# icle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

**NELLORE | TUESDAY | 16 FEBRUARY 2021** 



Max: 31.5°C Min: 21.6°C RH: 62% Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: clear. temp. 31/21 ºC



(+84)(+9.447)1,09,25,278 1,55,840

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS (+99)(+2)TS: 2,96,666 1,618

(+1)(+30)AP: 8,88,899 7,163

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

10,95,45,726 **DEATHS** 24,14,794 COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 219

> worldometers.info/ coronavirus

#### STROGUIDE

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

> Rajab 3,1442 AH (SHAHI MASJID) **Fajar:** 5.22 am **Zohar:** 12.24 pm **Asar:** 4.36 pm

**HIJRI CALENDAR** 

Maghrib: 6.14 pm

**Isha:** 7.26 pm SUNSET TODAY 6.14 PM **SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.33 AM MOONRISE** TODAY 9.36 AM **MOONSET** TOMORROW 10.52 PM





You can't meet any minister. But don't worry. They will come to your house shortly!

SHORT TAKES

### **SC** notice to

**Centre, WhatsApp** 

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

#### **WPI inflation**

**rises to 2.03%** 

New Delhi: The wholesale price-based inflation rose sharply to 2.03 per cent in January on costlier non-food manufactured items and experts are projecting further uptick in the rate of price rise in the next few months. The wholesale price index inflation was 1.22 per cent in December. 2020 and 3.52 per cent in January last year.

### **Kerala scribe gets**

5-day bail from SC New Delhi: The Supreme

Court on Monday granted 5day interim bail to journalist Siddique Kappan, arrested on his way to Hathras where a young Dalit woman had died after being allegedly gang-raped, to visit his ailing mother. The court, however, said that during his visit he shall not give any interview to the media, including social media.



#### NATION 4

**Assam key to Act East Policy: EAM** 



#### WORLD 5

**Suu Kyi custody** to be extended

#### SPORTS 8

**FIR against Yuvraj Singh** over casteist remarks



Vol. 18 No. 221 Established 1938 | 16 pages | ₹6.00

Ashwin has a ball with bat

Ravichandran Ashwin plays a shot during the 3rd day of second cricket test match between India and England at M.A.

# South Zonal meet in Tirupati

#### Shah to chair Council on March 4, southern CMs to attend

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

Andhra Pradesh would host the 29th edition of the Southern Zonal Council meet in Tirupati on March The meeting will be chaired by Union home

minister Amit Shah.
The SZC comprises Pradesh, Andhra Telangana Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry

**NIGERIAN WOMAN** 

Iweala as the next Director-General of the

164-member body. She will take office on March

1 this year. According to

Okonjo-Iweala said a key

priority for her would be

to work with members to

address the economic

and health consequences

brought about by the Covid. "WTO members

made history with a con-

sensus to select Ngozi

Okonjo-Iweala as the organization's seventh director-general," the WTO said. — PTI

statement,

ЙТО

TO LEAD WORLD

TRADE BODY

THE SOUTHERN ZONAL council comprises Andhra Pradesh. Telangana state, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and **Puducherry** 

Union Territories like Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Lakshadweep would be special invitees. Chief

ministers/Lt. governors, chief secretaries, government advisers and senior officials will attend the

chief secretary Adityanath Das reviewed the arrangements for the SZC meet with officials here on Monday. He called for steps to facilitate darshan Lord Venkateswara Tirumala for about 100 participants through the

offices Devasthanam.

He called for fool-proof security arrangements, high-speed internet with wi-fi and Lan facilities along with laptops and bigsize LEDs at the venue. He advised the health authorities to keep Covid-19 testing kits, masks, sanitizers and other requirements as

# Centre makes accessing local data for maps easier

New Delhi, Feb. 15: Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-New Delhi, Feb. 15: In Iweala has been selected sweeping changes in the as the next chief of the World Trade Organiz-ation (WTO), becoming country's mapping policy, government Monday announced liberthe first woman and the alisation of norms governfirst African to be chosen ing the acquisition and to head the Geneva-based production of geospatial data, a move that will help Members of WTO on in boosting innovation in Monday agreed by conthe sector and create a level-playing field for pubsensus to select Okonjo-

lic and private entities. Under the new guidelines, the sector will be deregulated and aspects such as prior approvals for surveying, mapping and for building applications based on that have been done away with, Department of Science and Technology Secretary Ashutosh Sharma said.

For Indian entities, there will be complete deregulation with no prior approvals, security clearances, licenses, for acquisition and production of

**HARSH VARDHAN** said due to this policy, the whole sector will open up in a big way and geospatial data of value of ₹1 lakh crore can be acquired and used by 2030.

FOR INDIAN entities. there will be complete deregulation with no prior approvals, security clearances, licenses, for acquisition and production of geospatial data and geospatial data services

geospatial data services, including maps, he said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the liberalisation of policies governing the acquisition and production of geospatial data is a "massive step in government's vision for

The reform will benefit the country's farmers, start-ups, private sector, public sector and research institutions to drive innovations and build scalable solutions, he said.

Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan in a press conference said the easing of norms will greatly help in several sectors that were suffering because of non-availability of high quality maps.

Under the new guide lines, terrestrial mobile mapping survey, street view survey and surveying in Indian territorial waters will be permitted only to Indian entities irrespective of accuracy.

Vardhan said due to this policy, the whole sector will open up in a big way and geospatial data of value of ₹1 lakh crore can be acquired and used by

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

#### SEC notification to resume electoral process

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

and Anantapur.
Election will be held in 75 municipalities/nagar panchayats including district-wise: Srikakulam-Ichapuram, Kasibugga and Palakonda; Vizianagaram-Bobbili, Parvathipuram, Salur and N e l l i m a r l a ; V i s a k h a p a t n a m Yelamanchili;

Godavari-Amalapuram, Tuni, Pithapuram,

Peddapuram, Yeleswaram, Gollaprolu and Mummidivaram; West Godavari-Narsapur Nidadavole, Kovvur and Jangareddygudem; Krishna-Nuziveedu, Pedana, Vuyyuru, Nandigama and Tiruvuru; G u n t u r - T e n a l i Chilakaluripet, Repalle Macherla, Sattenapalli, Vinukonda and Piduguralla; Prakasam-Markapur, Chirala. Chimakurthy Addanki, Kanigiri and Giddalur; Nellore-Venkatagiri Atmakur, Sullurpet and Naidupet, Hindupur, Anantapur Guntakal

Ramachandrapuram,

Samalkot,

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

Palamaneru, Nagara and

## 2 more activists to be arrested over toolkit row

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA | DC with agency inputs NEW DELHI/MUMBAI.

Non-bailable warrants was issued against two more people for allegedly sharing the "toolkit" related to the farmers' protest on the social media, the Delhi police said Monday, two days after it arrested climate activist Disha Ravi over the case. Meanwhile, hitting out at the police and other official agencies, scores of social activists and environmentalists called for the immediate release of Ms Ravi, asking the government to stop targeting India's youth. This Delhi police action also triggered a war of words between the Opposition parties and the ruling BJP.

The Delhi police procured a non-bailable warrant from a local court against lawver Nikita Jacob and environmental activist Shantanu Muluk over the protest "toolkit" shared by Swedish teen



activist Greta Thunberg

to support the Indian farmers' protests. police claimed Poetic Justice

Foundation, the organisation allegedly behind Ms Thunberg's "toolkit", had contacted Mumbai-based Ms Jacob to organise a "tweet storm" ahead of the farmers' Republic Day protests. Delhi police joint com-

missioner Prem Nath said at a press conference on Monday that the two, Ms Jacob and Mr Muluk, had attended a Zoom meeting hosted by Poetic Justice Foundation on January 11 to decide the modalities of creating the toolkit. This organisation is suspected to be working for "Khalistani" separatists.

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

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

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

A single judge hench

headed by Justice DVSS Somayajulu after a hear ing in the case on Monday issued an interim order suspending the State Election Commission's earlier order disallowing door delivery of essential commodities in rural areas as it would amount to violation of poll code in the wake of ongoing gram panchayat polls.

Now the civil supplies authorities can continue supply of essential com-modities under PDS at the doorstep of the beneficiaries even in rural areas in the state. The court posted the next hearing to March 15.

