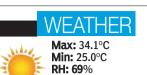
THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

NELLORE | WEDNESDAY | 17 MARCH 2021



Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: clear. Max/Min temp. 34/25 ºC







WORLD 7

Haaland, 1st Native, **OKayed as Interior secy**

SPORTS

Sindhu eyes title at **All England Open**



Vol. 18 No. 250 Established 1938 | 16 pages | ₹6.00

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttarayana Tithi: Phalguna Shuddha Chaviti till 11.29 pm Star: Ashwini till 7.30 am Varjyam: 6.20 pm to 8.08 pm **Durmuhurtam:** 12 noon to 12.48 pm **Rahukalam:** 12 noon to 1.30 pm **HIJRI CALENDAR**

> **PRAYERS** (SHAHI MASJID) Fajar: 5.06 am Zohar: 12.18 pm **Asar:** 4.39 pm Maghrib: 6.21 pm Isha: 7.31 pm SUNSET TODAY 6.20 PM

Sha'ban 3,1442 AH

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.15 AM MOONRISE TODAY 8.45 AM **MOONSET** TOMORROW 10.21 PM





Quick! Let us invite her to campaign for us before anyone else approaches her!

> SHORT TAKES **Lower juvenile**

age, says panel

New Delhi: A parliamentary panel headed by Congress MP Anand Sharma has recommended to the government to consider bringing down the juvenile delinquency age from 18 to 16 in cases under the POCSO Act, noting that minor sexu-

al offenders may commit more serious and heinous crime if left untreated and uncounselled. The report was submitted to the Rajva Sabha on Monday.

Upper limit for abortion raised

New Delhi: The Rajya Sabha on Tuesday passed the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020 to amend an old legislation for raising the limit for permitting abortions from the present 20 weeks to 24 for "special categories of women" including rape survivors, victims of incest, minors and differently-abled.

1L vacancies in

paramilitary New Delhi: There were 1,11,093 posts lying

vacant across the Central Armed Police Forces and the Assam Rifles, with the majority of such vacancies at the constable-rank, MoS home affairs Nityanand Rai informed the Lok Sabha. He said the recruitment was hit by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

REFORM PITCH

New Delhi, March 16: Bat-

ting for holding of simulta-

neous elections in the coun-

try, a parliamentary com-

mittee on Tuesday said this

will reduce the burden on

the exchequer, expenditure

of political parties and also

ensure that human resour-

ces are optimally utilised. "The committee also

believes that simultaneous

elections will reduce voters

deccanchronicle.com, facebook.com/deccannews, twitter.com/deccanchronicle



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy pays tributes to Potti Sriramulu on the occasion of his birth anniversary at the camp office in Vijayawada on Tuesday. Ministers Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy (right), Velampalli Srinivas (second from left), and MLAs Malladi Vishnu (left) and Jogi Ramesh (centre) are also seen.

Parents worried as 10 more test Covid+ at TTD school

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, MARCH 16

With six more students along with four faculty members at S.V. Veda Patashala, in Dharmagiri at Tirumala, reportedly testing positive for Covid 19, the parents of other students are getting jit-

Only last week, 57 students had tested positive at the school. When the school was reopened after the lockdown, all the 435 students had submitted negative RT-PCR reports

for Covid-19.
On March 9, however, when a second round of rapid antigen tests was conducted on all students, 57 tested positive and were admitted at the

SVIMS Hospital for treatment. In view of this, the TTD also carried out tests to the remaining 378 stu-dents and 10 faculty and everyone tested negative.

When the TTD authorities conducted another round of spot rapid antigen tests, six more stu-dents and four faculty members tested positive on Monday. They were immediately taken to the SVIMS Hospital for treatment. They are said to be asymptomatic and doing well now.

Health minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas (Nani) inquired about the health of the students and faculty and instructed Chittoor district medical and health officer Dr M. Penchalaiah and SVIMS Hospital superintendent Dr R. Ram over phone to provide best treatment, according to a release from the minister's office.

On the other hand, over 1,000 employees of TTD were administered vaccine in 10 days and no one reported side effects. On Tuesday, TTD additional executive officer A.V. Dharma Reddy and Srivari temple chief priest Venugopala Deekshitulu also took their Covid-19 vaccines at Tirumala.

In the ongoing first phase, the employees who crossed 45 years and have comorbidities are being vaccinated; 302 employees took the jab in the TTD Central Hospital and while 710 at the Aswini Hospital in Tirumala.

Amid the ongoing strike of nine bank unions over the privatisation of public sector banks (PSBs), Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday assured that not all banks would be privatised. She, however, insisted that the proposed privatisation of banks is a well-thought-out plan of the government.
"I want to assure all

The finance minister's

Panel backs one nation-one poll

have joined the protests. She further said that there are quite a few banks in the economy but we need banks that will be able to scale up. "We have announced a Public Enter-prise Policy and identified four areas where public sector presence will be there. The financial sector too is included in this. But, not all banks are going to be privatised. However, we need more banks of the size of State Bank of India to meet the aspirational needs of the country," she

TIRUPATI LOK **SABHA BYPOLL ON APRIL 17**

DC CORRESPONDENT

As per a press release issued by ECI on Tuesday, the by-poll will rolls prepared and published on January 1, 2021, will be used.

GOVT GRANTS ₹93.32 CR FOR **CAUSEWAY ON PENNAR RIVER**

DC CORRESPONDENT **NELLORE, MARCH 16**

The AP government has accorded administrative sanction for ₹93.32 crore for the construction of a submersible causeway across the Pennar river between Mudivarthi and Mudivarthipalem Vidavaluru and Indukurpeta mandals of Nellore district on Tuesday.

A causeway is similar to a barrage to store water but also has a road which links the two banks of the river. According Kovur legis-

lator Nallapareddy Prasannakumar Reddy, one of the major advantages of the project is groundwater recharge in coastal mandals which are com-bating the seepage of saltwater from the sea.

The seepage of saline water has been polluting both irrigation and drinking water sources in the coastal mandals abutting the river. The areas that will benefit from the proposed causeway include Indukurpeta, Vidavalur, Kovur, and Kodavalur mandals.

This will help connect coastal mandals and save time from detours to provide succor to the people during natural calamities, he said.

CID's notice to TD chief in land case

Naidu was asked to attend CID inquiry in **Amaravati lands scam case on March 23**

MD ILYAS I DC VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

The AP Crime Investigation Department (CID) on Tuesday issued notice to Telugu Desam president and former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu to attend an inquiry into the Amaravati lands scam

A team of the investiga-tion agency reached Naidu's Hyderabad residence on Tuesday morning and served him a notice to join the probe.

Naidu, after receiving the notice, is consulting legal experts about his future course of action. Since the CID has asked him to appear in person for inquiry, he is reportedly discussing consequences of attending the inquiry and also considering challenging the notice in a

The TD turned up in arms and all leaders, including TD AP president Atchannaidu, condemned the issuing of notice by the CID.

An FIR was registered by the CID, under Sections

120b, 166,167, and 217 of the

IPC into the Amaravati land scam case over alleged irregularities in acquisition of lands in Amaravati and their illegal transfer. The CID asked Naidu to attend the investigation on March 23.

The CID registered a case against Narayana, former TD minister for municipal administration and ex vice-chair-man of the AP Capital Region Develo-pment Authority, who was also named in the FIR.

According to the FIR, YSRC Mangalagiri MLA A. Ramakrishna Reddy submitted a complaint to additional director general of police of the CID, P.V. Sunil Kumar, on February

The complaint claimed that some farmers from Mangalagiri constituency had approached him with complaints that "influential persons" from the previous Telugu Desam government had "cheated them by taking their lands illegally", fraudulently, by keeping them "under confusion and fear" of insecurity about their lands.

LIFE GOALS. DONE.

The complaint alleged that a set of middlemen, who were also part of the conspiracy, falsely led the farmers to believe that they were at risk of losing their assigned lands to the government without any compensation.

Ramakrishna alleged that irregularities committed by Naidu and. Naravana irreparable loss" to people belonging to the SC and ST communities and other weaker sections in the assigned lands issue.

Based on a preliminary inquiry into the complaint, a report was submitted by CID DSP S. Surya Bhaskar Rao on March 12, which revealed that cognisance of the offence was made out. Based on the inquiry

report, an FIR was registered against Naidu and Narayana on March 12 under Sections 166, 167, 217 and 120B of the Indian Penal Code (Indian Penal Code), read with Sections 34, 35, 36 and 37 of the IPC, as well as relevant sections of the SC/ST Act and Section 7 of the AP Assig-ned Lands (Prohibition of Transfers) Act, 1977.

Not all banks will be privatised: FM

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO

stakeholders that it is not that the institutions are going to be closed or workers are going to be removed. Whether it is the salaries or scale or pension of employees, all will be taken care of. The interests of workers of such banks will be completely protected," Sitharaman said while addressing the media.

when bank unions, as well as opposition parties, have called for a twoday nationwide strike to protest against the privatisation of two PSBs. State-run banks across many states have been on the strike since Monday, leading to disruption in several banking services as over 10 lakh employees

VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Tuesday announced the schedule for conduct of by-election to Tirupati (SC) Lok Sabha constituency.

be on April 17. Gazette notification for the byelection will be issued on March 23. The last date for filing nominations by contestants is March 30. Scrutiny of nominations will be on March 31 and April 3 the last date for withdrawal of nominations. Polling will be on April 17 and counting of votes on May 2. ECI said electoral

Report on Page 2

bajajallianzlife.com BAJAJ Allianz (ii) **ENJOY GUARANTEED**' LIFE-LONG INCOME DEFERRED ANNUITY PAY GET GET ₹50 Lakh Total= ₹50 Lakh Total = ₹2.39 Crore





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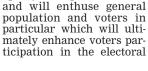
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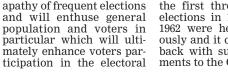
In the above illustration Male Age – 50 years | Premium paying term – 5 years | Deferred Annuity | Premium paying frequency – Yearly | Regular Premium – ₹10,00,000 | Deferment Period – 10 years | Annuity Amount – ₹4,72,900 | Annuity Frequency – Yearly | Annuity option – Life annuity with Return of Purchase Price (ROP) on death | Purchase price/Regular premium is exclusive of Goods & Service Tax/any other applicable tax levied, subject to changes in tax laws if any *Assuming Death at age 100 years | Death benefit - ₹ 50,00,000 | Total Benefits received under policy - ₹ 2,39,16,000 |
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process," the departmentrelated standing committee on law and justice, and personnel ministries said in its report on demands for grants for the law ministry. The report was tabled in both Houses on Tuesday.

The committee said it is of the view that the idea of 'One Nation, One Election' or simultaneous elections is not new to the country as the first three Lok Sabha elections in 1952, 1957 and 1962 were held simultaneously and it can be brought back with suitable amendments to the Constitution.

"In view of this, certain provisions of the Constitution may be amended to have fixed terms for local bodies, legislative assemblies and the Lok Sabha for holding simultaneous elections. The terms of legislative assemblies and Lok Sabha are also required to be synchronised with one another and the mechanism

in this regard requires to be

evolved with political con-

sensus as the term of the

respective state assemblies

need to be reduced or increased," the report said.

It said having continuous

One poll for all elected bodies to save money: Panel

elections around the year whether it is for local bodies, state assemblies or Lok Sabha, put a big strain on the state machinery which further causes hurdles in governance.

The first, second and third elections after promulga-tion of the Constitution were held simultaneously. However, premature dissolution of some legislative assemblies in 1968 and 1969 caused discontinuation of holding simultaneous elections, the Parliamentary standing committee noted







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OTHER STORIES

HC DIRECTS SEC TO DECLARE MPTC, ZPTC RESULTS

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Andhra Pradesh High Court has set aside State Election Commission's order to review unanimous elections to MPTCs and ZPTCs and directed the SEC to declare their results

immediately.

A single judge bench headed by Justice D.V.S.S. Somayajulu heard a batch of petitions on Tuesday filed against the commission's order directing district collectors to inquire into cases of forced withdrawal of nominations by MPTC, ZPTC contestants through coercion and threats.

The High Court directed that the election of such candidates, whose announcement has been held back, shall be immediately declared / certi-fied as per Rule 16 and Rules 62 to 64 under Conduct of Election Rules, 2006. The court observed that it would be open for opponents of these candidates to file appropriate proceedings in the court / tribunal constituted under law.

Though the court appreciated the endeavour of SEC for its efforts to curb intimidation, it observed that the commission does not have the power to interfere and set aside the election. The court further said such power is given to the election tribunal constituted under the law. The court observed that Rule 66 proviso prohibits SEC from entertaining any complaint till declaration of results. It said neither the commission nor the district collectors can decide on such controversial issues once the election process is over.
Earlier, SEC's counsel N.

