

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
HYDERABAD | SUNDAY | 16 FEBRUARY 2020

## WEATHER

Max: 33.4°C  
Min: 16.1°C  
RH: 59%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.  
Mist likely in morning  
Max/Min temp. 33/16°C

## ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Uttarayana  
Tithi: Magha Bahula Astami  
Star: Anuradha till 4.53 am  
(Monday)  
Varjyam: 9.06 am to 10.41 am  
Durmuhurtam: 4.42 pm to  
5.28 pm  
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm  
HJRI CALENDAR  
Jumada al-Sani 21, 1441 AH  
PRAYERS  
Fajar: 5.42 am  
Zohar: 12.40 pm  
Asar: 4.41 pm  
Maghrib: 6.23 pm  
Isha: 7.31 pm  
SUNSET TODAY 6.17 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.42 AM  
MOONRISE TODAY 12.29 AM  
MOONSET TODAY 12.03 AM

## COUNTER POINT



Beggars are getting a facelift for Trump's visit...

## Vodafone Idea to pay AGR dues

New Delhi: Telecom operator Vodafone Idea on Saturday said it is assessing the amount that can be paid towards AGR dues. The company said it is in the process to pay adjusted gross revenue dues as per the Supreme Court order. However, the continuation of business in India will depend on favourable order on its modification plea filed before the apex court, it added.

## India will settle J&K issue: MEA

Munich: External affairs minister S. Jaishankar told a senior US Senator that India will "settle" the Kashmir issue on its own when the American lawmaker brought up the issue. Referring to the Kashmir issue, Senator Lindsey Graham said the best way to sell democracy will be to settle the issue in a democratic way.

More on Page 9

## Many angered by Assam fund cuts

Guwahati: Many people were angry with Assam government's policy decision not to spend public money on religious education and shut down nearly 614 government aided madrasahs and 101 Sanskrit tols (institutes) and convert them in to high and higher secondary schools.

More on Page 8

## Faasal booked under PSA

Srinagar: The J&K administration booked former IAS officer-turned-politician Shah Faesal under the controversial Public Safety Act, sources said on Saturday. Faesal, who was under detention after scrapping of J&K's special status, was booked under the PSA on Friday night.

## INSIDE

CITY.. PG3  
Early Metro exit closure angers many

SPORTS.. PG16  
Bhawana qualifies for Olympics in 20km race

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## SUNDAY CHRONICLE

TREND OF WEEKEND  
LONELINESS HITS THE  
POSTMODERN WORLD

## TABLOID PHUBBING TEMPTATION

INDIA WARNS TURKEY NOT TO MEDDLE

>> PG 9

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## TRS continues its winning spree in coop elections

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

The Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) continued its winning spree, this time in the cooperative elections on Sunday. The party won 90 per cent of the seats of directors of Primary Agriculture Cooperative Credit Societies (PACS).

The TRS is now in a position to win all the District Cooperative Central Banks, District Cooperative Market Societies and Cooperative Marketing Federations in the state.

Even though the elections were held on non-party basis, the main political parties fought for the victory of their supporters. The state has a total 909 PACS, of which elections were unopposed in a few of them. For the remaining 6,248 wards, a total of 14,530 candidates were in the fray.

In Siricilla PACS, where TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao is the legislator, all 13 director posts were won by TRS supporters. The ruling party won all the posts in the Huzurabad Assembly seat previously represented by TPCC president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy.

On Sunday and Monday, the directors will elect PACS chairpersons. These chairpersons will elect the heads of the district banks and market societies. The notification for these polls will be issued on Monday or Tuesday.

Following the victory,



The hoarding at Necklace Road greeting the CM on his birthday.

## GHMC PENALISES TALASANI OVER CM'S B'DAY FLEXI

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav was penalised by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation for erecting a mega hoarding at Necklace Road to mark Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao's birthday on Sunday.

The hoarding bore the words "Happy Birthday sir" and "We love KCR".

TRS working president and municipal minister K.T. Rama Rao had expressly instructed party workers not erect hoardings and flexies for Mr Rao's birthday.

Page 5: Many posters put up for CM's birthday

Mr Rama Rao posted on Twitter: "Heartfelt thanks to the farmers of Telangana for giving yet another resounding victory to the TRS."

## 4 puppies burnt alive at Sainikpuri

GEETA VALABOJU | DC  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

Four puppies were burnt to death and two others survived with burns at Suryanagar, Sainikpuri, on Saturday.

The incident occurred when workers at a construction site set fire to some bushes to clear the place.

The puppies were hiding in the bushes which was apparently not noticed by the workers.

