

DECCAN Chronicle 26 FEBRUARY 2020

Delhi rioting as police abdicates responsibility

Northeast Delhi has been in the grip of a full-scale communal riot since Sunday. It seems that the violence could have been nipped in the bud if the Centre, which controls the Delhi police, had been purposeful. On Day 3, leaping flames and billowing smoke framed the skyline as the situation worsened. The rioters have used firearms extensively.

Only an impartial commission of inquiry can establish the causes of the present trouble, examining in particular the role of the police and of political parties and their local leaders. Instead of taking effective steps, minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy sought to limit anti-CAA elements had hatched a plot to create trouble during US President Donald Trump's visit and would deal with severely. This could only have encouraged the communal elements. The provocative comments of Delhi BJP leader Kapil Mishra, who had compared the recent Assembly election with an India-Pakistan war as the BJP targeted the Shaheen Bagh anti-CAA protest, apparently led to a so-called pro-CAA mobilisation that quickly degenerated into rioting. It is a helpful sign that Delhi BJP MP and former India cricketer Gautam Gambhir has demanded action against Mr Mishra.

In light of the history of communal violence in the country, it is not fanciful to think that those who traditionally developed this particular instrument for their stock-in-trade may be in search of opportunities outside Delhi too. State governments need to be alert to their machinations. Their immediate aim may be to put peaceful anti-CAA protesters under pressure. This may give other extremists the excuse to go on the rampage.

While on Monday afternoon the Delhi police claimed that the situation had been brought under control, although there was tension in the air, it was evident the police was divorced from reality or was being indulgent towards troublemakers initially. Live television reporting was showing a very different picture as the dead and injured were being taken to hospitals in a steady stream. By midday Tuesday the situation had worsened with the count of the dead rising to 11. Some 70 policemen and more than 100 civilians lay injured. A head constable was killed in stone-throwing on Monday. Journalists were attacked.

Communal trouble started in the wake of a peaceful Shaheen-Bagh style protest being started by anti-CAA Muslims women in northeast Delhi on Saturday. Mr Mishra warned the police to clear them within three days, failing which he threatened he would adopt his own methods. Stone-throwing attacks by so-called pro-CAA protesters followed not long after, developing into a no-holds-barred communal conflagration. The police remained mute spectators at the start.

Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal intervened only late Monday, urging calm, but senior AAP leader Gopal Rai told the media that efforts to contact the police had been in vain. Law and order and the police are not in the hands of the state government. Even so, the AAP leadership, which is used to dealing with municipal matters and local issues like schools and hospitals, seemed out of its depth when confronted with a descent into communal chaos. It appeared to lack the tools to deal with a political contingency.

A necessary, nuanced verdict

MeToo has brought down Harvey Weinstein. Due process of the law has taken its course. It is the movement's moment in the sun today. The conviction of the Hollywood mogul — of criminal sex act and third-degree rape — he was acquitted of the most serious charge of predatory sexual assault — comes two-and-a-half years after the New York Times and the New Yorker first published accounts of women who had been subjected to harassing sexual harassment by the powerful Hollywood producer. The jury did not find Harvey committed a nonconsensual act, but didn't apply violent force.

The nuanced verdict is fitting proof of the quality and efficiency of America's still-exceptional justice system. The 67-year-old, who will be sentenced on March 11, faces the prospect of spending his remaining years in prison — the criminal sex act charge carries a maximum of 25 years in prison while third degree rape carries a maximum sentence of 10 years. Harvey was despondent and unsteady on his feet while being led off in handcuffs to jail.

During the course of Harvey Weinstein's trial, many have cast aspersions on the veracity of his accusers' complaints, ascribing motives to their conduct before, during and after their encounters and citing delays in speaking up. The charges by Talara Wallf and Dawn Dumming have nevertheless held up under the scrutiny of the court. The #MeToo movement, too, has expanded conceptually in the meantime, with various thinkers calling out elitist cancel culture targeting men and themselves, and highlighting the need to break the comfortable stereotype of toxic masculinity.

Naomi Fry of the New Yorker writes, and it is a fact, that the perfect victim does not exist. One might add if she did she would not be a victim. But the journey from victim to survivor is forged in unaccounted-for suffering and appalling loss. Whatever be its length or result, it is a journey that is common to all women. Hence #MeToo.

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DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

- Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-2780394-4, Fax: 040-27805256
Vijayawada: No. C-3 & 4 Patanam, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2552822-2552827, Telefax: 0866-2552822
Visakhapatnam: Survey No.USA Beach Road, Near Kailashganga Roadway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P), Ph: 0891-2523323-2523234, Fax: 0891-2752285
Rajahmundry: Venagiri, Dwarakaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208, Telefax: 0883-2417208
Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-pass Road, Anantapur - 518004, Ph: 08554-276903, Fax: 08554-276904
Karrimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vaidyalayapally Colony, Jagajjala Road, Karrimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908, Telefax: 0878-2228433
Nellore: Survey No.5272, Banapur Village, Venkateswaram (M), Chemmalagutta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82, Telefax: 0861-2348580
Chennai: SP-93 Develop Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-2225447/48/50/51, Advt Fax: 22254225/66/4280522
Bengaluru: 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Feet Road, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560 095 Ph: 080-4346600, Fax: 080-2296052
Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 609, Ph: 0422-2231255
Kochi: No.3-B, 3rd Floor, DD TRADE/TREDE, Kaloorkadavanthara Road, Ernakulam, Ph: 0484-4039488
Thiruvananthapuram: St. George's Press, TC 151040, Cotton Hill, Thiruvananthapuram 695 014
Kozhikode: Door No 6/1002 E, First Floor of City Mall, Opp YMCA, Kanner Road, Kozhikode - 673 001, Fax: 0495-4010018
Gann: CHRONICLE - Postal registration No. HSD-3482006-68



Violence in Delhi shows poitics at boiling point

Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr

The Shaheen Bagh women need to form a committee of their own to steer the protests, and to prevent troublemakers from hijacking the peaceful movement.

It is not yet summer, but the political situation in Delhi has been moving towards a boiling point as the Narendra Modi government had decided to sit out the two-month-long protest of Muslim women at Shaheen Bagh over the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act in one part of Delhi. The violence that erupted on Sunday and Monday (February 23-24) in Muslim-dominated areas of northeast Delhi is the result of clashes between anti-CAA (read Muslim) and pro-CAA (read Hindu) protesters. It is in effect a communal riot, the Hindu-Muslim one.

There are enough reasons to argue that Delhi BJP member Kapil Mishra, who was formerly with the AAP, had issued an ultimatum that the Delhi police must free up the roads blocked by the anti-CAA protesters and that they supposedly those affected by the protests — would hold their peace until US President Donald Trump's visit made at a pro-CAA rally led by Mr Mishra in the presence of the police on Saturday (February 22). After the violence broke out and arsonists from the rampage, a police head constable and four other civilians were killed, more than 100 people injured and a police officer is in the ICU after sustaining injuries in stone-pelting. Mr Mishra appealed for peace and for maintaining civil communal harmony. Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal confined himself to issuing an appeal for peace. He had an alibi for not doing anything about

the violence as law and order in Delhi is the responsibility of the Union home ministry, heading towards a boiling point as the Narendra Modi government had decided to sit out the two-month-long protest of Muslim women at Shaheen Bagh over the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act in one part of Delhi. The violence that erupted on Sunday and Monday (February 23-24) in Muslim-dominated areas of northeast Delhi is the result of clashes between anti-CAA (read Muslim) and pro-CAA (read Hindu) protesters. It is in effect a communal riot, the Hindu-Muslim one.

leaders — seems to have become a problem with other anti-CAA protesters. The Union home minister and other ardent pro-CAA supporters — mostly Hindutva zealots suspect that anti-CAA protesters are being managed by someone like the People's Front of India (PFI) of Uttar Pradesh. No one is waiting to verify whether this is actually true or not. It is on the social media talk in alarmist tones about the breakdown in law and order. The police can bring things back to normal by holding flag marches and posting men in large numbers in fragile and sensitive areas. The police had proved it could do this when a temple desecration took place near the Jama Masjid area over a year ago. The Hindutva zealots on the social media were only too eager to fan the communal flames, but the police kept the situation under control. But the police alone couldn't have done it. They were helped by the community leaders of Hindus and Muslims in the locality, who intervened and did not allow things to get out of hand. It's time then for community leaders to step out and ensure that the anti-CAA protesters do not turn into Hindu-Muslim clashes, though there are enough people who would want it to turn into a communal conflagration. This is necessary as political leaders of the BJP, AAP and Congress have failed to do their job. The BJP leaders are keen that it turn into a communal clash because that is the only way they can justify the CAA to their core Hindutva constituency. The AAP is not a vocal supporter of inter-communal harmony and

bonhomie because it knows that its support base is among the majority Hindus. The Congress would want to manage Hindu communalists as well as the Muslim vote. Amit Shah, Arvind Kejriwal and Rahul Gandhi will make their tactical moves at the right time. The people of Delhi should not be looking to them for any help. Chief Minister Mr Shah have reiterated that there will be no climb-down on the CAA. They will remain inflexible because of their parliamentary majority. The CAA protests must continue but protesters will have to negotiate their way through the minefield of Hindu and Muslim communalism. The violence that erupted in northeast Delhi in the past few days will be likely a pattern of clashes over the CAA. Second, the Shaheen Bagh women need to form a committee of their own to steer the protests, and to prevent troublemakers from hijacking the peaceful movement. More important, it is necessary that majority Hindus must be brought to take position against the CAA that displays the unflattering colours of Hindutva. Citizens must recognise that discrimination against Muslims is discrimination against all Indians. The issue must be fought through democratic and peaceful means, and through constitutional channels like the courts and legislatures.

Protests are wonderful expressions of the democratic spirit, but they have their limitations. The CAA challenges an effective subverts, the high ideal of equality, and it is the duty of all democratic Indians to argue against it. But there is also the need to respect the position of those who are in charge of the CAA. That is what democracy is all about — arguing over our differences and respecting each other's positions. That is the only way to keep the hoodlums out of the political process.

