

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | SUNDAY | 7 FEBRUARY 2021



WORLD | 6

UN: Reverse coup
in Myanmar



SPORTS | 8

Root first to hit double
century in 100th Test

TABLOID

Bollywood's pursuit
of the talented



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WEATHER

Max: 32°C
Min: 16°C
RH: 60%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Partly cloudy.
Misty morning. Max/Min
temp. 31/15 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES (+12,514)
DEATHS (+74)
1,08,27,170 1,55,028

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+161) (+1)
TS: 2,95,431 1,608
(+75) (+1)
AP: 8,88,350 7,159

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

10,61,28,850
DEATHS 23,14,127
COUNTRIES 219
AREAS WITH CASES
worldometers.info/
coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Uttarayana
Tithi: Pushya Bahula Ekadasi till
4.47 am (Monday)
Star: Jyeshtha till 4.15 pm
Varjyam: Nil
Durmuhurtam: 4.39 pm to 5.25 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
HJRI CALENDAR
Jamadi- ul- Akhir 24,1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.45 am
Zohar: 12.40 pm
Asar: 4.38 pm
Maghrib: 6.19 pm
Isha: 7.28 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.13 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.46 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 2.38 AM
MOONSET TODAY 2.02 PM

COUNTER POINT



Price rise again? I am not
aware... I always travel
in government vehicles!

SHORT TAKES

H1-B registration from March 9

Washington: The registration
process for the H-1B visa
application for the next fiscal
year will begin on March 9
and the successful applicants
through a computerised
draw of lots would be notified
by March 31, a federal
agency has announced. The
notification by the US
Citizenship and Immigration
Services on Friday came a
day after the Biden adminis-
tration announced that it will
continue with the traditional
lottery system to issue the
much sought-after work visa
to foreign professionals.

GHMC | ELECTION

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

After an exercise spread
over two months, the
municipal administration
and urban development
(MA&UD) department has
determined that only 44 of
52 ex officio members
belonging to various parties
will be eligible for voting in
the GHMC council elections
on February 11.
These 44 are from the TRS,
MIM and the BJP. None
from the Congress can vote
as MP A. Revanth Reddy
has utilised his vote in the
Boduppal Municipal
Corporation.
No invitation has been

extended to ex-officio mem-
bers who are ineligible to
vote on the day mayoral
elections are to be held.
However, all 52 members
(TRS 38, MIM 10, BJP 3 and
Congress 1) will be allowed
participate in the remain-
ing GHMC council meet-
ings.
Hyderabad collector
Swetha Mohanthy, who is
the presiding officer for the
Mayor and Deputy Mayor
elections, scheduled to be
held on February 11,
inspected the arrangements
being made in this regard at
the council hall. As per the
seating arrangements,
Cabinet ministers and MPs
will be seated in the front

● EVERY YEAR, some two
lakh Indians travel to
Macca to perform the Haj,
but this year, pilgrims are
waiting for a call from the
Haj Committee for com-
pleting pre-selection for-
malities.

row, followed by MLAs,
MLCs and corporators. The
56 TRS corporators will sit
on the extreme left side of
the council hall, 44 of MIM
in the centre, 48 of BJP on
the right and two Congress
corporators on the extreme
right.
The mayor will be elected
soon after new corporators

are administered their oath.
The Deputy Mayor will be
elected thereafter. If, for
any reason, the mayoral
elections are not held on
February 11, polling will be
held the next day -
February 12 - even if it is a
holiday for the GHMC.
According to official
records, ex officio members
of the TRS have been
reduced from 38 to 32 since
MLA and MLCs Yegge
Malleham, Garikapati
Rammohan Rao, Katepally
Janardhan Reddy and min-
ister Sabitha Indra Reddy
utilised their votes in the
Tukuguda municipality.
They are thus ineligible to
vote in GHMC polls.

MLA Manchireddy
Kishan Reddy, MLC M.
Srinivas Reddy and Rajya
Sabha MP Banda Prakash
have cast their vote in
Adibatla municipality.
MLCs Kurumaiahgari
Naveen Kumar and Patnam
Mahender Reddy have
utilised their vote in Pedda
Amberpet municipality.
Rajendranagar MLA T.
Prakash Goud and Chevella
MP Gaddam Ranjith Reddy
have voted in the Narsingi
municipality; labour minis-
ter Ch. Mallu Reddy and MP
A. Revanth Reddy in the
Boduppal Municipal
Corporation and MLA K.P.
Vivekananda in the
Kompally municipality.



Congress leaders use bullock carts to protest against the 3 new farm laws during the Chakka jam at Hayathnagar in support of farmers on Saturday. Nearly 50 protests were held across Telangana. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

Farmers, farm union leaders held for jam

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

Hundreds of farmers, rep-
resentatives of farmer
unions, along with leaders
and workers from various
political parties were
arrested at many locations
around Hyderabad for
obstructing traffic as
part of the nationwide
'chakka jam' protest on
Saturday.

The largest of such
protests was held near the
Hayathnagar bus depot on
the Vijayawada highway
for about an hour from
noon.

In all, 50 such protests
were held across Telan-
gana state with no reports
of any untoward inci-
dents. Protests were held
on the highways including
Bodhan, Armoor, Kam-
mapally, Makur in Nizam-
abad district, Wardh-
annapet, Narsampet and
Mandarpur in Warangal

Oct. 2 deadline to repeal laws: Tikait

SUNIL THAPLIYAL
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, FEB. 06

On a day farmers protest-
ing against the Centre's
three contentious agricul-
tural laws staged an inci-
dent-free three-hour
'chakka jam' across the
country, Bharatiya Kisan
Union leader Rakesh
Tikait said that the farmer
leaders have given the

Centre time till October 2
to withdraw the laws.
Farmers, he added, will
return home only after the
government repeals the
contentious legislation
and makes a law ensuring
legal guarantee for mini-
mum support price (MSP).
"There will be no com-
promise on this," he said
and asserted that the agi-
tation is for the whole of
India and not one state.

Sangharsh Coordination
Committee, was in solidar-
ity with striking farmers
who have been camping
outside New Delhi.

■ Page 2: Protesters want
TS to reinstate procurement

SEC CONFINES AP MINISTER TO HIS HOME FOR POLLS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 6

In an unprecedented
move, the State Election
Commission (SEC) has
directed the AP Director-
General of Police to con-
fine minister for panchay-
at raj and rural develop-
ment Peddireddy Rama-
chandra Reddy to his
house till the completion
of gram panchayat elec-
tions on February 21.

This prohibits the min-
ister from accessing the
media and prevents him
from "making inciting
utterances" that could
adversely impact the poll
process and also the law
and order situation in
Chittoor district. The SEC
took serious note of the
minister's recent warning
to collectors and returning
officers, urging them to
disobey instructions from
SEC N. Ramesh Kumar
and to blacklist them if
they followed Kumar's
instructions especially
with regard to prevention
of forced unanimous elec-
tions. The minister had
allegedly said that the SEC
would be in power till
March 31 while the YSRC
government tenure would
continue beyond it, and
asked the returning offi-
cers to declare all unani-
mous elections.

■ Page 2: Minister alleged
SEC seeking MP nomination

TS Budget to be downsized 20%

₹50,000 cr lost due to lockdown, slowdown

L. VENKAT RAM
REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

The Telangana Budget is
set to be downsized by at
least 20 per cent from the
last year, as the financial
condition of the state has
been badly affected by the
Covid-19 pandemic and
the subsequent lockdown.
The government has suf-
fered revenue losses of
over ₹50,000 crore due to
the lockdown and slowing
down in the economy.

Finance minister T.
Harish Rao had presented
the 2020-21 Budget with an
outlay of ₹1.8 lakh crore.
The Budget for 2021-22 is
expected to be less than ₹1.5
lakh crore.

It may be recalled that
Chief Minister K.
Chandrasekhara Rao had
pruned Budget size by 20
per cent in 2019-20 citing
the economic slowdown
and drastic cuts in Central
government funds and
grants.

The recent Union Budget
also came as a big disap-
pointment for the TS gov-
ernment with cuts in
Central tax devolution
and imposition of agricul-
ture cess on fuel which is
estimated to result in a

● Growth fell short
of target and rev-
enues also fell.
None of the bud-
getary targets could
be met. There is lit-
tle chance of mak-
ing good the losses
till financial year
ends on March 31.

loss of over ₹5,000 crore in
2021-22.

The CM has been holding
meetings with finance offi-
cials at Pragathi Bhavan
to finalise the new Budget
for the past three days.
Officials explained to the
CM the need to prune the
Budget size.

The 2020-21 Budget pro-
posals were prepared esti-
mating the state's revenue
growth rate at 15 per cent.
Growth fell short of target
and revenues also fell.
None of the budgetary tar-
gets could be met. There is
little chance of making
good the losses in the
remaining week till the
financial year ends on
March 31.

The state government
also paid a heavy price for
stopping property regis-
trations to facilitate the
launch of the Dharani por-

tal.
The earnings through
property registrations
remain the worst-affected
among all sectors. The
Budget had targeted earn-
ing ₹10,000 crore through
property registrations but
the government collected
₹3,189 crore, thanks to
Dharani portal for which
the government stopped
registrations from
September 7, 2020, to
October 29.

On GST, the government
had set an earnings target
of ₹32,671 crore but has
realised only ₹18,429 crore
so far. Against the sales
tax target of ₹26,400 crore,
₹13,954 crore could be col-
lected.

The Budget had estimat-
ed that the state would
receive ₹10,906 crore as its
share in Central taxes but
the Centre has released
just ₹5,412 crore so far.

The silver lining is the
Centre's grants-in-aid to
the state government sur-
passed the budgetary esti-
mates, thanks to Centre
releasing more grants to
help states to overcome
Coronavirus-induced
financial crisis.

■ Page 2: Non-tax revenue
also got affected

KTR: Make Green India a success

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

TRS working president
K.T. Rama Rao on
Saturday urged all public
representatives at all lev-
els to participate in the
Green India challenge and

make it a success. The
minister appreciated TRS
MP Joginipally Santosh
Kumar for taking up the
one crore tree plantation
programme. He was speak-
ing after launching the
event's poster in the pres-
ence of Deputy Chief

Minister Mahamood Ali,
minister Talasani
Srinivas Yadav, MP
Malotu Kavita and MLA
Hari Priya Nayak. He
stated that the one crore
saplings were a birthday
gift to Chief Minister K.
Chandrashekar Rao, who

envisioned a green
Telangana. Rama Rao said
that the programme
should be taken up in co-
ordination with forest and
panchayat raj depart-
ments. The participants
would get 'Vanamali'
awards.

