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HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | 24 MARCH 2021

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Vol. 84 No. 82 Established 1938 | 20 PAGES | ₹6.00

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RH: 29%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Maximum Minimum temp. 36/24°C

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Uttarakaya
Tithi: Phalguna Shuddha Dasami till 10.19 am

Star: Pushyami till 11.06 pm

Varjyanam: 6.48 am to 8.26 am

Durmuhurtam: 11.58 am to 12.46 pm

Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR

Sha'ban 10,1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajr: 5.17 am

Zohar: 12.33 pm

Asar: 4.44 pm

Maghrib: 6.34 pm

Isha: 7.41 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.27 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.16 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 2.15 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 2.51 AM

COUNTER POINT



Congrats! You are selected for best actor award for your performance during polls!

■ WORLD... PAGE 10
AstraZeneca may have used outdated info: US

Centre's plea on CS stuck in HC

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

The Narendra Modi-led Central government is struggling to pursue a legal fight against Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, with its case challenging his continuation in the Telangana cadre remaining unheard in the Telangana High Court for almost four years.

Following the state bifurcation, Somesh Kumar was allotted to Andhra Pradesh cadre, but obtained an order from the Hyderabad bench of the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) in March 2016 to work in the Telangana cadre.

The High Court website reveals that a Writ Petition was filed by the Department of Personnel and Training against the CAT order in February 2017. It was listed only once in June 2019 for admission. If Mr Kumar continues to enjoy this privilege and work in the Telangana cadre for the next two years, he would retire from service in 2023.

Stating that the CAT "misconstrued the provisions of law and its approach is manifestly misconceived and misdirected," the DoPT knocked the HC doors with a plea to suspend the operation of the CAT order.

"Both parties have their respective arguments. Let the case be judged on merits. But, the case has remained unheard so far," said sources in DoPT, which is the controlling authority of the All India Services (AIS) officers.

Somesh Kumar argued in the tribunal that he should be permitted to continue in the TS cadre as his wife has been working in DRDO, Hyderabad.

Mr Kumar questioned the rationale behind the rules framed by the Advisory Committee for "outsider officers" belonging to the unreserved category at the time of cadre allocation. "Outsiders" are defined as those personnel allotted to the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh from other states.

“Due to mass congregation of students, there is a possibility of the virus

TS shuts all schools, colleges

Decision applies to all education institutions, hostels; medical colleges to run

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

The state government has announced closure of all educational institutions in Telangana from March 24, Wednesday, in view of the fresh spurt in Coronavirus cases in the state. However, the online classes will continue as usual.

Minister for education P. Sabitha Indra Reddy made a statement to this effect in the assembly on Tuesday. The government issued orders declaring closure of all educational institutions soon after.

The orders are applicable to all educational institutions in private and government sectors including hostels and government-run gurukulam schools (residential schools) barring medical colleges.

Sabitha said the Covid-19 cases were on the rise across the country as well as in neighbouring states. There were sporadic incidents of Covid-19 cases being reported from educational institutions across Telangana.

“Due to mass congregation of students, there is a possibility of the virus



Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao held a meeting with education minister P. Sabitha Indra Reddy to access situation in the state in view of rising Covid cases across India.

During the meeting, he directed the education minister to shut down all education institutions in the state as a precautionary measure.

spread. States like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh have already closed educational institutions. There is also an increasing number of requests from parents who are concerned about the health of their children. Keeping in view the par-

ents' requests and the safety of students and teachers, it has been decided to declare closure of all educational institutions including government and private educational institutions along with hostels from Wednesday as a precautionary measure. Online classes will be continued," she said.

The minister held a meeting with Chief Minister Chandrashekhar Rao on the corona cases in educational institutions before she made the statement. The Chief Minister asked her to close educational institutions as a precautionary measure.

The decision comes in the wake of the sudden spurt in daily fresh cases in several parts of the country. On Tuesday, 40,715 new cases and 199 deaths were recorded. Maharashtra had 28,699 new cases.

Meanwhile, the coronavirus-induced suspension of scheduled international passenger flights has been extended till April 30, Indian aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said.

All above 45 years can take Covid jab

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, MARCH 23

go and take the vaccine shot. "We request that all eligible persons should immediately register and get vaccinated," he said.

In a letter to all chief secretaries, Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan asked them to widely publicise this decision so that more people can take advantage of it.

The home ministry has, meanwhile, issued fresh guidelines for effective control of Covid-19 and asked states to rapidly increase RT-PCR testing to at least 70 per cent.

The states are free to impose restrictions at the local level but there must be no hindrance on inter-state and intra-state movement of persons and goods, including for cross border trade with neighbouring countries, and no separate permission or permit will be required for such movements.

KCR to notify 50,000 jobs

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao is all set to announce a mega recruitment drive to fill over 50,000 vacancies in government departments.

Sources said the Chief Minister has directed

chief secretary Somesh Kumar to submit a report on existing vacancies in all government departments by March 24.

Based on the report, the CM is likely to announce the decision to fill the vacancies on March 25 or 26.

Following the Chief

BJP WILL WIN 200 SEATS OUT OF 294 IN BENGAL: SHAH

Udalguri (Assam), March 23: Home minister Amit Shah said on Tuesday that the Congress' tie-up with the AIUDF will be a factor in the BJP-led alliance's win in the Assam assembly polls as voters will back the saffron party decisively because its main rival cannot stop the influx of illegal immigrants by joining hands with Badruddin Ajmal, accused by the ruling bloc of protecting infiltrators.

The senior BJP leader also predicted a thumping win for his party in West Bengal, asserting that people there are yearning for a change from the Trinamool Congress' "misrule".

"We will win more than 200 seats in Bengal and improve our tally in Assam," he said.

Asked about the ground for his confidence about the BJP's big victory in the elections to 294-member West Bengal assembly, Shah said the party has only strengthened its position since the 2019 Lok Sabha polls while the Trinamool's support base has eroded.

— PTI

13 PEOPLE KILLED IN ROAD ACCIDENT IN MADHYA PRADESH

Gwalior, March 23: Twelve women and a man were killed after the auto-rickshaw in which they were traveling collided with a speeding bus in Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday. The accident took place around 5 am on Gwalior-Morena road when the bus driver apparently tried to avoid hitting a person on the road, said state transport minister Govind Singh Rajput.

— PTI

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IN BRIEF
23,023 receive
first dose of jab

Hyderabad: A total of 23,023 beneficiaries were given the vaccine first dose and 1,106 the second dose for protection from Covid-19 on Monday. Of these, healthcare workers were 975, frontline workers 972, senior citizens 12,065 and those aged between 45 and 59 years 9,011 given the first dose. The second dose was given to 331 healthcare workers and 775 frontline workers. The total number of those vaccinated in the state stood at 9,68,050; of which 2,90,530 were senior citizens.

TS reports 412 new Covid cases

Hyderabad: There have been 412 new cases of Coronavirus, 103 of which are from Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits; taking the total number of cases in the state to 3,03,867. Three new deaths have taken the toll 1,674. Incidentally, GHMC has crossed the mark of 100 cases on a day after a gap of two months. This signals authorities in the state capital need to be alert, with emphasis on testing and tracking cases. Ranga Reddy district on city outskirts recorded 27 cases, while Medchal-Malkajgiri reported 31 and Sangareddy eight cases. Testing of samples has increased to 68,171, which shows the state government is keen on controlling the spread of virus.

Revanth tests Covid-19 positive

Hyderabad: Member of Parliament from Malkajgiri A. Revanth Reddy has tested positive for Coronavirus. Revanth, who is also working president of Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC), had returned to Hyderabad on Friday after attending the Lok Sabha session. Having isolated himself since Saturday following symptoms, the MP on Tuesday tweeted: "I (have been) found Covid-19 positive. I went into isolation on advice of a doctor.

Those who have been in direct contact with me for a few days should be careful. Take appropriate precautions." (sic)

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla had tested positive for Coronavirus infection on March 19. He was admitted to AIIMS Covid Centre for observation the next day. TRS MLC Puranam Satish has also tested positive.

INTER STUDENT JUMPS OFF BUILDING

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

An intermediate student allegedly ended her life by reportedly jumping from her college building on Tuesday evening.

According to the police, the deceased, identified as Shifa Naaz, was a student of Anwar-Ul-Uloom college at Mallepally area under Habeebnagar police station limits.

She suffered severe head injuries in the fall and succumbed while she was being shifted to hospital for medical attention, police said who were called on the spot via dial 100 call.

A team of Habeebnagar police station reached the spot and took up the investigation by booking a case under section 174 (suspicous death) of CrPC. The reasons for the suicide is yet to be known.

ENGINEERING STUDENT ENDS LIFE BY SUICIDE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

A 22-year-old engineering student has allegedly committed suicide by jumping from her hostel building under Pet Basheerabad police station limits on Monday night.

The matter came to light after some hostellers found her body on back side of the hostel building. Police have identified the deceased as Chandrika, a third year computer science student of Malla Reddy Engineering College. She hails from Miriyalaguda and was taking her semester examinations before taking the extreme step.

Pet Basheerabad police said Chandrika was living in the hostel along with three other roommates. They noticed her absence in the night but thought she might be sleeping in another friend's room, as she used to often do.

No GHMC camps this year too

Civic body summer coaching disrupted, pvt organisations allowed to hold camps

MADDY DEEKSHIT | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

modate migrant workers and beggars. They stressed that cancellation of summer camps is only a rear-guard action to fight Covid-19 in the city as the pandemic was seen to be on the rise again.

Over the years, these camps have turned out to be the most popular event in the city during the summer. Started by late L. Venkatram Reddy in the 60s, these drew many young boys and girls. Reddy's 'Catch-Them Young' programme was highly popular. The corporation was utilising 521 playgrounds, seven swimming pools, 17 sports complexes, five tennis courts

AN OFFICIAL also said GHMC received instructions from top that if there is a steep rise in the Covid cases there could be a possible lockdown.

and 11 roller skating rinks for this purpose.

According to GHMC officials, it is not feasible to conduct the summer camps this year. "With the situation not improving, we have no alternative but to cancel it this year. This will hurt many young trainees," he said.

An official also said the corporation received instructions from top that if there is a steep rise in

the Covid-19 cases there could be a possible lockdown and the playgrounds would have to be used to accommodate migrant labourers and beggars.

However, private entities operating playgrounds and swimming pools can continue with normal functions at least for now.

Recalling the glory of summer coaching camps, a senior GHMC official said there was tremendous enthusiasm for the summer camps. "Many talents from the city were spotted and picked up for extensive training from these summer camps. It was one of the innovative projects of Venkatram

Reddy. He as a director showed a lot of interest in making the young boys and girls learn the game. The talented picks were given intensive training. Some of them went on to represent the state and the country," he said.

The GHMC official said the B.V. Gurumurthy swimming pool in Secunderabad was the most-sought-after camp. "Of course, volleyball, cricket, badminton, tennis, table tennis and many other games were played in over 700 camps. It is sad that this year there will be no summer camps. It will be missed by the young trainees," he said.



KIMS hospital staff unveil a pylon to mark the 1st National Covid-19 Memorial Day, in Hyderabad, on Tuesday.

— BY ARRANGEMENT

KIMS remembers lost Coronavirus warriors

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

THE INITIATIVE was taken up as a part of the national movement to remember Covid-19 warriors who laid down their lives.

Expressing his gratitude to all the warriors, Dr B. Bhaskar Rao said, "Covid-19 did not just test the medical abilities of the healthcare machinery. Not just doctors, nursing & support staff, but every frontline worker including police who stood up to fight the virus and laid down their lives in the line of duty while saving others,"

was unveiled by Dr B. Bhaskar Rao, Managing Director, KIMS Hospitals.

all the more important that people do not become complacent. It is critically important to follow all precautions like social distancing and using masks even if you are vaccinated."

Dr P. Raghu Ram, Director, KIMS-Ushalakshmi Centre for Diseases said, "The frontline healthcare professionals through the very tough times, kept the good of the patient as their highest priority, risking their own lives and that of their families. My prayers are with the families of hundreds of healthcare professionals who lost their lives in the fight against this invisible virus."

He said "with the risk of the second wave, it is

TS welcomes jabs for 45+ age group

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

The decision by the Central government to open up Covid-19 vaccination to anyone over 45 years, has been welcomed by the Telangana State Health Department.

Director of Public Health Dr G. Srinivasa Rao said, "We welcome the Central

government move to vaccinate 45+ groups, which will help us contain the spread of the disease further."

Telangana had been for quite some time, urging the Centre to open up vaccination to all sections of people, as one of the methods for controlling the spread, or the intensity of the infections, is through vaccinations.