According to Arun, a resident in the area, it was only when some of the puppies caught fire and ran out yelping in pain that they were noticed.

"Many of us ran out to see what the noise was about but their mother would not let anyone get close to them. But she managed to rescue two of

THE INCIDENT occurred when workers at a construction site set fire to some bushes to clear the place.

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her pups," he said.

Compassionate Society for Animals representative Nagam Pravalika said, "it is a heart-breaking incident. Although they say they were not aware that the pups are inside the bushes, the workers should have checked."

## SAFETY | FIRST People to be restricted from protected areas like tiger reserves, wildlife sanctuaries

## Fires popping up across forest reserves

BALU PULIPAKA | DC  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

With fires popping up in the state's forests with increasing frequency in the past month, including in protected areas such as wildlife sanctuaries and tiger reserves, the forest department has announced restrictions on entry of people into the forests.

One of the decisions taken, it was learnt, was not to allow pilgrims to trek through the Amrabad tiger reserve in Telangana

state to the Srisaillam temple town in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh for attending the Maha Shivaratri festival.

Pilgrims and others have been urged to follow instructions of department officials in the tiger reserves. People trekking to Srisaillam from Mannanur that marks the beginning of the tiger reserve must stay on the road and not take any path through the forest, the department said. Incidentally, on Saturday, updates from the

## Shaheen dadis seek Shah meet

No appointment yet; Move in response to minister's 'offer' to meet protesters

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 15

Responding to Union home minister Amit Shah's comment at a TV event that anyone having doubts over the Citizenship Amendment Act could seek an appointment from his office and he would be willing to meet the person within three days. Responding to his call, we have decided to meet Mr Shah and we are now waiting for his response to our call," said a protester.

They said that in case they fail to get an appointment with Mr Shah the would decide their future course of action after 2 pm on Sunday.

An announcement in this regard was also made by a

National Register of Citizens (NRC). The protesters clarified that they had not sought an appointment with the minister. "Mr Shah said that anyone having doubts over CAA could seek an appointment from his office and he would be willing to meet the person within three days. Responding to his call, we have decided to meet Mr Shah and we are now waiting for his response to our call," said a protester.

Ms Mehrunnisa, who has been a regular at the protest, said the protesters would march to Mr Shah's residence on Sunday. "We would ask him to withdraw CAA-NRC-NPR," she said, adding that the protest would continue till their demand was met.

A woman protester said that all the women would be going to meet the home minister. "Everyone will go and meet the home minister at 2 pm on Sunday. It's a request to all the citi-

zens including men and women who are facing problems due to CAA and NRC to go and meet Mr Shah and Prime Minister," said an elderly woman.

The Delhi Police said that they have no information about the proposed meeting. "We will do the needful if they get the appointment," said a senior police officer.

Some of the protesters said that they will march to Mr Shah's residence with a charter of demands and their primary demand is to revoke the CAA. The protesters said they will not be sending any delegation but everyone protesting at Shaheen Bagh will be going to meet him.

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## SC JUDGE SAYS DISSENT IS NOT ANTI-NATIONAL

Ahmedabad, Feb. 15: Calling dissent a "safety valve" of democracy, Supreme Court judge Justice D.Y. Chandrachud on Saturday said "blanket labelling" of dissent as anti-national or anti-democratic strikes at the "heart" of the country's commitment to protect Constitutional values and promote deliberative democracy.

Delivering a lecture here in Gujarat, Justice Chandrachud also said that use of state machinery to curb dissent instills fear, which violates the rule of law. "The blanket labelling of dissent as anti-national or anti-democratic strikes at the heart of our commitment to protect constitutional values and the promotion of deliberative democracy," he said.

Protecting dissent is but a reminder that while a democratically elected government offers us a legitimate tool for development and social coordination, they can never claim a monopoly over the values and identities that define our plural society, Justice Chandrachud said. He was speaking on the topic, "The Hues That Make India: From Plurality to Pluralism," here. "Employment of state machinery to curb dissent instills fear and creates a chilling atmosphere on free speech which violates the rule of law," he added.

Page 8: Destroying dissent affects growth



Members of Thowheed Jamath stage a protest against the violence at an anti-CAA rally, in Chennai on Saturday. Report on Page 9 — DECCAN CHRONICLE

## 1st Covid-19 death in France

### Chinese tourist first fatality outside Asia, epidemic feared

Paris/Beijing, Feb. 15:

An 80-year-old Chinese tourist has died from the new coronavirus in France, the first death confirmed outside of Asia, French health minister Agnes Buzyn said on Saturday.