OGH DOCS PAY TO GET THEIR JOB CARDS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

Doctors alleged that the
70 newly recruited
assistant professors in
Osmania Medical
College are being paid
their salary only after
they shell out ₹5,000 to
section officers in the
administration depart-
ment. In a letter to
OMC principal Dr P.S.
Vijayender, convener of
the Telangana Doctors
Forum alleged that the
officials were demand-
ing money to process
the papers and create
employment cards. The
rates vary from ₹3, 500
to ₹5,000. Officials clar-
ified the amount was for
processing the employ-
ment card.

SHORT TAKES

MINISTER: SEC SEEKING MP NOMINATION

From Page 1

The minister was quoted as saying that the SEC was trying to gain an MP or MLC nomination from the Telugu Desam.

The SEC said that the intention for issuing such an order was to carry out the mandate given to the Election Commission to hold free and fair elections and to insulate collectors and returning officers from fear psychosis following the minister's threats. The SEC's order will come into effect immediately.

The SEC said that the minister's utterances were a serious breach of rule of law and unconstitutional. It said that the threats transgressed election laws and abuse of office for wrongful ends.

The SEC justified its action on the minister by saying that his exhortation in favour of forced unanimous elections was nothing but a veiled threat administered to disintegrate the citizens to participate in the election process as contestants and voters. However, it said that the restrictions imposed on the minister would not prevent him to access his medical aid and other exigencies and also to dispose of his official papers and matters.

BHATTI WANTS PROBE INTO PUVVADA LANDS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Saturday lashed out at minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar for regularising his land in Khammam by utilising GO Nos. 58 and 59, which is meant for the poor.

Bhatti criticised the government for its failure to create better infrastructure in Khammam town. He said that the state government has been illegally registering police cases on anyone questioning the government's failure pertaining to development.

he CLP leader alleged that Ajay Kumar was allocating works only to his own contracting company or to his supporters, which was against the spirit of democracy. He said that the minister's actions were causing concern among the locals.

Bhatti criticised the government for regularising thousands of acres of government land by using GO No 58 and 59. He said that Ajay Kumar has blatantly misused his position for boosting his personal business. He demanded a vigilance inquiry into his alleged irregularities.

The CLP leader announced that a booth level committee meeting pertaining to Khammam municipal corporation election would be held on Sunday.

BUILD STRONG STATE, KAVITHA URGES WOMEN

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat said the SanghaMitra programme to empower and train women from Ibrahimpatnam, Choutuppal, Bhongir and Yadadri had received a good response.

He said that the initiative has inspired thousands of women in the state by way of awareness and instilling self-confidence over issues like abolition of crime, fraud against women, and prevention of social evil against women, among others.

He was speaking at a meeting of SanghaMitra, the Rachakonda police commissioner's flagship programme that is held in collaboration with the Rachakonda Security Council.

Bhagwat called for active and continued participation of the SanghaMitra trained along with Rachakonda police in creating awareness amongst women to act as ambassadors. He sought prevention of child marriages and encouraged the progress of girls.

TRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha stated that women in Telangana state, taking inspiration from the statehood movement, should aspire and work together to build a progressive and forward state besides working towards empowering women.

She appreciated Bhagwat for his friendly policing initiatives and prompt actions ensuring prevention of violence against women.

All dams have enough water for summer

Good storage due to heavy rains during monsoon last year

L. VENKAT RAM
REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

Most reservoirs in the Krishna and Godavari basins in Telangana state have more water than previous years, just before the onset of summer. At others, the water is close to the levels seen in 2020.

The government is confident it can sail through this summer without facing drinking water shortage either in the city or in the districts.

The good storage is the result of heavy rains received during the southwest monsoon that lasted till October. The state received 1,259.7 mm of rainfall from June 1, 2020, against the norm of 852.8 mm, an increase of 48 per cent. In the GHMC limits, the total was 1221.1 mm against 723.5 mm usually, which is higher by 68.8 per cent.

Nagarjunasagar in the Krishna basin remains the major source of drinking water for the GHMC limits and south Telangana districts. As on Saturday, the water level at Nagarjunasagar dam stood at 559.50 ft against the full reservoir level (FRL) of 590 ft. It has 231.22 tmc ft against gross storage of 312.05 tmc. The same day last year, it had 551.30 ft and 212.43 tmc ft.

In Srisaillam dam, water stood at 867.30 ft against 868.8 ft last year (FRL 885 ft) and the storage was 130.96 tmc ft against 138.93 tmc last year (total capacity 215.81 tm ft).

Same is the case with the major dams in Godavari basin.

Sriramsagar had water at 1083.30 ft on Saturday (last year 1,084.4 ft, FRL 1,091 ft) and storage of 61.77 tmc (last year 64.99 tmc, gross capacity 90.31 tmc)..

The Mid-Manair dam is brimming with water at 1040.72 (last 1,039.93 ft, FRL 1043.31 ft) and storage

Malkapet reservoir work gathers momentum

DC CORRESPONDENT
SIRCILLA, FEB. 6

Smitha Sabarwal, secretary to the Chief Minister's Office, on Saturday inspected the construction work at the Malkapet reservoir Malkapeta of Konaraopet mandal in Rajanna Sircilla district. The work is part of package-9 of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS).

After inspecting the underground surgepool, tunnel, pump house, ventilation shaft, delivery cis-

terns on Bund-5 works, the official inquired with the officials about the progress of work and ordered them to speed up the works and to complete lining of the tunnel for at least 80 metres every day.

Speaking at a review meeting held with the officials and contractors, Smitha Sabarwal said that as per the orders issued by Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao, work should go on round the clock in shifts to meet the deadline.

"By maintaining quality,

complete stone pitching works of all the bunds," she said and wanted a dry run of the second pump by April and a trial run of the project in May.

The senior official said that the Chief Minister was very keen to complete Package-9 as early as possible and was tracking its progress.

She further asked the collector D. Krishna Bhaskar to resolve land acquisition and revenue issues and bring to her notice if they face any major problem.



Secretary in the Chief Minister Office Smitha Sabarwal inspects the construction work of Malkapet reservoir on Saturday.

of 25.52 tmc ft (last year 24.92 tmc ft gross capacity 27.50 tmc ft).

The Yellampally project, which also supplies the city, had water at 484.25 ft (last year 477.13 ft, FRL 485.56 ft) and storage of 19.06 tmc ft (13.60 tmc ft last year against gross capacity of 20.18 tmc ft).

As per the latest reservoir storage bulletin

issued by the Central Water Commission (CWC), live storage available in the reservoirs in the southern region is 33.12 billion cubic metres (BCM), which is 63 per cent of the total capacity.

The storage during corresponding period of last year was 61 per cent at this time of the year. The average storage in the last 10

years during the corresponding period was 42 per cent.

The southern region includes the states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. There are 36 reservoirs under the Central Water Commission (CWC) monitoring having total capacity of 52.81 BCM.

Owaisi to focus on Murshidabad and Malda for Bengal elections

PRANMOY
BRAHMACHARI | DC
BERHAMPORE, FEB. 6

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi and his brother Akbaruddin Owaisi will kickstart their poll campaign from Murshidabad and Malda, a party leader said on Saturday.

Murshidabad MIM convener Asadul Sheikh said, "Asaduddin Owaisi and his brother Akbaruddin will address at least 10 public meetings in

● **AIMIM MLA Akhtarul Iman and Bihar state youth wing president Adil Hasan will be camping in Murshidabad from February 13,**

Murshidabad and Malda after the poll schedule is declared. We hope that we will be able to open our account in Murshidabad like Bihar."

He added, "As we need good orators and organisers, our party leadership

from Jharkhand, Bihar, Delhi and Maharashtra have been entrusted the task of spearheading the campaign for the next two months. Since the Muslim population is around 66.27 per cent in Murshidabad and 51.30 per cent in Malda, these districts have been earmarked by us."

According to sources, five AIMIM MLAs from Bihar and the party's youth wing president, in the wake of a large-scale defection by the state lead-

ership to the ruling Trinamul Congress, have been given responsibility for campaign in Murshidabad, Malda and North Dinajpur, another minority-oriented district, before fielding candidates there.

While AIMIM MLA Akhtarul Iman and Bihar state youth wing president Adil Hasan will be camping in Murshidabad from February 13, others from neighbouring states have started camping in Murshidabad from Friday.

Few adverse reactions to Covid-19 jab, say Doctors

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

Around 12 deaths have been reported across India after Covid-19 vaccination till January 31, according to the Union health ministry. These deaths are being investigated by experts who are examining the possible causes.

This data was provided in a reply presented in the Lok Sabha on the adverse effects following immuni-

sation (AEFI). It was stated that a total of 7,580 adverse effects were reported after 44,49,552 persons were vaccinated. AEFI is stated to be 0.2 per cent.

The major side-effects noted in the first 30 minutes after vaccination were anxiety, vertigo, giddiness, dizziness, fever, pain, rashes and headaches. Due to this, many of those who took the vaccine were asked to stay at the vaccination



DGP M. Mahendar Reddy receives Covid-19 vaccine at Tilaknagar Primary Health centre in Hyderabad on Saturday.

Take Covid vaccine, DGP urges police personnel

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

The second phase of Covid-19 vaccination programme kicked off in Telangana state on Saturday with Director-General of Police M. Mahendar Reddy getting the first jab as police personnel began getting inoculated against the disease.

Mahendar Reddy, who got vaccinated at the Urban Health Centre in Tilaknagar, called on all police personnel to get their shots.

The top police official allayed any apprehensions people may have over the vaccine and said that while the vaccination programme is voluntary, there is no cause for any fears or worries as the

vaccines have proven to be safe. The DGP called on all senior police department officials to dispel any worries or apprehensions in the ranks of the force over the vaccination programme.

Recalling the services provided by police personnel during the lockdown, Mahendar Reddy said the department served the people during the time of crisis. This work has been recognised by everyone, he added.

With expectations that all of the 60,000 state police department personnel will come forward to take the vaccine shots, Mahendar Reddy said that while the current drive was for four days for police personnel, he would request the health

department to extend it should the need arise.

Several senior officials including Mahesh Bhagwat, commissioner of Rachakonda police, received their first round vaccine jabs on Saturday.

Phase II of the vaccination drive is for personnel from various frontline departments including the police, revenue, municipal workers, and those from the panchayat raj departments.

According to the health department, on Saturday, against the target of 41,666 vaccinations for the day, only 15,437 took the shots accounting for just 37 per cent of the target. Only two cases of some mild reactions were reported for the day, the department added.

Protesters want TS to reinstate procurement

From Page 1

The protesters also demanded that the state government reinstate procurement of crops and all measures to ensure minimum support price (MSP) to farmers, and demonstrate its opposition to the three farm laws by passing a resolution in the Assembly and by amending the state APMC Act to nullify the effects of the Central laws.

The laws enacted by the government, according to Kiran Vissa from Rythu Swarajya Vedika, were designed to hand over agriculture to agribusiness corporates.

The government, he said, should also enact a law that guarantees minimum support price to various crops.

