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HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | 3 MARCH 2021

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ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Uttarakaya
Tithi: Magha Bahula Panchami till 12.22 am
Star: Swati till 1.36 am (Thursday)

Variyam: 8.38 am to 10.06 am
Durmuhurtam: 12.04 pm to 12.51 pm

Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm
HIJRI CALENDAR

Jumada al-Sani 3,1441 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.33 am

Zohar: 12.38 pm

Asar: 4.44 pm

Maghrib: 6.28 pm

Isha: 7.36 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.23 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.32 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 10.29 PM

MOONSET TODAY 9.31 AM

COUNTER POINT

Our leaders are preparing for the Assembly poll campaign...

SHORT TAKES

Congress internal fight worsens

New Delhi: The Congress finds itself pushed to a corner after the public spat between the G-23 leaders and party loyalists. Senior Congress leader Anand Sharma slammed the party's tie-up with ISF in West Bengal, saying it was against the "Gandhian and Nehruvian secularism". The WB Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury rejected allegations.

■ Full report on Page 7

Five-time MP Nand Kumar passes away

Bhopal: Five-time MP and former Madhya Pradesh BJP president Nand Kumar Singh Chouhan passed away in Delhi late on Monday night. He was 69. The MP from Khandwa tested positive for the Coronavirus on January 11 and was admitted in a private hospital in Bhopal. He later tested negative for Covid-19 but his condition deteriorated. He is survived by his wife, a son and two daughters.

■ Full report on Page 7

Yadadri makes history

The temple for Lord Lakshmi Narasimhaswamy — being constructed in stone in a traditional manner — moves close to completion at Yadadri temple town near Hyderabad, on Tuesday.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

High Court jails collector, 2 officials for contempt

**VUJINI
VAMSHIDHARA | DC**
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

Justice M.S. Ramachandra Rao of the Telangana High Court on Tuesday sentenced Rajanna Sircilla district collector D. Krishna Bhaskar, joint collector Yashini Basha and land acquisition officer N. Srinivasa Rao, the revenue divisional officer, to three months simple imprisonment and a fine of ₹2,000 for disobeying court orders.

The order was passed on a contempt case that was filed by 11 landowners from Anantagiri village of Sircilla district, whose

HC SAYS, MIND YOUR WORDS

Hyderabad: The TS High Court on Tuesday pulled up officials and government counsels for casting aspersions on judges and courts so as to hide their failures.

■ Full report on Page 2

land was submerged by a reservoir of the Kaleshwaram project.

Earlier, the court had issued interim orders to the collector and others to not carry out any con-

struction work that could affect the petitioners' land unless the landowners were paid compensation.

Compensation should be paid as per the rules of land acquisition and benefits under the rehabilitation and resettlement policy, the court had ordered.

But, the construction work went on despite court orders and the petitioners' lands were submerged. No compensation was given to the petitioners. Following this, a case was filed, based on which Justice Ramachandra Rao sentenced the officers and directed them to pay ₹10,000 to each petitioner.

DMK seals Cong. deal with 24 seats

**G. BABU JAYAKUMAR &
D. SEKAR | DC**
CHENNAI, MARCH 2

The Congress clinched a deal with its alliance partner, the DMK, while the BJP leaders were holding prolonged talks with the AIADMK at a hotel in Chennai on Tuesday even as it seemed that the present line up of coalitions would remain intact for the battle of the ballot on April 6.

He said that his party would receive applications from those seeking seats from Wednesday.

Hence the talks on seat sharing between the AIADMK and BJP resumed. But the hitch is more in the identification of the constituencies than in the numbers per se. The BJP also upped its ante, demanding at least 24, after it was leaked that the DMK has agreed to allocate 24 seats to the Congress.

CERT-IN: POWER INFRA FACES CHINA THREAT

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

The Computer Emergency Response Team of India (CERT-In) on Tuesday advised the TS State Load Dispatch Centre (SLDC) and TS Transco to take precautionary measures to ensure security of the power system, after a security threat from a China-based threat group was assessed.

Measures like blocking server IPs were communicated by CERT-In, apart from temporary disabling of the control function for remote operation of circuit breakers from the SLDC.

■ Page 2: Ensure grid safety, Transco told

TOUGH FIGHT

Over 90 candidates contest for Hyd grad MLC seat

Jumbo boxes for MLC votes

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

The Election Commission is planning to deploy 'jumbo ballot boxes' that were last used in 2010 and 1996 for the upcoming elections to two seats of the Legislative Council as the ballot papers are the size of newspapers.

Chief Electoral Officer Shashank Goel has written to the Election Commission seeking permission to use these ballot boxes and approval is awaited.

A record 93 candidates are in the fray for the

EVMS CANNOT be used in any MLC election as voters have to mark their preference of candidates.

Hyderabad-Ranga Reddy-Mahbubnagar graduates constituency election again in 2015, and 71 are in fray for the Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda graduates constituency.

Besides, voters in any MLC election have to exercise preferential votes, marking their preference of

candidates unlike in other elections where they have to choose only one party or candidate. For this reason, EVMs cannot be used in any MLC election.

In 2010, the TRS had fielded over 64 candidates in each of the 10 Assembly seats that went for bypolls following the resignation of party MLAs while demanding statehood. The idea was to force election by ballot papers as an EVM can accommodate only 64 candidates. TRS opted for this strategy after alleging that EVMs were tampered with

in 2009 Assembly elections due to which it fared badly.

In the 1996 Lok Sabha polls, 480 candidates were in the fray for Nalgonda LS seat to protest government's failure in solving fluorosis issue.

After the advent of EVMs in 2004, the EC has done away with using ballot boxes. However, the State Election Commission used ballot boxes for the gram panchayat polls, zilla and mandal parishad polls in 2019 and, citing the coronavirus, in the GHMC polls of December 2020.



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COMPANIES VIE TO SHED SEZ TAG FOR STATE SOPS

L. VENKAT RAM
REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

Companies are vying to shed the 'SEZ' tag as the Centre has withdrawn certain concessions that were announced earlier. These companies want to come under the state government's TS-iPASS which has benefits like faster approvals among others.

A large number of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) were sanctioned especially on city outskirts by the UPA government between 2004 and 2013. There was heavy demand for the SEZ tag due to tax holidays and other incentives.

The UPA government later withdrew some of the concessions and the subsequent NDA government removed some more. Following this, several SEZs with thousands of acres of land have remained non-functional.

Sources in the industries department said that 15 SEZs, mostly on the city outskirts, have applied for withdrawal of the SEZ tag.

■ Page 2: TSIIC too seeks SEZ denotification

Spectrum auction fetches ₹77,814 cr

Jio emerges biggest buyer, followed by Airtel

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, MARCH 2

Reliance Jio on Tuesday emerged as the biggest bidder in the telecom spectrum auction conducted by the government, acquiring spectrum worth ₹57,122.65 crore. Bharti Airtel picked up airwaves worth ₹18,699 crore, while Vodafone Idea (VI) bought spectrum worth ₹1,993.40 crore.

The first auction of spectrum in five years ended on the second day on Tuesday with 855.60 MHz of airwaves bought for ₹77,814.80 crore.

"While there were no bidders for 700 MHz and 2,500 MHz bands, only 15 MHz, or 8.57 per cent of available spectrum, was acquired in 2,100 MHz band," the communications ministry said in a statement.

Over 2,250 MHz of spectrum, that carry telecom signals, in seven bands worth nearly ₹4 lakh crore

TELECOM EXPERTS

said the 700 MHz band did not find any takers as it was too costly due to its high base price, nearly ₹2 lakh crore, like the 2016 spectrum auction.

at the reserve or start price, was offered for bidding in the auction that began on Monday. The government had received bids of ₹77,146 crore on the first day.

"Incremental bids for ₹668.20 crore were made (second day) today," telecom secretary Anshu Prakash said in the statement, adding that out of the total 2308.80 MHz of spectrum put up for auction the government received bids for 855.60 MHz.

"Spectrum Usage Charges (SUC) for the spectrum acquired in this auction will be payable at the rate of 3 per cent of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) of the licensee, excluding

revenue from wireline services," the statement said.

There were only three bidders this year, as against seven during the last spectrum auction in 2016. DoT aimed to raise at least ₹3.92 lakh crore by auctioning the entire spectrum.

The DoT, however, auctioned over 2,308 units of spectrum across the 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz and 2500 MHz bands. Bids were received for radio airwaves in the 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz and 2300 MHz bands. Spectrum in the 700 MHz and 2,500 MHz bands remained unsold.

Telecom experts said the 700 MHz band did not find any takers as it was too costly due to its high base price, nearly ₹2 lakh crore, like the 2016 auction. "The 5G-capable 700 MHz airwaves will remain largely unsold as it is the most expensive band," they said.

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The Covid-19 frontline warriors at Gandhi Hospital being felicitated by the health minister Etela Rajender on the occasion of the completion of one year of the first Coronavirus case reported in the state. Gandhi Hospital superintendent M. Raja Rao and others are also seen.

— S.SURENDER REDDY

A year later, victims recall how virus made lives hell

Livelihood was the biggest challenge faced by many

IN BRIEF

Cops on lookout for chain snatcher

Hyderabad: A scooter-borne man snatched a three-tola gold chain from a woman pedestrian and escaped at Keshavnagar of Saidabad on Tuesday afternoon. Police identified the victim as Malathi, 48, who was walking along the road along with another woman. Based on a complaint from the victim, the police formed two special teams to nab the snatcher.

Two injured in road accident

Hyderabad: Two men, Md Yousuf and Md Yasin, sustained injuries when their jeep rammed into a truck near the agriculture university in Rajendranagar on Tuesday morning. "Md Yousuf was driving the jeep and was speeding when he rammed the vehicle into a cement bag-laden truck," the Rajendranagar police said. Police shifted the injured persons in an ambulance to Osmania General Hospital.

HC disposes of Assembly case

Hyderabad: The Telangana High Court on Tuesday disposed of a case filed in 2018 against the move for dissolution of Assembly several months before its term was due to end. A division bench headed by Chief Justice Hima Kohli expressed doubts over intention of the petitioners, who were unemployed. The court also questioned petitioners' counsel P.V. Krishnaiah asking how the Governor, Election Commission, and the Chief Ministers of Telangana state and Andhra Pradesh were made respondents.

