

Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | FRIDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2020

WEATHER

Max: 35°C
Min: 21°C
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast:
Hazy sun; air quality will be unhealthy for sensitive groups

ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Masi 16
Tithi: Panchami
Star: Asuapathi
Rahukalam:
10.30 am to 12 noon
Yamaganadam:
3.00 pm to 4.30 pm
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.18 am
Zohar: 12.27 pm
Asar: 3.43 pm
Maghrib: 6.17 pm
Isha: 7.29 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6:17 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6:26 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 9:25 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 9:51 PM

COUNTER POINT



Do you remember how the Gujarat riots were controlled in 2002?

Market Report

GOLD
24 ct (1 gm): ₹4,520.00
22 ct (1 gm): ₹4,140.00
SILVER
Bar (1 kg): ₹1,00,000.00
INDICES
Sensex: 30,760.00 pts
Nifty: 10,830.00 pts
EXCHANGE
USD: ₹73.80 Euro: ₹74.00

Naidu taken into preventive custody at Vizag airport

Vishakhapatnam: Telugu Desam Party president N Chandrababu Naidu was on Thursday taken into preventive custody at the airport here for his 'safety' as the ruling YSR Congress workers staged a protest opposing his visit, police said. Tension prevailed near the airport with the TDP workers repelling the YSRC activists who tried to block Naidu's convoy. ■ PG

China 'duck army' to fight Pakistan locusts

Beijing: China is planning to dispatch a 100,000-strong army of ducks to help Pakistan combat a massive locust infestation, a local newspaper reported Thursday. The legion of lotus-eating waterfowl will be sent from the eastern province of Zhejiang following the earlier dispatch of a team of Chinese experts to Pakistan to advise on a response to the infestation that is being called the worst in 20 years, the Ningbo Evening News said.

Existing antiviral drugs may be key to treat coronavirus

London: Already approved broad-spectrum antiviral drugs may offer a first-line treatment for the novel coronavirus which has so far killed over 2,700 people and infected around 80,000, according to a study unveiled on Thursday.



POLITICS | 4 DMK legislator KPP Samy passes away

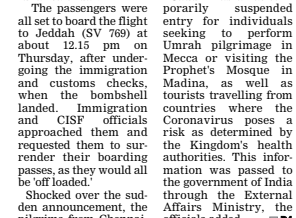
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Saudi cancels Jeddah flight Umrah pilgrims told to go home

P.A. JEBARAJ
CHENNAI, FEB. 27

It is a classic case of religious fervour watered down by deadly novel Coronavirus outbreak. The much anticipated Umrah pilgrimage for a fairly large group of 170 passengers from Tamil Nadu, with nearly 50 per cent of them being women, turned into utter disappointment, as Saudi Airlines temporarily suspended its flight to Jeddah. Umrah is an Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca that can be undertaken at any time of the year, in contrast to the Hajj, which has specific dates according to the Islamic lunar calendar. The passengers were all set to board the flight to Jeddah (SV 789) at about 12.15 pm on Thursday, after undergoing the immigration and customs checks, when the bombshell landed. Immigration and CISF officials approached them and requested them to surrender their boarding passes, as they would be off loaded. Shocked over the sudden announcement, the pilgrims from Chennai,

Kancheepuram, Vellore, Nagapattinam, Thanjavur and Tiruvavur, initially suspected some foul play and after a while some of them tried to engage the officials in an argument. The passengers, mostly senior citizens, sought to know if the government had passed an order suspending the flight. They even wanted to know the basis of recalling the boarding passes, especially after the Saudi government had granted them visas for the travel. The officials reasoned out that their visas might have been issued earlier but currently no new visas were granted. Saudi Arabia has temporarily suspended entry for individuals seeking to perform Umrah pilgrimage in Mecca or visiting the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, as well as tourists travelling from countries where the Coronavirus poses a risk as determined by the Kingdom's health authorities. This information was passed to the government of India through the External Affairs Ministry, the officials added. ■ M



Pilgrims at Chennai airport disappointed as Saudi Airlines temporarily suspended its flight to Jeddah. — DC



Pilgrims at Chennai airport disappointed as Saudi Airlines temporarily suspended its flight to Jeddah. — DC

India evacuates 112 people from China, 119 from Tokyo

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 27

India on Thursday evacuated 76 of its nationals along with 38 foreigners from the Coronavirus-hit Chinese city of Wuhan and another 119 Indian nationals along with five foreigners — who were earlier quarantined on the ship Diamond Princess — from the Japanese capital, Tokyo. The 76 Indian nationals evacuated from Wuhan included three Indian embassy officials who were in the city for coordination. The 119 Indian nationals evacuated from Tokyo comprised 113

A C-17 Globemaster III transport aircraft of Indian Air Force evacuated 76 Indians and 38 foreign nationals from Wuhan while an Air India flight brought back the group of 119 people from Tokyo crew members and six passengers. The foreign nationals brought to India from Wuhan in the third evacuation flight included 23 nationals from Bangladesh, six from China, two each from Myanmar and Maldives and one each from South Africa, USA and Madagascar. The foreign nationals evacuated

Midnight transfer of judge who rapped Delhi police raises storm

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 27

Less than 24 hours after the Delhi high court bench headed by Justice S. Muralidhar made significant observations and raised sharp questions regarding Delhi Police handling of the riots in Delhi, Union law and justice ministry handed him his transfer orders on Wednesday night. "In exercise of the power conferred by Clause (1) of Article 222 of the Constitution of India, the President, after consultation with the Chief Justice of India, is pleased to transfer Mr Justice S. Muralidhar, judge of the Delhi high court, as a judge of the Punjab and Haryana high court and to direct him to assume charge of his office in the Punjab and Haryana high court, on Tuesday, March 3, 2020, at 11 pm on Wednesday.

Judges are usually given two weeks' time, or 14 days, to take charge at the new place, however Justice Muralidhar is expected to take charge on March 6, 7, at least eight days after he has received the order. "Though Justice S. Muralidhar's transfer was recommended by the Supreme Court collegium about two weeks back, the timing of the orders came under strong criticism from Opposition parties, civil society, common people and the Bar Association. During the hearing on urgent petitions with regard to Delhi riots on Tuesday night, Justice Muralidhar had rapped Delhi Police for its role and

asked it to register FIRs against certain BJP leaders for their hate speeches and to ensure the safe passage of the injured from the small AI Hind hospital to GTB. "We should never allow another 1984... especially under the watch of the court and under your (Delhi Police) watch... We have to be very, very alert," the bench consisting of Justice Muralidhar and Anup Bhambhani observed during a midnight hearing on night's resolution. The case is now listed before the Chief Justice of Delhi high court, Justice Dhruvraj Narambhai Patel, and on Thursday he gave Delhi Police four weeks' time to file a counter-affidavit in response to a plea seeking registration of FIRs against four politicians-BJP leaders Amurgh Thakur, Kapil Mishra, Parvish Verma and Abhay Verma.

₹10L to victim's kin

Efforts on to restore normalcy; we urge organisations to indulge in making responsible statements: MEA on comments by OIC.

"The midnight transfer of Justice Muralidhar isn't shocking given the current dispensation, but it is certainly sad & shameful. Millions of Indians have faith in a resilient & upright judiciary, the government's attempts to muzzle justice & break their faith are deplorable," Priyanka Gandhi, Congress general secretary tweeted.



Indians have faith in a resilient & upright judiciary, the government's attempts to muzzle justice & break their faith are deplorable. — Priyanka Gandhi, Congress general secretary tweeted.

TABLOID Surrogacy on the rise

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On hate speeches, Delhi HC gives centre a month to update on action taken

Delhi High Court grants Centre and police 4 weeks to file their replies to the PIL.

In a veiled attack on Union Home Minister Amit Shah for his alleged involvement in the death of special CBI Judge BH Loya in a tweet, Rahul Gandhi tweeted on Thursday, "Remembering the brave Judge Loya, who wasn't transferred."



I admit I am the one in this viral video. This video is dated February 24. The rioters entered my house after breaking the door. I am trying to shoot them out using a lathi in the video. — Tahir Hussain, an AAP councillor

Delhi riot: Death toll mounts to 38

New Delhi, Feb. 27: The death toll in the northeast Delhi communal riots reached 38 on Thursday, according to senior officials. The death count at GTB Hospital has risen to 34. Till Wednesday night, the total count of casualties had stood at 25 of those at GTB Hospital in Dilshad Garden. "Over 215 riot victims have been brought to our hospital and treated since February 24. However, at present only 51 patients are admitted. The condition of almost all patients are stable except one," Medical Superintendent of GTB Hospital Sunil Kumar said. Since February 24, 25 victims have been brought

AAP councillor Tahir suspended from party

New Delhi: Aam Aadmi Party on Thursday suspended councillor Tahir Hussain from the party's primary membership. This came after an FIR was registered against Hussain for allegedly murdering Intelligence Bureau (IB) officer Ankit Sharma, whose body was recovered from North-East Delhi's Chand Bagh area here on Wednesday. Hussain was dead at GTB Hospital and nine have died during treatment, he said. Congress President Sonia Gandhi on Thursday marched to the Rashtrapati Bhawan along with other senior leaders of the party, including former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and asked President Ramnath Kovind to remove Home Minister Amit Shah for "gross ineptitude, abdication of duty and his inability to contain the situation" in violence-hit North East Delhi. Accusing the Centre, Mrs Gandhi said: "Due to the complete inaction on the part of the Home Minister and the Central Government, the violence has claimed the lives of at least 34."

INDIA WOMEN MARCH ON



After opening their campaign by upsetting four-time champions Australia, India beat Bangladesh, and their New Zealand victory made it three from three to ensure a semi-final berth for the second successive tournament.

16-year-old Shafali Verma helped India earn a 1-0 win over New Zealand on Thursday and reach the women's Twenty20 World Cup semi-finals. They still need to play Sri Lanka in Group B, with the top two from each of the two five-team groups qualifying for the knockout phase. Restricting India to 133 for eight after Verma gave a strong start with three sixes and four fours in a quickfire 46.

BJP fast becoming an outcaste in TN politics

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR | DC
CHENNAI, FEB. 27

Actor Rajinikanth's open lament on Wednesday night that he was being branded as being close to BJP after taking on the Union government for its 'failure in tackling the riots in Delhi and his colleague and friend, Kamal Haasan, welcoming the statement immediately are just clear indicators of the BJP's dismal popularity rating in Tamil Nadu. Though BJP leader S R Sekar hit out at



Rajinikanth for his remarks against his party and the central government on Thursday, it needs to be

tancing himself from the ruling party at the Centre, he was only making a sort of a volte face. For in his earlier rendezvous with the media, outside the gates of his Poes Garden residence before leaving Chennai for the CA, the actor had categorically supported the CAA, a remark that suggested that he was in the BJP camp. So, why did he have to clear the doubts of his return to the BJP on his affinity to Chennai? Also, why should Kamal Haasan

immediately tweet, 'Sabsh' and welcome his friend to the 'right path'? Since both the film stars are gearing up for their maiden electoral outing to capture Fort St George - Kamal Haasan has already tried his chances at the hustings for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections - they should have done their homework to understand what will click and what will boom as they tread the electoral minefield. So, if both the actors with aspirations to become the Chief Minister of Tamil

Nadu have to openly shun the BJP, the question arises if the party is an anathema to the people of Tamil Nadu. Affirming that view, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palanisamy, who defended the CAA in the Assembly and refused to pass a resolution against it in the House, too, seems to have had a change of heart. During his visit to Tiruchy on Wednesday, he said that an Assembly resolution against the BJP was under consideration. ■ P4

India's Qatari envoy to be at Afghan peace accord

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 27

Indian Ambassador in Qatar P. Kumarar will represent New Delhi at the historic signing of a peace deal to take place between the United States and the Afghan Taliban on Saturday in Doha (Qatar), sources said on Thursday. As reported earlier by this newspaper, Qatar had invited India to the event. This will mark perhaps the first time that India will be present at an "official level" along with the Taliban at an event regarding Afghanistan.



IN BRIEF

Providence college bags Auropath award

Coonor: Providence College for Women (PCW) here, the first ever women's college to have come up in the Nilgiris, has been conferred with 'Global Award' by the Puducherry-based Auropath, a unit of the Auro Society Trust of Sri Aurobindo Society, in recognition of PCW's best social and community service. Rev. Sr. Sheila, principal of PCW, Coonor, said the Providence family in addition to its primordial goal of education has also been keen in the improvement of its neighborhood and environment by means of adopting cluster villages around the area. The college has been providing services in the fields of education, health and hygiene. The college has also actively participated in various awareness programs like Swatch Bharat, anti-plastic, anti-drug abuse, anti-trafficking, child and women safety and anti-ragging. Despite the fact that majority of the student population of the college come from remote tribal villages with a poor financial background, the college has provided financial aid to the flood affected people in Chennai and Kerala. Saying that the PCW has realized that 'Service to mankind is service to God, and that's why it imparts important education to the community service, she added this award has come as an honour and reward for students to motivate them to work with renewed interest and extra enthusiasm.

Hong Kong vessel at VOC Port triggers Covid-19 panic

ARULOLI M | DC THOOTHUKUDI, FEB. 27
The port calling of a Hong Kong flag ship 'Hannah', an oil tanker with crew of 20, at the Thoothukudi VOC Port on Thursday morning, has triggered fears of Corona virus among the public. The oil tanker had visited the ports of Singapore and Indonesia, which are said to be popular tourist destinations of the Chinese, before it reached Indian shores. The oil tanker anchored at the VOC Port around 9 am on Thursday had berthed at Kabil Port in Indonesia for three days on February 18 and 20 and at Singapore on Feb. 21. "As these nations are few of the popular tourist destinations for the Chinese, we want that the vessel reaching Thoothukudi port through these regions should not be allowed inside the port before proper screening of its crew outside the port itself," said a cargo handling employee of the port. Screening of crew after the ship berthed inside the port created fear among the port employees, added employee. When contacted, the port officials said that all the 21 crew members on board the oil tanker were properly screened for Covid-19 and found asymptomatic by the port's medical team. Moreover, it has also been said that as a precautionary measure no sailor from the oil tanker has been allowed to disembark. It is to be noted that two weeks back, the arrival of a windmill tower loaded Panama flag ship with 19 crew including 15 Chinese nationals created a similar panic among the people here.

Recognition comes after a wait of four long years Susan wins Sahitya award for 'Kusumabale' translation

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, FEB. 27

While it is just a week away for the International Women's day, for the hills here the celebration had come a little earlier as one of its accomplished women writer has bagged the prestigious 'Sahitya Akademi' award in the category of translation to English.

For Susan Daniel, who had been residing here for the past two decades, the award has come as a pleasant surprise as she completed and published the English translation of Kannada classic 'Kusumabale' four years ago, but the recognition had come after four long years.

Born in Kerala, raised in Karnataka, where she worked as professor teach-



Susan Daniel, winner of the Sahitya Akademi award.

I decided to translate this 110 page Kannada classic into English with the sole aim that this wonderful novel will be read in other states, as English is a good linking language taking the literature to other parts of the nation and globe," says Susan Daniel

and globe," she said, and added that it was her first translation. About the novel, she said that it was written in dialect spoken in Chamrajnagar and Nanjangud parts of Karnataka and the story was woven around a love story in a Dalit family life, with rich blend of prose, poetry and mythology adding flavor to the novel.

She added that she is now working on the translation of short stories of Devanur Mahadeva. To a question, she said that schools must give utmost importance to language skills to strengthen literature culture, as language and literature are important tools for personality development and creativity. She also insisted on library culture to develop good literature skills.

Award winners to feature in expo by start-ups

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 27

A 'Start-up Exhibition' featuring the winners of National Entrepreneurship Award 2019 will be held at IITM Research Park on Friday.

According to the organisers, Prof. Ashok Jhanjhanwala, professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering, IITM, will deliver a speech on 'Start-up ecosystem in India' at 9.30 am as part of the event. Following this, the half-day 'Start-up Exhibition' will showcase the work of the winners of the 4th Edition of National Entrepreneurship Award 2019, conferred by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India, and some IIT Madras incubated start-ups. The objective of 'National Entrepreneurship Award' is to recognise and celebrate work by 'Young Entrepreneurs' and 'Ecosystem Builders' from across India and instil entrepreneurial attitude among the future-generations and the youth.

Chennaiites set to fly direct again to Paris

T. SUDHEESH | DC CHENNAI, FEB. 27

Easing out difficulties of passengers who fly to France from Chennai, the international carrier Air France is set to resume its service from Chennai to Paris. This move comes to fill up the vacuum left in the market by the withdrawal of Jet Airways last April.

Air France, which was conducting thrice a week service out of Chennai, had shut operations in 2009 following the global economic slowdown. The decision to resume the service will be a boon to the passengers, especially people with French citizenship who are residents of Puducherry, the former French colony. The airline, which is mostly preferred by French citizens, will provide direct service to Paris every week.

Noel Rault, General Manager, Air France KLM, Indian Sub-Continent said that Chennai was going to be their fourth gateway in India and second in South India. The thrice weekly service begins from June 14 will open more travel opportunities for Indian



customers. Air France-KLM will operate 38 weekly flights from Paris to its two hubs at India and Amsterdam. In the winter season the frequencies will increase to over 40 weekly flights," he said. According to Air Passengers Association, the resumption of Air France service will be a boon to tourism. Currently, the passengers have to get connecting flights from Dubai, Frankfurt, London, Abu Dhabi or Colombo to go to Paris. Many of the passengers are cancelling the trips as it was difficult to get a seat on any flights to Paris. The thrice a week service of Air France will revive the travel to Paris

from Chennai especially as it has been almost ten months since Jet Airways' Paris service shut," said Sudhakar Reddy, President, Air Passengers Association of India (APAI). The flights will be operated by a B787-9 Dreamliner with 228 seats in premium economy and 90 seats in business. According to figures available with French Embassy, the number of Indian tourists who visited France in 2018 had crossed the 8 lakh mark. In 2018, the number of visa applications grew by 15 per cent as compared to 2017, underpinned by a 40 per cent increase in applications from South India.

SECURITY STEP UP



Launching ceremony of 6th Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) being held at M/S L&T Shipbuilding Ltd. Kattupalli on Thursday. The OPV was launched by Smt Geeta Mandaviya, wife of Shri Manukh Mandaviya, Hon'ble Minister of State for shipping, Chemical & Fertilizer.

Vivekananda rural dev society gets ₹5 lakh

CHENNAI, FEB. 27

Chennai. As part of its CSR activities, SBI Chennai Circle gave ₹2.23,000 to the Association for Non Traditional Employment for Women (ANEW) for purchase of computers and laptops for training purposes. The association is a registered NGO committed to the cause of upliftment of under privileged women in providing free of cost non-traditional skills and placement.

The Chennai circle also gave ₹5,00,000/- to Swami Vivekananda Rural Development Society for construction of 10 toilets. Swami Vivekananda Rural Development Society is an NGO running over 1,000 single teacher schools. Another objective of the society is to ensure clean environment and eradicate open defecation. Mr B Sankar, GM (NW-II) and Ms Shirley Thomas, GM (NW-I) gave away the cheques to the beneficiary associations.