The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst

LETTERS LANDLORDS, TENANTS

I was amused to read letters to the Editor (DC, Feb. 25), defending the landlord's choice of tenants. These choices are being made on the basis of caste, religion etc., of the prospective tenants. The Equality Watchdog in UK and the Equality and Human Rights Commission brought a case against the buy-to-let mogul Fergus Wilson's ban, on "coloured" tenants, because they allegedly leave curry smells in his properties when lease terminates, was overturned by the Maidstone county court. I don't know how many of your esteemed readers, who defended an out and out discriminatory renting policy, will like themselves and their children to face such discriminations.

Farooque Shahab Hyderabad

CAA PROTESTS

The Gujarat Model is repeating in Delhi now (4 killed in Delhi riots over CAA, DC, Feb. 4). This is no communal riot, this is a clear anti-Muslim pogrom. Yet another state-sponsored anti-Muslim pogrom where the police and the right wing fanatics are turn allies. Please don't call them pro-CAA activists, they even don't know the full form of CAA.

Syed Masar Razvi Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

UP abolishes land revenue on small holdings

LUCKNOW, Feb. 25. THE UTR Pradesh Government has decided to exempt holdings up to five bighas — 3.25 acres — from the payment of land revenue. Chief Minister Charan Singh made this announcement at a mammoth public meeting organised here tonight by five parties — the Ruling Congress, Bharatiya Kranti Dal, Communist Party of India, Praja Socialist Party and Republican Party — to build what he called public opinion in favour of his newly installed Ministry. Mr. Charan Singh, amid repeated cheers, also said that this exemption of holdings up to 12.50 acres. This had been done to avoid fragmentation of holdings.

The world faces many current and looming shortages today — of water, energy, land and even clean air. They have less to do with population growth than with the inequitable distribution of resources, as a small minority hoards dozens more and more of them.

But no deficit is as crucial as the intellectual deficit the world faces today. This means an absence of globally accepted ideas for structuring economic, political and social life, and interaction within and across human societies to lead to equitable and environmentally responsible progress. Faith in democracy, capitalism, and international law principles, the holy trinity of ideas that has underpinned life for the last one century, is fast reducing, leading to global conflicts nationally and globally.

This is not the first time humanity has faced such a challenge. On each past occasion, conservative tendencies to amass power, wealth

and prestige at the expense of others created huge conflicts, which were then resolved by the application of the liberal principles of rule of law, cooperation and democracy. The 1648 treaty of Westphalia was one such early instance. Just before it, Europe had been ravaged by prolonged wars among several states spread over decades which had caused the death of around eight million people as different strands of nobility sought to increase their wealth and power. Under the treaty, a new system of political order arose, based upon peaceful coexistence, respect for territorial rights and non-interference in others' domestic affairs. It is seen by many political scientists as the beginning of the modern international political order based on the idea of sovereign nations. It reduced warfare in Europe. It reduced the overseas conquests by European powers in the form of brutal colonialism, and the simultaneous, quick spread of capitalism, democracy and science — the three bedrocks of modern civilisation. Relative peace lasted for a couple of centuries and was first disturbed by Napoleonic forays. It collapsed completely in the early 20th century due to renewed warfare in Europe and beyond. While capitalism, democracy and science had produced much progress, as well as problems resurfaced as conservatism urged again struggled to break free of liberal civility. Capitalism degenerated into a neoliberal form that produced huge economic inequality but little social protection. Democratic ideals came under attack from autocratic systems like fascism and Nazism. Efforts to forge international political order under the aegis of the League of Nations failed. Racism and xenophobia became widespread. These conservative tendencies unleashed two world wars and a great depression. Humanity again turned towards liberal principles after the Second World War to recover from the ravages caused by conservatism's ascent. Liberalism duly obliged by

providing the ideas of social democratic capitalism nationally which ensured a fair share to all classes and an international political order based on the rule of law under the UN institutions. This system provided for the ascendancy of human rights and mutual cultural respect, and led to relative peace and prosperity despite the rise of the communist bloc as a challenger. There were many problems even with this system, but massive poverty in developing states. But at least it provided a framework where these problems could be faced. It wasn't the communist challenge that led to the collapse of the post-Second World War order, but the rise of conservatism, which again in the West under the leadership of three conservative US presidents. Reagan took the lead in the collapse of social democratic capitalism by unleashing the forces of neoliberal economics which have led to economic inequality and climate change. Bush Jun-ior led an un-precedented attack on global



Dr Niaz Murtaza

IN BRIEF

Last USSR marshal dies

Moscow: The last marshal of the Soviet Union Dmitry Yazov, who participated in a coup against the last USSR leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1991, has died, according to news agencies. "On February 25 in Moscow in the 95th year of his life after a serious and prolonged illness Marshal of the Soviet Union Dmitry Timofeyevich Yazov passed away," the defence ministry said in a statement carried by agencies.

2 teens wounded in US stabbing

Millant: Two 16-year-olds were stabbed and seriously wounded at a Hindu 95th school Monday. Police confirmed to school officials that a suspect, who is not one of the wounded, was in custody, said Lindsay Chambers, a spokeswoman for the Hawaii Department of Education. A boy and girl were taken to a hospital in serious condition after the stabbing at Millant High School on campus. Honolulu Emergency Medical Services spokeswoman Shayne Enright said. They are expected to survive, Enright said. Students were released early after being in a lockdown, Chambers said. No other details were immediately available.

2 Turkish troops killed in Libya

Istanbul: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday said two Turkish troops have been killed in Libya, a country wracked by conflict between its UN-recognised government and the forces of strongman Khalifa Haftar. "We have two martyrs there in Libya," Erdogan told reporters before leaving for Azerbaijan on an official visit. He did not say when the troops died. Erdogan had come under fire from opponents at his weekend visit. He said at the weekend "we have a couple of martyrs" in Libya, without providing a precise number. Turkey supports the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA), based in Tripoli, and sent dozens of military training personnel after the two countries signed deals last year. The GNA has been under sustained attack for months from Haftar, a military commander with a strong powerbase whose principal backers include Russia. Last week, Erdogan confirmed pro-Turkey fighters were in Libya alongside the training teams dispatched by Ankara.

ARMENIA'S OUSTED PREZ STANDS TRIAL

Yerevan, Feb. 25: Former Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan on Tuesday goes on trial charged with corruption, nearly two years after he was ousted from power by a popular uprising following a decade in office. Sargsyan, who dominated Armenia in two consecutive terms as president from 2008, resigned in 2018 when his plan to stay in power by taking the post of prime minister sparked mass protests led by journalist-turned-politician Nikol Pashinyan. Sargsyan initially adopted a low profile in the months after his resignation. But over the last year he has reemerged and harshly criticised Pashinyan, who succeeded him as premier. The 65-year-old former military officer was charged in December with organising an embezzlement scheme that allegedly helped enrich government officials. He was banned from leaving the country and if convicted could face up to eight years in jail. Prosecutors have said that in 2013 Sargsyan helped to organise a scheme for a private company to supply diesel fuel for the government's agricultural assistance programme at a deliberately inflated price. The surplus of 489 million drams (\$1 million) was then pocketed by the officials and businessmen involved in the scheme, prosecutors have said. There is no direct indication in the indictment over whether Sargsyan had personally benefited from the plot. Sargsyan and his Republican Party have denounced the charges as "fabricated and aimed at silencing political opponents", calling them "a farce" and developments "jeopardising democracy".

German man rams car into carnival crowd



A carnival float is pictured close to the site where a man who drove into a carnival procession in Volkmarren near Kassel, central Germany, on Rose Monday and injured 52 people. Police said that the motive of the 29-year-old German remained unclear after he was arrested. —AFP

FORMER EGYPT PREZ HOSNI MUBARAK DIES

Cairo, Feb. 25: Former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak died aged 91. Mubarak spent three decades in office before a popular uprising swept Egypt. He was found guilty of complicity in the killing of protesters during the revolution. That conviction was overturned and he was freed in March 2017. His death was confirmed after his lawyer said he died at a military hospital. Mubarak underwent surgery in late January and was photographed with his grandson as he recovered. On Saturday, however, Mubarak's son Alaa said that the former president remained in intensive care. Born in 1928, Mubarak entered the air force as a teenager and went on to play a key role in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.



Hosni Mubarak

Singer Placido hits a #MeToo wrong note

The Opera star had previously denied all allegations

San Francisco, Feb. 25: An investigation into legendary singer Placido Domingo by the U.S. union representing opera performers found more than two dozen people who said they were sexually harassed or witnessed inappropriate behaviour by the superstar when he held senior management positions at Washington National Opera and Los Angeles Opera, according to people familiar with the findings. The investigation, conducted by lawyers hired by the American Guild of Musical Artists, concluded that the accounts from 27 people showed a clear pattern of sexual misconduct and abuse of power by Domingo spanning at least two decades, according to those who spoke says sources on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to disclose the findings. In response to a request for comment, Domingo issued a statement saying "I have taken time over the last several months to reflect on the allegations that various colleagues of mine have



A file photo of Placido Domingo performing in Szeged, Hungary last August. —AP

made against me. I respect that I am truly sorry for the hurt that I caused them. I accept full responsibility for my actions, and I have grown from this experience." Domingo had previously denied all the claims, referring to them as "inaccurate" and saying all his interactions and relationships were "always welcomed and consensual". The union's investigation was the first of two

independent inquiries into the opera star's reputation and that it was common knowledge at the two companies. Mirroring the reports last year, the investigation found that the allegations included unsolicited physical touching that ranged from kisses on the mouth to groping, late-night phone calls in which Domingo asked women to come to his residence, and inviting women to go out with him socially with such persistence that some felt they were being stalked. —AP

I RESPECT THAT these women finally felt comfortable enough to speak out, and I want them to know that I am truly sorry for the hurt that I caused them. I accept full responsibility for my actions.

PLACIDO DOMINGO, Opera star

December. In addition to the 27 who said they experienced or witnessed sexually suggestive behavior in the 1990s and 2000s, 12 others said they were aware of the star's reputation and that it was common knowledge at the two companies. Mirroring the reports last year, the investigation found that the allegations included unsolicited physical touching that ranged from kisses on the mouth to groping, late-night phone calls in which Domingo asked women to come to his residence, and inviting women to go out with him socially with such persistence that some felt they were being stalked. —AP

Debate to blunt Bernie's impetus

SANDERS SLAMS TRUMP FOR ARMS DEAL WITH INDIA

Washington, Feb. 25: Democrats take the stage for a debate in South Carolina on Tuesday in what could be the final opportunity for Joe Biden and the party's other presidential candidates to halt Bernie Sanders drive to the nomination. The 78-year-old senator from Vermont is in pole position heading into South Carolina's Democratic primary on Saturday. Sanders finished in a virtual tie with former South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg in the first nominating contest, in Iowa, and then went on to win in the next state to vote in New Hampshire and Nevada. Seven candidates will take part in the debate beginning at 8pm in Charleston, South Carolina, on Tuesday night (0100 GMT Wednesday), the 10th debate of the campaign cycle.