WOMAN HELD FOR KILLING 3-YR-OLD NEPHEW

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

A woman was arrested by the Bahadurpura police for killing her three-year-old nephew, Numaanuddin, by throwing him from the second floor at about 10.30 am on Tuesday.

Police said the accused, Ayesha Banu, 21, a resident of Edi Bazaar, had married Sujauddin in 2019. The couple did not have a child, and she did not like her husband to the three-year-old nephew. Bahadurpura inspector D. Durga Prasad said Numaanuddin sustained serious head injuries and succumbed on the spot.

MAN HARASSES IT EMPLOYEE, ARRESTED

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

A software company employee was allegedly attacked with a knife by a stalker near her residence in Narsingi late on Tuesday evening.

Police said the victim, employed in Madhapur, was a resident of Laxminagar of Hyderabad. The accused, Shah Rukh Salman, a resident of Sun City and native of Haryana, had reportedly been harassing her to accept his proposal but she had rejected him.

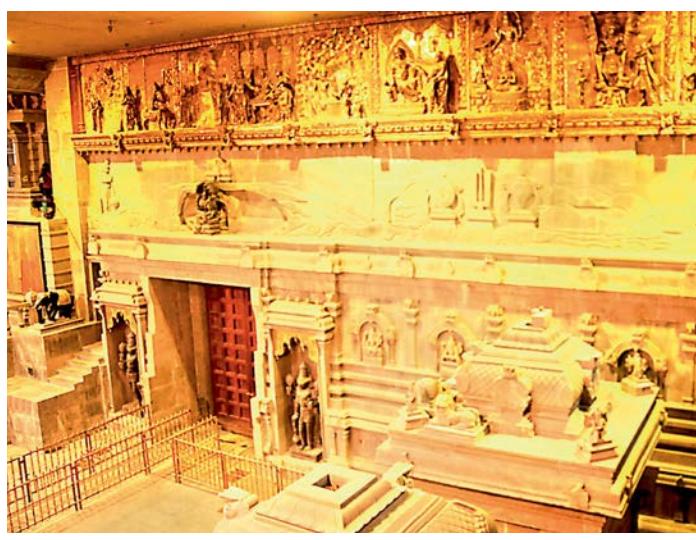
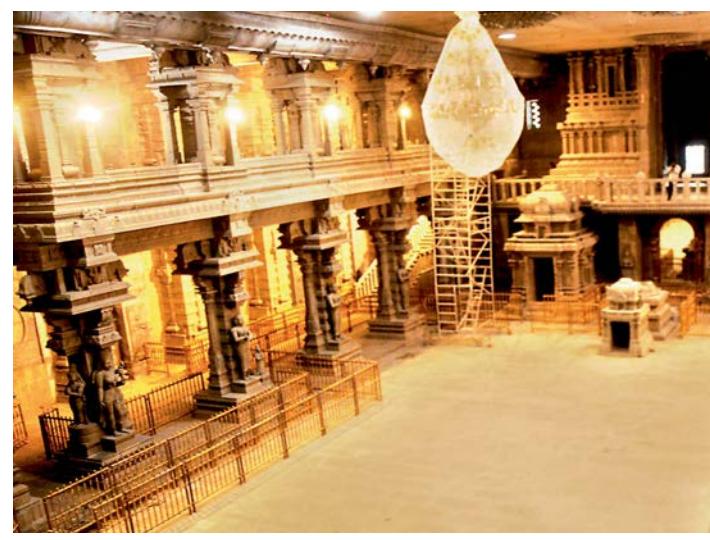
"He caused injuries on her neck and torso with a knife he had on him on Tuesday night. We registered a case of Section 307 (attempt to murder) of the IPC against him and took him into custody," police sources said.

THE ACCUSED, Shah Rukh Salman, a resident of Sun City and native of Haryana, had reportedly been harassing her to accept his proposal but she had rejected him.

Final touches

(Left) Workers give finishing touches to the Lakshmi Narasimhaswamy temple at Yadadri on Tuesday. (Below left) The grand interiors of the temple. The temple is said to be the first in the world to have a blend of all four styles of architecture – Pallava, Chalukya, Dravidian and Kakatiya. It is also the first temple in the world to be built with granite black stone that was brought from Guntur.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

**Miscreants loot empty 2BHK flats**

Government infrastructure worth ₹550 cr stolen within GHMC limits

DC DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

Miscreants have been stealing fixtures, including wires, doors, taps and copper coils of transformers from 2BHK house sites within GHMC limits.

Corporation officials said that following instructions from minister K.T. Rama Rao in August last year, private agencies expedited work on the 2BHK houses in the city and completed construction of about 70,000 houses.

A delay in payments — totalling ₹1,096 crore since October — led to these agencies withdrawing about 10,000 labour and security staff from the construction sites in December.

Taking advantage of this, miscreants have stolen valuable infrastructure worth ₹550 crore.

Work pertaining to 92,000 houses is in various stages of completion. Over 10,000 labourers are sitting idle since December last year.

A senior official, requesting anonymity, told *Deccan Chronicle* that some miscreants at Hafeezpet had stolen electrical wiring and copper coils from transformers from the 2BHK housing site. The same thing has happened at the Dundigal site, where miscreants even took away wooden doors and steel taps.

The civic body has decided to hand over completed houses to district collectors or the EVDM (Directorate Of Enforcement Vigilance & Disaster Management) wing for safeguarding till they are allotted to beneficiaries. EVDM had earlier cited staff crunch and was unwilling to safeguard the houses.

Now, it says it would monitor houses after installing CCTV cameras," the official stated.

The government had allocated ₹9,700 crore for construction of these houses. It is expected to establish one lakh houses, with about 4,000 houses in each of the 24 constituencies of the state capital.

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UoH council discusses NEP 2020 modalities

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

The University of Hyderabad (UoH) academic council met on Tuesday and discussed various issues related to implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, apart from the idea of holding a common entrance test through National Testing Agency (NTA) for admissions into the university.

UoH spokesperson Prof. Vinod Pavarala, however, said no conclusion had been reached. The annual meeting was just customary to dwell on the future course of action during the new

academic year. He said the academic council also discussed matters related to statutes so that they met legal requirements.

On NEP implementation, the council decided that the policy document will be passed on to respective departments and schools for a more detailed discussion.

Nandan said student representatives will be part of further discussions scheduled on March 26.

will be discussed in the next academic council scheduled on March 26, Prof. Vinod said.

The UoH Students union has, however, unanimously rejected any move to implement NEP 2020 at the university as well as the proposal for a common entrance test through NTA. Union president Abhishek Nandan said that the union collectively decided not to allow NTA to conduct any entrance exam for the university, especially the School of Social Sciences.

Nandan said student representatives will be part of further discussions scheduled on March 26.

HUMAN | WILDLIFE**Committee plans to take on sloth bear problem**

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

The government on Tuesday ordered the constitution of a state-level committee to resolve 'human-animal' conflicts. The committee is expected to evolve a mechanism to mitigate human-wildlife conflict.

The government order expects the committee to propose revision, if any, to the compensation package

for humans and domestic animals killed in conflict with wildlife and draft guidelines for settling the claims for human death, injury, cattle kills, crop damage amongst others.

The committee is to submit a report within three months, and the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests will review it.

The forest minister will be the chairperson of the committee, and Rajya Sabha MP

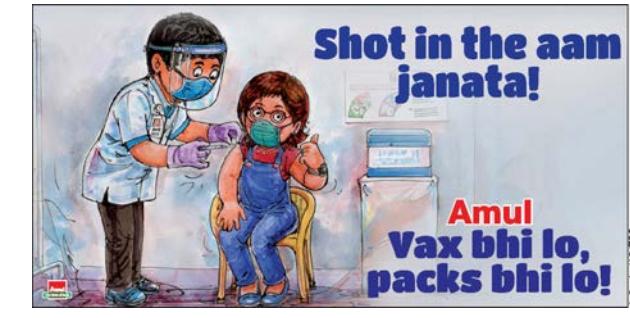
K.R. Suresh Reddy, special chief secretary, forests, among others, will be its members.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, a committee member called it a very proactive move. "Human-wildlife conflict has always been a major concern, the most recent example is that of wild boar which are damaging the crop," he said.

The committee, he said, would take in all stakeholders

ers into consideration and not leave room for any animosity. "Now that there is a committee there would be a more constructive method of tackling the issue, not just of wild boar," he said.

The committee plans to take on the sloth bear problem, he said. It would also counsel gram panchayat members about the dos and don'ts of wildlife conservation as well as on degradation of forests.

**Leftists in Singareni unions move to BMS**

PILLALAMARI SRINIVAS | DC
MANCHERIAL, MARCH 2

The leftist workforce in the Singareni SCCL and coal belt areas are gradually shifting their allegiance to the pro-BJP Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) in the erstwhile Adilabad district.

The ideological shift among the workers is slow but it may gain pace. Some senior left leaders active in trade unions as also the CPI and the CPM and those elected as MLAs had died in recent years. A new leadership has not emerged and hence young activists here are not joining the left parties, unlike in the past.

The changes that took place in socio economic and political conditions in the last 15 years are influencing the minds of the youths and workers in altogether different ways. The growth of the BMS in the coal belt areas was nominal till recently. It gathered pace due to the weakening of leftist trade unionism in the SCCL and the increased role of money in the coal belt elections.

A significant step-up in BJP activities and the favourable results for the saffron party in the Dabba and GHMC polls too are having a positive impact here on trade union politics of the party that rules the Centre.

This ideological shift is quite visible among the Singareni workers in Mandamarri, Srirampur, Bellampalli and Ramagundam areas in the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL).

Over a period of time, people and workers in the coal belt area have developed a feeling that political parties decided on the trade union activities and workers' fate and not the trade unions themselves.

Saffron flags are flying at the coal mines and BMS is getting strengthened in the coal belt area especially in Srirampur area as days pass. Large numbers of Singareni workers are often seen attending BJP meetings. The other day, workers gave a rousing welcome to BJP state president Bandi Sanjay and party in-charge Tarun Chug in Srirampur.