Buzyn said she had been told about the death of the patient — in hospital in Paris since late January — late on Friday, adding that his condition "had deteriorated rapidly" after several days in a critical condition. Six people with the virus remain in hospital in France, Buzyn said, adding that none were seriously ill.

Three deaths from the

TOP WHO experts to reach Beijing this weekend to assist China

THE TOLL rose to 1,523 after 143 more people died in China

virus have so far been recorded outside mainland China — in the Philippines, Hong Kong and Japan.

Top WHO experts are set to arrive in Beijing this weekend to assist China to contain the coronavirus outbreak.

The first fatality outside Asia, fuelled concerns about the epidemic. More than 66,000 people are now infected from the virus in

China, health officials said.

On Saturday China's Health Commission said the toll in China rose to 1,523 after 143 more people died in the country, most in Hubei, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak.

There were reports of 2,641 new confirmed cases of novel coronavirus infection and 143 deaths on Friday from 31 provincial-level regions, it said.

The most concentrated number of cases outside China is on a cruise ship quarantined off the Japanese coast, which is holding at least 285 people with the virus among its 3,711 crew and passengers.

A total of 138 Indians, including 132 crew and 6 passengers, are among the 3,711 people on board the quarantined ship. Three Indians are among those infected on the ship. Several countries have banned arrivals from China and major airlines have cut services with the country.

The coronavirus has posed a big threat to the medical staff in China as more than 1,700 Chinese health workers have been infected by the virus while treating the patients and six of them have died so far.

Agencies

More reports on Page 14

## AP'S COUNCIL TO BE WOUND UP BY MARCH

S.N.C.N. ACHARYULU | DC  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

The AP Legislative Council will be abolished by the end of March if the Centre implements its assurance to AP Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

In the last three days, Mr Reddy has met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union home minister Amit Shah and Union law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and requested them to introduce the Bill to abolish the Council in the second phase of Parliament Budget session which will begin on March 3.

Both Mr Modi and Mr Shah assured Mr Reddy that the Centre would introduce the Bill in the second week of March, according to sources close to the CM.

On the advice of Mr Modi and Mr Shah, Mr Reddy met Mr Prasad on Saturday. The AP Budget Session is likely to be held after March 15, and Mr Reddy wants the Council to be abolished by then. The next steps in the process are that the Union law ministry on the basis of the AP Assembly resolution on abolition of the Council will prepare a Bill and present it to the Central ministry.

Page 6: AP Council Bill in Parliament soon

## SHORT TAKES

## CONG VOWS TO PROTECT 4% MUSLIM QUOTA

Hyderabad, Feb. 15: The Congress party on Saturday expressed its resolve to protect the ongoing 4% Muslim reservation in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh by putting up a strong legal fight in the Supreme Court.

Addressing the prize distribution ceremony of competitions held on the topic of "15 Years of 4% Muslim Reservation" on the occasion of 64th birthday of former Minister and ex-Leader of Opposition Mohammed Ali Shabbir at Prakasham Hall in Gandhi Bhavan premises on Saturday, Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said that the Congress party would continue to fight the legal battle in Supreme Court to protect the 4% Muslim reservation. He praised the role played by Shabbir Ali and the then Chief Minister Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy in giving 4% reservation to backward groups among Muslims in 2004.

He said that the previous Congress regime implemented 4% Muslim reservation in jobs, education and also in local bodies which led to socio-economic, educational and political empowerment of poor Muslims.

Uttam Kumar Reddy accused Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao of cheating the Muslims on the promise of 12% reservation. He said that KCR had promised to implement 12% Muslim quota within four months after coming to power in 2014. However, he said the promise remained unfulfilled even after six years and today KCR is not even speaking about it.

Calling Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) an ally of BJP, he cited various instances when KCR supported the BJP and Modi Government.

Uttam Kumar Reddy also slammed KCR for not convening the special session of Assembly to pass a resolution against Citizenship Amendment Act. —INN

## When in crowd, turn to 3G for good network

4G gets congested as demand is more than supply

ADITYA CHUNDURU | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

A few days ago, Imran was at a massive protest at Dharna Chowk near Indira Park. He tried to post pictures of the protest on his social media accounts but was unable to do so. Though his mobile phone was on "full signal," he couldn't even send a text message on WhatsApp.

Imran isn't the only one to face this problem. At places with large crowds such as sporting events, religious processions and protests, mobile internet often becomes useless on many phones.

Journalists often walk with their phones held above their heads to get some reception to file their copies.

The reason for this is

quite simple, the demand for mobile data exceeds the supply.