Besides Sanders, Biden and Buttigieg, Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren, Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar, media magnate Michael Bloomberg and billionaire Tom Steyer will also be on the stage. Bloomberg, 78, will be looking to rebound from his disastrous performance in his first debate and prove that he is a credible, moderate alternative to the leftist Sanders. Biden, 77, has also been staking out the center and will be hoping to bounce back from his dismal performance in Iowa and New Hampshire, where he finished fourth and fifth respectively. The former vice president came in second in the Nevada caucuses, but with 20.2 percent, he was well behind Sanders' 46.8 percent. Biden has been coasting on his strong support among African-American voters in South Carolina since he flagged his campaign. But Sanders

Washington, Feb. 25: Democratic presidential front-runner Senator Bernie Sanders on Monday slammed President Donald Trump for selling weapons to India, saying that the US should instead partner with New Delhi to fight climate change to save the planet. Sanders, who has won the Nevada and New Hampshire primaries, said in a tweet after Trump, who is on a two-day visit to India, on Monday announced that the US will sign defence trade deals worth \$3 billion with India. In an address at a massive "Namaste Trump" rally at Motera stadium in Ahmedabad, Trump announced that deals to sell state-of-the-art military helicopters and other equipment worth \$8 billion will be sealed with India on Tuesday. Instead of selling \$3 billion in weapons to enrich Raytheon, Boeing and Lockheed, the United States should be partnering with India to fight climate change, Sanders said in a tweet, the first by Democratic presidential candidate on Trump's India visit. —PTI

has been surging in the polls in the southern state in recent weeks and Biden's lead there has dwindled to single digits. A Sanders victory in South Carolina would give him a second, could set him up for a knockout showing on "Super Tuesday" on March 3, when 14 states go to the polls. —AFP

Asia Bibi seeks French asylum

Paris, Feb. 25: Asia Bibi, the Pakistani Christian woman who spent years on death row after a 2010 conviction of blasphemy, said Monday that she was seeking political asylum from the French government. "My great desire is to live in France," Bibi said in an interview with RTL radio, her first trip to France since fleeing with her family to Canada in 2018. Her visit comes a few weeks after the publication of her book "Enfin Libre" (Finally Free) in French last month, with an English version due in September.

"France is the country from where I received my new life... Anne-Isabelle is an angel for me," she said, referring to the French journalist Anne-Isabelle Tillet, who waged a long campaign for her release and later co-wrote Bibi's book. On Tuesday, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo is to bestow an honorary citizenship certificate granted to Bibi by the city in 2014, when she was still behind bars. She said she did not have any meeting scheduled with President Emmanuel Macron, but "obviously I would like the president to hear my request." In her book, Bibi recounts the nightmare conditions she was subjected to in prison until her release in 2018, amid an international outcry over her treatment. The acquittal sparked fierce rioting in Muslim-majority Pakistan, where Christians are often the target of persecution. She later fled with her family to Canada, where she has been living in an undisclosed location under police protection. "Obviously I am enormously grateful to Canada," Bibi said, adding that she now wanted to work "hand in hand with Tillet to urge companies to help me to free others imprisoned over the country's anti-blasphemy laws. The allegations against Bibi date back to 2009, when Muslim friend labored to Bibi by the city in 2014, when she was still behind bars. She said she did not have any meeting scheduled with President Emmanuel Macron, but "obviously I would like the president to hear my request." In her book, Bibi recounts the nightmare conditions she was sub-

Migrant camp row: Cops in Greek islands

Athens, Feb. 25: Riot police were dispatched to the Greek islands of Lesbos and Chios Monday as the government prepared to launch the construction of new controversial migrant camps. In both islands, police deployed at the harbour to facilitate the landing of security force reinforcements from the mainland, state agency ANA said. There are over 35,000 migrants crowded into camps on the Greek islands of Lesbos, Samos, Chios, and Kos despite an official capacity of 6,200. Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis over



Riot police arrive to monitor the construction of new controversial migrant camps at the port of Mytilene on the Aegean island of Lesbos, on Tuesday. —AFP

the weekend insisted that the plan would go ahead despite local opposition. "The works will begin immediately and will be completed. There is no turning back," he told conserva-

tive party cadres on Sunday. Work on the new camps on Lesbos and Chios, with a capacity of up to 7,000 each, is to begin this week. Island officials and residents have told the Greek government that after five years on the front lines of the European migration crisis, they are no longer prepared to accept thousands of asylum-seekers. Residents have threatened to block access to the new camps sites in order to hobble their construction. The conservative government which came to power in July has announced that the camps on Lesbos,

Samos and Chios will be shut down this year, to be replaced with new, smaller facilities that are to be operational by mid-2020. But while the administration of Mitsotakis tries to alleviate the problem by relocating thousands of migrants to other parts of Greece, many communities on the mainland have also stonewalled the move. The UN's refugee chief on Friday called for urgent action to address the "shocking and shameful" conditions migrants are forced to live in at reception centres on the Greek islands. —AFP

Secret to long life is to keep smiling, says world's oldest man Chitetsu Watanabe 112-yr-old longevity Guinness record holder eyes

Tokyo, Feb. 25: A Japanese man who received his certificate as the world's oldest man with a raised fist and big smiles earlier this month has died at 112. Guinness World Records had given the certificate to Chitetsu Watanabe on February 12. The organisation and the funeral home handling his services confirmed on Tuesday he had died Sunday. No cause was given. He

had not been able to eat recently and developed a fever and difficulty breathing a couple of days before his death, Japan's nationally circulated newspaper Mainichi reported, citing family sources. Watanabe is survived by his five children, 12 grand-children, 16 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild. Watanabe's family did not immediately answer

calls to their home. Watanabe was born in 1907 and worked in Taiwan for 18 years. After returning to Niigata, northern Japan, he worked for the prefectural government until retirement. He grew fruit and vegetables on the family farm and loved cream puffs and bonsai, the Japanese traditional art of raising small sculpted trees. He used to say the secret to longevity was to keep smiling.

JAPANESE MAN Chitetsu Watanabe had received his certificate as the world's oldest man with a raised fist and big smiles earlier this month. Guinness in Japan offered its condolences to his family. The oldest living person is also Japanese, Kane Tanaka, a 117-year-old woman. —AP



A file photo of 112-year-old Japanese man Chitetsu Watanabe as he poses next to a calligraphy that reads 'Number One' after he was awarded as the world's oldest living male, in Joetsu. —AFP

Virus spreads, WHO issues pandemic alert

Global body issues warning after news of deaths and outbreaks across West Asia, Europe and Asia

IN BRIEF

InSight reveals Martian weather

New York NASA's InSight lander which touched down on the Martian equator in November last year, has revealed secrets about the Red Planet's weather patterns, including details about its surface tornadoes, and the steady, rumble of low-frequency sounds on the planet, a new study says. The research, published in the journal *Nature Geoscience*, noted that Mars experiences strong daily pressure and temperature fluctuations more than on the Earth. "The atmosphere is so thin that it can heat up and cool down much faster than on Earth. This is entirely new territory we are exploring," said Don Banfield, lead author of the study from Cornell University in the US. The researchers noted that about a month after landing, InSight endured a large dust storm which, they said, could dramatically change the Red Planet's weather. The scientists noted daily changing winds controlled by the seasonal freezing and thawing of the carbon dioxide in the Martian polar caps.

Italian hikers saved in Alaska

Anchorage (Alaska): An Italian man suffering from frostbite and four other tourists were rescued in the Alaska wilderness after visiting an abandoned bus that had become a lure for adventurers since it was featured in the *Into the Wild* book and movie. Alaska State Trooper and five other hikers were rescued Saturday from a camp they set up after visiting the dilapidated bus on the abandoned trail near the town of Healy. The hikers were found 13 miles from the trailhead, Trooper spokesman Tim DeSpain said. He didn't know how far they were from the bus. One of the hikers had frostbite to his feet and was transported to Fairbanks for treatment, DeSpain said. The hiker's injuries are not considered life-threatening. The other four hikers were picked up by friends in Healy. Rescuers were alerted by the hikers with a satellite-based emergency device that notified the International Emergency Response Coordination Center of a medical emergency, troopers said.

Arctic 'doomsday vault' stocks up

Oslo: An Arctic "doomsday vault" is to receive 60,000 samples of seeds from around the world as the biggest global crop reserve stocks up for a global catastrophe. The seeds are to be deposited in the vault inside a mountain near Longyearbyen on Spitsbergen Island in Norway's Svalbard archipelago, about 1,000 kilometres from the North Pole. "As the pace of climate change and biodiversity loss increases, there is new urgency surrounding the efforts to save food crops at risk of extinction," said Stefan Schmitz, head of the Crop Diversity Centre, which today's seed deposit reflects worldwide concern about the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss on crop production," he added. "But more importantly it demonstrates a growing global commitment to the conservation and use of the crop diversity that is crucial for farmers in their efforts to adapt to changing growing conditions," he said.

Geneva, Feb. 25: The new Covid-19 has peaked in China but could still grow into a pandemic, the World Health Organisation warned, as infections mushroom in other countries. Financial markets have gone into a tailspin after grim news of deaths and outbreaks in the Middle East, Europe and Asia, even as the Chinese epicentre appeared to be calming, with the toll at its lowest around 20 deaths. But the situation is worsening in other countries, with more than 2,000 cases and around 20 deaths reported abroad, prompting a raft of restrictions on travellers from infected nations. South Korea, Italy and Iran have logged particularly sharp increases in infections and deaths, while several countries in the Middle East reported their first cases of the novel Covid-19. But WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus insisted the virus could not be contained, praising China's drastic quarantine measures in several cities for helping to prevent an even bigger spread. "For the moment we are not witnessing the uncontained global spread of this virus and we are not

● **CROATIA'S PRIME** Minister Andrej Plenkovic on Tuesday announced his country's first confirmed case of the new Covid-19, the first in the Balkans region. The patient is a young man "showing mild symptoms", he said.