3 held for foreign exchange fraud

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

The South Zone Task Force and the Rein Bazaar police on Tuesday arrested three inter-state gang members for cheating people under the guise of exchanging US dollars for Indian currency. Police recovered ₹3 lakh cash including \$200 and

THE ACCUSED, Anil ulShaik (42), Shahjan Shaik (29) and Wahab Sheik (34), belong to Udhwa, Jharkhand, who used to work as labourers. Another accused is on the run.

three cellphones from them. The accused, Anil ulShaik (42), Shahjan Shaik (29) and

Wahab Sheik (34), belong to Udhwa, Jharkhand, who used to work as labourers. Another accused is on the run.

Police said the gang members tell the target that they have about \$8,000 (about ₹5.8 lakh) which they were willing to exchange for ₹4 lakh as they were in urgent need of cash. Once the deal

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IN BRIEF

MIM is main Oppn in Modasa

Hyderabad: The MIM on Tuesday won nine out of the 12 seats it contested in the Modasa municipal council in Gujarat and secured main Opposition party status in its maiden attempt. It also bagged seven seats in the Godhra municipal elections and one seat in Bharuch. The party had earlier won seven seats in Ahmedabad.

Party president Asaduddin Owaisi thanked the people of Modasa for the MIM's performance. In a tweet, he said, "Grateful to the people of Modasa for blessing @aimim_national with their love & trusting us with their votes. We're now chief opposition party in Modasa & Inshallah we'll fulfil the role to best of our abilities. Congrats to our Gujarat election team & newly elected representatives (sic)."

PEOPLE WILL VOTE FOR VANI: DEPUTY CM**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 2**

Home minister Mahmood Ali on Tuesday asserted that TRS candidate Surabhi Vani will win the MLC poll from the Hyderabad-Ranga Reddy-Mahbubnagar constituency on the strength of welfare initiatives undertaken by the KCR government.

He was speaking after cutting a cake to mark his birthday at the Banjara Hills Ministers' Quarters in the presence of ministers Talasani Srinivas Yadav and Gangula Kamalakar. Mahmood Ali pointed out that TRS activists are spreading information about the welfare measures that people are getting after Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao came to power in 2014.

He asked all MLAs of various constituencies in the graduates constituency to work together and ensure the victory of Vani. "All party activists must make it a point to bring voters to the polling booth on the day of elections," Mahmood Ali underlined, assuring that all problems being faced by graduates will soon be resolved by the TRS.

Minister Srinivas Yadav said if development of Hyderabad is to continue people need to elect Vani.

BJYM PRESIDENT BOOKED DURING STIR FOR JOBS**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 2**

Telangana BJYM activists attempted to lay siege to the TSPSC office on Tuesday with a demand that the state government fulfill its promise of quickly filling two lakh vacancies in the government sector.

Under the leadership of BJYM state president Bhanu Prakash, activists held a protest in front of the PSC office. Police broke up the agitation and took Prakash into preventive custody.

Prakash said they had held dharnas at PSC office four times to press the demand and also tried to lay siege to the Pragati Bhavan. He demanded that IT minister K.T. Rama Rao come forward to have an open debate on how many jobs have been filled in the government sector after the TRS government came to power.

BJP leaders including party president Bandi Sanjay Kumar and MLC Ramchander Rao warned that chief minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao will also go to jail soon. Sanjay demanded the immediate release of BJYM president.

Sanjay alleged that Intelligence IG Prabhakar Rao should be ashamed of Bhanu's arrest.

Owaisi: Majoritarian democracy hits poor

Owaisi for participative democracy; to meet farmers

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

Asaduddin Owaisi

MIM PRESIDENT CONDEMNS GOGOI FOR ATTACKING JUDICIARY**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 2**

MIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi said on Tuesday that every downtrodden person in the country wants that his voice should be heard and his problems attended to, but he feels suffocated from the form of majoritarian democracy.

"If a majoritarian form of democracy continues, we would not be able to fulfill the dreams held by our freedom fighters. We have to revive and strengthen participative democracy," Owaisi said while addressing AIMIM's 63rd revival day celebrations at the party headquarters Darussalam.

Owaisi said the MIM emboldens the oppressed communities and raises a voice against injustice by expanding its base from state to state. "The party will decide when and where to contest as per its poll strategy." Here,

the BJP's national leadership came to defeat the MIM and started talking about a surgical strike, but they failed. "Now our party reached Gujarat to counter this surgical strike. Within a matter of a few days, our party succeeded in gaining public trust. We will contest in UP, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and other states," he said.

Owaisi expressed support to the farmers' agitation and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to listen to farmers' demands and repeal

the laws as these were not scriptures. "MIM stands with the farmers; it stands with the families of 200 farmers who died during the agitation. I salute them. PM Modi is not ready to withdraw these laws due to his arrogance."

The MIM chief said, "I am going to Malerkotla, stop me if you can. I will meet the Sikh brothers. The Muslims, Dalits,

Sikh, Christians and Adivasis and even many sections among the Hindus are looking for an alternate. BJP is losing its ground."

Owaisi said peace prevailed in Telangana for the last many years.

"This should be continued. For this, we will give credit to the KCR government, the administration and the police machinery."

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SHORT TAKES

GUJ. LOCAL POLLS:
BJP SURGES
AHEAD OF CONG.

Ahmedabad, March 2: The BJP gained a lead by winning 2,085 seats, while the Congress won 602 seats so far across various municipalities, district and taluka panchayats in Gujarat where results for 2,771 seats out of the total 8,474 were declared till 1 pm on Tuesday.

Counting of votes is underway since 9 am in 81 municipalities, 31 district panchayats, and 231 taluka panchayats where elections were held on Sunday. There are total 8,474 seats across the three local bodies. Candidates in 237 seats remain unopposed, the state election commission said.

By-elections were also held for two seats in taluka panchayats and 24 seats in municipalities. As per the results available till 1 pm, the BJP has so far bagged 2,085 seats, while the Congress has won 602 seats across these local bodies, the SEC said.

New entrant Aam Aadmi Party has won 15 seats, Bahujan Samaj Party-5, while independents have won 42 seats, it said. In municipalities, the BJP has so far won 803 seats and the Congress-159.

In district panchayats, the BJP has till now bagged 246 seats and the Congress-55.

In taluka panchayats, the BJP has so far emerged victorious in 1,036 seats and the Congress in 388 seats.

GAZIPUR
BORDER CLOSED
AGAIN

New Delhi, March 2: The Delhi Police on Tuesday afternoon closed the Ghazipur border again, hours after it reopened a portion of NH-9 for traffic movement, officials said.

The stretch was closed since January 26 when violence broke out during the farmers' tractor parade in the national capital on Republic Day.

The one side of the road which goes towards Ghaziabad from Delhi was opened for traffic in the morning.

Thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, have been camping at the Delhi border points — Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur — demanding a repeal of the three farm laws enacted by the Centre in September last year.

Meanwhile, Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), which is spearheading anti-farm law protests in Delhi, will send its leaders to poll-bound states to appeal to farmers there to defeat the BJP in assembly elections, leaders of the outfit said on Tuesday. The protesting farmers will also block the KMP (Western Peripheral) Expressway on March 6 as the anti-farm law protest at Delhi borders completes 100 days. The expressway will be blocked at various points for five hours, from 11 am on March 6, SKM leader Yogendra Yadav said. He said SKM leaders will hold a public meeting in Kolkata on March 12 to appeal to the farmers of poll-bound states.

SKM leader Balbir Singh Rajewal said that SKM teams will visit poll-bound states, including West Bengal and Kerala, to appeal to farmers to defeat the BJP.

"We will not seek votes for any party. We will appeal to them to vote for those candidates who can defeat the BJP which has failed to address farmers' issues," Rajewal said.

CONGRESS'
G-23 CRISIS
WORSENS

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 2

The Congress high command finds itself pushed in a corner after the public spat between the G-23 leaders and party loyalists.

Senior Congress leader Anand Sharma who is part of the G-23 on Monday slammed the party's tie-up with ISF in West Bengal, saying it was against the "Gandhian and Nehruvian secularism" and the party cannot be selective in fighting the "communalists".

Hitting back, the West Bengal Congress chief and Lok Sabha MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Monday posted a series of tweets titled "Know Your Facts, Anand Sharma ji". "Would urge a select group of distinguished Congressmen to rise above always seeking personal comfort spots and stop wasting time singing praises of PM," he said. Interestingly the issue is not limited to a small alliance partner. The change seekers within the party have been complaining of lack of transparency within the party. The high command has done virtually nothing to assuage such a feeling.

There was meeting that was called by the Congress president Sonia Gandhi in December last year post that the high command has done nothing.

The party loyalists feel that these leaders should raise their voices in party forums and not go public like the Jammu outing. But the change seekers say that there is not a single forum left in the party where they can air their grievances.

Refuting the second charge that why aren't the G-23 campaigning in the poll bound states one of the leader said, "we are not star campaigners nobody wants us to campaign so how can we campaign."



All India Congress Committee general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra joins tea workers at Sadhuru tea garden in Assam on Tuesday. — PTI

Priyanka: Cong. will bring law to nullify CAA in Assam

Announces several sops including five lakh govt jobs in 5 years

MANOJ ANAND / DC
GUWAHATI, MARCH 2

Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

"If our party comes into power, a law will be enacted to ensure that CAA is not implemented in Assam. 200 units of electricity will be given free of cost every month to every household," said Gandhi.

"We will provide ₹2,000 per month to all the housewives as 'grihini samman'. The woman working in tea gardens will be provided ₹365 per day. We'll create five lakh new govt jobs. These are not promises but guarantee," she added.

Concluding her two days long visit to Assam, Gandhi also clarified that

tea garden owners need not worry as some part of proposed hike in minimum wages of garden workers would also be shared by the state government.

The senior Congress leader who was seen plucking tea leaves and interacting with tea garden workers in Biswanath said, "Just few days back the BJP government has increased the daily wages of tea garden workers from ₹167 to ₹217 but it has not been implemented as yet. If we are voted to power we will increase it to ₹365. This is our commitment."

Earlier Gandhi was given a rousing welcome when she arrived at the Sadhuru tea garden. She spent nearly 30 minutes at the garden before leaving for Tezpur in Sonitpur district.

Gandhi's visit to a tea garden assumes significance as the BJP government recently increased the daily wages of tea garden workers.

Later in the day, Gandhi also visited the residence of a local tea garden worker in Tezpur district for a meal.

