self-deceivers who brushed their hair forwards to hide their baldness, but now find myself wondering, comb in hand at the mirror, whether it's a good strat-

egy. It's not. Gentle reader, in my job as a teacher, and then in my short and happy life as an agitator and pamphleteer, I have addressed countless classes, assemblies and audiences. I never began with the old opening: "unaccustomed as I am to public

speaking", but perhaps should have. Zoom has demonstrated to me that any conceit I cultivate about my ability to present an argument is precisely that. I have now taken a vow during the Christian Lent to begin speaking on Zoom with that precise and modest caveat. Watch

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















interlocute.

DECCAN CHRONICLE | NELLORE | SATURDAY | 27 FEBRUARY 2021

| INDICATO | 25 | % |
|------------------------|---------------------|--------|
| Sensex | 49,099.99 | -3.80 |
| Nifty 50 | 14,529.20 | -3.76 |
| S&P 500* | 3,853.11 | 0.62 |
| Dollar (₹) | 73.47 | -1.42 |
| Pound Sterling (₹) | 101.83 | 0.80 |
| Euro (₹) | 88.76 | -0.29 |
| Gold (10gm)* (₹) | 45,599 ▼ 342 | 0.75 |
| Brent crude (\$/bbl)* | 66.13 | -1.12 |
| IN 10-Yr bond yield | 6.229 | 0.00 |
| US 10-Yr T-bill yield* | 1.491 | -0.024 |
| * As of 8:30 PM IST | | |

Inflation band okay for next 5 years: RBI report

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

PFC board okays ₹1 L cr borrowing plan for FY22



Power Finance Corporation said its board has approved a plan to borrow Rs 1 lakh crore under different debt segments. The borrowing will be made in one or more tranches in FY21-22, PFC said. The NBFC plans to raise a maximum of Rs 60,000 crore from long-term borrowing, Rs 20,000 crore from longterm foreign currency borrowing. Rs 5.000 crore from short term borrowing and Rs 15,000 crore from commercial papers.

Brazil to buy 20m Covaxin doses from B. Biotech

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

RailTel Corp makes strong market debut

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



■ Sensex sheds more than 1900 points

US bombing, bond yields spook mkt

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD

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

US market. Rising Covid cases in India also added to negative sentiments in the mar-

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

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

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

India's 10-year government bond yield also rose sharply intraday to 6.242 per cent and closed at 6.229. As per provisional data, foreign portfolio investors were net sellers of equities worth Rs 8,295.17 crore.

Financials suffered the most among sectoral indices after the recent rally, with the Nifty Bank Index closing down 4.78 per cent. Other big losers were Nifty Auto (-3.12 per cent) and Nifty Metal (-2.70 per cent). NSE's volatility index

Mar Mar May Mar Feb 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2021

RUPEE DIVES 104 PAISE AGAINST \$

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

India VIX shot up 22.93 per cent to 28.14, indicating a

volatile market ahead.

The GDP data expected after the market hours also weighed on the market sen-"The Q3 GDP growth number at 0.4 per cent is lower than our estimates of 0.8 per cent but quite short of some other estimates which were in the range of 1.4-2 per cent. The equity markets may be a tad disappointed with these data points," said Dhiraj Relli, MD & CEO,

EMERGING MARKETS BRACE FOR CAPITAL FLIGHT

LIVIA YAP & LILIAN KARUNUNGAN

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

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

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

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

Soon, get discount on life premium paid in advance

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, FEB. 26

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

Acting on representa-tions from the industry, the Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India (Irdai) has decided to permit life insurers to offer discounts on regular premiums paid in advance. As per the draft guide-

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

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



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

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

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

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

specified in Irdai guide-lines and will be uniform across the market.

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

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

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

INSTITUTIONAL **INVESTMENTS IN**

REALTY SEEN

RISING BY 14.6%

RBI report suggets issuing debt to mop up hot money

SUBHADIP SIRCAR & ASHUTOSH JOSHI

The Reserve Bank of India may consider issuing its own bonds to help soak up a deluge of foreign money into stocks that threatens financial stability, according to a report published by its researchers.

