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WEATHERMax: 29.7°C
Min: 19.6°C
RH: 47%
Rainfall: NilForecast: Partly cloudy.
Misty morning. Max/Min
temp. 30/19 °C**COVID-19
COUNT**CASES
(+12,901)
1,09,62,256DEATHS
(+89)
1,56,124**STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS**(+163)
TS: 2,97,106(+2)
1,672(+67)
AP: 8,89,077(+1)
7,166**CASES AROUND THE WORLD**11,06,10,885
DEATHS
24,44,897COUNTRIES,
AREAS WITH
CASES
worldometers.info/
coronavirus**ASTROGUIDE**Satvani; Uttaraayan
Tithi: Magha Shuddha Saptami
till 10.57 am
Star: Krittika till 5.56 am
(Saturday)Varjyam: 4.25 pm to 6.13 pm
Durmuhratam: 9.02 am to
9.48 am; 12.53 pm to 1.39 pm

Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon

HJRI CALENDAR

Rajab 5,144 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.41 am

Zohar: 12.40 pm

Asar: 4.42 pm

Magrib: 6.25 pm

Isha: 7.32 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.40 AM

SUNSET TODAY 6.19 PM

MOONSET 11.29 AM

MOONRISE NA

COUNTER POINT

I got this job because I have
an extra qualification....
diploma in Cow Science!**INSIDE**CITY... PAGE 3
CM: Digital survey of all
lands in Telangana

Full report on Page 7

KCR won't cut spend on welfare schemes

L. VENKAT
RAM REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 18

The Telangana government will not cut spending on welfare schemes in the upcoming annual budget, despite financial constraints on account of Coronavirus pandemic and lower share through Central devolutions.

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao is learnt to have issued instructions to all departments to submit budgetary proposals to the finance department, keeping in mind the funds required to meet present as well as future needs on account of addition of new beneficiaries to various welfare schemes in the next year.

The TRS government currently spends over ₹60,000 crore on welfare schemes, the highest in the country, an official claimed. It may be recalled that the Chief Minister had recently announced in a public meeting at Halia in

Nagarjunasagar assembly constituency that the state government would soon issue new ration cards and new Asara pensions. The issuance of new ration cards was stopped in 2018.

The TRS government is yet to fulfil its 2018 poll promise of extending Asara pensions to all categories, by reducing the maximum age limit from the present 65 years to 57 years. Nearly 10 lakh applications are pending for new ration cards while eight lakh applications are pending for Asara pensions from potential beneficiaries in the age group of 57 to 65 years.

■ Page 2: Rythu Bandhu to get huge allocation

HC issues notice in murder case of lawyer couple

3 ARRESTED
FOR MURDER
OF LAWYERSPULI SHARAT KUMAR | DC
KARIMNAGAR, FEB. 18

Reacting to the brutal killing of the advocate couple, Gattu Vaman Rao and P.V. Nagamani, as 'grave and a most unfortunate incident', the Telangana High Court on Thursday took up a suo moto case.

The court issued notices to principal secretary, Telangana State Home, the Director-General of Police, the Ramagundam Police Commissioner and other police authorities concerned, right down from top officials to the station house officer (SHO) of Ramagiri police station, in which jurisdiction the double murder took place.

Police authorities were directed by to submit a status report of investigation, with all information, before the High Court on March 1.

The court further directed the police to collect each and every piece of evidence thoroughly and to preserve them.

Characterising the incident as "blatancy in Telangana", and terming it "unforgivable", Chief Justice Hima Kohli "cautioned police authorities and the "state government" to take stern action immediately.

"If faith in the rule of law is shaken, then there is much that needs to be

done to repose faith in the administration. So, immediately start action to ensure no violator of law is spared. Do it in a time bound manner. The credibility of the state rests on how effectively you act. No one should forget that we are all governed by rule of law," Chief Justice Kohli said.

■ Page 4: Court orders police to probe properly

MONEY | GAME SA cricketer becomes IPL's most expensive foreigner

Morris turns costliest IPL buy

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC
CHENNAI, FEB. 18

Supply was limited, but demand was huge. The mini IPL auction, with 292 players going under the hammer, saw franchises splurging money to fill a few gaps and get their combinations right for the 2021 edition. As in the past, utility players were the most sought after.

South African allrounder Chris Morris who hasn't played a single game since he suffered an injury in IPL-13 became the most expensive purchase ever as Rajasthan Royals snapped up the 33-year-old for ₹16.25 crore.

KARNATAKA'S off-spinning allrounder Gowtham set the record for an uncapped player. He was lapped up by CSK for ₹9.25 crore.

Morris, who represented Royal Challengers Bangalore last year, overtook Yuvraj Singh (₹16 crore in 2015), Pat Cummins (₹15.5 crore in 2020) and Ben Stokes (₹14.5 crore in 2017) to set a new benchmark.

Rajasthan Royals, winners of the inaugural IPL edition, believe it was a smart purchase. "We did due diligence, he's an ex-

Royal who can deal with a price tag like that. He is a quality bowler through all phases of the game, can win us games with the bat too. We did stretch, that was our last bid, luckily Punjab held back," Jake Lush McRum, the Royals CEO, said.

Royal Challengers Bangalore, who are yet to clinch the title, spent a whopping ₹29.25 crore out of their purse of ₹35.4 crore on just two players — New Zealand allrounder Kyle Jamieson and big-hitting Aussie Glenn Maxwell.

The rebranded Punjab Kings' biggest buy was Australia pacer Jhye

Richardson at ₹14 crore. Karnataka's off-spinning allrounder K. Gowtham set the record for an uncapped player. He was lapped up by Chennai Super Kings for ₹9.25 crore.

Krunal Pandya's contract, worth ₹8.8 crore, with Mumbai Indians was the previous highest. Punjab co-owner Preity Zinta flashed a cheeky smile when she pocketed Shahrukh Khan, Tamil Nadu's swashbuckling batsman, for ₹5.25 crore. As expected, Sachin Tendulkar's son Arjun was bought by Mumbai Indians for his base price of ₹20 lakh.

■ Page 4: Tech helps cops to nab accused

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CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE AUTOMOTIVE

FOUR WHEELERS

HYUNDAI Creta SX, plus Automatic transmission 2016, white colour with (Full ZeroDep) Insurance. Excellent condition for immediate sale. Ph: 98458005130, 9912612345. (S/2021/C00591)

FURNITURE

AVAILABLE READY stock biggest collection of Imported Home and Office Furniture. Contact 9346211399, 9666116668. (HYMM/2021/C07090)

FOR SALE PROPERTY

COMMERCIAL

2193 SFT fully furnished commercial office space for sale, located right opposite to Sababa Temple, Dwarakarpuri colony, Panjagutta. No Brokers. Interested parties call: 8790622611, 995985145. (A/2021/C00593)

COMMERCIAL BUILDING for sale opposite to Foot Ball Ground, Trimulgherry main road, 135 sq.yds, Constructed area G-1. Ph: 9309217784, 9959488786. (S/2021/C02352)

FARM HOUSES-SITES

ORGANIC FARM Land @ Rs.249/- Per Sq.Yds With 1.Life Time Free Membership To Common Farm House 2.Two Years Free Maintenance Of Organic Fruit Plantation 3.Free Organic Agriculture Education To Students. Ph:6309713666, 6309714666 (HYMM/2021/C07075)

1000YARDS BEAUTIFUL

Urban Farm Land For Sale. Next to the airport and VVIP gate. 1000 Yards From Airport, with mango, coconut trees, full water, power, compound wall 9008455885, 9154779631 (HYMM/2021/C07171)

FLATS

DOUBLE BEDROOM

CHAMPAPET, NAGARJUNA Colony, 3BHK, 1500sqft @78 Lakhs, 2BHK, 1300sqft @62Lakhs. Contact: 9059124898, 9849001948 (HYMM/2021/C07099)

GHMC APPROVAL Project At Chandanagar 2.5 Years Position 35Lakhs 2bhk. Contact: 7993612001, 6309981152 (HYMM/2021/C06862)

UNDER CONSTRUCTION Premium Residential 2 BHK Flats For Sale At Komppala For More Details Contact: 8340070309 (HYMM/2021/C07040)

READY TO move in 2BHK, 1210 Sq.Ft East/West Premium Quality @Yapral Prayadarshini Enclosure 9 1 2 1 3 4 5 1 8 0. (HYMM/2021/C07114)

THREE & MORE

ABIDS 4BHK Newly Constructed Flat of 3607 st. East Facing with 2 car Holes is available for Sale in Blue Hope, Tilak Road (opp. Meena Bazar). For details call: 9399844944. (HYCL/2021/C02916)

PHARANKAMONI ROAD, Ameerpet, 3 BHK flat, 1st floor for sale, 1588 sqft, fully furnished, car parking -100 sqft. Ph: 9866389443, 9559973655. (S/2021/C02334)

JEDIMETLA, GANDHINAGAR, Flat No.523, 1555 sqft, 3 BHK, Starlite Apt, fully vasthu, car parking available for sale. Ph: 8975514123, 9440040444. (B/2021/C00988)

PRE-LAUNCH OFFER @2199/- including All Amenities at Kardhan, Orra Estate No.3, N. Patancheru 9 acres Land 11 Towns G+1, Mega Gated Community 28 3BHK Flats. Ph: 90195987460. (HYCL/2021/C02920)

PREMIUM READY to move in 2450 Sft, 3BHK west facing flats on 7th & 19th floor with 2 parking each for sale @ SMR Vinay Iconia, Kondapur. Ph: 9845948978 (HYMM/2021/C07104)

MADHUPUR, HITECH City 3060st East Facing 4BHK with Servent Quarter in DSR Regulated Community. Well maintained with Semi furnished Ready to move in @3.4 Cr. 9248028888 we have some other flats also available in Madhupur, Kondapur, Gachibowli. (HYMM/2021/C07106)

3 BHK 1450 sft, first floor, flat for sale in peaceful Singapore Township, Pocharam, Ghatkesar. 5-20 mts distance to Mindspace IT Park and AIMS. Call: 8520077846. (B/2021/C01031)

EXTRAORDINARY PENTHOUSE, Aristocratic interiors, 4500sqft +2200sqft terrace, prime location Tolichowki. Only parties with genuine interest may contact 9182517080. Visit only by appointment. (HYMM/2021/C06854)

3 BEDROOM Flat Spacious 2000 Sft Fully Renovated in Podash Nagar Colony, Birimaland. Ph: 9849017077. (HYCL/2021/C02924)

MULTIPLE FLATS

FLATS FOR Sale under Construction on 900, 1000, 1200, 1215 & 1410 st 2 BHK 3 BHK flats at Azampura Farhat Nagar, Car Parking and All Amenities available. Contact: 9581528002, 9959023786. (S/2021/C02349)

INDUSTRIAL LAND

3 ACRES Industrial Land with 50,000sft area. Suitable for sale @IDA, Bellary. Near Bachupally & 2 Acres Industrial Land for sale @IDA Bollar. Near Bachupally, Hyd. Ph: 9845832440. (HYCL/2021/C02903)

✓1200SYDS (WITH 8000SFT Kirby Stru Shed) North Facing Industrial Property for Sale IDA Pashamallam, Near to The Main Road With all Facilities and Good Road Visibility, will Established industrial area. 9885893666. (HYMM/2021/C06941)

INDEPENDENT HOUSE

DOUBLE BEDROOM

✓150 SQ.YDS independent house, North face, G+1, new construction, fully furnished, car parking, prime locality, very near to main road. Loan available near GHMC Park, NRI Colony near Saket Towers, ECL. Rs.1.4Cr. Ph: 984868249, 9908993709. (S/2021/C02350)

THREE & MORE

BABUKHAN LAKE Front, Kokapet Financial District, Gachibowli. Premium 4 Bedroom Villa Ready to occupy with all amenities, 386 Sq.yds 3884 Sft, 400 Sq.yds 3060 Sft. Ph: 9963163336. (B/2021/C01034)

✓EAST FACING 5(Five) Bedroom Luxury (Vaastu) Villa available for sale with approximately 6000 Square Feet Buliding on 934 Sq.yds. Independent Villa, modern amenities gated community at Gandipet. We also have GHMC/HMDA TDR for sale (to build extra floors without additional setbacks). Interested parties contact Naresh Jain Ph: 9246543777. (HYCL/2021/C02875)

LUXURY VILLA in Gated Community admeasuring 4200sft., in 300sq.yds with latest interiors, modular kitchen and wardrobes abetting 200ft Miyapur to Bachupally road. Call: 9177244942. (HYMM/2021/C07095)

PREMIUM VILLAS in Gated community for Sale at Mokal @ 1.70 crs (Special Offer available). Contact: 735385358 (HYMM/2021/C07041)

DESIGNER 3 bedroom villa, two halls, kitchen, dining, servant quarter, 400 sq.yds, 4800 sq.ft with garden, semi furnished for sale. Located on the main road of Old Bowpally, expected price 3.6CR. Interested may contact: 8686088888. (S/2021/C02333)

148 SQUARE YARDS 2450sqft bulding Independent Duplex two side road corner house for sale at Sigapuri Colony Saidabad. Contact: Pradeep Estates. 9246102046. (HYMM/2021/C02708)

✓3 BHK, 2 Bathrooms, 200 Sq.Yds for Sale. Survey of India, Uppal, near Little Flower College and Uppal Metro Station. Only Cash parties. Contact: 9963784150. (S/2021/C00176)

PLOTS

✓TWO PLOTS 1267, 395 Sq.yds for sale in Mominpet Mandal East facing, backside of Gandipet. Contact 9391378599, 9am to 2pm. (B/2021/C00985)

AUSHAPUR GATESKARI National Highway, North Facing commercial plot 1400sq.yds perfect vastra for sale. Ph: 9848923494. 9177641296 (HYMM/2021/C07053)

MEHDIPATNAM EAST Face Open Plot 48x60 Size, 240 sq.yds Main North Main PVNR. 2nd floor, flyover, Pillar No. 66, Pet Sqyd 65000-Fixed Clear Title Bank Loan Available. Middle Person Please Excuse. Ph: 9848015799. 8125325678. (HYCL/2021/C02908)

1500 SQ.YDS open Plot 2nd bin Shiva Ganga Colony, Nagole opposite to Kamineni Hospital. Contact: 9849017077. (HYCL/2021/C02925)

GENUINE HMDS plots Available @ Taramati (ORR Exit No -10) Surrounded by Nagole, R.F.C, Infosys and Ailms. Ph: 9948438722 (HYMM/2021/C06767)

YADADRI, WARANGAL Highway, Golden Investment, Near world famous Temple Timili Mandir. Only 3Lakhs for 120Sq.yds plot. Small Investment Big Returns. Assured Double Amount in 3years. Contact: 9505020202 (HYMM/2021/C07073)

LAUNCHING OFFICER 5gram old free Dtc approved layout near @yadadri Temple. 100feet facing per sq.yd 599/- only. sqft. Plot Registration: Ph: 07643463. (HYMM/2021/C07087)

WANTED YOUNG &Dynamic Marketing Executives (Field Work) for Educational Institute @ Komppaly/ Banjara hills Fresher or Experienced. Contact: 9246570555 (HYMM/2021/C07055)

ARCH & INTERIOR DSNSRS

WANTED 3D Visualizer with Experience (Must) DS & Associates, LB.Nagar. Email: Interiorsds@gmail.com (HYCL/2021/C02913)

CALL CENTER / BPO

INDIANEAGLE.COM IS hiring for customer care executives with good communication skills in English and Gujarati, Bengali, Punjabi or Tamil for Night shifts.