Mr Narsi Reddy, a telecommunications engineer, explained that mobile phones are like WiFi routers. They have a limit on the amount of data they can send out at a particular point in time. He explained that most mobile phones are now using 4G or LTE (long term evolution) frequency bands.

"On most phones, the default settings make it the only option. In a crowded place, everyone is trying to upload pictures or livestream the proceedings. This causes an excessive load in that particular network," he said.

The phone is quite confused when this happens. "It knows the network is there but doesn't know

■ AT PLACES with large crowds such as sporting events, religious processions and protests, mobile internet often becomes useless on many phones.

■ THE REASON for this is quite simple, the demand for mobile data exceeds the supply. Most people don't understand it, said Mr Ramu Penthota of Sri Ram Enterprises.

how to use it," the engineer said.

Mr Ramu Penthota of Sri Ram Enterprises, which sets up cellular infrastructure for major cellular networks in the city, agreed.

"A cell tower can only take on so much traffic. Most people don't understand it. Companies spend a lot of thought in deciding where they want to set up cell towers," he said.

There is, however, a workaround to this problem. Users could switch to the local 3G network when the 4G network is congested.

Mr Penthota said, "Most carriers continue to maintain a 3G and 2G network. However, they are seldom used since most mobile phone phones are set to receive only 4G signals. If one digs around the settings for a few minutes, one can have a completely workable 3G or even 2G signal."

This workaround is only valid with carriers other than Jio, since the carrier offers its services in LTE.

## PERMISSION TO HOLD ANTI-CAA PROTEST DENIED

ATHER MOIN I DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

The Police has refused permission to the women's protest against the

Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) scheduled for Sunday at Dharna Chowk, Indira Park. The organiser, Mr Mohammed Mushtaq Malik of the Telangana-AP Joint Action Committee against CAA and NPR, announced that they would observe Sunday as 'protest day'.

He gave a call for a protest throughout the city between 2 pm and 5 pm against the denial of permission.

Mr Malik told the media, "we discussed the matter at a meeting of the steering committee of the JAC. The city police has rejected our application for the fourth time in succession."

He said the police had denied permission citing "silly reasons".

## PIL in HC against CAA provisions

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA I DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

A public interest litigation (PIL) was filed before the High Court seeking to declare Section 14-A of the Citizenship Act, 1955 as void and to declare the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) rules 2003 as ultra vires of the parent Act.

Mr S.Q. Masood, a city-based social activist, and advocate Namrata Jaiswal who filed the PIL urged the court to quash the Gazette Notification No. SO 2753, issued by Union home ministry regarding the general citizen registration.

The petitioners submitted in the high court that Section 14-A and Citizenship Rules were the violative of Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution.

"As for the new gazette the questions to be asked by the Census officers or enumerators to collect the population details were materially different than the questions asked under the updation of National Population Register," the petitioners said.

It was submitted to the court that the circulars suffers from legal malafides, because the clubbing of the National Population Register 2020 and Census 2021 was not a lawful exercise of powers conferred on the authorities under the Census Act, 1948 and the Citizenship Rules.

"The questions asked under the Census do not seemingly offend the privacy of a person. However, the nature of the information sought for the updation of National Population Register is intrusive," the petitioners said.

The Union home ministry secretary, the Registrar General and

## CONDITIONS LAID FOR RELAY HUNGER STRIKE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

Justice T. Vinod Kumar on Saturday laid down conditions for a petitioner who sought permission to go on a relay hunger strike in the city.

The court directed the petitioner, Mr Syed Hameed Hussain Shuttary, vice-president, All India Masjid Inquilabe-Millat, Moghalpura, to confine the relay hunger strike to a single day from dawn to dusk. The event should be held within the four walls and the petitioner should not use mikes, the court said.

The judge was dealing with Mr Hussain's petition seeking a direction to the Hyderabad police commissioner to accord permission to hold an 11-day relay hunger strike at the Moghalpura office of the party. He said about 100 to 150 people would participate.

The judge advised the Hyderabad police commissioner to formulate appropriate rules to deal with this issue because many organisations and political parties approach the police seeking permission to hold relay hunger strikes, rallies and meetings opposing the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens.

The judge while directing the police commissioner to accord permission to the petitioner for a single day in accordance with the law, closed the writ petition.

Census Commissioner of India and the Telangana State government were named as respondents.

## LEGAL | EAGLE One should know his rights while dealing with police: Lawyers

## Fear stops people to complain against cops

ATHER MOIN I DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

Lawyers have stated that though there are provisions to prosecute police officers for abusing their power, it will only attract more persecution for the complainant. This forces the public to refrain from speaking up against police atrocities.

