SHORT TAKES **LPG CYLINDER PRICE HIKED BY** ₹149

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO | DC NEW DELHI, FEB. 12

The consumers in the country have reason to worry as the price of liquefied petroleum gas cylinders has been increased sharply once again by the state-run oil marketing companies. The steep price rise of non-subsidised cylinders, that will be effective from February 12, will make each unit dearer by up to ₹149.

For the sixth time in the recent past, the price of nonsubsidised cooking gas has been increased, with the cumulative price rise since August at nearly ₹300. The move of the OMCs came a day after the announcement of Delhi Assembly election res-ults, where the BJP party at the Centre was completely routed from the fray. Citing a spurt in benchmark global fuel rates, the OMC officials said that LPG price had a steep hike in prices, but the government almost doubled the subsidy it provides on the fuel to keep per cylinder outgo almost unchanged. "Domestic LPG users, who are entitled to buy 12 bottles of 14.2 kg each at subsidised rates in a year, will get more subsidy. Government subsidy payout to domestic users has been increased from ₹153.86 per cylinder to ₹291.48," officials said.

5 MEMBERS OF FAMILY FOUND DEAD

New Delhi, Feb. 12: Decomposed bodies of an erickshaw driver, his wife and three children were found inside their house in northeast Delhi's Bhajanpura area under mysterious circum-stances on Wednesday morn-ing, police said. The deceased have been identified as Shambhu Chaudhary (43), Sunite (27) Shirom (17) Sunita (37), Shivam (17), Sachin (14) and Komal (12), they said. The police received information at 11.16 am from neighbours, who complained of foul smell emanating from the house. The police broke open the door of the house and found the five decomposed bodies.

'Today, we received information that foul smell was emanating from a house. Police reached the spot and broke open the door which was locked from outside. Police found the bodies of five persons, including three children. The bodies were in a highly decomposed state. The cause of death will be ascertained after a post-mortem," Joint Commissioner of Police (East) Alok Kumar said. A forensic team has been called to the spot which is examining the case, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Northeast).



Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah's sister Sara Abdullah Pilot at Supreme Court for a hearing plea challenging Abdullah's detention under the J-K Public Safety Act in New Delhi on Wednesday.

25 envoys visit Valley, meet traders, enjoy shikara ride

Russian ambassador to India declines invitation to visit Jammu & Kashmir

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, FEB, 12

SECOND BATCH OF FOREIGN ENVOYS currently in J&K include A second batch of New those of Canada, Austria, Delhi-based envoys repre-Uzbekistan, Uganda, senting over two dozen countries, including those of the European Union, begun a two-day tour of Jammu and Kashmir for Slovak Republic, Netherlands, Namibia, Kyrgyz Republic, Bulgaria, Germany, an on-the-spot assessment Tajikistan, France, of the situation in the erst-Mexico, Denmark, Italy, while state stripped of its Afghanistan, New special status and split into two Union territories Zealand, Poland and in August last year. During their stay in Rwanda

Srinagar, the delegation of 25 members was briefed by top Army officers on the overall security situation in the hinterland and along the Line of Control Pakistan's (LoC), "unremitting attempts to push in militants and terrorists and perpetual ceasefire violations", a defence spokesman said ers. here.

Earlier in the day, the of foreign diplomats and visiting envoys interacted with fruit growers and traders of north-western Baramulla district and held a series of interactive meetings with representatives of some political parties, trade union leaders, civil society activists. women entrepreneurs and a select group of mediapersons — all handpicked the Narendra Modi gov-

but I wonder if they will be allowed to meet me for I'm under house arrest for the past six months."

He added: "Taking them for shikara rides on Dal Lake and allowing them to meet only the people sponsored by government agencies is not going to help those in power or the country. Further, such tamashas performed in the past also leave a nega-tive impact on the psyche of the people of J&K, especially Kashmir Valley."

Austria,

Uganda,

Republic,

Namibia,

Republic,

Germany,

France.

where they are scheduled The second batch of forto meet lieutenant-govereign envoys currently in J&K include those of nor, Girish Chandra Murmu, his advisers and other senior government Canada. bureaucrats, senior police Uzbekistan, and security forces' offi-Slovak cials and leaders and rep-Netherlands, resentatives of political parties, civil society groups and business lead-Kyrgyz Bulgaria, Taiikistan. Mexico, Denmark, Italy, It is the third such visit

Afghanistan, New Zealand, Poland and legislators in groups to Rwanda.

Judge recuses himself in Omar detention case

PRAMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, FEB. 12

The hearing on the plea by Sara Abdullah Pilot challenging the detention of her brother and former J&K CM Omar Abdullah under the Public Safety Act will now be heard on February 14 as Justice Mohan M. Shantanagoudar recused himself from hearing it. Justice Shantanagoudar was part of

"I am not participating in this matter," Justice Shantanagoudar said at ed that there could not be any material for further detaining a person, who is the outset without citing already under detention any reason for his recusal. for last six months. Initially the matter was

Pulwama attack: **4** JeM terrorists chargesheeted

DC CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, FEB. 12

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday filed a supplementary chargesheet against four alleged members of Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) from Jammu and Kashmir for planning terror attacks in Delhi, the surrounding districts of the Union cap-

ital and elsewhere in the country. A spokesman of the agency here said that the supplementary charge-sheet was filed in a NIA special court in the Union capital under Sections 120B and 121A of Indian Penal Code, Sections 18, 19, 20, 38 and 39 of Unlawful Activities (Prevention)) Act and Sections 4 and 5 of Explosive Substances Act against four JeM operatives. The accused have been identified as Sajjad Ahmad Khan, Bilal Ahmad Mir alias Billa, Ishfaq Ahmad Bhat and Merajuddin Chopan — all residents of J&K's southern Pulwama dis-

trict Giving the details of the case, the NIA said that a "criminal conspiracy" was hatched by senior commanders of the JeM to carry out militant attacks in different parts of the country including Delhi-National Capital

Region (NCR). The spokesman said that the investigation done by the NIA "has established that the accused persons are members of proscribed terrorist organisation, who were planning to carry out attacks and propagating the activities of JeM".

FOUR ALLEGED JEM operatives have been identified as Sajjad Ahmad Khan, Bilal Ahmad Mir alias Billa, Ishfaq Ahmad Bhat and Merajuddin Chopan

He claimed that JeM commander Mudassir Ahmad Khan who has been killed since was the mastermind behind this conspiracy. "He was also one of the main conspirators in the February 14,

2019 Pulwama attack,' the spokesman said. Khan was killed in an encounter with the J&K police and security forces in Tral area of the district on March 10 last year.

As per the NIA investi-gation, Sajad Khan was "directly in touch with Mudassir Khan whereas Ishfaq was involved in the transportation of arms and ammunitions for strengthening JeM in Kashmir and further harboured the operatives of the outfit." The NIA also said that

one hand grenade was recovered from the possession of Chopan and that it had been "procured with the intention of using the same against the security forces in J&K snatching their for

weapons." The NIA had earlier in September last year filed a charge sheet against the four accused under sec-tions 120B and 121A of IPC, sections 18, 18B, 38 and 39 of Unlawful Activities (Prevention)

Act and section 4 of Explosive Substances Act. Its spokesman added, "Further investigation continues under section 173(8) of CrPC."

'Observe Feb. 14 as martyrs' day'

DC CORRESPONDENT RIGHTWING HINDU SRINAGAR, FEB. 12 organisation says Valentine's Day "infringes

A rightwing Hindu organisation on Wednesday demanded that February 14 should be observed as 'martyrs' day' instead of Valentine's Day in Jammu and Kashmir and beyond in memory of forty Central over Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawans who died in a terror attack at southern Pulwama district on this day last year. Shri Ram Sena (SRŠ), in statement issued on Wednesday in Jammu on the eve of the first anniversary of the Pulwama attack, urged J&K's Lieutenant Governor Girish Chandra Murmu to impose a complete ban on Valentine's Day celebrations in the Union Territory and said that such activity "infringes upon India's innate culture". SRS's J&K president Rajiv Mahajan said, "We strongly oppose Valen-tine's Day celebrations. he said.

upon India's innate culture" These are anti-Indian culture and, therefore, must be banned in J&K. He added. "Also, we lost more than forty of our brave jawans in Pulwama terror attack on this day last year. It would be but an insult to the supreme sacrifice that they made if people celebrate February 14 as Valentine's Day. It should be observed as 'martyrs' day' instead." Terming the Valentine's Day as a man-ifestation of western cul-Mahajan asked ture, youths not to celebrate it. "We also appeal to all schools managements, government as well as private, to observe it as 'martyrs' day by holding two minutes prayer in morning assemblies on February 14 for the martyrs of Pulwama terrorist attack across the J&K.

Omar Abdullah Kashmiri leaders are

under detention since August 4, 2019, in the wake the bench also comprising of the abrogation of Art-Justice N.V. Ramana and icle 370. Sara Abdullah in Justice Sanjiv Khanna. her petition has contend-

directed to be listed for

Describing detention as "illegal," Sara in her peti-

ODISHA CM'S PROPERTY UP BY ₹1CR

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, FEB. 12

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik continues to be the richest among his council of ministers while state panchayati raj minister Pratap Jena's net worth grew by a whopping ₹4.5 crore in a year, a state ment of assets of all ministers of the state released here said. As per the statement. Naveen now owns assets worth over ₹64.26 cr which include movable property worth ₹62.66 cr. In 2019, Naveen owned assets worth ₹63.87 cr. As per his property list, the Odisha CM has an ambassador car of 1980 model that is valued at around ₹8,905 and he possesses jewellery worth about ₹2, 12,252. The CM has deposits over ₹40 lakh in two branches of State Bank of India at Hiinjlicut of Ganjam district and Padampur in Bargarh during the general elections last year. The CM has a farm land and building in an area of 22.7 acre at Tikri Khera village of Faridabad valued at ₹10,75,51,071, as per the valuation done in March 2017. Similarly, Naveen owns 50 per cent share of his ancestral property situated at APJ Abdul Kalam Road in New Delhi valued at ₹43.36 crore. Besides, the BJD president owns two-third share of Naveen Niwas worth over ₹9.52 cr, as on August 18, 2017. Although the graph of

Naveen's income has considerably increased as compared to last year, he has not been able to repay the loan of ₹15 lakh that borrowed from his sister, Gita Mehta on March 9, 2015.

by their hosts. The envoys also enjoyed "shikara" rides on the waters of Srinagar's Dal Lake.

Reports from Delhi said the Russian ambassador to India had declined an invitation by the external affairs ministry to join the delegation.

the three former chief After the night stay in a ministers who have been luxury Srinagar hotel, the incarcerated and other delegation members will veritable public represenvisit J&K's winter capital tatives. I too have some ideas to share with them Thursday, Jammu on

J&K since August 5 last The participation of envoys of the European year, necessarily to familiarise themselves with the Union member countries ground situation in J&K. assumes significance as However, such visits the EU Parliament recentorganised with overall ly initiated a joint draft supervision of the Union resolution on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and J&K situation, the home ministry have come up under severe criticism by the Opposition, which vote on which was later questioned the wisdom of deferred.

The Congress questioned the wisdom and probity of the government in inviting foreign diplomats to visit J&K when the country's political leaders, including members of Parliament, are being denied access to the erstwhile state. However, minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy told the Lok Sabha Tuesday there are no restrictions on the visit of any Indian citizen to

Thursday but later on a request by senior counsel Kapil Sibal, appearing for Sara Abdullah, it was directed to be listed for Friday.

A brief order passed by the court said, "List before another Bench since Mr. Justice Mohan expr-Shantanagoudar essed his inability to participate in the hearing of the matter." Recording the request by Sibal that the matter be listed on Friday, the court directed its registry to obtain necessary directions from Chief Justice S.A. Bobde for the listing of the matter on February 14, before an appropriate bench.

Omar Abdullah, his father and former J&K Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah and other senior

tion said, "The grounds for the detention order are wholly lacking any material facts or particulars which are imperative for an order of detention.'

Recounting the public service rendered by Omar Abdullah both in the J&K as Chief Minister and as a central minister, the peti-tion said, "It is rare that those who have served the nation as MPs, CMs, ministers in the union and have also stood by the national aspirations are now perceived as a threat to the State." It further said. "It is therefore of the utmost importance and of the utmost urgency that this court protects not only the individual's Right to Life and Liberty but also protects the essence of Article 21.

WB Guv, govt at loggerheads again

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, FEB. 12

In yet another round of clash with the Mamata Banerjee government, West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Wednesday complained of getting neither an invita-tion nor any information

for the proposed convoca-tion of a university in North Bengal, of which he is the Chancellor also, in next two days. Expressing his anguish, Dhankhar pointed out that although four ministers of the state government have been invited to the third convocation programme of the Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University, he has been

kept in dark despite hav-

ing a "right" to preside

over the ceremony. His predecessor Keshari

Nath Tripathi however

presided over the ceremo-

ny of the varsity last year. The Governor tweeted in the morning, "Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University Convocation will be held on Feb 14. Ministers Partha Chatterjee, Goutam Deb, Rabindra Nath Ghosh and Binay Krishna Barman are invited for the Convocation. Chancellor, who has right to preside, has just no information! Where are we heading!'

ernment behind "wasting

monev

and

Former Union minister

and senior Congress leader Saifuddin Soz said:

'The visiting delegation

should be allowed to meet

resources by sponsoring

such pleasure trips"

other

His complaint comes close on the heels of him facing unprecedented student protests which virtually forced him to skip two convocations — one of the Jadavpur University while another Calcutta the University in the past two over months the Citizenship Amendment Act, National Register of Citizens and National Population Register.

India, US engage in parleys on trade deal



A worker cleans a floor in front of Hriday Kunj where Mahatma Gandhi stayed between 1918-1930, ahead of US President Donald Trump's visit, at Gandhi Ashram in Ahmedabad on Wednesday. PTI

From page 1

Praising Mr Modi, he added: "I look forward to going to India. He (Prime Minister Narendra Modi) is a friend of mine. He's a great gentleman."

