

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | SATURDAY 29 | FEBRUARY 2020

WEATHER

Max: 24°C
Min: 23°C
Rainfall: Nil

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

ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Masi 17
Tithi: Sashthi
Star: Bharani
Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am
Yamaganam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm

PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.18 am
Zohar: 12.27 pm
Asar: 3.43 pm
Machrib: 6.17 pm
Isha: 7.29 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6:18 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6:26 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 10:03 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 10:47 PM

COUNTER POINT



They are my speech writers!

Market report

GOLD 24 ct (1 gm): ₹1,09,100
22 ct (1 gm): ₹1,04,600
SILVER 1 kg: ₹1,00,000
INDICES Sensex: 38,297.25 pts
Nifty: 10,202.75 pts
EXCHANGE US\$: ₹72.51 Euro: ₹79.54

Strict law to check interruption of House proceedings: Speaker

New Delhi: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Friday said a strict law will be formed to check interruption of proceedings and stop members from entering into the Well of the House. In a meeting with a group of journalists from the Indian Women's Press Corp (IWPC) at the Parliament House, Birla said the draft for such a law is being prepared.

4 dead, 28 hurt in blast at factory in Haryana

Chandigarh: Four labourers were killed and 28 others injured on Friday in a blast at a chemical factory in Haryana's Bahadurgarh town on the outskirts of Delhi, officials said. The blast took place at the factory in MI Industrial area on Friday after which three buildings opposite to it caught fire and two others adjacent to it collapsed. Jhajjar Deputy Commissioner Jitendra Dahiya told PTI.

1 dead, 2 held after shooting near West Virginia University

Morgantown: Two people were arrested in a fatal shooting at a student housing apartment complex near West Virginia University on Friday morning. Multiple agencies responded to the report of shots fired at the College Park complex around 4 am.



NATION | 7
AAP gives nod to prosecute Kanhaiya



SPORT | 14
T20 can't survive without Test cricket: Hadlee

TABLOID
The Lucky charms!



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Sensex crashes 1,448 pts, ₹5.45L cr wealth wiped out

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD | DC MUMBAI, FEB. 28

The coronavirus scare led to sheer mania in global equity markets on Friday as fears that the rapid spread of the deadly virus could nudge the global economy into a recession. The massive global sell-off extended into the Indian market and equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty-50 fell more than 3.5 per cent.

With large markets like the US and Europe reporting virus infection cases, the market fears that the global supply chains could be derailed. With more than 50 countries reporting confirmed cases, US equity benchmark Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 4.42 per cent, or 1191 points on Thursday, the most in history and triggered a 3.4 per cent fall in major Asian markets.

Sensex and Nifty-50 had big gap down opening by more than 2 per cent and the Sensex plunged over 1,000 points in the very first hour of trading and the index recorded an intraday fall of 1,325.88 points. The Sensex finally closed 1,448.37 points, or 3.64 per cent down, at 38,297.25 points. Its second-biggest fall in history, while the Nifty-50 closed 3.71 per cent, or 431.55 points down at 11,201.75.

The mad sell-off wiped out investors' wealth worth ₹5,45,452.52 crore, with the total market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies coming down to ₹1,46,94,571.56 crore from ₹1,52,40,024.08 crore the day before. During the week, the Sensex plunged by 2,872.83 points, or 6.97 per cent, and the Nifty, by 879.10 points, or 7.27 per cent.

On Friday too foreign portfolio investors were

CORONA CARNAGE STOKES ECONOMIC PANDEMIC Big Crash

Sensex crashes 1,448 pts; ₹5.45 lakh cr investor wealth wiped off

▶ In the US, a stock market sell-off erased more than \$2 trillion in wealth within the matter of days and sent the Dow plummeting 1,191 points Thursday, marking the biggest one-day drop in the index's history.

Threats to livelihoods were increasingly eyed as warily as the eyes to lives.

INDIAN ECONOMY	India's economic growth slows to 4.7 per cent in October-December 2019, from 5.6 per cent a year ago; Govt data.	India's economic growth slows to 4.7 per cent in October-December 2019, from 5.6 per cent a year ago; Govt data.	Indian rupee tumbles 60 paise to 72.21 (provisional) against US dollar.
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● The Sensex finally closed 1,448.37 points, or 3.64 per cent down, at 38,297.25 points, its second-biggest fall in history, while the Nifty-50 closed 3.71 per cent, or 431.55 points down at 11,201.75 net sellers of equities worth ₹1,428.74 crore while the domestic institutions did the heavy lifting with net buying worth ₹7,821.16 crore as per the provisional data.

Vinod Nair, head of Research at Geojit Financial Services said, "This fall is in the backdrop of coronavirus infections cropping up in Europe, the Americas and WHO warnings of a global pandemic. This fear combined with the fact that markets had already run up, has also triggered a "risk-off" attitude amongst the foreign investors who have emerged as net sellers this month."

India's Q3 GDP growth dips to 4.7%

New Delhi, Feb. 28: India's Q3 GDP growth slipped to a nearly 7-year low of 4.7 per cent during the December 2019, weighed by a contraction in manufacturing sector output, according to official data released on Friday.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth was recorded at 5.6 per cent in the corresponding quarter of 2018-19. In the previous quarter (July-September) of the ongoing fiscal, the economic growth was revised upwards to 5.6 per cent from 5 per cent. The GDP growth for the December quarter is the lowest since January-March 2015 when it stood at 4.3 per cent.

NIRBHAYA CASE

Death row convict Gurpreet Singh's curative plea in SC

New Delhi, One of the four death row convicts, Pawan Kumar Gupta, filed the 1012 Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case moved to the Supreme Court on Friday seeking commutation of his death penalty to life imprisonment.

He has also sought a stay on the execution of the black warrant issued by the trial court for the hanging. ■ P6

OPPN SPREADING LIES: HM

Shah: CAA aimed at giving citizenship to people

New Delhi, Feb. 28: In a major breakthrough, the NIA arrested on Friday an operative of Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) for his alleged involvement in the Pulwama terror attack last year, officials said.

Officials said that 22-year-old Shakir Bashir Magrey, a furniture shop owner and religious cleric of Hajibal, Kakapora in Pulwama, had provided shelter and other logistical assistance to suicide bomber Adil Ahmad Dar. Magrey was introduced to Dar in mid 2018 by Pakistani terrorist Mohammad Umar Farooq and he became a full-time overground worker (OGW) of the JeM. —PTI

Mamata raises Delhi riots at EZC meet

Bhubaneswar, Feb. 28: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Friday that there was no discussion on the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) or the NRC at the Eastern Zonal Council (EZC) meeting here, but she raised the issue of violence in Delhi. —PTI

HC QUASHES CHARGE MEMOS, TRANSFERS

'Govt docs have no right to go on strike'

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 28

Acting in public interest, the Madras high court on Friday quashed all the 135 charge memos/transfer orders issued to government doctors who allegedly spearheaded an agitation in Tamil Nadu in October 2019 as "tainted and malafiled" exercise of power by the State government, but also made clear that "government doctors do not have a right to go on a strike/boycott."

Allowing a batch of writ petitions challenging the charge memos, transfer orders issued on the above doctors who were said to be in the forefront of the agitation — after they had called off their strike and returned to duty on November 1, 2019, on the assurance of the Chief Minister and State Health Minister that their long-pending demands including pay revision would be redressed - Justice N Anand Venkatesh of the High Court also closed the connected miscellaneous petitions.

About 18,000 doctors participated in the week-long agitation after several pleas to the State Government since January 2019 were of no avail. A careful perusal of all the submissions and documents presented by both sides, Justice Venkatesh said in his 72-page order, "this court has absolutely no hesitation in coming to a conclusion that the transfer orders and the charge memos issued to the petitioners are clearly tainted with malafiled, and it has been issued only to punish the petitioners who were spearheading the agitation."

Observing that the Court had no alternative except to interfere with the charge memos and transfer orders issued by the Director of

Delhi violence: Toll rises to 42, some signs of return to normalcy

New Delhi, Feb. 28: The death toll in Delhi's communal violence rose to 42 on Friday as the situation showed some signs of returning to normalcy and clouds of smoke cleared to reveal the extent of the damage from the worst riots in the city in over three decades.

As people gingerly stepped out for work and opened shops and other establishments in northeast Delhi, anxiety escalated outside the Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) hospital where people waited outside the mortuary to receive the bodies of their loved ones. ■ P4

More than 250 people have been injured in the communal clashes over the amended citizenship law, police said, amid reports that one in every three victims suffered bullet injuries

Police and paramilitary personnel also maintained a strict vigil in view of the Friday prayers at mosques. The malivis of the mosques in riot-hit areas appealed for peace and harmony and put out announcements asking people not to fall prey to rumours and cooperate with

police. GTB hospital has recorded 38 deaths, the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash hospital three, while the Jag Prवेश Chandra hospital reported one death, officials said. Delhi Police spokesperson Mandeep Singh Randhawa, however, maintained that the death toll stood at 38. Randhawa told reporters that a total of 148 FIRs were registered and 630 people were either arrested or detained so far.

"No untoward incident was reported today (Friday)," he said, adding prohibitory orders were relaxed for 10 hours in several areas. ■ P7

A tale of two films: Love, caste, honour and politics

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR | DC CHENNAI, FEB. 28

Tamil cinema and politics have always been conjoined at various points but never have two contemporary celluloid offerings upheld diametrically opposite value systems like *Kanni Maadam* and *Draupathi*, released in a week's time, presenting two different viewpoints on caste violence and honour killing, impelling politicians of different hues to see "reformative ideas" in both. While *Kanni Maadam*, released on February 21, speaks out against the idea

of casteism and 'honour killing', earning accolades from the likes of VCK president Thol. Thirumavalavan and many social activists, *Draupathi* which hit the screens this Friday was praised to the skies by PMK founder Dr S. Ramadoss and BJP's H. Raja. The director of *Kanni Maadam*, Bose Venkat, delicately handles the subject of elopement, decrying Tamil society's casteist fanaticism and religious chauvinism. Thirumavalavan lauded the attempt, saying that the movie has taken the thoughts of Periyar E.V.

the director G. Mohan has captured the existence of 'love drama' in society, and urged parents to watch the film along with their 'grown up' daughters. He also tweeted the copy of an old statement of his issued in October, 2014, demanding a stringent law to prevent fake marriages, marrying and claimed that *Draupathi* was inspired by those views. After watching the film, along with his family members and senior party colleagues, the PMK founder tweeted photographs taken inside the movie hall and

said the film has many messages for society, emphasizing on women's security. He also urged people to watch the film with family members, particularly daughters, through his tweet. Elsewhere in the social media, tweets and posts played *Draupathi* as a fringe movie that harped on the bogey of 'fake marriages' the Ramadoss has been raising for a long time without regard to whether it with that of *Kanni Maadam* that has been running in movie halls without much ado for a week. ■ P4



hand, shines the light on the prevalence of fake marriages and earned encomiums from H. Raja, who said *Draupathi*, on the other

Afghans view US-Taliban deal with well-earned skepticism

Kabul, Feb. 28: Many Afghans view Saturday's expected signing of a US-Taliban peace deal with a heavy dose of well-earned skepticism. They've spent decades living in a country at war — and wonder if they can ever reach a state of peace. The deal is meant to set the stage for a US troop withdrawal and usher in talks among Afghans on both sides of the conflict about their country's future. There's been bitter squabbling among political leaders, concern of a temporary truce being undermined, and the challenge of uniting a fractured country remains daunting. Arash, an Afghan policeman in the capital of Kabul, whose father was killed when a US-led military coalition ousted the Taliban government in 2001. The US was retaliating for the Taliban harboring Osama Bin Laden while he masterminded the Sept. 11 terror attacks. — AP

IN BRIEF

India Post crosses milestone of 2 Cr customers

Chennai: India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) crossed the milestone of 2 crore customers, providing an impetus to Government's efforts in furthering financial inclusion in unbanked and under-banked areas across the country. In August last year, IPPB had reached the landmark of 1 crore customers in its first year of operations. The next 1 crore customers have been brought on board in 5 months. On an average, IPPB has been opening and maintaining a run rate of 33 lakh accounts per quarter. Speaking on the milestone of 2 crore customers, Rav Shankar Prasad, Union Minister for Communications, Electronics & IT and Law & Justice said, "Since its launch, IPPB has enabled more than 1.36 lakh Post Offices across the Dakshin to provide a complete suite of banking services at the doorstep of the customer providing access to any Aadhaar linked bank account, leading to an increase in rural banking infrastructure by almost 2.5 times." With the launch of Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS) Service in September 2019, IPPB has now become the single largest platform in the country for providing digital banking services to the customers of any bank.

Promotion of green buildings vital: VP

Chennai: Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Friday said that promotion of eco-friendly green buildings is the need of the hour and called for tapping digital technology to build smart buildings. Addressing students at the Government College of Architecture and Sculpture at Mamallapuram, he asked them to focus on energy conservation building code launched by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency to construct energy efficient buildings. He said the students of the college were truly fortunate to be in Mamallapuram town itself as an extension of the institution. "There are invaluable lessons hidden in every carving, every edifice, every sculpture. You need to only focus, internalise and assimilate," he said. The role of architects and planners in the 21st century was not limited to merely designing and giving shape to human settlements and buildings, but being innovative and creative in a fast-changing world, where digital technologies play a pivotal role in shaping every aspect of life. The grand temples of Tamil Nadu like the Meenakshi Amman Temple in Madurai, Brihadisvara Temple in Thanjavur and Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam are an eloquent testimony to the talent and skill of architects and sculptors, he said. —PTI

Warning plan hinges on geo-stability

National seminar on hill area disaster mitigation opens in Nilgiris

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, FEB.28

Nilgiris, which is synonymous with bountiful nature, wildlife, tea, vegetables and tourism, is prone to landslides, especially during rainy seasons as it makes the hills here a high-risk zone. In the wake of disastrous landslides in 1978, 1980, 1983, 1998, 2001, 2006, 2009, 2015, 2016 and 2019 in Nilgiris, the Tamil Nadu chapter of Soil Conservation Society of India (SCSI) and Indian Institute of Soil and Water Conservation, Regional Centre (IISSW-RC) here have organised a two-day national seminar, which got underway here on Friday, on landslide mitigation and slope management and uncontrolled excavations which result in high susceptibility of surface soil to instability, he said.



Destruction caused by Ooty landslide at Valley View point along Ooty NH in 2009. —DC

Unplanned developmental activities make a hillside unstable and thus trigger landslides during heavy rains. On the other hand, managing the slopes in landslide prone areas is a complex affair that requires systematic and advanced technologies. The national seminar was organized to create a platform to deliberate on various issues and technological options and to identify the researchable gap in addition to make requisite policy interventions for mitigating landslides. Focus of this seminar is on land slide assessment and impacts, landslide mitigation, slope mechanisms, geo-technical engineering, soil and crop management in slopes and plateau regions and policy issues on landslide mitigation and management to develop a pragmatic road map for sustainable ecological development in hill regions, Dr. Manivannan noted.

Mr. Amitava Kundu, Deputy Director General of Geological Survey of India (GSI), gave a presentation on the landslide susceptible mapping done by GSI across the country and the need to study the geo-dynamics and geo-stability of the slopes for better understanding to develop an area or region specific early warning system to evacuate people during landslides.

Conserving the ecology of Nilgiris is very crucial, which is also a challenging task, she noted. Steps should be taken to prevent slope destabilisation as weak slopes would lead to landslides and other related disasters. While geo-technological

measures and other technological aids are being used to stabilise the slopes, efforts are also being taken for effective watershed management in Nilgiris. It is high time the local people and other stakeholders understand that

upsetting the hill ecology will have adverse effects in future. So there is need for whole-hearted co-operation for nature conservation and other management efforts to effectively tackle the issues related to landslide hazards, she added.

JR: Tackle hill area landslips collectively

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, FEB. 28

Dr. J. Radhakrishnan, Commissioner, Revenue Administration, Disaster Management and Mitigation, Government of Tamil Nadu, who inaugurated a seminar on landslide management here, stressed on a community approach and an eco-system-based disaster risk reduction initiative for prevention of landslides.



Dr. J. Radhakrishnan.

He said that it has been found that 15 percent of the area in the country is prone to landslides. In Tamil Nadu, Nilgiris is highly susceptible to landslides, especially during the south-west and north-east monsoon periods. While the government has constituted mitigation funds in landslide prone districts, pilot projects should be done in at least five sensitive spots to tackle landslides, such as planting of saplings to prevent soil erosion and laying proper drainage channels and avoiding vertical cuts in slope for constructions to study the impact to build on proper strategies.

"A detail study is needed on the land use pattern, conversion of farmlands for construction hubs etc. are needed in vulnerable areas to thwart landslides or minimize its effect."

A detail study is needed on the land use pattern, conversion of farmlands for construction hubs etc. are needed in vulnerable areas to thwart landslides or minimize its effect.

—DR. J. RADHAKRISHNAN

Research should be done on landslide-prone areas to evolve an early warning system using the latest technological advancements. Identifying the hazard zones, treatment measures, mitigation efforts, developing coping capacity, knowledge transfer and community participation along with administration are needed for landslide mitigation and risk management, Dr. Radhakrishnan added.

Landslide-prone areas in Nilgiris rise to 283

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, FEB.28

Ms. J. Innocent Diviya, the Collector of Nilgiris, on Friday said the landslide-prone areas in Nilgiris has shot up to 283 now from 101 about a decade ago.

Conserving soil texture are vital for slope management and landslide mitigation, she said that Nilgiris, which is the core centre of the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve the first of its kind in the country, has a complex ecosystem that is vital for water sources, nature, air quality, horti-

culture and wildlife. Conserving the ecology of Nilgiris is very crucial, which is also a challenging task, she noted. Steps should be taken to prevent slope destabilisation as weak slopes would lead to landslides and other related disasters. While geo-technological

measures and other technological aids are being used to stabilise the slopes, efforts are also being taken for effective watershed management in Nilgiris. It is high time the local people and other stakeholders understand that

upsetting the hill ecology will have adverse effects in future. So there is need for whole-hearted co-operation for nature conservation and other management efforts to effectively tackle the issues related to landslide hazards, she added.



