

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | TUESDAY | 4 FEBRUARY 2020



WEATHER

Max: 30.7°C
Min: 19.4°C
RH: 55%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 30/20°C

ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Uttarayana
Tithi: Magha Shuddha Dasami till 9.44 pm
Star: Rohini till 1.45 pm (Wednesday)
Varjyam: 5.26 pm to 7.06 pm
Durmuhurtam: 9.07 am to 9.52 am; 11.13 pm to 12.04 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm
HIJRI CALENDAR
Jumadi us-Sani 9, 1441 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.45 am
Zohar: 12.40 pm
Asar: 4.36 pm
Maghrib: 6.18 pm
Isha: 7.27 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.12 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.47 AM
MOONRISE --
MOONSET TOMORROW 1.05 AM

COUNTER POINT



Please wear the mask... now, we are flying over China!

SC to finalise Sabari questions

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Iran knew it shot Ukraine plane



SPORT | 15

Rohit out of NZ tour with injury

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Opp. uproar in LS, RS on CAA, Shaheen firing

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 3

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The Opposition also staged a walkout the moment BJP MP Parvesh Verma rose to initiate the debate on the motion of thanks on the President's address. Later, Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi said that "if the Election Commission does not find him fit enough to speak

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Page 8: Congress blames minister for firing

Gandhi's freedom struggle was a 'big drama': BJP MP

Anant Hedge says his 'blood boils' when he reads Indian history

Bengaluru, Feb. 3: In an attack on Mahatma Gandhi, a controversial BJP MP from Karnataka Anant Kumar Hegde has questioned the freedom movement led by the Father of the Nation, and described India's freedom struggle as an "adjustment" with the then British rulers.

While addressing a public event in Kannada in Bengaluru recently, the BJP MP said "the entire freedom movement was staged with the consent and support of the British."

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"The British gave independence out of frustration. My blood boils when I read history. Such people become Mahatma in our country," the Uttara

Kannada MP said, in an apparent reference to Mahatma Gandhi.

The former Union minister also called Mahatma Gandhi's hunger strikes and satyagraha a drama.

Freedom fighters who did not sacrifice anything made the country believe that India attained independence through 'Upavas Satyagrah'. "Such people became Mahapurush (great people) Those who sacrificed their lives and worked towards big change in the country were dumped in the dark corners of history, but those who fought in adjustment with the British became freedom fighters with certificate... This is the tragedy of the country," Mr Hegde said. — ANI, PTI

2 gunmen open fire at protesters again

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The police said that it is zeroing in on the two accused allegedly involved in the third firing act with their two-wheeler's registration number that was caught on camera.

Meanwhile, the Rapid Action Force (RAF) has been deployed near Shaheen Bagh protest site on Monday evening.

Two unidentified persons had opened fire during the ongoing protests at the Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) University late on Sunday night. Though no one was injured in the incident, there was panic among those present at the spot.

DCP Kumar Gyanesh said the police teams are carrying out intensive search of the place where the firing took place near Gate No. 7 of the varsity campus. "So far, we have found no empty cartridges. We are, therefore, probing further to identify the accused and verify the crime. The FIR was registered after due procedure," said the DCP.

Hundreds of protesters stormed into the Jamia Nagar police station and stayed there until police registered an FIR at around 4 am.



Protesters hold placards against the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act during a demonstration in Bengaluru on Monday.

— AFP

Women promise to fight against CAA till the end

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The women protesters

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The youth were highly enthusiastic in making a point to the government. Around 15 speakers addressed the gathering, with several speeches laced with a mix of poems

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Page 6: Emergency is back, claim protesters

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"We will get to the roots of it," he said.

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Virus alert hits 3,000 medicos' internship

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Besides those students, who were recently airlifted from Wuhan and are now in quarantine, there were many others, who

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Page 6: Parents ask MCI to relax internship rules

DEADLY | VIRUS

3 Indians infected so far; China reports 361 fatalities and 17,205 infections

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The coronavirus is believed to have emerged in December from a market that sold wild game in the Hubei provincial capi-

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Sabka Saath-Sabka Vikas-Sabka Vishwas



Come, Explore & Invest

Uttar Pradesh has Incredible Opportunities for the Defence Sector

U.P. Defence Industrial Corridor

- Defence Corridor is expected to attract an investment of Rs. 50,000 Cr.
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- Land Availability: 1446 hectare.
- Government of Uttar Pradesh is committed to provide 24x7 quality power to Defence & Aerospace Industry.
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Now Hosting the Biggest Defence Expo



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- 1000 Companies from 70 Countries are participating**
- Over 3,000 Delegates from India & all over the world are attending the event**
- Illustrating Digital Transformation of the Defence Sector**





Seeking upgrade

TRS MLA Vinay Bhaskar has appealed to Piyush Goyal to upgrade Kazipet railway junction into a full division

POWER SHUTDOWN

9 pm to 5 pm: Samatha Colony, Quli Qutub Shah, Jamalikunta, MD Lines, Shatam Nagar, Durganagar, Grammar Colony, Wally Colony, Nadeem Colony, Naya Khilla, Jinsi Bazaar, Takathbowli, Ragavamma Kancha, Heera Khan 1 & 2, Moti Mohal, Khazi Galli, Banjari Darwaza, Attara Seedi, Golconda police station and quarters, Khtora House, Galaxy Theatre Area, Rahul Colony, Moulagunj, Golconda Hospital, Aravindnagar, Samatha Colony, Azizbagh, Rainbow Apartments, Adithyanagar, Suryanagar, Shaikpet, Nala, kallu compound, OU Colony, Vinobhanagar, Vinayknagar, Dattatreyanagar, Dwarakana-gar, Dream Valley, Maruthinagar, Gulshan Colony, Narayana Engineering College, Laxmannagar, Dargah area, Laxminagar, Falcon Colony, Narayanamma College, Radhenagar, Leather Factory, OU Colony, Hussain Shali Dargah.

10 am to 11 am: Ameena Masjid area, Paramont Colony Gates 2 and 4.

10 am to 1 pm: Police Lines, Kanaka Durgamma temple line, TRS Office; Jana Reddy house area, area opposite Kalinga Function Hall.

11 am to 12 noon: Paramount Colony, Paper Board, Hakimpet, Hanuman temple area, Bowli PT, Ambedkar Community Hall, Baba Hotel, Kabrasthan 1&2 area.

12 noon to 1 pm: Sabja Colony, Koi-e-Sar Colony, Reliance Mart, Brundavan Colony.

1 pm to 5 pm: Banjara Hills Roads 12, 13, part of Road 11, Renuka Chowdary house, Srimannagar, NBT Nagar, kallu compound area, Jithendar Reddy house area, K.Kesava Rao house area; Anand Banjara, Banjara Green, Music World, MS Goud area, Taj Banjara, Karvy Office; Suman house area, MLA Colony, Church area, Mithilanagar.

2 pm to 3 pm: Al-Hasanath Colony, Yousuf Tekdi, Nizam Colony, Toli Chowki, Delux Colony, Dowlet Gulshan Colony, Bade Janakinagar, KFC area.

3 pm to 4 pm: Hill Colony, VV Colony, LIC Colony, MIGH, Dilshadnagar, Kranthinagar, Amba Theatre, Income Tax Colony, Ram Murthi Colony, Mehdiatnam bus depot.

4 pm to 5 pm: Rajiv Gandhi Nagar, Defence Colony, Bapunagar, Mehdi Colony, Jitender floor mill.

SHORT TAKES

SPECIAL TRAINS FOR PILGRIMS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

The South Central Railway (SCR) on Monday announced that it would be operating 20 special Jansadharan (unreserved) trains for pilgrims to the Medaram Sammakka Saralamma Jatara. The trains will run between February 4 and 8. The festival is expected to see participation from lakhs of devotees from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and neighbouring states. The fare in these special trains will be on par with regular Express trains. The special trains will run from Secunderabad and Sirpur Kagaznagar to Warangal, the closest railway station to Medaram, on these days. Additionally, regular Express and Passenger trains running towards Warangal will be augmented with additional coaches on the same days.

CANCER | DAY

Breast, cervical, ovarian and uterine cancers are among the highest

Cancer among Indian women more than men

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

Incidence of cancer in women in India is high when compared to that of the world stated experts on the 20th anniversary of World Cancer Day. Worldwide men report a 25 per cent higher incidence than women but in India it is a reverse trend.

The number of cancer cases in women is high when compared to men. The cancers of breast, cervical, ovarian and uterine cancers are highest and in majority of the cases they are diagnosed in third and fourth stage.

Dr Geetha Nagasree, surgical oncologist at Care Cancer Institute explained, "The Indian data shows that one woman dies of cervical cancer every eight minutes. Average age of breast cancer has lowered than in the West and we

WAYS TO PREVENT CANCER

- Modifications in lifestyle with eating healthy foods.
- Stop using tobacco, alcohol.
- Indulge in physical activity.
- Sedentary lifestyle also is a risk and indulge in physical activity.
- Check weight and abdominal obesity.
- Avoid stress and tension.
- Opt for vaccination where available.
- Regular screening is required after 40 years of age.

are seeing more young woman like those in 30's and 40's. Every 2 woman newly diagnosed with breast cancer do not survive. Of the 2,000 women detected with cancer, 1,200 were diagnosed at a late stage. This means it reduces the first-year survival rate by 3 to 17 times for breast and cervical cancer."

As per the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) data, India had 14 lakh cancer patients in 2016. Oncologists state that there is a rise in the

cancer burden globally and is expected to increase by 60 per cent by 2040. The estimates are based on clinical cases in both government and private hospitals across the globe.

The burden is estimated to be 29 million cases annually by 2040.

Dr Chinnababu Sunkavalli, senior robotic surgical oncologist at Apollo Cancer Institute at Jubilee Hills explained, "There are multiple factors faced at the clinical and social

level. Lack of access to affordable treatment and also paucity of oncology professionals are being noted in low and middle income countries. Early screening and diagnosis of the disease is the key to effective treatment. Radiotherapy is the main treatment in cancer cases but 50 per cent of the patients do not have access due to cost factors."

At the hospital level it has been noted that there is shortage of medical equipment

Traffic violators



Though the traffic police has been taking action against two-wheeler riders for not wearing helmets, a large number of riders can still be seen flouting traffic rules. — S. SURENDER REDDY

KTR furious as GHMC fails to build promised bus bays

In 2015, govt had asked civic body to construct 226 bus bays

MADHY DEEKSHITHI | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

Municipal administration minister K.T. Rama Rao is furious with the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) for having failed miserably in the construction of bus bays across the city in the last five years.

The TRS government, headed by Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao, had asked the corporation to construct 226 bus bays in 2015, which much to Mr Rama Rao's dismay and unhappiness, the GHMC had managed only to construct 50 semi-bus bays.

In a recent review meeting, Mr Rama Rao has expressed displeasure over the poorly paced constructions of bus bays in the city, including the failure of complete the bus bays to be located even on government lands, and instructed the GHMC to identify locations to construct all the promised bus bays on priority.

The state government also took zonal commissioners to task for delay in the con-

struction of these bus bays and had asked the town planning department to acquire land on priority.

The civic body officials have been providing false reports to the government during review meetings to impress them. However, in a recent review meeting, the MA&UD minister questioned the integrity of officials and challenged them to show him at least ten bays on the ground.

Sources in MA&UD department said that Mr Rama Rao had told them to construct at least 10 bus bays in each zone. He reportedly said that they should be completed at the earliest since summer was fast approaching.

The minister asked the town planning department to co-ordinate with the city RTC and traffic officials to identify ideal locations and acquired the land required to expedite constructions of bus bays. Within the GHMC, some blame the town planning wing for inordinate delay of five odd years in the taking off of the bus bay project. The wing even did not acquire the government

lands which are easily available. When queried, a town planning official admitting the delay in land acquisition, saying that the corporation has received lukewarm response from private land owners. They said that the owners are not even ready give even a small chunk of land because the commercial value of their property would come down.

Official have made several attempts to convince land owners to hand over land to the corporation in public interest but they were in no mood. "Higher authorities can take us to task but ground level issues are more complicated. It is easier said than done," the official added.