After Mr Trump's comments, Mr Modi tweeted: 'Extremely delighted that @POTUS @real-

DonaldTrump and @FLO-TUS (President Trump and his wife Melania) will visit India on 24th and 25th February. India will accord a memorable welcome to our esteemed guests. This visit is a very special one and it will go a long way in further cementing India-USA friendship." He added: "India and the USA share a common commitment to democracy and plural-ism. Our nations are cooperating extensively on a wide range of issues. Robust friendship between our nations augurs well not only for our citizens but also for the entire world." Both coun-

tries said on Tuesday in separate statements that the visit would strengthen the Indo-US strategic partnership. Speculation is rife that a trade deal may also be signed during the visit, something that will be music to the US President's ears as he heads into his domestic re-election campaign. Meanwhile, officials of

two countries are engaged in hectic parleys for a proposed trade deal between the countries ahead of Trump's visit, an official said. However, the official said that as of now there is no clarity if the trade pact will be signed during Trump's visit. Multiple rounds of talks have taken place between commerce minister Piyush Goyal and US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer in the past few weeks over telephone. The two countries are negotiating a trade package to iron out certain issues and promote two-way commerce.

Chronicle **13 FEBRUARY 2020**

Data, not emotions, to clinch reservations

eservation in jobs and educational institutions for backward classes was a political project in India even before it was born; and the idea naturally got reflected in the Constitution as an enabling provision in the form of Article 16 (4) which allowed the state to provide for reservation for "any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the state, is not adequately represented in the services under the state" and of Article 16 (4A) which extended constitutional guarantee for promotion in jobs. While the affirmative action with respect to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes got going when the Constitution came into being, the same for the other backward classes took another three decades and a tricky political situation to take effect. Even then, it was resisted with violent protests though there was solid data, collated by the Mandal Commission, to prove

that the OBCs had no "adequate representation" in government services. Reservation has never been a settled issue for two reasons: one: it started off as a temporary measure for 10 years and unfailingly got a 10-year exten-sion when the period expired; and two, there has been no official data on the question of "adequate representation". Hence the judgment of the Supreme ourt this week annulling a decision of the Uttarakhand high court striking down a state government notification in 2012 to fill government jobs without providing for reservation calls for special attention. Reservation and pro-motion in jobs is not a fundamental right, the apex court ruled, and left it to the discretion of the state to take a decision. And should the government decide in its favour based on data, it has constitutional protection.

It may be noted that the court, which gave the state the freedom to scrap reservation, however, refused to remind the state that it needs to ensure adequate representation in its absence. It can be argued that it is not the job of the courts to compel the state to order reservation as long as the statute does not classify it as a fundamental right. It's a political question and the answer has to be political.

The political parties who have jumped to champion the reservation cause can do justice to its beneficiaries and those who oppose quotas by coming out with the data on representation or lack of it and settle the issue. The Constitution is clear on two things: one; reservation is an enabler, and two, it must be backed by data and logic. They are mutually reinforcing, not undermining. Hence the beneficiaries of reservation should not grudge an effort to present before the nation the number of people from among them in government service as all available data points to inadequate representation. It will then cease to be a sign of the grace of a benevolent state and become a legitimate tool in the hands of a society which, in the preamble of the Constitution, offers justice and equality. Political parties, social organi-sations and rights groups must demand immediate launch of an effort to come up with data instead of banking on emotions.

Delhi: Cong was in a fix

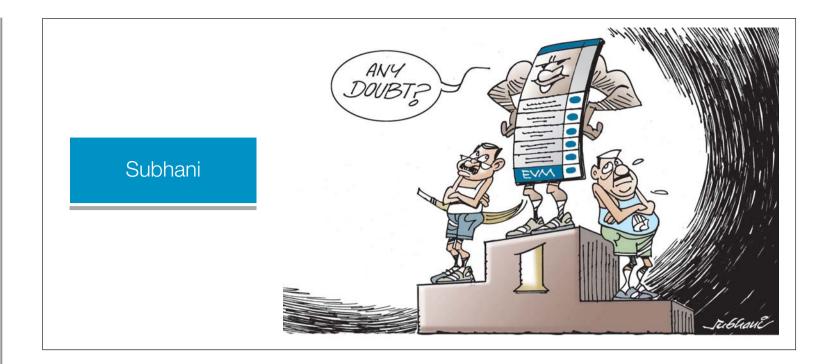
Olitics in Delhi, since the late Sheila Dikshit became its chief minister in 1998 and ran the show for three consecutive terms, has essen-focus on poorer classes.

This is the backdrop to the telling defeats of both the Congress and the BJP recently, including in the just-held Assembly polls. The BJP badly lost in seat terms although it has a core RSS vote of about one-third of all voters, and had a carpet-bombing campaign. Its agenda of majoritarian nationalism proved of no avail. The party hasn't won a state poll since 1993. The Congress' contra-RSS nationalism paid no dividends either. The voters' message was clear: national issues out, only city issues please. Delhi is now a vast camp of especially poor migrants.

In the 2015 Delhi polls, the Congress polled nine per cent of the vote, win-ning zero seats, and this year it polled four per cent and won no seat. The party is organisationally far weaker than in Sheila Dikshit's time, although she hadn't retained her own seat in 2013.

For this year's election, the party leadership took an informal decision to keep a very low-profile electoral presence. It did not field stronger can-didates in order not to cut into AAP votes and benefit the BJP. The gener-al impression was that the AAP would do well. But if the Congress had worked harder, it is still unlikely to have done too well and may have helped the BJP if its vote percentage were higher but not high enough to bag seats. That was the dilemma.

The Congress has weakened nationally but will likely still surprise the



BJP failed to gauge the anger of women, youth



elhi, reckoned a microcosm of aspiraional and

upwardly mobile India, from the daily wage worker from West Bengal sleeping on the streets to the temporary and propertied residents of the Lutyens' zone, has delivered a complex ver-dict in this election. The faceoff between the Aam Aadmi Party and the BJP, between Arvind Kejriwal and the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah-goli maarodeshdrohi-gaddar gang, was not about performance versus propaganda.

It was a deeper and primal contest between two sets of people, with opposing feelings, both afflicted by perceptions of persecution; the difference — and it was this that delivered the win and made the BJP a loser — was the additional paranoid obsession over roots, origins and identities. The (Amend-Citizenship ment) Act challenged the identity of Indians and divided the people on the basis of religion. Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains were entitled as the sons/daughters of the soil; the Muslims were not. The Muslim was not a persecuted person in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh; individuals and families, and therefore the community, were not entitled to be recognised as legitimate refugees and so legitimate applicants for citizenship in India. The subtext of the amendment is that the Muslim is not rooted: she is not a legitimate daughter of "Bharat Mata". The BJP's transformation of Shaheen Bagh into a location of the occupied and held by persons (actually women) without legitimacy —"*deshdrohi*" or terrorists or antinationals — who should be picked off with bullets, who are anarchists, and want to break India into pieces, supported and pro-tected by the "*tukde-tukde* gang" (disintegration of India gang) was so bizarre and paranoid that not only the 45 per cent of Muslim voters, but over 20 per cent of voters from other communities, necessarily including Hindus of Okhla constituency, of which it is a part, rejected the conspiracy theory and the paranoia feeding it. The contest between

persecuted and persecuted was so sharply drawn that any other verdict in Okhla would have been interpreted by the BJP as a signal to criminalise the protesters and the Mus-Îim community as traitors, funded

by foreign VERDICT and thou-DELHI agents who sands of

promote Jinnah wali azaadi" (Jinnah-style freedom), implying a breakup of the country. The focus on Shaheen Bagh as a metaphor by the BJP for its paranoid narrative of who can legitimately claim to be a child of Bharat Mata, on the one hand, and its fear inducing-hate mongering persecution complex has been overturned by the verdict in the National Capital Territory. The BJP's massive loss in Delhi was not only because of its ugly, divisive and destructive persecution-paranoid obsessions; it is a clear and unambiguous choice against its failure to deliver the barest economic relief and economic initiative to deal with the disastrous performance of the economy. The failure to do something by remaining in denial that unemployment has touched a 45-year high, inflation is going up and demand is falling because people have no money to buy, that access to credit has dried up and the daily woes of aspirational Indians are rising, is reflected in the verdict too. The Aam Aadmi Party

did not win only on the strength of its performance in governance and exceptional success in delivering public goods without obstructive corruption; it won because the depoliticised generation of selfie narcissists, the young, independently and spontaneously uncovered a particular kind of political consciousness that made them choose to reject the BJP's politics. For at least six weeks, a minimum of 42 days, young Indians have been participating in protests across the country — join-ing women, including Muslim women in pushing back against the politics of division, classification and demonisation. The BJP should have

recognised and been seriously wary of this spontaneous mobilisation by young Indians. The party should have recognised that there was a moment in its history in 1991 when thousands

y o u n g Indians had responded to its call to demolish the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, and had sustained the movement till the demolition on December 6, 1992. It should have recognised that the young Indians who flooded the protests and continue to give time to sustaining them were not mobilised by political parties or organised to join. These young people did not need to be harangued with specific appeals of grudge, identity and pride; these voung people were different. And these young and their parents have been put off by the BJP's politics of deploying State violence through the police on campuses. The demonisation of students and the violence that has been

unleashed against them has been fused with the politics of religious divisions and communal antagonism.

Any political party with less hubris would have been afraid. Any political party that succeeded without the least effort in galvanising women to participate in protests would have been overjoyed at the incredible nature of support it had received. Conversely, any party that was the object of women's resistance should have been cower-ing in the deepest, darkest hole it could find. Women's spontaneous and sustained participa-

tion in implacable opposition to State policy and government politics is an entirely new phenomenon in Indian politics. By declaring their choices against a policy and politics, women have turned a patriarchal democracy commandeered and manipulated by various political parties into a wider and inclusive democratic polity. After the Delhi elections, Indian politics will not be the same. It is not because of what Arvind Kejriwal did or has promised to do that women have now claimed a space for themselves and their needs and demands; because the BJP attempt-

LETTERS

WELL DONE AAP

Delhi's verdict in favour of the AAP should serve as an eye-opener to parties who have 'hate' as their main agenda (Delhi to BJP: We Love AAP ka kaam, DC, Feb. 12). People are no longer impressed by eloquence. Work for them, fulfil their basic needs, spread fraternity among them and they embrace you.

Pawar Ramachandra Rao Hyderabad

Kudos to Arvind Kejriwal and Delhi voters for respecting our Constitution. It is now proved that brute force has no place in a secular, democratic India. Other states should learn a lesson from AAP's victory in Delhi.

Imtiaz Ali Khan Hyderabad

SOPS NOT GOOD

I am sure most voters in Delhi wanted their freebies to continue and chose to go with the AAP. If a political party really worked hard for people, will it offer free electric-ity, water and bus ticket to women at the expense of others? These parties must remember we pay 12 per cent GST on medicines and 18 per cent on biscuits. They should make citizens self-reliant and not force them to depend on freebies. K. Ganesh Hvderabad

Email your letters to info@deccan-mail.com, editor@deccanmail.com. You can also send them to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad-500 003.

AAP in the Lok Sabha polls in Delhi. Over-reading Delhi polls can have its pitfalls.

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Any political party with less hubris would have been afraid... Any party that was the object of women's resistance should have been cowering in the deepest, darkest hole it could find.

ed to capture and subvert the foundations of the Indian State where unity. diversity, fraternity are alive and real values. Women, citizenship, liberalism, secularism, freedom, equality and demolition of an immense sociocultural barrier that excluded some from participation in decision-

making in a democracy are the new ingredients that are emerging as a force — both against the mullah and the Sangh-RSS Parivar and its brand of reconstituted religion via Hindutva. The unleashing of Mother India on the one hand and Young India on the other are signs of a tectonic shift in Indian politics. Arvind Kejriwal's third term is the entirely intended consequence of this new democratic politics. Shikha Mukerjee is a

senior journalist in

Kolkata

Govt. to issue ordinance on banks

NEW DELHI, Feb. 12. THE Union Cabinet tonight decided to restore the status of the 14 banks as it obtained before the Supreme Court struck down the Nationalisation Act.

The Cabinet was in favour of achieving this immediately through an ordinance. The ordi-



Cabinet discussed the position stemming from the Supreme Court judgement for over two hours soon after the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi had met leaders of Opposition groups. Except the Swatantra and the Jana Sangh groups which was for legislative action, the Leftist groups and the Opposition Congress groups were for an ordinance.



Why, for the Democrats, Bernie clearly is the best bet

ack in the year 2000, the winner of the JFK Presidential Library's annual Profiles in Courage Essay Contest was a high school senior from Indiana. "Cynical candidates have developed an ability to outgrow their convictions in order to win power," he lamented. But he saw a glimmer of hope. "Fortunately for the political process," he noted, "there remain a number of committed individuals who are steadfast enough in their beliefs to run for office to benefit their fellow Americans .. "One outstanding and inspiring

example of such integrity is the country's only independent con-gressman, Vermont's Bernie Sanders." He commended Sanders' courage in describing himself as a socialist "in a country where 'communism' is still the dirtiest of ideo-logical dirty words". He concluded by adding, "Above

all, I commend Bernie Sanders for giving me an answer to those who say American young people see politics as a cesspool of corruption, beyond redemption.

The evaluation of Sanders still rings true 20 years later, unlike the author of those words, who has dived headlong into that cesspool. His name? Pete Buttigieg.

Maybe he changed his mind at Harvard, or as a Rhodes scholar at Oxford, or as an employee of the wretched McKinsey firm. His record as mayor of South Bend, Indiana, has been called into question.

Buttigieg claimed a win in last week's Iowa caucus well before the votes had been tallied, perhaps confident in the knowledge that the software firm to which his campaign had subscribed would ensure his triumph. It almost turned out that way.

The consequence is that Buttigieg is level-pegging with Sanders in terms of delegates, despite the latter obtaining substantially more support. If the idea was to deny Sanders the momentum he would have obtained from a clear win in Iowa, it appears to have worked. The fact is, the hierarchy of the responsible software firm and its parent company are littered with

imperatives either from or related to the Obama administration, the Clinton campaign of 2016 and the Buttigieg campaign of 2020.

Could this be a coincidence? It wasn't just the Shadow app: recent revelations call into question the entire history of the quaint process whereby Iowa picks its delegates, suggesting there may well have been substantial discrepancies over the decades, not least in 2016, when Sanders lost to Hillary Clinton by a fraction of a percentage point.

