

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | FRIDAY | 12 FEBRUARY 2021

## WEATHER



Max: 31°C  
Min: 16°C  
RH: 34%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Mist or fog in the morning. Max/Min temp. 32/16 °C

## NATION | 5

CAA after vaccination is completed, says Shah

## WORLD | 6

Biden talks to Xi about unfair trade practices

## SPORTS | 8

Defending champion Kenin crashes out of Oz Open



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## COVID-19 COUNT

CASES (+9,325)  
DEATHS (+101)  
1,08,79,826 1,55,476

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+146) (+0)  
TS: 2,96,134 1,613  
(+87) (+0)  
AP: 8,88,692 7,161

### CASES AROUND THE WORLD

10,80,29,845  
DEATHS 23,69,118  
COUNTRIES WITH CASES 219

worldometers.info/coronavirus

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Uttarayana  
Tithi: Magha Shuddha Padyami till 12.32 am (Saturday)  
Star: Dhanishta till 2.25 pm  
Varjyam: 9.52 pm to 11.31 pm  
Durmuhurtam: 9.05 am to 9.51 am; 12.53 pm to 1.39 pm  
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon  
**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
Jamadi-ul-Akhir 29, 1442 AH  
**PRAYERS**  
Fajar: 5.43 am  
Zohar: 12.40 pm  
Asar: 4.40 pm  
Maghrib: 6.22 pm  
Isha: 7.30 pm  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.43 AM**  
**SUNSET TODAY 6.16 PM**  
**MOONSET 7.12 PM**  
**MOONRISE 6.53 AM**

## COUNTER POINT



Their 'rail roko' will be a big flop... there are hardly any trains running now!

## SHORT TAKES

### Zero Covid deaths in TS for 1st time

**Hyderabad:** For the first time after the onset of Covid in March last, Telangana on Thursday reported no death linked to the virus. Officials said 146 new cases were confirmed on this day, but most of them were mild.

■ Report on Page 2

### Over 70 lakh get vaccinated in India

**New Delhi:** India has become the fastest country in the world to achieve over 70 lakh vaccinations against COVID-19 in only 26 days, while it took 27 days for the US and 48 days for the UK to reach the same figures, the Union Health Ministry said on Thursday. The ministry also highlighted that 17 states and UTs have not reported any deaths in the last 24 hours.

### Rescue stopped as water surges

**Tapovan:** The water level in the Dhauli Ganga river surged on Thursday, leading to temporary suspension of rescue work at the tunnel in Tapovan where 25-35 people are trapped for over four days since the glacier disaster. Security personnel inside the tunnel rushed out and heavy machines engaged in drilling through the debris and sludge inside were withdrawn.



Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao with the new mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi and deputy mayor M. Srilatha Reddy at the Pragathi Bhavan in Hyderabad on Thursday.

## New mayor promises women's safety in Hyd

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 11

Banjara Hills corporator Gadwal Vijayalakshmi of the TRS party was elected as Mayor of Hyderabad on Thursday. She defeated BJP nominee and RK Puram corporator Radha Reddy. Mothe Srilatha Reddy, TRS corporator from Tarnaka, was elected the deputy mayor. She defeated the BJP's Shankar Yadav.

Amid the victory celebrations, there was also a pall of gloom elsewhere. While the name of P. Vijaya Reddy was in circulation till Thursday morning for the Mayor post, the mood in her camp has sunk by afternoon when another name cropped up menacingly.

Similarly, the party informed Borabanda corporator Baba Fasiuddin at about 9.30 am that he might be re-elected as deputy mayor. However, this was not to be. The 'top leader' instead assured him of a prominent post in the near

## TRS offered us deputy mayor post: MIM

ATHER MOIN | DC  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 11

AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi said on Thursday that the TRS party had offered the deputy mayor post for the Majlis. However, he did not say why it did not accept the offer.

Owaisi congratulated the newly elected Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi and deputy mayor Latha Sobhan Reddy. In a tweet, he said, "Congratulations to the newly elected

Mayor and deputy mayor of GHMC. Hope that, under their leadership, Hyderabad will be taken to new heights and public works will be actively taken up in areas that need them the most, including the Old City. I hope GHMC will carry out its works with honesty and financial propriety. Also, appreciate TRS for offering us the deputy mayor post."

■ Page 2: MIM corporators meet in Darussalam

future in due recognition of his hard work as deputy.

Cherlapally division corporator Bonthu Sridevi, wife of former Mayor Bonthu Rammohan, too had disappointment writ

large on her face. She left the council hall in a huff. Notably, the two were so embarrassed that they switched off their mobile.

■ Page 2: Caste arithmetic to help TRS

## Graduates' MLC polls on March 14

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 11

Elections for Members of Legislative Councils (MLCs) to be elected from graduates' constituency will be held on March 14. Announcing this in a press release on Thursday, Telangana Chief Electoral Officer Shashank Goel said counting of the votes polled will be on March 17.

The biennial elections are scheduled to be held

for members of the State Legislative Council from Mahabubnagar-Rangareddy-Hyderabad and Khammam-Warangal-Nalgonda graduates' constituencies.

The last date for filing nominations is February 23.

Nomination forms will be verified on February 24. Last date for withdrawal of nominations is February 26.

■ Page 2: Enrollment of voters completed

## MLC ASPIRANTS AWAIT TRS HIGH COMMAND NOD

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 11

Ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi is dwelling deep on the choice of its candidates for the two graduate MLC constituencies of Khammam-Nalgonda-Warangal and Hyderabad-Mahabubnagar-Rangareddy. The party does not want to take things for granted, like Dubbaka bypoll and GHMC

shooters were demanding money for shooting wild boars. We are willing to take part in the culling, spending our own money and on a voluntary basis". In a signed letter to the PCCF, this group said where possible, they will take up culling within 48 hours of a request from a sarpanch. They informed the department that they "were not party to the deci-

## Doctors' relay hunger strike enters 10th day

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 11

The relay hunger strike by doctors of the Indian Medical Association across the country and in Telangana has entered its tenth day, with several senior doctors and long-standing members of the IMA in the Telangana chapter are participating as they strongly object to the "mixing of different medical streams".

The mixing of modern medicine with AYUSH is strongly objected by the IMA doctors.

Senior doctors say that this policy will harm modern medicine practice and

lower the morale of students, who will be left confused about which medical stream they must study.

"People in general are not aware of the consequences but when it is put in practice there will be major confusion in the society," doctors said.

Dr M. Sampath Rao, president-elect of the TS IMA said, "the Central Council of Indian Medicine gave a gazette notification on November 19, 2020, permitting Ayurvedic postgraduates to perform 58 categories of modern surgeries after just six months of training. The Indian Medical Associ-

ation strongly condemns this type of mixopathy."

The surgeries that can be carried out by AYUSH doctors will include general surgery, gynaecology, ophthalmology, ENT, plastic and others.

Dr Krishna Reddy, IMA Building Trust Chairman said, "Modern medicine MBBS graduates are allowed to practice the super speciality in which they are trained. Eye surgeons cannot do an ENT surgery. But the CCIM order is to get trained and carry out surgeries. This is dangerous for people's health. If the order is not withdrawn we are going to intensify our protests."

## Military skill sharing



Indian Army and US Army soldiers sharing skills on unarmed combat and handling of each others weapons during the 16th edition of annual bilateral joint exercise Yudh Abhyas, Bikaner.

— PTI

## SOCIAL MEDIA MUST COMPLY, SAYS CENTRE

YOJNA GUSAI | DC  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 11

In a stern warning to social media platforms, information technology minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Thursday said they must abide by the Indian Constitution and follow Indian laws.

The minister said while social media platforms have their self-regulatory mechanisms to check and evaluate inflammatory content, it does not mean they will not follow Indian rules.

Mr Prasad's statement in the Rajya Sabha came a day after his ministry rebuked Twitter for not complying with its orders to take down inflammatory content after the Republic Day violence.

■ Full report on Page 5

## KEEP POLITICIANS OFF FARM STIR, CAUTION UNIONS

SANJAY KAW | DC  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 11

The farmers' union leaders on Thursday cautioned farmers protesting against the agricultural laws against the nefarious attempts being made by politicians to hijack their agitation for narrow political gains. The leaders asserted that the ongoing agitation was not limited to only farmers but had become a mass movement to stop the onslaught by corporate bodies.

■ Full report on Page 5

## Odisha drags AP to SC

New Delhi, Feb. 11: More than five decades since the first status quo order on territorial jurisdiction dispute with Andhra Pradesh over 21 villages, Odisha moved the Supreme Court once again on Thursday seeking contempt action against AP officials for notifying panchayat polls in three villages controlled by it.

The Naveen Patnaik government has said the notification amounts to

invading Odisha's territory.

The dispute over territorial jurisdiction over 21 villages popularly called as Kotia Group of villages first reached the top court in 1968 when Odisha on the basis of three pre-independence notifications claimed that AP had trespassed its well-defined territory. During the pendency of suit filed by Odisha, the top court had on December 2, 1968, direct-

ed both the states to maintain status quo.

In 2006, the court directed that status quo be maintained till the dispute is resolved.

Now, the Odisha government has sought contempt action against AP's three senior officials — Vizianagaram district collector Mude Hari Jawaharlal, chief secretary Adityanath Das, and State Election Commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar. — PTI

## WILD | LIFE

### Rift among hunters over culling animals at a cost

## Boar shooters snipe at each other

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH and  
BALU PULIPAKA | DC  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 11

Sarpanchs in Telangana state are authorised to engage shooters from a list of 30 empanelled hunters to cull wild boars destroying crops in their village limits. However, the expensive hunting safaris some of the hunters embark on is likely to come undone.

A group from among the 30 listed hunters, on Thursday, submitted a representation to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, and Chief Wildlife Warden R. Shobha declaring that they would hunt the wild boar for free.

This group, according to a news release from the forest department, has informed the PCCF that "it had come to their notice that some

shooters were demanding money for shooting wild boars. We are willing to take part in the culling, spending our own money and on a voluntary basis".

In a signed letter to the PCCF, this group said where possible, they will take up culling within 48 hours of a request from a sarpanch. They informed the department that they "were not party to the deci-

sion wherein a certain shooter has requested money for culling of wild-pigs in farmer's fields".

This move, according to some hunters, opens up the possibility of 'we will hunt for free' group using its 'voluntary participation' to not to act with the responsibility required for this culling.

■ Page 2: Forest staff dismiss apprehensions



## SHORT TAKES

## TSBIE EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR EXAM PAYMENT

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 11

The Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education announced the extension of due dates for payment of examination fee for IPE March 2021. The last date for payment of fee has been extended to February 22, for payment with a late fee of ₹100 is March 1. Payment of exam fee after March 8 will levy a late fee of ₹500, after March 15 and March 22 will levy late fees of ₹1,000 and ₹2,000, respectively. The decision was taken after requests from students, parents and college managements, said TSBIE.

## MINISTERS, MLAS TAPPED FOR WINNERS

From page 1

While Dubbaka was won by BJP, the saffron party candidates did quite well also in GHMC. Ministers and MLAs of these districts have been asked to submit to party high command candidates who would be sure-shot winners. These leaders are finding their task difficult as there are many contenders, who are also lobbying with TRS working president K. T. Rama Rao. Names of certain leaders have cropped up including former beverages corporation chairman Devi Prasad, Karem Ravinder Reddy and OSD to Chief Minister Desipathi Srinivas. But they do not seem much interested in contesting from the Hyderabad-Ranga Reddy-Mahabubnagar constituency. Devi Prasad had earlier contested and lost from here. He is also a non-local. Certain senior leaders are keen on bagging the MLC seats including contestant from Malkajigiri parliament constituency Marri Rajasekhara Reddy and educationalist Varkatam Jagannadh Reddy. They have submitted their resumes to the TRS high command. There is a clamour in Hyderabad-Mahabubnagar-Ranga Reddy constituency that preference is given to a local candidate. They point out that earlier, Prof. K. Nageshwar was graduate MLC, but he was a native of Adilabad district. Presently, the sitting MLC Ramchandra Rao is a native of Nalgonda district. So, party cadre want a local candidate this time around. They point out that Congress party has already declared as its candidate name of former minister G. Chinna Reddy, who is a local.

