

# DECCAN Chronicle

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KARIMNAGAR | WEDNESDAY | 10 MARCH 2021



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**English suffered weight loss during Test defeat**



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## WEATHER



Max: 35°C  
Min: 20°C  
RH: 64%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Max/Min temp. 36/21°C

## ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Uttarayana  
Tithi: Magha Baha; Dwadashi till 2.42 pm  
Star: Sravanam till 9.04 pm  
Varjyam: 1.11 am to 2.50 am (Thursday)  
Durmuhurtam: 12.02 pm to 12.50 pm  
Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm  
HIJRI CALENDAR  
Rajab 25, 1441 AH  
PRAYERS  
Fajar: 5.28 am  
Zohar: 12.37 pm  
Asar: 4.44 pm  
Maghrib: 6.30 pm  
Isha: 7.38 pm  
SUNSET TODAY 6.24 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.28 AM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 3.30 AM  
MOONSET TODAY 2.51 PM

## COUNTER POINT



**There is no room inside... we have to stop Operation Akarsh!**

## SHORT TAKES

### 357 arrested for fake GST invoices

**New Delhi:** GST officers have arrested 357 persons, including 12 chartered accountants, in about four months as part of its drive against fake invoices to check tax evasion, sources said. Since mid-November, 3,500 cases have been booked and 10,400 fake GSTIN entities have been unearthed by GST intelligence and Central GST officers so far.

### Centre firm on privatisation

**New Delhi:** The scope for sale of minority stakes in public sector companies has reduced and strategic disinvestment would be the primary mode for disinvestment receipts going forward, MoS finance Anurag Singh Thakur said on Tuesday. He said the government has realised ₹20,627 crore as disinvestment receipts till March 3.

### Mahanta won't fight Assam polls

**Guwahati:** Veteran AGP leader and two-time Assam CM Prafulla Mahanta has decided not to take part in the Assembly elections. Mr Mahanta, who was denied a party ticket from Barhampur, said he was "hurt because of the party's weak stand in defending regionalism, a cause that formed the very basis of the AGP".

## EASY ACCESS

**State and Centre to share cost of land acquisition**

## RRR to get TS budget boost

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 9**

The long-pending 340-km Hyderabad Regional Ring Road (RRR) project is set to get a boost in the upcoming State Budget. As part of the budget preparatory meetings, Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao has directed officials to sanction the required funds for the project which is estimated to cost ₹15,980 crore. Sources said the funds sanctioned in the Budget will be utilised for land

acquisition. The state government has agreed to pay 50 per cent of land acquisition cost while the Centre will bear the other half, they added. The project will improve connectivity between ORR and major urban clusters around Hyderabad. It comprises two parts—a ₹9,500 crore northern part and a ₹6,480 crore southern portion. The Centre granted in-principle approval for the northern part on February 22 while it assured that it would consider approval for the southern part later.

Union minister Nitin Gadkari assured that the RRR will be built in three years, provided that the government completes the land acquisition work quickly. The project will connect Sangareddy, Narsapur, T. O. Prasad, Gajwel, Jagdevpur, Choutuppal, Shadnagar and Sangareddy and serve 40 per cent of the population of the state. It will connect national highways 65 (Pune-Machilipatnam), 161 (Sangareddy-Nanded-Akola), 765D (Hyderabad-

Medak), 44 (Srinagar-Kanyakumari) and 163 (Hyderabad-Bhopalpatnam) and State Highway-1 (Hyderabad-Ramagundam). Once the project is constructed as an access-controlled expressway, the travel time and vehicle operation costs for commercial and non-commercial vehicles will get reduced by a great extent. A number of industrial clusters, IT centres, logistics parks, pharmaceutical industries among others, are expected to be set up around the project.

## Collector jailed for contempt

**Court punishes three officials for non-payment of compensation**

**VUJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 9**

The Telangana High Court has punished three senior bureaucrats with various terms of simple imprisonment after they were convicted for contempt of court in relation to some land deals.

The court pulled up Siddipet collector P. Venkatrami Reddy, IAS officer Krishna Bhaskar who



The court pulled up Siddipet collector P. Venkatrami Reddy, IAS officer Krishna Bhaskar, and erstwhile RDO Siddipet Jayachandra Reddy

served as Siddipet collector for eight months and is now Rajanna Siricilla collector, and erstwhile revenue divisional officer of Siddipet Jayachandra Reddy, saying they were

guilty of wilful disobedience of the court's order.

Justice M.S. Ramachandra Rao was dealing with a contempt petition filed by Gandla Tirupathi and another person from Vemula

ghat village of Thoguta mandal in Siddipet district. The petitioners complained that the interim orders issued by the court on land acquisition for the Mallanasagar project were not heeded to by these officers and they were responsible for eviction of the petitioners from his own land, without complying with the procedure.

■ Page 2: HC held officials guilty on two counts

## STATE'S BUDGET SESSION TO BEGIN FROM MARCH 15

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 9**

The Budget session of the Telangana Legislature will commence on March 15 and the Budget will be presented on March 18. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan issued a notification to this effect on Tuesday.

Sources said the session will commence with the address by the Governor to the joint meeting of the Assembly and the Legislative Council. Finance minister T. Harish Rao will present the Budget on March 18. The session is likely to conclude on March 31.

## EC shunts out Bengal's top cop

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, MARCH 9**

In a major step against the bunch of favourite bureaucrats of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, the Election Commission on Tuesday evening removed state director general of police Virendra from his post with "immediate effect" on the eve of the Assembly Election in the state.

The 1985-batch IPS officer of West Bengal cadre, who has been in the good book of the Trinamul Congress supreme since her second stint as the railway minister as he was posted in the railway protection force on central deputation then, was replaced by IPS officer: Nirajayan Pandey who is however a two-batch junior to Mr Virendra. In his last assignment, Mr Pandey was DG (administration).

Informing it's decision to state chief secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay, the EC in its order made it clear that Virendra "should not be given any post which directly or indirectly relates to conduct of election."

It also told Mr Bandyopadhyay, "Compliance of Commission's order may be done immediately."

## AINRC TO LEAD BJP, AIADMK FRONT IN PUDY

**Puducherry, March 9:** The BJP on Tuesday announced that the AINRC will contest 16 seats in the April 6 assembly polls in Puducherry as a constituent of the NDA.

After the alliance talks, BJP in-charge of the UT, Nirmal Kumar Surana said that negotiations were held by leaders of AINRC, AIADMK and BJP and the Rangasamy led AINRC has been earmarked 16 seats while the BJP and AIADMK have been allotted 14.

■ Full report on Page 5

Kindly inform the Commission about the compliance latest by 10.00 am tomorrow."

According to sources, BJP was displeased with Virendra's partial role towards the TMC since 2019 Lok Sabha polls though it is not clear whether the saffron party recently lodged any complaint against him with EC and demanded his removal from the state top cop's post.

## TS employee unions to back TRS in MLC polls

**L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 9**

The TRS is upbeat over the support extended by various employees unions to the party candidates for the upcoming graduate elections to the Legislative Council.

As the March 14 polling day nears, the unions are announcing their support to the TRS one after the other, contrary to reports that employees are angry with the government for delaying the Pay Revis-

ion Commission (PRC) report and the hike in retirement age.

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's 'strategy' in deputing ministers as election in-charges to 'negotiate' with employees unions is yielding results in the form of support for the elections.

The in-charge ministers who are holding separate meetings with employees unions every day could convince them that the TRS government will give the PRC and other benefits soon after the

MLC polls.

The idea behind these meetings is to convey the message to employees unions that the TRS government will remain in power until December 2023, irrespective of the outcome of the MLC polls and it's the TRS government that has to give PRC or any other benefit.

Employees unions also want to avoid a confrontation with the TRS government.

■ Page 2: Emotional appeal to unions helps TRS

## Uttarakhand CM Trivendra resigns

**BJP MLAs to meet today to elect new CM**

**DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 9**

Facing discontentment from a section of BJP MLAs and ministers over his style of functioning, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat on Tuesday tendered his resignation as the party's top brass did not want the growing dissension to dent the party's poll prospects.

With the Assembly polls just 10 months away and the Congress, the main Opposition party, now in disarray, the BJP leadership did not want to take any chance to give strength to the Opposition camp, including the AAP, which has decided to contest the polls this time. Rawat would have completed four years in office on March 17.

Sensing that the CM's resignation could upset his supporters and his constituency, Mr Rawat, who had held a meeting with BJP president J.P. Nadda in New Delhi on Monday, said it was a "collective decision" taken by the party leadership that someone else should lead the state now. Mr Rawat's Cabinet colleague Dhan



Trivendra Singh Rawat

Singh Rawat, who is also his batchmate from college, is said to be the frontrunner to succeed him.

The names of Union minister Ramesh Pokhriyal "Nishank", Rajya Sabha MP Anil Baluni and senior leader Ajay Bhatt are also doing the rounds.

Mr Trivendra Rawat submitted his resignation to governor Baby Rani Maurya at Raj Bhavan in Dehradun on his return from New Delhi, where he had met the BJP's central leadership.

After submitting his resignation, Mr Rawat said the Uttarakhand BJP Legislature Party will meet at the state party headquarters Wednesday to choose his successor. Central observers Raman Singh and Dushyant Kumar Gautam are due to land in the state

late on Tuesday to oversee the process of the change of guard in the state.

Earlier, before going to Raj Bhavan, Mr Rawat was closeted with his associates at the CM's residence, including Cabinet minister Madan Kaushik and Dhan Singh Rawat.

After submitting his resignation, Mr Rawat addressed a press conference at his residence and said the party had "collectively decided" someone else should lead the state now.

"I feel really honoured that my party gave me the opportunity to serve Devbhoomi for nearly four years," said Mr Rawat. He said that during his tenure, several steps were taken for the empowerment of women, including a recent ordinance giving ownership rights to women in the ancestral property of their husbands.

State BJP chief Bansidhar Bhagat, Mr Dhan Singh Rawat, Vikas Nagar MLA and chief spokesman Munna Singh Chauhan, Cantt area MLA Harbans Kapoor and Dehradun MLA Sunil Uniyal Gama were also present at Mr Rawat's last press conference as chief minister.

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## OTHER STORIES

EMOTIONAL  
APPEAL HELPS TRS

From Page 1

Major employees unions such as Telangana Gazetted Officers Association (TGOs), Telangana Non-Gazetted Officers Association (TNGOs) have expressed support to the TRS. The biggest teachers union, Telangana Progressive Recognised Teachers Union (PRTU), has also announced its support.

The Contributory Pension Scheme Employees Association comprising 1.3 lakh employees announced support to the ruling party candidates. On Tuesday, another major union, the Telangana Udyogula Sangham, extended support to the TRS.

The ministers pointed out to the unions that Chandrashekar Rao had given the highest ever 43 per cent fitment during PRC in 2015. Besides, the government had also paid a special increment and they would get similar benefits if employees ensure victory of the TRS in the MLC polls.

Ministers are trying to strike an emotional chord with employees unions, reminding them how the TRS and employees unions had together achieved statehood with their joint struggle.

COURT HELD  
OFFICIALS GUILTY  
ON TWO COUNTS

From Page 1

Justice M.S. Ramachandra Rao had passed interim orders in 2018 to the land acquisition authorities, asking them to dispose of the objections raised by the landowners before the lands were acquired for the project. The court had also directed the officials to provide adequate copies of the detailed project report in Telugu. This too was not done.

The court held the officials guilty and sentenced Jayachandrababu Reddy for simple imprisonment of four months and a fine of ₹2,000. He shall also pay costs of ₹50,000 to the petitioners within four weeks, the Judge said. Collector P. Venkateswara Reddy shall suffer simple imprisonment for three months and a fine of ₹2,000. He shall pay costs of ₹25,000 to the petitioners. Krishna Bhaskar shall pay a fine of ₹2,000. The high court also set aside the award passed by the government on the petitioners' land, as it has lapsed after two years.

CIRCULARS ON  
MIN. WAGES IN  
GULF DRAW FLAKNARENDER PULLOOR | DC  
NIZAMABAD, MARCH 9

The circulars issued by the ministry of external affairs, reducing the minimum referral wages (MRW) for Indian workers recruited for Gulf countries, have drawn flak from migrant workers and various associations of Gulf migrants.