Those arrested during the protest included AIKSCC farmer union leaders, Pasya Padma (Telangana Rashtra Rythu



Kiran Kumar Vissa from Rythu Swarajya Vedika is being taken away by the police from the chakka jam location near Hayatnagar bus depot on Saturday.

Sangham), Kirankumar Vissa (Rythu Swarajya Vedika), T. Sagor (Telangana Rythu Sangham), J.V. Chalapati Rao (AIKMS), Achutha Ramarao (AIKMS) and Upender Reddy (AIKF); Political party leaders

Chada Venkat Reddy (CPI), D.G. Narasimha Rao (CPM), Govardhan (CPIML-ND), and Sadineni Venkateswara Rao (CPIML-ND); and other leaders Jhansi (POW), Rama (POW) and Anuradha (IFTU).

Non-tax revenue also got affected

From Page 1

While the Budget expected ₹10,525 crore, the Centre has released ₹11,000 crore so far.

The non-tax revenue earnings also took a severe beating due to the pandemic. Against of the target to earn ₹30,600 crore, only ₹2,450 crore was realised due to the slump in registration of new vehicles, collection of transport taxes and mining cess.

The earnings through imposition of other taxes and duties also nosedived

● **THE EARNINGS** through imposition of other taxes and duties also nosedived from ₹6,041 crore expected to ₹2,650 crore.

from ₹6,041 crore expected to ₹2,650 crore. The excise duty collected on liquor also fell due to closure of liquor shops for nearly three months closure of bars, pubs from mid-March to September-end. The budgetary target was ₹16,000 crore but the state has earned only ₹8,874 crore so far.

LOOT | CASE

Court rejects plea for probe into alleged ₹300 crore fraud

HC status quo on Mahesh Bank fracas

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA
| DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

Complaining against the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as it was not responding to pleas for action against AP Mahesh Co-operative Bank for alleged fraud to the tune of ₹300 crore, the Mahesh Bank Shareholders

Welfare Association has approached Telangana High Court, seeking a direction to issue orders for a full-fledged probe into the bank affairs.

In a petition submitted to the court here on Saturday, the association stated that around ₹300 crore of depositors' money was siphoned off by six persons who were

● **IN A** petition submitted to the court here on Saturday, the association stated that around ₹300 crore of depositors' money was siphoned off by six persons who were on the earlier board of directors.

on the earlier board of directors. They mentioned that those six directors

were re-elected in November and they have been holding posts of chairman, vice-chairman and managing director. They sought the court to direct RBI for a forensic audit into the bank's transactions and to suspend the incumbent Board of Directors.

However, Justice Abhinand Kumar Shavili

refused to issue interim orders.

Recalling the earlier directions by a single judge of the High Court in a batch of petitions related to conduct of elections and allowing only administrative decisions for day to day activities, Justice Shavili said that the earlier orders were adequate.

SHORT TAKES



Commissioner of police V.B. Kamalasan Reddy takes vaccine.

KAMALASAN TAKES JAB, VAX DRIVE FOR COPS BEGINS

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, FEB. 6

Soon after Commissioner of police V.B. Kamalasan Reddy took the Covid-19 vaccine, district collector K. Shashanka launched the immunisation programme of the vaccine to frontline workers from the police department here on Saturday.

There were no untoward incidents or complaints of any side-effects from anywhere in the district.

As per the guideline issued, vaccine was first administered to the officials and staff members of the health care department working in government and private hospitals and to the staff of Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) anganwadi and sanitation workers.

Later, the vaccine will be given to those above 50 years of age and to Under-50 persons suffering from co-morbidity.

In Huzurabad area hospital, the vaccine was administered to ACP Srinivas Rao, CIs Madhavi and Kiran Kumar along with 42 members of police personnel.

Those who were administered the vaccine were first kept in the waiting hall. After enrolling their details in the Co-WIN app, they are sent to the second room, where they were given the vaccination. Later, they were shifted to the third room for a 30-minute observation.

The collector later interacted with the persons who were vaccinated. District medical and health officer Dr. Sujatha, superintendent of the government main hospital, Dr. Ratna Mala, Additional DCP G. Chandra Mohan were present along with others.

KCR's support for farm laws creates confusion

There is no clear direction to cadre, says senior leader

DC CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD, FEB. 6

TRS cadre and leaders in Adilabad district are in confusion over the party's stand on new farm laws enacted by the BJP-led government at the centre. As a result, they are unable to answer farmers who are asking them about whether the TRS is in favour or against the farm laws.

Earlier, the party high command asked its cadre and leaders to participate in Bharat Bandh against the farm laws.

TRS cadre outnumbered all others during the Bharat Bandh in the district against the three central laws.

However, news has now spread that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao is supporting farm laws. Because of this, TRS cadre and leaders are remaining silent on this topic. They are refraining from openly supporting the agitating farmers on borders of Delhi.

A senior TRS leader of Adilabad said there is no clear direction to cadre and second rung leaders from party high command about the party's stand on the three farm laws. They are thus remaining silent even as the Congress party has taken the lead in organising protests in Adilabad district.

TPCC state general secretary Gandrath Sujatha accused the TRS high command of taking a U-turn after participating in the Bharat Bandh opposing the farm laws. "This exposes the internal understanding between the BJP and TRS leadership," she charged.

Market revenues fall to 65 per cent

NARENDER PULLLOOR | DC NIZAMABAD, FEB. 6

The revenue of agriculture market committees has drastically dropped in undivided Nizamabad district over the last six months, after the farm laws that were passed last month took effect.

Market committees were unable to collect market fee from the traders and the revenues have fallen by 65 per cent.

The marketing department collects 1 per cent of the value of the business transaction as market fee from the traders. The fee is collected on transactions held in market yards or elsewhere in its regulated area. It is the main resource to provide basic amenities to farmers in the market yards.

The families of thousands farmers, traders and workers depend on market yards for their livelihood. Usually, farmers prefer to sell their

agriculture products in market yards for better prices.

For instance, Nizamabad agriculture market committee has collected ₹4.31 crore as market fee so far in the 2020-21 financial year. It had set ₹13 crore as the target for the market fee collection which may now not be met. In 2019-20, the Nizamabad market committee had collected ₹11.76 crore as market fee.

Following the ordinance on farm laws, following by the enactment of the legislation, the collection of market fee outside of market yards was stopped on June 5, 2020. Incidentally, the benefit is not reaching either farmers or consumers.

Market committee check posts were withdrawn in the district. Rice milling is a major industry in Nizamabad district and the rice millers enjoyed exemption from paying the 1 per cent market fee.

CPI, CPM STAGE RASTA ROKO RALLY ON NH 44

Adilabad, Feb. 6: Along with leaders of farmer bodies, leaders and activists of Congress, CPI and the CPM on Saturday staged a rasta roko on National Highway 44 near Chanda (T) village in opposition of the farm laws passed last year, and in support of the agitating farmers against the legislations in Delhi, in Adilabad.

With the rasta roko in place, long lines of vehicles were seen waiting on both sides of the national highway. Congress leaders led by TPCC state general secretary Gandrath Sujatha participated in the event. The farmers and agitators demanded that the Centre repeal of the farm laws.

Adilabad DCC incharge president Sajid Khan, ZPTC Goka Ganesh Reddy, senior Congress leader Sanjeev Reddy, CPI leader Mudupu Prabhakar Reddy, CPM Bandi Dattatri, Raghavulu and Rythu Swarajya Vedika district convener Borranra and others were present.

Cong. to interact with farmers

DC CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD, FEB. 6

Senior Congress leaders and MLAs led by Congress Legislature Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka will start a programme titled "Interaction with Farmers" from Bheemsari village in

Adilabad district on February 9.

A team of leaders, including MLAs Sridhar Rabu and Jagga Reddy, apart from senior leaders V. Hanumanth Rao and Kokkiral Premasagar Rao, Kodanda Reddy and others; will interact with farmers as also party cadre of the district.

As per the schedule, Congress leaders will reach Bheemsari from Hyderabad in the afternoon of February 9 for interacting with farmers. On the same day, the team will depart for Dhanora village in Boath mandal for discussions with farmers in that area.

Mahbubabad sets up ABC team to check dog menace

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC WARANGAL, FEB. 6

In a bid to make streets safer for citizens from stray dogs in Mahbubabad, district administration has set up an Animal Birth Control (ABC) Centre at Kummurikunta hamlet in Shanigapuram, where these dogs will be sterilised to control their population.

District additional collector Abhilasha Abhinav, who

has taken up this initiative, said the centre will also administer anti-rabies vaccination to stray dogs before their release. ABC Centre will double up as a care centre for injured street dogs.

"This unique initiative is being taken up for the first time in a small municipality. For the purpose, we have tied up with the state veterinary department to sterilise 300-400 dogs per month. There will be dedicated vehicles that will pick

up and drop the canines ward-wise. This will help us check the stray dog menace and deaths due to rabies," Abhilasha underlined.

She asked people to call 8106542911 in case there is menace of dogs in their area. They can also report about injured animals.

Stray dogs are estimated to number about 4,000 in Mahbubabad. District administration aims to cover all of them as early as possible.

KODANDARAM ASKS CENTRE TO WITHDRAW FARM LAWS

Warangal, Feb. 6: Telangana Jana Samiti founder Prof M. Kodandaram has demanded that the Centre withdraw the three farm laws which were being opposed by the farmers

across the country. Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, he emphasised the need for supporting farmers who have been protesting relentlessly against the laws.

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DECCAN Chronicle

7 FEBRUARY 2021



Shashi Warriar

Off the beaten track

The WhatsApp riddle: What's the big secret?

When I first saw the notice saying that the terms of WhatsApp's privacy agreement were going to change, I panicked. In my mind, at least, there was some reason for that panic. I sometimes share my writings with friends and publishers on WhatsApp, and I was afraid that Mark Zuckerberg would simply claim copyright on whatever I shared thus. Then came TV interviews with technology experts and lawyers saying that WhatsApp was going to swallow up everything you put on it, and let Zuckerberg do with it whatever he likes, which they said was against Indian law. And then Elon Musk came up with something about Signal, an app that allows you to do much the same things that WhatsApp does without gobbling up your data.

This was towards the middle of January, a couple of weeks late, because I see these things only when people point them out to me. I was stewing in my panic, unable to decide whether to change from WhatsApp to some other app, and people were giving me conflicting bits of advice: stay with WhatsApp, switch to Signal, switch to Telegram, get off social media, wait a little and go with the herd, and so on.

So when my professor friend came visiting, I was genuinely glad to see him. "What do you make of this WhatsApp trouble?" I asked him when he was seated comfortably with a cup of tea in his hand and a plate of snacks on the table in front of him.

"Nothing," he replied, taking a large bite from a hot samosa. The insides of the samosa were much hotter than the outside, and it took him a few seconds to regain control of his scalded mouth.

"Nothing?" I asked.

"Nothing," he repeated.