He went on to win handsomely in New Hampshire, where it's harder to manipulate the outcome. The results from this year's New Hampshire primary should come through today, and may offer an indication of what lies ahead.

There can be little question, though, that the Democratic establishment is petrified of Sanders. You'll often hear the argument that the senator from Vermont would be a disastrous choice, because Donald Trump will rip him to pieces. But can any "pundit" seriously claim that the incumbent

president would be any less vicious if confronted with Buttigieg, Joe Biden, Elizabeth Warren or Amy Klobuchar?

If anything, Sanders potentially poses a bigger dilemma, because his appeal reaches the same workconstituencies that ing-class Trump deluded four years ago and may well do so again if his rival is someone who panders to the billionaires. Or even if it is a billionaire in person, like Michael Bloomberg, the former Republican mayor of New York.

There's a theory that the Democratic establishment is keen for Buttigieg to hover around the top of the field until Bloomberg who doesn't need campaign contributions because he's worth \$60 billion, and who hasn't bothered to test his viability in the early primary states — steps in as the 'consensus' candidate.

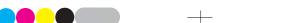
The democratic establishment has brought out some of its big guns to fire warning shots, including Hillary Clinton, who has claimed that no one likes Bernie. Flash back to 2008, with Clinton

tearfully wondering in public why no one liked her, eliciting a condescending response from Barack Obama. Obama hasn't extended that courtesy to Sanders, privately pledging to undermine him should he come close to being nominated. Likewise John Kerry. To say noth-ing of the mainstream "anti-Trump" news media.

The odds are stacked against Sanders, and it's doubtful whether he can override them. The bulk of his support is among the youth, but they don't always come out to vote. It's useful to remember, though, that if the British franchise had been restricted to under-45s, Jeremy Corbyn's Labour would have won December's election by a landslide. But then again, notwithstanding the odds, young voters propelled Sinn Fein to a leading position in last Saturday's Irish election.

America is a very different entity. But one would like to think, at this juncture, that all hope is not lost. Not yet, at least.

By arrangement with **Dawn**







IN BRIEF

Apple Music

gets new chief San Francisco: Warner Music Group veteran Jeff Bronikowski said has joined Apple Inc as global head of strategic music initiatives, Apple said on Tuesday. Bronikowski, who shared the news in a LinkedIn post on Monday, did not immediately return a request for comment. Apple declined to comment further. Apple is seeking to bolster its sales with paid subscriptions to services such as Apple Music, but it trails its top rival Spotify Technology SA. Apple has more than 60 million paid music subscribers to Spotify's 124 million. — Reuters

Paypal research to look into arms sale

New York: PayPal Holdings is teaming up with criminologists and experts at several universities to probe the payment systems used in the trafficking of illegal firearms in the United States, the company said on Tuesday. The research aims to help financial companies and law enforcement understand what types of payment methods are used to finance illegal transactions and prevent them from taking place, PayPal executives said. The effort will be led by the Center on Crime and **Community Resilience at** Northeastern University and the University of Chicago Crime Lab. The hope is that having a better understanding of illegal gun trafficking will help eradicate gun-related violence, said Dave Szuchman, PayPal's head of global financial crime and customer protection. "There haven't been comprehensive studies done," he said in an interview. - Reuters

TESLA FATAL CRASH: MAN FILED PLAINTS

Washington, Feb. 12: A Tesla driver killed in a March 2018 crash in California while using the Autopilot driverassistance system had report ed that on prior trips, the car had steered away from the highway, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) disclosed in documents made public Tuesday.

Walter Huang, a 38-year-old Apple software engineer, was driving his Tesla Model X in Mountain View in autopilot mode at about 70 mph when it The NTSB said Huang had reported issues on prior trips with Autopilot steering the wheel toward an area between a highway ramp and the lane. It is a moving violation to cross into that section of the road, known as the "gore area Data from the vehicle showed that in prior trips Huang had taken corrective action after Autopilot had steered toward the area. The NTSB said in the fatal crash Huang's hands were not detected on the steering wheel in the final six seconds before the crash. There was no evidence of braking or evasive action. The NTSB, which also found evidence that the driver was using a smartphone during the trip, plans a Feb. 25 hearing to determine the probable cause of the crash. Tesla did not immediately comment. Tesla drivers say they are able to avoid holding the steering wheel for extended periods while using Autopilot, but the company advises drivers to keep their hands on the wheel and pay attention while using the system. During the final 18-minute Autopilot segment of the trip, the system did not detect his hands on the wheel about onethird of the time and the system issued two visual alerts for hands-off driving operation and one auditory alert. The NTSB said Huang had been using an iPhone during his trip and records show evidence of data transmissions.

FTC demands data on **Big Tech's acquisition**

FTC commissioners voted unanimously to issue orders

Washington, Feb. 12: Federal regulators are trigger ramping up their investigation of the market dominance of giant tech companies, demanding detailed information on demanding five companies' acquisitions of smaller firms back to 2010. The Federal Trade

Commission announced the move Tuesday, issuing to Facebook, orders Amazon, Apple, Microsoft and Google's parent Alphabet Inc. Hundreds of takeovers of smaller com-panies are involved.

FTC Chairman Joseph Simons said that as a result of the review, the government may require tech giants to unwind earlier acquisitions and divest their assets if it violations found of antitrust law.

"All of our options are on the table," Simons said in a conference call with reporters. "If there are some transactions that are problematic, then we have that opportunity and that ability to go back and challenge" them. Short of requiring

divesting pieces of companies, other options could include putting assets into a separate company mandating unit or changes in how the companies conduct business, Simons said. The focus of the review

is on acquisitions with a is on acquisitions with a terms, scope, structure smaller value, about \$100 and purpose of acquisi-

itself as a champion

of privacy, the com-

pany is well-known

ways it sometimes

operates. It too prys

into emails of egre-

gious criminals on its

Forbes, which uncov-

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million or less, that didn't tions made between Jan. government 1, 2010 and Dec. 31, 2019. reporting requirements A Republican commisfor the companies. But sioner, Christine Wilson, Simons said the regulaand a Democrat, Rohit tors are interested in tech Chopra, said in a separate industry mergers of all statement that they supsizes. The FTC staff also ported the demand for

will look into whether companies may have manipulated the value of some acquisitions to reporting evade the requirements, he said.

The FTC, the Justice Department and a House committee have been investigating the conduct Facebook. Google. Amazon and Apple, and whether they aggressively bought smaller potential rivals to suppress competition and hurt consumers. Some critics have pointed to Facebook's acquisition of Instagram and WhatsApp, for example, as deals that should be questioned.

of Google and Facebook. The popular messaging In the Google investigaservices are among some tion, the attorneys general have asked the compacompanies that Facebook has acquired ny for internal documents over the past 15 years or related to how it sells ads and tracks the behavior of so, giving it what critics sav is massive market people who use its search power that has enabled it engine and other prodto snuff out competition. ucts. Microsoft said Tuesday The five FTC commis-

HOW APPLE 'INTERCEPTS' EMAILS WHEN IT FINDS CHILD ABUSE

sioners voted unaniit looks forward to workmously to issue the so-called special orders to ing with the FTC to answer its questions. A spokesman for Facebook the tech companies. The declined comment on the agency is asking the companies for information FTC action. Spokesmen and documents on the for Google and Amazon said the companies had no immediate comment; an

decade ago over its acqui-

sition of DoubleClick, a

competitor in digital

Apart from the govern-

ment and congressional

investigations, state attor-

neys general from both

political parties are con-

ducting antitrust probes

advertising.

Apple spokesman didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Google, Facebook, Amazon and Apple have said they'll fully cooperate with the antitrust investigations by the govern-ment and Congress. In information on the companies' previous acquisicongressional testimony, tions. But they said the their executives have agency also should study pushed back against accuhow tech companies' tarsations that they operate as monopolies, laying out geted advertising practices affect the collection, ways in which they say use and sharing of conthey compete fairly yet sumers' personal data. vigorously against rivals in the marketplace. Rep. David Cicilline, D-Google faced antitrust scrutiny more than a

R.I., the chair of the House Judiciary subcommittee on antitrust who is leading the panel's probe, called the FTC's new action "an important step in correcting the decades of inaction by antitrust enforcement agencies that have led to consolidation in the digital market place and across almost all sectors of our economy.

Čicilline has said that Congress and antitrust regulators wrongly allowed the big tech companies to regulate themselves, enabling them to operate out of control dominating the internet and choking off online innovation and entrepreneurship. He has suggest ed that legislative changes may be needed, though he

companies a last resort.



Samsung launches Galaxy S20 5G, Z Flip phones

San Francisco, Feb. 12: Samsung on Tuesday unveiled a foldable smartphone shaped like a large makeup compact and put 5G mobile network capabilities into all of its other flagship devices as it strives to retain the mantle of biggest global phone company.

Samsung's second attempt at a folding phone after a delayed rollout last year comes as the firm fends off its rival in the premium smartphone market, Apple, along with ascendant Chinese makers such as Huawei that have eaten into its sales in China and Europe.

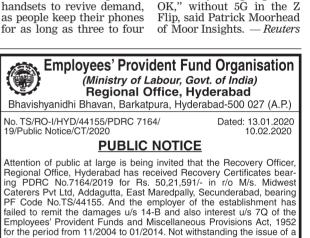
Huawei has only released its own folding phones in China, and Apple has yet to release a 5G iPhone of any kind. Some analysts said sales of Samsung's new flagship series, the Galaxy S20 which feature as many as four powerful cameras —

will be slightly less than those of its predecessor, expecting foldable phones could eat into some of its sales.

Shares of Samsung, which generated 34 per cent of its profit last year from the mobile business and half from its chip business, rose 0.2 per cent in a flat wider market. The Galaxy Z Flip, with folding glass, starts as a large square when closed and expands to look like most smartphones. It will start at \$1,380 and be available from Friday in purple, gold and black, executives

said in San Francisco. Last year's Galaxy Fold, a larger unit that folds like a book and was panned for its construction, had a plastic screen and was priced at nearly \$2,000. Carriers are betting on 5G

handsets to revive demand, as people keep their phones for as long as three to four



years with the global smart-

phone market maturing,

said Cristiano Amon, presi-

dent of Qualcomm, which

supplied the chips for many

of the Samsung devices. "The key thing that is rele-vant about the Galaxy S20 is

it's really a story about how 5G now becomes main-stream," Amon told *Reuters*

HALO EFFECT

Samsung said its three

Galaxy S20 phones will be

more expensive than prede-

cessors when they launch in

March with a starting price

of \$999. They will have a 5G

option whereas the Z Flip is

a 4G phone. "Everybody wants it to have 5G, but with

the segment they're target-

ing of style-conscious younger folks, right now I

think they are going to be

in an interview.

Certificate to the Recovery Officer u/s 8B the Central P.F. Commissioner or any other officer authorized by the Central Board may recover the amount by anyone or more of the modes provided u/s 8F This Office has issued Prohibitory Orders u/s 8F to freeze the ban accounts of the said establishment to all the Banks in which the above said employer is maintaining accounts. As per the information received from the banks a/c balance is "Zero" in some branches and the firm is also not operating the accounts from 2012

S.No.	Code No.	Estt Name	Period of default
1.	TS/44155	M/s. Midwest Caterers Pvt. Ltd.	11/2004 to 01/2014

If any person who has worked in above cited establishment during the period as mentioned above or any person who has any relevant details about the whereabouts of the employer or the details such as PAN Numbers, Aadhar Number, Bank Account Numbers or any property details of the responsible persons of the above said establish send the same by mail or by post, to the Office of Regional Providen Fund Commissioner, Regional Office-I, Barkatpura, Hyderabad.

Sd/- RECOVERY OFFICER & REGIONAL P.F. COMMISSIONER-

HOW DOES APPLE 'INTERCEPT' EMAILS? While Apple touts

Apple isn't manually checking all of your emails. It uses what most other major tech companies like Facebook or Google use to detect child abuse imagery: hashes



the relevant authority. But in Apple's sent. A staff member then looks at the emails. That's according to a search warpublished an Apple employee's com-ments on how they first detected "several images of suspected child pornography" being uploaded by an iCloud user and then looked at their emails.

GSMA MULLS has called breaking up the -AP

> Paris, Feb. 12: Telecoms lobby GSMA will hold a board meet-ing on Friday to discuss the possible cancellation of the Mobile World Congress (MWC) after several big-name withdrawals because of the coronavirus outbreak, an industry source said

MWC, scheduled to take place on Feb. 24-27, is the industry's biggest annual gathering, with companies spending millions on stands and hospitality to fill their order books. The world event was put in jeopardy after the coronavirus out-break, which has killed more than 1,000 people so far, mostly in China, prompted US firms such as Cisco, Sprint and ebook to pul

OF MWC 2020

CANCELLATION

on Tuesday.

Logs recovered with Apple's assistance show a word building game application "Three Kingdoms" was active during Huang's fatal trip.

The NTSB said "most players have both hands on the phone to support the device and manipulate game actions" but added the log data "does not provide enough information to ascertain whether the Tesla driver was holding the phone or how interactive he was with the game at the time of the crash

The NTSB said in September the system's design permitted a "driver to disengage from the driving task" in an earlier California crash.

Reuters

in Seattle, Washington, this week, shows that despite reports of Apple being uncooperative in serious law enforcement cases, it's being helpful in investigations.

It's taken a government court filing, one that Forbes had to dig out, to reveal more about Apple's practices here.

As long as Apple employees are only looking into emails when abusive images are detected by its computing systems, there shouldn't be much of a privacy issue here.

The real battleground. however, is where content is encrypted. It's impossible for Apple systems to flag illegal content in messages that have been sealed with a key that only customers have.

REGIONAL OFFICE-I. HYDERABAD



Ministry of Science and Technology **Department of Science and Technology**

Science and Technology of Yoga and Meditation (SATYAM) Call for Research Proposals for 2019-20

Science and Technology of Yoga and Meditation (SATYAM) is an interdisciplinary endeavor of Department of Science and Technology (DST) that interface with Medicine, Physiology, Psychology, Neuroscience, Philosophy, etc. SATYAM Programme converge different & diverse disciplines as well as approaches & methods in the study of yoga and meditation. SATYAM is aimed to foster scientific research on the effects of yoga and meditation on physical & mental health and on cognitive functioning in healthy people as well as in patients with disorders The comprehensive research on yoga and meditation under SATYAM is expected to apply new approaches for ailments' cure, setting of standard and specific yoga protocols, conduct scientific research, calibrations and analysis in order to bring out processes/protocols for healthy body and mind.