According to the corporation, it has constructed half-baked bus bays near Jyothi Rao police statue (Sainikpuri), Sharadha bus stop, G-Block Colony bus stop, Sai Sudheer College bus stop, North Kamala Nagar, Chinna Cherlapally bus stop, Pedda Cherlapalli bus stop, IG Mint Colony, EC Nagar bus Stop (Cherlapalli), Bharat Petrol Bunk, Sujatha Hotel (Nagole), Bandlaguda Road, Arunodaya Nagar, opposite VIGG Electronics, RHS (Masab Tank), near Sarojini Devi Eye Hospital, near PTI building, near Masjid, Salarjung Colony (near SBI Bank), opposite Hockey playground, Masab Tank junction, backside of Ahmed Nagar community hall, opposite of electrical sub-station, near military compound wall (RHS), near Nal Nagar junction, Salar bridge (Hakeempet), Mothi Darwaza, opposite Cyndrilla School, near Zeeshan hotel, Banjari Darwaza, Golconda and others. Most of these are in very bad shape and far below par to the promise made by the Chief Minister.

Encroachment of govt land irks HC

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

The Telangana High Court on Monday, expressed deep concern over the lackadaisical attitude of the revenue officials and bureaucrats who have failed in curbing rampant illegal encroachment of the government land and raising unauthorised constructions on them.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice A. Abhishek Reddy was dealing a PIL that had highlighted the encroachment of three acres and 22 guntas of land in Gandamguda in Gandipet.

The encroachers had built structures on the land, the PIL alleged.

Justice Chauhan said, "There are a large number of PILs regarding government land being encroached and unauthorised constructions coming up but government officials are sleeping, giving a go-by to continuous vigilance." Justice Chauhan asked government pleader for the revenue department what steps had been taken to protect government land in different parts of the state. The pleader replied that effective steps were being taken by senior officials.

Government counsel C.V. Bhaskar Reddy informed the

■ A DIVISION bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice A. Abhishek Reddy was dealing a PIL that had highlighted the encroachment of three acres and 22 guntas of land in Gandamguda in Gandipet.

bench that a survey of land parcels scattered in different survey numbers of Gandamguda was yet to be taken up for the government

to claim ownership. Justice Chauhan responded saying, "this work is regular work of the revenue officials and it does not need specific orders of the court."

He observed that it was an eye wash and illegal constructions in Hyderabad were a common feature and the bureaucrats had ignored the menace.

"It is amazing that these bureaucrats cannot see a building coming up in the heart of the city with 24 floors," Justice Chauhan said. Justice Chauhan directed the government to complete the survey of land in Gandamguda in a month and file a report.

T-Block launched to guide start-ups

ADITYA CHUNDURU | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

The T-Block accelerator, a part of the Telangana state government's Blockchain District initiative, was launched at Tech Mahindra campus in the city on Monday. The accelerator will be guiding 25 start-ups working in the blockchain space. The formal launch was done by IT principal secretary Jayesh Ranjan.

The T-Block accelerator will accept registrations from start-ups, out of which 25 will be selected for support. Speaking at the launch, Mr Ranjan noted that there were 12 cases wherein the state used blockchain-based solutions. He recalled that the T-Chits programme, a blockchain-based chit fund management solution, had won national recognition. "Of the 12 initiatives, 10 originated from start-ups," he

said. Mr Ranjan said scaling up of start-ups was proving to be difficult in spite of the government giving them a push. "In such a scenario, accelerators such as T-Block can help them," he said.

T-Block will be open to applications from start-ups from across the country. Mr Ranjan said the chosen start-ups would be expected to move to Hyderabad or set up offices here post the support period.

Ms Rama Devi Lanka, director of the government's Emerging Technology wing, said she hoped the next "unicorn," a term used to denote start-ups with \$1 billion valuation, would be among the start-ups supported by T-Block.

She announced that plans to launch other start-up accelerators in the blockchain space in the city, similar to T-Block, are in the works.

Big Bazaar booked for MRP tampering

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

Twenty-two cases were booked on Big Bazaar in Medchal-Malkajgiri jurisdiction by the legal metrology department for tampering MRP and other essential details on products. Inspection was done following a complaint from a consumer, Mr Shikande Umesh Kumar. According to the complaint, several mandatory declarations such as name and address of the manufacturer; net quantity, month and year of manufacture, expiry date, retail sale price, size or volume, consumer complaints declaration and others were absent on pre-



packaged commodities at the Big Bazaar store. "Super markets such as Big Bazaar are luring consumers by tampering with MRP labels. Regular inspec-

tions should be done to prevent this type of practice. Consumers should be vigilant and file cases if they find any unfair trade practices," said Mr Kumar, who works as a lecturer.

The note from the legal metrology department stated, "The district legal metrology officer, Medchal-Malkajgiri district, has inspected the trading premises of M/s Big Bazaar outlets and conducted inspections. During the course of inspection (22) cases were registered for contravention of various sections and rules of Legal Metrology Act, 2009 and Legal Metrology rules, 2011."

2,254 BOOKED FOR DRUNK DRIVING IN JANUARY

Hyderabad: Continuing its drive against drunken drivers to ensure road safety, Hyderabad Traffic Police booked 2,254 errant drivers, who were driving vehicles under the influence of alco-

hol, in last month. During the trial, the Nampally court awarded imprisonment ranging from 1-11 days for 290 drivers and ordered suspension of driving licence of three drivers who violated rules.

25th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY



Mr. Rakesh Punerija & Mrs. Varsha Punerija. May these twenty five years of your married life be the prologue of a timeless fairy tale with a lovely ending. Best wishes from: PUNERIYA FAMILY MEMBERS (S/1920/D01790)

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA CENTRAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (Department of Personnel & Training)

ENGAGEMENT OF INTERNS AS PER CBI INTERNSHIP SCHEME

The CBI intends to engage 30 interns (Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Lucknow and Chandigarh) for 06 to 08 weeks starting in Mid of May, 2020 under its "CBI Internship Scheme" for which applications are invited from eligible candidates/ students in India as below:

1. No payment would be made during the internship while interns would have to make their own arrangements for stay and travel. Internship does not provide any right for any future employment in the CBI.
2. The eligible candidates are required to send their applications in original with their detailed bio-data in the prescribed proforma (Annexure-A) to the Superintendent of Police (Training), CBI, Academy, Hapur Road, Kamala Nehru Nagar, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh - 201002 on or before 21.02.2020 through Speed Post. Delayed / Incomplete applications would not be considered.
3. For further details, interested / eligible candidate may see details advertisement posted on the website of CBI (www.cbi.gov.in) and CBI Academy (www.cbicademy.gov.in)

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Funds search

KTR says BJP leaders should get funds for the state from the Centre instead of indulging in big talk

SHORT TAKES

SC bench to review 4% Muslim quota

Hyderabad: A five-member Constitutional bench of the Supreme Court will review petitions seeking four per cent reservations for Muslims in education and jobs on Tuesday. The petitions in Cases No. 7618 of 2005 and 6206 of 2010 point out that the Sachchar Commission report says that Muslims are the most backward community. According to Zafar Javeed, secretary, Sultan ul Uloom Education Society (SUES), which is one of the parties in the case, senior advocates including Aijaz Maqbool, Huzaifa Ahmed, Nakul Deewan and Abhimanyu Bhandari will be appearing in Court No. 3. Mr Javeed said the quota had benefited innumerable students and helped them fulfil their dream of pursuing their higher education in professional courses.

Budget to burden commoner: TD

Hyderabad: Telangana TD politbureau member Ravula Chandrasekhar Reddy said the Union Budget would impose more financial burden on the poor and the middle class. He said the policies of the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre had worsened the state of the economy. There was no rationalisation of taxes in the Budget, he told media-persons at NTR Bhavan here. The Budget has increased taxes on small items such as brooms, combs and slippers. Mr Reddy asked for a tax waiver on goods that put a financial burden on small families. He objected to the privatisation of public sector enterprises and expressed worry over the reduced funds for the employment guarantee.

KTR IS LIKE 'GHAJINI', SAYS LAXMAN

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

BJP state president Dr K. Rama Rao called minister K.T. Rama Rao the new 'Ghajini', after the character in the film of the same name, for forgetting the help provided by the NDA-led government and criticising it.

He was responding to Mr Rama Rao saying that the Union Budget had not allotted a single rupee extra to the state.

Addressing the media on Monday, Dr Laxman said that Mr Rama Rao should understand that the Centre would allocate funds based on certain norms "but not to fill up your pockets in the name of major projects."

Praising the Budget, Dr Laxman alleged that the state was not implementing several Central schemes as the TRS government had failed to allocate its share. This deprived the people of getting the benefit of schemes initiated by the Modi government.

He said the BJP was ready for an open debate on Central funds released by the Modi government to the state. He alleged that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao was re-designing to projects to get commission.

Reacting to MIM president Asaduddin Owaisi's comment that the Budget was like a long movie without an interval, Dr Laxman said that he should know that the Modi government works 24x7 for the welfare of people without a break. He should watch the film till the end, Dr Laxman said.

TS, AP Assembly delimitation only after 2026

Bad news for Telugu states pressurising Centre to implement promise as assured in AP Reorganisation Act

S.N.C.N. ACHARYULU | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

In a setback to Telangana state and Andhra Pradesh, the Centre has decided to take up the delimitation of Assembly constituencies in the Telugu states following the first Census after 2026.

Both Telugu states were putting pressure on the Centre to begin the delimitation exercise as assured in the AP Reorganisation Act in time for the elec-

tions in 2024. It now appears that the delimitation will be set back by another decade.

The bifurcation Act says, "Subject to the provisions contained in Article 170 of the Constitution and without prejudice to Section 15 in this Act the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the successor state of AP and Telangana shall be increased from 175 and 119 to 225 and 153 respectively and delimitation of the constituencies

■ THE TRS government in Telangana, and in AP the previous TD government and the incumbent YSRC government pressurised the Centre to delimit the constituencies.

■ TELANGANA STATE would have got 34 more Assembly seats and Andhra Pradesh 50 if this was done. It would have helped political parties to accommodate more leaders for elections.

may be determined by the Election Commission."

The TRS government in Telangana state and in AP the previous TD government and the incumbent

YSRC government pressurised the Centre to delimit the constituencies. Telangana state would have got 34 more Assembly seats and Andhra Pradesh

50 if this was done. It would help the political parties, particularly the ruling parties, to accommodate more leaders when nominating candidates for the elections.

The Centre wants to take up the delimitation in the Telugu states along with the rest of the country after 2026. The Centre had amended the Act in 2002 not to have any delimitation till the first census after 2026. Thus the present constituencies shall

continue to be in operation till the first census — in 2031 — after 2026.

The next Assembly elections in Telangana state and AP will be held with the existing number of Assembly constituencies. Sources said that the Centre had informed YSRC leaders that the delimitation in the Telugu states will be done only after the first census of 2026 along with other states.

The Centre opined when

a date has been specified in the Constitution, there is no necessity to take up this exercise in Telugu states early.

Moreover the Centre is considering increasing the number of Lok Sabha seats in the country. If a final decision is taken on the matter by the Centre on this issue, the delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies will also take place along with that of Assembly segments "in the first census after 2026."

For sir with love



Nizam College students protest against Prof. Kaseem's arrest and demand his freedom in Hyderabad on Monday. Prof. Kaseem was arrested under the UAPA Act. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

ANDHRA PRADESH

AP to take legal assistance against Council existence

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 3

The state government may take a stand that the very existence of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council post the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh in 2014 is "unconstitutional and illegal".

The government is studying various legal opinions on the abolition of the council to formulate its stand in case of any judicial intervention.

The state Legislative Assembly has recently passed a statutory resolution and recommended to the Centre to take further steps.

Official sources told Deccan Chronicle that a top legal luminary, recently held discussions with state officials on a wide range of issues including abolition of the Council. The Legislative Councils in two states were carved out under Section 22 (1) of the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014 in which it was clearly stated that a Legislative Council for each of the successor states would be set up in accordance with Article 169 of Constitution of

■ THE GOVERNMENT is studying various legal opinions on abolition of the Council to formulate its stand in case of a judicial intervention.

■ THE ASSEMBLY recently passed a resolution to the Centre to take further steps.

India. "As per the Article 169, the Council has to be created by Parliament based on a resolution recommending creation of a Council by the respective State Legislative Assembly," the legal opinion pointed out.

The state Assembly did not pass any such resolution after 2014. Though Section 22 (2) declared that the existing Andhra Pradesh Council was deemed to have been constituted as two Legislative Councils, one for Telangana state and one for Andhra Pradesh, legal experts have questioned its validity as the Constitution is supreme over the Act.

The refusal of the Centre to enhance the number of Assembly seats in the two Telugu states has been taken as

the base to justify the contention that Constitution is superior to the Act.

The Centre took the stand that Article 170 (3) would prevail over the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014 which provisioned for additional seats in assemblies of both states. It said the existing 175 seats in AP Assembly should be enhanced to 225 and 119 in Telangana state to 153 seats.

