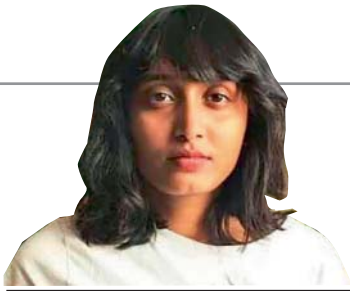


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | SUNDAY | 21 FEBRUARY 2021



NATION | 4
Disha bail order on Tuesday



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Russian court rejects Navalny plea

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Osaka is Australian Open champion



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WEATHER

Max: 28°C
Min: 18°C
RH: 44%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Mist or haze likely.
Max/Min temp. 30/18 °C



COVID-19 COUNT	
CASES	DEATHS
(+14,589)	(+100)
1,09,90,977	1,56,337
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+157)	(+0)
TS: 2,97,435	1,623
(+54)	(+0)
AP: 8,89,210	7,167

CASES AROUND THE WORLD	
11,14,24,608	DEATHS
24,67,212	219
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES	
worldometers.info/coronavirus	

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Uttarayana
Tithi: Magha Shuddha Navami till 3.38 pm
Star: Rohini till 8.41 am
Variyam: 2.48 pm To 4.32 pm
Durmuhurtam: 4.44 pm to 5.30 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm To 6 pm
HJRI CALENDAR
Rajab 8,1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.40 am
Zohar: 12.40 pm
Asar: 4.42 pm
Maghrib: 6.26 pm
Isha: 7.33 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.38 AM
SUNSET TODAY 6.20 PM
MOONSET 1.31 AM
MOONRISE 12.54 PM

COUNTER POINT



Wake up, sir. You are sacked for disturbing CM's sleep!

SHORT TAKES

₹1cr paid to Vizag gas victims kin: AP

New Delhi: The AP government has informed the NHRC that ex gratia of ₹1 crore each has been paid to the families of the 12 people who died in the styrene gas leak in Visakhapatnam last May, officials said on Friday. The National Human Rights Commission had taken suo motu cognisance of media reports about the death of several persons and over 5,000 others falling sick due to leakage of styrene gas on May 12.



The Air India Express flight which hit an electric pole while landing at Vijayawada International Airport at Gannavaram near Vijayawada on Saturday. — DC

AI jet hits power pole at Vij airport, 70 escape unhurt

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 20

Seventy persons on board an Air India Express flight had a lucky escape when a wing of the aircraft hit an electric pole while the aircraft taxiing to the terminal building at the Vijayawada International Airport at Gannavaram near the city on Saturday. The aircraft had arrived from Doha with 19 passengers for Vijayawada and

the rest for Tiruchirapalli in Tamil Nadu, the next destination. The aircraft was carrying 64 passengers and six crew members at that time. All of them were reported to be safe.

Flight IX 1676 is operated once a week on the Doha-Vijayawada-Tiruchirapalli route.

Vijayawada airport director G. Madhusudhana Rao said, "While taxiing, the pilot took a

wrong turn and hit an electric pole at 4.52 pm. All passengers and crew are safe." The aircraft suffered some damage. The airport director said it had been grounded.

"We have made arrangements for Vijayawada-bound passengers to reach their destinations while an alternative flight is being arranged for those who were to fly onward to Tiruchirapalli," Madhusudhana Rao said.

10 test +ve at toll gate, panic in Karimnagar

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, FEB. 20

Following 33 persons who attended a funeral in Chegurthi village contracting the Coronavirus, it was reported on Saturday that 10 staff members of Basantnagar toll gate were infected. It has led to panic among locals in Ramagundam of Peddapalli district on Saturday.

Over 100 personnel work at the toll gate and hundreds of vehicles pass through it every day. Following the latest news, people who passed through the toll gate and other staff members are a worried lot.

The toll gate staff alleged that the management has not provided face masks, gloves and sanitisers to

District administration officials sounded an alert, organised a health camp in the village and are conducting tests of all those who attended the funeral along with villagers of Chegurthi, Durshed and Mugdhampura.

protect themselves from being infected. Even though they maintained physical distance without protective ailments, there is a possibility of contraction of virus, said the worried staff members.

Meanwhile, district medical and health officer Dr Pramod Kumar, speaking to Deccan Chronicle, condemned the news of 10 members being infected with the Coronavirus. He said that five of them had

tested positive and that too some days back. He said that all other staff members were healthy. The five, who tested positive, are under home quarantine.

In Chegurthi village, around 150 members attended the funeral of one Durgam Kanakaiah (60) 10 days back and 33 of them were infected with coronavirus.

District administration officials sounded an alert, organised a health camp in the village and are conducting tests of all those who attended the funeral along with villagers of Chegurthi, Durshed and Mugdhampura.

On Saturday, the health officials conducted tests on 42 members. Four of them tested positive, including two from the neighbouring Durshed village.

No new med college for TS

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 20

The Union health ministry has sanctioned 157 medical colleges in government hospitals nationwide, but Telangana State does not figure in the list.

The state government had submitted proposals for six medical colleges.

The government had

intended to establish a medical college each in district hospitals at Karimnagar, Khammam, Kothagudem, Asifabad, Tandur and Sangareddy. Senior officials in the medical and health department said the proposals had been submitted with all details. The Union health ministry intends to establish medical colleges in government-run dis-

trict hospitals and referral centres.

District hospitals with higher patient load will be upgraded to teaching hospitals with the addition of the new medical colleges as part of a Centrally-sponsored scheme which is to be implemented in three phases.

Page 2: TS proposals not documented well

PROJECT | GOAL

AP CM tells Modi industrialisation possible only with SCS

Jagan demands special status for AP

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 20

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy asserted the need for Special Category Status (SCS) to ensure rapid industrial development in Andhra Pradesh and appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to accord SCS on a priority basis. The Chief Minister interacted with Modi during the Niti Aayog's Governing Council meeting, held virtually, on Saturday. Explaining about ongoing developments in the

state, he said, "Rapid industrialisation of my state is possible only if SCS is accorded. This was a commitment made on the floor of the Parliament and was a precondition to the bifurcation."

The Chief Minister said that the sixth meeting of the Governing Council assumes significance in the context of the economic upheaval caused by Covid-19. He stated that it is imperative that during these critical times, state governments and the Centre should explore opportunities to engage in

meaningful discussions to adopt a unified approach towards policy formulation for the country's economic revival.

Complimenting Modi for his visionary leadership and Niti Aayog for specifying six pertinent agenda points for the meeting, he said that these points relate to vital areas and require utmost emphasis.

The Chief Minister said that with respect to the first agenda point of making India a global manufacturing hub, the give significant impediments to the manufacturing sec-

tor's growth are the exorbitant cost of funds available from financial institutions, high cost of power, delays associated with land procurement, delay and complexity in the grant of statutory clearances and rigid labour laws. He said state governments and the Union Government must take a deeper drive to understand the root-cause and make a conscious effort to introduce reforms to mitigate the hurdles. Jagan Mohan Reddy said that for building infra-

structure, state government's undertakings take loans from financial institutions like PFC and REC at higher interest of 10 to 11 per cent per annum.

With this enormous debt-servicing requirement, the manufacturing units cannot hope to offer products that can compete with those from other states, where loan is available at interest rates as low as 2 to 3 per cent. He said that the state government was encouraging a performance-linked incentive scheme for new manufacturing units.

NARENDER PULLOOR | DC NIZAMABAD, FEB. 20

The Kuwait government has resumed direct flight services from 35 countries including India from Monday. The Director General of Civil Aviation of Kuwait issued orders in this regard. The decision would help guest workers from India easily reach Kuwait for their employment.

In view of the Covid-19 pandemic, direct flight services were suspended to and from Kuwait since September last year. As a result, guest workers were

forced to travel to Dubai where they had to undergo 14 days of quarantine.

They could travel onwards to Kuwait only after that, where they faced another 14-day quarantine. It cost the workers about ₹50,000 in additional expenses. Following the resumption of flights, guest workers can go to Kuwait and head for the 14-day quarantine. They will need to book hotel rooms in Kuwait. Kuwait authorities advised foreigners, to enrol details in the Kuwait App and get hotel reservation, otherwise they will be repatriated.

Farm sector's potential untapped, PM tells CMs

Urges improvement in some areas to get out of economic slump

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 20

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday spoke of the "untapped potential" of the farm sector while marking out areas for improvement to push the country out of the economic slump. Addressing the sixth governing council meeting of Niti Aayog, he said,

"Even today, despite being called an agricultural country, we bring 65,000-70,000 crores of edible oil from outside". The country, he added, should stop this. "The money can go to our farmers' account. Our farmers are entitled to this money, but for this we have to make our plans that way," the Prime Minister added.

Interestingly, the meeting which was held amid the ongoing farmers' protest, did not deliberate on the controversial farm laws, sources informed this newspaper. Agriculture minister Narendra Kumar had been asked by the Prime Minister to attend the meeting, as agriculture was among the main subjects of the meeting.

KCR skips meet, deputes Somesh

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 20

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao skipped the sixth meeting of the Governing Council of Niti Aayog chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi via video conferencing on Saturday. The government was represented by Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar.

Chandrashekar Rao's counterparts Mamata Banerjee and Amarinder Singh also stayed away. The Niti Aayog Twitter handle ignored Telangana state in its updates of the meeting.

Rao had also skipped the fifth meeting held on June



K. Chandrashekar Rao

25, 2019, citing his 'busy schedule' on account of the Kaleshwaram irrigation project inauguration on June 21, 2019. He did not deputate any official for that meeting.

Page 2: CS presents progress of TS

"Even during Covid-19, India saw a rise in exports in the agriculture sector. We have a lot of untapped potential in this sector."

Wastage of our products should be as less as possible and we must thus concentrate on storage and processing," he said.

THE NITI Aayog meeting held amid farmers' protest did not deliberate on the controversial farm laws while agriculture minister Narendra Kumar was asked to attend by the Prime Minister

Mr Modi also advised extending help to the private sector as a key move to seek foreign investment and emphasised on strengthening MSMEs and start-ups.

With the prime focus on developing agricultural best practices, strengthening local manufacturing in states and improving health care facilities, the meeting witnessed suggestions by several chief ministers on improving logistical support and reducing input costs to enable increased manufacturing in states.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar sought a policy of "one nation, one rate" of electricity, saying that it will benefit states like Bihar which gets power at a higher rate. Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot sought focus on job creation and health services.

Different pitch



Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Karambir Singh along with Commander-in-Chief of Eastern Naval Command, Vice-Admiral Atul Kumar Jain, right, chat with former Indian cricketers S.M.H. Kirmani and Roger Binny during the inauguration of Championship Golf Course at East Point Golf Club in Visakhapatnam on Saturday. — K. MURALI KRISHNA

India, China talk to disengage more

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 20

India and China Corps Commanders on Saturday held their 10th round of talks to discuss disengagement from Depsang plains, Gogra-Hot Springs and Demchok friction points

in Ladakh, following the disengagement of the two sides on the north and south banks of Pangong Tso lake.

The meeting was held in Moldo on Chinese side and started at around 10 am and was going on till reports last came in at 9.30

pm. The Indian delegation was led by 14 Corps commander Lt Gen. P.G.K. Menon. Naveen Srivastava, joint secretary (East Asia) from the ministry of external affairs was part of Indian delegation.

India and China are likely to issued a joint state-

ment on the meeting. It is expected that India and China will first be able to reach an agreement on Gogra-Hot Springs.

In the Depsang plains, Chinese troops are blocking Indian patrols from going to Patrolling Points 10 to 13.

Kuwait resumes direct flights from India

NARENDER PULLOOR | DC NIZAMABAD, FEB. 20

The Kuwait government has resumed direct flight services from 35 countries including India from Monday. The Director General of Civil Aviation of Kuwait issued orders in this regard. The decision would help guest workers from India easily reach Kuwait for their employment.

In view of the Covid-19 pandemic, direct flight services were suspended to and from Kuwait since September last year. As a result, guest workers were

SHORT TAKES

TS PROPOSALS
NOT WELL
DOCUMENTED

From Page 1

The state government and the Centre will share the costs.

Commenting on the development, Dr Bhaskar Rao, president of the Medical Colleges Associations in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, said, "We do not know why Telangana state was missed out. Andhra Pradesh has got three colleges in Phase 3 of the project." According to sources, the proposals sent by the state government were not properly documented. A senior health official explained, "New districts have been formed and there was confusion over which district the proposal was for."

A senior health official, however, said that these are wrong assumptions and that the proposals were formatted in a manner required by the Union health ministry required and there was no administrative lapse. The reason for not sanctioning medical colleges for the state is not understood as the requirements were properly assessed and submitted.

COVID VACCINE
SECOND DOSE IN
EIGHT DISTRICTSDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 20

The second dose of Covid-19 vaccination was administered in only eight districts, with 28.3 per cent of those who took the first dose turning up on Saturday. One case of mild adverse effect was reported during the day, according to the state health department.

The administration of the second dose was planned for 3,892 participants but 1,108 came forward. The vaccination schedule is to now be carried out on February 22 and there will be a mop-up session for first dose of vaccine.

Besides, those who missed the first dose of vaccine are coming forward to take the jab. As many as 696 health workers came forward on Saturday.

The total number of healthcare and frontline workers targeted for the first dose was 5,88,336 and those who have received the vaccine stood at 2,81,179. The number stands at 58 per cent while 34 per cent from among the emergency employees have taken the first dose. The government is asking all those whose names have enrolled for the first dose to get vaccinated as they are facing major logistical challenges. Beneficiaries are coming later and demanding that the vaccine be given to them. This is leading to confusion and causing a lot of commotion at the vaccination centres.

CS PRESENTS
PROGRESS
REPORT ON TS

From Page 1

However, this time the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) did not provide any reason for Chandrashekar Rao's absence. Chief secretary Somesh Kumar attended the meeting on his behalf.

On February 15, Somesh Kumar had convened a meeting with senior officials and asked them to prepare a progress report of Telangana state to be submitted to the Chief Minister to enable him to prepare for the Niti Aayog meeting. He submitted the progress report to Rao on Thursday. The Chief Minister sought more details from the CS on Friday.

According to official sources, the CM decided to skip the meeting all of a sudden on Saturday morning and asked the CS to attend on his behalf.

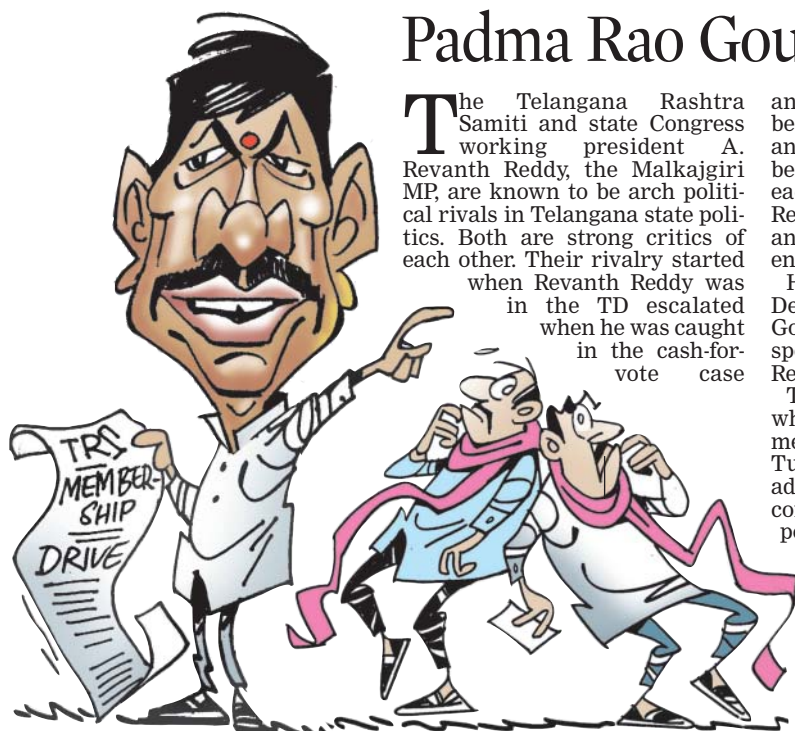
There was no release from either the CMO or the CS office. They did not furnish any details about issues the state government had raised and what it was seeking from the Centre. Official sources revealed that the CS presented the progress card of Telangana state government in various sectors, especially irrigation, agriculture, health and infrastructure sectors. Chief Secretary Kumar sought funds for Mission Bhagiratha, Mission Kakatiya and Hyderabad Pharma City.