YAPRAL GOLF Prime Homes, Phase-2, North facing, 314 sq.yds plot. Opp: NATCO PHARMA Near Jubilee Hills. Checkpost. Take Home Rs 14000 (PF+ ES+ Incentives Rs.300/day). Rs.22,188 (Bonus PA) Contact: HR:089956162, 9573804965. Fresher's welcome. (HYCL/2021/C02921)

DSA OF MNC Bank Requires Telecallers & Sales Executives (M/F) Fresh & Experienced both can apply. Near Energenz Metro Station. Contact: 837652344. 7989952300. (A/2021/C0592)

CALL CENTRE

HIRING PROFESSIONALS who have good knowledge of English/ Telugu/ Hindi/ Oriya. Salary package 12K to 15K CTC per month. Six days working. Rotational shifts. Interested candidates please connect on 981331600 between 10th to 7th Age limit 20-30 (HYMM/2021/C07097)

COMPUTERS

URGENTLY NEEDED experienced Data Entry & Research Operators for MNC on regular shift. Contact: Plot No.53, Maruthi Nagar, A.S.Rao Nagar. Ph: 9573560537. (S/2021/C02344)

ENGINEERS

REQUIRE CIVIL Engineer in a Reputed Construction Company. Only Male with an Experience of 2-3years. Must have knowledge in MS-Office& AutoCAD. Develop construction specifications and procedures. Establish and monitor construction work schedules. 9666680333, ramesh.a111@gmail.com (HYMM/2021/C07070)

HRD & ADMINISTRATIVE

BSC CHEMISTRY Graduate having Computer knowledge, one year experience in Accounts, Admin. Office Administration at Secunderabad-500009 (preferred). Apply (S/2021/C00175)

MEDICAL

WANTED MD, DM Nuro physician and Physio Doctor to work at Nizamabad attractive pay and allowance. Vedansh Hospital Nizamabad 9010177747 (R/2021/C00021)

THREE & MORE

2300 SFT Deluxe 2BHK Flat with Parking for Rent @Road No: 11, Banjara hills, in 1st Floor. Ph: 8466893770. (HYMM/2021/C07109)

✓3 BHK Flat 2100sq.ft, Semi Furnished. Motilal Nagar Colony. Near to the Airport Begumpet Contact 917099833- mantri082@gmail.com (HYMM/2021/C07092)

BRAND NEW 3 BHK- 2000 sft flat for rent at Srikrishna Colony. Posh locality, serene environment. Must see. Call: 9502277099. (S/2021/C02343)

INDEPENDENT HOUSE

THREE & MORE

VASANTHA CITY, villa-14, west facing Built-up 4500sft, Full finished, Home theatre, Near Hitech City MMTS railway station contact: 9885667250, 9701866242 (HYMM/2021/C07076)

4 PORTIONS

for Rent. Independent Poach Area Jubilee hills, Road No.10, well connected bus, metro, modern amenities, safe 24 hrs water, working women, professionals, family preferred. Contact: 9849590511. (B/2021/C01023)

NAMALAGUNDU, 3BHK 900 Sft E/F Rent. Opposite To Tirumala Nursing Home. Ph: 9346755696/ 9889330784. (HYMM/2021/C07088)

INDEPENDENT POSH 3 BHK first floor with full woodwork, Modular open kitchen, Air-condition, parking, inverter, vastu compliant. Tirumaligundu Rent: 22000/- Ph: 900414226. (S/2021/C02182)

LEASE

AGRICULTURE

FENCED FARM Land 3 Acres Two borewells, open well 50 metres from Narayan Sagar Road, Yacharam, Distrik: 9885382002. Eco-friendly! (A/2021/C00144)

COMMERCIAL

✓BANJARA HILLS 2100 & 870sqft Plug & Play Office Space available for Rent at Maas Heights 5th Floor opp GVK Ph: 9885644444. (HYMM/2021/C07091)

WAREHOUSE SPACE available at Medchal & khalakat main road 30,000 to 2,00,

SHORT TAKES

TS OKAYS WATER RESERVOIR IN KESHAVAPURAM

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 18

The government on Thursday gave final permission for diversion of 409.53 hectares of forest land for the construction of a 10 thousand million cubic feet capacity drinking water reservoir in Keshavapuram village. The reservoir is planned as part of providing water from Godavari river to Hyderabad to meet the drinking water requirements of the city.

The orders from the Environment, Forests Science & Technology Department of the state government follow a clearance from the Ministry of Forests and Environment approving diversion of the forest land for constructing the reservoir.

The approval, the department said, will be subject to the state government handing over that has been identified for compensatory afforestation in lieu of the forest land being diverted for the project.

TWO ARRESTED FOR SMUGGLING 1.4 KG OF GOLD

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 18

Two passengers were held in possession of 1.4 kg of smuggled gold by the Air Intelligence Unit at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Shamshabad on Thursday. According to the officials, the two passengers had arrived from Dubai via Flt No. FZ-8779 on Thursday morning at the Hyderabad airport.

"They concealed gold biscuits in an emergency torch and gold paste in the waistband of their jeans pants was identified by our Air Intelligence staff. Total gold weighing 1.4 kg, valued at ₹69.6 lakh, was seized from their possession and they were booked for smuggling the same," said the officials.

MAN ENDS LIFE DUE TO MARITAL PROBLEMS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 18

A 25-year-old man who was depressed with his married life killed himself by hanging at his residence in the Meerpet area late Wednesday night. Police said that trouble began after he questioned his mother-in-law's alleged affair with a man.

The deceased, identified as A. Babu, got married to Nirmala in July last year and they were residing at Sri Ramana Colony in Nandanavanam. "About two months into the wedding, the couple began fighting over trivial issues. During the end of 2020, Babu learnt that his mother-in-law, identified as Vijaya, 40, was allegedly having an extra-marital affair with one Srinu. When Babu questioned them about this, the duo came to his house and abused him, following which he reportedly slipped into depression," said the police, adding that about a month ago, Nirmala too left the house and went to stay with her mother.

Since then, Srinu began calling Babu and abusing and threatening him. On Wednesday, Babu allegedly hanged himself from the ceiling fan in his room.

The body was found at the house by his brother, who broke open the door.

KCR for digital survey of lands

Geographical coordinates to be given for every survey number

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 18

The state government will undertake a digital survey of all lands across the state and geographical co-ordinates will be provided for every survey number to ensure that no land dispute arose in future. This was announced on Thursday by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao.

The CM was holding a review meeting at Pragathi Bhavan on aspects of Dharani portal and revenue reforms. He held discussions with the government's chief advisor Rajiv Sharma, chief secretary Somesh Kumar, principal secretary S Narasimha Rao, and secretaries Smita Sabharwal and Bhoopal Reddy.

"Thanks to Dharani portal, corruption has been eradicated in the revenue department," the CM claimed.

"Justice has been done to farmers who otherwise have no voice. The anarchic way of registering a person's land on another name came to an end. The bad tradition of having

taken place in the department. A 'job chart' would be prepared for the officials in relation to their duties and responsibilities, KCR said.

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"Justice has been done to farmers who otherwise have no voice. The anarchic way of registering a person's land on another name came to an end. The bad tradition of having

land litigations and skirmishes over them also ended. The evil trend of swindling the documents and the hardships faced by people in the name of revenue courts also ended.

The state government, for the first time in the country, did three years of detailed exercise and brought in the new Revenue Act, he said.

The CM said, "Registrations and mutations are being done in a very transparent way without giving any chance for corruption. The entire sale and purchase of land is being done smoothly."

Due to the introduction of a new Revenue Act, massive changes have

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"Justice has been done to farmers who otherwise have no voice. The anarchic way

SHORT TAKES



Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao along with other TRS leaders display the chader at Pragathi Bhavan on Thursday.

CM APPRECIATES CHADER DESIGNED FOR DARGAH URS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 18

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao on Thursday appreciated the specially-designed chader (Gila) to be presented during the ensuing Ajmer Dargah Urs celebrations. The chader was displayed by Muslim elders at Pragathi Bhavan.

Religious leaders offered special prayers on this occasion. They prayed for the state's prosperity in all spheres, including agriculture and for the good health of Rao.

The Chief Minister conveyed his good wishes to the Muslim community on the occasion.

Home minister Mohd Mahmood Ali, Waqf Board chairman Mohammed Saleem, MLCs Mohd. Fareeduddin and Farooq Hussain, MLA Mohd. Shakeel, TRS minority cell chairman Khaja Mujeebuddin, Mufti Sayyed Yousuf, GHMC corporator Baba Fasiuddin were also present.

COURT ORDERS POLICE TO PROBE PROPERLY

From Page 1

Condemning the murder, the HC Bench observed that lawyers, who work to help others from unruly activities and raise voice against the unlawful, are themselves being targeted by the uncivilised. It was unfortunate what happened to them.

Further, the court directed that the incident should be investigated adequately and properly. All material evidence should be preserved properly. Forensic evidence must be collected scientifically and a cogent and cohesive status report on the gruesome issue should be filed, the Advocate-General, representing the state government, was instructed.

CJ Kohli stressed that video clippings of the murder, which were circulating on social media, must be authenticated forensically, and if found not to have been tampered and original, they should be preserved as "crucial evidence" against the culprits.

The CJ also told the police to scientifically examine and preserve video clips of the voice of advocate Vaman Rao, after he was stabbed and other statements made before he died.

Justice Bollam Vijasen Reddy asked the Advocate General of Telangana to make attempts to take passengers, who were traveling in two RTC buses, which were there at the place of the incident, as eyewitnesses.

"Passengers watched the attack and recorded videos. Police can try to take them as witnesses by tracing the passengers. Culprits should be punished," Justice Reddy said.

Advocate General B.S. Prasad, after taking notes of the series of directions issued, assured the Court that the police would thoroughly conduct an investigation and ensure perpetrators are brought to book.

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Telangana criminal court advocates boycott their duties, court proceedings and protest against the brutal killing of lawyer couple in Hyderabad on Thursday.

— P. SURENDRA

Lawyers see politics behind couple murder

Lawyers want Advocates Protection Act implemented

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 18

proceeding towards Raj Bhavan.

As the virtual court proceedings were underway in the High Court, Telangana High Court Advocates Association president, T. Surya Karan Reddy, urged the judges not to pass any adverse orders in cases listed for the day on reasons like non-appearance of advocates.

The country is witnessing frequent attacks on advocates and no person can take law into their hands. No one should not resort to illegal activities and matter shall be dealt with as per law," it said.

Some of the protesters alleged that Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) was responsible for the attack and said that the

advocates and lack of protection to them.

The Bar Council of Telangana issued a statement condemning the alleged incident.

"The country is witnessing frequent attacks on advocates and no person can take law into their hands. No one should not resort to illegal activities and matter shall be dealt with as per law," it said.

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Uttam demands CBI probe

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 18

Telangana Pradesh Congress committee (TPCC) president and MP, N. Uttam Kumar Reddy while demanding a CBI probe into the murder of lawyer-couple Gattu Vaman Rao and Gattu Nagamani, on Thursday alleged that top TRS leadership was behind the murder.

Addressing a press conference he said that the Congress party would meet Chief Justice of Telangana High Court Hima Kohli and also write a letter to Chief Justice of India. He said that they would raise the issue in Parliament.

Stating that the TRS government was looting the state's resources, he

suspected the involvement of the ruling party-backed sand mafia in the gruesome murder. He slammed Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao for his silence and having not even condemned the brutal killing.

The Congress leader pointed out that the couple had filed several cases against TRS party's Peddapalli Zilla Parishad chairman Putta Madhukar and his wife, the incumbent Manthani municipal chairman Putta Shailaja. He said these facts indicate that the murders were politically motivated and aimed at silencing whistle-blowers.

He said that law and order has been deteriorating and Home

Minister Mahmood Ali had no control over police administration.

He said that the couple was murdered to cover up lock-up death of a Dalit, Sheelam Rangaiah in Manthani. Rangaiah was allegedly killed due to third degree torture by Manthani police on May 26, 2020. Advocate Nagamani had written to the Chief Justice alleging that Rangaiah died due to custodial torture. The letter was treated as PIL and on May 27, the High Court directed Hyderabadi Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar to personally investigate the case, he informed. He said that Anjani Kumar submitted a report before the court on June 19.

Nomination papers



MP and PCC president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, MP Venkat Reddy, DCC presidents Shankar Naik, Venkanna Yadav and former MLC Anil Reddy submit nomination papers of MLC candidate Ramulu Naik to Nalgonda district collector Prashant Patil, IAS on Thursday.

— P. ANIL KUMAR

Tech helps cops nab accused

From Page 1

North Zone inspector general of police Nagi Reddy said the three were Kunta Srinivas (44), Shivandula Chiranjeevi (35) and Akkappa Kumar (44).

Nagi Reddy said the Ramagundam Police Commissionate used new technology and six special teams to locate and effect the arrest of the accused. Police got information that they were hiding at Wankadi Chandrapur region in Maharashtra state.

A dispute existed for the past five years between Kunta Srinivas and the Vaman Rao family over the construction of a Ramayana temple in Gunjapadu village. Both Vaman Rao and

Srinivas were the residents of the village.

After coming to know that the Vaman Rao couple were coming to Peddapalli to file a petition against him in the court, Kunta Srinivas took the help of Chiranjeevi and Kumar and murdered the couple by waylaying the car of Vaman Rao at Kalvacherla village, police said based on information they collected.

Kunta Srinivas along with his associates came in two cars. Srinivas and Chiranjeevi attacked Vaman Rao and his wife with knives. After attacking them, Srinivas asked Kumar to hide the car in some other place while he and Chiranjeevi tried to escape in the black Creta car.

The role of Vasanth Rao in the murder is yet to be ascertained, Nagi

Reddy said that during the investigation, they came to know that there were no political links to the murders.

"We are carrying out investigations. We will consider all facts and take action." He urged the people who took the videos on the spot to send them to the CP office. "This would help us collect further evidence. We assure them that the details of the persons who send the videos will be kept a secret."

Nagi Reddy appreciated the six-member police team led by inspectors G. Mahendar Reddy, A. Venkateswar and M. Raj Kumar as also G. Naresh Kumar, T. Karunakar Rao and A. Indrasena Reddy for cracking the case fast.

MULUGU MLA VISITS MEDARAM AHEAD OF MINI JATARA

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, FEB. 18

Mulugu MLA Danasari Anasuya alias Seetakka visited the tribal deities Sammakka and Saralamma at Medaram shrine in Tadvi mandal on Thursday and sought their blessings ahead of the mini jatara next week. She made an offering of jagerry which she carried to the altars of the deities on her head. She later interacted with the devotees and also posed for selfies with some of them.

Later, Seetakka said the government should provide better facilities for the Mini Jatara scheduled to be held from next Wednesday. She urged that good water facility should be provided to the devotees coming to the Jatara, sanitation works should be started and provide toilets to ensure no devotee is troubled.