Vice President Venkaiah Naidu inaugurates exhibition by the students of Government College of Architecture and Sculpture at Mamallapuram at its 60th year celebration of the college. —DC

CG offshore patrol vessel 'Varad' commissioned

Chennai, Feb 28: Enhancing Indian Coast Guard's rescue and surveillance capabilities, its latest multi-mission offshore patrol vessel 'Varad', equipped with state-of-the-art navigation and communication equipment, was commissioned by Union Shipping Minister Mansukh Mandavdya here on Friday. The 36-metre long craft, that can travel up to 10,000 kms non-stop, is the fifth in the series of seven indigenously designed patrol vessels being built by the Larsen and Toubro Shipyard as part of the Centre's Make in India programme. The vessel, which can carry two engine light helicopters with night flying capabilities, also has four high-speed boats including two rigid hull inflatable boats for swift boarding operations, search and rescue, law enforcement and patrol, the Coast Guard said. It was commissioned by Mandavdya in the presence of Coast Guard Director General K. Natarajan, Chennai Port Director, Chairman P. Ravendran and senior government officials at the Chennai Port. The Minister unveiled a plaque marking the commissioning of the ship, which

underwent extensive trials since August last year when it was launched. Speaking on the occasion, he said Coast Guard effectively establishes its presence for country's safety and that of the fishermen if there was any disaster in the sea like oil spill. "Every year one lakh vessels pass through Indian seas. But the vision of the shipping route, Coast Guard's role is to guide vessels, assist (them) during disaster," he said. "The commissioning of 'Varad' would enhance the Coast Guard's capability besides strengthening the country's security, he said. The Minister later shared some images of him taking part in the commissioning ceremony on his official twitter account. "Attended the commissioning ceremony of OPV 5 'Varad' at Chennai Port Trust. In the vision of #MakeinIndia. A momentous occasion for both Coast Guard and L&T Shipyard," he tweeted. Earlier, the Minister, on a two-day visit to Chennai and Puducherry, was accorded a warm welcome by Coast Guard personnel on his



arrival at the Chennai Port. Coast Guard Director General Natarajan, in his address, said the vessel succeeds the previous generation of ICGS 'Varad' which was in service for 28 years. He said 90 per cent of the funding allotted to Coast Guard had been spent on indigenisation of vessels. Later talking to reporters, he said the vessel can travel up to 10,000 kms non-stop and has many multi-mission capabilities. "On March 15, the first twin engine helicopter is going to be handed over (to Coast Guard by HAL). Even that can land on this ship. That is the kind of power," he said. "The Coast Guard official said. He said there were 61 Coast Guard ships under various levels of construction at public and private shipyards. "Our target is to have 200 ships for 2025 and we are moving towards that goal. We are also moving towards 100 aircraft. We have 65 (aircraft) right now," he said. "The stronger the Coast

Guard, the borders are protected and economy of the country will develop significantly," he said. L&T Shipbuilding Ltd Chairman S. Kannan said the ship underwent extensive trials ahead of its commissioning. The company had bagged a Rs 1,432 crore contract in 2015 from the Defence Ministry for building the seven patrol vessels at its yard in Kattupalli near here. "To serve and protect the maritime security agency's will and commitment which is to serve and protect the maritime interests of the country. The vessel is equipped with 30-mm and 12.7 mm guns. Some of the special features include Integrated Bridge System, Automated Power Management System and high power external firefighting system among others. The ship propelled by twin engines is capable of achieving maximum speed of 26 knots and endurance of 5,000 nautical miles. The vessel is led by Commandant Pintu Bag and manned by 11 officers and 91 men, is currently based at Paradip (Odisha) under the Commander Coast Guard Region (North East). —PTI

A wheelchair-bound man's journey for menstrual hygiene

T. SUDHEESH | CHENNAI, FEB. 28

Ravindra Bhausaheb Supekar is wheelchair-bound man with 80% disability. However, this 32-year-old man from Wavi in Nashik of Maharashtra, was in fact born with a purpose. With the wheelchair life he was destined to live, he continues to show the world how to brave odds, running a path-breaking campaign on menstrual hygiene among rural women. In 2015 Mr. Supekar launched a women-centric project named after "Stree Swabhiman" (pride of the Coast Guard official said. He said there were 61 Coast Guard ships under various levels of construction at public and private shipyards. "Our target is to have 200 ships for 2025 and we are moving towards that goal. We are also moving towards 100 aircraft. We have 65 (aircraft) right now," he said. "The stronger the Coast

Skill Development and Entrepreneurship last year. Decan Chronicle caught up with him on Friday on the sidelines of "Start-up Exhibition" that featured the winners of the NEA 2019. He says that he noticed the issue of menstrual hygiene when he was engaged in Digital Literacy mission under the Women Digital Literacy Programme (WDLP) in rural districts of Maharashtra in 2015. "I wanted to make rural women aware of the benefit of menstrual hygiene. There is lot of taboo associated with menstruation in rural India. This is in fact an insult to not only womanhood but also entire mankind. Many rural women still don't know the health problems the unhygienic menstrual treatment could cause them. That is the reason why I picked the name for our napkins as "Stree Swabhiman," he said. As part of the project, his

team has set up vending machines in almost all government-run rural schools in Maharashtra. "Girls can get a piece of napkin by inserting a one rupee coin into the machine," he says. Apart from this, he sells the napkins to medical shops and other outlets at a cost of Rs 40 for eight pieces. Today his enterprise touched an annual turnover of at least 510 lakh. A post graduate in English Literature, Mr. Supekar who lost mobility due to Polio infection at age of 5, began his journey as entrepreneur in 2015 with a capital of Rs 5 lakh he got from the bank as loan. He repaid it with 12% interest, enabling him to employ at least ten rural women who at least 1,000 sanitary napkins every day. One day, he hopes, all women in the country would get out of all kind of taboo associated with menstruation, and maintain better standard of menstrual hygiene.



Supekar with a piece of napkin at start-up exhibition held at IIT-M Research Park on Friday. —DC

IN BRIEF

₹10 L worth gutka seized, five held

Chennai: The police on Friday seized nearly ₹10 lakh worth banned gutka products from a godown at Periyapalayam in Thiruvallur district...

Abandoned truck with red sanders seized

Chennai: The Red Hills police seized 20 tonnes of red sanders in a Madhavaram on Thursday night...

Cops look out for 3 temple hundi thieves

Chennai: Police are on lookout for three men who made with the hundi from a temple in Ashok Nagar, Kanchipuram district in the small hours of Friday...

Protest over job denial to kin of people who gave land for auto plant Nearly 300 CPI workers detained

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 28 Around 300 CPI members, including party state secretary R Mutharasani, were arrested on Friday for staging a protest at Adigathur near Tiruvallur.

carmaker PSA Group, which is setting up a car manufacturing unit in the plant previously owned by Hindustan Motors...

Police said Hindustan Motors, which was functioning in the early 2000s, had provided jobs to 175 people in the neighbouring villages.

The protesters were demanding that French...

They agreed to strike a deal under a voluntary retirement scheme and give a one-time settlement.

Imported onions rot in Koyambedu market

N SAMPATH I DC CHENNAI, FEB. 28

At least 100 tonnes of large-sized onions, imported from Turkey, were trashed at the Koyambedu vegetable market due to paucity of takers in the last two days...



Secretary of semi-wholesale dealers in the vegetable market, S S Muthu Kumar, said...

Every day, the Koyambedu market gets long lines of onions that accounts to 2000 tonnes. A kilo of native onion costs ₹25, whereas the Turkey onion costs ₹15.

The incident happened late on Wednesday night when Thanigaivel came home drunk. He allegedly woke his children up and started shouting at them...

The incident happened late on Wednesday night when Thanigaivel came home drunk. He allegedly woke his children up and started shouting at them...



Woman kills alcoholic husband

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 28

A 40-year-old woman strangled her abusive alcoholic husband to death and tried to cover up the crime with a suicide drama.

FUTURE SCIENTISTS Govt should find quick solution

From page 1



On National Science Day, students take part in an inter-college science project competition in Kumararami Meena Muthiah College of Arts and Science in Adyar on Friday.

This attitude of the Government requires a change, he added. The Government must use its "might and power" to positively find a solution to the doctors demands...

Having said this, the Court added that the Government should not be treated as a means, "but they do not have any right to go on a strike/boycott under any circumstances."

Reiterating that the fundamental principle of medical jurisprudence is "first, do no harm," the High Court said, "by using strikes to resolve issues, doctors like lawyers, forget the moral worth and dignity of patients and leave them in the lurch, unmindful of the human and humanitarian consequences that ensue from their actions."

Nonetheless, the Government's selective action against a section of the doctors, in some cases even cancelling its action, went against the principle of universality if at all got the moral worth and dignity of patients and leave them in the lurch, unmindful of the human and humanitarian consequences that ensue from their actions.

Man sentenced to death in triple murder case

MARULOLI I DC TENKASI, FEB. 28

In an extremely tragic case, a 32-year-old man was sentenced to death by the Tenkasi additional district court on Friday in a triple murder case.

near Alangulam in Tenkasi district was caught red-handed during his attempt to sexually abuse a mentally-challenged young woman.

He also hacked Petchithai's 80-year-old father and her younger daughter the same day.

Gold seized at airport

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 28

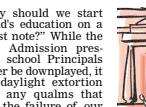
The Customs officers at the Chennai International Airport on Friday Thursday seized 1.63 kg gold worth ₹1.26 lakh.

Lankan national and Abdullah (38) of Ramanathapuram, had arrived from Colombo on a Sri Lankan Airlines flight. They were intercepted at the exit and on persistent questioning they admitted to carrying concealed bundles containing gold paste.

School admission: Open sesame with a donation!



Senior journalist friend who used to cover education on all beats, was in for a shock when schools he approached for admission for his son brazenly demanded a donation of a few lakh rupees, strictly in cash, with no receipt in hand.



is: "Why should we start our child's education on a dishonest note?" While the Mission Admission pressure on school Principals can never be downplayed, it is this daylight extortion without any qualms that exposes the ferocity of our laws.

rum project observed that "the element of coercion is writ large in the document. The lacunae in one of the statutes had left the Madras High Court in Parents Union For Students Educational Rights Vs Govt of Tamil Nadu with a Hobson's Choice of throwing up its hands."

permitted to be charged. No seat can be permitted to be appropriated by payment of capitation fee. 'Profession' has to be distinguished from 'business' or a mere 'occupation'.

are based on merit and transparency and the students are not exploited."

In another landmark case, the Apex Court in Islamic Academy of Education Vs State of Karnataka (2003) had ruled that "the Court must decide whether the fees proposed by that institute are justified and are not profiteering or charging capitation fee."

Now watch movies, serials from Metro's Sugarbox

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 28

Chennai Metro Railway Limited (CMRL) has launched free of cost entertainment service by SugarBox and Electric Bike services at Metro Stations on Friday.



IN BRIEF

Kanni Maadam repudiates caste pride, celebrates love

From P1 While Kanni Maadam according to a Facebook user, depicted how caste pride drove people of intermediate caste to commit 'honour' killing, Raja said Draupathi showed how girls are cheated through 'lover drama' in the heat of both the stories, however, is love, real or feigned, and caste. While Draupathi's story normalises caste prejudice and frowns upon love, Kanni Maadam repudiates caste pride and celebrates love.

Strengthen ties for research: Argentine envoy

Chennai: India and Argentina can be of help to each other in boosting research in fields of high importance, said Daniel Chuburu, Ambassador of Argentine Republic to India. He was addressing a gathering during the Research Day celebrations at SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST) on Friday. India and Argentina have strong points which can be of use to each other. Strong point for India is its expertise in Information Technology while Argentina's strength lies in its high-level knowledge in agriculture. Using the fine methods we manage to grow food more than their actual requirement. Added to this, Argentina is evolving microwave imaging satellite to monitor natural disasters and soil moisture in a long-term effort to protect its agriculture sector. The radar antennae technology will allow Argentina to access a real-time water map, this will allow for prediction of harvest yields, floods and drought. This may help India in its farming sector. India on the other hand can help fostering the creation of new universities in Argentina by providing its high level knowledge in the field of Information Technology, said the Argentine envoy.

J Matadee calls for policy amendments, reforms for SEZs

Chennai: Chennai Free Trade Zone, India's first notified free trade and warehousing zone developed and promoted by J Matadee Free Trade Zone Pvt Ltd on Tuesday, called for more favourable policy amendments and reforms for SEZs. Mr Sunil Rallan, Chairman and Managing Director, J Matadee Free Trade Zone Pvt. Ltd. and President-TASID addressed the media and said that, the recent amendments proposed will play a vital role in boosting investments in the manufacturing sector, job employment generation and growth in export volumes.

■ 'TN must take stringent action against groups that blocked public roads and streets for anti-CAA stir' Ponnar leads pro-CAA rally down South

M. ARULOU | DC TIRUNELVELI, FEB. 28

Rehabilitation of the religiously persecuted minorities from Islamic nations like Pakistan is the responsibility of the Indian government and hence the Shri Narendra Modi-led NDA has brought amendment to the Citizenship Act, said former union minister, Pon Radhakrishnan, who addressed the Congress and the DMK of "doing politics over dead bodies".

Addressing the BJP cadre at the pro-CAA agitation in Tirunelveli on Friday evening, the veteran BJP leader, Shri Ponnar wanted the Tamil Nadu government to take stringent action against those groups that blocked the public roads and streets for days under the name of anti-CAA. "No religious group or caste group has the right to create public inconvenience by blocking roads and



BJP cadre take out a procession in support of CAA and NRC on Collectorate road in Madurai on Friday. — DC

streets," said the BJP leader, who too warned of more counter-agitations by the pro-CAA groups, if the state government failed to clear the public roads (encroached by the anti-CAA protesters in places like Chennai). Blaming the Congress and

the DMK of misleading the innocent Muslim community for their political mileage, Shri Ponnar said, "Having nothing else to do, also appealed to the protest-ing Muslim community to give up their protests against CAA as the Act as such has nothing adverse against any of the Indian

"They don't have real concern for the people killed in Delhi violence," alleged the former union minister, who also appealed to the protest-ing Muslim community to give up their protests against CAA as the Act as such has nothing adverse against any of the Indian



Massive rally by BJP cadres in support of CAA and NRC at Chepauk in Chennai on Friday. — DC

citizen, including the Muslims. Dr S Jaishankar, Modi-led government, said Around 2,000 BJP cadres and supporters of CAA took out a rally in quarters of neighbouring Tirunelveli and submitted a petition to the district collector demanding to clear anti-CAA agitators blocking public streets in this

southern district. The BJP supporters too organised similar pro-CAA rallies in the district head-quarters of neighbouring Tirunelveli and submitted a petition to the district collector demanding to clear the respective district collectors the same day.



DMK President pays a floral tribute to late DMK MLA and former Minister KPP Samy in Chennai on Friday. — DC

1 more DMK MLA dies

D. SEKAR | K. SENTHILNATHAN CHENNAI | VELLORE, FEB. 28

The opposition DMK lost one more of its MLAs in the current Tamil Nadu Assembly on Friday with the untimely demise of S. Kathavarayan, representing Gudiyatham reserved constituency in Vellore district. A bachelor, Kathavarayan is survived by his three brothers and a sister. The MLA, who had developed a cardiac problem, passed away at the Apollo Hospital in Chennai on Friday morning. Kathavarayan's tenure in the House was so short-lived as he was elected from there in the Assembly by-polls in May 2019. Kathavarayan's demise comes a day after the DMK had lost its senior MLA and former State Fisheries Minister, K P S. Samy who represented

den passing away of Thiru Kathavarayan. "He was a symbol of simplicity and worked with dedication for the people of his constituency," the DMK leader said, adding, his death was a great loss personally and to the party.

The State Governor Sri Banwarilal Purohit said Kathavarayan's death "is a big loss to the people of Gudiyatham constituency," who elected him to the Assembly. In view of the demise of the DMK MLA, the scheduled meeting of party MPs of both houses of Parliament in Chennai has been postponed, party sources said. The 15th Tamil Nadu Assembly has till now lost 11 MLAs, including former Chief Ministers Dr J Jayalalitha and Kalaigna M Karunanidhi, it may be recalled.

CM orders ₹2 lakh to kin of sex assault victim

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Edappadi K Palaniswami on Friday ordered payment of ₹2 lakh as solatium to the next-of-kin of a minor girl in Sithan Kathiruppu village near Sirkazhi in Nagapattinam district, who was allegedly sexually assaulted and who died in hospital later.

The poor girl had come out of her house in the few hours to answer nature's call, when she was allegedly dragged out and assaulted. The girl who suffered critical injuries was rushed to a local hospital where the poor girl died. — DC

Evacuate stranded fishers from Iran, CM urges Foreign min

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 28

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. Edappadi K Palaniswami has urged the External Affairs minister to facilitate 'more RE make immediate arrangements for the safe return to India of about 450 fishermen from 154 sub-stations. The release said, the REMC in Tamil Nadu enables forecasting and scheduling of RE generation from 154 sub-stations. The real time RE generation from them are made available through 'AMR server', the release said. The Union Power Ministry has provided funds to the tune of ₹49 crore as grant-in-aid for the project of REMC projects in Southern region including Tamil Nadu, which were initiated to the country today.

in various fishing vessels berthed and operating in various ports of Iran. He said they have been reportedly stranded in Port. Kish, Cheeru and other places in Iran, due to cancellation of flights since the virus broke out there. Stressing the need for their immediate evacuation, Mr. Palaniswami said, "I request your good office to facilitate the Embassy of India in Iran to provide the required support to the fishermen and also to make arrangements for their safe and immediate return to India."

Renewable energy management centre opened

D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, FEB. 28

In yet another feather to the AIADMK government, the State Electricity Regulation and Excise Minister, Mr. P Thangamani on Friday launched the first Renewable Energy Management Centre (REMC) for Tamil Nadu, under a Central government initiative, at a simple function here. Top officers of the State electricity utility, Tangedco, including Mr Vikram Kapur, additional chief secretary, Mr. S. S. Srinivasan, managing director, Tangedco, and Dr Vinesh, joint managing director, Tamil Nadu, were present on the occasion. Tamil Nadu has been blessed with renewable energy, the REMC are being contribute to a green envi-

ronment and reduction of carbon emissions and greenhouse gases. Above all, they reduce the state's dependence on fossil fuels and lead to energy security. While the Union Ministry of Power has envisaged renewable energy capacity of 1,75,000 mw by the year 2022, Tamil Nadu's share of it has been fixed at 98,000 mw (which is 56 per cent of the total installed capacity). Tamil Nadu's RE installed capacity of 16 per cent of India's RE installed capacity. The break-up for the State is as follows: Wind energy- 8,507 mw, solar- 3,972 mw, biomass co-gen - 710 mw, and biomass accounting for 266 mw, according to the release. On July 21, 2019, out of a state peak demand of 12,021 mw, RE power generation was realised to the tune of 5,932 mw, which included 4,230 mw of wind power and 1,702 mw of solar energy. This means that nearly 50 per cent of the Tamil Nadu's demand that day was met through renewable energy. It is in this backdrop, considering the importance of renewable energy, the REMC are being established by Govern-

ment of India through Power Grid Corporation of India limited (PGLI) in seven RE rich states including Tamil Nadu, towards facilitating 'more RE integration into the grid and to achieve the target of 1,75,000 mw by 2022'. The REMC in Tamil Nadu enables forecasting and scheduling of RE generation from 154 sub-stations. The real time RE generation from them are made available through 'AMR server', the release said. The Union Power Ministry has provided funds to the tune of ₹49 crore as grant-in-aid for the project of REMC projects in Southern region including Tamil Nadu, which were initiated to the country today.