Ashwani Kumar maintained that the commission could not be a mute spectator when allegations of fraud and coercion are made. The counsel said being a constitutional authori-

ty, SEC is bound to act. Senior counsel C. V. Mohan Reddy pointed out that the role of SEC would become functus officio after formal declaration of results is made and it would then have no power to take any

GOVT COMMITTED TO DEVELOP THREE CAPITALS: BOTSA

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, MARCH 16

administration Municipal minister Botsa Satyanarayana reiterated that YSRC government is committed to develop three capitals as announced by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, including Amaravati as the legislative capital. Visakhapatnam as administrative capital and Kurnool as judicial capital. He ruled out that booking of the case against Chandrababu Naidu was an act of vengeance against the previous TD regime.

BY-ELECTION TO TIRUPATI LS **SEAT ON APRIL 17**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Election Commission of India (ECI) has announced the schedule for conduct of by-election to Tirupati (SC) Lok Sabha constituency.

As per a press release issued by ECI on Tuesday, the by-poll will be on April 17. Gazette notification for the by-election will be issued on March 23. The last date for filing nominations by contestants is March 30. Scrutiny of nominations will be on March 31 and April 3 the last date for withdrawal of nominations. Polling will be on April 17 and counting of votes

ECI said electoral rolls prepared and published on January 1, 2021, will be used for conduct of the by-election. EVMs with VVPATs will be used at all polling stations for smooth conduct of polls.

Electoral Photo Identity card will be the main document for identification of a voter. Alternate documents will be Aadhaar card, MNREGA job card, bank / post office passbooks with a photograph, health insurance smart card issued by union ministry of labour, driving licence, PAN card. Indian passport, pension document with a photograph, service identity cards with photographs issued to employees by central or state govern-ments and PSUs, apart from official identity cards issued to MPs, MLAs and MLCs.

Consequent on announce ment of Tirupati by-poll, Model Code of Conduct has into force with immediate effect in the district over which the parliamentary constituen-



Workers busy in preparing the GVMC Council Hall at GVMC Main Building in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. The GVMC Council Hall was not used in a big way for over nine years in Visakhapatnam.

State creates record in **MGNREGS** workdays

Construction of 15.60 lakh houses to start on April 15

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said on Tuesday that Andhra Pradesh has created a record in the national employment guarantee scheme by providing 2,427 lakh workdays by March 15 and paying nearly ₹6,000 crore to the workforce under the scheme.

The Chief Minister announced that construction of houses under the mega housing scheme Pedalan-dariki Illu would start on April 15. As many as 15.60 lakh houses would be constructed in the first phase of the housing scheme for the poor. The CM was holding a Spandana review meeting with district collectors and SPs.

During the meeting held on video conference mode, Jagan discussed with officials several matters and gave them the welfare calendar for April. MGN-REGS works, house site patta distribution, Nadu Nedu in schools and anganwadi centres, creation of multi-purpose facility centers, construction of medical colleges, roads and buildings, the YSR Cheyutha, the Jagananna Thodu, the YSR Bhima, the YSR Asara Pragathi, the crop procurement scheme, and the schedules of the programmes for April were the major issues that came up at the meet.

The CM said he couldn't connect with district collectors over the past few weeks because of the civic elections. Once the remaining six days' process of MPTC&ZPTC elections is completed, focus could be laid on vaccination, administration and developmental activities, he said.

The CM congratulated district collectors for achieving a record in MGN-REGS works by logging 2,472 lakh working days by March 15 and it would total 2,525 lakh working days by end of the financial year. Around ₹6,000 crore has been paid to labourers through this scheme.

The CM said the government would construct 15.60 lakh houses in the first phase and directed the officials to complete the required process. He asked them to expedite the

Ministers, MLAs, officers told to visit one constituency every day be provided at village level

The CM said the YSR

Zero Interest scheme for

farmers would be imple-

mented on April 16 and

the same scheme for

DWCRA women would

commence on April 20. He

said the Jagananna Vasati

cial focus on children bel-

ow six years and on pre-primary schools. He asked the officials to focus atten-

tion on identifying land

for construction of perma-

nent buildings and also on

training for Anganwadi

teachers. Jagan Mohan Reddy said

the government has been

setting up one medical col-

lege along with a nursing

college in each parliamen-

tary constituency. Officials must speedily com-

plete the process of identi-

fication and acquisition of

land for these colleges.

The state government is

taking steps to start con-struction of medical col-

leges in six places — Pulivendula, Piduguralla,

Amalapuram, Palakollu,

Adoni and Machilipatnam

– in April. The CM said multipur-

pose facility centres are

being set up under RBKs

and 0.5 to 1 acre of land is

required for each facility

centre. He asked officials

to identify the land and

hand it over to the con-

Facilities such as god-

cerned department.

Devena would be imple-

mented on April 27.

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy has directed the officials to ensure that phase of the Nadu Nedu in schools are completed by March 31. During a review with the

district collectors, SPs and officials in the Spandana programme on Tuesday, the CM said 10 types of facilities are being provided in schools through Nadu- Nedu and added that the paint works in the schools must be taken care of. He said Anganwadi centres are being revamped as YSR Pre Primary Schools under Nadu Nedu.

The CM gave a list of the welfare activities to be implemented in April. The Jagananna Vidyakanuka scheme will be implemented on April 9 and the volunteers across the state would be felicitated on April 13. The ministers, MLAs, collectors and SPs should visit one constituency every day and felicitate the volunteers with awards of Seva Mitra, Seva Ratna and Seva Vajra. He said the YSR Zero

Interest scheme for farmers would be implemented on April 16 and the same scheme for DWCRA women would commence on April 20. He said the Jagananna Vasati Devena would be implemented on

The CM said the state government has laid spe-

preparatory works for construction of the houses and added that water and electricity facilities should be arranged in the layouts by April 15. The construction of houses will start on April 15, he stressed.

Jagan Mohan Reddy said a model house should be constructed in every layout and building materials should be provided to those who want to build the houses on their own. The beneficiaries will get construction materials

owns, cold storages, and drying platforms should like cement, steel and metal at low cost as the government purchases them in bulk. He asked officials to utilise the services of engineering assistants, digital assistants and welfare assistants in

also of the Volunteers. The CM said the construction of village/ward secretariats should be completed on a war-footing by May 2021. District collectors must focus attention on completing the construction of RBKs and

He said the distribution of leftover house site pattas should be completed soon. The new applicants should receive the patta in 90 days. Distribution of house site pattas to 11,334 Village Secretariats as newly identified eligible beneficiaries should be completed soon and verifi-

for ensuring better price to farmers. Officials must

identify 10-15 acres of land

in each constituency and

the land would be used for

food processing. Officials

must create a special cell for the acquisition of the required land for National

He said insurance will

be paid on April 6 to nomi-

nees of 12,039 people who have died naturally or in accidents, whose families

are not enrolled in banks.

He asked officials to

arrange special DCC meet-

ings to ensure every eligible person is benefitted through the Jagananna

The CM asked the distri-

ct collectors of East Goda-

vari and West Godavari to

be well-prepared to ensure

supply of irrigation water

to every acre and they mu-

st co-ordinate these mat-

ters with water resources

He said procurement of Rabi crop has been started

and officials must ensure

efficient use of the CM

APP in crop procurement.

He said that the 1907 call

center should work effi-ciently. The registration

process for procurement

of paddy should be com-

pleted and the list of farm-

ers who have completed e

cropping should be dis-

played for social audit under each RBK. MSP

should be displayed in

RBKs and officials must

ensure the crops are pro-

YSR village health clinics.

cured at farm gates.

Thodu scheme.

officials.

Highways projects.

cation of the remaining applications should be done fast. He also asked officials to speed up the identification and pur-chase of the required land for house sites from April.

Govt proposes 2 deputy mayors, 2 vice-chairpersons and municipalities across the state.

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Minister for Panchayat Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy said that two deputy mayors and two vice-chairpersons would be appointed in municipal corporations

Speaking to the media here on Tuesday, the minister said that an Ordinance will be sent to that an the Governor in this regard of appointing two

deputies instead of one, as

it would be easier to pro-

vide better governance for the people. He said that as per the SEC schedule, Mayors, Chairpersons and Deputy-Mayors will be elected on March 18 and after getting Governor's approval, another Deputy Mayor

and Vice Chairperson will

be selected in ULBs.
The minister stated that people will support YSRC in Tirupati bypoll, even though BJP comes up with a Hindutva card.

He said that YSRC will retain its seat with tri-umphant victory in the coming polls.

and was actively

meeting party gurated the party's parliamentary office in Tirupati

Panabaka Lakshmi is a four-time MP and former Union minister, lost the 2019 Lok Sabha election on a TD ticket. She has inau-

mentary office in Tirupati and completed a round of 'Dharma Parirakshana Yatra', mulled by the TD to protest against the spate of attacks on temples, She has toured all Assembly

> BJP could only convince its alliance Jana Sena after a long time to field its own candidate. There is confusion over who the BJP candidate could be.

be fielded in view of the state leaders forwarding his name to the central leadership. However, inquiries revealed the names of a few more persons who are in race for the BJP ticket: Karnataka former chief secretary Ratna Prabha, former central services officer Krishna

not yet made any announsocial media.

Notice to Naidu political conspiracy, says TD

The Telugu Desam party on Tuesday objected to issuance of notice to par-ty chief N. Chandrababu Naidu by the AP CID in the Amaravati assigned lands case, terming the action "politically motivated"

Party AP state president K. Atchannaidu said that assigned lands were taken with approval of farmers for the capital, according to norms and rules. He questioned whether YSRC MLA Alla Ramakrishna Reddy belongs to the SC or ST to file a case under the

prevention of atrocities against SC and ST. Responding to the news of notices being issued by CID to the former chief minister, Atchannaidu called the move an "act of vengeance" by the ruling

Questioning if any former CM has been booked under the SC, ST PoA Act in the history of the country, he questioned if such

dent K. Atchannaidu said that assigned lands were taken with approval of farmers for the capital, according to norms and

a case could be registered based on a complaint from Alla Ramakrishna Reddy, who himself does not belong to the SC or ST community.

He said that the YSRC

government was occupy-ing lands assigned to poor farmers for cultivation to use them for the government's housing scheme for the poor. Atchannaidu said that

the-then TD government had offered the same package to assigned land farmers in the capital, which was offered to general patta lands. He said that land pooling took place in 2015.

"It is vengeance to file a case against it now, and issue CID notices," he

He alleged that Chief

Minister Y.S. Jagan Reddy has a history of building houses on assigned lands under which hundreds of

alleged that Mr Reddy has history of using igned lands in assigned In Idupulapaya for decades and has provided no compensation to the Vadarevu and Nizampatnam Industrial Corridor (VAN-

assigned lands were confiscated in the name of

He

further

housing.

PIC) land victim farmers till date. Atchannaidu claimed that Jagan's father Y.S. Rajashekhara

amended the Assigned Land Transfer Prohibition Act in 2007 to grab lands from poor and allowed them to be occupied by his henchmen. He Rajashekhara Reddy told

the AP state Assembly as Chief Minister that 610 acres were being returned to the government after the matter came to light and then broke his promise by saying he will return only 300 acres.

HC: DON'T DISPLACE

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC

VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Nearly one lakh families

living in 371 habitations

in the East and West

Goda-vari districts will

be displaced by the Polavaram project. Problem is also that some of the rehabilita-

tion and resettlement

centres being readied for

them do not have proper amenities, the AP High Court has been told.

A PIL said some 55 per

cent of the total 1,88,012

project-affected people belong to scheduled tri-bes, 15 per cent schedul-ed castes, 17.5 per cent backward classes and

the rest are from the ot-

her categories. While th-

ey are forced to abandon

their homes and hear-ths, there is no guaran-tee yet they will get due

entitlements or even

part payments. "This is

causing them serious

Nearly 112 habitations would be displaced in

the first phase covering

a 41.15 meters plus con-

tour while the remain-

ing 259 habitations iden-tified as submerging habitations over a 45.72

plus meters contour

would be moved out in a

Taking note, the high

court principal bench headed by Chief Justice

Arup Kumar Goswami

has directed the AP gov-

ernment not to go ahead

with the displacement of

these people unless proper ame-nities as per

law were provided at the

rehab colo-nies. When government pleader C.

Sumon tried to convince

the court about this with

an oral submission, the

court asked him to sub-

The tribals, through

the PIL, alleged that they were being forced

to move to the rehabili-

tation colonies even as

these do not have bare

minimum facilities.

mit it in writing.

phased manner.

agony and trauma."