The law and justice ministry and the ministry of home affairs, however, took a stand that delimitation of Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies would happen only on the basis of first Census taken after 2026. It quoted the Article 170 (3) of the Constitution which was amended to take up delimitation after 2026.

The legal opinion pointed out that all resolutions passed by the council after 2014 are deemed to be unconstitutional and there was a need to revisit and modify them in accordance with the existing law. Further, it said spending about ₹60 crore every year on Council is also unjustified.

STATE | CRAFT Report says Centre can decide on SCS in any state

Panel gives AP spl status hopes

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

The 15th Finance Commission has kindled hope in Andhra Pradesh that the state may, after all, get special category status (SCS), as assured by the Centre in Parliament when the undivided AP was bifurcated.

The Centre had all these days been taking shelter under the 14th Finance Commission report as an excuse for denying SCS to AP. However, the 15th Finance Commission has

clearly said in its report that the Centre can take a decision in granting SCS to any state. In Paragraph 7.4 of the 7th chapter of the report, the Commission says, "Some states have requested special category status. This does not constitute part of the mandate of 15th Finance Commission and remains entirely in the domain of the Union government, which can take an appropriate decision".

The concluding lines indicate that the Centre can indeed grant SCS to Andhra

Pradesh "if it so desires".

All political parties have been demanding special status for AP for more than five years. AP Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, before and after the Assembly polls, said his government will bring pressure on the Centre for SCS.

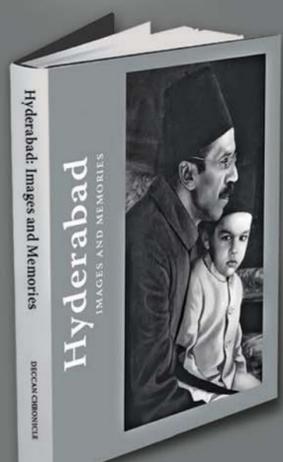
Whether or not the Centre grants SCS, the Finance Commission has given a weapon to the YSRC to pressurise the Centre on the issue. The Centre now cannot continue saying that the 14th Finance Commission

had made no mention of SCS, because the 15th Finance Commission has mentioned it.

Incidentally, the 15th Finance Commission has also given ammunition to Opposition parties in AP for attacking the YSRC on the special status issue. Since it leaves the matter with the Centre, the Opposition parties may take up cudgels against the ruling party for its failure in bringing pressure on the Centre if it does not secure the SCS.



Hyderabad IMAGES AND MEMORIES



We wrapped up our celebrations to mark the 75th anniversary of Deccan Chronicle on May 15, by bringing a special compilation of seventy-five stories filled with intrigue and delight from the final days of the Nizamshahi, titled Hyderabad: Images & Memories

From the palace mysteries and murder plots to the Nizam's 3,000 wives and how the ruler faced allegations of kidnapping his bride, all under the watchful eyes of the British, it is all there.

We scoured the archives and collected anecdotal evidence from several actors of that era to discover delightful asides like how the motichur laddus got their name, how an aide saved the Nizam's legendary treasures for the royal family and how Indira Gandhi floored the Nizam.

There are more than 75 pictures, a few of them rare and perhaps being published for the first time.

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Safety meet

SCR General Manager Gajanan Mallya holds review meeting on safety, goods loading and punctuality with senior officials

SHORT TAKES

Red Cross gives cheque to Gov

Hyderabad: The Indian Red Cross Society, Telangana Branch submitted a cheque for \$10,000 to the Governor. The Telangana Cultural Association of Portland, US, collected the money by conducting various charitable and fund-raising events to help the needy in the state. Pochampally Giridhar, overseas coordinator of the association handed over the cheque to Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan.

Man convicted for impersonating cop

Hyderabad: A 38-year-old man who impersonated a police officer and extorted money from a couple was convicted and sentenced to one year imprisonment by a court on Monday. The extortion was reported on June 15, 2019, when the couple from the city was spending time alone in a car at Gunthapally village under Abdullahpurmet limits. Chinthala Chandu, 38, a car driver from Medipally, had gone to Gunthapally on his scooter. When he saw the couple, he pretended to be a police official and threatened to implicate them in a case and extorted gold ornaments from them and asked them to meet him at the police station. When the couple went to the spot, they learned that they were duped and lodged a complaint. Subsequently, Chandu was arrested. After the investigation, a charge-sheet was filed.

CPM ALLEGES SCANDAL IN METRO FARE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

The city unit of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has alleged that Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited had breached its agreement and hiked ticket fares to ₹60 while it had agreed to ₹19 while signing the deal.

Mr M. Srinivas, CPM city secretary, quoting from a purported letter written by Mr Gajendra Haldea, who involved in the Metro Rail agreement, claimed that the fare hike had violated the terms of the Viability Gap Funding, under which the Metro Rail had received ₹1,458 crore from the Centre. Since the terms had been violated, the Centre is duty-bound to recover it along with interest.

Mr Srinivas said that the increase in user charges was said to have been done under the garb of change in law. However, Article 41 of the constitution agreement provides that if the concessionaire suffers financial loss due to change in law, it would be compensated by the state government. "Conversely, if the concessionaire makes any financial gain due to change in law, he must reimburse the same to the state government," Mr Srinivas said. The state has not enforced the provisions of this Article, and has allowed the concessionaire to allegedly unlawfully misappropriate large unearned gains which legitimately belong to the state or the users, Mr Srinivas claimed. He said that the violation of the law had put a burden on commuters whose ticket fares had been "unlawfully" hiked.

Students shock tech colleges

Decide to skip Eamcet due to poor salaries compared to grads

RAJESWARI PARASA | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

Some engineering students, who wanted to bolster Intermediate students ahead of the TS Eamcet (Telangana State Engineering Agricultural Medical Common Entrance Test) were in a shock on meeting several students as part of their campaign. Some of the Inter students said that they are least bothered about Eamcet as they are "unwilling to join a four-year expensive professional engineering degree, which is fetching a salary that is as low as what a general graduate draws."

According to Mr R. Sharan, who was part of the awareness campaign, "This exercise was taken up well in advance so that students would be suitably prepared for the big test. We all know that last year's Intermediate results shook the state and around 20 disillusioned students took their lives. However, most of the respondents were vocal and clear that they did not want to end up in an expensive engineering degree and later struggle for jobs." The lack of interest is getting reflected in the gradual decline in engineering admissions in certain colleges. About 10 engineering colleges have applied to Jawaharlar Nehru Technological University Hyderabad (JNTUH) seeking closure as they have seen less than 30 per cent of

■ SOME OF the students are least bothered about Eamcet as they are "unwilling to join a four-year expensive professional engineering degree, which is fetching a salary that is as low as what a general graduate draws."

■ THE LACK of interest is getting reflected in the gradual decline in engineering admissions in certain colleges.

admissions in the last three years. Some institutions have sought closure of around 35 engineering courses as there were no takers.

Students have also cited that lack of quality education in many engineering colleges is resulting in the decline.

They alleged that students are not being prepared for the hugely competitive world that awaits them.

It should also be noted that there has been no recent survey on the quality parameters of engineering and management colleges conducted by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the

University Grants Commission, according to information from the Union ministry of human resource development.

When it comes to employment opportunities, they are limited only to IITs, NITs and IIITs. Out of 23,298 graduates in 2018-19 from these institutions, about 17, 946 secured campus placements, which is 77 per cent.

For other AICTE-approved engineering institutes, out of 7,92,970 students, 3,59,153 were placed, which is 45.2 per cent for 2017-18. The figures for 2018-19 were not available with the government.

Man cheating job aspirants arrested

DURGA PRASAD SUNKU | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

A job fraud was busted by Hyderabad Cyber Crime who arrested the accused involved in the crime.

Police said the accused identified as Suraj Kumar Chowdry used to collect data of the job seekers from job portals online and contact them offering fake jobs. He then collected money as processing fee, and other related charges.

Based on a complaint from a woman, Hyderabad cyber crime police booked a case. The complainant said she got an email from "indigoselections@outlook.com" offering a job in the airport and asked her to contact them. When she called them, an unknown caller named Divya Kapoor convinced her to transfer ₹63,350. She realised that she was cheated when she reached the airport to take up the "job".

PARLIAMENT OF INDIA (Lok Sabha Secretariat) (Joint Committee on The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019)

Joint Committee on The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 headed by Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi, MP invite memoranda containing views/ suggestions from the public in general and Experts/ Stakeholders/ Organisations, in particular on "The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019". The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 has been uploaded on Lok Sabha Website (loksabha.nic.in) > legislations > billsintroduced > BillNo.373).

For further details please visit <http://loksabha.nic.in> under the link 'Committees' Press Release.

Those desirous of submitting their views/ suggestions to the Committee may send in writing to the Director, LSS, Room No. 152, PHA, New Delhi or Email at: jpc-dataprotection@sansad.nic.in and at: mrs.mlekhi@sansad.nic.in within three weeks from the date of publication.

New Delhi Dated: 04 February, 2020
davp 31201/11/0021/1920

COFOW (INDIAN RAILWAYS)

E-TENDER NOTICE No.OPB- 696, DATED: 04.02.2020
PCMM/COFOW.s Office invites e-Bids for the following STORES Tenders:

Tender No.	Brief Description	Closing Date
OP-710340	Airless Centrifugal Shot Blasting Machine for Coll Spring.	03.03.2020
OP-710140	Airless Centrifugal Shot Blasting Plant.	03.03.2020

E-TENDER NOTICE No.G-444, DATED: 04.02.2020

Tender No.	Brief Description	Closing Date
G-710240	Coach Shot Blasting Plant.	16.03.2020

Bidders may visit the website www.ireps.gov.in to download the tender document and submit their e-Bids. No manual offers shall be accepted.

CORRIGENDUM, DATED: 04.02.2020
Following corrigenda have been issued to e-Tenders already uploaded on the website www.ireps.gov.in:

Tender No.	Corrigendum No.	Closing Date
OP-807070	Corrigendum No. 01	10.02.2020
G-309460	Corrigendum No.01 & 02	11.02.2020
G-506565	Corrigendum No.02	14.02.2020
OP-511460	Corrigendum No.01	24.02.2020
G-706821	Corrigendum No. 06	04.03.2020
G-107150	Corrigendum No.05	04.03.2020

Bidders may visit the website to download the details mentioned in the corrigendum and submit e-Bids accordingly.

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Corrigendum No-1 dated 31.01.2020
Tender Notice No. 01HQWorks2020 dated 02.01.2020

Due to unavoidable reasons, after approval of competent authority, opening date (17.02.2020) of Tender Notice No. - 01HQWORKS2020 dated 02.01.2020 is re-fixed. This tender will be opened on 25.02.2020 at 1500 hrs. as per terms and conditions given on the website www.ireps.gov.in. The corrigendum can be seen at the same website.

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An anti-CAA meeting organised by karate champion Syeda Falak at Minar Garden Function Hall in the Old City where a few hundred women turned up. — P. SURENDRA

Emergency is back, claim protesters

FROM PAGE 1

Sandhya, an activist, said, "the nation has been oppressed by the imposition of this law. There will be around 60 to 70 crore people, who will end up in detention camps. Last elections this government came to power in the name of

Ram Janmabhoomi and Kashmir. Now they are creating something like this to come into power. The very intention of this government is to further the RSS agenda to make this nation an Akhanda Hindu rashtra."

Dr Ayman, who was very active in the event,

said, "the response from participants is very positive. This event is an inspiration for many. We will fight till the end. We want this government to take this law back. Today, it is happening to Muslims, tomorrow it will happen to others. We will now take lead to save our Constitution and secular spirit."

All participants opined that emergency was back in the country, which is trying to crush the Muslim minorities. This event was organised by Syed Falak, a karate athlete. The programme concluded with the singing of the national anthem.

Health min visits Gandhi

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

The medical kits for testing of coronavirus are ready in the laboratory in Gandhi Hospital and health minister Etala Rajender has inspected the hospital premises on Monday.

The health minister checked the virology laboratory and also wore the full protection gear which is going to be used by the microbiologists and

also the doctors who are going to be involved in treating these cases.

The health minister stated that they had sufficient stock and were also looking forward to procuring more of it in order to ensure that there is enough in case of an emergency.

There is no positive case in Telangana till now but we are prepared for any emergency stated Mr Rajender.

1 MORE PERSON ADMITTED TO FEVER HOSPITAL

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

One more person having persistent cough and cold self-reported to the Fever Hospital on Tuesday. He a travel history to China.