Let Supreme Court decide on CAA

Narasimhan Vijayaraghavan

Why is India in perennial agitation mode? It was largely forecast that the eviscerating impact of Art.370/35A of the Constitution on Kashmir may have India repercussions in the form of a challenge to Modi 2.0 on the streets. This has largely passed, though Kashmir situation is still wobbly as main political entities are still under lock and key. But, quietly and ever so gently, the national and state administrations are easing the grip on the State and letting the citizens be on normal mode. So far so good. The unanimous verdict in the Ramnathrao bhoomi land dispute also contributed and India was seemingly moving on. The country said 'Namaste Trump' to the leader of the free world. The two day visit, more of a jamboree for the Modi and Trump to tango in celebratory and campaign mode, passed off peacefully. No serious hiccups and even if the trade deal did not happen, the strategic bonhomie was reinforced. Alas, what is India if not a

The country said 'Namaste Trump' to the leader of the free world. The two day visit, more of a jamboree for the Modi and Trump to tango in celebratory and campaign mode, passed off peacefully. No serious hiccups and even if the trade deal did not happen, the strategic bonhomie was reinforced. Alas, what is India if not a chaotic democracy? An anarchic State, which somehow is a functioning one. Even as Trump was in town, or only because he was there, north-eastern parts of Delhi, presented a fighting mood. The CAA agitation took a violent turn and till date 89 lives have been lost. Including that of security personnel, totally unnecessary and avoidable. The Central Government with the Home Minister Amit Shah in the lead, has made ample clear that CAA is here to stay. It is not going anywhere. The agitators can agitate for as long as they want, but they are giving up. We will yield only when CAA goes lock, stock and barrel." What a sad note this rest of India to make of it? It does appear that opposition for CAA is real not imagined. It may have less traction than those agitating may wish. But that is no reason to

taunt or be taunted. Even the most informed are struggling to make sense of CAA. One side says that it would have absolutely no impact upon the citizens of India, be they of any religion. The other side says, "No, the threatened NRC tweak may make a mockery of this argument. There is no doubt that an external CAA/NRC calmly and clearly and none to listen. The visceral hatred and the shouting matches on electronic media are of little help. They rather stoke the embers, allied with the visceral social media trolls and hate campaigns. The environment is spoilt. If one analyses CAA and suggests that the innocuousness in the changes was by design and not external specificity to choose the deletion of one religion, the other side says "No, it was by design and not external provocation. Truth is, it was the Supreme Court that whipslashed the Central Government on NRC vide judgment dt.17th Dec.2014, in Assam Samhita Mahasangha case that resulted in CAA being ushered in. BJP says it is not new, as even the UPA administration led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, with P Chidambaram in tow

(check the viral video clips of these folks) had no other intent or path to travel by Modi 2.0 draws support from the UPA path and 1946 resolution of the pre-independence Congress. The agitators say that it is selective use and discrimination and they don't care, if UPA also sought this course, on the ground, it is they who have everything to lose and not them'. Please tell me, for heaven's sake, for us to understand them? It is all so confusing and confounding. A Churchillian enigma wrapped in mystery that knows no clear answers. Both sides have, by their respective intransigent stands, disclosed their utter contempt for the Rule of Law. Modi 2.0 has point blank refused to discuss with the agitators. The agitators are convinced that they have nowhere to go. Let us get real. CAA is under challenge. Scores of petitions have been filed and Supreme Court has called for a joint hearing. The Modi administration is to file its responses and proceedings may begin any time now. Why can't we wait for a verdict? In the R a m j a n a m a b h o o m i

Govt looking for funding for ₹60K crore river linking project: Gadkari

Karaikal, Feb. 28: The Union Government was looking for funding from financial institutions for its ₹60,000 crore project to link rivers Godavari and Cauvery. Union Water Resources Minister Nitin Gadkari said here on Friday. The project, for which the plan has been prepared, will save about 1,200 tmc ft of Godavari water that drains into the Bay of Bengal. The project satisfies the irrigation needs of farmers in Tamil Nadu, he said. The plan for the project is ready and the government is looking for a loan of Rs 60,000 crore to execute the project," the minister said, addressing the sixth annual conference at the National Institute of Technology at Karaikal, an enclave of the union territory of Puducherry. The Minister had earlier said that the government would raise finances for the project either from the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank.

IN BRIEF

8th edition of Yugam fest begins today

Colombatore: The eighth edition of Yugam, techno-cultural sports fest begins today (Feb 29, Saturday). Organised by the students of the Kumaraguru Institutions, at their campus, the eight-day long fest will feature programmes ranging from Tech Conclave and Inspire India Youth Conclave to Socio Constants and Profwows. Theme for the 2020 edition of the fest is infinity that signifies perpetual persistence. Yugam is all set to draw a footfall of over 20,000 participants from more than 1,000 colleges from across the country, making it one of the largest South Indian techno-cultural sports fest organised entirely by students, Kumaraguru Institutions said. In a press release.

March 9, local holiday for Pudukkottai

Pudukkottai: Pudukkottai Collector Mr. B. Uma Maheswari declared March 9 as local holiday in view of the car festival of Goddess Muthumariamman temple at Thiruvappur near Pudukkottai. In a release here on Friday, she directed in order to adjust this holiday, March 21 will be the working day and the offices which are having working days on March 21 should also work for the next day, that is March 22, she added.

Retired teacher's house burgled in Sirkazhi

Sirkazhi: Unidentified miscreants broke into the locked house of a retired teacher and education teacher and made away with Rs.35 lakh cash, eight sovereigns of gold ornaments and other valuables at Vinahidam-samuthiram near Sirkazhi in Nagapattinam district on Friday. The retired teacher Rajadurai, was away at Bengaluru along with his family and returned home this morning only to be shocked by the burglary. Sirkazhi police have registered a case and are presently investigating.

National Science Day celebrates at AVC College

Mayiladuthurai: Dr. N. Subramanian, senior scientist, material science group, IGCAR-Kalpakkam, has underscored the importance of Raman spectroscopy at extreme conditions and the use of spectroscopy, particularly Raman spectroscopy, at high pressure, volume and temperature conditions.

He made this observation while addressing the 'National Science Day' at AVC College (Autonomous, Mannampandal), near Mayiladuthurai on Friday. He also pointed out that evaluation of new alloys and change in characteristic property of metals at these extreme conditions, both at high and low extreme, particularly the production of metallic hydrogen at very low temperatures and the mechanism behind it. Among others, Dr. K. hagarajan, Mr. K. Singaravelan, HOD of physics, Dr. N. Sangeetha, assistant professor of physics, AVC College, and others spoke.

Free dental camp at Tiruchy

Tiruchy: Arway India, one of the direct selling FMC companies, organised a community dental clinic and a free dental care awareness camp in Tiruchy, with an aim to promote good oral care habits, comprehensive engaging sessions on oral hygiene and dental care. In a release at Tiruchy on Thursday, Company's senior vice President and the South Region Gursharan Cheema said in line with belief that good oral health is important to overall well-being, Arway India has been organizing several such oral care awareness sessions across the southern states. The sessions with experts have witnessed overwhelming response from consumers, direct sellers and employees.

Aggrieved write to National commission Minorities plead for basic infra in Kovai

LAKSHMI L LUND | DC COIMBATORE, FEB 28

On behalf of Karumbukkadai residents, the Jamaat-Islami Hind (JIH), submitted a written request to George Kurian vice-chairman of National Commission for Minorities at Kovai on Friday requesting basic amenities for the area. "In this regard, we have submitted a plea to the District Minority Welfare Officer here through our previous communications, however, nothing has been done," a source from the Jamaat-Islami Hind said. Karumbukkadai is one of the thickly populated

areas in Coimbatore, where about 50,000 people are residing. People living here do not have access to basic amenities, the letter said. "The organisation requests that a primary health centre, public library and park are established in the area, besides having the existing primary school upgraded to a high school or establishing a new educational institution in the Government land near the sewage management plant. Of the other requests which were made, a request for a nationalised bank in the area was also communicated. In an individual communication, addressed to the

vice-chairman of the commission, JIHM members demanded that the government must revoke the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and withhold the National Population Register (NPR) and National Register of Citizens (NRC). "The bill envisages granting citizenship to all foreign immigrants coming from our neighbouring countries except Muslims. This goes against the cherished diversity found in our country and the core values of our constitution. We hereby request the government to refrain from pursuing this legislation nationwide," the letter stated.

Suspected Maoist case: 1 person gets bail

Ooty: Danish alias Krishnan (32), hailing from Coimbatore, an accused who was arrested in last August in connection with the suspected Maoist surreptitious activity at Nedugal-kambai tribal hamlet near here in April 2016, was granted conditional bail by the district court here on Friday.

Advocate K. Vijayan one of the counsel here who appeared for Danish in the court, said that though the cops arrested Danish in August last, they failed to file charge-sheet before the court within the period of 180 days. "If the police failed to file charge sheet within the statutory period against the accused, then he is entitled for bail. On this ground we argued the case and the court ordered condition bail for Danish. He should provide two sureties and will have to sign twice a day in Kolakambai police station near Ooty till further orders," he added. DC

MEET ON VICTIMISATION



Dignitaries at the inaugural of the three-day 7th International Conference & 11th Biennial Conference of the Indian Society of Victimology, in collaboration with the Department of Criminology, University of Madras, on the theme, "Emerging forms of Victimisation: Multi-disciplinary Perspectives" held at Stella Maris College in Chennai on Friday. The Hon'ble Justice Amreshwar Pratap Sahi, Chief Justice, High Court of Madras delivered the inaugural address and the special address was presented by Dr. Pinaki Chakraborty, Chief of Social Policy, UNICEF.

Music director challenges ₹1.84 cr service tax demand

Chennai: Music director G V Prakash on Friday moved the Madras High Court, challenging the Rs 1.84 crore service tax demand issued by the authorities in April last year for permanent transfer of copyright for it under mega compositions to producer. Admitting the plea, Justice Anita Sumanth ordered notice to the Directorate General of GST Intelligence, returnable by March 6, Prakash contended that the composer of musical work becomes the absolute owner of the copyright for it under the Copyright Act. Subsequent transfer of such rights are exempted from tax under mega exemption notifications dated June 20, 2012 issued by the central government.



As per Section 13(1)(a) of the Act, copyright subsists in musical work and the composer is the sole and absolute owner of such right and is exempted from service tax. A person having the copyright of a cinematographic film would also not be required to pay service tax on the amount received from exhibitors to screen the film in theatres, Prakash said. Claiming that the April 9 2019 notice was without jurisdiction, ex facie illegal and deserved to be

quashed, the petitioner said that basically the authorities proposed to levy service tax on four types of transactions consideration received for assignment of copyright, performing roles in films, appearances in events and programmes and royalty. He also submitted he had paid applicable service tax on consideration received as a performing artist, but with regard to consideration for assignment of copyright, the same is exempted under the central government notification. On February 12, the court had stayed the operation of a notice issued by GST authorities to music composer R. Rahman, demanding service tax for permanent transfer of copyrights of his musical works to producers of such movies.

36 hurt in Pudukkottai jallikattu

Pudukkottai: At least 36 people were injured in a jallikattu event in Lakshmananpatti near Pudukkottai on Friday. Police said 60 bulls and 400 bull-tamers took part in the event, which was flagged off by the State Health Minister Dr. C. Vijayabaskar. All the injured were admitted to Government medical college hospital here for further treatment. DC

Masimham festival begins in Shiva temples

DC CORRESPONDENT THANJAVUR, FEB 28

The 'Masimham' festival starts in all Vaishnavite temples on Saturday with flag hoisting. 'Masimham' festival is observed on March 8 and people will take a holy dip that day in 'Mahamaham' tank at Kumbakonam, known as 'Bhaskara Kabhetram'. The 'Maham' festival is celebrated every year in the Tamil month of 'Masi', while 'Mahamaham' is celebrated once in twelve years, it may be pointed out.

The 'Masimham' festival began with flag hoisting at six Shiva temples at Kumbakonam near here on Friday. Flags were hoisted for ten-day festival at Adhikumbeswaraswamy, Kasi Viswanathar, Kalaharsheswarar, Abhimukheswarar, Vijayasomwarar and Gauthameswarar temples. Prayers are performed while the flag hoisting.



Flag hoisting at Adhikumbeswaraswamy temple at Kumbakonam on Friday for Masimham festival. DC

CBOA slams Central govt for banks merger move

R.VALAYAPATHY | DC COIMBATORE, FEB. 28

The Canara Bank Officers' Association (CBOA) has condemned the Union Government's move to merge the nationalised banks, and appealed to the government to give up the move immediately as the merger of the nationalised banks will neither be good for the country's economy, nor serve the poor and downtrodden in any way. Addressing a press conference here on Friday, CBOA's all-India general secretary G. V. Manimaran, after holding discussions with K.

Velmurugan and R. Rajagopal, the association's regional committee chairmen and secretary pointed out that the conditions during the time of bank nationalisation are still prevailing and the merger did not yield any fruitful results. Mr. Manimaran, who is also the general secretary of the all-India Nationalised Bank Employees' Federation, reiterated that the wage revision for the bank employees is based on the minimum wage formula without linking to profits or paying capacity. He said the government move for merger of nationalised banks will

ultimately make the banks fall into the hands of the private sector and they will fix the interest rate for their lending up to 21 per cent, universal banking system will be abolished and the portfolio banking system will come into force, which will affect the customers. He also said the Union Government also passed the code on Wages Act 2019 and notified it. Despite all these directions, the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) did not meet the bank officers' demands. He also wanted that the bank officers' basic pay to be equivalent to grade one officers of central government.

Gory murder of woman in steel town

ZAKEER HUSSAIN | DC SALEM, FEB. 28

The neighbourhood of Salem, known for its famous steel plant, was witness to another gory murder of a hapless elderly woman, sending shock waves through the town on Friday. In another tragic tale of murder for gold, a wayward Thirumalaigiri near here, Ms Pazhaniammal, 76, a Hindu widow, began to initiate a conversation with the elderly woman, as though he was caring for her. Suddenly, the youth tried to grab the little gold jewels the lady on her person, bought out of hard-earned money of her late husband and which she was wearing. Pazhaniammal's only form of economic and social security till date. Sensing that she was sought to be relieved of her gold jewels,



Pazhaniammal screamed in pain. Angered by that response, the youth pulled out a small knife he had hidden in his pocket, threatened the poor aged woman, and allegedly slashed her throat before fleeing the scene with her little cash pouch that woman usually carry. It was a pathetic sight that Pazhaniammal collapsed at the very spot and was soon found lying unconscious in a pool of blood. On information received from the spot, police rushed to the spot, retrieved the woman's body and sent it for post-mortem to the Government Mohan Kumaramangalam hospital here. There was no way the poor woman could be revived as she had already passed away by then. The police immediately swung into action and viewed the CCTV footage from all the CCTV cameras installed in the vicinity of the crime spot. The cops managed to get some clues from those footages on the basis of which they commenced their investigations and tracked down the identity of the youth assailant to one Balaji, of Vedukathampatti village. The wayward youth Balaji, it came to be known, was unfortunately addicted to drugs and was allegedly associated with other petty robberies in that area. Balaji, a Hindu resident, had gone hiding in Thirumalaigiri area from where Police nabbed him some time ago. Further investigations are on.

Businesses should be ready for digital leaps: Expert

Coimbatore: Businesses should be prepared and equip themselves for the evolutions in digital technology, said CK Ranganathan vice-president of the All India Management Association and Chairman and Managing Director of Cavinkare Pvt. Ltd. He was speaking at 'National Management Day programme' organised on Thursday.

He said very few businesses, mainly the ones in the digital domain, are prepared to face the challenges that come with rapid developments in digital technology. DC

BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs), Govt. of India. Manak Bhawan, 9 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi - 110002. INDICATIVE ADVERTISEMENT RECRUITMENT FOR POST OF SCIENTIST-B. Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), a statutory body under the administrative control of Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Govt. of India is the National Standards Body of India and is responsible for activities in the field of Standardization, Product and System Certification, Hallmarking of Gold/Silver Jewellery, Laboratory Testing etc. in the country. BIS is also responsible for Standardization and Certification at the International level. BIS offers excellent career opportunities to bright, young dynamic persons for the post of 'Scientist-B' in the specified disciplines and categories. These posts are in the Pay Level 10 as per the Seventh Central Pay Commission plus allowances as applicable. The gross emoluments at the time of joining will be approximately Rs. 37,000/- at Delhi at present. Table with columns: Discipline, Total UR, OBC, SC, ST, EWS, Essential Qualification. Includes details for Mechanical Engineering, Metallurgical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Electronics & Telecommunications Engineering, Computer Engineering, Food Technology, Chemical Engineering, Bio-Technology, Petro-Chemical Engineering, Bio-Medical Engineering. Total: 150 53 47 21 12 17. Out of above, eleven vacancies (including backlog) are reserved for Persons with Benchmark Disabilities. * Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering. Age Limit: The candidates must be between 21-30 years of age as on closing date of application. Relaxation in age limit or SC, ST, OBC, Persons with Benchmark Disabilities, Ex-Servicemen and Departmental Candidates of BIS is as per applicable rules. The Detailed Advertisement is available on the BIS website: www.bis.gov.in. The candidates are required to apply on-line from 02.03.2020 to 31.03.2020 only through Online payment mode/both dates inclusive is Rs. 100/- and is Non-Refundable. No fee is required to be paid by SC/ST/Ex-Servicemen/Persons with Benchmark Disabilities/Women Candidates. BIS reserves the right to Revise/Reschedule/Cancel/Suspend the process without assigning any reasons. The decision of BIS shall be final and no appeal shall be entertained. Date: 29.02.2020 Place: New Delhi. dave/08103/110015/1920 Head (HRD) Bureau of Indian Standards

DECCAN Chronicle

29 FEBRUARY 2020

Virus may close borders, beware of harder times

Just over two months after it was first reported in China, coronavirus is fast transforming into a grave threat for the global economy.

Initially, the coronavirus was considered a threat to the global economy as it shut factories in China as part of efforts to contain the spread of virus, disrupting the global supply chain.

The world has seen several pandemics in the past. There were viruses that killed a larger number of people than coronavirus has. But the current epidemic could be different in terms of the wide-ranging impact that it could have on the global economy.

Eerie apolitical campuses

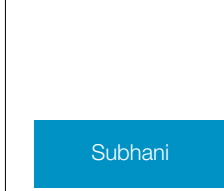
Courts are mandated to adjudicate on legal issues and not solve political ones. The moment they step into a realm that is not theirs, verdicts like the one by the Kerala high court the other day, banning political activity on campuses, result in a loss of trust.

The verdict is at its anchorage as it comes at a time when campuses in the country are actively involved in movements that are sure to decide its future as a democracy.

The ruling of the high court is thus an absolute paradox. Kerala has been shaped by leaders who took to political activity right from their student days, starting with the first chief minister, E.M.S. Namboodiripad through A.K. Antony and Changanacherry right up to Pinarayi Vijayan, the incumbent.

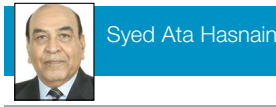
But personnel management issues about WOs are known only perfunctorily. A more nuanced explanation is perhaps that WOs today don't wish to be seen as job-seekers, pensioners, but look towards soldiering as a career.