"I don't understand," I said. "What about all those invasions of privacy and so on?"

"The invasions started when you began to enjoy what you thought were the free benefits of the Internet," he replied.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Take email, for instance," he said. "You've been using it for decades without paying a paisa for it. But did you ever read the details of your agreement with the service provider?"

"No," I said. "Everyone I knew agreed, and so did I. I never knew there was anything untoward about the agreement."

"Ah!" he said. "How do you think all the companies that provide the service pay all their employees, and for the software and the servers and everything?"

"Advertising," I said, hopefully.

"Of course," he replied. "Business is like politics, like most human activity. Everyone tries to take his work one step past the competition. No one wants to be remembered as the person who let something stagnate and die. Right?"

"Right," I said, a bit tentatively. I hadn't really thought about it but he being a professor must have.

"So they're always looking for opportunities to expand their reach," he said, "and, with social media the way they are, the simplest way they can expand is by getting to know you better. And do you know why they're spending so much on machine learning and artificial intelligence?"

"No," I said. "I was hoping you'd tell me."

"Well," he said, "they've always had trouble finding people to analyse the data they've grabbed. You know, when people go out for a meal, they post photos of what they eat before they eat it. If I post a photo of my samosa on Facebook before I eat it, do you know how much they get to know? From my GPS they know that this is your home, and in a corner of the photo they see a Brand X sofa or a Brand Y TV, so they know about your tastes. But then, can you imagine anything more boring than going through millions and million of photos of samosas or cakes? So, artificial intelligence and machine learning."

"But I thought machine learning and artificial intelligence were meant to relieve people of the drudgery of things like housework and taking care of old people and so on," I said.

"That's what they say," he replied. "The truth is that they've developed all these algorithms to recognise, say, the brand of a sofa in a corner of a photo of a black forest pastry. And they've been following you using the GPS chip in your phone. So now they can figure out what you'll eat next and where, and, besides, your taste in furniture and appliances. Business."

"Right," I said.

"And then there are selfies," he continued, a samosa later. "Social media sites use them to figure out where you're going for your next holiday, and what you'll do there, whether you're stupid enough to try to get yourself in a selfie with a crocodile or at the edge of a thousand-foot cliff."

"Then someone realised that the programs that could analyse all this could also do other things. So there were spinoffs. Those same programs, with small modifications, can also recognise dirt on a floor, or chart a path in a room that'll get a robot to sweep the floor with the minimum of effort, in the least possible time. That's dead easy. So is something like facial recognition, or thumbprint identification."

"So, you see, all the good things that they claim, all that wonderful security stuff about recognising faces and thumbprints and explosives and everything, it's all secondary. It's a sort of side effect of having to make programs to analyse the largest and most boring collections of photos and videos and GPS locations that people have taken in the entire history of the mankind."

"So what's all the protest about?" I asked.

"Umm," he said, picking up the last samosa. "That's just misdirection. You know, almost all of us lead such dreary, boring lives. The protesters, they're afraid people will figure out that their biggest secret is that they have no worthwhile secrets!"

Shashi Warriar has written fairy tales, thrillers, a semi-fictional biography, satires, and a love story. Besides writing, he teaches strategic communication at a business school.

Subhani



Maligning the messenger pays diminishing returns



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

In the days leading to the infamous declaration of the Emergency in 1975, PM Indira Gandhi, flush from her victory over Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, was showing signs of becoming increasingly autocratic. She was impatient about dissent, convinced of her own invincibility, and adamant about pursuing what she thought was good for the country irrespective of what the Opposition was saying. It was then that the theory of the "foreign hand" gained currency. She resorted to the not-unfamiliar stratagem of conflating all internal dissent as the manifestation of a conspiracy against her regime from abroad; "CIA agents", began to proliferate, and Opposition leaders, and those who had the temerity to oppose her, were seen as puppets playing to a conspiracy orchestrated by international powers.

A similar stratagem seems to be at play today. Undoubtedly, the sovereignty of our country is paramount, and we must ceaselessly be vigilant against outside powers that seek to destabilise it. But do Rihaana and Greta Thunberg qualify to pose such a threat?

Greta is a Swedish environmentalist activist not yet out of her teens; Rihaana is a celebrity singer-actor, who has sales of 250 million records worldwide, and is considered one of the most successful music artistes of all time. Both of them have been involved in social activism. Greta's environmental evangelism has won her global recognition. Rihaana is known for her involvement in humanitarian causes, and has been vocal against police brutality in America against the blacks.

Since the "foreign hand" of Indira Gandhi's days, the world has changed. Social media, and the global footprint of media and especially television, has inter-connected people in a way never seen before. News in any part of the world becomes instantaneously news everywhere. Our government appears to be making the cardinal mistake of using the paranoia of the "foreign hand" in today's world when so much has irrevocably changed. Social media celebrities, with hundreds of millions of followers on Twitter and Instagram, post comments on anything and everything as a matter of routine. Social media platforms are full of posts against the arrest of Russian Opposition leader Alexei Navalny by Vladimir Putin's dictatorial regime; against the attack on Capitol Hill by Donald Trump's hooligans; against China's undemocratic clampdown on dissidents; and against Saudi Arabia's intolerant Wahabi state — to name but a few subjects.

We are proud of India's democratic credentials, but if a farmers' protest on the borders of the capital of our country continues for over two months, with some 150 farmers dying in the bitter cold, it is bound to attract media attention worldwide. The government may be right in believing in agrarian reforms, but there is little doubt that the manner in which the bills were passed was undemocratic, and was unprecedented by the mandatory process of consultations with stakeholders. Equally, the manner in which the protests were handled leaves much to be desired. A certain arrogance informed the government's approach from the very beginning. What prevented the agricultural minister, if not the PM himself, in going to the protest site, and talking to the farm leaders over a glass of lassi? The offer to keep the laws in abeyance for some time could have been made much earlier, with the government assuring the farmers that there would be full discussions with them before the laws are implemented.

Reforms are desirable, but in a democracy, opposition to them — some of it very valid — must be taken on board. Besides, a large number of the protestors are from the sensitive border state of Punjab, which has seen radicalisation in the past, with the fullest support of Pakistan. It serves nobody's purpose to see Punjab radicalised again. Such factors should have weighed in with the government. After the condemnable violence on January 26, the protest movement was demoralised, and farmers were leaving for home on their own volition. But Yogi Adityanath's police gratuitously rekindled the

In a democracy there will be protests. Such protests, if they are allowed to linger on for so long, will attract global attention. Filing FIRs against those who comment is a highly immature and insecure way of responding.

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protest again. The visual footage of a government using nails and ditches to barricade itself from its own people made for dramatic watching, and it is futile to believe that its audience was restricted only to India.

Now, the government has made a laughing stock of the nation by filing an FIR against unnamed "foreign" conspirators, citing Greta's tool-kit tweet as evidence. Earlier, the government thought it fit to respond to Rihaana's tweet. The correct response would have been to ignore such tweets. If, however, the government felt that such "global influencers" should be replied to, the appropriate way would have been for a letter from a bureaucrat to be delivered to these commentators through the agency of our embassies explaining the government's point of view and saying that India as a democratic nation is well equipped to resolve such disputes. As the PM never tires of saying, we are a nation of "saava karod" — 1.25 billion people. We are the world's largest democracy, an emerging global super power. In a democracy there will be protests. Such protests, if they are allowed to linger on for so long, will attract global attention. Filing FIRs against those who comment is a highly immature and insecure way of responding.

The game of tarnishing the messenger has diminishing returns. First, the protesting farmers were called by some over-zealous supporters of the government as Khalistanis, Maoists, Urban Naxals and Pakistanis. Then the Opposition parties supporting the farmers were called anti-national. Now, foreign commentators are being accused of being part of an international conspiracy against India. All of this, when the real priority is to sensibly resolve the impasse with the farmers.

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

LETTERS

FIRE IN SCHOOLS

It is not shocking that such incidents can happen frequently as most schools do not follow fire safety norms (*Fire breaks out at school in Old City, DC, Feb. 5*). How could the education department ever give recognition to such a school without keeping in mind the safety of school children? The fire department should immediately check erring schools and make sure fire-fighting equipment is in place in each and every school.

Shahbaz Husain
Hyderabad

OLD VEHICLES

The move to scrap 20-year-old vehicles is not right without proper infrastructure to deal with massive scrap that will be generated. A badly maintained brand new vehicle can also cause pollution. The burning of fossil fuel is the pollutant. An old car reconditioned with a brand new engine will be as good as a new car in fighting pollution.

Rau Nidumolu
Hyderabad

KEY TRS MEETING

Chief Minister K. Chandrababbarao must get together with his party to bring forth overall welfare of twin cities and Telangana state (*KCR calls for key meet tomorrow, DC, Feb. 6*). The Chief Minister must not only discuss elections in the state but also how his second term will bring forth growth and prosperity in the coming years of his rule.

Mohan
Secunderabad

As usual the TRS president should have been selected on April 27. But one wonders why this time on February 7?

Om Vishal Raj Vikram
Hyderabad

VIZAG STEEL PLANT

The privatisation of the Vizag Steel Plant at a throwaway price and the proposed sale of ore mines at Bastar to a business house in the good books of the Centre are a blatant attempt to gift precious public property in AP acquired by agitation and sacrifices of many citizens. If the government expects private bidders to buy the plant to earn profits, why were mines not part of steel plant and why was there no effort to overcome losses in the public sector?

Dr K.V.N. Durga Prasad
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Pakistan refuses to return hijackers

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY. 6 Pakistan said today that it would not hand over to India the hijackers of the Indian Airlines plane. The refusal was conveyed to Indian High Commissioner B.K. Acharya by the Foreign Office on Islamabad. Radio Pakistan said, Mr. Acharya was summoned to the foreign office and told that the two hijackers, Mohammed Hashim Qureshi and Mohammad Ashraf, were "not Indian nationals" and, therefore, there was no question of their being handed over to India.

Anita Katyal

Political Gup-Shup

Farm stir: Snap ties, says JJP to chief; Yogi gags his ministers

Haryana deputy chief minister Dushyant Chautala of the Janmayak Janata Party is under immense pressure from his colleagues to walk out of the BJP-led ruling coalition in solidarity with the protesting farmers. The JJP's Karnal district president Inderjit Singh Goraya recently resigned from the party to support the farmers demand for the repeal of the three contentious farm laws. In addition, two JJP legislators have spoken in favour of the agitating farmers and have warned Mr Chautala that the party will pay a heavy price if he does not come out openly against the farm laws. Though JJP cadres are undoubtedly agitated about their party's wishy-washy stand on the farmers' agitation, Dushyant Chautala's unwillingness to share power with his colleagues has also contributed to the rumblings in the JJP. Mr Chautala is heading as many as 10 ministries, which include high-profile portfolios like excise and taxation, industry and commerce and food and civil supplies. There is only one more JJP minister in the Haryana Cabinet,

Anoop Dhanak who holds the inconsequential archeology and museums portfolio. Given the power he wields, it is not surprising that Mr Chautala is in no hurry to snap ties with the BJP.