POLAVARAM-HIT

WITHOUT REHAB

NAIDU TURNED A-1 FIRST TIME IN 40 YEARS OF POLITICAL HISTORY

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Signifying a change of season, Telugu Desam chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu has been named as first accused in a case this, for the first time in his 40-year-long political innings. The case relates to the Amaravati assigned land scam.

Curiously, TD leaders used to call Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy as "A-1" (first accused) and YSRC Rajya Saba member V. Vijayasai Reddy as "A-2" vis-a-vis the quid pro quo case probed by the CBI in the past. TD leaders includ-ing Chandrababu Naidu

and party general secretary Nara Lokesh often used the term "A-1" when they referred to Jagan and A-2 to Vijayasai. Tables have now turned on the father-son duo.

The case against the former CM was filed by the state CID, which also made former TD minister Ponguru Narayana as A-2, the second accused. Curiously, the CID did

not refer to Chandrababu Naidu as Leader of Opposition or TD national president, in the notice it served on him on Tuesday. referred to Naidu as the "Kuppam MLA residing at Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad."

Lokesh: Jagan in sheer frustration stooping to the lowest levels

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Telugu Desam national general secretary Nara Lokesh was provoked enough to accuse the Jagan Mohan Reddy government of "stooping to the lowest level" of filing an SC-ST Atrocity case against Chandrababu Naidu, and said this was done "out of sheer frustration over the deadlock in the capital shifting".

Lokesh said in a statement that Jagan Reddy's "silly cases" were "laughable" and would not cause any damage to the TD chief. "The CM might come out with any num-ber of devious plans to kill Amaravati. However, the pious capital would save and preserve itself on the strength of justice and ethical values

Lokesh noted that the courts had stated many times that there was no 'insider trading' in the Amaravati lands issue. 'The YSRC tried very hard for over 21 months and finally failed to find evidence to book the TD chief in the capital lands cases. Now, they lowered

TD OBJECTS TO CID **NOTICES TO NAIDU**

DC CORRESPONDENT **NELLORE, MARCH 16**

TD senior leader and party politburo member Somireddy Chandramo-han Reddy took strong objection to the notices served by the CID to the TD chief. He lambasted the government for booking cases under 10 sections, including under SC, ST Act, while stressing that it is a heinous act of the government.

He observed that the YSRC was attempting to hound Naidu by booking cases as they did in the dent K. Atchennaidu a few months back.

themselves to the chean level of threatening a former CM with an SC-ST atrocities case," he said. TD leaders Varla Rama-

iah, P. Sudhakar Yaday, and K.S. Jawahar strongly objected to the CID notices and asked how an SC-ST atrocity case could be filed against Naidu.

YSRC DEFENDS CID SENDING NOTICE TO NAIDU IN LAND SCAM

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

suing of notice to N. Chandrababu Naidu in Amaravati assigned lands case. Speaking to media here,

The YSRC has defended is-

civil supplies minister Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao alias Nani said the state government will

firmly deal with corruption. It will do justice to Dalits, whose lands had been deceptively taken over by Chandrababu Naidu. Nani asserted that Chandrababu the goal of YSRC government is to do justice to all sections of people.

Ruling party legislator from Mangalagiri Alla Ramakrishna

pointed out that the TD leaders had acquired lands assigned to Dalits in Amaravati at throwaway

Then Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu also played a role by issuing a government order allowing assigned lands to come under the Land Pooling Scheme.

LS SEAT

Suspense continues over BJP candidate even after Jana Sena sacrifices seat; Cong yet to take decision

YSRC fields Dr Gurumurthy as candidate for Tirupati bypoll The Congress has also

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, MARCH 16

Soon after the Election Commission released the notification for the byelection to the Tirupati (SC) Lok Sabha constituency. the ruling YSRC announced Dr M. Gurumurthy as the party candidate.

The byelection was necessitated after the death of YSRC MP Balli Durga Prasad in September last Opposition

Telugu Desam was the first to announce its candidate — Panabaka Laks-hmi. The BJP has not yet named its candidate.

Dr Gurumurthy is a physiotherapist by professi-on and associated closely with Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy during his Praja Sankalpa Yatra. Even before the ruling party had officially announced his name, Dr Gurumurthy had opened his office in the city and was



ders and different groups

in the seven Assembly seg-

ments which constitute

the Tirupati constituency,

seeking their support.



gurated the party's parlia-

segments.

On the other hand, the BJP supporters expect th-

at Dasari Srinivasulu, a retired IAS officer, would Prasad and local leaders Munikrishnaiah, Dr D.

Sree Hari Rao.

cement on its candidate, but the six-time MP and CWC special invitee Dr Chinta Mohan started campaigning a couple of days ago. Meanwhile, Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan said the party had sacrificed the seat for BJP. This has apparently dampened the spirits of his party workers, who are openly venting their anger over

Funds sought for

edu. institutions

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Narasaraopet MP Lavu

Srikrishna Devarayalu sought the union govern-

ment to allot required funds

for educational institutions

of AP, which were sanc-

tioned under AP Reorgan-

isation Act 2014. Addressing

during a discussion on edu-cation budget in the Parlia-ment on Tuesday, he said

that Central Government

had given an IIT, IIIT, NIT,

IIM, IISER, Central Unive-

rsity, Petroleum University, Agricultural University, Tribal University, NIDM to AP. He said that sadly, not

even a single university exc-

ept for AIIMS is functioning

from its permanent campus.

He stated that the fund utili-

sation for these Universities

SHORT TAKES **LIVE-IN COUPLE ENDS LIFE IN**

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, MARCH 16

A couple, supposedly in a livein relationship, has allegedly committed suicide at a lodge in Renigunta town near Tirupati. The deaths came to light on Tuesday morning after the hotel staff sensed a foul smell and informed the police about the incident.

According to police, the duo was identified as Venkat Goud (35), a native of Venkatagiri in Nellore district but had been residing in Tirupati for the last 15 odd years and Anitha (31), a resident of Satyanarayana Puram in Tirupati. They both were fruit

The couple were in a live-in relationship, as per the family members of Venkat Goud. They took two separate rooms in the lodge two days ago. According to CI Anju Yadav, Venkatesh was found to have consumed pesticides and committed suicide, while Anitha was found to have hanged herself to death in her room.

The police have registered a case, and further probe is underway. They have sent the bodies for autopsy and have contacted their family members for further investigation. Police are trying to find out reasons that have provoked the couple to take the extreme

MP SLAMS YSRC FOR HARASSING OPPN LEADERS

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, MARCH 16

Former Tirupati MP Dr Chinta Mohan alleged that the union government moves to privatise the banks would result in an unprecedented financial crisis as public money to the tune of ₹50 lakh crore is in the banks while pointing to the possibility of bankruptcy.

He found fault with the AP government for targeting leader opposition Chandrababu Naidu while pointing to the cases filed against him by the police.

Addressing media persons in Gudur on Tuesday, the senior Congress leader observed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and AP Chief Minister Jaganmohan Reddy have been attempting to stifle opposi-

He said Congress is the only alternative for BJP in the country while appealing to the electorate to support Congress the Tirupati Lok Sabha seat.

TTD SUBMITS ₹200 **CRORE WORTH CHOULTRIES PLAN**

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, MARCH 16

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), which entered into an agreement with the Karnataka state gov ernment for the development of Karnataka choultries – a pilgrim amenities complex at Tirumala at ₹200 crores, has submitted all tender papers for the review and clearance of the judicial preview commis-

As per the agreement, TTD is set to construct an amenities complex at an extent of 7.05 acres, which the temple body leased out to the Karnataka state government at Tirumala. The Karnataka government, which was eager to land the project, has already deposited ₹100 crore to take up the works with the support of TTD. Upon completion of the construction works as per TTD's designs and standards, the 'Karnataka Choultries' administration will be handed over to the Karnataka state govern-

Following the state government's directive to refer all projects worth over and above ₹100 crore to the judicial preview commission, TTD submitted the tender papers to the commission on Tuesday. The judicial preview commission is expected to ensure transparency in the tender process by examining the public's suggestions and objections through the TTD website gestions

before granting permission. TTD officials stated that all the documents about the project are uploaded on Monday, March 15 on the websites https://judcialpreview.ap.gov.i n and on www.tirumala.org and appealed to the public to present their objections, if any, before 5 pm of Mar. 23 on the TTD website or by email to the Guntur based judicial preview commission - Judgejpp@ap.gov.in.

Groundwater levels up by 4.01 metres in Nellore dist.

The rainfall was 1,305 mm as against the normal rainfall of 1,015 mm

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, MARCH 16

Heavy rains during the water year 2020-2021 contributed to the increase of groundwater level to 4.43 metres as of February 2021 as against 8.44 metres in February last year at SPSR Nellore dis-

During the water year, the rainfall was 1,305 mm as against the normal

Visakhapatnam on Tuesday.

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Andhra Pradesh regis-

tered 261 fresh Covid-19

cases and no death in

The state health authorities reported on Tuesday that out of 23,417 samples tested,

261 persons were infect-

ed with Covid-19. Out of

a total number of 1,45,80,783 samples test-

ed so far in the state.

8,92,269 persons were

found infected with the

virus and of them,

the last 24 hours.

rainfall of 1,015 mm to • ANYONE POSSESSING date from June last year. The groundwater department has disclosed these details in the back-

drop of the weeklong Golden Jubilee Celebrations Department scheduled between March 16 and 22. According to the depart-

ment, Piezo Meters have been installed at 135 locations in SPSR Nellore district under a national

Employees from various Public Sector Banks display placards during a protest meeting against the central

AP sees 261 Covid cases, no death

THE STATE health authorities discharged 125

hours. AP conducted Covid-19 tests on 2,73,048

in

samples per one million population and registered a

Prakasam,

Srikakulam, three in

West Godavari and zero

cases in Vizianagaram. With regard to the

cumulative active Covid-

19 cases, Chittoor con-

tinued to be the worst hit with 484 followed by

214 in Krishna, 193 in East Godavari, 154 in

Guntur, 120 in Visakhapatnam, 72 in

Covid-19 patients after recovery in the last 24

positive rate of 6.12.

active with the virus

while undergoing treat-

ment and 1,579 are still

Among daily cases of

Coronavirus infections,

Guntur reported the

highest of 41, followed

by 39 in Visakhapatnam, 37 in Chittoor, 34 in Krishna, 28 in East

Kurnool, 11 in Nellore,

Godavari,

Anantapur,

government move on the privatization of Public Sector Banks near GVMC Gandhi Statue iunction in

smartphone can access the information on water levels through Piezo meters from a website http://www.apwrims.ap. gov.in or http://apsgwd.ap.gov.in

level Hydrology Project to detect the groundwater

Before the advent of

Piezometers, groundwater wing used to depend on one among the potable water wells in each area to study the water levels. There were 79 such wells in the district before the Hydrology project was launched.

Anyone possessing smartphone can access the information on water levels through Piezo meters from a website http://www.apwrims.ap.g

http://apsgwd.ap.gov.in or CM dashboard http://core.ap.gov.in

information on water levels would help study the short term and long term changes in the water levels and identify the areas affected by the excess withdrawal of groundwater and contain the situation, groundwater department officials

TWO PERSONS **KILLED IN ROAD ACCIDENT, ONE CRITICALLY HURT**

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, MARCH 16

Two persons were killed dent on Naidupeta Tirupati road

Nellore district on Tuesday.

Two persons travelling in the auto-rickshaw, identified as P Venkateswarlu, 36, and A Ramesh, 40, from Modugulapalem of

The condition of one of the injured is stated to be alarming. The bodies of the demised were shifted to the government hospital in Naidupeta for autopsy.

The police booked a case and are investigating.

TWO PERSONS travelling in the auto-rickshaw, identified as P Venkateswarlu, 36, and A Ramesh, 40, from

• THE POLICE booked a

The incident took place when a speeding car hit an auto-rickshaw, which was going towards Naidupeta with passengers, from

Pellakur mandal died on the spot in the mishap.

case and are investigating.

and three others were injured, one of them critically, in a ghastly road acci-Talwaipadu village in Pellakur Mandal of SPSR

Pellakur Sub Inspector Manoj Kumar along with a team of police, rushed to the accident spot and shift-ed the injured to the nearby hospital for treatment.

Modugulapalem of Pellakur mandal died on the spot in the mishap.

Tributes paid to Sri Potti Sriramulu

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, MARCH 16

The life sacrifice of Sri Potti Sriramulu for a separate state to Telugu speaking people recalled during his 120th birth anniversary cele-brations in Ongole and Nellore. Prakasam Collector Pola Bhaskar said Sriramulu was taken up the agitation, upset with the discrimination being faced by Telugu speaking people in Madras during the British regime.