They expressed the fear that the circulars would affect 88 lakh Indian migrant workers in the Gulf countries. The ministry issued two circulars on September 8 and 21, 2020. According to these, the minimum referral wages of Indians who work in Qatar, Bahrain, Oman or the UAE have been reduced to \$200 (₹15,000) and in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to \$245 and \$324 respectively.

The Central government's decision to reduce minimum referral wages by 30 to 50 per cent risks the livelihoods of migrant workers, the associations complained. "It would also shatter the dreams of the current and prospective migrants from India." The Centre has been fixing minimum referral wages to regulate the wages of Indian migrant workers employed in countries falling under the category of Emigration Check Required (ECR). The rationale is that it ensures Indian migrant workers a decent minimum wage. Migrant rights organisations in Telangana state have recorded testimonies of migrants who were promised higher wages prior to their departure which were later reduced following the issuance of the wage circulars in September last. Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle* from New Delhi after meeting the minister of state for external affairs V. Muraleedharan, Gulf Migrants' Rights and Welfare Federation president Kotapati Narasimha Naidu said the minister has promised to roll back the circulars. "The minister told us that it was in the interest of Indian workers that the government issued the circulars, which would protect workers vis-a-vis minimum wages during the Covid-19 pandemic," he said.



TPCC president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy participates in the protest against the murder of the High Court advocate-couple last month, at Dharna Chowk, Indira Park, Hyderabad on Tuesday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

## Uttam hits out at TRS, BJP

Asks why CM is silent on murder of advocate-couple, BJP not raising issue

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

State Congress president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Tuesday announced that he would raise the issue of the murder of the lawyer couple G. Vaman Rao and P.V. Nagamani in Parliament. Addressing advocates who were staging a protest at Dharna Chowk at Indira Park over the murders, Reddy strongly

condemned Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao for not responding to the demand for CBI probe. He said the CM had turned so insensitive that he did not condemn the murders. He alleged that since the accused persons were reportedly close to the CM, the local police were not carrying out the investigation in an appropriate manner. He reiterated that the

murders were the result of a larger conspiracy hatched by TRS-backed sand mafia and were directly linked to the custodial death of a Dalit, Seelam Rangaiah, in the Manthani police station of Ramagundam. He said Vaman Rao and Nagamani were eliminated to hush up many other illegal activities being carried out with the backing of TRS leaders. He said that the TRS

Government had handed over control of the state to the 'sand, land, mine and wines' mafia. He slammed the BJP for not taking up the issue at the national level although Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy was from the state. If the BJP leaders were genuinely against the TRS, then they should convince the Centre to order a CBI probe. If this was not

done, the Congress would intensify its agitation. He assured the advocates that he would take up their demands for implementation of Advocates Protection Act, Review of CrPC 41, payment of stipend to junior advocates. He appealed to the advocates to vote in favour of Congress candidates in the forthcoming Legislative Council elections.



Prof. K. Nageshwar, independent candidate for the Hyderabad-Ranga Reddy-Mahabubnagar graduate constituency elections to the Legislative Council, addresses voters at a campaign meeting in Hyderabad, on Tuesday.

— BY ARRANGEMENT

## Prof.: Parties playing hide and seek to provide data on jobs

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

Prof. K. Nageshwar, independent candidate for the Hyderabad-Ranga Reddy-Mahabubnagar graduate constituency elections to the Legislative Council, alleged that political parties were playing a game of hide and seek to provide data on jobs provided to the youth in Telangana state.

Addressing voters at the series of elections meeting in the city on Tuesday, Prof. Nageshwar said that as per the Pay Revision Commission report, 1.91 lakh jobs remain vacant and this accounts for 39 per cent of the total sanc-

● **THE PARTY** that rules the Centre is claiming to fight for jobs in Telangana state. But, the Union finance ministry circular on September 2020 imposes a ban on fresh recruitments in the government. This speaks of the political hypocrisy of the ruling parties, Prof Nageshwar said.

tioned cadre in the state. "This not only shatters the hopes of educated unemployed, but cripples the delivery of public services and governance. Crucial sectors like education, health, panchayat raj

and rural development have job vacancies of about 25,000, 30,000 and 13,000 respectively," he said.

The party that rules the Centre is claiming to fight for jobs in Telangana state. But, the Union finance ministry circular on September 2020 imposes a ban on fresh recruitments in the government. This speaks of the political hypocrisy of the ruling parties, Prof Nageshwar said.

He appealed to the graduates to exercise voting preference so as to raise the civil society voice in the Legislative Council to make political system accountable.

Schemes by  
Centre increase  
poverty: OwaisiDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

AIMIM president Owaisi said the the Modi government was implementing schemes that increase the poverty of the poor. "It is an enemy of two-wheeler riders, autorickshaw and lorry drivers. The BJP forgot that these sections mainly participate in the voting process," he said. Owaisi said 38 per cent central taxes had been levied on petroleum products and asked the government to decrease taxes up to 10 per cent to ease prices. "The government has forgotten the plight of the poor," he said adding that women who got cylinders under the government's schemes were not able to purchase a refill.

Owaisi was speaking to the media while announcing that his party has struck a pact with Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazagam of T.V.V. Dinakaran, the nephew of V.K. Sankar, an aide of the late J. Jayalalitha. The MIM will be contesting three seats, Vaniam-badi, Krishnagiri and Sankarapuram.

"MIM will contest three seats under the leadership of Dhinakaran, we will emerge as the third alternative as people have been rendered averse to the traditional alliances of the DMK and AIADMK." He claimed that there were attempts to iso-

● **THE MIM** has joined an alliance with the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazagam of T.V.V. Dinakaran in Tamil Nadu and will contest three seats.

late the MIM in political circles, but contended that the party would proceed on its own. "Many political parties are refraining from us, for some parties we are untouchable." Reacting to the incident of communal violence in Bhainsa, he said, "We always appeal for peace and tranquillity. I have already warned the Telangana government that there is a need to monitor the situation in the undivided Nizamabad and Adilabad districts. Except for two incidents, peace has prevailed all over Telangana despite communal and fascist forces indulging in the provocation."

He opposed the law proposed by the BJP government in Karnataka to keep a check on information against its ministers. "You are indulging in immoral acts and want to protect yourselves from being exposed in the name of privacy," he said. He also questioned why the Karnataka government was controlling the food habits of the people. "You have banned the slaughtering of bulls and buffaloes as well, which has ruined the income sources of many poor families," he said.

KCR behaving like  
Mamata: Edu min.DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

Union education minister Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' alleged that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao was behaving like West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. He alleged that there was no difference between the West Bengal and Telangana state governments. The minister was speaking as chief guest at a programme, 'Role of Intellectuals', organised by the Hyderabad chapter of Forum for Nationalistic Thinkers at a hotel on Tuesday.

Pokhriyal alleged that as the state government was not implementing the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme of the Centre and the Fasal Bima Yojana in Telangana, the people had lost out. He accused the Chief Minister of working to a conspiracy by not implementing the Central schemes for fear that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would get a good image among the people here. The Union minister pointed out that subsidies were being directly credited in the beneficiary accounts under the Jan Dhan Yojana, and praised the Prime Minister for taking

● **THE UNION** minister pointed out that subsidies were being directly credited in the beneficiary accounts under the Jan Dhan Yojana, and praised the Prime Minister for taking historical decisions for the development of the nation.

● **POKHRIYAL STATED** that he had interacted with Kendriya Vidyalaya students and said he was happy with the girl students' statements on national respect and tradition.

historical decisions for the development of the nation. Pokhriyal stated that he had interacted with Kendriya Vidyalaya students and said he was happy with the girl students' statements on national respect and tradition.

The minister stated that across the globe education institutions were shut down and students lost their academic year but in India the Centre had taken steps to ensure that this did not happen.

He appealed to graduates to elect BJP candidate N. Ramchander Rao as Member of the Legislative Council to better voice their problems.

Custody extended for  
lawyers' killing accusedDC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, MARCH 9

The Manthani court extended the custody of Bittu Srinu, prime accused in the murder of High Court advocates Gattu Vaman Rao and P.V. Nagamani for 14 days of judicial custody on Tuesday.

After completion of seven days remand, Ramagundam police officials took Srinu to the Godavarikhani area hospital for tests and produced him in the court at Manthani of Peddapalli district. After he was remanded,

Srinu was sent to the Central Jail in Warangal district.

The advocate couple were murdered in broad daylight on February 17 at Kalvacherla village of Ramagiri mandal in Peddapalli district. Srinu is facing allegations of supplying weapons to Kunta Srinu and for conspiring to commit the murders.

The police has arrested four other persons, Kunta Srinu, Shivandula Chiranjeevi, Akkapaka Kumar and Udari Lakshman in the case.

Govt teachers  
await salary dues  
of three monthsDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

The Telangana State United Teachers Federation (TSUTF) on Monday demanded immediate release of salaries for the last two months, for January and February, for teaching and non-teaching staff of aided educational institutions.

Teachers alleged that the salaries are not being released despite the allocation of budget and approval of salary bills by the treasury.

"While most teachers are waiting for salaries of January and February, for

some even the December salaries have not been released yet," said TSUTF president K. Jangayya and general secretary Chava Ravi.

They also complained that the aided school staff were facing severe financial difficulties due to non-receipt of regular salaries for the past three months.

In recent times, pensionary benefits of retired employees, General Provident Fund (GPF) loans, final payments, medical claims, leave salaries have only accumulated at e-Kuber, rather than being released, they said.

## BUDGET SESSION TO BE HELD FROM MARCH 15 TO 31

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

The Budget session of the Telangana Legislature will commence on March 15 and the Budget will be presented on March 18. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan issued a notification to this effect on Tuesday.

Official sources said the session will commence with the address by the Governor to the joint meeting of the

Assembly and the Legislative Council. The following day there would be a condolence resolution on the demise of sitting MLA Nomula Narasimhaiah and former MLAs.

The discussion on the Governor's speech will take place on March 17 and finance minister T. Harish Rao will present the Budget on March 18. The session is likely to conclude on March 31.

TS ahead of neighbours: Harish TS gets ₹6,466 cr FDI  
in 9 months of 2020-21DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

Finance minister Tanneru Harish Rao on Tuesday asserted that compared to neighbouring states, Telangana is ahead in all fields. He maintained that TS has become a role model for the country in terms of education, employment, irrigation and welfare.

Harish Rao was speaking with representatives of Telangana Paramedical Colleges Management Association and Vocational Colleges Management Association at Hyderabad. They had called

on him offering support to TRS in the Hyderabad-Mahabubnagar-Ranga Reddy and Khammam-Nalgonda-Warangal graduate MLC elections.

The minister asked college representatives to cast their votes in favour of TRS candidates, along with their staff members, eligible students and relatives. Those present included Telangana Paramedical Colleges Management Association president Mohan Reddy, president M. Srinivasa Rao, general secretary Dhara Singh, chief adviser Vijaya Ravinder, vice presidents

Jahangir Pasha, and joint secretaries David and Soma Mallanna.

Harish Rao thanked representatives of college associations for promising support in the forthcoming MLC elections.

He explained to them the all round progress that Telangana has achieved after the TRS government came to power. The state was way ahead in job creation. Karnataka supplied power only for five hours whereas farmers and industries in TS got it for 24 hours. He pointed out that while the generation

capacity was only 7,778 MW at the time of Telangana formation, it is now 16,249 MW.

The minister pointed out that before Telangana was formed, every day there was news of farmers committing suicides. That is the reason why the TRS government provided farmers Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Beema and irrigation water, while removing counter-fert seeds from the scene and ensuring supply of the required fertilisers. Telangana has thus become a state without farmers' suicides today, he underlined.

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

Telangana state has received Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) worth ₹6,466 crore in the first nine months, April to December, of the ongoing financial year 2020-21. This amounts to 2 per cent of the total FDI received by India. The latest data released by the Centre's department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT) shows that Telangana is one of the top 10 states in

● **THE LATEST** data released by the Centre's department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT) shows that Telangana is one of the top 10 states in attracting FDI.

Telangana has received FDI worth ₹11,331 crore between October 2019 and December 2020 and stood at the eighth place. This amounts to 2.4 per cent of total FDI attracted by India. Andhra Pradesh on the

other hand stood at the 12th place by attracting FDI worth ₹1,975 crore.

India received FDI worth ₹5,54,613 crore between October 2019 and December 2020. Gujarat topped the country by attracting ₹1,77,052 crore, amounting to 31.92 per cent. Maharashtra was second with ₹1,53,351 crore FDI, or 27.65 per cent of India's total.