A SINGLE judge bench. issued an interim order suspending the State Election Commission's earlier order disallowing door delivery of essential commodities

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

# CM plots middle class sop

**DC CORRESPONDENT** VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

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

He held a review meeting on urban housing and solid waste management with minister for municipal administration Botsa Satvanaravana and other senior officials at his camp office here on Monday. Speaking on the occasion, he directed officials to provide plots having all requisite permissions at an affordable price and on a

**THE CM** asked officials to make all efforts to provide high living standards to the middle income group families.

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

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

about town plans being implemented in various states and how they could create a land bank for the scheme and alongside development of infrastructure. They proposed ring roads around towns and felt the need to prepare designs of ring roads in such a way that they should benefit both the government and the people who give their land for construction. They suggested smart town layouts around the ring roads.

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

Moreover, the layout has to be prepared within 18 months after the works begin. With regard to solid waste management, the government will start a Clean Andhra Pradesh programme with a 100-day action plan in order to keep the state clean. There are plans to rope in NGOs and the general public in the programme. There will be 3,825 garbage collection vehicles, auto-tippers and over 6,000 bins and waste management facilities would be set up in the municipalities.

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

#### human presence in space finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said the first unmanned launch is

India plans sustained

India plans to have a sustained human presence in space and is coming out with a policy framework and a long-term roadmap.

The Department of Space (DoS) has envisaged a national effort to meet the goal of successful demonstration of human spaceflight capability and to achieve the vision of sustained human presence in

India's maiden human space flight module 'Gaganyaan' will be launched after the second unmanned mission planned in 2022-23, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said last week.

In her Budget speech,

slated for December this vear. The DoS has now put up for public consultation on

the website of the Indian Space Research Organisation comes under the former, the draft "Humans in Space Policy for India -2021" and guidelines and procedures for its implementation.

DoS believes that given the collaborative nature of human spaceflight due to multi-disciplinary nature, it is essential to have a policy-framework, which not only fosters partnerships but also

concerns and compliance to existing policies, laws and treaties. 'Human-spaceflight pro-

gramme needs to be sustained over longer periods to deliver tangible benefits," according to the draft. Hence, it is essential that the policy enables sustained presence in low earth orbit and beyond through reliable, robust, safe and affordable means by undertaking appropriate capacity building measures like collaborations, infrastructure develop ment, facilities moderni sation, technology devel opment and hur resource development. human

**MLA ACCUSES YSRC** 

HINDUPUR VOTERS

Film star and Hindupur

MLA Nandamuri Balakrishna has accused

YSRC government of

unleashing terror before

the gram panchayat elec-

tions in his Hindupur assembly constituency. "The situation is no dif-

ferent in all parts of the

scale misuse of power".

politician is on a two-day tour of his Hindupur assembly segment,

assembly segment, where gram panchayat

elections are scheduled

to be held in the fourth

YSRC party leadership has set its eyes on Hindupur assembly seg-

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

Balakrishna is touring his constituency to counter any moves the

ruling party may make to wean away TD voters. The star has also been holding meetings with

Telugu Desam leaders

within his constituency

Speaking to media, the Hindupur MLA accused YSRC party of terroris-

ing Telugu Desam work-

ers and leaders in all

parts of Hindupur area.

Balakrishna, however, asserted that TD cadres

will thwart all moves of

the ruling party success-

in this regard.

phase on February 21.

The film star-turned-

he remarked.

formed.

People state. People of Hindupur are ready to teach a lesson to YSRC government for large-

**OF TERRORISING** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

ANANTAPUR, FEB. 15

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

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

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

Election Commission.

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

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

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, FEB 15

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

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

morcha president. In addition, Chodisetti Ramesh Babu has been appointed as treasurer of BJP's Kakinada parliamen-

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

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, FEB. 15

The Sarpavaram police have arrested two persons, accused of murdering 9th Ward Corporator of Kakinada Municipal Corporation (KMC) Kakinada Kampara Ramesh recently.

Kakinada DSP V. Bhima Rao told the reporters on Tuesday evening that Gurajana Veera Venkata Satvanaravana (Chinna) and his minor brother were arrested in the early

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

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

He said three teams, headed

The Sarpavaram police registered a case and investigating.

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

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENTS VISAKHAPATNAM/ KAKINADA, FEB. 15

Greyhounds, paramilitary forces and armed state police have been deployed in agency tracts in East Godavari Visakhapatnam districts following a boycott call given by the outlawed

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

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

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

**ADDL FORCES** 

**DEPLOYED FOR** 

**GP ELECTIONS** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

authorities have deployed route mobile

parties, special striking

forces, and enhanced the

intelligence network in the villages for the third and fourth phase of elec-

Police S. Senthil Kumar

has revealed this while

adding that they have also installed CCTV

cameras in some places

for maintaining law and

During an interaction with the media in Chittoor on Monday, he

explained that they had conducted first and the

second phase of polls held on February 9 and

13 peacefully in Chittoor

and Madanapalli divi-

"District Police had

paid special attention to

hypersensitive villages and motivated the elec-

torate to ensure free and

fair elections. We had

coordinated with all

other government departments to conduct the Gram Panchayat elections smoothly," the

He said they had deputed 2,224 personnel for

**DEFEATED SEEKS** 

**RECOUNTING** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

A candidate of Velanki

Velanki village in Kirlampudi mandal of East Godavari district,

has urged the State Election Commission to

re-evaluate the votes

held on February 9.
Daveedu said he has contested in the election

with "Cot" symbol and

another person Rayudu Swamy contested with

"small basket" symbol

while two others were

also in the contest. He

said that when the votes

were counted, Rayudu

Swamy got 1,185 votes

and he got 1,180 votes

and Swamy got five votes of majority. But,

Daveedu said he and his

demanded the polling

personnel for recounting and the officials

made recounting. In the recounting, Daveedu

won by one-vote majori-

ty. But due to the strong

pressures from the other

declared Swamy elected.

He requested the author-

ities to re-evaluate the

votes and do justice to

the officials

panchayat

Daveedu of

KAKINADA, FEB. 15

**OF VOTES** 

gram

sarpanch

SP said.

the third phase.

Superintendent

Chittoor police

NELLORE, FEB. 15

authorities

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

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

personnel

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

East Godavari Superintendent of Police Adnan Nayeem Asmi said that security personnel are taking all steps to ensure peaceful polling in agency areas. He said that agency areas. He salt that all 11 mandals in Rampachodavaram and Yetapaka divisions are being considered as being considered as extremist-affected areas but the attention is more on Chinturu, Yetapaka, Kunavaram, Gurthedu

Kunavaram, Gurthedu and other 25 villages. He said that the closure time of polling has also been reduced to 1.30 pm from 3.30 pm.

to oust the exploitative parties. East Godavari District Collector D. Muralidhar

Reddy visited Rampachodavaram and reviewed arrangements with ITDA project officer Praveen Adhithya on Monday.

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

to oust the exploitative

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

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

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

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



Minister Velampalli Srinivasa Rao conducting election campaign at One Town after

# No civic body polls for Rjy and 4 municipalities

DC CORRESPONDENT

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

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

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

As a result, many aspircandidates Rajamahendravaram Municipal Corporation (RMC) and four municipalities of West Godavari have been left disappointMCT officials gear up for Civic polls

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, FEB. 15

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

last year. Referring to the notification issued by the State Election Commission on Monday for holding the municipal elections, he made it clear that no new nominations

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

for the notification to con-

test elections. We are dis-

appointed that RMC has

now, the number of nominations filed stands at 324. Around 249 polling stations will be set up to approximately 2.66,762 voters to exercise their franchise.

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

The voters' list which was updated in January 2019 will be followed. Addressing a press con-

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

ed. "We had been waiting not been included in the list," rued an aspiring candidate of Telugu **Review meeting** 



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy conducts review meeting on Urban housing and Solid waste management at the camp office on Monday

### Min ridicules Naidu for false statements

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, FEB. 15

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

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

Speaking to media per-

no candidate for the Brahmanapalli seat.

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

Reddy said YSRC bagged 24 panchayats in his native Marripadu mandal besides 90 per cent of seats in six man-dals falling in Atmakur constituency represented

Poll officials gear up

for 3rd, 4th phase DC CORRESPONDENT announcement of results

Officials of Nellore and Prakasam are gearing up for the third and fourth phase of elections in gram panchayats of their respective districts on February 17 and 21. Senior officers have directed returning officers to take all steps to transparency, apart from free and fair elections. Arrangements should be such that results of elections are declared by 10 p.m. on the

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

DC CORRESPONDENT

Election notification for

East Godavari district

collector D. Muralidhar Reddy said election notifi-

cation for Teachers seat

Council from East and

West Godavari districts

will be issued on Tuesday.