Senior lawyer M. A. Azeem, addressing the programme, 'Legal Knowledge for Social Action', on Saturday, said it was not easy for an individual to challenge the abuse of power of the establishment. He suggested, "instead of raising our voices individually

against injustice and abuse of power, we should highlight the wrongdoings of police personnel through organisations consisting of eminent personalities." It observed that most people who dare to approach the courts against oppression and high-handedness of the police lose their patience before the prosecution ends as the police force them to withdraw the case by harassing them, Mr Azeem alleged.

He said there was a need to bring reforms in policing. Every citizen should know his or her rights while dealing with the police. Indians have rights even in police custody and

■ SENIOR LAWYER M. A. Azeem, said in all cases punishable with imprisonment up to seven years, the police officer cannot arrest anyone without permission from a magistrate. The police officer may instead issue a notice of appearance, he said.

confinement in jail, Mr Azeem said.

He said in all cases punishable with imprisonment up to seven years, the police officer cannot arrest anyone without permission from a magis-

trate. The police officer may instead issue a notice of appearance, Mr Azeem said. State general secretary, Association for Protection of Civil Rights, Jabbar Siddiqui, said, "we should resist against atrocities, this attempt is a sign of life. Every powerful person desires to grab the liberties of weak persons. The ascent of humanity is the participation of the public in decision-making and the powerful men desire to usurp these rights. Every citizen should know their rights in a democracy."

Mr E. Ismayeel, former member of the State Human Rights Commission, said if any

one harassed or persecuted by the police, that person should take legal action to safeguard his rights. The role of the Human Rights Commission is very significant to curb the abuse of power by the police, he said. Mr Mohammed Afzal, advocate, said people should pressurise the Chandrasekhar Rao government to defer the National Population Register (NPR) exercise. He said that if people avoid providing information to the NPR enumerator, there are chances of that they may face difficulties in the future, as the government may mandate the reference of NPR in various process and welfare schemes.

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## POWER SHUTDOWN

**10 am to 2 pm:** Banjara Hills Roads No. 3, 4, 5, Panchavathi Colony area, AK Enclave area, Devarakonda basti; Jalagam Vengal Park area; Sagar Society, area opposite Masjid opp area, Arora Colony; Cyber Hills Colony; Jubilee Hills Roads No. 46, 48, 47, 50, 70, Ambedkar Open University, Masthannagar, area around houses of Dasari Narayana Rao and Pallam Raju, Praja Rajyam party office; Andhra Jyothi newspaper office area, Justice Nooti Rammoohan Rao house area, Huda Enclave, NCP Tower.

**2 pm to 5 pm:** Nagarjuna Hills, Nagarjuna Fertiliser area, Little Flower Hospital area; Dwarakapuri Colony, Model House, Diwanchi Bar, Sai Baba Temple; Old Andhra Jyothi area, Venkateshwara Hills, VST Quarters; Nagarjuna Hills, Journalists Colony, area up to Srinagar Colony Line AB Switch, area behind Mirchi Hotel; Jubilee Hills Roads No. 3, 5, 10, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, Kavuri Hills Phase-II, Amar Cooperative Society, Anjaninagar, Vemral Garden; area behind Trinetra Super Market; Praja Rajyam Party office area, Surya Paper, Bata Chowrasta, Woman Cooperative Society.

## SHORT TAKES

### KICKBOXING: SILVER FOR LAKSHMI

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

Ms P. Lakshmi Prasanna, a second year BSc Agriculture student, has won the silver medal in the India Open International Kick-Boxing tournament held in New Delhi from February 9 to 13.

Ms Prasanna is from College of Agriculture which is affiliated to the Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agriculture University, Ms Prasanna and her coach, Ramanjaneyulu were appreciated by Vice Chancellor Dr V. Praveen Rao at the Rajendranagar campus.



P. Lakshmi Prasanna.

### EAMCET EXAM TO BEGIN ON MAY 4

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

The Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University Hyderabad (JNTUH) on Saturday released the schedule for the Engineering, Agriculture and Medical Common Entrance Test (Eamcet) which will be held from May 4 to 11.

The Eamcet notification will be released on February 19 and online applications can be submitted from February 21 to March 30. With late fee which will have a rolling increase, applications can be submitted till April 27 by paying ₹10,000. Students can start downloading hall tickets from April 20 to May 1.

Eamcet is taken up by students for entry into undergraduate professional courses and is conducted on behalf of the Telangana State Council for Higher Education (TSCHE).