He said the Government of India announced the formation of a separate state for Telugu speaking people with Kurnool as capital on 1 October 1953 and the combined AP state was formed in 1956. The Collector along with other officials, paid floral tributes to the statue of Sri Potti Sriramulu at

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

The state government has

reconstituted a tender committee to be headed by

the retired high court judge justice A. Gopala

Reddy as its chairman to

finalise the tenders for procurement of IMFL,

The state government

issued an order here on

Tuesday to reconstitute

with the chairman as its

head and two others as its

tender committee

foreign liquor and beer.

In Nellore, Collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu felicitated freedom fighter and a follower of Potti Sriramulu, K.V. Chalamaiah, after garlanding the portrait of Sri Sriramulu at the Collectorate. Election Observer Basanth Kumar and Joint Collectors Harendira Prasad and N. Prabhakar Reddy were present.

The district administration observed the birth anniversary of Potti Sreeramulu on Tuesday at Collectorate in the city. The district Collector, along with officials, gar-landed the statue of Potti Sreeramulu at Children Park and floral tributes were paid to mark the occasion. District Collector G. Veera Pandian called upon the people to emulate high ideals espoused with the great leader of Potti Sreeramulu.

AP reconstitutes committee

officer D. Varaprasad and

Marideswara Rao Kasi

Reddy to serve as mem-

The tender committee is

mandated to scrutinise

the offers/tenders received by the AP State Beverages Corporation

Limited/commissioner of

Prohibition and Excise on

behalf of the government

and negotiate with the offers. It has to recom-

mend the price of various

liquor brands to the APS-

bers of the committee.

accountant

for procurement of liquor

chartered

CHARGESHEETS FILED ON 41 IN **TUNI TRAIN BURNING CASE**

Vijayawada: Chargesheets were served to all the 41 accused in the train burning case in Tuni when they appeared for hearing before the seventh metropolitan magistrate court on Tuesdat.

The accused, including noted Kapu leader Mudragada Padmanabham, Tuni MLA Dadisetti Raja and others, appeared before Judge K. Suresh Babu. However, the defence lawyer Ventrapraga-da Uma Maheswari moved a petition under Rule 37 of Criminal Rules of Practice, seeking the court permission to allow only a select few accused to be present before it for hearing instead of all the accused in the case. The court accepted it and posted the next hearing

BCL for procurement of

IMFL, foreign liquor and

beer. The tender commit-

tee is entrusted with the

task of fixation of price

for such products/brands

as and when referred to it

by the Board during the

course of Rate Contract

Year. The Board of APSB-

CL is permitted to refer to

the committee such cases

that do not fall within the

guidelines laid down by

the tender committee for

fixation of the price of

IMLF, foreign liquor and

Farmers demand for paddy varities

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, MARCH 16

Anantapur and Kurnool, 60 in Kadapa, 59 in Srikakulam, 53 in

Nellore, 22 in West Godavari and 16 in

deaths were reported, and the death toll remained unchanged at

7,185. The state health

authorities discharged

125 Covid-19 patients

after recovery in the last

AP conducted Covid-19

tests on 2,73,048 samples

per one million popula-

tion and registered a

new

Covid-19

Vizianagaram.

24 hours

Farmers Associations demanded the state government purchase MTU 1010 variety of paddy stocks directly from the farmers during a round table meeting held at Nellore on

The meeting was held in the backdrop of harvesting in progress con-cerning paddy cultivated in about eight lakh acres this year in the district.

The participants felt that the guidelines on paddy procurement are not followed properly at the 200 odd Paddy Purchase Centres established in the district by the administration. They alleged that the lack of coordination between Rythu Bharosa Kendra and the PPCs have been causing inconvenience to the farmers.

farmers also fault with the agriculture, marketing, and civil supplies addressing their problems of paddy stocks

lighted by the farmers include the shortage of gunny bags and rejection of paddy under the pretext of high humidi ty levels in paddy.

They alleged that 100-

The farmers said they are forced to dispose of the stock for meagre prices because of a lack of storage facilities.

Lamenting over the PPCs stand against procuring MTU 1010 variety of paddy, citing the government's directions, farmers associations appealed to the officials to resolve the issue. President of Rythu Sanghala Sam akhya A.V. Ramanaiah Naidu, AP Rythu Sangham executive body members P. Sriramulu. Venkateswarlu,

and present. departments for not

lying with them.

The difficulties high-

150 kg of paddy is levied per putty (850 kg), citing excess humidity in the grains.

Radhakrishna Naidu,

others

FARMERS STALL LAND SURVEY FOR BHOGAPURAM AIRPORT

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, MARCH 16

Farmers tried to stall the land survey for developing Bhogapuram airport in

Vizianagaram district on Monday. Learning about the arrival of revenue officials for conduct of sur-

land for developing the airport, farmers from Byreddipalem Mudasarlapeta villages of Bhogapuram mandal, arrived there in large numbers and raised protest for giving merger compensa-tion and demanded for relief as per the prevailing market value.

vey for acquisition of LATHE 5Posts,

has been consistently low. and for Central University. AP, only ₹83 crores have been allocated since 2018-19, which show the poor alloca-

tion of funds.

MP Devarayalu lamented that the education needs of Andhra Pradesh's students had been continuously ignored. He stated that the students were in senior secondary school when these institutes were promised. He further stated that these students had finished their higher education, but the Institutes are not completely functional. He sought the union government to give a timeline about when these Institutes will be fully functional and further hoped to fulfil their demand for the release of required funds without pending.

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Chronicle

Competitive, compulsive: TN's 'poll freebie' culture

n Tamil Nadu the promise of freebies mark poll time and much of governance seems to revolve around delivering on populist measures that sustain vote banks favouring either of the Dravidian majors. The 2021 polls, slated for April 6, have triggered an even more frenetic push to promise freebies by the ruling AIADMK and the Opposition DMK, parties that have established a virtual duopoly in the 234-seat Assembly. The freebie culture has been ingrained in the psyche of the people of Tamil Nadu since the mid-1960s when the DMK came to power on top of a promise of three *padis* (measuring roughly 4.5 kg) of rice for a rupee, later watered down to one kg for a rupee due to financial constraints.

The 2021 freebie promise has been the most extensive on record with AIADMK offering a washing machine for each of about two crore families, besides a solar stove to go with the mixer grinder, fans and other household goods that went towards fulfilling Jayalalithaa's concept of easing the burden of housewives and working women of chores at home and win-ning them over. Besides white goods, lap-

There is even a promise of monetising housewives' work in the manifesto of fringe political player Kamal Haasan's party, which is to show how the aim for votes also somehow serves the purpose of creating a social net buttressed by health insurance and an almost free lunch that is nearly unique

tops for students are free as well as data. Consider the promise of ₹1,500 a month for women, free TV cable service and affordable housing for the needy and it completes a comprehensive household package includ-ing free rations, condiments, spices and fesival hampers that should ease lives. And for livelihoods there is an offer of one government job for each household, never mind if the government wage bill runs upwards of

one lakh crore rupees.

The DMK's competitive offerings include
₹1,000 for women, 75 per cent reservation in private sector jobs for locals, a year's maternity leave and food, fuel and milk subsidies. How all the freebies add up is anyone's guess as the state is already burdened with public debt of ₹4.87 lakh crore as of March 31, 2020,

on top of revenues earned from a highly industrialised state. There is even a promise of monetising housewives' work in the manifesto of fringe political player Kamal Haasan's party, which is to show how the aim for votes also somehow serves the purpose of creating a social net buttressed by health insurance and an almost free lunch that is nearly unique. There is no denying the state has been a forerunner in keeping students interested in learning in class through free eduction and midday meals.

The financial profligacy may create a burden that may never go away for seven crore people of the state. The concern for women, who constitute nearly 50 per cent of voters, does not, however, extend to political representation as the low number of seats, less than 10 per cent, allocated to them by major parties indicates. The outlier status of Tamil Nadu is further stressed as DMK and Congress promise to take state students out of the central medical entrance test NEET and emphasise their opposition to CAA as AIADMK, despite being in the NDA, has done too. Competitive freebie offers are a bizarre feature but that takes away only a little from the model welfare state Tamil Nadu has aspired to be and is in many ways

Soul-search for Sarah

— and disturbing — have recent events been in London in an overtly police versus citizen polarity that there is a risk that the an overtly police versus citizen polarity that there is a risk that the demonstrations of women, and social media interventions by thousands of them following the kidnap and murder of a 31-year old woman, Sarah Everard, may end up being narrowly compartmentalised.

The London Metropolitan Police have arrested a policeman in the kidnap-

murder case. Ms Everard was walking home from a friend's house to her own address on March 3 evening and apparently vanished. The remains of her body were found afterward. A large number of women gathered to lay flowers in her memory. The police, gathered in strength, manhandled the women, dragging some on the floor, tackling them violently, pinning some down.

The video of this is distressing. The police trotted out banality: unlawful gathering, Covid-19 restrictions. Not a word about men police attacking a peaceful assembly of condoling women.

In India, or in countries outside Western Europe and North America, such

The whole catechism of an advanced capitalist, liberal democratic, order-free speech, free assembly, gender parity, right to protest- went out of the window. In citizen versus state, the state was seen to be grotesque.

The Everard story is well beyond being a common crime. It underscores violence against women in public places. According to a UN report, 70 per cent of British women complain of sexual harassment in public. The out-

pourings of anger, grief, even helplessness, of thousands of British women on social media in which they detail the lengths to which they go to keep themselves safe (taking longer but better-lit routes, wearing bright clothes for visibility), are compelling.
In this grim background is also discernible the spirit to challenge and change. As a movement, "Reclaim Our Streets" is catching on in Britain.

There have been protest marches, one in Parliament Square. We need this in India too. Ask any girl or woman. Of course, London Police must be held to account as the police in urban India, both infamous for "institutionalised

KAUSHIK MITTER

DECCAN CHRONICLE

Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256 Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234

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Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255 Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08



India needs hate crimes law on lines of Scotland



ndia, with its increasingly assermajoritarian culture, would benefit from an equivalent of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill that the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh's Holyrood House passed last week by 82 votes to 32, following the previous day's five-hour debate when legislators considered a raft of amendments. In a nutshell, the controversial new measure will extend protection to vulnerable groups and take a far stricter view of the offence of "stirring up

As Victoria Atkins, a junior minister in the British government, said in another context recently, the minorities and marginalised communities need such protection. Such Indian groups need it far more than quotas and reservations which, as wise observers have pointed out repeatedly, backwardness. Indians who would qualify under Ms Atkins's definition are Muslims, the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, Sikhs and people from the Northeast who do not fit into the common man's notion of the national stereotype. Myanmar's Rohingyas are a tragic illustration of the outsider in this sense, as were Jews and the gypsies in pre-World War II

"Through the passing of this landmark bill, Scotland's Parliament has sent a strong and clear message to victims, perpetrators, communities and to the wider society that offences motivated by prejudice will be treated seriously and will tolerated", declared Scotland's justice minister Humza Yousaf. Around 18 hate crimes are committed every day in the kingdom; 6,448 were recorded in 2019-20. "I am delighted Holyrood has backed this powerful legislation that is fitting for the Scotland we live in" Mr Yousaf

Although born in

Glasgow, Mr Yousaf is of Pakistani origin and can be expected to bring a measure of personal commitment to the cause of equal treatment for peo-ple of all creeds and colours. "The bill's passage has shown Holyrood at its very best — a collaborative, diverse and determined Parliament which we should all be proud of", he says. "Robust scrutiny has ensured we have met the right balance between protecting groups targeted by hate crime and respecting people's rights to free speech."

He has been at pains to reassure everyone that the new law will not try to instigate any kind of witch hunt. Nor will it curb free speech. Asked about racist jokes and drunken anecdotes, he was quick to stress that the "behaviour has to be threatening or abusive and intended to stir up trouble, so a racist joke is clearly not going to reach be no prosecutions under

the new law. "If your unreconstructed uncle comes in, has too sherries Christmas dinner and savs something they shouldn't do, which creates great offence to his bisexual niece, for example, that is not going to be prosecuted." He fleshed out the point by recounting an abusive tweet he had received but would gnore. "The beauty of the Hate Crime Bill is that you can say that all day long (not that I'd encourage it!) and it would not be a criminal offence.'

That may seem like a The bill anticipates religious bigotry and defangs bigots in advance by abolishing the offence of blasphemy. Actually, modern Scotland is a liberal and civilised nation which has not known any blasphemy prosecution for over 175 years.

The 1968 Race **Relations Act made** it illegal to refuse housing, jobs or services to anyone on the grounds of race or national origins. The expectation was that the law would change people's outlook, and indeed, it has been transformed.

tolerant and sensibly lenient attitude to take. Yet, leniency can be mis-taken for tacit official sanction or condonation. Nazi anti-Semitism did not spring up overnight. German and Austrian culture had a long history of anti-Semitic witticisms which may have concealed a real societal bias. Nirad C. Chaudhuri recalls a Bengali rhyme in which the people of Odisha and Bihar are presented in negative terms to illustrate insularity. Similarly, the English have "jokes" at the expense of the Scots and the Welsh.