OBITUARY

I have fought the good fight
I have finished the race
I have kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:7)



Shri Ch. JL. JAGANNADHA RAO
Retd. Superintendent Officer
Survey of India
Born on 1st Nov 1940
Died on 18th Feb 2021
Funeral today on 19.02.2021 at 4:00 PM at SPG Cemetery, Secunderabad.
You will live forever in our hearts
Inserted by: Wife, Son, Daughters, Daughter-in-law, Sons-in-law and Grandchildren.

OBITUARY



NEVILLE SYDNEY JOHN DCRUZE
DOB: 16-09-1948 DOB: 18-02-2021
The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord!
Funeral will be held today (19.02.2021) at 3:30 PM: Mettuguda Cemetery.
Inserted by: Kurt, Judy, Adrian, Elvina and Loved ones
9985870004
(S/2021/D01252)

OBITUARY



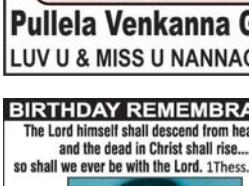
Late Mrs. BOLLAM VASANTHA WESLEY
Rtd. Nursing Superintendent
DOB: 30-09-1956 DOD: 19-02-2017
Your words we reminisce
Your prayers we never dismiss
Your love is what goes amiss
Though your absence created an abyss
It's your memory that keeps us in knits...!!
Inserted by:
B.M. John Wesley
Contact: 9849729698
(S/2021/D01248)

OBITUARY



Pullela Venkanna Garu
LUV U & MISS U NANNAGARU
IN EVERLASTING MEMORY OF
Shri VIJAY SATHE
DOB: 30-09-1943 DOD: 18-02-2021
A fountainhead of knowledge, wisdom & always a source of inspiration. He has left behind a rich harvest of memories to cherish, honour & emulate.
Inserted by: Family, Friends and Staff of Bombay Management Services
(B/2021/D00123)

OBITUARY



Shri Ch. J.L. JAGANNADHA RAO
Retd. Superintendent Officer
Survey of India
Born on 1st Nov 1940
Died on 18th Feb 2021
You will live forever in our hearts
Inserted by:
Ganta Joel Praveen Sagar (Son),
Ganta Aaron Sandeep Sagar (Son),
Ganta Arun Sandeep Sagar (Son),
Ganta Arun Sandeep Sagar (Son),
Brother & Sister, Nee & Lovely
(S/2021/D01248)

OBITUARY



Smt. SHEELA DEVI
DOB: 27-12-1941 DOD: 27-01-2016

The wonderful memories, love and happiness we shared together remain treasured in my heart forever.

MOHALN GURBANI
Fondly Remembered by:

Anu & Umesh Gurmani,
Geeta Gurmani & Children

Great Grand Children & Siblings Ph: 9676311907
(S/2021/D01250)

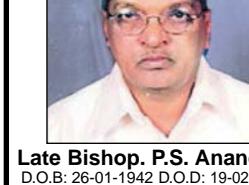
OBITUARY



1st Death Anniversary
Late G. Dayanand
Govt. Teacher (Retd.)
DOB: 28-11-1940 D.O.B.: 19-2-2020
"Your Love & Affection are always
remember in our hearts forever"

Inserted by:
FAMILY MEMBERS

OBITUARY



9th DEATH ANNIVERSARY
Late Bishop P.S. Anandam
DOB: 26-01-1942 D.O.B.: 19-02-2020
Founder Chairman, Agape Baptist Church and Agape Ministries, L.B. Nagar, Hyderabad.

We remember you in silent tears.

Inserted by: Mrs. Eva Anandam (Wife), Son, Daughter-in-law and Grand Daughters

OBITUARY



9th Death Anniversary of
Sri. PERAM SAMUEL

Exp. on 19th Feb. 2012
Inserted by:
Daughter, Son-in-law and Grand Children

OBITUARY

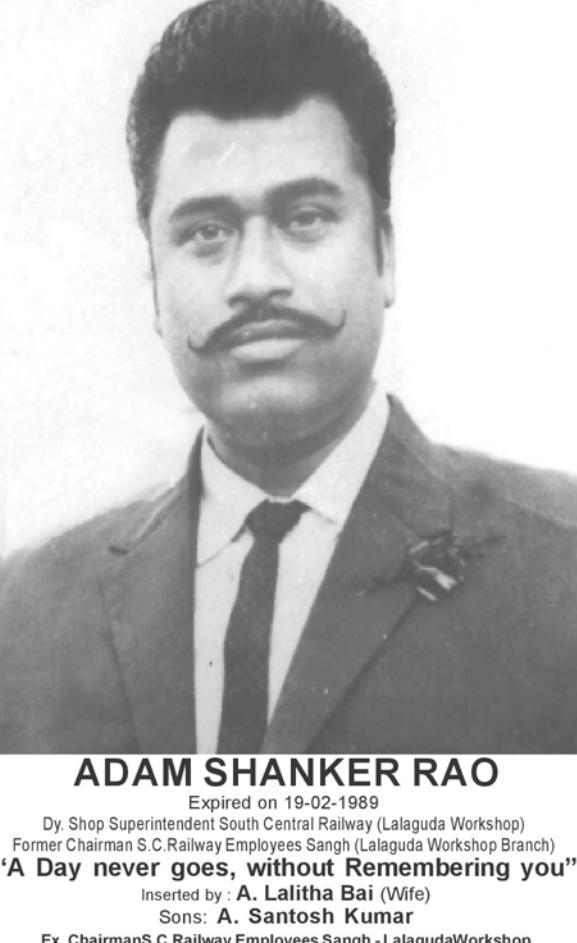
6th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

DOB: 15-01-1994 DOD: 19-02-2014

We could not bear your passing away, we still cry today; although we loved you dearly, we couldn't make you stay, your golden heart stopped beating. We laid you down to rest, God broke our heart to prove, that he only takes the best.

Inserted by: Family Members

32ND DEATH ANNIVERSARY



ADAM SHANKER RAO
Expired on 19-02-1989

Dy. Shop Superintendent South Central Railway (Lalaguda Workshop)

Former Chairman S.C. Railway Employees Sangh (Lalaguda Workshop Branch)

"A Day never goes, without Remembering you"

Inserted by: A. Lalitha Bai (Wife)

Sons: A. Santosh Kumar

Ex. Chairman S.C. Railway Employees Sangh - Lalaguda Workshop

TPCC - General Secretary

A. Vijaya Kumar, A. Prem Kumar

A. Bharath Kumar, A. San

DECCAN Chronicle

19 FEBRUARY 2021

Covid-19 variants: India not out of the woods yet

The detection of four cases of South African and one of Brazilian variants of SARS-CoV-2 in India and the data that came out of the third national Sero Survey conducted in December and January are a reminder that India cannot afford to let the guard down against the pandemic.

The arrival of the latest South African variant indicates that India has, at present, all the three variants: B.1.1.7 which was first found in the UK; B.1.351, which is now spreading in South Africa; and P.1, discovered in Brazil. Experts and scientists fear that all three have a tendency to spread faster than the original one. And the worst fear is that since they mutate, they could survive the vaccine, which the world has got after a wait for almost a year and which is thought to be the normalised of human life on earth. Director of the Covid-19 Genomics UK consortium, the country's genetic surveillance programme, Sharon Peacock, is on record saying vaccines were so far effective against the variants in the United Kingdom, but "mutations could potentially undermine the shots". The British variant was likely "to sweep the world, in all probability", she has said.

The results of the Sero Survey conducted by the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) offers little reason to be complacent. As per the data, 21.5 per cent Indians have developed antibodies to the virus, indicating that the number of people exposed to the pandemic is not small. True, the number of new daily case-load is coming down sharply and so is the case with the number of deaths. Maharashtra and Kerala account for most of the new cases and deaths. However, a disturbing piece of information coming out of the survey is that Kerala, which has half the national exposure to the pandemic, records the highest number of new case every day. There can be safer explanations but the worst one points to the lack of testing or reporting, especially in the rural areas in many states. The reports of fudged testing from Bihar do not inspire confidence about the testing data.

India's Covid-19 vaccination programme makes steady progress and as per the latest reports, 68.3 per cent of all healthcare workers and 28.2 per cent of all frontline workers have been administered the vaccine. Of the healthcare workers, 37.6 per cent got the second dose, too. While the feat is commendable, the government should stop patting on its back talking of the distance covered; it should take a realistic assessment of the enormity of the task on hand instead. The vast majority of Indians are still vulnerable to the pandemic's attack and the new variants are on the door, knocking. We are yet to start the programme for the 50 years plus category, the next most vulnerable group. The government must explore every avenue to speed up the programme. And at the same time, it must reinvigorate the awareness programme on Covid-appropriate behaviour — wearing of masks, use of sanitiser and social distancing — and advise caution on social gatherings, especially political and religious. No amount of caution is excessive while fighting a pandemic.

A shining verdict

Wednesday's Delhi court ruling acquitting journalist Priya Ramani of defaming M.J. Akbar, a former newspaper editor and a former minister in the Narendra Modi government, goes far beyond just clearing her name. In upholding the dignity of a sexual harassment survivor, the court has not only shone the light on how such cases should be dealt with but also lays a solid foundation for the #MeToo movement in India. Women — and men too — should feel empowered to come out with the names of people who may have been guilty of sexually harassing them by dint of a superior position in the workplace. There is nothing so reprehensible as the dignity and honour of a woman being offended by those who wield the power of retaliation over subordinates. The court has shown great empathy for the victims while defining a virtual template for those who suffer sexual harassment to be able to name their tormentors regardless of whether such episodes took place decades ago, as indeed it did in this case revolving around a 1996 episode.

Speaking truth to power has been given a new definition in Priya Ramani's case as a battery of lawyers had laid out these charges of defamation on the premise that the reputation of their client had been damaged. The additional chief metropolitan magistrate was emphatic that the right of life and dignity of women as guaranteed in the Constitution rules supreme. As the #MeToo movement raged in the United States and elsewhere in the wake of Hollywood mogul Harry Weinstein being named in 2017 as a serial predator, the victimised women of India began finding their voice. A few of the perpetrators named may have taken to legal recourse not so much to defend their reputation as frightening those naming and shaming them in public. The great difficulty in pinning sexual harassment not amounting to rape as a criminal offence is that it takes place where there can be no witnesses. The verdict itself may be subject to appeal, but what the celebrated case has already achieved is to give every victim the chance to plead that truth is their witness as they name sexual predators.

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Mahir Ali

Why Navalny's challenge poses threat to Putin's grip on power

The scale of the threat Alexei Navalny poses to the status quo in Russia is hard to estimate.

After all, even the unusually widespread protests that erupted across the vast country after Navalny was arrested on his return from Germany attracted tens of thousands of participants. In themselves, they could hardly be viewed as a serious challenge to Vladimir Putin's grip on power, which has been reinforced during his 20-plus years at the helm.

That longevity itself could be problematic. An entire generation has grown up without experiencing a change in leadership. There have been rumours of restlessness even within the power structure. The state has in many ways been stagnating for at least a decade — a phenomenon reminiscent of the soul-sapping Brezhnev years that contributed to the demise of the Soviet Union.

The absence of viable alternatives eventually begins to take its toll, especially if it begins to seem indefinite. By lifting term limits, Putin has effectively ensconced himself as pres-

ident for life, should he wish to carry on. Legislation indemnifying all past presidents has also been rubber-stamped by the State Duma, pre-emptively thwarting any legal proceedings should Putin be obliged to step down.

Authoritarian regimes are sometimes inclined to permit a certain amount of opposition, provided it serves only as a safety valve — allowing disaffected segments of the population to let off steam — and stops well short of posing a serious threat. Until last summer, it was possible to see Navalny's campaign against corruption in that light.

Last August, though, Navalny became agonisingly ill during a flight across Siberia. The pilots arranged an emergency landing in Omsk, where the paramedics and medics took over. The German doctors who treated him after he was airlifted out of Russia acknowledged the pilots and paramedics had saved his life.

When the Germans announced that Navalny had been poisoned with novichok — a chemical poison accessible only to state operatives, which

had previously been deployed against military intelligence defector Sergei Skripal and his daughter in England — the Putin administration predictably denied all responsibility.

Navalny eventually came out of his coma, and during his recuperation managed to prank-call one of the perpetrators of the assassination attempt. It turned out that the poisoning was a rear-end manoeuvre — Navalny's under-pants had been laced with the deadly substance. Which explains why blue underwear was among the emblems paraded by protesters last month.

Another was toilet brushes. That related to an almost two-hour video released on Navalny's YouTube channel a couple of days after his latest arrest, which explains in detail the genesis of Putin's corrupt practices and focuses on their apogee: a billion-dollar estate on the Black Sea coast that stretches to more than 30 times the size of the European principality of Monaco.

This goes beyond garden-variety luxury and more than matches tsarist extravagance. The props

apparently include golden toilet brushes worth 800 euros each. The median Russian monthly wage is less than 40 euros. The overpriced excrement-wipers inevitably struck a chord. So did the overall impression of resources being dedicated to an exclusive luxury resort while at least 20 million Russians subsist below the poverty line and others struggle to make ends meet. Many others bristle at the direct or indirect restrictions on freedom of thought.

Navalny has used social media cleverly for more than a decade, and the effort has borne fruit. His "Putin's Palace" video has been viewed more than 100 million times on YouTube. The administration could not ignore it, so Putin denied he owned the estate, and within days a reliable poodle was prodded into claiming ownership of the sprawling estate.

Although the existence of the "palace" had been revealed more than 10 years ago, most Russians had forgotten about it until Navalny's video surfaced as a searing reminder. Navalny's crusade against corrup-

tion and for corporate transparency was initially tolerated to an extent but has lately been deemed too dangerous. It's interesting, though, that the regime's propaganda has largely overlooked his former dedication to far-right nationalism, perhaps because it chimes too closely with Putin's own predilections.

Navalny, it is said, has since moved on. He no longer rants about immigration from Central Asia, or militates against assistance to Russia's Muslim populations in the Caucasus. But what exactly he stands for is difficult to ascertain, beyond his admirable campaign against corruption.

Interestingly, even among those who have risked arrest and brutalisation at the hands of the ruthless Russian security forces in recent weeks, less than a quarter would like to see Navalny replace Putin. Yet Putin is clearly rattled. Whether something deeper is stirring in the Russian psyche, only the years ahead will tell.

By arrangement with Dawn

Subhani



Decoding the numbers: What the FM didn't say

Karan Thapar

As I See It

I know it's a cliché but first impressions can often become lasting ones. That's frequently true of the Budget. Most of us form an early impression from the initial coverage but few bother to examine the small print. So what we're initially told remains what we believe, even if the full truth is quite different.

Now I'm not an economist but I have read and understood widely and my belief is that the experts' view is very different to what television told me on Budget night or the newspapers the next morning. Let me share with you some issues that could alter your perception of the Budget. No doubt they've been written and spoken about, but that was mainly to small and restricted audiences. So some of this could come as a surprise.

Let's start with what the finance minister said about the year ending March 31. She claimed government expenditure has increased by 28.4 per cent and she got a huge cheer for that. However, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) points out ₹3 lakh crores of this is to write off past borrowings of the Food Corporation. No doubt that will increase government borrowing but it will not create demand. If you exclude this, government expenditure has only increased by 17 per cent. That's not "we have spent, we have spent, we have spent", as the FM claimed.