Interestingly, the official Twitter handle of Niti Aayog also ignored any mention of Telangana state in its updates of the meeting.

While it updated highlights of what the Chief Ministers of 25 states and three Lieutenant Governors and two administrators of Union Territories spoke in the meeting, there was no mention about the issues raised by Somesh Kumar.

NETA'S NATTER

Padma Rao Goud's 'proximity' to Revanth



The Telangana Rashtra Samiti and state Congress working president A. Revanth Reddy, the Malkajgiri MP, are known to be arch political rivals in Telangana state politics. Both are strong critics of each other. Their rivalry started when Revanth Reddy was in the TD escalated when he was caught in the cash-for-vote case

and reached its peak after he became TPC working president and Malkajgiri Lok Sabha member. TRS leaders compete with each other to lash out at Revanth Reddy on every possible occasion and even by holding press conferences for the purpose.

However, senior TRS leader and Deputy Speaker T. Padma Rao Gouda created a flutter when he spoke 'positively' about Revanth Reddy.

This incident was witnessed when Goud launched the TRS membership drive in Lalapet on Tuesday. When Goud was addressing the gathering, a big convoy of Revanth Reddy's supporters passed through the area holding banners and flexis of the Congress leader and raising "Jai Revanth" slogans. The convoy was proceeding towards Raviryal to take part in the public meeting organised for the culmination of Revanth Reddy's padayatra,

titled Rythu Bharosa Yatra, against the Centre and the TRS government's anti-farmer policies. Goud stopped his speech and enquired with party cadre about Revanth Reddy. "Is Revanth there in the convoy? He is very close to me," Goud said. His comments on the public address system left TRS leaders and cadre shocked for a while.

Goud was recently in the news for his "advance congratulations" to TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao at a public meeting where he said KTR is all set to take over as CM very soon.

Naidu blames money for
loss of TD in Kuppam

Telugu Desam president and former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu is at it again. It's a loss of face for him after his party candidates suffered a humiliating defeat in the polls to the gram panchayats falling in Kuppam constituency being represented by him since

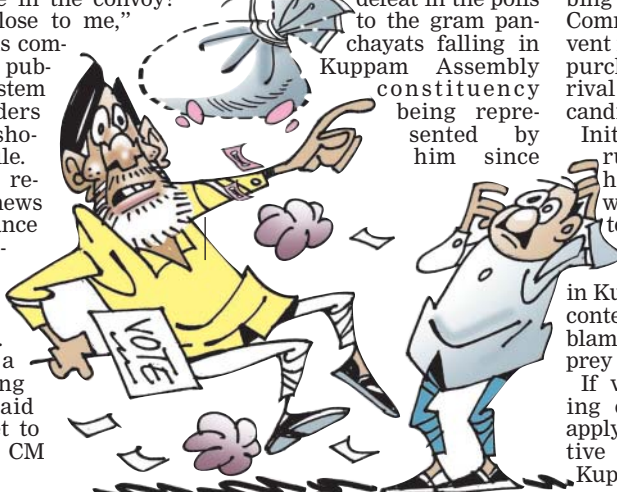
1989. Instead of accepting defeat gracefully, Naidu went back to his old trick of describing the trouncing as loss of democracy and not that of his party.

He attributed the drubbing to the State Election Commission's failure to prevent free flow of money aka purchase of votes by the rival YSR Congress-backed candidates in the polls.

Initially Naidu blamed the ruling party for forcing his party candidates to withdraw from the contest.

When there were no such incidents, at least in Kuppam, and there was a contest everywhere, Naidu blamed the voters for falling prey to the inducements.

If victory is due to "buying of votes" will it not apply to his seven consecutive victories from Kuppam?



Pay ex-wife, HC directs man

Will auction his property if he fails to pay permanent alimony to her: Court

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA
| DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 20

Taking a serious view of a man for disobeying a court decree to pay permanent alimony to his former wife and two children, the Telangana High Court made it clear that it can order auction of his properties and pay her.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Hima Kohli and Justice A. Abhishek Reddy was dealing with an appeal filed by

A. Laxmi Tulasi, urging the court to direct her former husband, A. Surendar, to pay ₹40 lakh as permanent alimony to her and transfer 2.5 acres of agricultural land in Palkonda of Mahbubnagar Urban Mandal to their son. She also asked the court to direct her husband to transfer part of his ancestral house in Palakonda on her name.

Her grievance was that since 2006, after a family court had issued a decree

● **HER GRIEVANCE** was that since 2006, after a family court had issued a decree for permanent alimony, her husband Surendar had not paid her anything till date.

aged one and three when the divorce was granted, have now grown up. Therefore, she prayed that at least a part of the offer being made to her should be complied with immediately.

She informed the High Court that Surendar had said that he was willing to give only ₹10 lakh as permanent alimony.

During a hearing on December 23, 2020, the High Court had ordered Surendar to pay ₹5 lakh as partial money immediate-

ly. Responding to the requests of transferring property, the court had directed the tahsildar of Palakonda to submit a report after assessing values of the properties that Surendar had in his possession.

Surendar ignored the orders, which enraged the court. As a final warning it said that if the orders were not complied within 10 days, it would order auction of his properties to raise money for permanent alimony.

On increasing NCDs in India, Venkaiah Naidu said that rare genetic disorders form a major group of NCDs, and added that an estimated 70 million people in India suffered from such rare diseases. Worldwide, the total is about 350 million and many of these diseases are untreatable, he said.

V-P: Say no to
junk food, adopt
healthy lifestylesDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 20

Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu has made out a strong case to junk 'junk food,' and called upon the people, particularly the youth, to adopt healthy lifestyles and avoid sedentary living. Cautioning against the fad for instant food, he said, "instant food means constant disease."

Naidu was speaking at the Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics (CDFD) here in the city. He said that India was facing growing incidences of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and reminded that a few years ago, the World Health Organisation attributed 61 per cent of all deaths in India to NCDs like heart disorders, cancer and diabetes that arise from unhealthy

lifestyle choices. He said collective efforts were needed to promote awareness among school and college students on the negative impact of sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy dietary habits.

The Vice-President inaugurated a laboratory for pediatric rare genetic disorders at CDFD. He said the lab would contribute positively towards meeting the Centre's Sustainable Development Goals on human health and mitigate societal burden of genetic diseases.

On increasing NCDs in India, Venkaiah Naidu said that rare genetic disorders form a major group of NCDs, and added that an estimated 70 million people in India suffered from such rare diseases. Worldwide, the total is about 350 million and many of these diseases are untreatable, he said.

LI SCHEME SANCTIONED FOR ARMOOR

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, FEB. 20

The state government accorded administrative sanction for several lift irrigation schemes in Armoor Assembly constituency limits. ₹L I scheme sanctioned for Armoor 40.40 crore for Maccharla lift irrigation scheme, Kamtam and

Chikli lift irrigation Rs 79.89 crore and Fathepur, Surbiryal LI for 149.66 crore sanctioned. Armoor MLA, public undertaking committee chairman A. Jeevan Redd thanked Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao for sanctioning the LI schemes in the Armoor Assembly constituency.

Advocate JAC demands CBI probe
into murder of Vaman Rao coupleDC CORRESPONDENT
PEDDAPALLI, FEB. 20

The representatives of the Telangana High Court Advocates 'Joint Action Committee' condemned the murder of High Court advocate couple Gattu Vaman Rao and P.V. Nagamani and demanded the state government probe an inquiry with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

JAC members took out a rally at the mandal headquarters and held a press meet at the premises of Mathani Court in Peddapalli district on Friday.

They said that fighting

against injustice done to the weaker sections and land mafia is a crime in the state. "Why is the state government not taking the High Court advocate couple's murder case seriously?" they questioned.

Before the death, Gattu Vaman Rao mentioned two names who attacked them. The names were clearly sounded in the posts which were posted on various social media platforms. But the police arrested only one person leaving the other.

Instead of carrying out investigations transparently, the police department is trying to protect some of the ruling party leaders. It is nothing but murder of

the justice. The state government must suspend R a m a g u n d a m Commissioner of Police, V. Satyanarayana who is trying to mislead the murder case, they demanded.

All the culprits involved in the advocate couple murder case must be punished severely without sparing anyone and must pay exgratia of ₹5 crore to Vaman Rao's family and both the state and central governments must enact a law for protection of advocates immediately, they added.

All advocates present in the state will support Vaman Rao's family and fight until justice is done to

them, they warned.

Later, they visited the Kalvacherla village of Ramagiri mandal and inspected the place where the murder of advocate couple Gattu Vaman Rao (49) and P.V. Nagamani (45) took place brutally in broad day light and also visited Gunjapadugu village, the native place of Vaman Rao and consoled his parents.

The representatives of the Telangana Advocates JAC, Damodar Reddy, T. Sushmitha, Soumya, Rajendar and state president of the Civil Rights Association Raghunadan were among those who were present along with others.

KCR uses Intelligence chief
to assault BJP workers: BandiDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 20

Telangana state BJP president Bandi Sanjay on Saturday alleged that police were resorting to attacks on BJP workers at the behest of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao.

He alleged that Rao was indulging in goondaism in Telangana state using intelligence chief T. Prabhakar Rao. He warned Prabhakar Rao of dire consequences after the BJP comes to power in the state.

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, Sanjay said that the Chief Minister was using the intelligence chief as a tool to harass BJP leaders and workers. He said that they



State BJP president Bandi Sanjay during a press conference in Hyderabad on Saturday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

would conduct an inquiry into the illegal assets of Prabhakar Rao after the BJP comes to power.

He alleged that the police kept tribals of

Gurrampodu thanda of Nalgonda district for 60 days in jail and resorted to third degree on them. He said that the police had violated High Court

orders on the lands issue. He claimed that police personnel attacked party activists mercilessly when they tried to fight on behalf of the tribals.

Sanjay demanded the state government to withdraw the cases filed against the tribals and the BJP workers in Gurrampodu lands issue. He said that BJP will repeat the Dubbak showing in the upcoming N a g a r j u n a s a g a r Assembly byelection by trouncing the TRS nominee.

The BJP leader said that many TRS MLAs and other party leaders were angry with Rao's autocratic style of functioning and that the days were not far when his own party would revolt against him.

DEADLY | GAME

Will obstruct IPL matches as no local player in team: TRS MLA

Rage against Sunrisers Hyderabad

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 20

Danam Nagender, the TRS MLA from Khairatabad constituency, on Saturday threatened that he would obstruct the Indian Premier League (IPL) matches in Hyderabad to protest the injustice meted out to local players in the Sunrisers Hyderabad team during the recent player auctions.

Nagender made these comments while speaking

to the media after launching the TRS membership drive in Filmnagar, Jubilee Hills.

He also found fault with the Sunrisers management for continuing with the Australian cricketer David Warner as captain, saying that he was involved in a ball-tampering scandal and was not worth leading the Hyderabad team in the IPL. Nagender also demanded that the Sunrisers management

remove Hyderabad from the name of the team if it ignores local players.

"There are many talented players in Hyderabad and it is shocking that the Sunrisers management ignored them while selecting players for the team," the MLA said. "There are players who have played Ranji Trophy, U-19 tournaments and other leagues. These players deserve to play in the IPL."

"Mohammed Siraj is not the only cricketer who

● **HE ALSO** found fault with the Sunrisers management for continuing with the Australian cricketer David Warner as captain, saying that he was involved in a ball-tampering scandal and was not worth leading the Hyderabad team.

shone due to his talent. There are other players as well. They should get enough opportunities," he

said adding, We demand that the Sunrisers management select local players. If not, we will make sure that no IPL match will be held at Uppal Stadium," he said.

Earlier, Hyderabad Cricket Association president Mohd Azharuddin also expressed disappointment at the Sunrisers team. "Very disappointed not to see a single player from Hyderabad in the Hyderabad Sunrisers Team," he said.



Lt Gen. T.S.A. Narayanan, Commandant, MCEME, and Alok Prasad, General Manager, Ordnance Factory Medak, sign an agreement for the development of an armoured tracked repair vehicle. — BY ARRANGEMENT

OTHER STORIES

ARVIND ACCUSES
ALLOLA OF
ENCROACHING LANDSDC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, FEB. 20

Nizamabad BJP MP Dharmapuri Aravind on Saturday said TRS leaders are indulging in land grabbing and illegal sand mining across the state and alleged that minister Allola Indrakaran Reddy had encroached the water bodies in Nirmal.

Addressing at various party meetings in Nirmal and Adilabad district, Aravind said Indrakaran Reddy should quit politics since he is encouraging land grabbing and alleged that Indrakaran Reddy shifted the place selected for the construction of collectorate to Nirmal town outskirts to just create value to the lands owned by him and his relatives there.

Aravind heavily came down on Indrakaran Reddy for comparing the oostes with a dog's tail during his recent visit to Ponkal village and alleged that there are 400 acres D1 illegal pattas in the name of Indrakaran Reddy's relatives.

BJP TO ORGANISE
CHATRAPATI SHIVAJI
SANKALP SABHA

Asifabad: The BJP is organizing first its kind 'Chatrapati Shivaji Sankalp Sabha' in Kagaznagar town on February 23 in the Komaram Bheem Asifabad district. It is said that BJP party is focusing on backward communities and trying to attract them into the party and BJP leaders are trying to mobilize BC communities showing 'Chatrapati Shivaji' as BCs icon.

Science fairs help students
achieve success: Koppula

Govt established welfare residential schools to fulfil B.R Ambedkar aspirations

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, FEB. 20

Science fairs help students build up their self-confidence and achieve success in their lives, said welfare minister Koppula Eshwar. He was inaugurating the Edu Bazaar 2021 at Girls Social Welfare Residential School and College in Chintakunta of Karimnagar on Saturday. He was accompanied by BC welfare minister Gangula Kamalakara and MLC Naradasu Laxman Rao. The Edu Bazaar is being organised by the Karimnagar region Telangana Social Welfare Residential Institutions.

Speaking on the occasion, Eshwar said more than one lakh students are pursuing their education in scheduled castes (SC) and backward castes (BC) welfare residential schools and colleges. They are also getting wonderful results, thereby laying a firm foundation for their bright future.

"Dr. B. R. Ambedkar has emphasised on proper education of students. To fulfil his aspirations, the state government has established welfare residential schools," he stated. Minister Eshwar appreciated teachers for their efforts in organising the science fair and helping students in putting up exhibits. Additional col-



Welfare minister, Koppula Eshwar along with BC welfare minister, Gangula Kamalakara and MLC Naradasu Laxman Rao observe the science exhibit in Karimnagar on Saturday.

—DC

Sports will boost self-confidence, says collector

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, FEB. 20

Sports not only enhance physical endurance but also boost self-confidence, said Mahabubabad district collector V.P. Gautham. Inaugurating the Joint Districts 2021 Sports Meet at the Social Welfare Residential Women's College in Mahabubabad town on Saturday, he said being

involved in sports creates better opportunities in finding jobs. "Success is yours if you combine discipline, perseverance and determination. A lot of people who are talented lack encouragement. Opportunities do not come easily. They should be created," he said. Encouraging students to rise to the international level, he said winning and losing are common in sports and one should

● INAUGURATING THE Joint Districts 2021 Sports Meet at the Social Welfare Residential Women's College in Mahabubabad town on Saturday, collector said being involved in sports creates better opportunities in finding jobs.

not lose their heart over it. Later, Mr Gautham took part in a game of

chess with one of the students.

Hostel Principal Rupa Devi, Telangana Social Welfare Residential Degree College Mahabubabad Sports Meet Convener Dr Gugulothu Sunita, Cluster Coordinator Nagraj, Dr K Dayakar, Zonal Coordinator Om Prakash, Sports Nodal Officer Sheshu Kumari, chess coach and others were present.

lector Shyam Prasad Lal, Telangana Social Welfare Residential Institutions

joint secretary K. Sharda, Libraries Department chairman

Anugu Ravinder Reddy, Kothapally municipal chairman Rudraraju

were among those who participated in the function.

Adilabad Rural dull with
no notification for pollsDC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, FEB. 20

Political activity has come down in Adilabad Rural mandal following news that the state government may not conduct elections in the near future for the Adilabad zilla parishad territorial committee (ZPTC) seat that is lying vacant following the demise of Are Rajanna.