It was followed by Karnataka at ₹78,159 crore, Delhi ₹59,830 crore and Tamil Nadu ₹19,733 crore.



## OTHER STORIES

### PROGRAMME ON AGRI- BIODIVERSITY HELD IN ADILABAD

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, MARCH 9

A grass-root level awareness programme on Agri- biodiversity conservation cum farmer benefit delivery was conducted for the benefit of the farmers under Tribal Sub-project in the Adilabad town on Tuesday.

The event was organised at the Agriculture Research Station of Adilabad by the National Bureau of Plant Genetics Resources (NBPGR), of Rajendranagar, Hyderabad in collaboration with the Horticulture Research Station of SKLTS Horticulture University. Tribal farmers from various places attended the event.

Principal Scientist and head of ARS in Adilabad Dr Sridhar Chauhan, Dr Praveen of NBPGR The regional station Rajendranagar, head of Horticultural Research station in Adilabad Dr Suchitra participated in the event.

## BUTTER MILK TO BE SUPPLIED IN BHADRADRI

DC CORRESPONDENT  
BHADRACHALAM, MARCH 9

The authorities of Sri Sitaramachandra Swamy temple in Bhadrachalam decided to supply buttermilk to the devotees free of cost from Tuesday. The free buttermilk distribution will commence from 9 am from March 10, 2021 and the scheme will be on till the temple closes in the afternoon. The officials planned the program by following all Covid-19 guidelines. The decisions is taken keeping the rising mercury and the problems of devotees in view.

# MLC candidates depend on social media to lure voters

## It's not possible to meet every voter living in various places

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, MARCH 9

All candidates contesting in Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduate constituency are relying more on social media and mouth-talk to reach the voters.

Unlike assembly elections, Nalgonda graduate constituency is vast in area and number of voters. There will be 2 to 2.5 lakh voters in the assembly segment and there are 5.05 lakh voters in Nalgonda constituency. It is difficult to meet the graduate voters in 35 assembly segments in three erstwhile districts including Nalgonda, Khammam and Warangal. It is also not possible for candidates to meet voters who are living in nearly 3000 villages.

Telangana Rastra Samithi is ahead among other parties in meeting the voters. Ministers in three districts – Errabelli Dayakara Rao, G Jagadish Reddy and Puvvada Ajay Kumar are campaigning for the party candidate Palla Rameswar Reddy. At the same time, about 30 MLAs and party leaders are involved in the campaign after the diklat came from TRS chief and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao. Sattupalli TRS MLA



Errabelli Dayakara Rao, G Jagadish Reddy and Puvvada Ajay Kumar are campaigning for the party candidate Palla Rameswar Reddy. Sattupalli TRS MLA Sandra Venkata Veeraiah visited government offices and appealed employees to cast their vote in favor of Palla. The MLA has also planned to get software employees votes belonging to Vemsoor mandal and working in Hyderabad.

BJP activists and cadre at second place in the campaigning for there their party candidate Gujjala Premender Reddy. The cadre is trying to meet voters personally and seek their votes to Premender.



Congress candidate Ramulu Naik rely on CLP leader Bhatti, PCC president Utham Kumar Reddy and other congress leaders campaigning for him.

Telangana Jana Samithi candidate Kodandaram relied mainly on morning walk programs and mouth to mouth campaign. Kodanda is using teachers and employees for it.



Yuvu Telangana Party candidate Rani Rudrama is using social media and face to face campaigning to get graduate votes. She said that she addressed meetings with employees and graduates and appealed to them to vote for her. "I am posting my targets and aspirations after elected as MLC to voters in the social media groups".

Sandra Venkata Veeraiah visited government offices and appealed employees to cast their vote in favor of Palla. The MLA has also planned to get software employees votes belonging to Vemsoor mandal and working in Hyderabad.

BJP activists and cadre at second place in the campaigning for there their party candidate Gujjala Premender Reddy. The cadre is trying to meet voters and seek their votes to

Premender. Telangana Jana Samithi candidate Kodandaram relied mainly on morning walk programs and mouth to mouth campaign. Kodanda is using teachers and employees for it.

## TRS registered bogus voters to win MLC polls: Kodandaram

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, MARCH 9

Prof. Kodandaram, the Telangana Jana Samithi candidate in the Nalgonda - Khammam - Warangal graduate constituency election for the Legislative Council, said that there were reports that the TRS candidate had registered duplicate votes. He said that the graduate voters, who were under the influence of the TRS candidate, should refrain from such activities. Prof. Kodandaram said that the youth will face impersonation cases if such voting was established those cases would ruin the future of the youth.

Campaigning in Madhira, Prof. Kodandaram said that he would work to resolve the problems of all graduates including teachers, government and private employees and those who are unemployed. There should be a system to solve the problems of unemployed youth. He called the graduate voters to participate in the voting to bring political accountability. "Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao has failed in all fronts and no section is happy with his administration. Corruption is at its peak and ministers and ruling

party leaders are selling sand and soil illegally. Irrigation projects have become the goose that lays the golden eggs for KCR," he said.

There are a lot of problems for the workers in private industries and locals are being denied jobs in Telangana state. A voice that questions the TRS is the need for the hour, Prof. Kodandaram said. He said he was meeting graduates at various places. "Their response is good," he said and added that he had confidence that he would win the election. "The voters are speaking of the lapses of the TRS government during my campaign. KCR has lost the confidence of the people," he said.

Prof. Kodandaram said that he had visited 70 per cent of mandals in the three districts that are going to the polls. He said that many people were raising issue of spiralling prices of fuel but the government was not trying to reduce the burden.

## BIDI WORKERS IN NIZAMABAD DEMAND WITHDRAWAL OF COTPA AMENDMENT ACT

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NIZAMABAD, MARCH 9

Hundreds of women Bidi workers took out a huge rally in Nizamabad on Tuesday demanding withdrawal of the proposed Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) amendment bill. The rally began at Rajiv Gandhi auditorium and reached the district sports

authority mini-stadium through the city's main roads.

The women workers displayed placards and banners demanding the rollback of the proposed COTPA Bill. They said that the proposed bill would adversely affect the Bidi industry, a major employment source for women in north Telangana districts.



Nizamabad MLC Kavitha accompanied with Endowment minister, A. Indrakaran Reddy and MLA Dr. Sanjay Kumar participating in the Bhumi Puja for establishment of Ramakoti Stupam in Sri Anjaneya Swamy temple situated in Muthyampet village of Mallial mandal in Jagtial on Tuesday.

—DC

## TRS answer to BJP: Jai Hanuman slogans

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, MARCH 9

As per the action plan announced by Nizamabad MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha, the TRS has geared itself up for a counter offensive on the BJP with the same Hindutva agenda — by taking up the Jai Hanuman Slogan.

As part of this plan, Kavitha accompanied by endowment minister Indrakaran Reddy participated in the bhumi puja programme for the setting up of a Ramakoti Stupam of 23 feet at a cost of ₹30 lakh in front of Uttara Dwaram of the Sri Anjaneya Swamy temple in Kondagattu of Muthyampet village under Mallial mandal in Jagtial on Tuesday.

Kavitha said the participation in one of the major events of establishment of the Ramakoti Stupam has given her immense happiness. "People in Telangana have a lot of faith in Kondagattu Anjanna and worship Him with high devotion. By taking up works at a brisk pace, the project will be completed by the time of the approaching the Pedda Hanuman Jayanthi celebrations," she said.

An action plan will be prepared for chanting of Hanuman Chalisa Parayanam in every house. A special committee will be formed in the name of Kondagattu Anjaneya Seva Samithi and this will help the state get rid of the deadly coronavirus, she said.

The procession of Hanuman deities will be held across the state from March 17 along with the deekshas by devotees. From the same day, Hanuman Chalisa Parayanam will be telecast for two hours in the evening through visual media across the state.

The temple priests said the devotees have written Ramakoti five crore times till date. "By completing six crore more of Ramakoti Japan in the coming 80 days, the Hanuman devotees must participate in the grand inaugural ceremony of the Ramakoti Stupam on June 4," Kavitha said.

Endowment minister said unlike in any other state, the TRS government is sanctioning funds for development of temples across

Telangana. Already, the developmental works of the Yadadri Sri Laxminarasimha Swamy temple have reached the final stage with the sanctioning of a Rs.1,000 crore fund by chief minister Chandrashekar Rao.

The Kondagattu Anjaneya Swamy temple will be developed on par with the Yadadri Sri Laxminarasimha Swamy temple. With the major programme of starting the Hanuman Chalisa Parayanam from March 17, the image of Kondagattu Anjanna temple will get a further boost within Telangana and in neighbouring states, he said.

Jagtial MLA, Dr.Sanjay Kumar, district collector G. Ravi and Zilla Parishad chairperson Dava Vasantha were also present.

## COMMUNAL CLASH

### Altercation between two persons over rash bike riding took communal angle

## Petty issues take shape of communal clashes in Bhainsa

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, MARCH 9

Petty incidents involving youths from different groups are repeatedly escalating into communal clashes in Bhainsa town, which again saw clashes two days ago.

The trigger seems to be rash driving of bikes during which minor accidents occur. Another issue is with youth revving their bikes and creating a racket, which enrages the opposite group.

It is said that a motor-bike accident and altercation between two bike riders of different groups resulted in clashes between two communities. In January, an altercation between the youth over bike noise had resulted in clashes.

It is learnt that leaders of



Police takes out flag march in sensitive colonies of Bhainsa town in the Nirmal district on Tuesday.

the BJP and the MIM had recently exchanged heated words on social media over the incidents. They had levelled allegations against each other over plot ventures that are com-

ing up in Bhainsa. This had raised the tension between the two groups and formed the backdrop for the incidents of March 7 night at Zulfikargalli.

However, it was for the

first time that some persons stabbed a reporter of a Telugu channel who was covering the clashes.

Police have stopped internet services within a 5 km radius of Bhainsa to

control messages regarding the communal clashes from spreading on social media and shops remained closed on Tuesday. Police top officials warned people against spreading false information.

The poor and daily wage labourers were the worst-affected by the clashes, as they are unable to go out and earn for their meals. Normal life has been affected for the last two days and people have remained indoors.

Adilabad superintendent of police Vishnu S. Warrior who is in charge SP for Nirmal, and other senior police officers camped in Bhainsa. Nirmal collector Musharaff Ali Paroqui visited Bhainsa on Monday and took stock of the situation there.

## 52 PERSONS IN CONNECTION WITH CLASHES TAKEN INTO CUSTODY

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NIRMAL, MARCH 9

Total 52 suspected persons were taken into police custody so far in connection with the communal clashes that were broke out in the Bhainsa town on March 7.

According to police, among the latter, 14 were remanded and 15 cases have been registered against the miscreants involved in the communal clashes. Police took out flag march in the colonies of Bhainsa town.

## 200 COPS TO BE DEPLOYED FOR SIVARATHRI

**Khammam:** All arrangements are being made for Sivarathri festival in Sangameswara Swamy temple in

Theerthala in Khammam. Temple is famous as thousands of devotees come to offer prayers on Sivarathri.

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## DECCAN Chronicle

10 MARCH 2021

### Speed up vaccinations, refresh awareness drive

India has of late been witnessing a surge in the daily caseload of Covid-19 infections with the numbers going up for the last six consecutive days; it is above 18,000 in the last four days. The number of active cases has also registered an increase for five consecutive days. At present, six states — Maharashtra, Kerala, Punjab, Karnataka, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu — together account for more than four-fifth of the total cases now. Given the pattern of the virus spread, it is not before weeks if not days that the pandemic will create another wave that could force the nation to go in for another shut down.

India had on January 16 rolled out an ambitious vaccination plan that, in its first phase, sought to inoculate three crore frontline workers, including healthcare professionals. The target has now been met by two-thirds, with the number of people who have received at least one dose standing at 2.26 crore. The second phase, launched on March 1, seeks to inoculate 27 crore people aged above 60 and those above 45 with co-morbidities.

**Except the Union government and some states such as Kerala, none seems to have kept a tab on the numbers. Worse, the attitude of most states and the people there has been akin to a situation where the virus has ceased to be a threat.**

As of now, nine lakh people who belong to these categories have been given the jab.

A realistic assessment of the spread of the pandemic and the speed with which the vaccination programme progresses calls for increased efforts on both the counts — a massive awareness campaign to stop the spread of the virus and a revitalised vaccination programme. The daily caseload numbers reached their peak in October and then started a downward journey. Except the Union government and some states such as Kerala, none seems to have kept a tab on the numbers. Worse, the attitude of most states and the people there has been akin to a situation where the virus has ceased to be a threat.