Faced with a revolt by farmers in western Uttar Pradesh, the Yogi Adityanath government has ordered a virtual gag order on its ministers and MLAs. It has been informally conveyed to them that no one other than those authorised by the government should make any public statements or give interviews to the media regarding the farmers' protests. Any MLA or minister violating this "code of conduct" immediately receives a phone call seeking an explanation for his or her transgression. These instructions were issued after several legislators from western Uttar Pradesh failed to come out strongly against the ongoing farmers' agitation, especially BKU leader Rakesh Tikait, and have instead sounded apologetic and conciliatory when questioned by the media about their views on the stir. In fact, an MLA from this region even sidestepped ques-

tions on Mr Tikait's aggressive stand, saying the agitating farmers were like members of his extended family.

Though Congress members have become accustomed to Rahul Gandhi's habit of disappearing for long breaks abroad, there was panic in the party recently when word went round that the Nehru-Gandhi scion had left for Germany. After all, this was in the midst of the Budget Session of Parliament and at the peak of the farmers' protests. Party MPs and other leaders made frantic calls to ascertain the veracity of these reports. Many called up Rahul Gandhi's close aides and one leader even tapped into his contacts at the airport to find out if he had boarded an international flight. There was all-round relief when Rahul Gandhi's office confirmed that he was very much in town and that he would be attending Parliament. It is, however, difficult to understand the panic over the Congress leader's disappearance during a Parliament session given the fact that his contributions in the Lok Sabha have been minimal. On the plus side,

Rahul Gandhi has addressed the media several times in recent weeks both in Delhi and outside.

The security arrangements inside the Parliament House building have been beefed up to such an extent that it is being compared to barricading at the Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur borders. In an unprecedented and unusual move, Delhi police personnel have been deployed inside the building along with the Parliament's watch and ward staff. The presence of the police personnel, who have been stationed all along the corridors, is inescapable. As it is, the number of media persons allowed inside has been restricted and even those who have been issued passes are finding it difficult to move around freely. Reporters, who could earlier linger outside the offices of ministers in the hope of getting a tiny bit of news, are now shooed away if they dawdle in the corridors for longer than five minutes. The police personnel randomly stop reporters and demand to see their passes when it is

known that only passholders can enter the building. Several media-persons have lodged a protest but apologetic security officers maintain they have instructions "from the top" to keep a vigil on them.

It is close to a year since he brought down the Kamal Nath government in Madhya Pradesh but former Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia, now with the BJP, is out to take revenge against his former colleagues for humiliating him. When ministers were given duties in different constituencies for the Republic Day celebrations, Mr Scindia made sure that his loyalist Govind Rajput was sent to Chhindwara, Kamal Nath's fiefdom. According to the buzz in Bhopal, this was meant to be a message for the veteran Congress leader and his son, who represents the constituency now, that they are on Mr Scindia's radar and that his next target is to uproot them from their stronghold.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

IN BRIEF

MODI HAILS
COUNTRY'S
JUDICIARY

Ahmedabad, Feb 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday praised the country's judiciary, saying that it has performed its duty well in safeguarding people's rights and upholding personal freedom, and added that it has also strengthened the Constitution.

He said the Supreme Court in India has conducted the highest number of hearings via video-conferencing from among the top courts in the world during the pandemic. Modi also said that in order to make the country's justice system future-ready, the possibility of using Artificial Intelligence was being explored. He was speaking after virtually releasing a commemorative postage stamp on the Gujarat High Court for sixty years of its establishment. "Every countryman can say that our judiciary has worked with firmness to uphold our Constitution. Our judiciary has strengthened the Constitution by its positive interpretation," Modi said.

Through constructive and creative interpretation of the Constitution, our judiciary has strengthened the Constitution itself, he added.

"Whether it is to safeguard the rights of citizens, question of personal freedom, or a situation wherein the interest of the country is to be given top-most priority, the judiciary has both understood and fulfilled its responsibilities," he said.

He said the root of good governance is in law, as has been held in the ancient Indian scriptures, he said.

"This idea has been a part of our 'sanskrit' since ancient times. This mantra gave moral strength to our freedom struggle, and the makers of our Constitution also gave it top priority," he said. This trust towards the judiciary has given confidence to the common man, given him the strength to stand for truth, Modi said.

Nadda: People have decided to bid adieu to dynastic rule

Nadda flags off BJP's rath yatra in Bengal; takes on Mamata, nephew

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, FEB. 6

Flagging off the Bharatiya Janata Party's first ever Rath Yatra calling for 'Parivartan' (change) in poll bound West Bengal a day before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit, BJP president J.P. Nadda on Saturday predicted that the people of the state have already decided to "bid adieu" to the dynastic rule of chief minister and Trinamul Congress supreme Mamata Banerjee and her MP nephew Abhishek Banerjee to welcome the saffron party in the ensuing Assembly Election.

Mr Nadda led the first of the five Rath Yatras from Chotir Math Ground at Nabadwip in Nadia after he participated in a massive BJP roadshow from Foara More to Rabindranath Tagore statue and also had lunch with the farmers in Malda.

Nadda ate the humble khichdi seated on the floor with farmers as he reached out to peasants on Saturday.

On a day when farmer unions have called a 'chakra jam' against three contentious agricultural laws, Nadda reaffirmed the BJP and the Narendra Modi government's commitment to the welfare of the farming community.

Nadda was addressing a rally of farmers during the last phase of the month-long 'Krishak Suraksha Abhiyan' and 'Ek Mutthi Chawal' campaign which he had flagged off in order to mobilise the farming community in the state in favour of the BJP.

Mr Nadda told the farm-



BJP national president J.P. Nadda addresses a rally in Malda on Saturday.

- PTI

ers at Krishak Suraksha Saha-Bhoj at Sahapur of Malda, "I have an appeal to you all. Now the polls will be held. Say 'Ta Ta' and 'Namaste' to Mamataji. Wherever I go on a visit nowadays, I find big cut-outs of only two Pishi (aunt) and Bhaipo (nephew). Both are seen standing with folded hands. Mamataji, people of Bengal have decided to bid adieu to you and Bhaipo. You need to understand this."

Attacking the ruling TMC, he then sarcastically asked the crowd, "Tell me who is rice thief, who is the tarpaulin thief and who extorts money? You will bloom lotus here to usher development led by the Prime Minister in Bengal."

Mr Nadda, silent on the nationwide farmers' protests against the three farm laws, also alleged, "Mamataji meted out a very big injustice to the

farmers. PM through his Kishan Samman Nidhi scheme allotted ₹6,000 per year to each farmer for welfare. But Mamataji, only to satisfy her arrogance and ego, did not allow the implementation of the central scheme, leaving more than 70 lakh farmers deprived here. However when 25 lakhs among the affected farmers sent their applications for the scheme on their own, only then she talked of implementing it."

He argued, "Mamataji, the election has come. So what is the point in trying to take advantage of what has already been lost! The way farmers and labourers have been deprived, Bengal, under her rule, has slipped to 24th position among the states in the list of 29."

Mocking Ms Banerjee for her allergy to 'Jai Shree Ram' slogan, the BJP chief wondered, "When I talk, 'Jai Shree Ram' slogan is

raised in front of me. Same happened on my way here from the helipad. As I waved my hands at the crowd, I was greeted with 'Jai Shree Ram.' But why does Mamataji feel so angry about it? Why does she have so much hatred for 'Jai Shree Ram' slogan? What is the problem? Is it wrong to be associated with the Indian culture? Is it wrong to remember the legend? If someone chants the slogan, her face turns red in so much anger. This reflects politics of these people is above the culture. They will not protect culture rather bring it down to serve their political interests."

It may be recalled that Banerjee had declined to speak at the event to celebrate Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's birth anniversary where "Jai Shri Ram" slogans were raised in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

SOURN MITRA
NAMED NEW
KOLKATA POLICE
COMMISSIONERDC CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA, FEB. 6

The Mamata Banerjee government on Saturday transferred Anuj Sharma from the post of the Kolkata Police Commissioner and replaced him with Sourn Mitra, a Bengali face having previous experience in handling polls with iron hands, in a list of major reshuffle of 24 senior IPS officers, for their completion of a term of three years at the same post or unit, ahead of the Assembly Election.

Incidentally, this is also the second stint for Mr Mitra, who was posted as the ADG for training in the state police in his last assignment, as the Kolkata Police Commissioner. He earlier served the post on the orders of the EC after it removed Rajeev Kumar as the city police chief before the Assembly Election in 2016.

While Mr Mitra earned a distinction for ensuring one of the most peaceful elections in the city with a strict police deployment, the Trinamul Congress supreme, after returning to power for the second consecutive time, however transferred him from the Kolkata Police Commissioner's post as ADG (Training) and replaced him with Mr Kumar, also her favourite cop.

N'land govt staff to face action for 'seditious' posts

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, FEB. 6

Nagaland Governor R N Ravi has directed the state chief secretary to initiate criminal proceedings against the state government employees indulging in seditious and subversive writings challenging the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country and posting them on social media.

Referring to one such instance of Dr H Inato Jimomi Naga, serving under the department of animal husbandry and veterinary department, Government of Nagaland, the commissioner and secretary to the Governor Mr T Mahabemo Yanthan said, "Such act of government servant constitutes serious offences under the penal laws and also gross misconduct under the service conduct rules inviting criminal prosecution and disciplinary action including dismissal from service."

Pointing out that Mr Jimoni's social media post justifying the demand of sovereign Nagaland was still in circulation on media platforms, security sources said that there have been numerous instances in

which state government employees are found to have been voicing separatist sentiment on various platforms.

Asserting that it was not only harming the national interest, security sources said that such activities of a section of government employees was hampering the development activities of the state as well.

Directing all the heads of the departments to sensitize the state government employees in the regard, the commissioner and secretary to governor in his letter to the state chief secretary said, "I have been directed to request the state government to take serious cognizance of such misconduct and initiate appropriate legal and disciplinary action against the delinquent government servants."

The letter of the governor has also been marked to union home secretary Mr Ajay Kumar Bhalla for necessary action and to check such seditious and subversive acts of state government employees.

State government sources told this newspaper that departmental proceedings have been initiated against the particular officer.

UP ASKS LEGISLATORS TO BUY TABLETS FOR PAPERLESS BUDGET SESSION

Lucknow, Feb 6: The Uttar Pradesh government has asked members of the state's legislative assembly and council to purchase tablets for a paperless budget session. According to Deputy

Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma, each legislator will be reimbursed ₹50,000 to buy Apple iPads.

It may be noted that there are 403 MLAs and 100 MLCs in the state.