Reportedly, there will be a delay in issuing a notification for conducting the election. Till a few days ago, everybody was waiting for the election notification but now leaders of major political parties are adopting a 'wait and watch' approach as far as spending money on voters is concerned. It is said that the government has changed its mind to conduct elections following intelligence inputs. The ruling party has more or less stopped its campaign in the

villages while the BJP leaders, who were aggressively campaigning in villages till a few days ago, have stopped their campaign.

There are other aspects too for stopping the campaign. Both TRS and BJP have already spent huge money to attract voters and some leaders even distributed new clothes to Adivasis for Diwali and some others gave money to celebrate Gussadi festival. This is apart from the alleged feasts for youth in the last two months.

An Adivasi leader from Mamidiguda said political leaders are not visiting their villages these days unlike a few days ago and added that major political parties have stopped election campaigns due to mounting expenditure. He said they may resume their campaign just before the election notification for the Adilabad Rural ZPTC seat.

NEXUS BETWEEN CONG, TRS: PEDDI REDDY

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, FEB. 20

The ruling TRS which is afraid of the BJP's growing patronage among the public has colluded with the Congress and fielded a candidate who is not even a graduate in the upcoming Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda Graduates' Constituency election, former minister and senior BJP leader Enugala Peddi Reddy alleged.

Speaking to reporters here on the occasion, he said that people who were vexed with the family rule of TRS are ready to dethrone it in favour of the BJP. "After the

formation of Telangana, the TRS formed as a platform for the ruling party leaders to loot public money. Apart from this, there is no development in the state because of the inefficient governance," he said. Reddy also pointed out that the police who did not allow the Shanti rally organised by the ABVP under the aegis of Hindu Vahini was supporting the TRS cadres who carried Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Naidu's birthday celebrations. Referring to the advocate couple's murder in Peddapally, Peddi Reddy said that it indicates the law and order situation in the State.

CLASSIFIEDS

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✓TATA ZEST 2014, diesel, silver colour, 65000 kms drive, full insurance, 2 keys, fancy number, mag wheels, single owner. Dealers excuse. P h : 9 8 4 9 4 4 7 0 0 3 . (HYCL/2021/C02845)

PROPERTY

COMMERCIAL

AT JUBILEEHILLS Road No. 36 commercial space 954 sq. ft. one car parking Prime Location For sale Genuine Buyers contact 9849075757 (W/2021/AT000968)

✓HOSPITAL CUM residence for sale, 5500 sqft. Building in 720 Sq.yds. place in doctors lane, Dwarakanagar, Nizamabad. Contact: 9848059679, 8309496656 (R/2021/C00019)

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✓2 BHK 1465 sft Fully Furnished, Newly Constructed, 100% Vastu, Old Alwai, Main Road Colony, Jyothi Nagar, J.K. Residency, Include Car Parking & Amenities, 24 hours Water, 1st Floor, 68 Lakhs, contact: 8712724938, 9849036381. (S/2021/C02393)

BRAND NEW Flats Banjarahills Rd.5 3400sft-4bhk, Rd No.12 4300 sft-4bhk, MLA colony Near Lotus pond 2900sft-3bhk, MLA Col Duplex flat 4600sft-4bhk, 2300sft-3bhk, JubileeHills MP mla Col 3600 sft, Madhapur 3300sft-4bhk, 5800sft-4bhk, Kondapur 3600sft, More flats/Sales/Rentals 8884872389, 9985888511. (W/2021/AT001148)

INDEPENDENT HOUSE

✓LAKAPUR NEKNAMPUR 5 bhk villa 4500sft 380 sqyds 100% east west facing for sale total 40 villas Gated community 2km to ORR Narsing circle contact: 9848055550 (W/2021/AT001101)

INDEPENDENT HOUSE: 289 Sq.yds, Old House, 3 Rooms Slab+ 3 Rooms Penku, 35,000/- per Sq.yard, Beside Hayagreevachary Compound, Srinivasa Colony, Balasandram, Hanamakonda, Warangal. Ph:9949424759, 99897749355. (HYCL/2021/C02876)

GATED COMMUNITY villas JubileeHills Whisper valley 475 yards, Hitch city 350yards, Gachibowli IVR Hill Ridge 490 yards, Financial District & kopakpet surroundings areas, Vessella meadows 310 yards, 360yards, Aditya casa grande, Ekta Highland, Eden garden, River edge and more villas in Gandipet, Tellapur, kollar 8884872389, 9985888511. (W/2021/AT001054)

KOMPALLY, HYDERABAD, SRC Luxury Villas, beside Nuziveed Seeds in gated community project. 2130 to 4130 sft. 4 BHK all modern amenities. Attractive offer till 28th February 2021. Ph:9550155023, 9481260314. (S/2021/AT001166)

LAND

CLEAR TITLE with cement tiles fencing 4.18 Acres, East facing Land for sale on Shadnagar - Chevella (Proposed Regional Ring Road) Opposite Mission Bhagiratha Tank. Contact: 7799322476. (S/2021/C02232)

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PLOTS

BANJARAHILLS 400, 500 North 600 West jubileehills 200 South, 400South KBR park view, 500East 600East 717 East 1200East 1500West, Filmnagar 110yards Journalist colony 300 NandagiriHills 600North Madhapur kavurihills 500East Gachibowli jayabheri HUDA 934 N/E Jubileehills and Banjarahills independent houses 10Cr to 50Cr. All commercial plots with tenant properties 996991449, 9394022449. (W/2021/AT001053)

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY (A) Bhongliri, Yadadri HMDA Villa Plots Approved Layout With L.P.No. Minimum Investment 30Lakhs To 4.50 Crores, Residential/Commercial Plots Available, Spot Registration, Loan Available, High Appreciation. (B) Mansanpalli 'X' Road, Shamshabad Zone, DTCP Approved Layout, Ready For Construction, Minimum 2225Sq.yards To 1700Sq.yards, Near Electricity & Facility. Ph:8374399578/ 6303107421. (HYMM/2021/C07334)

HYDERABAD @KOMPALLY/ Medchal Town Near KLR Ventures 18,000/- Per Sq.yd, HMDA Plots Fully Developed, Gated Community, Bank Loan available Contact: 8886785050 (HYMM/2021/C06916)

✓JUBILEEHILLS 1450 Sq.Yds N/F, 500E/F, Filmnagar 666S/F, 405 N/W corner with buildings semi commercial. Madhapur 365 N/F, Kondapur 400,500,700. Gopannally Journalist Colony 267 N/F, 410 N/F, 270S/F Commercial 60ft Roads. Jayabheri 350,450 W/F, Nallagandla & Tellapur HUDAs 258,430,516, 1050 Sq.Yds. All facing Plots for Sale & Purchase. Contact: "Sevenhills Realtors" Ph:99499-77477, 99599-77577. (A/2021/IC001112)

JUBILEEHILLS 1100 sqyds Filmnagar 1000sqyds gachibowli 4000 sqyds Narsingi 5200sqyds Madhapur 3000 sqyds... Buy/sale/hyderabad. P h : 8 7 9 0 5 4 0 2 0 9 (W/2021/AT001095)

HOUSING PLAT for sale 270 sq.yds Aparna Palm Grove Gated Compound Kompally. Walkable from, Medchal Road, Serene Locality. Rs.65,000/- per sq.yd. Ph:9985138260. (S/2021/C02130)

✓KONDAPUR SRIRAM nagar Colony "B" Block Near to main Road 200 yards, West facing, Building permission with Borewell 9948251027, 6281278739. (W/2021/AT001063)

REAL ESTATE

LAND REQUIRED

REQUIRED LAND in Acres any where in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Please contact @ 9 2 4 6 2 2 8 2 6 6 (HYMM/2021/C06644)

REQUIRED 3ACRES To 300Acres Immediate Payment, For Out/Rate Purchase Or Development, For A Reputed Organisation, In And Around Hyderabad. (B) Required 500Sq.yards To 20,000Sq.yards With in Hyderabad For Immediate Purchase Or Development. Zones Like R1, 111GO, Commercial, Agriculture, Industrial Any zone is Ok. Ph:8374399578/ 6 3 0 3 1 0 7 4 2 1 . (HYMM/2021/C07335)

✓MEDCHAL AREA, Maheshwaram area, Patancheru area, Shamirpet area and Surroundings R1 Zone Lands required for Outright/Development or either part outright and part development for Plotting Purpose from 10-40 Acres required. 9963616777. (W/2021/AT001102)

MULTIPLE

LOOKING FOR residential/ commercial plots above 600sqyds in Prime Locations and Lands suitable for Construction/ Layout in & around Hyderabad on sale or development. Call/WhatsApp 9885122633 (W/2021/AT001104)

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BOMBAY BASE Co wanted to purchase Independent House, Plot (no south facing) 300 to 600 sq.yds, Narayanaguda, Barkatpura, Himayathnagar, Basheerbagh, Abids, King-Kothi, Direct owner Contact 9820619555 brokers extremely sorry, Whatsapp 98490-78692 (S/2021/C02227)

RENTALS

COMMERCIAL

FOR RENT Banjarahills Road No.12, 2000 Sft 3 Bedrooms, hall, kitchen, 2 car parkings, two wheeler parking, lift, 24 hrs water for Office purpose. 2. Himayathnagar 1150 Sft 2 BHK Flat for Rent for Office purpose with lift, car parking & 2 wheeler parking. Ph:9346384904. (B/2021/IC00111)

✓HIMAYATHNAGAR HYDER- GUDA aboveDomino's Pizza (main road) 3RD(Third) Floor ReliableBusiness chambers 3044 sqfeet Commercial Space Cabins lift/toilets/parking for Office/College Restaurant/MNC ExpectingRent Rs.75000 maintenanceRs7500. 8008444407 (W/2021/AT001088)

FLATS

EAST MARREDPALLY Sai Leela Abode near Shenoy Hospital 3BHK Flat with Wardrobes Car parking 24 Hrs Water Contact 9347064974 (W/2021/AT001087)

HIMAYATHNAGAR/ DOMALGUDA, 2000 Sft Semi Furnished 3 Bedroom, 3 baths, drawing, dining hall, modular kitchen, pooja room, car parking, lift, power backup. 2. Banjarahills/ Lakdikapool 3 BHK semi furnished Flats for Rent with lift, car parking, power backup, 24 hrs water. Cell: 9346384904. (B/2021/IC00110)

SOMAJIGUDA RAJBHAVANA road, Lane beside Jaya Gardens, 3Bhk 2000sqft, NE 100% Vastu, Woodwork, 24x7 Water, Car Parking. P h : 9 8 6 6 3 0 8 3 8 9 (HYMM/2021/C07086)

INDEPENDENT HOUSE

BANJARAHILLS ROAD no.12. Independent house 5 Bedroom 7000 sft, North facing, Lift, near Lotus Pond, servant room. Rs.2,50,000/-, Agent: 9849968657. (A/2021/IC00060)

✓3BHK NEW semi furnished Villa in Sahiti Abode Gollapudi immediate occupancy Vegetarians only Ph:7022596444, Brokers Excuse (HYMM/2021/C07172)

LEASE

COMMERCIAL

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

6000 SOFT Begumpet office space with 110 workstations, cabins, fully power backup, air conditioned, parking, etc. Reputed Company. Contact: 95335-15928, 90000-08833. (S/2021/C02354)

HIMAYATHNAGAR MAIN road, Liberty Plaza, 1000 sqft, office space with furnished in Mezzanine floor. Ph:98490-13490. (S/2021/C02355)

EAST FACING 70Guntas (1.75 Acres) Commercial land, Nearby IT park (Manair Dam) in Karimnagar for lease, suitable for Godown Restaurant/ Showroom/ Educational Institution/ Gaming zone, etc, if interested, we will construct and lease out on mutually agreed terms, interested parties can contact: 9849037115, 9 6 5 2 5 3 3 3 0 9 (HYMM/2021/C07158)

KOMPALLY HIGHWAY ROAD 9000 sqft for office etc. In first floor Ratna Arcade with lift, parking, etc. Ph:9885251769, 9000008833. (S/2021/C02353)

KOMPALLY OPEN Land with compound wall four acres for Godowns, parking etc. P h : 9 8 4 9 0 - 1 3 4 9 0 . (S/2021/IC00182)

SITUATION VACANT

ADVT. SALES & MKTG.

WANTED MARKETING executive Female/ Male for a reputed construction company in Sangareddy. Please contact: 8 1 4 2 8 1 3 1 5 6 . (HYMM/2021/C07289)

10 FIELD Sales Executives, 2 Team Leaders required for reputed Manufacturing Company @ Suchitra having good experience in Health Care Product sales. Contact: 9248033474, 9701211899. (S/2021/C02345)

REQUIRED MARKETING Executives / Site Supervisors with 2-3 years of experience in Modular Furniture and Kitchens for Vishakhapatnam and Vijayawada. Relevant candidates apply. Contact: 9010252680, Email: hrdep2t2@gmail.com (W/2021/AT001137)

DOMESTIC

✓BABY SITTING Aaya (Nanny) USA, must have 10 yrs, Multiple entry Visa & Ready to Travel. Contact Venu Reddy: 9652550999. (A/2021/IC00110)

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A REPUTED Bakery Qsr Is Hiring Female/ Male >Operations Manager &Shift Managers Well Experienced In Customer Care, Staff Training &Inventory Management &Business Development. >Chefs And Helpers Bakery, Cakes Confectionery & Continental. >Sales &Service Crews Best Package Offered. Call: 9 8 4 9 0 1 3 5 1 3 . (HYMM/2021/IC0285)

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✓MEDICITI HOSPITAL (MIMS), Ghanpur, Medchal Require: 1)Staff Nurses-50 GNM/BS.Sc., (Nursing) Experience: 1-5 years, 2)B.Sc. Lab Technicians, 3)Quality Manager-1 well versed in NABH &NABL Standards, 4)Asst. Managers-3 Corporate &Insurance Tie-Ups. 5)Marketing Executives-5. Salary: best in the industry. Walk-in Interviews from Monday. Contact Ph:9966620567. Mail: hr@mims.edu.in (HYCL/2021/C02932)

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

MULTIPLE VACANCIES

REPUTED PVT Ltd Company for its Defence Project at Kanpur requires Engineering Graduates/ Diploma holders/ B.Sc chemical having 3 to 10 yrs experience in O&M furnaces/ chemical reactors/ Electrical heated vessels. Persons having SCADA knowledge preferred. Apply complete bio-data, expected salary email: kanpur@hpehyd.com (W/2021/AT001119)

REPUTED PVT Ltd Company for its Defence project at Kanpur requires, ITI Fitters/ Electricians

having 2 yrs industrial experience. Apply complete bio-data, expected salary email: kanpur1@hpehyd.com (W/2021/AT001120)

REPUTED MANUFACTURING Company @ Suchitra requires Manager HR, Senior Accountants Officer. Candidates having 6-10 years experience in Manufacturing units. Contact: 9701211899, 9248033474. (S/2021/C02346)

MATRIMONIAL

BRIDE WANTED

MUSLIM

SM-WELL qualified son 38/5'11 Divorced S/w Engg IT MNC (HYD)Seek bride Divorced, Widowed- 9849398661. (HYMM/2021/C07186)

ASM PARENTS settled in Hyderabad invite alliance for their Son 32 years height 5'9" BE Team Lead in Reputed MNC looking for Engineering Graduate very fair, slim, beautiful Girl from Decent Family background only from Andhra Region. W/A 9989191361. (B/2021/C00930)

AYESHA MARRIAGES Telangana/ Andhra/ Rayalaseema 27 5'7" BE, MS USA, 27 5'11" BE MS USA, 29 5'10" BE PR Canada, 29 5'9" BE MS USA, 32 5'10" B.Tech MS USA, 28 5'10" Orthopedic, 28 5'8" General Medicine, 29 5'8" General Medicine, 29 5'8" Orthopedic Seeking Suitable Brides. Whatsapp 9392420344. (B/2021/C00106)

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TAMIL SOLIA Vellalar (Pillai) Bride required age upto 31 years from Tamil Pillai/ Mudliar. Boy (B.Tech) 32 years- self employed at Hyderabad. Ph:9701370269, 9959556605. (S/2021/C02339)

TELUGU

SEEKS REDDY Bride: Reddy, MBBS, MD (USA), 29yrs, Ht: 5'10" Very fair, working as Doctor in USA, seeking Reddy Doctor Bride, who is doing residency in USA or appearing for USMLE steps or currently doing MBBS in India & interested to do MD in USA. Photos Whatsp. Call: 9 5 0 5 9 3 7 6 8 . (HYCL/2021/C02670)