State-of-the-art school unveiled at Perumbakkam

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 27

A higher secondary school built from scratch at a cost of ₹7 crore was handed over to the Education department at Perumbakkam. The school had been badly affected by floods in 2015. Built on 1.2 acres of land, it has 17 classrooms and 6 laboratories constructed over 30k Sq ft and can accommodate 660 students. The Tata group and their employees, through the Tata Tamil Nadu Floods Response Programme, were the major donors for the project. Inaugurating the School, K.A. Sengottaiyan, Minister for School Education, said Tamil Nadu has always enjoyed the support of the corporate world in creating excellent infrastructure in the form of schools, hospital. He thanked the Rotarians and the Tata group for this gesture and assured the school will be run in the most efficient way possible to mould children who will contribute positively to the society in the future.



School students from Presidency Girl's Higher secondary school, Egmore, participating in a meditation programme before the upcoming public exam.

CMRL's four-day free medical camp ends today

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 27

The four-day free medical camp organised by Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) in association with Apollo Hospitals for metro passengers and public at Metro Stations will end on Friday. The camp, which got underway on February 24, will be held on Friday at

12 metro stations including Central Metro, AG DMS, Saidapet, Alandur, LIC, Thirumangalam, Vadapalani, Washermenpet, Ekkattuthangal, Thousender Light, Annanagar Tower and Shenoy Nagar Metro Stations from 8 am to 1 noon and 4 pm to 7 pm. According to CMRL, as many as 1,088 of people including Metro Passengers, Public and Metro staffers benefited from the camp held on Thursday at Metro Stations including Central Metro, AG DMS, Saidapet, Alandur, LIC, Thirumangalam, Vadapalani, Washermenpet, Ekkattuthangal, Thousand Lights, Annanagar Tower and Shenoy Nagar Metro Stations. The beneficiaries will get check-up on lifestyle diseases including blood pressure and diabetes.

Eliminate barriers in career path, say Indian women scientists

As the country marks the National Science Day on Friday, the leading Indian women scientists have stressed on the need for the right kind of support, equality and gender-fair policies in the field of research. National Science Day is celebrated on February each year commemorating Indian physicist C.V Raman's discovery of the Raman effect - the scattering of photons or light particles by matter. Raman received a Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930. Of the 607 Nobel medals awarded so far in scientific disciplines globally just 20 have gone to women. Noting that a career in science is a demanding and tough option, Rupamanjari Ghosh, Vice-Chancellor, Shiv Nadar University, Greater Noida said there are additional barriers - often unintentional and



Indian physicist C.V. Raman.



Rupamanjari Ghosh



Gagandeep Kang

unconscious ones - which are put up along the career path of women in science. "When such a career demands long hours, there are issues of lack of security and basic amenities that affect women more adversely than men in this society

We need to pay active attention to these preventable problems," Ghosh, a Professor of Physics, said. G Geetha, Professor and Head, Division of Research and Development at Lovely Professional University (LPU) in Punjab, empha-

sised on closing the gender gap and moving towards women-led projects in science. She noted that out of the 560 awardees of Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize for Science and Technology, only 18 recipients have been women. The prize is one of the highest multidisciplinary

science awards in India. According to Geetha, women represent only about a fifth of senior authors in all published research. A study published in the journal PLOS One in 2018, assessed 289,557 research articles from 54 journals, and found that "29.8 per cent of all research authors, and 33.1 per cent of the first, 31.8 per cent of the last, and 18.1 per cent of the last authors were women."

Another study by the UK's Intellectual Property Office (IPO) noted that women inventors account for just under 10 per cent of patent applications globally. For society to evolve with equality, Geetha feels the state and non government bodies should provide women grants for startups, core research, travel, and prototype development. "Universities should preferentially encourage women entrepreneurs and women startups. Research has to be conducted on participation of women as chairpersons or committee member in policy making," Geetha added. Professor Manjula Reddy, Chief Scientist, Center for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad believes that science in India is progressing rapidly. In the last decade, thanks to the focus and initiatives on education and research. "Setting up new educational and research institutions across India has contributed to this cause," she said. However, Reddy, who won the Infosys Prize 2019, thinks India is lagging behind in basic sciences compared to developed countries, and needs to make serious efforts to fill the gap. "This can be achieved with structured funding, more focus on activation and research. "Basic research is a developmental activity; it may not have immediate tangible benefit, but has long-term sustainability and is the bedrock for future technological advances," she explained. Gagandeep Kang,

Professor in the Department of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at the Christian Medical College in Tamil Nadu believes that there is a lot of work to be done to build an understanding of the process and outputs of science - a spirit of inquiry, and a deep trust in science and scientists. "As scientists, some are doing reasonably well in many fields, but there are many areas where both quality people and skills are limited or lacking," said Kang, who was awarded the prestigious Infosys Prize in Life Sciences in 2016. Kang feels India does not have sufficient researchers working across various disciplines. "That means we are unable to grow up to global standards, and there are few areas that I am aware of where an Indian group is among the world leaders," she added.



IN BRIEF

BJP CAA rally will lead to chaos, says DK leader

Thanjavur: The intention of the BJP is to organise an agitation in support of CAA in Tamil Nadu on Friday is suspect as it may lead to clashes in a place where already anti-CAA agitations are going on, said K. Veeramani, DK president here, on Thursday. Speaking to presspersons, he said that in Delhi, where Union Home Minister Amit Shah is sitting, there were clashes. The court has indicted Delhi police and the Central government. Tamil Nadu remains a peaceful state. In this state, where agitations against CAA are going on, the BJP is trying to create agitations in support of CAA. This has the potential to disturb peace in the state and if government permits CAA support agitation, Veeramani said the Central government has brought CAA only to divert attention from the current economic slowdown.

Bank heist: Probe progressing well

Coimbatore: In a statement issued on behalf of the State Bank of India, Kallangudi branch, V Kanagaraj, chief manager (CM&CS), State Bank of India, Regional Business Office, Tirupur, stated that the branch is in the process of contacting customers whose safety lockers were broken and valuables stolen in the recent heist. "The customers are cooperating with the investigating officer and we are yet to ascertain the amount of valuables lost. Three locker cabinets were partially broken open by intruders. An amount of Rs.18.97 lakh cash held in the bank has been stolen", Kanagaraj said. An FIR has been registered at Kama-naickenpalayam police station. Investigation is on.

Two-day handloom expo

Coimbatore: The Indian handloom products expo will begin in Coimbatore on March 2. According to a statement, the two-day expo will be held at the Sree Narayana Temple, which is organised by Aparna Sunku and Weave-India displays Indian handlooms, dupattas, sarees, WeaveIndia, along with kurtas and suit sets in purest cotton and silk with embroideries from Mulmul. The expo will also display costume jewellery from Isharya. The expo will open for visitors from 10 am to 9 pm on March 2 and 3 at Whispering Stones, in Uppilipalayam.

Call to adopt natural farming

Aranyar: The means to protect and preserve nature was discussed at an international conference, "Frontiers in Environmental Health and Mitigation", held on Thursday. Natural farming scientist from Netherlands, Gerrit Impens, who spoke on the subject underlined the need for protecting nature, and said it is the duty of everyone to do so. Impens also pointed out that it was a big challenge to protect natural resources, besides taking care of humans and animals, since chemical fertilizers and other modern day technological advancements introduced in the field of agriculture, have polluting ground water everywhere. He also emphasised the importance of natural farming using bio-fertilizers and avoiding plastics.

Hit by 2-wheeler, elder, dies

Chennai: A 60-year-old man died after being knocked down by a speeding two-wheeler on Aranganathan subway road, Saidapet on Wednesday night. Vijay (60), an employee of a private firm, was walking to his house in VGP Sali in Saidapet on Wednesday night. When he was on Aranganathan subway road, the speeding bike coming in the opposite direction, knocked him down. He sustained grievous injuries and died on the spot, while the biker fled. The jurisdictional Guindy traffic police arrived at the spot and sent his body to Royapettah government hospital for post-mortem. Police later tracked down the motorcyclist identified as D.Santhan (22) with CCTV footage and arrested him. Police are conducting inquiries with him.

Cops question safety measures taken at shooting site

Director Shankar grilled

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 27

The repercussions of the tragedy at the sets of the Tamil film Indian 2 on Feb. 19, continued to reverberate at various venues with the producers slamming actor Kamal Haasan for his questioning the safety standards and the insurance cover for employees and the Chennai police interrogating director S. Shankar on Thursday.



Kamal Haasan



S. Shankar

Shankar was questioned by the City Crime Branch. The film's director reportedly faced questions on the safety measures taken at the shooting site.

The previous day Shankar had tweeted that he was in utmost grief and shock and was unable to sleep since the tragedy occurred.

Lyca tweets response to Kamal Another tweet from Lyca Productions created a storm as it was in response to Kamal's letter to the company questioning the safety standards implemented by the production team and also the insurance cover provided for the employees of the movie.

Lyca Productions director, Neelkanti Narayanaswamy, said, "We were in constant touch with your office all through and arrived at the movie just 15 minutes after you. At that very point, Mr Subaskaran announced financial assistance to the tune of Rs 2 crores to the family members of the deceased, and those who suffered injuries and also undertook to take care of their treatment. All these measures were taken before the receipt of your letter, and it is unfortunate that this did not come to your attention before the 22nd of February."

SAY NO TO PLASTICS



Around thousand students holding cloth bags participate in an anti-plastic awareness campaign organised by Greater Chennai Corporation officials, held at a Govt. Higher Secondary School in Veleycherry, Chennai, on Thursday.

Thanjavur college faculty fear of ouster from service

DC CORRESPONDENT THANJAVUR, FEB. 27

Nearly 113 guest lecturers and 17 non-teaching staff of the Government Arts and Science College for girls at Orathanadu near here expressed apprehension that they may be ousted from service, and hence, staged a demonstration on Thursday at the entrance of the college demanding job protection.



Thanjavur MP and former union minister S S Palani Manickam, hearing the grievances of guest lecturers of the Government Arts and Science College for Women at Orathanadu near Thanjavur on Thursday.

The guest lecturers said that the state government was trying to appoint surplus teaching and non-teaching staff of Annamalai University in their place, thus ousting them from service.

There are 13 undergraduate courses and six post-graduate courses. PhDs can be done in five departments. All guest lecturers have the qualifications specified by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and go to the college.

Palani Manickam said that the issue will be raised in the coming session of the state assembly. The issue will also be raised with the directorate of collegiate education. "We will protect your jobs and now you can withdraw your agitation and go to the college," Palani Manickam said.

They cited the example of MBA department, which has three teaching staff from Annamalai University who were ousted from service.

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Seven get lifer for murder

PERAMBALUR: The Perambalur district track Mahila court awarded life sentence to seven persons including an aged woman on Thursday in connection with a murder over a petty dispute.

The prosecution said that there was an irrigation dispute between Ramesh, Manickam, Ramachandran and Ramasamy of Palayur village near Perambalur and they developed enmity on this.

Manager of popular hotel chain commits suicide

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 27

A 58-year-old man, who was managing three branches of a popular restaurant chain in Kanchipuram, reportedly committed suicide at his residence in China Kanchi on Thursday morning. He has been identified as R. Palaniappan, a resident of Brindhavan Street in Chinnai, Kanchipuram.



Employees protesting outside Saravana Bhavan demanding for their salaries.

Palaniappan was the manager of three branches of Saravana Bhavan hotel in Kanchipuram district. On Thursday morning, he was found dead on his house in Brindhavan Street.

Police sources said that the cause of death is most likely suicide and that further investigations are being undertaken.

There was a clash between them on February 17, 2009 in which Kandasamy son of Ramasamy was brutally murdered.

Arumbur police registered a case and arrested the sons of Ramasamy R. Sundararaj (37) and their mother Nallakanni (40).

Later, Palani Manickam told mediapersons that the college was started as a constituent college of Bharathidasan University during the DMK regime.

The Siva Kanchi police were alerted. On information received, police personnel reached the spot and sent the body to Kanchipuram Government Hospital for post-mortem.

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Two among four arts dts to come up in Tamil Nadu

LAKSHMI L LUND | DC COIMBATORE, FEB. 27

After successfully setting up art districts in four places across the country, 'St-art India Foundation', a non-profit organisation taking up the cause of art in civic body will establish its fifth and sixth art district in Tamil Nadu.



Artists are working in Kannagi Nagar in the state capital.

While Chennai's Kannagi Nagar will be christened as the fifth, the city's Slum Development Board Colony at Ukadam will become the sixth art district in India.

In Coimbatore, we will complete the work by March 20. We are inspired by the various lake rejuvenation activities which are carried out here and hence, we plan to depict them on the walls of the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board housing unit at Ukadam here," Vikas Nagare added.

Another set of volunteers of the Delhi-based organisation will host art workshops and activities to involve the public in the area besides educating them on the importance of maintaining the respective public space.

While four local, national and international artists are at work in the cotton city, as many as 20

artists are working in Kannagi Nagar in the state capital.

Another set of volunteers of the Delhi-based organisation will host art workshops and activities to involve the public in the area besides educating them on the importance of maintaining the respective public space.

'Don't transfer complaints to BCI'

Chennai: The Madras High Court on Thursday restrained the Bar Council of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry (BCTP) from transferring any of the complaints before it to the Bar Council of India (BCI) until further orders of the court.

The Division Bench comprising Justice N Kirubakaran and Justice P Velmurugan, in its order, said, "From the facts mentioned, it is very clear that the petitioner made a complaint against the advocate before the BCTP on 2016."

A petition was filed by the advocate to dismiss the complaint on October 19, 2019 and a counter filed by the petitioner in November 2019 and without disposing of the case it was represented by the BCTP that a note is being prepared to transfer the matter to the file of BCI.

The matter relates to a petition from PL Sunder of Madurai who made a complaint against an advocate D. Balakrishnan, Madurai alleging that on the proceedings on the complaint were kept pending from November 2016 and further with an apprehension that

the BCTP may transfer the case to BCI in New Delhi. The Division Bench comprising Justice N Kirubakaran and Justice P Velmurugan, in its order, said, "From the facts mentioned, it is very clear that the petitioner made a complaint against the advocate before the BCTP on 2016."

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3-day bank strike from March 11

TIRUCHY: G. Kripakaran, general secretary of State Bank's staff union and the representative of the United Forum of Bank Unions consisting of AIBEAA, AIBOC, NOBE, AIBOA, BEFI, INBBF, INBOC, NOBW and NOBO, said they are going to launch a three-day national strike from March 11 and also an indefinite strike from April 1, protesting against the demands.

Addressing a press meet after submitting a memorandum to Congress LS member S. Thirunavukarasaran here on Thursday, Kripakaran said despite the Union Finance Ministry's advice to bank managements and the IBA to expedite and conclude the 11th bipartite wage settlement of or before Nov 2017, he did not take any step until May 2018 and announced a measure two percent increase in bank employees' wages. —DC

Gangsters hack rowdy to death in Kasimedu

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 27

Driven by previous enmity, a 28-year-old rowdy was hacked to death by an eight-member gang at Kasimedu on Wednesday night.

On Wednesday night, a 28-year-old rowdy was hacked to death by an eight-member gang at Kasimedu to deliver water cans, when he was surrounded by an eight-member gang, one of whom constantly stabbed him with a weapon and fled the spot as a crowd gathered," said police. Diwakar was admitted to Stanley GH, where doctors pronounced him dead on arrival.

Driven by previous enmity, a 28-year-old rowdy was hacked to death by an eight-member gang at Kasimedu on Wednesday night.

Driven by previous enmity, a 28-year-old rowdy was hacked to death by an eight-member gang at Kasimedu on Wednesday night.

Gold coins found during temple work

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC TIRUCHY, FEB. 27

Workers engaged in earth work for establishing a garden near Akilandeswari Sannidhi at the ancient Sri. Jevarajapuram temple, Akilandeswari temple, which represents water out of the five natural elements discovered a golden treasure in a copper pot on Wednesday.



The sources further period or antique value could not be determined

immediately and sought the help of the state archaeological department to assess the coins and the period the coins belonged to.

In turn, Srirangam Tashildar R. Sridhar also arrived at the spot.

In the presence of police and revenue officials the coins were counted, weighed and out of 505 coins, one coin weighed about 10 gms and rest of them weighed 3.5 gms each, he added.

He said the particular officer discovered declared as protected area and day and night security arrangements around the place is being made.

Security personnel guarding the room in which the upcoming exam papers are kept at Lady Wellington School in the city on Thursday.



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IN BRIEF



Disinayed passengers in Chennai airport. **88 allowed to board flight to report to work in Saudi From p1**

Declining to accept the reasoning, the passengers began to protest and demanded they be allowed to board the flight. However, they were told that the chance for their deportation upon their arrival at Jeddah was more due to the high alert for the Coronavirus outbreak.

The commotion made the airport police rush to the spot. It took some time for the disinayed passengers to reconcile to ground realities and they finally accepted to return home. To get back home, all the 170 passengers had to call their relatives who had just seen them off at the airport. Later, about 88 passengers (out of 258) were allowed to board the flight, as they had to report for work in Saudi Arabia.

On Thursday, Saudi Arabia suspended visas for visits to Islam's holiest sites for the Umrah pilgrimages triggered by Coronavirus fears that raise questions over the Hajj, which starts in July. The kingdom, which hosts millions of pilgrims every year in the cities of Mecca and Medina, also suspended visas for tourists from countries with reported infections as fears of a pandemic deepened.

The new precautions are based on the recommendations of the competent health authorities to apply the highest precautionary standards and take proactive preventive measures to prevent the emergence of the Coronavirus in the Kingdom and its spread," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on Twitter.

The measure has come in the backdrop of sharp increase in the number of cases reported in the Middle East, where most of the individuals infected had travelled from Iran, which has a reported death toll standing at 19, the highest outside China. This, media reports said, had pushed several countries to suspend flights and most of its neighbours to close their borders. Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Lebanon, Iraq and the UAE have all reported Coronavirus cases in persons who had travelled to Iran recently.

■ Poor demand from Chinese market led to price drop

Slowdown, Coronavirus fears affect pepper prices

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 27

The slowdown in the economy and the novel Coronavirus outbreak appear to have impacted pepper prices, which reported a drop of ₹2 per kg. According to traders, the diminishing demand in the Chinese market for spices such as nutmeg and ginger due to Coronavirus issue and the resultant

price drop is reflected in the pepper market as well. Although the quantity offered has improved, there has been a subdued demand, especially from Tamil Nadu based dealers to procure the commodity from the primary market. Wayanad based dealers, who were active in interstate business last week, are also in a mood to sell, especially those who are based in Kalpetta, Bathery, Pulpally etc.

The average price realised was ₹316 for ungarbled, while MG1 garbled was quoted at ₹336. Fresh pepper garnered ₹306. Besides, the Indian domestic trade is not ready to accept the reports coming from Vietnam on pepper market becoming firmer there, say sources. A few days ago, a majority of farmers did not release their newly plucked crop into the market as they thought the

change in climate would affect the standing crop. Edappal K. Padmanabhan, a pepper dealer in Tamil Nadu at terminal market rates has also resulted in the upward trend in prices. Farmers expect Indian domestic prices would maintain a price level above ₹300, especially with the farmer-friendly approach of the government in fetching better returns for them.