The landline number 040-24651119 is proving to be helpful as people are self-reporting cases. There were 20 samples tested so far and 19 samples have been returned negative.

The samples sent to Pune for testing will now be tested in the city, at Gandhi Hospital.

Parents ask MCI to relax internship rule

FROM PAGE 1

With coronavirus widespread in China, it is not possible for these students to go back. But more than health, what is worrying them right now that the gap in their internship term could be considered as a break and disqualified them from getting a medical degree due to non-completion of internship. There are doubts whether the degrees will be awarded to them, given this 'break'.

Dhirender Trivedy, managing director, Growell Education Consultancy Services for the Tianjin Medical University, China, explained, "The students are in India for safety reasons. Those of them who are in their last year have completed only six months of internship. They have to complete the remaining six months to qualify, according to MCI rules."

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■ THEY WILL have to write the NEET exam in India, where their internship certificates would also be considered. There is now a break.

of internship. They have to complete the remaining six months to qualify, according to MCI rules. They will have to write the NEET exam in India, where their internship certificates would also be considered.

There is now a break. The MCI must look into problems of these students. The government of India must give them some relief as this is the time of crisis."

Students are approaching consultants who helped them seek admissions to universities in China to bail them out of the present crisis.

A senior doctor with the MCI, on condition of anonymity, explained, "We have to wait and watch. We do not know how long this crisis will continue. The students cannot practice in India without clearing the NEET exams. They have to prepare for NEET, clear it and then only will they be registered in India. The internship issue will have to be discussed and looked into."

There is a growing demand that these students must be allowed to complete their internship in India if the crisis continues for long. But senior doctors say that it was not possible as there are different teaching methods and bedside practices. To practice in India, a student has to clear NEET.

With a new Board of Governors to look into the issues of MCI, parents and consultants are planning to approach them to grant relief for internship.

Dr T Narsinga Reddy, senior doctor, said, "The best way forward for medical students from China is to give NEET exam, which will be held in June and December. In this way, they can make up for the lost time."

भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Notice Inviting Global Expression of Interest (Tender ID: 2020_AAI_41418_1)

Expression of Interest (EoI) is invited by General Manager (R&D) on behalf of Chairman, Airports Authority of India from eligible bidders for the work of "Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Fast Time Simulation tool for Airports and Airspace at Research & Development (R&D) Technical Centre, Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad, India". Last date of online submission of EoI is 05.03.2020. For further details, please visit our website: www.aai.aero, <https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app>. N-101/2019-20

Public Works Department
Sector-19, North Block, Nava Raipur,
Atal Nagar Distt. - Raipur (C.G.)
E-Procurement Tender Notice
E-mail: tenders-pwd.cg@gov.in

NIT No. 230/TC/EinC/PWD/2019-20 Dated 30.01.2020

The Engineer-in-Chief, Public Works Department on behalf of Government of Chhattisgarh invites percentage rate bids on electronic tendering system under RCPLWE RRP-II in the district of Kanker, Bijapur, Bastar, Sukma & Dantewada for Construction & up-gradation of Road Works with estimated cost amounting Rs. 6644.71 Lacs including their maintenance for five years from the contractors registered with unified registration system (e-registration) in Chhattisgarh. Non registered bidders may submit bid; however the successful bidder must get registered in appropriate class under "Unified Registration System" (e-Registration) of Chhattisgarh before signing the agreement.

The bid document shall be available to bidders online free of cost and should be submitted online e-procurement system of government of Chhattisgarh in <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>. Bids form will be available on the website from 31.01.2020 and may be submitted up to 17:00 Hrs. on 25.02.2020.

For participating in bidding process, bidders are required to register in the above web-site with nominal fee of Rs. 500/- to be paid online to service provider. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have a valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from authorized certifying authorities.

The bidders are required to submit (a) original bid security in approved form and (b) original affidavit duly verified and notarized as per clause 4.4 B (a) (ii) and 4.4 B (c) to Chief Engineer, Tender Cell, First Floor, Nirman Bhawan, PWD, North Block, Sector-19, Nava Raipur, Atal Nagar Distt.-Raipur (C.G.) 492-002 as per provisions of bid document through Speed/Registered post, failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive.

Detailed schedule of important dates may be seen on notice board of offices and also available on website of Public Works Department <http://pwd.cg.nic.in>

Sd/- Chief Engineer, (In-charge Tender Cell) O/o Engineer-in-Chief, PWD Nirman Bhawan, Sector-19, North Block Nava Raipur, Atal Nagar Distt.-Raipur (CG) 492-002.

G-76540/4

GOVERNMENT OF CHHATTISGARH, WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MANIYARI WATER RESOURCES DIVISION MUNGELI, DISTT. - MUNGELI (C.G.) e-Procurement Tender Notice

eProcurement Portal: <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> (FIRST CALL)

SYSTEM TENDER No. 60449 NOTICE INVITING TENDER No. 08/SAC/2019-20 DATED: 31-01-2020

ONLINE Tenders are invited for the following works up to 19-02-2020 (17.30 hours IST)

System Tender No.	Group	Name of Work	Probable amount of contract
60449		Construction of under ground pipe line system for Command Area Development and Water Management structures for 252.92 Ha. (Under WUA Dindori and Salheghori) developed in command area of Maniyari Reservoir including necessary survey, planning, design, drawing, Layout plan, collection of village maps, Land records, Khasara, B-1 etc. from Revenue Department, preparation of Layout drawings for complete Layout planning for laying UGPL system, getting consent from concerned farmers, field Layout, collection of 10% of functional grant from concerned farmers for the work of CAD & WM, after Layout for completion of UGPL system as per specification and norms of UGPL system for construction of UPVC pipe lines with all joints and structures, valves for necessary and successful flow of water. The work also includes construction of micro irrigation work in 10% area (252.50 ha.) as per the guidelines of water resources department. The work includes, Workshop, Seminar & Training etc. by expert with respect to agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, crop rotation, Creating awareness to farmers regarding importance of CAD works, making them to accord consent to let the land be made available to lay UGPL system, providing knowledge, motivation etc. to the farmer for optimum use of water, third party evaluation of CAD & WM work by national or state level recognized institution / firm.	Rs. 851.84 Lakhs

The details can be viewed & downloaded online directly from the Govt. of Chhattisgarh Integrated e-Procurement Portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) from dated 05-02-2020 at 17:31 hours (IST) onwards.

NOTE: All eligible / interested contractors / bidders are mandated to get enrolled on the integrated e-Procurement Portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) and get approval on specific vendor class from PWD under centralized contractor / supplier registration in order to download the tender documents and participate in the subsequent bidding process.

Sd/- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MANIYARI W.R. DIVISION MUNGELI DISTT - MUNGELI (C.G.)

G-76525/2

SHAHEEN BAGH: HOW THE PEACEFUL PROTEST BECAME A 'MUDDA' FOR BJP

Polls & the anatomy of a protest

SUPARNA SHARMA | DC

Several weeks before Union home minister Amit Shah set in motion a chain of violent reactions with his goading at the January 27 election rally in Delhi — “Press the voting button so hard that the tremors are felt in Shaheen Bagh” — two people had seen it coming.

And when junior finance minister Anurag Thakur followed up Mr Shah's instructions the next day by inciting people to chant “goli maro gaddaraon ko”, which in turn led 17-year-old Rambhakt Gopal to post “Shaheen Bagh, khel khatam” on his Facebook page before shooting at Jamia Millia Islamia's anti-CAA protesters, Sharjeel Imam and Aasif Mujtaba, the two IITians who had led the protest at Shaheen Bagh, would have been unnerved. They would have recalled the “exit plan” they had negotiated with the Delhi Police and were ready to implement after the New Year.

If they could, they would have discussed the ominous comment of the police officer on that freezing night of January 1 that led to a chain of events they both had dreaded but couldn't eventually avoid.

“Tum ko peacefully uthane se mana kar diya hai,” the officer had said to them, relaying instructions received from the Union home ministry.

They would have liked to discuss it, surely, except that Sharjeel was in police custody and Aasif remains besieged by the recurring shooting at Shaheen Bagh and Jamia Millia Islamia University.

Sharjeel and Aasif had got a glimpse of how quickly and easily things could go wrong on December 15 itself. At around 4 pm, when a crowd in Jamia Nagar had lifted Sharjeel on their shoulders and asked, “Hamein kya karna chahiye?”, his two-word response, “Chakka Jaam” had led to the Shaheen Bagh sit-in protest.

At around 5 pm, both sides of Road No. 13A that links Mathura Road and Kalindi Kunj to Noida, had been blocked with cement slabs, stones and police barricades. Sharjeel and Aasif, encircled by about 300 men, were taking turns to explain why it was important to protest.

“All we can do is disrupt,” said Sharjeel. “That is the only way to be heard. Sitting at Jantar Mantar, even for years, will yield nothing. We were talking of blocking both sides of the highway, of disrupting the water and milk supply to Delhi,” he told me over conversations that began on January 16.

The local AAP MLA, Amanatullah Khan, was not so keen. He said let's get up now and organise a peaceful march to Amit Shah's house next Friday.

“I said, ‘Hamein baithna hai, hum baithenge. Jisko jana hai woh jaye,’” Sharjeel said.

“Women had come and gone. At around 8.30 pm, police came and asked us to vacate at least one side of the road. I agreed, though I was not very happy,” Sharjeel said.

As soon as the barricades were removed from one side of the road, a protester, carrying the tricolour, started throwing stones at the passing vehicles.

“It was like a scene from Mumbai locals as people rushed back to the street and many started pelting stones,” Sharjeel recalled. He had a mike in his hand and kept shouting, “Stop the violence, don't vandalise property.”

“You can't win over a state by throwing stones,” Aasif said.

Police fired rubber bullets and Sharjeel left after 10 pm for Aasif's home in Shaheen Bagh. During the night, 10-15 young men blocked both sides of the road again. “I returned, and at around 7 am, and a crowd was forming. I spoke for an hour about why not to pick up stones,” Sharjeel said.

People of Jamia Nagar, Shaheen Bagh, upset since December 11 when Parliament passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, were bristling with indignation when, just two days later, police entered Jamia Millia Islamia University and beat up several students.

Shaheen Bagh's two lakh residents, living about a kilometre away from Jamia, are deeply connected with the university. Either they themselves, someone in their family or a neighbour studied or worked there.

“The December 13 police attack on Jamia students upset them greatly, especially the women... The sense of safety



The juvenile who shot at anti-CAA protesters near Jamia on January 30



Sharjeel Imam (L) and Aasif Mujtaba

Photos by G.N. Jha, Bunny Smith, Biplab Banerjee, PTI, Reuters

they once felt when their sons and daughters were in college was now gone,” Ehtmam, a law student at Jamia, said.

There was anger, and it had now found an avenue.

By December 16, a mike materialised and a makeshift stage was organised by some local Congress leaders on Road No. 13A.

“People have vested interests, and there was a Congress lobby versus a BJP lobby and we didn't want to become players in it or its victims — so we formed a committee,” Sharjeel said.

The 12-member Shaheen Bagh Coordination Committee was focused on creating a safe space for people to sit in peaceful protest and use the stage for students, scholars and experts to talk about CAA, NRC, citizen's rights, the Constitution and the law.

Sharjeel Imam and Aasif Mujtaba, who had met for the first time on December 14, during anti-CAA protests at Jamia, led the charge.

Sharjeel, a BTech and MTech in computer science from IIT Mumbai, is now a student of history pursuing his PhD in JNU. Aasif, a resident of Shaheen Bagh, who did his BTech and MTech in environmental engineering from IIT Delhi, is pursuing his PhD from IIT.

Sharjeel, more than Aasif, was mindful of the threat of violence and the possibility of the Shaheen Bagh protest being politicised and sabotaged.

“There was talk of Delhi elections ke pehle saza de denge, var-daad ho jayegi,” Sharjeel said.

So on the 5th day of the protest, eight CCTV cameras were installed in and around the tent. Footage was relayed to a backend office.

As days progressed and new challenges came up, several sub-committees were formed. In between the sloganeering, singing and speeches, Sharjeel repeatedly spoke of avoiding cash donations that people were offering.

“We said no cash, give kambal, chai patti, cheeni, but no cash... That could even lead to NSA (National Security Act)... And then one day, a donation box appeared. I sat on the stage and said remove it,” Sharjeel said.

Someone sent biryani, someone brought boiled eggs, and someone sent helmets for protection in case of a police attack. At one point, Sharjeel recalled, there was a theological discussion over what Prophet Mohammed had said — that “Kisi ka rasta band karna sunnat ke khilaf hai”.