● **TWO PEOPLE** in Austria have tested positive for the new Covid-19, authorities said Tuesday, marking the country's first cases after an outbreak in northern Italy. The two 24-year-olds have been quarantined in a hospital in Innsbruck.

witnessing large-scale deaths," Tedros told reporters in Geneva on Monday. He added, however, that countries should be "doing everything we can to prepare for a potential pandemic." The term "pandemic" is used to describe an illness that spreads across numerous communities. There are 53 cases in the United States so far. —Agencies



People buy face masks at a retail store in the southeastern city of Daegu in South Korea on Tuesday.

—AFP

Fourth person from quarantined ship dies

Tokyo, Feb. 25: A fourth person has died in Japan after becoming ill aboard a Covid-19-stricken cruise ship, local media reported Tuesday, as the government unveiled a new policy to tackle the outbreak. Nearly 700 people aboard the Diamond Princess, which spent two weeks quarantined off Japan, have so far tested positive for the virus.

Four people who were hospitalised after being taken to the ship were the latest a man in his 80s, according to local media. The *Yomiuri Shinbun* daily said the man had tested positive for the new Covid-19 and died of pneumonia. The health ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the reports. Three others, all Japanese, have so far died after

● **WE ARE** aware of the risk of them getting infected when they take off a mask or gloves, so we will have thorough measures to prevent infections under these circumstances.

— **KATSUNOBU KATO**
Japan Health Minister

becoming sick on the ship. Two were confirmed to have the new Covid-19, while the health ministry declined to comment on the diagnosis of the third. Japan has come under increasing pressure over its handling of the ship, particularly after it emerged that some passengers allowed to disembark after testing negative were subsequently diagnosed with the virus.

Some of the disembarking passengers were not even tested during the quarantine period, the health ministry has acknowledged. Several government officials working on the ship have themselves contracted the infection, but authorities have defended a policy of not uniformly testing those working on the boat. "We are aware of the risks of them getting infected when they take off a mask or gloves, so we will have thorough measures to prevent infections under these circumstances," Health Minister Katsunobu Kato said, while stressing no change in policy was planned. Many nations have evacuated their citizens from the ship with 450 Filipinos due to be flown home on Tuesday on two chartered flights. —AFP

Iran deputy health minister has virus

Tehran, Feb. 25: Iran's deputy health minister has been infected with the new Covid-19, a ministry official said on Tuesday amid a major outbreak in the Islamic republic. "The Covid-19 test for Mr Harirchi, the deputy health minister who was on the front lines combating the Covid-19, was positive," Alineza Vahabzadeh, a media adviser to the health minister, said in a tweet. Iraj Harirchi coughed occasionally and appeared to be sweating during a press conference on Monday with government spokesman Ali Rabiei.



Iraj Harirchi

Dubai, Sharjah flights stopped

Dubai, Feb. 25: The tiny island nation of Bahrain suspended flights to the world's busiest airport for international travel in Dubai on Tuesday over fears about the spread of a new virus. The move by Bahrain, a small island off the coast of Saudi Arabia, suggested its monarchy had doubts about screenings of incoming passengers in Dubai and nearby Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. It said the ban was immediate and would last at least 48 hours. Bahrain counted its first case of the Covid-19 that causes the illness on Monday in a school bus driver who transited Dubai while coming from Iran. Dubai International Airport did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Officials at Sharjah's airport could not be immediately reached. Dubai has been screening passengers on incoming flights from China, where the outbreak began. Long-haul carriers Emirates and Etihad are among the few international airlines still flying to Beijing. However, the outbreak in Iran only became public in recent days.

GULF COUNTRIES SNAP ALL LINKS WITH IRAN

Dubai, Feb. 25: Gulf countries announced new measures Tuesday to cut links with Iran to prevent Covid-19 spreading after the confirmation of 20 new cases, all of them people returning from the Islamic republic. The United Arab Emirates suspended all passenger and cargo flights to Iran after Gulf neighbours Kuwait and Bahrain announced the additional cases of Covid-19. Over the past two days, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman have reported 29 cases of the novel Covid-19 among people returning from pilgrimages to Iran, which is battling the deadliest outbreak outside China. The UAE General Civil Aviation Authority "suspended all passenger flights and cargo to and from Iran starting today and for one week," a statement carried by the official WAM news agency said, adding that the ban could be extended. Muscat was making arrangements to bring back its citizens from the Islamic republic, the foreign ministry said, a day after it suspended all flights to and from Iran. Oman also announced that it will suspend the import and export of goods from Iran from Wednesday. —AFP

Military drill may be scaled back

Washington, Feb. 25: The United States and South Korea said Monday they were considering scaling back a military exercise planned for this spring because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The commander of US forces in South Korea, General Robert Abrams, said at a news conference that the joint chiefs of staff, General Park Han-ki, "are looking at scaling back the command post training due to concerns about the covid-19." US Defence Secretary Mark Esper said at a news conference. His South Korean counterpart, Jeong Kyeong-doo, said at the same briefing that 13 servicemen from his country have become infected with the virus and that all leave for

● **THE COMMANDER** of US forces in South Korea, General Robert Abrams, and the head of that country's joint chiefs of staff, General Robert H. Geoghegan, are looking at scaling back the command post training due to concerns about the Covid-19.

the military has been cancelled nationwide so as to limit soldiers' movements. "The situation is quite serious," Jeong said. "The two countries have significantly scaled back traditional joint military exercises so as to facilitate US nuclear talks with North Korea." —AFP

White House seeks \$2.5b emergency fund

Washington, Feb. 25: The White House sent lawmakers an urgent budget request for \$2.5 billion to address the deadly Covid-19 outbreak, whose rapid spread and threat to the global economy rocked financial markets. The White House budget office said the funds are for vaccines, treatment, and protective equipment. The request could advance quickly through Congress and come as Covid-19 fears were credited with Monday's 1,000-point drop in the Dow Jones Industrial and increasingly seen as a potential political threat to President Donald Trump. The request was released Monday evening and came as key government accounts were running

● **THE WHITE HOUSE** budget office said the funds are for vaccines, treatment, and protective equipment.

low. The Department of Health and Human Services had already tapped into an emergency infectious disease rapid response fund and was seeking to transfer more than \$130 million from other HHS accounts to combat the virus but is pressing for more. Today, the Administration is transmitting to Congress a \$2.5 billion supplemental funding plan to accelerate vaccine development, support preparedness and response activities and to procure much needed equipment and sup-

plies, said White House budget office spokeswoman Rachel Semmel. "We are also flexing up existing resources and allowing for greater flexibilities to response activities. Senators returning to Washington after a week-long recess will receive a classified briefing Tuesday morning on the government's Covid-19 response, a Senate aide said. All of the warning lights are flashing bright red. We are staring down a potential pandemic and the administration has no plan," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, who blasted a shortage of kits to test for the virus and President Donald Trump's proposed budget cuts to health agencies. —AP

WATER | WORLD | Homes and buildings, including presidential palace, inundated as transport networks paralysed

Thousands caught in floods in sinking Jakarta

Jakarta, Feb. 25: Floods that have crippled parts of Indonesia's capital worsened Tuesday, inundating thousands of homes and buildings, including the presidential palace, and paralysing transport networks, officials and witnesses said. Overnight rains conspired to burst rivers to burst their banks in greater Jakarta starting Sunday sending muddy water up to 1.5 metres deep into more residential and commercial areas, said Agus Wibowo, the National Disaster Mitigation Agency's spokesman. "Floodwaters entered parts of Indonesia's presidential palace complex Tuesday morning but the situation was brought under control with water pumps, said Bey Muchmidin, an official at the Presidential Office. He

● **AGUS WIBOWO**, the National Disaster Mitigation Agency's spokesman said the floods on Tuesday inundated scores of districts and left more than 300 people homeless.

reached as high as 1.5 metres in places. Television footage showed soldiers and rescuers in rubber boats struggling to evacuate children and the elderly who were holding out on the roofs of their squalid homes. Indonesia's meteorological agency is predicting rain for the next two weeks. The flooding has highlighted Indonesia's infrastructure problems. Jakarta is home to 10 million people, with a total of 30 million in its greater metropolitan area. It is prone to earthquakes and flooding and is rapidly sinking due to uncontrolled extraction of groundwater. Congestion is also estimated to cost the economy \$6.5 billion a year. The president Joko Widodo announced in August that the capital will move to a

site in sparsely populated East Kalimantan province on Borneo island, known for rainforests and orangutans. Severe flooding and landslides that greater Jakarta in the early last month killed more than 60 people, displaced hundreds of thousands and forced an agency to close the city last month, blamed widespread deforestation in the southern hills, saying it had destroyed water catchment areas. Seasonal downpours cause dozens of landslides and flash floods each year in Indonesia, support preparedness and response activities and to procure much needed equipment and sup-



People walk through a flooded road after heavy rain in Jakarta on Tuesday.

plies, said White House budget office spokeswoman Rachel Semmel. "We are also flexing up existing resources and allowing for greater flexibilities to response activities. Senators returning to Washington after a week-long recess will receive a classified briefing Tuesday morning on the government's Covid-19 response, a Senate aide said. All of the warning lights are flashing bright red. We are staring down a potential pandemic and the administration has no plan," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, who blasted a shortage of kits to test for the virus and President Donald Trump's proposed budget cuts to health agencies. —AP

OHIO ZOO GETS FIRST IN-VITRO CHEETAH CUBS

Powell, Feb. 25: Two cheetah cubs have been born through in-vitro fertilisation and embryo transfer to a surrogate mother for the first time, Ohio zoo officials announced. The male and female cubs were born to a three-year-old zebra at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium on Wednesday, the zoo said in a statement. "The biological mother of the births through a remote camera and are monitoring Izzy and the cubs. It will suspend the import and export of goods from Iran from Wednesday. —AFP

quick BITES

INDICATORS

	%
Sensex	40,281.20 -0.20
Nifty 50	11,797.90 -0.27
S&P 500	3,225.89 --
Dollar (₹)	71.65 -0.42
Pound Sterling (₹)	92.96 -0.02
Euro (₹)	77.67 -0.18
Brent crude (\$/bbl)	48.20 -0.26
IN 10-Yr bond yield	+6.367 0.000
US 10-Yr T-bill yield	1.369 -0.581

* As of 07:43 pm

Critical personal data must remain in India: Niti CEO

Critical personal data of the people must be kept within the country, NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said here on Tuesday. The statement comes in the backdrop of the mandating global technology giants including Mastercard and Visa to comply with the data localisation norms in the public interest. Data localisation requires data about residents be collected, processed, and stored inside the country.