VOICES AGAINST DELHI VIOLENCE



Muslims protest near Chennai collectorate to condemn the violence in Delhi. —DC

SDPI stages anti-CAA protests

RIVALAYAPATHY | DC TIRUCHY, FEB. 28

Members of the Tiruchy district unit of the Social Democratic Party of India led by president Inam R. Sadasu staged a demonstration here on Wednesday condemning the attack on anti-CAA protesters in New Delhi, and also condemned the police for its failure to control the riots.



Meanwhile, the ongoing sit-in against the CAA, NRC and NPR issues by Muslim youth and women in various places across the central districts of Tiruchy, Tiruvavur, Nagapattinam and Pudukkottai have intensified further. The protesters at Tiruvavur held a novel agitation on Wednesday night by blindfolding themselves with black

Congress MP lauds Rajinikanth AIADMK wants to shed BJP-friendly image?

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUCHY, FEB. 27

Senior Congress leader and Tiruchirappalli MP Thiruvavukkarasar on Thursday applauded popular film star Rajinikanth for condemning the BJP government at the Centre for the violent incidents in New Delhi, and said the sector was a strange supporter of the BJP.

Addressing a press conference here, Thiruvavukkarasar pointed out that Rajinikanth's reported remark that political parties are instigating the agitations was totally wrong.

He also appealed to the Union government to increase the allocation for the local area MP development fund as the present annual allocation of ₹5 crore was inadequate.

To a question, the MP said his wish was that the present Congress-DMK alliance should continue as both parties once contested on the national election of 2014. Moreover, the workers of both parties also want the present alliance to continue.

He said, when he was the TNCC president he had constituted a committee under the leadership of former legislator Selvaperumthugal to retrieve and protect the assets of the TNCC across the state, which Congress leader Rahul Gandhi appreciated and asked other PCs across the country to emulate. But, the present DMK government dismantled the committee which is unfortunate. If they wanted to include more persons in that com-

U ROAD TO DIPLOMACY



Mr Martin Van Den Berg, Indian ambassador for Netherlands, met Chief Minister Edappal K. Padmanabhan as a formal gesture in the secretary in Tiruchy. Chennai incharge for Netherlands embassy Gopal Srinivasan is also seen interacting with the Chief Minister. —DC

Congress MP lauds Rajinikanth AIADMK wants to shed BJP-friendly image?

From p1

Also, the Chief Minister, along with Deputy Chief Minister O Paneerselvam, wrote to the Centre urging the exclusion of pesky questions during the enumeration of the next census, which only went to suggest that the BJP's move without actually severing ties just like the AIADMK. However, the two allies that shed the BJP-friendly image that has been bestowed on it in the past three years. The antipathy against the BJP has been growing of late, what with the country's indicative of CAA/NRC/NPR proliferating day after day and the

manner in which the communal riots in Delhi were handled by the BJP government at the Centre, which is actually in charge of law and order in the national capital. Even another ally of the BJP in Tamil Nadu, the PMK, has been trying to raise its voice against the BJP's move without actually severing ties just like the AIADMK. However, the two allies that shed the BJP-friendly image that has been bestowed on it in the past three years. The antipathy against the BJP has been growing of late, what with the country's indicative of CAA/NRC/NPR proliferating day after day and the

despite the voice against CAA turning shriller day by day, the BJP in Tamil Nadu has not done much to counter it. Even as the protest, predominantly by women, at Old Washermanpet continues to rage without a break, the first protest march in support of CAA has been organised at Tiruvannamalai on Friday. Compared to that, a plethora of marches, dharnas and protests have been held at various venues across the State, since the beginning of January. All the protests recorded large number of participation by common people, pointing to the general mood in Tamil Nadu.



Thiruvavukkarasar also condemned the transfer of the Delhi high court Justice Muralidhar who had passed remarks against the BJP government, and also directed the police to file cases against the BJP ministers and leaders to the Punjab and Haryana high court.

He condemned the transfer of the Delhi high court Justice Muralidhar who had passed remarks against the BJP government, and also directed the police to file cases against the BJP ministers and leaders to the Punjab and Haryana high court. He appealed to the state government to include Karur, Tiruchy and Ariyalur districts under the protected agriculture zone, to hold elections to the urban local bodies, and direct the election to the post Minister Narendra Modi, to become the president of the All India Congress Committee again.

AGAINST DELHI VIOLENCE



Advocates form a human chain in front of Madras High Court on Thursday to condemn the violence in New Delhi

ASHC to organise MSME loan mela to help Ayush industry

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 27

The Madurai-based Association of Siddha Hospitals and Clinics (ASHC) has planned to support the Siddha and Ayurveda drug manufacturers and healthcare institutions by organising an MSME loan mela programme in Madurai to help start new enterprises and establish clinics. About one hundred registered Siddha and Ayurveda medical professionals have

already registered for the loan mela, and they expect 150 people more on Feb. 29 when the loan mela would be held. Siddha doctors who run hospitals can avail ₹40 lakhs to renovate and develop their institutions. This assistance scheme would promote the Ayush sector in Tamil Nadu in a big way, it is said. The loan mela is organised in association with Madurai District Tiny & Small Scale Industries Association (MADITSSIA) and supported

by TICC. The mela will be held at the Madurai Hall near the Madurai Corporation office from 9 am to 5 pm on Feb. 28. ASHC association will assist new entrepreneurs and existing industries and the president took the decision after consulting the Chief Justice of India. It, however, does not mention when Justice Muralidhar has to take charge of his office. DC loans would be granted to not be sworn in at Chendighr before the first

DMK legislator KPP Samy passes away

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 27

Former State Fisheries Minister and DMK legislator KPP Samy passed away at his residence here on Thursday. Samy, who won from the Thiruvittiyur Assembly constituency, had been suffering from kidney issues. He breathed his last at about 6:10 am at his residence in K. V. Kuppan, according to the party. The 58-year-old leader is survived by his son Prabhakaran and daughter Udaya. Samy has been a staunch DMK loyalist and even his father

Parasuraman had been in the DMK. DMK president and Minister for Fisheries in the Tamil Nadu Assembly M. K. Stalin, Treasurer Duraimurugan and party's youth wing secretary Udayanidhi Stalin were among the leaders who visited the home of the bereaved family and consoled them. "We are all shocked over the loss of a public interest and everything to do with 'punishing' an honest and courageous judicial officer for simply governing with his constitutional duties. Earlier in the day, Union law Minister Havi Shankar Prasad said Justice Muralidhar was transferred following the recommendation of the Supreme Court collegium, asserting that a 'well-settled process' was followed. CJAR said it was a statement. Muralidhar's transfer was recommended by the Supreme Court collegium on February 12, but he rushed manner in which the notification has been issued by the Union government cannot be ignored. The fact that the notification for Justice Muralidhar's transfer was issued in the evening after he held the Delhi Police and

● The 58-year-old leader is survived by his son Prabhakaran and daughter Udaya. Samy has been a staunch DMK loyalist and even his father Parasuraman had been in the DMK. DMK president and Minister for Fisheries in the Tamil Nadu Assembly M. K. Stalin, Treasurer Duraimurugan and party's youth wing secretary Udayanidhi Stalin were among the leaders who visited the home of the bereaved family and consoled them. "We are all shocked over the loss of a public interest and everything to do with 'punishing' an honest and courageous judicial officer for simply governing with his constitutional duties. Earlier in the day, Union law Minister Havi Shankar Prasad said Justice Muralidhar was transferred following the recommendation of the Supreme Court collegium, asserting that a 'well-settled process' was followed. CJAR said it was a statement. Muralidhar's transfer was recommended by the Supreme Court collegium on February 12, but he rushed manner in which the notification has been issued by the Union government cannot be ignored. The fact that the notification for Justice Muralidhar's transfer was issued in the evening after he held the Delhi Police and

family and the DMK. On behalf of the DMK, I express my deepest condolences," Mr. Stalin said. "That has been the DMK government's Fisheries Minister between 2006 and 2011 when late DMK president M. Karunanidhi was the Chief Minister. He was also in charge of the Fisheries Wing of the

Samy is the second MLA the DMK has lost in less than a year. In July last year, the DMK lost K. Vikramaditya R. Radhamani following an illness. With Samy's demise, the DMK's membership in the Assembly has come down to 89 members. Election should be held within six months following the death of the MLA but in a pre-election year, it is doubtful if the election to Thiruvittiyur constituency would be held soon. In all likelihood, the election could be held along with the Assembly election in 2021, say sources.

NGO condemns midnight transfer of Justice S Muralidhar

An NGO on Thursday condemned the midnight transfer of Justice S Muralidhar from the Delhi High Court to the Punjab and Haryana High Court, claiming that the move was to punish an "honest and courageous" judicial officer. Justice Muralidhar was hearing the Delhi violence case and a notification came late in the evening on Wednesday when a bench headed by him expressed "anguish" over the Delhi Police's failure to register FIRs against alleged hate speeches by three BJP leaders. The notification, which was issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice, stated that the president took the decision after consulting the Chief Justice of India. It, however, does not mention when Justice Muralidhar has to take charge of his office. DC loans would be granted to not be sworn in at Chendighr before the first

week of March. The Campaign for Judicial Accountability and Reforms (CJAR) said the transfer has nothing to do with public interest and everything to do with "punishing" an honest and courageous judicial officer for simply governing with his constitutional duties. Earlier in the day, Union law Minister Havi Shankar Prasad said Justice Muralidhar was transferred following the recommendation of the Supreme Court collegium, asserting that a 'well-settled process' was followed. CJAR said it was a statement. Muralidhar's transfer was recommended by the Supreme Court collegium on February 12, but he rushed manner in which the notification has been issued by the Union government cannot be ignored. The fact that the notification for Justice Muralidhar's transfer was issued in the evening after he held the Delhi Police and



Justice Muralidhar began his law practice in Chennai in September 1984 and in 1987 shifted to the Supreme Court of India and the Delhi High Court. He was active as a lawyer for the Supreme Legal Services Committee and was a member for two terms. Justice Muralidhar was counsel for the National Human Rights Commission and the Election Commission of India, and a part-time member of the Law Commission from December 2002 till May 2006 when he was appointed a judge of the Delhi High Court. His pro bono work includes cases of victims of the Bhopal Gas tragedy and those displaced by the dams on the Narmada River.

● Began law practice in Chennai in 1984 Justice Muralidhar began his law practice in Chennai in September 1984 and in 1987 shifted to the Supreme Court of India and the Delhi High Court. He was active as a lawyer for the Supreme Legal Services Committee and was a member for two terms. Justice Muralidhar was counsel for the National Human Rights Commission and the Election Commission of India, and a part-time member of the Law Commission from December 2002 till May 2006 when he was appointed a judge of the Delhi High Court. His pro bono work includes cases of victims of the Bhopal Gas tragedy and those displaced by the dams on the Narmada River. nature" of this move, it said. "If this was indeed a transfer with the consent of the judge, no element of consideration seems to have been given by the Centre in ordering him to make the move," the NGO said. It claimed that Justice Muralidhar's transfer resembles the "punitive transfers" of high court judges during the Emergency. The move resembles the "petty vindic-

SHORT TAKES

More trouble in store for Azam Khan

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 27

More trouble seems to be in store for Samajwadi Party leader and Lok Sabha member Azam Khan as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is contemplating registering more money-laundering cases against him on the basis of fresh evidence provided by the state police.

"Investigations by the probe agencies have revealed that the SP MP and his associates allegedly tried to destroy some crucial evidence pertaining to certain dubious transactions which are not part of the ED's ongoing 'money probe', sources said.

These transactions include a case involving Khan, will now be investigated by the ED under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), sources said. If required, the ED may register fresh cases against Khan and his associates. ED sleuths are in touch with state police in this regard, they added.

Khan was arrested in connection with the alleged fake birth certificate case involving his son on Wednesday. Khan's wife Tanzeem Fatima and son Abdullah Khan were arrested in the same case on the orders of a district court in Rampur. The ED is preparing to initiate proceedings to attach assets belonging to Khan and his family as part of its ongoing money-laundering probe.

Dalit woman gang-raped at gunpoint

Rajkot, Feb. 27: Three men allegedly kidnapped a 19-year-old Dalit woman and raped her at gunpoint in a car in Gujarat's Rajkot district, police said on Thursday.

No arrest has been made yet. In her complaint to the district police, the woman, native of Kotasanganji taluka, claimed she was raped at gunpoint by one Amit Padaliya and his friends Vipul Shekhda and Shanti Padaliya on Wednesday, they said.

It is alleged Amit Padaliya is a local BJP leader who had earlier served as general secretary of the party's Kotasanganji taluka unit. Reportedly, Shanti Padaliya is an elected Congress member of Kotasanganji taluka panchayat.

Police investigation has revealed that Amit Padaliya's mother is the sarpanch of the village where the victim lives. According to the police, in her complaint, the victim claimed the trio kidnapped her from her house in the afternoon and forced her to sit in their car.

Homework 'forces' class 6 student to end life

DC CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, FEB. 27

A Class 6 girl of a local English medium school in Chhattisgarh village committed suicide by jumping into a lake after finding no one to help her with her studies and homework.

The body of Deepika Maravi, who went missing from her Narotikappa village, Kota block, in Bilaspur district on February 23, was recovered from a lake late Wednesday night, investigating officer said on Thursday.

The purported suicide note left behind by the tribal girl vividly narrated her mis-

NIA: Breakthrough in Pulwama case soon

Agency denies reports of bail to accused in attack case

New Delhi, Feb. 27: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday denied reports that a special court had granted bail to an accused in the Pulwama terror attack case in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed.

In a statement, the agency said the bail was granted to Yousuf Chohan, who had been arrested by the NIA in a terror conspiracy case, and not the February 2016 attack case.

The NIA spokesperson said Chohan was arrested in the case pertaining to a criminal conspiracy hatched by senior commanders of the Jaish-e-Mohammed terror group to carry out terror attacks in different parts of India, including Delhi-NCR.

Raising the issue of the bail to the accused, the Congress said it was an "insult" to the security personnel killed in the Pulwama terror attack and demanded Home Minister Amit Shah's resignation over it.

The NIA official said the agency had not filed charge sheet against Chohan in the Jem conspiracy case as enough evidence could not be gathered against him, resulting in his bail by a special court in Delhi.

It is to clarify that Yousuf Chohan was never arrested in Pulwama attack case. However, he along with six others was arrested in the NIA case 08/2019/NIA/DLI (Jem Conspiracy case) in which two charge sheets were filed against eight accused (including two killed), the agency statement said.

The agency said it had filed the charge sheets in the case against Sajad Ahmad Khan, Tanveer Ahmed Ganje, Bilal Ahmad Mir, Muzaffar Ahmad Bhat, Ishfaq Ahmad Bhat and Mehrajuddin Chohan, besides Mudassar Ahmad Khan and Kari Mufti Yaseer who were killed in an encounter with security forces.

Mudassar Ahmad Khan, the mastermind behind the Jem conspiracy case, who was also the main conspirator in the Pulwama attack case, was killed in an encounter. "During the investigation in the Jem conspiracy case, seven other ground workers (OGWs) were arrested. However, out of which six accused were charge-sheeted in two charge sheets and Yousuf Chohan was not charge-sheeted due to inadequate evidence," the NIA said.

As such Chohan has been granted default bail by special NIA court on February 18, 2020 and he has been sent back to Kot Bhalwal jail, Jammu under Public Safety Act by the order of District Magistrate, Pulwama. "Needless to say NIA follows the policy of fairest possible investigation. In the Pulwama attack case, Case 02/2019/NIA/JMU, in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed in the suicide attack, significant leads have emerged and the case is expected shortly," it said.

Meanwhile, Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala alleged that the Pulwama terror attack accused got bail as the National Investigation Agency (NIA) neither collected evidence nor filed a charge sheet. "After taking political advantage of the

Pulwama attack, forming government, now the Modi government does not care about the sacrifice of the country and the martyrs," he claimed. "Is this not treason," he asked. Senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel also attacked the government saying he was "shocked to know that the Pulwama accused got bail because NIA so busy that it failed to file a charge sheet."

"It's an insult to our martyrs. Clearly government used this tragic attack for political purposes and was never serious about delivering justice," Patel said in a tweet.

At a press conference, Congress spokesperson Pawan Khandra claimed that the nationalism of the BJP stands exposed because the NIA has failed to charge sheet against terrorist Yousuf Chohan.

"Who will take responsibility for this. This was an attack on the country's honour. Accountability is a must," he said. "The BJP wasted no time to garner votes and shamelessly used the martyrdom of our soldiers," he claimed. "We demand the resignation of the Home Minister," Khersa said. PTI

Indians evacuated



An IAF C-17 Globemaster III aircraft carrying Indian nationals and foreigners from China's coronavirus-hit city of Wuhan, arrives at airport in New Delhi on Thursday. India on Thursday brought back 112 people from Wuhan and another group of 124 from Tokyo who were on board a cruise ship off the Japanese coast, taking the total number of evacuees in view of the spread of the deadly outbreak to 842. - PTI

Patkar, Tushar Gandhi, Gopinathan attend rally

Kanhaiya's 'Jan Yatra' ends

Patna, Feb. 27: Social and cultural activists from far and wide converged here on Thursday to lend their support to a massive rally that marked the conclusion of Kanhaiya Kumar's 'Jan Gan' Yatra across Bihar to galvanise public opinion against CAA-NPR.

Medha Patkar of the Narmada Bachao Andolan fame, Mahatma Gandhi's grandson Tushar Gandhi and former IAS officer Kannan Gopinathan, who gave up his career at a young age in protest against abrogation of Article 370, shared the stage with the former JNU students' leader Shabnam Hashmi - founder of socio-cultural organisation ANHAD and sister of slain Marxist playwright and director Safdar Hashmi - also joined the 'Jan Gan' Yatra across Bihar to galvanise public opinion against CAA-NPR. Kanhaiya began his



CPI leader Kanhaiya Kumar meets social activist Medha Patkar in Patna on Thursday. - PTI

during his tour that commenced at Champaran on January 30, Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary on February 25, and the frequent units of CPI and CPI(M) also addressed the rally held at Gandhi Maidan. Kanhaiya began his

speech with a one-minute silence held in the memory of those who lost their lives in Delhi violence. Defending his frequent use of the term 'AAI' (freedom) which supporters of the Sangh Parivar hold to be tantamount to support-

ing secession. Kanhaiya said, "We must talk about the virtues of aadi here as today happens to be the day when legendary revolutionary Chandra-shekhar Day had given up his life fighting the British." - PTI

HC tells Inter Board to shut 68 ChaiNa colleges

VUJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 27

The Telangana High Court on Thursday directed the state Board of Intermediate Education (BIE) to close 68 colleges of Sri Chaitanya and Narayana group that were admitting students without getting an affiliation from BIE.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice An-

reddy Abhishek Reddy ordered BIE to close the colleges after March 28, immediately after the completion of public examinations.

A compliance report is to be submitted to the court by April 3. The bench was dealing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) on BIE's inaction over the violation of rules by these two groups relating to fire safety and sanitation, etc. On February 17, the court had berated BIE offi-

● A compliance report is to be submitted to the court by April 3.