The world in general, and India in particular, are better equipped to take on the

virus than we were a year ago. Our knowledge base has improved, the protocols are in place and the healthcare professionals are trained to handle even extreme situations. However, the people's attitude has become less than acceptable. The government must re-launch on a war footing the campaign focussing on the importance of social distancing, wearing of masks and hand hygiene. It must also revisit the restrictions on gatherings, especially social, political and religious ones, which can turn super spreader events.

India vaccinated more than 16 lakh people on Monday, the highest since the programme started. At the present rate, India will take another year to vaccinate at least half of the population. This is unacceptable. There may be many hurdles, from the shortage of raw material for vaccine manufacturing to the logistical issues to the technical glitches in the CoWin app, and the government must meticulously strive to remove them. It must also open up the programme for all sections of the population, co-opt as many institutions, and make the process easier. Unless we speed it up and cover a reasonable share of the population, we can't say goodbye to the uninvited guest.

### The royal underbelly

The world is horrified at Meghan Markle and Prince Harry's revelation that racism towards Meghan was the principal reason they fled their royal home to find freedom in California. But it should not be so because systemic racism is stark reality, more so in the world of privilege that British royalty lives in. Harry's indictment of his own family for not fighting the racist attacks hurled at his biracial wife Meghan and his multiracial son Archie, whose skin colour was a matter of concern to the palace even before he was born, is a pointer to how institutionalised royal reticence is. A disparaging term like 'The Firm' may have been seen as appropriate even for an insider.

Oprah Winfrey's skills at bringing the angst out of celebrities by playing the agony aunt may have helped smear British royalty and its stiff upper lip with hate while a more defensive UK might see the story of a second sensational interview by an ex-royal after Diana's expose on BBC in 1995 in a different perspective. His marriage may have helped liberate Harry from the trappings of power and privilege and the service Harry has rendered his family is to save it from racism though his flight to the US may be seen in the UK as pique since Archie was denied a princely role and a place in the queue to the crown.

The alacrity with which Buckingham Palace ordered an inquiry against Meghan on charges of bullying staff comes in sharp contrast to its reluctance to probe Prince Andrew's links to the convicted Jeffrey Epstein and his shenanigans with underage girls. This should give more grist to Republicans in Britain as well as the Commonwealth, which Queen Elizabeth II heads by virtue of her record years in the British throne. Diana and Meghan did the democratic world a favour in boldly exposing the underbelly of the royal family, which by itself is an anachronism in the modern age.

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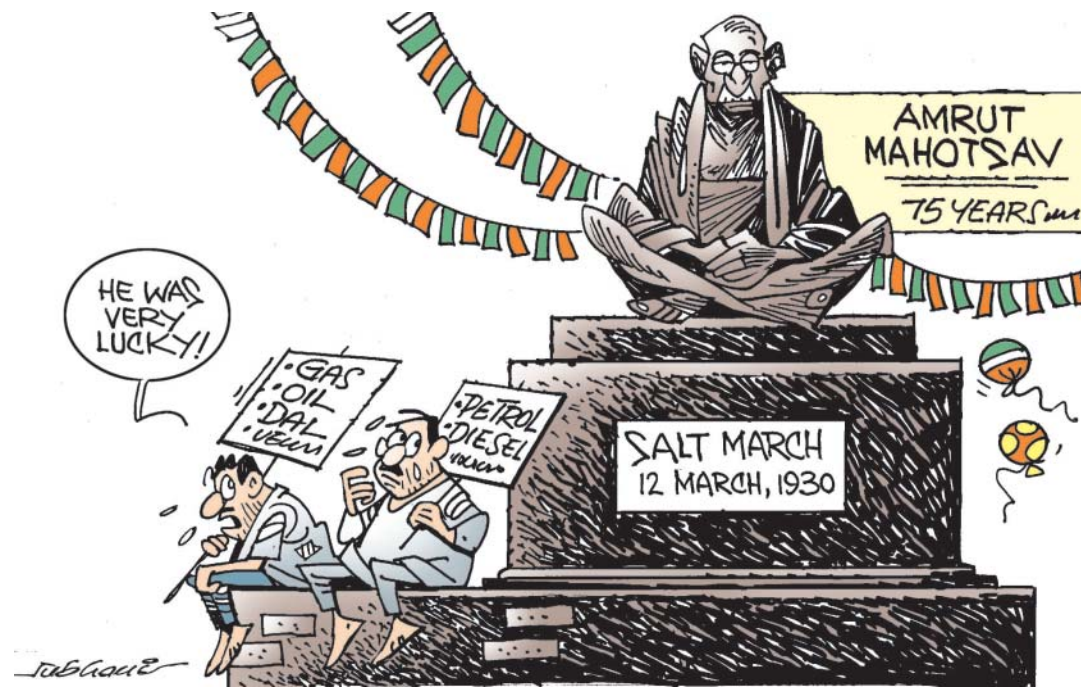
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Subhani



## Modi's pan-Indian image won't help BJP win polls



**Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr**

The focus of the Assembly elections in four states and a Union territory -starting at the end of this month and spread over the whole of April — in West Bengal and Assam in the east, and Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala in the south — has centred around West Bengal and the big question is whether the BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi will breach the final barrier, as it were, for the right-wing saffron party. It has turned out to be a battle between West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee of the Trinamul Congress and Prime Minister Modi of the BJP. As has become the norm with the Modi-centric BJP in the past seven years, the laurels for the victory always go to Mr Modi because the party is but a symbol for the most domineering politician in the country today. The reality, of course, is much more complicated and the magic factor of Mr Modi has huge limitations.

Though the party had won Assam in 2016 for the first time, the right-wing majoritarian sentiment in that state was well represented by the Congress and the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) from 1985 onwards. The breakthrough for the BJP in Assam in 2016 has nothing radical about it. Assam, however, poses its own set of challenges for the BJP this time round. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), with its vicious Hindutva slant, is a sore point in the state where Bangladeshi migrants — whether Hindu or Muslim — are the source of local resentment and discontent. The Hindutva rhetoric does not mean much here.

West Bengal remains the big prize in the east for the BJP. It has eluded the party with its majoritarian colours. The party considers this

election as the final push at the final frontier. That is why it has become much too loud and much too bitter. The CPI(M)-led Left Front and the Congress still remain marginal players. And the battle between Mr Modi and Ms Banerjee, despite the Prime Minister's pan-Indian standing, is reduced to a local tussle. If Ms Banerjee prevails, it will be a huge blow to Mr Modi. And the bets are hugely hedged in the matter.

In Tamil Nadu and in Kerala, the BJP is a small player. It is reconciled to play second fiddle to the ruling All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) in Tamil Nadu and confined to the 20 Assembly seats allotted to it. It would have to ride to victory on the back of the AIADMK because it has no presence of its own. The BJP cannot hope to give wings to its Hindutva ideology in the state because the Dravidian politics — (anti-Hindi and indirectly anti-North Indian variant of Hinduism represented by the BJP) and the Hindutva nationalism, again a North Indian concoction — does not pass muster. Even the Congress, with its benign pan-Indian outlook, has become a small player in Tamil Nadu and it has been given just 25 seats in these elections by the dominant regional Opposition party, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). After the death of the icons,

**The CAA, with its vicious Hindutva slant, is a sore point in Assam where Bangladeshi migrants, whether Hindu or Muslim, are the source of local resentment. The Hindutva rhetoric does not mean much here.**

**Unlike in West Bengal, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) led by the CPI(M) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) led by the Congress in Kerala leave no space for a new player with a north Indian ideology**

the DMK's Karunanidhi and the AIADMK's Jayalalithaa, it seemed the spell of Dravidian politics would end, and national parties like the Congress and new entrants like the BJP would become the big players. The seat allocation for the two national parties by the dominant regional parties is a clear indication that the local in terms of ideology outflanks the national in Tamil Nadu. Tamil and Dravidian nationalism are unlikely to fade away simply because the stars who represented them have died.

Unlike in West Bengal, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) led by the CPI(M) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) led by the Congress in Kerala leave no space for a new player with a north Indian ideology to break into the crowded political space in the country. Kerala is a complex mosaic of castes and communities, where the Nayers and Ezhavas on one hand, Christians and Muslims and the Communists jostle with each other. The Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh (RSS) has been fighting a fierce and bloody battle with the Marxists in parts of northern Kerala. Political violence is as rampant in Kerala as it is in West Bengal. The RSS and the Marxists have been hacking each other's cadres with ruthless regularity. The BJP has been trying to use the RSS' base to make headway, but it has not succeeded in any major way.

The dominant parties in all these poll-bound states are forced to reckon with the smaller political formations. In Assam, the BJP cannot afford to ignore the Bodos. When the Bodo People's Front broke away from the BJP-led

National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the BJP had to find place for the United People's Party Liberal, and the Congress has to accommodate the Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) and Rajgor Dal. India is infuriatingly diverse for hegemonic national parties like the BJP and the Congress.

The Assembly elections are a time for the rest of the country to know how each state has its own identity and politics and that it is not a referendum for the ruling party at the Centre. It is this entrenched democratic pluralism that checks the free run of parties such as the BJP with their regimented mindsets forged in RSS shakhas. The BJP is struggling to come to terms with the political diversity and pluralism of this country. The authoritarian populism as practised by Mr Modi and his second-in-command, Union home minister Amit Shah, serve only as a stumbling block in the Assembly elections, especially in places like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and to a great extent in West Bengal and Assam.

Even in Puducherry, after engineering defections from the ruling Congress, the BJP did not find it very easy to come to power. The right-wing party is learning the hard way that multitudinous India is a multipolar political field. And there is no option but to adapt to India's political multiverse. This is why the majoritarian tyranny of the BJP kind has to give way to rainbow coalitions. Assembly elections in India are always a lesson in democratic politics.

*The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst*

**The party is learning the hard way that multitudinous India is a multipolar political field. There is no option but to adapt to India's political multiverse. Majoritarianism has to give way to rainbow coalitions.**

#### LETTERS

##### METRO HAWKERS

The state government has a responsibility to help the unskilled persons/hawkers who are making their living by selling different types of items such as readymade garments, leather bags/goods, toys etc., under the Sultan Bazaar Metro flyover since decades. A rent of ₹4,500 per month with a security deposit of ₹9,000 to HMRL is too costly for them.

**Katuru Durga Prasad Rao**  
*Hyderabad*

##### GOOD INITIATIVE

I fully endorse the initiative on electric vehicles (*TS policy fuels boom in sale of electric vehicles, DC, March 9*). Such a measure will greatly help to scale down air pollution inter alia with other benefits. I was in China and observed electric vehicles were popular.

**Dr Shankar Chatterjee**  
*Hyderabad*

##### WOMEN'S DAY

At least on International Women's Day, women's wings of political parties could have given a break to politics and, instead of speaking for the party, could have joined to speak for all ordinary women who have nothing to do with parties. No wonder the women are unable to form a party only for women with men getting them less 25 per cent reservation in the party.

**N. Nagarajan**  
*Hyderabad*

##### CORRUPTION

Corruption has spread like a deadly virus among officials in government departments where 10 of them have been caught red-handed by the Anti-Corruption Bureau while accepting bribe. I hope that ACB will catch more big fish in near future. I wonder when a vaccine will be developed to wipe out corruption.

**D. Manoj Kumar**

## 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

### K Asif dead

BOMBAY, March. 9 Mr. K. Asif, a well-known film producer-director died of heart attack in Bombay this evening. He was 48. He is survived by his wife and two daughters.

Mr. Asif who went to film actor Sanjeev Kumar's residence this evening complained of chest pain and before he could removed to hospital he passed away.

Mr. Asif had produced and directed a number of pictures including 'Phool' and 'Moghal-E-Azam' which was a box office hit. 'Phool' was his first film with the biggest star cast.

**Dilip Cherian**  
**Dilli Ka Babu**



### Coalition karma takes babu to chief secy spot

A coalition alliance government creates its own special dynamics, which affects the bureaucracy uniquely. In Maharashtra, which has a three-party alliance, this was seen when the 1985-batch IAS officer Sitaram Kunte was named the state's new chief secretary. Sources say that Mr Kunte was ignored by the previous BJP government during whose tenure he was commissioner of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

His fortunes changed for the better in the Shiv Sena-led government of chief minister Uddhav Thackeray. However, while the chief minister and the Congress Party were said to be keen on his appointment, the National Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar was reportedly less than enthusiastic. Initially, However, Mr Kunte

managed to make it to the top post, although he snuffed the chance of his batchmate Praveen Pradesh, who was widely expected to be appointed to succeed Sanjay Kumar.