In light of the above, the research proposals are invited under SATYAM from scientists/academicians/yoga practioners, preferably having prior research experience in scientific aspects of 'Yoga & Meditation'. Multi-centric, interdisciplinary research proposals are also encouraged.

Themes: Basic themes covered under SATYAM include, (1) investigations on the effect of Yoga and Meditation on physical and mental health and well being, and (2) investigations on the effect of yoga and meditation on the body and mind in terms of basic processes and mechanisms. Additionally, scientific studies, which provide development and standardization of protocols, consolidation of existing knowledge in Indian perspective, etc., are also encouraged.

Who can apply: Scientists/academicians/yoga practitioners with research background in 'yoga and meditation' and having regular position are invited to participate in this initiative. Practitioners actively involved in yoga and meditation practices are also encouraged to apply in collaboration with academic and research institutions of repute.

Interested researchers are required to submit research proposals in their area of expertise along with Endorsement Certificate from the Head of the Institution and detailed bio-data of PI and Co-PIs. The project proposal format is available on the DST websites: www.dst.gov.in and onlinedst.gov.in.

Project duration: The project is tenable for a maximum period of three (3) years.

Proposal Submission: Project proposal in prescribed format should be submitted at online portal of DST i.e. e-PMS (onlinedst.gov.in). Principal Investigators have to register themselves at e-PMS and then proposal can be uploaded in the given format which is available on e-PMS under KIRAN Division and at DST website. Two (2) hardcopies of submitted research proposal should also be sent to Dr Vandana Singh, Scientist-E, Department of Science and Technology, Technology Bhawan, New Mehrauli Road, New Delhi-110016, by Speed Post. The envelope should be superscribed with "SATYAM".

- Last date of Proposal Submission is: 15 March 2020.

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Google drags EU to court in 10-yr-old fight

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"political

She has since racked up

13 billion euro tax bill

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Brussels, Feb. 12: Google and the EU have a day in big court Wednesday as the search engine giant enters a new phase of a legal saga that began a decade ago. The Silicon Valley jug-

gernaut is appealing a 2.4 billion euro (\$2.6 billion) fine from 2017 that was the first in a series of major penalties from the European Commission, the EU's powerful antitrust regulator. Google has paid the fine

and changed its behaviour, but the company will strongly condemn the decision in the EU's Court as ill-General founded and unfair. 'We're appealing the European Commission's 2017 Google Shopping drew decision because it is wide. wrong on the law, the facts, and the economics," a total of \$9 billion in the company said in an fines against Google and email. has slapped Apple with a

"Shopping ads have always helped people find the products they are looking for quickly and easily, and helped merchants to reach potential customers," it added.

The case opens what will certainly be a long season of court dates for Google and the EU, with two other fine decisions also under appeal at the Luxembourg-based court.

12: been locked in battle since 2010 when the commission first looked into accusations that the engine search squeezing rivals from results in order to promote ads and Google

Shopping, a price comparison service. For Brussels and the US giant sought a negotiated settlement, but the EU abruptly reversed course in 2014

after the intervention of member states and the arrival of Margrethe Vestager who took over as EU competition chief. Vestager, a former Danish finance minister, quickly became known for her relentless pursuit of US tech giants that

missed

The EU and Google have

1990s and early 2000s and saw the company fined about 1.4 billion euros. Google is expected to plead that the commission has wrongly applied arguments used successfully against Microsoft and that the company has

throughout most of the

the right to give advantage to its own services. The company will also underline that the EU case erroneously failed to account for the spectacular rise of Amazon and eBay in its assessment of

'A FEW CRUMBS'

Google Shopping.

The EU commission will give testimony alongside complainants who accuse Google of having smothered their business. "Our traffic decreased considerably, which created a vicious circle with merchants who no longer saw us as an alternative to Google Shopping," said Godfroid, Laurent lawyer for Twenga, a rival to Google Shopping.

The appeal hearing is to He said Google "left only a few crumbs" to its last three days with a decision not expected for rivals.Players in other sectors are following the a year. The case can then go to the EU's highest case closely, and hoping that Vestager swoops in the European Court of Justice. The on other features such as EU's case mirrors similar maps, travel and job ads against where Google has vet to face push back from regulegal lators. - AFPran

UK TO FINE SM PLATFORMS FOR CONTENT London, Feb. 12: The

British government says it will give regulators the to fine social power media companies for harmful material their platforms. Plans announced

Wednesday would give the UK's telecommunications watchdog, Ofcom, power to enforce a "duty of care" on companies such as FB and Twitter 'to protect users from harmful and illegal terrorist and child abuse content Firms that allow harm-

ful material to flourish or don't remove it quickly could be sanctioned. Ofcom currently keeps tabs on radio and televi sion broadcasters, and has the power to levy fines or even kick repeat offenders off the air. The government said it

was "minded" to make the changes, but new legislation will be needed for it to take effect. It said officials were working "at pace" to draft a new law. Ofcom will hold firms to account if they don't deal with harmful material, and platforms will have to remove "illegal content" quickly and "minimise the risk of it appearing." In order to safeguard freedom of expression, the government would let internet firms to decide what is tolerated. -AP





IN BRIEF **Pakistan's FIA** summons activist

Pakistan: Activist Gul Bukhari has been summoned by the Federal Investigative Agency (FIA)'s anti-terror wing which is also going to contact Interpol, ARY News reported on the authority of its sources. The channel reported that Gul Bukhari was issued the notice on Tuesday. Bukhari is known for her criticism of the establishment's policies, and is currently based abroad. London-based Pakistan activist Gul Bukhari has been threatened with terror charges. Bukhari has been accused of harbouring anti-Pakistan agenda, being a part of a cyber-terrorism ring and being associated with the Haqqani network and the Balochistan Liberation army

112 Israeli firms on UN blacklist

Geneva: The UN has released a list of 112 companies with activities in Israeli settlements, which are considered illegal under international law, including Airbnb, Exp-edia and TripAdvisor. The report comes in response to a 2016 UN Human Rights Council resolution calling for a "database for all businesses engaged in specific activities related to Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory". The UN rights office said the claim about the companies was "not, and does not purport to be, a judicial or quasi-judicial process". Israeli officials fear the list could be used to boycott firms with ties to the Israeli settlements. Among the businesses on the list are a range of lar-ge international companies, including Airbnb, Alstom, Booking.com and Motorola Solutions. "I am conscious this issue has been, and will continue to be, highly con-tentious," UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet said.

Duterte ends US defence pact

Manila/Washington: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte on Tuesday announced the termination of a two-decade-old Visiting Forces Agreement with the United States (VFA), delivering on threats to downgrade an alliance important to US interests. US Defense Secretary Mark Esper called the decision "unfortunate" and said it would be a move in the wrong direction at a

time when Washington and its allies were trying to press

Sanders edges Buttigieg in New Hampshire

Klobuchar gets her moment but bad nights for Warren and Biden; Yang, Bennet suspend their 2020 bids

Washington, Feb. 12: US Senator Bernie Sanders has won the Democratic presidential primary in the key state of New Hampshire, giving a big boost to his campaign for the 2020 White House bid as the race to his party's nomination gathers momentum over the next few months.

President Donald Trump, 73, who is seeking his reelection, won the New Hampshire Republican primary with a massive vote.

Sanders, 78, who lost to former secretary of state Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential primaries in New Hampshire, was ahead of his closest rival Pete Buttigieg.

With more than 85 per cent of the votes counted, the Senator from Vermont took 26 per cent support, followed by Buttigieg closely with 24.4 per cent and Amy Klobuchar coming third with 19.8 per cent of the votes.

Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren and for-mer Vice President Joe Biden were headed for distant fourth and fifth spots

"Now that we've gained another victory in New Hampshire, the establishment and financial elite are going to throw everyare going to throw every-thing at us except the kitchen sink. And I have a feeling that the kitchen sink is coming pretty soon as well," Sanders said after his victory in New Hampshire. The Repub-lican party and the **Trump** campaign said that Sanders winning the Democratic primary Democratic primary reflects that socialism has gained momentum in the

Democratic party. "One thing that is clear: Bernie Sanders winning his second state in a row shows how Socialism is now the mainstream in today's Democrat Party," Republican National Committee (RNC) Chair-woman Ronna McDaniel said in a statement.

"The Democrat story in New Hampshire is the continued dominance of big government socialist policies and the success of their standard bearer, Bernie Sanders," said Brad Parscale, **Trump**

2020 campaign manager. Ahead of the US Presidential election later this year, White House hopefuls are contesting for their party's nomina--PTItion in primaries.

financing cases.

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Democratic presidential candidate Senator Bernie Sanders at a primary election rally in Manchester, New Hampshire.

After Iowa, concerns grow over Nevada's plan

NEVADA, THE

third state to cast

votes on the Dem-

ocratic presidential

field, is seen as the

first test of a candi-

before a diverse po-

pulation and strong

ed some confusion about

how early voters would be

included in the multi-

stage caucus process. "This sounds just dan-

gerous, like people are still improvising and mak-

ing up the rules as they

puter scientist and expert

date's strength

labour unions.

Las Vegas, Feb. 12: Concerns have been growing that next week's Nevada caucuses could offer a

repeat of the chaos that ensnared the Iowa vote, with Nevada facing many of the same organisation-al and technical chalthat crippled lenges Iowa's process. Volunteers who will be

leading the Feb. 22 caucuses said key information ed step that Iowa did not attempt. That has prompthad yet to be shared.

There has been no hands-on training with iPads being deployed to caucus sites on Election Day nor opportunities to try out a new "tool" that will be loaded onto the iPads and used during the caucus process. go," said Doug Jones, a University of Iowa com-

Adding to the mix is that Nevada also plans to offer early voting, a complicaton voting technology. "How do they expect to get training done for all the people doing these

caucuses? Nevada, the third state to cast votes on the Demo-cratic presidential field, is seen as the first test of a strength candidate's before a diverse population and strong labor Nevada unions Republicans are not holding caucuses this year.

Molly Forgey, a spokes-woman for the Nevada State Democratic Party, declined to respond to questions about how the reporting process will work and the security measures in place.

said.

"We'll train our volunteers as soon as the process is rolled out." Forgev ΑP

Feds upset over Trump intervention, resign

Washington, Feb. 12:Underpressurepresident Donald Trump,theUSJustice Department on Tuesday abruptly moved to seek a shorter prison sentence for veteran Republican operative and long-time Trump adviser and friend Roger Stone, and all four prosecutors quit the case after the highly unusual reversal.

Senior department officials - hours after Trump complained on Twitter that Stone was being treated unfairly - overrode the sentencing recommen-dation of seven to nine years made on Monday by the federal prosecutors who secured Stone's conviction. Stone was found guilty in November on seven counts of lying to

PRESIDENT DON-**ALD** Trump praised his attorney general Wednesday for intervening to seek a lighter prison sentence for Roger Stone, convicted as part of the Russia probe.

Congress, obstruction and witness tampering. In a new court filing, a Justice Department official who had not previously worked on the case called that recommendation "excessive and unw-arranted" and said the department would not make a formal sentencing recommendation.

Democrats blasted the department's shift in the

TRUMP MAY ACT AGAINST FORMER AIDE VINDMAN

Washington: President Donald Trump has sug-gested that the Pentagon should review the conduct of a former White House national security aide who played a central role in the Democrats' impeachment case and potentially con-sider disciplinary action against him. Army Lt. Col. Alex Vindman, who until last week was detailed by the Pentagon to the White House, testified before the House impeachment panel that Trump inappropriate-ly pushed Ukraine Volodymyr President Zelenskiy to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden and his son Hunter. Vindman was ousted from his job on the White House National Security Council on Friday, just two days after the Senate acquitted Trump on abuse of power and obstruction of justice charges. He is to reassigned by the Pentagon. His twin broth-er, Lt. Col. Yevgeny Vindman, who worked as an ethics lawyer at the NSC, also was ousted from his job and was re-assigned to the Army General Counsel's Office. -AP

-AP

ing Stone, whose friend-ship with Trump dates back decades. Stone's trial arose from former Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investi-

high-profile case involv-

gation that detailed extensive Russian interference in the 2016 election to benefit Trump's candidacy. Trump told reporters he thought the initial recommendation was "ridicu-lous" but said he did not speak to the Justice Department about it.

The four prosecutors who won Stone's conviction - Aaron Zelinsky, Adam Jed, Michael Mar-ando and Jonathan Kravis - withdrew from the case. Kravis told the court in a filing that he was also quitting his job as a federal prosecutor. — *Reuters*

China to abide by "interna-tional rules of order" in Asia. The mercurial Duterte, who has clashed with the United States over several issues, decided to pull the plug on the troop rotation pact with the former colonial ruler to enable the Philippines to be more independent in its relations with other countries, his spokesman Salvador Panelo said.

WIFE THRASHES **HUBBY AT HIS 3RD WEDDING**

Karachi, Feb. 12: A Pakistani man was rescued by the police after his first wife gatecrashed his third wedding and brutally thrashed him and tore up his clothes in front of guests here, a media report said on Wednesday. Madiha and her relatives

barged into the wedding reception venue of Asif Rafiq in Karachi's Sakhi Hassan Chowrangi area on Monday night and claimed that was married to him in 2014, The Express Tribune reported. She clai-med that Rafiq had married another woman, a Jinnah University employee, without her consent and apologised to her after she objected to his second marriage, promising to stay only with her, the report said.

Madiha and her family brutally thrashed Rafiq during the reception and tore his clothes, the report said, adding that the police also beat him up after detaining him. Rafiq tried to escape from the police station but was chased by Madiha's family, forcing him to hide under a parked bus. He was caught and beaten up again before being rescued by some people, it said

According to Rafiq, he had divorced Madiha and therefore does not require anyone's permission to remarry, saying: "It is my right to marry four women at the same time' Meanwhile, the police asked Madiha and Rafiq to approach the court as it was a civil dispute.