Believing laughter to be the best antidote to hatred, the British once offered prizes to comedians who could tell jokes nities. The 1968 Race Relations Act made it illegal to refuse housing, employment, or public services to anyone on the grounds of colour, race, ethnic or national origins. The deeper expectation was that the law would change people's outlook because the law-abiding British would avoid anything illegal. And, indeed, race relations and social attitudes have been completely transformed. The three Race Relations Acts (two others followed in 1976 and 2000) accomplished what the old laws could

not. Stirring up racial hatred has been an offence in Scottish — and British — law for decades. But the old laws were not regarded as providing adequate protection to minority groups. Hence Scotland's Hate Crime Bill was introduced in April 2020 following an independent review by Lord Bracadale, a distinguished Scottish judge, who recommended that all the old laws on the subject be consolidated into one new bill. The mea-

sure updates the list of entities protected by the law while also expanding the list. It also identifies new "stirring up of hatred" offences that apply to all the categories — age, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity and variations in sex characteristics — that the bill mentions.

It is also noteworthy that the bill anticipates religious bigotry and defangs bigots in advance by abolishing the offence of blasphemy. Actually, modern Scotland is a liberal, secular and civilised nation which has not known any blasphemy prosecution for more than 175 years. But the authorities are taking no

chances "I look forward to overseeing the implementa-tion of this legislation which will ensure Scotland's justice system can bring perpetrators to account and provide sufficient protection for individuals and communities harmed by hate crimes, Mr Yousaf promises.

There is no reason why he should be disappointed provided freedom of speech is not curbed and justice is speedy and effective. India has not forgotten the 1968 Kilvenmani massacre when 44 Dalit men, women and children were burned alive, and an appeal court acquitted the convicted murderers on the ground that landlords of their status did not commit such crimes. A new law must also punish rumour mongering about beef, killing cattle and romance across religious borders.

India demonstrates that the law by itself is simply not enough. It must also be administered by politicians of goodwill and integrity.

> The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author

India has not forgotten the 1968 Kilvenmani massacre when 44 Dalit men, women and children were burned alive, and a court acquitted the convicted murderers on the ground that landlords of their status did not commit such crimes

YSRC'S CLEAN SWEEP

The clean sweep by the ruling YSR Congress and its large margin of vote share in the recently-held Urban Local Bodies polls is due to the speedy implementation of several welfare schemes and developmental works in record time by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy (YSRC gets 53% vote, BJP, Jana Sena gain at TD cost, DC, March 16). At the same time, the verdict shows that now expectations of the people are running high and the ruling party in AP needs to resolve vigorously the issues of 'Three Capitals of AP' and 'Visakhapatnam Steel Plant's privatisation by the Centre'. In these elections, the Jana Sena is just taking its first baby steps towards its future

Dr C. Ghanshyam Visakhapatnam

MEAN OF AMIT SHAH

It's quite mean and unbecoming on the part of home minister Amit Shah for mocking West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Baneerjee (Shah mocks Didi campaign in wheelchair, DC, March 16). After the immediate acrimonious outburst on conspiracy theory for her injury, Mamata retracted her allegations to a mere accident caused inadvertently due to the surging should have rest there instead of raising all sorts of sarcasm by almost all BJP stalwarts as if to push her into Abhimanyu's chakravyuh.

K. Nehru Patnaik Visakhapatnam

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN • nronicie

Hymns from Gita over Dacca Radio

CALCUTTA, March. 16 The "Dacca Betar Kendra" for the first time in its history broadcast hymns from the Gita this morning amply substantiating Awami Leader Sheikh Mujibar Rehman's declared policy of secularism.

Another was special classes for patriotic songs. One of the songs begins thus: "its your land and my land — our soil. On it together
— we are to it." Another songs runs: "crossing the days of darkness, we have reached the dawn of a new day. Unity is dignity, unity is strength. Fear of the journey has ended. We now move fearlessly, defiantly... we are the torch bearers of a new path, we want to embrace the new day."

Dilip Cherian Dilli Ka Babu



Fresh push for lateral entry of babus likely

year, Panagariya, former vicechief of the government Niti Aayog, wrote in his book, India Unlimited — Reclaiming the Lost Glory, that Indian babus suffered from the socialist hangover, which has slowed down the pace of reforms the Modi sarkar wishes to introduce. To support his view, he cited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative for lateral entry at the top levels of the bureaucracy. According to Mr Panagariya, babus slowed down the process to the extent that at the very end of his term only nine officers could be inducted from outside.

But the government has not given

up, yet. It is making another push

to induct 30 more private sector specialists into different govern-

ment departments at the crucial

decision-making level of joint sec-

retaries and directors on a contract basis. The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) will shortlist the candidates for interviews. Prime Minister Modi has intro-

duced the mechanism of recruiting fresh talent in the bureaucracy from the private sector during his first tenure. But the first round hasn't been the success that the government was expecting. It could recruit only nine of the 10 domain experts it had selected, and one of them, Arun Goyal, who had joined the commerce ministry as joint secretary, put in his papers barely a year later. It appears that far from changing the system, the lateral entrants are more likely to be subsumed by it. Further, a year after their appointment, the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) had issued a notice to the UPSC after a petition from whistleblower Indian Forest Service (IFoS) officer Sanjiv Chaturvedi alleged irregularities in the recruitment of three of the nine lateral entrants by the

government. The government is catching flak already. Some Opposition leaders are calling for the policy to be withdrawn. Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad has threatened to "gherao" Parliament, calling the government's move a violaof constitutional rights. Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejaswi Yadav has said that UPSC's lateral recruitment an injustice to the youth.

Will the Modi sarkar overcome the political resistance from outside and from the babus within who may try to defend their turf?

ED AND KERALA POLLS The Enforcement Directorate (ED)

has reportedly registered a case against senior officials of the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) for alleged FERA violations. But things get blurred around election time when the stakes are high. Questions are being raised about the timing of the probe, with the ruling LDF claiming the ED action as a "political conspiracy" by the BJP, which is trying hard to make a dent in the

Sources say that ED has served notices to KIIFB CEO Dr K.M. Abraham, former chief secretary of Kerala, and deputy managing director Vikramjit Singh, a serving IPS officer of the Kerala cadre. As it so happens, chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan is chairman of the board. Not surprisingly, therefore, the ruling party has linked the ED action to the forthcoming elec-

tions. The LDF leaders have said that the ED moved only after Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman's statements against the Board.

The Centre has denied the allegations. It is being said that ED's investigations discovered that the board earned ₹2,100 crores by issuing bonds for infra projects, but the money was used by cultural, fisheries and tourism departments. Besides, the state government issued the bonds without the Centre's permission, which violat-

Politics, or not, the dust will only settle once the state elections are done with.

ed rules

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

DECCAN CHRONICLE | NELLORE | WEDNESDAY | 17 MARCH 2021

SHORT TAKES

AMARINDER TO MEET SIDDHU AGAIN

Chandigarh, March 16: Chief Amarinder Singh is expected to meet former minister Navjot Singh Sidhu over lunch on Wednesday, amid speculations that the cricketerturned-politician might be given an important role ahead of the 2022 state polls, official sources said.

This will be the second luncheon meeting between the leaders. The first such meeting had taken place in November last, seen as the first step to break the ice between the two

Singh had then said that he and Sidhu would continue to have cordial meetings.

Another meeting between the two leaders assumes significance as the Congress central leadership has been trying to rehabilitate Sidhu who had resigned as minister after he was divested of the Local Bodies portfolio in 2019.

Congress leader and Punjab affairs in-charge Harish Rawat has been pushing for an important position for Sidhu. Rawat had met Sidhu on March 10. After the meeting, Sidhu had said, "was summoned by Harish Rawat ji.

Had a cordial meeting.' For the past several weeks, party circles have been abuzz with the speculation that Sidhu could be re-inducted into the state cabinet with some key portfolios. There have also been talks of the possibility of appointing him as party state unit president.

NINE SAD MLAS FROM PUNJAB **BOOKED**

Chandigarh, March 16: Nine Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) legislators from Punjab have been booked for their alleged attempt to gherao and confront Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar outside

the Assembly here last week, officials said on Tuesday.
The booked legislators are former ministers Sharanjit Singh Dhillon and Bikram Singh Majithia, Baldev Singh Khaira, Sukhwinder Kumar, Harinder Pal Singh Chandumajra, Kanwarjit Singh Barkandi, Manpreet

Singh Ayali, Gurpartap Singh Wadala and N.K. Sharma. The Shiromani Akali Dal termed the registration of case against its MLAs an 'unfortunate and undemocrat-

The Chandigarh police registered the case against the SAD MLAs under relevant IPC sec

tions including 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 323 (punishment for voluntarily causing hurt) and 341 (punishment for wrongful restraint), according to a copy The SAD legislators had confronted Khattar outside the

Assembly hall on March 10 and had demanded that a resolution be passed in the Haryana Assembly against the Centre's three new farm laws. Thereafter, the Haryana Assembly secretariat had decided to lodge an FIR against the group of Punjab MLAs for allegedly misbehaving with Khattar.

MAJOR FOREST FIRE RAGES ON IN ODISHA

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC **BHUBANESWAR, MARCH 16**

A major fire broke out on Tuesday at Charikharia forest, adjacent to Chandaka Wildlife Sanctuary on the outskirts Bhubaneswar. Fire services personnel rushed to the spot and started dousing the flame, which was reportedly spreading quickly towards the sanctuary. The reason behind the outbreak of fire was yet to be ascertained.

Similar fire was reported at Barunei hill forest in Khordha district, couple of days ago. The forest fire in the Similipal National Park in

Mayurbhanj district was brought under control few days ago, thanks to rainfall in the region. Reports from Similipal National Park in Mayurbhanj district said that though wildfire had been contained at most of the places, fire incidents were reported from Podadiha, Dubrigarh, Jarada, Manikpur, Balma and Barehipani. The SNP which also houses the Similipal National Tiger Reserve has reported wildfire from more than 500 spots in the past two weeks. At most of the places, the wildfire got doused because a few spells of rain on March 10.



West Bengal CM and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, sitting on a wheelchair, addresses an election campaign rally ahead of Assembly polls in

Dissent over tickets in **Bengal has Shah worried**

Takes party leaders in WB to task over low turn out in poll rallies

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC

KOLKATA, MARCH 16

A growing and fierce revolt within the BJP over the distribution of tickets to most of the Trinamul Congress turncoats for the Assembly election in West Bengal and low turnouts in the party's poll campaign rallies forced Union home minister Amit Shah to return to the state instead of New Delhi from neighbouring Assam quietly on Monday night and pull up the party leaders for their role during a

Finishing his two-state visit on Monday afternoon, Shah went to attend a programme in the evening in Assam from where he was supposed to return to the capital later. However, he flew from Guwahati to Kolkata, checked into one of the two hotels, which have become favourite destinations for the party leaders for poll preparations in the city, at and night-long meeting.

"marathon class"

There, according sources, he came down heavily on the party func-

AASU TO HOLD

ANTI-CAA STIR

ON MARCH 20

P.C. Chacko to join NCP

member of the CPM or the

BJP. I wish to be with a

party which has Congress

culture. And while being in that party I would like to extend support to the Left Front," he said.

Chacko, 74, quit the

party on Wednesday in

protest against the intense

groupism in the organisation. Chacko, 74, who has

held various crucial posi-

tions in the party, alleged

that there was no internal

democracy

ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 16

Veteran leader P.C. Chacko who quit Congress last week is all set to join NCP. Chacko, who arrived in New Delhi on Tuesday, called on NCP supremo Sharad Pawar to discuss his entry into the party. Pawar's party is a constituent of LDF in Korala. stituent of LDF in Kerala. Before meeting Pawar he

told mediapersons, "I tionaries, who painted a rosy picture of poll preparations to the top leadership, and sought their explanation over massive protests by the rank and

file against distribution of tickets to the former TMC leaders throughout the day in the city including at Hastings, which saw demonstration on Tuesday also, and the districts. Mr Shah, sources added,

also expressed displeasure over thin crowd at Circus Ground in Jhargram which he had to address virtually from Kharagpur. He wanted to know the reason behind the flop show, sources said.

The prominent TMC turncoats, who are in the eye of storm in the BJP for getting tickets, include Rajib Banerjee at Domjur and his aide Mohit Ghanti ired number of candidates at Panchla in Howrah,

Rabindranath tacharya at Singur and Prabir Ghoshal in Uttarpara. Besides demands of changing candidates at three more constituencies in South 24

He alleged seats had

been divided between the

"A" and "I" groups led by former chief minister Oommen Chandy and opposition leader Ramesh

Chennithala respectively.