First, the issue of WOs in combat arms like the infantry, armoured corps or mechanised infantry is unnecessarily being discussed, fearing that another legal appeal by some WOs may once again result in a setback to the Supreme Court's sympathy. That aspect wasn't in court. Most operationally unnecessary being discussed, fearing that another legal appeal by some WOs may once again result in a setback to the Supreme Court's sympathy.



Subhani

Army's women: On way towards full acceptance



Syed Ata Hasnain

In the few days after the Supreme Court judgment on permanent commission for women officers (WOs) of the Indian Army and command opportunities for them, both of which got a positive nod from the court, there has been euphoria on one side but an equal amount of consternation among the older school of professional soldiers.

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equal terms with their male counterparts for the restricted number of vacancies (sometimes as little as 30 per cent of what strength). It means some male officers already at such reduced approval percentages will make way for WOs with better qualifications and potential. It may be remembered that the Army's selection boards examine the record of candidates through a complex system where the identity is anonymous.

Most field commanders will relate instances of challenges overcome by WOs; an equal number will also recall subject failure. At the end of it, the best largely get through, and perform or perish at the next rank.

LETTERS

UNTIMELY TRANSFER

This refers to the news Midnight transfer of judge who rapped Delhi police raises storm (Feb. 28). Police have every right to oppose an Act brought in by the ruling party if they apprehend to be affected.

Midnight transfer of judge who rapped Delhi police raises storm (Feb. 28). Police have every right to oppose an Act brought in by the ruling party if they apprehend to be affected. During provocative hate speeches of a few BJP leaders and unruly attacks by miscreants, unprecedented violence was seen in the past few days. After proper hearing and perusal of video clipping before the bench and the Delhi high court bench headed by Justice Muralidhar rightly ordered to file FIRs against them and also pulled up the police for their visible failure to douse the situation before escalation.

M. Govindaraj, Gudiyatham

TEMPLE DRESS CODE

Approx your report 'On T-shirts, leggings at Kappal temple' (Feb. 28). No a day too soon has the order on temple dress code appeared. No doubt, the temple being a place of worship demands low-key decorous attire of grace and modesty.

Most field commanders with experience of having WOs serve under them will anecdotaly relate instances of severe challenges overcome by these officers; and an equal number will also recall moments of abject failure. That is a natural phenomenon which provides inputs for the MS Branch's selection procedures. At the end of it, the best largely get through and perform or perish at the next rank.

P.R. Krishna Narayanan, Chennai

LAUREUS AWARD FOR SACHIN

How's Sachin Tendulkar? Iconic Indian cricketer Sachin Tendulkar for winning the prestigious sporting award in the world at Berlin on Tuesday.

The writer, a retired lieutenant general, is a former commander of the Srirangam-based 15 Corps. He is also associated with the Vivekananda International Foundation and the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies.



Taki

The appeal of ugly men and if girls would slap Brad Pitt

Lenin Moreno is in trouble, despite his very unchristian first name. For any of you unfamiliar with the name, Senator Moreno is the president of Ecuador, a tiny South American country that I like very much because if you've met one Ecuadorian man you've met them all. There are 16 million Ecuadorians, and eight million of them, the men, all look like identical twins. One of my closest friends on the tennis circuit back in the late 1950s and early 1960s was Eduardo Zuleta, an Ecuadorian who was the colour of copper and could run all day, all night, 48 hours straight, as long as he was chasing a tennis ball. Those were not colour-blind days and I remember how, one day, an Australian lady watching Eduardo playing a match expressed outrage at the fact that he had a very blonde and pretty girlfriend pining away at the courtside. 'What does she see in him?' Well, I told her, 'if you care to sneak into the locker room shower after the match, I'll point it out, not that you can miss it.'

Zuleta almost reduced me to tears when he and his partner Guzman beat the big bad Yankees in the Davis Cup, back when the Yankees were a superpower. (And the Davis Cup was a 'South American tennis'). They played in Quito, the capital, and the powers that be promised Zuleta's father a peanut concession outside the football stadium if he beat the hated gringos. I think he ran something like 250 miles in the course of two singles and a doubles match, and Ecuador won 3-2. When I asked Barry McKay, a top player, what had happened, he said it was like being in a bullring with people throwing pennies and screaming their heads off as he looked up to hit an overhead ball. He was tired and dirt-poor, the Ecuadorians threw their best pennies on to the court in order to ensure victory. It's called patriotism, not nationalism. I say all this because President Lenin Moreno is in deep doo-doo. Les girls are Orlando Furioso and want to make him a scapegoat. He said that women complain about sexual harassment only when they

are harassed by someone ugly. Has apologized, as is the form over these days. No dice. The girls are mad and they will not take it any more. So, always in search of the truth for the dear old Specsies, I went the length and breadth of this alpine village and visited the nightclub up at the Palace hotel looking out onto the football stadium. I saw sex about Lenin's remarks. 'Who the hell is Lenin?' was the first answer I got when I asked a young woman drinking a martini in the bar (most of the women in Gstaad have never been accused of being intellectuals). This place attracts females like you know who draws flies, possibly on account of the mature men who frequent the Alps for the scenery. Some have even been known to ski, but not too fast. The next lady I asked was more forthcoming. 'Would you feel harassed if Brad Pitt stroked your backside uninvited?' 'Actually he can stroke it any time,' said the 50-year-old. 'But why would he want to make him a scapegoat? He's her on her candour and honesty, and then asked if she would react

the same way if the perpetrator were Harvey Weinstein. 'Not in a hundred years. I've never heard of this prompted me to broaden my quest. I stopped women in the hallways and posed the question: 'Would you slap Brad as hard as you would slap Harvey if both gossiped you on the dance floor?' Most answered by telling me to go and reproduce myself, but when I took out my notebook and pretended to write down their responses they asked whom I was doing this for. My answer was Screw magazine, now defunct, as is its owner, Al Goldstein. But this poses a serious question. What Lenin Moreno said was out of line - or so my wife and daughter tell me - but what he meant I am sure, is what it has taken me all these words for is: Brad Pitt would be able to get away with touching whereas Harvey Weinstein cannot. Is this true? I am not a woman, so I cannot say, but what I can say for sure is that if Helen of Troy had been here, she would have gone to war for ten years to get her back. Mind you, women

know better. John Wilkes insisted that 30 minutes alone with a lady would result in a child. I think that would triumph over any far better-looking rival. He was right. Women prefer brains and charm. Australian Men are dummkopfs and will take skin-deep beauty every time. 'The great seducers were mostly ugly men such as Casanova, Lord Byron, Louis XIV, D'Annunzio, and so on, though power undoubtedly had something to do with their appeal. Errol Flynn and Gianni Agnelli were two very good-looking men who got lucky a lot, but most male lookers do not rank high. That's because women want something more than looks, and if brains are not on offer, then power will do nicely, thank you very much. So, this is for you, ladies: next time Brad Pitt comes around and acts inappropriately, slap him rather hard - if he be the boss. This is Harvey will not be coming around for some time, so you can forget about him. By arrangement with the Spectator

When British VIPS get a raw with sexual abuse



Farrukh Dhondy
Cabbages & Kings

"A cotton-wool dain
A feathered twilight
Softness that hides the sun."

A night of stars
Of burnished Mars
And witches stalking midnight
hours...
From Modikum of Virtue by
Bachchoo

Everyone in Cannes, when I attended the film festival there, wanted to meet Harvey Weinstein. Among the aspirants must have been starlets and already famous female actors. The world now knows how this eagerness was criminally used by Weinstein. The old saying is power corrupts. New saying:

Power affords the opportunity for corruption. Weinstein, with a very successful film company behind him, sported one magnificent sign of power.

Now in the UK, an independent inquiry into child sexual abuse, by men with political power or the allure of fame, is being conducted. Unsurprisingly, in Britain, they all seem to involve some connection between abuse and social rank.

A character called Jimmy Saville, a television joker with a distinguished TV career, was recommended in 1989 by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher for a knighthood. The Queen granted Saville the honour in 1992, when Sir Jimmy was dead and buried, the evidence against him of horrific child sexual abuse emerged. He had

used his celebrity and his position as a presenter on children's TV shows to rape and abuse young boys and girls. His celebrity had also made him the patron of several children's charities, including those for the sick and handicapped. It then emerged that he had used his visits to hospitals and children's homes to sexually abuse the patients and inmates.

There is no doubt that this criminality was known to, or strongly suspected by, scores of people who deferred to his celebrity and suppressed the truth. The Cabinet Office was alerted to the allegations when Thatcher was lobbying to grant him a knighthood and, instead of initiating an investigation into these serious and multiple allegations, she defiantly ignored them and went on to invest in him as Sir Jimmy.

Though he hadn't been prosecuted for it, there was strong but suppressed evidence against him as a rapist of young boys. Lord Armstrong, a former cabinet secretary, testified to the recent inquiry that he had seen a letter to the head of M15, that Morrison had been arrested at Crewe railway station for an incident involv-

In the UK, an independent inquiry into child sexual abuse, by men with political power or the allure of fame, tells some murky tales. Unsurprisingly, in Britain, they all seem to involve some connection between abuse and social rank.

Cameron and public outrage prevailed in the end. Saville was deprived of his honour and will pass into petty historical record as a debased predator.

In the same era, one of Thatcher's favourite ministers, who had been her parliamentary private secretary, MP Jim Morrison, was accused of paedophilia. Though he hadn't been prosecuted for it, there was strong but suppressed evidence against him as a rapist of young boys. Lord Armstrong, a former cabinet secretary, testified to the recent inquiry that he had seen a letter to the head of M15, that Morrison had been arrested at Crewe railway station for an incident involv-

ing a minor. The evidence was obviously suppressed when Thatcher was made aware of it.

Despite other information that she was presented with, Thatcher ignored the evidence and granted him a knighthood. In the wake of the publication of the inquiry last week, Lord David Steel, a former prominent leader of the Social Democratic Party, resigned from the party and has given notice that he will leave the House of Lords as a further response.

The inquiry accuses Lord Steel of turning a blind eye to the allegations of paedophilia dating back to 1979 against the former MP for Rothenham, Cyril Smith. David Steel, as he then was, knew of the allegation and as leader of the party, not only chose to ignore them but recommended Cyril Smith for a knighthood. In his defence, however feeble, he said that though he believed the allegations, he, regretfully, overlooked them as "past history".

turnout in the party he has served all his life.

Connected again to paedophilia and peesages is the pending fate of Tom Watson. He was deputy leader of the Labour Party and resigned before the last election. Jeremy Corbyn, about to be replaced as Labour leader, has, as Opposition leaders are entitled to do, nominated Mr Watson for a peerage. There has been a public outcry against the nomination as Mr Watson is accused by the child abuse inquiry of pursuing a witch hunt against politicians and members of the armed forces and security services.

In 2014 the police were pressed by Mr Watson, men his allegations in Parliament, to launch an enquiry into a VIP paedophile ring. Mr Watson's statement and his demand that the police investigate the allegations he was making, were based on the evidence supplied by one Carl Beech.

Mr Beech went to Mr Watson with horrific allegations of a VIP paedophile ring which included Tory MP Harvey Proctor, Labour MP Greville Janner, the former home secretary Leon Brittan, the former Prime

Minister Edward Heath, the former Chief of the Defence Staff Lord James Hanley.

Mr Beech alleged that these VIPS constituted a ring which met in flats near the House of Commons, procured young boys, including himself, for sex and had even stooped to murder to avoid detection. Apparently, Mr Watson believed these claims and pressured the police into the multi-million-pound enquiry. The police found no evidence against any of the accused and subsequently prosecuted Mr Beech, not only for false allegations but also for police time and public money, but for being himself a paedophile and fantasist. He was found guilty and jailed.

Watson has failed to apologise to the "VIPS", some of whom are still alive, for demanding a position at the pursue them — a pursuit which caused extreme distress to those named, including to their families. Perhaps he will extend such an apology when he sits next to some of them in the Upper House.

In defence of Priti Patel



Rod Liddle

Who will rue the day we all decided bullying was a bad thing. The complete sequence is that the inept, the imbecile and the perpetually frit will hang on to their jobs and the UK will become a much less efficient country. By bullying I do not mean physically beating someone up and stealing their lunch money, which is what it used to mean when it had a proper meaning. I mean telling someone they're useless and deserve to be sacked, which is what bullying means today. As R.D. Laing might have put it, that kind of bullying is a rational response to irrationality. The home secretary, Priti Patel, who is 5 feet 6 inch tall, has been accused of using bullying tactics with regard to her civil servants. Nowhere near enough bullying behaviour in my book. One imagines the charlin amid the Sir Humphreys: "I have just been told what to do by a short, state-educated woman from the colonies!" The fury and loathing turned upon Patel is a foretaste of what awaits government ministers (and advisers) when they dare to tell the civil servants that perhaps things might be done differently from here on in.

The fury and loathing turned upon Priti Patel is a foretaste of what awaits government ministers (and advisers) when they dare to tell the civil servants that perhaps things might be done differently from here on in.

Further, the real housing crisis we have — that homes are far too expensive — has been exacerbated by the net gain, if we had to have a net gain, to have been closer in size to that of the village of Chop Gate in North Yorkshire, pop. about nine. Priti's proposals are the first serious attempt in all that time to halt the flow, for which she deserves great credit.

Who knows if it will work? If it does, Patel will have hugely alleviated that other great problem of our age, the housing crisis. It's very cuts and the privatisation of social housing and a refusal to build. Well, nobody is blaming the immigrants on themselves, any more than they are blamed for exerting a depreciatory effect upon the wages of the very poorest. But they are still both a consequence of a net influx of

immigration. If an extra 250,000 people arrive here every year, they will need somewhere to live, no? Denial of that patent fact is one of the more entertaining examples of liberal doublethink.

The quizzical remains, though. If our birth rate is stable (immigrant birth rates excepted), how come most of our new housing need is the consequence of indigenous Brits? Again, this is a question the liberals and difficult to address. Almost all of the reasons are the consequence of progressive legislation of one kind or another. Easier divorce, the breakdown of both the nuclear family and the extended family and its replacement by fissiparous single parenthood. A diminishing of communitarianism and a concomitant wish on our behalves to live separately, apart from others.

By the same token, we might also blame neoliberal economic policies — an obsession with the vaunting wealth that can be generated by home-ownership and which has led to houses being seen as simply collateral, ever to be traded up, rather than as places to live in and put down one's roots.

To which we might add the horror of unrealistic expectation: with 50 per cent of young people not attending university, rather than 10 per cent (which was about right), we have graduates emerging from their colleges with a 2:2 in Gender Studies, appalled and astonished that they cannot find a nice flat to buy in Islington on their wages from Poundland. I had this very discussion with a young chap in my train recently. He was furious at my generation for depriving him of the right to buy an apartment in London. He was 23. I'm so sorry, I said, where would you like your apartment to be? Belgavia? Docklands? Hoxton? I was 30 before I got my studio flat in Peckham. Until then I camped out in low-grade squats and housing association properties, devoid of a sense of entitlement.

By the same token, we might also blame neoliberal economic policies — an obsession with the vaunting wealth that can be generated by home-ownership and which has led to houses being seen as simply collateral, ever to be traded up, rather than as places to live in and put down one's roots.

PTI: Too young a dream to have lost all its romance already



Asha'ar Rehman

View from Pakistan

The determination with which the Punjab government, along with its federal counterpart, sticks to its guns when it comes to the matter of Mian Sahib is in itself a commendable display of resolve. Pakistan on health grounds defers political logic. The question of whether Mian Sahib should be allowed to go for treatment abroad had plagued the country for long and at least some of the more traditional observers of politics had thought that the former Prime Minister's exit was a good development that the government could exploit in its favour.

Prime Minister Imran Khan had hopelessly been bogged down in this debate about relief for the PM-NC leadership, as part of the larger discussion about the manner in which the new setup wanted to operate the accountability system. So deep and intense was the dispute that, at one time, it appeared that even though the government wanted to provide an outlet to the Sharifis, in order to secure an exit for itself, the Imran Khan camp had run out of ideas about how to execute a retreat strategy.

As provincial minister Dr Yasmin Rashid spoke to the media outlet the Services Hospital that winter day, it was a rather mellow culmination of a battle fought long and hard. Mian Nawaz Sharif's — or his family's — attempt at finding a way out of confinement in Lahore had met with success and for once the farewell tone of the PTI minister, who happened to have contested elections against Mian Sahib and his wife in the past, was bereft of acrimony. That was relief for one who, in the less than ideal circumstances, had generally managed to get out of politics in this land.

Dr Yasmin Rashid was once known as quite a (surgical) knife wielder, her handling of the Nawaz Sharif case did create the illusion of feccency — which, unfortunately, she was later left to fight for. She has been forced to not only justify Mr Nawaz Sharif's brand on medical grounds, but also to prove her own innocence, and more than that, the competence of the system she is responsible for. The minister, a senior member of the government of Punjab.

What is at stake here is much more than a simple confirmation, or not, about the veracity of the medical reports that helped provide the former Prime Minister, suffering from a bout of silence among other possible ailments, an urgently needed escape. The possibilities of politics in Punjab under Sardar Buzdar, tasked with granting or refusing relief to Mian Nawaz Sharif, is immense. Not the most difficult option is where an ostensible well-wisher of Sardar Buzdar can innocently ask about the likelihood of the Punjab government having erred while reading Mian Nawaz

Sharif's medical reports.... It is a question that places the rival PM-NC in an awkward position at the same time promising the intelligent poser of the question points against the Buzdar government.

The Buzdar government is considered to be meek. The Prime Minister has to frequently come to its defence. In recent times, Mr Khan has gone so far as to warn off those conspiring against the Punjab government, admitting that the former Prime Minister's exit was a good development that the government could exploit in its favour.

Mr Khan had hopelessly been bogged down in this debate about relief for the PM-NC leadership, as part of the larger discussion about the manner in which the new setup wanted to operate the accountability system. So deep and intense was the dispute that, at one time, it appeared that even though the government wanted to provide an outlet to the Sharifis, in order to secure an exit for itself, the Imran Khan camp had run out of ideas about how to execute a retreat strategy.

Potentially, the most dangerous weapon that the Sharifis can use against the PTI are obviously pressing for their right to be given greater power and the desire to remain within the party fold — as is normal in a democratic political outfit. They might well have a genuine claim to make to Mr Buzdar for the time being comes from within. Against this background, it is not too difficult to understand why the PTI chose to attack on the Punjab government over the medical reports of Mian Nawaz Sharif and the desire to deigns to discredit the current Punjab setup.

Underneath the lily created by the short-lived federal system is a party that has shown increasing signs of adapting and compromising to prove its worth. Power assignment. But despite all this realisation about what changes the brush with power must bring for a party that has lost its dream to have lost all its romance already. Underneath the lily created by the short-lived federal system is a party that has shown increasing signs of adapting and compromising to prove its worth. Power assignment. But despite all this realisation about what changes the brush with power must bring for a party that has lost its dream to have lost all its romance already.