ANDHRA SUNNIMUSLIM seeking alliance for their Son 30-5.6a B.Tech, @Bangalore, looking for B.Tech, Bride. Contact: 9866901525, 8985884782, Mail: pashamd12@gmail.com (VZ/2021/C00007)

GROOM WANTED

CHRISTIAN

GOVT JOB Bride, 46years, Late Marriage, Christian Maia, Upper Middle Class Family. Wanted Suitable Groom. Contact Matrimony Consultant 6 3 0 4 8 2 6 1 6 2 (HYMM/2021/C06996)

FAIR SLIM girl B.Tech, MBA, 26, 5'3", working ADP. Seeks protestant born again believer 27-30 good job. Whatsapp Photo & Biodata: 9490166468. (S/2021/C02258)

MUSLIM

SMP INVITE alliance for their only daughter 27 years, v.fair, 5'4", MBBS Doctor from boys MS, MD, M.Tech 5'8" & above from well educated religious respectable families. Ph:7702630082 (S/2021/C02128)

ANDHRA SM Parents Invite Alliance for Daughter 28, 5'2" MBA, Very fair, beautiful, Boy should be Engineer/ PG, working in India/ Abroad from Andhra/ Rayalaseema/ Telangana family. Ph:9908576169, 9030855437. (B/2021/IC00103)

RAYALASEEMA SM Parents invite alliance for their very fair Daughter 30, 5'2" B.Tech Gazetted Officer/ Central Government/ Hyderabad (Qula Taken/ No Issue) Seeking Divorce/ Widower/ Unmarried Boy Engineer/ MBA (HR)/ Software/ Government Employee without issues. P h : 9 8 4 9 2 5 8 3 7 7 . (B/2021/IC00105)

ANDHRA SM Parents settled in Hyderabad invite alliance for daughter 1994, 5'4", V.fair M. Arch (Interior Designer) seeking M.Tech/ MS/ BE boy working in India/ Abroad from Andhra/ Rayalaseema family. Ph:7093190402/ 9849655913. (S/2021/IC00171)

FINANCE

LOAN FOR High Level Projects & Properties from 10Cr to 1000Cr R.O.I @ 3.5% to 8% with feasible tenure. No prepayment. Ct:99884327792. Email: hirseventures@gmail.com (CHSD/2021/C00010)

✓FUNDS IN Crores for High value builders projects Industries, Corporate companies, business groups, purchase of properties, Educational Institutions, Takeover loans, No Processing Fee. Ramalingam Retd Banker- 9176058736. (ADVIKA ADS) (S/2021/C02272)

FDI LOAN: Above Rs.6Cr for LAP, Business, Feasible Projects, Sickunits, Takeover. Interest 3-8% P.A Flexible Tenure 8270757045, tifsgruups@yahoo.com (CHCT/2021/C00008)

CONSTRUCTION/FABRICATION

BUILDERS & DEVELOPERS

SHORT TAKES

ULFA-I THREATENS TO KILL CAPTIVE EMPLOYEES

BY MANOJ ANAND
WITH AGENCY INPUTS
GUWAHATI, FEB. 20

The outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom - Independent (Ulfa-I) has threatened to take the "ultimate step" next week on the two employees of the Quippo oil and gas drilling company who are being held captive by the outfit, prompting senior Assam minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to appeal for their release.

The Paresw Barua-led outfit has demanded a ransom of ₹20 crore for the duo's release and had earlier set February 16 as the deadline.

The two, drilling superintendent Pranab Kumar Gogoi and radio operator Ram Kumar, of the Quippo Oil and Gas Infrastructure, were kidnapped by Ulfa-I rebels on December 21 last year from Kumchaikha hydrocarbon drilling site in Changlang, Arunachal Pradesh. While Gogoi is a native of Assam, Kumar hails from Bihar.

CONGRESS BANDH IN MP RECEIVES BACKLASH

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, FEB. 20

The half-day bandh call given by Congress to protest against the fuel price increase on Saturday evoked mixed response in Madhya Pradesh. Though petrol stations remained closed, normal life remained unaffected in most places.

Congress workers and leaders who were enforcing bandh in their respective areas were seen facing resistance from local businessmen at some places.

One Krishna Pachouri, a local businessman, lodged a complaint with the Korada police station in Bhopal alleging misbehaviour by Congress men who were trying to intimidate him to close his shop. Yogesh Bhatia, a cloth merchant in Jabalpur, lodged a complaint against some Congress workers in Ranji police station alleging intimidation to force him to close his shop.

INDIA WITNESSES SPIKE IN DAILY COVID-19 CASES

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 20

Daily Covid-19 cases in the country climbed to about 14,000 after nearly 22 days, taking India's tally to 1,09,77,387. Recoveries surged to 1,06,78,048, according to Union health ministry data that was updated on Saturday.

A total of 13,993 new cases were registered in a span of 24 hours and there were 101 new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed. The active case-load remains below 1.5 lakh, at 1,43,127. The 101 new fatalities included 44 deaths from Maharashtra, 15 from Kerala and 8 from Punjab.

Worryingly, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh have recorded an "upsurge" in daily new cases of Covid-19, the Union Health Ministry said on Saturday.

CSR SHOULD NOT BE MANDATORY: AZIM PREMJI

New Delhi, Feb. 20: IT czar and philanthropist Azim Premji on Saturday said companies should not be legally mandated to engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) as such contributions to society need to "come from within".

Premji, who donated ₹7,904 crore in donations last year (₹22 crore a day), also highlighted that the Covid-19 crisis was a "wake up call" to look at fundamental issues like the need to improve public systems like health, and changing the structure of society to become more equal and just.

"I do not think we should have a legal mandate for companies to do CSR. Philanthropy or charity or contribution to society must come from within, and it cannot be mandated from outside. But that's my personal view.

As of now, this is the law and all companies must follow it, Premji said.

He added that it is important that individual and personal philanthropy is separated from a company's CSR efforts.

Fight against high fuel prices



Activists of Indian Youth Congress clash with police personnel during a protest against the hike in fuel and LPG prices, in New Delhi on Saturday. — PTI

Get out of election mode: Patnaik

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, FEB. 20

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik stirred up a hornet's nest on Saturday when, in his address at the Prime Minister-chaired 6th meeting of the governing council of NitiAayog, he charged that elected governments are meant to work for people, beyond the party line, but "every crime is being politicised and every action of the government is being seen from a

political angle."

The 75-year-old CM, who was elected for the fifth consecutive term in 2019, added that it's high time elected governments stop behaving like political parties.

"Elections are an essential feature of democracy. However, the hallmark of a mature democracy is that once elected, the governments are meant to work for people, beyond party lines. It's high time that we as a country have serious introspection on whether we are able to do

the same. Every crime is being politicised, every action of an elected government is being seen from a political angle. This kind of atmosphere is one of the biggest threats to the pace of development and peace in the country. It's high time the country gets out of this election mode and allows elected governments to function," he said.

Though the CM, who heads the regional Biju Janata Dal as its founder president, a key rival of the Bharatiya

Janata Party (BJP), did not mention any political party, his remarks were a direct rebuff of the saffron party's persistent attack on his government and other non-BJP state governments over various issues.

BJP leaders have been constantly attacking the BJD government on various issues, including chit fund and mining scams, irregularities in procurement of healthcare hardwares and mismanagement Covid-19 crisis.

'Metro Man' courts row, calls Vijayan an autocrat

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
FEB. 20

Ahead of his entry into the BJP, 'Metro Man' E. Sreedharan courted controversy by calling Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan an "autocrat" and evoking a sharp reaction from the CPM leadership.

Sreedharan said it would be a tragedy if Left Democratic Front (LDF) were to come back to power again in Kerala after the Assembly polls scheduled to be held soon. In an interview with a regional channel, the well-known engineer, who is set to join BJP next week, said the Chief Minister was depending on the flawed advice of bureaucrats.

Sreedharan heaped praise on the Opposition



E. Sreedharan

Congress-led United Democratic Front. He said former chief minister Oommen Chandy was highly regarded. Chandu, Ramesh Chennithala, Aryadan Mohammad and P.K. Kunhalikutty wanted good to happen to the state, he said.

He said Vijayan's LDF government had blocked important projects. "They opposed the Nilambur-

Nanjangud railway line which pained me. In place of Nilambur-Nanjangud, they wanted the Thalassery-Mysore railway project."

Sreedharan said he was expecting to be nominated either from Palakkad or Malappuram. "I am contesting to become a part of the government," he said and added that there was a branding of BJP as a communal party and this image needs to be changed.

The CPM reacted sharply to Sreedharan's comment against the Chief Minister. "He may be a good engineer but unfortunately he has no sense of history. A person who is calling Kerala Chief Minister autocratic, is joining a party whose credentials are well known," the party said.

TN: Declare Godavari-Cauvery plan as national project

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 20

Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to declare the Godavari-Cauvery river linking project as a National Project so as to benefit lakhs of people in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Addressing the sixth governing council meeting of

NITI Aayog, he said river Cauvery and its tributaries had to be rejuvenated on the lines of "Namami Gange" and requested the Centre to accord sanction and extend financial assistance to the State at the earliest.

"We are meeting after a year, during which period the world has been struck by the most extensive pandemic we have seen. A

series of timely and effective measures taken in Tamil Nadu by calibrated relaxations, effective RT/PCR testing, tracking and conduct of fever camps have ensured total control of the spread of Covid in our State," he said.

He said the State had been ranked Number One in the Good Governance Index released by the Government of India and

had bagged the 'Best Performing State' title in the National Water Award, 2019.

The State received the highest share of investment proposals (16 percent) in India during April 2020 to September 2020, as per the CARE ratings report, he said, adding that through the on-line single window portal, investment of ₹22,332 crore and employ-

ment potential of 76,835 persons had been cleared.

He also listed the various business projects launched in the State like the Multi-Modal logistics park being developed near Chennai in around 150 acres of land.

"The Tamil Nadu Protected Agricultural Zone Development Act, is a historic enactment to protect the fertile agricultural

lands and safeguard the livelihoods of farmers and agricultural labourers in the Cauvery delta," he said.

Palaniswami said Lakhs of farmers were successfully enrolled under the Prime Minister Crop Insurance Scheme and compensation of ₹9,365 crore was disbursed in the last 4 years to 54.12 lakh beneficiaries.

Disha bail plea order on Feb. 23

Cops allege she deleted evidence like emails

New Delhi, Feb. 20: If highlighting farmers' protest globally is sedition, then she is "better in jail", activist Disha Ravi told a Delhi court which on Saturday reserved for February 23 its order on her bail plea in the toolkit case after police alleged that she was part of a plan to instigate violence in India and had deleted "evidence" like emails.

Additional Sessions Judge Dharmender Rana posed some scathing questions to the probe agency during the hearing on Ravi's plea, asking if it was only acting on "surmises, inferences, and conjectures" and questioned how the toolkit was connected to the violence during the farmers' march. "...Unless I satisfy my conscience, I don't move ahead," the judge said.

Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju, appearing for the Delhi Police, told the court that the hyperlinks in the toolkit connected people to Khalistani websites that propagate hatred towards India. "This was not just a



Disha Ravi

toolkit. The real plan was to defame India and create unrest here," he said. Ravi's counsel, however, claimed there is no evidence linking the toolkit to the violence during the farmers' march on January 26. He also questioned the contents of the FIR. "We all have different opinions. You may have a problem with farmers' protest, I may not. If highlighting protest globally is sedition, I (Ravi) am better in jail. I (defence counsel) also support farmers. But if that's an offence, let's all go to jail," defence counsel Sidharth Agarwal said. "There is an allegation in FIR that Yoga and Chai are being targeted. Is it an offence? We are now

reducing the bar that somebody can't have a point of view different," the counsel said.

Ravi was arrested in Bengaluru on Saturday by a Cyber Cell team of the Delhi Police for allegedly creating the toolkit and was brought to Delhi. She was booked on sedition and other charges.

Opposing Ravi's bail plea, the police alleged that she was preparing the toolkit with those advocating Khalistan. It alleged that Ravi deleted WhatsApp chats, emails and other evidence and was aware of legal action that she could face. Why did Disha Ravi cover her track and delete evidence if she did not commit wrong, the police said, alleging that his shows her guilty mind and sinister design.

"My part is that I sought support from Greta Thunberg, that too for farmers' protest and not for Khalistan," the defence counsel countered, and claimed that Ravi acted due to fear of being wrongly prosecuted. — PTI

TMC poll slogan: 'Bengal wants its own daughter'

BJYM leader held with 90gm cocaine

Kolkata, Feb. 20: The Trinamool Congress on Saturday launched its slogan for the upcoming assembly elections — 'Bangla Nijer Meyekei Chaye', adding to the shrill insider vs outsider debate while portraying Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as the daughter of Bengal. The slogan, which translates to 'Bengal wants its own daughter', with Banerjee's photo was put up on hoardings across Kolkata as the state's ruling party officially launched it from its headquarters off EM Bypass.

"The people of the state want their own daughter who has been by their side for the last several years as their chief minister. We don't want outsiders to call the shots in Bengal," TMC secretary-general Partha Chatterjee said. The Trinamool Congress is engaged in a bitter political fight with the BJP, pitching the opposition party's leaders as outsiders who are on "election tourism" to the state.

"The upcoming election is not a big factor for the Trinamool Congress. The entire country is watching how the Constitution can be protected and the outcome of the polls will prove that," TMC's Rajya Sabha MP Subrata Bakshi

said. He said the chief minister has already submitted a report card of the work done in the last ten years to the people of the state. "Which state has done so much? None," Bakshi added.

State Minister Panchayat Subrata Bakshi said. He said the chief minister has already submitted a report card of the work done in the last ten years to the people of the state. "Which state has done so much? None," Bakshi added.

State Minister Panchayat Subrata Bakshi said.

should be arrested. This is his conspiracy," Goswami told reporters while being taken to lock-up from a city court.

Singh, a BJP state committee member, alleged that the ruling Trinamool Congress and the Kolkata Police were conspiring against him and have "brainwashed" Goswami. He said that he has not been in touch with Goswami for more than a year and was ready to face any investigation.

"If I am involved, they can call me or Kailash Vijayvargiya or Amit Shah. I think the police have brainwashed her. I am not in touch with Pamela for more than one and a half-years now," Singh said. — PTI

TOURISM | SUPPORT

Foreign minister Jaishankar begins two-day visit to India's south-western maritime neighbour

Indian tourists boost cash registers in Maldives

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 20

Even as External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar began his two-day official visit to the Maldives on Saturday, Indian tourists are setting the cash registers ringing in the tourism-dependent economy of India's tiny south-western maritime neighbour.

As per statistics of 2020 so far, a whopping 30,000 Indians have visited the Maldives till mid-February out of a total of

1,38,000 foreign tourists this year, the highest number from any foreign nation visiting the Maldives. Even with the pandemic, a total of 62,905 Indians, largest number of tourists, visited the Maldives in 2020.

It became possible due to the creation of an 'Air Travel Bubble' to facilitate the movement of people from both sides for the purpose of employment, tourism, medical emergencies and so on. Maldives was the first neighbouring

India gifts another 1L jabs to Maldives

New Delhi, Feb. 20: India on Saturday gifted another one lakh doses of Covid-19 vaccine to the Maldives, with External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar himself accompanying the fresh consignment on his two-day visit to the archipelago nation on Saturday.

This takes the overall gift of Covid vaccine doses for the Maldives to two lakh from India since New Delhi had gifted one lakh doses earlier. The EAM also announced a "stand-alone new Line of Credit (LoC) worth US\$40 mil-

lion" from India for the development of sports infrastructure in the Maldives during his address at a public event in the tiny nation which is India's south-western maritime neighbour.

This fresh LoC is expected to be inked soon.

India had also undertaken a series of economic and financial initiatives at the peak of the pandemic

to revive Maldivian economy and provide the much-needed budgetary cushion to its dwindling revenues,

primarily driven by tourism. These included the extension of soft loan of US\$250 million for budgetary support of the Maldives for the implementation of Greater Male Connectivity Project which is the largest civilian infrastructure project in the Maldives, connecting Male with three neighbouring islands by the construction of a bridge-and-causeway link spanning 6.7 km, through a financial package consisting of a grant of US\$100 million and a new Line of Credit

of US\$400 million. In addition, Maldives was the first country to receive Covid vaccines from India, with New Delhi gifting one lakh doses to the tiny archipelago nation. Indo-Maldivian ties have become extremely close ever since President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih assumed office in the in November, 2018.