“We said, hum kisika rasta nahin rok rahe, hum sadak band kar rahe hain. People can walk,” Sharjeel said.

Sharjeel Imam's politics is that of a strident scholar. He nipsicks and is critical of all.

“I hardly spoke against the BJP at Shaheen Bagh,” he said. But in a style that exudes a scholar's intellectual confidence and an activist's moral certitude, he routinely dismisses some well-regarded Muslim historians, takes a strong position against not just the Congress and the Left, but also his college mate Kanhaiya Kumar who, he says, is a pointless public attraction that gathers huge crowds

but changes nothing.

If they'd listen, Sharjeel's beliefs would warm the cockles of many saffron hearts. “The Congress has not been secular. Even our Constitution is not secular — only a Hindu can be a dalit as per the 1950 presidential order, not a Muslims or a Christian,” he would say often in his speeches.

“The point was to tell them that the Congress is not your sympathiser... If the Congress was so concerned about the CAA and the NRC, they could have blocked Delhi on their own,” said Sharjeel.

The anti-CAA movement was gaining strength and Shaheen Bagh was turning into its powerful pivot. It was more than just a peaceful dharna — it was a moral force field whose ripples were being felt not just on Raisina Hill, but across the country.

Locally, the dharna was causing inconvenience to a lot of people. Though one side of the barricaded road was being kept free for ambulances and school buses to pass, all other traffic between Kalindi Kunj and Noida was diverted, leading to long, harrowing jams.

Several showrooms on Road No. 13A remained shut. “The shopkeepers were criticising us every day, saying ₹60-70 lakh ka stock credit pe liya hua hai, staff bhii garib hai. Your blockade has shut our businesses but we have to pay staff salaries, we have to pay rent,” Aasif said.

“The police was also saying, ab tum hato, khali karo, bahut ho gaya — almost every day, till the 1st of January,” Aasif said.

Sharjeel, Aasif and other members of the Shaheen Bagh committee had regular meetings with the police, often at night, near the police barricade, at a distance of about 100 metres from the protest tent. The plan was to keep the protest going for some days, then call off the blockade and carry forward the movement in some other form. Many were leaning towards Hong Kong-style flash mobs blocking roads, when they wanted, where they wanted.

“The exit plan” worked out with at least three senior police officials, including one from the local thana, had been discussed over and over.

“We had been negotiating with the police... We were very clear and had said New Year tak baithenge, New Year ke baad, agar uthana hai, toh kaise uhayenge... Bring lots of women constables and remove the protesting women, open the blockade on both sides of Road No. 13A... The police had agreed,” Sharjeel said.

The Delhi Police forcibly entering a Muslim neighbourhood was not a scenario anyone wanted.

“Since Jamia, the police was on the backfoot. And Shaheen Bagh mein ghusege toh police walle bhi zaroor mare-jayenge. So the best option was to dislodge the protesters nicely, peacefully... promotion bhi mil jayega,” Sharjeel said.

“On 31st and 1st night there was a huge crowd,” recalled Aasif, suggesting that the sit-in protest had been successful in highlighting the communal, divisive nature of CAA nationally and internationally and it was now time to move out of Shaheen Bagh.

But on the night of January 1, the cops changed their tune. “They said they didn't have enough female constables,” both Sharjeel and Aasif told me separately.

“It is out of our hands,” the cops said. The matter was now being handled by the Union home ministry and the instructions were “not to intervene”.

“Is mein hamara kya fayeda hoga? Na a h i n uthana. Jo karna hai karne do,” is what the cops said they had been told.

“Tum ko peacefully uthane se mana kar diya hai... court bhi intervene nahin karega,” Sharjeel recalled a police officer telling him.

He understood, Aasif didn't. “Maine kaha, aap peacefully nahin uhayenge toh hum baithe rahenge. Phir directly mujhse hi bola, ‘Maine dobara bol raha hoon, ki hum peacefully nahin uhayenge,’” Aasif said.

“Toh peaceful nahin uthane ka matlab hai ki they wanted isko violently uthayen. Aur violently uthane ke liye sabse achha hai ki isko pura communal colour de dein — Shaheen Bagh ka jo face hai, peaceful protest ka, woh khatam ho jaye,” Aasif said.

“On January 2, I was walking and thinking, if we don't have an exit plan, hum akele pad jayenge. Elections were about to be announced and polarisation will help the BJP... Anyone can start a scuffle... 10-20 men dressed as Muslims. Then the police will get a chance to enter the mohalla... Bachche uhayenge. If violence happens, we will be held responsible,” said Sharjeel, whose PhD is on Hindu-Muslim riots.

“There was now marginal utility of the protest and the road-block, and it was further reducing for us. But it was increasing for the BJP,” Sharjeel said.

Sharjeel and Aasif asked the protesters to vacate the protest site. But people, especially women, were in no mood to leave.

Humera, a resident of Shaheen Bagh and a student of zoology, had been managing the stage all these days. When I first texted her on January 14, she couldn't talk as she had lost her voice anchoring and giving speeches.

I met her a few days later. “There was constant fear of violence — we were conscious of it 24x7. We tried to explain to people that we should move. But they were like ke, ‘Nahin, hum nahin hatenge... We've been sitting here for 17-18 days but haven't got the result we wanted, so why should we leave?’ We could not convince people,” Humera said.

On January 2, Sharjeel put out a statement: “We have taken back the chakka jaam of Shaheen Bagh Road to avoid violence and attempt by goons to politicise the movement. We are afraid that the BJP wants violence by not bringing in the police.” He also wrote of money being used to taint the movement.

From that moment, Sharjeel, “the Gandhi of Shaheen Bagh,” became a “traitor, gaddar,” accused of having taken “₹1-2 crore from Amit Shah”.

As Sharjeel and Aasif stepped back and others took charge, the character of the Shaheen Bagh protest changed.

There was an unsaid rule now, about not revealing the organisers, and not putting a face or a name to the movement.

Though the message that Sharjeel, Aasif and others had drilled in — not to trust any political party — stayed, the sound and optics changed.

The Shaheen Bagh protest now sounded less scholarly, more participative. It also looked unapologetically Islamic, organic.

Shaheen Bagh's moral force kept growing. The longer the women stayed, Shaheen Bagh's attraction and popularity increased, as did the cooperation and sacrifice of those working behind the scenes, or just quietly supporting the protest.

As temperatures dipped and chai kept brewing night and day, the nearby Warda Hospital kept its bathrooms open for women protesters and visitors. Some homes remained open too, offering beds and washrooms.

The owners of the buildings on the main road, where shops and showrooms had been shut since December 15, decided that no rent will be charged for the duration of the protest.

Artists from across the country came to create protest art. A small 24x7 health camp with doctors came up. Volunteers set up a library for children whose mothers were sitting in protest.

A map of India in circulation on social media shows the sites of at least 40 Shaheen Bagh-like protests that have come up across the country.

Everyone I spoke with, to try and understand how and when had women become the main protesters, gave vague answers.

Most put it down to women being more upset by the attack on Jamia students, especially girls. Some said that they were inspired by Ayesha Renna, Ladeeda Parzana and Shaheen Abdullah — the three hijab-clad girls who had shielded a male student from police beating.

But there were several practical reasons behind this brilliant idea.

Men and women sitting together day and night is not an acceptable scenario in any Indian residential colony. There was also concern that men could be removed forcibly and detained at any time, most likely in the dead of night.

Women, on the other hand, can only be arrested by women cops, and never after sunset or before sunrise.

Women leading the protest also posed a dilemma for the BJP government. It is difficult to target mothers, grandmothers and turn them into hate figures.

Attacking women, especially Muslim women after the BJP had made triple talaq a poll plank in Delhi elections, was not going to fly.

On January 6, the Election Commission announced that polling in Delhi will take place on February 8 and votes will be counted on February 11. A day later a survey predicted that the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) was all set to sweep back to power in Delhi with 59 of the 70 seats. The BJP, a distant second, was tipped to get eight seats, an embarrassing increase of just five from its 2015 tally. The Congress was not really in play.

The AAP's best bet was to keep the election campaign, the narrative focussed on local issues — pani, bijli, sadak, health clinics, but the BJP needed a mudda, and for this it needed an enemy with a face.

The women of Shaheen Bagh would not do and that lament was clear in Yogi Adityanath's comment on January 22. While addressing a pro-citizenship law rally in Kanpur, he asked why the men of Shaheen Bagh were “sleeping under the quilt while women have been pushed forward”.

A man was needed — someone who would naturally fit the anti-national template created by the BJP. Someone who was easy to identify, by his clothes, speech, college.

Sharjeel Imam, from Delhi Public School, Vasant Vihar, who had not just studied but also taught at IIT Mumbai, would not make the cut. Like the Crocs he wore under his kurta-pyjama, the ensemble didn't gel.

But a JNU scholar with a bushy beard who spoke of cutting off Assam from the rest of the country did.

On January 25, a five-minute clip of Sharjeel's speech went viral and Assam police filed a case against him. Several other states followed suit. Except Delhi, all were states with BJP governments.

He was accused of sedition, provocation with the intent to cause riots.

Since the first week of December, Sharjeel Imam and many other students of JNU, Aligarh Muslim University,

Jamia had been actively engaged in educating people about CAA and NRC. They were distributing pamphlets and delivering speeches in which they asked people to organise themselves, to block roads.

Sharjeel's hour-long speech, delivered on January 16 on the footpath outside AMU, was no different.

He spoke approvingly of constitutional spirit, but said the Constitution is not secular. He discussed the Poona Pact, called Mahatma Gandhi a “fascist”, criticised the Congress, talked of the history of violence of the Left and Right, and said Indian history had been written by pandits. “We have to write our own history.”

While speaking of people's anger against CAA and NRC, he said students, scholars should take charge and channel it productively, for an outcome. After sensitisation, there must be a plan of action.

“Delhi kyun band karna hai — Delhi band karna hai kyunki awam ko takleef ho,” he says and adds that while protesting, people must guard against violence, sabotage and political takeover.

It's at about 30 minutes into the speech that he comes to the five minutes where he talks of Assam: “If 5 lakh people come together and sit in dharna, they can cut off Assam from the rest of India at least for a month or two. Only then will we, they be heard.”

He mentions the Chicken's Neck, the narrow strip of land that connects the Northeast with the rest of India, being Muslim dominated and says that if 5 lakh Muslims were to mobilise, they could hamper the Army's movement and supply.

He is talking of a dharna, a chakka jaam. Not an armed rebellion.

The five-minute clip played on a loop on certain TV channels with the hashtag #tuktuktudegang. The Shaheen Bagh protest had been forcibly given a face and attacking it now became easy.

On January 29, Union minister Prakash Javadekar, speaking at an election rally, asked Delhi voters to decide whether they wanted “Jinnah wali azaadi or Jai Mata Di”.

On January 28, Sharjeel was arrested, the same day when, in a video that went viral, Anurag Thakur, Union minister of state for finance, is seen prompting a crowd at an election rally. “Desh ke gaddaron ko...,” he says, to which the crowd responds “...goli maaro sa****n ko”.

On January 29, a news report said the BJP's fortunes in Delhi Assembly elections are on an upswing, and an internal poll was predicting at least 30-35 of the 70 seats in Delhi.

One of the main reasons for the change, according to two unnamed leaders, was the rising resentment against the sit-in protest at Shaheen Bagh.

A week after Yogi Adityanath called for all those chanting the “azaadi” slogan to be charged with sedition, Rambhakt Gopal aimed a gun at anti-CAA protesters in Jamia and said, “Ye lo azaadi.”

Tarannum Begum from Batla House, Okhla, is a widow and mother of three and has been sitting in protest at Shaheen Bagh since December 15. She says she has no choice but to protest, to save herself and her children from discrimination, harassment and being sent to detention centres.

“Maine socha tha ki hamare Wazir-e-Azam hain, awam ke badshah hain, Pradhan Mantri hain, woh hamari takleef samjhenge... Jaise ma-baap apne bachche ki sunte hain, vaise woh hamari sunenge. Woh aaj tak aa kar yeh pooch bhi na sake ki kya pareshani hai?” she said.

“Article 370 par, Kashmir par, Ayodhya judgment par, hum sab ne sarkar ki izzat rakhi... Sarkar kehni hai ki triple talaq se woh Muslim women ko protect karna chahate hai, toh un auraton ko protect karna nahin chahti jo Shaheen Bagh mein baithi hain?”

On a good day, the 17 km-long drive from 7, Lok Kalyan Marg to Shaheen Bagh takes about 37 minutes.

In the Prime Minister's cavalcade, which moves at 120 km per hour, that distance would take a little over 10 minutes.