## EC's schedule of MLC polls delays TS staff PRC talks

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 11

The schedule issued by the Election Commission of India on Thursday for holding MLC elections in graduates' constituencies for two seats in Telangana came as a big shock to various Telangana employees and pensioners associations. The schedule came at a time when the unions were expecting a call from Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao inviting them for talks at Pragathi Bhavan on February 12 or 13 to discuss on PRC report and finalise the quantum of fitment (hike on basic salary). The EC which released the schedule on Thursday announced that the model code of conduct has come into force with immediate effect. With this, the government cannot take any decisions on salary hikes till the election code ends.

The employees unions are left with no option but to wait until March-end for getting new PRC pay scales. The unions are already angry at the state government for delaying new PRC by over two-and-a-half years now.

As per the EC schedule, polling will be held on March 14 and the results will be declared on March 17. The election code will be in force till March 22. Employees are due for new PRC scales from July 2018.

But the state government delayed it citing Assembly polls in December 2018, Lok Sabha polls in 2019 and corona pandemic in 2020.

Though the new PRC was

## Revanth backs farmers, slams three new laws

Cong wants TRS to pass a resolution in Assembly against farm laws

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 11

Congress party working president and Lok Sabha MP from Malkajigiri A. Revanth Reddy demanded the TRS government pass a resolution in the Assembly against the three contentious farm laws introduced by the Narendra Modi government.

These three farm laws will destroy the future and livelihood of small-scale farmers while corporations will rule the national agriculture sector, he said.

Mr Revanth Reddy, who is on a Padayatra from Achampet to Hyderabad, questioned Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, saying, "why did KCR take a U-turn on the farm bills after touring Delhi, though he participated in a 'Bharat Bandh' on January 8?"

Mr Reddy interacted with farmers while on padayatra, dubbed, 'Rajiv Rythu Bharosa padayatra' and explained about the three farm bills. He reminded that because of the Minimum Support Price Act, introduced by the Congress party, farmers are getting MSP for their crop produce.

"If any merchant purchases a crop produced below MSP, he will be pun-



Congress working president A. Revanth Reddy started Rajiv Rythu Bharosa Padayatra from Achampet to Hyderabad during which he interacted with farmers on three farm bills introduced by the Centre, on Thursday.

● **THESE THREE farm laws will destroy the future and livelihood of small-scale farmers while corporations will rule the national agriculture sector, he said.**

ished according to law, but due to PM Modi's new farm laws, MSP act got scrapped. Along with this, the Modi government removed IKP centers, market yards, Cooperative Society, FCI and CCI", he said.

Mr Reddy was critical of

the Prime Minister, saying, "PM Modi is not responding to farmers' demands, who are protesting outside the borders of Delhi for the last 80 days. Even the death of 195 farmers in the protests has not moved the government."

With these farm laws, farmers will become laborers in their own lands whereas corporate companies will dictate terms to farmers. Revanth urged farmers to unite and protest against the farm laws in all villages. In their interaction with

the Parliamentarian, farmers appraised him of their problems, saying, "the loan waiver promised the TRS government has been implemented, There is no MSP and no input subsidy also."

Former union minister Balram Naik, former minister Sudharshan Reddy, MLA Seethakka, former MLAs Vem narendra Reddy, Mallu Ravi, Eravath Anil, GHMC corporators, Nizamabad DCC president Mohan Reddy, OU JAC leaders and others participated in the padayatra.

## TS gave report on ITIR to Centre: KTR

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 11

The statement given in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday by Union minister of state for electronics and IT Sanjay Dhotre on ITIR, Hyderabad, was "factually incorrect" stated Telangana minister for IT & industries, K.T. Rama Rao, on Thursday.

The Union minister was responding to a question in the Lok Sabha on Information Technology Investment Region (ITIR), Hyderabad, asked by Bandi Sanjay Kumar, MP.

Rama Rao said that in spite of submitting all necessary information, the detailed project report (DPR) and the several reminders in the last six years, the Union minister chose to mislead the house by issuing the following statement: "The Government of Telangana was asked to submit the

required information to the concerned ministries with intimation to MeitY. No information was furnished by the Government of Telangana."

Rama Rao said it was unfair on the part of the NDA government and the Telangana BJP leaders to blame the Telangana government despite the fact that the state government sent several representations on the subject to the Central government.

The first such letter was written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao as soon as Telangana was formed in June 2014, Rama Rao said, adding that another detailed memorandum was submitted on the ITIR project to the Union Government by he himself in September 2014. In 2016, Rama Rao met the then Union minister of state for labour and

employment Bandaru Dattatreya to present a DPR on ITIR. This was done by way of a response to the latter's comments that the Telangana government did not submit the project report for ITIR.

"Though the Telangana government presented a project report on ITIR twice, Union minister Bandaru Dattatreya claimed that we did not submit the DPR. He might have been misguided by officials. To put things straight, I have personally met him, informed him, and also presented the DPR of ITIR once again," Rama Rao had said while addressing the media after meeting Dattatreya in June 2016.

Several reminders about ITIR project were submitted to Prime Minister Modi and Union electronics & IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad over the last six years. The NDA

government chose to ignore these requests. The intention to discontinue the ITIR project was clearly understood from the noncommittal responses of the NDA Government, Rama Rao said.

In January 2021, Rama Rao as Telangana IT minister wrote a letter to Union minister for electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad seeking funds for the ITIR project. But the Union Government did not allocate a single rupee in the current year's budget, KTR said.

He added: "While the facts are these, it is unfortunate that the Union minister Sanjay Dhotre chose to issue a factually incorrect statement. It was irresponsible on the part of state BJP leaders to resort to a smear campaign against the Telangana government without ascertaining the facts."

## Regular VCs likely for TS universities by next week

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 11

Telangana state universities could get regular Vice-Chancellors by next week, after almost 18 months, sources have told *Deccan Chronicle*.

The state government's search committee has conducted meetings for seven out of the 11 state universities, including JNTU, Osmania University, Kakatiya University. Dr. BR Ambedkar Open University, among others.

The search committee scrutinised a total of 984 applications received by the State government, and shortlisted three candidates for each varsity. It will be revealed only after the Chief Minister and then the Governor sign on them.

Since July 2019, civil servants and some IAS officers holding other positions in the government have been appointed as in-charge VCs. This has led to problems like the varsities not getting adequate funds, faculty positions remaining vacant, progress of research and payment of salaries to staff.

Teachers and depart-

● **THE SEARCH committee scrutinised a total of 984 applications received by the State government, and shortlisted three candidates for each varsity. It will be revealed only after the Chief Minister and then the Governor sign on them.**

● **TEACHERS AND**

ment heads of several universities raised concerns over the absence of regular Vice-Chancellors for almost two years now.

A professor at Osmania University, who wished to remain anonymous, told this correspondent "Even though the government says that it plans to better the conditions in state-run universities, it all feels like they are only indulging in sweet talk. If they are really concerned at the state-of-affairs in educational institutions across the state, the administration would not have been given in the hands of bureaucrats for so long".

Dr. A Santhosh, Telangana Schools

department heads of several universities raised concerns over the absence of regular Vice-Chancellors for almost two years now.

● **THE GOVERNMENT has now expedited the process of appointment of VCs after protests and much criticism over the past one year.**

Technical Colleges Employees Association (TSTCEA) State President said that teachers have suffered the most during the lockdown because the in-charge VCs are not authorised to take decisive actions.

In most universities, they were not even available to address the concerns of the faculty. He added that the in-charge VC of Osmania University, Arvind Kumar, has not visited the campus in the last eight months.

The government has now expedited the process of appointment of VCs after protests and much criticism over the past one year.

## TS ordinance soon to rename Telugu varsity

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 11

The Telangana state government is all set to issue an ordinance soon to rename Potti Sreeramulu Telugu University in Hyderabad after Suravaram Pratapa Reddy.

Telugu University located in Lalitha Kala Kshetram in Public Gardens, Nampally, was established during late chief minister N.T. Rama Rao-led Telugu Desam in 1985 through an Act of Legislation (Act No. 27 of 1985) by the State Legislature of the then united Andhra Pradesh with headquarters at Hyderabad and campuses at Srisaillam and Rajahmundry.

Following the bifurcation of AP in June 2014, the Telangana state government wants to remove the name of Potti Sreeramulu "associated with "Andhra" and name the university after Telangana icon Suravaram Pratapa Reddy, known for his immense contribution to Telangana literature.

IT minister K.T. Rama Rao promised to rename the university while participating in the 125th birth celebrations of Suravaram Pratapa Reddy on December 27 last year.

A proposal to rename the Telugu University

after Suravaram was made by the speakers during these celebrations.

Reacting to this, Rama Rao had said, "We will look into the proposal and bring it to the notice of the Chief Minister about renaming the Telugu University after Suravaram Pratapa Reddy to recognise his contribution to the literature of Telangana."

The proposal was first floated on the dais by S. Niranjan Reddy, agriculture minister, who represents the Wanaparthy Assembly constituency in Mahbubnagar district, from which Suravaram hailed.

Rama Rao requested the higher education department to take steps accordingly.

Following this, the higher education department recently submitted a proposal to Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao to rename Telugu University. The CM is learnt to have approved this and asked officials to draft an ordinance to amend the Telugu University Act for the purpose.

The ordinance will be sent to Governor for approval.

The ordinance will later be approved in the Legislative Assembly during the upcoming Budget session and Act will be amended.

## Caste arithmetic to help TRS

From Page 1

TRS party sources feel the Munnuru Kaapu and Reddy representation in the GHMC council would help them in the upcoming polls in Warangal Municipal Corporation and also in the two MLC graduate constituencies including the Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda and the Mahabubnagar-Hyderabad-Rangareddy and the Nagarjuna Sagar bypolls.

Overall, the caste arithmetic would help the TRS in the upcoming polls in 15 districts of state. Sources said it was worth sacrificing the Muslim minority post in the GHMC council.

Vijayalakshmi is a corporator from the Banjara Hills division. She is daughter of Dr K. Keshava Rao, Rajya Sabha MP. She has done BA, LLB and Journalism courses. She is married to Bobby Reddy. She had lived in the US for 18 years, working as a research assistant in the cardiology department in Duke University, North Carolina. Vijayalakshmi returned to India in 2007 and gave up her US citizenship to join her father in politics. In 2016, she contested the polls for a corporator post as the TRS nominee and won the seat with a huge majority.

After her election as Mayor, Vijayalakshmi said she had a surprise agenda in mind pertaining to the city's development. She

● **THERE ARE many things I want to concentrate on. I promise complete safety for women in Hyderabad. Be it roads, drainage, there are many issues. We will address all these. I have a vision.**

## IIT ALUMNI TO HOLD TECH BOOTCAMP

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 11

Alumni from IITs across India will conduct a free 4.0 tech online bootcamp on advanced technologies like the Internet of things (IoT), Cybersecurity,

Artificial Intelligence & Machine learning (AI/ML) with iB Hubs & NxtWave on February 14 from 9 am to 5 pm. The online bootcamp will be addressed by professionals from colleges like IITs, NITs and experts who have already built successful products in 4.0 technologies.

Hands-on sessions with experts will be held to help participants make career decisions. The participants in the bootcamp will also receive a 4.0 Tech 101 Certificate.

Those interested can register on <https://bit.ly/3tg1EjP>.

## NO COVID-LINKED DEATH IN TS FOR FIRST TIME

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 11

For the first time after the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March last, Telangana on Thursday reported no death linked to the virus.

Officials said 146 new cases were confirmed on this day, but most of them were mild. The number of active cases in the state stood at 1,825. The fall in the number of active cases meant the virus spread is now under control in the state, officials said.

Yet, people are advised to wear masks, wash hands regularly and follow the norms of social distancing. These safety protocols cannot be given up even by those who have taken the first dose of the vaccine.

New cases in Greater Hyderabad Corporation limits on Thursday were 25, while Karimnagar reported 10 cases.

## CORPORATORS OF MIM MEET IN DARUSSALAM

From page 1

In the morning, MIM corporators gathered at the party headquarters, Darussalam, before leaving for the GHMC polls. Party general secretary Ahmed Pasha Quadri informed the corporators that party president Asaduddin Owaisi has decided to support TRS candidates. The corporators were not aware who would be the candidates, though.