Nominations will be

received till February 23.

Scrutiny will be on February 24. Candidates

State Legislative

constituency

KAKINADA, FEB. 15

teachers'

**MLC ELECTION NOTIFICATION FOR** 

**TEACHERS' CONSTITUENCY TODAY** 

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

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

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

can withdraw their nomi-

nations on February 26. Polling will be held on

March 14 from 8 a.m. to 4

p.m. Counting of votes

The collector said there

are total 17,285 voters in

the Teachers constituen-

cy, 9,560 in East Godavari

district and 7,725 in West Godavari. Convening a

meeting with political parties here on Monday,

Muralidhar Reddy sought

their cooperation in ensuring smooth and fair

will be on March 17.

#### **WITHDRAW PINK DIAMOND CASE HIT** DC CORRESPONDENT

TTD'S PLANS TO

NELLORE, FEB. 15

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Trust Board is in a fix over withdrawing a defamation case filed against former chief priest of TTD Ramana Deekshithulu and Rajya Sabha member Vijaya Sai Reddy for their allegations on the missing pink diamond during the

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

Against this backdrop, the Tenth Additional District Court dealing with the case in Tirupati admitted two petitions filed by Telangana Hindu Jana Sakti Welfare Association and an advo-Haribabu, to become parties in the

case.

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

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

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

# HC reserves orders over Lalapet dairy

**VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA** 

HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

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

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

APDDCF has been listed under Schedule IX of the AP Reorganisation Act. Andhra Pradesh government had approached the then united High Court in 2016 challenging Telangana state's GO declaring the premises, infrastructure and machinery at Lalapet head office of APDDCF as belonging to Telangana government. The TS government had also gone on to take over possession of the property in Lalapet including buildings and machinery.

Aggrieved, approached the then joint High Court asserting that assets of APDDCF should be shared in 58:42 ratio, because it belonged to both states, as it was constructed and developed in united has never claimed any

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

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

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

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

and there are no major units in Telangana. So Lalapet should be treated as an operational unit. "The headquarters, that is, principal office of the undertaking is to be apportioned as per population ratio. Operational units are to be divided on location basis,' TS AG contended. division bench,

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT

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

Parents of the kids launched a search for the trio when they failed to return home on Sunday night and complained to the police after their efforts

The incident came to light when police deployed swimmers to locate the bodies when they noticed their cycles and dress on the banks of the tank near Nakkala Colony on Monday morning.

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

#### 27-YEAR-OLD **WOMAN ENDS LIFE BY SUICIDE**

NELLORE, FEB. 15

allegedly unable to bear the harassment by her husband and in-laws at Nehru Nagar in Tirupati on Monday.

Based on a complaint of the victim's mother, SI of Tirupati West Police Station, Chalapati filed cases against seven persons including her husband and his kin responsible for the

In another incident, a worker S. Neelakantaiah, 40, was electrocuted during the construction of a building in MR Palli near Tirupati on Monday. MR

### FOR SMUGGLING **GANJA IN NELLORE**

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, FEB. 15

recovered 4.250 kg of the banned substance from the accused on Monday.

Vedayapalem Police, one Bhaskar. resident Bujabuja Nellore area, was found trading ganja in the city after obtaining the stocks from Visakhapatnam and East Godavari districts.

4.250 kgs of ganja.

the city while they were shifting the stocks.

Circle Vedayapalem Inspector P. Ramakrishna, SI B. Lakshmana Rao, Nellore rural tahsildar and others par-

They registered a case with Crime No. 58/2021 of Vedayapalem police station under sections 272, 273, 328 IPC and Section 8 (C).

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

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, FEB. 15

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

They were speaking to media financial assistance provided by the government to two famners

They promised to take care of the children of the deceased who survived in the accident.

They consoled the family members of the deceased at Madanapalle, (Gurramkonda mandal) and Thummanamgunta in B.Kottakota mandal) where the bodies are buried.

Peddireddy Legislators Dwarakanath Reddy, Nawaz Basha, and Chintala Basha, and Chintala Ramachandra Reddy and Madanapalli Sub Collector Jahnavi were present with the

# VSP: TD's dharna on Feb. 18

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

DC CORRESPONDENTS VIJAYAWADA/VISAKHAPA

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

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

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

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

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

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

TTD TO DEVELOP

**VEDA PATHASHALA** 

**IN KEESARAGUTTA** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

ragutta at Telangana

alleged that they are not

considered for employ

ment in Vedic related

ment of Telangana State

pundits after pursuing

the 8 years long Vedic

They poured out their woes before the TTD EO Dr K.S. Jawahar

Reddy when he inspect-

ed the Pathashala on

Reacting to this, the EO told them that he will

definitely discuss the

issue in the ensuing

Meeting which is slated

on February 27.
After his inspection, the EO instructed the

Engineering officials concerned to send pro-

posals to take up devel-

opment works of the

He was reacting to the

information given by the

Principal D. Mallikar-

juna Âvadani that the

Hostel building accom-

modates only 40 pupils

whereas there are 120 students studying at

present in Veda Patha-

He also sought EO that

necessary barricading might be provided to

prevent the entry of

beasts

Vedapathashala premis-

es. EO directed the offi-

cials concerned to send a

proposal to take up the

The EO had darshan of

Swamy in Keesaragutta.

He also visited TTD

Information Centre, Kalyana Mandapam, Guest House, Dining

Hall which are under

cerned informed the EO

that the works will be

completed by this April.

Later he also visited the SVBC Studio, HDPP Office and interacted

with the employees.

The officials

Ramalingeswara

development works

Yagashala

renovation.

shala at Keesaragutta.

Vedic institution.

Trust

they

by

in Keesa-

Depart-

accomplished

have

NELLORE, FEB. 15

Pathashala

Endowments

though

become



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

## Learn from farmers, CPM Raghavulu tells agitators

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 15

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

Atchannaidu

announced that Naidu

would give new direc-

tions on how to go hold

the agitation on the steel

against the privatisation of VSP.

Atchannaidu announced

here on Monday that

Naidu would give new

directions on how to go

DC CORRESPONDENT

The annual Brahmotsa-

Subrahmanyeswara

Swamy began on a grand

note in Mopidevi village

in Krishna district on

eswara was decorated as

a groom, and the deity

Valli Devasena as a bride

amidst chanting of Vedas

under the supervision of

endowments assistant

commissioner G.V.D.N.

Leela Kumar and temple

chief priest B. Pawan Kumar and special pujas were performed to the couple.

The endowments assis-

tant commissioner offered silk robes to the

lord and deity with tem-

ple honours amidst chanting of Vedas and

Sri Valli

Subrahmany-

Sametha

VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

vams of Devasena

Monday.

Lord

chief K.

TD

launched a relay hunger strike at the Kurmannapalem junction close to the steel plant main gate on Monday. Addressing a huge gath-

trade unions who have

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

hold the agitation on the steel plant issue. Though Rao was earlier infected

Brahmotsavams at Mopidevi begin

strike. He appealed to the ruling party members to resign from their elected posts if they were serious about stopping the privatisation move, and assured them that that TD would not put up any candidate in the by-elec-

with coronavirus, he was

firm in his determination

stage the hunger

Former home minister N. Chinarajappa, former mayor and TD leader Sabbam Hari and former minister Devineni Umamaheswara Rao also minister called on fasting Palla

cooking, and agitating,

which has drawn the

tral leaders will come

down so easily. The agita-

tion has to be more

intense and should spread all over the state

to bring pressure on the

should

government.

'I do not think the cen-

world attention.

Raghavulu said.

Srinivasa Rao.
Another district-level leader Pasarla Prasad offered prayers Simhachalam temple seeking blessings for the good health of Palla

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

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 15

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

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

He quit the party in January 2020 after differences arose with the party founder president Pawan Kalyan.

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

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

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

The senior leader said he was worried about the municipal impact on the steel plant

### CM intervention sought into polls of Kabaddi association

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

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

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

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

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

Referring to the support

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

being extended to these two groups by a section of legis-lators and leaders, he called it unfortunate because they were doing so without knowing the facts. He said that the players were victimised as the tournaments conducted by these two groups were not authorised.