Mr Pradesh had even returned from the UN in the hope of becoming the new chief secretary. Mr Kunte's elevation has led to the appointment of M.K. Srivastava, a 1986-batch IAS officer, in his previous office of additional chief secretary for home.

#### MIND THE 'S' WORD

A communique issued by T.M. Yanthan, commissioner and secretary to Nagaland governor R.N. Ravi, to chief secretary J. Alam, has directed the state government to warn officials that they could face penal and disciplinary action if they post "seditious or subver-

sive content" on social media. Apparently, it had come to the notice of the governor's office that "some government servants are indulging in seditious and subversive writings challenging the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country" on social media platforms.

Sources say that a copy of Mr Yanthan's letter has been also marked to Union home secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla. This suggests, they say, that the governor has kept the Centre in the loop and may even have been directed by Delhi to take action against government officials posting seditious content.

Apparently, this is the second letter from the governor's office to the state chief secretary. Last year, he had directed the state government to prepare a database of state government employees' family mem-

bers and relatives who were in "underground organisations".

However, ominous though it may sound, some observers feel that Mr Ravi is merely reiterating the conduct rules for government servants and people should not read too much into this. Your thoughts?

#### TENURE ROW

Who has the authority to take a call on the posting of officers of the director-general of police rank in Haryana? This has become a point of contention between Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar and his home minister Anil Vij. The officer at the centre of it all is DGP Manoj Yadava, a 1988-batch IPS officer, reportedly hand-picked by Mr Khattar for the post.

It appears that Mr Vij wants a change of DGP despite Mr Yadava having over four years of service

left. The minister recently directed additional chief secretary (home) Rajeev Arora to send a panel of officers to the UPSC to be considered for the next DGP. According to sources, once the minimum tenure of two years ends, the state government has the option of deciding to continue with the current DGP or replace the officer. In the present case, the government has extended Mr Yadava's tenure beyond February until further orders.

Sources say that Mr Khattar is unlikely to seek a replacement for Mr Yadava, who has done a long 15-year stint at the Intelligence Bureau (IB) before returning to his parent cadre. But Mr Vij, say sources, is sticking to his stance.

*Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.*



IN BRIEF

Al-Badr chief killed in gunfight

**Srinagar:** J&K police on Tuesday claimed that Al-Badr militant outfit chief Gani Khawaja has been killed in a gunfight raging in Tujar Sharif area outside the Valley's northwestern town of Sopore. Inspector general of police Vijay Kumar said Khawaja was one of the most wanted militants and termed his killing as "a major success" for the security forces combating a three-year-old insurgency in J&K. A report from Sopore said that, at least, two militants were trapped in the area after a joint team of security forces laid siege to it on Tuesday evening. Kumar was quoted by local news agency GNS as saying the operation was "carried cleanly on a very specific input which was received by the police earlier during the day."

Hiren's wife blames Vaze

**Mumbai:** The wife of Mansukh Hiren, the owner of the vehicle found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence, has alleged that her husband was murdered by assistant police inspector Sachin Vaze. In her complaint, she also said that the vehicle in question was also in possession of Vaze since November 2020. Hiran's wife Vimla also claimed in her statement, copy of which is with this newspaper, that her husband told her that Vaze had asked him to get himself arrested and he would ensure his bail in a few days. The officer had resigned from the police force in 2007 and joined Shiv Sena in 2008. He was reinstated in the police department on June 6 last year.

GOYAL REBUTS DIDI'S CLAIM OF NO RAILWAY HELP

DC CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA, MARCH 9

Railway minister Piyush Goyal has refuted West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's allegation of non-cooperation by his ministry officials to the fire brigade in fighting the devastating fire which claimed nine lives at the Eastern Railways' office in New Koilaghat Building on Strand Road in Kolkata on Monday evening. Four fire-fighters Girish Dey, Gaurav Bej, Aniruddha Jana, Biman Purakait, four railway staff RPF Constable Sanjay Sahni, deputy chief commercial manager Partha Sarathi Mondal, senior commercial clerk Shrawan Pandey and senior technician Sudip Das and an assistant sub-inspector (ASI) Amit Bhawal of the Kolkata Police boarded two lifts against the rule to reach the source of fire at the 13th floor of the high-rise. Seven of them were charred to death in one elevator while two others died of suffocation inside another. Visiting the spot Banerjee accused "the railways of non-cooperation by not providing the building map to the fire brigade." Early on Tuesday Goyal, mourning the loss of lives, tweeted, "Railway officials including the GM are at the site and are working in coordination with the state govt for rescue and relief efforts. We are committed to doing everything possible to ensure safety of all concerned. All possible assistance has been provided by the Railways to the state govt during this unfortunate fire accident. A high level inquiry consisting of four Principal heads of Railway departments has been ordered to ascertain the cause of the fire." The inquiry report is expected in two weeks.



Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal along with BJP supporters arrives to file his nomination for the upcoming state Assembly elections in Majuli on Tuesday.

Didi warns BJP not to play Hindutva card in Bengal

Asks voters to make 'April Fool' of saffron party by defeating Adhikari

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, MARCH 9

Warning the BJP not to play its Hindutva card against her in the West Bengal Assembly elections, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who is contesting from Nandigram in East Midnapore, on Tuesday asked the voters of the hot seat, going to the polls on April 1, to make an "April Fool" of the saffron party by defeating her nemesis Suwendu Adhikari. At her first rally in Nandigram after the announcement of the Assembly polls and the candidates' lists of the TMC and BJP, Banerjee told the crowd, "Those who are playing the politics of Hindu-Muslim should know that I am also a daughter of a Hindu family. Do not try to play the Hindu card against me. If you do, explain first whether you are a good Hindu or not. The second phase of the polls, which includes Nandigram among many seats, is on April 1. She said, "Khela Hobe (Game On). Make 'April Fool' of them by your votes on that day." Tearing into her opponent and former Cabinet colleague for branding her as an "outsider" in his home turf, the CM, who has coined the same slogan against the BJP, wondered, "Some people are calling me an outsider! I am from Bengal. How can I be an outsider? The only difference is my native place is Birbhum while yours (Suwendu) is Nandigram. Had I been an out-

Poll seizures: Assam breaks all records, items worth ₹18 cr seized

**Guwahati, March 9:** Assam broke all previous records in seizures of cash, liquor, drugs and other goods in the run-up to the Assembly polls with various agencies already confiscating over ₹18 crore worth of items and arresting around 110 people in the last 11 days, officials said on Tuesday. The highest amount of seizures worth over ₹5.72 crore took place during the 24 hours, starting 9 am on Sunday, an official said. After the polls were

notified on February 26, all constituencies in Assam formed a minimum of three Static Surveillance Teams (SST) and Flying Squads (FS) each, with some even having six such teams each, he added. "We have a minimum of 756 teams working across the state. The seizures by all state and central agencies along with SST and FS have crossed all figures of last elections," the official said. Since the Model Code of

Conduct came into force, the agencies have seized an overall ₹18.31 crore worth of items till Monday, according to the daily seizure report of the Election Department, Assam. It includes ₹4.27 crore in cash, liquor (3.58 lakh litres) worth ₹5.52 crore, ₹4 crore worth drugs and other narcotics substances, ₹1 crore worth precious metals such as gold and silver, and ₹3.52 crore of other items like different freebies. — PTI



PRAFULLA MAHANTA NOT TO CONTEST POLLS

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, MARCH 9

In what has surprised many political observers, veteran AGP leader and two-time chief minister of Assam Prafulla Mahanta, has decided not to take part in the ongoing state Assembly election. Mahanta, who was denied the party ticket from Barhampur from where he won for six consecutive terms, said he was "hurt because of the party's weak stand in defending regionalism, a cause that formed the very basis of AGP." According to the seat-sharing agreement between AGP and BJP, the Barhampur seat has gone to the saffron party which has fielded Jitu Goswami as its candidate. Mahanta's decision of not contesting elections this time was conveyed by his wife and former Rajya Sabha member Joyshree Goswami Mahanta. The agreement, worded in English and have signatures of three witnesses, drew flak from many on social media as the general practice in the state is to have such deals written in Tamil with just the number of seats allotted for the parties mentioned in it. But the MoU of Haasan spoke about objects and goals. It said that parties join together to bring in change in Tamil Nadu.

Kamal's MNM signs 'MoU' with allies

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, MARCH 9

Actor Kamal Haasan's Makkal Neethi Maaim, which has been scouting for allies to face the April 6 Assembly elections as a combine, finally decided on an alliance with the Indhiya Jananayaga Katchi of T.R. Parivendhar and All India Samathuva Makkal Katchi, founded by actor Sarathkumar. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by leaders of the three parties, more in the form of a business deal,

said that MNM would take a lion's share of 154 seats, while the IJK and AISMK will get 40 seats each. The agreement, worded in English and have signatures of three witnesses, drew flak from many on social media as the general practice in the state is to have such deals written in Tamil with just the number of seats allotted for the parties mentioned in it. But the MoU of Haasan spoke about objects and goals. It said that parties join together to bring in change in Tamil Nadu.

DMK wraps up alliance with coalition partners

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, MARCH 9

The DMK wrapped up its alliances with the various coalition partners on Tuesday by allotting three seats to the Kongunadu Makkal Desiya Katchi, led by E.R. Easwaran, whose candidates would be contesting the April 6 polls in the 'rising sun' symbol.

Party leaders were busy finalising the seat allotment, a laborious exercise since some of the constituencies are sought by more than one ally, with other party honchos too visiting Anna Arivalayam for the negotiations. Though it might take a few more days for the seat allotment to be finalised, the DMK might announce its first list of candidates and constituencies on

Wednesday, it was rumoured. Meanwhile, two small parties that were earlier in the AIADMK alliance, the Mukulathor Pulai Padai led by actor Karunas and Manithaneya Jananayaga Katchi of Tamimur Ansari, expressed their displeasure over the DMK not offering them any seats. The two parties had given letters expressing support to the DMK-

led front after breaking away from the AIADMK coalition on the hope that the DMK would at least offer one seat each to the two leaders. While rumours started floating that the two parties had withdrawn their letters of support given to the DMK as they felt neglected by the DMK, Tamimur Ansari denied it. Another Muslim party, Indian National League,

whose emergent State executive met in Chennai on Tuesday, also decided to extend support to the DMK-led front. It accused the AIADMK government of being subservient to the BJP at the Centre. Meanwhile, DMK MP S. Jagthrakshan, who is in charge of Puducherry, came out with a statement denying speculations on his switching over to the BJP.

Scindia 'dismisses' Rahul's CM offer

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, MARCH 9

Rahul Gandhi's offer of post of chief minister of Madhya Pradesh to senior BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia if he returned to Congress on Tuesday kicked up a storm with the latter calling it a misplaced concern. "I wish Rahul ji had shown similar concerns when I was in Congress", Scindia, who quit Congress and joined BJP in March last leading to fall of 15-month-old Kamal Nath government, retorted while seeking to dismiss Gandhi's offer as misplaced concern. Scindia said he would not like to comment further. Gandhi had recently told youth wing leaders of Congress that had Scindia remained in the party, he would have certainly become chief minister (of MP). Scindia was now a 'backbencher' in the BJP. "Scindia will be chief minister only when he is in Congress", the former Congress president said. Scindia's supporters here called Gandhi's statement as 'immature'. "Gandhi is known for making immature statements. He is not taken seriously by people and his credibility in public is at the rock bottom. He has now been left with three options to restore his credibility by making Sachin Pilot, chief

minister of Rajasthan, T.S. Singhdeo, chief minister of Chhattisgarh and Navjot Singh, chief minister of Punjab, as he had promised them earlier", Scindia loyalist Pankaj Chaturvedi who quit Congress and joined BJP in March last, told this newspaper. Gandhi's remarks on Scindia have raised eyebrows in Congress circle here also with a section of party leaders wondering if he was throwing a bait to make Scindia chief minister) to woo him back to the Congress fold. "Gandhi's statement creates an impression that something is cooking up between Scindia and Congress. But, I think it is an immature statement and may cause damage to the party in Madhya Pradesh. This may alert and antagonise two key leaders of Congress in MP, Kamal Nath and Digvijay Singh, both of whom are considered arch rivals of Scindia", a senior Congress leader here said requesting not to be quoted. Interestingly, Congress MLA and former Union minister Kantilal Bhuria, considered a staunch loyalist of Singh, said Scindia would be taken back into Congress if he apologised in public for quitting the party. "Bhuria's statement is nothing but a joke since the question of Scindia returning to Congress does not arise", Chaturvedi said.