OU, JNTU, BRAOU to hold examinations

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

The Osmania University, Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, and the BR Ambedkar Open University plan on conducting exams as planned and there will be no changes in the already announced examination schedules.

The clarification followed the state government's

decision on Tuesday announcing the closure of all educational institutions and hostels to stop the spreading of Coronavirus among students.

However, students affected by Covid-19 who cannot attend the exams will be allowed to retake those they have missed and such retaken exams will be treated as regular exams and not supplementary examinations.

him. In another video, the car driver was seen being beaten by two persons as he couldn't walk due to the injuries he suffered. It also showed locals protesting in front of the Sadashivapet police station against the police brutality.

As a row erupted over the police high-handedness on the car driver, Sangareddy SP Chandra Shekhar Reddy initiated disciplinary action against the police officers involved in the incident.

"Police constable Ramulu and Home Guard Balaraju were suspended and assistant SI Durgaiah and constable Prasad were attached to the Sangareddy headquarters," said the police.

In a similar incident last year, Sangareddy district police was in the spotlight after a police constable kicked the grieving father of a 16-year-old teenager who committed suicide. The constable was suspended.

DURGA PRASAD SUNKU | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Within hours after videos of police beating a car driver went viral on social media, the Sangareddy SP has suspended two police personnel and attached two others to the headquarters, on Tuesday.

Sangareddy district police conducted a vehicle checking during which they stopped a car driven by Wajid. After checking, the police asked the driver to go; then they changed their mind and asked him to stop. Wajid, in a confused state, drove the vehicle and brushed past a police officer.

Police pulled out Wajid from the car and started bashing him on the road. Some onlookers took a video of the incident. The videos showed four policemen kicking the driver repeatedly. While he was writhing in pain, one policeman caned

him.

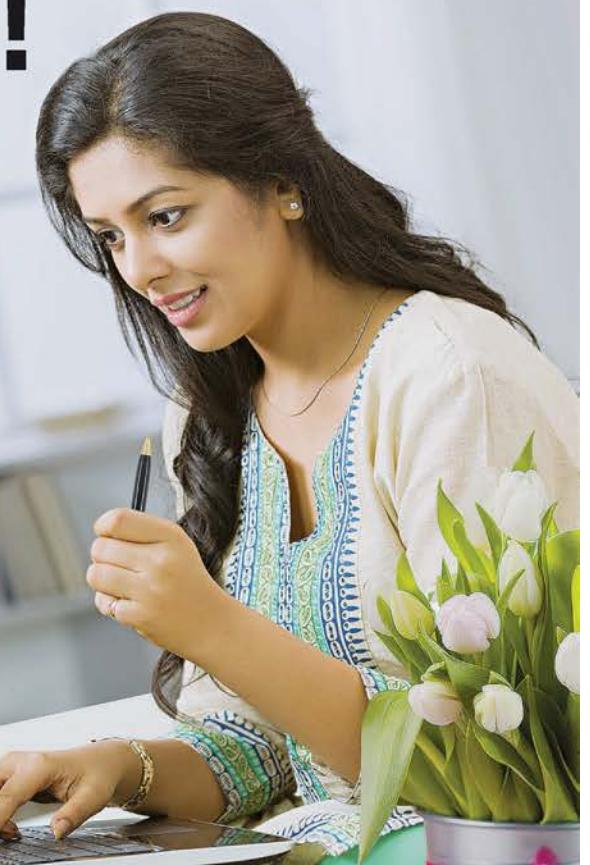
There are three channels of admissions, based on initial screening and subsequent interviews. The first is young professionals with one or more years of IT experience, the second is for start-ups, and the third is for industry-sponsored candidates. Details can be accessed at <https://www.iit.ac.in/academics/postgraduate/mtech/h/pdm/>

product managers and maybe even start-up founders.

There are three channels of admissions, based on initial screening and subsequent interviews. The first is young professionals with one or more years of IT experience, the second is for start-ups, and the third is for industry-sponsored candidates. Details can be accessed at <https://www.iit.ac.in/academics/postgraduate/mtech/h/pdm/>

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SHORT TAKES
DASOJU SEEKS FREE VACCINE FOR ALL IN TS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

AICC spokesperson Sravan Dasoju on Tuesday urged Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao to give Covid-19 vaccine free to everyone in Telangana ahead of the second wave of virus. He demanded that a special free vaccination drive be launched expeditiously, particularly in view of crippling effect the Coronavirus has had on neighbouring Maharashtra.

Welcoming state government's decision to shut schools and colleges, the senior Congress leader found fault with KCR government for snail-paced immunisation in the state. He pointed out that cumulatively, vaccines have been given to a little over nine lakh people ever since the vaccination process was initiated.

"If this is the case, when will all four crore citizens of the state get their vaccination?" Dasoju asked.

He said in view of the emergency, the Chief Minister should not limit vaccination to people over only 45 years' old. He suggested that to expedite vaccination, vaccine should be made available everywhere, including at apartments and in colonies and basties of entire Telangana.

"I humbly appeal to Chandrasekhar Rao that he emulate Tamil Nadu in vaccinating every citizen of the state. K. Chandrashekhar Rao should also massively enhance free access to Covid-19 for all before people start succumbing to the second wave of Coronavirus in the state," the AICC spokesperson appealed.

MES CRITICISES KCR OVER CLOSING OF SCHOOLS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

The All India Muslim Educational Society has criticised the state government decision to temporarily close all educational institutions from Wednesday.

General secretary of the society, MS Farooq, said, "We are concerned over the literacy rate of Telangana, which has come down to a lower level because of the delayed decisions of the state. After a gap of many months, the schools were allowed to start the classes physically for 9th and 10th. Later, after many months, classes for 6th to 8th were also allowed in schools. It is very unfortunate that all the educational institutions have now been asked to close down and the managements were asked to start online classes."

He said, "It is a fact that online classes are an utter failure at every stage because of the lack of smartphones and network issues in many areas of the twin cities. The society questions why every time schools and colleges are targeted as Covid hotspots. Farooq said that to the society's knowledge, not a single private educational institution student tested Covid positive, but only some government school students were infected. "This shows that the private educational institutions are very much concerned about the health of school children and kept their institutions' buildings sanitised and social distancing norms observed while conducting the classes."

"When the children up to the age of 17 are barred from attending classes, why doesn't the government issue instructions not to allow any child up to 17 years in public places? Mostly, the budgeted private schools could not collect the dues from March 2020 and are in huge financial losses. Their debts are converted into bad debts every day."

NAGARJUNASAGAR | BYPOLL

21,000 TS staff to benefit from sop in next 3 years

Hike in retirement age comes as immediate relief for 610 staffers

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

● IN THE undivided Andhra Pradesh the retirement age was 58 years since 1956. In all other states, retirement age is either 60 or 58 years. Even the retirement age of central government employees is 60 years.

and 7,331 in 2023.

The retirement age in the state has been revised after a gap of 35 years and after nearly seven years of formation of Telangana. Chandrasekhar Rao's announcement to increase the retirement

age to 61 years, makes Telangana the state with the highest retirement age.

In the undivided Andhra Pradesh the retirement age was 58 years since 1956. In all other states, retirement age is either 60 or 58 years, which has been in force since then, including even after bifurcation in June 2014.

Even the retirement age of central government employees is 60 years.

In 1985, the then Chief Minister of AP N.T. Rama Rao reduced the retirement age to 56 years, which triggered strong protests from various employees unions, who challenged

the government orders in the High Court. The court ruled in favour of employees unions. Following this, the NTR government restored the retirement age to 58 years, which has been in force since then, including even after bifurcation in June 2014.

Soon after the bifurcation, neighbouring Andhra Pradesh raised the retirement age to 60 years in June 2014.

However, the Telangana state government continued with a retirement age of 58 years till the historic announcement was made recently.

TSRTC staff too want 30% fitment in salary

SANJAY SAMUEL
PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

● THE STATE government has now banned RTC trade unions for two years. This has muted the voice of employees. This has ultimately led to RTC employees failing to get their dues, which the government had promised, Kamalakar regretted

word from the Chief Minister about the PRC hike applying for corporation employees too. This has pushed all RTC workers into a depression. We demand that the government implement PRC hike for corporation employees too," Thomas stated.

Kukatpally depot controller Kamalakar Goud, who is also a union leader, recalled that on October 5, 2019, road transport corporation employees had gone on strike demanding merger of the corporation with state

government and implement the pending PRC from April 1, 2017. Demanding PRC, 33 employees had committed suicide. Because of this and no response from the state government, employees withdrew the strike then.

"The state government has now banned RTC trade unions for two years. This has muted the voice of employees. This has ultimately led to RTC employees failing to get their dues, which the government had promised," Kamalakar regretted.

Employee leaders are now demanding that with the state government announcing PRC hike for its employees and teachers, RTC staff must be given their PRC fitment pending from April 2017. In addition, the corporation must be absorbed by the state government, the union leaders added.

KTR pulls up Centre over AP Reorganisation Act

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

IT and industries minister K. T. Rama Rao on Tuesday criticised the centre for not implementing provisions of AP Reorganisation Act 2014.

Speaking in the State Legislative Assembly, he pointed out that the Reorganisation Act promised industrial development of Telangana. But it has remained only on paper even after more than six years of separate Telangana being formed. He remarked.

Responding to questions raised by MLAs in the assembly, the minister said TS-iPASS will prove to be a game-changer and contribute to growth of industrial sector in the state as well as state's economy.

"Approvals have already been issued for establishment of 15,326 industries in the state under TS-iPASS during last six years. Investments worth ₹2.13 lakh crore have

been attracted, creating about 15.52 lakh direct and indirect jobs. So far, 11,954 industries have commenced their operations with an investment of around Rs. 97,405 crore and are employing 7,67 lakh persons at present," he said.

Rama Rao said the state government is committed to industrial decentralisation. For the purpose, it is promoting establishment of industries in backward regions of Telangana by offering additional incentives. Further, skill development programmes are being offered to unemployed youth in several sectors through Telangana Academy of Skill and Knowledge (TASK) all over the state. This will enable youth to become skilled human resources for absorption in industries coming up in the state, KTR added.

MLAs wearing black khandavas held a march from Gun Park to the assembly. Led by Congress legislature party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, they alleged that the speaker and treasury benches were not allowing them to perform their duties. They were often restrained from speaking in the assembly, the MLAs said.

MLAs wearing black khandavas held a march from Gun Park to the assembly. Led by Congress legislature party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, they alleged that the speaker and treasury benches were not allowing them to perform their duties. They were often restrained from speaking in the assembly, the MLAs said.

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SHORT TAKES

ACB BOOKS 4 REVENUE BABUS FOR 'BRIBERY'

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Tuesday booked cases against a tahsildar and three village revenue officers (VROs) for demanding a bribe from an ex-serviceman for allotment of government land.

The three VROs, who have been arrested, have been identified as Seerla Balanarayana of Kondareddypalli, Todusu Chinnaiyah of Ramajipalli and Bijula Buchiramulu of Kondanagula. The tahsildar is absconding.

According to ACB, these officials had demanded a bribe from the ex-serviceman Macherla Balaraju for sending a favourable report to Collector, Nagar Kurnool district, for allotment of five acres of government land.

"Manthati Radha Krishna, tahsildar of Balmoor mandal in Nagarkurnool district, demanded ₹5 lakh and accepted a bribe amount of ₹2 lakh through the arrested VROs. We have recovered ₹2 lakh from the possession of accused VROs," said an ACB official.

Based on a complaint from Macherla Balaraju, ACB booked a case and caught the VROs red-handed while accepting the bribe. The arrested have been produced before the First Additional Special Judge for ACB cases, Hyderabad.

NIGERIAN PEDDLER HELD, DRUGS SEIZED

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD MARCH 23

A Nigerian national, who was acting as a pawn for drug peddlers in Bengaluru, was caught in possession of 153 grams of cocaine and 16 grams of MDMA from MS Maktha area by the Excise Enforcement team of Hyderabad on Tuesday.

Officials also seized a small weighing machine, one red tape and a long note book with transactions of drugs written in it.

A raid was conducted at a house in MS Maktha based on a tip off by the Enforcement team of Hyderabad under supervision of Asst. Excise Superintendent Anji Reddy, police said.

The accused identified as James Morrison, 28, a native of Nigeria, during questioning revealed that two men, Daddy Boy alias John and Mike, both residents of Bengaluru, appointed James as their agent in Hyderabad.

"Morrison was released from jail in December 2020. Daddy Boy and Mike, while staying at Bengaluru and Goa, were sending cocaine to him through their agents and were receiving orders from the customers through WhatsApp. They were directing Morrison over the phone to deliver cocaine for ₹6,000 to ₹8,000 per gram and MDMA for ₹5,000 per gram at specified locations," said the police.