● The HC bench was dealing a PIL on BIE's inaction over the violation of rules by these two groups relating to fire safety and sanitation, etc.

cials and expressed doubt over connivance between the officials and the institutions, when it learnt that no action was taken against the colleges for admitting more than 29,000 students without getting affiliation. The court was furious with BIE for allowing those colleges to conduct classes on just an undertaking that no classes will be conducted in the buildings that were compliant with fire safety norms. With this background, the

Bench ordered BIE to take steps against these colleges and to submit a report by February 25. However, BIE came to the court on Thursday and submitted that it had issued show-cause notices to the colleges for closure, and asked the court for time to initiate steps. An affidavit Bench prepared to issue closure orders. A Sanjeev Kumar, special counsel for the state representing BIE, submitted that these 68 colleges that have no fire

NOC were chosen as examination centers for the intermediate exams from March 10 to 28. He said their closure would disrupt the examination schedule. Convinced, the Bench directed BIE to close the colleges after completion of examinations. The court also directed BIE to inform it of the number of colleges inspected by the fire department and the condition of those colleges. The case was adjourned to April 7 for further hearing.

PRASHANT KISHOR ACCUSED OF PLAGIARISM IN BAAT BIHAR KI

Patna, Feb. 27: A case has been filed against election strategist-turned-politician Prashant Kishor for alleged plagiarism in his 'Baat Bihar Ki' campaign launched here last week, police said on Thursday. According to the complaint lodged at the Patliputra

police station in the city on Wednesday night, Kishor has used content developed by Shashwat Gautam, a data analytics coordinator with Bihar Ki' campaign launched here last week, police said on Thursday. Her parents lodged a missing report in the local police station two days later.

HOUSE | HUNTERS Language proves to be barrier for newcomers

Non-Telugu students find it hard

GEETA VALABOJU | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 27

It's a Babel-like situation, according to some out-of-state house-hunters who cannot speak Telugu.

"In some areas, if you do not know Telugu it is hard to find a place to rent," says Shiva Nesaraj a student from Tamil Nadu. He lives in Amerepet, which over the years emerged as a hub for preparing for competitive exams. "When I came, it was difficult to deal with house

owners as I could neither speak in Telugu nor Hindi. Attempts in English were also not of use as they could not understand," he says.

Nesaraj relies on a friend who speaks both Telugu and Hindi. "I take Bim along whenever I go to talk to the owners. I also take his help if I go somewhere that would require the local language," he says. This is a challenge that non-Telugu speaking students who come to the city and search for a place in

and around Amerepet face. Even minor conversations with home-owners about electricity bills, water bills or even where to hang clothes for drying, become hurdles for them to cross repeatedly.

Vel Murugan, who is from Tamil Nadu and came six months ago, randomly picked the Disukhannagar-Nagole stretch for house-hunting. "I found a first floor that I took on rent, but even now and then the landlord would tell me something in Telugu, a language I do not

know. This situation went on for some time and resulted in confusion between us. One day, I was asked to vacate with the condition that they do not want to rent to someone who cannot speak in Telugu," he says. Animeshwar Reddy, who owns a house in the same area where Murugan lived, says, "Generally, no one has an issue with tenants so long as the rent is paid on time. There was a time when we asked a tenant to move out because of the language barrier."

MP MANTRI DEMANDS RS TICKET FOR PRIYANKA GANDHI

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, FEB. 27

A senior Madhya Pradesh minister considered close to Chief Minister Kamal Nath, on Thursday reiterated his demand for Rajya Sabha nomination for AIOC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra from Madhya Pradesh in the biennial polls in the state, scheduled to be held on March 28. State Public Works Development (PWD) minister Sajjan Singh Verma broached the issue again.

Thursday by exhorting the chief minister to persuade Ms Gandhi to go to the Rajya Sabha from MP in the upcoming biennial elections in the state. He was talking to reporters in Indore in MP. Mr Verma reminded the chief minister of the initiative he had taken into politics by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. "The former PM had helped Mr Nath make his debut in electoral politics in Chhindwara in the 1980 Lok Sabha election.

I-T's swoop on bizmen, officers unsettle C'garh

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, FEB. 27

Raids by income-tax (I-T) sleuths in houses and business establishments of high-profile people, including a Congress leader, liquor merchants and real estate barons and bureaucrats at several places in Chhattisgarh rattled the corridors of power on Thursday. The raids, conducted by 500 I-T officers and 200 Central paramilitary forces from Delhi, began at about 6am and were continuing early on Friday.

Sources said I-T wings of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh were kept out of the operations. The targets, included Raipur mayor Ejaz Dhebar, former chief secretary and chairman of Real Estate Regulation Authority (RERA) Vivek Dhand, kin of senior IAS officer Anil Tuteja, Meenakshi, liquor baron Anlok Singh, promoter of a nursing home, a Farista, chartered accountants Sanjay Sancheti and Kamlesh Jain, promoter of a local TV channel Guru Charan Singh Hora and Chhattisgarh State Beverage Corporation managing director Arun Tripathy. Grand was among half-a-dozen IAS officers of Chhattisgarh, currently facing charges of misappropriation of government funds to the tune of ₹1,000 crore

● THE RAIDS, conducted by 500 I-T officers and 200 Central paramilitary forces from Delhi, began at about 6am and were continuing early on Friday.

● SOURCES SAID I-T wings of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh were kept out of the operations.

allocated for the welfare of physically-handicapped people. Tuteja was an accused in an alleged mega-scam in Chhattisgarh food and civil supply corporation, which surfaced during the previous Raman Singh government. Some CAA firms were raided on suspicion of helping high-profile people in the state to evade tax, IT sources said. Raids were simultaneously conducted in establishments of some Chhattisgarh-based businessmen at Betul, Bhopal, and Hosangabad in Madhya Pradesh. Chhattisgarh Pradesh Congress Committee president and MLA Mohan Prasad, however, tried to downplay the issue saying that the people whose houses were raided were close to the power during the previous government.

IN BRIEF

SA minister's phone 'cloned'

Johannesburg: Cellphones of South Africa's state security minister and her deputy have been cloned by unknown hackers, an official said in a breach described as "concerning". It was discovered this week that the phones belonging to State Security Minister Ayanda Dlodlo and her deputy, Zizi Kodwa were cloned after "several strange messages" they had not composed were sent out from their lines. "I can confirm the incident of cloning regarding the phones of the deputy minister and the minister and some several officials in the office of the minister, Ministry spokesman Mava Scott said Thursday. "It is the first time," it has happened since minister Dlodlo took over the ministry in May last year and "it's concerning", Scott said. He said police have launched an investigation into the breach.

Charity: Bullied boy to donate \$475,000

Sydney: An Australian boy with dwarfism whose distress from bullying became a viral video will donate hundreds-of-thousands of dollars in donations to charity rather than a trip to Disneyland. The clip of 10-year-old Quaden Bayles showed him crying and repeatedly saying he wanted to die after being bullied at school, sparking an outpouring of support from around the world. The video was watched millions of times and prompted US comedian Brad Williams to start a GoFundMe page that eventually raised almost \$475,000. Although the funds were meant to send Bayles and his mum to Disneyland, his aunt told Australia's NITV News that the money would be used for charities instead. "What kid wouldn't want to go to Disneyland, especially if you have lived Quaden's life."

Dubai court jails Indian for theft

Dubai: An Indian man has been sentenced to a year in prison after he was found guilty of stealing 86 expensive watches worth over \$2 million from a store in Dubai's famous Gold Souq. The 26-year-old man, who worked as a cleaner, was sentenced by the Dubai Court of First Instance on Wednesday. He was accused of stealing as many as 86 expensive watches worth over 8.3 million dirhams (\$2.2 million) and the valuables from a watch jewellery shop where he worked, the Khaleef Times reported. Two Pakistani men (cousins), aged 44 and 25, both fugitives, who were received in absentia for possession of the stolen goods, are also facing one year imprisonment each, it said. The court ordered deportation of all the three men after they have served their jail terms.

CALL ME HARRY, SAYS UK PRINCE

Edinburgh, Feb. 27: Prince Harry announced the beginning of Travaylat, a project he was spearheading alongside tourism industry giants that would allow travelers to measure their carbon impact. On Wednesday, he made a launch summit for the partnership in Edinburgh. Though he teased his remarks on climate change, there were a few references to the big events of the last five months. The event's host, Ayesha Hazarika, mentioned that he doesn't necessarily want to be called "Prince Harry" anymore. "He's made it clear that we are all just to call him Harry. So ladies and gentlemen, please give a big, warm, Scottish welcome to Harry," she said as she introduced him. Later, Hazarika told the Daily Mail that she asked him if the new moniker had anything to do with the decision he and Meghan Markle made to step back from the royal family. "When I was introduced to him I was a bit worried about what I should do. I thought the right things, and he was very relaxed, and just [said] 'Harry just call me Harry.' And that's very much the spirit of how he wanted the event today," she said. "He doesn't need a title. He is such a global figure now, he is recognisable all around the world."

Iran heads for Talib deal

This is the second visit of PM Khan to Qatar after taking office in 2018

Islamabad, Feb. 27: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan met Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani in Doha on Thursday, just two days prior to the signing of a landmark peace deal between the US and the Taliban in the Gulf nation's capital to end the brutal war in Afghanistan. Qatar's Energy Minister Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi received Khan at the airport. "Arrival at Doha was Amiri and Meeting with Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani," Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party said in a tweet accompanied by a short video of the meeting. Earlier, the Pakistan Foreign Office said in a statement the focus of Khan's visit will be on "strengthening the bilateral cooperation and exchanging views on regional developments". This is the second visit of Prime Minister Khan to Qatar after taking office in 2018. The Emir of Qatar visited Pakistan in June 2019 and the trip resulted in strengthening the bilateral economic collaboration in diverse areas, the statement said. Khan's visit comes as the US is set to sign a historic peace deal with the Taliban on Saturday providing a week-long reduction in violence across Afghanistan holds.



Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan arrives at Qatar prior to the landmark peace deal sign between the US and the Taliban in the Gulf nation's capital to end the brutal war in Afghanistan.

PAKISTAN FOREIGN OFFICE said in a statement the focus of Khan's visit will be on "strengthening the bilateral cooperation and exchanging views on regional developments".

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi to attend the peace deal signing ceremony in Doha. US President Donald Trump said on Monday in India that the landmark Afghan peace deal had received "tremendous support".

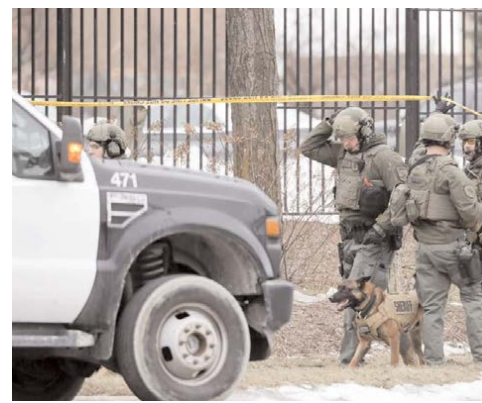
Trump's remarks came after the US and the Afghan Taliban started a seven-day partial truce ahead of the possible peace deal to end more than 18-year-long war. The longstanding war has killed tens of thousands of civilians and Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Some 2.5 million Afghans are registered as refugees abroad and another two million are displaced within their country.

The agreement struck during talks between the US and the Taliban, if maintained, may secure a peace deal that would lead to a withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan, fulfilling a campaign promise of President Donald Trump. The US currently has reportedly less than 14,000 troops in Afghanistan.

Greeks protest migrant plan

Athens, Feb. 27: Demonstrators gathered Thursday for a fourth consecutive day on the eastern Greek islands of Lesbos and Chios to protest against plans to build new migrant detention centers. The protests came amid heightened tensions and occasional violence on islands that are the main entry points for tens of thousands of people seeking better lives in the European Union. Shops and services were shut on Lesbos as workers extended an initial 24-hour strike into a second day as part of the protests. The mayors of Lesbos, Chios and the nearby island of Samos were scheduled to meet with Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in Athens to discuss the situation.

SHOPS AND SERVICES were shut on Lesbos as workers extended an initial 24-hour strike into a second day as part of the protests. The prime minister condemned attacks against police officers, saying those who participated in the violence, "will be located and will answer for their actions." "At the same time however, incidents of excessive violence by the police will be investigated," Mitsotakis said. "Serious accusations have been made. We have a duty to investigate them," Mitsotakis said he had ordered a "significant increase" in the number of patrol boats and patrols given what he called an increased public health risk from the new coronavirus, as new arrivals include people from Iran, where cases of the virus have increased significantly in recent days, and people who had crossed through Afghanistan. Greece's eastern Aegean Sea islands have been the main entry point into the European Union for tens of thousands of people fleeing conflict and poverty in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Under a 2016 deal between the EU and Turkey, new arrivals must stay on the islands pending deportation back to Turkey until their asylum applications are processed.



Police work outside the Molson Coors Brewing Co. campus in Milwaukee, after reports of a shooting.

Hitman kills 5 at Milwaukee brewery

Milwaukee (US), Feb. 27: An employee opened fire at one of the nation's largest breweries in Milwaukee, killing five fellow workers before taking his own life, police said. The assailant who attacked the Molson Coors complex on Wednesday was identified as a 31-year-old Milwaukee man who died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, police said. "There were five individuals who went to work today, just like everybody goes to work, and they thought they were going to go to work, finish their day and return to their families. They didn't and tragically they never will," Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett said. Authorities offered no immediate motive for the

attack and did not release details about the shooter or how the shooting unfolded. None of the victims was identified. Police, who were still contacting relatives, said identities would not be released for at least 24 hours. No one was wounded beyond those who were killed, authorities said. Officers worked for hours to clear the more than 20 buildings in the complex where more than 1,000 people work. They announced at a late evening news conference that the work was done and all employees had been allowed to go home. Police Chief Alfonso Morales said authorities believe the shooter operated alone. President Donald

Trump addressed the shooting before speaking at the White House about his administration's efforts to combat the coronavirus. "Our hearts break for them and their loved ones," the president said. "We send our condolences. We'll be with them, and it's a terrible thing, a terrible thing." The attack occurred at a sprawling complex that includes a mix of corporate offices and brewing facilities. The complex is widely known in the Milwaukee area as "Miller Valley," a reference to the Miller Brewing Co. that is now part of Molson Coors. Molson Coors CEO Gavin Hattersley called the shooter "an active brewer employee."

"Unfortunately, I am devastated to share that we lost five other members of our family in this tragic incident," he said in an email sent to employees. "There are no words to express the deep sadness many of us are feeling right now." He said the office would be closed the rest of the week and the brewery shuttered "for the time being" to give people time to cope. A group of brewery employees gathered at a nearby bar to talk about what had happened. "We are all a family. We work a lot of hours together, so we're all very sad," said Selena Curka, a brewery employee who was about to start her shift when the complex went on lockdown and she was turned away.

EX-MAJID SUES ISRAELI PM'S WIFE FOR ABUSE

Jerusalem, Feb. 27: A former housekeeper at Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's official residence is suing the leader's wife Sara for pain and suffering allegedly caused during her employment there. The housekeeper's attorney said Thursday. Ophree Shimson says his client is demanding \$150,000 in damages for the abuse from Sara Netanyahu. He said the woman, an immigrant from France in her mid-50s and a mother of five who wished to keep her identity secret, worked at the residence for five months until last November, when she was injured in a fall caused by what he described as Sara Netanyahu's tyrannical demands. He said the woman, a staunch supporter of the prime minister, kept a diary detailing the verbal abuse she endured from his wife. "She adores the prime minister, she's a fan, she works at his home as a form of national service," Shimson said.



Vladimir Putin

Vandenko, who is doing a series of interviews with Putin to mark 20 years since he became president. "Yes," said Putin. "The doubt would go where things were dodgy?" asked Vandenko. "Well yes, go, put in appearance," Putin confirmed. Conspiracy theories have long circulated suggesting that Putin had died and been replaced by a lookalike. "These centres on the 67-year-old's apparent lack of signs of ageing, the disappearance of bags under his eyes and his seemingly worsening knowledge of German, which he learned when working as a Soviet agent in East Germany in 2015. Putin disappeared from public view for 10 days, unleashing a frenzy of speculation that he had once again become a father, been depressed in a past, fallen ill and had cosmetic surgery or even died."

WOMEN POWER Trainees who keep their head covered are not allowed to take on tasks

German court upholds headscarf ban

Berlin, Feb. 27: Germany's highest court on Thursday upheld a ban on headscarves for Muslim trainee lawyers in courts, finding that the requirement of maintaining religious neutrality was justified. The Federal Constitutional Court's ruling came after a Frankfurt-born German-Moroccan legal trainee filed a challenge to Hesse state's ruling. In the western state, trainees who keep their headscarves are not allowed to take on tasks in which they may be seen to be acting as representatives of the judiciary of the state. This means for instance that headscarf-wearing

trainees are not allowed to sit on the judges' bench as they observe proceedings like other trainees, but would need to follow the process from the floor. Likewise, they are not allowed to take evidence or lead hearings. Thursday's ruling must stay on the issue in Germany, where around 4.5 million Muslims live and where rules on use of the hijab headwear differ between the 16 federal states. German national law bans all civil servants from covering their faces, including with Muslim niqabs and burkas — except for health and safety reasons, such as fire



Picture for representation.

fighters wearing breathing masks. But there is no nationwide ban on civil servants wearing the hijab and many states weigh the

trade-off between freedom of religion and civil servants' neutrality rules on a case-by-case basis.

Is women's rally a threat, asks court

Lahore, Feb. 27: Assenting to a ban on procession cannot be banned, a Pakistani court on Thursday asked the law enforcement agencies to inform it whether there is any "specific threat" to a women rally scheduled to be held on March 8. The Lahore HC was hearing a petition filed by Judicial Activism Council Chairman Azhar Siddique seeking a ban on the Aurat March, claiming that there are various anti-state parties present who are fanning the rally with the sole purpose of spreading anarchy. The petitioner termed the march "against the very norms of Islam" and that its hidden agenda is to spread "anarchy, vulgarity and hatred" in the society. The rally, which first started in 2018, has now become an annual event held on March 8 coinciding with the International Women's Day.

MAHATHIR SAYS PARLIAMENT TO PICK NEW PM

Kuala Lumpur, Feb. 27: Malaysia's interim leader Mahathir Mohamad on Thursday said Parliament will pick a new prime minister next week following the collapse of the ruling alliance and that snap elections will be called if the vote ends in an impasse. Mahathir, who met the king earlier on Thursday, said the monarch couldn't find a candidate with a clear majority to form a government after consulting all 222 lawmakers over the last two days. "As such, he said the king decided to have the lower house of Parliament vote on a new leader on March 2. "If the lower house fails to find a person with the majority, then we will have to go for a snap election," he told a news conference.

DECCAN Chronicle 28 FEBRUARY 2020

Shah must quit as a matter of principle

The question of ethics for a representative government is to the fore with Opposition parties demanding the resignation of Union home minister Amit Shah for being hopelessly ineffective in dealing with the recent communal riots in Delhi...

The issue is: Should a cabinet minister put in his papers when things go horribly wrong, as in the present case where the police have been accused of complicity with elements associated with the ruling party...

Only an impartial commission of inquiry can help establish the causes of the communal conflagration in northeast Delhi, and its terrible consequences...

The ethics of ministers in a democratic dispensation offering their resignation is rooted in the notion that everything must appear to be above board, and a minister under whose name things have gone badly wrong ought not to remain in a privileged position...