Mastercard CEO to step down from his role



Mastercard's Indian-American President and CEO Ajay Banga will step down from his role and assume chairmanship of Executive Chairman of the Board of Directors, as the payments giant announced Michael Miebach as the new CEO. We regret the untimely departure of Executive Chairman of the Board of Directors effective January 1, 2021.

CORRIGENDUM

GAIL Ltd was inadvertently referred to wrongly in the body text of a news item published on February 25, 2020. We regret the unintentional typographical error.

Tata Sons chief meets Prasad amid AGR crisis

Amid the ongoing AGR crisis, Tata Sons chairman N. Chandrasekaran on Tuesday met communications minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, even as an official said the telecom ministry is prepared to issue a notice to Tata for paying only part of its dues as full and final settlement. Emerging from the meeting which lasted for over 30 minutes, Chandrasekaran declined to comment on the details of his discussion. The crucial meeting comes at a time when the government is looking to issue a detailed notice to Tatas for paying only ₹2,197 crore as full and final settlement.

NCLAT member: Liquidation is better sometimes

Liquidation of a company under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code is some times better than a resolution as it throws opportunity for alternative use of its assets and add value to the country, said NCLAT Technical Member Balvinder Singh.

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Indian firms audited by Big-4 is far below the global average even as regulators tighten screws

Restrictions will hurt audit profession, say experts

ASHWIN J PUNJEN
MUMBAI, FEB. 25

Indian companies audited by Big-4 audit firms are steadily coming down and is far below the global average even as regulators are tightening screws on auditors in the country.

Top four audit firms — E&Y, PwC, Deloitte and PwC firms — audit 26 per cent of the NSE listed companies in FY20 down from 30 per cent in FY 20. This is much below the global average, in the US 99 per cent of S&P 500 companies are audited by the big 4, while in Europe it is around 80 per cent.

However, in the case of UK it hovers around 60 per cent. "The demand and talent to be able to grow. The profession needs more large firms to service the growing economy instead of more small firms," says Ex Central Council member of the ICAI.

If India is to grow to be a \$5 trillion economy, then there is no need to cause hindrance to supply of



audit services. In nature demand and supply forces, audit firms will be required to grow to meet the increased demand and everyone will get a share of the market. For this, small and mid-sized firms should be encouraged to build capacity and invest in IT systems, learning and development of their employees," says Srinivas Reddy of Juniper Advisors, a leading corporate advisory firm.

Experts believe that restriction on number of audits per firm/network or number of partners per firm is detrimental to growth of audit profession as it is not justifiable to penalise firms and networks that have invested in knowledge, tools, methodologies, talent to enable their growth and development. Audit firms have come under regulatory scrutiny as series of audit failures have come to surface over the past few years. The latest was the near-collapse of Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Ltd (IL&FS) in September 2018, which left a \$99,000 crore hole in the country's financial system and sent the NBFC (non-banking financial company) sector into a tailspin. The list of companies in which auditors were

caught napping include IL&FS, Yes Bank Ltd, Satyam Computers, Manpasand Beverages Ltd, Vakrangee Ltd, among others. All these cases of alleged financial misreporting and irregularities highlighted audit quality concerns. In some cases, even audit failures. The audit process, which is meant to certify whether the accounts stated by companies are true, failed to flag gaping holes, experts said.

Interestingly, the headline-grabbing action has all been against the top 4 audit firms. And it has inevitably culminated in the MCA paper, which could potentially lead to change in law. "But it became fairly obvious soon enough that the quality of the audit was the key concern, not whether the firms were Indian or otherwise. As regulators began tightening the screws, the markets could smell that something was brewing. In the first half of 2018, nearly 32 auditors quit from listed firms, said Vijay Kumar Gupta executive director of ICAI.

Life insurers can soon offer health insurance policy

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, FEB. 25

After banning life insurers from selling indemnity-based health policies a few years back, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India is now examining the feasibility of allowing them again.

IRDAI (Health Insurance) Regulations 2016 allows Life Insurance Companies to offer benefit-based health insurance products only in which the insured have been received from life insurance companies to allow them to offer indemnity products as well, the regulator said.

Indemnity-based health plans are insurance policies in which the insured is reimbursed the actual

expense incurred during hospitalisation up to the total sum insured under the policy.

Historically Health Insurance is recognised as one of the important elements of health care and health insurance premiums have been registering a significant CAGR of around 20 per cent in the preceding 10 years in India. It is in this context that IRDAI is making a feasibility study.

A few years back, life insurers had started offering such plans. However, in July 2016, IRDAI had banned them from offering them.

According to industry, IRDAI had found that indemnity cover was a service more than a product and did not want life

insurers to sell them as their core competency is not providing health cover.

Now IRDAI has formed a committee, which will look into feasibility and the business scope for life insurance companies to offer indemnity based health insurance products and extant statutory provisions that are applicable in this regard. "The Committee shall submit its recommendations within two months."

According to S. Prakash, MD of Star Health and Allied Insurance and a member of the committee, this is a good initiative for the regulator. "We will have to study the pros and cons of this suggestion before providing recommendation to the regulator," he said.

Gold dips ₹954 due to strong rupee, global cues

New Delhi, Feb. 25: Gold prices on Tuesday tumbled by ₹954 to ₹43,549 per 10 gram in the national capital on stronger rupee and selling in global market, according to HDFC Securities.

The yellow metal had closed at ₹44,503 per 10 gram in the previous trading session. Silver prices also fell by ₹80 to ₹49,990 per kg from ₹50,070 per kg on Monday.

The price of 999 and 995 purity gold in Delhi was trading lower by ₹70 to ₹44,030 per 10 gram and ₹43,880 per 10 gram, respectively as per TickerPlant.

"Gold prices pared previous gains with international spot gold prices witnessing correction on Tuesday, falling below \$1,650. Spot gold for 24 karat in Delhi declined by ₹854 on broad selling in global prices and stronger rupee," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said.

The spot rupee was trading around 16 paise stronger against the dollar during the day, he said.

The rupee appreciated by 18 paise to 71.80 against the US dollar in early trade on Tuesday including gains in domestic equity market and weakening of the American currency in the overseas market.

In the international market, both gold and silver were trading lower at \$1,648 per ounce and \$18.40 per ounce, respectively. "The worries over spring coronavirus may limit downside in gold prices," Patel added. —PTI



SBI Cards to raise ₹10,354 cr via IPO, sets price at ₹750

FC BANKING BUREAU
MUMBAI

The price band of the much awaited Initial Public Offering (IPO) of SBI Cards and Payment Services has been fixed in the price range of ₹750-755 per share. The issue will open for subscription on March 2 and close on March 5. At the higher end of the price band, SBI Card IPO is expected to raise around ₹10,354 crore, making it the fifth-largest IPO so far. An employee discount of 7% per share will be offered to eligible employees. The bid lot for the IPO has finalised to 19 shares and in multiples thereafter.

The Offer consists of the fresh issue and the offer for sale. The object of the offer for sale is to allow the selling shareholders to sell an aggregate of up to 13.05 crore shares held by them. SBI Card will not receive any proceeds from the Offer for Sale. The fresh issue of ₹500 crore would be utilised for augmenting SBI Card's capital base to meet its future capital requirements. The secondary share sale will include up to 37.29 million share sale by SBI and up to 83.23 million shares on offer by the Carlyle Group, while the rest is held by Carlyle. Both will pare

their stakes by 4 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively, via the initial share sale.

Speaking at a press conference ahead of the IPO Hardyal Prasad, MD and CEO, told reporters that he aims to keep the proportion of Gross non-performing assets at 2.4 to 2.5 per cent of the total assets. Gross non-performing assets stood at 2.47 per cent at the end of last year, down from around 2.9 per cent in March 2018. "Our focus is that the underwriting is profitable and impairment should be least and so we are leveraging analytics and accordingly reach out to customers," said Prasad.

SBI Cards and Payment is the second-largest credit card issuer in India, with a 18.1 per cent market share of the Indian credit card market in terms of the number of credit cards outstanding as of November 30, 2019 and a 17.9 per cent market share of the Indian credit card market in terms of total credit card spends in the eight months ended November 30, 2019, respectively. Kotak Mahindra Capital, Axis Capital, DSP Merrill Lynch, Nomura Financial Advisory, HSBC Securities and SBI Capital Markets are the book-running lead managers of the issue.

PE, VCs see 20x jump in credit investment

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, FEB. 25

While some stressed assets may be up for grabs in India, private equity and venture capital funds, however, saw a jump of over 20 times in credit investments in January compared to same month last year. "Credit investments are fast-emerging asset class for PE/VC as seasoned investors cherry pick stressed opportunities thrown up by companies that need support to prevent going into NCLT," says EXY.

PE/VC funds have been active with credit investments in the past three to four years. They were a lot of stressed assets under custody of US FPIs are worth ₹11,62,579 crore and those from Mauritius stood at ₹4,36,745 crore.

Following the FATF notice, some fund managers are looking to do one through the tax haven. "Foreign investors are looking to do one through the tax haven. "Foreign investors will continue to be eligible for FPI registration with increased monitoring as per FATF norms". It is noted from FATF website that when a

No ban on foreign investors from Mauritius, says Sebi

ASHWIN J PUNJEN
MUMBAI, FEB. 25

Market regulator Sebi on Tuesday said foreign investors from Mauritius will continue to be eligible for FPI registration with increased monitoring as per international norms.

The regulator issued clarification after the tax haven was on the "grey list" of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) — an inter-governmental policy making body that sets anti-money laundering standards.

A significant percentage of foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) investing in the Indian market is registered in Mauritius.

The island nation is the second largest source after the US from which foreign portfolio investments come into the country. As per January NSDL data, assets under custody of US FPIs are worth ₹11,62,579 crore and those from Mauritius stood at ₹4,36,745 crore.