Pak court sentences Hafiz Saeed to 11 years in jail Terrorism

Counter Lahore, Feb. 12: Mumbai attack mastermind and Department (CTD) of Punjab police. Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed was on The court sentenced Wednesday sentenced to Saeed to five and a half

11 years in jail by an antiyears and imposed a fine terrorism court in Pakistan in two terror of ₹15,000 in each case. The sentences of both cases will run concurrently. Saeed, a UN designated The anti-terrorism court terrorist whom the US has

or ATC had indicted Saeed placed a USD 10 million and his close aides on bounty on, was arrested on July 17 in the terror December 11 in the terror financing cases

financing cases. He is lodged at the Lahore's Kot On last Saturday, Lahore ATC judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta deferred Lakhpat jail in high secuthe verdict against Saeed in two terror financing

A court official con-firmed that Saeed was sentenced in two terror cases till February 11. In the two cases, the produced financing cases registered prosecution some 20 or so witnesses in against him in Lahore and Gujranwala cities on the the ATC who testified the against Saeed and his

close aides for their involvement in terror financing. Saeed pleaded "not guilty" in both the cases.

The Counter Terrorism Department had regis-tered 23 FIRs against Saeed and his accomplices on the charges of terror financing in different cities of Punjab province. The cases were regis-tered against Saeed and others in Lahore. Gujranwala and Multan for collection of funds for terrorism financing through assets/properties made and held in the names of Trusts/Non Profit Organisations including Al-Anfaal Trust, Dawatul Irshad Trust, Muaz Bin Jabal Trust. etc.



Turkish military convoy is seen near Idlib in Syria on Wednesday.

Swiss-based firm was top supplier of devices for encoding messages SECURITY ALERT CIA spied on countries, including India

CIA read the encrypted messages of several countries, including India, for decades through its secretly-owned Switzerlandbased company trusted by governments all over the world to keep the commu-nications of their spies, soldiers and diplomats

secret, according to a leading American daily. According to a report by The Washington Post and German public broadcaster ZDF published on Tuesday, the company, Crypto AG, entered into a deal with America's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1951 and

Washington, Feb. 12: The came under its ownership in the 1970s.

The joint reporting project, which uncovered the secret operation from CIA classified documents, described how the US and its allies exploited other nations' gullibility for years, taking their money and stealing their secrets. The company specialised in communications and

information security and was founded in the 1940s as an independent firm.

The CIA and the National Security Agency (NSA) spied on allies and adversaries alike through Crypto AG specialising in cryptography making



The Central Intelligence Agency seal displayed in the lobby of CIA Headquarters in Langley, Virginia.

equipment, the report mats secret, the Post said. said. For more than half a The company had clients century, governments all such as Iran, military juntas in Latin America, India, Pakistan and even over the world trusted the Swiss firm to keep the communications of their the Vatican, it said. spies, soldiers and diplo-

Swiss neutrality tainted by scandal

Feb. complicit in the secret Geneva. 12: Outraged commentators operation. warned Wednesday that Switzerland, takes pride in its neutral revelations the CIA and Germany's intelligence service had for decades used a Swiss encryption company for spying had and non-aligned status, "was hosting a quasi ally intelligence agency," the Tribune de Geneve daily seriously damaged said in an editorial. Swiss Switzerland's cherished reputation for neutrality. Critics voiced particular concern that Bern may the na have been at least tacitly added.

US, TALIBAN CLÓSE TO AGREEMENT

Islamabad, Feb. 12: The Taliban have issued ultimatum to Washington after weeks of talks with a US peace envoy, demanding a reply on their offer of a seven-day reduction of violence in Afghanistan, or they would walk away from the negotiating table, two Taliban officials said Wednesday.

The development comes as Washington said late Tuesday that an agreement on the insurgents' "reduction of violence" offer was days away.

Also, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani tweeted that he had received a phone call from US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo telling him of "notable progress" in the talks with the Taliban.

-AP

which

-AFF

The ultimatum came from the chief Taliban negotiator Mullah negotiator Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, who met earlier this week with White House envoy Zalmay Khalilzad and the Qatari foreign minister, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, according to two Taliban officials familiar with the negotiations. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorised to speak to the media.

There was no immediate response from Washington on the ultimatum, which appeared designed to focus the negotiations on Taliban demands.

TALIBAN ISSUES an ultimatum to US after weeks of talks with a peace envoy







officials "very likely' knew what was going on but "closed their eyes" in the name of neutrality, it



IN BRIEF **Nepal shuts resort** as 8 Indians die

Kathmandu: Nepal has sus-pended the licence of a mountain resort for three months after a probe found security lapses at the hotel for the incident that led to the death of eight Indians, including four minors, due to possible asphyxiation, a senior official said on Wednesday. Tragedy struck a group of 15 tourists from Kerala when eight of them died on January 21 due to possible asphyxiation after they fell unconscious probably due to a gas leak from a heater in their room at a resort in Makwanpur district. After a five member probe committee formed by Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation to investigate the tragedy, submitted it's report, the ministry decided to suspend the trans-action of the resort for three months, said Surendra Thapa, director at the Department of Tourism, who headed the five member probe committee.

N. Ireland hosts

same sex marriage

Carrickferbugs, UK: A Belfast couple on Tuesday made history by becoming the first same-sex couple to get married in Northern Ireland, following a landmark change in the law last year. Robyn Peoples, 26, and Sharni Edwards, 27, tied the knot in an afternoon ceremony in a hotel in Carrickfergus, near Belfast, after the new legislation came into effect on Monday. The legal change followed campaigning by Amnesty International and partner organisations in the "Love Equality" coalition, which hailed it as "a landmark moment for equality in Nort-hern Ireland". "We are literally living the dream, it's incredible," Edwards, a waitress from Brighton on the British mainland, told the domestic Press Association news agency shortly after the service. "We didn't expect to be the first couple, it's coincidental."

Man sustains burns trying to save wife

Dubai: A 32-year-old Indian man is fighting for his life after sustaining 90 per cent burn injuries while trying to save his wife from a fire at their home in the UAE, according to a media report. Anil Ninan, who hails from Kerala is in a very critical condition and has sustained 90 per cent burn injuries, his close relative was quoted as saying by the *Khaleej Times.* "Doctors said his condition is very critical. We are all praying for him," said July, Anil's relative who is in the hospital. However, the condition of his wife is stable. "She is doing okay. She has only 10 per cent burns and is recovering," the relative said. The incident happened on Monday when Anil was trying to save his wife Neenu from the fire that was caused by a short circuit from the electric box placed in the corridor of their apartment in Umm Al Quwain city in the UAE, the report said.

Coronavirus death toll climbs to 1,114

More than 45,100 infected globally; virus officially named 'COVID-19' by World Health Organisation

Beijing, Feb. 12: The death toll in China's novel coronavirus outbreak has gone up to 1,113 with 97 new fatalities reported mostly in the worst-affect-ed Hubei province while the confirmed cases of infection jumped to 44,653, health officials said on Wednesday. The country's National Health Commi-ssion said it received reports of 2,015 new confirmed cases and 97 deaths from 31 provincial-level

regions on Tuesday. The virus was officially named 'COVID-19' by the World Health Organisation (WHO) at a conference in Geneva. Among the deaths, 94 were from the virus-hit Hubei Province and one in Henan, Hunan and Chongqing respectively, the Commission said.

Another 3,342 new sus pected cases were reported Tuesday, said the commis-sion. Also on Tuesday, 871 patients were seriously taken ill, while 744 people discharged from hospital

after recovery. The overall confirmed cases on the Chinese mainland has reached 44,653 by the end of Tuesday and 1,113 people has died of the disease. The commission added that 8,204 patients remained in severe condition and 16,067 people were suspected of being infect-

ed with the virus. A total of 4,740 people had been discharged from hospital after recovery. The commission said

over 4.51 lakh close contacts had been traced with over 1.85 lakh others are still under medical observation. By the end of Tuesday, 49 confirmed cases including one death has been reported in Hong Kong, 10 confirmed cases in Macao and 18 in Taiwan. As many as 397 cases have reported from a number of

Brussels, Feb. 12: Janez Lenarcic, the EU's crisis countries. After naming the virus as 'COVID-19', WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said: "We had to find a wall of computer screens in Brussels. This is where his crisis task forces usuname that did not refer to a geographical location, an animal, an individual or group of people, and which is also pronounce-able and related to the dis--PTI



A doctor takes a swab from a woman to test for the COVID-19 virus at a fever clinic, in Yinan county in China's Shandong province.

EU crisis centre offers aid to China to fight virus

in six EU member states, according to the World Health Organisation.

The bloc's 27 health ministers plan to gather for a crisis crisis meeting on Thursday. Lenarcic did not specify which measures would be discussed. China has requested additional humanitarian goods and medical supplies from the European Through Tuesday, just 33 Ūnion.

Face masks, protective

gloves and clothing will soon be delivered to China, according to the European Commission. So far, Germany and France have already delivered protective gear to China. "Ever since the virus outbreak became known to the international community," Lenarcic said, "cooperation bet-ween the European Commission and China has been good." — Agencies

Another 39 people aboard the Diamond Princess cruise ship in Japan have tested positive for the new coronavirus, as thousands more steel themselves for a second week in guarantine. There are now 174 confirmed cases on the ship.

Chinese foreign minister to make first visit abroad since coronavirus outbreak.

CRUISE SHIP LAUGHS OFF **VIRUS FEARS**

Pattaya, Feb. 12: On board a US cruise ship that is being rejected at Asian ports over coronavirus fears, stoic passengers are keeping spirits up with poolside yoga, spin classes, comedy shows and a few

drinks. The Westerdam, with its 1,455 passengers and 802 crew, left Hong Kong on February 1 on what was meant to be a dream 14-day cruise across Asia, and was due to disembark this Saturday in Yokohama, Japan.

But Japan, Guam, the Philippines, Taiwan and now Thailand have refused to allow the ship to dock.

Cruise operators insist there is "no reason to believe" there are any cases of the deadly virus, which has killed over 1,100, on board and have urged Thai authorities to reverse their decision.

Several other cruise ships have been refused entry at ports across the Asia-Pacific region — from Singapore to Tonga — as fears over the virus spike. On Wednesday afternoon

the Westerdam still appeared on its way to Thailand's eastern seaboard, where authori-ties have instead offered to -APferry over supplies.

Singapore's DBS bank evacuated

Singapore, Feb. 12: Lea-ding Singaporean multinational bank DBS bank on Wednesday cleared its downtown office and told some 300 employees to work from home after one of its staff was infected with the Coronavirus. Singapore had previously reported 47 cases of the new virus, the Health Min-istry of the island citystate confirmed. The firm, in a statement, said that

on Wednesday morning, one of its employees was confirmed to be infected of the new virus, and as a precautionary measure, the authorities told all its staff on the same floor to work from home."We are also currently conducting detailed contact tracing with all employees and other parties that the infected person may have come into contact with,' the statement read

Doctors at China's virus NEW UNIVERSAL TARGET FOR ANTIVIRAL VACCINE epicentre overworked

Russian jumps out of window as 2 flee hospital

OLDER WOMEN TEND TO DRINK MORE: STUDY

Melbourne, Feb. 12: Women aged between 50 and 70 are more likely than younger women to consume alcohol at levels that exceed low risk drinking guidelines, according to a study conducted in Denmark and Australia.

Researchers from Edith Cowan University (ECU) in Australia found that many middle-aged and young-old women who consume alcohol at high risk levels tend to perceive their drinking as normal and acceptable, so long as they appear respectable and in control.

This is despite the potential health risks of exceeding national drinking guidelines, they said. The study, published in the journal Sociology of Health and Illness, analysed the social construction of alcohol use among 49 women aged 50 to 69 in Denmark and Australia.

According to Australian health authorities, drinking more than two standard drinks on any day significantly increases the risk of premature death over a woman's lifetime, the researchers noted. The research highlighted the widespread use of alcohol in both samples of women in Australia and Denmark. "Respondents from both countries indicated that alcohol use among women their age was normal and acceptable," Dare said.

management commission-

er, recently stared at a

ally monitors forest fires,

floods, and other natural

disasters. Now, he is look-

ing at maps with con-

firmed coronavirus infec-

cases had been recorded

tions.

Beijing, Feb. 12: Doctors on the frontline of China's ment and make it last new coronavirus epidemlonger, according to a ic are facing a daunting health official.

task: treat an ever-grow-ing number of infected One doctor at a community clinic in Wuhan said patients and risk getting he and at least 16 other colleagues were showing infected themselves due to a drastic shortage of symptoms similar to the masks and other protecnew virus, including lung infections and coughing. "As doctors, we do not Tired and understaffed, medical workers have had want to work while being a source of infection," he to deal with thousands of new cases per week in said, requesting anonymi-Wuhan, the city at the epity for fear of reprisals. centre of the outbreak that first emerged late last But "right now, there is no one to replace you," the doctor explained, adding year. Many doctors have had to see patients withthat all medical staff without a fever are expectout proper masks or proed to work.

tective body suits, resort-"What would happen if there was no one working ing to reusing the same equipment when they should be changed reguon the frontline?" Some 44 larly. Some have even worn diapers to avoid havpercent of the 42,600 cases nationwide — and the

ing to take off the equip- majority of more than 1,100 deaths — have been in Wuhan, home to a wild animal market where the virus is suspected of having originated before spreading between humans.

The risks medical staff are facing was highlighted on Friday after Li Wenliang, a whistleblowdoctor ing Wuhan, succumbed to the disease more than a month after he first raised alarm about a new SARSlike virus in the city. His death unleashed an outpouring of grief and anger on Chinese social media, with 10 academics in Wuhan circulating an open letter calling political for reform and freedom of speech. -AFP

Boston, Feb. 12: A potential new drug target that could lead to a vaccine against a host of viral infectious diseases has been identified, scientists said on Wednesday.

The novel coronavirus outbreak in China shows viruses are a constant threat to the humanity, researchers from the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) in the US noted. The research, published in the journal Cell Reports, suggests that the protein Argonaute 4 (AGO4) is an "Achilles heel" for viruses. AGO4 is one of a family of AGO proteins. Until now, there has been little evidence of why they important, are the researchers said. -PTI

Mascow, Feb. 12: One patient jumped out of a hospital window to escape her quarantine and another managed to break out by disabling an electronic lock.