If Mr Modi were to come, he will see tirangas painted on faces, fluttering in small hands, on the barricades, on the stage, on every bamboo stick and pole in sight, and he will hear both, a wail and a warning.

‘Tum ko peacefully uthane se mana kar diya hai... court bhi intervene nahin karega,’ Sharjeel recalled a cop telling him on Jan. 1... ‘It's out of our hands,’ cops said. The matter was now being handled by the home ministry.



Several weeks before Amit Shah set in motion a chain of violent reactions with his goading at the January 27 election rally in Delhi — ‘Press the voting button so hard that the tremors are felt in Shaheen Bagh’ — two people had seen it coming... Sharjeel Imam and Aasif Mujtaba, the IITians who had led the protest at Shaheen Bagh...



Poisoning minds

Union minister Giriraj Singh accuses AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi of poisoning educational institutes against the country

SHORT TAKES

UP: 108 PFI MEMBERS IN CUSTODY

Lucknow, Feb. 3: Uttar Pradesh police has arrested 108 members of the Popular Front of India in the last four days for their alleged involvement in protests against the CAA, a senior official said on Monday. The arrests are in addition to the 25 made earlier, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Kumar Awasthi told reporters.

"This is just the beginning. We will get to the roots of the organisation. A probe is also going on about their financial dealings. We are in touch with central agencies and are sharing information with them," he said, adding that UP was the first state to take this kind of action against the organisation. Giving details, acting DGP Hitesh Chandra Awasthi said 14 people were arrested in Lucknow, 21 in Meerut, 20 in Varanasi, 16 in Bahraich, three in Sitapur, nine in Ghaziabad, six in Muzaffarnagar, seven in Shamli, four in Bijnore, five in Kanpur and one each in Gonda, Hapur and Jaunpur. —PTI

MORE THAN 170 WOMEN WRITE TO PM

New Delhi, Feb 3: More than 170 activists and women's groups on Monday sent an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressing "horror" over the alleged hate speeches made by BJP leaders and accused them of using "fear of rape as a campaign message" during the ongoing Delhi poll rallies.

Prominent among the signatories include feminist economist Devaki Jain, activist Laila Tyabji, former Indian Ambassador Madhu Bhaduri, gender rights activist Kamla Bhasin, and groups like AIPWA and NFIW. "Repeated hate speech by election campaigners of the BJP using fear of rape as a campaign message, urging their followers to inflict violence on peaceful women protesting against the CAA is being made. Vote for BJP or you will get raped! Is this your election message to Delhi's women? Is this how low your party has sunk?" the letter asked.

PIL TO END ANTI-CAA PROTESTS

Chennai, Feb. 3: The Madras High Court on Monday issued notice to the Centre and Tamil Nadu government on a PIL petition seeking to forbear anti-CAA protests by students inside campuses of universities and schools in the state.

A division bench of Justices M Sathyanarayanan and R Hemalatha was hearing a plea by Varaaki, founder-president of Indian Makkal Mandram, an NGO, who contended that the protests against the CAA, were causing law and order problems and resulting in hardship to the general public.

The petitioner said the agitation had spread across the state and students of other colleges and schools were adversely affected.

LEGALISE GAMBLING: GOA MLA

Panaji, Feb. 3: Days after Chief Minister Pramod Sawant announced that Goans are being banned from visiting casinos in the state from February 1, state ports minister Michael Lobo on Monday struck a discordant note. Lobo, a BJP MLA, also demanded that "matka gambling" be legalised in the state and a "GST-like" tax imposed on the activity. "Goans should be allowed to continue visiting Casinos. There was a difference between entry and gaming and that Goans could not be stopped from entering casinos. Besides gaming, there's #music, #entertainment #food etc," he tweeted.

He also tweeted that Matka gambling be legalised and brought under the ambit of law. "There should not be any illegal gambling in Goa. Goa government must impose a 12 per cent GST-like tax on it," Lobo tweeted. Currently, six offshore and a dozen onshore casinos operate in Goa.



An activist paints graffiti on a wall to protest against the recent incidents of firing at Jamia Millia Islamia and Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi on Monday. —PTI

PM must clarify, says Oppn

BJP issues show-cause notice to Uttara Kannada MP Anantkumar Hegde

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 3

Miffed over the controversy created by its former Union minister and Uttara Kannada MP Anantkumar Hegde by his remarks against Mahatma Gandhi, the BJP, it was learnt, has issued a show-cause notice to him. The ruling party came under heavy criticism from the opposition over its MP's remarks. The opposition has demanded a clarification from Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his party MP's remarks.

Often in news for his controversial remarks, Hegde, sources said, could also be barred from attending the first parliamentary party meeting of the BJP of the budget session, scheduled on Tuesday. The party had taken a similar approach against its Bhopal MP Pragya Thakur during the last winter session for

praising Mahatma Gandhi's killer Nathuram Godse. Though the BJP leadership was earlier of the view that Hegde should tender an apology over his remarks but the party top brass, it was learnt, decided that it was not enough.

The Congress on Monday launched a scathing attack over the comments of BJP Lok Sabha MP Anantkumar Hegde on Mahatma Gandhi. The party demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi come to Parliament and clarify his position on BJP leader's "objectionable" remarks. Congress party spokesman Anand Sharma said, "we can understand that why one after the other senior BJP leaders are insulting the memory of Mahatma Gandhi. They are disparaging the national movement, the freedom struggle because they

are ideological descendants of those who were not only non-participants, but, actively opposed the freedom movement." He further added, "Parliament is in session. We demand that the Prime Minister come to the House and make his position clear. As I have said, feeds that he is unhappy and angry, we are not concerned with that. In the very ideology, mindset, thinking and language of the BJP, there is violence."

Asserting that the BJP MP's statement was condemnable, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said the leaders of the saf-ron party could afford to call the freedom movement a drama as they never fought for the country's independence. "Such statements reveal their true mindset that they use Gandhi's name just for show and have no regard for him," he said.

200 Pak Hindus cross Wagah border

Amritsar, Feb. 3: About 200 Pakistani Hindus crossed over to India through the Attari-Wagah border on Monday, officials said amid indications that several travellers did not wish to go back.

The Pakistani Hindus came on a visitor's visa but some of them claimed that they felt unsafe in Pakistan and hoped to get India citizenship after the enactment of the CAA.

Akali leader and Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee president Manjinder Singh Sirsa was at the border to receive four families who he claimed had "fed" Pakistan due to religious persecution. Borders official

claim the number of Hindu travellers from Pakistan using this border crossing has increased significantly over the past month. The CAA envisages giving Indian nationality to members of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities, who have come from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan till December 31, 2014 due to religious persecution there. One of the Pakistani Hindus on the condition of anonymity said after the enactment of the new citizenship law, Hindus and Sikhs living in Pakistan and Afghanistan were "optimistic" of getting Indian citizenship.

Police is verifying CCTV camera footage

FROM PAGE 1

"As usual, the police wasn't taking any complaint and after two to three hours of the citizens shouting slogans and approaching cops inside the police station, the FIR was registered," claimed Mohd. Hafeez, a Jamia student who was at the police station.

"We had taken photographs of the red scooter, which the accused had used, and based on the same identified its registration number. It is up to the police now to verify and see if the owner of the vehicle and the accused are the same or if the accused used someone else's vehicle," he said.

However, a police official at the Jamia Nagar police station said that a few persons approached them during the registration of the FIR saying they had seen the red scooter that was allegedly used for the crime.

The police has claimed

that no one could capture the full registration number of the two-wheeler.

"As per the vehicle registration records, the owner of the two-wheeler with the registration number caught on camera apparently ending with the digit '2' belongs to a man while that ending with '4' belongs to a woman," said the police official.

"The police teams are cross verifying the CCTV cameras and other videos of the incident captured by some protestors to ascertain whether the number ends with 2 or 4," said the police official.

Prior to Sunday's incident, Kapil Gujjar, a resident of Dallupura village on the outskirts of Delhi, had fired at the protest spot in Shaheen Bagh on February 1. Gujjar had allegedly shouted, "Humare desh mein aur kisi ki nahi sirf Hindu ki chalegi (only Hindus shall have a say in our country, no one else)." He was later arrested by the Jamia Nagar police.

Congress blames minister for firing at Jamia, Shaheen Bagh

FROM PAGE 1

Mr Gogoi later took on the government for its policies and attitude towards protests and dissent. "The ruling party is under the impression that just because they have won the election, democracy is over. They can pass any laws... For the first time a minister of the government (Anurag Thakur) is saying that men, women, students and the youth (who are protesting) should be shot dead... There have been no arrests made on the JNU incident. The Delhi police has not been able to nab the culprits because their political masters are giving instructions, and people are shooting right in front of the police (referring to

shooting incidents at Jamia and Shaheen Bagh)," Mr Gogoi said.

"Who is pulling the trigger? The boy? Or the minister making inflammatory statements who should be booked under Section 153... Inflammatory statements are being made with regard to Mahatma Gandhi and (Nathuram) Godse. None of these can happen without the approval of their (BJP) top leader," Mr Gogoi added. The Assam Congress MP also criticised the Budget, saying: "What is the point of this Budget if it cannot take India out of the lowest GDP growth, poverty and recession?"

Terming the President's speech a "big disappointment", IUML MP P.K. Kunhalikutty said that it

did not cover the important issues before the country. "The mandate given to the BJP is to uphold the Constitution while slogans are being raised (by anti-CAA protesters) to save the Constitution. Our reputation in the international arena is falling, and globally we are seen as (an) intolerant (nation). The international media is writing against the government... The PM is talking about a New India which is full of hatred, and joblessness," he said. The MP also raised the inflammatory speeches by BJP MPs, saying: "The BJP is trying to communalise the Delhi polls. Not a single leader condemned the 'goliya mara' speech and they are encouraging people to shoot."

INDUSTRIAL HAZARD Fire on Burhi Dihing after crude oil pipeline bursts

Massive fire breaks out on Assam river

MANOJ ANAND I DC GUWAHATI, FEB. 3

Panic prevailed among residents of Dibrugarh in Upper Assam after a massive fire broke out on Burhi Dihing River following a blast when crude oil leaked from a pipeline. The area was covered in a hellish red hue with huge plumes of smoke emanating.

Oil India authorities announced that oil leakage, which led to the blast, was due to "rare instrumentation error" in the central tank pump, where crude oil from all Oil India fields in upper Assam

region is collected. Oil India has said a team of experts is at the location to douse the fire, which is now under control.

Locals suspect miscreants may have set the leaked crude oil afire after it floated onto the river. According to some reports, villagers had noticed the fire on the river three days ago and had informed the local administration. But the authorities did nothing to douse the flames.

Officials of Oil India Limited (OIL) headquartered at Duliajan, however, said, "Our team specialising in crude oil recovery



Plumes of smoke rise over a small stream of the Burhi Dihing River after a crude oil pipeline exploded at Naharkatia town of Dibrugarh district on Monday. —PTI

and damage restoration after any spillage controlled the situation the very night one of our cen-

tral tank pumps suffered instrument failure. Almost 99 per cent of the spillage was on land but

the rest fell in a drain that is linked to Burhi Dihing." An OIL official maintained that the loss due to burning of crude was minimal.

Dibrugarh deputy commissioner Pallab Gopal Jha told reporters that a committee of experts is monitoring the situation and trying to minimise the environmental damage.

Environmentalists say Oil India authorities and other agencies should learn a lesson from the accident. "Spillage of crude or processed oil into river bodies threatens aquatic life," they pointed out.

Jamia Millia has no record of property damage

ADITYA CHUNDURU | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

The Jamia Millia Islamia University in Delhi seems to have no record of the damage and loss of its assets during the ongoing protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Hyderabad-based activist Kareem Ansari filed a RTI to the university, asking details of how much of its property was damaged because of the infamous police crackdown on December 15, 2019.

It may be recalled that university property, including the library, was damaged during the police action. In the aftermath, the university had reportedly estimated the damage at around ₹2.5 crore. However, surprisingly in the RTI reply, the university claimed it had no such information to furnish.

Ansari's RTI query was received by the Public Information Officer (PIO) at Jamia Millia on December 26. The university was asked to provide details of the amount of damage and whether any complaint was made to the concerned authorities. He also asked for information related to insurance claims by the university.

The query was forward-

ed by the PIO to the procurator and security centre. Chief Procurator, Waseem A Khan and security advisor, Mohad Shahid Khan, in their replies, claimed that they had no information about the damage estimate or insurance.