With close to 10 lakh tea workers and over 60 lakh population of the tea tribe, the garden workers community has been a major vote bank in Assam. The tea tribe com-

munity is a deciding factor in as many as 35 assembly seats, out of a total 126 in Assam. The state in last few elections has noticed a major shift in Assam tea garden voters from Congress to BJP.

Assam Assembly elections will be held in three phases. In the first phase, 47 seats in 12 districts will go to the polls on March 27.

In the second phase, 39 constituencies in 13 districts will go to the polls on April 1 while 40 assembly constituencies in 12 districts to go on polls on April 6. The counting of votes will take place on May 2.

Karat urges CJI to take back 'marry' remarks

New Delhi, March 2: CPI(M) Politburo member Brinda Karat has written to Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde urging him to withdraw his remarks made during the hearing of a case where he asked a rape accused if he was willing to marry the victim, saying that courts should not give an impression of supporting such "retrograde" approaches.

Karat was referring to remarks made during the hearing of a plea filed by a public servant, who is accused of repeatedly raping a girl, against the Bombay High Court February 5 order which had cancelled his anticipatory bail.

The Left leader said that these questions, words and actions have serious implications in granting of bail in

cases of rape of minors.

"Please reconsider and withdraw these comments and questions... Please uphold the judgment of the Aurangabad High Court which rules that bail granted to him by the lower court was 'atrocious,'" she said.

When the hearing on the plea commenced on Monday, the bench also comprising Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Rama-

subramanian, asked the

said, "The girl was gagged and raped by this criminal, when she was just sixteen years old. He repeated his crime 10-12 times. The girl tried to commit suicide. Does this show consent? In any case, in the case of a minor, as this girl was, the law is clear that there is no issue of consent."

— PTI

As the counsel said that the accused is a public servant, the bench said, You should have thought this before seducing and raping the girl. You knew that you are a government servant.

The apex court granted the accused protection from arrest for four weeks to allow him to apply for regular bail in the trial court.

In the letter, Karat said, "The girl was gagged and raped by this criminal, when she was just sixteen years old. He repeated his crime 10-12 times. The girl tried to commit suicide. Does this show consent? In any case, in the case of a minor, as this girl was, the law is clear that there is no issue of consent."

The counsel appearing for the petitioner said that the accused was initially willing to marry the girl but she had refused and now he

was married to someone else.

As the counsel said that the accused is a public servant, the bench said, You should have thought this before seducing and raping the girl. You knew that you are a government servant.

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— PTI

Puducherry jolt for BJP as NR Congress set to dump it

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR / DC
CHENNAI, MARCH 2

Despite its systematic and meticulous machinations in downing the Congress in the former French colony, perhaps with a view to turning it into a gateway to the South, the BJP has received a big jolt in Puducherry. N. Rangasamy of the NR Congress has sent out a subtle message that he would be going it alone in the April 6 elections.

Though the NR Congress played along with the BJP in the political game to topple the previous Congress government led by V. Narayansamy, the party founder Rangasamy is now having second thoughts on continuing with the BJP, particularly after he visited the tomb of Appa Paithiyam Swamy, his spiritual guru, near Salem.

MALAYALAM FILM DIRECTOR RANJITH MAY CONTEST AS CPM CANDIDATE

GILVESTER ASSARY / DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
MARCH 2

Noted Malayalam film director Ranjith is likely to contest as LDF candidate from North Kozhikode.

The CPM leadership has got in touch with the director to ascertain his thoughts about contesting the polls. "If CPM asks me to con-

tend I will surely be in the fray. They had sought my opinion. I have expressed a favourable opinion," Ranjith told media persons.

The 56 year old director's films *Thirakkatha* and *Indian Rupee* won National Film Award for best feature film in Malayalam in 2008 and 2011. *Spirit* — best film on social issues in 2012.

Rangasamy, who has acknowledged that his life revolved around Appa Paithiyam Swamy's guidance in the past, would not take any decision without consulting the guru when he was alive. After the swamy attained Samadhi near

Salem in 2000, the 70-year-old bachelor politician visits the tomb to get directions through 'telepathic message' that he claims to get while meditating there.

The ground reality, too, is that his party would lose its sizable vote bank if the BJP soon.

Such a decision would seriously impact the schemes of BJP, which was apparently aiming at grabbing power in league with NR Congress and AIADMK and then install its own candidate as the Chief Minister.

POLICE TELECOM HQS, MADHYA PRADESH

Bhabhada Road, Bhopal-462 003

Fax No. 0755-2443674, E-mail: sspradiompbpl@gmail.com

Date: 26/02/2021

NIT No.: PDM/Pur/UHF-Indore/F-249/2021,

Notice Inviting Tender (IV-Call)

Fourth e-Tenders are invited by Senior Superintending of Police (Radio) MP Bhopal for the following items:-

S. No	Name of Item	Tender Fee	Required EMD
1	Design, Supply, Installation and Commissioning of UHF Digital Radio Trunking System on "Turn-key" Basis for Indore District		
a	APCO-25 Phase-II Technology as per giving BOQ Annexure-A		
	OR	30,000/-	30,00,000/-
b	DMR Tier-III Technology as per given BOQ Annexure-B		

- Cost of tender documents (Tender Fee) is non-refundable and cannot be exempted in any condition.
- The Tender should be submitted online on website <https://www.mptenders.gov.in> in favour of DRDO MP Bhopal within scheduled date and time. Tender fees and EMD should be deposited online through the website.
- Tender documents also available for ready reference on the website of MP Police (www.mppolice.gov.in).
- This is a "Turn Key" Project.

5. Schedule:

Documents download/Sale Start Date	26/02/2021 from 1800 Hrs.
Pre-Bid Meeting	05/03/2021 at 1200 Hrs.
Bid Submission Start Date	11/03/2021 from 1200 Hrs.
Bid Submission End Date	25/03/2021 up to 1700 Hrs.
P.Q. Bid will be opened on	26/03/2021 at 1710 Hrs.

Sd/- Sr. Superintendent of Police (Radio) Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal

दो गज की दूरी, मालक है जलरी।

NORTHERN RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM

Ref: i) Tender Notice No. 53/20-21 dated 09.02.2021 (S.No. 02)
ii) Tender No. 08201513 due on 08.03.2021
In reference to above tender, the (due date has been extended from 08.03.2021 to 22.03.2021) (Eligibility criteria has been revised). All other terms and conditions remain unchanged. The corrigendum has been published on website www.reps.gov.in. 467/2021 SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM

Ref: i) Tender Notice No. 53/20-21 dated 09.02.2021 (S.No. 04)
ii) Tender No. 08201517 due on 08.03.2021
In reference to above tender, the (due date has been extended from 08.03.2021 to 19.03.2021) (Eligibility criteria has been revised). All other terms and conditions remain unchanged. The corrigendum has been published on website www.reps.gov.in. 466/2021 SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM

Ref: i) Tender Notice No. 53/20-21 dated 09.02.2021 (S.No. 05)
ii) Tender No. 08205219 due on 08.03.2021
In reference to above tender, the (due date has been extended from 08.03.2021 to 22.03.2021) (Eligibility criteria has been revised). All other terms and conditions remain unchanged. The corrigendum has been published on website www.reps.gov.in. 469/2021 SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

DECCAN Chronicle

3 MARCH 2021

Hope in war on Covid as vaccine drive picks pace

Participating in the vaccination drive aiming to inoculate senior citizens and those above 45 years of age with a health condition, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has generated a signal encouraging a vast section of people, estimated to be in the region of 27 crores, to take the jab. There has been a slight decline in the daily average of new cases in India but it is far too early to be dropping the guard. There are a number of regions that are experiencing another surge in infections, which can be blunted only by vaccinating close to 70 per cent of the population even as precautionary measures like social distancing and the wearing of masks is observed universally and with life-saving discipline.

There is still a debate over the efficacy of the Covaxin, which the Prime Minister took. The data and findings from Phase 3 trials are yet to be scrutinised and reviewed though it is a positive sign that the number of adverse events relating to administration of the wholly indigenous vaccine is thus far insignificant. The inoculation rate is going to be the biggest challenge for India with a huge number of two-dose vaccinations to be undertaken. The minimum number of jabs would have to be in the range of 20 lakhs a day to have any impact on the big numbers to achieve anything close to immunity for the community.

The key to containing urban surges is the vaccine even if there is no guarantee on efficacy against the Brazilian strain, which is said to be reinfecting those who have had the virus

The number of hospitalisations and deaths has plummeted, not only in India, and what the enhanced vaccine drive primarily promises is to bring them further down to negligible levels. Realistically, it will be months before vaccination can dent the pandemic. But is there a better way to fight the coronavirus than that is evolving dangerously now into contagious variants that are threatening to sidestep the human immune system? As new threats emerge, science is already tweaking the vaccine to try and quickly take on the dominant forms like the UK, South African and Brazilian variants. A third dose of new vaccines may be needed to take care of threats from newer strains but that is a long way from

where we are at the moment.

It may be India's good fortune that the fatality rate is very low while the recovery rate is as high as 97.07 per cent. The summer ahead should see heat and humidity help more in containing the survival of the virus even as more people get immune after getting infected or get vaccinated. The key to containing urban surges is the vaccine even if there is no guarantee on efficacy against the Brazilian strain, which is said to be reinfecting those who have had the virus. Privatisation of the vaccine effort has come like a booster shot.

The way forward towards opening up the economy fully as well as all the schools can only be after this fuller rollout of the vaccine programme has been in operation in the next few months and tends to people outside of the health and frontline workers and senior citizens.

Rape case: Bizarre suggestion

India's Supreme Court on Monday turned itself into the theatre of the absurd when the Chief Justice of India, who not only presided over a three-judge bench but also the Indian judicial system, sought to check with a man accused of raping a minor if he was willing to marry her. The man was unable to answer in the affirmative only because he was already married. The court, however, set aside an order of the high court and prevented his arrest for four weeks.

It's sad, absurd and bizarre that someone needs to remind their lordships that rape of a minor is not a compoundable offence under Indian legal system, though it talks of such offences. The Indian parliament created that piece of legislation, the Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, with a view to protecting minor children from predators and to ensure that violators are dealt with an iron hand. The court's job was limited to see if the man in the dock is guilty or innocent or if he deserves a lenient treatment. But it just cannot broker a compromise — never a marriage — and perpetuate a crime.