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE
PROPERTY

COMMERCIAL

BANJARAHILLS ROAD no.1 615 yards, JubileeHills 720 yards, Road no.45 1,000, Road no.36 1200 yards & 8200 sqt Ground and Mezzanine showroom, Madhapur Main Road Ground Floor 3050 sqft, Kondapur main road 1400 yards & Jayabheri 934 yards N/E & Rental income properties 5Cr to 50Cr 9866981449, 9394022449. (W/2021/AT001052)

HIMAYATNAGAR MAIN road side facing office space 863sqft in 3rd floor fully furnished, centralized A/C & car parking with tenant complete vaastu @ 86 lakhs contact 8555085092 (W/2021/AT000974)

FLATS

DILSUKHNAGAR KOTHAPET Alkapur Near Saibaba Temple, 2Bhk Flat 1000Sft, Ground Floor, North Facing, Woodwork, Exterior & Italian Marble Flooring, With Beds & A/C's Ph:6302762628, 9 0 3 0 5 5 7 7 6 6 (HYCL/2021/C02754)

NEW 2 BHK Flat Deluxe construction, East Marredpally, 1200 sqft, w/f, 3rd floor, Car parking, lift, backup, Prime location. Ph:9866286151. (S/2021/C02216)

APARNA AURA 1820sft Vastu North 3BHK 14th floor 2 CCP Road 79 Jubilee Hills Film Nagar Extn Premium gated community, Swimming Courts All amenities 4years old 1.85Cr. negotiable. 9000656585 (HYMM/2021/C06539)

READY TO occupy, Brand New Semi-Furnished Luxury, 3 BHK flats for sale at **Kondapur**, near Kims Hospital, 1885 sqft. Ph:9874174353, 8008222691. (S/2021/IC001162)

ABIDS CHIRAH ALI LANE 3 bed room flat approx 2000sft luxuriously furnished with premium parking 24hrs water complete vaastu for sale @ 1.4cr contact 8555085092 (W/2021/AT000973)

INDEPENDENT HOUSE

UPPAL, PRIME Location, Padmavati colony, 195 Sqyds, 1200 Sft House for sale, Near Venkateswara Swamy Temple, Contact: 9010202020, 9 7 0 0 0 2 0 0 0 0 (HYMM/2021/C06611)

GATED COMMUNITY villas JubileeHills Whisper valley 475 yards, Hitech city 350yards, Gachibowli IVR Hill Ridge 490 yards, Financial District & kokapet surroundings areas, Vessella meadows 310 yards, 350yards, Aditya casa grande, Ekta Highland, Eden garden, River edge, and more villas in Gandipet, Tellapur, Kollur 8884872389, 9985885111 (W/2021/AT001054)

KOMPALLY, HYDERABAD, SRC Luxury Villas, beside Nuziveed Seeds in gated community project. 2130 to 4130 sft. 4 BHK all modern amenities. Attractive offer till 28th February 2021. Ph:9550155023, 9481260314. (S/2021/IC001166)

INDUSTRIAL LAND

MALLAPUR IDA - Available for Sale 3030 Sq.yds Land with G + 1 Built up 18000 Sqft in Mallapur IDA. Contact 7893460684 from 8 am to 6 pm. (W/2021/AT001026)

LAND

LAND FOR Sale: 25 Acres Land, 100kms from Hyd- Bangalore NH-44 at Annasagar left 4kms from Highway, with fully developed Mango orchid and Paddy Fields. Dairy Farm with plenty of Water for Sale. Contact: 8008333869. (HYCL/2021/C02723)

CLEAR TITLE with cement tiles fencing 4.18 Acres, East facing Land for sale on Shadnagar - Chevella (Proposed Regional Ring Road) Opposite Mission Bhagiratha Tank. Contact: 7795322476. (S/2021/C02232)

JAWAHAR NAGAR (Near) 6 Acres, Prime Agriculture Land, 9Kilo Meter From Sainikpuri, Near ECIL, Clear Title, Prime Location, Best Investment, Square Bit, Suitable For Very Good Farmhouse. Ph:8374399578, 6 3 0 3 1 0 7 4 2 1 (HYMM/2021/C06115)

PLOTS

BALAPUR 'X'ROAD Commercial Plot in Huda Approved Sri Datta Nagar 309& 365Sq.Yds E&W 40&100FT Roads Rs.48000/- Per Sq.Yd. Srisalram Highway Mucherla Dasarlapally(V) 1000Sq.Yds E&W Road Gated Community Rs.4500/- Per Sq.Yd Ph:9248098222/ 9248642333. (HYCL/2021/C02732)

BANJARAHILLS 400, 500 North 600 West jubileeHills 200 South, 400South KBR park view, 500East 600East 717 East 1200East 1500West, Film Nagar 1110yards Journalist colony 300 NandagiriHills 600North Madhapur kavurihills 500East Gachibowli jayabheri HUDA 934 N/E jubileeHills and Banjarahills independent houses 10Cr to 50Cr, All commercial plots with tenant properties 9966991449, 9394022449. (W/2021/AT001053)

HYDERABAD @KOMPALLY, Medchal Town Near KLR Ventures 18,000/- Per Sq.Yd. HMDA Plots Fully Developed. Gated Community, Bank Loan available. Contact: 8886785050 (HYMM/2021/C06551)

KONDAPUR SRIRAM nagar Colony "B" Block Near to main Road 200 yards, West facing, Building permission with borewell 9848251027, 6281278739. (W/2021/AT001063)

KALYAN SULOCHANA Gardens, Yopal near Indus School, gated community, 291 sq.yds, 46x57', East facing. Huda approved. Serious buyers only. P h : 9 8 4 9 2 5 3 2 0 7 (S/2021/IC001161)

REAL ESTATE

LAND REQUIRED

REQUIRED LAND in Acres any where in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Please contact @ 9246282866 (HYMM/2021/C06644)

PLOT REQUIRED

HYDERABAD WANTED plots Bollaram, Yopal, Kowkur, Dammaiguda, Nagaram, Thimmaipalli, Silent Wald, Oorjitha projects, Thumukunta, E.M.E housing society, Shameerpet, Indus Park, Medchal, Dublin and near by. Contact: 8074203475 (R/2021/C00018)

REQUIRED

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

BANGALORE BASE company wanted Purchase Independent house/ open plots, 400 sq.yds to 1000 sq.yd, East facing, North or North East facing JubileeHills & Banjarahills, Land Owners contact 8123009979 & 8147444747, Broker extremely sorry. (S/2021/C01959)

RENTALS

COMMERCIAL

FIVE FLOOR Prime Commercial Building (total 23500 sft) Available for Rent at D.K.Road Amerpet with parking Each floor 4300 sft for Offices, Colleges, etc. Contact: 8919268453. (B/2021/C00925)

LEASE / RENT: Commercial Purpose G+3 Floors, Each Floor 3000 sft. At Beside Sri Ganesh multi Specialty Hospital, J.B.Nagar, Bellampally Road, Mancherla, Contact: 8121713253. (R/2021/C00016)

FLATS

'ERRAMANZIL COLONY' Deluxe 3 Bedroom Flat, Attached Bathrooms, 1800 Sft, Cupboards, Marble Flooring, 24hrs Water, Vasthu, Parking near NKM Grand Hotel & 'Dwarakapuri Colony' 3 Bedroom Flat 1900 Sft, Drawing, Dining, Cupboards, 24hrs Water, Marble Flooring, Vasthu, near Saibaba Temple, Suitable Residence, Company Managers, prefer company lease. Contact 'SriLakshmi Estates': 9948284298. (A/2021/IC00107)

JUBILEE HILLS, Prashasan Nagar, New 3Bhk 1600Sft, 100% Vastu, Panoramic Designer Interior, 24x7 Water, Car Parking. Ph: 9866308389 (HYMM/2021/C06059)

INDEPENDENT HOUSE

BANJARAHILLS, ROAD No:12, 5 Bedroom Independent house, 7200 Sft, near Lotuspond, North facing, Lift, servant room, Rent: Rs.2,50,000/- Contact Agent: 9849968657. (A/2021/C00557)

JUBILEEHILLS, ROAD No:10, 5 Bedroom 9000 Sft, 1290 Sq.Yds, 2 Servant room, S/E Facing, Lift, Rent: 4 Lacks. Contact Agent: 9849968657. (A/2021/C00558)

LEASE

COMMERCIAL **TOILET KONDAPUR** stand alone A grade Building total area 11750sft still plus 4 floors each floor 2900sft available for long lease Contact 9803121115. (HYMM/2021/C06534)

13500 SFT building for Lease at Nallagandla, opposite to Citizens Hospital. Suitable for School, Hostel, Boutique, Hotel. Contact: 9949400004, 9949904477. (B/2021/IC00100)

G+4 (18,000 sft) commercial building for Lease in Tolichowki, walkable distance from Main Road. Interested parties may contact Kamran 7674987012, 8790364046. (S/2021/IC00158)

SITUATION VACANT

DOMESTIC

BABY SITTING Aaya (Nanny) USA, must have 10 yrs, Multiple entry Visa & Ready to Travel. Contact Venu Reddy: 9552550999. (A/2021/IC00110)

OTHER VACANCIES

LOOKING FOR Retired Army jawans or Officers or Retired Police Officers to Work in Karimnagar. Ph:9959592959. (A/2021/C00552)

TEACHERS

WANTED teachers to teach English & Social for classes 6 to 10 in English medium. Interested candidates can mail your resume along with your certificate. Salary negotiable. Email: bluebells.ms@gmail.com. Correspondent, Blue Bells, Pitlam, Dist: Kamareddy, Telangana. (R/2021/C00017)

FINANCE

LOAN FOR High Level Projects & Properties from 10Cr to 1000Cr R.O.I @ 3.5% to 8% with feasible tenure No prepayment. Ct:09884327792. Email: hirisev-entures@gmail.com (CHSD/2021/C00009)

FUNDS IN Crores for High value builders projects industries, corporate companies, business groups, purchase of properties, Educational institutions, takeover loans, No processing fee. Ramalingam Retd Banker 9176058736. (ADVIKA ADS) (S/2021/C02030)

MATRIMONIAL

BRIDE WANTED

CHRISTIAN

WWW.EASYCHRISTIANVIVAH.COM, RS.365/- For 365 Days, First, Second & Late Marriages, Lakhs of people are seeing from India & Abroad, No Settlement Fees Phone/ Whatsapp: 9440506441. (HYMM/2021/C05068)

COSMOPOLITAN

BRIDES WANTED. Cosmopolitan. 46yrs, 6feet Graduate, Businessman seprated looking for a understandable partner qualified below 40years with a good soul For a long term relationship. samar19742020@gmail.com (HYCL/2021/C02580)

HINDU

USA GREENCARD Handsome Kshtriya Engineer 29 years looking for Doctor or well settled Girl; -no bars; Ph:9849032879. Lakshmi Marriage Bureau. (S/2021/C02222)