SIT probe into Delkar's suicide

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, MARCH 9

As the BJP cornered the Maha Vikas Aghadi government over Mukesh Hiren death case, the state government announced investigations into the alleged suicide of Dadra and Nagar Haveli MP Mohan Delkar and 2018 suicide case of interior designer Anvay Naik. Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh said that former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis has suppressed the investigation into Naik's suicide, while Delkar's suicide note mentioned administrator of the Union Territory Praful Kheda Patel, who was earlier a minister in the Narendra Modi-led cabinet in Gujarat," he added. Mr Deshmukh said Delkar's suicide note mentions that he was getting threats from Patel that he will be "finished off" from social life. "Delkar's wife and son have also written to me voicing the same concerns," he said. Delkar had also stated that he was ending life in Mumbai as he had faith in Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and the Maharashtra Government, Mr Deshmukh added. Mr Delkar, a seven-term Lok Sabha member from Dadra and Nagar Haveli, was found dead in a Mumbai hotel on February 22.

demanding arrest of Mr Vaze, Shiv Sena minister Anil Parab demanded investigation into Delkar's suicide. Soon after making a statement in the House, state home minister Anil Deshmukh said, "Mohan Delkar suicide case will be investigated by SIT. Maharashtra government will form an SIT for investigation." "In his suicide note, Delkar has said he was being harassed and was under pressure from Praful Kheda Patel who is the administrator of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and also was earlier a minister in the Narendra Modi-led cabinet in Gujarat," he added. Mr Deshmukh said Delkar's suicide note mentions that he was getting threats from Patel that he will be "finished off" from social life. "Delkar's wife and son have also written to me voicing the same concerns," he said. Delkar had also stated that he was ending life in Mumbai as he had faith in Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and the Maharashtra Government, Mr Deshmukh added. Mr Delkar, a seven-term Lok Sabha member from Dadra and Nagar Haveli, was found dead in a Mumbai hotel on February 22.

MIN. INDICATES CLOSURE OF NIGHT CLUBS IN MUMBAI

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, MARCH 9

In view of the Covid-19 cases in Mumbai, minister Aslam Shaikh on Tuesday hinted that night clubs might be shut if the cases continued to rise. However, the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai said there was no proposal for partial or full lockdown, or closure of night clubs as of now. Speaking with reporters in Vidhan Bhavan, the minister said that many districts of Maharashtra have witnessed the increase in Covid cases. "Mumbai has been witnessing a surge in the number of cases. So there is a possibility of imposition of lockdown. We may have to shut places like beaches and Gateway of India where people gather in the evenings for no reason." He also said that people need to take precautions in order to contain the spread of the virus. "The CM has already held a meeting regarding this. All municipal commissioners and district collectors have been instructed by him that they should take a decision," he said.

GANGSTER'S CUSTODY EXTENDED

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, MARCH 9

A special court in Mumbai on Tuesday extended the police remand of gangster Ravi Pujari till March 15 after the accused told the court he wanted to share certain information with the investigation officer. Pujari, who was extradited to India from Senegal in West Africa in February last year was in a jail in Bangalore. The Mumbai police took his custody in a 2016 firing case and brought him to Mumbai on February 22. Upon production before a special Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) court the judge had remanded him to police custody till March 9. When he was produced before the court again on Tuesday upon completion of his custody the police sought his further custody.

BILATERAL TIES New Delhi advises British MPs to refrain from practising vote bank politics

India fumes as UK House discusses farmers' stir

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

In a stinging rebuke against the recent discussion in the British Parliament on the ongoing farmers' protests, India on Tuesday summoned and issued a demarche to British High Commissioner Alex Ellis to "strongly oppose the unwarranted and tendentious discussion on agricultural reforms in India in the British Parliament" on Monday on the grounds that "this repre-

sented a gross interference in the politics of another democratic country". In a message dripping with sarcasm, New Delhi also "advised British MPs to refrain from practising vote bank politics by misrepresenting events". This is the second Western nation to which a demarche has been issued by India in the past three months on the farmers' stir. In December last, India had similarly summoned the Canadian High Commissioner in New Delhi and had issued a demarche to Can-

ada for its "unacceptable interference" in India's internal affairs in response to recent comments made then by some senior politicians there including Canadian PM Justin Trudeau on the farmers' protests in some states in India. New Delhi had also warned Canada then that "such actions, if continued, would have a seriously damaging impact" on bilateral ties. In a statement on Tuesday, New Delhi said, "Foreign Secretary (Harsh Vardhan Shringla) summoned the British High Commissioner

(Alex Ellis) and conveyed strong opposition to the unwarranted and tendentious discussion on agricultural reforms in India in the British Parliament. The Foreign Secretary made clear that this represented a gross interference in the politics of another democratic country. He advised that British MPs should refrain from practising vote bank politics by misrepresenting events, especially in relation to another fellow democracy." Just last week, the British High Commissioner had te-

rmed the farmers' protests against the recently-enacted three Indian farm laws as an "internal issue of India", even as New Delhi had said last week that Indian diplomats in the UK are apprising the British Government as well as Members of Parliament and members of the civil society there about the concerned three farm Bills and also about the Indian government's efforts to resolve the issue in talks with farmers. "This is an internal issue of India. We look at it. That is for India to resolve," the

British High Commissioner had told reporters last Friday, in reference to the ongoing protests by farmers predominantly from some of the northern Indian states. "Things that happen in India have ripples in the UK," Ellis said, in an obvious reference to the large Indian-origin community and diaspora in the UK. He had also referred to a remark made by British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab in India in December last year that "your (Indian) politics are our (British) politics".





SHORT TAKES

BIDEN BOOST  
TO OFFSHORE  
WIND

Washington, March 9: A huge wind farm off the Massachusetts coast is edging closer to federal approval, setting up what the Biden administration hopes will be a model for a sharp increase in offshore wind energy development. The Vineyard Wind project, south of Martha's Vineyard near Cape Cod, would create 800 megawatts of electricity, enough to power 400,000 homes in New England. If approved, the \$2 billion project would be the first utility-scale wind power.

EVACUATION  
S AFTER  
HEAVY RAINS

Honolulu, March 9: Heavy rains have breached a dam on the Hawaiian island of Maui, and nearby residents in the community of Haiku are being evacuated, county officials said Monday. The National Weather Service reported 13.2 inches (33.5 centimetres) of rain fell in the Haiku area of Maui's North Coast between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. "Resources are being pushed into this area right now," Maui County Mayor Michael Victorino said during a live address on Facebook.

PHILIPPINE  
COPS, MAYOR  
KILLED

Manila, March 9: Police killed a central Philippine city mayor and two of his aides, while two of the police officers were killed in the latest deadly violence, officials said Tuesday. "I can only assume that this was a mistaken encounter," Brig. Gen. Ronaldo de Jesus, a regional police commander, said. The police were on routine patrol when they were fired upon Monday afternoon by security aides of Catbalogan City Mayor Ronaldo Aquino.

Protesters  
defy curfew  
in Myanmar

Military curbs media coverage

Yangon, March 9: Demonstrators in Myanmar's biggest city came out Monday night for their first mass protests in defiance of an 8 pm curfew, seeking to show support for an estimated 200 students trapped by security forces in a small area of one neighbourhood. The students and other civilians earlier took part in one of the many daily protests across the country against the military's seizure of power last month that ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. The military government also placed a major curb on media coverage of the crisis.

It announced that the licences of five local media outlets — Mizzima, DVB, Khit Thit Media, Myanmar Now and 7Day News — have been cancelled. "These media companies are no longer allowed to broadcast or write or give information by using any kind of media platform or using any media technology," it said on state broadcaster MRTV.

All five had been offering extensive coverage of the protests, often with live streaming video online. The offices of Myanmar Now were raided by the authorities Monday before the measure was announced. The government has detained dozens of journalists since the coup, including a Myanmar Now reporter and Thein Zaw of The Associated Press, both of whom have been charged under a public order law that carried a penalty of up to three years in prison. The night's street protests began after police cordoned off part of Yangon's Sanchaung neighbourhood and were believed to be conducting door-to-door searches for those who fled attacks by security forces to seek shelter in the homes of sympathetic strangers. News of their plight spread quickly on social media, and people poured into the streets in neighborhoods all over the city to show solidarity and in hopes of drawing some of the pressure off the hunted protesters.

On some streets, they con-

structed makeshift barricades with whatever was at hand. In the Insein district, they spread across road junctions, singing songs, chanting pro-democracy slogans and banging objects together. The diplomatic missions of the United States, Britain, Canada and the European Union all issued statements urging the security forces to allow the trapped people to return safely to their homes.

Although all have been sharply critical of the Feb. 1 coup and police violence, it is unusual for such diplomatic statements to be issued in connection with a specific, ongoing incident. "There is heightened tension caused by security forces surrounding Kyun Taw Road in Sanchaung Township, Yangon. We call on those security forces to withdraw and allow people to go home safely," said the US Embassy's statement. By midnight Myanmar time, there had been no reports of clashes between police and protesters, although security forces chased crowds, harassed residents watching from windows, and fired stun grenades.

They also were some reports of injuries from rubber bullets.

The nighttime hours have become increasingly dangerous in Myanmar. Police and army units routinely range through neighborhoods, shooting randomly to intimidate residents and disrupt their sleep, and making targeted arrests.

Security forces shot and killed two people in northern Myanmar during the day, local media reported. The Irrawaddy online newspaper said the victims were shot in the head during anti-coup protests in Myitkyina in Kachin State.

Graphic video on social media showed protesters backing away from tear gas, responding with rocks and then fleeing after a fusillade of what seemed to be automatic gunfire. Demonstrators hurriedly carried away the injured, including one apparent fatality, a person with a severe head wound.

— AP

CDC: Vaccinated can meet without masks

New York, March 9: Fully vaccinated Americans can gather with other vaccinated people indoors without wearing a mask or social distancing, according to

long-awaited guidance from federal health officials. The recommendations also say that vaccinated people can come together

in the same way such as in the case of vaccinated grandparents visiting healthy children and grandchildren. The guidance is designed to address

a growing demand, as more adults have been getting vaccinated and wondering if it gives them freedom to visit family members, travel, or do other things like

they did before the Covid-19 swept the world last year. "With more and more people vaccinated each day, we are starting to turn a corner," said. — AP



E. Guinea explosives  
death toll rises to 98

Dakar, March 9: The death toll from a series of explosions at a military barracks in Equatorial Guinea rose by dozens to at least 98 killed after more bodies were recovered.

The blasts on Sunday in the Mondong Nkuantoma neighbourhood of the coastal city of Bata also wounded at least 615 people, authorities said. The government said that 316 of the injured have been discharged and 299 remain in care in various hospitals in the city.

More than 60 peo-

ple were also rescued from under the rubble by the civil protection corps and fire service, the government said. President Teodoro Obiang Nguema said the government will hold an emergency meeting to look into how victims can quickly receive aid from Equatorial Guinea before international aid arrives.

Investigations into the blast have begun, he said in a Tuesday statement. The president initially the explosion was due to the "negligent handling

of dynamite" in the military barracks and the impact damaged almost all the homes and buildings in Bata. The vice president, who is also charged with defence and security, Teodoro Obiang Nguema said that investigations so far showed the fire may have begun when a farmer set fire to his plot to prepare it for food production and a breeze spread the flames to the nearby barracks where the high-caliber ammunition was stored.

— AP

Thai PM sprays scribes  
with disinfectant

Bangkok, March 9: Politicians are often accused of sanitizing the news. On Tuesday,

Thailand's prime minister sanitized members of the press. After fielding a slew of questions from journalists at his weekly news conference in Bangkok, the famously mercurial Prayuth Chan-ocha sprayed back — with disinfectant.

Riled by a final question about a possible Cabinet



Prayuth Chan-ocha

reshuffle, he told reporters to mind their own business, then grabbed a container of alcohol mist and doused the front row before sauntering off.

The quick-tempered former army command-

er, who overthrew the elected government in a 2014 coup, is known for his unpredictable behaviour.