The two factions had com-

plete control over ticket

allotment for each con-stituency. Under these cir-cumstances there was no

point in continuing in the

Congress, he had stated

after resigning from the

party.

districts have been raised. The sources pointed out hat the num aspirants in BJP has gotten bigger than the requwhile people in rural areas leaders. What do they want? Do they want to kill me?" MAMATA BANERJEE,

West Bengal CM

Amit Shah is frustrated as his

rallies have regis-

tered poor turnout.

Instead of running

hatching conspira-

cies to harass TMC

the country, he is sit-ting in Kolkata and

remain busy in farming, instead of political rallies, this time of the year. But their arguments only fell flat before the former BJP chief. On Tuesday morning when BJP president J.P. Nadda landed in the city on a campaign tour, he also attended the second round of meeting by Shah. Parganas and some other

While leaving the city later, Shah summoned Rov a Delhi at night for picking up suitable candidates for

the remaining phases of

MP govt decides to include milk in anganwadi meals, not eggs

MANOJ ANAND | DC **GUWAHATI, MARCH 16**

Just a week before the first phase of polling, the influential All Assam students' Union (Aasu) has announced a mega statewide anti-CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) protest on March 20.

Informing that Aasu activists are going to take out mega bike rallies across the state to educate and remind the voters about the CAA introduced, Aasu president Dipanka Nath told reporters, "Our aim is to make all, especially those living in the rural areas, aware of the draconian CAA introduced by the BJP government. We will reach out to all and make them aware of how the CAA is a threat to the identity and culture of Assam.

The students body has also decided to issue directives to its members at the state executive meeting on March 21, to indirectly campaign in favour of the two new regional parties, the Assam Jatiya Parishad and Raijor Dal, for the Assembly elec-

Aasu, which claims to be an 'apolitical' organisation, for the first time took a 'political stand' by backing the formation of AJP to oust the BJP-AGP combine from power. The movement against the controver-sial CAA, which started in December 2019, gave rise to a call for a new political party.

then accused the Kamal criticism from child Nath government of health experts as well as attempting to change the the Opposition Congress. RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC The Shivraj government

on Tuesday announced to do away with eggs and introduce milk in the menu of midday meals provided in the anganwadi Centres in Madhya Pradesh to combat malnutrition among children. The decision taken by the state cabinet held here

BHOPAL, MAR 16

under the chairmanship of chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan overrides the proposal mooted dur-ing the Kamal Nath government to add eggs in the menu of anganwadi mid-

The Opposition BJP had

dietary habits of children belonging to a particular community by adding eggs in the menu of midday meals in the anganwadi centres.

The party had then warned that it might lead to cultural conflict in the state. The state cabinet approved the proposal to provide milk to children in the age group of 3 and 6 in the anganwadi centres thrice a week, state home minister Narottam Mishra told reporters

Mr Chouhan's decision to shun eggs and introduce milk in anganwadi midday meal has drawn dren. Milk is not a com-

"Availability of milk cou-

pled with shelf-life of the liquid food raises question mark over feasibility of the decision to add milk in the menu of midday meals in the anganwadi centres", child health expert Sachin Kumar Jain has

Opposition Congress also slammed the Shivraj government for reversing the decision taken by the Kamal Nath government to add eggs in the menu of anganwadi midday meal.

Egg is known to be a high protein diet. Egg in diet can effectively combat malnutrition among chilplete nutrient. The Kamal Nath government had introduced eggs as well as milk in the menu of anganwadi midday meal, leaving it to the beneficiaries to choose between them. If egg is dropped in the

menu of anganwadi midday meal, then an alternative of compensatory value should have been added in the menu of anganwadi midday meal to combat malnutrition among children", Congress spokesman here Bhupendra Gupta said.

He accused the state BJP government of unnecessarily dragging religion and culture in a sensitive matter like this for politi-

After Waze's arrest, BJP wants Maha HM's removal

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, MARCH 16

After the arrest of police officer Sachin Waze in the industrialist Mukesh Ambani security scare case, the Maharashtra BJP has now targeted State Home Minister Anil Dechapting Deshmukh by demanding his resignation. The party has started a campaign highlighting his 'failure' to take action in several major crimes in the state. The BJP on Tuesday

started hashtag "#ResignAnilDeshmukh" on Twitter saying politics in Maharashtra has been criminalised. Citing various crime cases, the party asked Mr Deshmukh what action he has taken in these cases so far.
The saffron party has

mentioned several cases like a woman being burnt alive at Hinghanghat in Wardha district, the lynching of Sadhus at Palghar, the Pooja Chavan death case in which Shiv Sena minister Sanjay Rathod resigned, the controversial speech of activist Sharjeel Usmani at Pune etc to demand Mr Deshmukh's resignation. Mr Deshmukh has

found himself in the soup in the Ambani security scare case, in which an explosive-laden vehicle was found near the indusresidence Antillia on February 25. The vehicle belonged to auto parts dealer Mansukh Hiren, who was later found dead in a creek in Thane district on March 5. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested Mr Waze on March 13 in connection with its probe of

However, Maharashtra added.

NIA COURT REJECTS WAZE'S PLEA ON ARREST

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, MARCH 16

Controversial Mumbai police officer Sachin Waze could not get any relief from the special NIA court, as the judge dismissed his contention that being a police officer he was protected from arrest without a prior sanction.

The court, however, has partially allowed his plea seeking presence of his lawyer during interroga-tion but the lawyer could remain present at the distance where he can see Waze but his questioning is inaudible.

Waze's lawyer contended that as per a notifica-tion May 23, 1979 consent is required under section 45 (1) of the CrPC hence he demanded his arrest be declared illegal. One of the other reasons seeking his arrest as illegal was that he was not produced before the court within 24 hours of his arrest.

NCP chief Jayant Patil has ruled out the possibility of Mr Deshmukh's res ignation. "There is no question of home minister being replaced. There is no cabinet reshuffle happening," Mr Patil said. Action would be taken against those found guilty in the case of the recovery of SUV as well as the mysterious death of Thane businessman

SC to hear plea by Zakia on April 13

PARMOD KUMAR I DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

The Supreme Court on Tuesday fixed April 13 to hear a plea by Zakia Ehsan Jafri challenging the clean chit to the then Gujarat chief minister the Special bv ers Investigation Team (SIT) for their alleged inaction in 2002 post-Godhra riots including attack on Gulberg society.
Zakia Ehsan Jafri

widow of Congress leader and former member of parliament Ehsan Jafri has challenged October 5, 2017 order of Gujarat High Court upholding the magistrate court order rejecting Jafri's protest petition challenging the SIT report giving clean chit to top political leaders and state functionaries for the alleged larger conspiracy.

Ehsan Jafri was among the 68 people killed at Society Gulberg in Ahmedabad on February 28, 2002. Justice A.M. Khanwilkar heading a bench also comprising Justice Dinesh Maheshwari and Justice Krishna Murari, in the order passed on Tuesday said, "Put this case for hearing on April 13. No request for adjournment will be entertained'

The hearing on Zakia Jafri's petition that is pending before the top court since 2018 was adjourned to April 13

after senior counsel Kapil Sibal told the court to hear the matter sometime in April since several senior lawyers are busy in the Maratha reservation case being heard by a 5judge Constitution

Bench. closure report February 8, 2012, giving a clean chit to Modi and 63 others, including senior government officials, say ing there was "no prose cutable evidence" against them.

The SIT in earlier hearings while raising preliminary objection to Zakia Jafri plea had opposed it saying "it is an issue of facts and for how long it can go on.

The court has also been told in the earlier hearings that there were concurrent findings of the magistrate court and the High Court as well reject-

ing Zakia Jafri's plea. The SIT was set up by the top court, and it had come to the conclusion that no case was made out and the same was accepted by the magistrate and reiterated by the High Court.

The petition by Zakia has said that the High Court refused to interfere with the magistrate court order "despite large amount of documentation and contemporaneous evidence that existed which made out a triable case against all

FIGHTING I CORONA India records 24,492 fresh cases of Coronavirus in last one day

Covid cases up, night curfew returns in MP, Guj

DC CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, MAR 16

Madhya Pradesh government announced to impose night curfew in Bhopal and Indore from Wednesday in the wake of sudden spurt in coronavirus cases in the state. The state government has also ordered closure of shops after 10 pm in 8 other cities in the state.

Chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan ordered the measures after reviewing the pandemic situation in the state at a high level

duration of night curfew was vet to be decided. The state government

ordered closure of shops after 10 pm in the cities of Jabalpur, Gwalior, Ujjain, Ratlam, Chhindwara, Burhanpur, Betul and Khargone. The government has also barred celebration of Holi in public, but allowed the revelers to observe the festival individually. Madhya Pradesh has reported 797 fresh coronavirus positive cases in the last 24 hours taking

reached 3,890 in the state. Similarly, to contain the

surge in Covid-19 cases, the Gujarat government on Tuesday decided to increase the night curfew timings in four major cities of the state by two hours. The curfew will now remain in force in Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Rajkot from 10 pm to 6 am, an official statement said. The curfew timings earlier were from 12 am to 6 am. The decision was taken

official meeting here on the tally of cases to on Tuesday in the core Tuesday. However, the 2,69,391. The death toll has committee meeting of the task-force coronavirus headed by Chief Minister Vijay Rupani.

The state government has decided to impose curfew from 10 pm to 6 am in view of the increasing cases of coronavirus," the government said in the statement. The restrictions will be in place till

March 31, it added.
The Gujarat Cricket
Association (GCA) on Monday said the next T20 matches India between and

England will be played without any spectators at Narendra Modi Stadium here in view of rising cases of coron-

On Monday, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation also asked eateries, restaurants and malls in eight wards of the city to close down at 10 pm. Gujarat on Monday reported 890 new cases of Covid-19, taking its tally to 2,79,097. Last month, the was reporting around 200 cases daily.

Surat has been reporting

Covid-19 cases in the state followed by Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Rajkot, as per official data.

the highest number of

Meanwhile, India has recorded 24,492 fresh cases of the coronavirus in the last one day out of which 15,051 cases are from Maharashtra while 1,818 from Punjab and 1,054 from Kerala. Cases have also started rising in Delhi and Guiarat. The number of active cases in the country has increased to more than 2.23 lakh while 131 deaths were reported.





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SHORT

PHILIP LEAVES HOSPITAL AFTER TREATMENT

London, March 16: Britain Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, on Tuesday left King Edward VII's Hospital in central London after a month since he had been admitted there and went on to have a

"successful heart procedure".

The 99-year-old husband of Queen Elizabeth II was pictured being driven out in a black BMW after a 28-night stay, his longest spell in hospital. He was first admitted to the King Edward VII Hospital on Feb. 16 before moving to a National Health Service (NHS) specialist St Bartholomew's Hospital two weeks later, where he underwent a procedure for a pre-existing heart condition.

3 DIE WHEN CAR HITS 9 PEOPLE IN SAN DIEGO

San Diego, March 16: A driver plowed through a crowd on a sidewalk in downtown San Diego on Monday morning, killing three people and injuring six others, including two who are hospitalised in criti-

cal condition, police said. The driver — whom authorities identified only as a 71year-old man — appeared to be driving while impaired when his car suddenly veered off the street shortly after 9 a.m. near a community college and went up onto the sidewalk briefly before returning to the road, said San Diego Police Chief

David Nisleit.

Nisleit said the driver identified himself to police and he was arrested. Earlier police had stated that he had tried to flee. Multiple ambulances responded to the scene near City College.

UGANDA OPPN LEADER ARRESTED

Kampala, March 16: Ugandan opposition leader Bobi Wine was arrested on Monday as he took part in a protest in the capital, according to a post on his Twitter page. The 39year-old popstar-turned-presidential contender last week had called on Ugandans to "rise up peacefully and unar-med" against President Yoweri Museveni who won a sixth term in office following disputed elections in January.

"Bobi Wine arrested as he led MPs and other leaders in a peaceful protest against the abduction, torture and murder of his supporters," said the post. Around 15 MPs and activists from Wine's National Unity Platform political party took part in the protest which was quickly halted by police officers and soldiers.

DUTCH PM'S ELECTION LEAD SHRINKS

Amsterdam, March 16: The lead of Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte's conservative party in polls continued to shrink Tuesday, according to a new survey published ahead of the second day of voting in coronavirus-affected national elections.

Rutte's People's Party for Freedom and Democracy still retains a lead of some 10 percentage points over its nearest rival, the anti-immigration Party for Freedom led by anti-Islam firebrand Geert Wilders. According to the respected Peilingwijzer survey, Rutte's party is in line to win between 34 and 38 seats in the 150-seat

lower house of parliament. On the other hand, Wilders' party is forecast to win about 17-21 seats.