Would the court have ordered their marriage were the accused unmarried? Under Article 141 of our Constitution, an order of the Supreme Court of India is the law of the land and all the courts in the country need to align their observations and orders with it. Such an order would have been gross and grotesque miscarriage of justice and plain negation of the legislative intention. The CJI who, in another case, refused to recognise the term marital rape and asked a petitioner if sex in a marriage can be termed rape, however cruel it is, would do well to rescind his suggestions and observations and deliver justice as per his constitutional mandate. He owes that much to the women, and their parents, in this country.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

K. SUDHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

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Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08

Karan Singh

Art of ageing: The five facets, and what work goes into each

There are two things that we do from the moment that we are born all the way to the moment when we die, breathing and ageing. It is, therefore, necessary for us to be aware of the many methods of breathing which includes pranayam and other such practices, as well as of the many dimensions of ageing. I have identified five dimensions of ageing.

The first dimension is chronological, depending on our birth date. This obviously cannot be legally changed.

The second dimension is physiological age. Some people are healthy at 80, others unhealthy at 40. This depends considerably on the individual lifestyle adopted when we were young, including food habits (overeating is to be avoided); tobacco (smoking is an anti-social act because it poisons not only the smoker but all those around them); alcohol and drugs (these are highly addictive and cause severe psychosomatic damage); and a sedentary lifestyle (exercise remains essential for our whole life). This is where ancient disciplines such as yoga and tai chi are of tremendous benefit. Young people should always remember that what

they do when young will have a major impact on the quality of their later years.

The third dimension is emotional age. Unfortunately, our educational system does not involve advice regarding how to maintain emotional stability. As a result of tension at the workplace and at home, and as we age the loss of friends and dear ones, tensions within the family, between husband and wife and between parents and children as well as financial problems, all add up to the growing emotional trauma that we are now witnessing. There has been an exponential growth in mental illness and depression around the world due to the pandemic. This is particularly painful for elderly people and, therefore, we must, through meditation, yoga or any other means, learn to come to terms with our emotional problems. In India, psychological counselling is still in its infancy and needs to be strengthened, although some gurus do fulfil this role. Trained counsellors can make a marked difference towards helping elderly people deal with their emotional problems.

The fourth dimension is intellectual

age. The body-mind relationships are now well established, and as we plan to have a healthy old age, our brain has to function in a positive and creative manner. This involves the practice of reading, doing puzzles, playing indoor games and so on. We must always remember that the brain has an infinite capacity to grow. As a famous psychologist has said, "people do not grow old, when they stop growing they become old". I am often asked how it is that at ninety I seem to remain psychologically as active as ever. The reason basically is divine grace. In addition, I continue to walk half-an-hour every day, read a variety of books, mainly the glorious Upanishads, play bridge with my computer, invariably do the Asian Age scrabble, and of course, pursue my puja, pranayam and bhakti for two hours a day. Simply being a passive viewer of television may, in fact, have a negative impact, especially if we watch movies or serials full of violence and hatred. The Internet can also be a mixed blessing and we must use it responsibly.

Finally, there is spiritual age. Here we enter an ageless realm, because the

spiritual quest cannot be put into a time straitjacket. Life is not merely a meaningless journey from the womb to the tomb, but a unique opportunity for spiritual growth. All religions speak of an inner light, which represents our spiritual goal. The Bible calls it "the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world", the Sufis call it the Noor-e-Ruhani, the Sikhs call it Ek Onkar, the Vedanta calls it the Effulgent Light of Lights. Whatever path we may be following it is very important that elderly people do have a spiritual awareness which will be a great support and solace to them in the ageing process.

I must finally address the question of death which ultimately will come to us all. The Gita simply says "that which is born must die and that which dies must be reborn; therefore, for what is inevitable, we should not grieve". Of course, this is easier said than done, but if possible we should approach death with courage and dignity. This will depend to a considerable extent on how modern medicine can keep us comfortable. Geriatrics is now a specialised branch of medicine dealing

exclusively with the problems of old age, and both pharmacological and handicapped-friendly products are growing rapidly. Buildings now are legally required to have special facilities for the handicapped. There is also the delicate question of giving terminally ill people the Right to Die. In fact, this is one of the last human rights that humanity has not yet achieved and is the subject of an animated international debate.

Let me end with a Vedic prayer for a long and vigorous life that has come down to us through the long and tortuous corridors of time:

"For a hundred autumns, may we see
For a hundred autumns, may we live
For a hundred autumns, may we know
For a hundred autumns, may we rise
For a hundred autumns, may we be
For a hundred autumns, may we become
Aye, and even more than a hundred autumns"

— Atharva Veda XIX 67

The writer is a senior Congress leader and a former Union minister

THE SHOT...

Subhani



More than a state battle: BJP strategy on test too



Shikha Mukerjee

West Bengal has always been able to buck the trend, overturn expectations and be an uncontrollable force in Indian politics. The 2021 Assembly polls will be a reflection of the particular politics of West Bengal, where the local is entangled with the national and works its way into the contemporary discourse on democracy and the nature of the threats that endanger its survival as an organically evolving political and institutional form.

From December 18, 2020, after the defection of a key leader from East Midnapore, Suvendu Adhikari, it seemed that the Trinamul Congress was on the run. By the time Mamata Banerjee reached Dunlop on February 24, an industrial wasteland after the closure of the legendary tyre factory immediately after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public meeting at the same venue, she worked out her offensive strategy that would unshackle her from the corner into which the anti-TMC parties — BJP, CPI(M)-led Left Front and Congress — had tried to box her in.

Till then it was a fight between the very different but powerful charismatic appeal of Narendra Modi versus Mamata Banerjee. It was also a confrontation over nation-nationalism, secularism versus Hindu vote consolidation by raising anxieties over the legitimacy of claimants as Indian citizens and the anti-Hindu decisions of the Mamata Banerjee government to appease the Muslim minority, on whose votes she was perceived as disproportionately dependent.

In Dunlop, Ms Banerjee attacked the Modi government's move to raise petrol-diesel-LPG prices. She pointedly referred to the withdrawal of the kerosene subsidy and its

disappearance from the market, that increased hardship for the poorest 20 million of the state's population. By the time she rode a scooter back from her Nabanna office on February 26, the elections had been transformed from an Assembly contest into a partial referendum on the Narendra Modi government's performance.

The West Bengal election has morphed. The Modi government's actions and policies, brutally ignoring the farmers' protests seeking repeal of the three controversial agricultural laws, incremental hikes in petrol-diesel-LPG and kerosene prices, centralising power and decision-making in New Delhi by invalidating the claims of federalism and usurping the rights and powers of the states on education, healthcare, agriculture, social welfare, as is much under the scanner as is the performance of Mamata Banerjee's government.

By February 28, with the announcement of the CPI(M)-led Left Front-Congress-Indian Secular Front led by Pizada Abbasuddin Siddiqui of Furture Sharif, a rookie politician with a newly hatched platform, the transformation of the election into a political consolidation against the BJP's communally polarising and anxiety-induced divisive agenda was complete. The ISF and the anointing of Pizada Abbasuddin at a mammoth Brigade Parade Ground rally could be the "X" factor that makes an unprecedented election fascinatingly unpredictable — never before has a cleric-led party come to the assistance of the Left to oust the BJP's communally polarising politics.

By turning it into an early mid-term review of the Modi government's

WEST BENGAL ELECTION 2021

The unintended consequence of the ISF joining forces with the CPI(M) means Ms Banerjee has been bleached clean of one of the BJP's most effective charges against her — of Muslim appeasement

on the verge of a revival, with the infusion of the ISF's new blood. The earlier nebulous form of the 2021 election has acquired substance. There are two simultaneous battles going on in the elections to the five Assemblies — against the BJP, which will be the larger context within which the local contests will play out. It's only in West Bengal that the BJP has set itself a challenge. In the other states, like Tamil Nadu, the tussle is within the AIADMK over

It remains for the BJP to offer an alternative appeal that is local to West Bengal, instead of a promise to cut and paste the Modi model of development via the "double engine sarkar". It may need to review its strategy because raking up religious identity could be alienating, citizenship and identity too could be alienating and it would be very risky to offer itself as a defender of Bengali culture, because pinning down this elusive but tangible and powerful force is never simple, not even for a diehard Bengali.

It's very unfortunate that IPL matches will not be played in Hyderabad. Mohammed Azharuddin and other office bearers have tried but failed. Even now it's not too late. Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao should intervene and convince the organisers to include Hyderabad for the matches. Hope Hyderabadis will get an opportunity to see young players in action.

LETTERS

MUSI RIVER

Last year, floods ravaged Hyderabad and served as a wake-up call to the dangers of encroaching on lakes (DC, Musi panel lists 6k illegal units, razes just 2 in 3 yrs, DC, March 2). But nearly five months later, the response has been extremely slow. The Musi River Development Corporation Limited has only managed to remove a handful of illegal structures along the river. Hopefully work will pick up speed.

Hanisha Bhupathiraju
Hyderabad

TWITTER WAR

Both the BJP and the TRS do not have answers for their claims on providing jobs (KTR, Ramachander slug it out on jobs; DC, March 2). While the TRS did not have an answer for claiming to have provided 1.32 lakh posts in government departments in seven years, the BJP did not substantiate its claim of having promised 12 crore jobs and remitting ₹15 lakh in Jan Dhan accounts.

Vaddeti Venunath
Hyderabad

IPL IN HYDERABAD

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Dr G.V. Kumar
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Curfew in Dacca as violence flares up

NEW DELHI, March 2 An eleven-hour curfew was imposed in the East Pakistan capital of Dacca this evening as popular resentment against the postponement of the National Assembly session and the subsequent tightening of the military of the regime's control over the country erupted into violence in the city.

Radio Pakistan said the imposition of the curfew from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. (local time) followed "large-scale looting and arson and other unlawful activities" in Dacca.

exclusively with the problems of old age, and both pharmacological and handicapped-friendly products are growing rapidly. Buildings now are legally required to have special facilities for the handicapped. There is also the delicate question of giving terminally ill people the Right to Die. In fact, this is one of the last human rights that humanity has not yet achieved and is the subject of an animated international debate.