The accused was arrested in the month of August 2020 in a drugs case where in 6 grams of cocaine was seized from him and two more accused, Nelson Samuel Smith and Abdul Kareem Abdullah. His passport was said to be deposited in a court case and only a copy of the passport was seized from him. The original case papers, along with the accused person, seized contraband and drawn samples, were handed over the Nampally Prohibition and Excise Station for taking further action.

OFFICIALS ALSO seized a small weighing machine, one red tape and a long note book with transactions of drugs written in it.

Sheer negligence



Overflowing drainage water causes inconvenience to motorists and pedestrians in front of the Moosapet Metro station, in Hyderabad, on Tuesday.

— R. PAVAN

Forest dept promises speedy nod for works

Schemes of agencies in forest land to be reviewed

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Speedy nod from forest department for works that require its clearance has been promised by the state principal chief conservator of forests (PCCF), R Shoba.

Speaking at a review meeting at Aranya Bhavan on Tuesday, she said the applications from various agencies for execution of work in forest land would be reviewed. This meeting, she said, was to ensure that officials would see to it that the projects for the welfare of people and development of regions would get clearance faster.

Officials would see to it that the projects for the welfare of people and development of regions would get clearance faster.

faster so that their completion could be expedited.

As of now, a total of 109 works await such approvals. These include works for the irrigation, water supply, NH, roads & buildings and the electricity department, apart from those linked to the Singareni collieries. These works were segregated into stage-1, and stage-2.

The meeting decided to

work fast for resolving obstacles. Hemant Kumar, deputy director general, Union forest department, said every employee must work in tandem with the priorities set by the government and complete the forest clearance process at the earliest.

He requested the government to submit a report on the allocation of government land for afforestation in lieu of diversion of forest land. He called for payment of alternative afforestation funds to enable Stage-1 permits above three years to be completed within a month, those exceeding two years

within two months and those pending for more than a year within three months.

Hemant Kumar said speed is of essence for completion of all the projects headed by the central and state governments. It was the responsibility of every department and authority to work towards that; and to that extent, Stage-2 approvals should be obtained within the stipulated time. Legal hurdles should be cleared. At the same time, he cautioned that the concerned officials would be in trouble if any work is started without proper forest permits.

IMD warns of rain

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

If this trough oscillates or moves towards the eastern direction, we will have showers," IMD Hyderabad director K Naga Ratna told *Deccan Chronicle*.

This new system, however, stands a chance to cool the atmosphere in the state, where summer heat has already reached 40 degrees Celsius. "During the summers, the days are longer, compared to winters. Because the earth has rotated in such a way, we are facing the Sun's rays. Under the influence of this phenomena, we will have longer and warmer days and shorter nights," she said.

CENTRE ARGUES CAT ERRED IN SOMESH KUMAR'S CASE

From Page 1

Somesh Kumar also took objection to former chief secretary Dr P.K. Mohanty being a part of the cadre allocation process when his daughter and son-in-law were serving in the State.

The DoPT, in its affidavit to the High Court, however, said "the CAT failed to appreciate that so long as the principles of allocation are uniformly applied, Somesh can't make any grievance merely because the cadre to which he has been allocated does not suit him, or he wants to be allocated to a state of his choice."

Further, the DoPT argues that CAT erred in deciding Somesh's case without specifying as to what will happen to the allocation of other officers' in a similar circumstance. "The bias of CAT is an error apparent on face," it pointed out.

The Centre defended Dr Mohanty's inclusion in the committee as material on record is contrary to CAT's erred stand that his inclusion vitiated the advisory panel's deliberations. Different classifications for deciding the cadre allocation between unreserved and reserved categories was to extend equal opportunities to both, it said.

COL. SURENDER HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

The National Cadet Corps has launched a week-long online 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' camp on March 22 with 10 associate NCC officers and 400 cadets, Uttarakhand, directorate and AP and Telangana directorate taking part in it. The camp was

Hora welcomes 200 guest cadets from Uttarakhand.

launched by Col. Surender Hora, Shaurya Chakra Sena medal group commander NCC Group HQs Secunderabad on behalf of NCC directorate AP & Telangana. He welcomed the 200 guest cadets from

Uttarakhand and appreciated Col. Ramanuj and his team for conducting the event hosted by 1 Telangana Girls Battalion NCC.

On Tuesday, the deputy director general AP & T directorate, Air Commodore TSS Krishnan visited the control room to monitor the training and get on-ground feedback from the conducting team.

62-year-old woman succumbs to burns

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

A 62-year-old woman, who suffered severe burn injuries after her saree caught fire at her residence, passed away on Tuesday. The deceased has been identified as Puttam Sandhya (62), a housewife and resident of Raju Apartments, New Mirjalguda, Malkajgiri.

On March 1, while performing puja at her residence, her saree accidentally came into contact with a lamp kept on the

POLITICAL | ATTACK

MIM hits out at DMK over secularism jibe

Modi supporting SL: Owaisi

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Tulasi tree and caught fire. According to police, Sandhya could not immediately realise that her saree had caught fire and went inside her home. By the time she realised, her saree had started burning fiercely. She sustained severe burn injuries on both her legs and back and was admitted to a private hospital. She succumbed to burns on Tuesday after undergoing treatment for more than 20 days. Based on a complaint, case has been booked and investigation on.

Addressing an election meeting in Newpet in Krishnagiri constituency, Tamil Nadu, Owaisi asked, "Where is Modi's love for Tamilians?" He said the Modi government's abstaining from the meeting shows Modi's support to Sri Lanka.

Owaisi said the Modi government was more interested in getting a large contract in Sri Lanka for atrocities against the Tamil people.

Betting big on small trucks to go electric way first: Founder

S. UMAMAHESHWAR | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

A few weeks ago, Tesla Motors led by Elon Musk, the global pioneer in electric automobiles, announced that it would register a company in India. The news triggered an avalanche of speculation about the foray of Tesla into India, despite there being no definitive statements from the company.

While the media continues to speculate about Tesla endlessly, a three-year-old company in Hyderabad has been silently working towards transforming fuel guzzlers and striving to transform the highest polluting sub-segment — commercial vehicles — into clean-and-green future-ready vehicles.

Once back home and at the drawing board, however, he was confronted with the perennial problem that all automobile companies have been facing in India: price tag.

Fuelled by a mission to combine manufacturing in India with future ready R&D-based value creation at the core of business, 34-year-old Sathya Yalamanchili founded e-Trio Automobiles in 2017 to conduct commercially applicable research on converting mini-trucks into green vehicles. He was soon joined by his friend and IIM-Calcutta alumnus, the 39-year-old Deepak M.V. as the company's chief executive officer.

"We found that India is not ready for electric passenger cars as yet. The cost of ownership is too high because of lesser per day travel by Indians and amenities that people expect in a passenger car. So we decided to focus on retrofitting mini-trucks, which have high per day travel, to convert them into



Sathya Yalamanchili

something similar in our country," said Sathya, recalling the intent behind his foray into electric vehicles business.

When 1,500 mini-trucks come on the road, it would save 2,070 tonnes of carbon dioxide a month.

When demand for batteries increases because of higher adoption of electric vehicles by freight operators, the Indian battery makers could further increase their scale of manufacturing that could drive down the cost of battery, paving the way eventually to make electric passenger vehicles affordable for price-sensitive Indians, argues Sathya.

The harbingers for this transformational change are small startups like e-Trio, who, unlike global pioneers, understand the needs of the Indian market and apply technology as it suits the country.

3 killed in mishap, driver held

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD MARCH 23

Three persons died in a vehicle collision on Outer Ring Road (ORR) in the wee hours on Tuesday in the Abdullapurmet police station limits.

The three were D. Prabhakara Rao and a father-and-son duo Upendranath and Roshik. The police took driver Shaik John Saida into custody.

residents of Saroornagar. They went to Ponnur town in Guntur district by an Ertiga car for registration of a plot on Sunday.

Based on a complaint from Upendranath's wife, that the driver of lorry No. AP07Y4599 kept the vehicle without putting on the parking light, the Abdullapurmet police booked a case against him. The police took driver Shaik John Saida into custody.



A week-long online camp 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' held at NCC Group Headquarters in Secunderabad on Tuesday.

— BY ARRANGEMENT

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE

No. RS-U-L Repair-BOXNHL-DDU

PCME/ECR on behalf of The President of India invite Open E-Tender from the eligible and experienced agency or contractor for E-Tender No. RS-U-L Repair-BOXNHL-DDU. Particulars are as under:-

Details are as below : S.N. 1. Name of the work: Heavy body repair of 8400 unloadable BOXNHL & other S.S. wagons for 02 years. 2. Approx. cost of the work: Rs. 65,54,68,17/- (Rupees Sixty-five Crore Fifty-four Lakhs Eight Thousand One Hundred Forty-eight only). 3. Earnest Money to be deposited: Nil. 4. Date & Time for submission of tender and opening of Tender : From 13.04.2021 up to 27.04.2021. 5. Website particulars, Notice Board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc. IREPS Website - www.ireps.gov.in. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids online through this website only. Manual offer are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Note : Details information may be seen in the tender documents.

AME/Ctg./
E.C.Railway, Hajipur

PR/1652/HQ/MECH/T/20-21/40

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

e-Tender Notice

Mech-WT-16 (OPEN)

For & On behalf of President of India, Dy. CME/WP/Patha invites e-Tender for the following works as detailed :-

Name of the work and location : Composite Works (Civil, Electrical, Mechanical) involving construction of Buildings, Track works, Water supply system. Drainage system with Pit line, Road works, Landscaping, Electrification and illumination works. Procurement and commissioning of specified Mechanical Machineries & Plant in connection with Construction of 2nd washing pit as per CAMTECH design at Saharsa. East Central Railway (Bihar). 2. Estimated cost : Rs. 11,72,04,203.88 3. EMD: NIL 4. Date & Time for closing of tender: 27.04.2021 up to 13.00 hrs. 5. Website particulars and notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and downloaded : IREPS Website - www.ireps.gov.in. Bidder can only be downloaded and Bid from IREPS website : www.ireps.gov.in for any information please contact office of CAO/Workshop Projects/Indian Railways Chamber/Bhawan 3rd floor J.C. Road, Patna-800001

Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer-1
Workshop Projects/ Patna

PR/1649/WPO/MECH/T/20-21/40

SANJAY GANDHI POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES

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Phones: 91 (522) 2494009, 2494111, 2494304

FAX: 91-522-2668017, 2668129
Email: registrar@sgppi.ac.in

Cancellation of Faculty Advertisement No. I/38/ER/ACAD/2020-21 & its Corrigendum

The Advertisement No. I/38/ER/ACAD/2020-21 and its Corrigendum for Faculty Appointment is hereby cancelled.

ADVT.No.: I/56/ER/ACAD/2020-21 DIRECTOR

Department of Atomic Energy

Hyderabad Regional Purchase Unit

Corrigendum to e-Tender Notice

Last Date for Submission of Online Bid against NIT No.: DPS/HRPU/NFC/PT/TPT/ENG/17083 is extended upto 05/04/2021 up to 2:00 PM.

Visit <https://etenders.dpsae.gov.in> for details.

[DPS/HRPU/NFC/2021/66C1]

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED

OPERATION DIVISION : MAHABUBNAGAR

TENDER NOTICE No. 06/2020-21

Sealed tenders are invited from eligible contractors Carrying out

DECCAN Chronicle

24 MARCH 2021

Optics key, Uddhav must act fast to kill racket stink

It is no exaggeration to say that the political situation in Maharashtra has turned fragile following on allegations levelled by a DGP rank IPS officer, Param Bir Singh, who was removed from the post of commissioner of Mumbai Police by the state government last week.

The allegations are grave. After being displaced from the post of CP, Mr Singh told chief minister Uddhav Thackeray in a letter that home minister Anil Deshmukh had ordered junior officers, including assistant sub-inspector Sachin Vaze who has been suspended for his suspected role in an explosives-laden SUV near the residence of business magnate Mukesh Ambani, to collect ₹100 crore per month, obviously sanctioning extortion.

The former CP followed up his letter with a petition in the Supreme Court on Monday, seeking a CBI inquiry in this matter and in an alleged transfer-posting racket run by Mr Deshmukh.

It is up to the apex court to consider the reliability of Mr Singh as a complainant, not least because he had been removed for not being exercising sufficient control of the police force and, by implication, letting API Vaze run amok. It may also need to be considered why the former CP had kept quiet over the alleged criminality of the home minister for over a year. Did he stand to gain through prolonged silence? At the same time, delayed disclosure — provided allegations in question are not ungrounded — cannot justify inaction.