MUSLIM

MUSLIM-SUNNI USA boy-smp invite alliance for their SON working in USA 28yrs/5'-8"/ H1B-visa/MS(usaf) religious, handsome&fair from highly-educated family, looking for doctor (MBBS), Hijabi & Namazi girl who follows sunnah, from well-educated family. "Only MBBS girl profiles" contact: +91-9 4 1 6 9 3 7 1 3, syeda.bsu@gmail.com (W/2021/AT000982)

AYESHA MARRIAGES Telangana/ Andhra/ Rayalaseema 27 5'7" BE, MS USA, 27 5'11" BE MS USA, 29 5'10" BE PR Canada, 29 5'9" BE MS USA, 32 5'10" B.Tech MS USA, 28 5'10" Orthopedic, 28 5'6" General Medicine, 29 5'8" General Medicine, 29 5'8" Orthopedic Seeking Suitable Brides. Whatsapp 9392402344. (B/2021/IC00106)

TELUGU

SEEKS REDDY Bride: Reddy, MBBS, MD (USA), 29yrs, Ht: 5'10". Very fair, working as Doctor in USA, seeking Reddy Doctor Bride, who is doing residency in USA or appearing for USMLE steps or currently doing MBBS in India & interested to do MD in USA. Photos Whatsapp. Call: 9550593768. (HYCL/2021/C02670)

GROOM WANTED

MUSLIM

RSM GIRL Hyderabad 28yrs 5'3" Very Fair MCA SWE Mulesoft Developer 6LPA Prefers Govt/IT Banking Officers sadiqsmtd1@gmail.com 9 9 5 1 2 5 9 8 1 0 (HYMM/2021/C06205)

SUNNI SYED Girl Muslim B.tech Fivisa (USA) Ht:5.5 Dob: 1990 whitish have 1Child 5years old stay with nana nani Looking for lnd Marriage well settled in USA boy age below35 years free from shirk Biddat only USA pic & biodata send only whatsapp P h : 8 0 0 8 7 7 7 5 3 5 (HYMM/2021/C06688)

ANDHRA SM Parents invite alliance for their very fair Daughter, 1994, 5'2" MBBS pursuing MD (Anesthesia) Seeking Boy MD/ MS/ DCH/ DNB/ Orthopedics from Andhra/ Rayalaseema Family Ph:7702150110 9848769103. (B/2021/IC00094)

SM AFFLUENT family invites alliance for their Saudi born Daughter aged 31, pursuing MBA, fair, slim, from Reputed well settled families, professional Graduates, seeking urgent marriage. Contact Kamran 7674987012. (S/2021/IC00159)

SHEERIN MATRIMONIAL All are V.fair B.com 2001 Born B.sc 5'7" 2) 1995 5'5" B.tech IT 3) 1995 5'6" M.A 4) 22 5'3" B.com belongs to Business family 5) 21 B.Pharmacy final year required only well settled Business proposal 6) 1997 5'4"pursuing M.pharmacy 9246201463, 7036660001 info@sheerinmatrimonial.com (W/2021/AT001023)

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

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

MARRIAGE BUREAU

LORDS CHRISTIAN marriage bureau for all casts: divorce/ widows/ late marriages Registration Fee Rs.1100/- Office at 16No Uppal bus-stop, Opp: Blue-sea Hotel behind transformer 2ndfloor Rezipental Bazar Secunderabad Benhur Vijay 9 5 4 2 9 4 3 0 1 7 (HYMM/2021/C06705)

BUSINESS OFFER

WANTED INVESTORS On Profit Sharing Or Interest Basis, Daily, Monthly Payments, Cheques And Agreement Provided. 9390940959. (HYMM/2021/C06740)

CONSTRUCTION/FABRICATION

BUILDERS & DEVELOPERS

MS CONSTRUCTION & Interiors. We undertake independent house, villas apartment, all constructions & renovation works along with materials. Architect planning, interior designing with vastu. P h : 9 1 2 1 3 5 2 3 7 6 (HYMM/2021/C06637)

CONSULTANCY

SOUTH AFRICA: Critical Skills Visa for Software Professionals Quick Processing time for more details: 8341493131, 9290460404. Malta (Europe) Study @ work with Low Tuition fee Eligibility 10th Class only. No IELTS. (HYCL/2021/C02644)

DANCE

DANCE COMPETITION 21 & 28th April Jr & Sr. kindly interested person contact 9346022255, 7981353696. Winners get an opportunity in Badhyatha movie for songs and acting characters. Free of cost. C.K.S. Entertainment Banner. (S/

IN BRIEF

TWO SUMATRAN TIGERS ESCAPE INDONESIAN ZOO

Pontianak, Indonesia, Feb. 6: A critically endangered Sumatran tiger was shot dead on Saturday while another is still on the loose after they escaped from a zoo on Borneo island, leaving a zookeeper dead, an official said.

The tigers, both female and about 18 months old, escaped from Sinka Zoo in the town of Singkawang, West Kalimantan late Friday after days of torrential rain caused a landslide and opened a tunnel allowing their exit. A 47-year-old zookeeper was found dead with scratches and bite wounds on his body. Authorities also found dead a cassowary, ostrich and monkey near the tiger cage. Police and conservation officials were immediately dispatched to search for the tigers. Nearby tourism attractions were ordered to close and locals were told to stay at home while police searched for the animals.

THREE CLIMBERS MISSING ON K2 MOUNTAIN

Islamabad, Feb. 6: Three climbers have gone missing attempting to summit the world's second-highest mountain, K2, their expedition manager and the Alpine Club of Pakistan said Saturday.

Climbers John Snorri from Iceland, Juan Pablo Mohr from Chile and Muhammad Ali Sadpara from Pakistan reportedly lost contact with base camp on Friday.

"It's already been more than 30 hours, we (at base camp) have received no news of John Snorri, Ali Sadpara, and Juan Pablo Mohr; since none of the GPS trackers seem to be working", Chhang Dawa Sherpa, expedition manager, said.

An army helicopter has conducted a search flight for the missing climbers, Sherpa said in a separate statement.

"Unfortunately, they cannot trace anything and the condition up in the mountain and even at the base camp is getting poor", he said. News of the missing men comes a day after a Bulgarian mountaineer was confirmed to have died on K2.

He is the third mountaineer to die on K2's slopes this year, after a Spanish climber fell to his death last month. Russian-American Alex Goldfarb also died on a nearby mountain during an acclimatising mission in January. A team of Nepali climbers made history on K2 last month when they became the first to scale it in winter.

Will reverse Myanmar coup, says UN

'Absolutely essential' to carry out UNSC's calls for a return to democracy, asserts Secy-Gen Guterres

United Nations, Feb. 6: Secretary-General Antonio Guterres pledged Friday that the United Nations will do everything it can to unite the international community and create conditions for the military coup in Myanmar to be reversed.

The UN chief told a news conference it is "absolutely essential" to carry out the Security Council's calls for a return to democracy, respect for the results of the November parliamentary elections, and release of all people detained by the military, "which means the reversal of the coup that took place." "It is absolutely essential that that moves forward, and for that, I believe, we need to have all possible areas of pressure to make it happen," Guterres said.

Myanmar's military announced Monday on the eve of the meeting of new Parliament that it will take power for one year, accusing leader Aung San Suu Kyi's government of not investigating allegations of voter fraud in the November elections, where its party did poorly. It detained Suu Kyi, whose party swept that vote, and other lawmakers, activists, journalists and mem-



A protestor gives bouquets of flowers to a line of riot police during a demonstration against the military coup in Yangon on Saturday. — AFP

bers of civil society.

The election commission had refuted the military's allegations. In its first statement following the military's takeover on Thursday, the Security Council "stressed the need to uphold democratic institutions and processes, refrain

from violence, and fully respect human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law."

It also "emphasised the need for the continued support of the democratic transition in Myanmar."

Guterres said Christine Schraner Burgener, the

UN special envoy for Myanmar, had a first contact Friday with the military since the coup and expressed the UN's strong opposition to the takeover.

According to UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric, she reiterated to Deputy Commander-in-Chief Vice

Gen. Soe Win "the secretary-general's strong condemnation of the military's action that disrupted the democratic reforms that were taking place in the country."

Schraner Burgener also reiterated her call for the immediate release of all detainees and emphasised the need for progress on the safe and voluntary repatriation of the Rohingya refugees, Dujarric said, calling it "an important conversation." More than 700,000 Rohingya have fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh since August 2017, when the military launched a clearance operation in response to attacks by a rebel group. The security forces have been accused of mass rapes, killings and the burning of thousands of homes.

A year ago, the UN's top court, the International Court of Justice, ordered Myanmar to do all it can to prevent genocide against the Rohingya, a Muslim minority. Guterres said Schraner Burgener is also in contact with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Brunei, which chairs the 10-nation regional group, including Myanmar.

— AP

Myanmar junta blocks net access

● **NETBLOCKS, A LONDON-BASED** service that tracks internet disruptions and shutdowns, said Saturday afternoon that "a near-total internet shutdown is now in effect" in Myanmar, with connectivity falling to just 16% of normal levels.

ment order to block Twitter and Instagram that said some people were trying to use the platforms to spread what it deemed fake news. Facebook had already been blocked earlier in the week — though not completely effectively.

The communication blockages are a stark reminder of the progress Myanmar is in danger of losing after Monday's coup plunged the nation back under direct military rule after a nearly decade-long move toward greater openness and democracy.

— AP

Rana attorney: No hint India let go Headley extradition

Washington, Feb. 6: There is no indication that India has given up on the extradition of David Coleman Headley, the Mumbai terror attack accused, attorney of his co-accused Tahawwur Hussain Rana has told a US court. Rana, 59, a childhood friend of Headley, is facing extradition request by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack in which 166 people, including six Americans, were killed.

Rana, who has been declared a fugitive by India, is opposing his extradition. In a submission early this week before the US District Court Judge in Los Angeles Jacqueline Chelonian, opposing his extradition, the attorney of

Rana claimed that as of now there is no indication in the record that India has agreed to forgo Headley's extradition to India. "India presumably could have agreed to forgo Headley's extradition in return for his assistance to the US, but there is no indication in the record that it did so," the court submission said.

"In fact, the opinion of the Indian prosecutor serving as the government's expert states: 'The present opinion is specific to the extradition request in respect of fugitive Tahawwur Hussain Rana. This opinion may not be construed in any manner to indicate that the various extradition requests pending with different sovereign nations.

— PTI



U.S. Sec. Blinken presses China on Uighurs, HK

Washington, Feb. 6: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken pressed Beijing on its treatment of Uighurs, Tibetans and Hong Kong while China defended its policies in the first conversation between top officials of the two powers since President Joe Biden took office.

"I made clear the US will defend our national interests, stand up for our democratic values, and hold Beijing accountable for its abuses of the international system," Blinken said on Twitter of his call with senior Chinese official Yang Jiechi.