Two Russian women who were kept in isolation for possible inflection by a new virus say they fled from their Russian hospitals this month because of uncooperative doctors, poor conditions and fear they would become infected. Russian health authorities haven't commented on their complaints.

The incidents occurred amid the outbreak of the virus in China that has already infected some 45,000 people worldwide. In Russia, only two cases of the disease COVID-19 have been reported. Nevertheless, the authori-

return to their home in ties took vast measures to prevent the new disease from spreading and hospitalized hundreds of people who returned from

China as a precaution. Many of those quarantined in different Russian hospitals complained about dire conditions of isolation rooms and lack of cooperation from doctors. uncertain about quarantine protocols.

women said their Both hospital ordeals began after returning from Hainan, a tropical region of China popular with Russian tourists.

In a lengthy account on Instagram published Friday, a woman with the screen name of Guzel-Neder said her son came down with a cough and a fever of 37.3 C (99.2 F) four days after the family's

the city of Samara. She called emergency servic-es, who diagnosed the boy as having a viral respiratory infection and who said the mother and the son must go to a hospital for coronavirus tests.

The hospital promised test results within 3 days then extended it to five she said, and meanwhile the boy responded to treat ment with medication and

an inhalator, she wrote. When she tried to press for results, hospital staff obstructed her, she said. Meanwhile, she had become concerned about lax procedures in the hospital saving that some medical staff came to the isolation area without masks or threw their protective clothing on the floor.

with their dead bodies, we just have to let go of them at sea," he told the news-

paper. "A couple have died and

left behind their baby and

FOOD CRISIS Every farmer, big or small, has been affected Cyclone: Hunger stalks southern Africa

Buhera,Zimbabwe, Feb. 12 : Just under a year ago, Alice Posha fled her home in the middle of the night and then watched as it was swept away by floods.

tive equipment.

The torrential rain came from Cyclone Idai, one of the worst storms ever to hit Africa and the fiercest record to strike on Buhera, a district in the usually arid province of Manicaland in eastern Zimbabwe.

Today, the scene in Buhera is entirely different. But the misery remains. The 60-year-old, who was rehoused in October, is going through the motions of weeding a field of maize that has been withered by the worst drought in 35 years. A little rain for her corn would be more than welcome. "Seeing how the maize is wilting, we may



A view of Ngangu township in eastern Zimbabwe after -AFP the area is hit by Cyclone Idai.

sistent

about climate change.

have a very bad harvest." she said It is a scene that is being played out across southern Africa, where chronic lack of rain is threatening mass hunger and ruin. Climate is being fingered as the big culprit. In the space of 10

Zimbabwe and its neighbours Mozambique and Malawi.

Over a thousand people died and the lives of millions of others were badly affected. "Our chickens and turkeys were swept away" said Posha's sisterin-law, Josephine Ganye, who now depends on food aid. She is among the 45 million people in southern Africa that the UN has said are threatened by famine.

Its Programme (WFP) sent out a stark warning last month. "This hunger crisis is on a scale we've not seen before and the evidence shows it's going to get worse," said Lola Castro, WFP's regional director in southern Africa. For the past five

nent, where average temperatures are rising twice as fast as the global mean, has suffered from a signif-

icant lack of rain. Every farmer, big or small, has been affected as well as breeders, hoteliers and teachers. In Zimbabwe, the drought has added to a long list of crises, from stratospheric inflation to shortages of cash, petrol, medicines, water and electricity. For many, daily life has become a nightmare. "Almost everybody in my area is insecure," said 68food year-old Janson Neshava, who is a headman, or senior leader, in Buhera

'We still do the traditional rain ceremonies, but to no avail. Even the wetlands are now dry and streams that used to flow throughout the year are all dry." —*AFP*

Four survive 32 days in Pacific

Wellington, Feb. 12: Four people survived a month adrift in the Pacific by eating coconuts and drinking rainwater in an ordeal that claimed the lives of eight of their companions, including a baby, reports said Wednesday. The

ber of the group drowned.

ful ocean currents.

am the one who held onto the baby and later the baby died as well.' Stally said a number of fi group, from Papua New Guinea's Bougainville prshing vessels passed nearby without noticing th ovince, are believed to have spent 32 days at sea. em until they were finally The group set off from picked up on Jan. 23 off Bougainville on Dec. 22. New Caledonia after drifintending to celebrate Chting some 2,000 km. The survivors comprised two ristmas in the Carteret Islands, about 100 km awmen, a woman and a girl ay. But survivor Dominic

aged about 12. Stally said their small They were dropped off boat capsized and a numin Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands. last The rest managed to right Saturday and were dischthe vessel but there were arged into the care of Papfurther fatalities as they ua New Guinea's High Cofloated in the remote watmmissioner John Balavu ers at the mercy of powerafter receiving treatment for dehydration. —Agencies

We could do nothing

years, the entire southern tip of the African conti-

World Food

months. Buhera and many districts like it have been hammered by extremes that scientists say are conwith forecasts In March 2019, the arrival of Idai unleashed devastation on eastern

FINANCIAL Chronicle

DECCAN CHRONICLE | HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 13 FEBRUARY 2020



INDICATO	%	
Sensex	41,565.90	0.85
Nifty 50	12,201.20	0.77
S&P 500*	3,371.31	0.40
Dollar (₹)	71.35	0.02
Pound Sterling (₹)	92.76	0.53
Euro (₹)	78.11	0.11
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	41,148 ▼ 128	0.31
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	55.74	1.73
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.473	0.008
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.628	0.038
* As of 9:30 pm IST		

Cabinet nod for **Major Ports** Authority Bill

To provide autonomy to the top 12 major ports and improve their competitiveness, the government gave the nod to the Major Ports Authority Bill to replace a 1963 law governing the sector and said it will be introduced in the ongoing session of Parliament. Earlier, the Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha in 2016 and thereafter referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee but got lapsed.

Nasscom pegs IT-BPM revenue at \$192 billion



The Indian IT and business process management (BPM) sector's revenue is estimated to grow at 8.4 per cent in FY20 on a constant currency basis to \$192 billion, and the industry remains "cautiously optimistic" about the future, Nasscom said. The industry body, which discontinued giving a number on the outlook last year, said the growth in FY20 came on the back of a 23% rise in the newage digital revenues.

FC BUREAU NEW DELHI, FEB. 12

With muted growth in the manufacturing sector, the country's factory output contracted in December and the retail inflation accelerated for the sixth consecutive month in January, casting doubts over the government's claim of a recovery is in sight for the economy.

The government data on Index of Industrial Production (IIP), on Wednesday, showed that industrial output contracted 0.3 per cent in December against a growth of 1.8 per cent in November. Besides, retail inflation jumped to over five-and-a-half-year high of 7.59 per cent in January on persistently high prices of vegetables, pulses and protein-rich meat and fish."

The government data came two days after when finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman claimed the economy is on the mend, relying on seven indicators, including the IIP, to show that green shoots have started to emerge in the economy that is projected to grow at a mere 5

New Delhi, Feb. 12:

Fitch on Wednesday said

it expects vehicle produc-

tion in India to contract

by 8.3 per cent in 2020 as

the auto industry faces

increasing risk of supply shortage due to China's coronavirus outbreak,

possibly hitting domestic

output if the virus spreads in the country. In China, where the virus originated, automo-

tive manufacturers have

order to limit the congre-

gation of people and reduce the exposure of its

halted

production in

to possible

Auto production to

contract by 8.3%



■ IIP records -0.3% growth, CPI inflation at 7.59%

Factory output contracts

again as inflation spikes

per cent this fiscal, hitting an 11-year low.

Manufacturing output, which accounts for more than three-fourths of the IIP, fell 1.2 per cent against a growth of 2.7 per cent in November. Production of capital goods saw a con-traction of 18.2 in December against a con-traction of 8.6 per cent a month ago. Also consumer durables fell 6.7 per cent in December against a fall of 1.5 per cent in November and electricity production by 0.1 per cent against a fall

of 5 per cent a month ago. However, mining production grew 5.4 per cent

impact on Indian autos

pared to China".

production.

unchanged in coming months. "Growth-inflation mix has seriously deteriorated ... there will be a longer pause in the rate-cutting cycle now," said Rupa Rege Nitsure, chief economist, L&T Financial Holdings

The overall food inflation during January this year stood at 13.63 per cent, slightly lower than 14.19 per cent in the previous month. Among proteinrich items, prices of meat and fish went up by 10.50 per cent during the month, while egg prices were higher by 10.41 per cent against the year-ago period. The food and beverages catego-ry showed an inflation print of 11.79 per cent. "The internals of the food inflation one way

food inflation are worrying, given a broad-based uptick across categories that tend to be sticky, such as proteins, and a narrow-er-than-expected reduction in inflation for vegetables. Moreover, the fairly broadbased rise in the core inflation to 4.1 per cent in January 2020, driven by various services, is a cause for concern," said Aditi Nayar, principal econo-mist, Icra.

Govt to infuse ₹2,500 cr into 3 general insurers

FC BUREAU NEW DELHI, FEB. 12

cent a month ago. Similarly, the growth of primary products was 2.2 per cent against a fall of 0.3

per cent in the previous

The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based infla-

tion, which rose to 7.59 per

cent in January, was at 7.35 per cent a month ago in

December 2019 and a year

ago at 1.97 per cent in January 2019. The CPI had

hit 8.33 per cent in May

Economists said the ris-

ing inflation could prompt

the Reserve Bank of India

to leave interest rates

month.

2014.

will be much larger because the virus will likely spread much faster The Union Cabinet on in the country when com-Wednesday gave an inprinciple approval to pump in Rs 2,500-crore capital into three state-Furthermore, because China is one of India's owned general insurance largest supplier of automotive components, a companies ahead of their slowdown in the supply of merger. The three insurers are Oriental Insura-China-made components will lead to shortages in nce Company Ltd, Nation-India and could force auto al Insurance Company Ltd and United India makers to slow or stop Insurance Company Ltd. As a result, we forecast Briefing reporters here, vehicle production in India will contract by 8.3 Union minister Prakash Javadekar said, "The capital has been fused

"The government has infused Rs 3 lakh crore into public-sector banks in the past three years. Similarly, we will start recapitalisation of general insurance companies in tranches. The government will infuse more capital as and when required," he added.

In January, the finance ministry had said that the merger of PSU general insurers was at an advanced stage and could happen soon, as the matter was pending before the Cabinet. In his Budget

the

Narasimhan appointed CEO of **Tata Trusts**

FC BUREAU MUMBAI, FEB.12

After a 10-month search, Trusts Tata Wednesday appointed group old-timer Srinath Narasimhan as the chief executive of the Tata Trusts from April 1 this year.

Tata Trusts hold 66 per cent of the equity share capital of Tata Sons, the principal investment holding company and promoter of Tata companies.

Narasimhan is cur-rently the managing director of Tata Teleservices and Tata Teleservices (Maha-rashtra). Earlier he was MD at Tata Communications.

He was appointed in place of R. Venkataramanan, who quit last year as managing trustee of Tata Trusts. Venkataramanan resigned in the wake of the income tax department scrutinising his annual remuneration and later withdrawing tax exemption granted to Sir Dorabji Tata Trust. He was summoned by the Enforcement Direc-torate (ED) in January as part of a money laundering probe involving Air Asia, in which the Tatas hold a 51 per cent stake.

Narasimhan, a mechanical engineer from IIIT Madras and an MBA from IIM Calcutta, joined the Tata Administrative Services (TAS) in 1986.

In the newly created post of CEO, Narasimhan will have all the powers previous-ly wielded by the managing trustee.

The trustees on Wednesday also appointed Pramit Jhaveri, former CEO of Citi India as a trustee of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust with effect from February 12.

G&J exports hit by China shutdown

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, FEB. 12

The coronavirus outbreak and the consequent clo-sure of manufacturing units and jewellery stores in China as well as Hong Kong has added to the woes of gems and jewellery exports, which were already reeling under the pressure of slower global and demand credit crunch.

According to the Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council, offtake by China as well as Hong Kong has come down by 10 per cent since the outbreak. If the situation persists the impact could be higher and more widespread, finds the industry.

Some of the jewellery units have been closed fol-lowing the outbreak. Jewellery stores too are closed and the consumption has been hit across the country,' said Colin Shah vice chairman, GJEPC.

Chow Tai Fook, the world's biggest jewellery chain by revenue, has temporarily halted operations in about 80 per cent of its stores in mainland China. Chow Tai Fook has more than 3,600 outlets in mainland China. The remaining stores are also opened for lesser hours. It has also temporarily closed 40 stores across Hong Kong and Macau as fears over the possible spread of the novel coronavirus are keeping shoppers away

from stores. In January, the overall exports of gems and jew-ellery from India dipped 9.17 per cent to \$2,966.42 million against \$3,265.88

mn in January 2019. China and Hong Kong are major buyers of cut and polished diamonds from India, accounting for around 30 per cent of the exports. Export of cut and polished diamonds have come down 5. 67 per cent in January and is down 16.80 per cent between

April and January. "The slowdown in China can spread to other markets as well and this is a major worry for the indus-try,' said Shah. Chinese

DBS evacuates 300 employees

pg **14**

GURDIP SINGH SINGAPORE, FEB. 12

Singapore's largest bank DBS on Wednesday evacuated 300 staff from its head office here and told them to work from home after an employee was found to be infected with the deadly coronavirus. The infected employee was tested on Tuesday, the DBS bank said.

As a precaution, employees in the affected office space were told to work from home.

"As a precautionary measure, as at 12pm on Wednesday, we ensured that all employees on the affected floor at Marina Bay Financial Centre Tower 3 vacated the premises, to work from home," it said. DBS said it was con-ducting contact tracing

with all employees and other people the infected person may have come into contact with. The affected office space and common areas are being deep cleaned and disin-

fected, it added. All bank employees will receive a "personal hygiene and protection care pack" from next week. -PTI

travellers are major buyers of diamond studded jewellery in the US market.

industry has The appealed to the govern-ment and the Reserve Bank of India to revise credit terms for exporters and importers in the gems and jewellery trade which has been badly affected by the Hong Kong protests last year and the recent novel coronavirus outbreak.