INDIA GIVES TRAINING AIDS TO LANKAN NAVY

Colombo, March 16: India's envoy in Sri Lanka has underlined the importance of close cooperation between the navies of the two countries as an essential part of the overall bilateral engagement, as he handed over training aids worth 22 million LKR (about ₹81,00,000) to the island natio-

n's Navy for capacity building. High Commissioner Gopal Baglay, during a visit to the Northern and Eastern Provinces, formally handed over the training aids to the Commander Eastern Naval Area of the Sri Lanka Navv at a ceremony held on Sunday at the prestigious Naval and Maritime

Academy (NMA) Trincomalee. Baglay reiterated the importance of close cooperation between the two navies.

Japan to share China worry

Tokyo, March 16: Japan and the United States joined forces Tuesday to criticise China's "coercion and aggression" in Asia as senior ministers from both countries held their first in-person talks since President Joe Biden took office in January. Aside from the sharp

rhetoric aimed at Beijing, the meeting in Tokyo and a planned stop next in Seoul are as much an eff-ort by the Biden administration to reassure worried allies in Asia after four years of occasionally confrontational dealings with the Trump adminis-tration. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, after holding the so-called "two plus two" security talks with Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin and their Japanese counter-parts — Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi — said democracy and human rights in the region are being challenged and the United States will push with its partners for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Blinken said the Biden administration is committed to work with US allies and those in the region as they face challenges from China and its ally North Korea, which is pursuing an illicit nuclear weapons programme. 'We will push back if nec-

N. KOREAN **LEADER'S SISTER WARNS U.S.**

Seoul, March 16: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's influential sister warned the United States against actions that could make it "lose sleep", state media reported Tuesday, as top Biden administration officials began a visit to key allies Tokyo and Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Japan on Monday on their first overseas trip, aimed at rallying milī tary alliances as a bulwark against China and cementing a united front against the nuclear-armed North.

-AFP

coercion or aggression to get its way," he said. In a joint statement released after the talks, the ministers shared strong worry over Beijing's human rights violations in Xinjiang, "unlawful maritime claims and activities in the South China Sea" and "unilateral action that seeks to change the status quo" over the Japan-controlled East China Sea islands that China also

Myanmarese flee martial law area

Yangon, March 16: Residents of a protest flash-point district in Myanmar's biggest city fled on flatbed trucks and tuk-tuks Tuesday after security forces escalated the use of lethal force against anticoup protesters, despite international appeals for

restraint.

Much of the country has been in uproar since the military ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi last month, with hundreds of thousands taking to the streets to demand a return to democracy.

Police and soldiers have used tear gas, rubber bullets and live rounds to subdue crowds in neardaily crackdowns, along with blanket nightly internet shutdowns to stop protesters from mobilising. Monday saw fresh violence by security forces in several cities, leaving at least 20 dead, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), a local monitoring group that has been tracking arrests and fatalities.

It followed the deadliest day so far in the six weeks since the army deposed Suu Kyi's government, with the AAPP reporting 74 killed on Sunday after the violent suppression of anti-coup unrest across

Myanmar.
Many of those deaths came from the impover-ished Hlaing Tharyar township in Yangon, a garment-producing area in the commercial hub with mostly Chineseowned factories — several of which were razed on Sunday. The junta reacted by imposing martial law over the area and five

other townships that are home to around two million people -- more than a quarter of the sprawling

city's population.

Anyone arrested there faces trial by military tribunal, with sentences ranging from three years' hard labour to execution.

Myanmar law expert Melissa Crouch said the martial law declaration effectively gave complete control to military commanders and sidelined civilian administrators and judges.

"The use of martial law is extremely troubling and... represents a significant decline in the situation in Myanmar," the University of New South Wales academic said.

The AAPP said in a statement that even civilians who were not participating in anti-coup protests had died in crossfire on Monday.

By Tuesday morning, local media outlet *The* Irrawaddy published photos of residents fleeing the township, crowding onto flatbed trucks stuck in columns of snaking

Some carried their pets on the back of motorbikes, while others crammed their belongings in vinyl bags on tuk-tuks.

"We can see the people on the roads for as far as one's eve can see," reported local outlet Democratic

Voice of Burma. A resident confirmed the mass exodus to AFP, saying that people wanted to leave at dawn and protesters removed makeshift barricades — erected to slow security forces down -- to let them out. -AFP

Tokyo talks: US, Sweden is latest country to stop using AstraZeneca vax

Country takes step amid reports of dangerous blood clots in some recipients

Berlin, March 16: Sweden on Tuesday became the latest European coun-try to pause use of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine amid reports of dangerous blood clots in some recipients. The company and international regulators continue to say the vaccine is safe, however, and many countries elsewhere in the world are forging ahead with their vac-

cination campaigns.

The move by the Swedish
Public Health Agency is pending an investigation by the European Medicines Agency. "The decision is a precautionary measure," Swedish chief epidemiologist Anders Tegnell said in

Germany, France, Italy and Spain were among countries that suspended use of the vaccine on Monday. AstraZeneca's formula is one of three vaccines in use on the European continent. But the escalating concern is another set-back for the European Union's vaccination drive, which has been plagued by shortages and other hurdles and is lagging well behind the campaigns in Britain and the US.

The EU's drug regulatory agency will review experts' findings on the Astra-Zeneca shot and decide whether action needs to be taken. Much of Asia has shrugged off concerns about the AstraZeneca jab, with Thailand's prime minister receiving a shot at the start of the country's use of the vaccine on Tuesday. "There are people who have concerns," Prayuth Chan-ocha said after his vaccination. "But we must believe doctors, believe in our medical professionals." Thailand initially was the first country outside Europe to temporarily suspend using the Astr-

aZeneca vaccine. But Thailand's health authorities later decided to go ahead with it, with Prayuth and members of his Cabinet receiving the first shots. Indonesia suspended use of the vaccine



Workers clean the exterior of Bang Khae Market, after more than a hundred residents in the district tested positive for the Covid-19, in Bangkok on Tuesday.

WHO: Vaccine rollout

on Monday, saying it was waiting for a full report from the World Health Organisation regarding possible side effects.

AstraZeneca has developed a manufacturing base in Asia, and the Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine maker, has been contracted by the company to produce a bil-lion doses of the vaccine for developing nations. Hundreds of millions

more are to be manufactured this year in Australia, Japan, Thailand and South Korea. AstraZeneca has said there have been 37 reports of blood clots out of more than 17 million people vaccinated in the 7-country EU and Britain. The drugmaker said there is no evidence the vaccine carries an increased risk of clots. In fact, it said the incidence of clots is much lower than would be expected to occur naturally in a general population

Geneva, March 16: The UN health agency said its global rollout of Coronavi-

rus vaccines remains unaffected even as a growing number of countries, especially in Europe, suspended use of AstraZeneca's vaccine on Monday amid concerns about blood clots in some people who recei-

The World Health Organisation says the AstraZeneca vaccines for its COV-AX programme, which is shipping vaccines mostly to low- and middle-income countries, are being produced in India and South Korea — and the suspensions have been ordered over batches made in Europe. "We understand these are precautionary measures," WHO assistant director-general Mariangela Si-

unaffected by concerns "I would like to say this to countries from other regions that are not Europe: That the vaccines (at issue) so far are from Èuropean manufacturing not vaccines that are provided through the COVAX

facility." Germany, France,

Italy and Spain joined the growing list of mostly European countries — starting with Denmark last week — that temporarily halted use of the AstraZeneca vaccine in recent days to investigate cases of blood clots that occurred after vaccination. Others include Thailand and Congo. "This does not necessarily mean these events are linked to vacci-

nation," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom WHO Director

Ghebreyesus told a news

Berlin, March 16: The German government said Tuesday it will postpone a virtual summit on the country's vaccination efforts until after the European Medicines Agency has met over reports of dangerous blood clots in some recipients of Astra-

GERMANY TO

POSTPONE VAX

VIRTUAL SUMMIT

Zeneca's Covid-19 vaccine. A growing number of European countries — including Germany, France, Italy and Spain — suspended use of the AstraZeneca vaccine on Monday, though the company and international regulators say there is no evidence the shot is to blame. The German government and the country's 16 state governors had planned to meet Wednesday for a vir-

HAALAND, 1ST NATIVE, OKAYED **AS INTERIOR SECY**

Washington, March 16: The Senate has confirmed New Mexico Rep. Deb Haaland as interior secretary, making her the first Native American to lead a Cabinet department and the first to lead the federal agency that has wielded influence over the nation's tribes for nearly two centuries. Haaland was confirmed by a 51-40 vote on Monday, the narrowest margin yet for a Cabinet nomination by President

Joe Biden. Four Republicans voted yes: Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan of Alaska, Susan Collins of Maine and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina. Democrats and tribal groups hailed Haaland's confirmation as historic, saying her selection means that Indigenous people — who lived in North America before the United States was created — will for the first time see a Native American lead the powerful department.

Will block Twitter in a month, threatens Russia iled to remove calls for ch

Moscow, March 16: Russian authorities said Tuesday they would block Twitter in a month if it take steps to doesn't remove banned content, a move that escalates the Russian government's drawn-out standoff with social media platforms that have played a major role in amplifying dissent in Russia.

Russia's state communications watchdog, Roskomnadzor, last week announced it was slowing down the speed of uploading photos and videos to Twifter over its alleged failure to remove content encouraging suicide among children and information about drugs and child pornography. The agency said Twitter has failed to remove more than 3,000 posts with banned content, including more than 2,500 posts encouraging

suicide among minors The platform responded by emphasizing its policy of zero tolerance for child sexual exploitation, promotion of suicide and

On Tuesday, deputy chief of Roskomnadzor Vadim Subbotin argued that Twitter still wasn't complying with the demands of the Russian authorities. "Twitter doesn't react to our requests appropriately, and if things go on like this, then in a month it will be blocked, on an out-of-court basis," Subbotin told the Interfax news

agency, adding that Rosko-

mnadzor at this point "is

not registering specific

steps by Twitter to remove

prohibited content." Twitter did not respond immediately to an email request for comment. Authorities have criticized social media platforms that have been used to bring tens of thousands of people into the streets across Russia this year to demand the release of opposit-

ion leader Alexei Navalny. The wave of demonstrations was the largest in years and posed a major challenge to the Kremlin. The authorities alleged social media platforms faildren to join the protests. Russian President Vladimir Putin has urged police to act more to monitor social platforms and to track down those who draw the children into illegal and unsanctioned street actions." The government's efforts to tighten control of the internet and social media date back to 2012, when a law allowing authorities to blacklist and block certain online content was adopted. Since then, a growing number of restrictions targeting messaging apps, websites and social media platforms have

been introduced. In 2014, authorities ado pted a law requiring online services to store the personal data of Russian users on servers in Russia and have since tried to make Facebook and Twitter comply with it. Both companies have been fined, first small amounts of around \$50 and last year the equivalent of \$63,000 each. — *AP*



Bidya Devi Bhandari

3 NEPAL EX-PMs DON'T ATTEND ALL-PARTY MEET

Kathmandu, March 16: Nepal's three former prime ministers on Tuesday boycotted an all-party meeting called by President Bidya Devi Bhandari to discuss contemporary issues amid the political crisis that has gripped the country.

Former premiers Baburam Bhattarai, Madhav Kumar Nepal and Jhala Nath Khanal skipped the meeting called by President Bhandari at Shital Niwas, questioning her role in the row of the erstwhile Nepal Communist Party (NCP), My Republica newspaper reported. While both Khanal and Nepal belong to the rival faction of the ruling Communist Party of Nepal (UML), Bhat-tarai heads the federal council of the Janata Samajbadi Party.

They have publicly alleged that President Bhandari had failed to act as a custodian of the Constitution, supporting even unconstitutional moves taken by Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli who had dissolved the House of Representativ-

es in December. PM Oli, CPN (Maoist Centre) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda, Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba, Chairman of Janata Samajbadi Party Mahanta Thakur, and former Chairman of Council of Minister Khil

Raj Regmi attended.

SIGNIFICANT I FIND Most of the text is in ancient Greek, a widely used language at the time Israel unearths 2K-yr-old biblical scroll fragments

led fragments of a biblical scroll dating back some 2,000 years, in what experts described as the most significant such find since

the Dead Sea Scrolls. The artifacts were unearthed during excavations by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) in the Judean desert, which spans parts of southern Israel and the occupied West Bank. In a site known as the "Cave of Horrors," archaeologists found fragments of a scroll with a Greek translation of the Hebrew bible, the first

such find since the early

Jerusalem, March 16: 1960s. "For the first time Israel on Tuesday unvein approximately 60 years, archaeological excavations have uncovered frag-ments of a biblical scroll," the IAA said.