## FOREST STAFF DISMISS APPREHENSION

From Page 1

"Culling of wild boar requires discipline and a proper plan. It is not a weekend outing to the fringes of forest armed with a powerful gun and ammunition," Pervaram Santhaji, one of the hunters said.

A senior forest department official said when the idea was first mooted and the hunters came on board, they gave an undertaking that their participation will be voluntary without any expectations of remuneration.

On fears that some of the wealthy hunters will end up treating the wild boar culling as a sport, as they do while on a African wildlife hunting safaris, the official said, "Just because our orders permit culling by private individuals, it does not mean they will have a free run. The orders can be rescinded any time.

And if any hunter violates any provision of the Wildlife Protection Act (such as hunting other wildlife under the guise of culling wild boar) they will face the full force of the Act."

One of the empanelled hunters, Amit Sanghi said: "We are doing this because the government has asked us to. Also, we are doing it to put an end to the hardships that farmers are facing because of the vermin (wild boar)."

Erraballi Pradeep Kumar Rao said he is in possession of a gun that is licensed. He said he is taking this up as a responsibility to serve farmers by culling marauding wild boar. "The sarpanch of the gram panchayat has been given the powers to ask hunters to shoot the pigs."

So, if the farmers take us to the spot, we will kill the pigs. We do not have the power to shoot anywhere and everywhere," he said.



## OTHER STORIES

## DRUNK LORRY DRIVER RUNS OVER SIX-YEAR-OLD GIRL

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, FEB. 11

Milky, a six-year-old girl, was run over by a sand-laden lorry in Moranchapalli on Bhupalpally-Parkal highway on Thursday. The girl was playing in front of her house along the highway when the driver, who was under the influence of alcohol, ran over her.

Villagers and family members of the girl beat up the lorry driver and staged a protest on the highway demanding justice. Traffic came to a standstill for about a kilometre on either side of the highway.

Police reached the spot and convinced villagers into calling off their protest. Bhupalpally inspector S. Vasudeva Rao said the lorry driver has been arrested and a case registered against him.

The dead body has been shifted to Parkal government hospital for post-mortem examination. The lorry was transporting a load of sand from Kaleshwaram to Hyderabad.

## FARMER AWARDED FOR BEST FARM PRACTICES

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, FEB. 11

Gorla Satyanarayana Reddy, a farmer from Kandukur in Vemsoor mandal was awarded the 'Pudami Putra' award for working in best farm practices.

Gandhi Global Family and Gandhi Global Prasthan selected Satyanarayana Reddy for the award for making quality paddy seeds that had more nutrient values. He helped a lot to the co-farmers in following the best practices in farming.

The award will be presented to him in Suryapet on the hands of Minister for Power G Jagadeesh Reddy. The Gandhi Global Family identified one such farmer from each district in two Telugu states.

## NAI BRAHMINS STAGE PROTESTS IN INDUR, KAMAREDDY

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NIZAMABAD, FEB. 11

Nai Brahmins on Thursday staged protests in Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts on Thursday against corporate entities encroaching into the profession of barbers.

All hair cutting salons remained shut down in Nizamabad, Bodhan, Armoor, Kamareddy, Banswada and other towns, where Nai Brahmins also staged dharnas. They expressed their solidarity with Nai Brahmins of Mancherla, who are on a relay hunger strike against corporate-managed hair cutting salons.

The Nai Brahmins Ikya Vedika staged a protest at Nizamabad collectorate on Thursday. On the occasion, a delegation presented a memorandum to additional collector B. Chandrasekhar against corporate takeover of barbers' profession.

Similar protests were held at Renjal, Kotagiri, Sirikonda and other mandal headquarters.

## Dedicated cadre is any party's backbone: Etala

Uneducated single women will be provided sewing machines, training

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, FEB. 11

Health minister Etala Rajendar on Thursday went around Huzurabad to take stock of the situation in the area hospital and how it was going about the Covid vaccination process. He took feedback from doctors about the health condition of those who have been vaccinated. He called for ensuring adequate drinking water facilities and a rest room for those accompanying patients.

Later, the minister participated in the ruling party's Huzurabad constituency meeting in Jammikunta.

Addressing the gathering, Rajendar said that cadre was always the backbone of any party and they were more crucial than leaders. A party without a sound cadre is like a lifeless body, he said. Stating that the TRS leadership has always stood by the party cadre, he said that those who



Health minister Etala Rajendar inspects the Covid-19 vaccination drive at the area hospital in Huzurabad of Karimnagar district on Thursday. — BY ARRANGEMENT

stay loyal for long would get plenty of opportunities to grow.

On the general perception that he does not reject anyone who approaches him, Rajendar said "This is my weakness. I become emotionally drawn when someone approaches me with some problem. I try to help them come out of their problems, irrespec-

tive of their standing in the party."

Chief Minister, K. Chandrasekhar Rao issued orders to complete the membership drive within 15 days. Leaders must strive to bolster the party membership. A special identity card will be given to those who enroll as active workers. The individual will be recognized anywhere in the

state with that identity card, he said.

There are around 2.4 lakh voters in Huzurabad Assembly constituency and it is the responsibility of party leaders to enroll at least one lakh members in the party. A strong cadre can work wonders, in this regard, he said.

Rajendar said that he wished to see the

Huzurabad constituency without any hut. It is towards this that steps are being taken to construct double bedroom houses in all villages and expedite the process of distribution, he said. The minister pointed out that although around 3,500 2bhk houses were constructed, the distribution process was delayed due to some unforeseen issues that had cropped up.

He suggested mandal-level meetings every alternate month and village-level meetings every month so that they can discuss various local issues and help strengthen the party from the grass-root level, he suggested.

Steps will be taken for providing employment to the unemployed youth along with sanctioning of tractors to those opting for farming as their livelihood. Uneducated single women will be provided sewing machines along with adequate training, he said.

## ALL SET FOR 2ND DOSE VACCINATION FROM TOMORROW

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, FEB. 11

District Collector, K. Shashanka appealed to all healthcare workers who had taken Covid vaccination in the first phase to take a second dose without fail.

He was speaking at the task force meeting organised by the district medical and health department here on Thursday.

Shashanka directed nodal and special officials and staff of medical and health departments to take appropriate steps for administering the second dose from Saturday, as the time period of 28 days was over for those who were given vaccination in the first phase.

DM&HO, Dr. Sujatha informed that around 2,649 health workers were vaccinated in the first phase. The second dose of vaccination will be given on February 13, 15, 16, 18 and 19 at the centres where the first dose was given. Municipal commissioner Valluri Kranthi, district panchayat officer Veera Bhadraraj, BC welfare officer B. Raja Manohar Rao, deputy director of Social Welfare department, Nethinial, district women and child welfare officer Sharada, DMO Dr. Raja Gopal Rao were present on the occasion.

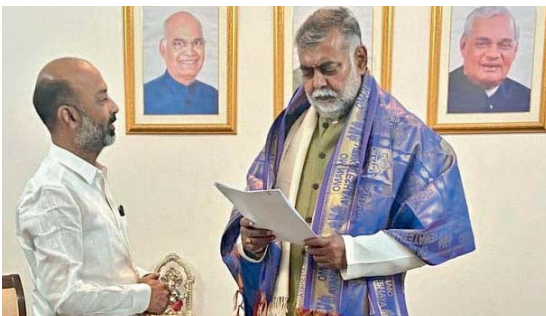
## Bandi asks funds for development of Vemulawada, Kondagattu temples

PULI SHARATH KUMAR,  
KARIMNAGAR, FEB. 11

Karimnagar MP and BJP state chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Thursday met Union minister of state culture and tourism Prahlad Singh Patel in New Delhi and submitted a representation for funds for the famous Sri Raja Rajeshwara Swamy temple in Vemulawada and the Sri Anjaneya Swamy temple situated in Kondagattu.

Sanjay Kumar informed the Union minister that the two temples lacked basic facilities despite the heavy rush of pilgrims to Vemulawada and Kondagattu.

He said along with the development of bus stations, steps must be taken for laying of roads and providing transport and drinking water facilities. With releasing of funds from the Centre for these



Minister and BJP Telangana state chief, Bandi Sanjay Kumar submits a representation to the Union Minister of state Culture and Tourism department, Prahlad Singh Patel in New Delhi on Thursday. — BY ARRANGEMENT

temples, tourism will get a boost in the region. This will also create employment opportunities to the locals and artists who are mainly dependent on various art forms and handicrafts, he informed the central tourism minister.

The Union minister assured Bandi Sanjay Kumar, who is also the

Karimnagar MP, that he would take suitable steps for the development of Karimnagar.

Bandi Sanjay Kumar also met the chief executive officer of Indian Railways Sunith Sharma and requested him to allot funds for completion of the several railway projects in the Telangana

region.

Sanjay said he also made a request for release of funds for construction of a Rail Over Bridge at LC18(T) near Theegalaguttapally in Karimnagar, as also remove the railway gate at LC 26 near the Kothapally-Gangadhar road and construct either a railway under bridge or railway overbridge at that place.

Bandi said he requested Sunith Sharma to construct a bypass line from Kazipet to Peddapalli and speed up the construction works of the Kothapalli-Manoharabad railway line as funds of ₹325 crore were allotted in the recent Union Budget for this purpose. He also urged Sharma to speed up construction of a new railway line from Karimnagar to Hasanparthy via Huzurabad keeping in view the huge demand from the public.

## Police set up special team to curb human trafficking

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, FEB. 11

Mahabubabad district police have set up a special team to curb human trafficking. Mahabubabad district Superintendent of Police N. Koti Reddy on Thursday said a special team has been set up in Mahabubabad district to curb human trafficking as per the directions of the state government.

He warned that strict action would be taken against those who indulge in trafficked women and children. The SP explained that this special team set up with the Mahabubabad district would coordinate with all the police stations.

Similarly, the SP appealed to the police to be informed immediately if any smuggling is

detected. "Human trafficking is serious on a global scale. It is on the rise in developed countries as well. There were no facilities or failures in many places to eradicate these. But, there is no such situation in the state of Telangana.

Much of the state continues to curb human trafficking. Efforts are being made to make

Mahabubabad a crime-free district while taking tough measures to curb crime."

Assistant commissioner of labor O. Ramesh, Mahabubabad Tahsildar Ranjit, CWC Chairman Nagavani, Anti Human Trafficking Team in-charge CI Venkat Rao, ChildLine District Coordinator Venkatesh, CWC members were present among others.

## Nizamabad municipality tops in tax collection

NARENDER PULLOOR | DC  
NIZAMABAD, FEB. 11

Nizamabad Municipal Corporation (NMC) set a new record in Telangana state in collections of property and other taxes. Of 142 municipal corporations and municipalities, excluding Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), Nizamabad tops in collections. Tax collection reached ₹50 crore mark in the first week of February.

Nizamabad Municipal Corporation set a target of ₹65 crore tax collection in 2020-2021 financial year. Of this, around ₹50 crore taxes of property, water and others have been collected so far. Interestingly, the revenue wing of the corporation formed special teams to collect the property tax in the city. They also concentrated on property tax defaulters.

Around 3,600 warrants issued to the property tax defaulters of ₹50,000 and above amount defaulters. If the tax defaulters failed to clear the arrears, the municipal teams sealed the

● **AROUND 3,600 warrants issued to the property tax defaulters of ₹50,000 and above amount defaulters. If the tax defaulters failed to clear the arrears, the municipal teams sealed the properties.**

properties. Nizamabad municipal commissioner Jithesh V Patil directed municipal officials to concentrate on tax collections for integrated development of the city.

In addition, rebate on tax arrears also attracted the property owners to clear the pending taxes. The municipal staff set up flexi boards in the city suggested the people to pay the taxes timely and avoid penalties and other action.

A section of people are trying to evade the tax and pressuring the municipal staff but in vain. It is hoped that Nizamabad municipal corporation will collect targeted taxes by the end of the financial year. The higher officials are regularly monitoring the tax collection in the city.