After completing his two-day visit on Sunday, the EAM will visit the small Indian Ocean nation of Mauritius on February 22-23.

SHORT TAKES

UKRAINE FREEZES ASSETS OF PUTIN ALLY MEDVEDCHUK

Kyiv, Feb. 19: Ukraine's national security council on Friday placed sanctions on Viktor Medvedchuk, a politician and tycoon who is a close friend of Russian President Vladimir Putin, freezing his assets for three years and preventing him from doing business in the country.

The security council accused him of financial terrorism, but details were not immediately available.

The move came two weeks after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy ordered the closure of three Medvedchuk-owned television channels that he accused of spreading propaganda financed by the aggressor country, a reference to Russia.

ULTRAS KILL 5 PAK SOLDIERS IN BALOCHISTAN

Karachi, Feb. 20: At least five Pakistani soldiers were killed and two others injured when suspected terrorists carried out attacks through remote-controlled bombs in two separate areas in the restive Balochistan province.

The first attack took place in the Bypass area outside Quetta when a remote-controlled bomb fixed to a motorcycle was detonated near a Frontier Corps (FC) convoy in which a soldier was killed and two others injured. The explosion took place near an FC vehicle on patrol duty.

In the second attack in the remote Kahan area of Kohlu district, terrorists attacked a FC checkpoint at night in which four soldiers were killed.

RAINS FLOOD INDONESIA'S CAPITAL

Jakarta, Feb. 20: Whole neighbourhoods of Indonesia's capital Jakarta and dozens of major roads were flooded on Saturday after torrential rains pounded the Southeast Asian city overnight.

More than 1,300 residents have been evacuated to temporary shelters, with parts of the capital under four to nine feet (1.2 to 2.7 metres) of water.

Images showed rescuers on rafts battling to evacuate the elderly and children from submerged houses in hard-hit southern and eastern areas of the city, and dozens of cars were seen submerged on waterlogged streets.

National rescue agency spokesman Yusuf Latif said the floods were triggered by extreme downpours.

SPYING CHARGES ON 4 EX-INTEL TAIWAN OFFICERS

Taipei, Feb. 20: Four retired Taiwanese military intelligence officers — including a major general — have been indicted for spying for China, prosecutors said Saturday.

The quartet were charged with developing a spying network and collecting confidential information for Beijing, the Taipei district prosecutors' office said. The two sides have been spying on each other since the Nationalists fled to the island to set up a rival government in 1949, having lost a civil war on the mainland to the communists.

Two Taiwanese former colonels were recruited by a Chinese national security official in the southern province of Guangdong, the government lawyers said.

RUSSIAN AIR HIT IN SYRIA KILLS 21 IS. JIHADISTS

Beirut, Feb. 20: A wave of air strikes by government ally Russia killed at least 21 Islamic State group jihadists in the Syrian desert over the past 24 hours, a monitor said Saturday. The 21 were killed in at least 130 air strikes "carried out over the past 24 hours by the Russian air force targeting the Islamic State group" in a vast area stretching from the central province of Homs to the border with Iraq, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The raids, which continued into Saturday, follow a series of IS attacks Friday on government and allied forces that killed at least eight members of a pro-Damascus militia.

More than half of the jihadists were killed in strikes on the eastern province of Deir Ezzor, near the Iraqi frontier.

Texans queue for water as US counts cost of winter storm

This after 'polar plunge' burst pipes, left millions shivering without power

Houston, Feb. 20: Frustrated Texans queued for hours for safe drinking water Friday, after an unprecedented and deadly "polar plunge" burst pipes and left millions in the US state shivering without power or clean water for days. The extreme winter weather system wreaked havoc across much of the southern and central United States this week, reportedly killing at least 40 people and igniting anger in Texas as authorities scrambled to turn the lights back on.

Houston resident Percy McGee rated his frustration level at "number 10" as he waited his turn at the city's Delmar Stadium, now a mass bottled water distribution site.

"I've been up since five o'clock. And I've been on the road since six. And I know it's 11:30 but I'm gonna sit here until, I mean, I have no choice. All the stores in my area are out of water," he said.

"I'm very frustrated. I'm a diabetic. I have a 94-year-old senior as a diabetic. We haven't had no medicine. Nothing... So I'm really frustrated mentally. But I'm keeping it together," he said.

Erica Granado, another Houston resident, said she had rushed to the site after seeing it on the news.

"I gotta be early because I knew everybody — yeah, everybody wants water and so it's a difficult time for everybody," she said, adding: "Thank God I had gas in my car." On Friday the weather system was slowly moving northeast, where hardy New Englanders — far more used to



The George Washington Bridge is blanketed with snow on Friday, in Fort Lee, New Jersey.

— AFP

scouring winter storms than residents of the Lone Star state — were batten-

ing down. But even as the temperature rose above freezing in Texas — and the National Weather Service forecast weekend weather in the 50s Fahrenheit (10-15 Celsius) — state governor Greg Abbott said some 165,000 people were still without power Friday.

Water pressure problems meant nearly seven million Texans were being advised to boil their water before drinking it or using for cooking, said Toby Baker, who heads the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. — AFP

Kerry: China, India, Russia, need to lower emissions

United Nations, Feb. 20: The world's big emitting countries, including China, India, Russia and Japan, need to really step up and begin to lower greenhouse gas emissions, US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry has said as he called on all nations to raise their ambition to fight against climate change.

Kerry on Friday joined UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres for a special virtual event to mark the United States rejoining the Paris Agreement. We need the United States and every country to determine they will get on a path toward net-zero emissions by 2050. That is not something we will do by countries just stepping up and saying, Hey! We commit, here we are. Yeah, we'll do it by 2050. That doesn't work. That doesn't

cut it. That is not the way that we get to go to Glasgow, Kerry said.

The United Kingdom will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in November this year.

The COP26 summit will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. — PTI

Russia says detected first case of H5N8 avian flu in humans

Moscow, Feb. 20: Russia said Saturday its scientists had detected the first case of transmission of the H5N8 strain of avian flu to humans and had alerted the World Health Organisation.

"Information about the world's first case of transmission of the avian flu (H5N8) to humans has already been sent to the World Health Organisation," the head of Russia's health watchdog Rospotrebnadzor, Anna Popova, said in televised remarks.

The highly contagious strain is lethal for birds but has never before been reported to have spread to humans. Popova said that

ARGENTINE HEALTH MINISTER RESIGNS

Buenos Aires, Feb. 20: President Alberto Fernandez removed Argentina's health minister Friday after a well-known local journalist said he had been given a Coronavirus vaccination preferentially after requesting one from the minister. — AP

scientists at Russia's Vektor laboratory had isolated genetic material of the strain from seven workers of a poultry farm in southern Russia, where an out-

MAR. 8 LOCKDOWN IN TORONTO

Toronto, Feb. 20: A lockdown and stay at home order is being extended in Toronto, Canada's largest city until at least Mar. 8. Ontario Health Minister Christine Elliott said Saturday that extension was a difficult but necessary decision. — AP

break was recorded among the birds in December.

The workers did not suffer any serious health consequences, she added. Popova praised "the

important scientific discovery," saying "time will tell" if the virus can further mutate.

"The discovery of these mutations when the virus has not still acquired an ability to transmit from human to human gives us all, the entire world, time to prepare for possible mutations and react in an adequate and timely fashion," Popova said.

Located in Koltsovo outside the Siberian city of Novosibirsk, the Vektor State Virology and Biotechnology Center has developed one of Russia's several Coronavirus vaccines. — AFP

Give Latifa's proof of life, UN to UAE

Berlin, Feb. 20: The UN human rights office said Friday that it has asked the United Arab Emirates for evidence that an Emirati princess held against her will for almost three years is still alive.

The Geneva-based Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights said the case of Sheikhha Latifa bint Mohammed Al Maktoum was raised with the

UAE's mission to the UN on Thursday.

Earlier this week the BBC released excerpts from video diaries Sheikhha Latifa said were recorded in a locked bathroom inside the Dubai villa where she was being held. She was detained by commandos off the coast of India in 2018 after she tried to flee Dubai on a yacht. "We raised our con-

cerns about the situation in light of the disturbing video evidence that emerged this week," Elizabeth Throssell, a spokeswoman for the UN rights office told reporters.

"We requested more information and clarification about Sheikhha Latifa's current situation."

"We did ask for proof of life," she added. Friends of the princess have said say

they are concerned for her safety because she hasn't been heard from since she stopped responding to text messages six months ago.

The 35-year-old princess is the daughter of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the hereditary ruler of Dubai who also serves as prime minister and vice president of the United Arab Emirates. — AP

Germany and Poland, are under a complete lockdown. The number of new infections per 100,000 inhabitants in the last seven days there is around 1,000.

Further measures, including a complete lockdown of more counties, will be discussed over the weekend. The government is also planning to make Covid-19 tests mandatory for all employees not working from their homes.

The Czech government wants to go ahead with a plan to partially reopen schools, with the students of the final grade at high schools coming back on March 1. All students will have to get tested regularly, with the government providing all necessary tests. — AP

Court rejects Navalny appeal

Moscow, Feb. 20: A Moscow court on Saturday rejected Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny's appeal against his prison sentence, even as the country faced a top European rights court's order to free the Kremlin's most prominent foe.

Navalny was sentenced earlier this month by a lower court to two years and eight months in prison for violating terms of his probation while recuperating in Germany from a nerve agent poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin. Russian authorities have rejected the accusation. Navalny, 44, an anti-corruption crusader and President Vladimir Putin's most vocal critic, appealed the prison sentence and asked to be released. The Moscow City Court's judge on Saturday only slightly reduced his sentence to just over 2 1/2 years in prison, ruling that a month-and-half Navalny spent under house arrest in early 2015 will be deducted from his sentence.

Navalny's arrest and imprisonment have fuelled a huge wave of protests across Russia. Authorities responded with a sweeping crackdown, detaining about 11,000 people, many of whom were fined or given jail terms ranging from seven to 15 days. Russia has rejected Western criticism of Navalny's arrest and the crackdown on demonstrations as meddling in its internal affairs.

In a ruling Tuesday, the



Alexei Navalny

European Court of Human Rights ordered the Russian government to release Navalny, citing "the nature and extent of risk to the applicant's life."

The Strasbourg-based court noted that Navalny has contested Russian authorities' argument that they had taken sufficient measures to safeguard his life and well-being in custody following the nerve agent attack. The Russian government has rebuffed the Strasbourg-based court's demand, describing the ruling as unlawful and "inadmissible" meddling in Russia's affairs.

In the past, Moscow has abided by the ECHR's rulings awarding compensations to Russian citizens who have contested verdicts in Russian courts, but it never faced a demand by the European court to set a convict free. In a sign of its long-held annoyance with the Strasbourg court's verdicts, Russia last year adopted a constitutional amendment declaring the priority of national legislation over international law. — AP

Oppn to Biden budget nominee

Washington, Feb. 20: The nomination of Neera Tanden to lead the White House Office of Management and Budget was thrown in doubt Saturday as Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia became the first Democratic lawmaker to oppose her confirmation. During her confirmation hearings, Tanden apologised for spending years attacking top Republicans on social media. She is a former adviser to Hillary Clinton and served as president of the liberal-leaning Center for American Progress.

With the Senate evenly divided between 50 Republicans and 50 Democrats, she'll likely need support from at least one Republican to win confirmation. "I believe her overtly partisan statements will have a toxic and detrimental impact on the important working relationship between members of Congress and the next director of the Office of Management and Budget," Manchin said in a statement.

He went on to say that, at a time of grave crisis, "it is more important than ever that we chart a new bipartisan course that helps address the many serious challenges facing our nation." It's the first real test that Biden has faced on a nomination, with most of his picks for Cabinet positions sailing through the chamber with bipartisan support.

Tanden had also disparaged some Democrats on social media, most notably Sen. Bernie Sanders, the independent from Vermont. Biden, asked Saturday whether he would pull Tanden's nomination, said he wouldn't. "I think we are going to find the votes and get her confirmed," Biden said. Moments earlier, the White House had issued a statement defending her: "Neera Tanden is an accomplished policy expert who would be an excellent Budget Director and we look forward to the committee votes next week and to continuing to work toward her confirmation through engagement with both parties." White House press secretary Jen Psaki said. Tanden would be the first woman of colour to lead the OMB, which leads efforts to ensure an administration's priorities are reflected in legislation and regulations. The Senate Budget Committee is scheduled to vote on her nomination next week. — AP

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3 SEPARATE KABUL BLASTS KILL 5, HURT 2

Kabul, Feb. 20: Three separate explosions in the Afghan capital Kabul on Saturday killed at least five people and wounded two others, a police official said.

No group claimed responsibility. The first blast targeted a civilian car wounding both travellers inside the vehicle. The second explosion targeted a car in a north-western Kabul neighbourhood in which national army soldiers were travelling, killing two soldiers. A civilian passerby was also killed.

The third explosion destroyed a police car in western Kabul killing two police officers. Kabul police said investigations were underway. — AP

NEW | VARIANTS

Region saw very few infections when Covid first hit a year ago Virus surges anew in central Europe

Prague, Feb. 20: Authorities in central Europe warned on Friday that they are seeing a surge in Coronavirus cases across their region amid the discovery of new variants.

The Polish health minister, Adam Niedzielski, said the first case of a variant first found in South Africa had been discovered in Poland, and that some 10% of all cases now involve the variant that emerged in England.

We are entering a crisis situation again. It is up to us where the peak of this third wave will be Niedzielski said.

The Czech Republic, one of the hardest-hit countries in the 27-member European Union, moved Friday to further tighten

restrictive measures amid a surge of the English variant. The government said the worsening situation has forced it to abandon its plans to reopen all stores as early as next week.

Neighbouring Slovakia is also badly hit. It became the country with the most Covid-19 deaths by size of population in the world this week amid a surge of the English variant.

The number of Covid-19 patients in Slovakia's hospitals reached a new record high of 3,900 on Thursday a situation that has prompted leaders to appeal for outside help. So far, Austria, Poland and Hungary have agreed to deploy medical staff to Slovakia.

In Hungary, where a

steady decline in daily infections and deaths from December reversed course early this month, there are now fears of a new surge even as the country began receiving shipments of Russian and Chinese vaccines. We are clearly in the ascending phase of the third wave, Chief Medical Officer Cecilia Muller told an online press briefing Friday.

Czech Health Minister Jan Blatny said residents will also have to wear better masks in places where large numbers gather, including stores, hospitals and public transportation. He said cloth masks used so far by many will no longer be good enough and medical-grade masks, safety respirators or two sur-

gical masks will instead be required.

We've agreed that it's necessary to do all we can to prevent the infection from spreading, Blatny said. In Poland also a debate has opened about the need to require better masks. The health minister said there would only be recommendations for now, but the government wants to discourage the use of scarfs and plastic face shields.

The central European region saw very few infections when the virus first arrived in Europe a year ago, only to see a huge spike in infections and deaths in the fall of 2020.

In the Czech Republic, the three hardest-hit counties, on the border with

DECCAN
Chronicle

21 FEBRUARY 2021



Ranjona Banerji

Off the beaten track

Concrete threat coexists
with bignonia, birdsong

You are so lucky that you moved to Dehradun from a city, I get told all the time. As cliches go, it's a great line. I see the foothills of the Himalayas every time I look out of the window. I am surrounded by countryside. I have a garden full of flowers.

Especially after the pandemic, you read articles or you hear about people from Gurgaon, Delhi, Meerut, looking to move to Dehradun. I get calls from friends about the availability of land or flats. The horrors of pollution and the rat race have been brought home in full force after almost a year of "work from home". They use the line I myself used when I moved here six years ago: all you need is a good Internet connection.

I know, you're looking for the poetry. The dawn chorus, the bird song through the day, the evening choir, which depending on the season could start at three in the afternoon or three hours later. Every November, you wait for the Himalayan Whistling Thrush to make its annual visit. Winter has begun when you hear its beautiful call early in the morning. Then the song stops but the bird stays, hopping the garden, and glinting when the Sun catches its brilliant dark blue with speckled wings and a yellow beak.