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corridors of time:

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"Aye, and even more than a hundred autumns"

— Atharva Veda XIX 67

The writer is a senior Congress leader and a former Union minister

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INDIA'S FIRST MOVIE BASED ON CROSS TIME CONNECTION

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S&P 500*	3,872.20	-0.76
Dollar (₹)	73.37	0.25
Pound Sterling (₹)	101.73	0.82
Euro (₹)	88.08	0.53
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	44,760.679	1.51
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	63.66	-0.05
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.236	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.434	-0.012

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Lebanese pound falls to new low of 10,000 to dollar

Lebanon's pound tumbled towards 10,000 to the dollar, a record low for a currency battered by a financial meltdown that has fuelled poverty and unrest. The collapse has slashed about 85 per cent of the currency's value in country relying heavily on imports. Prices of many consumer goods have tripled. Political leaders have failed to agree a rescue plan since the crisis erupted in late 2019 as dollar inflows dried up.

Printed & Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press at Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. #563/9/D&E, Behind Andhra Bank Pet Basheerbagh, Kompaaly, Ranga Reddy Dist. Editor: T Venkatram Reddy, RNI Reg No. APENG/2008/24282. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle ® is prohibited.

Ministry ready with list of 400 investable projects \$82 bn being invested in port projects: Modi

New Delhi, March 2: India will invest \$82 billion in port projects by 2035, raise share of clean renewable energy source in maritime sector, develop waterways, augment seaplane services and boost tourism around lighthouses, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday, urging global players to make India a "preferred investment destination".

As many as 400 projects with investment potential to the tune of \$31 billion are ready for investors, who can be a part of India's growth trajectory, Modi said inaugurating the Maritime India Summit.

"More than 574 projects at a cost of \$82 billion or Rs 6 lakh crore have been identified under the Sagarmala project for implementation during



2030 and 2035... We will encourage private investment in the port sector... India's long coastline awaits you. India's hard-working people await you. "Invest in our ports. Invest in our people. Let India be your preferred trade destination. Let Indian ports be your port of call for trade and commerce," the Prime Minister said as he invited players to invest in ports, shipyards and waterways. The Ministry of Ports,

Shipping and Waterways is ready with a list of 400 investable projects with investment potential of \$31 billion or Rs 2.25 lakh crore, Modi said adding, this will further strengthen India's commitment of overall development of its maritime sector.

"Through this Maritime India summit, I want to invite the world to come to India and be a part of our growth trajectory. India is emerging as a leading blue economy of the world. Our

leading focus area includes upgrading current infrastructure, creating next generation infra, boosting the reform journey. Through these steps we aim to give vision to our Atmanirbhar Bharat," he said.

Modi noted that "ours is a government that is investing in waterways in a way that was never seen before. Domestic waterways are found to be cost effective and environment friendly ways of transporting freight. We aim to operate 23 waterways by 2030."

He said this will be done through infrastructure enhancement, fairway development, navigation aid and river information system provisions and focus will also be given on augmenting regional connectivity to Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar. — PTI

Airtel adds extra safety layer to online payment

FC BUREAU
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

With the fear of online fraud keeping away a large chunk of Indians from digital payments, Bharti Airtel has come up with an additional authentication layer to secure transactions of its payment bank customers. The feature called Safe Pay is available only for Airtel Payments Bank customers who use the Airtel mobile

network.

"The Airtel SafePay uses an additional 'third-factor' authentication to process the customer's payment transaction. Currently, all banks and e-wallets have only two-factor authentication as mandated by the Reserve Bank of India," Anubrata Biswas, MD and CEO of Airtel Payments Bank told this newspaper.

The Safe Pay feature was launched in January. In around 30 days, Biswas said the bank has got 2.5 lakh customers using the Safe Pay feature. He expects one crore people to use this security feature in a couple of years.

Post-Covid pandemic, digital payments have increased manifold in the country. The data provided by the National Payments Corporation of India shows that in February, transactions based on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) hit a volume of

over 229.29 crore, which is 96 crore more in volume recorded in February last year. The total transaction value over one year increased from Rs 2.22 lakh crore in February 2020 to Rs 4.25 lakh crore in February 2021.

However, a study conducted by UK-based market research firm YouGov revealed that nearly half of the Indian consumers are concerned about digital payments fraud.

Commenting on the

SHORT TAKES

Federer pulls out of Miami tourney

Miami: Defending champion Roger Federer has withdrawn from this month's Miami Open as he works his way back to full fitness following surgeries to repair his right knee, US media reported on Monday.

The 39-year-old Swiss star, who has not played since losing in the semi-finals of last year's Australian Open, is due to make his return from a year-long layoff at the Qatar Open in Doha next week.

However the Miami Herald cited Federer's agent Tony Godsick as saying on Monday that the 20-time Grand Slam singles champion had opted to skip the Miami tournament for scheduling reasons.

The Herald said Federer could play in Dubai after Doha but would then take a training break. Federer's withdrawal is a blow to organizers of the Miami tournament, who were forced to cancel last year's event as Covid-19 chaos left sport in North America at a standstill. — AFP

Para-athlete misses dope test

New Delhi: World champion and Tokyo Paralympics-bound javelin thrower Sandeep Chaudhary allegedly went missing before an out-of-competition dope test at his training base here, officials of the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) have said.

The "running away" of Chaudhary, who is under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) of the government, from the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium complex has also raised serious concerns regarding the protocols being followed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"When a team of dope testing officials from abroad came recently to take dope samples from Sandeep as per to the whereabouts he had given, he went missing. He might have run away from the JLN stadium complex where he is based," a PCI official said on condition of anonymity.

The 24-year-old Chaudhary, who had also won a javelin gold in the 2018 Asian Para Games in Indonesia, could not be immediately reached for a comment. He is one of the three Indian para athletes included in the registered testing pool of the International Paralympic Committee. — PTI

Koushik punches big, whacks double century

Rohan, Harish, Abhishek, Rohit, Siddharth, Takshith, Vikranth, Geeta, Harshavardhan, Aaron, Likith, Waseem, Sai, Sudhir, Khush, Aditya, Baji, Abhay, Chandrakanth, Yashaswi, Sainath also do well in local league matches



Sai Koushik, Abhishek, Takshith Rao, Geeta Krishna, Khush Agarwal, Yashaswi Yeles

43.3 overs (Varun Vinod 45, Siddhath Reddy 52, Ghazi Abbas 75 n.o). Points: Hyderabad Wanderers 5, Medak District 0.

■ Deccan Wanderers 347 in 8.61 overs (Aditya Javvaji 118 — 163b, 19x4, 2x6), Kanthi Kiran 65, A Bharath 4/34) vs Telangana.

■ Galaxy CC 200 in 47.4 overs (SK Bajji 104 — 124b, 19x4), Darsh Mohan Lal 31, Vanish Sharma 5/40), Shaik Madassir 3/23) vs Balaji Colts 90/1 in 37 overs.

■ Kishoresons 330 in 80.2 overs (Manav Agarwal 73, K Nitin 59, Durgesh L 50, Trilok 4/62, J. Harish 4/76) lost to Youngmaster 333/8 in 79.3 overs (Aaron George 159 n.o. — 185b, 18x4, Abhishek Yadav 45). Points: Youngmaster 5, Kishoresons 0.

■ Brothers XI 327 in 77.1 overs (Likith 149 — 182b, 27x4), Advaith 33, K. Hari Krishna 73, Avinash 43, Rishikesh Yadav 4/37) vs Future Star 20/0 in 10 overs.

■ Sunline CC 319 in 72 overs (Mir Sved Ali 81, Mir Waseem Ali 138 n.o. — 156b, 23x4, 2x6, Md Atta 4/39) vs Time CC.

■ Osmania 97 in 23.4 overs (M. Shiva Srikant Naidu 4/45, Abhay Swaroop 5/21 — 6-1-21-5) lost to Deccan Blues 98/3 in 17.2 overs (Deepak 48, Charan 34).

■ International CC 471/8 in 90 overs (Akash Karthikeya 95, Ankith 80, Vijay Vardhan 53, Sravan 76, Prem Sai 97 n.o., Ruthwik 3/65, Nishant 3/94) vs SN Group 9/1 in 9 overs.

■ Green Turf 366 in 90 overs (Syed Afzal 86, Anmol Singh Sethi 87, Gautam Sarika 49, Ayman Arif 43, Hemant D 4/18) vs Saleemangar 30/1 in 10 overs.

■ New Star CC 155 in 62 overs (Alk Kumar Singh 54, Yash Raj 42, Sai Kumar 4/14) lost to RJCC 161/3 in 22.2 overs (E. Akash 44, Shrinithi Reddy 59 n.o., Mirza Mudassir Baig 3/43). Points: RJCC 5, New Star 0.

■ New Blues 230 in 63.2 overs (Md Nadeem Khan 60, Vipin Choudhary 51, V. Anjaneyulu 4/40) vs Visaka 40/0 in 12 overs.

■ Saty Satya 232 in 66.4 overs (Subrajith Nag 40, Sai Krishna Reddy 39, P. Pranay 44, Vishal Yadav 30, Prateek Sehgal 31, Bhargav Anand Goud 4/42, G Surya Kiran 3/36) vs Postal 68/0 in 9 overs.

■ Pasha Beedi 204 in 63 overs (Md Faiz Ahmed 68, K. Shreyas Goud 49, Mukthair Ahmed 3/30) vs Vijay Hanuman 103/1 in 28 overs.

Rashid rocks on at State Snooker

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

Rashid, Mohammed Afzal, Kalyan and Mushtaq shone in the senior snooker category at the Telangana State Ranking Snooker & Billiards Championship being played at the Telangana Cue Sports Association premises at Khajaguda on Tuesday.

In the third round, Rashid packed off Phani Raj 3-1 (30-55, 60-25, 52-16, 62-29), Afzal nailed Naresh Kumar 3-1 (56-38, 69-33, 64-29), Kalyan blanked Aziz 3-0 (56-15, 55-22, 106[56]-16) and Mushtaq

mauled Arveen Banne 3-0 (61-32, 68[61]-11, 89-55), which included a fine break of 61.