Chief Minister Usman Buzdar may be a recent Imran Khan discovery, but Dr Yasmin Rashid is not. She is an old-timer, someone from among the original cadres who was considered still useable when the party was near to collapse. She has been advertising the good, professional-led Pakistan that the PTI sought to create after dismantling the corrupt system. i.e. the original PTI fate that contested against Mian Sahib in the old Lahore constituency, and that was restored over the new minister, a senior member of the government of Punjab.

There is at stake here is much more than a simple confirmation, or not, about the veracity of the medical reports that helped provide the former Prime Minister, suffering from a bout of silence among other possible ailments, an urgently needed escape. The possibilities of politics in Punjab under Sardar Buzdar, tasked with granting or refusing relief to Mian Nawaz Sharif, is immense. Not the most difficult option is where an ostensible well-wisher of Sardar Buzdar can innocently ask about the likelihood of the Punjab government having erred while reading Mian Nawaz



"I can't get on the housing ladder."

What happens to us after death?



Sadhguru

There was a yogi who, at the age of 84, started telling people around him very confidently: "I'm going to heaven." People asked him: "Who told you that you are going to heaven? Do you know what is on God's mind?" The yogi said, "I don't care what is on God's mind. I know what is on my mind."

place. Those who have made a hell out of themselves are saying there is another heaven. We have heard gossip about heaven and hell, but there is no confirmed information. If you think that your loved ones who died are just lost, that you don't know where they are, you will feel terrible. So, generally, most cultures believe when people die they go to their heavenly abode. If it is true that such a privilege will be conferred upon you, why should you postpone it? Why not leave today? No one has solecled ourselves with lots of empty talk. Most people cannot digest death. If you are aware of your mortal nature, everything is put into its proper perspective. If you knew that you are a flower that blooms in the morning, and dies in the evening, you would not miss a single flower on the way. Your fantasies will collapse, and reality will rule.

There are believers and non-believers, both are on the same boat, arguing about something that they do not know. We are not sincere enough to admit: "I do not know." But only when you are willing to see, "I do not know," does the possibility of knowing arise. So what actually happens after death? If I talk about anything which is not in your experience, you cannot understand it. The only option you have is to believe or disbelieve me. If you believe me, you will fool yourself because without really knowing, you will pretend to know. If you disbelieve me, you will destroy the possibility of knowing, that which is not in your current experience. Today, modern science has done many experiments to understand the nature of life and death. But this

can only be grasped by experience. Do not try to think what happens beyond death, as that is not the realm of your mind. Only if your experience of life has gone beyond your mental and physical structures, can you access this dimension. This is not a secret hiding somewhere — it is right here, right now. It is just that most human beings have never paid enough attention to the very nature of their existence. What we call as spirituality or yoga is an inner technology which can deliver you into a state of perception that gives you access to both life and death.

Belief in judgement or self-realisation means just this, that you know the nature of your existence absolutely. There are believers and non-believers, both are on the same boat, arguing about something that they do not know. We are not sincere enough to admit: "I do not know." But only when you are willing to see, "I do not know," does the possibility of knowing arise. So what actually happens after death? If I talk about anything which is not in your experience, you cannot understand it. The only option you have is to believe or disbelieve me. If you believe me, you will fool yourself because without really knowing, you will pretend to know. If you disbelieve me, you will destroy the possibility of knowing, that which is not in your current experience. Today, modern science has done many experiments to understand the nature of life and death. But this

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, an internationally renowned spiritual leader, is a visionary, humanitarian, author, poet and speaker. He can be contacted at www.ishafoundation.org

By arrangement with Dawn

IN BRIEF

Nepal's ex-deputy PM injured

Kathmandu: Nepal's former deputy prime minister CP Mainali and four others were injured when their car collided with a pick-up truck coming from the opposite direction, police said on Friday. The accident took place on Thursday when Mainali and his family members were on their way to Kathmandu from Jhapa, according to District Police Officer, Maheshwari. He is currently undergoing medical treatment at Grande International Hospital in Kathmandu. Four others, including Mainali's son Saroj, daughter-in-law Pujan, grandson and nephew Nam Prasad Poudyal were injured in the accident.

Chinese ship fires laser at US aircraft

Washington: A Chinese Navy ship fired a laser at a U.S. surveillance aircraft flying over the Philippine coast of Guam, the Navy said Thursday, acknowledging the incident more than a week after it happened. The Navy said the People's Republic of China naval destroyer lased the American F-4A Phantom II aircraft in an act the U.S. deemed unsafe and a violation of international codes and agreements. The laser beam from U.S. Pacific Fleet said the laser was detected by sensors on the aircraft, but was not visible to the naked eye. "Weapons-grade lasers could potentially cause serious harm to aircraft and mariners, as well as ship and aircraft systems," the Navy said. The incident took place about 350 miles west of Guam.

Pak: US invited to invest in CPEC

Islamabad: A top Pakistani official has said that the US has been invited to invest in projects of the billion-dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as Washington expressed keen interest in increasing trade relations with Islamabad. "The US has shown interest in energy, oil and gas, agriculture and food processing," The Express Tribune quoted Abdul Razak Dawood, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce, as saying on Thursday. "Pakistan-US market access is the main point. We want access to the US market," he said. Dawood's remarks came a day after visiting US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross held a meeting here with Pakistani authorities. Sharing details of the meeting, the adviser said that the US officials have also expressed interest in e-commerce. "They have agreed that the US International Development Finance Corporation would help in developing new businesses in Pakistan," Dawood said.

ARDEN TOOZ: DON'T DEPORT 'PROBLEMS'

Canberra, Feb. 28: New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern called out her Australian counterpart at an extraordinarily abrasive joint news conference Friday, saying her country's rigid policy of deporting foreign criminals to his homeland left as children. Ardern called the policy unfair and corrosive to the near-neighbors' ties, but Australian PM Scott Morrison publicly held firm. "You commit a crime here, if convicted, once you've done your time, we send you home," he said. New Zealand and Britain receive large proportions of these felons under the policy, but many long-time Australian residents are sent to countries where they don't speak the language and have no family or community ties. Ardern said many of the 2,600 New Zealand citizens Australia had deported in recent years had no "home" in New Zealand because they had left years ago. New Zealand courts were dealing with these long-term Australian residents who were failing to rehabilitate because they lacked the necessary family and social networks. "You can't break your laws. New Zealand does the same. But we have a simple request. Send us back Kiwis — genuine Kiwis," Ardern said. "Do not deport your people and your problems."

Turkey fumes as airstrikes by Syria kill 33 of its soldiers

Threatens to flood Europe with migrants raising prospects of all-out war

Reyhanli, Feb. 28: The presidents of Turkey and Russia spoke over the phone on Friday, a day after Syrian government airstrikes killed 33 Turkish troops, significantly ratcheting up tensions between Ankara and Moscow. It was the highest number of Turkish soldiers killed in a single day since Ankara first intervened in the Syrian conflict in 2016. The development was the most serious escalation in the conflict between Turkey and Russia-backed Syrian forces and raised the prospect of all-out war with millions of Syrian civilians trapped in the middle.



A woman holds a child's hand as Afghan refugees, 5 children, 3 women and 7 men, disembark from a dinghy on the Greek island of Lesbos on Friday. —AP

NATO envoys held emergency talks at the request of Turkey, a NATO member, and scores of migrants began converging on Turkey's border with Greece seeking entry into Europe after Turkey said it was "no longer able to hold refugees." Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whose country already hosts more than 3.5 million Syrian refugees, has long threatened to "open the gates" for millions of refugees eager to flee to Europe unless more international support was provided.

Turkish reprisals kill 16 Syrian soldiers: Monitor

Beirut, Feb. 28: Turkish reprisals killed 16 Syrian soldiers in the battleground northwestern province of Idlib on Friday after a bombardment Ankara blamed on Damascus killed 33 Turkish soldiers, a monitor said. The retaliatory drone and artillery strikes hit Syria army positions in southern and eastern parts of the province which were recaptured by the government in a nearly three-month-offensive against the rebel enclave, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Also on Friday in Idlib, four members of a single family, two of them children, were killed in air strikes, the Britain-based monitoring group said. There was no immediate confirmation from Damascus of the 16 deaths or any comment on the flare-up with Ankara that prompted NATO to call an urgent meeting of its ruling council for later Friday. "Sixteen regime fighters were killed in Turkish bombardment," the Syrian Observatory chief Rami Abdulrahman said. Turkey had said it retaliated "from the air and ground" for the deaths of 33 soldiers. Ankara's biggest single loss of personnel by far since it launched its intervention in Syria in 2016.

The deadly strike comes after weeks of growing tension between Turkey and Russia — the main foreign brokers in the Syrian conflict. The latest casualties bring to 33 the number of Turkish soldiers killed in Syria this month alone. The flare-up came after Turkish-backed rebels re-entered the key crossroads town of Sarajeel in Idlib province. The town had been one of the most significant gains of the government offensive earlier in February because it lies along the M5 highway that connects Syria's four largest cities. —AFP

TURKISH TROOPS KILLED AMONG 'ULTRAS': RUSSIA

Moscow, Feb. 28: Russia on Friday said that Turkish troops who came under fire by the Syrian army were among "terrorists" after at least 33 were killed in Idlib province.

On Thursday "Turkish soldiers who were in the battalions of terrorist groups came under the fire of Syrian troops," the defence ministry said in a statement. It said Turkish forces had not communicated their presence in the area, "where they should not have been." "The Russian air force is not used in this zone," the ministry added. —AFP

TURKEY CALLS FOR NO-FLY ZONE OVER SYRIA

Istanbul, Feb. 28: Turkey on Friday called on the international community to establish a no-fly zone over the northwestern province of Idlib to protect civilians from Syrian regime bombardments a day after the killing of 33 Turkish soldiers.

"The international community must act to protect civilians and impose a no-fly zone," Fahrettin Altun, communications director at the Turkish presidency, said on Twitter. Syrian regime forces backed by Russian air strikes have since December clawed back chunks of the Idlib region, forcing close to a million people to flee their homes and shelters amid bitter cold. —AFP

Afghan duo set US-Taliban deal

Kabul, Feb. 28: The path to the US-Taliban deal came down largely to two Afghan men — one occupying a commanding position for the US, the other for the militants, their lives shaped by decades of conflict.

On one side was Zalmay Khalilzad — a leading US diplomat who spent the prime of his career attempting to restore order as an envoy in Afghanistan and Iraq following successive US invasions.

Across the table was Mullah Baradar, the seasoned jihadist who spent most of his life as a fighter, first with the mujahideen during the anti-Soviet jihad and again as the Taliban's co-founder.

More than 18 years after being toppled from power, it appears Baradar and the Taliban — with Khalilzad's help — are again on the verge of returning to Kabul as arguably the most united force in Afghanistan's chaotic political arena.

Khalilzad, the Afghan hawk: Born in northern Afghanistan's Mazar-i-Sharif, Khalilzad learned the tough realities of Afghan life from an early age. In his memoir, he recounted seeing future president Daoud Khan bite off a man's ear during a brawl. His life changed after he travelled to America for a high school exchange programme, widening his horizons. Fluent in Pashto and Dari, Khalilzad held a commanding position as US ambassador to Afghanistan from 2003 to 2005 and was instrumental in forming the new government in Kabul.

In 2018, Khalilzad was again hand-picked to pitch up things in Afghanistan, this time by President Donald Trump to lead negotiations with the Taliban.

Baradar, the fighter: Abdul Ghani Baradar was born in the arid badlands of southern Afghanistan and later raised in Kandahar — the future birthplace of the Taliban movement.

Like most Afghans, Baradar's life was forever altered by the Soviet invasion of the country in the late 1970s, transforming him into an insurgent believed to have fought side-by-side with the one-eyed cleric Mullah Omar amid the chaos of the Taliban movement.

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Baradar is believed to be widely respected by the Taliban's various factions and his presence would help garner support for any deal from insurgents on the frontlines. —AFP



Youth release balloons and pigeons as they celebrate the reduction in violence in Jalalabad on Friday. —AFP

Walk on the famous Zebra cross



Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex (L), US singer Jon Bon Jovi and two members of the Invictus Games Choir walk on the zebra cross that The Beatles walked across, outside Abbey Road Studios in London on Friday, while recording a special single to aid the Invictus Games Foundation. —AFP

POLL | BATTLES Former New York mayor pins hopes on picking up enough delegates to blunt Sanders' rise

Bloomberg not to spend on Sanders campaign

San Francisco, Feb. 28: Billionaire Mike Bloomberg said Thursday that he might not spend money to assist Bernie Sanders if Sanders is the Democratic presidential nominee, days after a Sanders adviser said they wouldn't want the help. Sanders adviser Jeff Weaver said Tuesday that it would be a "hard no" on accepting Bloomberg's financial assistance. "What do you mean, I'm going to send a check to somebody and they're not going to cash the check? I think I wouldn't bother to send a check," Bloomberg said on Thursday. "That's a different answer than he gave the night before in a CNN town hall, when he was asked specifically if he would give financial help to Sanders despite his adviser's comments. He committed that he would keep campaign



Democratic presidential candidate and former New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg speaks during a rally held at the Bricktown Events Centre. —AFP

offices open in battleground states so whoever is the nominee can use them. The back-and-forth is part of a larger escalation. Bloomberg is hoping he can pick up enough dele-

gates to blunt Sanders' rise. Bloomberg, the former New York City mayor, is worth an estimated \$60 billion, wealth built from the financial data and media company he started in the 1980s. He's already spent more than \$50 million on his presidential campaign. But he's pledged to pay to keep campaign offices open and staffed in general election battleground states through the fall. "I said that I would help, I'm going to keep our campaign offices, the main ones anyways, open until November 3," Bloomberg said. "And if they don't want to use them, then fine. Then we'll close them." Asked to clarify the campaign's position, Bloomberg spokesman Stu Loeser said "we'll see" on whether Bloomberg spends on Sanders' behalf. —AP

India to witness US-Taliban pact

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 28

A day ahead of the historic signing of a peace deal between the United States and the Afghan Taliban on Saturday in Doha (Qatar), Indian foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla visited the Afghan capital Kabul and met acting foreign minister Haroon Chahkhanuri. The move has generated considerable interest among foreign policy-watchers.

New Delhi has been strongly backing the Afghan government led by President Ashraf Ghani. India has also earned considerable goodwill in Afghanistan through various development projects completed there. The Afghan Taliban on the other hand are considered to be an organisation that survives on Pakistani cross-border support.

MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted, "Foreign Secretary @HarshShringla met Acting Foreign Minister @hchahkhanuri of Afghanistan. They reviewed and positively assessed developments in bilateral strategic partnership. Foreign Secretary conveyed India's support for the people of Afghanistan in their pursuit for sustainable peace, security and development."

Indian Ambassador in Qatar P. Kumararam will represent New Delhi at the signing of the peace deal. Qatar had invited India for the event. This is the first time that India will be present at an "official" Taliban on the other hand are considered to be an organisation that survives on Pakistani cross-border support.

Pete Buttigieg campaign deploys Twitter followers



Pete Buttigieg

The Pete Buttigieg campaign is deploying any army of Twitter volunteers to "digital door-knocking" likely ahead of the important Super Tuesday primaries next week, two members of the Buttigieg campaign said. It's just one way that 2020 presidential campaigns are leveraging social media in new and aggressive ways ahead of the primary contest. As part of its efforts to get out the vote, the Buttigieg campaign has amassed roughly 200 total volunteers, spread across every Super Tuesday state and territory, to contact

likely Pete supporters over Twitter. Those volunteers will rest out a set of the @PeteForAmerica Twitter account's over 66,000 followers, organized by the state listed in their Twitter profile. After being named the Buttigieg campaign's online engagement director earlier this year, Stefan Smith has focused on how the campaign could harness the very real grassroots energy they see online by adding structure to internet organizing "without making it top down," Smith said. By scrapping @PeteForAmerica's followers, the campaign was able to sort each account by state in a spreadsheet that volunteers in those states can access. The volunteers then either DM or mention the account handles to see if they need help causing or voting. —Agencies

IN BRIEF

Air toxics lead to kidney diseases

Washington: Living in countries with higher levels of air pollution, such as India and China, may be associated with an increased risk of developing kidney diseases, a study suggests.

17 new planets discovered

Toronto: Astronomers have discovered 17 new planets, including a potentially habitable Earth-sized world, by combing through data gathered by NASA's Kepler space telescope.

Biggest cosmic explosion detected

Melbourne: Astronomers, using X-ray and radio telescopes, including the Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT) in Pune, have discovered the biggest explosion seen since the Big Bang from a supermassive black hole at the centre of a far away galaxy.

LINK BETWEEN CALORIE CONTROL, AGEING DECODED

Los Angeles, Feb. 28: Restricting food-calorie intake may help reduce levels of inflammation throughout the body, delay the onset of age-related diseases, and increase lifespan, according to a study which provides the most detailed report to date of the cellular effects of a calorie-restricted diet in rats.

While the benefits of calorie restriction have been widely studied, the new results, published in the Journal Cell, showed how it protected against ageing by shedding light on the chemical processes happening at the cell-level under the diet.

Nigeria, 6 nations see rise in cases of Covid-19

Nearly 60 countries hit by the virus; Africa at risk

Lagos, Feb. 28: Nigeria reported the first new Covid-19 case in sub-Saharan Africa on Friday, tacked on deepening fears of a pandemic and the World Health Organization (WHO) warned against the "fatal mistake" of complacency.

THE WHO on Friday upgraded the global risk from Covid-19 to "very high", saying the continued increase in cases and countries affected was "clearly of concern".

THE WHO has voiced particular concern about Africa's preparedness and poor healthcare systems to respond to a Covid-19 epidemic.

The list of countries hit by the illness edged toward 60 with Mexico, Belarus, Lithuania, New Zealand, Azerbaijan and the Netherlands reporting their first cases, along with Nigeria.

Belarus reported Friday its first coronavirus case, an Iranian student who arrived in the country from Azerbaijan last week. The health ministry said the patient was in a "satisfactory" condition.

The number of new deaths and infections has been tapering off in China, following unprecedented quarantine efforts locking down tens of millions of people in the worst-hit cities.

China reported 44 more deaths on Friday, raising its toll to 2,788, with 327 new cases.



Pope Francis

POPE DOWN WITH COLD IN TIME OF CORONAVIRUS

Vatican City, Feb. 28: Pope Francis cancelled his official audiences on Friday after apparently coming down with a cold.

The Vatican said the 83-year-old pontiff celebrated morning Mass as usual and greeted participants at the end. He planned to keep his private meeting schedule as planned, but decided to cancel the official audiences, the Vatican said.



New virus has infected 83,000 globally, caused 2,800 deaths

NEW VIRUS HAS INFECTED 83,000 GLOBALLY, CAUSED 2,800 DEATHS

Beijing, Feb. 28: A viral outbreak that began in China has infected more than 83,000 people globally. The World Health Organization has named the illness Covid-19.