### NUMAISH EXTENDED TILL FEB. 18

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

The 80th All India Industrial Exhibition Society has extended the annual consumer and industrial exhibition, Numaish, for three days. The exhibition will now continue till February 18.

Earlier, the 45-day exhibition was to close on February 15. However, due to popular demand from the city residents, the exhibition society decided to extend the date.

Besides, handicraft and consumer goods, the exhibition also features joy rides, eateries and other entertainment for the visitors. Handicraft items from all over India and electronic goods of the best brands in the country are displayed.

## Health hazard



Foul smell coming out of garbage pile-up coupled with overflowing drains near the Secunderabad Railway station is causing inconvenience to the citizens. — S. SURENDER REDDY

## Metro exit shut early, users cry

Lifts, escalators shut 20 minutes before

MADHY DEEKSHITHI DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

Metro Rail commuters are complaining about the early closure of gates at the stations. They claimed that though the lifts and exit gates were supposed to close at 10.30 pm, Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited (HMRL) officials were closing them at 10.10 pm without prior intimation to the commuters.

Elderly commuters and women are the ones suffering with the early shutdown of elevators and escalators.

Mr P.V.S.N. Murthy, a Metro Rail commuter, said, "We experienced this for the second time at the Secunderabad East station. We disembarked from the train at 22.10 pm and saw that both the lifts were closed, along with all the exits. We were told that we are late and only one exit was open. My wife, who has a knee problem, had to walk to find the open gate."

MR DHANRAJ Rao from Chikkadpally claimed that with the work at the local Metro Rail station incomplete, it had become extremely difficult to park vehicles. He said lack of footpaths and incomplete construction of staircases were troubling commuters.

He said the lack of footpaths and incomplete construction of staircases were troubling commuters. Bad roads and absence of footpaths at Musheerabad, RTC crossroads, Chikkadpally, Narayanguda and Sultan Bazaar stations have been irking commuters. They also complain about the single exit and entry gate at Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station (MGBS) as it is jam-packed during the peak hours.

The issues came up at the city convergence meeting held on Saturday, where Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation commissioner D.S. Lokesh Kumar asked HMRL officials to take up road and footpath restoration works and development of the central medians. The commissioner instructed the authorities to hand over the stretch from the Jubilee Bus Station to the Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station to the corporation.

## BIODIVERSITY FESTIVAL DRAWS TO A CLOSE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

The Mobile Biodiversity Festival (MBF) concluded at Machanoor, Jharasangam, on Saturday. Organised by the Deccan Development Society (DDS), this was the festival's 20th edition. DDS also released 'Zaheerabad Agenda', a document drafted by locals to address global problems such as climate change.

The festival is a moving exhibition of bullock carts laden with seeds, accompanied by folk singers, dancers and farmers. Since January 15, it moved through villages and towns in Zaheerabad region.

On the occasion, Ashish Kothari, environmentalist and founder, Kalpavriksh in Pune, appreciated the initiative and the 'Zaheerabad Agenda' document.

## TECH GLITCH HITS TRANSPORT OFFICE WORK

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

Work in transport offices and Mee Seva centres came to a halt on Saturday because of a "maintenance issue" in the messaging services. Most users could not receive the one time password (OTP), mandatory to begin the application processes.

Several users who lined up at the Road Transport Authority (RTA) offices for new licences, registrations of vehicles and change of address had to return without getting the work done. The users now have to wait till Monday.

"We lined up since the morning and we have no clue why we were made to wait. We were unable to receive the OTP. Thousands of people are going back, the departments have not arranged for an alternative method," said Mr Sathi Reddy.

Officials said they are planning to set up an alternative method to get the work done by "other" means and that they were not to blame. An RTA official said, "The problem is not just in Telangana state, the problem arose from the sites maintained by Centre. In many states, messaging services and one-time passwords were not sent. We received an email towards the end of the day stating that there was a maintenance issue."

## Officials mull ways to curb accidents

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 15

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) commissioner D.S. Lokesh Kumar on Friday asked officials to provide signboards specifying speed limits in order to prevent accidents and regulate the traffic. Most city roads are suitable for a speed limit of 40 km per hour.

Participating in a city convergence meeting on Saturday, Mr Kumar directed officials of different departments to share with each other the new proposals they were coming up. This should be done so as not to damage other utilities when development work is taken up.

He stated that all road-cutting proposals and estimates should be submitted to the Comprehensive Road Maintenance Project (CRMP) agencies so that they execute the works immediately.