He added that the groups' medals and recognition were not helping the players get admission in educational institutions and employment under sports quota in addition to denial of awarding cash incentives to them

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

30 fresh cases of Covid-19 and one death in the last 24

On Monday, the state health authorities reported that out of 18,834 samples tested, 30 persons were confirmed with Covid-19. Out of a total number of 1,35,65,062 samples tested, 8,88,899 persons were found infected with the virus and of them, 8,81,041 recovered while undergoing treatment while 695 are still active with the

Among the daily cases of Covid-19, Kadapa registered seven followed by five in Chittoor and Nellore, three in East Godavari, two each in Anantapur. Krishna and Visakhapatnam, one in West Godavari and zero Kurnool,

Prakasam, Srikakulam and Vizianagaram.

Andhra Pradesh registered

With regard to the cumu-

lative active Covid-19 cases, Chittoor continued to register the highest number of 142 followed by 111 in Krishna, 91 in Kadapa, 78 in East Godavari, 57 in Nellore, 51 in Prakasam, 49 in Guntur, 36 in West Godavari, 28 in Godavari,

Visakhapatnam, 21 in Anantapur, 15 in Kurnool, 11 in Vizianagaram and five in Srikakulam. Among the daily Covid-19 deaths, only one case was

registered at Krishna, raising death toll to 7,163. The state health authoridischarged ties Coronaivrus

patients after recovery in the last 24 hours in the state. AP conducted Covid-19 tests on 2,54,027 samples per

one million population and registered a positive rate of

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#### **KUNDA CHATURDI OBSERVED WITH FERVOUR**

department of endow-ments. The temple chief priest helped the official

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, FEB. 15

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

On Monday evening, Kunda Kusumarchana was observed with religious fervour in

Tirupati by SV Vedic University scholars on the auspicious day of Magha Chaturthi. The unique feature about this fete is that the giant Shiva Linga was offered Abhishekam with jasmines.

Jasmines and as its Dhvanaramam also worshipped as Rudra was offered floral

slokas on behalf of the tooffer the silk robes cer-

The Vedic pundits said that Kunda means

flowering commences in Lord Shiva, who is

Endowments assistant commissioner G.V.D.N. Leela Kumar presents Silk robes at

emonially to the lord and

Temple superintendent

Subrahmanyeswara Swamy temple at Mopidevi in Krishna district on Monday.

bath with jasmines to appease Him to bestow His benign blessings and protect humanity from calamities and dis-

#### Fish grading



Fishermen grade the Tuna fish before packing for the exporting at the fishing harbour in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

#### **LEOPARD ON PROWL AGAIN** IN HYD LIMITS

A. Madhusudhana Rao

and other officials V.S.K. Malleswara Rao were

present.

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB, 15

Reports of a leopard again being on the prowl in Rajendranagar area and an eye-witness account of a leopard attacking two cows in the early hours of Monday have spread scare among inhabi-tants of Walamtari and surrounding areas. Forest department offi-

cials said a preliminary inspection of the location where the leopard "attacked" the cows did not yield any evidence of a big cat presence or pug marks. The caretaker of the cattle, Ahmad, however reiterated that he saw a leopard attacking the cows around 3.15am on Monday. Two months ago, in

December last, the forest department had trapped a leopard that was found on a road near the Katedan industrial area. It was subsequently released in the Amrabad Tiger Reserve.

The forest department is investigating the incident of leopard sighting.

appropriate enquiries while

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DC CORRESPONDENT

A woman identified as Rupa Devi, 27, committed suicide

Palli SI Narasimham booked a case and investigating. **5 PERSONS HELD** 

Police arrested five persons for smuggling and marketing ganja in Nellore city and

According

Following a tip-off, a police team conducted a raid on a secret stock point near Technology Bhavan and seized

The team apprehended Kudicheti Usha, Kamala Vinay, Arava Sampath, Konda Praveen, and SK Khaleel belonging to various parts of

ticipated in the raids.

# **MINISTERS VOW**

persons after presenting the ilies who lost their breadwinat Madanapalle on

ministers among others.

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

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB 15

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

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

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB 15

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

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

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

India till now has vaccinated 85.16 lakh persons.

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

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

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC

BHOPAL, FEB 15

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

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

Some of them procured liquor of brand "Dilse" from a quor contractor hailing from

Uttar Pradesh. Many of them who consumed the liquor were taken

ill, according to the police. While Ahirwar's son died on

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

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

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

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

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, FEB. 15

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

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

The Court was hearing a plea seeking to restrain WhatsApp from implementing its new privacy policy in India. The application has been moved by two colstudents Karmanya Singh Sareen

and Shreya Sethi in a matter pending before a Constitution bench wherein 2016 policy is under challenge.

under challenge.

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

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

cy".

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

Senior counsel Kapil Sibal, who appeared for WhatsApp, denied that the users' data would be compromised by the new

policy.
"This 2021 policy is applicable everywhere apart from Europe as it has a law. If India has a law, we will follow the same," he said.

At this the CJI asked him to put that on oath. WhatsApp had earlier in January renewed its terms of service and privacy policy.

Delhi Chief Minister

Covid cases jump in Maha



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

# BJP, Oppn clash over climate activist's arrest

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

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

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

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

"Your lips are free to speak. Say that the truth is still alive. They are scared,

not the country," he said in a tweet in Hindi. "India will not be silenced," he added.

Arvind Kejriwal said, "Arrest of 21 year old Disha Ravi is an unprecedented attack Democracy. Supporting our farmers is not a

crime."
RJD leader Manoj Jha said democracy is under threat. "I am worried about democracy, as it is passing through the most difficult times," he said. Union minister and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Gajendra

Singh Shekhawat tweeted: "If age is the criteria then Veer Lt Param Chakra Second Khetarpal, martyred at 21 is who I am proud of. Not some toolkit propagan-

dists."
BJP general secretary B L Santosh tweeted, "21 year old...environment activist...student...Are these credentials for becoming a part of breaking India forces? How does she get the access for edit-of the "toolkit Google doc" ing tool kit...? Why she is and "key conspirator" in law. Accordingly, we have part of anti-national the document's formula-not taken any action as a groups...? WhatsApp Many questions...But only one answer...21 year old.'

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

Meanwhile, in a comment on the arrest of climate activist Disha Ravi, Haryana Home minister Anil Vij on Monday urged 'extermination from the roots" wherever seeds of anti-nationalism found.

Γoolkit," he asked.

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

Centre's farm laws. The Delhi Police had claimed that the 21-yearold activist was an editor tion and dissemination.

urgent actions, including

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

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

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

We have investigated the reported content and have found that it is not subject to removal under the Twitter Rules or German law. Accordingly, we have result of this specific In the document, various report, the response said.

# DYFI worker, hurt in police lathicharge, dies

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

The auto-rickshaw drivfrom Kotolpur in Bankura was the bread-

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

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

icharge by the police." CPI(M) MLA Sujan Chakraborty claimed, "A bright youth was mur-dered and turned into a corpse. Leader

Opposition Abdul Mannan alleged, "It is a brutal murder which reflects unlimited atrocities of an autocratic gov-

ernment."
State BJP president
Dilip Ghosh said, "This is
unfortunate. Trinamul Congress government has lost its control over everything." Wondering if Mr Chakraborty talked of

getting her call about the DYFI worker's death first, the chief minister however said, "Any death is sad and unfortunate. Post mortem report will reveal the cause of death. But the police was neither informed nor complained

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

DC CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA, FEB. 15

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

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

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

Two outlets have been started in South Kolkata.

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

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

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

Agitated over his death led a cop and torn apart his uniform during a protest in the city.

# 3 forest guards attacked by timber mafia in MP

DC CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, FEB 15

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

inside Panna National

Park on Saturday. According to local subofficer Dinesh divisional (SDO)(forest) Singh Gaur, the three forguards, Chatrapal Swamideen Kushwaha and Govind Singh Yadav, spotted a gang of timber smugglers

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

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

were brutally attacked with axes by the goons, causing grievous injuries to them. He later alerted his higher authorities about the incident. Later, the injured guards were rushed to the nearby

government hospital.

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

Three suspects were village for interrogation in connection with the incident, the forest officer

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

On February 5, a forest guard, identified as guard. Madanlal Verma (52), was in Ratanpura forest range under Punjapur reserve forest in Dewas district. He had filmed his own

murder on his cell phone camera while challenging

### parts of Indo-China border DC CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI, FEB 15** 

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

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

taken timely action by deployment enhancing along the Indo-China border so that the Chinese security personnel do not try any transgression

exercise in other sectors.