Mathesh Vyas, CMIE's CEO, told me a 17 per cent hike is only marginally more than last year's 16 per cent. "That was a business-as-usual budget", he said. "It's hard to deny this year's is no different."

The third big announcement was that FDI in insurance would be raised to 74 per cent. If that actually happens — and it's a big if — it could certainly expand the insurance sector and provide funds for long-term investment. But the critical question is: are foreign insurance companies itching to increase their percentage? Many were reluctant to even go to 49 per cent when that was allowed. Jahangir Azziz, J.P. Morgan's top economist for emerging markets, tells me foreign insurers have grave concerns about India's regulations. If they remain unchanged, that will considerably dampen their interest.

The fourth big announcement was the government's decision to create an Asset Reconstruction Company to handle non-performing

assets (NPAs). Given the RBI's forecast that NPAs could increase to 13.5 per cent by September 2021 and to 16.2 per cent for public sector banks, this received another huge round of applause. But Pronab Sen notes an ARC would require public sector banks to take "haircuts" of up to 40 per cent or more. That, in turn, would affect their reserve position adversely. If that happens, it would force the government to take substantial steps to recapitalise banks. But none of that was mentioned in the Budget.

Finally, the announcement on privatising PSUs and insurance companies and monetising assets like surplus land, airports, roads and highways, oil and gas pipelines. Once again, the stock markets loved this as did the experts in TV studios. But the devil lies in the unseen details. Pronab Sen raises some fundamental questions. "We don't know whether this is payment owed to contractors for earlier commissioned projects, some of which are stuck, or for new ones. If it's the former, then it's likely to have a supply side effect rather than a demand side impact." The former won't lift GDP so much as clear the government's debts. As yet we don't know which it is.

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LETTERS

PETROL FOR ₹100/L

The Narendra Modi government increased Central excise duty on petrol (₹9.48 to ₹32.98) and diesel (₹3.56 to ₹31.83) during its tenure. However, Modi found it convenient to blame his predecessors for not planning to minimise India's energy independence. Such remarks dent the image of the PM who is considered an intellectual globally. Modi should realise that people cannot be fooled and religion cannot be trump card at all times.

Kshirsagara Balaji Rao
Hyderabad

People living in Naya Bharat are not blind but keenly observing and silently suffering. Therefore, the Centre must read the writing on the wall and take action to reduce the financial burden on people who have voted twice for this government.

P.H. Hema Sagar
Secunderabad

The PM's charges against previous governments for the day's fuel crisis is no consolation for the nation. Politicians and officials travelling in government vehicles don't feel the pinch of fuel price hikes. I feel government must introduce 'Petrol rationing' and introduce alternate day use of motor vehicles and car pooling to save fuel. It is an irony that government gave a free hand to automobile industry to increase production, knowing well that new vehicles will consume fuel and add to import bill.

Baru Rajendra Prasad
Hyderabad

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Politicians and officials travelling in government vehicles don't feel the pinch of fuel price hikes. I feel government must introduce 'Petrol rationing' and introduce alternate day use of motor vehicles and car pooling to save fuel. It is an irony that government gave a free hand to automobile industry to increase production, knowing well that new vehicles will consume fuel and add to import bill.

Four bodies were recovered while two more still lay under the debris. Late tonight, Brig. M. J. Ramachandran, Area Commander along with 300 officers and men of the Armed Forces was at the site supervising the removal of the debris.

The writer is a television commentator and anchor

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Part of Chaderghat extension work collapses, 6 dead

HYDERABAD, February 18 Six persons were killed and 43 others injured here today when the entire scaffolding of a span on the Chaderghat bridge collapsed. Of the injured, 31 persons have been admitted as patients in the Osmania General Hospital of which the condition of six is described as serious.

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SHORT TAKES

10 COUNTRIES ENDORSE MODI'S COVID PLAN

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, FEB. 18

In a significant development, 10 countries in India's immediate and extended neighbourhood including Pakistan on Thursday are understood to have endorsed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's suggestions at a Covid management workshop that India and its neighbourhood "consider creating a special visa scheme for our doctors and nurses, so that they can travel quickly within our region during health emergencies, on the request of the receiving country".

Modi also mooted a "regional Air Ambulance agreement for medical contingencies" in the region by the respective civil aviation ministries.

The suggestions were made while addressing a workshop on "Covid-19 Management: Experience, Good Practices and Way Forward" with health leaders, experts and officials of 10 Neighbouring Countries" that were Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and India.

Indian Government sources late on Thursday evening said, "All countries including Pakistan supported PM's five proposals. They proposed a structured discussion for regional cooperation on these proposals to take them forward."

Also all countries - except Pakistan which has not received vaccines from New Delhi - thanked India and the PM for India's supplies of vaccines and earlier of various medicines, equipment and training.

MUMBAI MAKES MASKS COMPULSORY

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, FEB. 18

Taking a serious note of rising coronavirus cases, the Brihammumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has decided to implement Covid-19 regulations strictly across the city. People not wearing masks in public will be fined by the civic body, which has also decided to deploy marshals in local trains to keep an eye on those travelling without masks.

BMC chief Iqbal Singh Chahal on Thursday held a meeting with municipal officials and instructed them to implement Covid-19 guidelines strictly to discourage people from violating rules.

Mr Chahal issued a circular stating that wearing masks has now been made mandatory in the city.

"All persons will have to wear masks in public places including streets, shops, offices, hospital premises, local trains, and public transport services. People found violating the rule will be punished by the civic body," it said.

To take action against people violating rules, the BMC has decided to double the number of clean-up marshals in the city from 2,400 to 4,800. In addition to this, 300 marshals will be deployed in the local trains to penalise people travelling without mask.

Shah promises probe into all graft cases during TMC rule

Says not even a single TMC goon will be seen on the road on poll days

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA, FEB. 18

Union home minister Amit Shah on Thursday declared that the BJP, after coming to power in West Bengal in the ensuing Assembly election, would investigate the corruption in the distribution of the Centre's ₹3,500 crore relief aid for Cyclone Amphan to the Mamata Banerjee government and all other scams during the Trinamul Congress rule to put the offenders behind bars.

He told a BJP rally at Namkhana in South 24 Parganas, "When Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent relief for the affected by Cyclone Amphan, the TMC goons looted it. It was around ₹3,500 crore which he had disbursed. Still nothing happened here. As soon as the BJP forms its government here, we will carry out a high-level probe into the Amphan fund misappropriation and send those, who ate away your share in it, to jail."

Training his guns on the Chief Minister and her MP nephew Abhishek Banerjee, Shah claimed, "Modiji also sent huge funds for the development of Bengal. But the amounts went to the syndicates of Didi. The Congress, when in power at the Centre, had released ₹1.32 lakh crores to the state over five years. But the Narendra Modi government sent here ₹3.59 lakh crores in five years. The amounts were looted by Bhaipo (nephew) and his goons. Once the BJP government comes to existence, all graft cases will be investigated and whoever ate the money for the poor people of Bengal will be sent to the custody of the law."

The Union home minister



Union home minister Amit Shah along with other BJP leaders eats lunch at the residence of Subrata Biswas in Narayanpur village of South 24 Pargana district. — PTI

Huge security deployment for Bengal elections likely

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 18

An unprecedented 80,000 to 1,00,000 central para-military force security personnel could be deployed for the crucial West Bengal Assembly polls.

Home ministry and election commission have held several rounds of meetings amid Intelligence reports that there could be large scale violence during these polls. Election commission is expected to

announce the poll schedule in the next few days as they are expected to be held in April-May.

Home ministry sources said they had several rounds of meetings with the poll panel during which a detailed threat and security analysis was done. Since West Bengal is likely to witness a tough contest between the Trinamool Congress and the BJP, large scale violence is expected in some parts of the state.

Following a series of meetings both the election commission and home ministry has decided that at least 800 to 1,000 companies (each having 100 security personnel) of central para-military forces will be deployed in the state during different rounds of polling.

"Both poll panel and home ministry have largely worked out the number of forces to be deployed as are expecting violence in some areas," a senior Ministry official said.

Warning the goons of the TMC at the launch of the fifth and final Rath Yatra of the BJP, he said, "I ask the goons, patronised by Mamata, Go for hiding wherever you want to. You will be found out in Patal (if you hide even there) and will be put behind bars."

The Union home minister

further assured of a tight security arrangement for Assembly polls, adding, "I can guarantee that not even a single goon of the TMC will be seen on the road on the poll days. You can cast your vote without any fear."

To woo the voters with sops, Shah then announced that the BJP,

after forming its government, would implement the seventh pay commission in the salary scale of the state government employees, more than 33 per cent reservation for women in state government jobs, a fishermen welfare scheme in line of the PM Kishan Samman Nidhi.

Additional charge



Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan accepts a bouquet from Chief Justice of Madras High Court Sanjib Banerjee after being sworn in as Lt. Governor of Puducherry, an additional charge, during a brief ceremony at Raj Nivas in Puducherry on Thursday. Tamilisai directed the ruling Congress-DMK alliance to prove its majority on the floor of the Assembly before 5 pm on February 22. — PTI

Modi's 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' to be held online due to Coronavirus

New Delhi, Feb. 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's annual interaction with students 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' will be held online this year in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The interaction with students from classes 9 to 12 ahead of their exams will be held in March.

"As our brave #ExamWarriors start padding up for their exams, 'Pariksha Pe Charcha 2021' returns, this time fully online and open to students all over the world. Come, let us appear for the exams with a smile and without stress! #PPC2021," Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted.

"On popular demand, 'Pariksha Pe Charcha 2021' will also include parents and teachers. It'll be a fun filled discussion on an otherwise serious subject. I call upon my student friends, their amazing parents and hardworking teachers to take part in #PPC2021.



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in #PPC2021 in large numbers, the Prime Minister said.

Union education minister Ramesh Pokhrayal Nishank said the registration process of the fourth edition of the interaction has started.

Questions related to dealing with examination stress from school students of classes 9 to 12 will be invited through the 'MyGov'

platform and selected questions assigned for students, parents and teachers in the programme, he said.

"I feel happy to share that the interaction every student was waiting for is back! Get ready to smile your way through exams with PM @narendramodi #ParikshaPeCharcha2021," Nishank said in a tweet.

"In view of the Covid-19 pandemic, this year the

interaction will be conducted online," he said in another tweet.

The registration for the programme began on Thursday and it will conclude on March 14. Students who will get to ask questions will be selected through a competition.

The first edition of the Prime Minister's interaction programme with school and college students 'Pariksha Pe Charcha 1.0' was held at the Talkatora Stadium on February 16, 2018.

"There are different topics assigned for students, parents and teachers in the contest. The applicants can also pose their questions on this platform. The selected participants will be participating in the programme online from their respective state and UT headquarters and will be presented with a special PPC kit (Pariksha Pe Charcha kit)," Nishank said.

— PTI

DIDI: ATTACK ON BENGAL MINISTER A CONSPIRACY

RAJIB CHOWDHURI & PRANMOY BRAHMACHARI | DC
KOLKATA/BERHAMPUR, FEB. 18

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has cried of a "well-planned and big conspiracy" and security lapses by the railway ministry behind the "murderous" bomb attack which left her cabinet colleague Zakir Hussain and 25 others critically injured at Nitmit railway station in Murshidabad on Wednesday night.

Many of those who joined the JD(U) were senior functionaries of the party which includes several district heads.

LJP leaders who joined the JD(U) on Thursday were upset over the party's poor performance in 2020 Assembly elections. The political crisis in the LJP comes at a time when Chirag Paswan has been trying to expand his party's base in Bihar.

Chirag Paswan's LJP suffered a jolt in Bihar as 208 of its members joined the ruling JD(U) on Thursday.

Sources said that those who left the LJP were upset over the party's poor performance in 2020 Assembly elections. The political crisis in the LJP comes at a time when Chirag Paswan has been trying to expand his party's base in Bihar.

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LJP leaders who joined the JD(U) on Thursday were upset over the party's poor performance in 2020 Assembly elections.

"Before Assembly elections, the party came out with a slogan Bihar first Bihari first but after the demise of veteran leader Ram Vilas Paswan the focus shifted to Chirag first family first," Keshav Singh said after joining JD(U) on Thursday.

JDU president R.C.P. Singh who was also present during the occasion said that "All those who joined the JD(U) were top functionaries in LJP. Our party will benefit from their political experience".

Meanwhile, Rameshwar Chaurasia, who left the BJP before 2020 Assembly elections and contested on LJP ticket, has also sent his resignation to Chirag Paswan. Sources said that he is likely to return to the BJP.

Chirag Paswan's party LJP had contested Bihar polls against Nitish Kumar after breaking away from the JD(U) on 20 seats during the elections.

Over 200 LJP members join ruling JD(U)

NAYEER AZAD | DC
PATNA, FEB. 18

LJP LEADERS who joined the JD(U) were headed by senior leader Keshav Singh who was expelled from the LJP for revolting against Chirag Paswan after the party's debacle in the Assembly elections.

JDU PRESIDENT R.C.P. Singh who was also present during the occasion said that "All those who joined the JD(U) were top functionaries in LJP. Our party will benefit from their political experience".

Kumar after breaking away from the NDA. Though it had won only one seat during the Assembly polls, but assessment done by the JD(U) suggests that the move caused heavy damage to the party.

The JD(U) had emerged as the largest party in the NDA with 74 seats while its partner JD(U) won 43 seats. Two NDA partners Hindustani Awam Morcha and Vikasheen Insan Party managed to win four seats each during the polls.

The JD(U) has been holding Chirag Paswan responsible for the low tally and has been accusing him of "cutting votes" on most of the seats fielded by the party.

Sources said that JD(U) leadership had urged the BJP to initiate action against Chirag Paswan and his party for aggressively campaigning against Nitish Kumar and fielding candidates on most of the seats where JD(U) had fielded its candidates. As per an assessment, the LJP harmed the JD(U) on 20 seats during the elections.

after forming its government, would implement the seventh pay commission in the salary scale of the state government employees, more than 33 per cent reservation for women in state government jobs, a fishermen welfare scheme in line of the PM Kishan Samman Nidhi.

Directorate of Film Festivals
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Government of India

68th National Film Awards

68TH NATIONAL FILM AWARDS 2020

CALL FOR ENTRIES

Feature & Non Feature Films	Best Writing on Cinema
Eligibility Films Certified by CBFC between 01/01/2020 and 31/12/2020 (Both days inclusive)	Eligibility Books & Article/Reviews on Cinema published between 01/01/2020 and 31/12/2020 (Both days inclusive)

- All films MUST carry English subtitles.
- Last date for submission of ONLINE applications is 12th March, 2021 (till 6.00 P.M.) and the last date for receipt of the hard copy of the submitted online application form along with the requisite documents is 19th March, 2021.
- (Note : Both the versions of application forms (Online and Printed Hard Copy) submitted by the applicants should be same).

For Regulations (which includes Entry Form) visit : www.dff.gov.in

(Note : Applicants are requested to carefully read the Regulations of 68th National Film Awards, 2020 before submitting the application form)

68th National Film Awards, 2020

Directorate of Film Festivals

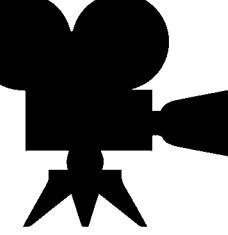
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SHORT TAKES
CONG THREATENS TO STOP AMITABH, AKSHAY SHOOTS

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, FEB. 18

The Maharashtra Congress on Thursday threatened to stall the movies of film stars Amitabh Bachchan and Akshay Kumar accusing them of not raising a voice against the spiralling prices of petrol and diesel.