Some sounds are all-India sounds but evocative of the seasons and their gifts nonetheless: the thok-thok of the Coppersmith Barbet, the cooing of the doves, the summer frenzy of the Brainfever Bird, the persistent call of the Koel. Others like the plaintive Grey Hornbill or the did-you-do-it cry of the Red Wattle Lapwing come and go through the year.

The birds alone, even if you are ignorant from one page of Salim Ali to the next, are worth it.

It's the sheer privilege of course. The privilege of knowing that even if the mountaintops are covered in summer or winter haze, the air is clear and fresh. That when visitors arrive for the first time, the enormous hit of oxygen makes them sleepy.

And it's those little pleasures that are hidden privileges. Garden privileges. Of camellias and magnolias. Of discovering daffodils and tulips when your orientation is tropical. Of making your own compost from kitchen and garden waste. Of having the time to meander. Of staring at the sunbirds while they feed on the vine or pose on the passionflower.

But, there has to be a but. It's not all sap-suckers and sappy stories. There are those harsh realities of the countryside. Of the lack of basic amenities. Health, education, migration for work. Of environmental destruction and the resultant devastation.

Why did I move to Dehradun all those years ago? I moved to live with my parents. I left Mumbai, the city I have also felt the closest to, left my friends, my colleagues, my little flat with its verandah garden, to start a new chapter. For me, it was family and that's a different kind of poetry. Not romantic lyricism but something far deeper, more elemental.

And it has been a struggle, as it was for my Mother when she made the move from Calcutta post-retirement. You have to rejig your mind and your expectations. From the ridiculous — o lord, there is not one decent restaurant — to the sublime — where are the art galleries to feed my soul.

And for me, where is Arif who brought me my breakfast brun pao every morning, on his cycle, fresh from the bakery? Tiwariji who took me to work in his taxi every morning, and was always a phone call away for any emergency? Or Yadavji, ready with his taxi for the day when family came to visit? Or Baba who would travel miles for any electrical emergency, and had saved up enough to buy an old small flat that I had once lived in? Or Lalji, who smiled his way through every carpentry disaster? Or Anita, who cooked like a dream and then fulfilled her own dream with a little food stall near a school?

Living in Mumbai was heady, a mix of enterprise, collaboration and trust every day. Going home from work by public transport at any time of the night. Putting in those commuter miles, whether by train or bus or auto or taxi. Three hours a day or more, gone. How did we do it? How do people still do it? And that buzz. That ineffable, glorious, unquantifiable, addictive buzz of big city life. I have not found it in any other Indian city. They have other attractions. Soul perhaps, entitlement definitely. But not buzz.

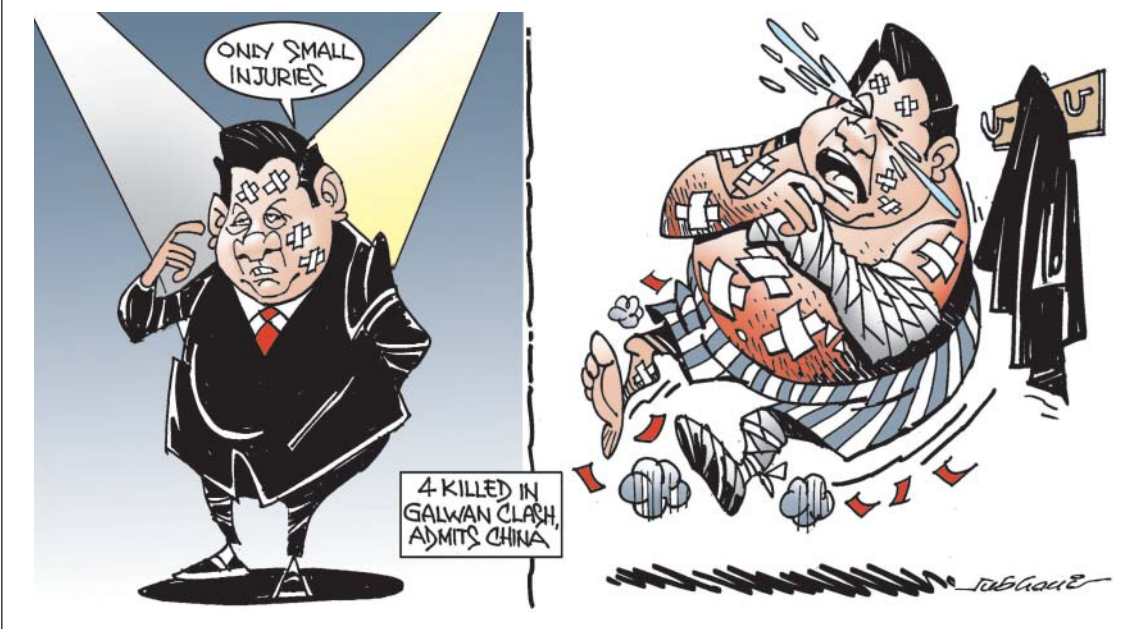
Dehradun has no buzz. It has higgledy-piggledy growth. Almost none of it is organic. It is all concrete boxes. It has locals trying to adjust to the status of a capital. Some hate it. Some love the increased scope of income and business. Most rue the degradation of a slow life because of increased speeds and influxes. Many watch aghast as the very reason for living here vanishes with loss of tree cover and garbage-dammed streams.

You will argue that all these concerns are universal. The planet revolts around us, wherever we live.

So while I can I raise my eyes to the hills and this new-old life. It's spring. The bignonia venesta is a riotous celebration of colour. And I pretend I can't see that ugly new building beyond.

The writer is a senior journalist who writes on media affairs, politics and social trends. She tweets at @ranjona.

Subhani

Not much righteous about
Ram temple funds drive

Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

It is good that the Ram Temple at Ayodhya is being built through public donations. This was the model for the reconstruction of the Somnath temple in 1951. The initiative to rebuild it was taken by Sardar Patel; Gandhiji approved of it, but asked that the funds for this purpose be raised through voluntary donations, rather than an outgo from the government exchequer. This advice was followed, and K.M. Munshi, a minister in Nehru's cabinet, spearheaded the raising of funds and the rebuilding of the temple.

The same model is reportedly being followed for the Ram temple. The cadres of the RSS, the BJP and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, are in the forefront for raising funds from the public. Many ordinary Hindus are more than willing to make contributions. Many non-Hindus may also be willing to contribute. So long as this entire exercise is carried out voluntarily, on the bedrock of genuine public support, it should pose no problem.

But there are disturbing stories doing the rounds of coercive methods being employed. It has been reported that bands of "bhakts" are combing residential areas and housing societies asking people to donate, and judging them by their response and the quantum they give. It has been reported that stickers are put on the doors or entrances of those who have paid, thereby marking out those who have not. In a close-knit residential habitat, this identifies people who are not "adequately" Hindu, or sufficiently demon-

strative about their devotion to Lord Ram. Such people then face social ostracisation, and are portrayed as betrayers of the faith.

If these stories are true, it is a matter of deep concern. The noble cause of building the temple cannot be sullied by mob intimidation bordering on extortion. Most Hindus hold Shri Ram in great reverence, and may wish to donate; but those that do not want to hand over cash to people they don't know, or are unsure about their credentials, or unconvinced about the accountability of the money they give, are entirely free not to donate, and cannot and should not be penalised for it. The use of stickers or crosses to identify those who do not comply has very ominous implications.

Besides, Hinduism by definition is a religion of choice. Even in temples, there is no compulsion to put money in the donation box, however prominently it may be placed. Many Hindus worship Rama; for others, the subject of devotion is Shiva; and, for still others it is Devi. At one level, of course, all Hindu gods stand for that one divinity which is omnipresent and indivisible. This is the Nirguna — attributeless — Brahman. But Hinduism consciously

Hinduism allows for Hindus to be atheistic, pantheist, monist, polytheist, agnostic or animist; and is more than happy with those who see God everywhere or nowhere and do not even wish to visit a temple

derogates this pervasive cosmic consciousness to the Saguna or attribute-full level, to enable devotees to worship a more accessible god. At the saguna plane, each Hindu is free to choose more than one god, or elevate any one of them to primary status. For instance, in West Bengal, a great many people are devotees of Durga. Is there anything wrong if a Hindu in Kolkata chooses to donate a part of his meagre disposable income for Durga Puja rather than a temple for Rama?

Moreover, what kind of precedent does such an exercise set? Today, the aim is to raise money for the Ram temple. Tomorrow, if the same cohort comes around to ask for money to celebrate the birth of Rama, Ram Navami, who will stop them? If at Dussehra, the same gang fans out to raise money for a yatra or a function, how can ordinary Hindus, afraid of being marked out for not being "sufficiently devotional", resist their demands? Even powerful politicians have spoken out openly against the manner in which money is being asked for. Fear and unlawful pressure cannot be a basis for religious or spiritual pursuits.

The real danger is that Shri Rama, the compassionate (*deen dayala*) merciful (*kripalu*), and the epitome of rectitude (*maryada purushottam*), is being used as a means to make Hinduism a prescriptive religion. Such a development is mutilating to the cerebral essence of Hinduism. The tragedy is that those who assume to dictate to

other Hindus on how they should behave in order to be "good" Hindus, don't know the fundamentals of Hinduism in the first place. More often than not, their evangelical illiteracy is orthodox, upper-caste, patriarchal and ritualistic. Little would they know that Hinduism allows for Hindus to be atheistic, pantheist, monist, polytheist, agnostic, animist, or any combination of the above; and, at the level of philosophy, Hinduism is more than happy with those who see God everywhere or nowhere and do not even wish to visit a temple.

Shri Rama's aura should not be sullied by the taint of money and politics. It would have been much better if the government had issued explicit instructions that donations for the Ram temple, by those who wish to make them, would only be valid by online transfer, with an electronic receipt. It would have been good, too, if the government had set up a more transparent mechanism for donors to know how their hard earned money — in times when petrol and diesel prices are skyrocketing — has been utilised for the construction of the temple. Herds of people of a particular political orientation, roaming the streets and neighbourhoods demanding money with little accountability, is not something that Shri Rama would have wanted for his temple.

The writer, an author and a former diplomat, is in politics

Herds of people of a particular political orientation, roaming the streets and neighbourhoods demanding money with little accountability, is not something that Shri Rama would have wanted for his temple

LETTERS

PUNJAB LESSONS

Three lessons can be learnt from the Punjab civic poll results. One, the Congress can win big and take the first step to revive the party. Second, the BJP must realise people are rejecting the party as laws are made in an autocratic way. The third lesson for all parties is to depend more on local stalwarts to win elections.

G.V.N. Murthy
Hyderabad

JAGAN'S REIGN

We need to point out that AP is at a huge disadvantage to attract investments (*Jagan reigns supreme, Naidu's hubris meets its comeuppance, DC, Feb. 20*). Not many large industries were set up in the last 20 years. There is not even a good airport. The Congress and TD governments did not concentrate on this. With excellent infrastructure in Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Pune, AP will find it difficult to attract investments. Hence, the CM is concentrating on small, aqua, agri, dairy, food processing and pharma which are the state's strengths. Added to this he is also trying to develop ports and industrial clusters.

A.R.R. Datta
Hyderabad

COSTLY IPL AUCTIONS

Cricket was considered a gentleman's game, but it has now become a gamble with film actors with a lot of money involved (*Morris turns costliest IPL buy, DC, Feb 19*). With the auction of human beings like slaves, it can no more be a gentleman's game.

Dr. Mohammed Abdul Mujeeb Siddiqui
Hyderabad

Players were bought in auction in the range of ₹20 lakh to 16.25 crore. The players get a share of the revenue through advertisements from companies. Instead of investing in IPL, the companies can get more popularity and fame by sponsoring Covid vaccine for poor people.

Dr O. Prasada Rao
Hyderabad

HYDERABAD TREE CITY

I request citizens to plant more saplings on the outskirts (*Hyderabad now India's Tree City, DC, Feb. 19*). Hyderabad has always been friendly, encouraging varied team managements, driving scientific development and solutions. It is a role model for easy and healthy development for the world.

Sreelekha P.N.
Secunderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN
DECCAN
ChronicleForward Bloc
Chairman
assassinated

CALCUTTA, FEBRUARY. 20 Forward Bloc Chairman and veteran freedom fighter Hemanta Kumar Bose was assassinated near his residence at Shyampur in North Calcutta at about 11-00 this morning.

The murder came as a culmination to the run of savage violence which has held the State in its vicious grip for over a year and claimed about 170 lives in the last seven weeks.

Mr. Bose, who was a candidate for the Shyampur Assembly seat, had held since the first General election.

Anita Katyal
Political
Gup-ShupBJP for Sourav
as Bengal CM;
Cong farmer
cell has no chief

What do Tamil superstar Rajinikanth and cricketing hero Sourav Ganguly have in common? Both have been wooed assiduously by the Bharatiya Janata Party which is making strenuous efforts to expand its footprint in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, the home states of the two legends. And both Rajinikanth and Ganguly were recently hospitalised following a medical emergency. The BJP ran out of luck with Rajinikanth, who had first declared his intention to float a new political party and contest the forthcoming Assembly polls in Tamil Nadu, but decided not to take the plunge after his short stint in hospital. However, there is no clarity about Ganguly's political ambitions.

The BJP has not given up on him and is working hard on roping in Ganguly.

The saffron party wishes to project the former cricket captain as its chief ministerial candidate since the party does not have a state leader who can take on West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee.

The BJP has apparently put together a copious dossier on Ganguly and his family's business interests in its effort to persuade him. The BJP's eagerness here is understandable as word on the street is that the ruling Trinamul Congress will be routed if Ganguly decides to enter the fray.

Both politicians and journalists from Tamil Nadu get extremely agitated when they are spoken to in Hindi, insisting that since they do not understand the language, they should be addressed in English. It was, therefore, a surprise when Tiruchi Siva, DMK's Rajya Sabha member, belted out several Hindi film songs at a farewell dinner organised by him for Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad who retired from the Upper House earlier this month. His rendition of "ek pyaar ka nagma hai" and "kabhie kabhie mere dil mein" drew an instant applause from the guests who demanded an encore. Azad, who walked in while Siva was singing, remarked laughingly that there could not be a better wel-

come when one is greeted by a Tamilian singing Hindi songs.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has finally bestirred herself and begun touring Uttar Pradesh in an effort to revive the party in the electorally crucial Hindi heartland state. She recently reiterated Congress support for the agitating farmers at several mahapanchayats in Western UP and later travelled to Allahabad where she took a holy dip in the Sangam on the auspicious occasion of Mauni Amavasya. According to Congress insiders, Priyanka will be spending more time in the state with an eye on next year's Assembly polls. As a result, the Congress office in Lucknow has been renovated and a special vehicle has been purchased for her travels. Priyanka's communications team has also been beefed up. Social media experts, filmmakers and researchers have been specially drafted for the UP challenge. This team's task is to build the Congress profile in the state. Not an easy task given that the party has

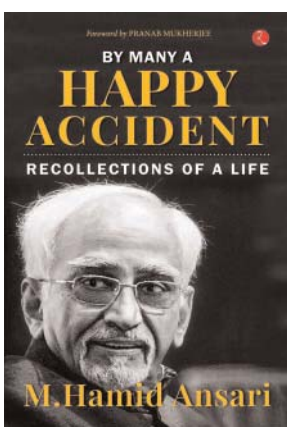
been out in the cold in UP for over three decades.

Despite Congress president Sonia Gandhi's intervention, differences between Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh and his bete noire Navjot Singh Sidhu are yet to be sorted out. Harish Rawat, Congress general secretary in charge of Punjab, has held a series of meetings with Amarinder Singh to arrive at a compromise formula but to little avail. The former cricketer is keen on taking over as president of the Punjab Congress but the chief minister has said an emphatic "No" and has instead grudgingly offered to accommodate Sidhu in the Cabinet. But Sidhu is not keen on joining the Captain's Cabinet. Sonia Gandhi wants Sidhu to be rehabilitated soon as Assembly elections in Punjab are due next year, especially since there is talk that if he does not have his way, Sidhu will start addressing farmers' meetings in the hope of emerging as a rallying force for the peasantry currently agitating against the Centre's farm laws. While the Central leadership is worried, it could prove difficult

to persuade Amarinder Singh who is feeling emboldened after the Congress swept the civic polls.