Security up along other

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

Ministry remarked Both Indian and Chinese

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

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



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

MANOJ ANAND I DC **GUWAHATI, FEB. 15** 

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

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

assisted projects.

trees

Vishramgang range under

Panna National Park.

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

# Atmosphere in Tapovan village grim as kin lose hope

ies are being continually pulled out of the muckfilled power project tunnel here, the atmosphere outside is getting grimmer with families of the missing people losing hope of seeing them alive. Every time a body is brought out of the adit tunnel, families waiting outside for over a week, take some time to pluck up the courage to see if the mortal remains

are of a loved one or not. And the temporary relief of not finding a family member among the dead is brief as they are soon gripped by despair when

battling through tonnes of sludge choking the tunnel and are reminded that eight days have elapsed since the calamity happened. Nine bodies have so far been recovered from the tunnel at Tapovan-Vishnugad hydel project site taking the toll in the tragedy to 54, while officials say 150 people are

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

alive. But now we will have to return home with my brother's body. It's unbear-able," said his elder brother in a choked voice.

Over a dozen relatives of Bartwal including his brother, who had been camping at Tapovan village since the day the tragedy struck, broke down inconsolably after

are found hanging around

identifying the body. The crowd of disheartened relatives at the tunnel site has begun to dis-

Relatives of Jitendra, a resident of Jammu brought out dead from the tunnel on Sunday are also packing up to leave. "Seven of us had come

from Jammu after we heard of the glacial disasin Chamoli February 7 and my brother's phone was switched off. We had been scouring different areas of Tapovan and Joshimath for four days in search of Jitendra until his body was brought perse. Those who remain out of the tunnel on the mortuary where the Jitendra's younger broth bodies are being brought er Pavan said.



Mithilesh Kumar, who has been missing after flash floods in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, at her village Chokad, in Ramgarh district of Jharkhand on Monday.

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

TO ISS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The driver left the scene of the accident, and Maraj was taken to hospital, where he was pronounced dead on Saturday. "The investigation is ongoing," police added.

The statement did not speci-

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

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

The rapper has been nominated for 10 Grammy awards during her career.

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

New York, Feb. 15: A 21-yearold Brooklyn man was arrested in the fatal stabbings of two people on New York City sub-

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

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

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

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

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

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

cued on Sunday. Rescuers on Monday found bodies buried under as much as 6 metres (10 feet) of mud and were searching for the nine people still missing, Nganjuk district chief Novi Rahman Hidayat said. Heavy equipment arrived later to help in the search.

Overnight rains caused rivers to burst their banks in other districts of the province on Monday, sending nearly 1 metre (about 3 feet) of muddy water into some residential areas and forcing hundreds of people to flee from their submerged homes, Jati said.

# **Myanmar rattled by army** movements, Net shutdown

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

Yangon, Feb. 15: Sightings of armored personnel carriers in Myanmar's biggest city and an internet shutdown raised political tensions late Sunday, after vast numbers of people ar-ound the country flouted orders against demonstrations to protest the military's seizure of power.

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

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

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

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

**POWER CUT AS** 

**BLANKET TEXAS** 

Dallas, Feb. 15: A win-

ter storm dropping snow

and ice also sent temper-

atures plunging across the southern Plains,

prompting a power emergency in Texas a

day after conditions can-

large swaths of the US.

Rotating power out-

ages were initiated by

the Electric Reliability

Council of Texas, or

ERCOT, early Monday

morning, meaning thou-

sands went without elec-

tricity for short periods

as temperatures fell into

the teens near Dallas

and 20s (about minus 5

degrees Čelsius) around

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

tweeted as it urged resi-

dents to reduce electrici-

ERCOT manages the

flow of electric power in the state. "Traffic lights

and other infrastructure

may be temporarily wit-

hout power," ERCOT said. Officials in Hous-

ton had warned people

to prepare for outages

and hazardous roads —

conditions similar to

what residents might see

in the wake of a Cate-

Nearly 120 crashes,

including a 10-car pileup

on I-45, were reported

Sunday, Houston Fire

gory 5 hurricane.

tweeted.

Houston.

celled flights impacted traffic

**SNOW, ICE** 



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

Briton breaks S'pore

**Singapore, Feb. 15:** A booked. The two spent nine hours together. Most

quarantine order

found no evidence to sup-

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

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

Monday — AP

London, Feb. 15: The UK's tougher new travel rules to contain the spread of Covid-19 vari-

ants came into effect from

Monday, involving com-

pulsory hotel quarantines

for anyone returning to England from one of the

33 high-risk "red list"

countries. Those arriving

will have to pre-book and

pay £1,750 to spend 10 days

quarantining in governm-

ent-sanctioned hotels, cov-

ering the cost of the hotel,

transport and two sepa-

Extremely serious brea-

ches of the new norms

could result in a 10-year

jail term and fines of up to

£10,000. Those who have

not visited a "red list"

country, such as India,

must still quarantine for

10 days at home and com-

plete two mandatory Cov-

id-19 tests on the second

and eighth day after arriv-

ing. "With the emergence

of new variants, we must go further. The rules com-

ing into force today will

bolster the quarantine sy-

stem and provide another

layer of security against

new variants at the border," said UK Health

"These new measures

are important to protect

our vaccination program-

me, which has now seen 15

million people vaccinated.

we all work towards res-

toring normal life," he

any UK or Irish resident

Starting Monday,

Secretary Matt Hancock.

rate tests post-arrival.

## Suu Kyi detention extended

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

military coup. Suu Kyi will now be remanded until February 17, when she will likely appear in court by videoconference, according to Khin Maung Zaw, a lawyer asked by Suu Kyi's party to represent her.

Virus: Tougher travel rules

come into force in Britain

ilty on Monday to violat-

ing a coronavirus quaran-

tine order in Singapore by

visiting his fiancée sever-

al times in another hotel

room. They are to appear

in court for sentencing on

February 26, and face a

possible sentence of up to

six years in jail and a fine

of 10,000 Singapore dol-

lars (\$7.500) on each

charge. Skea Nigel left his

room at The Ritz-Carlton,

Millenia Singapore hotel

on three occasions in

September, according to

the charge sheets. He was

Nigel climbed an emer-

gency stairwell and enter-

ed a room that his Singa-

who has been in a high-

risk destination on the

UK's red list — compris-

ing 33 hotspots with Covid-19 variants in circu-

lation — will have to enter

England through a desig-

nated port and have pre-

booked a quarantine pack-

age to stay at one of the government's "Managed

Non-residents are curre-

ntly not part of the essen-

tial-only travel rules of

Quarantine Facilities".

fiancée

not wearing a mask.

porean

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

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

Protesters continued to gather across Myanmar on Monday following a

travellers have to stay in

an assigned hotel room or

at home for 14 days after

arriving in Singapore

under Coronavirus quar-

antine rules. They receive

meals and regularly rec-

State Courts on Monday

with Agatha Maghesh

Evamalai, whom he has

since married. The Briton

said he was guilty of two

charges for flouting the

rules. Four other charges

against him were tem-

porarily withdrawn. The

prosecution asked that

Nigel be jailed for four

weeks and fined 1,000

Singapore dollars (\$750).

the Coronavirus lockdo-

wn. The government said

it has tough measures

already in place requiring

all travellers into the UK.

from any location, to pro-

vide proof of a negative

Covid-19 test taken no

more than three days

before departure and non-

UK residents from the 33

red list countries are

entering Britain.

banned from

Nigel arrived at the

ord their temperatures.

night in which authorities cut the country's internet access and increased the security presence in major cities seeking to curtail

demonstrations.

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

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



Shah Mahmood Qureshi

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

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

Addressing the 9th International Maritime Conference (IMC 21) in Karachi, Qureshi also said that the Indian Ocean offers promising potential for mutual cooperation and collaboration.

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

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

# Israeli hit kills 9 fighters in Syria

several missiles early on Monday targeting areas near the Syrian capital, Damascus, Syri-a's state news agency reported. An opposition warmonitoring group said the strikes killed nine Iran-backed fighters. The SANA news agency claimed that Syrian air

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

strike hit Syrian army positions in Kisweh, just south of Damascus.