Police officials at the meeting said the percentage of death of pedestrians in accidents stood at 31 per cent, and asked Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited (HMRL) officials to raise the height of central medians in order to regulate pedestrian movement and prevent crossover at unauthorised spots. Most of the accidents were occurring when pedestrians were crossing the road over the central medians particu-

POLICE OFFICIALS at the convergence meeting said that the percentage of death of pedestrians in accidents stood at 31 per cent.

larly in Kukatpally and Serilingampally.

On illumination of dark spots to improve road safety, the GHMC commissioner asked officials to complete the work by February 29.

The issue of shifting of electric poles and improvement of footpaths came up for discussion at the meeting, and also notification of parking places at Metro Rail stations. It was decided that all water and drainage works will be handed over to the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB) for maintenance. On the request of HMWS&SB officials, it was decided not to penalise water tankers as they were providing an essential service.

The GHMC commissioner asked officials to share the data on allotment of houses under schemes like JNNURM and Vambay from 2000 in order to eliminate duplication.

He asked discom officials to connect solar power to the grid so that the solar power generation could commence on GHMC buildings.

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SHORT TAKES

AP COUNCIL BILL IN HOUSE SOON

From Page 1

Once cleared, the Bill will be introduced in both Houses of Parliament. After Parliament passes the Bill, it will be sent to the President for assent. Then, a notification will be issued to the Council.

Meanwhile, Mr Modi and Mr Shah also assured that the Centre will take steps to relocate the AP High Court to Kurnool and clear the Disha Act, the other issues highlighted by Mr Reddy.

Explaining the three capitals proposal to Mr Shah, Mr Reddy told him that the AP BJP had assured in its election manifesto that the AP High Court would be located at Kurnool.

A leader close to Mr Reddy said that Mr Modi had directed the Chief Minister to meet Mr Shah and brief him on all issues. Mr Shah heard him out and directed him to Mr Prasad.

# 3Cs: BJP to rally behind farmers

Deodhar says BJP opposes 3 capitals in AP

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

Bharatiya Janata Party national secretary Sunil Deodhar on Saturday found fault with Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for raising regional aspirations in the name of decentralisation of power.

Mr Deodhar, who is currently touring the state, told mediapersons that the BJP was opposed to the creation of three capitals and would join the agitation to retain Amaravati as capital.

"We are with the farmers of Amaravati who have been agitating for the past several days. When we come to power, all their problems will be

**MR DEODHAR** found fault with the ruling party leaders taking out protests against Citizenship Amendment Act in the state after extending support in Parliament

solved," he said. Referring to the charges of insider trading by the Telugu Desam leaders, Mr Deodhar suggested that the Chief Minister should take stern action against people involved in such irregularities but relocating the capital is not a solution. Mr Deodhar said a false and misleading narrative is spread by the ruling party that relocation of capitals will lead to equal development of

all the regions. "Will you make every village a capital in such case," he said.

The BJP leader found fault with the ruling party leaders taking out protests against Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in the state after extending support in Parliament.

He took on Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy for going on a borrowing spree. Mr Deodhar said that former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu borrowed ₹2 lakh crore during his tenure while Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy already borrowed ₹50,000 crore within eight months of coming to power.

He also cautioned the state government against the industry moving away from the state.

## OPPN BANKS ON RATION CARD TUSSLE

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

The alleged cancellation of 19 lakh white ration cards in the state during Navasakam Survey has given the Opposition, Telugu Desam, enough ammunition to attack the ruling YSR Congress. The TD demands for restoration of the cards and has plans to capitalise on the issue in the local body elections.

Meanwhile, the YSRC government has launched damage control exercise by reviewing the decision. According to reports, out of the 1.47 crore white ration card holders in the state, 1.3 crore were found eligible during the survey.

Observing the unrest in the public over the cancellation of white ration cards, Mr Naidu reportedly has plan to highlight the same and also launch protests in various districts, including Krishna and Guntur. Besides the TD, the Left parties, JS and other parties are also planning to draw the support of the public by focussing on the white ration cards issue.



Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan interacts with women farmers at Yerrabalem in Guntur district on Saturday. — DC

# Pawan: JS-BJP want only Amaravati as AP's capital

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan on Saturday said his Jana Sena Party and the BJP had a written agreement to ensure development of capital at Amaravati and reverse its decentralisation if CM Jagan ahead with his plans of setting up of executive capital at Visakhapatnam, judicial

capital in Kurnool and legislative capital in Amaravati. "Though relocation of capital is State's prerogative it was wrong on the part of the YSR Congress to take a U-turn after extending support to the capital construction at Amaravati. He vowed to fight until the agitating farmers and women got justice.