■ **THE RESULTS**
■ Senior Snooker third round: Rashid bt Phani Raj 3-1 (30-55, 60-25, 52-16, 62-29); Md Afzal bt Naresh Kumar 3-1 (56-38, 69-33, 64-29, 53-20); Kalyan bt Aziz 3-0 (56-15, 55-22, 106[56]-16); Mushtaq bt Arveen Banne 3-0 (61-32, 68[61]-11, 89-55); Himanshu bt Sandee 3-0 (63-27, 73-21, 66-26); Nabil bt Ziaullah Khan 3-0 (60-6, 61-42, 43-37); Rizwan bt Saad Salman 3-0 (43-32, 53-50, 64-51); Yashasvi bt Prem 3-0 (69-32, 60-26, 65-23); Md

Saleem bt P. Avinash 3-0 (60-24, 57-36, 61-31); Khalid Pasha bt Khaleel Feroze 3-2 (45-59, 41-43, 86-40, 61-26, 64-34); Arvind bt Riyaz 3-1 (47-7, 66-42, 87-28, 53-18); John Bosco bt Faisal 3-0 (50-0, 69-16, 67-20); Clinton bt Mubashir Ahmed 3-0 (60-14, 78-48, 63-24); Mithra bt Abdul Ghazi 3-1 (73-11, 65[50]-10, 48-66, 49-42); Vishwanath bt Aslam 3-0 (54-49, 62-59, 65-52); Junaid Azhar bt R. Avinash 3-2 (55-44, 46-76, 42-49, 55-41, 61-21); Murali bt Naresh 3-2 (46-20, 28-43, 26-67, 52-35, 71-41); Balakrishna bt Dev Pal 3-2 (37-78[56], 36-69, 69-14, 60-41, 27-64, 35-54, 62-11); Brandon bt Prashanth 3-1 (62-21, 68-26, 46-68, 64-25); Ajay Bushan bt Abhishek 3-2 (15-61, 49-59, 60-48, 72-25, 47-39); Syed Ahmed bt Vibhas 3-1 (69-35, 52-76[56], 65-10, 65-15); Bharat bt Saurav 3-2 (26-51, 57-28, 44-58, 74-44, 80-35); ■ Senior Snooker second round: Rashid Qureshi bt Abhilash 3-1 (30-63, 50-13, 59-15, 59-43); Vishwanath Reddy bt Kishan Kumar 3-2 (73-25, 22-81, 31-50, 66-11, 79-1); Yashasvi bt Sadiq Naqvi 3-1 (63-10, 40-60, 73-43, 56-44); Pragnesh bt Abdul Salman 3-2 (52-20, 56-41, 27-64, 35-54, 62-11); Brandon bt P. Avinash 3-0 (60-47, 67-22); Brandon bt Prashanth 3-1 (62-21, 68-26, 46-68, 64-25); Ajay Bushan bt Abhishek 3-2 (15-61, 49-59, 60-48, 72-25, 47-39); Syed Ahmed bt Vibhas 3-1 (69-35, 52-76[56], 65-10, 65-15); Bharat bt Saurav 3-2 (26-51, 57-28, 44-58, 74-44, 80-35); ■ Senior Snooker second round: Rashid Qureshi bt Abhilash 3-1 (30-63, 50-13, 59-15, 59-43); Vishwanath Reddy bt Kishan Kumar 3-2 (73-25, 22-81, 31-50, 66-11, 79-1); Yashasvi bt Sadiq Naqvi 3-1 (63-10, 40-60, 73-43, 56-44); Pragnesh bt Abdul Salman 3-2 (52-20, 56-41, 27-64, 35-54, 62-11); Brandon bt P. Avinash 3-0 (60-47, 67-22); Brandon bt Prashanth 3-1 (62-21, 68-26, 46-68, 64-25); Ajay Bushan bt Abhishek 3-2 (15-61, 49-59, 60-48, 72-25, 47-39); Syed Ahmed bt Vibhas 3-1 (69-35, 52-76[56], 65-10, 65-15); Bharat bt Saurav 3-2 (26-51, 57-28, 44-58, 74-44, 80-35); ■ Senior Snooker second round: Rashid Qureshi bt Abhilash 3-1 (30-63, 50-13, 59-15, 59-43); Vishwanath Reddy bt Kishan Kumar 3-2 (73-25, 22-81, 31-50, 66-11, 79-1); Yashasvi bt Sadiq Naqvi 3-1 (63-10, 40-60, 73-43, 56-44); Pragnesh bt Abdul Salman 3-2 (52-20, 56-41, 27-64, 35-54, 62-11); Brandon bt P. Avinash 3-0 (60-47, 67-22); Brandon bt Prashanth 3-1 (62-21, 68-26, 46-68, 64-25); Ajay Bushan bt Abhishek 3-2 (15-61, 49-59, 60-48, 72-25, 47-39); Syed Ahmed bt Vibhas 3-

SHORT TAKES

Ex-Barca prez released: Court

Barcelona: Former Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu and his former advisor Jaume Masferrer were released on Tuesday after appearing before a judge investigating last year's 'Barcagate' scandal, a Spanish court said. The two men, who were arrested on Monday, "exercised their right not to speak", and the judge granted them conditional release while the investigation continues, the Barcelona court said in a statement.

The court said the judge had sought to question them as part of an investigation opened in May 2020 into the suspected crimes of false administration and business corruption.

Two other club officials also detained as part of the operation which involved a search of Barcelona's stadium — the club's current chief executive Oscar Grau and its head of legal services Roma Gomez Ponti — were released late on Monday. — AFP

Manika, Sreeja inch ahead

Doha: Star paddler Manika Batra and young Sreeja Akula moved to the final round of the women's singles qualifiers at the WTT Contender after winning their respective matches here on Tuesday. The world number 150 from Hyderabad, Sreeja prevailed over world number 74 Vega Paulina of Chile before she sent packing Thailand's 87th-ranked Orawan Paranang packing 11-5, 11-5, 11-6 in the third round. She will now take on Russia's Mariia Tialakova in the final round. Tialakova entered the last round with a 14-12, 11-8, 11-8 win over India's Archana Kamath. Living up to her reputation, Commonwealth Games gold medalist Manika got the better of Romania's Irina Ciobanu 11-7, 15-13, 11-8 comfortably in the third round of women's singles qualifiers and will face Ganna Gaponova of Ukraine in the last round.

Mandhana slips two spots in ODI

Dubai: India opener Smriti Mandhana slipped two places to sixth among batters but Jhulan Goswami retained her fifth spot among bowlers in the latest ICC women's ODI Players' rankings issued on Tuesday. Another veteran Mithali Raji — with 687 points — remained at 9th to be the second Indian batswoman in the top 10. Mandhana has 732 points. England opener Tammy Beaumont has rocketed five places to grab the top position after an excellent display in the three-match series against New Zealand. — PTI

PSL hit with three more Covid cases

Karachi: Three more people — two foreign players and one support staff member — have tested positive for Covid-19 in the ongoing Pakistan Super League but the cricket Board on Tuesday insisted the tournament would continue on schedule.

Pakistan Cricket Board's Director of Media Sami Burney did not name the three people whose Covid-19 infection came a day after Australian leg-spinner Fawad Ahmed tested positive, leading to his isolation. "I can confirm that two foreign players and one support staff member have tested positive from the results of the 242 PCR tests we had conducted on all the franchises their officials and support staff since yesterday," Burney said. — PTI

Live on TV

FOOTBALL
English Premier League: Burnley vs Leicester City from 11.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1; Sheffield United vs Aston Villa from 11.30 pm on Star Sports Select 2; HD: Crystal Palace vs Manchester United from 1.45 am (Thursday) on Star Sports Select 1, HD

Italian League: Sassuolo vs Napoli from 11 pm; AC Milan vs Udinese from 1.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2; Fiorentina vs Roma from 1.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Six

WWE
NXT: Bouts from 6.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

Regd. No. HQ/SD/509/2021-23
Printed and Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Plot No. 9 Alwal Village, Vallabh Nagar Taluk, Medchal Malkajgiri Dist, Telangana and Published at 36, S.D. Road, Secunderabad-3. RNI Registration No. 3081/1957. Editor: Kaushik Mittra

VINTAGE ASH

VVS says Ashwin is constantly reinventing himself

Mumbai, March 2: Ravichandran Ashwin is a thinking cricketer, who is constantly reinventing himself, said former India batsman V.S. Laxman, insisting that preparation is key to the veteran off-spinner's success.

Ashwin recently became the fourth Indian bowler to take 400 Test wickets, when he achieved the feat by dismissing Jofra Archer in the pink ball Test at Ahmedabad, which the hosts won by 10 wickets under two days.

Ashwin, 34, also became the second fastest bowler to reach the land-mark after Sri Lanka spin wizard Muttiah Muralitharan.

"I think he's (Ashwin) a very intelligent person. When you're playing at the highest level, then it's not only about your skill, it's about your preparation, your planning and execution is so critical."

"So, he works out what are the weaknesses of the batsman. He plans those dismissals and that's why I think he is reinventing himself," Laxman, a veteran of 134 Tests, said on a *Star Sports* show.

To prove his point, Laxman cited the example of Steve Smith's trouble against Ashwin during India's recent tour Down Under.

"We saw recently in the Australia series how he (Ashwin) troubled someone as great as Steve Smith and that's another thing that makes Ashwin or any champion player special, that he wants to be the best and compete against the best," he added.

Former India opener Aakash Chopra too lavished praise on Ashwin, saying he is one of the biggest match winners the country has ever produced.

"78 Test matches for 400 Test wickets. Let the naysayers be! He's been absolute phenomenal with the craft that he has displayed over a period of time and as he's growing as a bowler, he's picking a lot of wickets. So, that question mark is also getting answered quite nicely," said Chopra.

Leach eager to learn from Ashwin, Axar

London, March 2: By his own admission, England's Jack Leach is in awe of the exploits of Ravichandran Ashwin and Axar Patel during the pink ball Test and he is eager to learn the nuances of spin bowling from the Indian duo in the fourth and final match, starting here on Thursday.

Ashwin and Axar used the spin-friendly Motera pitch to great effect and picked up 18 of the 20 English wickets in the match to demolish the visitors.

"When you see players having so much success, like Ravichandran Ashwin, who has just got to 400 Test wickets and has a lot of experience in India, and Axar Patel, who has had a great start to Test cricket, of course, you try to learn from them," Leach wrote in a column for *Sky Sports*.