Oren Ableman, an IAA curator, said parts of the same scroll from the Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets were first discovered in the Cave of Horrors by

Bedouins in the 1950s. The Cave of Horrors took its name from the

numerous skeletons found inside it and the treacherous terrain nearby. Most of the text is in ancient Greek, a widely used language at the time,

but the word Lord appears

OREN ABLEMAN, an IAA curator, said parts of the same scroll from the Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets were first discovered in the Cave of Horrors by Bedouins in the 1950s.

in ancient Hebrew script. Oren said that among the most striking features of the new fragments is a deviation with all other known versions of the Old Testament: in one passage, the word "gates" is replaced by the word "streets." The significance of that

deviation is "what we are

trying to discover now," he Yosef Garfinkel, head of the Institute of Archaeology at Jerusalem's Hebrew University, described the find as "exciting," telling it could enrich the "study of the history of the Greek translation of the bible.

The items were discovered in a cave believed to have been used by Jews rebelling against the Romans during the failed second-century Bar Kochba revolt.

The IAA compared the find to the extraordinary discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, some 900 manuscripts found between 1947

and 1956 in the Qumran caves above the Dead Sea in the West Bank They are some of the earliest biblical texts ever

found. The Judea desert excavation also unearthed a cache of rare coins, a six-millennia-old skeleton of a child and a basket described by the IAA as "likely the oldest in the world", which been carbon-dated to 10,500 years old. "I shook for days," after the basket was found, IAA archaeologist Chaim Cohen said.

The woven basket was found remarkably intact, with a rock resting on its top — an indication that the contents safe and intended to come back for them, Cohen said. Organic material like the

its users wanted to keep

wood used for the basket typically decays, but this unprecedented discovery was preserved by the Judean's desert's dry climate and protective conditions in the cave, he said. Cohen added that very little is known about the society that lived in the

area at the time. "From this ancient period, we have nothing: We can tell, and I want to be very cautious, that they are likely nomads or half-

nomads," he said.

SHORT TAKES

Messi levels Xavi

record for Barca

Madrid: Lionel Messi scored a spectacular double the same night he equalled Xavi Hernandez's appearance record for Barcelona, the Argentinian inspiring his team to a 4-1 win over Huesca on Monday.

Messi tied Xavi's 767 games in all competitions for Barca and marked yet another milestone with a brilliant brace, a curling effort in the first half flying in off the crossbar before a late shot nestled in the corner. Antoine Griezmann had earlier

followed suit with another impressive shot into the top corner before Huesca pulled one back, Rafa Mir converting a doubtful penalty on the stroke

of half-time. But Messi helped Barca pull away, sending in a cross for Oscar Mingueza to head in and then scoring his second as the Catalans moved to within four points of league leaders Atletico Madrid. — AFP

Dhanalakshmi defeats Dutee

Patiala: National record holder **Dutee Chand was beaten to** second place by S. Dhanalakshmi while Hima Das was disqualified after a false start in a much-anticipated women's 100m sprint final in the Federation Cup Senior National Athletics Championships on Tuesday. The 22-year-old Dhanalakshmi, of Tamil Nadu, took the gold by clocking 11.39 seconds ahead of

final did not live up to the

expectations as Hima was

shown the red card, while **Dutee and Dhanalakshmi did**

11.15 seconds. — *PTI*

not come anywhere near the Olympic qualification mark of

Sports Authority of Telangana State chairman Allipuram Venkateshwar Reddy (left) greets Finance Minister Harish

Rao at the Secretariat in Hyderabad on Tuesday, ahead of the State Budget. Mr Reddy petitioned the FM and the

Chief Minister for enhanced allocation of funds for the sports department in this year's budget which would boost Telangana in sporting circles across the world.

Hockey trials for Medchal district Hyderabad: Medchal Hockey is conducting selection trails at 4 pm on Wednesday at the Gymkhana Hockey Ground to pick the district side for the upcoming 5th Senior Women's Inter-District Tournament to be held in Hyderabad from March 26 to 28. Further details contact G. Yashwanth on phone number 9866711724.

ive on

India vs South Africa women: Fifth ODI from 9 am on Star Sports 2 **BADMINTON** All England Open: Round of 32 Sports 2 HD, Star Sports 3 **FOOTBALL**

Italian League: Torino vs Sassuolo from 7.30 pm on Sony Ten 2; Juventus vs Napoli from 11.15 pm on Sony Six, HD

Champions League: Chelsea vs

Atletico Madrid from 1.30 am

(Thursday) on Sony Ten 2; Bayern Munich vs Lazio from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1

> Printed and Published from Nellore by K.Sudhakar

on behalf of Deccan Chronile Holdings Limited at PlotNo.527,Chemudugunta

(Village), Venkatachalasatram

(Mandal), Nellore, RNI Registration

No.APENG/2003/11048 Phones: 2348581, 82 & 83, Fax:2348580

Grams: CHRONICLE,

Editor: Kaushik Mitter

Dutee (11.58) of Odisha to become the fastest woman of the championships. Another Tamil Nadu runner Archana Suseendran was third in 11.76. This was after Hima, who was running in the shorter sprint races of 100m and 200m instead of her per event 400m, was disqualified after a false start. The much-anticipated

More than the Buttler's

Indian top order during the Powerplay overs and even Kohli's magnificence wasn't good enough to save the night

90 plus miles per hour the younger Indian batsmen in considerable discomfort.

extra but bowled fast and straight, mixing the well

BUTTLER HOUSE Best chance for

India fall to Jos fire in third encounter, England take lead

Ahmedabad, March 16: Virat Kohli's brilwasn't good enough to paper over an otherwise inept Indian batting performance as England humbled the hosts by eight wickets in International to take a 2-1 lead in the five-match series, here on Tuesday.

Morgan unleashed his fast bowlers Mark Wood (3/31) and Chris Jordan (2/35) to restrict the hosts for 156 for 6, which the visitors surpassed easily in 18.2 overs, riding on Jos Buttler's

unbeaten 83 off 52 balls. Skipper Kohli had mistakenly said at the toss that his team led 2-1 but Morgan, in his 100th T20 International appearance, made sure that

opposite happened.
Buttler showed his mastery in white ball format after Kohli singlehandedly carried the team to a reasonable score with an unbeaten 77 off 46 balls.

Buttler in the Powerplay pounced on Shardul Thakur and Yuzvendra Chahal in successive overs and England were never in danger of falling behind the run-rate after that.

He played the pacers and spinners with comforting ease, playing reverse slog sweeps between interspersed the lofted straight hits into the empty stands. In all, Buttler hit five fours and four sixes.

blade, the difference between two sides was the sheer pace generated by England pacers after Morgan won another good toss.

Mark Wood rocked the for the 'Men In Blue'.

Wood's thunderbolts at

He didn't do anything disguised short pitched stuff to get them into a

Kohli, other Indian youngsters found better part.



England batsman Jos Buttler (right) is greeted by teammate Dawid Malan on scoring a half-century during the third T20 against India at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Tuesday.

difficult to put bat to ball as pace and bounce off the pitch worked wonders for English speed merchants. The Indian skipper

with his near perfect technique fought fire with fire, playing pull shots and the lofted hits, shuffling towards leg stump to make room for

He was lucky when his mis-timed flick off a short ball from Jofra Archer fetched him a six but then the second flick off Chris Jordan was perfectly dispatched to the longest corner for a maximum.

But the shot of the night was a straight six off Wood, which made the bowler take his time to finish the over. Not to forget the shape which he was in while executing a ramp shot off

His partnership with Hardik Pandya (17 off 15 balls) fetched 70 runs off just 5.3 overs but it was all about Kohli for the

SCORECARD

India: Rohit Sharma c Jofra Archer b Mark Wood 15, K.L. Rahul b Mark Wood 0, Ishan Kishan c Jos Buttler b Chris Jordan 4, Virat Kohli (not out) 77, Rishabh Pant run out (Jos Buttler/ Sam Curran) 25, Shreyas Iyer c Malan b Mark Wood 9, Hardik Pandya c Jofra Archer b Chris Jordan 17. Extras (b-1, lb-5, w-3) 9. Total (for 6 wkts, in 20 overs)

FoW: 7-1, 20-2, 24-3, 64-4, 86-5, 156-6.

Bowler: Adil Rashid 4-0-26-0, Jofra Archer 4-0-32-0, Mark Wood 4-0-31-3, Chris Washington Sundar 4-0-26-1.

Jordan 4-0-35-2, Ben Stokes 2-0-12-0, Sam

England: Jason Roy c Sharma b Chahal 9, Jos Buttler (not out) 83, Dawid Malan st Pant b Washington Sundar 18, Jonny Bairstow (not out) 40. Extras (b-4, lb-2, w-2) 8. Total (for 2 wkts, in 18.2 over) 158. **FoW:** 1-23, 2-81.

Bowling: Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-0-27-0, Shardul Thakur 3.2-0-36-0, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-41-1, Hardik Pandya 3-0-22-0,

UAE players banned for bid to fix

Dubai, March 16: The ICC on Tuesday slapped eight-year bans on United Arab Emirates (UAE) cricketers Mohammad Naveed and Shaiman Anwar Butt for their attempted role in trying to fix matches in

the T20 World Cup qualifier in 2019.
The bans are backdated to October 16, 2019, when they were provisionally suspended for attempting to corrupt matches and found guilty of breaching global body's Anti-Corruption Code.

The 33-year-old former captain and right arm pacer Naveed has played 39 ODIs and 31 T20 Internationals for his country, while 42-year-old middle-order batsman Butt has played 40 ODIs and 32 T20s.

"Mohammad Naveed and Shaiman

Anwar represented their adopted country the UAE at the highest level in cricket. Naveed was the captain and leading wicket taker. Anwar was the opening bat. Both had long international careers and were well versed in the threat from match fix ers. That they both chose to engage with this corrupt activity was a cynical betray al of their positions, their teammates, and all supporters of UAE cricket," Alex Marshall, ICC General Manager Integrity Unit, said in an ICC release.

Naveed was also found guilty of breaching two counts of the Emirates Cricket Board Anti-Corruption Code for Participants of the T10 League 2019.

Sindhu to excel

Birmingham, March 16: World champion P.V. Sindhu will look to shrug off her demoralising Swiss Open final defeat and take advantage of a depleted field when she spearheads India's challenge at the prestigious All England Open Badminton Championships, beginning here on Wednesday.

Sindhu looked a pale shadow of herself in her defeat against Carolina Marin, going down without much fight as she struggled to contain errors.

Carolina, the three-time champion from Spain, though has pulled out of the prestigious tour-nament due to an injury, taking some shine off of Also missing in action

will be the Chinese, Koreans and Chinese Taipei shuttlers, who decided not to compete in the Super 1000 event as it is not part of the Tokyo Olympic qualification period. It affects the quality of the competition but also provides the 19-member contingent an opportunity to go deep in the draw and recapture the trophy which has been won by just two Indians so far the legendary Prakash

Carolina Marin, the three-time world champion from Spain, though has pulled out of the prestigious tournament due to an injury, taking some shine off of the event. Also missing in action will be the Chinese, **Koreans and Chinese** Taipei shuttlers.

Padukone (1980) and P. Gopichand (2001).

While former world number one Saina Nehwal had a runner-up finish in 2015, Sindhu's best finish was a semifinal in 2018.

Sindhu will again be one of the top contenders but Saina is nowhere near her best with just two quarterfinal finishes to show in the last two years

Among other Indians, former No. 1 Kidambi Srikanth and young men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, current-ly ranked 10 in the world, had a good run in Swiss Open and will look to put their best foot forward.

Fifth seed Sindhu will kick off her campaign with a clash against Malaysia's Soniia Cheah.



Players of the Bhadradri team are jubilant after winning the TCA U-16 Inter-Districts Championship on Tuesday.

BHADRADRI ARE CHAMPIONS

Hyderabad: Bhadradri emerged winner of the TCA U-16 Inter-Districts Championship at the Bhadradri Stadium in Manuguru. In the finals played on Tuesday, they chased down Warangal Urban's modest 138 with five wickets in hand. Batting first, Warangal Urban rode on useful knocks by Pardipan (40) and Hardik (35). In reply, Ranadheer steadied

Bhadradri and saw them safely home. **BRIEF SCORES** ■ Warangal Urban 138/8 in 25 overs (Pardhipan 40, Hardik 35, Jashwanth 3/23) lost to Bhadradri 139/5 in 22.2 overs

(Ranadheer 37, Ratna Arya 32). ■ Man of the Match: Jaswanth (Bhadradri).

■ Man of the Tournament: J. Pardipan (Warangal Urban).



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