In the past, he's spoken to a media scrum while fondling the ear of one of the reporters and flung a banana peel at camera operators. After an event in 2018 he declined to speak to the media, and instead set up a life-size cutout of himself. "Ask this guy," he said and walked away.

— AP





## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	51,025.48	1.16
Nifty 50	15,098.40	0.95
S&P 500*	3,891.38	1.83
Dollar (₹)	72.92	0.46
Pound Sterling (₹)	101.35	-0.03
Euro (₹)	86.84	0.13
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	43,996.35	0.07
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	67.77	-0.69
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.206	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.544	-0.050

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

## E-invoice must for biz with over ₹50 cr turnover

The Centre has made it mandatory for businesses with over Rs 50 crore turnover to generate e-invoices for B2B transactions from April 1. Under GST law, e-invoicing for B2B transactions has been made mandatory for companies with turnover of over Rs 500 crore and Rs 100 crore from October 1, 2020, and January 1, 2021. E-invoicing will be extended to companies with turnover over Rs 50 crore from April 1, the CBIC said.

## GST fraud of over ₹20,100 cr found in Nov.-Jan.: FM



The government has detected GST fraud of Rs 20,124 crore between November 9, 2020 and January 31, 2021, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said. A special drive against unscrupulous entities for availing and passing on input tax credit (ITC) fraudulently on the strength of fake/bogus invoices is being carried out, she said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha. She said 2,692 cases were booked by the officers.

## Anugrah Stock fined ₹90 lakh for fund abuse

The Sebi slapped a fine of Rs 90 lakh on Anugrah Stock and Broking Pvt Ltd for violations of norms. The order follows a joint investigation carried out by Sebi, BSE, NSE and CDSL between April 2017 and Sept. 2018. "It is established that the notice failed to segregate client's funds inter-se and/or between clients' funds and its own funds, misutilised the funds of clients, pledged the securities of clients... Sebi said.

## Nd for setting up plastic parks in two states

The Centre has given 'in-principle' approval for establishing two new plastic parks in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, chemicals and fertilisers minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda said in Parliament. Gowda, in his written reply to the Lok Sabha, said the Centre had received requests from seven states—Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, UP, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh and Goa—for setting up new plastic parks.



## Firms keen on hiring apprentices Worst-hit sectors back in job mkt

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MARCH 9

Some of the worst pandemic-hit sectors have re-entered the job market this year, but with a tight fist. Travel & hospitality and beauty & wellness, which were battered by the lockdowns and subsequent travel restrictions, are back in the job market with intentions to hire apprentices.

With companies focusing on cost optimisation, large-scale apprenticeship has become the new trend in the post-pandemic job market. Out of the 18 sectors reviewed by Teamlease Services for its Apprenticeship Outlook Report for January to June 2021, more than 16 were keen on hiring apprentices. This is because apprentices are paid stipends, and not wages as in case of regular employees, and usually stipends are far less than regular wages.

While manufacturing, automobiles and ancillaries and retail are the leaders in hiring apprentices, more services sectors are now taking baby steps in the job market.

The hiring intents of travel & hospitality and beauty & wellness were at 10 per cent and 5 per cent, respectively, in the previous half-year between July and December 2020. They have now made a remarkable turnaround with a growth of 34 per cent and 31 per cent, respectively. "What is very interesting to note is the current pro-



jections, which not only indicates an overall increase in hiring, but the fact that sectors like travel and hospitality as well as beauty and wellness which were adversely hit by the pandemic, are now showing aggressive turnaround in their apprenticeship hiring sentiments," said Sumit Kumar, vice president-NETAP, TeamLease Skill University.

However, the hospitality industry is not in full agreement with the survey, dismissing it as a city-specific trend. "It is not a general trend. The hospitality sector is far from a significant recovery and that will happen when international travel and MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) segments pick up. But companies in places which have reported lesser pandemic cases and increased flow of domestic travellers could be hiring apprentices. With limited revenue and high operational cost, hospitality companies are looking at ways for cost optimisation by avoiding tradition-

al HR practices and going for apprentices," said Jaison Chacko, secretary general of the Federation of Hotels and Restaurants Association of India. According to the Teamlease report, around 41 per cent of the employers are keen on hiring apprenticeships in the January-June period, 8 per cent higher compared to the previous half year. There is buoyancy towards the concept of apprenticeship and more than 58 per cent of the companies reviewed were keen on increasing their apprenticeship hiring. More employers are realising the merit of the apprenticeship model to build a robust pipeline of employable talent, it said. "In fact, from 2018, to now, we have seen a 2.5 per cent annual growth in employers, who are willing to increase their apprentice intake. This positive momentum has happened despite the dip in the labour market during the Covid-19 lockdown," said Kumar.

## MUTUAL FUND AUM HITS ₹32.3 L CR DESPITE ₹10K CR EQUITY OUTFLOW

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MARCH 9

The asset under management (AUM) of the mutual fund industry touched a new all-time high of over Rs 32.29 lakh crore in February on continued bull run in the equity market post-budget and the return of investors to hybrid funds and ETFs amid divergent trends.

Data released by the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) shows despite higher outflow of Rs 10,468 crore (Rs 9,253 crore in January) from pure equity funds for the eighth month in a row and debt fund inflow of a mere Rs 1,734 crore, mark-to-market gains in equity-oriented funds and inflows from systematic investment plans (SIPs) helped the average AUM for February to rise to Rs 32.29 lakh crore.

Hybrid funds and exchange traded funds, including gold ETFs, saw inflows worth Rs 4,702 crore and Rs 3,898 crore, respectively.

N. S. Venkatesh, chief executive, Amfi said: "SIP AUMs as also retail equity folios, are at an all-time high at Rs 4.21 lakh crore and 8.07 crore, respectively, reflective of continued disciplined approach adopted by the retail mutual fund investors."

However, the monthly SIP contribution for February 2021 has come down by Rs 495 crore (to Rs 7,528.14 crore) owing to less number of working days in February and the shortfall would get accumulated and reflected in March 2021 monthly data, the Amfi chief executive said.

## Life insurers report strong growth in Feb.

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, MARCH 9

A recovery in the demand for unit-linked insurance plans (ULIPs), led by a rally in the capital markets, and a strong demand for non-participating savings product helped private life insurance companies clock strong 23 per cent year-on-year (YoY) growth in individual new sales in February 2021, higher than 7 per cent YoY growth in January.

The industry posted a 17.8 per cent YoY growth and LIC grew at 9.4 per cent YoY in February compared to a decline of 45 per cent in the public sector behemoth's business in January 2021. For April 2020 till February 2021, private players' individual new business fell 1.6 per cent YoY to Rs 3.72 lakh crore. The same for the industry fell 7.5 per cent to Rs 6.34 lakh crore.

Private players market share on individual weighted received premium (WRP) basis (an



international formula that takes into account 10 per cent of single premium but gives 100 per cent weightage to regular premium) improved 270 basis points month-on-month to 64 per cent in February 21 versus 62 per cent in January 2021. LIC's market share stood at 40 per cent in FY21 YTD. During FY21 YTD, SBI Life (14 per cent) remained the largest private insurer in terms of Individual WRP, followed by HDFC Life (9.5 per cent), and ICICI Prudential Life at 7.2 per cent.

Among listed players, SBI Life Insurance posted a strong rebound of 53

per cent YoY growth in February after showing muted trends for many months. ICICI Prudential Life too posted a growth of 6.3 per cent after reporting a consecutive decline for the past 13 months. The resilient performance continued at Max Life up at 32 per cent YoY. However, the growth momentum in HDFC Life slowed, up 16 per cent YoY versus 24 per cent in January 2021.

"We expect premium growth to rebound over FY22 after seeing tepid trends, with ULIPs showing a revival. Players continue to focus strongly on non-participating traditional plans and protection segment," said Motilal Oswal Institutional Equities in a report.

Mid-sized players reported strong growth, with Bajaj Allianz/Kotak Life reporting a growth of 43 per cent/29 per cent. Birla Sun Life grew around 13 per cent.

## Foreign investment is good for women

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MARCH 9

Foreign investment is good not just for the economy but for women as well. Foreign direct investment (FDI) and the operations of multi-national enterprises (MNEs) tend to have a positive influence on the economic well being of women.

According to a UN study involving India and Bangladesh, increased FDI and operations of MNEs are associated with higher employment of women and positive social improvements in India. MNEs influence gender equality in host countries directly through employment practices and indirectly through spillovers in local labour markets. On an average across developing countries, foreign affiliates employ about 5 percentage points more female administrative workers than domestic firms. This is true even after controlling for firm size, location and industry type. The same holds in India, where FDI improves gender outcomes in terms of employment. This result is confirmed from both the household- and firm-level panel data.

In India, increased FDI is associated with higher employment of women, particularly unskilled women. In addition to the positive impacts of foreign investment on female employment, research has shown important positive social improvements for women in terms of reductions in crime and delayed marriage and childbearing with the expansion of foreign investment.

Increased FDI decreases the probability that a woman is married or has children at age 20. This supports the argument that FDI can impact not only female employment but also women's family life decisions. The Geneva-based body studied the situation in



Bangladesh and India to understand this phenomenon. In the Bangladeshi textile and garment industry, firms with FDI hire significantly more female administrative workers and production workers than domestic firms. This is true even after controlling for firm size, location and industry type. The same holds in India, where FDI improves gender outcomes in terms of employment. This result is confirmed from both the household- and firm-level panel data.

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## 6,000 compliance norms identified for pruning

New Delhi, March 9: As many as 6,000 compliance norms have been identified so far at state and central level and the work is going on to reduce these barriers to further promote ease of doing business for the industry, a top official said on Tuesday.

Secretary in the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Gurusprasad Mohapatra said that a systematic exercise across Centre and states is being undertaken to eliminate or reduce compliances, which have an adverse impact on time and cost of businesses.

The exercise is divided into two phases—March 31 and August 15, 2021.

In phase 1, work is underway for reducing regulatory burden across six areas, including renewal of licences; inspections to be assigned randomly; returns/ filings to be standardised and digitisation and simplification of all manual records or procedures.

In the second phase, the focus is on four areas, including decriminalisa-

tion of regulations; identity and repeal archaic laws and rules; and intensive use of new-age digital technologies.

Mohapatra said that as per data, maximum compliance burdens are in five ministries—commerce and industry; finance; health; corporate affairs; and mines. Of the 6,000 burdens, 1,500-2,000 are at the central level and the remaining at state level.

He also said that to promote investments, the government is working on creation of single-window system for approvals and clearances.

By April 15 this year, the system is expected for launch with 14 states.

The single-window system portal will integrate the existing clearance systems of various central and state departments.

When asked whether the government is clearing pending FDI proposals from countries which are sharing land border with India, he said the government has not banned or prohibited investments from those nations. —PTI

## AIR INDIA EMPLOYEES BID DISQUALIFIED



RAGINI SAXENA MARCH 9

A group of Air India employees has been ruled out of a bidding process to take control of the loss-making national carrier, as the government moves ahead with its years-long attempt to offload the airline.

"I write to you with a heavy heart on the outcome of our bid to acquire Air India," the airline's commercial director Meenakshi Malik wrote in a letter to employees dated March 8. "We have been unsuccessful in qualifying to the next phase of the 'Disinvestment Acquisition process'."

Citing a letter from EY (earlier Ernst & Young), which is advising the government on the sale, Malik said the group didn't meet eligibility requirements. They include submitting three years of audited financial statements for foreign consortium members and being an appropriately regulated foreign investment fund. The group of employees partnered with a Seychelles-based fund for the bid.

Tata Sons Ltd, the holding company of the conglomerate that owns an 84 per cent stake in AirAsia India, is among the remaining bidders.

SpiceJet Ltd promoter Ajay Singh and two other investors have also shown an interest in acquiring Air India, a media report said last month. Singh is seeking a 100 per cent stake with support from investors, including a foreign fund, according to the report.

Debt-ridden Air India has been up for sale since 2017. The government extended a bid deadline last year.

—Bloomberg

## JUNKING | JUST-IN-TIME Suppliers require to stockpile chips for two-six months

## How Toyota thrives when chips are down

NORHIKO SHIROUZU MARCH 9

Toyota may have pioneered the just-in-time manufacturing strategy but when it comes to chips, its decision to stockpile what have become key components in cars goes back a decade to the Fukushima disaster.

After the catastrophe severed Toyota's supply chains on March 11, 2011, the world's biggest automaker realised the lead-time for semiconductors was way too long to cope with devastating shocks such as natural disasters.