## Battlelines drawn for MLC elections on March 14

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC  
WARANGAL, FEB. 11

Political parties vying for the Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda graduates' constituency MLC seat have taken it as a major challenge and launched their respective campaigns months ago. With the election commission announcing the schedule for the election on Thursday, they are now gearing up for a much-focused showdown.

The election notification will be released on February 16, polling will be on March 14 and counting of votes will be taken up on March 17. Filing of nominations ends on February 23, while scrutiny will be taken up the next day with February 26 being the last date for withdrawal of nominations. Independents along with TRS, Congress, BJP, TJS and young parties are all competing heavily.

Sitting MLC Palla

Rajeshwar Reddy from TRS is going for an encore. Pitted against him are Ramulu Naik (Cong), G Premender Reddy (BJP), Prof M Kodandaram Reddy (Telangana Jana Samithi), Vijayasaradhi Reddy (Left), Rani Rudrama Reddy (Yuva Telangana Party) and Teenmar Mallanna, who is in the fray as an independent candidate.

Some student leaders and graduates who are dissatisfied with the government on the issue of jobs and unemployment benefits are ready to file their papers.

The two main rivals TRS and BJP are at loggerheads, trying to prove each other's dominance. While the BJP leaders claim that the ruling party is losing its ground on account of its failure to keep promises, the TRS is banking on the welfare and development schemes taken up by the government.

Premender Reddy said

the TRS is aware of the fact that if it loses, it would mark its downfall in the state. That is why Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has come out of his farmhouse and started making amends, he said.

"The BJP has succeeded in bringing him out. He has made U-turns on EWS reservation, PRC and employment notification. The people have decided to teach him a fitting lesson this time," he said.

Meanwhile, the TRS is busy promoting its welfare schemes. Minister for Panchayat Raj Errabelli Dayakar Rao, during a party preparatory meeting, stated that Telangana has made rapid strides under the leadership of Chandrasekhar Rao.

He advised the party cadre to reach out to the people and explain the welfare and developmental programmes being implemented by the TRS government.



Minister for transport P. Ajay Kumar lays foundation stone for the checkdam on Munnair river in Khammam on Thursday. — BY ARRANGEMENT

## Ajay lays foundation stone for checkdam

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, FEB. 11

A new check-dam is to be shortly built across Munner River at Prakashnagar.

Minister for Transport P Ajay Kumar, who laid the foundation stone to the check-dam against a projected cost of Rs 7.45 crore, said that it is proposed to make available more water to Khammam Municipal Corporation (KMC).

The Minister said that lakhs of cusecs of Munner water is joining Krishna River and Bay of Bengal during every monsoon. He said that the place of the check-dam has since been changed to Prakashnagar Bridge.

Officials proposed three metres height for the check-dam, which he wanted increased to six metres keeping the future requirements in mind.

"Nearly 0.5 tmc of water can be stored in the dam and borewells in the Three Town area will be recharged", he said.

The Minister said that the government is considering building bunds on both sides after the check-dam comes up. There will also be a walking track and park.

There is presently no drinking water problem in Khammam. It has been extended to 120 million litres per day and will cater to 70,000 houses, approximately, he said.

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2	4Cx95mm <sup>2</sup>	160								
<b>Start date for down loading of Specification/tender documents from www.eproc.punjab.gov.in</b>	12, February, 2021									
<b>Last date for down loading of Specification/tender documents from www.eproc.punjab.gov.in</b>	18, March, 2021 (upto 11:00 AM)									
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## DECCAN Chronicle

12 FEBRUARY 2021

### Twitter's snub of Centre's selective outrage timely

The fundamental issue with freedom of expression is either you have it or you don't. While there is no arguing against the fact that such freedom may be subject to reasonable restrictions, particularly with reference to communal harmony and public safety being threatened by inciters of violence and disorder, government action cannot be selective in acting only on the basis of its sensitivities being outraged by criticism. The spat with social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp may have been caused by suspicions over their neutrality when it comes to issues cropping up in India. But the government is seen to be acting like a bully in its plaintive calls for action to be taken against all critics in a blanket manner that is reminiscent of a totalitarian approach that had led to democratic disasters in India.

The government's fear of its image abroad being hammered by celebrities with a large following on the social media has led to it calling for Twitter to take down nearly 1,200 accounts following tweets on farmer protests. Some of those accounts may be backed by Pakistan or Khalistan sympathisers, and sported ridiculously hateful hashtags like "farmers' genocide".

**To insist on a virtual blanket ban on one side of the arguments in support of the farmers is what makes government action suspicious**

Orders to take them down are legitimate and may have already been acted upon. To insist on a virtual blanket ban on one side of the arguments in support of the farmers, which might be more universal among Indians than the government may imagine, is what makes government action suspicious in the eyes of the votaries of free speech and expression. In a free world, Indian developers are free, too, to set up microblogging platforms like Koo.

There was widespread praise for Twitter when it chose to act against Donald Trump for actively encouraging his acolytes to attempt an armed insurrection on Capitol Hill. It must also do so when inspired actions of vicious users and automated bots aimed at disruption are brought to its attention. Behind Twitter's espousal of the foundational principle of free expression may lie social media's monetisation of hate but free expressions of hate are a sign of the times which have armed individuals with handles and megaphones on media platforms to rant on. India is beset by the same phenomenon and may have no extraordinary case for protection or idealistic treatment. It has chosen the Internet as a right of the people even if it has been known to act selectively as on the borders of Delhi hosting the farmers' protests and in Kashmir, which went without 4G connectivity for more than a year.

It is in the modern war between perception and reality that issues like differential treatment of violence on Capitol Hill and the storming of the Red Fort crop up. Again, these are part of the perils of living in an interconnected age in which opinion is free and, perhaps, even overrated as billions enjoy the freedom of presenting their personal thoughts to the world. The threat to jail Twitter's Indian employees is, however, part of a worrisome pattern of the current regime, which has contemplated similar repressive action against a politician and several journalists with only the top court standing between them and arrests. It is in this context that Twitter's disinclination to take down handles of politicians and journalists must be viewed and praised as supporting essential freedom of expression.

### PM's red herring

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's criticism in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday of those who "abuse the private sector" sounded more like being in a dark room and looking for a black cat that isn't there than raising a point for the nation to discuss. His advice of caution against "returning the nation to the babus" was equally intriguing.

This country has long scrapped the licence-permit-babu raj and ushered in an era where the private sector has been viewed as creators of employment and wealth. No government in the last three decades has chosen to ignore them; they did everything possible to promote them instead in the form of policy frameworks and easing of regulatory mechanisms. Even state governments run by political thoughts of all hues vied with one another offering freebies and sops to "unleash the entrepreneurial spirit of the youth". Mr Modi took special care to ensure that India made a quantum jump in its position on the Index of Ease of Doing Business within a couple of years of his assuming power even when the country's positions in terms of indices on hunger or freedom of thought suffered.

The public sector units were hardly a choice of any government during the liberalisation period. Even brilliant performers were put on the auction block while several others were bled dry by the governments; many have been put on their deathbed by governmental interventions that stopped them from competing with the private sector. Mr Modi's fears of the nation going back to the babus, thus, sound rather misplaced.

The Prime Minister has spoken in the backdrop of the farming community agitating against new laws which, it fears, would make them captive players of the private corporates with deep pockets. The government should rather address their fears than demonising those who raise them.

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Subhani



## Simultaneous polls to be a blow to smaller parties

Sanjay Kumar

A few months ago, in a meeting with returning officers, Prime Minister Narendra Modi once again advocated the holding of simultaneous elections both for the Lok Sabha and the state Assemblies in India. He had expressed the desire for holding simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and state Assemblies even in his first term as the Prime Minister. It is important to note that this time he not only reiterated his view but also made a more aggressive advocacy for holding simultaneous elections. He stated "this is not an issue of debate; this is a necessity for India". It is important to recall that when this was advocated a few years ago, there were lots of debates on this issue amongst journalists, analysts and stake holders. The arguments put forward both for and against this proposal were on grounds of feasibility, legality and polity related to the large issue of possible impact on Party system in India.

The arguments put forward in favour of holding simultaneous election are minimising expenses for holding elections and expediting the developmental work of the government. There is merit in these two arguments, and hardly any disagreement — but should these be the only considerations for pushing for a case of holding simultaneous elections? Is there a need for careful thinking about its impact on the larger issue of the party system in India? There is also the question of feasibility, how this can even be implemented in a federal country like India with

states having elected governments and enjoying constitutional powers. There is also issue about what would happen if there is a premature fall of the government in any state; will the state be put under governor's rule and elections held only when the next cycle of elections is due? At the moment every state is under its own cycle of election, what happens to state governments elected by popular vote only a couple of years ago when the simultaneous election system is being implemented? Will putting a state under the governor's rule for a very long time by making provisions for that after amending the Constitution not be against democratic principles?

But beyond those issues, there is the larger issue of its impact on the nature of the party system; there is a possibility of a few political parties, especially the national parties, dominating both the national as well as state politics. Some stronger regional parties may still be able to survive in the state, but slowly and gradually, many smaller parties would disappear from the political map of India. Simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the state Assemblies will be of great disadvantage to the regional parties.

Evidences suggest that a very large number of voters tend to vote for the same party when elections to both the state Assembly and the Lok Sabha are held simultaneously or within a gap with six months of holding the latter election. Voters tend to vote for the same party in the Assembly election for which they had voted during the Lok Sabha

election, though there are a few exceptions. The national parties are in an advantageous position. The dominant regional parties also enjoy this advantage but smaller regional parties are at the receiving end. If simultaneous elections are held, Indian politics will come to be dominated by the national parties. A few regional parties and many smaller regional parties will disappear, as the people's voting choices would largely be influenced by how parties are likely to play a role in national politics. Holding simultaneous elections would mean the expansion of the dominance of national parties and slow and gradual shrinking of the political space for regional parties.

Evidence suggests that till now there have been 111 instances of the state Assembly election in various states being held along with the Lok Sabha election. In these elections held in different years, a total of 387 national parties contested elections. Of these, in the case of 263 national parties (69 per cent), the difference in their vote share for the Lok Sabha and Assembly election was less than three per cent, in case of another 19 per cent national parties, the vote share difference for the two elections was between three and six per cent. Evidences also suggest, even when the state Assembly elections were held within six months of holding the Lok Sabha election, voters overwhelmingly tended to vote for the same party both for the Lok Sabha and state Assembly elections. Of

the 501 national parties for which data was compiled which fit the case of the state Assembly elections being held within a gap of six months, in 68 per cent of the cases the national parties polled a more or less similar percentage of votes, the variation in vote-share being less than three percent. The situation does not change much with regard to the people's choice for the dominant regional parties when elections were either held simultaneously or if the state Assembly elections were held within a gap of six months from holding the Lok Sabha elections. When the state Assembly and Lok Sabha elections were held simultaneously, 79 per cent of the dominant regional parties polled a more or less similar vote percentage, within a less than three per cent variation in vote share. Similarly, when state Assembly elections were held within a gap of less than six months, the variation in vote share of 75 per cent of the dominant regional parties, which contested both these elections, was less than three per cent in both these elections.

There are arguments put forward against regional parties; some even argue for restricting the number of political parties in India. In my view, regional parties provide a platform to many Indians who have felt marginalised in the social and political sphere for decades. It provides an opportunity to such people to play a role in politics, no matter if these smaller regional parties succeed or not. Simultaneous elections would put smaller regional parties in a disadvantageous position, ultimately leading to overwhelming dominance of the political parties that are already predominant.

*The writer is a professor at Centre for the Study of Developing Societies and a political analyst. Views expressed are personal.*

#### LETTERS

#### COVID SENSITIVITY

People are now taking the Covid-19 pandemic lightly. Many are walking around holding hands and not wearing a mask. Not too long ago, there was lockdown to enable disinfection every night and social distancing was strictly followed. The government must ensure to disinfect all localities at nights now.

**Jerusha Samuel**  
Hyderabad

#### RIDICULOUS FIRE GO

Even as the threat of fire looms over the students in schools and colleges, the Secretary, Intermediate Education Board, quoted a GO issued in September 2020 by State Home Department that junior colleges up to 50 metres height are exempted from producing NOC for fire safety (*Firemen tells schools to run drill before opening, DC, Feb. 10*). The government should ban this law. It's ridiculous that such exemptions are given. Basic fire extinguishers are a must in all schools and colleges.