NCP leader Sharad Pawar, widely thought to hold the whip hand in politically shepherding the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition government, at a Delhi press conference on Monday, strongly defended Mr Deshmukh, who is from his party. Mr Pawar appeared to stoutly refute the factual basis of Mr Singh's allegation against Mr Deshmukh.

But this supposition has been emasculated by Mr Deshmukh himself. In the public mind, now, serious doubts are apt to have arisen about the integrity of the state government although Mr Thackeray did appear to be gaining in popularity and stature since he took office in November 2019. The CM has kept mum on the Vaze-Singh-Deshmukh matter, allowing Mr Pawar to call the shots. Circumstances now do not permit him to withhold comment — and action — for long, else he will be at risk of completely losing the initiative in a wobbly situation.

At the risk of annoying NCP, the first logical step is to oblige Mr Deshmukh to step away from the position of home minister and simultaneously set in train a probe conducted by a retired Supreme Court or high court judge. Even if it is true, as many suspect, that the BJP, which has no love lost for Mr Thackeray and his party Shiv Sena, may have manipulated events behind the scene to trigger the current denouement, with a view to playing politics to return to power in Maharashtra, the CM is obliged to discharge his *raj dharma* not only politically but by being technically and constitutionally correct.

Wins for merit, politics

Controversies, politics and criticism of the incumbent government for using the National Film Awards to reward its darlings are now par for the course. Almost every year, as soon as the long list of awards is announced, congratulatory messages and carping begin a parallel race. Questions are raised about the relevance of the awards, faults are pointed out in the selection of the jury, processes and choices. And yet, National Film Awards remain the most prestigious and respected. Were it left to the devices of Mumbai's film-magazine backed awards, it would seem that India only churns out melodramas that prance around five songs.

The National Film Awards are the only truly "national" awards that celebrate cinema and artists from across the country.

Given Indians' obsession with films and movies' power to influence, it is naive to think that the government of the day won't use the national awards to its benefit. And the 67th National Awards, announced on Tuesday for films released in 2019, is no different.

Kangana Ranaut, the BJP's most vocal flag-bearer on social media, has received her fourth national award for her performance in two films — *Manikarnika* and *Panga*. Ms Ranaut is a very talented actress, but this would be her third national award since 2014. In these six years there have been other, much better performances, but they have only been on the screen.

This year's list also includes several films that neatly align with the BJP's ideology, like the best direction award for Sanjay Puran Singh Chauhan's *Bahattar Hoorein* (72 Virgins), and *Holy Rights*, Farha Khatun's film on Triple Talaq bagging the award for the best film on social issues.

It would be churlish to cast aspersions on the merit of these films based simply on the fact that deal with issues that are currently palatable because also included in this year's list are two sublime performances by actors portraying characters very relevant to our times. Manoj Bajpayee and Dhanush have both won the best actor award — the former for his performance in and as *Bhonsle* (Marathi), and Dhanush for his role in Vetrimaaran's Tamil film, *Asuran*. Bajpayee plays an ageing police constable who fights the rise of communalism in his chawl and Dhanush plays a daft villager who fights off upper caste landlords to save his family. In these bleak times, that's reason enough for celebration.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

K. SUDHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256
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Maleeha Lodhi

US peace plan for Afghanistan to face critical challenge ahead

The Biden administration has launched its first diplomatic initiative to accelerate the Afghan peace process even as it continues its review of Afghan policy. This is reflected in a leaked letter from secretary of state Antony Blinken to President Ashraf Ghani that sets out its proposed plan. It is also evident from the discussion draft of a peace agreement shared by the US with Afghan parties and the regional diplomacy now underway by special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad.

These moves signal three things — a renewal of US commitment to withdraw from Afghanistan, its desire to do so after securing a peace settlement among the warring Afghan parties and the willingness to use pressure to quickly achieve this. This raises several questions. Is the Biden administration overreaching with an ambitious plan that it wants to accomplish in a limited timeframe? In deciding to mount pressure on the parties does the US have the leverage to get them to agree? Is the proposed "new, inclusive" interim government an achievable goal as bitter foes will have to share power? With Washington having drafted a peace agreement, albeit for discussion, will Afghan parties take ownership of this?

The Biden team is vigorously engag-

ing Kabul, the Taliban and other Afghan leaders in discussions over the peace plan and the May 1 deadline for US withdrawal with the proviso that final decisions will emerge once the review concludes. President Joe Biden has said that meeting the May 1 deadline will be tough but it won't be extended by "a lot longer". Meanwhile, the Taliban have warned against any delay in this deadline and of an unspecified "reaction" if this happens.

The US diplomatic initiative — according to the leaked letter — has four elements. One, a meeting to be convened by the UN of representatives of Russia, the US, Pakistan, Iran and India to forge regional consensus to support the peace plan. Two, a draft peace agreement to expedite negotiations on a settlement and ceasefire. A key proposal is to set up a transitional government once agreement is reached. Three, Turkey to host a meeting between the two sides to seal a peace deal. And four, a 90-day reduction in violence to avert a spring offensive by the Taliban. This plan is punctuated by the US warning that it is considering full withdrawal of forces by May 1 but not ruling out other options.

By clearly communicating that a political settlement is a priority — not just the military withdrawal, as it was for president Trump — a prudent path

seems to have been outlined especially as diplomatic parleys underway will shape the conclusions of the US review.

Regional consensus to back a peace deal is clearly necessary. This is also a way for Washington to ensure that Iran is included in the diplomatic process. No timeframe has been set for this. But the UN will have to deftly play the role expected of it. Moscow, while welcoming the transitional government idea, has not said anything on the US plan and is embarked on its own regional diplomacy including a peace conference hosted last week on Afghanistan. The Pakistan-India dynamic also has to be kept in view; Islamabad has already conveyed its misgivings over India's inclusion in the proposed conference to US officials.

With two new processes now envisaged in addition to that in Doha it would be important not to allow the intra-Afghan negotiations in Doha to be diluted or complicated by the proposed new ones. They should facilitate the Doha process and not replace it. The principal diplomatic effort should remain in the Doha talks.

Washington is clearly in a hurry. Trying to force the pace of the peace process reflects US frustration with the stalled intra-Afghan talks. It also shows impatience with President Ghani's obstructive tactics, evident from the

tough tone of Blinken's letter. The tight timeframe in which the US wants a settlement done and dusted aims to compel the two sides to negotiate seriously. Even so the expectation for negotiations to yield an expeditious outcome runs up against an ineluctable reality that the tough compromises needed for an agreement are unlikely to emerge quickly just because Washington has set a deadline. The US can intensify pressure on both sides but that doesn't mean it has enough leverage over them to reach a speedy settlement. A senior Afghan official recently told PBS that the US has adopted a "fast food" approach, forcing everybody to consume something that is "too quick to succeed".

There is also the question of whether in order to expedite the process Washington has overprescribed the elements of an agreement — drafting one itself rather than letting it emerge from negotiations. This lays it open to being viewed as an "imposed" solution. While the US says it is not seeking to dictate terms and its peace agreement is a discussion draft it is yet to be determined whether Afghan parties see it the same way.

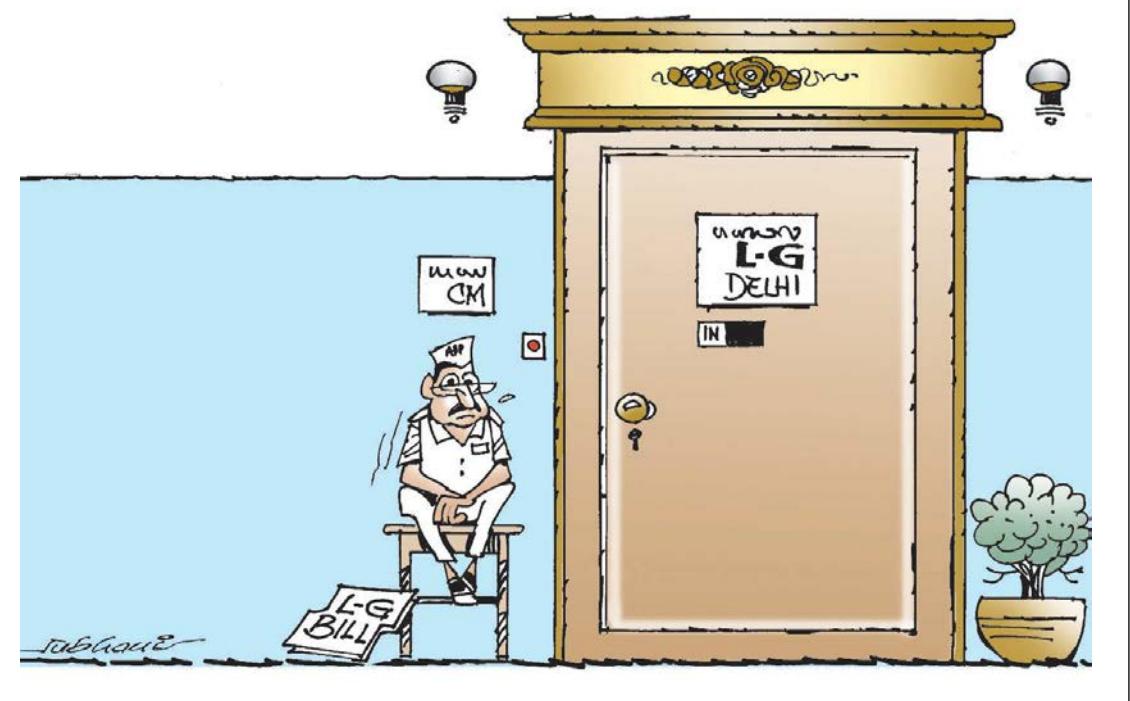
The idea of a transitional government, vehemently opposed by Ghani, makes sense before a more permanent government can be installed following

adoption of a new constitution and elections. But can the two sides and other Afghan leaders show the accommodation needed for a workable power-sharing arrangement? In an initial response a Taliban spokesman asserted that interim governments have proven ineffective in the past but the Taliban have yet to take a firm position.

Pakistan's interest lies in the success of intra-Afghan talks that can produce a negotiated end to the war and a lasting settlement before the full withdrawal of US forces. That is what Islamabad means by its repeated calls for a "responsible withdrawal". It does not want its neighbour to descend into political chaos or a civil war, and sees an inclusive post-settlement government in Kabul as the best way to ensure peace and stability. It seeks assurances that Afghan territory will not be used against Pakistan. US officials have also been told that Islamabad stands ready to do what it can to help the peace process. It is however up to the Afghan parties to seize the moment as the US plan starts to unfold and faces critical tests in the months ahead.

The writer is a former Pakistani ambassador to the United States and the UN
By arrangement with Dawn

Subhani



India should not fall for China's charm offensive

Abhijit Bhattacharyya

Is gullible India once again falling for the Dragon's charm offensive? After the betrayal and battering this country and its valiant forces faced at the hands of the People's Liberation Army in Galwan Valley, Pangong Tso, Dapsang and Gogra/Hot Springs last summer, and at the Doklam tri-junction earlier, why do we forget this humiliation and treachery when, for good reasons of its own, the adversary puts on its benign mask and pretend to place all animosities on the backburner. How else does one deal with the words of Wang Yi, China's foreign minister, who also holds the weightier post of state councillor, as he appeared to reach out to New Delhi earlier this month? "China and India are friends. Should end suspicion." "Should not undercut each other." "Boundary dispute not the whole story", as the "rights and wrongs of the Line of Actual Control conflict clear", and "let's resolve border issues".

But good to be true? It's all beautifully crafted, carefully scripted and tries to bypass the real issues to paint India as the villain, with the aggressor playing the victim card! The press, of course, laps it all up, and forgets to play its real role — to ask the tough questions? Of WHY China is doing this, and at the present juncture. Instead, there are headlines like: "Dragon turns dove, talks peace, partnership with India".

It is a truism — but worth repeating now — that peoples and nations which forget their own history are condemned to repeat it. Have we forgotten that when Chairman Mao's People's Republic was born in October 1949, India, which had attained independence just two ears earlier, was one of the first major countries outside

to believe we are global company... and must continue to trade with China. Because if we conduct our business by excluding such a large country... and market... we will be poorer for the loss of that experience".

This unabashed dependence on China, and by extension of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), is all pervasive, and extends to the nation's largest corporations, whose motto clearly seems: "Company first; country later". This, of course, is

true for most large companies worldwide. No wonder several countries, from the United States to Australia, and to China, are now busy trying to rein in mega corporations who have become too big for their boots — and feel emboldened to challenge the State with impunity!

But some business deals have more serious implications than others. It was recently reported in the Indian media that "Bharti Airtel has awarded a telecom infrastructure expansion contract worth ₹300 crores to China's Huawei". What is disturbing is that Airtel's national long-distance network — which will carry inter-circle and international traffic, as well as Internet traffic, and that from main landing stations — will now be run by Huawei, which has connections to the CPC.