Ansari said it was puzzling why Jamia refused to share this data. "The visuals of damage at Jamia were telecasted all over by media channels. If they claim they don't have the information, either the visuals are wrong or the university's claims are wrong," he said. Ansari felt either Jamia Millia's PIO is under pressure to not release any information or the university itself doesn't wish to do it. "I plan on filing an appeal on the reply. I want to get to the bottom of this," he said.

Speaking to Deccan Chronicle from Delhi, Ahmad Azeem, public relations officer, Jamia Millia said he wasn't sure why the university did not share the information in the RTI reply. "I don't know what happened. Indeed, the university's property was damaged and we even drafted a report with estimates," he said. He added that Ansari's questions could be misunderstood. "We will look into this matter," he said.

Govt unjust with students: Owaisi

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

"Hum tamam Jamia ke bachchon ke saath hai. Yeh hukumat zulm kar rahehai bachchon pe, (We are with the students of Jamia. This government is unjust with the students)," said AIMIM president and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

Owaisi said that the party will stand by the students of Jamia Millia University who were protesting against the CAA. During the Question Hour, Owaisi alleged that the government has been harassing students, terming it as "shameful." He said, "Sharam nahi hai inko (They are shameless). Bachchon ko mara rahe hai (they are beating the kids)... goliya mara rahe hai (firing bullets at

them). Yeh jante hain ke ek bachche ki ankh chali gayi (one student has lost an eye), betiyon ko mara rahe hai (they are also beating up girls)," he said.

Earlier, replying to Owaisi's question, HRD minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said there were reports of violence in campuses of JMI and Aligarh Muslim University but no such incident was reported in the University of Allahabad. Mr Pokhriyal said the Central universities are statutory autonomous organisations and all administrative and academic decisions are taken by the university with the approval of its statutory bodies such as Executive Council, Academic Council and Court etc., and universities are also competent to deal with such incidents.

PM: Oppn playing vote-bank politics

FROM PAGE 1

If the protesters were not stopped in Delhi, the Prime Minister said they would block some other road in some other part of the country. He said because of the Shaheen Bagh protests, people commuting to and from Noida had been facing a lot of problems.

Making a fervent appeal to people to vote for the BJP, Mr Modi said: "Vote for change in Delhi. It will strengthen the BJP. People are facing problems because of these protests, but they are silent but angry with votebank politics. It is votebank politics in Seelampur, Jamia and Shaheen Bagh over protests on the CAA. It is not a coincidence, but an experiment. They hold the Constitution and the national flag to divert attention from the real conspiracy and (to hide) their intentions."

Mr Modi said if there was any confusion over a law, the protest should have ended after the government's assurances. "But the AAP and the Congress are playing the game of politics," he said.

In a swipe at the Congress, the PM said those who had questioned the Batla House encounter were saving those who had raised the "tukde

tukde" slogan.

Earlier in the day, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the BJP was trying to benefit from the protest at Shaheen Bagh, and if Mr Shah wanted, he could get the route opened in "two minutes". "The road must be vacated. This issue is under the Central government and I don't know why it is not opening that road. They don't want to open it. The BJP is doing politics on this. Can't believe a powerful home minister as Amit Shah can't get that road opened. If the road is opened, there won't be an issue left for them," he told a news channel.

Targeting Mr Kejriwal, the PM also criticised him for removing his party's old manifesto from its website. He said: "21 days ago the AAP removed its old manifesto from its website. Because people were watching what they promised and how many were fulfilled."

"Kejriwal Sir, you hide the manifesto, but we and the people of Delhi will not stop asking questions," he said, adding that the BJP fulfils all its promises. The PM said the vote to be held on February 8 will not be just to form the government in Delhi, but to take the city's development "to new heights in this decade".

If you wish to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first invent the universe

There are things known and things unknown and in between are the doors

DECCAN Chronicle

4 FEBRUARY 2020

UK after Brexit: Will the gamble pay off?

Britain is finally out of the European Union. Its citizens woke up on February 1 to mixed reactions that mirrored the narrow margin represented in a 51.9 per cent vote in favour of leaving the EU on June 23, 2016. While many rejoiced in a newfound sense of independence, others were left despondent for breaking away after 47 years. The reconciliation of such divergent views appears to be the biggest challenge, with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson declaring his job was to bring his country together and take it forward. "This is not an end but a beginning" — were his words, where he may have paraphrased Winston Churchill, but they are as likely to linger in history as Britons move on.

Brexit marks yet another blow to globalisation as economic nationalism triumphed, much as it has in the past few years in which strong leaders are finding ways to make populist rule legitimate. What were open borders will have to close soon. For most Britons, the painful Brexit debate was much less about economics and far more about identity. This hankering for freedom, partly premised on old glory, might have been a throwback to the heyday of the colonisers when the sun was said to never set on the British Empire. And yet it was mostly the young and those living in the country who favoured Brexit more than London.

The situation is riddled with problems as Britain left in a hurry, even before a proper deal could be struck with the EU. The negotiating positions on trade are seen to be hardening now as EU leaders are offering an icy reception to the British PM's insistence on the UK not countenancing jurisdiction of European courts in trade. Mr Johnson is not wrong in seeking a pragmatic agreement, but the sharp deadline of December 31 looms, and a "no-deal" Brexit could be far more damaging than the all the freedom the exit has brought.

The world order has changed somewhat, including in politics. The emergence of Boris Johnson, seen as the man who "got Brexit done", could reshape Britain's electoral map for years to come. Given the dynamics of an American election year, it is moot whether President Donald Trump would deliver on the great trade deal he promised when the UK was dithering in multiple parliamentary votes on Brexit, to settle which the Conservative leader called a general election.

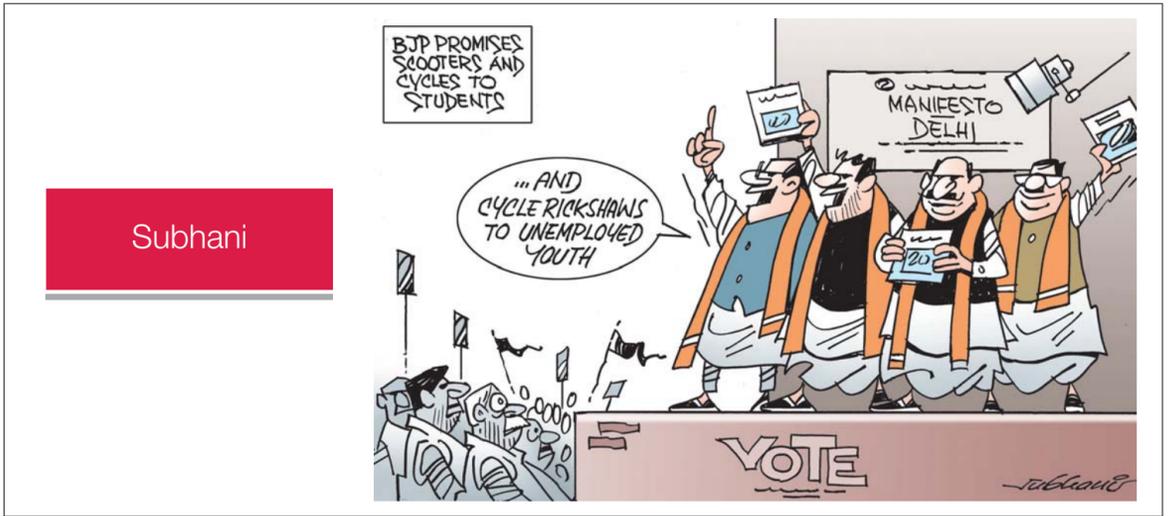
In emerging stronger as his December election gambit paid off, Mr Johnson himself will be a much wanted leader as the rest of the world, including India, senses an opportunity for trading with Britain on favourable tariff terms. Given India's steady and durable relationship with the UK, it's on the cards that old bonds will mean something as India tries to fill gaps even as Britain and the EU go through a tortuous negotiating process, complicated by Northern Ireland's geographical contiguity with the Irish Republic. The hunt for a new playing field in trade will only get more intense.

Delhi stir: Ominous trend

Citizens' protests against governmental action aren't a new phenomenon in this country; people take out a march or sit on dharna almost every single day. There have been peaceful agitations that lasted weeks and months before being called off, but the Delhi protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the reactions to it show an alarming trend. Sunday's firing in the air at Jamia Millia Islamia by two unidentified gunmen is the third in a series of dangerous responses. A juvenile fired on unarmed protesters on January 30, Gandhiji's martyrdom day, injuring a university student. Two days later, on February 1, a young Kapil Gujjar fired at protesters at Shaheen Bagh.

It seems the Delhi Assembly polls have cast a long shadow on the anti-CAA protests. While the Aam Aadmi Party has chosen to stay out, the BJP appears hell-bent on making Arvind Kejriwal a party to it, and the election an India-Pakistan affair. Senior BJP leaders, including a senior minister, have no qualms in calling an elected CM a "terrorist", not once but twice. So it's not an accident, but follows a pattern.

BJP leaders have chosen to interpret the word "terrorist" in a way politically convenient to them, to paint political opponents in dark shades. The only sane voice that has come from the ruling side is that of defence minister Rajnath Singh, who said the BJP "did not wish to come to power in Delhi riding on hatred, and such a victory would be unacceptable to the party". The trend appears ominous. Desperation can't be the inspiration in politics; democracy should be the winner in an election, not the politics of hate and desperation. The ruling party has an added responsibility to ensure this.



Subhani

CAA: Lack of informed debate mars discourse



Amitabha Bhattacharya

All government functionaries — whether they are ministers or officials — are paid by the taxpayers to serve the nation. Consequently, each of their actions, individual and collective, is liable to be questioned. Dissent being central to any form of democratic governance, such questioning is not only legitimate but most often desirable. Most government actions are but a continuation of earlier decisions and discourses, and are the outcome of deliberations between selected officials and elected public representatives. All major decisions at the Centre are taken by the council of ministers headed by the Prime Minister, and generally reflect the collective wisdom of the government — not that of the PM alone. Such executive actions are normally questioned in the legislature and frequently challenged in the courts of law. Thus, under normal circumstances, the system itself has built-in checks and balances. Unfortunately, a trust deficit has resulted in some leaders in power and those in the Opposition being on a conflicting course, with one side demonising the other as pushing a divisive agenda. This is causing a fear psychosis, which can very often be extremely counterproductive.

The recent spate of protests across the country over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), as well as the proposed National Population Register (NPR) or the National Register of Citizens (NRC), establishes one thing for sure, that India's democracy continues to be vibrant. It can be argued that the current discontent is the cumulative effect of mainly economic and certain social factors, aggravated by incidents of lynching and intemperate utterings by certain political leaders, but the fact remains that the core citizenship issues are not being discussed adequately on facts or merits, and that the agitations are accompanied with emotive considerations and often guided by political hues. Since the citizenship concerns are very complex and deeply grained in history, any discourse has to be grounded in reality — requiring a dispassionate analysis of the facts and the legal position, not merely on abstraction of moral or civilisational ideals. Since State actions comprise enacting of laws and framing of rules thereunder, budgeting of financial resources, deployment of manpower, timeline and such other concrete measures, a framework of informed debate with both sides willing to concede some ground, should perhaps include the following.

First, the CAA has been termed by critics as discriminatory and against secularism, not universal in outreach, unconstitutional and against India's civilisational ethos. It would be prudent to wait for the Supreme Court to give its final verdict on these issues. Meanwhile, any public debate should address whether the CAA is against one religious group or favouring others. Is it in the spirit of affirmative action or not? Should the Government of India, dealing with citizenship, exercise reasonable restrictions to define certain religious groups, if there has been a historical case of persecution against them? While universalism in approach may be an ideal scenario, can

the government be blamed for not following that ideal? What has been the international experience in this regard? How would the maintenance of status quo help resolve this contentious issue?

This brings us to the second issue, relating to the administrative capacity of the State. What is the approximate number of illegal migrants and how many of them are sought to be covered under the ambit of the CAA for the faster grant of citizenship? Has there been any official estimate? If so, can that be published for the people to understand the magnitude of the exercise? In the absence of any data, and of the basis of arriving at such data, how would the cost, complexities and implications of the nationwide undertaking be assessed?

The third issue is about the process involved and the documentation needed. What has been the experience of conducting the NRC in Assam? What are the lessons learnt? Should the CAA be further amended and how are the rules to be framed thereunder? What modifications of rules and processes are needed to make the exercise meaningful, compassionate and non-threatening? Instead of making blanket demands for the abolition of everything, can there be constructive suggestions about the amendments that may be needed, on the basis of evidence-based reasoning? Between the rigid stances of the pro-changers and the no-changers, is there any space for a more nuanced middle path?