**Shahbaz Husain**  
Hyderabad

#### RISING FUEL PRICES

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is distancing himself from the people and is a mute spectator as prices of fuel is rising daily. The NDA government seems to be more friendly towards the business community and ignoring the rest.

**Baru Rajendra Prasad**  
Hyderabad

#### 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

#### More industries alone can solve unemployment

HDYERABAD, February. 11  
Setting up of a number of small units was the only answer to solve the unemployment problem, Chief Minister Mr. K. Brahmananda Reddi, said here today.

Inaugurating the Hyderabad Packaging Company at Moula Ali, a unit engaged in the production of corrugated fibre board containers, he said that such units would also help rapid industrialisation.

It has been the endeavour of the State to encourage small entrepreneurs and personally he said that he would render all help for small and young industrialists in setting up new units.

Tarun Chugh



### A Budget of aspirations, self-reliance

The first Union Budget of this decade comes at a time that our nation is commemorating the 75th year of Indian Independence, 60 years of Goa's accession to India, 50 years of the 1971 India-Pakistan War, eight censuses of Independent India (and also the first digital census), India's turn at the BRICS presidency, the Chandrayaan-3 mission and the celebration of Haridwar Maha Kumbh. Under this scenario, India has a vital role to play as a major Asian economic power in the new world order in the post-Covid era.

The Union Budget 2021-22, along with the myriad mini-budgets, including the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana and the Atma Nirbhar Bharat packages, presented by the finance minister to stabilise the economy during a critical pandemic period, has prepared our country to move in the right direction.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Budget addresses the imperative of resetting priorities and identifies the emergence of opportunities by devoting an "all-inclusive Budget" as a guide to a "self-reliant India".

The development of any nation depends on transportation networks

and the way in which they are maintained. One of the most crucial announcements in the Budget was with regard to infrastructure development projects, across various states and Union territories.

For connecting the areas and maintaining smooth flow of traffic, the construction of new roads is a must. The infrastructure projects are not just connectivity specific, like the proposed highway works and upgrade of the existing 675 km Kolkata-Siliguri highway bisecting the state of West Bengal, but also employment-generating opportunities.

Further, as Union territories receive 100 per cent of their funding from the central government, long-stalled projects are being revived and new welfare projects implemented.

The budget has provisioned ₹30,757 crore for Jammu and Kashmir, the highest among UTs. The announcement of a maiden gas pipeline in J&K has further rekindled hopes for the revival of the project that, due to a paucity of funds and the lack of an administrative push, showed no progress for a decade. This gas pipeline project will create a base for increased beneficiary coverage under the Ujjwala

Yojana as well as decrease carbon footprint by increasing utilisation of clean fuel for cooking purposes.

This connectivity upgrade also envisions the development of modern fishing harbours and fish landing centres along the banks of rivers and waterways. The government has provisioned for developing five major fishing harbours — Kochi, Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Petuaghat — as hubs of economic activity. The development of fishing harbours would help in exploitation of rich fishing grounds, create adequate infrastructure for operation of mechanised fishing vessels, mitigate navigation hazards, save fishermen's lives and fishing vessels from the rough seas, make for the handling of fish and crustaceans in hygienic conditions, and, thereby, enhance export earnings.

The first-ever paperless Budget also gave a major boost to the start-up ecosystem in India, with the objective of encouraging entrepreneurship and fostering growth. Recently, 11 Indian start-ups managed to bag a unicorn tag in a pandemic year when they crossed the US \$1 billion valuation mark.

Prime Minister Modi has averred that start-ups are changing the demo-

graphic characteristics of today's businesses. Further, start-ups played a major role in ensuring availability of sanitizers, PPE kits and related supply chains, and fulfilled a sterling role in meeting local needs like grocery, medicine delivery at doorstep, transportation of frontline workers and online study material. The Budget provided a boost to start-up investments by extending the eligibility for claiming tax holidays for start-ups along with a capital gains exemption for investment in start-ups till March 31, 2022.

Mr Modi has ushered in a wave of behavioural change among people with the *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*. The pandemic made *swachhta* an integral lifestyle and a practice that has seen increased community participation.

For further *swachhta* of urban India, the government raised the focus on complete faecal sludge management and waste water treatment, source segregation of garbage, reduction in single-use plastic, reduction in air pollution by effectively managing waste from construction and demolition activities and bioremediation of all legacy dump sites. The Urban Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 is being implemented with a total financial allocation of

₹1,41,678 crores over a period of five years.

Amidst a global pandemic, India's overall allocation for health and well-being increased by 137 per cent in the financial year 2021-22, thus boosting the capacity of the healthcare system to detect and cure new diseases.

Underscoring the importance of strengthening healthcare infrastructure, the government launched the PM Atma Nirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana, with an outlay of about ₹64,180 crore over six years. The scheme will concentrate on bridging the health infrastructure gap at the village, block and panchayat levels and integrate them with centralised healthcare facilities.

Today, India has indigenously manufactured a vaccine and has begun medically safeguarding not only its own citizens against Covid-19, but also those of 100 or more countries under its Vaccine Maitri outreach. Our nation has strengthened its ethos of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* while turning a crisis into an opportunity for developing "self-reliance" and presented a budget with an eye on future growth.

*The writer is national general secretary of the Bharatiya Janata Party*



## SHORT TAKES

1-YEAR-OLD DIES  
AFTER FALLING  
INTO BOREWELL PITAKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANSWAR, FEB. 11

A one-year-old girl died after falling into a borewell pit at Goapala village in Balasore district on Thursday morning. The victim was identified as Sarojini Naik, daughter of one Saniya Naik of the village.

As per reports, Sarojini's mother had come to visit her relative's house at Goapala a few days ago.

On Thursday morning, while the digging of the borewell was underway near the house, Sarojini who was playing nearby, fell into the well accidentally.

Some people present at the spot noticed her slipping into the borewell pit and immediately called for help. Neighbours and her family members rushed to the spot and rescued her from the well.

Though she was later taken to Khaira Hospital, the doctors declared her dead on arrival, added reports. The body was sent for post-mortem.

26,121 INDIAN  
WEBSITES  
HACKED IN 2020

New Delhi, Feb. 11: Over 26,100 Indian websites were hacked during 2020, compared to 24,768 websites attacked in the previous year, Parliament was informed on Thursday.

As per the information reported to and tracked by Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), a total number of 17,560; 24,768 and 26,121 Indian websites were hacked during the year 2018, 2019 and 2020, respectively, minister of state for communications and IT Sanjay Dhotre said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha.

"There have been attempts from time to time to launch cyber attacks on Indian cyberspace," he added.

Dhotre said it has been observed that attackers are compromising computer systems located in different parts of the world and use masquerading techniques and hidden servers to hide the identity of actual systems from which the attacks are being launched.

"According to the logs analysed and made available to CERT-In, the Internet Protocol (IP) addresses of the computers from where the attacks appear to be originated belong to various countries including Algeria, Brazil, China, France, Indonesia, Netherlands, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Serbia, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, USA, Vietnam etc," the minister said.

Dhotre noted that CERT-In devises response measures in coordination with its counterpart agencies in foreign countries for resolution of incidents involving systems outside the country.

ODISHA MAN GETS  
LIFE TERM FOR  
ESPIONAGEAKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, FEB. 11

The Court of Additional District Judge in Odisha's Balasore district on Thursday convicted a youth named Ishwara Behera on espionage charge and sentenced him to life imprisonment.

Behera, a contractual cameraman at Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) was convicted for passing confidential and sensitive information of Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur to Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI.

He was convicted under Sections 121A (treason) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), and 3, 4 and 5 of the Official Secrets Act.

Behera was found guilty for the offences of spying and wrongful communication of information protected under the law with the court saying that his actions caused severe security threat to the nation.

Behera, a resident of Kantipur village of Mayurbhanj district, was arrested on January 22, 2015 for allegedly supplying secret information on various missiles test-fired by DRDO from Wheeler Island to his ISI conduit in Kolkata.

Ishwar was employed as a cameraperson at the ITR on contractual basis in 2007. He had been spying for ISI for the last 8-10 months prior to his arrest. A hard disk, two mobile phones and a bank passbook had been seized from his possession at the time of arrest.

CAA to be implemented  
after vaccination: Shah

Shah tell Mamata Banerjee she won't be CM after April

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, FEB. 11

Determined to fulfill the BJP's key poll promise to the refugees about their citizenship, Union home minister Amit Shah on Thursday declared that the Citizenship Amendment Act implementation would get underway as soon as the Covid-19 pandemic and its vaccination drive ends.

Using CAA as the BJP's trump card against the ruling Trinamul Congress in poll-bound West Bengal, Shah, who was on a day's state visit after cancelling his two tours last month, made the announcement with full confidence before the Matua community, a sizeable votebank of the Hindu migrants now with the BJP, at their bastion in Thakurnagar of North 24 Parganas, to placate their discontent over the long delay in the CAA implementation.

"In 2018, we promised that we, if elected again in 2019, would amend the citizenship laws to give Indian citizenship to our Matua brothers. The Matuas voted us to power. Modi government was formed again. Without wasting time, we introduced CAA which now exists. In between corona spread," Shah told the rally before he lambasted Banerjee for her fierce opposition to CAA.

"Mamatadi started alleging it was a false promise which would never be fulfilled. Betting her life, she vowed to stop it so that it would not happen even if we would have tried. Mamatadi, we are those who fulfill what they promise. We have initiated the CAA. Today I am making a promise on this holy land. As soon as the vaccination drive ends and there is relief from Corona, the BJP government will undertake the task of giving you citizenship," he said showing his resolve.

Shah also asked Mamata, "It is an enactment of the parliament. How can you stop it? Anyway, you will not be in a position to stop it because after April you will no longer be the CM, Mamatadi!"



Union home minister Amit Shah at a public meeting at Thakurbari in Thakurnagar, on Thursday. — PTI

## YOU WILL ALSO START CHANTING 'JAI SHREE RAM': SHAH TELLS MAMATA

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA, FEB. 11

Union home minister Amit Shah on Thursday asserted that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who has been planning to contest the Assembly election from more than one seat, would start chanting 'Jai Shree Ram' before the end of the polls.

"The environment in Bengal has been made such that *Jai Shree Ram* slogan is an offence! If *Jai Shree Ram* can not be chanted in Bengal then

where will it be, in Pakistan? Why does Mamatadi feel insulted hearing this? The entire country and crores of people across the world feel proud remembering our icon. But she finds its problematic because she needs votes of a particular community through appeasement. Don't their (read: Hindus) votes matter? I can promise you, Mamatadi will also chant *Jai Shree Ram* while the polls getting over," Shah told a rally in Coochbehar in North Bengal.

## Rescue ops resume at Tapovan

DC CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI/JOSHIMATH,  
FEB. 11

After a brief pause in rescue operation due to rising water levels in river Rishi Ganga, the security forces and disaster management teams resumed search to save people stuck inside the Tapovan tunnel and those buried under landslides and silt. Uttarakhand government said bodies of 35 persons have been recovered so far from the 204 missing and out of these 10 have been identified.

Rescuers from multiple agencies like the ITBP, NDRF and Army are trying to penetrate deeper through tonnes of silt to reach out to workers trapped inside the

Tapovan tunnel. Apart from drones and canines, the relief teams are also using sonar system to find survivors or bodies in the areas that are having high water level.

The ITBP troops have been carrying rations to villages cut off from main routes. On Thursday they helped in the construction of Jhula bridge across Dhauli Ganga to connect village Bhangyul.

Chinook helicopters were utilised to transport men, material and heavy loads towards rescue operations, and 14 passengers, 1,400 kg load was carried for NDRF and SDRF. In addition 3T load and five personnel of BRO were also transported to forward locations by the Indian Air Force.

Search operations are

going on from Raini village in Chamoli till Srinagar. However, the centre of operations, post the Sunday disaster in the border district of Chamoli, remains the large tunnel where an estimated 30-35 workers are believed to have been trapped after the Alaknanda river hurtled down in spate as a result of a possible glacier burst or avalanche in the Himalayas.