Is this a Greek tragedy? At a time when the PLA soldiers are forcibly entering Indian territory and killing Indian soldiers, a CPC-run Chinese company will earn crores in the guise of managing sensitive, secret, critical communications deep inside India. Is this the kind of unequal war we want to engage in?

That's a basic contradiction in India today. The PM is pushing for self-reliance, while our corporate honchos appear to have another agenda.

Sadly, the matter doesn't end there. The entire world knows about China's global cyberattacks, with India being a priority target due to the CPC's deep penetration in Delhi. So, when reports emerge of a "Red Echo over India", there's

That's a basic contradiction in India today. The PM is pushing for self-reliance, while our corporate honchos appear to have another agenda.

The Chinese have dug so deep within India that they have learnt to take in their stride the occasional outbursts by Delhi, with some minor glitches like a few anti-dumping duties or the ban on a few Chinese apps...

The writer is an alumnus of the National Defence College. The views expressed are personal.

LETTERS

PREACH, PRACTICE

What Aakar Patel says in his article is true because what our political leaders preach will not be followed by them (*The unreality of India today: nothing makes sense any more*, DC March 23). The MHA instructs all states to follow the guidelines given to them as Covid-19 surges and our Prime Minister too instructs state Chief Ministers to take action to curb the second wave pandemic. But when it comes to win elections all these norms are overlooked by them where thousands are allowed to come for rallies. Are we not fooling ourselves?

P.J. David
Hyderabad

MYANMAR REFUGEES

The government's move to send back refugees from Myanmar fleeing violence at the hands of the military Junta (*Let Myanmar refugees stay*, DC March 23) exposes its hypocrisy in the professed sympathy for persecuted people in the neighbourhood, the very basis for the CAA.

L. Prabhakar
Secunderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

State's bifurcation ruled out

HYDERABAD, March 23
Finance Minister K. Vijayabaskara Reddy today ruled out bifurcation of the State and said that the demand for a separate Telangana State was unjustified.

Replying to a discussion on the Appropriation Bills, in the State Assembly, the Finance Minister said that bifurcation of the State was not an easy thing, and that the problems faced by this region could and should be tackled within the framework of an integrated State.

The House later approved the Appropriation Bills.

The Finance Minister said that the formation of Andhra Pradesh was a great event in the history of the Telugu-speaking people and that it was a dream come true.

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Bhatija & Co. looted ₹10k-cr, will go to jail, says Shah

Home minister says Didi hasn't fulfilled even 82 of 282 promises made

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, MARCH 23

Going all out against West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's MP nephew Abhishek with large-scale corruption charges, union home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday accused "Bhatija & Company" of amassing central funds to the tune of ₹10,000 crore which were disbursed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for relief and rehabilitation to the state after it was devastated by Cyclone Amphan last year.

Mr Shah also made it clear that the entity would be sent to jail by a special investigation team (SIT), mentioned in the BJP manifesto, following a probe after the party forms its first government in the state.

In a blistering attack on the Trinamul Congress supremo, he then ridiculed her for running "115 scams" in comparison to "115 schemes," run by Mr Modi while mocking her for failing to fulfill even 82 out of her 282 promises made last time.

The union home minister told a BJP rally at Gosaba in South 24 Parganas, "Modiji has been sending a lot of funds here. Cyclone Amphan hit the state. Modiji released ₹10,000 crore. Did you get anything out of it? Where did it go?" Bhatija & Company amassed it. You do not need to worry. Forming an SIT the BJP government will put those, who looted each and every pie of the funds sent by Modiji, behind bars. All scams, be it on Cyclone Amphan or Bulbul or Aila, will be probed by us through the SIT."

Mr Shah, in view of a portion of Hindu migrants' votebank in the district, also touched the party's top electoral promise.

He said, "We will implement the Citizenship Amendment Act to give citizenship to the refugees after coming to power

here."

According to him, "For the poor, the PM has undertaken 115 Yojana which is called scheme. But Didi has started 115 scams. The money of the poor is looted by those who take cut-money. The BJP government will bring an end to it."

Training his guns on Ms Banerjee over her false promises, Mr Shah highlighted the sops for the Sundarbans delta in the

BJP manifesto.

He claimed, "Didi had announced 282 promises but could not meet even 82 of them. In 2016 she talked of building a multiple integrated fisheries zone. Till date no one knows where it is. She should furnish an account but she would not. So you will give your account on April 1 by pressing the button of Kamal (Lotus). We had also sent ₹5,000 crore for the

Sundarbans. But the fund was misappropriated. In 2015, 2017 and 2019, Didi had claimed to turn Sundarbans



SUDARSHAN 35MM
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11.00, 2.15, 6.00, 9.15PM

ARJUN 70-11.30, 2.30, 6.30, 9.30

RAJADHANI COMPLEX-DSNR

11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15PM

SANTOSH ABIDS-11.30, 2.30, 6.00, 9.15

INDRA VENKATARAMANA/PADAMAVATHI COMPLEX-KACHIGUDA
6.00PM(ONE SHOW)

LAXMIKALACINEPRIDE
11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15PM

OAMB CINEMAS
10.50, 1.45, 4.35, 7.25,
10.05, 10.25PM

9.00, 12.45, 3.15, 5.45,
8.15, 10.45PM

ASIAN CINEMAS
RADHIKA-10.55, 1.50, 7.25, 10.30PM
SIVAGANGA-2.00, 9.00PM

CINESQUARE-10.55, 1.55, 4.45, 7.15, 10.40

MCUBE-11.00, 1.50, 7.40, 10.40PM

SHA-2.30, 9.45PM|GPR-1.35, 7.30, 10.30

PVR

FORUM-11.00, 2.00, 5.00, 8.00, 11.00PM

RK-5.05, 10.40PM

GALLERIA-10.15, 4.10, 7.10, 10.10PM

CENTRAL-11.25, 1.50, 5.10, 8.00PM

INORBIT-11.00, 1.50, 8.00, 11.00PM

PRISTON-5.00, 10.50PM

MOOSARAMBAGH-1.50, 7.50, 9.45PM

IRRUMMANZIL-1.10, 4.10, 7.10, 10.10

ICON-4.40, 7.15, 10.15PM

CINEPLANET-KOMPALLY
11.00, 1.45, 7.40, 10.40PM

MUR SQUARE-NARAPALLY
10.55, 1.20, 7.40, 10.40PM

INOX MP-10:30, 1:15, 7:15PM

GSM-11:40, 3:00, 6:35, 9:15PM

Cinépolis CCPL-11.00, 4.55, 10.50PM

DSL-12.40, 7.10, 10.20PM

SUDHA-11.00, 4.35, 10.50PM

MANTRA-10.50, 1.20, 7.35, 10.35PM

MIRAJ CINEMAS CHANDANAGAR-3.45, 9.45PM

BALANAGAR-11.15, 1.40, 7.40PM

SHALINI SHIVANI-11.15, 1.40, 7.40PM

PLATINUM 10.30, 1.15, 6.45, 8.00, 10.45

AMEERPET-4.20, 10.30PM

BVK-11.00, 4.40, 10.40PM

TIVOLI-11.15, 2.00, 7.30PM

MALLAPUR-11.00, 2.00, 7.50PM

AARADHANA 11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

AMBA 70MM 11.30, 2.30, 6.30, 9.30

SENSATION 11.30, 2.30PM

SRIRAMA 11.15, 6.15PM

ANJALI 70MM 11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

SRISAPOOJA 11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

SIVASAKTHI 11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

BHUJANGA 70 11.00AM(ONE SHOW)

SRLATHA 70 11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15

TALLURI 70 2.15, 9.15PM

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RAJADHANI COMP-11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15PM

2.45, 8.00PM

OAMB 1.50, 7.45 10.00PM

INOX GPR-1.40, 10.20PM|UPPAL-1.30, 7.15PM

RADHIKA-1.35, 10.20PM

MCUBE-4.10, 10.10PM|KOMPALLY-1.20, 7.30PM

1.50, 7.20, 11.30, 2.30PM 2.05, 8.00PM

INOX GSM-12.15, 10.00PM

GVK-10.05, 7.20PM

MP-1.10, 7.20PM

Cinépolis CCPL-10.10, 4.00, 10.00PM

SUDHA-10.50PM

DSL-4.00, 9.45PM|MANTRA-10.00, 6.00PM

PVR PRISTON-9.15PM|RK-11.05, 8.00PM

ICON-4.10PM|CENTRAL-1.50, 11.00PM

GALLERIA-4.10, 10.50PM|INORBIT-4.40, 10.40PM

IRRUMMANZIL-12.20, 6.30PM

MUSARAMBAGH-12.20, 6.30PM

FORUM-10.10, 1.10, 7.20, 10.20PM

PLATINUM 3.00, 11.00PM

TIVOLI 2.00 7.20PM

SRLAXMI 70MM SAMPOORNA 11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15

VIJETHA 70MM RAJYALAXMI 11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

SV CINEPARK SREERAMULU 11.30, 2.30, 6.30, 9.30

SENSATION COMP EESHWAR 11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

ASIAN MAHALAXMI SRIDEVI RC PURAM 11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15

BHUJANGA 70 TALLURI 70MM 2.00, 6.00, 9.00PM

KRISHNA ALIYABAD SIVARANJANI 11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00

SANTOSH IBPTNM-11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00PM

C I N

WITNESS THE BIGGEST BATTLE TO SAVE THE ELEPHANTS



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NATION

DECCAN CHRONICLE | HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | 24 MARCH 2021

pg 8

ATS: Waze key conspirator in Hiren's case

At the instance of Waze, SIM card used in crime was procured from Gujarat

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, MARCH 23

The Maharashtra ATS has claimed that its investigation has revealed that suspended API Sachin Waze was prime conspirator in Mansukh Hiren murder and the agency is likely to seek his custody for interrogation in this case.

Meanwhile the NIA has claimed that Waze used a fake Aadhaar card to book a room in a 5-star hotel in South Mumbai a day before the Scorpio car, which was later parked near Mukesh Ambani's residence with explosives, was reported to be missing. He was seen carrying five bags in CCTV footage of the hotel.

ATS chief Jaijeet Singh on Tuesday revealed that very next day of registering the FIR in connection with the death of Mansukh Hiren, in which his wife Vimla has stated that she suspect involvement of Waze, the probe officers had recorded Waze's statement in which he had refuted the claim that the Scorpio was in his use.

He had also said that he didn't have any relation with Hiren and denied any role in his death, the ATS chief informed.

However, the subsequent investigation revealed that Waze's statement was a lie.

According to ATS

chief Singh, the probe revealed that at the instance of Waze the SIM card used in the crime was procured by bookie Ramesh Ramniklal Gaur from Gujarat.

The said SIM card was bought in the name of a Gujarat based company. It has also come to light that Gaur had given this SIM card to Waze's aide, former police constable Vinayak Shinde.

Shinde was sentenced to imprisonment for life in connection with the fake encounter of Ramnarayan Gupta alias Lakan Baiyya. But in 2020, he was released on parole due to Covid pandemic. After coming out of jail, Shinde got in touch with Waze and started working for him.

The ATS has claimed that they have procured evidence showing their involvement in Hiren's murder. The ATS so far has recovered 14 SIM cards from the accused persons.

But it has been revealed that the mobile phones that were used in the crime have been destroyed.

With the help of inputs received from interrogation of accused and suspected persons an ATS team on Tuesday returned from Union Territory Diu Daman with a seized Volvo car and suspect.

This is allegedly owned by Waze's business partner and is sus-

ODISHA WANTS INCORPORATION OF 'AHIMSA' IN PREAMBLE

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOI | DC BHUBANESWAR, MARCH 23

The Odisha Legislative Assembly of Odisha on Tuesday adopted unanimous resolution calling for incorporation of word "Ahimsa" (non-violence) in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution of the country.

With the entire Odisha celebrating the centennial anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's first visit to the state on Tuesday, the Assembly passed the historic resolution as a "fitting tribute" to the Father of the Nation.

State tourism and culture minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi had introduced the resolution.

It may be noted that the Odisha government and outfits crossing party lines have been urging for the inclusion of non-violence, which is the Mahatma's most propounded doctrine, in the Preamble of the constitution.

A special discussion was tabled in the Assembly on this occasion.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik while addressing the House during the discussion said Odisha was where Mahatma's heart was. Gandhiji had visited Odisha on eight different occasions and toured several places across the state.

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, Pradipta Naik said, "Tributes to the Mahatma can only be reflected in ways how much we all have lived up to inculcate his doctrines in our lives."