Following the FATF notice, some fund managers are looking to do one through the tax haven. "Foreign investors will continue to be eligible for FPI registration with increased monitoring as per FATF norms". It is noted from FATF website that when a

• The Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements are reportedly being misused by investors to avoid paying taxes by routing investments through various countries which has tax treaty with India, in particular Mauritius and Singapore, which account for 48% of FDI inflow into India.

• According to the tax treaty between India and Mauritius, capital gains can only be taxed in Mauritius, the same treaty exist with 16 other countries. Thanks to its low 3% capital gains tax, quality regulatory framework, professional labor, geographical proximity, cultural affinities, and historical ties with India, Mauritius is the most attractive conduit for investments into India.

jurisdiction is placed under increased monitoring, it constrains that the country has committed to resolve swiftly the identified strategic deficiencies within agreed timeframes and is subject to increased monitoring," Sebi said.

Sebi said that FATF does not call for the application of enhanced due diligence to be applied to these jurisdictions, but encourages its members to take into account this information in their risk analysis. Referring to the above, Sebi said that intermediaries should take note of FATF identifies jurisdictions that have significant strategic deficiencies in their regimes to counter money laundering, terrorist financing, and financial proliferation.

Jurisdictions under the "grey list" face increased monitoring. Currently, there are 18 jurisdictions identified as having "strategic deficiencies", including Mauritius and Pakistan, as per the FATF. For several years, there have been apprehensions about Mauritius being a money laundering route for FPIs due to its limited regulatory oversight. But, the Indian Ocean island nation has been taking several steps in recent years to address the concerns.

Equity benchmark BSE Sensex was trading 118.15 points higher at 40,481.38, and the broader NSE Nifty was up 32.70 points at 11,862.10.

'Almost closed' contours of limited trade pact: Goyal

New Delhi, Feb. 25: India and the US have moved to the next level of engagement having "almost closed" the final contours of limited trade package, and is to open up the market to US as well as a comprehensive trade deal going forward, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday.

Goyal was participating in the US-India Forum: Partners for Growth conference here. "On the economic front, having almost closed the last contours of the limited trade deal and with the announcement of a much larger trade deal in the offing, we have moved to the next level of engagement," Goyal said.

The minister said the engagement will help both sides on different fronts. While India will benefit by engaging with new technology, the US will gain by India becoming a big source for talent.

Sharing the government's vision, the minister said our goal is that by 2022, every family should have own home with 24 hours electricity, clean cooking gas access to internet, and good school and health care around the home.

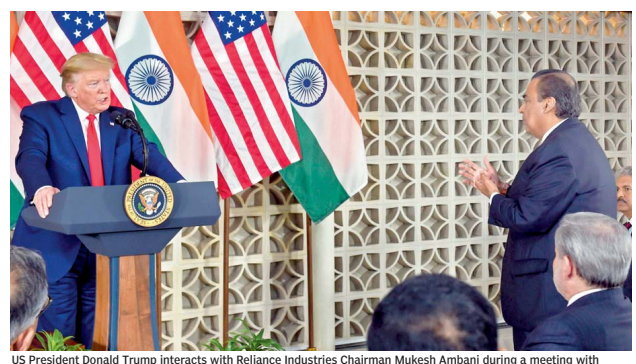
To reach the goal of making India a \$5 trillion economy, Prime Minister has had extensive consultations with 80 ministries, entire council of ministers and senior bureaucracy to bring in the interconnect between different thought processes, he said.

Referring to the proposed trade deal between India and the US, DIPP Secretary Guruprasad Mohapatra said, "There are certain areas where you need the US to also open up the market to us, that is the discussion going on between the various ministries, between the US and India. "Suffice it to say that we

need better understanding, something more akin to the kind of understanding we have at several other levels between the US and India. I am pretty sure that some kind of understanding will be reached," he said.

On the draft e-commerce policy on data storage kind of understanding under formulation, Mohapatra said every responsible country in the world wants to carve out its own space to decide what is good for the country and citizens.

India hopes to make an FDI policy where it wants to protect its own interests, the citizens, the data interest, so that citizens can leverage on data where it is used commercially by others. At the same time trying to promote national security also," he said, adding that these are legitimate things which every other responsible country including the US does. —PTI



US President Donald Trump interacts with Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani during a meeting with business leaders at US embassy in New Delhi on Tuesday

SHORT TAKES

MSD to train for IPL from March 2

Chennai: Mahendra Singh Dhoni will start training for his much-anticipated return to action in the Indian Premier League (IPL) from March 2 amid never-ending speculation on his career, which has been on a roller coaster since last year's ODI World Cup. The talismanic Chennai Super Kings captain, who led India to two world titles, will start his training at the MA Chidambaram Stadium along with some other players of the franchise. The 36-year-old has not played since the World Cup semifinal loss to New Zealand last year and has maintained a stoic silence on what his next move would be. He was dropped from the BCCI's list of centrally contracted players in January. "Dhoni will start at the M A Chidambaram stadium from March 2. He will practice with players who are available at that time," CSK CEO Jay Viswanathan said here. "The full camp will begin on 19 March when all the players would have joined the squad," he said. —PTI

Buttler promises to prove worth in Test

London: England wicketkeeper Jos Buttler is adamant he can prove his worth in the Test arena after struggling to emulate his one-day success. Buttler has endured a torrid time in Test cricket for England recently, managing a top score of just 45 in five matches against New Zealand and South Africa. The 29-year-old was still named in the England squad for the forthcoming tour of Sri Lanka and insists he can transfer his explosive limited-overs skill-set to the longer form of the game. Virat Kohli, Faf Du Plessis and David Warner are among the current batsmen who thrive with the red or white ball and Buttler, who helped England win the World Cup last year, wants to join them. "There's a crop of guys who are the best in the world, and they're the best across all formats. They manage to do it," Buttler said on Monday. —AFP

Smith, Warner return to Newlands

Cape Town: Australia's Steve Smith and David Warner will return to Newlands on Wednesday, less than two years after they were central figures in one of cricket's greatest scandals at the ground. They will be playing in a one-day international against South Africa in front of an expected capacity crowd where "maximum attention will be in operation to prevent any abuse of players. Smith and Warner were captain and vice-captain of Australia on Feb 24, 2018 when team-mate Cameron Bancroft was caught on television hiding a piece of yellow sandpaper under his shirt during the third day of the third Test. That evening Smith and Bancroft admitted in a press conference they deliberately tried to tamper with the ball. It quickly emerged Warner was the instigator in the "leadership group" that drafted the sandpaper play. —AFP

What vows tonight

I don't think being cautious will help India, says Kohli

Wellington, Feb. 25: Indian captain Virat Kohli has exhorted his batsmen to shun ultra-defensive approach heading into the must-win second Test against New Zealand, saying it "never pays off" on overseas.

India were thrashed by 10 wickets in the opening Test at the Basin Reserve, failing to go past 200 in both their innings on seam-friendly conditions. "I think the language we use as a batting unit, that has to be correct. I don't think being cautious or wary will help because you might stop playing your shots," Kohli said after the loss.

In the second innings, the technically sound Cheteshwar Pujara consumed 81 balls for his 11 runs and Hanuma Vihari made 15 off 79, as the batting unit failed to generate any momentum. Pujara, at one point, went 29 balls without a run, forcing Mayank Agarwal into playing loose shots and perishing.

Not running the singles and waiting for a good ball that has "your wicket" written all over it is unacceptable to the India skipper. "You will start doubting that if even singles are not coming in these conditions, what will you do? You are just waiting for when that good ball will come and you will be dismissed."

"If you have that acceptance that it's ok if you are out to a good ball, at least I don't think that way," said Kohli, making his stand clear on what he thought about the approach of some players.

The skipper, who is known to take the attack back to the opposition camp, wants some of his batsmen to follow his leads. "If I see a situation, if it is a green wicket, then I try to play counter-attacking cricket so that I can take the team forward."

"If you don't succeed, then you have to accept that your thinking was correct, you tried but it didn't come off, fair enough. There is no harm in accepting that. "But I don't think a cautious approach ever pays off, especially away from home," the skipper was clear in his thought process.

He again stressed on the mental aspect of Test cricket, where clarity of mind, at times, becomes more important than the technical nuances of batting. "If you start thinking too much about the conditions, then you won't be able to focus on your batting. When you are not playing in your (home)



New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson hugs his Indian counterpart Virat Kohli. — ICC

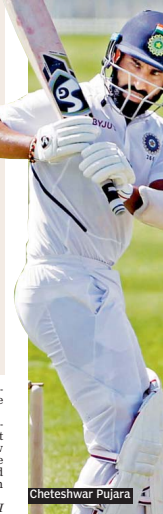
Kohli, Pant & Shami in Asia XI for centenary match in Bangla

Dhaka, Feb. 25: India skipper Virat Kohli was on Tuesday named in the Asia XI squad, also featuring Rishabh Pant and Mohammed Shami, to take on a World XI side in a two-match T20 International series to celebrate the birth centenary of Bangladesh founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman here.

Kohli has been named by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) for one match series to availability, which is yet to be confirmed by the BCCI. The two matches are scheduled to be held on March 21 and 22. "We have already received four names from India," Bangladesh Cricket Board President Nazmul Hassan was saying as per ESPNcricinfo.

"We haven't signed contracts but Rishabh Pant, Kuldeep Yadav, Shikhar Dhawan and Mohammed Shami are supposed to come. They have said KL Rahul and Virat Kohli will play one game each, but that hasn't been finalised," he added.

BCB wants Kohli to be a part of both the T20 Internationals but considering the hectic schedule of the Indian team, it remains to be seen if the maestro makes himself available. "Kohli's name has been sent but the call on his participation lies with him and he will take it after due consultation with BCCI President Sourav Ganguly," a BCCI source said. —PTI



Cheteshwar Pujara

Gary surprised by India's surrender

Wellington, Feb. 25: New Zealand coach Gary Stead on Tuesday said he was a bit surprised by India's abject surrender in the first Test but is expecting a strong comeback in Christchurch.

India were all out for 165 and 191 in the two innings of the opening Test, leading to a 10-wicket drubbing in just over three days. "It was a bit of a surprise but it was also due to the pressure we put on those guys for long periods of time. You get Trent and Tim to operate in our conditions and both were outstanding," Stead told reporters on Tuesday.