The rescuers are "hoping against hope" to find the workers of the Tapovan power project who have gone missing for over four days now. With every minute passing by, the concern about the safety of these men is mounting. Officials on the ground said that continuous accumulation of slush and silt inside the tunnel is the biggest

hurdle for the rescuers.

"Heavy machines have removed more slush from the tunnel the whole night. A joint team of ITBP, NDRF, SDRF and sister agencies entered into the tunnel this morning. The tunnel is approachable till about 120 meters but more slush and water coming from inside the tunnel is making the way ahead difficult," Indo-Tibetan Border Police spokesperson Vivek Kumar Pandey said.

Measures like drilling to take oxygen to those trapped inside the tunnel are being contemplated. The over 1,500 metre tunnel has become the focal point of rescue operations even as family members of those trapped spend hours outside with a bated breath to hear some good news about their kin.



Rescue operations continue at Tapovan Tunnel in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand on Thursday, following the Sunday's glacier burst in Joshimath causing a massive flood in the Dhauli Ganga river. — PTI

## FAKE | NEWS

We respect social media but if it is misused to spread violence, then action will be taken: Minister

## Govt warns social media apps to abide by Indian laws

YOJNA GUSAI | DC  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 11

In a stern message to social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, the Narendra Modi government on Thursday told them from the floor of Parliament that it respects their work but they will have to abide by the Indian Constitution and follow Indian laws.

Amid ongoing row with the Twitter, which erupted over the ongoing farmer

unions protests and Red Fort violence, information and technology minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, while replying to queries in the Rajya Sabha made it clear that the government has immense respect for the social media as it has empowered the common man and plays an important role in the government's Digital India mission but if it is misused to spread violence, fake news or hatred, then strict action will be taken.

The minister said while

social media platforms have their own self-regulatory mechanism to check and evaluate inflammatory content, it does not mean that they will not follow the Indian rules.

The Upper House also saw Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu disallowing AAP's Sushil Gupta to quote from a Sweden based institute's report on Indian democracy, such reports are political and these institutes and countries, who are commenting on India should "look

inward and then comment." Naidu's comments came at a time when India has strongly objected to foreign celebrities and politicians using social media platforms to support the farmer unions protests and criticise the Modi government.

"We respect social media, it has empowered common man and plays an important role in the Digital India campaign. We respect criticism, you can criticise the PM or the government which are

CBSE issues guidelines for  
class 9, 11 examinations

New Delhi, Feb. 11: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has directed schools under it to take steps to identify and resolve learning gaps, and then conduct examinations for Classes 9 and 11 by following Covid-19 safety protocols.

The board has also recommended that the new academic session begin from April 1.

"For Classes 9 and 11, schools should take steps to identify and remedy the learning gaps and thereafter, conduct examinations by strictly following Covid-19 safety protocols as per the Examination By-Laws," the Central Board of Secondary Education Controller of Examination Sanyam Bhardwaj said in a letter to school principals.

"This exam will also help in identifying learning gaps which could be addressed by schools in the new academic session, at the beginning of classes, by having a bridge course specially designed to address learning gaps,"

● IT WOULD be appropriate to start the academic session 2021-2022 from April 1 to the extent feasible subject to the instructions of state governments, CBSE suggested.

he said.

Schools were shut in March last year as a precautionary measure following the outbreak of the Coronavirus. During the subsequent nationwide lockdown, students moved to online classes. But as restrictions were gradually eased from June last year, schools reopened partially in a few states from October 2020 onwards.

In the letter, Bhardwaj said, "While holding examinations/classes, Covid-19 safety protocols should be followed strictly. It would be appropriate to start the academic session 2021-2022 from April 1 to the extent feasible subject to the instructions of state governments."

Schools are requested to follow the suggestions to make the next session

more streamlined and ensure that learning gaps, if any, are addressed, he added.

"Schools have opened in a majority of states and with the improvement of Covid-19 pandemic situation, it is expected that schools will be opened in other states and Union Territories. Schools should be fully geared up and prepared to welcome the students for face to face classes. This will help students attend schools for completing their practicals," Bhardwaj said.

The CBSE had earlier this month announced the schedule for board exams for classes 10 and 12.

"The board has taken decision to reschedule the class 10 and 12 exams from May-June, because of the unprecedented situation arising due to Covid-19 pandemic. As a result a number of schools have been seeking advice from CBSE regarding examinations for classes 9 and 11 and about the commencement of new academic session, Bhardwaj said.

— PTI

## Holy dip



Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra takes a holy dip in Sangam on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya during the ongoing Magh Mela in Prayagraj on Thursday. — PTI

Maha disallows use of  
VVIP aircraft for Gov.SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC  
MUMBAI, FEB. 11

The Maharashtra government on Thursday denied the permission to use government aircraft for Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari's official visit to Uttarakhand. Koshiyari was informed about the lack of government clearance after he boarded the aircraft. Later, he travelled in a private aircraft. The incident sparked political controversy as the move was seen as the government's reaction to the Governor's decision on 12 MLC candidates recommended by the government.

However, the government held officials of the Governor's office responsible for the incident and said that the action will be taken against erring officials who failed to inform

the Governor about the state's non-clearance.

Meanwhile, the sources in Raj Bhavan said that the permission to use the aircraft for Koshiyari was sought nine days in advance, but there was no response from the government. "Is it not the duty of the government to respond to the Governor's office's proposal?" he asked.

An official statement issued by Raj Bhavan said, "Governor of Maharashtra and Goa Bhagat Singh Koshiyari is scheduled to preside over the official programme of the Valedictory Function of the 122nd Induction Training Programme of IAS officers at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration at Mussoorie, Uttarakhand on 12 February 2021. In this con-

nection, the Governor was scheduled to depart from CSIM Airport Mumbai for Dehradun at 10.00 am on Thursday 11th February 2021."

It also said that in preparation of the visit, the Governor's Secretariat had written to the government of Maharashtra authorities seeking permission for the use of Government Aircraft on 2nd February 2021. The office of the Chief Minister was also informed.

"Today, on 11th February 2021, the Governor reached the CSIM Airport at 10.00 am and boarded the government plane. However, the Governor was informed that the permission for the use of government Aircraft had not been received," the statement said.

Equating the Red Fort violence with US's Capitol Hill riots, Prasad said while the social media companies took immediate action when riots broke out at Capitol Hill in Washington but ignored similar action when farm bill protesters ran riot at Red Fort on Republic Day. "This double standard would not work here," he said as he pointed out to the inflammatory content, especially those with the hashtag alleging Modi of planning farmers' genocide.



## SHORT TAKES

7.7-MAGNITUDE  
QUAKE LEADS TO  
SMALL TSUNAMI

Noumea, Feb. 11: A 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck in the South Pacific on Thursday, generating a small tsunami that caused no damage to island nations in the region before authorities gave the all clear.

The quake struck at just after midnight on Thursday local time (1320 GMT Wednesday) about 415 kilometres east of Vao in New Caledonia at a depth of 10 kilometres, according to the US Geological Survey. The US government's NWS Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said "hazardous tsunami waves" were forecast for some coasts. It said waves reaching between 0.3 and one metre above the tide level were possible for Fiji, New Zealand and Vanuatu. A wave of 0.3 metres struck Fiji, according to the Twitter feed of the island nation's seismology department.

PAK TEST-FIRES  
CRUISE MISSILE,  
3RD IN 3 WEEKS

Islamabad, Feb. 11: Pakistan on Thursday conducted a successful training launch of a surface-to-surface cruise missile which can strike targets up to 450 kilometres, the Army said, the country's third missile test in three weeks. The Babar missile "is capable of engaging targets at land and sea with high precision," the Army said in a statement, adding that the missile was launched from a state-of-the-art multi-tube launch vehicle.

It said that the Babar cruise missile has a range of 450 kilometers. Senior scientists and defence officials witnessed the training launch and acknowledged the standards of training and operational preparedness of the Army Strategic Forces. Raza Samar, chief of National Engineering and Science Commission, said that the launch showed the "proficient handling of the weapon system in the field and fulfillment of all laid down training parameters".

Biden talks tough in  
first call to Jinping

## Slams China's unfair trade practices, crackdown in HK

Washington/Beijing, Feb. 11: US President Joe Biden has expressed his "fundamental concerns" about China's coercive and unfair economic practices, its crackdown in Hong Kong, human rights abuses in Xinjiang and increasingly assertive actions in the region, as he spoke with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping for the first time since taking office.

The phone call between the two leaders came hours after the Pentagon announced a task force on China. This was the first phone call between the two leaders after Biden was sworn in as the 46th President of the United States on January 20. During the phone call, Biden shared his greetings and well wishes with the Chinese people on the occasion of Lunar New Year on Friday. Biden affirmed his priorities of protecting the American

● **BIDEN AFFIRMED** his priorities of protecting the American people's security, prosperity, health, and way of life, and preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific, the White House said in a readout of the call.

people's security, prosperity, health, and way of life, and preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific, the White House said in a readout of the call.

China claims almost all of the 1.3 million square-mile South China Sea as its sovereign territory. China has been building military bases on artificial islands in the region also claimed by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. "President Biden underscored his fundamental concerns about Beijing's coercive and unfair economic

practices, the crackdown in Hong Kong, human rights abuses in Xinjiang, and increasingly assertive actions in the region, including toward Taiwan," the White House said. The militaries of China and India have been engaged in a tense standoff in eastern Ladakh since early May last year. Biden had earlier said he would not immediately cancel the trade agreement that former president Donald Trump struck with China nor take steps to remove tariffs on Chinese exports.

His administration is planning a sweeping review of the previous Trump administration's posture toward China, including its crackdown on unfair trade practices and antagonistic military activities in Asia.

China has faced severe criticism from Western countries, including the

US, over persistent reports of the mass detention of Uighurs and other minorities in Xinjiang.

Biden administration officials have also condemned China's attacks on pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong. China has ramped up a crackdown in Hong Kong after imposing a new law against subversion following major protests in the city.

The two countries also have differences over Taiwan. China resents US support for Taiwan, which Beijing views as a rebel province that must be reunified with the mainland, even by force. During the phone call, Biden and Xi also exchanged views on countering the Covid-19 pandemic, and the shared challenges of global health security, climate change, and preventing weapons proliferation. —PTI

Nations curb Myanmar ties,  
increase economic pressure

Seoul, Feb. 11: A growing number of governments are curbing diplomatic ties with Myanmar and increasing economic pressure on its military over the coup last week that erased the fragile democratic progress in the long-oppressed Southeast Asian nation. President Joe Biden said Wednesday he was issuing an executive order that will prevent Myanmar's generals from accessing \$1 billion in assets in the United States, and promised

more measures. The US was among many Western governments that lifted most sanctions in the past decade to encourage democratic transition as Myanmar's military rulers were taking gradual steps toward civilian rule — changes that proved temporary with the ousting of the elected government and detentions of Nobel Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and others.

One of the strongest reactions came from New Zealand, which has

suspended all military and high-level political contact with the country and pledged to block any aid that could go to its military government or benefit its leaders. It also placed a travel ban on Myanmar's new military rulers. "We do not recognise the legitimacy of the military-led government and we call on the military to immediately release all detained political leaders and restore civilian rule," Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta said Tuesday. —AP

FRENCH NUN,  
TURNS 117 AFTER  
SURVIVING COVID

Toulon, France, Feb. 11: Europe's oldest person, French nun Sister Andre, turns 117 on Thursday after surviving Covid-19 last month and living through two world wars, with a special birthday feast including her favourite dessert — baked Alaska. Born Lucile Randon on February 11, 1904, Sister Andre said she didn't realise she had caught the Coronavirus, which infected 81 residents of her retirement home in Toulon, killing 10 of them. —AFP

## LUKASHENKO VOWS TO DEFEAT REBELLION IN BELARUS

Kyiv, Feb. 11: Belarus' authoritarian leader on Thursday denounced six months of protests against his rule as a foreign-directed "rebellion" and vowed to

resist the pressure. Speaking to 2,700 participants of the All-Belarus People's Assembly, President Alexander Lukashenko charged that "very powerful forces"

abroad were behind the protests. He didn't elaborate, but over the past several months he has repeatedly accused the West of fomenting the protests. —AP

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## INDICATORS

		%
Sensex	51,531.52	0.43
Nifty 50	15,173.30	0.44
S&P 500*	3,914.48	0.12
Dollar (₹)	72.86	-0.02
Pound Sterling (₹)	100.79	-0.01
Euro (₹)	88.29	0.005
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,509.36	0.07
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	61.35	-0.20
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.962	-0.80
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.145	-0.007

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

Average salary  
to increase 6.4%  
in 2021: Survey

Salaries in India are projected to rise by an average of 6.4 per cent in 2021 against the actual increase of 5.9 per cent in 2020, says a Willis Towers Watson survey. It said average salary increase of 6.4 per cent in 2021 translates to a median increase of 7 per cent. "There is an increased optimism on business recovery, but it is yet to translate into the salary increment budget," said Rajul Mathur, India consulting head talent & rewards.