It has asked for leeway and time for credit facilities availed by exporters / importers for meeting their financial commitments and extension of

Get FASTag free of charge for 15 days

The National Highways Authority of India has waived FASTag fee till February 29, the government said. "In order to further increase digital collection of user fee via FASTag at NH fee plazas, the National Highways Authority of India has decided to waive off the FASTag cost of Rs 100 for NHAI FASTag between February 15 and 29," the ministry of road transport and highways said in a statement.

All problems to be resolved in 2020: Sahara chief

Hopeful of all its problems getting resolved this year, Sahara group chief Subrata Roy has said two large foreign investors have been roped in for real estate and city development businesses, and nearly Rs 22,000 crore deposited with the Sebi will also eventually come back. Roy has also assured all Sahara investors they would get their invested amount with full interest and additional interest for delay.

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population infection and "we see India adopting similar policies if the virus spreads throughout the country." it said Given that India's health care system is ill-equipped to deal with a

large scale epidemic, the rating agency said "the

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD

FMCG major Hindustan

Unilever gained over 5 per

cent on BSE and NSE to a

new all-time high of Rs

2.271 per share and its

market cap surged to near

Rs 5 lakh crore at Rs

HUL shares closed at Rs

2260.45, up 5 per cent on the BSE after hitting a

new a record high during

massive one-day move.

MUMBAI, FEB. 12

4,89,344.94 crore.

the day's trading.

2020lowing an estimated contraction of 13.2 per cent in 2019. The agency said that it

believes that the weak domestic demand for new vehicles will see India's vehicle production continue to contract in 2020.

the light of the critical financial position and breach of regulatory solvency requirements of the general insurers. The capital infusion...comes ahead of their proposed merger by the end of March 2020." PTI

There was no immediate

trigger for the stock's rise,

next few quarters, expect-

ed recovery in the demand

2QFY21, synergies from

merger, price increase in

Glaxosmithkline

Healthcare

environment

Consumer

the

said an analyst.

HUL spurts 5%, nears ₹5L cr M-cap

finance minister Arun Jaitley had announced that the three companies would be merged into a single insurance entity. However, the merger process could not be completed due to various reasons

soaps and lower crude costs are likely to boost earnings," analysts at

earnings," analysts at Motilal Oswal Financial

In the third quarter, HUL's earnings before interest, tax, depreciation

and amortisation grew at

19 per cent to Rs 2,445

Profit after tax before exceptional items for the quarter grew at 21 per

"The rise in palm oil

prices may affect gross margins, but soft crude prices, judicious price

increases and higher cost

savings still provide a pos-

itive margin outlook,'

analyst from Emkay

Global Financial Services

cent to Rs 1,691 crore.

Services said.

crore.

Placements at IIMC see record salary

RITWIK MUKHERJEE KOLKATA, FEB. 12

The overall job market may tell you a different story, but when it comes to India's two of the premier B-Schools, the hiring scenario has causes to cheer about.

Consider these. For its MBA Class of 2020 at IIM Calcutta, the average salary stood at a record Rs 28 lakh, with the median salary at Rs 25.5 lakh. The average salaries for the top 10 per cent and the top quartile of the class were recorded at a record Rs 54.5 lakh and Rs 41.8 lakh per annum, respectively. Similarly, the median salary offered to the flagship batch at XLRI- Xavier School of Management saw an increase to Rs 23 lakh per annum from 21 lakh in 2019 and the average salary saw an increase to Rs 24.30 lakh per annum from Rs 22.35 lakh in 2019. The batch received multiple domes-tic offers at Rs 50 lakh per



annum from the banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) sector while the highest international offer stood at Rs 58.5 lakh a year from the sales and marketing (S&M) domain.

"This year's placement season has witnessed remarkable success in spite of the longish economic slowdown. Interest in XLRI's students has been tremendous," said Fr. P Christie, director, XLRI - Xavier School of Management.

CBDT to share PAN other data with Sebi

ASHWIN J PUNNEN with agency inputs MUMBAI, FEB. 12

In order to help curb stock market manipulation, the Income Tax Department and the market regulator Sebi have decided to work closely by sharing information of taxpayers. The markets regulator and the Central Board of

Direct Taxes are expected to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) soon in order to implement the decision and work out modalities of exchange of data, maintenance of confidentiality, mechanism for safe preservation of data and weeding out

after usage. The CBDT, which frames policy for the tax department, had issued an order in this context on February 10 under section 138 (1) of the I-T Act.

The sharing of infor-mation will be under three broad heads: request-based exchange of data, suo moto and automatic.

The CBDT said under the suo moto exchange, information such as list of scrutiny cases marked as having evasion or violation related to 'stock market manipulation' and any other information considered necessary for Sebi will be provided. Under the requestbased exchange data, CBDT will share PAN information that includes name of father/ husband, date of birth or date of incorporation, photo and signature .

M&M lines up a series of models for next 2 years

said.

from

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, FEB. 12

Mahindra and Mahindra, one of India's biggest automakers, plans to launch half a dozen passenger vehicles, including three new sports utility vehicles (SUVs) and three new electric vehicles. five commercial vehicles and four tractors over the next two years for which it has lined up Rs 15,000 crore over three years.

In one of the biggest lineups, the Mumbai-headquartered firm will also

competitive auto mart. Mahindra is the second largest commercial vehicle (trucks and buses) maker after rival and market leader Tata Motors and the largest manufacturer of tractors in India.

passenger vehicles (cars, SUV and vans) maker after Maruti Suzuki and Hyundai.

Auto Expo sees 70 models

Greater Noida, Feb. 12: India's flagship motor show Auto Expo came to a close on Wednesday after witnessing over 70 product launches and unveils. recording a total of 6.08 lakh visitors over eight days. This edition of the ment.

es coming up in the next 18 Goenka. to 24 months. The most imminent one is the launch e-KUV100," Pawan

Auto Expo witnessed over 352 product displays from 108 exhibitors, including eight global premiers, over 70 launches and unveils, the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers said in a state-

Managing Director at Mahindra & Mahindra. said. This electric SUV called

-PTI

e-KUV100 will be launched in the first quarter of the next financial year, he said. Goenka said the first of the several joint products coming from the Mahindra-Ford joint venture will also debut in the last quarter of the next fiscal.

The brand new platform, code named W601, will spin off a cross-over SUV for Mahindra and Ford will also release its own product on the same platform, he said.

The Scorpio, one of Mahindra's longest surviving models, will also under-

go a major change. An allnew model, code named Z101, will sport new features and styling, and will debut in the first quarter of FY2022

Mahindra will also step into the mass mobility segment with the launch of a electric vehicle called Atom, which was showcased at the Auto Expo. This light weight vehicle is a quadricycle that will compete against the Bajaj Qute. 'The next one is the new

Thar, which should also happen in the first quarter,"Goenka said.

introduce nearly 10 new models of buses and trucks, and at least four allnew tractors to gain market share in the fiercely

It is also the third biggest

"We have several launch-





The BSE FMCG Index outperformed and delivered 13.39 per cent return (against Nifty-50's -1.04 gained 1.90 per cent and topped the sectoral gainers list, helped by HUL's per cent) over the last onemonth period and 25.33 The stock was the top per cent (against Nifty-50's 12.05 per cent) gainer in both Sensex and Nifty-50 indices on Wednesday. The stock has return over the last oneyear period.

GAMES DECCAN CHRONICLE | HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 13 FEBRUARY 2020

SHORT TAKES

Golfer Oviya in lead at Chennai

Chennai: Local golfer Oviya Reddi shot her best round as a professional, a one-over 73, on the opening day to take sole lead at the third leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour here on Wednesday.

The 19-year-old Oviya, who turned professional in the middle of the 2019 season, shot four birdies against three bogeys and one double. Oviya was actually four-under through the first seven holes at the TNGF Cosmo layout, where she plays often. She birdied the first, second, fifth and seventh. Her first blemish was the double bogey on the Par-3 eighth, but she steadied herself with a series of pars. Then she ran into three bogeys on 13th, 14th and 15th before closing with three more pars for 73. Amandeep Drall, whose last win was at the 10th leg last season, shot 74 with two bogeys. Ananya Datar, who was in the first group of the day, was one-over after the 15th with two birdies against three bogeys. - PTI

East Bengal have task cut out

Kalyani: Quess East Bengal are getting all set to host secondplaced Punjab FC, in what is a must-win Hero I-League 2019-20 encounter for the Red and Gold Brigade, on Thursday (February 13, 2020). The side from Kolkata is, at the moment, placed tenth on the points table with 11 points from 10 games while Punjab are second from the top with 17 points in 11 matches. The game will be played at the Kalyani Stadium. Quess East Bengal, who have been struggling for form this vear, have been on a slump with two continuous losses and have been unable to string together a series of wins to uplift the team. The lack of an in-form striker has been another problem which the team is going through with Marcos Jiménez de la Espada not being able to live up to his reputation. Punjab FC, on the other hand, have lost only once in the last five encounters. The sole defeat also came at the hands of the Mohun Bagan by the narrowest of margins of 0-1. - Agencies

Legend Banerjee improving: Doc

Kolkata: Legendary Indian footballer PK Baneriee, who was admitted to a city hospital with chest infection, was showing improvement in his health conditions, a statement from the medical facility said on Wednesday.

Humpy moves on

Koneru nails leader Nana to be second

St Louis (USA), Feb. 12: Indian players had mixed fortunes in the fifth round of the Cairns Cup Chess here with Koneru Humpy posting a win and D. Harika suffering a defeat. Humpy returned to winning ways with a superb victory against overnight leader Nana Dzagnidze with black pieces on

Tuesday. She had suffered a defeat in the second round and shared points in the third and fourth rounds after opening with a crushing win over Carissa Yip.

She is on three points after five rounds, half a point behind the leaders — Wenjun Ju and Alexandra Kosteniuk. Humpy, the world rapid

champion, outlasted her rival in a long-draw 83move game. Dzagnidze, who had been in good touch in previous games, was undone in Lady Gambit game as the Indian ace capitalised after gaining a pawn.

World champion Wenjun Ju posted a win over Katernya Lagno, despite making errors which her Russian oppo-nent could not capitalise

Harika was beaten by Valentina Gunina in a Sicilian Closed game in 38 moves. It was Harika's first defeat in the 10-player tournament. Meanwhile, former champion world Alexandra Kosteniuk out-

played Mariya Muzychuk to join Ju at the top. Carissa Yip, who had earlier lost her matches,

opened her account with a win over compatriot Irina Krush. -PTi

THE RESULTS

Fifth round: Koneru Humpy (3) bt Nana Dzagnidze (3); Wenjun Ju (3.5) bt Katernya Lagno (2.5); Alexandra Kosteniuk (3.5) bt Mariya Muzychuk Muzychuk (2.5); Valentina Gunina (2) bt Dronavalli Harika (2.5); Carissa Yip (1) bt Irina Krush (1.5).



Above: India's Koneru Humpy participates at the Cairns Cup in St Louis, USA, on Tuesday. **Below:** D. Harika is lost in her thoughts as she takes a walk during the competition.



Ajay elected president, Bharat to be secretary

Venketrama Raja as the new President of the All India Chess Federation (AICF) after being elected unopposed along with incumbent Secretary Bharat Singh Chauhan. In all, five office-bearers were declared winners by Returning Officer former Supreme Court judge Fakkir Justice Mohammed Ibrahim Kalifulla. The new set of office-bearers will hold their positions till 2023. Naresh Sharma (treasurer), M. Arun Singh (joint secretary) and Vipnesh Bharadwaj (vice-president) were also elected unopposed for the respective posts. The AICF has been

split into two camps —

approached the Madras High Court seeking headed one bv Venketrama Raja and one led by Chauhan. relief against the rejec-Those elected belong to tion of their nominathe Chauhan faction. tions by the returning In his three-page officer.

order, Kalifulla said the rejected the nomination forms of 23 contestants, proposed election scheduled on February including that of Venketrama Raja, as 23 in Hyderabad will not take place now. they did not file in per-

Kalifulla, on Sunday,

The High Court had

appointed Kallifulla as

the returning officer to

conduct the elections

after the two factions

had approached it after

Sports

Code.

Development

-PTI

"As the election process has been con-cluded, all original releson as specified in the para 6.4 of the National vant files will be forwarded to the Registry of the High Court, Madras on February 12." he said.

However, the opposing camp still remained hopeful. Sources in the Raja

calling for general body camp said the final outmeetings on different come of the election dates. will be decided by the

Ritu gears up for China challenge

can be.

Under-23

the process.

embrace

promptly

But Ritu

rewards. As an athlete, I

am open to meet any chal lenge head on. I am moti-

vated to become the best

mixed martial artist that I

Even before Phogat made

the switch, she already had three Indian national

championships titles to her

credit and bagged the gold at the 2016 Commonwealth Wrestling Championships as well. The following year,

she won a silver medal at

the prestigious World

Championships in Poland

becoming the first female Indian wrestler to do so in

Singapore to join the world-renowned Evolve

MMA, where she currently

trains with multiple Muay

Thai and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu World Champions to

bring her striking and sub-

mission skills up to par with her elite wrestling.

impressed on her debut,

she will now need to pro-

duce that same confidence

and determination against debutante Wu in her upcoming fight. With whole of India following

her, she is aiming to make

While the 25-year-old

Wrestling

chose to

tc

MMA and

moved

New Delhi, Feb. 12: India got its first taste of ONE Championship's brand of I knew the risk and the Martial Arts live on Wednesday as Ritu Phogat displayed her skills at the National Sports Club of India here in the city ahead of her face-off with China's Pro MMA fighter

Wu Chiao Chen at ONE: KING OF THE JUNGLE to be held at the Singapore Indoor Stadium on Friday, February 28.