State Congress chief Nana Patole alleged that these stars are acting on the directives of the BJP. "Several celebrities including Amitabh Bachchan and Akshay Kumar, through their tweets, had earlier criticised the fuel price rise when the Congress-led UPA Government was in power. However, they have now kept mum despite the huge rise in fuel prices. Why are they silent now on the rising petrol and diesel prices?" he asked.

Mr Patole on Thursday flagged off the bullock cart and tractor rally organised by the Congress at Bhandara to support the farmers, who are protesting at Delhi against the Centre's new farm bills.

"Just like they criticised the UPA Government, these celebrities are now expected to raise a voice against the policies of the Modi Government. Instead they are quiet now as they have become a puppet of the BJP. They did not speak up when the farmer's protests were vilified by the BJP's IT cell, but they took a stand against the farmers," he said.

If these celebrities do not take a stand now on the injustice meted out by the Modi government, we will not let any films or shootings of Amitabh Bachchan or Akshay Kumar in Maharashtra, the Congress leader said.

I-T RAIDS MP CONG MLA'S HOUSE

DC CORRESPONDENT
BHOPLA, FEB. 18

Income Tax sleuths on Thursday conducted raids at residences and business establishments of Congress MLA Nilay Daga over suspicion of tax evasion. He is the first sitting MLA in Madhya Pradesh to be on I-T radar for alleged tax evasion.

The raids were conducted on the lawmaker's properties at 20 places in five cities, Betul and Satna in Madhya Pradesh, Mumbai and Sholapur in Maharashtra and Kolkata, simultaneously, a senior IT officer said here.

"The I-T raids may continue for three days," Rajendra Singh Chouhan, an officer in the I-T department here told the media.

The I-T raids were conducted at his residence and edible oil factory in Betul, rice and oil mills in Satna and various business establishments in other cities in the country, sources said.

The legislator who represented Betul Assembly constituency is considered close to former chief minister and Congress veteran Digvijay Singh. His father was also a Congress MLA.

He was the only Congress leader in MP who supported construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya and was actively involved in mobilisation of funds for the purpose.

Meanwhile, a large crowd of supporters of the lawmaker's gathered before his residence in Betul as a show of solidarity to him.

MAHA TO PRESENT STATE BUDGET ON MARCH 8

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, FEB. 18

The Maharashtra government is likely to present its budget in the state legislature on March 8. The budget session will begin on March 1.

Sources said that the government does not want to conduct sessions of more than two weeks. However, a final decision would be taken after taking stock of the Covid situation in the Business Advisory Committee's next meeting on February 25.

A meeting of the Business Advisory Committee was held on Thursday and it was attended by the representatives of ruling and Opposition parties including chief minister Uddhav Thackeray and leader of the opposition Devendra Fadnavis.

The Opposition BJP has demanded to hold a budget session for four weeks. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the monsoon and winter sessions of the state legislature were held only for two days.



Locals stage a protest after bodies of two minor Dalit girls were found in a field and another in critical condition on Wednesday evening, near Baburaha village in Unnao district on Thursday.

— PTI

No injury marks on Unnao victims' bodies, says DGP

Congress targets UP govt over death of two teenage girls in Unnao

SC closes proceedings to probe larger conspiracy in Gogoi case

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, FEB. 18

The Supreme Court on Thursday brought the curtains down on its suo motu proceedings to investigate the alleged larger conspiracy behind the allegation of sexual harassment against former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi. Without giving details, it added that the possibility of a larger conspiracy cannot be ruled out.

"Two years have passed and the possibility of recovery of electronic evidence is unlikely. Three-member committee headed by the CJI S.A. Bobde has already submitted a report. Suo motu case is closed and proceedings are disposed off. There is no requirement to keep the case going on," the court said in its order closing the case. The order was passed by a bench comprising Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian.

The court added that the one-man committee headed by former judge Justice A.K. Patnaik has not ruled out the possibility of a conspiracy against former

The Opposition slammed the government over law and order, and demanded a high-level inquiry, while Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath took a serious note of the incident and sought a detailed report from the director general of police (DGP).

The three girls, aged 15, 14 and 16, were found in a field at Baburaha village in Asoha - around 36 km south of Lucknow - on Wednesday evening by the villagers when they did not return after leaving their house to take fodder for cattle, police had said.

The villagers rushed the teenagers, who are related, to a hospital, where two of them were declared brought dead. The other girl was rushed to the Unnao hospital and later referred to a Kanpur healthcare facility, according to police.

The DGP said six police teams had been constituted and senior officials were supervising the probe.

"The post-mortem of the two girls was done by a panel of doctors and no injury before death or external injuries were found on their bodies," Awasthi said in a video clip released to the media.

Adityanath directed officials to ensure proper treatment of the teenager on government expenses, according to a spokesperson.

"The cause of death could not be ascertained and viscera has been preserved for chemical analysis," he said. "We are taking help of forensic experts and looking into all possibilities."

A medical bulletin issued by the Kanpur hospital treating the third girl has noted it was a suspected case of poisoning, the officer said.

Adityanath directed officials to ensure proper treatment of the teenager on government expenses, according to a spokesperson.

Farmers on Thursday sat on railway tracks at many places in Punjab and Haryana as part of the four-hour 'rail roko' protest against the Centre's three farm laws, with officials saying trains were halted at stations as a precautionary measure.

Normal movement of trains on various rail routes was disrupted as farmers squatted on tracks.

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body of farmer unions which is spearheading the



Ranjan Gogoi

CJI Gogoi. In 2019, the top court had, in a suo motu matter it said was of "great public importance touching upon the independence of judiciary", initiated proceedings and set-up a one-man committee to inquire into the claims of wider conspiracy behind the allegation of sexual harassment against former

The three-judge bench comprising Justice Arun Mishra (since retired), Justice Rohinton Fali Nariman and Justice Deepak Gupta (also retired), had referred to a letter by the director of Intelligence Bureau (IB)

Earlier, Unnao Superintendent of Police Anand Kulkarni said there was a contradiction in the statements of the mother and brother of the girls. He added that the brother had said the girls were tied with a stole, while her mother said on Thursday that it was around her neck.

Our investigation has

found that bodies had no marks on them either in the hands or legs, suggesting that they were not tied, the SP said.

Kulkarni said the family

which said that some conspiracy might have been hatched because of the tough decisions taken by Justice Gogoi, including the preparation of National Citizens Register in Assam and streamlining the court registry.

However, the top court's order on setting up the Justice A.K. Patnaik Committee had said that it will not inquire into the "alleged misbehaviour" involving former CJI Gogoi.

Referring to Justice Patnaik's report, the court said on Thursday, "The veracity of the allegations levelled by lawyer Utsav Singh Bains could not be verified completely due to the limited access of records and other collaborative material."

A three-member committee headed by Justice Sharad A. Bobde (present Chief Justice) and comprising Justices Indu Malhotra and Indira Banerjee that inquired into the allegation of sexual misconduct gave a clean chit to former CJI Gogoi.

The report of the committee was never made public.

Samajwadi Party supreme Akhilesh Yadav termed it shocking and a "shame on humanity", and demanded strict punishment for the guilty.

"It seems that the chief minister didn't care about law and order in the state. The state has become insecure for women due to the BJP," Yadav said in a statement.

He said the Adityanath government had "failed" to check the atrocities on women.

"The BJP government did not have any policy for women security. BJP ideology ignores women interests. UP has become 'Hatya Pradesh' (murder state) in the present regime," Yadav added.

— PTI

protest, had last week announced the nationwide rail blockade to seek the repeal of the three farm laws. The farmers sat on tracks as part of the 'rail roko' agitation from 12 noon to 4 pm.

Farmers at Kurukshetra in Haryana climbed on the locomotive of the Gita Jayanti Express train, which had been stopped at the station. "The train was scheduled to leave from the Kurukshetra station after 3 pm," a railway official in Kurukshetra said, adding the farmers did not allow the train engine to

change its end for some time. In Punjab, protesters sat on tracks at many places on the Delhi-Ludhiana-Amritsar railway route, officials said.

They blocked the Jalandhar Cantt-Jammu railway track in Jalandhar. Farmers also squatted on railway tracks at Mullanpur, Dakha and Jagraon on Ludhiana-Ferozepur rail route in Ludhiana, said officials.

Bathinda-Delhi rail track in Bathinda, Delhi-Amritsar track in Amritsar, Amritsar-Tarn Taran track were also

blocked by protesters. In Haryana, protesting farmers, including women, squatted on a track at Shahpur village, about 2 kilometres from the Ambala Cantt station.

"Our protest will continue in a peaceful manner till the farm laws are repealed," said Manakpur.

Security was beefed up in both Haryana and Punjab with the government railway police and state police personnel having been deployed at many places in the two states, officials said.

On the Ambala-Delhi

railway section, a group of farmers led by Bharatiya

members who were the first ones to reach the spot were being questioned.

Asked if an FIR had been lodged, the SP said the matter was being investigated and action would be taken on the basis of the post mortem report, which was conducted by a panel of three doctors and video-graphed.

On speculation about it being a case of honour killing, the officer said all aspects would be included in the probe, adding that it would not be right to say anything on it at the

moment.

Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra hit out at the state government over the issue of women safety.

"The UP government is

not only crushing Dalit society, but also the honour and human rights of women," Rahul Gandhi tweeted. "But they should remember that I and the entire Congress party will stand as the voice of victims and will endeavour to get them justice."

He also used the hashtag "#Save_Unnao_Ki_Beti" (daughter of Unnao) with his tweet.

Priyanka Gandhi

demanding that the third girl be shifted to Delhi for better medical treatment and asked why her family had been detained.

In a Facebook post, she said: "The Unnao incident is

a heart-wrenching.

Hearing out the family

and providing immediate medical help to the third victim is very important for investigation and justice."

He is the third girl to be shifted to Delhi for better medical treatment and asked why her family had been detained.

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SHORT TAKES
**QUAKE INJURES
AT LEAST 10 IN
CENTRAL IRAN**

Tehran, Feb. 18: A magnitude 5.6 earthquake struck central Iran on Wednesday, injuring at least 10 people, Iranian media reported.

The state TV said the quake jolted the country of Sisakht, about 500 kilometres (310 miles) south of the capital, Tehran. The reports said search and rescue teams have been deployed to the area. It said the tremor struck at a depth of 10 kilometres (6.2 miles).

Sisakht is a farming area with a population of about 6,000 people; it's part of the province of Kohkiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmadi.

There were no further details on possible damages or casualties.

Iran lies on major seismic faults and experiences one earthquake a day on average.

**NASA ROVER
STREAKS TOWARD
MARS LANDING**

Cape Canaveral, Feb. 18: A NASA rover streaked toward a landing on Mars on Thursday in the riskiest step yet in an epic quest to bring back rocks that could answer whether life ever existed on the red planet.

Ground controllers at the space agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, settled in nervously for the descent of Perseverance to the surface of Mars, long a deathtrap for incoming spacecraft. It takes a nail-biting 11 1/2 minutes for a signal that would confirm success to reach Earth. The landing of the six-wheeled vehicle would mark the third visit to Mars in just over a week. Two spacecraft from the United Arab Emirates and China swung into orbit around the planet on successive days last week.

All three missions lifted off in July to take advantage of the close alignment of Earth and Mars, travelling some 300 million miles in nearly seven months.

**HK ACTIVIST
JIMMY LAI
DENIED BAIL**

Hong Kong, Feb. 18: Prominent Hong Kong democracy advocate and newspaper publisher Jimmy Lai was again denied bail on Thursday ahead of his April trial on charges of colluding with foreign forces.

Lai is one of several activists facing charges and possibly lengthy prison terms under the sweeping National Security Law that Beijing imposed on the semi-autonomous southern Chinese city last year following massive anti-government protests in 2019.

Critics at home and abroad say the legislation amounts to a crackdown on political dissent and free speech that is eroding the rights and freedoms promised to Hong Kong under the one country, two systems framework following the handover from British colonial rule in 1997.

Arrested and charged in early December, Lai was at first denied bail then granted it on appeal under strict conditions amounting for a form of house arrest. That prompted a withering attack on the Hong Kong judiciary by the ruling People's Daily newspaper.

**BOMBING KILLS 2
KABUL VARSITY
LECTURERS**

Kabul, Feb. 18: An explosion in the Afghan capital on Thursday killed two lecturers at the Kabul University, after a bomb attached to the car they were travelling in went off, a police spokesman said.

The attack took place around noon near the university, said Kabul police spokesman Ferdinand Farzam. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing.

The two lecturers, Mubasher Muslimyar and Marouf Rasikh, taught at the university's Islamic studies faculty, according to an Afghan official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

Two years ago, Muslimyar had been briefly arrested by the Afghan intelligence agency over allegations of promoting militant propaganda by the Islamic State group among university students. No charges were raised and he was later released. Kabul police said an investigation team had arrived at the scene of the explosion.

This was the second explosion on Thursday in Kabul.

Facebook blocks access to news in Oz

Actions to unfriend Australia were as arrogant as they were disappointing, says PM Morrison

Canberra, Feb. 18: In a surprise retaliatory move Thursday, Facebook blocked Australians from sharing news stories, escalating a fight with the government over whether powerful tech companies should have to pay news organisations for content.

Australia's government condemned the step, which also blocked some government communications, including messages about emergency services, and some commercial pages. The digital platforms fear that what's happening in Australia will become an expensive precedent for other countries as governments revamp laws to catch up with the fast changing digital world.

Facebook acted after the House of Representatives passed legislation that wo-

uld make it and Google pay for Australian journalism, said Treasurer Josh Frydenberg. He said he was given no warning before Facebook acted. The legislation must be passed by the Senate to become law.

Australian news organisations could not post stories and people who tried to share existing news stories got notifications saying they were blocked from doing so. "This post can't be shared," the website said. "In response to Australian government legislation, Facebook restricts the posting of news links and all posts from news Pages in Australia. Globally, the posting and sharing of news links from Australian publications is restricted."

The legislation mentioned by the notice has not yet

been enacted. "Facebook's actions were unnecessary, they were heavy-handed and they will damage its reputation here in Australia," Frydenberg said. Prime Minister Scott Morrison lashed out on his own Facebook page.

"Facebook's actions to unfriend Australia today, cutting off essential information services on health and emergency services, were as arrogant as they were disappointing," Morrison posted. "These actions will only confirm the concerns that an increasing number of countries are expressing about the behavior of BigTech companies who think they are bigger than governments and that the rules should not apply to them. They may be changing the world, but that doesn't mean

they run it," he added. "We will not be intimidated by BigTech seeking to pressure our Parliament."

Facebook said the proposed Australian law "fundamentally misunderstands the relationship between our platform and publishers who use it." "This is an assault on a sovereign nation," Health Minister Greg Hunt told Parliament.

"It is an assault on people's freedom and, in particular, it's an utter abuse of big technologies'

market power and control over technology."