Sun Pharma,  
Shanghvi settle  
case with Sebi

Sun Pharma settled with the Sebi a case of alleged violation of listing obligation and disclosure requirements. Sun Pharma paid over Rs 56.11 lakh towards settlement charges and Dilip Shanghvi paid Rs 62.35 lakh. Directors Sudhir V. Valia and Sailesh T. Desai paid Rs 37.41 lakh each and K. Subramanian had to remit a settlement amount of Rs 36.97 lakh. CFO Uday Baldota and compliance officers Sunil Ajmera also paid.

Indians spend  
highest time on  
smartphones

The average time spent by Indians on smartphones is the highest in the world and the duration for watching short videos is likely to rise four-fold by 2025, Nokia said in a report. It found that India ranked second in the world after Finland in terms of broadband usage on mobile phones and the data traffic in the country has increased 63 times over the last five years. India consumed close to 10,000 petabytes in December 2020.

ACC profit up  
73% at ₹472 cr  
in Dec. quarter

Cement maker ACC Ltd reported a 72.88 per cent increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 472.44 crore for the fourth quarter ended December 31. ACC, which follows the January-December financial year cycle, had posted a profit of Rs 273.28 crore in the year-ago quarter. Total revenue from operations rose 2.08 per cent to Rs 4,144.72 crore from Rs 4,060.31 crore. Revenue from cement was up 4.63 per cent.

■ Gross delinquencies also increase substantially  
MFI loan portfolio sees  
double-digit rise in Q3SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, FEB. 11

The gross loan portfolio of micro lenders has grown in double-digits in the December quarter over the previous quarter, but gross delinquencies have also moved up.

The gross loan portfolio (GLP) of all lenders recorded a growth of 16 per cent during the December quarter to Rs 2,27,893 crore compared with Rs 1,96,820 crore in the year-ago quarter. The GLP of all lenders in the previous quarter, September 2020, was marginally higher at Rs 2,27,843 crore.

However, delinquencies during the October-December period reached disturbing levels of 13 per cent, higher than the post-



demonetisation levels.

As per data from Sa Dhan, portfolio at risk for more than 30 days, or PAR-30, has deteriorated to 13.23 per cent from 4.48 per cent in September 2020 and 1.89 per cent in June 2020. PAR-30 was just 1.78 per cent in March 2020.

PAR-60 has moved up 8

per cent and PAR-90 to 4.9 per cent in the December 2020 quarter. Even during the post-demonetisation quarters, delinquencies were much lower. In the quarter ended March 2017, PAR-30 was 10.56 per cent. PAR-180, which technically is a non-performing asset, had moved up from

1.23 per cent in March 2017 to 6.7 per cent in the September quarter and 6.14 per cent in December quarter of 2017.

In 2017, in the aftermath of the demonetisation, liquidity of the borrowers was badly affected. Further, the rumours about loan waivers had affected the collections, which eventually led to large-scale write-offs of micro loans then.

However, Sa Dhan believes that things might not move to such a level this time. "The economic recovery has started happening and the collections have improved. Further, the micro finance industry had put up better checks and balances to avoid such a situation," said Somesh Dayal, associate director, Sa-Dhan.

## Grofers mulls US listing via merger

BAIJU KALESH &  
ANTO ANTONY  
FEB. 11

Grofers, an online grocer, is weighing a plan to go public in the US through a merger with a special purpose acquisition company (Spac), people familiar with the matter said.

The SoftBank Vision Fund-backed company is working with an adviser, one of the people said, asking not to be named as the information is not public. The grocer is seeking a deal that would value the

firm at about \$1 billion, another person said.

Deliberations are at an early stage and the company could decide not to proceed with the plan, the people said. A representative for Grofers declined to comment.

The Spacs trend is rapid-

ly spreading beyond the US, with blank-cheque companies springing up in recent months to focus on targets in Asia, or with ties to the region. James Murdoch and former president of Walt Disney Asia Pacific Uday Shankar are seeking a blank-cheque vehicle to acquire Asian companies, Bloomberg News reported this week.

Grofers sells grocery and daily household products from cooking oil to Indian spices to shoppers in more than 27 cities, according to its website. Its eight in-

house brands make up the majority of the products it sells to the roughly three million people who have downloaded its app.

SoftBank's Vision Fund led an investment round of more than \$200 million into the company in 2019, along with Tiger Global, Sequoia Capital and KTB.

In a post-earnings presentation on Tuesday, SoftBank Group Corp founder Masayoshi Son said the company may see 10 to 20 public listings a year from its portfolio of 164 startups. —Bloomberg

Life without Google: Oz  
facing the unthinkableANGUS WHITLEY &  
GEORGINA MCKAY  
FEB. 11

Imagine a world without Google, the search engine so pervasive it's the starting point for more than five billion queries a day. That's the reality facing Australia, where the tech giant is threatening to unplug its homepage in a standoff with the government.

Google opposes a planned law that would force the company and Facebook Inc. to pay Australian publishers for news content. The Internet juggernaut's ultimatum to local lawmakers—change the legislation, or else—has left a digital vacuum hanging over a nation that essentially knows just one way to navigate the web. Google runs 95 per cent of Internet searches in Australia.

Potential fallout from the spat goes far beyond Australia for Alphabet Inc-owned Google, whose dominance of global

advertising has made it a target for watchdogs worldwide. If the company backs down in Australia, the pay-for-news law risks becoming a template for jurisdictions, including Canada and the European Union that are following the quarrel and keen to shorten Google's lead.

But disabling what is arguably the world's most famous website would hand all of Australia to rivals, including Microsoft Corp's Bing and DuckDuckGo, which have failed to dislodge Google as the gateway to the web. These search-engine competitors would suddenly have a playground for development and a foothold to advance on the global stage.

Software-engineering student Patrick Smith exemplifies Australia's Google dependency. The 24-year-old from Canberra said he sometimes racks up 400 Google searches a day to help with his studies, catch up on news and look up

recipes. Smith said his browser from the previous day shows 150 searches—in the space of just five hours.

"The prospect of Google search disappearing is frightening at best," Smith said. "It's quite reflexive of me to Google something, anything, that I'm even mildly not sure of."

Searching for 'best beach Sydney' shows the variance in performance among Google's competitors. DuckDuckGo's first result was an ad for a hotel more than 1,000 kilometres away in Queensland. Search Encrypt, which touts its data-protection capability, said: 'It looks like there aren't any great matches.' Bing suggested Bondi Beach Post Office. Only Google returned a real beach, Bondi, first up.

The world-first legislation is still being debated in Australia's parliament and a report on the law from a key senate committee is due Friday.

—Bloomberg

RAILTEL SETS  
₹93-₹94 PRICE  
BAND FOR IPORAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, FEB. 11

RailTel Corporation Of India, a telecom infrastructure provider under the Ministry of Railways, has announced a public issue of shares by the Government of India in the price range of Rs 93-Rs 94 per share of Rs 10 face value. The issue aims to raise Rs 819.24 crore at the upper price band.

The initial public offering opens on February 16 and closes on February 18.

A company release said RailTel is one of the largest neutral telecom infrastructure providers in the country having a 59,098 route kilometres of optical fibre cable network that connects 5,929 railway stations as of January 31, 2021.

RailTel offers a diversified portfolio of telecom services and solutions, including leased lines services, e-office services and data centre services, large network hardware system integration, software and digital services to enterprises, public sector banks, defence organisations and educational institutions, operated through data centres located in Gurugram, Haryana and Secunderabad and Telangana. RailTel is also appointed by the Ministry of Railways for implementing the Hospital Management Information System.

The issue will comprise an offer for sale of up to 87.15 million equity shares by the GoI.

Passenger vehicle sales  
up 11% in Jan: SiamMICHAEL GONSALVES  
PUNE, FEB. 11

The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers or Siam said on Thursday that the wholesales of passenger vehicles from factories to dealerships in India in January rose for the sixth straight month, helped by robust demand for utility vehicles.

Domestic wholesales of passenger vehicles rose 11.14 per cent year-on-year to 2.77 lakh units last month, according to the Siam.

While car sales fell 1.16 per cent over the year earlier to 1.53 lakh units, utility vehicles jumped 37.26 per cent to 1.12 lakh units—also the sixth straight month of pick-up for the segment.

Total two-wheeler sales, too, rose 6.63 per cent at 14.29 lakh units for the sixth month in a row.

Motorcycle sales increased 5.1 per cent to 9.16 lakh units while scooter sales were also up 9.06 per cent at 4.54 lakh units.

Three-wheeler sales, however, declined by 56.76

per cent to 26,335 units as compared with 60,903 units in January last year. Vehicle sales across categories rose by 4.97 per cent to 17.32 lakh units last month as against 16,50,812 units in the year ago period.

Siam releases sales data for commercial vehicles on a quarterly basis.

"Supply chain challenges, including rising price of steel, unavailability of semi-conductors, and higher container charges continue to be obstacles in smooth functioning of the industry," Rajesh Menon, director general, Siam, said.

The pandemic has fuelled demand for personal mobility. But automakers, battling several quarters of slowing sales, have not been able to keep up with supply.

World is going electric  
and MNCs are upbeatRUDY RUITENBERG  
FEB. 11

Schneider Electric SE forecast higher profit for this year after a better-than-expected annual result and joined European rivals in predicting growth linked to the world going electric.

Adjusted operating profit before amortisation slipped to 3.93 billion euros (\$4.77 billion) last year, ahead of analysts' estimates, as demand for gear to power data centres and buildings helped blunt the impact of the coronavirus. The French company predicted earnings will jump as much as 15 per cent this year.

Schneider and rivals Siemens AG and ABB Ltd. have been among the best performers on their benchmark indexes during the pandemic. From rising data usage to connected buildings and electric vehicles, demand is surging for the companies' switches and automated controls. Electricity demand is expected to outpace all other fuels in the next 10 years, according to the International Energy Agency's main outlook.

"There's going to be a massive shift on the side of electricity," Schneider chief executive officer Jean-Pascal Tricoire said in an interview with BFM Business TV on Thursday. "The future will be electric, because all new technologies - be it electric vehicles, electronics, IT and buildings - will be electric."

Schneider forecast organic sales growth of 5 to 8 per cent in 2021. Its

shares rose as much as 2.8 per cent and advanced 29 per cent last year.

Siemens last week raised its earnings outlook, while ABB reported better-than-expected revenue thanks to a rebound in Germany and China and rising orders linked to data centres, EV chargers and renewable energy. Smaller rival Legrand SA reported results on Thursday that were in line with expectations, with the fourth quarter "not matching the general trend in the sector for big profit beats," RBC analyst Wasi Rizvi said. Legrand predicted organic sales growth of 1 to 6 per cent, trailing Schneider's outlook.

Spending to modernise, expand and digitise grids will reach \$460 billion in 2030, the IEA forecasts. The agency expects network expansion to rise 80 per cent from the previous decade. Tricoire said electricity's share of energy consumption will double to 40 per cent in the next 20 years.

Rexel SA, which distributes electrical supplies, including Schneider and Legrand products, said full-year adjusted earnings fell by about a fifth to 526 million euros.

—Bloomberg

FUTURE-RELiance  
DEAL: AMAZON  
MOVES APEX COURTSANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, FEB. 11

After suffering a setback at the Delhi High Court's division bench, Amazon has approached the Supreme Court against the contested Rs 24.713-crore deal between Future Group and Reliance.