That's why Toyota came up with a business continuity plan (BCP) that required suppliers to stockpile anywhere from

two to six months' worth of chips for the Japanese carmaker, depending on the time it takes from order to delivery, four sources said.

And that's why Toyota has so far been largely unscathed by a global shortage of semiconductors following a surge in demand for electrical goods under coronavirus lockdowns that has forced many rival automakers to suspend production, the sources said.

"Toyota was, as far as we can tell, the only automaker properly equipped to deal with chip shortages," said a person familiar with Harman International, which specialises in car audio systems, displays and driver assistance technology.



Two of the sources who spoke to Reuters are Toyota engineers and the others are at companies involved in the chip business.

Toyota surprised rivals and investors last month when it said its output would not be disrupted significantly by chip shortages even as Volkswagen, General Motors, Ford, Honda and Stellantis, among others, have been forced to slow or

suspend some production. Toyota, meanwhile, has raised its vehicle output for the fiscal year ending this month and jacked up its full-year earnings forecast by 54 per cent.

The source familiar with Harman said the company, part of South Korea's Samsung Electronics, was experiencing shortages of central processing units (CPUs) and power management integrated circuits as early as November last year.

While Harman doesn't make chips, because of its continuity deal with Toyota, it was obliged to prioritise the carmaker and ensure it had enough semiconductors to maintain supplies of its digital systems for four months,

or more, the source said.

The chips in especially short supply now are microcontroller units (MCUs) which control an array of functions such as braking, acceleration, steering, ignition, combustion, tire pressure gauges and rain sensors, the sources told Reuters.

However, Toyota changed the way it buys MCUs and other microchips after the 2011 earthquake, which caused a tsunami that killed more than 22,000 people.

In the aftermath of the quake, Toyota estimated its procurement of more than 1,200 parts and materials might be affected and it drew up a list of 500 priority items that would need secure supply in the future.

—Reuters



## SHORT TAKES

## Sharath downs world No. 16

**Doha:** Indian paddler Achanta Sharath Kamal stunned world number 16 Patrick Franziska to progress to the men's singles pre-quarterfinals of the World Table Tennis Star Contender series here on Tuesday. Sharath Kamal, ranked 32, beat his higher-ranked rival from Germany 12-10, 3-11, 11-7, 7-11, 11-9 in the second round match. He will now face the winner of the match between Egypt's Ahmed Saleh and German Dimitrij Ovtcharov in the pre-quarters on Wednesday. However, G. Sathiyam and Manika Batra bowed out after suffering defeats in their respective singles second round matches. While world number 63 Batra lost 7-11, 6-11, 7-11 to Japan's Mima Ito, who is ranked third in the world, Sathiyam was beaten by Japanese sensation and world No.5 Tomokazu Harimoto 4-11, 5-11, 8-11.

## Delhi to bid for 2048 Olympics

**New Delhi:** The Delhi government aims to host the 2048 Olympic Games and it will create whatever infrastructure and facilities required for it, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Tuesday. Delhi hosted the first Asian Games in 1951, and the ninth edition in 1982. "Delhi will bid for the 2048 Olympic Games. We will create whatever infrastructure and other facilities are required for it," Kejriwal said during a post-budget press conference. Presenting the budget earlier in the day, Deputy Chief Minister Sisodia said, "There is another big dream related to sports which I am placing before this house... It is a dream to organise the Olympic Games in Delhi. "The 32nd Olympic Games are to be held in Tokyo. The next three host cities have also been decided. Our government aims to bring the sports facilities and the atmosphere towards sports competitions to such a level through the new Sports University that we can apply to host the 39th Olympic sports competitions for 2048," he further said. — PTI

## WEIGHT &amp; WATCH

## Stokes reveals players had sudden weight loss during last Test

**Ahmedabad, March 9:** Ben Stokes has revealed that he and his teammates endured sudden weight loss during the fourth and final Test against India here after a stomach illness hit the tourists before the match. England lost the Test series 1-3 after going down in the final match by an innings and 25 runs last week.

"Players are totally committed to England and I think that was emphasised last week when a few of us went down with illness that made operating in 41 degree heat particularly taxing," Stokes told UK's *Daily Mirror*. "I lost 5kg in a week, Dom Sibley 4kg and Anderson 3kg among others. Jack Leach was ducking off the field in between bowling spells and spending more time than is ideal in the toilet."

Rishabh Pant and Washington Sundar scored 101 and 96 respectively to guide India to 365 in their first innings. The hosts then returned to dismiss England for 135 to win the match. "This is in no way an excuse, because everyone was ready to play, and India and Rishabh especially produced a terrific performance, but I take off my hat to the effort that was put in by players who gave everything they had to try and win for England," Stokes said.

England drew a lot of flak from former players following their performance but Stokes said it is important to shut that out to focus on improving the game. "Pundits have a job to do and that's fine. But their responsibility isn't to make us better players and a better team. That is our job and that is what we have to focus on," said Stokes. — PTI

**I lost 5kg in a week, Dom Sibley 4kg and Jimmy Anderson 3kg among others. Jack Leach was ducking off the field in between bowling spells and spending more time than is ideal in the toilet.**

— BEN STOKES  
England star all-rounder



Ben Stokes in this file photo. — AP

## ASHWIN WINS PLAYER OF THE MONTH AWARD

**Dubai, March 9:** India's premier off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin was on Tuesday named the ICC men's Player of the Month (February) for his stellar show against England in a four-match Test series at home which his side won to qualify for the World Test Championship final.

England's Tammy Beaumont was adjudged the women's Player of the Month.

In the three Tests he played, Ashwin scored a 106 in the second innings of India's second Test victory over England at Chennai and took his 400th Test wicket in the third Test victory at Ahmedabad.

Besides the century, Ashwin scalped a staggering 24 wickets against England in February to help India pocket the four-match Test series 3-1 and help his team secure its spot in the WTC final against New Zealand at the iconic Lord's in June.

Scoring a total of 176 runs across these games and taking 24 wickets, Ashwin was the unanimous choice to win in the men's category for February and garnered the most votes in the fan vote, the ICC said.

England Test captain Joe Root and West Indies Test debutant Kyle Mayers, who scored a 210 to help his team successfully chase 395 and win the first Test against Bangladesh, were nominated alongside Ravichandran Ashwin for the honour. — PTI

## Azhar flicks, says HCA mess is old

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 9



HCA president Mohammad Azharuddin addresses the press on Tuesday.

A day after being criticised for Hyderabad being ignored as a venue for the upcoming IPL, Hyderabad Cricket Association president

Mohammad Azharuddin hit back at former secretary and BCCI interim president N. Shivalal Yadav saying his team is in the current situation because of the mismanagement of previous regimes.

Azhar was all aggression as he addressed the press flanked by Apex Council members at the Gymkhana ground on Tuesday. "I just cannot drag the IPL to Hyderabad," he burst out.

"I went all the way to Ahmedabad and spoke to the BCCI secretary, who said he would do his best but with Chennai and Bangalore already in, the BCCI was not in favour of a third venue in south India. It was tough but I tried my best. I tried to phone the Governing Council members also but they didn't answer my calls. However, I am still at it. If something were to go wrong at any of the venues, Hyderabad should be part of the back-up plan," he explained.

"Today, past officials are making a hue and cry about IPL not being played in Hyderabad, I would like to ask them why did they not have a match in the City during the 2011 World Cup?" he countered.

Taking a dig at past bodies, Azhar said: "The HCA was burdened when we took over. There were tax and PF issues with appeals and showcase notices pending. We somehow settled everything by paying heavy fines."

Then, "institutional clubs have been privatised, leading to court cases that have stalled a round of the league matches. How could Union Bank of India become Kun? Similarly, district teams are being

controlled by individuals," he continued.

"So much muck has gathered in the HCA over the years. If this goes on I may have to write to the Board and the Government and ask them to initiate inquiries with different agencies into the wrongdoings of the past that are having a cascading effect," he said.

However, Azhar conceded HCA league standard needed improvement. "I saw a batsman who said he scored a double century and two tons but he couldn't even connect a single ball at the nets," he revealed. For the record, all the teams play in the A-1, 2, 3 divisions.

Asked about the team selection controversy for the Vijay Hazare Trophy, Azhar said "we will definitely look into it. This has been happening for so many years."

He attributed the delay in conduct of AGM to Covid restrictions. "Now, we will make all pending appointments such as the selection committee, cricket advisory committee among others at the AGM this month-end. However, I spoke to a lot of senior players but they want money to be on the panel. Nobody wants to work for free," he said.

As a parting shot, Azhar reassured his team and cricketers that he is hands-on: "I am on the front foot, will always be."



Chelsea's Jorginho (left) celebrates after scoring against Everton in an English Premier League match at Stamford Bridge in London on Monday. — AFP

## Chelsea blank Everton 2-0 as race for top-four heats up

**London, March 9:** Chelsea strengthened their hold on fourth place in the Premier League as Kai Havertz inspired a vital 2-0 win over Everton, while West Ham boosted their surprise top four challenge with a 2-0 victory against Leeds on Monday.

Havertz has endured a disappointing first season following his £70 million (\$96 million) move from Bayer Leverkusen last year. But the Germany forward was given a rare start by Chelsea boss Thomas Tuchel and he responded by playing the key role in both goals at Stamford Bridge.

Havertz's shot was deflected into the Everton net for a Ben Godfrey own goal in the first half.

## THE RESULTS

<b>Chelsea</b> (Godfrey 31-og, Jorginho 65-pen)	<b>2</b>
<b>Everton</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>West Ham</b> (Lingard 21-pen, Dawson 28)	<b>2</b>
<b>Leeds</b>	<b>0</b>

The 21-year-old has not scored in the league since October, but Tuchel entrusted him with an important role as Chelsea's false nine and Havertz's intelligent movement put him in position to earn the second-half penalty that Jorginho converted.

"I'm very happy with his performance, no doubt

about his quality, his talent and also his character," Tuchel said.

"He needs to adapt to the Premier League, he needs to be at a club where you play to win every game, where the highest standards are normal.

"That's a normal process for him to adapt to this mentality," Chelsea newly appointed coach added. Chelsea are unbeaten in 11 games in all competitions — winning eight times — since Tuchel replaced the sacked Frank Lampard in January.

They are two points ahead of fifth placed West Ham, who have a game in hand in a tense race to qualify for next season's Champions League via a top four finish. — AFP

## PRITHVI SHOW TAKES MUMBAI TO SEMIFINALS

**New Delhi, March 9:** Skipper Prithvi Shaw blazed his way to an unbeaten 185 off just 123 balls as Mumbai stormed into the semifinals of the Vijay Hazare Trophy with a crushing nine-wicket win over Saurashtra in the fourth quarterfinal here on Tuesday.

Opting to bat, Saurashtra rode on Samarth Vyas' unbeaten 90 to post 284/5, but it was overshadowed by Shaw's blitzkrieg, as Mumbai chased the target in just 41.5 overs. Shaw smashed his third hundred in the tournament after slamming 105 not out against Delhi and 227 not out against Puducherry in the league stage.

Chasing 285, Shaw went on the offensive from the word go as Mumbai scored 67 for no loss after nine overs.

With Shaw in full flow, Yashasvi Jaiswal (75 off 104 balls) played the perfect second fiddle.

Meanwhile, a disciplined Uttar Pradesh put up a thoroughly professional performance to outwit Delhi by 46 runs in the quarter-final.

UP will now meet Gujarat in the first semi-final while heavyweights Mumbai will be pitted against Karnataka in the other Last four clash.

UP rode on Upendra Yadav's stroke-filled 112 off 101 balls and Karan Sharma's 83 to post a competitive 280/7. — PTI

## BRIEF SCORES

■ Saurashtra 284/5 in 50 overs (Samarth Vyas 90 not out, Chirag Jani 53 not out; Shams Mulani 2/51; Tanush Kotian 1/30) lost to Mumbai 285/1 in 41.5 overs (Prithvi Shaw 185 not out, Yashasvi Jaiswal 75; Jaydev Unadkat 1/52) by 9 wickets.

■ Uttar Pradesh 280/7 in 50 overs (Upendra Yadav 112, Karan Sharma 83; Pradeep Sangwan 2/49, Simarjeet Singh 2/51) beat Delhi 234 in 48.1 overs (Lalit Yadav 61, Anuj Rawat 47, Akshdeep Nath 2/29, Shivam Mavi 1/32) by 46 runs.



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