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

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

# Meghan again in the family way

in's Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle are expecting their second child, their spokesman said in a Valentine's Day announcement on Sunday. The couple released a black and white image of them under a tree, all smiles, with Markle, 39, showing signs of pregnancy.
"We can confirm that

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

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

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

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

## Oz: Google near media pay deals

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

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

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

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

Samuel Peña

4-LEGGED INHABITANT Ex-PM David Cameron recruited the cat to deal with rats seen near his official residence

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

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

net Office, an unofficial pest control post.

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

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

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

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

why all animals deserve a second chance — one minute they may be an overlooked stray on the streets, the next they could become one of the nation's beloved political figures, with fans around the world." Larry, who has met a

number of world leaders, has been largely unfriendly to men but took a liking to former US President Barack Obama. When former President Donald Trump visited in 2019, Larry took a nap under his car. His grip on the public im-

political leaders know better than to ignore that popularity. The tomcat was a sentimental topic of conversation in Cameron's final appearance in Parliament as prime minister when he said he wanted to quash a rumour that perish the thought — he didn't like Larry. And just to prove it, he whipped out evidence: A picture of Larry lying on his lap. "He belongs to the house and the staff love him very much — as do I," he said at

the time, explaining why

es tale is yet more proof of agination is clear — and he wasn't taking Larry cially Palmerston, chief with him after leaving office. After the December 2019 election, rumours swirled that Larry might be headed for retirement with the news that the new prime minister, Boris Johnson, was a dog man. However, despite the

prime minister moving Jack Russell cross Dilyn Downing into Larry remained in office. Reports of his rodentkilling abilities vary. Larry became known for his occasional scraps with neighbouring cats — espe-

mouser to the Foreign Office across the street – and fondness for sleep. Palmerston has retired to the country, so things have been a bit quieter of late.

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

# **Chronicle**

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

Thile it's in the fitness of things to expect the judicial system to speak up to protect a citizen against the State's over-reach and high-handedness, it is no surprise that civil society across the country should be furious over the arrest of the 21-year-old Bengaluru climate

activist Disha Ravi by the Delhi police over the weekend.

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

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

In order to under-

ciousness, indeed the enormity, of

State has done by

arresting Ms Ravi

(and two others), it

is important to be

called "toolkit" is

aware that this so-

stand the mali-

what the Indian

comfort of the government. FIRs were filed against Ms Thumberg and others for sedition. In the government's eyes, she is guilty of spreading the idea

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

handbook of terrorism.

In fact it's no more than guidelines on ways to propagate the farmers' cause through the social media, and is a common expression among activists of all kinds. Indeed, it's no more than what the Hindutva brigade, including the ruling party, have been doing. The difference is that the causes of the climate activists and the Hindutva not a handbook of terrorism. group are vastly different, with the latter identify-

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

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

### Trump escapes conviction

Former US President Donald Trump may have escaped conviction by the Senate, but history will judge him culpable for the attack on down Only seven Republicant Control of the Attack on down only seven Republicant Control of the Attack on down on the Attack on Only seven Republican Senators voted to convict, like 10 Congressmen had done in the House of Representatives vote to impeach him for the second time. The action of 43 other Republican senators to vote against his conviction wasn't due just to partisanship. Self-preservation was their primary motive, petrified as they were by the prospect of a backlash by the Trump loyalists of a party that has been hijacked by the far right and swears blind loyalty to a President who sub-

verted hoary democratic norms that embroiders American history.

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

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

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

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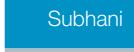
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# How PM can win hearts, keep bills, end protests



political stalemate deadlocked in seeming binary is dangerous. It is erroneous, which often arises out of a bankruptcy of ideas premised in possibili-ties, leaves both sides strongly entrenched in a zero-sum game. The binary has left its predictable trail of bitterness on both sides of the current battlelines.

Hail George W. Bush, the modern proponent of the equation: You are with us or against us! But this is actually from a more ancient play-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With the acknowledgment of a common problem comes an alignment of purpose — to solve the problem, reducing farmers' costs, reducing overall costs of production, eliminating waste, and increasing incomes without making

food too expensive for a nation of over 1.3 billion.

A benevolent surgical strike on farmers' hearts

Enough commentary has flowed through edi-torials, columns, feisty television debates and vituperous social media exchanges about the transformed nature of the agitation. Not just Sikhs from Punjab but Jats, predominantly BJP voters and building blocks of Hindutva, are now resolved to stay put on the ground till the bills are withdrawn.

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

If the farmers were not convinced not arrogant.
In the next many days,

the langar, let him listen and to the ladies cutting vegetables, sit on the ground with the leaders as they pass the hookah. Ask them if they are comfortable, if they have everything they need for now. Let him break

dairy sector; and how

this policy wishes to replicate the same suc-

Prime Minister Modi

in their midst will be a

visual story for all farm-

strike on their hearts. It

will calm farmers in all

protest sites and those

elsewhere simmering

with anger with a new belief in his leadership,

and that his government

cares for farmers every-

where. Before he leaves

the protest site, having

told the world he was

there himself, he can

throw in a final gesture

of affection by asking for

some jalebis and rotis to

be packed for his dinner

— the entire gamut of security and Covid-19

and he will leave with

A little haggling, a little

willingness to give in on

an odd thing here or there; and the farmers

will be happy to leave,

with the optics of victo-

ry, their pride intact,

and return home, their

heads held high.

precautions set aside -

their hearts.

the surgical

cess for grain.

needed,

bread with them, the ice will break on its own. Yes, that's all it might end up taking to end these protests. Just that. Mr Modi is capable of magic with some sections of people and the protesting Jat and Sikh

farmers are part of that section. Once they are no longer angry, and his humble arrival at the After Republic Day and protest site will convince them that neither he nor his government is actually arrogant, the stalemate will lead to a thaw. It is then that Mr Modi can explain that the existing policies have failed the farmer for 50 years and expecting a different result with the same policies would be an Einsteinian measure of insanity. The BJP can talk about how corporate and cooperative procure-ment of milk have enriched farmers in the

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

on any day and at any hour of his choosing, Mr Modi should just walk into a protest site and spend several hours. Let him make some rotis at

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

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

P. Ramakrishna Rajahmundry

#### **NOBLE DOCTOR**

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

Govardhana Myneedu

#### **PRIVATISATION WOES**

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

Dr C. Ghanshyam Visakhapatnam

#### FRAGILE DEMOCRACY

Yes, democracy is fragile, undoubtedly. It doesn't need a Biden to say so. It's so obvious these days, lookg at what's happening around us It happened in Capitol Hill and at Red Fort. We must transform fragility into firmness K. Nehru Patnaik

Visakhapatnam



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

said here today.

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

Aakar Patel



Vital areas in kids' health left ignored in Budget 2021

he Union Budget delivered earlier this month was praised for two things. First, that it was spending money in the right place: capital expenditure, which would create value over the long term. And second, that it was transparent. The deficit is three times what it should be, but at least the government has accepted it. Perhaps these two things are enough to make it a good Budget, though one doesn't know. There has not really been any Budget I can remember that made any difference to most people's lives, except perhaps one, and that was in 1991.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

DECCAN CHRONICLE | NELLORE | TUESDAY | 16 FEBRUARY 2021

# guick

<b>INDICATOR</b>	RS	%
Sensex	52,154.13	1.18
Nifty 50	15,314.70	1.00
S&P 500*	3,934.83	0.47
Dollar (₹)	72.68	0.09
Pound Sterling (₹)	101.02	-0.69
Euro (₹)	88.19	-0.12
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,826▼19	0.04
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	63.13	1.12
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.022	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.210	0.00
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

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

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

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



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

#### RBI sets up panel on urban coop banks

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

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

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



■ JLR to spend \$3.5 bn annually on electrification

# Jaguar cars to become all-electric from 2025

**MICHAEL GONSALVES** 

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

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

JLR will invest about 2.5 billion pounds (\$3.5 billion) annually into electri-fication and related con-nected technologies, the company said on Monday.

It plans to introduce six fully electric Land Rover variants in the next five years and aims to electrify all its models by 2030, it

JLR's new chief exectutive officer Thierry Bollore made the announcement on Monday, with the new 'Reimagine' strategy also committing to retaining its production facilities in the UK. Bollore said Land Rover will phase out diesel engines from 2026 and invest more heavily in hydrogen fuel cell technol-

ogy.

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

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

#### RENAULT KIGER STARTS AT ₹5.45 L

**MICHAEL GONSALVES** PUNE, FEB. 15

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

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

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

Car companies the world over are following zeroemission strategies to meet tough carbon dioxide emission targets in Europe and China.