Amazon appealed against February 8 order of the division bench, which stayed the status quo order passed by a single judge of the court on February 2 asking Future Group and concerned authorities to maintain status quo in the Reliance-Future deal till it pronounces the final order.

The staying of the order of the single judge even temporarily and permitting further violation of the operative directions in the Emergency Arbitrator order would be difficult to reverse, Amazon said in its appeal. Amazon has been seeking enforcement of the arbitrator award.

HALDIRAM'S FIGHTS  
LOOK-ALIKE SITES

Hyderabad, Feb. 11: The Senior Division Civil Court of Nagpur has issued notices to Godaddy.com, Network Solutions and Nixi on a petition filed by Haldiram's Foods International Pvt Ltd against the domain registrars hosting various websites by the name Haldiram.

Haldiram's operates its website as www.haldirams.com. Many look-alike websites such as www.haldirams.in, www.haldiram.com, www.haldiramfranchise.com etc. are created by fraudsters and are taking money from various people on the pretext of giving dealership/distributorship of Haldiram's. The firm had also filed police complaints in this respect.

Business  
NOTE



## SHORT TAKES



Telangana mountaineer Amgoth Tukaram (left) called on National Police Academy Director Atul Karwal, a 1988 batch IPS officer, also a mountaineer and one who has scaled Mount Everest in 2008 from the South Col route, the same route Tukaram had taken to scale the Everest in 2019. During Thursday's meet in Hyderabad, they discovered that both scaled the summit on the same day — May 22.

## Soumya in Natl football team

**Hyderabad:** Telangana's G. Soumya has been included in the Indian senior women's football team which will participate in the international friendly matches from February 14 to 24 in Alanya, Turkey. The friendlies are being held to prepare the side for the forthcoming AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022 to be held in India.



## Vihari to lead Andhra team

**Hyderabad:** G. H. Vihari will lead the Andhra cricket team in the Vijay Hazare Trophy to be held from February 20. Ricky Bhui will be the vice-captain. Andhra is placed in Elite 'B' group along with Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Vidarbha, whose matches are scheduled at Indore.

**The Team:** Hanuma Vihari (captain), Ricky Bhui (vice captain), Ch Kranti Kumar, K. Aswin Hebbar, C. R. Ganeswar, Maheep Kumar, K. Karan Shinde, UMS Girinath (WK), P. Girinath Reddy, Shoaib Md Khan, S. Ashish, K. V. Sasikanth, Ch Stephen, I. Karthik Raman, S. Dhruv Kumar Reddy, G. Manish, D. Naren Reddy, K. Nitish Kumar Reddy, M. Harishankar Reddy, S. Charan Saiteja, S. Tarun (wk), B. Santosh. **Support Staff:** CD Thompson (head coach), L. N. Prasad Reddy (mentor), Jugul Kishore Ghiya (team manager), M. N. Vikram Varma (coach), P. Madhusudhan Reddy (coach), N. Nirmal Kumar (coach), K. Ashok (physio), K. Ratan Kumar (trainer), K. Nava Jeevan (video analyst), Pydi Raju (masseur).

## 16 teams for 7H media cricket

**Hyderabad:** As many as 16 teams will participate in the 7H Media Premier League T20 cricket tournament at various grounds in Hyderabad from February 22 to March 15. On Thursday, Minister of State for Excise, Sports, Tourism and Culture V. Srinivas Goud released the brochure for the tournament in which print and electronic media sides will participate. The jerseys for teams were drawn and presented by tournament organisers 7H Sports to the captains of all the teams. Matches will be played on a league-cum-knockout basis with the opener at Lal Bahadur Stadium.

## Rashmika in Chennai semis

**Hyderabad:** Shrivalli Rashmika defeated Statemate Y. Sai Dedeepya 6-1, 6-0 to move into the semifinals of the MPTA AITA Open Women's Tennis Tournament being played in Chennai. Earlier in the pre-quarters, Rashmika beat Priyanshi Bhandari of Gujarat 6-3, 6-4. She had made a strong start by beating P. Amula of Tamil Nadu 6-0, 6-0 in the first round.

## Live on TV

**FOOTBALL**  
Indian Super League: East Bengal vs Hyderabad FC from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3  
**WWE**  
SmackDown: Bouts from 6.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

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## SWEET VICTORY

## Svitolina thrashes Gauff; Nadal makes 3rd round

**Melbourne, Feb. 11:** Defending champion Sofia Kenin exited the Australian Open in tears on Thursday as world number one Ashleigh Barty negotiated a sticky moment to reach the third round.

Meanwhile, Elina Svitolina lifted in the pivotal moments of the free-wheeling contest to move into the third round with a 6-4, 6-3 victory against teenage sensation Coco Gauff in one hour and 17 minutes at Rod Laver Arena.

Fifth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas also survived a five-set marathon with Australia's Thanasi Kokkinakis, a close friend of showman Nick Kyrgios, to maintain his hopes of a first major win. With Rafael Nadal crushing the American Michael Mmoh 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 in his quest for the all-time Grand Slam titles record, Kenin and Barty topped the day-time bill — but their matches had very different outcomes.

Self-imposed pressure has weighed heavily on Kenin, 22, the world number four who was defending a Grand Slam title for the first time.

And after an emotional first-round win over wildcard Maddison Inglis, Kenin met her match in



Elina Svitolina of Ukraine hits a return to Coco Gauff of the US during their women's singles match on the fourth day of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on Thursday. — AFP

the in-form Estonian Kaia Kanepi, who ousted the American 6-3, 6-2.

While Kenin became just the third defending champion since 1970 to fail to reach the third round, Barty further lifted hopes of a first Australian winner since 1978.

Playing with her left thigh heavily strapped, the top seed Barty twice

failed to serve out the win before ousting her 387th-ranked compatriot Daria Gavrilova 6-1, 7-6 (9/7).

Barty, who is unbeaten in seven matches after sitting out nearly all of last year, blamed the lapse on ring-rust.

Elsewhere, Medvedev, who turned 25 on Thursday, powered past the Spaniard Roberto

Carballes Baena 6-2, 7-5, 6-1.

Meanwhile, the volatile Australian Nick Kyrgios had a raucous crowd willing him to a stirring 5-7, 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 victory over impressive young Frenchman Ugo Humbert at his favourite John Cain Arena in a Wednesday night match.

— Agencies

## SELECTED RESULTS

## Men's singles second round:

Rafael Nadal (ESP x2) bt Michael Mmoh (USA) 6-1, 6-4, 6-2; Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE x5) bt Thanasi Kokkinakis (AUS) 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-1, 6-7 (5/7), 6-4; Daniil Medvedev (RUS x4) bt Roberto Carballes (ESP) 6-2, 7-5, 6-1; Andrey Rublev (RUS x7) bt Thiago Monteiro (BRA) 6-4, 6-4, 7-6 (10/8); Nick Kyrgios (AUS) 5-7, 6-4, 3-6, 7-5 (7/2), 6-4; Ugo Humbert (FRA); Feliciano Lopez (ESP) bt Lorenzo Sonego (ITA x31) 5-7, 3-6, 6-3, 7-5, 6-4; Casper Ruud (NOR x24) bt Tommy Paul (USA) 3-6, 6-2, 6-4, 7-5; Matteo Berrettini (ITA x9) bt Tomas Machac (CZE) 6-3, 6-2, 4-6, 6-3; Fabio Fognini (ITA x16) bt Salvatore Caruso (ITA) 4-6, 6-2, 2-6, 6-3, 7-6 (14/12); Alex De Minaur (AUS x21) bt Pablo Cuevas (URU) 6-3, 6-3, 7-5; Cameron Norrie (GBR) bt Roman Safiullin (RUS) 3-6, 7-5, 6-3, 7-6 (7/3).

## Women's singles second round:

Elina Svitolina (UKR x5) bt Coco Gauff (USA) 6-4, 6-3; Ashleigh Barty (AUS x1) bt Daria Gavrilova (AUS) 6-1, 7-6 (9/7); Kaia Kanepi (EST) bt Sofia Kenin (USA x4) 6-3, 6-2; Ekaterina Alexandrova (RUS x29) bt Barbora Krejickova (CZE) 6-3, 7-6 (7/4); Anett Kontaveit (EST x21) bt Heather Watson (GBR) 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-2; Shelby Rogers (USA) bt Olga Danilovic (SRB) 6-2, 6-3; Belinda Bencic (SUI x11) bt Svetlana Kuznetsova (RUS) 7-5, 2-6, 6-4; Elise Mertens (BEL x18) bt Lin Zhu (CHN) 7-6 (10/8), 6-1; Karolina Pliskova (CZE x6) bt Danielle Collins (USA) 7-5, 6-2; Donna Vekic (CRO x28) bt Nadia Podoroska (ARG) 6-2, 6-2; Jennifer Brady (USA x22) bt Madison Brengle (USA) 6-1, 6-2; Kaja Juvan (SLO) bt Mayar Sherif (EGY) 3-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-3.

## Team India revs up for Le Mans

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 11

Racing Team India will take its first step on the road to the 24 Hours of Le Mans this weekend when it makes its debut at the season-opening round of the Asian Le Mans Series in Dubai.

The all-Indian squad of Narain Karthikeyan, Arjun Maini and Naveen Rao will compete in the LMP2 category over two, four-hour-long races at the Dubai Autodrome on Saturday and Sunday before the series moves to Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina circuit for another round of two, four-hour races on February 19 and 20.

Racing Team India's Dubai debut will make it



The car in which Narain Karthikeyan, Arjun Maini and Naveen Rao will compete in the Asian Le Mans Series at the Dubai Autodrome over the weekend.

the first outfit with an all-Indian driver line-up to compete in international endurance racing. If it secures an invitation to the 24 Hours of Le Mans in June, it will become the first Indian team to take part in the iconic endurance classic at the Circuit de la Sarthe in

France. "Le Mans is like the whole Formula One championship in 24 hours. It's all about endurance, preserving the car and getting a great set up and work as a team. The pistons need to be right, the driver changes, et al. The challenges are so many including driv-

ing at night at the speed of 300km every lap. It is the toughest race in the world," Karthikeyan said on Thursday.

"We are all experienced but nothing prepares you for Le Mans, anything can happen but it's a great challenge and we're up to it. To represent India is a proud moment for all of us," he added.

"This is a phenomenal step ahead," said Sanjay Sharma, Head-Motor-sport, JK Tyre, which is one of the team partners.

"We are confident Racing Team India has what it takes to be successful and race at Le Mans which would deliver the breakthrough that Indian motorsport needs," he added.

## ENGLAND SUFFER SETBACK AS ARCHER IS OUT; FOAKES HOPES FOR SPINNING STRIP

**C. SANTOSH KUMAR | DC**  
CHENNAI, FEB. 11

England suffered a major setback on Thursday as their fast bowler Jofra Archer has been ruled out of the second Test with an injury. The second match begins at the M. A. Chidambaram Stadium here on Saturday.

"Archer will miss the Test after having an injection in his right elbow. The injection follows discomfort the fast bowler experienced during the first Test," said an ECB release.

England, however, are hoping that Archer would be available for the third Test in Ahmedabad. "The issue is not related to any

previous injury and it is hoped the treatment will allow the condition to settle down quickly, allowing the player to return to action in time for the third Test in Ahmedabad," the release added.

In Archer's absence, Stuart Broad is likely to share the new ball with James Anderson.

Meanwhile, Ben Foakes' two-year wait will finally end when England take on India in the second Test. It's an enforced change as England's No.1 keeper Jos Buttler has flown home as part of their rotation policy.

Foakes said he would love to have the same kind of impact he had in his debut

series. "Of course, it was frustrating to sit out for a while. Over the last two years, I haven't played as much as I would have liked to. So, I am just trying to put myself in a good position. Hopefully, I will be able to contribute," he said.

Foakes expects a spinning track for the second Test. "Obviously, it's an avenue that India would like to go down. Actually, I found it quite tricky to read the wicket. The pitch looks different to the last one — a darker soil. I think it might play a bit low and slow. The previous pitch played really well for about three days. I think there is a potential that it will spin earlier," said Foakes.

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McCann/Btl/Tvs/02/02/21