The 29-year-old left-arm spinner felt the experi-

enced Ashwin was very clever in the way he changed his seam position.

"He (Ashwin) will bowl to the same spot but the way it gets there and whether it hits the seam or hits the lacquer varies and the ball reacts very differently. Then Axar is someone who seems to present every ball the same, a squarish seam,

ASHWIN NAMED IN ICC PLAYER OF THE MONTH LIST

Dubai, March 2: Seasoned India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin along with England captain Joe Root and West Indies' new batting sensation Kyle Mayers were on Tuesday nominated for the ICC 'Player of the Month' for their exceptional performances in February.

Ashwin played three Tests against England and scored 106 in the second innings of India's second Test victory at Chennai and took his 400th Test wicket in the third Test victory at Ahmedabad.

"Scoring a total of 176 runs across these games with taking a total of 24 wickets, Ashwin is the deserving candidate to be nominated in the men's category for February," the ICC release stated.

"England Test captain Joe Root makes it to the list of nominations again this month for his outstanding performance with the bat and the ball. He scored a total of 333 runs and took 6 wickets overall in the 3 Tests that he played against India," the ICC release further stated.

Root started the series with a superb 218 in the opening Test.

— PTI



R. Ashwin

A dash of talent from the city
Hyderabad striker gets licence to shoot in Europe

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

Having hurtled downhill over the years, Hyderabad football has one player looking up now. At 6-feet-2, he's surely standing tall... and is eager to touch the sky. Meet Aadarsh Narayananpuram, an 18-year-old who has broken out of the box and dazzled with his skills as a centre forward to secure a European player licence in the junior category.

The youngster is currently scoring goals for CD Olympic de Xativa, a third division club in Valencia, Spain. He has five from eight games, and is yearning for more. "It's a pretty good start but I need to build on it. I want to improve overall as a player, be good at passing, shooting," he says.

And just like the lines of attack on the field, Aadarsh seems to have chalked out the path to his greater goal. "Right now, I need to play as many matches as possible in Europe and get much experience to grow as a player," he informs before revealing the bigger picture. "My long term goal is to play for Hyderabad FC. I was very happy to see the team do so well in the ISL... it's unfortunate that they could not make the semifinals after having come so close just a couple of days ago. I always wanted my city to play in the top league of the country and it was amazing to see HFC right up there. I want to perform for Hyderabad and hopefully India in the future."



Currently playing for Spanish club Olympic de Xativa in Valencia, Aadarsh Narayananpuram wants to graduate to seniors with Hyderabad FC and eventually the Indian team.

Inspiration, there's aplenty around. "I had gone to the Barcelona vs Levante match (in the Spanish top division) at the latter's home ground and got to see greats like Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez, Antoine Griezmann and Ousmane Dembele play. It was a very proud moment, one hell of an opportunity for me. The best footballer in the world was right in front of me, dribbling past players and scoring goals. I actually was in tears watching Messi play," Aadarsh beams.

However, his favourite player is Harry Kane of English club Tottenham Hotspur. "The reason why I look up to him is

because my game style is somewhat similar to his. I follow him closely, look at every aspect of his play, his specialties in situations and try to adapt them to my position, which suits me physically as well mentally," reasons the towering teen.

Aadarsh has outshone peers to get to where he is right now. He was the only one from south India from the seven or eight players picked from among hundreds who had turned up for the Spanish club's selections that ran for about two months in Bengaluru. In fact, he made the cut for a German academy (DFI — Deutsches Fussball Internat) in Munich as

because my game style is somewhat similar to his. I follow him closely, look at every aspect of his play, his specialties in situations and try to adapt them to my position, which suits me physically as well mentally," reasons the towering teen.

In all this, support from the family has been paramount. Aadarsh's father N. Sudhakar Rao, Principal of the Culinary Academy of India in Begumpet, has played a supreme role in dishing out necessary ingredients for his son to savour his own taste and chase his dreams. It shouldn't be long before he relishes the lad's success.

KOHLI REACHES 100M FOLLOWERS ON INSTAGRAM

New Delhi, March 2: India captain Virat Kohli has recorded another century, albeit not on the pitch this time, as he became the first cricketer in the world to have 100 million followers on social media platform Instagram.

He has also attended some camps in the United Kingdom, including the Elite Football Academy of Manchester United Soccer training school in Peterborough and the Arsenal Expsortive Soccer Academy in Charter House, where he was awarded the best player among 150 trainees.

In fact, it was the Arsenal camp conducted at his school (Oakridge) in Hyderabad that ignited the spark when he was in sixth grade. "I just took part in it as I was passionate about all sports - cricket, basketball, swimming, everything. The coaches there were impressed by the way I was playing and encouraged me to take up football. That's when I started kicking the ball seriously," Aadarsh recalls.

Later, he trained at the Pullela Gopichand Academy and Hyderabad Football Academy before playing for I-League club Fateh Hyderabad's Under 15 team.

In all this, support from the family has been paramount. Aadarsh's father N. Sudhakar Rao, Principal of the Culinary Academy of India in Begumpet, has played a supreme role in dishing out necessary ingredients for his son to savour his own taste and chase his dreams. It shouldn't be long before he relishes the lad's success.

Virat Kohli is the first cricket star to hit 100 million followers. He is also the fourth most followed sportsperson on Instagram, behind football superstars Cristiano Ronaldo of Portugal, Lionel Messi of Argentina and Brazil's Neymar.

Sania makes winning start

Doha, March 2: Sania Mirza made a winning return to the WTA circuit as she and her Slovenian partner Andreja Klepac beat Ukrainians Nadia Kichenok and Lyudmyla Kichenok to reach the doubles quarterfinals of the Qatar Total Open here.

The Indo-Slovenian pair won 6-4, 6-7 (5), 10-5 against the duo of Kichenok and Kichenok in the opening round of the WTA 500 tournament.

It was Sania's first match in 12 months and incidentally it was at the Doha Open where she played last in February 2020 before pandemic halted the tennis competitions across the world.

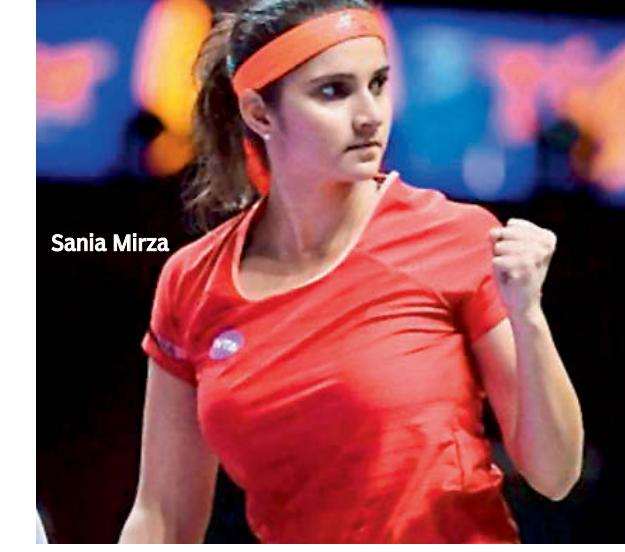
● It was Sania's first match in 12 months and incidentally it was at the Doha Open where she played last in February 2020 before pandemic halted the tennis competitions across the world.

The Indo-Slovenian pair needed just one break to get back on serve and they got that in the seventh game, breaking the Kichenok sisters at love in the seventh.

With an easy hold, they were 4-all and pocketed the set with another break.

The Ukrainians again drew the first blood in the second set for a 3-1 lead but Sania and Klepac fought hard to drag it to the tie-breaker but could not stop the rivals from pushing the contest to super tie-breaker.

The Indo-Slovenian pair raced to a 5-1 lead in a jiffy and closed the match, converting the second match point. — PTI



Real draw gives Atleti advantage

Madrid, March 2: Real Madrid's chances of chasing down La Liga leaders Atletico Madrid were dealt a blow on Monday as they needed a late Vinicius Junior equaliser to secure a 1-1 draw with Real Sociedad.

It could have been worse for Zinedine Zidane's side, with Vinicius' finish in the 89th minute preventing what would have been a damaging defeat after a week in which both Atletico and Barcelona had won.

Atletico's victory over Villarreal on Sunday put them six points clear of Real Madrid, an advantage that is now only cut to five ahead of next week's Madrid derby at the Wanda Metropolitano. Atletico also have a game in hand.

The result ends Real Madrid's run of five consecutive wins while Portu's brilliant header or Real Sociedad early in the second half was also the first goal conceded by the reigning champions in five

games.

It represents an important shift in momentum. A few days ago Atletico might have hoped just to hold on to first place next weekend but now they could spy an opportunity to all but knock their opponents out of the title race.

"We're playing for a lot there," said Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois. "We can win, we're physically strong and we're getting players back. There's a lot of time left to keep fighting in La Liga."

Barcelona kept their own resurgence going on Saturday by overcoming Sevilla and now sit level on points with Real Madrid, having also played one game fewer than the leaders. — AFP

SUNNY TO DELIVER JAISIMHA MEMORIAL LECTURE IN APRIL

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

The family of legendary cricketer M. L. Jaisimha have decided to transform the Jaisimha Cricket Academy into a Trust — the M. L. Jaisimha Sports Foundation. The announcement came on Tuesday, eve of the former batsman's 82nd Birth Anniversary.

This Trust has been started to keep Jaisimha's legacy alive and make his dream of providing free coaching in all sports to talented young sports persons who cannot afford it," Ms Jayanthi Jaisimha said in a press release.

"Our first initiative is to provide free coaching to 30 deserving young underprivileged cricketers — 15 boys and 15 girls in the 15 to 19 age group. This was Jaisimha's dream. The cricketers will initially be from the State of

Telangana and coaching will commence once permission is granted by the Government during this pandemic," she said.

"We are also delighted to announce that the first M. L. Jaisimha lecture will be held at the Foundation premises in April by Jaisimha's greatest fan, Sunil Gavaskar," the release read.

Further activities that the Trust proposes to take are: Coaching by experts assisted by trainers and physiotherapists; online webinars, lectures; debates and panel discussions; workshops on leadership, peak performance, umpiring, sports management and commentating; E-Zine on subscription model; cricket and sports library; digital dissemination of cricketing knowledge; match opportunities in India and abroad and scholarships for talented sportspersons.