The government contends the proposed News Media Bargaining Code will ensure media businesses will be paid fairly for journalism linked online. Both Google and Facebook had threatened to retaliate. Australia's proposal requires a negotiation safety net through an arbitration panel. The digital giants would not be able to abuse their dominant negotiating positions by making take-it-or-leave-it payment offers to news businesses for their journalism.

In case of a standoff, the panel would make a binding decision on a winning offer. Google had threatened to remove its search functions from Australia because it said the pro-

posed law was unworkable. But that threat has faded as Google has worked out licensing content deals with Australian media companies under its own News Showcase model. Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. announced a wide-ranging deal with Google on Wednesday. Major Australian media organization Seven West Media reached a deal earlier in the week.

Their rival Nine Entertainment is reportedly close to its own pact, and state-owned Australian Broadcasting Corp. is in negotiations. The government accused Facebook of endangering public safety by temporarily blocking state emergency services messaging on a day when there were severe fire and flood warn-

ings in various parts of Australia. The Bureau of Meteorology's weather warnings, a Hobart women's shelter and the Betoota Advocate, a satirical website named after an Australian ghost town, were among those surprised to find their content blocked at least temporarily. Communications Minister Paul Fletcher said he told Facebook the government expects access to its pages to be restored. "The fact that there are organizations like state health departments, fire and emergency services . . . who have had their Facebook pages blocked, that's a public safety issue," Fletcher said. Facebook said in a statement: "Any pages that are inadvertently impacted, we'll look to reverse."

—AP

Water woes over icy temps

Memphis (US), Feb. 18: About 7 million people in Texas—a quarter of the nation's second-most populous state—were told to boil their water or stop using it entirely as homeowners, hospitals, and businesses grappled with broken water mains and burst pipes, many in areas unaccustomed to dealing with sustained frigid temperatures.

Winter storms during the past week in the Midwest, Texas and the South forced water service providers to scramble to manage flows as sub-freezing temperatures presented serious problems. The Texas city of Kyle, south of Austin, asked residents Wednesday to suspend water usage until further notice because of a shortage. "Water should

only be used to sustain life at this point," the city of 45,000 said in an advisory.

"We are close to running out of water supply in Kyle." In Memphis, Tennessee, the power and water company asked residents to reduce their water usage through Friday. Memphis Light, Gas & Water said in a news release that it is experiencing reduced pressure across its distribution system due to freezing temperatures this week. The utility also said it is seeing reduced reservoir levels at pumping stations and several water mains have burst.

MLG&W has asked customers to refrain from leaving the water running while rinsing dishes, take short showers and hold off on

washing clothes until Friday.

Officials also asked customers to save water by letting faucets drip, instead of streaming water, to prevent pipes from freezing over. Oklahoma City officials said on Twitter that power outages and extremely low temperatures caused water service interruption and low pressure for customers. Crews helped turn off water for thousands of customers who had their private water lines break.

"Leave your cabinet doors open to allow warm air to circulate," the city said in a tweet. "Do not try to use open flames or boiling water to thaw pipes." Three hospitals in Shreveport, Louisiana, lost water because of the storm,

—AP

5 PIOs in TIME leaders' list

New York, Feb. 18: Five Indian-origin personalities, including Twitter's top lawyer Vijaya Gadde and UK's finance minister Rishi Sunak, and an Indian activist feature in TIME magazine's annual list of 100 "emerging leaders who are shaping the future". The 2021 TIME100 Next, released on Wednesday, is an expansion of TIME's flagship TIME100 franchise of the most influential people in the world and highlights 100 emerging leaders for many citizens whose jobs were disrupted by the virus.

Sunak has however also been criticised for advocating early relaxation of lockdown rules, the profile said. "Nonetheless, Sunak remains the country's most popular politician, according to the pollster YouGov. And he's the o d d s m a k e r s ' favourite to be Britain's next Prime Minister," it added.

"Everyone on this list is poised to make history. And in fact, many already have," Dan Macsai, the editorial director of the TIME100, said. Other Indian-origin personalities on the list are Instacart founder and CEO Apoorva Mehta, doctor and Executive Director of nonprofit Get Us PPE Shikha Gupta and founder of nonprofit Upsolve Rohan

Pavuluri. Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad is also on the list.

Sunak's profile in the TIME feature says that a little over a year ago, the 40-year old was an "unknown junior minister in the British government" but after he was named to lead Britain's Treasury last year, he "quickly became the benevolent face of the government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, approving large handouts for many citizens whose jobs were disrupted by the virus."

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#NARESH 57
**RELEASING
TODAY**



C
I
N
E
M
A



SAPTHAGIRI 70MM 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM	
ARJUN 70-11.30,2.30,6.30,9.30	
KONARK 70-11.15,2.15,6.15,9.15	
INTRA VENKATARAMANA/PADMAVATHI KACHIGUDA-2.30PM	
OAMB 10.30,1.15,4.20,7.25,10.20PM	
ASIAN LAKSHMI CINEPRIDE Mysorepet	
LAXMIKALA CINEPRIDE 11.15,6.30,9.15PM	
PRASADS-11.30,5.15,11.00PM	
O ASIAN CINEMAS Gpr-1.30,7.20pm Sivaganga-6.30pm	
Radhika-1.30,7.20pm Cinesquare-10.40,1.20,4.45,7.15pm	
PVR Rk-4.35,11.00pm Central-2.20,4.20,7.35pm	
L & T- 3.30,6.45,10.00pm Musarambagh-1.50,5.05,10.40pm	
Irrummanzil-1.10,4.25,10.50pm Inorbit-10.15,1.10,7.35,10.50pm	
Prestone-4.20,10.45pm Forum-10.00,1.05,4.20,7.35,10.50pm	
Galleria-11.30,1.25,7.35,10.50pm	
INOX Gvk-11:15,2:50,6:25,10:00 Mp-10:20,4:15,10:20pm.	
Gsm-11:30,3:05,6:40,10:15pm	
PLATINUM 11.00,4.30, 10.30pm	
ASIAN Cineplex 10.50,1.45 7.30pm	
MIRAJ Chandanagar-3.15,9.30pm Balanagar-11.00,1.30,7.50	
Kothapet-11.00,1.30,7.50pm	
Cinépolis CCpl-10.40,4.25,10.10PM Dls-12.40,7.00,10.35PM	
Mantra-10.40,3.55,10.25PM Sudha-10.45,4.25,10.10PM,	
TIVOLI EXTREME 10.50,4.45, 10.45pm	
MULTIPLEX BY VIJAYA LAKSHMI 11.00, 10.15pm	
BIG Cinemas Ameerpet 1.10pm	
ASIAN SHAIK DRAMERICA 70MM Chinthal you matter! 6.15pm	
2 Mallapur 1.05,7.15pm	
ASIAN MURUGA MJR SQUARE 10.30,1.30, 7.45,10.35	
VIMAL 70MM 11.00,2.00PM	
AARADHANA 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00	
SRILATHA 70MM 6.00,9.00PM	
SAMPOORNA 11.15,2.15PM	
MAHALAXMI 2.00,6.00PM	
TALLURI 70MM 2.15,9.16PM	



CINEMA

EMOTIONAL HIT

2nd WEEK

SUDARSHAN

35MM (ENJOY 4K LASER PROJECTION & DOLBY ATMOS SOUND SYSTEM)

11.00, 2.15, 6.00, 9.15PM

OAMB

10.55, 1.35, 1.50, 4.00, 4.45, 7.00,
7.40, 10.05, 10.35PM

11.45, 2.30, 5.15,
5.45, 8.00, 1.45PM

11.30, 6.30
9.45PM

GPR- 10.50, 1.40, 4.35, 7.30, 10.25PM

RADHIKA-10.40, 1.40, 4.40, 7.30, 10.20PM

SIVAGANGA-11.00, 6.00, 9.00PM

MCUBE-10.40, 1.35, 4.30, 7.25, 10.20PM

**CINESQUARE- 10.45, 11.00, 1.40, 4.35, 7.35,
10.20, 10.35PM**

**FORUM-10.00, 11.15, 1.10, 2.25, 4.20, 5.05, 7.30,
8.00, 10.40, 11.00PM**

**MUSARAMBAGH-12.00, 3.10, 4.10, 6.20,
7.20, 10.30PM**

**GALLERIA-10.20, 11.30, 1.30, 2.40, 4.40, 7.50,
10.00, 11.00PM | PRESTON-1.30, 4.40, 7.50, 11.00**

ICON-12.00, 1.00, 4.10, 7.20, 10.30PM

CENTRAL-10.20, 11.10, 1.30, 4.40, 7.50, 11.00PM

**INORBIT-10.20, 11.30, 1.30, 3.50, 4.40, 7.00,
7.50, 11.00PM | RK-1.10, 4.20, 7.30, 10.40PM**

**IRRUMMANZIL-12.00, 3.10, 6.20, 7.30,
9.30, 10.40PM**

11.00, 1.55, 4.50
7.45, 10.45PM

10.30, 1.30, 4.25,
7.20, 10.15, 10.35

10.40, 1.35, 4.35, 4.50,
7.30, 10.25PM

MOOSAPET
2.15, 9.15PM

**GVK-11:00, 1:15, 2:30, 6:00, 7:10, 9:30, 10:40PM
MP-11:20, 12:45, 2:50, 6:20, 7:15, 9:50PM**

**GSM-10:45, 11:30, 12:30, 3:00, 4:00, 6:30, 7:30,
9:00, 10:00, 11:00PM**

**CCPL-10.00, 1.10, 4.05, 7.30, 10.40PM
SUDHA-10.00, 1.10, 4.05, 7.30, 10.40PM
MANTRA-10.00, 1.10, 3.30, 4.20, 7.30, 10.40PM
DSL-11.30, 12.30, 3.55, 6.30, 7.20, 10.45PM**

**BALANAGAR-10.00, 1.15, 4.30, 7.45, 11.00PM
CHANDANAGAR-12.15, 7.15, 10.30PM
DILSKUNNAGAR-10.00, 1.15, 4.30, 7.45, 11.00PM**

1.05, 4.20,
7.20, 10.30PM

10.45, 1.40,
4.40, 7.40, 10.40

9.30, 10.20, 11.00, 1.30, 3.10,
4.00, 7.35, 10.00PM

10.20, 1.30, 4.40,
7.50, 10.00, 11.00PM

HEART TOUCHING LOVE STORY

GRAND 2nd WEEK

Gautham

MYTHRIL
Sukumar's
Entertainment

BUCHIBABU SANA
NAVEEN YERCHENI Y NAVI SHANKAR DEVI SRI PRASAD
SHAMMI SAMKHADEEN NAVIN NOOLE RAKHESHWARA MOHINI VENKET TSAGARAN T CHERRY

SUDARSHAN
35MM (ENJOY 4K LASER PROJECTION & DOLBY ATMOS SOUND SYSTEM)
11.00, 2.15, 6.00, 9.15PM

SV EESHWAR -11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00	SANGEETH -11.15,2.15,6.00,9.00
MAHALAXMI -11.15,2.15,6.15,9.15PM	
RAJADHANI COMPX-DSNR 11.15,2.15,6.15,9.15PM	
VISWANATH 70-KUKATPALLY 11.45,2.45,6.45,9.45PM	
MALLIKARJUNA 70MM 11.15,2.30,6.15,9.30PM	
SRISAIRAM 70-MALKAJGIRI 11.15,2.15,6.15,9.15PM	
MANJU 70MM 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM	SUSHMA 70MM 11.15,2.15,6.15,9.15PM
GOKUL 70MM 11.30,2.30,6.30,9.30PM	RANGA 70MM 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM
SRILAXMI 70MM 12.00,3.00,7.00,10.00PM	SRIDEVI R.C.PURAM 11.15,2.15,6.15,9.15PM
SENSATIONcom 2.00,6.00,9.00PM	SREERAMULU 11.30,2.30,6.30,9.30PM
ALANKAR 70MM 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM	SUPER 70MM 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM
SARADA 70MM 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM	SRIKRISHNA 70 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM
KRISHNA NAGARAM 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM	SANTOSH IBPATNM 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM
SREEPREMA 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM	NARTHAKI 70 11.30,2.30,6.30,9.30PM
GANESH 70MM 11.30,2.30,6.15,9.15PM	KRISHNA ALIYABAD 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM
ASIAN MUKUND 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM	TALLURI CINEMA 11.00,2.00,6.00,9.00PM



quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	51324.69
Nifty 50	15119.00
S&P 500*	3,895.88
Dollar (₹)	72.64
Pound Sterling (₹)	100.98
Euro (₹)	87.67
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	45,867 ▼320
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	64.47
IN 10-Yr bond yield*	6.132
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.311
As of 8:30 PM IST	

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Piramal Group gets RBI nod for DHFL acquisition

Piramal Group on Thursday said the Reserve Bank is understood to have approved acquisition of debt-ridden DHFL by the group's subsidiary as part of resolution process. The committee of creditors (CoC) had approved a resolution plan submitted by a Piramal Group company, Piramal Capital and Housing Finance Limited, last month. DHFL was the first finance company to be referred to NCLT by the RBI under IBC.

Record 2.5 lakh FASTags sold in two days



After the payment of user fee through FASTags was made mandatory on NH toll plazas on Feb. 15, FASTag sales touched a new record of 2.5 lakh in the past two days. The rollout of cashless tolling has been positively received by the highway users, the National Highway Authority of India said. With nearly 60 lakh transactions, the per day toll collection through FASTag crossed the highest ever mark of Rs 95 crore.

Haldiram's partners Africa's Futurelife

Food and snack company Haldiram's has partnered with Africa's Futurelife to bring its nutritional food product range to India. The two companies announced the launch of a range of four products—Smart Foods, Smart Oats and Ancient Grains, Crunchy Granola and High Protein—in India. "Haldiram's is committed to being part of an increasing trend... with regards to better eating habits," the firm said.

Benelli rides in BS-VI Leoncino 500 bike at ₹4.6 L

Benelli, Italian superbike manufacturer, launched the all-new BS VI Leoncino 500 at a starting price of Rs 4,59,900 at pan-India showroom. The company has also started bookings on the model at a token amount of Rs 10,000. Benelli India is also offering the bike with '3-Year unlimited kilometre warranty as standard'. The Benelli Leoncino gets a DOHC, twin-cylinder four-stroke and liquid-cooled 500cc engine.

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■ Govt treats power as separate sector, not in industry PM: Policy & regulatory setup for discoms soon

New Delhi, Feb. 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the Centre is working to remove problems in the power distribution sector and a policy and regulatory framework for discoms is in the offing.

Consumers should be able to choose their supplier according to performance like any other retail commodity, he said at a webinar for consultation towards effective implementation of the Union Budget provisions in the power and renewable energy sector, the Prime Minister's Office (PM) said in a statement.

Modi said the government treats power as a separate sector and not as part of the industry sector while adding that the Centre's approach towards it has been holistic and guided by the four mantras of "reach, reinforce, reform and renewable energy".

He noted that the renewable energy capacity of the country has been enhanced by two-and-a-half times in the last six years and the solar energy capacity by 15 times.

"This year's budget has shown unprecedented commitment towards investment in infrastructure. This is



evident in mission hydrogen, domestic manufacturing of solar cells and massive capital infusion in the renewable energy sector," Modi said.

Referring to the performance-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, he said high-efficiency solar PV modules are now part of it and the government is committed to investing Rs 4,500 crore in this. Modi hoped for a massive response to the scheme.