The latest figures reported by each government's health authority as of Friday in Beijing:

Table with columns for Country and Cases. Includes Hong Kong (92 cases), Macao (10 cases), South Korea (2,022 cases), Japan (918 cases), Italy (650 cases), Iran (254 cases), Singapore (96 cases), India (3 cases), United States (60 cases), Croatia (3 cases), Kuwait (43 cases), Greece (3 cases), Thailand (40 cases), Israel (3 cases), Bahrain (33 cases), Lebanon (3 cases), Taiwan (32 cases), 1 death, Pakistan (2 cases), Finland (2 cases), Australia (23 cases), Austria (2 cases), Malaysia (23 cases), Sweden (7 cases), Germany (21 cases), Egypt (1 case), France (38 cases), 2 deaths, Algeria (1 case), 2 deaths, Afghanistan (1 case), North Macedonia (1 case), Spain (17 cases), Georgia (1 case), Vietnam (16 cases), United Kingdom (15 cases), Estonia (1 case), United Arab Emirates (14 cases), Belgium (1 case), Canada (19 cases), Netherlands (1 case), Iraq (6 cases), Romania (1 case), Russia (6 cases), Sri Lanka (1 case), Switzerland (5 cases), Cambodia (1 case), Oman (6 cases), Norway (1 case), Philippines (3 cases), 1 death, Denmark (1 case), Brazil (1 case).

Empty prayer house



A view of the deserted Orthodox Patriarchal Cathedral in Bucharest as Romania's Orthodox Church (BOR) announced "exceptional measures" due to concerns about the Covid-19 on Friday.

VIRUS GAME 'PLAGUE' APP PULLED OUT

Beijing, Feb. 28: A popular game that allows players to create a virus and spread it worldwide has been pulled from Apple's App Store in China.

Users based in China could not download "Plague Inc" on Friday after the cyber watchdog ordered its removal over "illegal" content.

Chinese couple gives fake info, booked

Singapore, Feb. 28: A couple from China on Friday became the first two persons to be charged under Singapore's Infectious Diseases Act for providing false information to the authorities relating to the deadly Covid-19, obstructing the process of contact tracing, an important exercise of monitoring people exposed to the infected persons.

Hu Jun, 38, from Wuhan, the epicentre of the deadly Covid-19, and his wife Shi Sha, 36, who lives in Singapore, became the first two people to be charged under the Infectious Diseases Act, in relation to the current outbreak, the Ministry of Health said in a statement on Wednesday.

THE COUPLE allegedly gave false information to the health ministry officials about their movements and whereabouts from January 22 to 29, when they were contacted during the quarantine period.

THE MINISTRY said that it was able to determine the couple's true movements only through detailed investigations confirmed to be infected with Covid-19 on January 31, the statement said.

Disney Parks in Tokyo closed

Tokyo, Feb. 28: The operator of Tokyo's two Disney resorts, Disneyland and DisneySea, said on Friday the parks would be closed for around two weeks on fears over the outbreak of the new coronavirus.



A file photo showing Disney characters and dancers parading in Tokyo before it was closed for two weeks over fears of Covid-19.

JAPAN SCHOOL CLOSURE COMES AS A SHOCK

Tokyo, Feb. 28: The Japanese government's abrupt call for schools nationwide to close over the Covid-19 outbreak has caught parents and administrators off-guard, prompting criticism even as some experts defended the move.

On Thursday night, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced he would ask primary, junior high and high schools to shut their doors for at least a month, though nurseries and after-school clubs are expected to remain open.

QUESTIONING | POWER His delayed response to Covid-19 outbreak proves his incompetence

White House hopefuls target Trump

Charleson (US), Feb. 28: Democratic White House hopefuls are seizing on President Donald Trump's slow and delayed response to the Covid-19 outbreak, calling it the latest evidence of his incompetence and warning that the crisis may only deepen as a result.

A NUMBER of the candidates have released their own pandemic policies. The chaos of the administration is front and center in everyone's mind, said Jesse Ferguson, a longtime Democratic strategist and former spokesman for Hillary Clinton's campaign.

During their CNN town halls, Warren warned that the economic impact of the new Covid-19 could get worse. She and Klobuchar slammed Trump's decision to put Vice President Mike Pence in charge of the Covid-19 response, noting his controversial handling of an HIV outbreak in Indiana when he was governor.



Donald Trump

quick BITES

INDICATORS

		%
Sensex	38,297.29	-3.64
Nifty 50	11,201.80	-3.71
S&P 500*	2,892.93	-2.88
Dollar (₹)	72.21	0.85
Pound Sterling (₹)	93.27	0.09
Euro (₹)	79.93	1.60
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	43,358,722	0.51
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	50.41	-1.77
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.371	-0.007
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.190	-0.109

*As of 9:30 pm IST

Slowdown is temporary, says Mukesh Ambani

The current economic slowdown is "temporary" and caused by external turbulence, and the country has reasons to be more optimistic for the next decade, richest Indian Mukesh Ambani said on Friday.

The chairman and managing director of Reliance Industries said the coming decade presents a "historic opportunity" for businesses to excel and place India among the top three economies of the world.

Dumping duty likely on zinc, aluminium items

The commerce ministry's dumping probe arm DGTR has recommended antidumping duty on aluminium and zinc coated flat products from China, Vietnam and Korea to guard domestic players from cheap imports, according to a notification. The Directorate General of Trade Remedies has recommended duty in the range of \$14.5-17.51 per tonne on the imports. The directorate's probe concluded dumping of such flat products.

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Motilal Oswal fined for using client funds

The Sebi has slapped a fine of Rs 17 lakh on Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd for failing to comply with Sebi's circular that mandated stock brokers to segregate the funds and securities of the clients. The order follows an inspection conducted by Sebi between April 2012 to March 2014. It found instances where the broker had indulged into intermingling or misuse of clients' funds, especially credit balance of clients.

Land Rover's new Defender comes at ₹70L

Jaguar Land Rover, the Tata Motors-owned British marque, has launched the new Defender SUV priced at ₹ 69.99 lakh. The car was recently seen performing extreme stunts in the James Bond movie, No Time to Die, in a showcase of its off-road capabilities. The Defender is being imported into India and will be offered in five different variants across both 90 (3 door) and 110 (five door), Base, S, SE, HSE and First Edition.

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Q2 growth revised to 5.1% GDP growth dips to 7-yr low of 4.7%

MADHUSUDAN SHAOH
NEW DELHI, FEB. 28

Expanding at a marginal pace, India's economic growth slipped to a near seven-year low of 4.7 per cent during the October-December 2019 quarter.

The key reason for the slow growth for India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth is a massive contraction in manufacturing sector output.

The numbers released by the government on Friday were broadly in line with analysts' expectations. The GDP growth for the December quarter is the lowest since January-March of 2012-13, when it stood at 4.3 per cent.

The 4.7 per cent expansion in the third quarter of the current financial year compares with a revised 5.1 per cent growth witnessed in July-September of 2018-19 was 12.15 per cent of that year's revised base estimate.

Reacting to the GDP numbers, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that it's more important that the economy is moving ahead amid the ongoing global slowdown. "It's encouraging that the ship is moving ahead. I am glad the GDP numbers indicate there are some stanchions in the economy," she said.

Economic affairs secretary Atanu Chakrabarty said the decline in the economic growth has bottomed out. "The growth in the third quarter of 2019-20 is 4.7 per cent, while electricity growth fell 0.7 per cent compared with a 3.9 per cent growth earlier. The weak growth for the manufacturing sector during the January-March quarter of the fiscal," Chakrabarty said.

Core sector grows 2.2% in January

FC BUREAU
CHENNAI, FEB. 28

Eight core industries stood at 137.5 in January, which increased by 2.2 per cent as compared to the index in the same month last year. The index had grown 1.5 per cent in January 2019 and 1.1 per cent in December 2019.

Production of coal increased by 8 per cent, crude oil and petroleum production rose 1.9 per cent, steel production increased by 2.2 per cent, cement by 7.5 per cent and electricity generation climbed by 2.8 per cent in January. However, mining production declined by 5.3 per cent and natural gas by 9.1 per cent.

The combined Index of

PE/VC investment in fintech hits record

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, FEB. 28

The financial technology industry saw record private equity/venture capital investment in the first quarter of 2020, as the industry had clocked just \$708 million worth investments, which led to a 225 per cent quarter-on-quarter growth in Q4.

Altogether, the industry funding, but hinted at a larger reliance on the private sector in 2020.

The government has utilised a clause under the financial deficit and budget deficit waiver in the 2019-20 budget to allow a wider fiscal gap of 3.8 per cent in FY20 and has committed to an "average event," Sitharaman said the government is mulling creating a Development Finance Corporation (DFC) to help fund the Rs 102-lakh crore infrastructure



sumption expenditure, which grew 5.3 per cent.

The government numbers came in a day the Sensex tanked over 1,400 points and the rupee plunged by 60 paise against the US dollar.

Besides, India's fiscal deficit also touched 128.5 per cent of the whole year budget target at January-end, while the deficit during the same period during 2018-19 was 121.5 per cent of that year's revised base estimate.

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Rupee slips 60 paise to close at 72.21/\$

FALAKNAZ SYED
MUMBAI, FEB. 28

The rupee on Friday fell 60 paise to close at Rs 72.21 tracking the US dollar tracking a sell-off in the equity market, as overseas investors dumped Indian stocks on fears that coronavirus outbreak may trigger recession across major economies.

The spread of Covid-19 has become more a pandemic compared to the situation in December 2019 when it was restricted largely to China. This has raised concerns of the impact being more serious for the world economy as it affects the prospects of all affected countries. The WHO head has said that coronavirus has the potential to become a pandemic and that it was at a decisive stage now.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 71.90 to the US dollar. During the day, it hit a low of 72.29 and finally settled at 72.21, down 60 paise over its previous close.

Asian currencies are also trading with depreciating bias while the flood-bath in the equity market. The WHO head has said that coronavirus has the potential to become a pandemic and that it was at a decisive stage now.

JEREMY HERRON & VILDANA HAIRIC
FEB. 28

Fear over the economic fallout from the spreading coronavirus tightened its grip on global markets and sending US equities to a seven-day straight loss and sparking demand for safe assets from Treasuries to the yen.

The S&P 500 plunged more than 3 per cent on Friday and is now down over 15 per cent from its record. The index is mired in its longest slump in over three years and careening toward its worst week since the financial crisis. The Dow Jones Industrial Average has shed more than 4,000 points this week.

The sell-off picked up after a White House official suggested the virus could force some companies to close and more disruptions could upend sales and profit forecasts.



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ket and even the yen which till now was firm got impacted today for the first time. On the positive side, crude oil prices are down and the RBI has surplus forex reserves. Bond yields have not been impacted much as there is ample liquidity in the system and there is another Long Term Repo Operation (LTRO) slated for Monday," said the treasury head of a public sector bank.

Crude oil prices have declined quite sharply and contrary to the expectation that the Opec would try and lift the price to the \$80-plus region by invoking output cuts, the fear of recession has taken WTI crude to less than \$80.

"Likely range for USD-INR pair 71.72-72.05 with upside bias. Rupee could remain supported and could turn out to be a relative outperformer given low crude prices," said

Abbhishek Goenka, chief executive officer at IFA Global.

Balaburnam, economist at IDFC AMC said, "India's growth could be impacted by the coronavirus depending on the duration and intensity of both its spread and containment measures across the world. While India's direct trade linkage to China and Hong Kong is at 9 per cent of total exports and 17 per cent of total imports, supply chain disruptions and lower external demand would add to domestic issues and continued risk-off capital outflows could put pressure on emerging market currencies, although the RBI has been shoring up forex reserves. However, expectations of global monetary policy easing has already started rising amidst the uncertainty which still looms large."

Gold slumps by ₹222

New Delhi, Feb 28: Gold prices on Friday fell by Rs 222 to Rs 43,358 per 10 gram in the national capital in line with weak trend in global markets, according to HDPC Securities.

The precious metal had closed at Rs 43,580 per 10 gram in the previous trading session. Spot gold for 24 Karat Gold at Delhi plunged by Rs 222 with sharp fall in international gold prices. HDPC Securities Senior Analyst Tapan Patel said, "Owing to sharp depreciation in the rupee, the gold prices might not see further downfall, he said. He attributed the decline in yellow metal prices to investors switching to safer investment tool such as bonds. —PTI

World stock rout extends as fear grips markets

Auto stocks tank over 11%

Pune, Feb. 28: Auto stocks plunged on Friday amid fear of supply chain disruptions. The BSE auto index dropped 3.78 per cent with Tata Motors plunging 11.05 per cent. Ashok Leyland fell 8.15 per cent and M&M 7.50 per cent. According to the Association of Indian Forging Industry (AIFI), China is a leading supplier of auto components to India and any supply disruptions from there would hurt automotive production here. It said vehicle makers have reduced their production plan for February and March due to non-receipt of components. —Michael Gonsalves

Airlines crash

Mumbai, Feb 28: Shares of airline companies plunged up to 10 per cent on Friday. Shares of Indigo Aviation plunged 9.99 per cent to Rs 1,229.75 on the BSE. Spicjet cracked 6.68 per cent to a low of Rs 82.10. Defunct airline Jet Airways hit its lower price band losing 4.81 per cent at Rs 24.55. —PTI

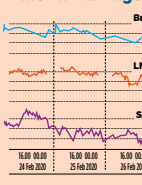
Commodities savaged in sell-everything Friday

JAKE LLOYD-SMITH & NICK DURISIN
FEB. 28

Global commodity prices continued to tumble Friday as the fast-spreading coronavirus epidemic sparked fears for global growth prospects and demand for raw materials from fuel to food.

International benchmark Brent crude slipped below \$50 a barrel for the first time since December 2019 as oil majors' production cuts were in jeopardy. The coronavirus epidemic continues to

Material damage



Commodities are selling off across the board

spread, now more quickly outside of China than within the country, as the first cases are reported in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa and travel and event restrictions are imposed in Europe and Asia. Major commodity trading houses are also keeping employees from leaving their offices but events this week at the oil industry's biggest gather-

the worst week since the 2008 crisis, down around 10 per cent. With the likes of Citigroup Inc saying they want to see markets "closer to panic" before going all-in on global equities, the debt buyers who have helped make this bull market the longest on record are nowhere to be seen. That's all put shares worldwide on course for

ing were cancelled. That's spurred a stampede away from risk assets, with no appetite for dip-buying before the weekend. Oil in London is on course for its biggest weekly loss since 2016 ahead of a crucial meeting next week in Vienna between Opec and its allies about whether to extend its supply-side curbs output and keep prices stabilised. Saudi Arabia wants the Opec and its allies to agree to collective production cuts of an additional 1 million barrels a day. The price for May delivery sank as much 4.2% to \$49.58 a barrel on the ICE Futures Europe exchange. Gold futures fell as much as 1.2 per cent to \$1,822.50

an ounce, set for a weekly loss. Standard Chartered Bank said the drop in bullion may be driven by investors selling the metal to cover margin calls in tumbling equity markets.

Base metals are heading for a rout as investors drop zinc and aluminium hitting their lowest levels in more than three years. The price of copper fell as much as 1.5 per cent to \$5,533 a tonne, with inventories in China expanding in the first week of almost three years, indicating slumping demand. In crops, palm oil headed for its worst week in 11 years in Malaysia on slumping petroleum prices. weaker exports and concern over the coronavirus. —Bloomberg

No decision on relief to telcos at DCC meet

New Delhi, Feb 28: The crucial meeting of Digital Communications Commission (DCC) on Friday could not arrive at a decision on relief to the distressed telecom sector as government officials said more details are required for reconciliation of data on statutory dues.

In a day of hectic parleys at DoT, Vodafone Idea (VIL) CEO and MD Ravinder Takkar also met telecom secretary Anshu Prakash but refused to comment on the details of his discussion. Telecom companies have been desperately waiting for a bailout package from the government after a Supreme Court order put their statutory liabilities at Rs 1.47 lakh crore, and all eyes were on the DCC meet for the much-needed relief to fix the AGR imbroglio. In fact, just days ahead of the Friday meeting of



spread, now more quickly outside of China than within the country, as the first cases are reported in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa and travel and event restrictions are imposed in Europe and Asia. Major commodity trading houses are also keeping employees from leaving their offices but events this week at the oil industry's biggest gather-

DCC, VIL - which is the most vulnerable of the lot, told the government that it would not be able to pay the Supreme Court mandated Rs 53,000 crore dues until the government extended to survive the crisis. VIL had made a strong plea for setting off Rs 8,000 crore of GST credits, a three-year moratorium on payments of the remaining amount which should be staggered over 15 years at a simple interest rate of 6 per cent, drastic cut in licence fee and fixing a minimum price of call and data. —PTI

IOC to set up 500 EV stations

CHANDRASHEKAR G
BENGALURU, FEB. 28

A day after Karnataka minister for large and medium enterprises Jagdish Shettar's commitment to file a bill to electronic vehicles, the oil giant, IOC, Bengaluru to set up 500 electric charging stations across the country, said IOC Karnataka executive director D. L. Pramodh. He said that ministry of power has given the company a target to set up 500 charging stations across India in the first half of 2020.

"By March 31, the IOC in the state has aimed to set up to 34 vehicle charging facilities. Of the 34, 26 will be EV charging sites and 8 will be battery swapping stations," Pramodh added.

50 YEARS AGO IN
DECCAN
Chronicle

Land reforms:
PM for phased
programme

New Delhi, Feb. 27: Prime Minister Indira Gandhi is understood to have addressed a letter to Chief Ministers urging them to work out a phased programme of land reforms and to commit the necessary administrative and financial support for its fulfillment within a specified period.

The communication, dispatched last week, also emphasised the need to provide drinking water to every village by the end of the Fourth Plan, formulate rural works programme for solving the unemployment problem and take urgent steps to deal with problems of urbanisation.

Mrs. Gandhi warned the Chief Ministers that any delay or deficiency in the implementation of land reforms would accentuate social tensions and inhabit development.

She said the most important objectives to be fulfilled were security of tenure, fair rents, strict enforcement of ceilings, distribution of land to the landless and assignment of Government waste land suitable for cultivation to special labourers, with special reference to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

She stressed that land reforms alone could impart reality to the concept of a more egalitarian rural society.

Expressing her distress that many villages were still without drinking water, Mrs. Gandhi said the State Governments should ensure that by the end of the Fourth Plan no village remained without this basic amenity.

Mrs. Gandhi warned the Chief Ministers that any delay or deficiency in the implementation of land reforms would accentuate social tensions and inhabit development.

What now for Abu Dhabi's Manchester City project?

London: Manchester City have enjoyed a meteoric rise from mid-table mediocrity to serial trophy winners thanks to the deep pockets of Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Mansour. But now they face their biggest challenge in the new era.

European football's governing body Uefa on Friday banned City from European competitions for the next two seasons and imposed a fine of 30 million euros (\$32 million, £5 million) on the English champions.

City are up for the fight and will have their day in court. The club immediately responded that they would appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport for what they called "an impartial judgement".