● **ODISHA GOVERNMENT** and outfits crossing party lines have been urging for the inclusion of non-violence, which is the Mahatma's most propounded doctrine, in the constitution of the country.

IN CINEMAS TODAY

ONE WILL FALL

GODZILLA VS. KONG

AVAILABLE ON HD-MAX FOR 31 DAYS FROM THEATRICAL RELEASE

HINDI VERSION

ASIAN TARAKARAMA 70MM-KACHIGUDA

11.00, 2.15, 6.00, 9.00PM

INDRA RAMAKRISHNA 70MM-ABIDS

11.15, 2.15, 6.00, 9.00PM

INDRA VENKATARAMANA/PADMAVATHICOM

2.30, 6.15, 9.15PM

SRI SAIRAJA 70MM-MUSHEERABAD

SHORT TAKES
CONVERSION: U.S. MAN DETAINED IN YUGANDA

Kampala, March 23: Ugandan police said an American man has been detained over alleged involvement in "subversive activities" against the government.

Police said the man identified as Guy Smith was arrested in a remote town and is being detained at a police facility in Kampala. The statement gave no more details, and it was not immediately possible to get a comment from the US Embassy. Ugandan authorities accuse foreigners of meddling in the country's affairs, charges that have raised tensions between President Yoweri Museveni and the country's development partners.

VOLCANIC ASH: GUATEMALA CITY AIRPORT SHUT

Guatemala City, March 23: A shift in wind blew ash from an eruption at the Pacaya volcano over Guatemala City on Tuesday, and authorities closed the airport as ash coated planes and planes parked at the terminal. The 8,373-foot (2,552 metre) volcano, just 30 miles (50 km) south of Guatemala's capital, has been active since early February. Civil Aviation Director Francis Argueta did not say how long the closure would last.

Tourists frequently hike up to visit Pacaya's peak, but those trips have been temporarily cancelled.

Pacaya has a clear view of the nearby Volcano of Fire, which erupted in 2018, emitting a fast-moving avalanche of super-heated muck that killed at least 110 people and left about 200 missing.

OZ EAST COAST RAIN TO EASE; FLOODING ON

Sydney, March 23: Heavy rainfall was forecast to ease across Australia's east coast but floodwaters will linger for days across New South Wales state where 15,000 people were nervously waiting on Tuesday for potential orders to evacuate. Some 18,000 residents of Australia's most populous state have fled their homes since last week, with warnings the cleanup could stretch into April. New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian on Tuesday said several weather fronts continued to effect large swaths of the state.

Some parts of the state had recorded two-thirds of their annual rainfall in less than a week. Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the rain emergency was expected to ease by late Wednesday.

FRANCE CALLS CHINESE ENVOY OVER COMMENTS

Paris, March 23: France's foreign ministry said it has summoned China's ambassador over "unacceptable" comments in recent days that included alleged insults and threats towards lawmakers and a researcher.

Foreign Affairs Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian tweeted on Monday that "comments of China's Embassy and actions against elected officials, researchers and European diplomats are unacceptable."

French authorities will "firmly reiterate the message" when meeting with Chinese Ambassador Lu Shaye, he added.

The Chinese Embassy in France called a Paris-based researcher, Antoine Bondaz, "a thug" on Twitter on Friday.

NIGER VILLAGE ATTACKS: 137 GUNNED DOWN

Niamey (Niger), March 23: Gunmen aboard motorcycles have attacked a series of villages near Niger's troubled border with Mali, leaving at least 137 people dead in the deadliest violence to strike the African country in recent memory, the government has announced.

The latest village massacres come amid a dangerous escalation in attacks following the election of Niger's new president, Mohamed Bazoum, several weeks ago.

Government spokesman Abdourahmane Zakaria confirmed on Monday the latest killings took place on Sunday, the same day Niger's officially declared Bazoum as the winner of February's election.

UN rights body slams poor Lanka situation

**SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI/GENEVA**

ing India abstaining from the voting.

Asserting its support to both "the Tamils of Sri Lanka for equality, justice, dignity and peace" and also "ensuring the unity, stability and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka", India said "these two goals are mutually supportive and Sri Lanka's progress is best assured by simultaneously addressing both objectives" while urging "the Government of Sri Lanka to carry forward

the process of reconciliation, address the aspirations of the Tamil community and continue to engage constructively with the international community to ensure that the fundamental freedoms and human rights of all its citizens are fully protected".

Striking a balance in its Explanation of Vote (EoV) statement, India "supported the call by the international community for the Government of Sri Lanka to fulfill its commitments

● **TWENTY-TWO OUT OF**
the 47 countries supported the resolution and 11 opposed it while 14 countries, including India, abstained from voting.

on the devolution of political authority... in accordance with the 13th amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution" while at the same time making it clear that the "work of the (UN's) Office of the High

Commissioner, Human Rights (OHCHR) should be in conformity with mandate given by the relevant resolutions of the UN General Assembly". The 13th amendment in Sri Lanka stands for devolution of power to the provinces there. India has been a supporter of the "reconciliation process" in the island nation between the majority Sinhalas and the minority Tamils.

New Delhi's vote is being seen as an exercise of

political balance and one key factor could be the upcoming Tamil Nadu Assembly elections since some political parties there had already made it an issue. The continuing proximity of the Rajapaksa brothers (President Gotabaya and Prime Minister Mahinda) to China could have also been another key factor in New Delhi's decision.

The UNHRC resolution called upon "the (Sri Lankan) government to

ensure prompt thorough and impartial investigation, if warranted, prosecution of all alleged crimes relating to human rights violations and serious violations of international human rights law".

The resolution was tabled by a Core Group on Sri Lanka consisting of the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Malawi, Montenegro, and North Macedonia at the 46th Session of the UNHRC in Geneva.

Certify Rana extradition, US admin to court

Washington, March 23:

The Biden administration has urged a federal court to certify India's request to extradite Pakistani origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, who is sought for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack.

Assistant US Attorney John J. Lulejian, in his submission before a federal court in Los Angeles, said Rana, 59, meets all the criteria to be extradited to India for his trial in the Mumbai terror attack. On February 4, Rana's attorney had opposed his extradition.

US District Court Judge in Los Angeles Jacqueline Chooilok has scheduled the extradition hearing for April 22.

"The United States respectfully requests that following the April 22, 2021, extradition hearing, the Court certify India's request for Rana's extradition for the Secretary of State's surrender decision," Lulejian said in his court submission on

Mondays, Rana, a childhood friend of David Coleman Headley, was re-arrested on June 10 in Los Angeles on an extradition request by India for his involvement in the Mumbai attack in which 166 people were killed.

He has been declared a fugitive by India. "Fugitive Tahawwur Hussain Rana is wanted in India to stand trial for offences related to his role in the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India, that resulted in the death of 166 people, injury of 239 people, and damage to property in excess of \$1.5 billion," Lulejian said.

As per the India-US Extradition Treaty, the Indian government has requested the formal extradition of Rana, and the United States has initiated this extradition proceeding.

Lulejian said in his court submission on

10 shot dead in US supermarket

LANKA, CHINA INK \$1.5 BN CURRENCY EXCHANGE DEAL

Colombo, March 23:

Sri Lanka will exchange currency with China under a 10 billion yuan (about \$1.5 billion) agreement aimed at promoting trade and investment between the two countries, the island nation's central bank said on Monday.

So-called currency swaps allow central banks to ensure banks in their countries can borrow ready cash in any of the currencies involved.

China remains Sri Lanka's largest source of imports.

— AP

killings during the pandemic in 2020, which had the smallest number of such attacks in more than a decade, according to the database, which tracks mass killings defined as four or more dead, not including the shooter.

The slain officer was identified as Eric Talley, 51, who had been with Boulder police since 2010, Herold said. He went to the store after a call about shots fired and someone carrying a rifle, she said.

"He was by all accounts one of the outstanding officers of the Boulder Police Department, and his life was cut too short," Dougherty said of Talley. Identities of the other victims were not disclosed as police were still notifying family members.

Matthew Kirsch, the acting US attorney for Colorado, pledged that "the full weight of federal law enforcement" will support the investigation. He said investigators from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives were at the crime scene, along with FBI agents. Officers had escorted a shirtless man with blood running down his leg out of the store in handcuffs but authorities would not say if he was the suspect. They did say the suspect was receiving medical care and was the only person injured who did not die.

These were people going about their day, doing their shopping. I promise the victims and the people of the state of Colorado that we will secure justice." The attack was the seventh mass killing this year in the US, following the March 16 shooting that left eight people dead at three Atlanta-area massage businesses, according to a database compiled by The Associated Press, USA Today and Northeastern University.

It follows a lull in mass



Yesh Atid party leader Yair Lapid and his wife Liki vote for Israel's parliamentary election at a polling station in Tel Aviv, Israel, on Tuesday. — AP

14 ULTRAS GIVEN DEATH FOR B'DESH PM KILL BID

Dhaka, March 23: Fourteen Islamist militants were on Tuesday given death sentence by a Bangladeshi court here for attempting to kill Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in 2000.

Judge Abu Zafar Md Kamruzzaman of Dhaka's Speedy Trial tribunal pronounced the verdict as nine of them were brought to the court from jail to face the trial in person.

The rest five convicts are on the run. They were tried in absentia and defended by state-appointed lawyers.

"The verdict will be executed by a firing squad to set an example, unless the law barred it," the judge said.

Otherwise, the convicts could be hanged in line with the prevailing practice, following mandatory review of the death sentences by the High Court Division of the Supreme Court under the Bangladesh law, the judge said. Under the Bangladesh law, the death sentences would require to be endorsed by the High Court following an automatic death reference hearing.

The convicts are allowed to file an appeal as well.

For the five convicts who are at large, the judge ordered the verdict to be executed after their arrest or surrender. All the convicts are operatives of outlawed Harkatul Jihad Bangladesh (HuJI-B).

HuJI-B's chief Mufti Abdul Hannan, who was found to be the mastermind of the plot, too was indicted in the case but his name was dropped from the trial as he was executed in 2017 in another case involving attempted assassination of the then Bangladeshi-origin British High Commissioner. — PTI

US: AstraZeneca 'used' dated info in vax trial

Washington, March 23: Results from a US trial of AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine may have included "outdated information" and that could mean the company provided an incomplete view of efficacy data, American federal health officials said early Tuesday.

AstraZeneca said in a statement that the data it released Monday included cases up to Feb. 17, as the study rules specified, and that it was continuing to analyse cases that have occurred since then. The company said that a pre-

liminary analysis of data that has continued to roll in was consistent with what it had already reported.

It promised an update within 48 hours. AstraZeneca reported Monday that its Covid-19 vaccine provided strong protection among adults of all ages in a long-anticipated US study, a finding that some experts hoped would help rebuild public confidence in the shot around the world and move it a step closer to clearance in the US.

In the study of more

than 30,000 people, the company reported that the vaccine was found to be 79 per cent effective at preventing symptomatic cases of Covid-19 — including in older adults.

There were no severe illnesses or hospitalisations among vaccinated volunteers, compared with five such cases in participants who received dummy shots — a small number, but consistent with findings from Britain and other countries that the vaccine protects against the worst of the disease.

— AP

Xi, Kim reaffirm traditional alliance

Seoul, March 23: The leaders of China and North Korea are reaffirming their traditional alliance following contentious talks between top diplomats from Washington and Beijing and diplomatic isolation and economic problems in the North that have left it ever-more dependent on the Chinese.

The North's official

Korean Central News Agency said Tuesday leader Kim Jong Un called for stronger "unity and cooperation" with China in the face of challenges posed by "hostile forces" while exchanging messages with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

According to KCNA and China's Xinhua news agency, Xi in his own message to Kim described

bilateral relations as a "valuable asset" to both countries and vowed to make unspecified contributions to the peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. KCNA said Xi also expressed a commitment to "provide the peoples of the two countries with better life."

Some analysts saw this as an indication that China would soon provide

North Korea with badly needed food, fertiliser and other aid that had been significantly reduced amid the pandemic border closures. Xinhua said the leaders' messages were exchanged during a meeting between Chinese senior diplomat Song Tao and North Korean Ambassador to China Ri Ryong Nam during a meeting in Beijing on Monday. — AP

US Labour Department invites comments from public on migrant workers

18-month delay in H-1B visa pay calculation

Washington, March 23: The Biden Administration has proposed an 18-month delay in the effective date of a final rule on calculating the prevailing wage levels, an official release said following the announcement on Monday.

This proposed delay will provide the Department of Labour with sufficient time to consider the rule's legal and policy issues thoroughly and issue an

upcoming Request for Information and gather public comments on the sources and methods for determining prevailing wage levels, an official release said following the announcement on Monday. This proposed rule follows an initial 60-day delay announced earlier this month.