Jaguar Land Rover is one of the hardest hit by the downturn in demand for

the Hyundai Venue, Kia Sonet, Maiillara XUV300, Tata Nexon, Ford EcoSport, Maruti Suzuki Vitara Brezza and Toyota Urban "With this outstanding

other sub-4m SUVs like

pricing, Renault Kiger is surely set to radically alter the dynamics in the Venkatram Mamillapalle, country CEO & MD at Renault India, said.

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

diesel vehicles in recent Its range of models

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

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

**SARITHA RAI** 

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

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

tled the industry in 2015. Ballore was drafted into

JLR last July.

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

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

SIDDHARTHA SINGH

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

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

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

spokesman declined to comment.

The government earlier this month said it will

finance ministry

keep a "bare minimum presence" by running companies in atomic energy, space & defence; transport & telecommunications; power, oil & coal; banking & financial services, according to the Department of Investment Public

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

ing the budget. -Bloomberg

### Smartphone sales clock record growth in Q4

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, FEB. 15

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

According to global market intelligence firm IDC, the October-December quarter posted record fourth-quarter smartphone shipments of 45 million devices, growing 21 per cent over the same quarter in 2019. A total of 150 million

smartphone units were sold in 2020, which was 1.7 per cent less than what was sold in 2019. Stay-athome mandates, remote work, remote education. travel restrictions and manufacturing downs led to a sluggish H1'20, which saw a 26 per cent decline over the same

period in 2019.

However, H2'20 recovered with 19 per cent growth as markets reopened gradually. Lockdowns and restrictions rendered an urgent need for devices supporting activities such as entertainment, work from home, and remote learning, resulting in more devices per house-hold, and leading to a resurgence in demand for consumer devices including smartphones, consumer notebooks, and tablets in 2020.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**SARITHA RAI** FEB. 15

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

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

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

# Financials push Sensex above 52K

**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD** 

Resumption of business activity close to the prepandemic level and positive global cues, macro data and earnings season triggered more than one benchmarks Sensex and

The Sensex crossed 52000 for the first time, closing with 610 points, or 1.18 per cent, higher at 52154.13. The Nifty-50 closed at 15314.70, up 151.40 points, or 1 per cent.

"Tĥe Nomura India Business Resumption Index picked up to 98.1 (provisional) for the week ending

**FARAH ELBAHRAWY** 

S&P Global Ratings said

Gulf Arab economies suf-

fered population losses as a

result of an "exodus" of

expatriate workers, warn-

ing the outflow could com-

plicate their diversifica-

The population across

the Gulf Cooperation

Council may have declined

tion in the long run.



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

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

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

by 4 per cent last year,

according to a report on

The share of foreigners

relative to citizens is set to

drop through 2023 "because

of subdued non-oil sector

growth and workforce

nationalisation policies,

S&P credit analysts led by

tivity, income levels, and

economic diversification

"GCC countries' produc-

Zahabia Gupta said.

Monday

numbers. Monday's move was mainly propelled by the financial space as the top seven contributors in Nifty were from this space

only," an analyst said. Even in the Sensex pack top nine gainers were from the financial space.

gained 3.32 per cent. The top gainers included Axis Bank (6.21 per cent) and ICICI Bank (4.17 per cent). Realty, Telecom and Healthcare stocks also made sound gains.

Foreign portfolio investors were net buvers of equities by Rs 1,234.15 crore while the domestic institutions were net sellers by Rs 1.048.55 crore.

may stagnate in the long

term without significant investment in the human

capital of the national pop-

ulation and improvements

in labour market flexibili-

The six nations compris-

Arabia, the UAE, Qatar,

Oman-are fully depend-

ent on foreign workers in industries. —*Bloomberg* 

Bahrain

GCC—Saudi

ty<u>,"</u> they said.

Kuwait,

the

# Japan sights recovery, Nikkei at 1990-high



**GEAROID REIDY & TOSHIRO HASEGAWA** 

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

US stimulus package. The gauge rose as much as 1.6 per cent on Monday, taking it a step higher on the climb back to its bubble-era levels. While equities globally have hit new heights in recent months, the Nikkei 225 still needs to gain almost another 30 per cent to surpass its record That was

reached in the final trad-

ing session of 1989, before

the index went on to lose

more than half its value in three years after the economic bubble burst.

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

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

#### structurally remain attractive for us," HUL said in its presentation. On the other hand, the company said "Covid obsessive" categories such as hand sanitisers

and hand wash, which saw a sharp surge dur-ing the pandemic, are expected to normalise this year. The hand sanitiser category surged 16 times in 2020 compared to 2019, while the hand wash category grew 1.5 times. Categories such as

hand, body and face care, classified as "Covid resistant" items are expected "to normalise with increase in mobility in 2021."

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

ny said "Covid impact-ed" categories, which include ice cream, food solutions business and vending business are also expected rebound strongly in 2021 with increase in mobility".

Similarly, the compa-

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

**SHARON CHO & ROB VERDONCK** 

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

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

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

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

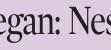
"The cold snap, the additional Saudi cuts, the fresh US stimulus promise are all helping," said Vandana Hari, founder of Vanda Insights in Singapore.

**CORINNE GRETLER** 

pany expands beyond meat alternatives. The Swiss food giant will start offering plantbased KitKat bars this year, called KitKat V, according to Alexander von Maillot, head of

Nestle's business. wider rollout. The bar, which uses a

rice-based formula as a milk substitute, took about two years to devel-



## Going Vegan: Nestle plans rice-based KitKat announced plans to make plant-based milk choco-

Nestle SA is adding its first vegan milk chocolate products as the world's biggest food com-

confectionery The product will be for sale online and at selected stores in a handful of markets including the UK as a test run before a possible



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

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

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

Mondelez International Inc's Cadbury has also

haven't yet joined in on the trend. Lindt & Spruengli AG, better known for its Easter bunnies wrapped in golden foil, has started selling oat milk-based chocolate bars under its Hello label. Mars Inc has introduced a vegan version of its Galaxy bars in the UK.

"Demand for plantbased food is growing everywhere," von Maillot

said in a phone interview. "KitKat was a logical choice, as it's by far the biggest brand and a global brand. Confectionery is one of Nestle's last categories to join the plant-based trend. Nestle Purina last

year introduced a blended pet food line, adding insects and plant protein from fava beans and millet to the meat protein.

Nestle introduced sausage substitutes last and also makes

plant-based mince and non-dairy ice cream and coffee products.

- Bloomberg

### **HUL** expects Covid-hit products to



New Delhi, Feb. 15:

FMCG major Hindus-

tan Unilever expects its

'Covid impacted" prod-

uct categories, such as

ice-cream and vending

solutions, to rebound

strongly in 2021 with

In an investor presen-

tation, the company

said categories such as

skin care and colour

cosmetics, which slow-ed down last year, will

also rebound.

"These

increase in mobility.

**RESULTS** 

Men's singles fourth round:

Andrey Rublev (RUS x7) bt Casper Ruud (NOR x24) 6-2, 7-

Medvedev (RUS x4) bt Mackenzie McDonald (USA) 6-4, 6-2, 6-3; Stefanos Tsitsipas

(GRE x5) bt Matteo Berrettini (ITA x9) walkover; Rafael Nadal (ESP x2) bt Fabio Fognini (ITA x16) 6-3, 6-4, 6-2.

Women's singles fourth round: Ashleigh Barty (AUS x1) bt Shelby Rogers (USA) 6-3, 6-4; Karolina Muchova (CZE x25) bt

Elise Mertens (BEL x18) 7-6 (7/5), 7-5; Jennifer Brady (USA

x22) bt Donna Vekic (CRO x28) 6-1, 7-5; Jessica Pegula

(USA) bt Elina Svitolina (UKR x5) 6-4, 3-6, 6-3.

**RUSSIANS ARE COMING** 

American Jessica Pegula

reached her maiden Grand

Slam quarter-final with victory over Elina

victory over Elina Svitolina, her first over a

Pegula, whose billionaire

father owns the Buffalo Bills NFL team, overcame fifth seed Svitolina 6-4, 3-6,

6-3 to set up a meeting with

fellow American Jennifer

Brady, a 6-1, 7-5 winner

against Croatia's Donna

Vekic. Elsewhere, fourth seed

Daniil Medvedev and sev-

enth seed Andrey Rublev

both won to ensure an all-

Medvedev blew away American world number

192 Mackenzie McDonald 6-

4, 6-2, 6-3 to extend his win-

Rubley, who is also unbeaten this year, went through when Norway's

Casper Ruud retired after

losing the first two sets.

ning streak to 18 matches.