When the women urged him to take them to Prime

Minister Narendra Modi so that they would ask for his intervention to stall capital decentralisation, Mr Pawan told them that the Centre had a limited role as it was up to the State to decide on such matters.

He said that though the PM laid the foundation stone for the capital, State government had discretionary power to relocate it to a place of its choice.

# BJP quashes YSRC, NDA pact rumours

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 15

The Bharatiya Janata Party and YSR Congress on Saturday dismissed rumours of the latter joining the National Democratic Alliance government at the Centre.

While the BJP sought to project its equidistant stand towards the Telugu Desam and YSRC, the ruling party maintained that it had no plans to join the Centre. The YSRC joining the Narendra Modi government was widely discussed following reports in a section of the media (not Deccan Chronicle)

that the party was willing to join the Union Cabinet if it served the state's interests better. These reports quoted municipal administration minister Botsa Satyanarayana.

The minister came out with a strong rebuttal on Saturday and dared the media which published the reports to prove that he actually uttered anything on the YSRC joining the NDA government. "We have our ideology and the BJP has its own," the minister said in a statement. The Chief Minister repeatedly meeting the Prime Minister and

Union ministers was only to maintain cordial relations with the Centre and get adequate Central funds, he added.

Seeing a conspiracy in spreading rumours of the YSRC joining the Centre, Mr Satyanarayana said the detractors of the ruling party including a section of media wanted to use this as an opportunity to create confusion and unrest among the minorities.

"They want to instigate minorities who posed great confidence on us by publishing such reports and when we deny the same they try to

create a rift between us and the Centre," the minister pointed out.

Elsewhere, BJP national secretary and AP in-charge Sunil Deodhar, who is touring the state, has categorically said the BJP had already forged an alliance with Jana Sena and both would fight the ensuing local body polls. "We have made it clear time and again that there will not be any tie-up with Telugu Desam in future and there will be a straight fight between the YSRC and the BJP-Jana Sena combine in 2024," he said.

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**IN BRIEF**

**Fest of student films on heritage**

Hyderabad: Intach is organising an event 'Filmit Hyderabad Festival', where school students will screen films shot on heritage. On February 18 at Jubilee Hills Public School, 13 schools from around the nation will take part in the event which is funded by the Helen Hamlyn Trust of the United Kingdom. The student were trained technically and in presenting content before the shoot. The organisers said 4,000 short films have been prepared by students in India.

# Civic body fears it won't get funds for roads

All funds will have to be routed through Roads Corp, GHMC will have to look to government for money

**MADHY DEEKSHITH | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 15**

Officials of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) are keeping their fingers crossed over funding of the Comprehensive Road Maintenance Project (CRMP).

This is because the corporation will not be able to use any amount from the general funds. All funds will have to be routed through the special pur-

pose vehicle, Hyderabad Road Development Corporation Limited (HRDCL).

Though tenders have been finalised for CRMP, the civic body is depending on the state government for funds. If sanction is delayed like in case of the double bedroom housing scheme, the condition of city roads will go from bad to worse.

According to highly placed sources, GHMC has already designated the yearly amount to be spent

over the next five years. Under supervision of the corporation, private parties are to execute works on 709 kilometre of arterial roads at an estimated cost of ₹1,827 crore. From January during the current financial year and for 2020-21, the civic body has asked the government to sanction ₹720 crore for the CRMP. The state government would either include amount in the state budget or, in case of fund crunch, ask HRDCL to knock on

the doors of financial institutions. Sources feel that with GHMC polls around the corner, government will release funds for road repairs without any further delay. However, in

Any delay in release of instalments by the government via the HRDCL, will lead to the condition of city roads deteriorating, especially post monsoon

case there is any delay, CRMP would come to a grinding halt, like the 2 BHK housing project, where the government is yet to release funds pertaining to July. Since seven months, the housing project has hardly seen any progress.

Against this backdrop, corporation officials have decided to request the government that special provision be made for funding the road project. Considering the topogra-

phy and poor underground sewerage and drinking water systems, city roads are vulnerable to frequent damage. Any delay in release of instalments by the government via HRDCL, will lead to condition of city roads deteriorating, especially post monsoon. Officials claim private players have already grounded works in all the zones and city will be pothole free in a month and freely motorable in two months.

An official said under CRMP, the main roads of Hyderabad city would be divided into eight units for taking up maintenance works on a war footing. For a term of five years, the designated agencies will be responsible right from laying of roads, their maintenance, and building of footpaths to cleaning and ensuring greenery. GHMC will from time to time monitor the quality of works being implemented by the various agencies.

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