Current laws forbid the RBI from selling its own paper, and budgetary constraints could prevent the government from issuing so-called stabilisation

scheme, or MSS, bonds authorities have used in the past. That's made it harder for the central bank to navigate what's known as the Impossible Trinity, i.e. maintaining an independent monetary policy while also allowing free flows of capital and ensuring a stable curren-

"Sterilised intervention is an effective solution to managing the trilemma in India," the central bank said in its annual Report on Currency and Finance, published on

'Enhancement of sterilisation capacity may be necessary to deal with possible surges in capital flows in the future," the

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

— Bloomberg

New Delhi, Feb. 26:

Hindu-stan Unilever on

Friday said it will achieve

SBI readies MF arm for IPO

BAIJU KALESH & SUVASHREE GHOSH

State Bank of India, the country's largest lender, is preparing for its mutual fund joint venture for an public offering, according to people famil-

iar with the matter. SBI plans to ask investment banks for proposals after discussions with its and shareholder Amundi Asset Management and kick off the process in the next few months, the people said. The lender could raise about \$1 billion from the offering, one of the people said, who asked not to be identified, as the information is private. SBI's mutual fund is now valued at about \$7 billion, another person said. At \$1 billion, the first-

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

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

and cards businesses last SBI's mutual fund is the

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

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

— Rloomherg

MICHAEL GONSALVES

PUNE, FEB, 26

Investments in Indian real estate is expected to grow by 14.6 per cent to Rs 39,600 crore in 2021 from Rs 34.600 crore in 2020, as institutional investors continue to be bullish on domestic real estate asset classes such as offices, data centres and warehouses and are looking to deploy their existing dry powder, Colliers has said in its report.

In 2020, investments had dropped 23 per cent from

Between 2018 and 2020, an average annual supply of over 35 million square feet entered the top six Indian cities such as Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi NCR, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Pune, with the majority being snapped up by institutional investors.

Even though a similar level of supply is set to enter the market, some investment firms are looking increasingly towards developing their own greenfield office assets, the report said.

Investors remain bullish on the long-term prospects even as they target an internal rate of return of about 17-18 per cent.

"The investment climate in India is very buoyant with global investors interest in real assets getting stronger," Piyush Gupta, managing director, Capital Markets & Investment Services (India) at Colliers, said.

Moreover, the resilience

of the Indian market is also evident from continued good housing sales across various markets, the large institutional investments in commercial office and industrial parks, and the listing of two REITs in the past six months, he pointed out.

100 per cent plastic waste collection from 2021 onwards as it will collect and process more plastic packaging waste than the plastic in packaging used by it. The company will enable processing of over one lakh tonnes of post-consumer plastic waste Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun July Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan through collection from

Base: 2011-12=100

0.2

more than 100 towns across India, said HUL in a

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

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



HUL aims to achieve 100% plastic waste collection in 2021

Saniiv Mehta

waste. The company is also working in partnership with the United Nations

improve

the collec-

plastic

tion

Development Programme and the international societies organisation Xynteo. and com-Commenting on the development, HUL chairestablishments to

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

provider, enabling car

OEMs (original equip-

ment manufacturers) to

Sony to open PS 5 for storage upgrades

Index of eight core industries Monthly growth

TAKASHI MOCHIZUKI

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

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

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

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

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

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

Battered Huawei plans foray into EVs

JULIE ZHU, YILEI SUN HONG KONG/BEIJING,

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

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

Huawei is also in discus-

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

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

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



chips to the Chinese company, which has denied wrongdoing, will be reversed by his successor. A Huawei spokesman denied the company plans

to design EVs or produce Huawei branded vehicles. "Huawei is not a car manufacturer. However through ICT (information communications technology), we aim to be

a digital car-oriented and

new-added components

build better vehicles." Huawei has started internally designing the EVs and approaching suppliers at home, with the aim of officially launchof US technology and ing the project as early as this year, the sources said.

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

All the sources declined to be named as the discussions are private.









SHORT TAKES

Hima inducted as

DSP in Assam

Guwahati: Star sprinter Hima Das was on Friday inducted as **Deputy Superintendent of** Assam Police in the presence of chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal and described the moment as a childhood dream coming true. Hima was handed the appointment letter by

Sonowal, also a former Union Sports Minister, at a ceremony attended by the top functionaries of the state government as well as from the police department, including the Director General of police.

"People here know and I am not going to say anything different. Since my early school days, I harboured a wish to become a police officer one day and my mother also wished that," Hima said.