The largest global sports media property in Asian history, ONE nistory, ONE Championship[™] (ONE) held the official ONE: KING OF THE JUNGLE Open Workout where the Indian wrestling superstar Ritu Phogat featured in an ovaiting workout excision exciting workout session and interaction, discussing her successful switch to MMA from amateur

wrestling. As the daughter of the legendary wrestling coach, Mahavir Singh Phogat, Ritu became the first one to make the crossover having begun her wrestling training at the age of 8. Phogat's selfless dedication and her ability to pick up skills quickly gifted her a sizzling debut late last year when she finished Nam Hee Kim in the first round by technical knockout to remain unbeaten at the ONE Championship. Ritu Phogat stated: "I am

honored to showcase my skills in front of all the fans and media here in India. My career has been a fantastic one. But when I



Ritu Phogat (left) showcases her skills with MMA fighter Maira Mazar in New Delhi on Wednesday.



pg **15**

The 83-year-old was admitted to the hospital for the second time in less than a month with a history of fever and cough. "Banerjee is showing improvement in his clinical condition and responding well to the ongoing treatment," a statement from the Medica Superspecialty Hospital said. According to family sources, he is likely to be taken out of the Intensive Care Unit to general ward on Thursday. The 1962 Asian Games gold medallist is being treated by a panel of specialists, including pulmonologist Dr Nandini Biswas, internal medicine and intensivist Dr Tanmoy Banerjee.

RAILWAYS **TEAM BEGIN** WITH A BANG

Hyderabad: South Central Railway (SCR) toyed with YMCA Hyderabad, recording a thumping 91-33 win in the Samuel Vasanth Kumar memorial flood-lit prize money tournament at YMCA Secunderabad on Wednesday evening. During the change of ends, the winners were comfortably placed at 54-

18. The railway men were superior in every aspect and looked like very strong contenders for the title. Powered by Vijay Kumar, Santosh Mani, M. Raju and Kaushik Ram, the quartet of Tamil Nadu imports, SCR gave their rivals very little room to score. Instead they virtually monopolised ball possession, rotating the sphere around the 'D' to capitalise on the smallest opening and fire three-pointers. Pouncing on defensive rebounds, forward Vijay was swift with his fast breaks, as was Santosh Mani. The results: SCR 91 (Vijay Kumar 36, Santosh Mani 27, Kaushik 9) bt YMCA Hyderabad 33. HT: 54-18; Young Men's Guild, Secunderabad

74 (M. Prudhvishwar Reddy 32, Chris Viresh 20) bt HAL Basketball Club 65 (Aman 23, G. Vikram 12, Ashish 14) HT: 31-33; Saints Basketball Club 53 (Prateek 15, Agni 14) bt RR Club 18. HT: 32-5.



The new Ferrari Formula One SF1000 which was unveiled during a ceremony at Teatro Romolo-Valli in Reggio Emilia, Italy, on Tuesday. - AFP

Vettel Ferrari's top driver: Manager

Reggio Emilia (Italy), **Feb. 12:** Ferrari team manager Mattia Binotto insisted that Sebastian Vettel remained the team's "first choice" for the future despite reports that Lewis Hamilton could join the Italian stable next season.

"Seb is our first choice, our preference," Binotto said on Tuesday during the presentation of the team's new SF1000 car for the 2020 season at Reggio Emilia in northern Italy. Vettel, 32, joined Ferrari in 2015 and the German's contract ends at the end of the coming season, as does world champion Hamilton's at Mercedes.

'We're focused on our drivers. We're not thinking about it for the moment," added Binotto. "We're talking with Seb and we'll take the time

needed. We are focused on the car and the Tests. There will be a time for the rest. I think it's good to live in the present moment and the present moment is what's behind us," said Vettel, pointing to the new car Ferrari.

"We will have time," he added. Ferrari's second driver Charles Leclerc extended his contract with the Scuderia. — AFP



Ferrari drivers Charles Leclerc (left) and Sebastian Vettel in this file photo.

ITALIAN RACING SIDE UNVEIL NEW CAR FOR THIS SEASON

Reggio Emilia (Italy), Feb. 12: Ferrari unveiled its new SF1000 car for the 2020 Formula One season. which they hope will deliver a first world drivers title since 2007, during a glitzy ceremony. The single-seater's name acknowledges the fact that the Italian team will start its 1,000th world championship race during the coming campaign, which begins with the Australian Grand Prix in

Narrower than last season's SF90, with a deeper red colouring the body, Ferrari is pinning its hopes on the SF1000 car earning them drivers and constructors titles that have eluded them for 12

and 11 years respectively. "I like it very much. It's much narrower at the back than last year and it is also redder, it's even better," said German driver Sebastian Vettel on -AFP

Andhra women are champions

Andhra won seven

matches to top the

BCCI women's U-23

one-day tournament.

Padmaja (3/21) and G

Saranya (3/25) bowled well.

However, Andhra could not measure up to the task and managed only 120/9 in the

BRIEF SCORES At Chukkapalli Pitchaiah

Ground, Mulapadu: Odisha

141/8 in 50 overs (Susmita

28, Anjali 39, Lakshmi 3/27

Anitha 2/8) bt Hyderabad

123 in 43.1 overs (Anitha 40, Louisa 3/25, Taranna 2/10, Indrani 2/25).

At Deveneni Venkata

Ramana Pranitha Ground,

Mulapadu: Jharkhand 141 in

47.4 overs (Rashmi 37, Indrani 23, G. Sindhuja 4/28, E. Padmaja 3/21, G. Saranya 3/25) bt Andhra 120/9 in 50

overs (Shanthi 2/30, Durga

stipulated 50 overs.

(4/28),

Elite group in the

of their eight

Sindhuja

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 12

Andhra lost to Jharkhand by 21 runs in their last league match but emerged on top of the group to win the BCCI Women's Under-One-Day title in

Mulapadu near Vijayawada on Wednesday. Having won seven of their eight matches, Andhra topped the Elite-A Pool with 28 points. Jharkhand, having lost two matches, finished munor matches, finished runnerup with 26 points. The two teams, along with Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Kerala qualified for the knockout stage of the

tournament to be held in Mumbai from February 19. Andhra Cricket Association secretary V.

Durga Prasad was under-standably excited. "All the women teams (in different age groups) at Andhra are faring quite well in all formats of the game. They deserve all the praise. Everyone at the ACA wishes them the best in the future tournaments," he said

In the last league match played at Deveneni played Venkata Ramana Pranitha Ground on Wednesday, Jharkhand were all out for 141 in 47.4 overs as G.



hinese GP moved to April

eb. 12: The Grand Prix Paris, Feb.

scheduled for April 19 has been postponed because of the "continued spread" of the deadly coronavirus. motorsport's governing FIA announced body Wednesday.

Chinese

FIA said promotors of the Shanghai race had requested a postponement "in view of the continued spread of novel coron-

"As a result of continued health concerns and with the @WHO (World Health Organisation) declaring the coronavirus as a global health emergency, the FIA and @F1 Formula 1 year. have taken these measures in order to ensure the health and safety of the staff, championship participants and fans.

becomes the latest sports event to fall victim to the virus outbreak which has killed more than 1,100 people in China, where it emerged at the end of last

The postponement also throws into doubt the inaugural race in in Vietnam, which takes place two weeks before

but where there have also been cases of COVID-19. "The FIA and @F1 continue to work closely with the teams, promoter, CAMF and local authorities to monitor the situation," FIA said in relation to the Shanghai postponement.

It could prove tricky with FIA organising a record-breaking 22 Grand Prix this season. -AFP



Members of the Andhra women's Under 23 team pose after winning the BCCI one-day tournament.



now named The Shanghai race, the COVID-19. fourth of the new season,

Tuesday. Melbourne on March 15.

DECCAN CHRONICLE | HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 13 FEBRUARY 2020

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BRIEF SCORES

In Hyderabad: Hyderabad

239/7 in 86 overs (Rahul Buddhi 52, Prateek Reddy (batting) 76, Mehdi Hassan (batting) 27, Yash Thakur 4/44, Rajneesh Gurbani 3/48) vs Vidarbha.

In Nadiad: Andhra 177 in 84.2

overs (Karan Shinde 49,

TAKES SHORT

Maxwell may miss beginning of IPL

Melbourne: Australia's dashing all-rounder Glenn Maxwell is set to miss the beginning of the IPL after an elbow injury on Tuesday ruled him out of the upcoming ODIs and T20 Internationals in South Africa. The tour of South Africa starts on February 21. Maxwell will undergo surgery on his left elbow and will be replaced by D'Arcy Short in both squads. Cricket Australia said he might require at least six to eight weeks to attain full match fitness, which means he is likely to miss the beginning of the IPL too, which is starting on March 29

The 31-year-old is representing Kings XI Punjab in the franchise-based league. – PTI

Lakshmi to officiate

at ICC women's T20

Dubai: Nitin Memon is the lone Indian in the ICC's list of umpires for the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup in Australia, where an unprecedented six women will be in the match officials team for the tournament. India's G. S. Lakshmi will become the first woman match referee at a global ICC event. Lauren Agenbag Kim Cotton, Claire Polosak, Sue **Redfern and Jacqueline** Williams are the women umpires named for the competition. – PT/ Match Officials at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2020 Match Referees: Steve Bernard, Chris Broad, G. S. Lakshmi. Umpires: Lauren Agenbag, Gregory Brathwaite, Chris Brown, Kim Cotton, Shaun George, Nitin Menon, Claire Polosak, Ahsan Raza, Sue Redfern, Langton Rusere, Alex Wharf, Jacqueline Williams

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Opening dilemma Rahul and Prateek

After stellar show with the 'A' side, Shubman has emerged as one of the top opening bets

Hamilton, Feb. Shubman Gill's stellar show in the recently-concluded India 'A' series is an indicator that he is ready for Test debut, feels senior off-spin-Harbhajan Singh. ner Shubman had scores of 83 and 204 not out batting in middle-order in the first 'A' Test and then scored a hun-dred opening in the second game, showing his versatility at different slots.

Prithvi Shaw, back in the Test squad after 16 months, is also a contender in the play-ing XI with his equally dazzling repertoire of strokes. "Shubman should get his chance since he has been part of the team (as reserve opener) for quite a while without playing any Test

match,'

12: Harbhajan, who has been Gill's state team skipper in white ball cricket, said. Their journeys have been intertwined since the U-19 days but in next 10 days, Prithvi and Shubman will

provide skipper Virat Kohli and coach Ravi Shastri with a lot to ponder while fighting to be Mayank Agarwal's opening partner in first Test against New Zealand, starting February 21. With Rohit Sharma being

ruled out due to a hamstring injury and the in-form KL Rahul surprisingly ignored by the outgoing selection committee, India could go into the series with Agarwal, who has so far played nine Tests, as the senior opener. India's woes could be compounded as Agarwal,

despite his superb initiation in Test cricket, has been in wretched form, bagging a pair (0 in both innings) of the 'A' Test in Christchurch and failing in all three ODIs. He also had a quiet couple of Ranji

However, top batsman. He underhis stands

3 get his chance since he has been part of the team (as reserve opener) for quite a while without playing any Test match.

because of three ODI innings and a practice game, you

don't drop him. It doesn't work like that," Harbhajan explained. "He has been scoring lots of runs wherever he is playing, so I feel Mayank and Shubman should start in first Test," he added. But, former India stumper

Deep Dasgupta has a contrarian view and wants Prithvi to start in the playing XI. "I fully understand that Shubman is in great form but remember one thing. It was Prithvi who made his Test debut before even Mayank. He did well and was first choice in Australia before getting injured," Dasgupta's take was different from Harbhajan. -PTI

steady Hyderabad

Hyderabad, Feb. 12: Vidarbha's Yash Thakur (4/44) and Rajneesh Gurbani (3/48) vindicated their captain's decision to bowl first as they shared seven wickets that fell on Day One of their Elite Group 'A' Ranji Trophy match against Hyderabad being played at the Beijy being played at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium.

Bodapati Sumanth 40, Arzan Nagwaswalla 4/18, Axar Patel 3/33) vs Gujarat 2 for For the hosts, an unbeat-en Prateek Reddy top-scored with 76 while Medhi no loss in 4 overs. In Rajkot: Tamil Nadu 250/7 in 90 overs (Abhinav Mukund 86, N Jagadeesan 61 (batting), Jaydev Undakat 3/25) vs Saurashtra. Hassan was batting on 27 at stumps. Prateek's 76 was studded with eight fours from 159 balls. In Bengaluru: Baroda 85 in

Earlier Rahul Buddhi with the help of nine fours — added 52 to the team's 33.5 overs (A. A. Pathan 45, tally.

Meanwhile, in Group 'B', Saurashtra bowlers led by skipper Jaydev Unadkat dished out a clinical show to restrict Tamil Nadu to 250/7 in Chennai.

For Tamil Nadu, the experienced Abhinav Mukund (86) and N. Jagadeesan (61 not out) scored fifties. Jagadeesan's wicket.

Abhimanyu Mithun 3/26) vs Karnataka 165/7 in 52 overs (Karun Nair 47, Soyeb Sopariya 3/40). knock ensured that the visitors reached the 250-run mark. Tamil Nadu openers Mukund (86 off 112 balls) and L. Suryaprakash (10) added 49 runs for the first

Gowtham

3/25,

Smriti's 66 in vain, Aussies claim title

Melbourne, Feb. 12: India opener Smriti Mandhana's 37-ball 66 went Smriti in vain as Australia claimed the tri-nation women's T20 series with a gritty 11-run win following sensational five-wicket haul by spinner Jess Jonassen here on Wednesday.

Set a target of 156, India were all out for 144 after being 115 for three in the 15th over. Seasoned leftarm spinner Jonassen was the star of the show with brilliant figures of 5 for 12 in four overs, making her only the third Australian

in the women's T20 format. Opting to bat, Australia managed to post 155 for six in their stipulated 20 overs. Chasing a challenging target, Mandhana was up to the task at hand and smashed 12 boundaries in her knock at the Junction Oval. However, Mandhana's

bowler to return a five-for

dismissal in the 15th over turned the match in Australia's favour. -PTI**Brief scores:** Australia 155/6 in 20 overs (Beth Mooney 71 not out) bt India 144 in 20 overs (Smriti Mandhana 66, Jess Jonassen 5/12).

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Shubman Gill

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10

- HARBHAJAN SINGH

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Trophy games. Harbhajan feels that Agarwal should continue as the main open-"Mayank is a proven player in Test cricket and a



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