It is ironic that at a time when the Congress has come out in strong support of the farmers agitating against the Centre's farm laws, the party's department/cell mandated to study and take up issues pertaining to farmers and agriculture has been headless for nearly a year now. The party's All-India Kisan Congress was headed by Nana Patole who was subsequently named Speaker in the Maharashtra Assembly when the Congress joined the Shiv Sena and the Nationalist Congress Party to form a coalition government in the western state. Patole resigned as Speaker after he was appointed president of the MPCC. Most departments/cells set up by the Congress are virtually defunct, having little to offer in terms of programmes or activities. It appears they exist only to placate members with posts which, in reality, do not mean anything.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

INDIAN TOP 10
BESTSELLERS
NON-FICTION

BY MANY A
HAPPY ACCIDENT:
RECOLLECTIONS OF A LIFE
M. Hamid Ansari
Rupa, ₹795

GHALIB: A WILDERNESS
AT MY DOORSTEP: A
CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY
Mehr Afshan Farooqi
Allen Lane, ₹799

THE BATTLE OF
BELONGING
Shashi Tharoor
Aleph, ₹799

A PROMISED LAND
Barack Obama
Penguin Viking, ₹1,999

REMNANTS OF A
SEPARATION
Aanchal Malhotra
HarperCollins, ₹599

MISSION ECONOMY- A
MOONSHOT GUIDE TO
CHANGING CAPITALISM
Mariana Mazzucato
Allen Lane, ₹799

HOW TO AVOID A
CLIMATE DISASTER
Bill Gates
Allen Lane, ₹999

AGENT SONYA- LOVER,
MOTHER, SOLDIER, SPY
Ben Macintyre
Penguin, ₹799

JUGALBANDI: THE BJP
BEFORE MODI
Vinay Sitapati
Penguin Viking, ₹799

EMPIRELAND: HOW
IMPERIALISM HAS
SHAPED MODERN
BRITAIN
Sathnam Sanghera
Penguin Viking, ₹999



FICTION

SHUGGIE BAIN
Douglas Stuart
Picador, ₹499

THE DISCOMFORT OF
EVENING
Marieke Lucas Rijneveld
Faber & Faber, ₹499

THE LAST QUEEN
Chitra Banerjee
Divakaruni
HarperCollins, ₹599

A TIME FOR MERCY
John Grisham
Hodder & Stoughton,
₹699

WRITERS & LOVERS
Lily King
Picador, ₹699

HOMELAND ELEGIES
Ayad Akhtar
Tinder Press, ₹1,050

HAMNET
Maggie O' Farrell
Tinder Press, ₹699

A BOOKSHOP IN PARIS
Ellen Feldman
Simon & Schuster, ₹399

WHAT THE BODY
REMEMBERS
Shauna Singh Baldwin,
Tara- India Research
Press, ₹599

SINBAD AND THE
TRUMPET OF ISRAFIL
Kevin Missal
Penguin, ₹250

Bahrison, New Delhi

Conversations from JLF 2021,
largest literary show on earth

Sucheta Dasgupta

diary

The world's largest literature festival, JLF is back again with its lavish intellectual fare, albeit in an online-only avatar. Thanks to the hard work of the organisers, that has not turned out to be limiting or constraining in any fashion.

Saraswati ke bhandaar kee badhi apoorav baat, jyo kharche tyon tyon badhe, bin kharche ghat jaat. With knowledge is associated this counterintuitive fact; that in the places where you expend it, it expands and, in the absence of that, it does verily contract. Novelist and festival co-director Namita Gokhale opened the 14th edition of JLF with this couplet from the quill of Vrind, the 17th century Marwari saint.

Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world. That is what Albert Einstein believed, and that is the connect between science and the arts. In the very next session, Tilly Blyth, head of collections and principal curator at the Science Museum in London, came out with this mind-expanding thought.

India is a little bit like Italy but with a billion people, said quantum physicist Carlo Rovelli, writer of *Helgoland*, during a scintillating conversation with astronomer Priyamvada Natarajan. Rovelli is the founder of the loop quantum gravity theory. What brought you to Buddhist philosophy as a way of understanding these complex concepts, said Natarajan to Rovelli. Rovelli said, quantum mechanics tell us three things. Two of them are relatively simple and one is mysterious. Quantum physics tells us about granularity. It tells us that the space in which we live is granular; not continuous. The second thing it tells us is that this space consists of things that move randomly. The third and mysterious thing is that quantum mechanics is a theory that tells us about not how things are at a given place and time but what you are going to see. If you try to fill in the gaps in between it does not always work. So the mystery of quantum mechanics is still open. And that is where my interest in Buddhist thought emerged. It is the breakdown of determinism and the fact that an observer can alter the results just by being present, that is



Carlo Rovelli

what is interesting, Natarajan summarised quite cogently. Nagarjuna, the third century Mahayana philosopher, said that all notions are provisional after a point. There is no ultimate essence to anything, Rovelli explained. There are no qualia, Natarajan agreed. An object manifests only in relation to others. Without them, the object is "empty". Is this what is then meant when one is asked not to take anything too seriously?

S. Hareesh's controversial novel, *Moustache* (original *Meesha*) has won the 2020 JCB Prize for Literature. It is all about the fascination of the familiar; says Professor Tejaswini Niranjana, depicting as it does life in the Kuttanad region of Kerala. To



S. Hareesh

her credit, translator Jayasree Kalathil ably conveys the mesmerising quality of Hareesh's prose to non-Malayali readers. But author Aruni Kashyap says it is also a novel that misbehaves. We expect novels to run in a linear way, to follow one story or one character. Here, there are multiple worlds, multiple stories, multiple protagonists. And in many ways that is the Indian reality, it is very polyphonic, multi-layered. What gets published in the British, American and Canadian literary markets, kind of, decides how a novel should be. But



growing up reading Indian literature one sees how we have adapted the European form to ourselves. One of the big things is that we never have a single character, he informs his audience. Interestingly, the introduction to Hareesh's book has the following, liberating, lines: Novels are free countries. You cannot take responsibility for what your characters do.

The first amendment to the Indian Constitution in 1951 started the tradition of Indian governments using executive power to subdue the judiciary, posited journalist Karan Thapar to which historian Tripurdaman Singh agreed. Singh has recently published his *Sixteen Stormy Days: The Story of the First Amendment of the Constitution of India*. The justification about "the will of the people" that was used by Jawaharlal Nehru (to curb free speech in order to abolish zamindari, introduce caste-based reservations and censor publications deemed as national security threats) really set a trend from which there was no going back, he added. Sedition seems to be one of the favourite instruments of the Narendra Modi government, but it was pretty favourable to previous governments as well,



Tripurdaman Singh

said Thapar. In 1950, the Punjab high court famously read down the law of sedition in the Master Tara Singh case and the first amendment in 1951 reintroduced the law of sedition. Thus Nehru, Sardar Patel and B.R. Ambedkar, the three people that we regard as champions of democracy don't emerge brilliantly from this story, he concluded. Singh responded: Nehru is a complex figure. He had moral uncertainties. But he had so much public support that he did what he wanted. It was juxtaposed by a very pedantic commitment to the procedures of democracy, he was, for



Namita Gokhale

instance, very fastidious about attending parliament. Ambedkar, who only resigned several months after the passing of the amendment, was a bit of a misfit in the Nehru government and did not carry too much weight, did not get much of a say in matters. He probably went along because of the social justice aspect of the amendment. Patel considered free speech as irrational exuberance. Nehru had used the powers of Article 392 to pass the amendment, much the same way as Modi used Article 370 to read down Article 370, Thapar commented.

What gets published in the British, American and Canadian literary markets, kind of, decides how a novel should be. But in Indian novels, there are always multiple arcs, many characters.

— ARUNI KASHYAP

The paradoxes of the life of the nineteenth century Bengali poet Michael Madhusudan Dutt are movingly rendered in a play, titled *Betrayed by Hope*, co-authored by Namita Gokhale and Professor Malashri Lal. You have made Jaipur famous not only in Jaipur but the world over, given it a brand name really, Lal said to Gokhale at the panel discussion. Interestingly, Dutt, too, has a connection with Rajasthan. The play that he wrote called *Krishnakumari* is based on a legend that is coming to us through Colonel James Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*. Why Dutt now?

What if I were to invite Dutt to JLF, mused Gokhale. How would he behave? How would we handle him? I am sure he would be a difficult writer to look after, but a brilliant speaker: I am obsessed by the writing process. In 2004, I wrote a review of *Heart of a Rebel Poet* as well as another book on Dutt, and I resolved there and then to do a play around them because the letters in the *Heart of a Rebel Poet* were automatically, naturally, spontaneously, forming a sequence of five acts. We have tried to pay a tribute to

the great genius of this man overshadowed by the dramatic and colourful and ultimately tragic details of his life.

The Booker-shortlisted Adam Fould's new novel, *Dream Sequence*, is about the brutality of fame and what happens when fandom turns to obsession. *Dream Sequence* explores what it is to live in our current moment, with its porous borders between the inner and the outer life. Foulds was asked by Elaine Canning to talk about the blurring of the dream and the magical with the real in the novel. In the word, dream, we have the double meaning of



Priyanka Chopra Jonas

ambition, in the sense of something that we aspire to and the sense of something that is unreal, a fantasy. Both these meanings are captured in the lives of the two main characters. In life, too, there is more and more the saturation of fantasy and the liquefying of reality in people's lives that is happening in so many ways, in terms of our online life and political life, where we are entering a kind of dream sequence very frequently. Unlike in earlier times, today, with social media, we can track the celebrities we are interested

in real time, in terms of where they are and what they are doing, and we can interact with them and have them respond to us, and yet it is all saturated with fantasy and does not really mean what we might hope it could mean, Foulds said. His observations were immediately relatable.

In her chat with author Shobhaa De on her autobiography, *Unfinished*, actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas spoke highly of her co-actor in the film, *The White Tiger*, Adarsh Gourav, as well as the success of the OTT (over-the-top) platform. Adarsh has done tremendous work and might be nominated as one of the first Indian leading men, she averred. But Chopra Jonas has an unfinished agenda. It wasn't in people's consciousnesses that a brown person can be the lead of the show, she said to De. Literally, there used to be a saying in Hollywood during that time that black and brown movies do not work for audiences outside America. This was the insider's myth and, incredibly, we have been able to change that in just five years' time. *The White Tiger* is probably historic. It has an all-Indian star cast that was the No. 1 movie in the world on the largest streaming platform in the world. That's what I want to normalise — seeing people who look like us. We have the largest movie industry in the world. Why can't we have that kind of representation in English speaking entertainment? Talk about game changers?

Visit www.jaipurliteraturefestival.com to register and attend. February 28 is the last day.



FAST FACT: I actually had to stop being a journalist to write the novel, says Deepa Anappara, writer of the magnificent debut, *Djinn Patrol on the Purple Line* (Penguin Random House, 2020). For years, I really struggled to make that switch from fact to fiction. I placed such a high level of importance on research and things being true that for me to really trust my imagination it took a really long time, she said at the Jaipur Literature Festival.



Clever treatise marries economics, storytelling



Savita Patel

review

What Economics does to do with how I protect my shoes from thieves outside a temple, or with the "atithi devo bhava" motto, or whether to wear a seatbelt versus solely relying on a prayer to keep me safe while driving? Virginia Tech's Dr Sudipta Sarangi's book *The Economics of Small Things* entertains us with often witty anecdotes as he brings out connections between economics and everyday behavioural choices. Delightful incidents from films, music industry, social media, history, and author's personal experiences intersect in this book to reveal how laws of economics govern social norms and preferences.

Mahatma Gandhi's economically non-defensible complaint against the railways makes for an interesting case to talk about economic motives behind pricing of goods. Laws of demand explain why the best alphonso mangoes get exported from India and become cheaper abroad. The financial success of the

music company T-series and the profitable placement of breakfast cereals in a grocery store, demonstrate how you can benefit from writing a resume that uses the concept of product differentiation. Managers can learn team building skills from a gang of Scandinavian shoe stealers via the complementary goods theory. The story of Pied Piper of Hamelin is analyzed using game theory to prove that it is wise to not keep your work skills a secret if you want to be paid for them. I wish I had such an easy to read and humorous collection of examples to relate complicated economic theories with, when I was studying for my Bachelors in Economics.

Dr Sarangi weaves anecdotes, recent and historical economic incidents with fascinating studies by economists, including Nobel laureates, to create stories that elucidate the reasoning behind human exploits. To give an example, here is an excerpt from the chapter "A Tale of Two Bounties" — Apparently, worried about the number of cobras in Delhi, the British colonial

government had started offering a bounty to anyone who turned in a dead cobra. The story goes that in response to this, some smart people started farming cobras. As a result, the government finally had to kill the programme. The German economist, Horst Siebert, is supposed to have coined the term "Cobra Effect" to describe the phenomenon in a book where he provided numerous examples of such perverse incentives. The author describes various riveting incidents to interpret that incentives impact human behaviour but large incentives like bounties can distort human behaviour. Hence nation states don't deal with hostage takers or protect falling banks to not encourage more hostage taking or risky financial practices.

Economics of Small Things comprises of chapters that don't have to be read in any particular order. The flexibility allows one to read the book in small chunks over time or smile through it in one go, like I did. Professor Sarangi's book tells tales of everyday economics, in a style that makes one reminiscent of long conversations with friends over endless cups of tea. The book has elements of a travelogue-cum-memoir, the author drawing upon personal encounters, funny anecdotes, and travels to show how the world can be

explored through the spectrum of economics. This excerpt is from the author's time in Istanbul for the Fourth World Congress of the Game Theory Society aka Game Theory Olympics in the chapter "Palaces, Raki and Game Theory" — Drinking raki usually requires a group of good friends and plenty of food, especially cheese (peynir in Turkish) and kebabs, and the circle that is formed is the equivalent of the Indian adda. So gather up a bunch of friends, order plenty of food, eat a bit and raise a toast (serefe in Turkish) and take a sip; no bottoms up here. If you are looking to

generate some surefire table talk, this book is brimming with tales, incidents, events and phenomenon — a conversation starter, its engaging stories and facts make it a delightful read for fiction and non-fiction lovers. Dr Sarangi teaches a popular course, "Economic Puzzles in History, Literature & Movies" at Virginia Tech.

Being easy to relate to, *The Economics of Small Things* appeals to both young minds like my tween son who could connect with many concepts including that of "the free rider", and to specialists like Kaushik Basu, who wrote the foreword. Cornell University professor, Kaushik Basu was formerly the chief economist at the World Bank and chief economic advisor to the Government of India.

The word, economics, is synonymous with complex and difficult to grasp terms such as income, inflation and interest rates. This is a rare storytelling from an economist. It builds a lot of anticipation as chapters progress, hence it could have ended with a crescendo rather than a summation. If economics were a stand-up comedian, it would become *The Economics of Small Things*.



THE ECONOMICS OF SMALL THINGS
By SUDIPTA SARANGI
Penguin Books
₹299

Savita Patel is a writer and producer, based in San Francisco Bay Area, USA

The paedophile who hid in plain sight

Until this book was published, Gabriel Matzneff was a respectable man. The French author may have written about his affairs with young girls and his travels to the Philippines in search of pre-pubescent boys — insert Gallic shrug here — but he still won literary prizes and enjoyed a state stipend. He was celebrated by the chattering classes, who said little when he brought different adolescent girls as his plus one to interviews.

Little V, or V sometimes, was one of those girls. She had slipped in and out of his affections for decades. In *Consent*, her memoir, Vanessa Springora returns the favour and refers to him by his initial. She first met G. at a dinner party in 1986. She was 13, dragged along by her single mother who worked in publishing. He was the guest of honour. He was over 50.

The grooming process she describes was both assiduous and unoriginal. He sent her letters for weeks (her mother was likely to answer the telephone). He started to bump into her in her neighbourhood. He organised a meeting outdoors, then told her that he had afternoon tea ready at his flat. By the second date she thought she was ready to lose her virginity. She had only just turned 14.

Over a decade before, Matzneff had written what was really a playbook for paedophiles (reprinted as late as 2005). Springora describes how she furnished him with the perfect victim. Her parents were divorced and she was precocious, book-smart and hungry for attention — quite ordinary, in other words. Jane Eyre is loved by so many teenage girls for a reason.

The suspense in *Consent* comes from waiting for someone to step in: Springora's father, a doctor, a family friend, a teacher or the police. But, slowly, she herself began to see through Matzneff. She started to read his books. In them she discovered he had copied out letters he'd received from young girls. He thrived on hiding in plain sight. Now a respected literary editor, Springora is no puritan; she has no interest in condemning a relationship simply because of an expansive age gap. The word rape is too simple. Her contempt is cool and sardonic and the prose spare. It is his sordid repetitiveness she objects to, and his hypocrisy.