However, failure to overturn the ban, even if it is reduced to just a one-season suspension, would have huge ramifications for City on and off the field.

Since the Sheikh Mansour takeover in 2008, City have won 10 major trophies — four Premier League titles, two FA Cups and four League Cups.

Yet the prize that has eluded them is the one the Abu Dhabi project most desires — the UEFA Champions League.

WHAT DID CITY DO WRONG?

City have been found to be in breach of Uefa's financial fair play rules, which place restrictions on how much money a club can lose.

Over a three-year period, clubs are not permitted to lose more than 30 million euros with exceptions for some costs such as youth development and women's teams.

Uefa's Club Financial Control Body found that City ensured they did not fall foul of those restrictions by overstating their sponsorship revenue between 2012 and 2016.

The case against City was reopened when German magazine *Der Spiegel* published a series of leaked emails in 2018 that seemed to show how City had manufactured



extra sponsorship revenue from a series of companies with connections to the Abu Dhabi United Group, owned by Sheikh Mansour. City strenuously deny that accusation.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF A BAN

Should City's appeal fail, there could be repercussions for the futures of manager Pep Guardiola and a host of star players.

Guardiola's contract runs until the end of the 2020/21 season, but the only major task left for the Catalan in Manchester is to make City European champions for the first

time. Under the former Barcelona and Bayern Munich boss, the club rewrote the record books in storming to the Premier League title with 100 points in 2017/18 and won a first-ever domestic treble of trophies in English football last season.

City have fallen off the pace in the title race this season, 22 points behind leaders Liverpool in second place.

Guardiola suggested this week he could even be sacked if his side fail to beat Real Madrid in the Champions League last-16 but while that is highly

Guardiola's contract runs until the end of the 2020/21 season, but the only major task left for the Catalan in Manchester is to make City European champions for the first time.

unlikely, he may not want to hang around for another season if there are only domestic prizes up for grabs. Similarly, players such as Kevin De Bruyne and Raheem Sterling are unlikely to want to waste

two of their peak years without Champions League football.

It would still take huge fees from rival clubs to tempt City to sell, but they may be forced to downsize to gain re-entry to the Champions League even after their ban is over.

City made 93 million euros from UEFA prize money and TV rights from last season's Champions League, with gate receipts and extra sponsorship revenue from Europe's premier club competition added to that tally.

It would be almost impossible for the club to lose that level of revenue for

two years and remain FFP-compliant without cutting costs on transfer fees and wages, or selling players. The sanctions may not even have stopped with UEFA. A Premier League investigation into City's compliance with FFP is also ongoing and could result in a points deduction.

WILL ABU DHABI INVESTMENT DRY UP?

The great unknown is how Abu Dhabi reacts to the setback. Former City CEO Gary Cook told The Athletic in December the aim of their takeover was to "create a proxy brand

for Abu Dhabi."

It has branched now damaged goods, particularly if FFP restrictions mean City's success on the field is curtailed?

On the other hand, the huge investment from Abu Dhabi has already lifted City to the status of one of the world's heavyweight clubs. The club have reported a combined profit for the past five years of 51 million and revenues have risen to £558 million a year. City are strong enough financially to compete and be FFP-compliant. It is how they got to this stage that has been their downfall. —AFP

Kodokan: A pilgrim for judokas

Tokyo: For judo lovers all over the world who make the pilgrimage to Tokyo's Kodokan, it's an emotional experience to tread the hallowed mats — a unique chance to train at the sport's Mecca.

It would be like a club tennis player knocking up at Wimbledon, a village cricket striding onto the bat at Lord's or a Sunday League footballer in a doing keepy-ups in a judo, "home of the game" welcomes all comers.

Many spend small fortunes just to experience the thrill of throwing opponents where judo began and others have been known to break down in tears when they realise a life's dream.

"It's everything that is judo," said Emrys Rees, a 28-year-old from Cannell, in South Wales, who said he has been dreaming of coming to the Kodokan since he started the sport 16 years ago.

"Just the chance to be on the mat here, training with all these great instructors, learning from them. People from all over the world coming together, leaning on each other, which is exactly one of the maxims of judo," Rees said.

The pinnacle for any judoka is to train at the iconic "Kangeiko" or Winter Training, 10 consecutive days of judo starting at 5:30 am sharp that is not for the faint-hearted.

Head coach at the Kodokan, Motonari Sameshima, said many for-



Judokas receive special instruction at the Kodokan. — AFP

eigners are overcome with emotion when they step onto the tatami for the first time, bowing to the statue of the sport's founder Jigoro Kano, before they do so.

Head coach at the Kodokan, Motonari Sameshima, said many foreigners are overcome with emotion when they step onto the tatami for the first time, bowing to the statue of the sport's founder Jigoro Kano, before they do so.

all role-call, nor the president's New Year speech in Japanese, nor the strenuous warm-up guided by one of the youngest judoka.

Sameshima admitted there was a language barrier but stressed that judo was "a genuinely physical activity" that transcends language.

"Even if they don't know the language, they know

and they are thrown. We feel pain, of course, when we are thrown, but we can get a connection with each other by doing so," he said.

On the day AFP visited, there were at least a dozen foreign judoka grappling at the Kodokan, from Australia, the United States, Germany, France, Britain and Brazil. Over the 10-day Kangeiko, 50 had registered from 16 countries.

Nick Forbes, a 29-year-old from Sydney, decided to make the trip of a lifetime after losing his job, using the redundancy money to fund his travel.

"I've always wanted to come to the Mecca of judo. This is where it all started," said Forbes, who was sleeping in an 18-person dormitory onsite to keep costs down.

For Sandro Endler, a 48-

Giroud puzzle: Will Blues find room for Cup winner?

Call it persistence. Call it force of circumstance. Call it downright desperation.

Whatever it is, Olivier Giroud is likely to be a key figure for Chelsea the rest of the season, whether his manager likes it or not.

Giroud has found himself in a bizarre situation over the past year. He is the first-choice striker for France, the world champion, but the third-choice striker for his club.

Frank Lampard's arrival at Stamford Bridge in the off-season last year nearly spelled the end of Giroud's brief time at Chelsea.

With the club hamstrung by a transfer ban, Lampard was determined to give youth its chance this season, while his high-energy approach demands pressing from his forward line.

Before last weekend, Giroud had made just eight appearances for Chelsea in all competitions this season, just two more than he had made for France.

He was close to securing a move to Inter Milan in the January transfer window, with a frustrated Lampard openly expressing his desire to sign a striker amid a slump for his team, but it never happened.

Staying with Abraham nursing the latest in a string of minor injuries as he runs out of steam in his break-

down season, and Batsbuayi ineffective against Manchester United on Monday, Lampard was backed into a corner and

decided to hand Giroud a start against Tottenham on Saturday.

With Giroud delivering a goal and a strong all-round performance, Lampard now has a decision to make ahead of Bayern Munich's visit to Stamford Bridge in the Champions League on Tuesday.

"He's always been engaged, even when he's not played regularly," Lampard said of Giroud. "I said it in the (January) window, he's been absolutely fantastic with me from the start now, and that's why he can put in those performances when he comes in."

"Personality in the dressing room, on the pitch; quality to finish; selfless in his very strong. He's been around, won the World Cup. He's very good with the younger players around him, he wants to train at a high level every day, he understands his game, his attributes and how important they can be."

It was quite the roll call of attributes. And it begged the question: Why had Giroud been so underused by Lampard to this point? Lampard probably regrets that now. Surely Giroud has jumped above the faltering Batsbuayi in the pecking order and must be challenging Abraham for a starting spot against Bayern in their first leg in the round of 16.

Picking Giroud will mean Chelsea has to alter its style of play. He will need busy, energetic attacking midfielders around him to run onto his flick-ons or to be nearby when he brings down the ball with his back to the goal.

Don't expect Giroud to prey on the shoulder of the centre backs and sprint in behind — the opposition defense. Bizarrely, though, that is exactly what occurred in his goal against Tottenham in the 2-0 win on Saturday.

For that reason, players like Mason Mount and Ross Barkley — playmakers who had impressive displays against an admittedly tame Tottenham — should thrive alongside Giroud if the Frenchman stays in the team.

Chelsea might be more predictable should Giroud start, but he can be highly effective. His lack of mobility can be made up in other areas, and the importance of his experience cannot be discounted, even if Lampard clearly leans in favor of his younger players.

It's been three months in the stands," Giroud said after the game, referring to his most recent start for Chelsea — a home loss to West Ham on Nov. 30, when he struggled to make an impact.

With his confidence higher and having likely changed the opinion of his coach, Giroud should now have more time on the field.

With the European Championship a fast approaching, France coach Didier Deschamps would probably say "oui" to that, too. —AFP

SHORT TAKES

India, Pak will play Asia Cup in Dubai

Kolkata: BCCI president Sourav Ganguly on Friday said the next Asia Cup will be held in Dubai, paving the way for both India and Pakistan to participate in the continental tournament. Pakistan was the designated hosts for the tournament scheduled for September, but with the BCCI making it clear that the Indian team would not be able to travel to the neighbouring country owing to security concerns, the event has been moved to Dubai. "Asia Cup will be held in Dubai and both India and Pakistan will play," Ganguly said. Earlier, the BCCI had said they have no problem with Pakistan hosting the tournament, provided it is held at a neutral venue. India and Pakistan have not played a bilateral series since 2012-13 when Pakistan visited the country for a limited-over series. Due to the ongoing political tensions between the two countries, India and Pakistan have only met in major international tournaments since early 2013. —PTI

Kohli might not feature in Asia XI

Christchurch: India captain Virat Kohli's strenuous workload will certainly be a factor when BCCI decides its list of players to feature in the Asia XI team for the two-match T20I series against West Indies on March 21 and 22. While the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has recently stated that Kohli is expected to play at least one match, the agency can confirm after talking to top BCCI sources that India captain has not yet given his consent. The Indian team will return from a gruelling six-week tour of New Zealand on March 10 and are set to assemble in Dharamsala on March 10 for the first ODI against South Africa on March 12. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has sent a wish list of 10 names and we are supposed to send five players. As of now, we have not confirmed any names. All the players including the skipper will undergo tests to check their level of workload. Only then will we give the names, a senior BCCI source said. —PTI

Akmal asked to return payment

Karachi: Pakistan batsman Umar Akmal, who has been suspended pending an anti-corruption investigation for failing to report a spot-fixing approach, has been told to return the payment cheque he received prior to the start of the Pakistan Super League. According to official sources, Umar Akmal's name was on the list of other players in the league, who was paid 70 per cent of his total contract amount for representing Quetta Gladiators in the PSL. "We have now been asked to return the amount to the Pakistan Cricket Board and stands suspended from the PSL and all other cricket activities until the inquiry is completed," one source said. The source said as per rules, all players participating in the PSL as well as foreign players have been paid 70 per cent of the contract amounts and remaining 30 per cent will be paid soon after the completion of the league on 22nd March. —PTI

RANJI TROPHY SEMIFINAL

Bengal up against strong Karnataka

Kolkata, Feb. 28: Bolstered by KL Rahul's availability, heavyweights Karnataka will stand in the way of Bengal as they bid to reach their first Ranji Trophy final in 13 years, when they meet in a last-four clash starting here Saturday.

Bengal have not made the Ranji Trophy final since 2006-07 when the Deep Dasgupta-led side finished runners-up for the second consecutive season. Their last title came way back in 1989-90 when the Sourav Ganguly-led debut first-class season.

On the other hand, eight-time winners Karnataka have remained consistent and are appearing in their third semifinals on the way to the final. Under coach Arun Lal, Bengal have done well collectively and will look to exploit the home advantage over the next few days. They won back-to-back away matches against Assam and Punjab to seal a last-eight berth where they edged out Odisha in Cuttack. Former skipper Manoj Tiwary leads the team's batting chart with 651 runs from nine matches. —PTI

Christchurch challenge

India batsmen set to face barrage of bouncers as New Zealand likely to deploy all-pace attack



Christchurch, Feb. 28: Their pride bruised and technique exposed in adverse conditions, India's famed batting line-up will face its hour of reckoning against a New Zealand pace attack, threatening to be relentless with its short ball tactic in the second Test starting Saturday.

The ignominy of a defeat in less than five days in a World Test Championship encounter has certainly increased a batting line-up that prides itself in performing in tough conditions. And none other than coach Ravi Shastri is first to agree.

"A shake up like this is good as it opens your mind. When you are on the road all the time and have not tasted defeat, it can close your mind," Shastri was forthright in his admission that placency had crept in somewhere. Come Saturday, the Virat Kohli, Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane will face an even tougher test on a green top at the Hagley Oval where the Black Caps have won all but one Test.

With the peerless prescription of the short-ball tactic Neil Wagner joining Tim Southee, Trent Boult and Kyle Jamieson in aiming for the rib cage from round the wicket, there will be more probing questions on offer during the next five days.

What the Indian team would want is one among Ashwin, Hanuma Vihari

SHAW IS FIT AND READY TO PLAY, CONFIRMS SHASTRI

Christchurch, Feb. 28: Young opener Prithvi Shaw has recovered from a foot injury and is "ready to go" in the second and final Test against New Zealand starting here on Saturday. India head coach Ravi Shastri has said that Shaw missed Thursday's training session due to swelling on his left foot, increasing the Indian team manager's worries ahead of the second Test.

But the good news for India was that Shaw was back in the nets on Friday with an extensive session under the watchful eyes of Shastri and got some valuable tips from skipper Virat Kohli. "Prithvi is ready to go," Shastri said, clearing the air on the opener's fitness. —PTI

Umesh Yadav or Navdeep Saini will be inducted in case Ishant fails to make it.

For New Zealand, it could be an all-pace attack considering that Ajaz Patel, the specialist left-arm spinner, had precious little to do at the Basin Reserve. With Wagner getting his place back, the team management would find it difficult to bench Jamieson who won Man of the Match award on Test debut. "It's a good kind of worry to have for the Kane, Trent Boult, Shastri said. —PTI

As per team sources, Ishant's scan report is awaited and he looks doubtful as of now. The visitors, in all likelihood, will have two changes in the playing XI from the last Test with Ravichandran Ashwin likely to lose his spot to Ravindra Jadeja and

Hagley will be better to bowl: Boult

Christchurch, Feb. 28: Senior New Zealand pacer Trent Boult on Friday said he expects the green top at the Hagley Oval to be more conducive for his brand of swing bowling compared to the Basin Reserve track where they thrashed India by 10 wickets in the opening Test.

Boult took four Indian wickets in the second innings including Cheteshwar Pujara and skipper Virat Kohli. "...it's probably better (than bowling at the Basin). The Basin generally turns into a very nice batting surface. There's a lot of runs been scored there. Kohli, Shastri said on the eve of the second Test here. "Here's a slightly different story," Boult said referring to the Christchurch strip. "You are not battling the surface. The overhands are there and it's generally a nice place to pitch the ball up and get it swinging around." —PTI

Boult said. "You are not battling the surface. The overhands are there and it's generally a nice place to pitch the ball up and get it swinging around." —PTI



Virat Kohli (left) and Prithvi Shaw ahead of the second Test against New Zealand in Christchurch. —AP

It's much-needed shake-up: Shastri

Christchurch, Feb. 28: India head coach Ravi Shastri termed the Basin Reserve debacle as a timely "shake up" for his team which will now go into the second Test with an "open mind", fully aware of the challenges that New Zealand will pose over the next five days. "India lost the first Test by 10 wickets in just over three days and Shastri considers it as a blessing in disguise for a bunch of players who have gotten used to only winning games."

"I always believe when you are on a run like we were, a shake-up like this (in domestic and international cricket)." Boult said at the pre-match press conference ahead of the second Test here. "There's a slightly different story," Boult said referring to the Christchurch strip. "You are not battling the surface. The overhands are there and it's generally a nice place to pitch the ball up and get it swinging around." —PTI

"Here's a slightly different story," Boult said referring to the Christchurch strip. "You are not battling the surface. The overhands are there and it's generally a nice place to pitch the ball up and get it swinging around." —PTI

The defeat, nonetheless, hurts and Shastri made it clear that Test cricket remains on top of his team's agenda both in domestic and international cricket. "It's a good lesson and I am sure the boys are up for the challenge," the head coach seemed confident as ever. "The defeat, nonetheless, hurts and Shastri made it clear that Test cricket remains on top of his team's agenda both in domestic and international cricket. "It's a good lesson and I am sure the boys are up for the challenge," the head coach seemed confident as ever. "The defeat, nonetheless, hurts and Shastri made it clear that Test cricket remains on top of his team's agenda both in domestic and international cricket." —PTI

You know what strategies NZ are employing and now you are prepared, what to expect, what to have your plans on how to counter that.

— RAVI SHASTRI

ICC T20 World Cup. "I wouldn't judge ODI and Test cricket as they are totally different things. For us, the least priority is ODI cricket at the moment. Because of the schedule and what's coming up in the next two years. Our focus — Test cricket is No.1 and T20 cricket," said Shastri. India is still on top of World Test Championship points table and Shastri feels that there shouldn't be undue panic after just one defeat. "...we played eight games (3 vs South Africa, 2 vs West Indies and 2 vs Bangladesh and 1 vs New Zealand) and won seven. For one loss, there is absolutely no need to panic." —PTI

T20 can't survive without Test cricket: Hadlee

Christchurch, Feb. 28: A purist at heart, New Zealand pace great Sir Richard Hadlee is not a fan of T20 cricket and has no qualms in asserting that the shortest format will not survive if Tests are not taken care of.

Hadlee said the foundation of cricket must be "preserved" and all three formats can co-exist if a balance is struck. "Test cricket must be preserved. It's the foundation on which the game is based. So we must look after the five-day game," Hadlee said. "Certainly with emergence of T20 cricket which is a revolution in the



Sir Richard Hadlee

game, all three formats need to live together. They can co-exist but I hate to see that T20 cricket will dominate world cricket, the 69-year-old made his preference clear in response to a query.

He is very sure that T20 cricket won't be able to sustain the game if the traditional format is not taken care of. "Probably too much T20 cricket is played around the world. But I hope that the game doesn't try to just survive through T20 cricket because T20 cricket is not real cricket. Real cricket is Test cricket," said Hadlee, the owner of 431 Test wickets and 3124 runs from only 86 Tests.

Hadlee, however, feels that T20 has produced more skillful players even though they might not be better cricketers. "I am not saying they are better players but they are certainly more skillful. Because of different formats that they play, they have to adapt to different situations particularly in T20 which is a high risk game anyway." —PTI

BATTLING THE CANCER HAS PUT LIFE INTO PERSPECTIVE FOR PACE LEGEND HADLEE

Christchurch, Feb. 28: It's nowhere close to perfect but New Zealand pace legend Sir Richard Hadlee says he is "at the moment all clear" in his two-year-old battle with cancer, which necessitated two surgeries and changed his perspective on life.