"Trent's freshness after being out for eight weeks added spark. The head coach also had a subtle warning for the Indian team, saying touring New Zealand could be tough as playing in some of the other countries." "We want teams to believe that it is tough in New Zealand as it is playing anywhere else in the world. That's a pride thing."

Getting Anshika Rahane cheaply on the fourth morning was the clincher for Stead. After that, he knew that New Zealand would wrap it up quickly. "Guess picked up wickets at critical times in the match. We got Rahane out and it was the catalyst of the belief," he said.

Stead also lauded Virat Kohli had expressed a desire for his batsmen to come out with a positive approach, and Stead feels



Gary Stead

We want teams to believe that it is as tough in New Zealand as it is playing anywhere else in the world. That's a pride thing. —GARY STEAD, New Zealand coach

that a world class side like India would like to dominate the proceedings. "I expect Indian batsmen trying to dominate more and that will be a challenge for our bowlers because a world class side like India will come back hard."

Neil Wagner is back for the second Test after the birth of his first child and it was a possibility that the home team will go in with four specialist seamers in bowling friendly conditions at the Hagley Oval. —PTI



Craig McMillan

India didn't make any adjustments, says McMillan

Wellington, Feb. 25: Former New Zealand all-rounder Craig McMillan on Tuesday said Indian batsmen "throwing their hands at the ball like they do in India" will not work here.

Indian batsmen's inadequacies in adverse conditions were exposed as they crashed to an embarrassing 10-wicket defeat in just over three days in the opening Test here on Monday.

"They didn't make any adjustments in the way they played, they threw their hands at the ball like they do in India," he told Radio Sport.

"When the ball doesn't bounce above knee high you can get away with some of those shots — in New Zealand you don't."

McMillan lauded the New Zealand's veteran seam-bowling duo of Tim Southee and Trent Boult. "When the ball's swinging, and it did for most of that Wellington Test, Boult and Southee are geniuses," he said.

He rated it "a terrific performance" from the Black Caps. "I haven't seen it in the number one Test side in the world, dismantled like they were over those four days in Wellington," he said.

New Zealand's drubbing of India was hailed as one of their best in Black Caps' history by the media here. "Rare are the Tests in which the BlackCaps beat the world's number one Test side," the New Zealand Herald wrote. —PTI

Chatfield fascinated by current trio of Southee, Boult & Wagner

Wellington, Feb. 25: The first Test he played could well have been his last. Ewen Chatfield didn't just live to tell the tale but also enjoyed an enduring love affair with cricket, which ended only after he turned 68.

Richard Hadlee's new ball partner for the longest time, Chatfield had a scary beginning to his international career in 1976, when England bowler Peter Lever's bouncer struck him on the temple and he immediately fell unconscious. It was 45 years ago in his debut Test for New Zealand.

He had swallowed his tongue after getting concussed. He was saved by



Ewen Chatfield

opposition team physio Bernard Thomas, who sprinted onto the Eden Park to give the player mouth-to-mouth resuscitation before being rushed to the hospital.

In an interview, Chatfield spoke about how the incident impacted him

but asserted that he never felt he would not be able to make a comeback. "No, I didn't think that way that I will never return to cricket," the 68-year-old, who played 63 Tests and 114 ODIs, said.

Chatfield finds the current trio of Tim Southee, Trent Boult and Neil Wagner extremely fascinating as they have enjoyed more than decent amount of success. "All bowling partnerships are different. It's hard to compare one with other but the latest one with Boult and Southee and Wagner has been a very, very successful partnership," he said. —PTI

Wellington snow just an aberration



R. Mohan

Line & Length

There is no doubt, in my mind at least, that Team India will be at Lord's in the final of the world Test championship next year. What happened at the Basin Reserve in windy Wellington was an aberration, most likely brought on by the greenish tinge in the pitch, which was splendidly exploited by the Kiwis' pace attack, of course. My only fear is whether the same will not happen to us if the ball swings and seams at Lord's next English summer as it always tends to at HQ, especially when there is a cloud cover over London.

Give the Kiwis their due. They won their 100th Test, 64 years after their first triumph and their 100th Test win was inspired by two seasoned fast bowlers in Trent Boult and Tim Southee who were backed up by the six-foot-eight inch greenhorn Kyle Jamieson who is not of express speed but bounces from a very high release. The conditions on the first day, when New Zealand won the Test, have been just what the doc-

tor ordered to test Indian batsmen. Should there be any doubt that India would have inserted the Black Caps had they won the Test? India came into the game with an impressive seven straight Tests. But all victories in Tests are subject to the conditions and the relative strengths of the opposition. To have underestimated New Zealand, unbeaten at home in a streak of 12 Tests, was perhaps the real cause of the Indian debacle. Virat Kohli's lean trot exacerbated the problem even as the presence of Prithvi Shaw as first choice opener was a bit of an overreach, as much as comparisons to Sachin Tendulkar have been in the young batsman's career. Let's face it, Prithvi is no Sachin and would struggle to live up to comparisons in the future to if he doesn't tighten up his game.

The Black Caps' mastery of their home conditions, particularly in Wellington where bowling against the wind needs certain expertise, has to be admired. India had to be tough to survive and they seemed to for a

start, although watching Mayank Agarwal, who was stodgy and yet picking on opportunities to score, was never likely to be easy on the eye. Nor is Cheteshwar Pujara going to be an advertisement for bright cricket even if he had played such great Test innings as in Australia two years ago to make possible India's historic Test series triumph down under.

Ajinkya Rahane was the pick of India's Test batsmen on the short innings at Wellington Test. He had time to play the ball and he was fluent in negotiating it. Both Agarwal and Pujara made it look too often as if they were dealing with grenades rather than a Kookaburra ball. The sum total of the batting efforts was just about good enough to avoid defeat by an innings and we can't be too proud of that. What was truly disturbing was that once the conditions settled as India carried all before them, they did not put up enough of a fight before going down. The world's leading Test side can't allow themselves to be rolled over on a barrel.

The Indian pace attack was not bristling with aggression and purpose. They had built a reputation for just such qualities but were found lacking as a unit where the ball was bowled in a proved an exception by

sticking to the task more than his partners in pace. Things can change quickly and, maybe, the pitch and conditions for the second Test may be kinder to batsmen. But then any quality side must make its own fortune in any conditions rather than be a one-dimensional, fair weather batting line-up.

The Indian Team India batsmen are far better performers than what we saw of them at the Basin Reserve. They have to turn up in Christchurch if the series is to be a real contest. The quicks of the Indian attack are far better performers than what we saw of them. They would have to turn up too if the visitors are not to be demoralised by the typical weather conditions and soft pitches that will hinder the great batsmen left on them. Indians should be the last to complain of plain of any team seizing the initiative and using it to their advantage by tweaking the conditions a bit. After all, Indians are experts at designer pitches

that lets rotating balls jump at the batsmen's throats rather than those bowled with an upright seam.

Prithvi Shaw

RAJJI TROPHY SEMIFINALS

DRS to make its debut in domestic matches

Rajkot, Feb. 25: In a first, the Decision Review System (DRS) will be implemented in the Ranji Trophy when Saurashtra take on Gujarat in the semifinals of the domestic competition, starting here on Saturday.

The teams will be given four referrals per innings but the technology will not have Hawk Eye and Ultra Edge, two key components of the DRS used in international games. "First time in Ranji Trophy, Umpire Decision Review System (DRS) is being introduced. Semifinal matches and final match of Ranji Trophy 2019-20 will have DRS system," Saurashtra Cricket Association stated in a press release on Tuesday.

Last week BCCI's general manager of cricket Saba Karim had said the limited use of DRS was always a priority for the Ranji Trophy semifinals and not from the knockout stages. The decision to introduce limited

LIMITED USE

Contrary to the two reviews available per team per innings in Test cricket, each team in Ranji will be given a maximum of four referrals in an innings

There will be a "limited use" of DRS, with no snicko, hot-spot, and the ball-tracker. Instead, the third umpire will have a slow-motion camera on a pitch map along with spin vision to assist him, with the idea being that at least the 'howlers' can be prevented.

Saurashtra Cricket Association president Prakash Singh said the decision of having DRS in Ranji Trophy he stated that the Ranji Trophy along with Vijay Hazare and Syed Mushtaq Ali are the most important events in India's domestic calendar and DRS should be used in at least the semifinals and finals of these tournaments.

The other semi-final of the domestic championship will be played between Karnataka and Bengal. —PTI

SHORT TAKES

Kashvee picks all 10 wickets in U-19

Kadapa: Chandigarh's Kashvee Gautam did an Anil Kumble by picking up 10 wickets in 4.5 overs to seal a 161-run win for her side against Arunachal Pradesh in a women's Under-19 One Day Trophy at KSRM College Ground here on Tuesday.

She became the first Indian bowler to take all 10 wickets in a limited-overs match. Besides, Gautam was also the skipper of Chandigarh, top-scored with a 68-ball 49. Kumble is the only Indian to have achieved the feat in international cricket when he scalped all 10 wickets against Pakistan in a Test match in New Delhi in 1999.

Other cricketers to have taken 10 wickets in an innings are Debashish Mohanty in 2001 and Rex Singh in 2019, all in red ball cricket.

Defending 186 for 4, Gautam started for the winners, registering a hat-trick by her name to bowl out Arunachal Pradesh for 25. — PTI

North and West register wins

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

North Zone and West Zone registered victories in the Food Corporation of India's All-India Inter-zonal Cricket Tournament being played at the Gymkhana Grounds here on Tuesday. North defeated North East Zone by six wickets while West Zone got the better of Head Quarters by four wickets. West Zone's Onkar G was the top-scorer of the day. He made 79 to power his side past HQ, for whom Wasim took 4 wickets while conceding 15 runs to emerge the pick of bowlers alongside North East Zone's Mayank, who got 4 for 15 in a

BRIEF SCORES

■ North East Zone 105 in 20 overs (Dharani Nath 25, Abir Chakraborty 20 n.o., Bhanu Sankia 2/18) lost to North Zone 106/4 in 16.5 overs (Jashan P. Singh 47 n.o., Ritvi Kashyap 27, N. Manik 10 n.o.)