Under the PLI scheme, integrated solar PV manufacturing plants with a capacity of 10,000 MW will be operationalised with an estimated investment of Rs 14,000 crore.

This is likely to increase demand for locally produced materials such

as EVA, solar glass, backsheet and junction box.

"We want to see our companies to become global manufacturing champions, not just to fulfil local demands," the prime minister said.

The government has indicated its commitment of additional capital infusion worth Rs 1,000 crore in the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) to promote investments in the renewable energy sector. Similarly, the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (Ireda) will get additional investments worth Rs 1,500 crore. This will enable the SECI to invest in innovative projects worth Rs 17,000 crore, Modi said.

The investment in the Ireda will lead to additional loans of Rs 12,000 crore by the agency. This will be over and above the Ireda's current loan-giving capacity of Rs 27,000 crore, the statement noted.

Stakeholders and experts of the power sector, representatives of industries and associations, MDis of discoms, CEOs of state nodal agencies for renewable energy and consumer groups attended the webinar.

—PTI

lion growth over the next five years, could potentially double the industry," Vijayakumar said.

He said while Indian IT services companies have a fair share in about five-six countries, there are many countries where the industry is underrepresented. "If you look at all the projections, there is at least a trillion dollars of incremental spend in the next four-five years. I think, as an industry, we should get at least a 20 per cent share, which means that \$200 billion

the tune of \$150 billion.

Parekh noted that localisation is a critical element of globalisation as clients, especially large global enterprises, are looking for delivery capabilities across multiple geographies.

Wipro's Delaporte said one of the challenges to growth could be around how much talent is available that can cater to the burgeoning demand for digital services.

—Bloomberg

IT sector can double in 4-5 years: HCL Tech CEO

New Delhi, Feb. 18: Indian IT players are well-positioned to capture at least 20 per cent share of the \$1 trillion incremental spend on technology over the next four-five years, potentially doubling the size of the industry, HCL Technologies chief executive officer C. Vijayakumar said.

Infosys CEO Salil Parekh and Wipro CEO Thierry Delaporte expressed similar views at a Nasscom

event, saying the pandemic has accelerated digital adoption, and there is a need to continue upskilling people on latest technologies for driving the industry's growth.

"If you look at all the projections, there is at least a trillion dollars of incremental spend in the next four-five years. I think, as an industry, we should get at least a 20 per cent share, which means that \$200 billion

—PTI

India Inc's net profit jumps 67%; low base helps: Care

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, FEB. 18

The third quarter corporate performance demonstrated a return of demand after four quarters of negative sales growth and three quarters of negative net profit growth.

However, the robust corporate performance is also a function of low base effect due to negative growth in the corresponding quarter last year, said a report by Care Ratings.

Its assessment of the corporate performance for Q3 FY21 is based on a sample of 2,450 companies.

Net sales recorded a growth of 2.7 per cent in Q3FY21 compared with marginal fall of 0.8 per cent in the corresponding quarter last year.

The net sales of 2,062 companies (excluding banks and finance) have also registered a growth of 2.4 per cent during Q3FY21 compared with a decline of 3.8 per cent in Q3FY20. Therefore, sequentially net sales have improved after recording negative growth in Q1 and Q2FY21.

"However, one needs to read the positive growth number in Q3FY21 with caution owing to the low

base effect," Care said. "Corporate performance in Q3FY21 has been robust as reflected by marginal uptick in net sales and strong growth in net profits. Improved consumer sentiments, festive season demand, further relaxations in the restrictions coupled with cost rationalisation in some expenditures have been the key factors leading to a strong rebound in corporate earnings in Q3FY21 compared with the previous two quarters," said Sushant Hede, associate economist, Care Ratings.

"Despite the improvement in net sales at the aggregate level, there are some industries like hotels/resorts/restaurants, diamond & jewellery, airlines, shipping, oil exploration, paper products, among others, which have recorded a double-digit fall in net sales during Q3FY21."

"Net profits of 2,450 companies have seen a profound improvement of 67 per cent in the quarter ended December 2020 on the back of improvement in net sales coupled with cost rationalisation in some expenditures like raw material costs, power cost, interest cost," it said.

Apple lobbies for more incentives

SANKALP PHARTIYAL
FEB. 18

Apple Inc is angling to participate in a new scheme of what government and industry sources say are plans to bring iPad tablet manufacturing to the South Asian country.

India launched a \$6.7-billion plan to boost smartphone exports last year, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi stepped up efforts to promote electronics manufacturing and create jobs.

Apple, which has steadily

raised production of iPhones in India to lessen its dependence on Chinese manufacturers, took part in that scheme via its contract manufacturers.

Now the government is preparing to unveil another incentive to drive local manufacturing of IT products, including tablets, laptops and servers, three sources involved in the drafting of the plan said.

The new performance-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, which offers cash-back to manufacturers for exports, will have a budget of up to Rs 7,000 crore

(\$964.5 million) over five years, the sources said. It's expected to be launched by the end of February.

Apple, along with others, is lobbying for a bigger budgetary outlay of Rs 20,000 crore over five years, to boost domestic manufacturing of wearable devices such as smartwatches, the sources said, adding the plan could be announced within two months.

Apple assembles a bulk of its iPads in China, but is fast diversifying production to markets such as India and Vietnam.

workers went on a ram-page last year. Apple is yet to take the Taiwan manufacturer off of probation.

New Delhi is also planning another PLI, at a budget of roughly Rs 5,000 crore over five years, to boost domestic manufacturing of wearable devices such as smartwatches, the sources said, adding the plan could be announced within two months.

Apple assembles a bulk of its iPads in China, but is fast diversifying production to markets such as India and Vietnam.

—Reuters

PANDEMIC LIFTS PET FOOD DEMAND FOR NESTLE



CORINNE GRETTER
FEB. 18

Nestle SA, the world's largest food company, reported its fastest sales growth in five years as stuck-at-home consumers adopted more cats and dogs, boosting demand for pet food.

Revenue growth may cross the threshold of 4 per cent, CEO Mark Schneider told journalists on Thursday. Analysts have forecast 3.9 per cent growth. Last year's revenue was just ahead of analysts' expectations. Pet food surged 10 per cent, the star performer.

Nestle said it has "performed well" in the South Asia market, including in India where it posted "high single-digit" growth.

"In India, Maggi, Nescafe and KitKat posted robust growth and e-commerce sales saw sustained momentum," it said.

—Bloomberg/PTI

Visa curbs on Chinese hurting assemblers

SHRUTI SRIVASTAVA &
SUDHI RANJAN SEN
FEB. 18

Geopolitical tensions between India and China are beginning to hurt some of Taiwan's biggest technology companies, including suppliers to Apple Inc and hindering New Delhi's incentive programme for electronics manufacturing.

India has been slow to issue visas to Chinese engineers, who are needed to help Taiwanese compa-

nies set up factories in India, people with knowledge of the matter said. India is also nudging companies to opt for the more difficult to obtain employment permits, they added.

The wrangling may delay Prime Minister Narendra Modi's plan to bolster India's manufacturing capacity and deter overseas investors, who invested \$30 billion in the six months to September, with the maximum foreign direct investment flowing in the computer

hardware and software sector. The companies are looking to India to diversify their supply chains. New Delhi has banned hundreds of Chinese apps and slowed approvals for Chinese investment in recent months.

Last year, iPhone assemblers—Foxconn Technology Group, Pegatron Corp, and Wistron Corp—along with many others pledged \$1.5 billion to set up mobile-phone plants in India after the government offered them special

ly designed incentives. The move was also expected to shift supply lines to India from China.

Visas are an important resource to help expand domestic manufacturing and the "government has to balance its existing policies with the genuine and short-term requirements of technical manpower for setting up new factories," said Pankaj Mohindroo, chairman of the India Cellular and Electronics Association.

—Bloomberg

5Y Capital also made 866-fold gain from its bet on Xiaomi

Venture firm made \$30 bn on video app

LULU YILUN CHEN
FEB. 18

Before its Kuaishou windfall, 5Y Capital was best known for generating an 866-fold gain from its bet on smartphone maker Xiaomi Corp. Founded by Richard Liu and Ken Shi, 5Y Capital has also invested in Agora Inc, the Chinese company that is said to power the breakout social networking app Clubhouse.

Formerly known as Morningside Venture Capital, 5Y Capital was a spinoff from Hong Kong property mogul Ronnie Chan's Morningside Group. The fund renamed itself last year after a

comment.

Shanghai street known as Wu Yuan where it started operations about 13 years ago. It manages about \$3 billion of assets for sovereign wealth funds, family offices, university endowments and pensions, according to its

LinkedIn page. Liu's early career included a stint in IT maintenance at a state-owned steel factory in the 1990s. He joined Morningside in 2000 after receiving a degree from China Europe International Business School.

Around 2011, one of Liu's investment managers spotted an app that focused on sharing GIFs, the precursor to Kuaishou. The fund invested 2 million yuan (\$310,000) for a 20 per cent stake the following year. 5Y Capital holds a 16.59 per cent stake in Kuaishou, which is now

worth about \$35 billion after the shares more than tripled since listing on the Hong Kong stock exchange earlier this month.

Other 5Y Capital investments include Musical.ly, which was sold to TikTok's owner, and Trip.com Group Ltd., which is now a \$23 billion company, according to 5Y Capital's website.

For new areas of growth, 5Y Capital is investing in cloud computing, artificial intelligence, semiconductors and bio-pharma companies, Liu said in a speech last year.

—Bloomberg

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—Bloomberg

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SHORT TAKES

Shooter Esha in World Cup squad

Hyderabad: Hyderabad shooter Esha Singh has been selected in the Indian team for the Shooting World Cup to be held in Delhi next month. At 16 years and two months, she is the youngest player in the Indian squad for the event. Esha is also the youngest in the Olympic core team for Tokyo 2020. In the recently held trials she had performed well, making three finals.



Paddler Sreeja bags a bronze

Hyderabad: Hyderabad-based paddler Akula Sreeja created history by winning a medal (bronze) at the 82nd Senior National Table Tennis



Championships at the Tau Devi Lal Indoor Stadium in Panchkula, Haryana, on Thursday. Fourth-seeded Sreeja, representing her employer RBI, lost to the ultimate champion, Manika Batra of PSPB 1-4 (4-11, 12-10, 14-16, 8-11, 5-11) in the semifinals. On her way to the semis, Sreeja beat Prapti Sen of Bengal 4-3 (7-11, 9-11, 11-8, 11-7, 11-1, 11-6, 11-7) in quarter-finals. The fourth-seeded Sreeja represented her employer RBI in this tournament.

Manika won her second title, the maiden being back in 2015 at the Hyderabad Nationals, by beating her teammate Reeth Rishya 4-2.

THE RESULTS

Women singles final: Manika Batra (PSPB) bt Reeth Rishya (PSPB) 8-11, 10-12, 11-1, 11-9, 11-6. **Semifinals:** Manika Batra (PSPB) bt Sreeja Akula (RBI) 11-4, 10-12, 16-14, 11-8, 11-5; Reeth Rishya (PSPB) bt Takeme Sarkar (RSPB) 11-8, 4-11, 11-6, 11-6, 11-3.

Srinath, Uday hit half-ton

Hyderabad: Manda Srinath and Uday Kiran hit a half-century each to guide Bhadradi to a comfortable win over Warangal Urban in the Telangana Cricket Association U-19 East Zone inter-districts tournament. Srinath and Uday made 65 and 56 respectively in Bhadradi's 216 for 9. In reply, Warangal Urban were bowled out for 70 as Sravan took 4 for 11.

BRIEF SCORES

■ Bhadradi 216/9 in 25 overs (Manda Srinath 65, Uday Kiran 56) bt Warangal Urban 70 in 12.1 overs (Sravan Kumar 4/11). ■ Suryapet 127/9 in 18 overs (Usman Khan 42) lost to Bhupalapally 128/9 in 16.2 overs (Haseeb 33, Uday Kumar 3/41). ■ Bhadradi 123/9 in 20 overs (Srinath 48) lost to Bhupalapally 127/6 in 19 overs (Paripurna Chary 39, Haseeb 31). ■ Warangal Urban 101 in 17 overs (Avinash 25, Manish 3/22) lost to Suryapet 102/4 in 13.4 overs (Avinash Kailas 69, Tharak 4/27).

Asim adjudged Mr Telangana

Hyderabad: Md Asim won the KCR Cup Open Body Building Championship to be declared Mr Telangana 2021. He received an Evolet bike as the prize. More than 200 senior body-builders from across the state participated in the championship organised by the

Telangana State Body Building Association on the occasion of CM KCR's birthday. Speaking on the occasion, Sports Authority of Telangana State chairman Allipuram Venkateswar Reddy, who was the chief guest, said the All India National Open Body Building Championship will be held in Hyderabad soon and added that efforts are on to make the State a sports hub of the country.

Live on TV

TENNIS

Australian Open: Women's doubles final from 10.30 am; Men's semifinal from 2 pm on Sony Six, Sony Ten 2, HD

CRICKET

South Africa T20 League: Titans vs Knights from 1.30 pm; Dolphins vs Cobras from 5.55 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: Mohun Bagan vs East Bengal from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

Italian League: Fiorentina vs Spezia from 11 pm; Cagliari vs Torino from 1.15 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 2

WWE

SmackDown: Bouts from 6.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

MORRIS THE MAN!

Bought for ₹16.25 crore, SA's Chris is most expensive ever at IPL auction

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, FEB. 18

It began with an awkward silence and ended in laughter. In between, during the three-and-a-half-hour auction, franchises spent an extravagant amount of ₹145.3 crore on 57 players.

It took some time for the auction to heat up as the first three names — Karun Nair, Alex Hales and Jason Roy — that came out of the bag evoked little interest. Delhi Capitals broke the ice by snapping up Australia's Steve Smith for ₹20 lakh more than his base price of ₹2 crore. But it was the arrival of Glenn Maxwell that spiced up the proceedings.

Tug of war for Maxwell

After Rajasthan Royals and Kolkata Knight Riders dragged the bid from ₹2 crore to ₹4 crore, Chennai Super Kings and Royal Challengers Bangalore swooped in. Both seemed desperate.

The ensuing tug-of-war meant that Maxwell, who didn't hit a single six in the previous edition, laughed all the way to the bank, again. The price that RCB finally paid for Maxwell was ₹14.25 crore — ₹3.5 crore more than what Punjab paid him last time around.

In what was a terrible outing in 2020, Maxwell scored only 108 runs in 11 innings. The Aussie has vowed, in a tweet, to end RCB's barren run in the IPL.

Mike Hesson, RCB's director of cricket, said Maxwell is the X-factor player they have been looking for. "We know how good a player he is away from the IPL. Only a couple of years ago he was used higher up and had his best IPL. He can help AB de Villiers and provide an extra bit of power in the middle," he said.

Morris the surprise

The biggest surprise, however, was Chris Morris. The South African all-rounder (sold to Rajasthan Royals for ₹16.25 crore) overtook Yuvraj Singh (₹16 crore in 2015), Pat Cummins (₹15.5 crore in 2020) and Ben Stokes (₹14.5 crore in 2017) to become the most expensive player ever at the IPL auction.