Hadlee was diagnosed with bowel cancer in June 2018. A month after undergoing a surgery to have the tumour removed, he had to be operated for a secondary liver cancer. "It puts life into perspective because I never had symptoms. It was purely a freak situation where a routine colonoscopy determined the problem. I was faced with a huge challenge in my life as odds were not in my favour," Hadlee said. "One of the greatest fast bowlers of all time and probably the best ever from this part of the world, Hadlee said the next five years are important. "Two years have gone by and I have to go through the next three years. Tomorrow I could wake up with a symptom," Hadlee said with the familiar grit of his playing days writ large on his face. He recalled the first six months after diagnosis which were like living hell for the legend, who played 86 Tests for New Zealand, taking 431 wickets and a world record at the time. "At the moment all good, I lost 10 kilos. I do all normal things now, just watch my diet. I get regular check-ups every three months." —PTI

India look to iron out batting woes against SL

Melbourne, Feb. 28: A semifinal berth secured, the unbeaten Indian women's cricket team would look to address some of its batting issues in the final Group A match against a defeated Sri Lanka in the ICC T20 World Cup here on Saturday.

The Indians are on a roll, having beaten the hosts in the semifinal berth with wins over defending champions Australia, Bangladesh and New Zealand. The Lankans, on the other hand, are out of the semifinal race following two losses so far.

While India beat hosts Australia by 17 runs in the tournament opener, they defeated Bangladesh by 18 runs before eking out a narrow four-run victory over the White Ferns on Thursday.

And come Saturday, the Harmanpreet Kaur-led team would look to end its group engagements on a high when it takes on the islanders. But the Indians definitely have a few things to worry about, especially their below-par show with the bat, going into the business end of the tournament. —PTI

LIVE on TV
India vs Sri Lanka on STAR Sports 2, HD @ 9:30 AM

Can't take any team lightly, will shift focus to semis after SL clash: Harman

Melbourne, Feb. 28: The Indian women's team captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Friday insisted that her side will take its final group game of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup against Sri Lanka seriously before shifting focus on to the semifinals. "I know we have qualified, but the next game is still crucial for us. We will be taking Sri Lanka very seriously," Harmanpreet said. "They've been doing well. I know they haven't won a game but they were almost there on both occasions. We will be taking it very seriously before we start thinking about the semi-finals," she added. Victory over Sri Lanka on Saturday would see India top Group A and head into the semifinals high on confidence.

"We try to take every wicket in all of our games. Every wicket is an important one at this level. We just have to try and stick to our plan, especially to get out the likes of Chamari Athapaththu early. That will be crucial," Harmanpreet said. —PTI

I know we have qualified, but the next game is still crucial for us. We will be taking Sri Lanka very seriously. They've been doing well.

—HARMANPREET KAUR



—PTI

SHORT TAKES

Bala Devi upbeat about Rangers FC

New Delhi: Indian striker Bala Devi says playing in the high-quality Scottish Women's League is an opportunity she wants to "grab" and "make the most of at any cost". Bala Devi scripted history when she was signed up by renowned Scottish side Rangers FC last month, making her the first Indian woman to play outside the country professionally. "This is an opportunity which I have to grab, and make the most of at any cost," Bala said. Having started in both the matches for Rangers FC, the Indian national team striker feels the experience can help her become a complete player and give a clearer picture of where she stands. She joined the club on an 18-month deal after a successful spell on trial at Rangers in November. The development makes Bala the first Indian woman to become a professional footballer anywhere in the world and she also became Rangers' first Asian international footballer. — PTI

Diksha cards 69, is tied-second

Dubbo, Australia: India's Diksha Dagar shot a solid 68 on the back of three birdies and an eagle in the second round of the Women's New South Wales Open tournament here on Friday. Dagar carded 69 in the first round and at seven-under 137 is tied-second and two shots behind leader, Manon De Roey, who shot 64 on day two of the event. Three-time LET winner Aditi Ashok recovered from her first round 73 to shoot 69 and rise to tied-11 at the end of the second round. The other four Indians in the field, Ivesa Malik (79-73), Gaurika Bishnoi (74-78), Madan (78-77) and Ridhima Dilwari (81-76) all missed the cut, which fell at 109. Long-hitting Dagar, who will defend her Investec South African Women's Open in a fortnight, also moved up the 10th in a Round of 68. The 19-year-old Dagar trails Belgian De Roey by two. — PTI

Oly cauldron to be lit for marathon

Atlanta: The Olympic cauldron used in the 1996 Games in Atlanta was scheduled to be publicly lit for the first time in more than two decades on Saturday. Georgia State University announced the cauldron will be lit just before noon on February 29, news outlets reported. "I felt like I started exceptionally well and I was able to get the ball kind of in my areas a bit more," said the Australian top seed. "Then in the second set Garbine was able to shift her court position and take a few more risks, put me on the back foot. It was frustrating. I felt like I wasn't doing a lot wrong but I wasn't making the most of my opportunities and wasn't getting opportunities." "So I was happy to be able to get to a third set well," she added. Barty has won her last three meetings with Kvitová, including the quarterfinals of the Australian Open last month. Kvitová, the 2018 Qatar Open champion, trailed Tumisea's Ons Jabeur by a break in the second set and saved two set points before securing a gruelling 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/4) win after one hour and 44 minutes. "I'm glad how I was able to manage those tie-breaks for sure," said the Czech left-hander. "So I'm really glad that I improved something. It was difficult with the crowd as well, with the wind, different conditions today for sure. So I'm really glad that with my very talented player as well as with the great touch, I was able to play a good game." Kvitová added. In the other semifinal, Russian Svetlana Kuznetsova will face Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus. Two-time major winner Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia's "Tsisitsipas had to come from a set down to beat Jan-Lennard Struff 4-6, 6-4 and will next face Daniel Evans of Britain, who upset No. 6 Grigor Dimitrov, who ousted third seed Stan



Chennaiyin FC during a training session ahead of their semifinal clash against FC Goa.

Photo: E.K. Sanjay

Crash of equals

Chennaiyin meet FC Goa in semifinal today

NEHA SURANA | DC CHENNAI, FEB. 28

Chennaiyin FC will be looking to continue their stupendous run when they take on league topers FC Goa in the first of the ISL semifinals here at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Saturday. No one expected Chennaiyin to make the playoff when they began the season on a disastrous note, scoring just four goals in first six games. The change at the top — with coach John Gregory making way for Owen Coyle — fired 12 wonders as CFC drew in 32 goals in

A mouthwatering individual battle will be fought between Lucian Goian and Corominas. The Spaniard has had the last laugh on most occasions and the defender will be eager to amend the records by helping Vishal Kaithi to maintain a clean sheet.

their next 12 games to finish fourth in the league stage. Having already beaten CFC twice this season, Goa would be eyeing a hat-trick on Saturday, but Coyle is confident that his boys can stand toe-to-toe with the table-toppers. "We have to play out very best because we are playing against a quality side. We have shown that we can beat anyone. Goa are the best team and their position in the table shows that. But, over the last 12 games, we have matched them," Coyle said. FC Goa's interim head coach Clifford Miranda had no qualms in accepting that he was looking to avoid meeting Chennaiyin in the playoffs. "We, along with ATK

and Bengaluru FC, were always there in the top four mix. But, Chennai were nowhere near. They are a team that is unbeaten in the last eight games (six wins and two draws). I think, all teams would have wanted to avoid them. It is going to be difficult for us. But we will play our natural game. We will play a style that will help us go closer to our objective of winning the title," said Miranda. When the two teams met here last time, Goa edged Chennaiyin 4-3. Coyle feels Chennaiyin are a different unit now. "The past results have no relevance tomorrow. We both like to play attacking football. It will be an entertaining game tomorrow. The away goals might very well come into play. But I don't think both our sides will be changing our style of play," Coyle said. This Chennaiyin's first leg will be a rematch of the 2015 ISL final in which Chennaiyin emerged on top for their first ISL crown. "If we had to look back; apart from the 2015 defeat, we lost to them in the semifinals in 2018. I don't believe past results will help us in this match. It's a brand new game and it is about two legs," Miranda added.

Barty goes past Garbine

Doha, Feb. 28: World number one and Australian Open champion Ashleigh Barty set up a ninth career meeting with two-time Wimbledon winner Petra Kvitová at the Qatar Open on Thursday. Barty saw off Spain's Garbine Muguruza 6-1, 6-7 (4/7), 6-2 in her quarterfinal in windy and chilly conditions in Doha. "I felt like I started exceptionally well and I was able to get the ball kind of in my areas a bit more," said the Australian top seed. "Then in the second set Garbine was able to shift her court position and take a few more risks, put me on the back foot. It was frustrating. I felt like I wasn't doing a lot wrong but I wasn't making the most of my opportunities and wasn't getting opportunities." "So I was happy to be able to get to a third set well," she added. Barty has won her last three meetings with Kvitová, including the quarterfinals of the Australian Open last month. Kvitová, the 2018 Qatar Open champion, trailed Tumisea's Ons Jabeur by a break in the second set and saved two set points before securing a gruelling 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/4) win after one hour and 44 minutes. "I'm glad how I was able to manage those tie-breaks for sure," said the Czech left-hander. "So I'm really glad that I improved something. It was difficult with the crowd as well, with the wind, different conditions today for sure. So I'm really glad that with my very talented player as well as with the great touch, I was able to play a good game." Kvitová added. In the other semifinal, Russian Svetlana Kuznetsova will face Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus. Two-time major winner Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia's "Tsisitsipas had to come from a set down to beat Jan-Lennard Struff 4-6, 6-4 and will next face Daniel Evans of Britain, who upset No. 6 Grigor Dimitrov, who ousted third seed Stan



Ashleigh Barty of Australia returns to Garbine Muguruza of Spain during their women's singles quarterfinal match at the Qatar Open tournament in Doha on Thursday. Barty won 6-1, 6-7 (4/7), 6-2. — AFP

DJOKER NICKS KHACHANOV, MAKES SEMIS

Dubai, Feb. 28: Novak Djokovic swept aside seventh-seeded Karen Khachanov 6-2, 6-2 Thursday to reach the semifinals of the Dubai Championships, ensuring he will keep hold of the No. 1 ranking. Djokovic improved to 16-0 in 2020 and set up a semifinal against third-seeded Gael Monfils, against whom he has a 16-0 head-to-head record. Monfils, though, is on a career-best 12-match winning streak after two straight tournament titles. He kept up his strong form by beating Richard Gasquet 6-3, 6-3 in his quarterfinal. Stefanos Tsitsipas had to come from a set down to beat Jan-Lennard Struff 4-6, 6-4 and will next face Daniel Evans of Britain, who upset No. 6 Grigor Dimitrov, who ousted third seed Stan

Nadal flies into Mexico semis

Los Angeles, Feb. 28: Rafael Nadal remained on course for his third ATP Mexico Open title by breezing past South Korea's Kwon Soon-woo 6-2, 6-4 in their quarterfinal clash on Thursday. Top seed Nadal eased into the semifinals with his best performance of the week as he continues to jockhammer his way through the men's singles draw at the hardcourt event in Acapulco, Mexico. The Spaniard finished the night with 25 winners to 11 unforced errors, and saved all eight break points he faced. "The match has been much tougher than what the result said. I think it was a beautiful match to see," Nadal said. Next up for Nadal is Grigor Dimitrov, who ousted third seed Stan

Lewa hurt as Bayern face ties

Berlin, Feb. 28: Bayern Munich head into the start of a crucial series of games this weekend without key striker Robert Lewandowski, who has contributed 35 league goals this season. The 31-year-old Pole picked up a knee injury during Bayern's demolition of Chelsea at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday when they looked every inch a club with the pedigree of five Champions League titles to their name. Bayern have one foot in the Champions League quarterfinals but Lewandowski will miss the second leg at the Allianz Arena on March 18 and at least three Bundesliga matches, starting with Saturday's trip to Hoffenheim. "I'm not one-point lead at the top over Leipzig in an exciting Bundesliga title race, reigning champions Bayern cannot afford to slip up at eighth-placed Hoffenheim. Bayern's French forward Kingsley Coman will also be missing through injury on Saturday, most likely putting the attacking duties in the hands of Serge Gnabry who grabbed two goals against Chelsea before Lewandowski finished the job on the pitch." Thomas Mueller, who has enjoyed an impressive return to his old self since he grabbed two could also chip in with goals. "Lewandowski is in the form of his life," Flick said. "We didn't have a problem with Kingsley either," Bayern chief Uli Hoeness's typically blunt reply to the question how they will cope without Lewandowski, referring to the legendary Bayern striker. Leipzig were off during the week after taking a 1-0 advantage over last season's finalists Tottenham in London in the Champions League. Their opponents, Bayern Leverkusen, have won nine of their last ten all competitions. — AFP

CITY CLIPS



Loyola, winners of the Red Bull Campus cricket T20 tournament. They beat SRM in the final.

Sanjay hits TN in Theagaraya RC's win

S. Sanjay Shrinivas unbeaten 112 helped Sir Theagaraya Recreation Club beat Krishnaraj Memorial Club in the TNCA third division A league. **Brief scores: III Division A:** Krishnaraj Memorial Club 196 in 49.3 overs (Aditya Varadarajan 47, G. Satish Kumar 38, S. Shyam Sundar 35, S. Sathyamoorthy 4 for 42) lost to Sir Theagaraya Recreation Club 200 for 6 in 45 overs (S. Sanjay Shrinivas 121 not out, S. Muthu Kumar 3 for 54). **IV Division B:** Jubilee Cricket Club 273 for 8 in 50 overs (C. Karthick 97, R. Maniselvam 49, S. Raja Ravi Varma 35 not out, P. Sivakumar 4 for 71) beat Komaleswar Cricket Club 269 in 49.5 overs (A. Arun Pandian 57, E. Sivakumar 55, M.S. Raja 43, M. Huzefa 40, K. Syed Shahabuddin 32, S. Devaneshwaran 3 for 22, S. Raja Ravi Varma 3 for 71, S. Harish 3 for 53). **Mambalam Mosquitoes** 272 for 9 in 50 overs (P. Babu 95, T. Pravin 65, G. Ajith Kumar 41, R. Sanjay Soorya 5 for 68 (RLS), P. Arjun Thapa 3 for 64) beat Bharathi Sports Club 218 in 42.3 overs (S. Sai Sabareesha 34, P. Arjun Thapa 34, J. Kathiravan 4 for 74, S. Arunachalam 4 for 63). **Chennai Sport Sports Club** 195 in 45 overs (P. Kanish Prabhu 36, S. Shrawan 5 for 30 (RMF)) beat BSNL Chennai Telephones Recreation Club 155 in 40.2 overs (K. Kiran Kumar 43, Harish Sasi Kumar 30, V.S. Karthick Manikandan 3 for 45, P. Kanish Prabhu 3 for 8). **GE T&D India Sports and Recreation Club** 141 in 47.3 overs (R. Sarath Kanna 49 not out, S. Prakash 4 for 21) lost to Sriharan Cricket Club 144 for 9 in 48.3 overs (G. Sakthivel 36, R. Sarath Kanna 4 for 33, N. Pradeep 3 for 38).

IV Division D: Book Sellers XI 133 in 50 overs (B. Vignesh Babaji 50) lost to Sunamajal Homes 134 for 4 in 28.1 overs (P. Girish Prabhu 55).

V Division E: Triplicane Friends United Cricket Club 230 for 7 in 50 overs (D.R. Madhusudhanan 56, M. Rajasekaran 51, A. Chavithir Nathan 38, C. Ashwin 25, R. Ram Kumar 3 for 52) lost to Venkat Cricket Club 233 for 6 in 45.3 overs (B. Sreeram 78, S. Senthil Kumar 57, Vijay Mariya Doss 36 not out). **Madhusudan Cricket Club** 236 for 9 in 50 overs (J. Bharani Dhanan 75, M. Balamurugan 49, V. Deenadhayalan 3 for 38) lost to Milkyway Cricket Club 240 for 9 in 49.1 overs (T. Thiruganathan 58, M. Karthik 58, R. Maniselvam 4 for 70). **C. Appaiah Chettiar Memorial Cricket Club** 210 for 8 in 50 overs (M. Tamil Selvan 75 not out, Kevin Graham Ignatius 42, S. Ashwath Narayanan 4 for 31) beat Triplicane Cosmopolitan Club 195 in 47.3 overs (M. Dinesh Kumar 62, V. Akash 55, Kevin Graham Ignatius 5 for 40).

TN girls beat Chhattisgarh

C. Shushaantika scored an unbeaten 96 as Tamil Nadu beat Chhattisgarh in the BCCI U-19 one-dayers at Rajkot. **Brief scores:** Chhattisgarh 360 for 5 in 50 overs (Aishwarya Singh 37, Kumud Sahu 39, Jyoti Nat 26) lost to Tamil Nadu 167 for three in 47.5 overs (C. Shushaantika 96*, M.S. Aishwarya 25*).

District Cricket Association of Chengalpattu formed

Kancheepuram District Cricket Association formalised the bifurcation and formation of the District Cricket Association of Chengalpattu (DCAC) in a meeting held earlier this month. Twenty two members are a part of DCAC. The inauguration of the august league will take place at GE T&D India ground on Saturday.



SSN, winners of the table tennis event at the SSN Trophy all-India inter-college tournament.

FANS TO BE KEPT OUT OF ITALIAN MATCHES

Milan, Feb. 28: The clash between Juventus and title rivals Inter Milan is among five Italian league games which will be played behind closed doors this weekend because of the coronavirus outbreak in Italy. The Italian league body has confirmed. The other four are Udinese against Fiorentina, AC Milan at home to Genoa, Parma against SPAL and Sassuolo versus Brescia. — AFP

Vietnam's F1 GP event to go ahead

Hanoi, Feb. 28: Vietnam's Formula One Grand Prix race track has been completed, organisers said on Friday, ahead of the inaugural event in April. The country insists will host the race despite the global coronavirus epidemic. Numerous sports events and other public gatherings across the region have been cancelled or postponed because of the outbreak. "The Hanoi F1 race track has been completed not only to deadline but also meeting all standards on safety," Vietnam Grand Prix chief executive Le Ngoc Chii said in a statement. "No reference was made to the spread of the COVID-19 infection, which has so far killed more than 2,800 people and infected nearly 84,000 people worldwide. If the event does go ahead, it will be the communist country's first taste of Formula One glitz and glamour as the sport targets new markets in Southeast Asia. Hanoi's organisers said they have the money at stake after signing a 10-year deal with Formula One last year which state media said would cost the country \$60 million per year. Vietnamese authorities told state media last week the April 5 race would be postponed because of the outbreak. "The Hanoi F1 race track has been completed not only to deadline but also meeting all standards on safety," Vietnam Grand Prix chief executive Le Ngoc Chii said in a statement. "No reference was made to the spread of the COVID-19 infection, which has so far killed more than 2,800 people and infected nearly 84,000 people worldwide. If the event does go ahead, it will be the communist country's first taste of Formula One glitz and glamour as the sport targets new markets in Southeast Asia. Hanoi's organisers said they have the money at stake after signing a 10-year deal with Formula One last year which state media said would cost the country \$60 million per year. Vietnamese authorities told state media last week the April 5 race would be postponed because of the outbreak. — AFP