This isn't a misery memoir, or an account of survival against all odds. It reads like a dark fairy tale. Alice has fallen through the looking-glass. I can't help but cheer her on. Matzneff's legacy is now enmeshed forever in this clever, thoughtful and honest book.

Written by Fleur Macdonald. By arrangement with the *Spectator*.

CONSENT

By VANESSA
SPRINGORA
HarperVia, £12.99

SHORT TAKES

Alfiya punches 1st gold for India

New Delhi: Indian women boxers continued their fine run as Alfiya Pathan (81+kg) claimed the country's first gold medal even as five others stormed into the finals of the 30th Adriatic Pearl Tournament in Budva, Montenegro. Babyrojisana Chanu (51kg), Vinka (60kg), Arundhati (69kg) and Sanamacha Chanu (75kg) have made the finals in their respective categories. An Asian junior girls champion in 2019, Alfiya notched up an easy 5-0 win against Daria Kozorev of Moldova. Nagpur's Alfiya looked in complete control throughout the bout and made the opponent work hard with her swift movement and precise punches. The Indian contingent has so far assured itself of 12 medals with five women eyeing gold. — *PTI*

Manu miffed with Air India officials

New Delhi: Tokyo Olympics medal prospect Manu Bhaker has demanded action against two Air India employees for allegedly "harassing" and "insulting" the pistol shooter while she tried to board a flight to Bhopal from Delhi. The 19-year-old Commonwealth Games and Youth Olympics gold medallist pistol shooter eventually managed to board the aircraft on Friday evening after the intervention of Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju. Manu, one of the country's brightest medal hopes at the upcoming Games, thanked Rijiju for his prompt intervention but is also hoping for action against the Air India officials at Delhi airport. Later, Air India, too, apologised for the conduct of its staff. — *PTI*

Pak may push for T20 WC relocation

Karachi: Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Hsani Mani said they will push for the upcoming T20 World Cup's "relocation" to the UAE if India doesn't provide a written assurance that its team, fans and scribes will be granted visas for the event. During an interaction at the PCB headquarters, Mani said his board had expressed their views to the ICC. "We are not seeking written assurance for the visas of the national team only, but for the fans, officials and journalists as well." Mani added, "We have told the ICC that India should give written assurances by the end of March so that we know where we stand or we will push for the relocation of the World Cup from India to UAE," he said. India will host the T20 WC in October-November. — *PTI*

Pakistan League hit by Covid-19

Karachi: One player has tested positive for coronavirus while another player and an official were quarantined after breaching disease protocols ahead of the start of the Pakistan Super League in Karachi on Saturday. Six teams are vying for the title in the sixth edition of the Twenty20 league, which runs from February 20 to March 22 in Karachi and Lahore. "A player from a franchise team who had shown symptoms and was in isolation has tested positive," the Pakistan Cricket Board said in a statement. "He will now remain in quarantine for 10 days and will require two negative tests in order to rejoin the side." The identity of the player was not disclosed. — *AFP*

Live on TV

TENNIS

Australian Open: Men's doubles final from 7:30 am; Men's singles final from 1:30 pm on Sony Six, Sony Ten 2, HD

CRICKET

South Africa T20 Challenge: Cobras vs Titans from 1:30 pm; Warriors vs Dolphins from 5:55 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

PSL: Lahore Qalandars vs Peshawar Zalmi from 2:30 pm on Sony Ten 1, HD

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: Bengaluru vs Goa from 4:50 pm; Kerala Blasters vs Chennaiyin from 7:20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

English Premier League: West Ham vs Tottenham Hotspur from 5:30 pm; Aston Villa vs Leicester City from 7:30 pm; Arsenal vs Manchester City from 10 pm; Manchester United vs Newcastle United from 12:20 am (Monday) on Star Sports Select 1, HD

Italian League: AC Milan vs Inter Milan from 7:30 pm on Sony Ten 1; Atalanta vs Napoli from 10:30 pm; Benevento vs Roma from 1:15 am (Monday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

O! SAKE TIME

Japan's Naomi dominates Brady to win Oz Open again

Melbourne, Feb. 20: Japan's Naomi Osaka dismissed Jennifer Brady in straight sets to win the Australian Open and underline her growing hold on women's tennis on Saturday.

Osaka edged a tight first set but controlled the second to win 6-4, 6-3 in 77 minutes in front of 7,381 fans at Rod Laver Arena.

Third seed Osaka preserves her 100 percent record in Grand Slam finals after winning the 2018 and 2020 US Opens and the 2019 title in Melbourne.

The reigning US Open champion, who beat her idol Serena Williams in the Melbourne semi-finals, has now won two of the last three Grand Slams as her status and reputation soars.

"We played in the semis of the US Open a couple of months ago and I told everyone that you're going to be a problem," Osaka told Brady at the trophy presentation.

"And I was right. It's really incredible to me to see your growth over the past few months, it's really cool for me to see."

Osaka, 23, is only the third player after Monica Seles and Roger Federer to win their first four major finals, and will now rise to second in the world rankings.

She saved two match points in the fourth round against Garbine Muguruza and swept past Williams in straight sets in the semis.

On Saturday, Osaka wore down fellow big-hitter Brady, and then lifted her racquet above her head in celebration of her win as the crowd roared.

After sealing back-to-back Slam titles twice, Osaka has won half the majors she's contested since beating Williams to win her first in 2018.

"Thank you for coming and watching, it feels really incredible for me," she told the crowd, which was capped at half-capacity over coronavirus concerns. I didn't play my last Grand Slam with fans so just to have this energy really means a lot."

US OPEN REMATCH

The Japanese survived a



Japan's Naomi Osaka celebrates with the winner's trophy after her women's singles final match against Jennifer Brady of the USA in the Australian Open on Saturday. — *AFP*

You don't go into a final wanting to be the runner-up. For me, I feel like every opportunity that I play a Slam is an opportunity to win a Slam.

— **NAOMI OSAKA** after winning the Australian Open crown

seesaw start to gain control, reeling off six straight games en route to the title.

It was a rematch of last year's epic US Open semi-final, described by some as the best match of 2020, but Osaka triumphed far more comfortably on this occasion.

Before the match, Osaka

had pinpointed her return as the key, but she was helped out by a shaky Brady who lost her serve in the fourth game after two double faults.

But Brady, the 22nd seed, hit back with a break and she continued to pile pressure on Osaka's serve.

A brilliant lob winner,

showcasing her trademark athleticism, gave a pumped-up Brady a break point in the ninth game, but Osaka held on.

Brady then played a sloppy game on serve to hand over the set to Osaka, who had a 20-0 record at Melbourne Park when winning the first set. — *AFP*

MIXED DOUBLES TITLE FOR RAM & KREJCIKOVA

Melbourne, Feb. 20: Barbora Krejckikova and Rajeev Ram won their second Australian Open mixed doubles title in three years on Saturday with a 6-1, 6-4 win over home pairing Sam Stosur and Matthew Ebden.

For Krejckikova it was her third Australian Open title in a row after combining with Nikola Mektic of Croatia to win the mixed doubles a year ago. She had lost in the women's doubles final with fellow Czech Katerina Siniakova on Friday to Elise Mertens and Aryna Sabalenka, but put her disappointment behind her in just 59 minutes on Rod Laver Arena.

"We had a year off as a team, but she didn't have a year off and won this thing last year," Ram said of Krejckikova at the presentation ceremony. — *AFP*

LOW-KEY CELEBRATION FOR OSAKA

Melbourne, Feb. 20: Japan's Naomi Osaka said she's living her "dreams" after winning the Australian Open, adding that she'll celebrate with anime and pizza. "I'm really just living my dreams," she told Channel Nine after her win.

"I'm always shaking a little bit (at the end). Thank God I had three match points."

Reinforcing her reputation herself as tennis's leading light, having won four of her last eight Slams she's played, Osaka warned she was not satisfied. But after her triumph, Osaka planned a low-key celebration.

"I'm probably going to watch some anime... Maybe (eat) pizza... And go to sleep." — *AFP*

VIJAY HAZARE | TROPHY

Ricky, Vihari set up Andhra's win

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 20

Ricky Bhui smashed an unbeaten century as Andhra made a screaming start to their campaign in the Vijay Hazare Trophy with a three-wicket win over Vidarbha on Saturday. Chasing Vidarbha's strong 331 for 6 that was built on centuries from Yash Rathod (117) and Faiz Fazal (100), Ricky slammed 101, hitting six boundaries and six sixes in his 78-ball knock as Andhra chased down the total with four balls to spare.

Captain Hanuma Vihari contributed 65 while Nitish Kumar Reddy made 54 to help Andhra's cause.

TILAK, MILIND SCRIPT HYDERABAD VICTORY

Meanwhile, the lefties got it right for Hyderabad. Consistent performer Thakur Tilak Varma smashed another century while seamer C. V. Milind scalped five wickets as Hyderabad beat Tripura.

Opener Tilak thumped 10 fours and five sixes in his 156 that came off 145 balls to bolster the side's total to 349 for 5 in 50 overs after being put in to bat. Captain Tanmay Agarwal (86), B. Sandeep (41) and Himalay Agarwal (38) played supporting roles.

Tripura found the total too steep, especially up



Thakur Tilak Varma

against Milind's deliveries and were all out for 236 in 42 overs. Milind returned with fine figures of 5 for 43 as Hyderabad collected four points.

In Bengaluru, Rinku Singh smashed an unbeaten 62 as Uttar Pradesh stunned defending champions Karnataka by nine runs via the VJD Method in their rain-truncated Group 'C' opener.

Chasing 247 in the stipulated 50 overs, Uttar Pradesh had a slow start and were 150/4 in 32 overs, but then, the KKR left-hander took charge of the proceedings, hitting seven boundaries and one six in his 61-ball knock.

BRIEF SCORES

■ Vidarbha 331/6 in 50 overs (Yash Rathod 117, Faiz Fazal 100; C. Stephen 3/66, Girinath Reddy 2/78) lost to Andhra 332/7 in 49.2 overs (**Ricky Bhui 101 not out — 78b, 6x4, 6x6**, Hanuma Vihari 65; Darshan Nalkande 3/76, Aditya Thakare 2/76) by three wickets.

■ Hyderabad 349/5 in 50 overs (**Thakur Tilak Varma 156 — 145b, 10x4, 5x6**, Tanmay Agarwal 86, Himalay Agarwal 38, B. Sandeep 41, R. A. Dey 2 for 45) bt Tripura 236 in 42 overs (Bikram Kumar Das 65, Milind 67, **C. V. Milind 5/43 — 8-0-43-5**, T. Ravi Teja 2/60, B. Sandeep 2/47). **Points:** Hyderabad 4, Tripura 0.

■ Karnataka 246/8 in 50 overs (Aniruddha Joshi 68, Devdutt Padikkal 52; Shivam Sharma 3/40) lost to Uttar Pradesh 215/4 in 45.2 overs (Rinku Singh 62 not out, Abhishek Goswami 54, Karan Sharma 40) by nine runs (VJD Method).

■ Odisha 258/8 in 45 overs (Sandeep Pattnaik 66, Gourav Choudhury 57, Kartik Biswal 45 not out) lost to Kerala 233/4 in 38.2 overs (Robin Uthappa 107, Sachin Baby 40; Sourav Kanoria 3/43) by 34 runs (VJD Method).

■ Bihar 189 in 45.5 overs (Anuj Raj 72, Shabbir Khan 46 not out; T. Pradeep 6/43, Amit Mishra 3/30) lost to Railways 190 for no loss in 29 overs (Mrunal Devdhar 105 not out, Pratham Singh 72 not out) by 10 wickets.

■ Goa 263 in 49.1 overs (Snehal Kauthankar 81; K D Eknath 43; Atit Sheth 3/50; Krunal Pandya 3/62) lost to Baroda 264/5 in 48.3 overs (Vishnu Solanki 108, Karan Pandya 71; Amit Verma 2-39, Amulya Pandrekar 1-35) by five wickets.

■ Chhattisgarh 231 in 48.5 overs (Shashank Chandrakar 92, Ashutosh Singh 47; Arzan Nagwaswala 6/54, Chintan Gajra 2/50) lost to Gujarat 232/7 in 48.1 overs (Dhiruv Raval 38, B H Merai 38; Veer Pratap Singh 2/38) by three wickets.

■ Jharkhand 422/9 in 50 overs (Ishan Kishan 173, Anukul Roy 72; Virat Singh 68; Gourav Yadav 4/73, Shubham Sharma 1/44) beat Madhya Pradesh 98 in 18.5 overs (Abhishek Bhandari 42; Venkatesh Iyer 23; Varun Aaron 6/37, Bal Krishna 2/8) by 324 runs.

■ Punjab 288/4 in 50 overs (Gurkeerat Mann 139 not out, Prabhsimran Singh 71; Baba Aparajith 1/15, R Sai Kishore 1/31) lost to Tamil Nadu 289/4 in 49 overs (N. Jagadeesan 101, Baba Aparajith 88; Shaikhur Khan 55 not out; Siddharth Kaul 2/47, Karan Kalra 1/44) by six wickets.

Djoker takes on Medvedev in final

Melbourne, Feb. 20: Novak Djokovic says going unbeaten in eight Australian Open finals will give him confidence in Sunday's decider, but he'll need more than that to overcome "the man to beat" — red-hot Russian Daniil Medvedev.

The Serbian world number one is into his ninth decider at Melbourne Park as he targets an 18th Slam title to close the gap on Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, who have 20 each.

It has been a rollercoaster ride to get there, with Djokovic uncharacteristically dropping five sets as he battled an abdominal injury that nearly forced him to pull out.

But after his semi-final, Djokovic said he was feeling better than at any time during the past fortnight as he prepares to defend his crown against a man on a 20-match unbeaten streak.

The Serb heads into the showpiece on Sunday evening with the phenom-



enal record of never losing a final on Melbourne's famous blue courts in eight attempts spanning 13 years.

Djokovic will also be playing his 28th Grand Slam final, in contrast to the Russian's second.

But the 33-year-old, who swept past qualifier Aslan Karatsev in the semi-finals, said while experience was clearly an advantage, Medvedev was also in electric form.

"Of course it con-

tributes to more confidence, prior to coming into the finals knowing that I never lost in the finals or semi-finals just makes me feel more comfortable being on the court," he said.

Medvedev is unbeaten since last November, including a straight-sets drubbing of the Serb at the ATP Finals in London, with Djokovic deeming him "the man to beat".

"He's just so solid. Also,

I heard (commentator) Jim Courier calling him a master chess player because of the way he tactically positions himself on the court, and it's true," he said.

"He's definitely a very smart tennis player."

'HE'S THE FAVOURITE'

Medvedev, who has dropped just two sets so far, insisted that despite having all the momentum he was still the underdog. "He's the favourite because he didn't lose. On eight occasions that he was here in the semis he won the tournament," said the 25-year-old.

"Me, I'm... The challenger, the guy that challenges the guy who has eight times in the final and won eight times. And I'm happy about it.

"I know that to beat him you need to just show your best tennis, be at your best physically maybe four or five hours, and be at your best mentally maybe for five hours," he added. — *AFP*

Suryakumar, Ishan in T20I squad

New Delhi, Feb. 20: Young wicket-keeper batsman Ishan Kishan, Suryakumar Yadav and Rahul Tewatia were on Saturday named in India's 19-man squad for the five-match T20 series against England.

Yadav finally breaks into the team after consistent performances for Mumbai in domestic cricket as well as Mumbai

Indians in the Indian Premier League.

Kishan, who also plays Mumbai Indians, has been in red hot form in white-ball cricket and has been rewarded and will be second stumper in the side along with Risabh Pant.

Haryana's Tewatia too made the cut after a memorable IPL.

Left-arm wrist spinner

Kuldeep Yadav and Manosh Pandey have been dropped while pacer Jasprit Bumrah has been rested.

The T20 series will be played in Ahmedabad from March 12.

THE SQUAD

Virat Kohli (Captain), Rohit Sharma (vice-captain), KL Rahul, Shikhar Dhawan, Shreyas Iyer,

Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya, Rishabh Pant (wicket-keeper), Ishan Kishan (wicket-keeper), Yuzvendra Chahal, Varun Chakravarthy, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Rahul Tewatia, T. Natarajan, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Deepak Chahar, Navdeep Saini and Shardul Thakur. — *PTI*