Morris hasn't played a single game since he suffered an injury in IPL-13. Jake Lush McCrum, CEO of Rajasthan Royals, is confident that Morris will live up to their expectations. "He is a quality bowler who can win us games with the bat too," said McCrum.

Tendulkar Jr in Mumbai

It was the name everybody was waiting for and it came at the end. When auctioneer Hugh Edmeades called out Arjun Tendulkar's name, pat came the response from the Mumbai Indians. No surprise. Zaheer raised the paddle and sealed the deal with a smile. A hearty laugh signalled the end of the auction.



Glenn Maxwell, perennial underperformer in the IPL, was bought by RCB for ₹14.25 crore.

CSK also bought off-spinner Krishnappa Gowtham for ₹9.25 crore, making him the most expensive uncapped player.

K.S. Viswanathan, CEO of CSK, expected a tough auction as the other teams knew CSK would be looking to buy an off-spinning allrounder. "We are happy it turned out to be fruitful. I'm also delighted to have one more local player, Hari Nishant, in our line-up," he said.

Field day for pacers

It was a field day for fast bowlers from Down Under as Kyle Jamieson (sold to RCB for ₹15 crore), Jhye Richardson (Punjab, ₹14 crore), Riley Meredith (Punjab, ₹8 crore) and Nathan Coulter-Nile (Mumbai, ₹5 crore) made some moolah.

Former India pacer Zaheer Khan, Mumbai Indians' director of cricket operations, said it was exciting to see fast bowlers in high demand. "It's something the franchises have taken note of, over the past 12 years or so. There's a rise in demand now and that's reflected in the auction," he said.

Pujara back after 6 years

India's 'Test specialist' Cheteshwar Pujara made a comeback to IPL after a six-year gap with CSK bagging the Saurashtra batsman for his base price of ₹50 lakh. CSK bowling coach L. Balaji said Pujara deserved an IPL contract.

"He deserves that mark of respect. He is one player I genuinely feel is giving his sweat and blood to the country. I feel genuinely happy for him," Balaji said.

Tendulkar Jr in Mumbai

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South African Chris Morris was bought by Rajasthan Royals, became the most expensive player.



Kyle Jamieson of New Zealand was bought by RCB for ₹15 crore.

This SRK is PK's blockbuster pick

NEHA SURANA | DC CHENNAI, FEB. 18

Most of Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's movies are based on love and heartbreak. The journey of his namesake, one of the biggest attractions at the IPL auction on Thursday, has followed a similar script.

As someone who had a strong desire to play in the IPL when he was a teen, getting the snub from franchises last year was heartbreaking for Tamil Nadu batsman Shahrukh Khan. It upset him terribly when he found no takers despite his stellar performance in the domestic circuit. But he didn't lose hope. The 25-year-old channelled his energy into performing for his state. This year, when he played a key role in Tamil Nadu's title triumph in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, a couple of franchises asked him to attend trials.



"When the auction was being held on Thursday, Shahrukh was on his way back after training and watching the proceedings on his mobile phone. 'I was in the team bus. I was a bit nervous in the beginning but after the first bid went up, I was super excited,' said Shahrukh from Indore where Tamil Nadu are preparing for the upcoming Vijay Hazare Trophy.

"It definitely feels great to play for a franchise like Punjab. KL Rahul is a

dynamic captain. I am excited to play under coach Anil Kumble sir. I am hoping to learn a lot from them," added Shahrukh.

From his base price of ₹20 lakh to the winning bid of ₹5.25 crore, it was a fierce battle that played out. "To be honest, money is secondary for me and there are a lot of other important things I need to do now. The focus is only on my game and not money," he said.

Shahrukh expressed his gratitude to personal trainer Azariah Prabhakar and TN assistant coach R. Prassana for shaping his career. "They have always been there for me and I can rely on them for anything. I feel grateful to have them as my guiding light. And my family has also played a special role in my career. Right now, they all have mixed emotions. I just hope they calm down soon," he said.

VIVO BACK AS IPL SPONSORS

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 18

Chinese mobile manufacturing giants Vivo will be back as Indian Premier League's title sponsors for the 2021 edition, confirmed the tournament's chairman Brijesh Patel on Thursday.

"Vivo is back with us," Brijesh said during his opening address at the IPL auction here.

The announcement has put an end to the speculation that Vivo was looking to exit the five-year deal worth ₹2,199 crore.

The IPL chairman also confirmed that the upcoming edition will most likely see fans return to the stadium. "We can't wait to have fans back in attendance. We held one season behind closed doors in the UAE, now most likely fans will be in attendance," Brijesh said.



Krishnappa Gowtham is top gainer at the auction.



Cheteshwar Pujara back in IPL after six years.

MONEY BAGS

57

Number of players sold at the auction. There were 61 vacant slots. Only Rajasthan Royals (24) and RCB (22) have not completed the 25-player limit.

BIG BUYS

Name	Base price	Sold for
Chris Morris (Rajasthan Royals)	75L	16.25cr
Kyle Jamieson (RC Bangalore)	75L	15cr
Glenn Maxwell (RC Bangalore)	200cr	14.25cr
Jhye Richardson (Punjab Kings)	1.5cr	15cr
Krishnappa Gowtham (CSK)	20L	9.25cr

TOP GAINERS

Name	Base price	Sold for
Krishnappa Gowtham (CSK)	20L	9.25cr
Shahrukh Khan (Punjab Kings)	20L	5.25cr
Chris Morris (Rajasthan Royals)	75L	16.25cr
Riley Meredith (Punjab Kings)	40L	8.00cr

TEAM SHOP

Name	Base price	Bought for
Krishnappa Gowtham (India)	20L	9.25cr
Moeen Ali (England)	2cr	7cr
Cheteshwar Pujara (India)	50L	50L
K. Bhagath Varma (India)	20L	20L
C. Hari Nishaanth (India)	20L	20L
M. Harisankar Reddy (India)	20L	20L

DELHI CAPITALS

Name	Base price	Bought for
Tom Curran (England)	1.5cr	5.25cr
Steven Smith (Australia)	2cr	2.20cr
Sam Billings (England)	2cr</	

SHORT TAKES

Third Ind-Eng ODI could be shifted

Pune: The Maharashtra Cricket Association on Thursday said that there have been some ongoing discussions with the BCCI to shift the final ODI between India and England slated on March 28 from Pune to Mumbai to facilitate smooth departure of the visiting team. "There has also been some discussion that one of the matches (last match on the 28th) may be shifted to Mumbai, to facilitate the teams departure from Mumbai to the UK, but the final decision in this regard is awaited," the cricket body stated in a media release issued here on Thursday. Meanwhile, it said that the MCA is ready to host three ODIs, between India and England, to be played in March, informed its president Vikas Kakatkar. — PTI

AITA to tighten grip on age fraud

New Delhi: Taking note of the parents' demand and as promised by the previous dispensation, the national tennis federation (AITA) is gearing up to crack the whip on age fraud suspects ahead of the upcoming 2020 National Championships. Former AITA secretary general Hironmoy Chatterjee said in an interview that all main draw players competing in the age group nationals will be subjected to age verification test (TW3). AITA said that it will be not possible to put into scrutiny each and every participant to TW3 test for the upcoming Nationals due to time constraint but if the federation is given names of the suspects of age manipulation, they will enquire and remove the guilty players from the championships. — PTI

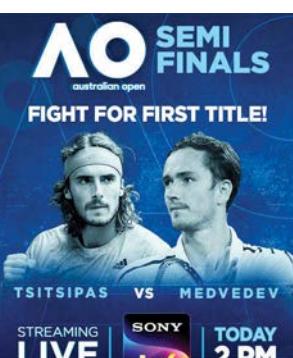
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SERENA SLUMPS

Osaka strolls into Oz Open final; Djoker drubs Aslan

Melbourne, Feb. 18: Japan's Naomi Osaka brutally halted Serena Williams's latest bid for a record-equalising 24th Grand Slam title on Thursday, as Novak Djokovic wrote the final chapter of qualifier Aslan Karatsev's fairy-tale run.

Fans returned after a five-day Coronavirus lockdown in time to see an emotional exit from Williams, Jennifer



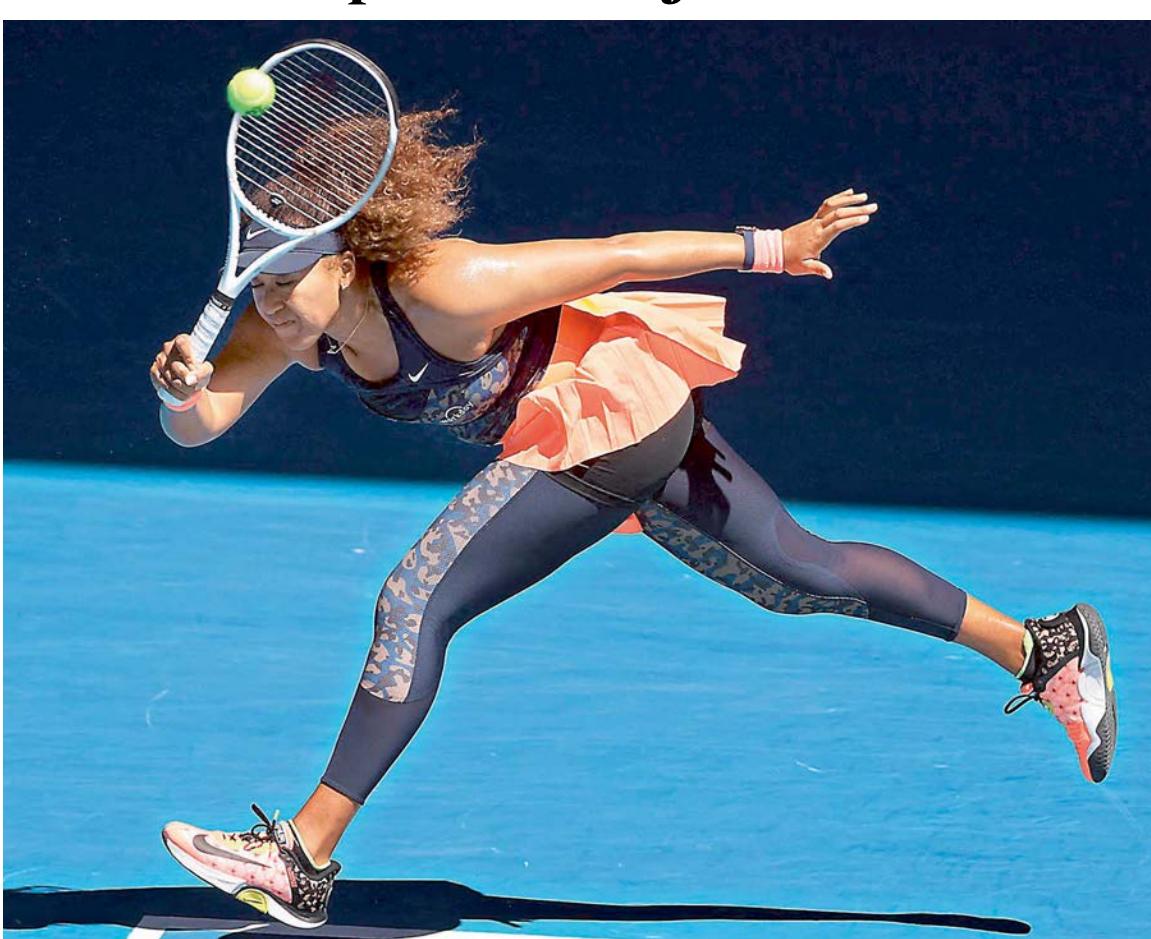
Brady's win over Karolina Muchova and top-ranked Djokovic preserving his perfect semifinal record at Karatsev's expense.

Triple major-winner Osaka, 23, again proved Williams's nemesis with a one-sided 6-3, 6-4 win which heightened questions about whether the American, 39, will ever match Margaret Court's all-time record for Slam singles titles.

Williams put her hand on her heart as she acknowledged a standing ovation on Rod Laver Arena, and later walked off her post-match press conference in tears, saying: "I'm done."

The American has lost four Grand Slam finals since winning her 23rd in Melbourne in 2017.

After going 0-2 down in the first set, Osaka reeled off five straight games to



Japan's Naomi Osaka returns to Serena Williams of the USA during their women's singles semifinal match at the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on Thursday. Osaka won 6-3, 6-4. — AFP

take charge against a despairing Williams and carried into the final.

The soft-spoken Osaka has never lost a Grand Slam match after reaching the quarterfinals, and Brady can expect the match of her life on Saturday.

Williams lamented a "big error day" and refused to discuss whether she had made her last appearance at a tournament she has won seven times, an Open-era record. The Australian Open is

the first Covid-era Grand Slam to welcome large numbers of fans after last year's Wimbledon was cancelled, the US Open took place behind closed doors and the French Open was limited to 1,000 a day.

The returning spectators also witnessed the end of 114th-ranked Karatsev's astonishing campaign, when he became the first man in the Open era to reach a Grand Slam semifinal on debut. Karatsev knocked

out three seeds to reach the last four but he was no match for Djokovic, the record eight-time Melbourne champion who has never lost a semi or final on his favourite court.

"This is the best I've felt in the entire tournament," said the Serb after his 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 win.

Exemplifying the gulf between them, Vladikavkaz native Karatsev, 27, has won 18 Grand Slam sets in his career, while Djokovic, 33,

is going for his 18th major title.

Brady versus Muchova was a far more competitive affair as the American needed five match points before subduing the Czech 25th seed in three sets.

Brady eventually prevailed 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 in 1hr 55min to reach her debut major final against the formidable Osaka.

"My legs are shaking, my heart is racing," said Brady. — AFP

Ever scoring City down Everton 3-1

ATLETICO HELD BY LEVANTE IN SPANISH LEAGUE

Madrid, Feb. 18: Atletico Madrid failed to move eight points clear at the top of La Liga on Wednesday as they were held to a 1-1 draw at Levante in a game which saw a dreadful miss from Angel Correa.

Riyad Mahrez scored the pick of the goals in between Phil Foden and Bernardo Silva's strikes as City extended their English top-flight record winning run to 17 games.

Richarlison's first-half equaliser was little consolation for seventh-placed Everton, who have now won just one of their last six league games to fall five points behind in the battle for a top-four finish.

Guardiola's side were eighth in the table at the time, but have not dropped a point in their 10 league games since to streak clear of the chasing pack.

City were without the inform Ilkay Gundogan due to a groin injury, while Kevin De Bruyne was fit to return from a hamstring problem but only for a late cameo appearance off the bench. — AFP

TAREMI, MAREGA SCORE AS PORTO PESTER JUVE

Porto (Portugal), Feb. 18: Cristiano Ronaldo's first game for Juventus in his native Portugal ended in 2-1 defeat as FC Porto out-played the Italians for much of Wednesday's Champions League last-16, first leg tie.

Such was Juve's lacklustre performance that coach Andrea Pirlo claimed his team handed victory to their hosts on "a silver platter".

Iranian striker Mehdi Taremi put Porto ahead after just a minute at Estadio do Dragao following a Rodrigo Bentancur error.

And Mali striker Moussa Marega added a second straight after the break.

But Federico Chiesa pulled a goal back with eight minutes to go to keep Juventus afloat with the second leg in Turin on March 9.

It was a below-par performance by Juventus, chasing their third Champions League title and first in 25 years. — AFP

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