The case of Lal Bahadur Shastri, railway minister in the Nehru government, is part of folklore. He resigned following a railway accident, although he was told that could possibly be no fault of his...

In light of such precedents, the actions of Mr Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are apt to be watched. The Congress, the NCP and the CPI(M) called for the home minister's resignation on Wednesday...

A disturbing message

The midnight gazette notification on Wednesday transferring Justice S. Muralidhar of Delhi high court to the Punjab and High Haryana high court calls for an assessment by the discerning citizen on what prompted the government into this act...

Why should the government hurry with the transfer of Justice Muralidhar when he posed no immediate threat to it by way of judicial pronouncements? One can only land at one conclusion: The government wants to send a message that any attempt to leash it in its tracks will not be tolerated...

Disturbing signals, indeed.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

ADITYA SINHA Editor DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at: Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai 600032. Phone: (044) 2254747, 2254748...

Subhani

Modi, Trump take ties to a more robust level



Vishnu Prakash

The grandeur of Indian culture was on full display as America's President Donald Trump landed in Ahmedabad around midnight on Monday, February 24. For the first time, three of his closest family members — wife Melania, daughter and senior adviser Ivanka, as well as son-in-law Jared Kushner, also a senior adviser — accompanied him on a visit abroad...

Ever a showman, President Trump relished every moment of interacting with the 125,000-strong crowd at the newly-rebuilt Sardar Patel (Motera) Cricket Stadium, said to be the world's biggest, which was as much in thrall of the moment. It mattered little if they did or did not understand English! What mattered was their awareness of history being written. For them it was a celebration, as they full-throatedly cheered for Mr Trump, their very special guest, as well as Narendra Modi, their son of their soil...

India, and America will always be faithful and loyal friends to the Indian people... From this day on, India will always hold a very special place in our hearts," declared the overwhelmed visiting dignitary.

The visuals were beamed live across India, the United States and at least half the world. They will be replayed again and again during President Trump's upcoming year-long electoral campaign, permeating the boardrooms and living rooms, far and wide, that ambitio...

If a peace deal is signed, what comes next? No amount of spin can gloss over the fact that the Americans will, for all practical purposes, be signing instruments of surrender on Feb 29. For the Taliban in the room, many of whom who have staked their legacies on getting the US to exit, a US-Taliban truce will be a resounding victory. Buoyed by having defeated not one but two superpowers, the Taliban will approach the second phase of negotiations from a position of conviction...

Maintaining the peace is going to be doubly difficult without an agreed upon definition of "violence" and a broader Chinese, American,

kind of boost that even good money could not have bought. Such a boost is indeed required. Despite being global and strategic partners, India and the US remain a bit tentative about the best way of engaging with each other. The latter finds India sanction-minded and prickly. India considers the US prescriptive, transactional and unpredictable. America is used to having its way, but the other. The blunt speak of President Trump and his fixation on trade does not make matters easy.

On the eve of his India visit, too, he had reiterated: "We're going to India, and we may make a tremendous deal there... but we're only making deals if they're good deals, because we're putting America first... We're not treated very well by India, but I happen to like Prime Minister Modi a lot."

While in India, he kept harping on trade and business, pointing to his success with China, Japan and other countries. He acknowledged that the bilateral trade gap was shrinking but that India imposed world's highest tariffs (not correct). He spoke about striking a big trade deal later in the year.

Let's take another example, the CAATSA (Countering American Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) was enacted in 2015. It was signed by the US Congress to primarily punish Russia, Iran and North Korea. Washington has been waving it also at India, to try and scuttle its \$5.43 billion deal for 3-400 Triumf missile defence systems with Russia.

Naturally, this is not acceptable to India. Russia has been a time-tested defence partner for India, and the US's India's imported hardware is Russian. Moreover, given India's complex security environ-

ment, it is not prudent to depend on one source for its critical defence needs. Mr Trump's White House, pursuing the policy of "America First", prefers to ignore such considerations.

Coming back to the Tri-Services, Prime Minister Modi stated upfront: "We have decided 'to raise our partnership to the level of a comprehensive global — strategic partnership'."

Bilateral defence and security partnership has been noticeably reinforced in the recent period. In fact, for the first time, India is now undertaking the maximum training exercises with the American military. India is also America's "Major Defence Partner". Tiger TRUMP, the first-ever Tri-Services Amphibious Exercise, between India and the US took place in November 2019. Mr Trump observed that "a strong and capable Indian military supports peace, stability, and a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific."

During the visit, New Delhi agreed to source MH-60 multi-role and AH-64E Apache helicopters worth an additional \$3 billion. Negotiations on procuring more defence platforms are ongoing. India has now ordered over \$20 billion worth of sophisticated US military equipment.

The US, which helped India get NSG waiver in September 2008, is now exploring the feasibility of setting up six nuclear power plants of 1100 MW each. Within the framework of the Indo-US Strategic Energy Partnership, a term agreement has been reached.

Given India's complex security environment, it is not prudent to depend on one source for its critical defence needs. Mr Trump's White House, pursuing the policy of "America First", prefers to ignore such concerns.

between ExxonMobil and Indian Oil Corporation for the former to supply gas to India. The US has since become one of the biggest producers of hydrocarbon products in the world.

The two leaders came down heavily on the "use of terrorist proxies and strongly condemned cross-border terrorism in all its forms". They called on Pakistan "to ensure that no territory under its control is used to launch terrorist attacks, and to expeditiously bring to justice the perpetrators of such attacks, including 26/11 Mumbai and Pathankot." Mr Trump conveyed that the US was "also working productively with Pakistan to confront terrorists who operate on its soil."

President Trump was at his restrained best in India. Though Mr Modi was held in high esteem by the Indian public (56 per cent of Indians view him positively, which exceeds his favourable rating back home). At his presser, he remarked with refreshing candour: "It was a fantastic two days. I'm going to be not at all controversial because I don't want to blow the two days, plus two days of travel, on something — one little answer."

All the same, there were a few "Trumpesque" moments. He unilaterally "decided" that India's population at 1.4 billion was the world's largest. He also had a trappati Bhavan banquet, he cast convention aside by choosing to speak in Hindi. And his closing remarks were: "We will be back!"

"You always count on Americans to do the right thing — after they've tried everything else." British wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill had once noted. While it is impossible to say anything with certainty, having taken a measure of each other, both sides are now setting into a more robust phase of partnership, with greater mutual trust and confidence.

The writer is a foreign affairs analyst and a former Indian ambassador to South Korea and high commissioner to Canada

LETTERS VALUE TRADE DEAL

The speech by Mr Trump soon after his arrival at Ahmedabad was emotional and in which he had covered a lot of topics of mutual interest and had given specific importance to the fight against terror by modules indulging in terrorist activities. There is clear indication that the U.S. values trade relations with India highly. The Centre should take note of the extremely positive attitude of the U.S. on the important subject of trade with India since the US president's observation is indicative of a highly positive stand. It is hoped the government would take note of the significance contained in the observations and act in a positive manner taking advantage of the president's attitude.

T.R. Anandan, Coimbatore

DESERVES AWARD! It is exhilarating to note that a Tamil teacher K.V. Jayasri from Tirunelveli has won the prestigious Sahitya Akademi award 2019 for her translation of Malayalam novel Nilam Poothu Malamra Naal in Tamil. Though Mr. Jayasri is modest about winning the award, her achievement adds pride and loftiness to Tamil literature, and it is a matter of delight to every Tamil reader. One of the key challenges of literary translation is to stay faithful to the original work with the need to create something unique and distinctive that will evoke same feelings and responses as the original. This can be particularly challenging when it happens to be the translation of a novel. Besides, literary translation is of huge importance, as it helps to shape our understanding of the world. Translation requires a particular skill-set, and Ms. Jayasri seems to have mastered that art so well. S. Sivakumar, Chennai

BE HONEST One farmer was telling his land, and devotion to the god. He in disguise asked him why he did this without rain. The farmer told him he was sure it would rain. Indra said there won't be rain. Yet the farmer continued. Indra got wild and told Varuna not to send clouds and Vayu into the king of the gods. Vayu replied he can't help it if frogs croak. Indra called the frog king and told him to see that his tribe didn't croak. Indra felt humiliated but Sage Narada consoled him saying, "If humans are honest, determined with faith and devotion to the god, the king and grant boons. If cruel and dishonest, they will curse them to join the animal kingdom." A. Seshagiri Rao, Chennai



Fahad Humayun

Leap year charm: On Feb. 29, US may exit Afghan, devil in the detail

In just a few days, one of two things may happen. On Feb 29, the US may sign a historic peace deal with the Afghan Taliban, or maintain there has been no significant reduction in violence in which case all bets are off. If the Taliban hold their end of the bargain, the deal will pave the way for intra-Afghan negotiations and provide a justifiable umbrella for the US to withdraw a quarter of its roughly 12,000 troops this summer.

More than 160,000 American troops have lived and died in the perennial shadow of a mismanaged war effort next door, there are still a host of unknowns to contend with. Most Pakistanis are either too pragmatic or too disillusioned by years of operational shortcomings on the Afghan battlefield, to expect a sincere apology for being scapegoated, first for not doing enough to exterminate the Taliban/Haqani leadership, and then, not doing enough

to engage them.

Yet between Sirajuddin Haqqani's public sanitisation by the New York Times, America's attention deficit and Kabul's capacity deficit, it is incontestable that negotiations would not have reached this evolved stage without Pakistan's cooperation and diplomatic efforts to curate some semblance of regional stability.

If a peace deal is signed, what comes next? No amount of spin can gloss over the fact that the Americans will, for all practical purposes, be signing instruments of surrender on Feb 29. For the Taliban in the room, many of whom who have staked their legacies on getting the US to exit, a US-Taliban truce will be a resounding victory. Buoyed by having defeated not one but two superpowers, the Taliban will approach the second phase of negotiations from a position of conviction...

Russian, Iranian and Pakistani convergence on regional goals. Monitoring comms without neutral observers in an environment as complex as Afghanistan will be difficult; the ground is littered with spillover, and the US has many a ally who would rather not see the Taliban mainstreamed. India, which has seen its influence in the Afghan endgame diminish, stands to benefit from continued low-intensity conflict, and wants to delay the political mainstreaming of the Taliban. Controlled chaos in Afghanistan undermines stability in Pakistan and creates the case for stronger Indo-Afghan strategic ties.

In its rush to reach a deal in light of a tough election calendar ahead, Republicans in the US could fudge long-term strategic intent, giving rise to several complications. For instance, it cannot both be a party to the conflict and a guarantor should things unravel. America's insistence that it reserves the right to help defend Afghan forces in the interim

is tricky; should Afghan forces come under fire, the US stands to lose credibility if it does nothing, and its good will with the Taliban should it intervene. And if counterterrorism indeed remains America's top mission in Afghanistan, the US must clarify its objectives without troops or resorting to gunboat diplomacy is unclear. Equally unclear is the question of demobilisation and reintegration of Taliban fighters into the Afghan security forces. Mid-level commanders will expect patage and the entire security apparatus will need to be reconstituted. Forging an ethically informed institution may be necessary if it is to be deployed across the country.

Finally, the US still thinks Islamabad has the capacity to "retain Taliban infrastructure" on its side of the border. Frankly, this is a cognitive schema that for now means the US won't fully afford Pakistan the trust it deserves as a regional partner and well-intentioned stabiliser.

This is unhelpful given the political crisis unfolding in Kabul in the wake of the Taliban takeover. Today, there seems to be little appetite in the US to smooth over Kabul's political cracks. Should intra-Afghan talks get underway, there is no guarantee that President Gani will concede a political exit; that non-Pakhtun factions will accept any dilution of their influence; that the political and social rights of women will indeed be upheld; and that Afghans themselves will agree to any constitutional changes. A Taliban demand that the US, in its rush to exit, has legitimised.

Negotiations among all Afghan factions are supposed to begin within 10 days of the peace being signed. But the real challenge going forward lies in mapping a viable peace that won't be buffeted by exogenous shocks. Keeping that process on track will require the US to continue to invest for the next phase of negotiations.

By arrangement with Dawn

Trump: Has Modi embraced a two-term President?



Saeed Naqvi
Wide Angle

Before leaving for India, Donald Trump had congratulated Bernie Sanders, front-runner for Democratic nomination, for winning the Nevada caucuses. But he mischievously added in parenthesis: "The nominee would work to deny him the nomination." Pulling back a front-runner will create chaos in Democratic ranks. In that case, Narendra Modi may well have held a two-term US President in a tight embrace at Ahmedabad's Motera stadium.

So far, the Democratic race has similarities with the primaries, which led to a Hillary Clinton-Donald Trump contest in 2016. Back then, what was in bad odour with the electorate

was the Washington establishment. The two who reached out for the establishment's jugular from two diametrically opposite ideological positions were Mr Trump and Mr Sanders. But the Democratic National Committee (DNC) had set its heart on Ms Clinton as the party's nominee for President. In doing so, it overlooked a crucial ideological position: none was against the establishment, and Ms Clinton, more than most, was the core of the establishment.

We all know what happened. Since I was witness to the drama on that fateful night of the election results, let me reproduce bits of what I wrote: "A dozen or so friends, who had assembled in Lucknow who had waylaid Mr Sanders when he was ahead in the popularity stakes, by citing a 1962 law.

So far, the Democratic race has similarities with the primaries, which led to a Hillary Clinton-Donald Trump contest in 2016. Back then, what was in bad odour with the electorate was the Washington establishment. The two who reached out for the establishment's jugular from two diametrically opposite ideological positions were Mr Trump and Mr Sanders. But the Democratic National Committee (DNC) had set its heart on Ms Clinton as the party's nominee for President. In doing so, it overlooked a crucial ideological position: none was against the establishment, and Ms Clinton, more than most, was the core of the establishment.

Trump right now. Yet instead of embracing his message, the establishment wing of the party continues to resist him at almost every turn.

That was written in 2017. The situation remains unchanged. In fact, it seems to be a greater urgency in Democratic ranks to stop Mr Trump than to stop Mr Trump winning a second term. This priority has been explicitly spelt out by that superior pundit of American journalism, Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times*. As early as November, 2019, he began to promote Michael Bloomberg, billionaire and former New York mayor, as the Democratic nominee. Mr Friedman demonstrates impeccable manners by making a disclosure: Bloomberg philanthropies has contributed to the museum Mrs Friedman is writing. Mr Friedman is not working for enough people in Democratic politics to be protected himself. Mr Friedman eulogises the billionaire aspirant in a column titled "Why I like Mike".

What can anyone say if the NYT grants him his self-indul-

gence — and not just once. By the time the Democratic race for the nominee heats up in January, Mr Friedman proclaims another Michael Bloomberg boosting column. If senator Joe McCarthy were to reappear by some magical incantation, he would hold Mr Friedman in a tight embrace for the columnist's disdain for an "avowed socialist". The Trump machine "will cast Mr Sanders as Che Guevara — and it won't even be that hard".

Just consider the scale of the exaggeration: America's best-known columnist conjures up images of Che to scare Americans away from Mr Sanders. The senator from Vermont has to be painted in lurid colours because Mr Friedman describes himself as Democratic Socialist, dedicated to a platform which seeks to reverse inequality.

To make Mr Trump a one-term President, Mr Friedman and his ilk have located the stowaway Democratic winner Mike Bloomberg. This most favoured candidate crossed the finish line of the Republican Party just the other day. Frisk and search operations against blacks and hispanics was a

racist nightmare during his stories as New York mayor. Formerly his sexist misbehaviour are legion. He should be forgiven all his misdemeanours. His big bucks matter. He catapulted onto the stage for the eighth Democratic debate in Las Vegas without having gone through the normal process of primaries. He made a donation of \$50 million to the DNC, has already splurged \$40 million on ads. Who knows, a billion may still be in the pipeline. American exceptionalism possibly bestows on aspiring candidates a choice: they can drudge their way to the nomination by mobilising the people or, they can simply buy the nomination, off the shelf. In the end, the likes of Mr Friedman will probably enlighten us which way to the top is more Democratic? Mr Trump's big bucks will thump his pal on the back during the Motera stadium festivities: "You were clever endorsing me at the end of the day. My Democratic ranks will prove you right."

The writer is a senior journalist and commentator based in New Delhi

Bernie's Democrat rivals are weak



Freddy Gray

Bernie beats Trump! Bernie beats Trump! That's what Bernie Sanders fans keep chanting, and they have the polls to prove it. Survey after survey suggests that, of all the leading candidates for the Democratic Party's nomination, Sanders is most likely to defeat Donald Trump in the election in November. Voters like Bernie. Some 46 per cent of voters say they admire him. Only 26 per cent say the same of President Trump.

Still, most political experts think Sanders will be a disaster for the Democratic Party. He may be popular with the base, they say, but he is far too left-wing for the general electorate: 2020 would be a repeat of 1972, when the radical leftie George McGovern lost to Richard Nixon in a landslide. Sanders as nominee would all but guarantee four more years of Trump and put both Houses of Congress back under Republican control.

Senior Democrats are freaking out. At the candidates' debate in South Carolina on Tuesday night, Michael Bloomberg even reshaped the idea that Vladimir Putin is dragging Sanders' success — a sure sign of elite despair.

What Sanders' campaign really shows is how far the expert theories as to why Bernie can't win are not so clever. It's said that he can't appeal to racial minorities, yet he won in Nevada last weekend he won 27 per cent of African-American voters and 53 per cent of Hispanics. It's said that only young voters are drawn to his socialism, yet he won every age group apart from the over-65s. He's meant

Mike Bloomberg still has enough money to brainwash and cajole large chunks of the electorate. He had a slightly better debate this week in South Carolina, but everyone knows he has a serious personality problem.

"The truth is the truth," he said. He'll get away with that. British observers might be reminded of Corbyn and the IRA staff: a minority feels outraged that the majority reported the bad guys can be so brazen; the majority can't remember and doesn't care. Some commentators are also eager to claim that Sanders' movement is, like Corbyn's, racist against Jews, because he has the support of public figures such as Linda Sasour and Iltan Omar, who have flirted with anti-Semitism. But that point is neatly undercut by the fact that Bernie is a proud Jew who once lived on a kibbutz. It would be an irony of almost biblical proportions if the first Jewish President turned out to be a rabid anti-Semite.

Unless the various attack machines can find a way to stop him in the coming days, or Bloomberg somehow rigs a brokered party convention in July, Sanders will be the nominee. Yet beating Donald Trump is another matter. Can Sanders win over those six million voters who supported Barack Obama in 2012 and Trump in 2016? He might seek to their lingering disgruntlement.

Yet it's equally possible that a booming economy has locked them in for Trump.

The economy could turn bad — but even then a Trump Sanders contest might prove that right-wing populism out-muscles left-wing populism. Team Trump will portray Sanders as "the pro-killer" because he wants to ban fracking and abandon the current healthcare system, both of which would put an enormous number of people out of work. That point could be far more devastating than any grainy footage of young Bernie saying the gulags weren't so bad.

Sanders could choose a black running mate to boost Democratic turnout among African-Americans, something Hillary Clinton failed to do. But he needs to mobilise huge numbers of black voters to win in November — and Trump has had some success counting that Democratic advantage with his appeals to African-Americans.