"I got everything due to sports, I will try to work for betterment of sports in the state and try to make Assam one of the best performing states in the country, like Haryana," Hima further added. — PTI

Deepak stuns world champion

New Delhi: Asian silver-winner Deepak Kumar (52kg) on Friday stunned Olympic and world champion Shakhobiddin Zoirov of Uzbekistan to storm into the finals of the 72nd Strandja Memorial Boxing Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Deepak clinched one of the most memorable wins of his career with a 4-1 win over more fancied Zoirov, who had claimed the 2019 world championship title beating India's Amit

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

Charlotte to lead cricketers union

London: England great Charlotte Edwards has become the first female president of the **Professional Cricketers'** Association.

An outstanding top-order batsman, Edwards scored over 10,000 runs in more than 300 matches during an international career that lasted from 1996 to 2016. Edwards, who succeeds Graham Gooch, another former England captain, was elected for an initial two-year term at Thursday's annual general meeting of the PCA, which rep-

resents all professional crick eters playing in England. "I'm hugely honoured to be given such a prestigious title in being the president of the PCA," said Edwards. Edwards was England captain when they won both limitedovers World Cups in 2009, while she remains the country's leading run-scorer in both women's one-day internationals and Twenty20s. - AFP

Belinda sees off Coco, into final

Adelaide: Second seed Belinda Bencic battled for almost three hours before seeing off 16-yearold American Coco Gauff in three sets Friday to reach the final of the Adelaide

International. Bencic set up a final showdown against Poland's French Open champion Iga Swiatek with her 7-6 (7/2), 6-7 (4/7), 6-2 win. Fifth seeded Swiatek had a much easier passage to the

final, beating Swiss player Jil Teichmann 6-3, 6-2. Bencic went into the semi-final against Gauff as favourite, but the young American has been in good form this week, winning through two rounds of qualifying just to make the main draw. — AFP

Live on TV

English Premier League: Manchester City vs West Ham United from 6 pm; West Brom vs Brighton from 8.30 pm; Leeds United vs Aston Villa from 11 pm; Newcastle United vs Wolverhampton Wanderers from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Star Sports Select 1, HD

Italian League: Spezia vs Parma from 7.30 pm; Bologna vs Lazio from 10.30 pm; Verona vs Juventus from 1.15 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2

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Grams: CHRONICLE,

Editor: Kaushik Mitter

SURESHOT SPINNER Coach kills self after sex slur

Match-winner Axar says confidence did trick

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

But Patel was unfazed as he knew, his time would

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

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

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

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

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

enjoying his good time.
"When you are out of the team, many people, friends keep asking you 'why aren't you in the team, team despite doing well?'

These things keep coming in the mind," he said.

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

England may have been "relieved" when Jadeja was injured. "But then this guy comes in. Bowls it quicker and

from a bigger height as It is a tribute to his hard work, his accuracy," said

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



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

Rohit bats for batting intent

Intent to score and not just survive was the key to flourish on the Motera pitch, asserted India opener Rohit Sharma who batted effortlessly on the 'interesting but normal' pitch that was declared difficult and challenging by visiting England bats-

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

"When you are playing on a pitch like that, you need to have an intent and look to score runs as well. You can't just keep block-Rohit said during the virtual conference after the match on When you are playing on a pitch like that, you need to have an intent and look to score runs as well. You can't just keep blocking. You just need to be slightly ahead at times and try and find ways to score

- ROHIT SHARMA



as challenging. The senior opener scored India's only half-century of the game with the home side spinners accounting for 19 wickets. England batsmen were deceived by left-armer Axar Patel's straighter deliveries that skidded straight instead of turning. Rohit felt that during his innings of 66, he was a step or two ahead of England bowlers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Coming wider off the crease was also another effective ploy used by

Lansing (USA), Feb. 26: A former U.S. Olympics gymnastics coach with ties to disgraced sports doctor Larry Nassar killed himself, hours after being charged with turning his Michigan gym into a hub of human trafficking by coercing girls to train and then abusing them. John Geddert faced 24

charges that could have carried years in prison had he been convicted. He was supposed to appear in an Eaton County court, near Lansing, but his body was found at a rest area along Interstate 96, according to state police.
"This is a tragic end to a tragic story for everyone

involved, Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel said.

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

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

We had no indication that Geddert intended to flee or hurt himself or others. We had been in contact with his attorney and were assured of his cooperation," Nessel spokeswoman Kelly Rossman-McKinney US Olympics coach John Geddert faced 24 charges that could have carried years in prison had he been convicted. He was supposed to appear in an Eaton County court, near Lansing, but his body was found at a rest area along Interstate 96.