Russian quarter-final.

unseeded

Earlier,

top-10 player.

Nadal closes in

Melbourne, Feb. 15: Rafael\_Nadal outclassed

Fabio Fognini to close in on the all-time Grand Slam

titles record on Monday as Ashleigh Barty ramped up

hopes of becoming the Australian Open's first

home winner in 43 years. Nadal said his lower-back

stiffness was continuing to

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

2 against the flamboyant

Italian, which set up a quarter-final against

Fognini had registered a

five-set win over Nadal at the 2015 US Open, but the

Spaniard cantered to victo-

ry after recovering from 2-4

Nadal is now into his 43rd

Grand Slam quarter-final,

staying on course for a title

match with eight-time win-

ner Novak Djokovic who battled through an abdomi-

nal injury to reach the last

Next up for Nadal is

Berrettini pulled out with

As the action continued in front of empty stands, top-ranked Barty beat big-

hitting American Shelby

Rogers in impressive fash-

ion to reach the last eight.

Barty won 6-3, 6-4 to go

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

Australian champion since

The former French Open

champion next plays Karolina Muchova, who

came through two tight

sets to beat Belgium's Elise

Chris O'Neil in 1978.

Mertens 7-6 (7/5), 7-5.

an abdominal strain.

number

who through on a walkover after Italy's Matteo

went

eight on Sunday.

world

Tsitsipas,

down in the second set.

Stefanos

Greece's Tsitsipas.

on Slams record

TAKES

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

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

#### **Lukaku shines** as Inter qo atop

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

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

Hyderabad: P. Siva Reddy of Andhra Pradesh was adjudged the best Pole Diver and was awarded with the ₹50,000 for his spectacular show in the KKFI's Super League Kho Kho Tournament at Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi on Monday. Despite Siva's heroics Jaguars went down to Panthers 35-43 in the semifinals. However, Maharashtra's Pratik Waikar continued his phenome-nal show at the KKFI 2021

Super League Kho Kho Tournament as Pahadi Billas lifted the trophy with a convincing six points win in the thrilling final against Panthers.KKF doled out ₹7,85,000 total prize money to players. Also, three Maharashtra players picked the best achievement awards for their fine run in the tournament. Ramji Kashyap of Solapur was adjudged the best chaser and Thane's Mahesh Shinde received the best runner award with each of them receiving ₹50,000. In the women's tournament, Panthers emerged as the winner with a dominating between Ashwin and show throughout the

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

Hyderabad: Ramu, Syed Sajeed and Tarun hogged the secondday's spotlight in the Telangana Cricket Association's U-19 East Zone Inter Districts state championship on Monday. Mulugu's Syed (4/24) bowled well to help his side grab a onewicket victory over Mahabubabad, who failed to

defend 95 runs. Mahabubabad's Tarun also impressed with 5/17 but his effort went in vain. In another match, Ramu (4/18) and Pranay (63) stole the show for Khammam who restricted

Warangal Rural to 100 runs and earned a 22-run victory. **BRIEF SCORES** Mahabubabad 94 in 15.2 overs

(Sameer 41 n.o, Syed Sajeed 4/24) lost to Mulugu 97/9 in 20.1 overs (Tarun 5/17) ■ Khammam 122/9 in 20 overs (Pranay Lendi 63, Laxman 2/15) bt Warangal Rural 100 in 16.5 overs (Ramu Ram 4/18)

#### TV Live on

Australian Open: Quarterfinals from 5.30 am. from 1.30 pm on on Sony

India vs England: Second Test, Day Four, from 9.20 am on Star Sports 1

**FOOTBALL** 

Indian Super League: Hyderabad FC

vs Kerala Blasters from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

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# A-SHHHH!

### Ashwin silences pitch critics with batting masterclass

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, FEB. 15

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

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

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

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

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

**NUMBERS GAME** 

ASHWIN'S THIRD ALLROUND DOUBLE IN TESTS

Ravichandran Ashwin recorded his fifth century after scoring 106 off 148 balls in the second innings

of the second Test against England on Monday. It was

his third century when batting at No. 8. Only one

scored more hundreds when batting at No. 8 or

Ashwin took 5/43 in the first innings. It was the

third instance when he scored a century and taken

England's Ian Botham hold the record. Botham has

done it five times in his 102-Test career. Four all-

rounders have achieved this feat two times - West

Indian Garry Sobers, Pakistan's Mushtaq Mohammad,

South African Jacques Kallis and Banglades's Shakib

Three Indians who have achieved this double in a

Test are Vinoo Mankad (184 & 72 and 5/196 against

England at Lord's in 1952) and Polly Umrigar (172 not

out & 56 and 5/107 against West Indies in Port-of-

batsman - New Zealand's Daniel Vettori -

lower. He has four at No. 8 and one at No. 9.

five-for in a Test match.

lead past 400. It was one of those rare days when Kohli's well-compiled half-century — 62 off 149 became a mere footnote. Kohli fell to Ali for the second time this match. The skipper was not too pleased with Nitin Menon's lbw call even after the thirdumpire upheld the decision. The way Ashwin nursed the tail-enders

— pushed India's

Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Siraj en route to his century was entertaining. A straight punch past mid-on off Stuart Broad and a slogsweep off Ali had the Kohli — 96 runs off 177 crowd on its feet.

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

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 15

England spin consultant

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

Playing his first Test after an 18-month break, England off-spinner Moeen Ali bagged a match haul of eight wick-— four in each ngs. Jeetan said Moeen deserved a five-for.

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

"I am sure Moeen will

Jeetan Patel was all praise for India all-rounder R. Ashwin who scored a brilliant century on a challenging track on day

"Ashwin was fantastic.

innings.

just didn't work out for him," said Jeetan.

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

#### Test in Chennai on

R. Ashwin celebrates

his century against

day of their second

Monday.

England on the third

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

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

Lawrence 1-0-7-0. England 2nd Innings: Rory Burns c Kohli b Ashwin 25, Dom Sibley Ibw b Patel 3, Dan Lawrence batting 19, Jack Leach c Rohit Sharma b Patel O, Joe Root batting 2. Extras (b-4) 4. Total: (for 3 wkts, in

FoW: 1-17, 2-49, 3-50.

Bowling: Ishant Sharma 2-1-6-0, Axar Patel 9-3-15-2, Ravichandran

#### **SCORECARD**

India 1st Innings: 329 England 1st innings: 134

19 overs) 53.

Ashwin 8-1-28-1.

# When Ashwin was dropped from team for playing sweep

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 15

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

years," informed Ashwin who became the second Indian after Kapil Dev to score a 1,000-plus and 100against wicket plus England.

Ashwin credited India batting coach Vikram Rathour for his recent

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

maybe never played a is someone who has helped sweep in the last 13-14 me to go out there and me to go out there and express myself.'

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

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

### FIR against Yuvraj over remarks against Chahal

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

round match in Melbourne on Monday.

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **TEAM INDIA MAKE SOLID DEBUT AT ASIAN LE MANS**

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

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

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

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

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

# Man Utd falter, Auba wins it for Arsenal

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

United have dropped points in five of their last seven league games to allow Manchester City to pull seven points clear, with a game in hand.

A point was enough to Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men back above Leicester into second on goal difference.

But that was of little consolation to United against a West Brom side chance to move level with

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

- S. PERVEZ QAISER

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

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

THE RESULTS **SPANISH LEAGUE** 

Southampton (Ings 25) Wolves (Neves 53-pen, Neto 66) **West Brom** 

(Fernandes 44) (Aubameyang 13, 41-pen, 47, Bellerin 45) (Struijk 58, Costa 69)

Everton (Maja 48, 65) neighbours Liverpool in fourth as they were well beaten 2-0 by Fulham.

Villarreal (Nabil Fekir 45, Emerson Aparecido 52)

(Karim Benzema 12, Toni Kroos

Real Madrid

after coming from behind for a 2-1 win that extended Southampton's six-game Wolves moved 12 points losing streak in the clear of the drop zone

#### **DEPLETED MADRID** Real Madrid are celebrat-

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

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

- Agencies