Bernie may indeed be the best-placed Democratic candidate to beat Trump. That doesn't mean he will.

By arrangement with the Spectator

World Bank study points to where most foreign aid for the poorest goes



Rafia Zakaria

It has been a tumultuous month at the World Bank. The bank's armies of analysts and economists routinely produce research on topics ranging from best practices to a variety of development issues to how to promote gender equality in emerging economies. Indeed, the vast majority of papers and research it produces apply to certain niches of analysis that are launched without much ado, let alone controversy.

This was not the case with a recent working paper. Entitled *Elite Capture of Foreign Aid: Evidence from Offshore Bank Accounts in India*, the paper was authored by economists Jorgen Juul Andersen, Niels Johansen and Bob Rijkers, with the support of Panama Papers' own economists, including its (now former) chief economist Penny Goldberg. According to reports, the paper had also gone through numerous reviews that helped improve and organise its findings.

The findings were damning. Research suggesting that its own aid disbursements can lead to as much as a 75 per cent increase in offshore bank accounts. Indeed, if the bank wants to take its own work and findings seriously, it must change the course of its work. When it publishes such research, in sum, it amounts to an admission that their most important work is a complete waste.

What the World Bank is going to do may determine the course of aid in this century. There are already compelling reasons how the structure and means of aid disbursements do not lead to development successes or lift people out of poverty. This new paper adds even more fuel to the fire, suggesting that the entire architecture of aid needs to be reconsidered.

Economists do not talk often about morality. In this case, however, the data also reveals that economic elites in developing countries believe stealing to be an entirely acceptable proposition, fodder to fuel the expensive tastes of autocrats' wives and other highly positioned people. If the money is being stolen with such regularity by so many and over such a long period, it follows that those who govern the world's poorest make no bones about taking what is meant for others. This last bit is not the World Bank's problem, but it is something to think about.

Morality aside, the paper and the resignation of the chief economist — along with allegations made in the media, all mean that some significant changes are around the corner. When it comes to men — we know so many who have stolen with impunity — may soon have far fewer opportunities to steal. The biggest problem is that the raison d'être of the World Bank's existence is to help the world's poorest populations, the very people from whom aid was being stolen and dumped into this or that offshore

account. If the paper is taken at its word, it means that aid disbursements do little to nothing for the poor, and often go directly into the pockets of corrupt economic elites.

The conclusions this one paper has produced in one of the world's largest development organisations is speculated to have led to Penny Goldberg's resignation, after holding the position of chief economist at the bank for only a brief 15 months. The *Economist* accused the World Bank's bosses of suppressing the paper's publication. It is indeed true that the paper's release seemed to have been delayed; the paper was shared by one of its authors on his own website, before finally being uploaded on the World Bank's website. When it comes to this, the controversy does not detract from the damning findings made by the paper. Though not included in the paper, Pakistanis, long dependent on aid, quote well "where the poor are, the money is."

At the same time, it is quite another thing altogether when the World Bank itself publishes research suggesting that its own aid disbursements can lead to as much as a 75 per cent increase in offshore bank accounts. Indeed, if the bank wants to take its own work and findings seriously, it must change the course of its work. When it publishes such research, in sum, it amounts to an admission that their most important work is a complete waste.

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By arrangement with Dawn

to have a "ceiling" of about 30 per cent of Democratic voters who identified as "moderate-are". By Wednesday night, the best news for Bernie is that his rivals are so weak. Joe Biden's candidacy is a sad spectacle, his mind is gone, yet his zombie campaign drags itself on. Pete Buttigieg is a clear second in the delegate count, yet his pale imitation of Barack Obama's rhetorical style leaves people cold. Amy Klobuchar is doing enough not to be discounted, yet not well enough to count. Elizabeth Warren has faded dramatically, but she kept her candidacy on life support with a good performance in last week's TV debate. The person who lost that debate in Nevada was indisputably Mike Bloomberg. He still has enough money to brainwash and cajole large chunks of the electorate. He had a slightly better debate this week in South Carolina, but everybody knows he has a serious personality problem.

Team Bloomberg's Sanders now loathe each other — possibly more than they despise Trump. After enough money to brainwash offices were vandalised this week, his staff were quick to blame Sanders' inflammatory language. Bloomberg, the one who used to have the support of the gun lobby, it is heresy to be a gun in some Democratic circles, then again, plenty of Democrats love guns.

That's the point about



Bhagat Ravidas: Devotion regardless of caste



Kulbir Kaur

der and ethnicity, as was shown by Ravidas. Bhagat Ravidas, an ardent devotee of the God, was a Bhakti saint who lived in the region of the Guru Granth Sahib. Ravidas, a cobbler by profession, was born in the village of Nankana Sahib, near Varanasi. Belonging to a low-caste family, Bhagat Ravidas was completely devoted to his work and love for God. Instead of renouncing the world in pursuit of truth, he combined work ethics with spiritual practice. He rejected the sectarian approach and denounced idol-worship as well. He conveyed his message of simplicity, love and devotion through his songs. His hymns are recited regularly in the gurdwaras. Bhagat Ravidas had no attachment to worldly things. Once, Ravidas met a brahmin and gave him two coins from his hard earned money to offer to the sacred river Ganges. Bhagat Ravidas said he should give the coins only when Goddess Ganga

stretches her hand from the deep waters. The brahmin, who was on his way to pilgrimage to Haridwar, merely laughed at this suggestion and left. As legend has it, Goddess Ganga stretched out her hand over the coins and the Goddess gave him a beautiful diamond-studded gold bangle for Ravidas. The brahmin, instead of giving the bangle to Ravidas, sold it to the king. The king's wife, highly pleased with the bangle, demanded one more bangle to complete the set. Having failed to procure another bangle of the same beauty, the brahmin approached the saint and admitted his greed. He pleaded and requested Ravidas to save his life. Being a leather worker, Ravidas was immersed in his work and he asked the brahmin to look for the vessel full of water used to dip leather to

make it soft and pick up the bangle. When the brahmin looked inside the vessel, he saw the Ganges flowing there and there were a number of bangles lying there. It was a rare moment when realisation and truth struck him like lightning. The notion of spirituality is not determined by one's caste or creed. Bhagat Ravidas, born into a lower caste, was more enlightened than a high-caste brahmin. The Supreme Being understands the language of selfless love, devotion and good conduct only.

Bhagat Ravidas, a poet-saint, attracted a large number of followers. The Sikh Gurus also wrote: "Ravidas, the leather worker, praised the Lord, and sang the *Kirtan* of His praises each and every instant. Although he was of low social status, he was exalted and elevated, and people of all four castes came and bowed at his feet."

Kulbir Kaur teaches sociology at Shyam Prasad Mukherji College, Delhi University

IN BRIEF

Scales in moths help evade bats

London: Some species of moths can absorb as much as 85 per cent of the sound that hunting bats pitch and reflect off the insects to locate them, according to a study which may lead to advanced, bio-inspired acoustic camouflage technology. The study, published in the journal Royal Society Interface, revealed that moths, which are unable to hear the ultrasonic calls of bats, evolved this defensive strategy to help them survive. According to the researchers, bats produce high frequency sound to search for and find prey, putting them under predation pressure on nocturnal insects. Countering this, they said, many nocturnal insects evolved the ability to hear the ultrasonic calls of bats, which allows them to actively evade approaching bats.

Pak teen's remains in lion enclosure

Lahore: In a horrific incident, a 17-year-old Pakistani boy has been mauled to death by a pride of four lions at an animal park in Lahore. The remains of Bilal, who had been missing for two days, were found on Wednesday in the lions' enclosure of the Lahore Safari, according to a park official. "We recovered the remains in the park on Wednesday after Bilal's father told us that his son had been missing since Monday. He was in the Safari Park to catch grass," said Lahore Safari official Chaudhry Shafiq. "We have sent the remains to a laboratory for a forensic examination and ordered investigation into the incident," he said. It appears Bilal, whose uncle was an employee at the Safari, was mauled to death by a pride of lions, he added.

China ducks to fight Pak locusts

Beijing: China is planning to dispatch a 100,000-strong army of ducks to help Pakistan combat a massive locust infestation, a local newspaper reported Thursday. The legion of lotus-eating birds will be sent from the eastern province of Zhejiang following the earlier dispatch of a team of civil servants to Pakistan to advise on a response to the infestation that is being called a 'locust plague' by the 20-year-old, the Ningbo Evening News said. Their use is both much less expensive and environmentally friendly than the use of pesticides, the paper quoted Zhejiang Provincial Institute of Agricultural Technology researcher Lu Zhi as saying. Ducks are suited to the task than other poultry like chicken as they stay in a group and are easier to manage, Lu said.

111-year-old Briton world's oldest

London: A 111-year-old former engineer in the UK is set to be confirmed as the world's oldest man after the recent death of a Japanese man who was 112. Bob Weighton, who was born on March 29, 1908, is expected to be named as the new record-holder following the death of Chitetsu Watanabe on Sunday. The 112-year-old Watanabe died just days after being awarded a Guinness World Records certificate. Weighton said: "I don't really feel satisfied because it means someone else has died." The Guinness World Records said it was currently investigating the title for the oldest living man following the death of Watanabe.

IAEA Liquid stored after reactors went into meltdown following '11 tsunami

Fukushima pumped water to go to sea

Tokyo, Feb. 27: The world's nuclear watchdog gave its backing on Thursday to Japanese plans to release contaminated water from the damaged Fukushima nuclear plant into the ocean. Japan has around a million tonnes of contaminated water stored in tanks at the site of the Fukushima Daiichi power plant, whose reactors went into meltdown after a huge tsunami in 2011. A government panel last month recommended the water be released into the ocean or vaporised, but no final decision has been taken with all sections deeply unpopular with sections of the Japanese public. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) expert Rafael Grossi told journalists in Tokyo the panel's recommendations appeared suitable. "Of course the decision on when to do and when is a matter for the Japanese government," he said. "Our final analysis is not completed but I can tell you already that we find the (panel) report based on a sound methodology and a systematic approach."

Iran Covid-19 death figure spirals to 26

106 fresh cases as two more officials infected prompting Islamic nation to impose travel restrictions

Tehran, Feb. 27: The Covid-19 epidemic in Iran has cost 26 lives, the Iranian health ministry announced Thursday, with seven new deaths reported over 24 hours as the spread appeared to accelerate. Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour also told a press briefing that 106 more cases of the disease had been confirmed, raising the tally of infections to 245, the highest outside China where Covid-19 originated. The additional cases made up the highest number in a single day since Iran announced its first cases on February 19. Among the latest sufferers of the new Covid-19 is Mojtaba Zolnour, head of parliament's national security and foreign affairs committee, who appeared in a video posted by Fars news agency saying he was in self-quarantine. The cleric is a deputy for the Shiite holy city of Qom in central Iran, where the country's first cases were detected. The announcement by Zolnour comes two days after another top official, deputy health minister Iraj Hariri, head of the government's Covid-19 task force, said he too had contracted the virus. On Wednesday, Iranian authorities announced domestic travel restrictions for people with confirmed or suspected infections of the virus.

TWO NEW UK CASES LINKED TO ITALY, TENERIFE

London, Feb. 27: Two more patients have tested positive for Covid-19 in Britain, health authorities said Thursday, bringing the total number of diagnosed cases in the UK to 15. The two have been transferred to specialist centres after contracting the virus in Italy and on the Spanish island of Tenerife, said Professor Chris Whitty, England's chief medical officer. — AFP

ESTONIA'S FIRST CASE AFTER MAN BACK FROM IRAN

Tallinn, Feb. 27: Estonia reported its first Covid-19 case on Thursday, a day after the man returned to the Baltic nation of just 1.3 million people from his homeland Iran. "The person, a permanent resident of Estonia who is not a citizen, arrived in Estonia on Wednesday evening," Social Affairs Minister Tanel Kiik told public broadcaster ERR. — AFP

WE ARE facing a crisis, an epidemic that is coming. We know that we're only at the beginning...

They also placed curbs on access to major Shiite pilgrimage sites, including the Imam Reza shrine in second city Mashhad and the Fatima Masumeh shrine in Qom. Visitors to the shrines will be allowed to visit on condition they are provided with hand-washing liquids, proper (health) information, masks "Health Minister Saad Namaki told reporters at a news conference. They must "not gather together in groups but just pray and leave", he said. In affected areas, school closures will be extended for three days, and universities for another week starting from Saturday.

Another official hit

A state-owned newspaper in Iran says Masoumeh Ebtekar, a vice president in the Islamic Republic and a spokeswoman for the 1979 hostage-takers, has the new coronavirus. The report came from the English-language IRAN daily newspaper via its Twitter account. Ebtekar was known as "Maryam" during the crisis when 52 American diplomats and citizens were held hostage for 44 days. The report comes as other top officials in Iran's Shiite theocracy have caught the virus. — Agencies



People wear masks to help guard against the Covid-19 in downtown Tehran.

Origin unknown behind US case

Los Angeles, Feb. 27: A new Covid-19 case in California could be the first in the US that has no known connection to travel abroad or another known case, a possible sign the virus is spreading in a US community, health officials said. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported the case Wednesday. California officials said the person is a resident of Solano County, northeast of San Francisco, and is getting medical care in Sacramento County. They said they have begun the process of tracking down people who the patient has been in contact with, a process known as contact tracing. The patient was brought to UC Davis Medical Center from another Northern California hospital on February 19 but it was four days before the CDC heeded a request to test the patient for Covid-19, according to an email sent to employees Wednesday by the hospital's interim CEO, Brad Simmons, and David Lubarsky, CEO of UC Davis Health.

The patient arrived on a ventilator and special protection orders were issued because of an unexplained and suspected viral condition, according to the email, which was sent to employees. The hospital asked the CDC to test but it was delayed until Sunday since the patient did not fit the existing CDC criteria for the virus, the email said. The hospital, which has treated other patients, has been taking infection prevention precautions since the patient arrived. The email said officials believe there was only a small chance that others were exposed to the virus. — AP

THE VIRULENCE of the novel Covid-19 continues to show a declining trend in China which reported 29 new fatalities, the lowest in weeks, taking the death toll to 2,744 while the confirmed cases climbed to 78,497, officials said on Thursday.

Japan PM: Close public schools

Tokyo, Feb. 27: Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Thursday urged schools nationwide to close for several weeks to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus. He said the government considers the health and safety of children above anything else. Abe said: "We request all primary, junior high and high schools across the nation to close temporarily from March 2 next week until their spring break." The government also asked schools usually starts in late March in Japan and lasts several weeks. Local medical officials said the measure would extend to nurseries and daycare facilities however. "Efforts to prevent the

spread of infections among children are being made in various areas. Abe added. Many public elementary schools and junior high schools in northern Hokkaido, where the death of a man in his 80s infected with the virus was confirmed on Thursday, were already closed after a cluster of infections prompted the governor to request public schools close for about a week. The city of Osaka also said it will close its kindergartens, elementary and

junior high schools from Saturday for two weeks. Abe said the government urged organizers of major events to consider cancelling them, and called on businesses to allow employees to work from home or commute off-peak. Authorities have said the coming two to three weeks will be critical in determining whether they can stem the outbreak of the virus, which has infected nearly 200 people in the country. — AFP

PAKISTAN CONFIRMS FIRST 2 INFECTIONS

Karachi/Islamabad, Feb. 27: After two persons returning from Iran tested positive for the deadly Covid-19 in Pakistan's largest city Karachi, all educational institutions in Sindh and Balochistan provinces have been closed. On Wednesday, a young man tested positive for the novel Covid-19 in Karachi the first confirmed case in Pakistan. Shortly after, another case was confirmed and both have returned from Iran. The second case was confirmed in Balochistan province's Dr Zafar Mirza said. Sindh Education Minister Saeed Ghani announced on Twitter that "all Govt and private educational institutions will remain closed on Thursday & Friday (27th & 28th Feb)."

Balochistan government announced to close down all educational institutions till March 15. — PTI

SOUTH KOREA, U.S. POSTPONE MILITARY DRILLS

Seoul, Feb. 27: The Special Advisor on US militaries on Thursday announced that they were postponing their annual joint drills due to concern about a viral outbreak that has infected soldiers in both countries' armed forces, put many troops in quarantine and closed base facilities. "Twenty-two South Korean soldiers and one American service member in South Korea have tested positive for the new Covid-19, which has infected about 1,770 people in the Asian country, the largest outbreak outside mainland China. The allies have previously suspended or scaled back their regular military exercises, but that was part of diplomatic efforts to disarm North Korea. — AP

Trump faces credibility test, plays down threat

Washington, Feb. 27: President Donald Trump faces a critical personal challenge in grappling with the new Covid-19 outbreak: Asking Americans to believe him after he and some of his top advisers have contradicted scientists in playing down the threat. The unaware of the stakes not just for public health but also his credibility, Trump conducted a lengthy press conference Wednesday evening aimed at reassuring everyone that he has the crisis well in hand. Trump surrounded himself with his administration's top health experts. And he encouraged Americans to be prepared for the virus' potential



President Donald Trump with Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar (C) and Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health Anthony Fauci (R) at a news conference at the White House. — AP

spread. But he continued to minimise the risk, saying the outbreak may get a little bigger; it may not get bigger, he said. And he continued to distance himself

from the stated opinion of public health officials that it's inevitable the virus will spread within the United States. As businesses, schools and people in general think about preparing, the X-factor may be an unpredictable president who has clashed repeatedly with scientists in his 3 1/2 years in office. Trump tends to see any crisis through the lens of his own reelection chances.

Pence to head response "I don't think it's inevitable," Trump said at the White House. Vice President Mike Pence would lead the administration's response to the outbreak. — AP

Existing antiviral drugs key to cure

London, Feb. 27: Already approved broad-spectrum antiviral drugs may offer a first-line treatment for the novel Covid-19 which has so far killed over 2,700 people and infected around 80,000, according to a study published in the International Journal of Infectious Diseases. Researchers from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) noted that there is no vaccine or cure for the virus in sight. This means that doctors can do little more than offer supportive treatment to the very sick, and hope their bodies can survive the infection, they said. "Drug repurposing is a strategy for generating additional value from an existing drug by targeting diseases other than that for which it was originally intended," said Denis Kainov, an associate professor at NTNU. — PTI

50 YEARS AGO IN
DECCAN
Chronicle

Panel to study working of sugar industry

New Delhi: A high-powered committee is being set up by the Union Government to study the working of the sugar industry in the context of demand for its nationalisation. Minister of State for Food and Agriculture, A.P. Shinde said in the Lok Sabha today.

In a written answer to Mr. A.S. Bhadoria, Mr. Shinde said the constitution of the committee and the finalisation of the terms of reference were being processed.

Later during the question-hour, Mr. Shinde said, the Government proposed to export 1.5 lakh tonnes of raw sugar. Replying to Mr. N.P.C. Naidu, the Minister said that further possibility of exporting raw sugar was being explored.

Mr. Naidu asked whether the Government was prepared to negotiate with Singapore and Malaysia to export raw sugar and jaggery at a better price to the producers. He also alleged there was "hostile discrimination" on the part of the Centre which had announced price revision of sugar recently. He said, while the sugar price had been reduced by Rs. 15 in Andhra Pradesh, in the neighbouring Tamil Nadu it had been increased.