Blinken told Yang that the United States "will continue to stand up for human rights and democratic values, including in Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong," a State Department statement said of the call, which took place on Friday Washington time.

Blinken also "pressed China to join the international community in condemning the military coup in Burma," it said, using the former name of Myanmar.

The top US diplomat said the United States would hold Beijing "accountable for its efforts to threaten stability in the Indo-Pacific, including across the Taiwan Strait, and its undermining of the rules-based international system." The tough tone comes after Blinken in his confirmation hearing said he would continue former president Donald Trump's approach to China in a rare point of agreement

BIDEN'S SON PENS MEMOIR OF SURVIVAL

New York, Feb. 6: US President Joe Biden's son Hunter will come out with his memoir of addiction, loss and survival on April 6.

"Beautiful Things" will be published by Gallery Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster. "I come from a family forged by tragedies and bound by a remarkable, unbreakable love," Hunter, a lawyer, writes. The book details his descent into substance abuse and his tortuous path to sobriety. Holly Harris, publishing director (non-fiction) at Simon & Schuster UK, acquired UK and Commonwealth rights from Caspian Dennis at Abner Stein on behalf of Laura Nolan and David Granger at Aevitas Creative.

"This book is an extraordinary accomplishment — as gripping as it is courageous. I cannot wait to publish it," says Harris. — PTI

between the two administrations.

Yang however warned on the call that Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Tibet were "China's internal affairs" and "no external forces are allowed to interfere," urging the US to "correct mistakes" made in recent years.

— AFP



SHORT TAKES

BCCI one-dayers from February 20

New Delhi: The BCCI will be organising the Vijay Hazare Trophy (domestic one-dayers) from February 20 to March 14 across six cities, with the teams entering the bio-secure bubble from February 13 in order to undergo three Covid tests. BCCI secretary Jay Shah on Saturday released the schedule with Surat, Indore, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Jaipur being five of the six venues. Eight Plate Group teams will be playing their matches in Tamil Nadu. As per the BCCI protocol, the players will undergo three RT-PCR tests in their respective bio-bubble and three more on arrival before the start of the knock-out stages (pre quarter-finals) from March 7. According to the BCCI notification, Elite Group 'A' will comprise Gujarat, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Tripura, Baroda, Goa. — PTI

Stokes all praise for captain Joe

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 6

Ben Stokes said Joe Root made him "feel rubbish" during their stand of 124 runs against India on Saturday. "That's pretty much where he is at the moment. He makes everyone around him not look very good. He is an amazing player and I am not sure we have ever had an England player play spin so well, with such control, such ease," said Stokes. "He is so consistent. He has a game plan for all types of spin," he further added. Having lost their previous Test that was played in Chennai in 2016 despite scoring 477 in the first innings, Stokes knows the importance of scoring big in the subcontinent.

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DOUBLE ROOT

Joe slams double ton as England make India toil

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, FEB. 6

Joe Root has an insatiable appetite for scoring runs. And it goes up a notch when the England skipper takes guard in India and Sri Lanka where he averages in the mid 60s. Close on the heels of notching up a double hundred and a 186 in Sri Lanka, on Saturday, Root feasted on Indian bowlers for another big knock.

His stroke-filled 218 that steered England to 555/8 (180 overs) in the first innings of the opening Test here at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium has put him on a high pedestal. Of the many firsts he achieved on Saturday, he would definitely cherish the feat of becoming the highest individual scorer in a 100th Test.

Continuing from where he left off on the opening day, Root found another able ally in Ben Stokes (82) and forged a century stand to give impetus to a huge total. England have made it clear that they will bat, at least, for one more hour on day three.

Having made a quiet start, Stokes pulled off a surprise when he popped his 16th ball back over R. Ashwin's head for a six. That shot sparked the day's play into life. Stokes also enjoyed some luck. He was dropped twice in the next two overs — once by Ashwin, off his own bowling, and then by Cheteshwar Pujara, off Shahbaz Nadeem. The dangerous Stokes eventually fell to left-arm spinner Nadeem after mistiming a slog sweep. This time, Pujara, stationed at deep backward square leg, held on to the ball after a fumble.



England's Joe Root celebrates after scoring 200 runs against India on the second day of their first Test at the M. A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Saturday. — PTI

Exhibiting great technique and temperament, Root brought up his double ton in style by charging down and launching Ashwin over long on for a six. He became the first England player to do it with a big hit.

India heaved a huge sigh of relief when Nadeem's quicker delivery crashed into Root's pads. The England skipper reviewed instantly, but the third umpire upheld the on-field decision, ending Root's marathon 377-ball vigil.

As he walked back, drenched in sweat, Kohli was the first to applaud his effort with a pat on his back.

Playing a long innings in Chennai's humid conditions is not easy. Root has left a lasting impression by making the highest individual score for a visiting batsman at Chepauk, surpassing Aussie Dean Jones' 210.

Indian bowlers who logged through the day found some solace in the final session by taking four wickets. Ishant

Sharma bowled his heart out. The pacer's persistent line and length finally earned him rewards. He castled Jos Buttler (30) and Jofra Archer (0) off consecutive balls.

The fact that Washington Sundar and Nadeem, who shared 70 overs between them, could manage only six maidens highlighted their lack of control. As many as 19 no-balls and a few dropped catches — Rohit Sharma dropped a dolly — didn't help India's cause either.

SCORECARD

England 1st Innings (overnight 128/3): Rory Burns c Pant b Ashwin 33, Dominic Sibley lbw b Bumrah 87, Daniel Lawrence lbw b Bumrah 0, Joe Root lbw b Nadeem 218, Ben Stokes c Pujara b Nadeem 82, Ollie Pope lbw b Ashwin 34, Jos Buttler b Ishant 30, Dominic Bess batting 28, Jofra Archer b Ishant 0, Jack Leach batting 6. Extras (b-2, lb-16, nb-19) 37. **Total (for 8 wks in 180 overs) 555.** FoW: 63-1, 63-2, 263-3, 387-4, 473-5, 477-6, 525-7, 525-8. **Bowling:** Ishant Sharma 27-7-52-2, Jasprit Bumrah 31-4-81-2, Ravichandran Ashwin 50-5-132-2, Shahbaz Nadeem 44-4-167-2, Washington Sundar 26-2-98-0, Rohit Sharma 2-0-7-0.

NUMBERS GAME

JOE ROOT FIRST TO SCORE DOUBLE TON IN 100TH TEST

● Joe Root became the first batsman to score a double century in his 100th Test match. He achieved this feat by making 218 on the second day of the first Test against India in Chennai on Saturday.

● Pakistan's Inzamam-ul-Haq, who had posted 184 against India at Bangalore in 2004-05 in his 100th Test match, held the previous record.

● Root's 218 was his fifth double century in 182 innings of 100 Test matches. With this double hundreds he became England's third and 16th batsman overall to score five or more double hundreds in Tests.

● Root also became the first captain after 84 years to register a hat-trick of 150-plus scores in Test cricket. The England captain became only second skipper after legendary Don Bradman to achieve the feat. Australia's Bradman was the first captain to notch up three successive 150-plus scores in Test way back in 1937.

● Root had scored 228 and 186 in his previous two Tests in Sri Lanka. He is the 7th player to make 150-plus runs in three consecutive Tests as he joins an elite list including New Zealand's Tom Latham, Sri Lanka's Kumar Sangakkara (4 consecutive Tests), Pakistan's Mudassar Nazar and Zaheer Abbas, Bradman, and England's Wally Hammond.

— S. PERVEZ KAISER

Pak increase lead against Proteas

Rawalpindi, Feb. 6: The lower order increased Pakistan's lead to 200 runs against South Africa on the third day of the second and final Test on Saturday. Allrounder Faheem Ashraf and Mohammad Rizwan were dropped off successive deliveries before featuring in a 52-run sixth-wicket stand which guided the home team to 129-6 in the second innings at stumps.

Rizwan was unbeaten on 28 but Ashraf fell late in the second session for 29 when he sliced a catch at point to give George Linde (3/12) his third wicket.

Earlier, fast bowler Hasan Ali's (5/54) five-wicket haul earned Pakistan a vital 71-run first innings lead as the visitors were bowled out for 201, half an hour after lunch.

Hasan, returning to the five-day format after a two-year absence due to

injuries, picked up three wickets on Saturday, but poor running cost South Africa with two batsmen getting run-outs.

Temba Bavuma fought a lone battle to remain unbeaten on 44 off 138 balls before Hasan wrapped up the innings by claiming the last two wickets of successive deliveries. The diminutive Bavuma successfully overturned a leg before decision against him in the fourth over of the day, but could not get enough support from the lower order.

Bavuma and Wiaan Mulder (33) dug in for 90 minutes and raised a half century stand before Pakistan struck with two quick wickets. — AP

Brief scores (Day 3): Pakistan 272 & 129/6 (Rizwan 28 batting, Hasan 0 batting; Linde 3/12) vs **South Africa 201** (Bavuma 44 not out, Hasan 5/54).

Haque's hundred puts WI in trouble

Chattogram (Bangladesh), Feb. 6: Captain Mominul Haque hit his 10th Test century and off-spinner Mehidy Hasan continued his good form for Bangladesh on the fourth day of the first Test against West Indies on Saturday.

Mominul's 115 reaching the 3,000 runs milestone in the process helped Bangladesh set a fearsome 395 runs target for West Indies. At the end of the day, the visitors reached 110-3, with two debutants Kyle Mayers (37) and Nkrumah Bonner (15) batting. Mehidy Hasan (3-52) took all the three wickets.

Resuming the day on 47/3, Bangladesh declared their second innings on 223/8 with Liton Das play-

ing an important role alongside the captain. Das struck 69 and shared 133 for the fifth wicket stand with Mominul to keep the visitors frustrated.

Windies got a glimmer of hope when Rahkeem Cornwall struck early, dismissing Mushfiqur Rahim for 18. Mushfiqur reviewed the decision in vain.

With the ball keeping low, Mominul and Liton had to be watchful. Mominul completed his 10th century off 173 balls, pushing the ball toward cover for a quick single. — AP

Brief scores (Day 4): Bangladesh 430 & 223/8 decl. (Haque 115, Das 69, Warrican 3/57, Cornwall 3-81) vs **WI 259 & 110/3** (Mayers 37 batting, Bonner 15 batting, Miraz 3/52).

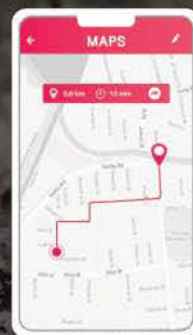
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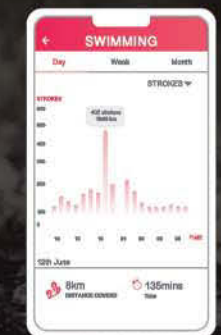
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