Calls seeking comment from attorney Chris Bergstrom weren't imme-diately returned. Geddert was head coach

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

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



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

Auba nets brace

to beat Benfica

HUSSAIN SAYS ENGLAND WERE SCARED RABBITS

Feb. England have lost their batting rhythm after playing on two difficult surfaces and looked like "startled rabbits" in the second innings of the third Test against India, according to former skip-

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

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

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

from all forms of cricket

New Delhi, Feb. 26: Outof-favour India all-rounder Yusuf Pathan on Friday announced retirement from all forms of cricket, saying time has come "to put a full stop to this innings of my life. The 38-year-old Pathan

was part of the inaugural T20 World Cup-winning side in 2007 and also the one that triumphed in the 2011 ODI World Cup at "The time has come

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

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

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



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

"Winning two World Cups for India and lifting Sachin Tendulkar on my shoulders were some of the best moments of my career. I made my interfrom all forms of the game. - YUSUF PATHAN after announcing his retirement national debut under M S

Dhoni, IPL debut under

The time has come

today for me to put a

of my life. I officially

announce retirement

full stop to this innings

Shane Warne, Ranji debut under Jacob Martin and would like to thank them for believing in me," he Meanwhile, veteran Karnataka medium pacer R. Vinay Kumar, who also represented India and led his state team to successive Ranji Trophy titles, also announced his retirement from international and first-class cricket. The 37-year-old Kumar

played one Test, 31 ODIs nine Internationals for India, taking 49 wickets across the three formats. -PTI

Allrounder Yusuf retires INDIA CAN WIN **AGAINST ODDS,**

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

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

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

— PTI all. Conditions should

Rajat wallops ton to down Andhra

Indore, Feb. 26: Rajat next best for Andhra with Patidar's brilliant century an unbeaten 47. propelled Madhya Pradesh to a facile 98-run victory over an erratic Andhra in a Group 'B'

game of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Friday. Riding on Rajat's quickfire 102 that came off 61 balls, Madhya Pradesh posted a huge total of 316

could only muster 218 and were all out in 42.3 overs. Nitish Kumar Reddy (59) was Andhra's top scorer but his efforts went in vain. Karan Shinde was

runs. In reply Andhra

Meanwhile in Surat.

skipper Krunal Pandya's unbeaten 133 formed the cornerstone of Baroda's win 13-run Chhattisgarh in an Elite Group 'A' game, even as Atit Sheth blazed away to

a 16-ball 51. Opting to bat, Baroda rode on Pandya's hundred and Sheth's big-hitting to post 332/6 after a toporder failure, and then restricted the opposition to 319/9 to record their fourth win on the trot.

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

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

walked skipper Pandya,

who was in his element

and toyed with the

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

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

BRIEF SCORES Madhya Pradesh 316/8 in 50 overs (Rajat Patidar 102. Shubham 78, Sharma

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

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

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

Paris, Feb. 26: Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored twice including a late winner as Arsenal Arsenal qualified for the last 16 of (Aubameyang 21, 87, the Europa League on Tierney 67) Thursday with a 3-2 victo-**Benfica** ry over Benfica in Greece, while Manchester United

and Rangers cruised through to the next round. The Gabon striker put Arsenal ahead at the Karaiskakis stadium in Piraeus in their home leg of a tie relocated due to Covid-19 travel restrictions between Portugal and the United Kingdom.

Diogo Goncalves levelled the contest with a magnificent free-kick and Rafa Silva gave Benfica a 2-1 lead on the night when he took advantage of an error from Dani Ceballos on the

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

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

THE RESULTS

(Goncalves 43, Silva 61) **Manchester United**

(Kessie 9-pen) Red Star Belgrade (Ben Nabouhane 24)

Real Sociedad

Granada (Montoro 25) Slavia Prague (L. Provod 49, Sima 79)

(Zielinski 3, Fabian Ruiz 59)

Leicester City

home to Czech champions Slavia Prague. Lukas Provod fired Slavia in front just after half-time following a goalless draw in the first leg, and Senegalese

Abdallah Sima ensured the

visitors extended their run in the competition. Steven Gerrard's Rangers progressed following their 5-2 win over Belgian side Antwerp at Ibrox, with five different players on target for the Scottish league