Mr. Shinde refuted the allegation and said, the Government's price policy was based on the recommendations of the Tariff Commission which asked to go into the cost structure of sugar production in various States.

ODDLY ENOUGH

Swiss prez to mark 60th birthday with all who have it

Geneva: Swiss President Simonetta Sommaruga is turning 60 on May 14 and is planning a party with all those who share her birthday. There were 94,372 babies in Switzerland in 1960 — the year Sommaruga was born — meaning that the average maximum number of invitees would be around 258. Sommaruga is not taking any chances with potential gate-crashers and is asking prospective celebrants to submit a copy of their passport through the presidency website. "I would be delighted to receive your registration for my birthday party," Sommaruga wrote on Twitter on Thursday. — AFP

Remembering Rajendra Prasad, who helped draft India's Constitution



Praveen Davar focus

Dr Rajendra Prasad served as President for 12 years and the day he laid down his office on May 13, 1962, was the day when he was awarded the Bharat Ratna by his successor Dr S. Radhakrishnan. A couple of days earlier a public function was organised at Ramlila Maidan to bid farewell to Dr Prasad. In his address, Dr Radhakrishnan said, 'Just as in ancient times Bharat had ruled the people with the image of Rama in his heart — Dr Prasad served and ruled the people with the image of Gandhiji in his heart.'



Schoolgirls tie a rakhi on India's first President, Dr Rajendra Prasad

In addition, Prasad was an outstanding legal mind that presided over the Constituent Assembly which emerged one constitution, and a scholar who wrote three major books: *India Divided* (a trenchant 1946 critique of the two nation theory), *Autobiography* — composed in Hindi first as *Atmakatha* — and *At the Feet of the Mahatma*.

The above is an excerpt from the foreword by historian Rajmohan Gandhi for *Dr Rajendra Prasad: First President of India* written by B.S.M. Murty. In this brief essay we will examine the role played by Dr Rajendra Prasad as president of the Constituent Assembly and in the making of India's Constitution of which Dr B.R. Ambedkar was undoubtedly, the chief architect.

The Madras (now Chennai) session of Congress in 1927, presided by Dr M.A. Ansari had constituted a Committee for drafting a Constitution for India. With Pandit Motilal Nehru as the chairperson of the committee, the report of the committee came to be known as the Nehru Report. It envisaged a parliamentary system of government, joint electorates and a formula for protection of minorities. But, unfortunately for Hindu-Muslim unity at that time, the report was rejected by M.A. Jinnah on the question of the quantum of reservation for Muslims.

In the Karachi session of the Congress held under the presidency of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, a resolution on economic policy and fundamental rights moved by Jawaharlal Nehru was passed. Some of its features were incorporated in the Constitution of India that was adopted when India became a republic in 1950.

The demand for a Constitution of free India continued to be raised in various sessions of the Congress till 1946 when the Viceroy Lord Wavell finally gave in and declared the formation of a Constituent Assembly. The members of the Assembly were chosen on the basis of elections held in 1946.

The first meeting of the Constituent Assembly took place on December 9, 1946. Dr Rajendra Prasad, who was food minister in the interim government was elected as its President two days later. The primary task of the Constituent Assembly was to frame the Constitution of India for which Dr B.R. Ambedkar was chosen as the chairman of the Drafting Committee. A noted historian Granville Austin identifies seven members who were the most influential in drafting the Constitution. These were: Ambedkar, Nehru, Patel, Rajendra Prasad, K.M. Munshi, Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar and B.N. Rau (non member of the assembly), designated as the chief draftsman. A noted historian Granville Austin identifies seven members who were the most influential in drafting the Constitution. These were: Ambedkar, Nehru, Patel, Rajendra Prasad, K.M. Munshi, Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar and B.N. Rau (non member of the assembly), designated as the chief draftsman. A noted historian Granville Austin identifies seven members who were the most influential in drafting the Constitution. These were: Ambedkar, Nehru, Patel, Rajendra Prasad, K.M. Munshi, Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar and B.N. Rau (non member of the assembly), designated as the chief draftsman.

In his magnum opus *India: After Gandhi*, Ramachandra Guha underlines the importance of Rajendra Prasad: "The third Congress member (after Nehru and Patel) of impor-

Friday, February 28, is the death anniversary of Dr Rajendra Prasad

tance was the president of the assembly Rajendra Prasad. He was nominated to the assembly on the day after the assembly was inaugurated and held it with dignity until the end of its term. His was an unenviable task, for Indians are better speakers than listeners, and Indian politicians especially so. Prasad had to keep the peace between quarrelsome members and (just as difficult) keep to the clock men who sometimes had little sense of what was trifling and what was significant."

On December 13, 1946, Pt Jawaharlal Nehru moved the historic "Objectives Resolution" which broadly outlined the seminal spirit behind the Constitution. Moving the resolution Nehru said: "The first task of this assembly is to free India through a new constitution, to feed the starving people, and to clothe the naked masses, and to give every Indian the fullest opportunity to develop himself according to his capacity. The content features of the resolution were to draw a Constitution wherein: a) shall be guaranteed and secured to all the people of India justice — social, economic and political; equality of status, of opportunity and before the law; freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship; b) adequate safeguards shall be provided for minorities, backward and tribal areas and depressed and other backward classes. c) the constituent assembly of 1948, Prasad had been relieved from Congress presidency along

with all other responsibilities in governance. His sole responsibility henceforth remained to preside over the Constituent Assembly sessions. For his important role as president of the Constituent Assembly, he was widely applauded. On the penultimate day of the closing session of the Constituent Assembly, presenting the draft Constitution for adoption before the house, Ambedkar paid reverential tributes to Prasad in his speech.

"Finally, I must thank you *Mr. Prasad for the way in which you have conducted the proceedings of this assembly. The courtesy and the consideration which you have shown to the members of the assembly can never be forgotten by those who have taken part in the proceedings of this assembly. There were occasions when the amendments of the Drafting Committee were sought to be based on grounds purely technical in their nature. Those were very anxious moments for me. I am, therefore, especially grateful to you for not permitting legalism to defeat the work of the committee.*"

Prasad himself, in his closing presidential address, was quite generous in his praise for all the members of the Drafting Committee "and especially its chairman, Dr Ambedkar... [who] has not only justified his selection but has added lustre to the work which he has done". In that long valetudinary address, Prasad reflected on the "tremendous magnitude" and value of the monumental work of writing the constitution for a country — geographically, culturally and demographically — as vast and diverse as India. He also dwelt on the "salient features of the

Constitution" giving broad hints about the possible ramifications of the "distribution of powers and functions between the Union and the States", the inevitable complications regarding the issue of a "national language" vis-à-vis Hindi and the "status" of the role and powers of the elected president of the Republic. He was candid in his admission about the constitution not being a perfect instrument, but sounding a clear note of warning, he said: "If the people who are elected are capable and men of character and integrity they would be able to make the best even of a defective Constitution. If they are lacking in these, the Constitution cannot help the country. After all, a Constitution, like a machine, is a lifeless thing. It acquires life because of the men who control it and operate it, and India needs today nothing more than a set of honest men who will have the interests of the country before them... Let us launch on this new enterprise of running our Independent Republic with confidence, with truth and non-violence and above all, with heart within the God overhead."

Dr Rajendra Prasad served as President for 12 years and the day he laid down his office on May 13, 1962, was the day when he was awarded the Bharat Ratna by his successor Dr S. Radhakrishnan. A couple of days earlier a public function was organised at Ramlila Maidan to bid formal farewell to Dr Prasad who had held the office of President of India with great dignity and grace. In his address Dr Radhakrishnan said, "Power had not touched Dr Prasad at all. Just as in ancient times Bharat had ruled the people with the image of Rama in his heart — Dr Prasad served and ruled the people with the image of Gandhiji in his heart."

Dr Rajendra Prasad died in the city of his birth, Allahabad, at his residence on Feb 28, 1963. At a public meeting held in Patna on March 6 to condole his demise, Pt Jawaharlal Nehru paid rich tributes to the first President of India who had 45 years long association with the Congress party. He was like his elder brother. Earlier, Pt Nehru had said: "They were fortunate to work under Dr Prasad's guidance during the formative period in India's history." No wonder, he should have maintained a close relationship with Dr Prasad's successor, Pt Jawaharlal Nehru. "He was an asset to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru."

The writer, an ex-Army officer and a former member of the Rajya Sabha Commission for Minorities, is a political analyst based in New Delhi

Trump-Netanyahu duo to blame for West Asia mess



K.C. Tyagi meanwhile

US President Donald Trump's Middle East Plan recognising Palestine as an eighty year old settlements in the occupied West Bank and proposing Jerusalem as an undivided capital of Israel has again heated the West Asia. The so-called peace plan has envisaged a limited Palestinian state and has also deprived Palestinians of their rights they had been fighting for decades. This plan completely sides with Israel and giving Palestinians control over 15 to 20 per cent of what it called "Historic Palestine". Reacting to the plan, thousands of Palestinians in Gaza Strip and occupied West Bank are protesting against this. The Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has termed it "nonsense" while Jordan has rejected this proposal. The recent announcement has once again attracted criticism from around the world. By doing so, Mr Trump has once again intervened in Israel's election campaigns putting an effort to ensure Mr Netanyahu's win.

Mr Trump's administration had been drafting this plan for more than two-and-a-half years but it has been released on a very urgent basis to sustain the Israeli prime ministerial candidate Benjamin Netanyahu

to retain his decade-old regime. As he could not prove his majority in the two recent elections, the US President has now taken both the future Prime Ministers Netanyahu and Benny Gantz into confidence on the peace plan deal.

Mr Trump had shared the details of the proposed peace plan with both of them but did not find it necessary to involve the future Prime Ministers Netanyahu and Benny Gantz in the plan before its release, as they no longer trusted the aggressive and prejudiced policies of the US on the Palestine-Israeli crisis. Reacting to this plan, the Palestinian Authority had even threatened to withdraw from the Oslo accord with Israel if the US announces its peace plan for Middle East. Palestinians are very clear on what the US can do for them. Undoubtedly all the decisions of the Trump administration since he took over the White House have been favouring Israel and ignoring the Palestinian causes. The US administration has recognised Jerusalem as Israel's new capital and relocated its embassy there from Tel Aviv.

On March 25, 2019, just before Israel went to the first of its recent polls, the US had recognised the Golan Heights as part of Israel through a presidential proclamation signed by the President. It became the only nation which recognizes Israeli territoriality over the Golan Heights region. Favouring Israel, the US has discontinued the funds for United



US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

Nations' Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank. A sum of more than hundreds of millions of dollars in aid to the Palestinians. This aside, cutting off the West Bank aid, shutting down the PLO mission in Washington and many such steps have generated dissatis faction among Palestinians. The Trump administration made a potential election gift to Netanyahu on April 6, hours before the polls opened in Israel, when the President officially declared Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps a terror outfit. As these steps taken just before the elections are enough to convey the desired message to Israeli voters that their current Prime Minister and his best relationship with the US President were beneficial for their country, Israel at the same time kept passing laws that directly targeted the religious minority in

the country. It passed the Nation State Bill in July 2018 which states that "the right to exercise national self-determination" in Israel is "unique" to the Jewish people. The bill also establishes Hebrew as Israel's official language and downgrades Arabic, which is widely spoken by the Arab Israeli population, to a second language. This had attracted controversies and criticism from around the world. The settlement bill that became a law now legalises Israeli settlement homes on private Palestine land in West Bank. Around 120 formal settlements have been established on disputed territories up till now.

Both Israel and United States are to face elections this year. Mr Trump is going to face his anti-currency test in November but the people of Israel have already rejected Mr Netanyahu in the last two elec-

tion and now the country will go to polls for the third time in less than one year. None of the major political parties could fetch a majority. Mr Netanyahu's party lost to Benny Gantz's Blue and White in both the elections — held in April and September — last year. An election to form a unity government was also made by Mr Netanyahu but it did not work well. The recent results of both the elections have exposed anti-incumbency against Mr Netanyahu and a rejection of his staunch Judaism and ultra-nationalism. The right-wingers were severely accused of bribery, distrust and corruption during the campaigns. To divert the voter's mind from all such allegations, Mr Netanyahu has shifted the people's focus to national security and also created an environment of threat for Israelis. Speaking hard on the

one-nation theory too did not work for him. So with new strategies the US will definitely take a step ultimately focused on harvesting political gains. It might be a very crucial elections year as the Trump-Netanyahu duo may go to any limits to help each other retain power. Mr Netanyahu can prove helpful for Mr Trump in terms of wooing the Jewish population of the US. Though Mr Trump is unpopular among the American Jewish population, he has been socio-political and religious issues might turn some of them. The Jewish population in the US is estimated to be 7 million. Getting military, financial and political support from it, Israel has remained the favourite of the US. The US used its UNSC veto 42 times out of 83 with respect to resolutions related to Israel. Statistics say that between 1981 and 2011, the US used its veto 24 times of which 15 were to protect Israel alone. Mr Trump fetched 24 per cent of the Jewish vote in the last election. He has fulfilled his campaign pledge by upending the status quo in the Middle East. David Friedman who supports the construction of West Bank settlements has been working aggressively on the US Ambassador to Israel. Many of the President's key advisors including his son-in-law Jared Kushner and Joseph J. Cowie have been framing policies favouring Israeli interests. In the peace process, Trump's administration has also included infrastructure, business, tourism projects and construction of a travel corri-

dor in Israel that would be linking the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with a highway. They have a big economic stake there. The Palestine-Israeli crisis is a critical and sensitive one, and former US Presidents like Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama have maintained a neutral stand on it. Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque, which is most sacred among Israel's Jews, has been under attack. The Palestinian territories occupied since 1967" says that the Israeli settlement are in violation of international law. Mr Trump should have maintained the dignity of the White House while proposing the new plan. He should have addressed the two-nation theory rationally and in keeping with traditional American policies. Now it's all up to the Israel and the US organisations with regard to delivering justice to Palestinians.

The writer is the Janata Dal (United) chief general secretary of a national spokesperson. The views expressed here are personal.

INDIAN TOP 10 BESTSELLERS

NON-FICTION

- 1 BACKSTAGE: THE STORY BEHIND INDIA'S HIGH GROWTH YEARS Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Rupa, ₹595
2 V.P. MENON- THE UNSUNG ARCHITECT OF MODERN INDIA Narayan Basu, Simon & Schuster, ₹799
3 GANDHI'S HINDUISM: THE STRUGGLE AGAINST JINNAH'S ISLAM M.J. Akbar, Bloomsbury, ₹699
4 THE EMPEROR WHO NEVER WAS - DARA SHUKOH IN MUGHAL INDIA Supriya Gandhi, Bellknop Harvard, ₹699
5 LET ME SAY IT NOW Rakesh Maria, Westland, ₹899
6 THE ANARCHY William Dalrymple, Bloomsbury, ₹699
7 REMNANTS OF A SEPARATION Aanchal Malhotra, HarperCollins, ₹599
8 A CHEQUERED BRILLIANCE Jairam Ramesh, Penguin Viking, ₹999
9 INDIA'S FOUNDING MOMENT Madhav Khosla, Harvard, ₹599
10 2019 HOW MODI WON INDIA Rajdeep Sardesai, Harper Collins, ₹699

BACKSTAGE



THE STORY BEHIND INDIA'S HIGH GROWTH YEARS

A LONG PETAL OF THE SEA Isabel Allende, Bloomsbury, ₹550

THE TESTAMENTS (BOOKER PRIZE 2019 WINNER) Margaret Atwood, Chatto & Windus, ₹799

GIRL, WOMAN, OTHER (BOOKER PRIZE 2019 WINNER) Bernardine Evaristo, Hamish Hamilton, ₹799

THE FAR FIELD Madhuri Vijay, 4th Estate, ₹599

AMNESTY Aravind Adiga, Picador India, ₹699

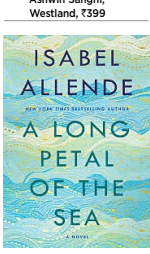
HASSAN'S STATE OF AFFAIRS Mirza Ather Balg, Translated by Haider Shabbaz, Harper Perennial, ₹699

THE CARPET WEAVER Nemat Sadat, Penguin Viking, ₹599

AMERICAN DIRT Jeanine Cummins, Tinder Press, ₹699

RAAVANPUTR MEGHANA-PRINCE OF LANKA Kevin Missal, Simon & Schuster, ₹250

THE VAULT OF VISHNU Ashwin Sanghi, Westland, ₹399



ISABEL ALLENDE A LONG PETAL OF THE SEA Bahriross, New Delhi

Tatas vs Cyrus Mistry: A lawyer's reminiscence



Abhishek Singhvi excerpt

We celebrate the great constitutional cases — the important questions of rights of citizens and how for a permanent replacement. By the end of the day, the dramatic events were all over the press. Even the share markets were stunned.

A 2 pm on 24 October 2016 a board meeting was to take place at Tata Sons, chaired by Cyrus Mistry. Nothing especially unusual was slated to happen at the meeting, and the agenda did not contain any surprises — primarily investments in AirAsia.

Cyrus Mistry immediately asked why this was not on the agenda. He was informed that it was not legally necessary and that the company had sought legal opinions to back that up.

It was all over in an hour. Cyrus Mistry had been removed from one of the most coveted managerial spots in the world. He would continue as a director, which he had been since the year 2006, but he was no longer the head of Tata Sons.

of employees who were outsiders were sacked with immediate effect as well. In the meantime, Ratan Tata was appointed interim chairman, and the company began to look for a permanent replacement. By the end of the day, the dramatic events were all over the press. Even the share markets were stunned.

Cyrus Mistry went immediately to court. The court he chose to approach was the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) deal, or what somebody's shares in a company entitle them to.

But Cyrus Mistry himself did not hold significant shares. Those shares were held by the Shapoorji Pallonji companies. They filed a petition against Tata Sons, and Cyrus Mistry was a respondent party supporting them.

At this point, Ratan Tata called me to take on this fight, and warned me that it would be a big one. I had not met him earlier and was pleased to find him a dignified, balanced, solid and sober person, not flashy or opinionated in the least.

a long-drawn one. It had started with a rush of anger on both sides. In most cases like this where the litigants are proud, the anger remains inflamed for some time, then cooler heads win and a settlement is reached.

This being a very prestigious, major battle, I had a team of about 12 people with me, including four or five senior advocates whom I led. With me were Ravi Kadam from Bombay, Mohan Parasaran of Delhi (former Solicitor General of India), S.N. Mukherjee of Calcutta, Zai Andhyarajana and many others.

At the first stage, the fight was about two things: interim measures and maintainability. From December 2016 to January 2017 every attempt was made by the petitioners to get some kind of interim order. It wasn't even a very important thing they were seeking, but they wanted a victory, any victory.

FROM THE TRENCHES ABHISHEK SINGHVI

FROM THE TRENCHES By ABHISHEK SINGHVI with SATYAJIT SAMIA Juggernaut pp.225; ₹599

being heard. I don't think interim protections are sometimes really ego trips, and have very little practical use. If a property is in danger of being destroyed, an interim protection might save it, and that is a valid case.