The department based that action on a January 20, 2021, White House memo, the media release

said. The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

The department invited

considering whether to propose a further delay of the final rule's effective date and accompanying implementation periods.

The department proposed to delay in accordance with the Presidential directive as expressed in the memorandum of January 20, 2021, from the Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff, entitled Regulatory Freeze Pending Review.

The department invited

written comments from the public for 15 days on the proposed delay of the effective date. All comments had to be received by February 16, 2021.

Published in January 2021, the final rule affects employers seeking to employ foreign workers on a permanent or temporary basis through certain immigrant visas or through H-1B, H-1B1 and E-3 non-immigrant visas, the Department of Labour

said. While the E3 visa is one for which only citizens of Australia are eligible, the H-1B1 visa is for the people from Singapore and Chile.

The proposed delay will also give agency officials sufficient time to compute and validate prevailing wage data covering specific occupations and geographic areas, complete necessary system modifications and conduct public outreach. — PTI

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	50,051.44
Nifty 50	14,814.80
S&P 500*	3,944.91
Dollar (\$)	72.42
Pound Sterling (\$)	99.78
Euro (\$)	86.15
Gold (10gm)* (\$)	44,374▲116
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	62.14
IN 10-Yr T-bill yield*	6.144
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.654
	-0.028

* As of 8:30 PM IST

NCLAT closes proceedings against Jyoti

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal has shut the insolvency proceedings initiated against motor and generator manufacturing company Jyoti Ltd after settlement of claims raised by financial creditors. A two-member bench, including acting chairperson Justice B. Lal Bhat, allowed the company's plea after observing that it has already paid Rs 16.5 crore as per the compromise proposal.

Cipla board okays another 5-year term for Vohra



Pharma major Cipla said its board has approved the re-appointment of Umgan Vohra as the managing director and global CEO of the company for a further period of five years, with effect from April 1, 2021. Vohra had joined Cipla in 2015 and has been its MD & global CEO since Sept. 1, 2016. After gaining degrees in engineering, marketing and finance, Vohra worked with Eicher Motors, PepsiCo and Dr Reddy's Lab.

Hero MotoCorp to increase prices from April

Hero MotoCorp said it will make an upward revision in the ex-showroom prices of its motorcycles and scooters, with effect from April 1 to partially offset the impact of higher commodity costs. "The price hike has been necessitated to partially offset the impact of increased commodity costs," Hero MotoCorp said in a BSE filing. The price increase across the range of two-wheelers will be up to Rs 2,500, it added.

Glenmark gets \$40 mn as IFC Covid credit-line

International Finance Corporation said Glenmark Pharmaceuticals has become the first Indian drugmaker to get a \$40-million (about Rs 290 crore) credit-line from its \$8-billion fast-track Covid-19 facility. The loan to Glenmark will help the drug firm increase the availability of affordable, quality medicines in the country as well in other countries, including treatment for the pandemic.

Printed & Published by K Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press at Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd, #563/9/089/E, Behind Andhra Bank Pet Basheerbagh, Komappally, Ranga Reddy Dist. Editor: T Venkatram Reddy, RNI Reg No. APENG/2008/24282. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle ® is prohibited.

Waiver of 'interest on interest' applicable to all SC refuses to extend loan moratorium beyond Aug.

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, MARCH 23

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to extend the six months' loan moratorium period offered by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) beyond August 31. The apex court also said that the waiver of compound interest is not possible as it affects depositors' interest.

However, the apex court ruled that all borrowers will be eligible for waiver of 'interest on interest' (compound interest) with respect to EMIs which were not paid by them after availing of the loan moratorium scheme extended by the RBI during March 1 to August 31 in view of the pandemic. And whatever the amount is recovered by lenders by way of interest on interest/compound interest/penal interest for the period during the moratorium, the same shall be refunded and to be adjusted in the next instalment of the loan account.

The court effectively set aside the direction of the central government and the RBI to restrict waiver of interest on interest to certain categories of borrowers who had taken loans of less than Rs 2 crore.

"There is no justification shown to restrict the relief of not charging interest on interest with respect to loans up to Rs 2 crore only and that too restricted to the aforesaid categories. What are the basis to restrict it to Rs 2 crore are

- PRAYERS THAT WERE REJECTED**
- Total waiver of interest during the moratorium period
 - To extend the period of moratorium
 - To extend the period for invocation of resolution mechanism
 - Sector-wise reliefs provided by RBI
 - Further reliefs over and above the packages already offered

NPAs FELL TO ₹5.7 L CR: MINISTER

New Delhi, March 23: Non-performing assets of banks declined to Rs 5.70 lakh crore in December 2020 and the recovered amount stood at Rs 2.74 lakh crore following a slew of measures taken by the government, minister of state for finance Anurag Singh Thakur told the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

During question hour, he also said the IBC has helped in the recovery of NPA. "There has been a reduction in gross NPAs. The NPAs which stood at Rs 8.96 lakh crore in 2018—have reduced to Rs 5.70 lakh crore in December 2020. Recovery of Rs 2.74 lakh crore was also made," he said. — PTI

not forthcoming. Therefore, as such, there is no rational to restrict such relief with respect to loans up to Rs 2 crore only," the court said.

The court, therefore, partly allowed the petitions which had challenged the decision of the Centre and RBI to restrict waiver of interest on interest to those borrowers who had availed of loans of less than Rs 2 crore.

The SC also lifted the temporary freeze on letting banks classify accounts as non-perform-

ing assets (NPAs) after the moratorium has ended. This according to rating agency Icra Ltd would result in bad loans rising by Rs 1.3 lakh crore for banks and an outgo of Rs 7,000-Rs 7,500 crore as reimbursement of interest on interest to those with loans outstanding during the moratorium period.

Also noteworthy was that the SC said no direction could be issued to the government or the RBI to announce any particular financial package or relief, and held that it will, there-

fore, ordinarily not engage in exercising judicial review over matters of economic and fiscal policies.

The judgment was delivered by a bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R. Subhash Reddy and M.R. Shah in a batch of petitions filed by companies, individuals and business associations challenging the decision of the Centre and RBI to charge interest during the moratorium period and restrict waiver of interest on interest to eight categories of borrowers who had taken loans of less than Rs 2 crore.

Anil Gupta, vice president-financial sector ratings, Icra said, "As per Icra's estimates, on a proforma basis, the GNPA of the banks stood at Rs. 8.7 lakh crore or 8.3 per cent of advances as against the reported GNPA of Rs 7.4 lakh crore (7.1 per cent) as on December 31, 2020. Also, on a proforma basis, the Net NPA for the banks stood at Rs. 2.7 lakh crore or 2.7 per cent of advances as against the reported NNPA for all banks of Rs 1.7 lakh crore (1.7 per cent) as on December 31, 2020. Hence in absence of standstill by Hon'ble supreme court, the Gross NPAs for the banks would have been higher by Rs 1.3 lakh crore (1.2 per cent) and Net NPAs would have been higher by Rs one lakh crore (1 per cent).

"As per our estimates, the compounded interest for six month of moratorium across all lenders is estimated at Rs 13,500-14,000 crore."

Govt raises PF tax floor to ₹5 lakh

New Delhi, March 23:

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday raised the limit for tax exemption on interest earned on provident fund contribution by employees to Rs 5 lakh per annum in specified cases against Rs 2.5 lakh proposed in the Budget.

However, the minister in her reply to discussion on Finance Bill 2021 in the Lok Sabha, said the concession would be available to employees only in cases where his or her employer does not make any contribution to the retirement fund.

The Finance Bill was later passed by the Lower House with 127 amendments by voice vote.

With the passage of the Finance Bill, which contains tax proposals for the next fiscal, the Lok Sabha has completed the budgetary exercise for 2021-22. The Bill is to be taken up by the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

Repeating the debate, she said the proposal for taxing interest income on contributions of more than Rs 2.5 lakh would affect less than 1 per cent of the total number of EPF subscribers.

"I intend to raise this limit to Rs 5 lakh only in those cases, where there is no contribution by the employer in that fund.

"So, most often, it is employee contribution and employer's contribution, but there are contributions which are only employee and no employer contribution is made, in such cases that amount is raised to Rs 5 lakh," she said. — PTI

The GST Council, headed

Petrol issue can be taken up at GST Council meet: FM



Nirmala Sitharaman

New Delhi, March 23:

Amidst an outcry over the high taxes on motor fuel, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said she would be "glad" to discuss the suggestion of bringing petrol and diesel under the ambit of the Goods and Services Tax at the next meeting of the GST Council.

State levies and central excise duty account for more than half of the retail selling prices of petrol and diesel.

For instance, taxes make up for 60 per cent of the present retail price of petrol of Rs 91.17 a litre in Delhi. Excise duty constitutes 36 per cent of the retail price comprises central excise.

Over 53 per cent of the retail selling price of Rs 81.47 a litre for diesel in Delhi is made up of taxes. As much as 39 per cent of the retail price comprises central excise.

Petrol and diesel prices are hovering at historic highs following a relentless increase in rates over the past nine months. There have been calls by Opposition parties as well as sections of society to reduce excise duty to ease consumer pain.

Supriya Sule (NCP) said excise component in the prices of petrol is close to Rs 38 per litre while state value-added tax (VAT) is about Rs 19 per litre in Delhi. The government should consider slashing this high excise duty, she said. She urged the government to bring down prices of petrol, diesel and LPG cylinder.

Ritesh Pandey (BSP) and Nama Nageswara Rao (TRS) too raised the issue of high prices of petrol and diesel. — PTI

Gangavaram Port goes to Adani for ₹3,600 crore

New Delhi, March 23: Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) on Tuesday said it will acquire controlling interest in Gangavaram Port Ltd (GPL) from D.V.S. Raju and family for Rs 3,604 crore, taking its stake in GPL to 89.6 per cent.

GPL is located next to the Vizag port.

APSEZ, India's largest private ports and logistics company and the flagship transportation arm of the diversified Adani Group, is acquiring the 58.1 per cent stake held by D.V.S. Raju and family in GPL, the company said in a statement.

The acquisition is valued at Rs 3,604 crore, it said.

APSEZ had announced acquisition of Warburg Pincus' 31.5 per cent stake in GPL on March 3, 2021, and together with this acquisition, APSEZ would have 89.6 per cent stake in GPL.

DIGITAL MAPPING OF INDIA TO BE OVER BY 2024

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, MARCH 23

The digital mapping initiative by the Survey of India is expected to cover the entire country by 2024. The departmental budget for this in FY21 is Rs 449 crore.

The project by the Survey of India, with support from the Department of Science and Technology (DST) had started in 2019. The entire country will be covered mostly with high resolution satellite imagery and some areas with UAV/drones as per the request of state governments for large-scale mapping. Soi will be covering 31.67 lakh sq km of area, minister of science and technology Harsh Vardhan told the Rajya Sabha.

The high resolution satellite imagery work involves five stages. The fifth round of Final National Topography Data Base has been completed in around 2,324 sq km.

The departmental budget for FY21 is Rs 449 crore. Further, funds have been received from some extra departmental projects.

JLR starts electric journey with ₹1.06 cr I-Pace SUV



Rohit Suri

With the launch of the Jaguar I-Pace SUV on Tuesday, Jaguar Land Rover, Tata Motors-owned British luxury carmaker, has now entered the electric vehicle, or EV, market in India. With a price tag of Rs 1.06 crore for the base S trim, going up to Rs 1.12 crore at pan-India showroom for the top-end HSE trim, the Jaguar I-Pace will compete against the likes of Mercedes-Benz EQC and the upcoming Porsche Taycan and Audi e-tron in India.

Rohit Suri, president & managing director at Jaguar Land Rover India spoke with Michael Gonsalves on the company's electric plans and challenges in the Indian market.

How significant is the launch of Jaguar I-Pace in India?

Jaguar I-Pace is the first all-electric SUV that we've launched in India and it marks the beginning of our electrification journey. With our electrified products we look forward to playing a significant role in India's electrification drive into the future.

Is the Indian market is

ready for electric-vehicles?

The Indian market is surely warming up to the prospects of electric vehicles. Amongst our customers, there is a growing concern around pollution in cities and overall environmental sustainability, which is triggering the demand for EVs. Government policy push is acting as a catalyst to drive this demand even further.

The 21st century luxury customer is also keen to adopt the latest in technology and EVs are absolutely positioned at the top of the pyramid in this aspect.

What charging solutions have you provided with the Jaguar I-Pace?

With 15 states raising a total of Rs 17,783 crore through auction of government securities on Tuesday, the market borrowings of all states and union territories have touched Rs 7.78 lakh crore this fiscal, 28 per cent higher than last year.

Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand and West Bengal were the main states that participated in the auction of government securities on Tuesday. The borrowing cost witnessed a sharp decline and fell to the lowest level since the end of

To charge the I-Pace, customers may either use a home charging cable that is provided as standard with the vehicle or use a 7.4 kW AC wall mounted charger that is also provided as standard. The installation of this charger at the customer's house will be done by Tata Power, and will be coordinated via Jaguar Retailers.

What about battery warranty and services?

To ensure complete peace of mind, Jaguar I-Pace is provided with complimentary five-year service package, five years roadside assistance package, eight years or 160,000 km battery warranty and a 7.4 kW AC wall mounted charger.

What are your plans for FY22?

In line with the growth in the economy, we expect the luxury car market to witness a strong double-digit growth and we will strive to grow faster. Post the successful launch of Land Rover Defender in FY21, we are looking to further fortify our position in the market with 10 strong product actions planned in FY22.

The appeal was filed on Monday, a source with knowledge of the matter said.

The finance ministry spokesperson did not respond to an e-mail sent for comments.

The appeal against a three-member tribunal at the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague invalidating India's Rs 10,247-crore tax claim on Cairn Energy and ordering the government to return the value of shares it had sold, dividends seized and tax refunds withheld, comes weeks before UK prime minister Boris Johnson's visit to India.

The British prime minister is widely expected to broach the topic of India honouring international arbitration awards during his April 26 visit, another source said.

In December, the government had challenged in a Singapore court an international arbitration tribunal verdict that overturned its demand for Rs 22,100 crore in back taxes from Vodafone Group Plc.

Since the seat of Vodafone arbitration was Singapore, an appeal was filed in a court in that country. In the case of Cairn, the seat was The Hague and so an appeal has been filed in a court in the Netherlands, the first source said.

The tribunal's 582-page detailed verdict asked India to return \$1.2 billion-plus interest and cost to Cairn. — PTI

GOVT GARNERS ₹30,369 CR AS PSU DIVIDEND

FC BUREAU
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

New Delhi, March 23: The government has collected Rs 30,369 crore as dividend from Central Public Sector Enterprises so far in the current fiscal, according to a senior official.

In the revised budget estimate, the government significantly lowered the dividend receipt from the CPSEs to Rs 34,717.25 crore from Rs 65,746.96 crore estimated earlier for this financial year.

Dividend receipts of GoI (Government of India

SHORT TAKES

Espargaro ready for Honda debut

Doha: The 2021 MotoGP World Championship is about to commence. Pol Espargaro is excited for his first race on the RC213V after a strong test as Stefan Bradl lines up alongside him. Sunday will see the lights go out on the Grand Prix of Qatar and begin another thrilling MotoGP World Championship season. After a difficult 2020, the Repsol Honda Team enter the new season with rejuvenated determination and desire to return to the front. This will be the first of two races at the 5.4-kilometre-long Losail International Circuit, Round Two coming the following week.

A productive test has Espargaro and his side of the garage feeling positive ahead of the first race but has set no expectations for the weekend, wanting to focus on continuing to deepen his understanding of the Honda.

Mixed bag for State sides

Hyderabad: Telangana girls got off to a winning start but the boys lost their opening game in the 47th Junior National Kabaddi Championship being held at Suryapet.

The girls defeated Bihar 42-38 after leading 21-15 at half-time. The boys were overpowered by Uttar Pradesh 54-23.

OTHER RESULTS

Girls: Haryana bt Orissa 67-36; Delhi bt Chandigarh 46-45; Maharashtra bt Madhya Pradesh 49-47; Goa bt Manipur 37-24.

Boys: Rajasthan bt Bihar 54-31; Karnataka bt Telangana 49-33.

Sangareddy start well

Hyderabad: Sangareddy and Kamareddy won their respective matches in the Telangana Cricket Association's U-19 Inter Districts West-Central Zone tournament at IOC Grounds in Gajwel. Sangareddy defeated Gajwel by 23 runs while Kamareddy edged out Jangaon by just one run.

BRIEF SCORES

Sangareddy 163 in 24.3 overs (Divit 43) bt Gajwel (Siddipet) 140/9 in 25 overs (P. Lohit Reddy 37, M. Janardhan 3/24).
Kamareddy 89 in 13.3 overs (M. Ramreddy 21, A. Aravind 3/4) bt Jangaon 88 in 18 overs (E. Kartik 34, Saquib 3/19, Sohail 3/18).

Live on TV

SHOOTING
World Cup: 25m Pistol Women Final from 11.5 am on Sony Six, HD

FOOTBALL

European Qualifiers for 2022 World Cup:
Turkey vs The Netherlands from 10.30 pm; Portugal vs Azerbaijan from 1.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2; France vs Ukraine from 1.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Six; Belgium vs Wales from 1.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1

EXTRAODINAIRE

Debutants Krishna, Krunal shine as India start series with a win

Pune, March 23: Debutants Krunal Pandya and Prasidh Krishna made the big stage their own to give an all-round India a convincing 66-run victory over world champions England in the first ODI of the three-match series here on Tuesday.

After under-fire opener Shikhar Dhawan delivered with a solid 98, Krunal (58 not out off 31) smashed the fastest fifty by a debutant to fire India to 317 for five following England's decision to field.

At 135 for no loss in the 15th over, with Jason Roy (46 off 35) and Jonny Bairstow (94 off 55) going strong, England seemed to be running away with the chase before Krishna (4/54) and Shardul Thakur (3/37) shared seven wickets between them to script a winning comeback.

The 25-year-old Krishna's figures were the best by an Indian debutant as England's innings ended at 251 in 42.1 overs.

Krishna, who leaked 37 runs in his first three overs, came back strongly and troubled the batsmen with his ability to generate extra bounce.

England had the game in the bag but were guilty of throwing it away, failing to build on the flier of a start given Bairstow and Roy.

Earlier, Dhawan and Virat Kohli (56 off 60) shared 105 runs for the second wicket before Krunal (58 not out off 31) and K. L. Rahul (62 not out off 43) sent England on a leather hunt with their unbeaten 112-run stand off 57 balls to take the team past 300. Dhawan hit 11 fours and two sixes. —PTI



India's Shikhar Dhawan en route to his 98 against England in the first one-day international at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune on Tuesday. — AFP

SCORECARD

India: Rohit Sharma c Jos Buttler b Stokes 28, Shikhar Dhawan c Morgan b Stokes 98, Virat Kohli c Moeen b Mark Wood 56, Shreyas Iyer c (sub) Livingstone 18, Mark Wood 6, K.L. Rahul (not out) 62, Hardik Pandya c Bairstow b Stokes 1, Krunal Pandya (not out) 58. Extras (lb-3, w-5) 8. Total (for 5 wickets, in 50 Overs) 317. FOW: 64-1, 169-2, 187-3, 197-4, 205-5.

Bowling: Mark Wood 10-1-75, Sam Curran 10-48, Tom Curran 10-0, Ben Stokes 8-34-3, Adil Rashid 9-66-0, Moeen Ali 3-0-28-0.

England: Jason Roy c (SA) Yadav b Prasidh Krishna 46, Jonny Bairstow c Kuldeep Yadav b Thakur 94, Ben Stokes c (sub) (Shubman Gill) b Prasidh Krishna 1, Eoin Morgan (c) b Rahul b Thakur 22, Jos Buttler lbw b Thakur 2, Sam Billings c Kohli b Prasidh Krishna 18, Moeen Ali c Rahul b Kumar 30, Sam Curran c (sub) (Shubman Gill) b K. Pandya 12, Tom Curran c Kumar b Prasidh Krishna 11, Adil Rashid c Rahul b Kumar 0, Mark Wood (not out) 2. Extras (lb 3, w 10) 13. Total (all out in 42.1 overs) 251.

FOW: 1-155, 2-157, 3-169, 4-175, 5-176, 6-217, 7-237, 8-239, 9-241, 10-251.

Bowling: Bhuvneshwar Kumar 9-0-30-2, Prasidh Krishna 8-1-54-4, Shardul Thakur 6-0-37-3, Krunal Pandya 10-0-59-1, Kuldeep Yadav 6-0-68-0.

(Abhishek 53 batting)

Saint Sal 153 in 35.5 overs (Y. Raju Shekar 21, Mani Kiran 48, **Vamsi Kumar 6/62, Rahul 26) lost to Bharat CC 153/6 in 31 overs (Praveen 30, Sunil 30 n.o., T. Rohit Kumar 4/25). Points: Bharat 5, Saint Sal 0**

Yadav Dairy 180 in 36 overs (N. Sudheendra 97 n.o., Sved Ershad Pasha 6/66) lost to Vijay CC 184/2 in 30.1 overs (Shyam Reddy 19 n.o. — 65b, 14x4, 5x6, Adrit 33). Points: Vijay 0, Dairy 0.

Anu CC vs International 375 in 71 overs (V. Karthikeya 66, Ankit Kumar 86, K. Prem Sai 85, C. Rahul 30, Jitu Samanta 37/7) vs Anu CC 32/2 in 12 overs.

Hyderabad Patriots 115 in 39.4 overs (Kish Agarwal 4/50, Shreyas Reddy 4/39) lost to Ekoila 115/2 in 17 overs (Vijay 55, Kish Agarwal 45). Points: Ekoila 5, Patriots 0

Time CC 158 in 59 overs (G. Vivek Gagan 71, Sal Sandeepa 31, Nishanth Reddy 4/44, Sarah 4/24) lost to SN Group 162/3 in 32.2 overs (Aryaman 77 n.o., Bhrujan Prakash 73 n.o.). Points: Time 0.

Deccan Wanderers vs Classic (Classic full team was not present, Deccan Wanderers claimed walkover). Points: Deccan Wanderers 5, Classic 0.

ONE-DAY LEAGUE

Mahbubnagar District 170 in 59 overs (A. Srikanth Naik 52, Yashaswi Yes 4/33) vs Oxford Blues 78/2 in 30 overs.

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TWO-DAY LEAGUE

WMC 136 in 36.3 overs (Anish Reddy 25, Vishesh Arora 5/27) lost to HBCC, Darsh Mohal Lal (5/57) of Galaxy, Md Nadeem Khan (5/58) of New Blues, Bhupendra Kumar (5/64) of MCC and Sai Chand (5/72) of Khammam District were the bowlers who did well.

Among the batting performers were Hyderabad Cricket Academy's K. Pranay (151), Shaik Zaheer Abbas (135 n.o.) and Sahil Parakhne (101); Shyam Paigwar (124) of Hyderabad Titans; Shyam Reddy (119 n.o.) of Vijay CC; Visaka's A. Vigneshwar (108) and Jai Chandu (106) of Galaxy.

Performers in the one-day league included Rishikesh Pandya (179) and Raju (5/20) of Marredpally Blues, Angad Pappat (5/21) of Universal CC, Pranav (111) and Sai Charan (5/24) of LNCC.

Brief Scores:

Dhanush, Tarun, Neeraj, Vamshhi, Ershad on top

Sacheit, Vishesh, Darsh, Nadeem, Bhupendra, Sai, Pranay, Zaheer, Paigwar, Shyam, Vigneshwar, Chandu also do well

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 23

Dhanush scored a double century while C. Tarun Kumar took seven wickets to emerge top performers in the Hyderabad Cricket Association's two-day league matches played on Tuesday.

Dhanush hit 250, slamming 37 boundaries and seven sixes in his 171-ball knock to prop up Deccan Blues to 522 against Aggarwal Senior, who slipped to 54 for 2 by close on the first day.

Tarun of Future Star took 7 for 62 against Nizam College, for whom Mirza Noman snared 5 for 45 to bowl his side to victory.

R. Neeraj (64/2) of Greenlands, Vamshhi Kumaar (6/62) of Bharat CC and Syed Ershad Pasha (6/66) of Vijay CC were the next best out show with six wickets each.

Sacheit Binrajka (5/27) of Kosaraju, Vishesh Anand (5/27) of HBCC, Darsh Mohal Lal (5/57) of Galaxy, Md Nadeem Khan (5/58) of New Blues, Bhupendra Kumar (5/64) of MCC and Sai Chand (5/72) of Khammam District were the bowlers who did well.

Nondumiso Shangase ended the young Indian opener's knock by having her caught by Ismail in the deep in the ninth over. But by then, the match was as good as over in India's favour.

Mandhana showed her class by producing the final flourish, taking India to 114/1 in 11 overs. SA Women clinched the three-match T20I series 2-1, having won the first two matches.

Chasing 113 for victory, the 17-year-old Shafali went on a rampage from the word go by picking up 18 runs (3 fours and a six) off the first over bowled by Shabnim Ismail. She smashed three more sixes

in the next three overs, including two off Nadine de Klerk's second over.

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