■ Head Quarters 170/7 in 20 overs (Shubam C 64, Sanjeev G 29, Chetan S 24, Kuldeep Y 2/25, Rajinder B 2/20) vs West Zone 171/6 in 20 overs (Onkar G 79, Pratik A 39, Siddhesh K 21, Wasim S 4/15, Nitin S 2/42).

Athletics trials for Medchal

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

The Medchal District Athletics Association is conducting selection trials on Feb 26 at Telangana Sports School to pick the team for the Federation Cup Junior Athletics Championship to be held in Warangal on March 11 and 12. For further details, contact Rajasekhar on phone number 9849612733.

Hyderabad circle score a big win

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

Hyderabad blasted Bhubaneswar 5-0 in the State Bank of India Inter-Circle Football Tournament being played in Visakhapatnam. Steven Xavier Davy scored the first hat-trick of the tournament while Fareed and Anand scored one goal each. All the goals were assisted by midfielder Zaki Raza.

In another match, Amaravathi circle defeated Chennai circle 5-1 as captain Dhanala Kumar scored a brace and Anand slotted home one.

Chess tournament from March 1

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 25

The One Goal Chess Academy (OGCA) is organising an Under 16 Children's Chess Tournament at Kukatpally from March 1 in the boys and girls Under 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, veteran and women categories. For further details, contact OGCA director Jyothi Ganesh Inaganti on phone number 8745153718.

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Liverpool's Sadio Mane (second from right) scores against West Ham in their English Premier League match at Anfield in Liverpool on Monday. Liverpool won 3-2. — AP

READY TO ROAR

Liverpool just four wins away from EPL title after record-equalling 18th successive victory

Liverpool, Feb. 25: Jürgen Klopp admitted he never expected Liverpool to make such a "special" charge towards the Premier League title after a record-equalling 32 victory against West Ham left the runaway leaders four wins from the clinching trophy.

Klopp's side were in danger of dropping Premier League points for the first time since their draw at Manchester United on October 20 after falling behind in the second half at Anfield on Monday.

Georginio Wijnaldum put Liverpool ahead early on but Issa Diop equalised soon after.

Two big Farnals gave struggling West Ham a stunning

lead, but Lukasz Fabianski's woeful blunder allowed Mohamed Salah to equalise with his 19th goal of the season.

Sadio Mane completed the fightback with nine minutes left as Liverpool restored their 22-point lead over Manchester City.

The dramatic escape ensured they equalled Manchester City's top-flight record of 18 consecutive wins set between August and December 2017.

Klopp, usually reluctant to celebrate milestones, confessed to being impressed by Liverpool's relentless run. "A couple of years ago, three or four maybe, in the beginning, I said we want to write our

THE RESULT

Liverpool (Wijnaldum 9, Salah 68, Mane 81)	3
West Ham (Diop 12, Fornals 54)	2

own stories, we want to create our own history," Klopp said.

"Obviously, the boys took really seriously what I said there. It's so special, the numbers are incredible, so difficult."

KLOPP CONFIDENT OF HIS TEAM

Liverpool's 21st successive league victory at Anfield also equalled their own English top-flight record for consecutive home

wins, set by Bill Shankly's team between January and December 1972.

"They need 12 points from their final 11 games to guarantee a first title since 1990.

"They are unbeaten in their last 44 league matches, just five short of Arsenal's all-time English record of 49.

It is unthinkable that Liverpool would squander their lead now but, publicly at least, Klopp is talking nothing for granted.

"We all know it's very special, but in the moment we are really just in the situation and want to recover and prepare for the next one," he said.

"The next opponent is really waiting and wants

to fight us. I saw the boys tonight, they are ready to fight and as long as we are really ready to fight, nobody should worry, but we still have a lot of work to do.

Klopp's men found themselves in the rare position of coming off a defeat, for only the third time in all competitions this season, after Tuesday's 1-0 Champions League last first leg loss at Atletico Madrid.

And third from bottom West Ham gave them all they could handle in a thrilling clash that suggested Liverpool are not inevitable just yet as they try to emulate Arsenal's unbeaten 2003-04 top-flight campaign. — AFP

City gear up for Real clash

Madrid, Feb. 25: Manchester City will be up against both Real Madrid and their reputation on Wednesday as the Champions League's biggest winners play one of its biggest under-achievers at the Santiago Bernabeu.

After City's win over Leicester on Saturday, Pep Guardiola said: "We will try to be ourselves. We can win and we can lose but we must try to be ourselves."

Yet in some ways, City will seek a role reversal too.

Madrid's record is the envy of Europe but in particular by teams like City, whose financial might and technical talent has translated only into disappointment outside domestic competition.

In the time City have won three Premier League titles and five domestic cups, they have once past the Champions League's quarterfinals last only once, reaching the last four in 2016, only to be beaten by Madrid.

Zinedine Zidane's side, meanwhile, have surrendered dominance in La Liga to Barcelona but City have perhaps boasted an even better all-round collection of players



Manchester City's Nicolas Otamendi (from left), Joao Cancelo, Bernardo Silva, Sergio Agueiro and Riyad Mahrez share a light moment during their training session at City Football Academy in Manchester on Tuesday, eve of their UEFA Champions League pre-quarterfinal first leg match against Real Madrid. — AFP

Live on TV

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Real Madrid vs Manchester City from 1:30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

Lyon vs Juventus from 1:30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

TONIGHT 1:30 AM STREAMING LIVE

League has become something of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Madrid believe this tournament is their tournament, a conviction based on historic success that makes them assured under pressure and ruthless in the decisive moments.

"When you have a history of the (Alfredo) Di Stefano period, winning five or six European Cups at that time, it means a new player that comes to Real Madrid and puts on that shirt knows we have to defend our history," said Guardiola.

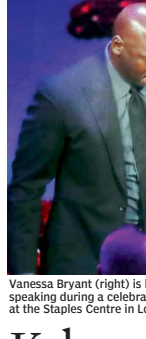
When Madrid last won the Champions League by beating Liverpool in the final in 2018, their advance to the trophy against Bayern Munich, they progressed after an error from Bayern's goalkeeper Sven Ulreich.

In the quarters, they were awarded a fortuitous 97th-minute penalty to beat Juventus. Even in the last 16, they faced a Paris Saint-Germain side without Neymar.

"I've where some saw luck, Madrid's coach and their players saw a refusal to give in."

"The point Madrid never give up," said Zidane after their last-gasp triumph over Bayern.

"We came up against a number of obstacles but we believe in the goals we want to achieve and we achieve them because we fight," he added. — AFP

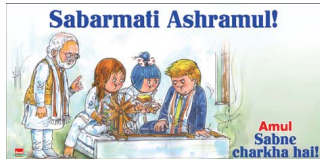


Vanessa Bryant (right) is helped off the stage by former NBA player Michael Jordan after speaking during a celebration of life for her husband Kobe Bryant and daughter Gianna at the Staples Centre in Los Angeles on Monday. — AP

Los Angeles, Feb. 25: Kobe Bryant's widow Vanessa filed a lawsuit on Monday against the operators of the helicopter that crashed on January 26, killing the NBA icon and eight others.

The suit was filed in Los Angeles Superior Court on the same day that Bryant, his 13-year-old daughter Gianna and the other seven crash victims were memorialised in a public ceremony at the Staples Centre.

The lawsuit names Island Express Helicopters, Island Express Holding Corp. and the estate of the pilot, Arato Zobayan, who was among the victims. Gianna Bryant's basket-



Pound's not sure of Tokyo Games

Tokyo, Feb. 25: Dick Pound, the longest-serving member of the IOC, estimates there's a three-month window to decide the fate of the Tokyo Olympics, which are being threatened by the fast-spreading virus from China.

Pound, in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press, did not sound alarmist. But he speak frankly about the risks facing the Olympics, which open July 24.

Pound has been an International Olympic Committee member since 1978, 13 years longer than current President Thomas Bach.

"You could certainly go to two months out if you had to," Pound said, which would mean putting off a decision until late May and hoping the virus is under control.

"A lot of things have to start happening. You've got to start ramping up your security, your food, the Olympic Village, the hotels. The media folks will be in there building their studios," he added.

And if it got to the point of not going ahead, Pound speculated "you're probably looking at a cancellation."

"This is the new war and you have to face it. In and around that time, I'd say folks are going to have to ask: 'Is this under sufficient control that we can be confident about going to Tokyo, or not?'"

— DICK POUND, longest-serving member of the IOC



TT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP IN KOREA POSTPONED

Table tennis's world team championships, due to take place next month in the South Korean city of Busan, were postponed on Tuesday following a leap in novel coronavirus cases. The International Table Tennis Federation said the event, originally planned for March 22-29, had been provisionally rescheduled for June 21-28 following an emergency meeting with local organisers.

South Korea's K-league had already postponed the country's sporting calendar. The event, originally planned for March 22-29, had been provisionally rescheduled for June 21-28 following an emergency meeting with local organisers.

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NO FANS AT FOOTBALL MATCHES IN ITALY

Upcoming matches in Italian and the Europa League will be played behind closed doors to combat the spread of coronavirus, the Italian sports minister announced.

"Knowing that the ban on sporting events open to the public remains in force in six regions of northern Italy, we have agreed to the holding of matches behind closed doors," said Sports Minister Vincenzo Spadaro after a meeting of the Council of Ministers.

— Agencies

Kobe wife sues copter Co.

Los Angeles, Feb. 25: Kobe Bryant's widow Vanessa filed a lawsuit on Monday against the operators of the helicopter that crashed on January 26, killing the NBA icon and eight others.

The suit was filed in Los Angeles Superior Court on the same day that Bryant, his 13-year-old daughter Gianna and the other seven crash victims were memorialised in a public ceremony at the Staples Centre.

The lawsuit names Island Express Helicopters, Island Express Holding Corp. and the estate of the pilot, Arato Zobayan, who was among the victims. Gianna Bryant's basket-

Transportation Safety Board is still investigating the exact cause of the crash, although preliminary findings showed no sign of mechanical failure. Monday's lawsuit faults the company for allowing the helicopter to fly in "heavy fog and low clouds" that Sunday morning, conditions which prompted "law enforcement agencies and our companies" to ground their helicopters.

"On information and belief, Island Express Helicopters, Federal Aviation Administration operating certificate limited its pilots to flying only under visual flight rules," the lawsuit says.

— AFP