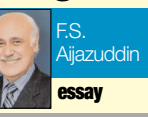
Unfortunately, in high-profile cases, the press impressions and perceptions of the public are more important than the actual thing. So if you sneezed, it would be reported. There was a lot of misreporting and it was alleged by our side that the other side tendered to place stories in the media which were not exactly what transpired in court.

As this book was being readied for press, the NCLAT pronounced its judgement on 18 December 2019. It reversed the order of the NCLT completely, and reinstated Cyrus Mistry to his former position.

FROM THE TRENCHES ABHISHEK SINGHVI

FROM THE TRENCHES By ABHISHEK SINGHVI with SATYAJIT SAMIA Juggernaut pp.225; ₹599

Heights of intellect: LLF offered all things to all readers



F.S. Aijazuddin essay

I was said once that Life magazine was for those who cannot read and Time magazine for those who cannot think. Lifetimes have been invented for those to whom a mobile phone has become their third eye.

The star of the Lahore Literary Festival 2020 over the last weekend, was undoubtedly Orhan Pamuk, the Turkish Nobel laureate.

Orhan Pamuk was the star of the Lahore Literary Fest 2020

Orhan Pamuk was the star of the Lahore Literary Fest 2020

lition from one language to another, spiced by the observations of an Urdu-proficient Spanish author. Poets discussed their poetry. Conservationists spoke about urban restoration.

The ongoing trauma of Kashmir revived in the conscience of Pakistanis. Kabul, Baghdad, Istanbul, Mumbai, New Delhi, and Karachi found a second home in Lahore.

Orhan Pamuk was the star of the Lahore Literary Fest 2020

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Orhan Pamuk was the star of the Lahore Literary Fest 2020

KIDS SHINE AS BROADWAY'S TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD GOES BIG

New York: The cast of To Kill a Mockingbird ditched its sombre Broadway home Wednesday for the cavernous Madison Square Garden, performing the play for 18,000 school kids in an electric one-time-only performance that one called "normal".

It marks the first time a Broadway play has been performed at the venue nicknamed "The World's Largest Open Air Theatre", which is home to the New York Knicks and Rangers.

by that, giving it a standing ovation and a hearty thank you. "I loved the book in middle school when I read it and seeing it live and seeing the characters come to life, it's so much more real," said Alissa DiCristo, 17.

The play's usual Broadway home is the 1,435-seat Shubert Theatre, which is routinely sold out. But thousands of middle and high school students from all five boroughs got to see it for free, courtesy of the Scott Rudin-led production and James L. Dolan, executive chairman and CEO of The Madison Square Garden Company.

The audience this time surrounded the stage and, in the moments before the play started, using the flashlight feature on their phones to make patterns and signals, turning the Garden into a tapestry of lights, like a forest ignited with fireflies.

As the play progressed, the students clapped, booed, cheered and gasped, even erupted into a semi-darkened space barely lit with the colour of molten green, soft grey dust in abundance for me to blow around, to control the air-space marking out my new patterns with trained hands, with my breath and breathing strength, and my imagination.

It is quite odd and strangely warming to imagine the sound waves that a crystalline rock would create when one carried out lines on the face of volcanic granite, to form a newly emerging rock, to feel the heat of an ingratifyingly severe would satisfy my urge, an urge to get out of this sanitised capsule, a capsule where the range of colours are as broad as blue, black, and white — their heat extremely chilling.

Suddenly, one of the screens sparks creating a flurry of beautiful short-lived streaks. Post-mortem reveals a short-circuit that results in heaps and heaps of ash — tangled

Magnetising dead bones

velocity summoning up its strength as the forces build up. I like the sound of air rushing around, it has a sense of assurance about it, never predicting the end and always there even when everyone else disappoints. I like the fact that I have the power to create air, sculpt its shape, direct it, channel it, and even consume it.

The person in the room can sense the electronics lighting up this intricately controlled space. The trans-

electric ash — powdered bone ash. Ash is meant to be very good, sacred, and virile in its content.

Now this is the stuff of dreams — a semi-darkened space barely lit with the colour of molten green, soft grey dust in abundance for me to blow around, to control the air-space marking out my new patterns with trained hands, with my breath and breathing strength, and my imagination.

All I need is my breath and breathing strength, and my imagination. But I lack the former. I assumed that they would be naturally present. But one does not account for decay, least of all when your mind is buzzing. They say imagination can conquer anything, even the body. It isn't true.

One sees now has a hollow feeling running through it as if all the bones have been wrenched out. Only here the arithmetic surface of fission does not wish to match the speckled red in my blood's transference.

The night nurse peeps in to assure me that blue is not all black, that red is not grey, that the colour of my skin does not reflect the colour of my life. I wish I could agree with her consolations. I can present myself amicably. But that may not be for long. That is why I feel a great sense of urgency to create when there is some voltage left. In any case, what else can I do? — nothing really, certainly nothing that is worth any effort.

At least here, I have been granted a mound of ash, a palette of blood, syringes that ooze metal, uncut crystals, electrolysed bones, and clean white sheets. I feel grateful to possess all these. At least I can begin where memory began, start the early sketches and the bare-bone drafts of my metered text. The lyrics, if they are

Thom Gunn The Man with Night Sweats

Thom Gunn The Man with Night Sweats

Thom Gunn The Man with Night Sweats

Thom Gunn The Man with Night Sweats

Thom Gunn The Man with Night Sweats

Thom Gunn The Man with Night Sweats

Thom Gunn The Man with Night Sweats

Thom Gunn The Man with Night Sweats

Thom Gunn The Man with Night Sweats

Paul Celan Selected Poems

Paul Celan Selected Poems

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Sudeep Sen's newest books are: Kafi Azmi: Poems I Nazim: New & Selected Translations (Bloomsbury) and Modern English Poetry by Younger Indians (Sahitya Akademi)

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David Warner
Warner back as Hyderabad captain

New Delhi: Explosive Australian batsman David Warner was on Thursday reinstated as IPL franchise Sunrisers Hyderabad's captain, a position that he had to give up after the ball-tampering scandal in 2018. The 33-year-old Warner, who led the Sunrisers to the trophy in 2016, will take over from New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson for the season starting March 29. "I am thrilled to be given the captaincy for this coming IPL 2020. I'm extremely grateful for the opportunity to lead the side once again," Warner said in a video posted by the Sunrisers Hyderabad. "I'd like to thank Kane (Williamson) for the way you guys led the team throughout the couple of years and I'd be leaning on you guys for support and insight to the game as well," he said. —PTI

Guwahati to host two games of RR

New Delhi: The Barsapara Stadium in Guwahati will host former champions Rajasthan Royals' first two home matches during the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League, the BCCI said on Thursday. "They will now play Delhi Capitals & Kolkata Knight Riders on April 5th & April 9th respectively in Guwahati. Both games will have an 8 PM IST start," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in a release. Rajasthan Royals will play their remaining five home matches at their designated home ground of Saiam Mansingh in Jaipur. The Steve Smith-led Rajasthan Royals will open their campaign with an away match against Chennai Super Kings on April 2. —PTI

Dhoni has to play more games: Kapil

Noida: The legendary Kapil Dev is not excited about Mahendra Singh Dhoni's return to action during the IPL, saying the league is for future stars and suggested that he should play a few matches to be considered for selection in India's T20 World Cup squad. 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 hold since last year's ODI World Cup. "It's not just Dhoni who is playing the IPL, I am a person who look for a young player who we can be proud of in the next 10 years. I think Dhoni has already done so much for the country," Kapil said. "As his fan, yes (would like to see him playing the T20 World Cup) but as a cricketer I think it depends on the management. He hasn't played for one year. He should play more matches to be in the team. There should be different parameters for different players," the 1983 World Cup winning skipper said. —PTI

The counterplan

Rahane's mantra for second Test: Show more intent and negate angles created by Kiwi pacers

Christchurch, Feb. 27: Ajinkya Rahane wants to take on the New Zealand pace battery with more intent in the second Test and his foolproof strategy includes countering the awkward angles which became a nightmare for Indian batsmen during the first Test at the Basin Reserve. Rahane, who top-scored with 46 in the first innings of the opening Test, is hopeful that a turnaround will happen on a green top at the Hagley Oval, which he reckons will be better for batting compared to the one they got in Wellington. "I am not saying (we have to be) more aggressive but having that intent and clear mindset will help us," Rahane told reporters on Thursday. New Zealand pacers Trent Boult, Tim Southee and Kyle Jamieson used the short ball liberally after coming wide of the crease with an angle that was disconcerting for the batsmen. "I think they used that angle really well in Wellington. Bowling wide of the crease or from the centre, they changed angles while bowling the short balls. I think their plan was completely clear. "As a batsman, if you go to think about a particular shot, then you need to back yourself and play that shot. You cannot doubt yourself. We need to forget what happened in Wellington," the Indian vice-captain said. According to Rahane, the two net sessions at the Hagley Oval is being used to practice negating the

awkward angles that Neil Wagner and company can create. "That's what I said: try and learn what mistakes we did as a group, what can we learn. I think we have to practice those angles. We had a practice session and we have one more tomorrow. And you have to practice that and trust your ability in the middle," Rahane said in a reassuring tone. While net sessions are important, it's the instincts in match situations that he counts on. "But to change or adjust those angles there are times you need to be instinctive while you are batting. It can mean standing on off-stump, or standing outside the crease or staying deep inside the crease, like if it is a pitch for cut shot then you can stand deeper in the crease. This is the mental side of the game," Rahane said. "For me as a batsman it is important you show your intent to the bowler, if you stand in one spot then the bowler doesn't need to change anything. These are

small things we have been working on in practice and how to use the crease and the angles. Doesn't matter how much you practice you must trust or have the belief to be able to do it in the middle," he added. "Pujara has drawn a lot of talk for his dour approach in the first Test where his painstaking 11 off 81 balls put enormous pressure on the other batsmen. "Pujara was trying his bit, he was actually looking to score runs. But I think Boult, Southee and all their bowlers did not give away much. —PTI

I am not saying (we have to be) more aggressive but having that intent and clear mindset will help us — AJINKYA RAHANE

We will be ready for Virat: Latham



Tom Latham

Christchurch, Feb. 27: Virat Kohli will be itching to make a comeback in the second Test and the best chance for New Zealand will be to exploit the sideways movement which can spin trouble for the Indian captain, feels opener Tom Latham. Kohli led an indifferent tour of New Zealand so far. He was out for 2 and 19 in the first Test in Wellington. "When Virat comes out to bat we will be ready. He is a quality player and there is a reason why he is up around that No 1 rank for such a period of time," Latham said. "He has done it for long time and done it in all conditions. If the surface is conducive to sideways movement we will try and exploit that," said Latham. The Hagley Oval surface Jasprit Bumrah and

Mohammed Shami might have had a below par game in Wellington but Latham said they remain world class bowlers and the team would be certainly wary of them. "We have played those guys really well in the first Test. But they are World class performers and we will be wary of them. Certainly they would be on top of their game and if we play well it will give us a good chance. We need to be consistent for long periods," he said. Latham is sure that Neil Wagner's comeback will add firepower to the side. "I haven't yet seen him but when he rocks up for the first Test, he will be absolutely firing up to get going and obviously he will be raring to go. He is been a quality performer for a number of years for us," Latham said. The Hagley Oval surface will have bounce and

Latham expects Wagner to be more than a handuff. "It's something that Neil has obviously been so good at for so long and he is second to none in terms of accuracy. "He is a short guy and that makes him harder to play. If the surface is up for that plan he will be looking to go round with that." The first day will be important reckoned Latham. "Generally it's a good surface and surfaces in NZ have been on the greener side at the start and then flatten out. So we need to do well on day one. "Hagley Oval has been a happy hunting ground for the New Zealanders. "We have lost only one Test here. Hagley has been a happy hunting ground for us and hopefully won't be different for us as we try to play to our skills for long periods of time. —PTI



Prithvi Shaw

Shaw skips training after foot injury

Christchurch, Feb. 27: Young opener Prithvi Shaw missed Thursday's training session due to a swelling on his left foot, increasing Indian team management's worries ahead of the second Test against New Zealand beginning on Saturday. According to sources, Shaw will undergo a blood test on Thursday to ascertain the reason of the swelling. In case the medical report is favourable, a call will be taken during Friday's practice session on his availability for the second Test. If Shaw is not comfortable while batting, he will not make it to the playing XI. Shubman Gill had a good net session on Thursday and it is expected that he would be asked to open the innings alongside Mayank Agarwal. If Shaw is unable to make it, During Thursday's nets, head coach Ravi Shastri was seen paying extra attention to Gill's batting. "I think Gill and Shastri walked up to Gill and was seen giving some technical inputs about his batting and what's required to check his uppish drives. "The Indian team management is hopeful that the swelling will not be a serious concern for Shaw. The Mumbai opener didn't even take part in the customary warm-up session where players had a good time playing touch rugby. Shaw had a poor outing in the nets. He was out in Wellington, getting dismissed cheaply in both the innings. Tim Southee got him out with an unplayable delivery in the first innings and he also found it difficult to negotiate when he was on 14 in the second innings. —PTI



India's Ravindra Jadeja during a training session at the Hagley Oval on Thursday. — BCCI

Score big: Jaffer to India batsmen

Navi Mumbai, Feb. 27: Wasim Jaffer, a domestic cricket giant, says unless the Indian batsmen build on their starts and put a big total on the board, bouncing back in the Test series against New Zealand will be extremely difficult. India were humbled by the hosts in the opening Test as the pace trio of Tim Southee, Trent Boult and Kyle Jamieson ran riot. "Virat has a lean patch for a while, so I am expecting him to come back stronger. Pujara needs some runs under his belt. Most importantly they need to convert their starts into three figures, if that doesn't happen and if we don't put score of 350-400 runs then it is difficult," Jaffer said. "In 200-250 (runs) you can't win a Test match unless there is much help from the pitch. When we need to score 400-450 runs," the former India

opener said. Jaffer also felt that the team getting banded out for below 200 in the first Test was not befitting of its number one rank in the longest format of the game. "They kept our run-rate in check and kept our batsmen under pressure for long periods. I felt that in the first innings the conditions were favourable for bowlers, but they worked out an strategy of bouncers and we should have batted better in the second innings. To get out both times under 200 is unlike the number one Test team," he said. Jaffer was confident that India would bounce back as they have done it in the past. "There is no doubt that they India will come back hard in the next Test (at Christchurch), which they should and they have always done that in the past. Whenever they have been put under pressure, they have bounced back very strongly. I'm expecting the same thing," he said. —PTI



In 200-250 (runs) you can't win a Test match unless there is much help from the pitch. When we need to score 400-450 runs. — WASIM JAFFER

India women seal semifinal spot



Taniya Bhatia



Team Australia celebrate their T20 series win over South Africa. — AP

Melbourne, Feb. 27: India entered the semifinals of the women's T20 World Cup after Shafali Verma's 34-ball 46 followed by a superlative performance from the bowlers helped the team notch up a narrow four-run win over New Zealand here on Thursday. Invited to bat, India posted a below-par 138 for eight in the group A match with Shafali top-scoring with a 34-ball 46 and Taniya Bhatia chipping in with a 25-ball 23. They, however, produced a disciplined performance with the ball to restrict New Zealand to 129 for six and register their third consecutive win in the tournament and seal a last-four spot. With this win, India topped Group A, having beaten Australia and Bangladesh in their last two outings. "It is a great feeling when you are performing like that," India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur said after the match. "We did the same mistakes, we got a good start in the first 10 overs and we didn't carry the momentum. We did bowl well in patches and some times, we were not up to the mark and have to focus on those areas," she said. Defending a below-par total, India introduced spin straight away but Deepti

Sharma led 12 runs with opener Rachel Priest (23) hitting for two boundaries. But experienced pacer Shikha Pandey removed Priest in the next over when she had her caught at mid wicket. With Shikha and left-arm spinner Rajeshwari Gayakwad bowling in tandem, New Zealand played with caution to reach 28 for one. Back into the attack, Deepti then cleaned up Bates

with a beauty of a delivery as New Zealand slipped to 30 for two. Poonam Yadav and Radha Yadav then mounted the pressure on the Kiwis and soon the Black Caps were 34 for 3 when the former dismissed skipper Sophie Devine (14). Maddy Green (24) and Katey Martin (25) then tried to resurrect the innings with a 36-ball 43-run stand. However, Gayakwad

BRIEF SCORES

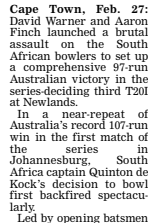
INDIA 133/8 in 20 overs (Shafali Verma 46, Taniya Bhatia 23, Amelia Kerr 2/21, Shikha Pandey 1/23) but NEW ZEALAND 129/6 in 20 overs (Amelia Kerr 34 not out; Shikha Pandey 1/21).

returned to remove Green, who danced down the pitch only to end up with an outside edge as Bhatia did the rest. Radha then dismissed Martin to leave New Zealand at 90 for 5 in 18.3 overs. Hevley Jensen and Kerr cracked a four each but Shikha held her nerves in the end to ensue India's win. Earlier, 16-year-old Shafali provided the fireworks as India scored 49 for one in the powerplay overs. But they lost six wickets for 43 runs to squander the good start. Smriti Mandhana, who returned to the playing XI after missing the last match due to illness, departed early but Shafali and Taniya kept the scoreboard ticking, adding 51 runs for the second wicket. —PTI

We can handle situations better now, says Bhatia

Melbourne, Feb. 27: Women's T20 World Cup batswoman Taniya Bhatia says the Indian team has got better at reading and handling different situations, which was evident during the recent tri-series in Australia. "In the last 12 to 14 months, we have improved a lot as a unit. We're in a really positive position. We've been playing well ever since the tri-series. I think we've got a lot better as a team in working out how to handle and read situations well," Bhatia said. "The results are in our favour; but we need to keep up the momentum. If we do that, we will do well and we can win the final." —PTI

Warner, Finch power Oz to series victory over SA



David Warner



Team Australia celebrate their T20 series win over South Africa. — AP

Cape Town, Feb. 27: David Warner and Aaron Finch launched a brutal assault on the South African bowlers to set up a comprehensive 97-run Australian victory in the series-deciding third T20 at Newlands. In a near-repeat of Australia's record 107-run win in the first match of the series in Johannesburg, South Africa captain Quinton de Kock's decision to bowl first backfired spectacularly. Led by opening batsman Warner and captain Finch, Australia piled up 193 for five — three fewer than they made in Johannesburg. They then bowled out South Africa for 96, just seven more than the host country's record low in Johannesburg. As in Johannesburg, left-arm fast bowler Mitchell Starc bowled De Kock, South Africa's star batsman, in the first over since both were banned. He followed up by dismissing former captain Faf du Plessis in the third over

and was named man-of-the-match after taking three for 23. Finch was named man of the series for his aggressive batting and astute captaincy. "The guys have bought into the roles they have been asked to play," he said. It was the first time Warner and Steve Smith had played at Newlands since both were banned for a year after a ball-tampering scandal at the same ground two years ago. "It's something we pride ourselves on," said Finch. "It's quite disappointing the way we lost," said De Kock. "We have to keep our heads up and keep looking forward." —AFP

Brief Scores: Australia 193/5 in 20 overs (Warner 57, Finch 55, Shami 1/25) bt South Africa 96 in 15.3 overs (van der Dussen 24, Klaassen 22; Agar 3/16, Starc 3/23).