The fourth issue relates to the timing and

What has been the experience of conducting the NRC in Assam? What are the lessons learnt? Should the CAA be further amended and how are the rules to be framed thereunder?

phasing of this exercise. Is it the right time? Is the current disruption going to affect the nation's growth prospects — and if so, how much? While the CAA makes clear the intentions of the government, should it be in a hurry to steamroll the process, having known well that administration or politics is the art of the possible? Those opposing the moves should also spell out a tangible course of action to tackle the problem. Do they want the process of accelerated citizenship to be abandoned permanently or extended universally? Under the circumstances, shouldn't the government pause a little, take a deep breath, learn from past experience, involve all the stakeholders involved and then proceed?

Finally, certain state governments have planned to not cooperate in any way with the implementation of the CAA as also the NPR/NRC. Making a political noise is understandable in a charged atmosphere, but states seeking to defy a Central law, if validated by the Supreme Court, can set a dangerous trend. This is also against the spirit of cooperative federalism. Let each political party go straight to the people and explain the features of the CAA, word by word, and of the process thereafter, enabling each individual to take a considered view on the matter.

Knowing that hatred diminishes the persons who hate, demonising any political formation or even a class of people — and dividing and classifying them either as bhakts or anti-nationals — can only vitiate the atmosphere further. Worse, the entities so despised may even start behaving like them. Only informed and dispassionate debates, in an atmosphere free from violence and fear, can lead to a resolution.

The writer is a retired IAS officer from the Andhra Pradesh cadre, who has also worked with UNDP and with the private sector

LETTERS

FOOD SAFETY

Street food certification by FSSAI has taken Hyderabad one step forward in food safety. Nowadays people are more dependent on street food vendors. Hence, it is very important to keep such places hygienic. It would be great if the GHMC follows up on this certification programme in other parts of city. It will boost the confidence of both the vendors and consumers.

Surabhi Singh Tanwar
Hyderabad

BUDGET WOES

Your editorial exposes the stark reality and reflects true feelings of the common man (*Budget lacks vision, a golden chance wasted, DC, Feb. 3*). The FM seemed to be in a hurry to achieve something impossible soon. In the process, she has pleased no one and has antagonised almost everyone. To repair the damage, the FM should not consider Standard Deduction as an exemption. It may be increased to ₹75,000. The removal of exemption to charities was crude to compassionate human beings. India is often hit by natural calamities and even Presidents and PMs request donations. There also seems to be no cheer for the senior citizens. The FM could have at least increased the limit to ₹6L or ₹7.5 L.

Wing Cdr. V. Sundaresan (retd)
Secunderabad

It may help if the recent Budget is referred to a top class economist or Nobel Laureate Abhijith Banerjee and his team. His research on economics of the poorer sections and his vast knowledge can be used to amend the Budget based on realities of the unhappy poor and the middle income groups. We also need to discuss how to produce excess goods for export as India is already having 134 crore people. The idea is to live a quality life with quality education, peace, prosperity, progress and surplus production.

M. Vislesha Sahara
Secunderabad

ANTI-CAA RALLIES

The Opposition parties behaviour towards CAA is unfortunate and condemnable. Anything is possible in India in the name of Democracy. The demand of some people to accommodate the majorities of neighbouring countries in CAA is not justified. We are under stress with a burgeoning population.

K. Ganesh
Hyderabad

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

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Irfan Husain

On the Chinese horoscope, this is the Year of the Rat. Traditionally, the New Year begins with celebrations and feasts, but the lethal coronavirus has dampened all such festivities.

Many scientists trying to pinpoint the origin of this virus have concluded that it was caused by bats from a certain cave in Hubei province. From them it appears to have jumped to civet cats kept in small cages in the seafood market at Wuhan by way of urine or faeces. Some biologists conjecture that the outbreak was caused by snakes.

Whatever the cause, it is certain that China's food preferences have triggered this plague.

Don't get me wrong: as a foodie, I like to experiment and have been known to slurp down all manner of exotic dainties. Once in Hanoi, I was happily scoffing stir-fried locusts until my wife stopped me in mid-bite by saying: "That one looks like a cockroach." To this day, I

don't know if she was joking.

But bats? Civet cats? No way. However, not everyone is restrained in their tastes. Most faiths practised in China do not offer dietary guidelines, so people will eat whatever catches their fancy. In fact, the rich will buy the most expensive beast or bug on the menu. Thus, entire nations are being stripped of their wildlife to satisfy the Chinese desire to impress and try novel dishes.

Donkeys in Africa are being shipped to China where their skins are turned into gelatine for traditional medicine. There have also been proposals to export donkey hides from Pakistan to China. The meat, of course, is eaten.

Pangolins, too, have been pushed to the edge by China's dietary habits. These helpless, scaly beasts are being scooped up from East Africa to Pakistan and trafficked to China where they are sold for \$470 per kilo (as against \$11 per kilo in the 1990s). The scales cost another \$3,000 per kilo in Vietnam and

China, and are used in spurious cures, including as a cure for impotence.

In fact, more endangered animals and birds have been slaughtered in search of an elusive virility than in any other cause. Our own houbara bustards have fallen victim to Arab royalty's compulsion to overcome impotence. But the killing of rare species like the Indian tiger, the rhinoceros for its horn, and elephants for their tusks has pushed them to the edge of extinction.

Fortunately, the giant panda and many types of whales are staging a slow comeback. Partly, this is due to their appeal to animal lovers: it has never hurt to have good PR. But if you are a bat in a cave in Hubei province, you don't stand a chance. Other bears don't fare as well: some are locked up in cages to make them secrete bile which again is used in Chinese medicine.

Fortunately, China has shut down the animal food markets, but how long this ban will last — and whether it will be rigorously imple-

mented — is an open question. If the SARS epidemic of 2003 is any guide, we can conclude that the authorities in China have learned little from the past.

However, China has a lot to lose from the current outbreak: tourists and investors will be reluctant to visit a country that poses such a serious health hazard. Millions of overseas Chinese are being seen as potential carriers of coronavirus.

At a time when President Xi is trying to position China at the top table, the last thing he needs is for his country to be dragged into pariah territory.

So is the coronavirus a case of wild animals striking back? Well, I'm certainly on the side of the pangolins and the donkeys. Nobody can convince me that an animal on the endangered list is good for me, no matter how delicious it tastes.

And yet we all have our own food preferences that must seem odd to foreigners. Force-feeding geese to make them produce more liver for foie gras must be painful for the

birds, but we do it anyway to obtain the unctuous paste so beloved by diners in luxury restaurants.

The Japanese continue to hunt whales despite worldwide criticism. Meat from these giants of the deep is frozen and stored. Consumption is down to a small fraction of what it used to be during the Second World War, but the Japanese insist that whale meat is part of their culture.

People in France, Italy and Germany still eat horse meat. When I was a boy in Paris, it was fairly common to see butchers with a horse's head on the shop front. A horse steak I once had in Italy was lean and tasty. And what would foreigners make of the nihari/brain/marrow combination that makes us salivate?

So it's all about perceptions and preferences at the end. But I still draw the line at bats.

By arrangement with Dawn

Unlike in China, all endangered species should be off the menu

A medium to long-term vision for India's economy



Hemant Kanoria

The present glaring issue for the economy has been to infuse funds for a demand pickup — for the agriculture sector, for NBFCs and for infrastructure spend, so as to enable the nation to be back on the growth track. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has endeavoured to address most of the issues with a medium to long-term vision.

In order to take the economy on to a higher growth trajectory, stepping up infrastructure

investments is a must. Therefore, for me, the biggest takeaway is perhaps the announcement of allowing Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs) 100 per cent tax exemption for investments in Indian infrastructure projects. The other important announcement was the increase in the FPI limit for corporate bonds from nine per cent to 15 per cent. This, coupled with the laying out of the red carpet for SWFs at this juncture, is very good news for Indian infrastructure projects as it will enable long-term funds, both equity and debt, to be invested



Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman

in India. The global financial markets are flush with abundant funds.

The decision on Dividend Distribution Tax, which has been on the expected lines, is likely to make investments in India more profitable.

On the infrastructure front, one of the notable announcements was to bring the power sector in line with manufactur-

BUDGET 2020-21

On the infrastructure front, one of the notable announcements was to bring the power sector in line with manufacturing companies and provide a concessional tax rate of 15 per cent on the new domestic generation companies

ing companies and provide a concessional tax rate of 15 per cent on the new domestic generation companies. However, I hope the existing power generation companies and the distribution companies should also be included in due course. I welcome the announcement that the Centre would now prod all state governments to adopt smart metering. This

can do wonders in improving the financial health of the discoms.

I also welcome the decision to set up a body for improving the modalities of settling commercial disputes. This is something which needs to be fast-tracked.

The finance minister has done well in paying adequate attention to the needs of the tech-driven New Economy and stepped up allocations for fostering the startup ecosystem and incentivising skilling initiatives. Allowing tax benefits to startups by way of deduction of 100 per cent of their profits and increasing the turnover limit and period of eligibility are in the right direction and will encourage both innovation and talent grooming.

The decision to liberalise external commercial borrowing (ECB) and foreign direct investment (FDI) norms for development of institutes of higher skills was also very

reassuring. If India has to emerge as a global power, we need to quickly scale up the capacity of our higher education ecosystem.

On the personal income-tax front, once we go through the fine print, we can comprehend better as to the modalities and advantages of the new optional income-tax rate system and how useful it would be in increasing consumption demand. On the real estate front, the finance minister has extended by one year the date of approval of affordable housing projects for availing a tax holiday on profit earned by developers and also the additional ₹1.5 lakh tax benefit on interest paid on affordable housing loans. Given the huge inventory buildup in the real estate sector, and the fact that this sector is a huge employment generator, I was expecting more incentives.

On the resource mobilisation front, the decisions to offload a

part of the government's stake in the Life Insurance Corporation and to sell off the entire government stake in IDBI Bank were noteworthy. It was reassuring to hear from the finance minister that the proceeds from such disinvestment will be mostly used for capital expenditure.

The extension of the Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme for NBFCs will surely facilitate them and I am sure we will soon hear good news for the sector that can address the liquidity availability in the medium to short-term basis.

The decision to increase the Deposit Insurance Coverage from ₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakhs per depositor will be a huge relief and will encourage further savings, which can be channelised to fund infrastructure and industrial projects.

The writer is the chairman of Srei Infrastructure Finance Ltd

BJP launches a proxy war on Shaheen Bagh on election eve



Anand K. Sahay

Far & Near

The participation of thousands — or is it tens of thousands? — of its residents in marches, sit-ins, and the making of human chains to protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, a series of emotion-filled actions sustained over a period of nearly two months (and still unfolding), has helped New Delhi reclaim its romanticism and fame packed in the old line "Dilli dil walon ki!", which means that people of this city have a great heart.

In particular, Shaheen Bagh, a slum in a far corner of the city, is likely to be etched into the history of protest movements in modern India. It will be impossible for BJP-RSS censors to efface it since it is invested with public emotion on an unbelievable scale in the face of the State and its agents seeking to revile it through calumny day in and day out.

In recent decades, New Delhi — being a city in a near permanent state of transition — has had its composure disturbed. It has come to be regarded as a self-absorbed, callous, soulless place. But the spontaneous outpouring of its citizens on a sustained basis, for a task that is no less than the defence of the Constitution in the face of heavy-duty police repression, changes all that.

What's remarkable is that those who came out to challenge the might of the State were mostly women (of all ages) and young people, chiefly students, who looked the kind that had never taken part in protesting in public — braving police batons and firing — before. The age of innocence has died for them, and God knows what kind of anger or frustration has been born in their young minds, and what politics this might presage.

There is, however, also another noteworthy aspect flowing from the recent dramatic events in Delhi (which have served as a model for the country). This too marks itself out for posterity. It will doubtless be remembered for long that the Government of India did not see it fit to engage with citizens who have already spent more than 50 days and nights out in the open in the harsh winter protesting its policy direction and law pertaining to something as basic as the definition and rules of citizenship.

This tells us something about the canon of governance adopted by those at the helm. In November 2018, lakhs of farmers had descended on New Delhi to apprise the Narendra Modi government of their condition in a time of farmers' distress. The govern-

It will doubtless be remembered for long that the Government of India did not see it fit to engage with citizens who have already spent more than 50 days and nights out in the open in the harsh winter protesting its policy direction

ment gave them short shrift, making no effort to engage with them.

And yet, a few months later, the farmers of India backed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a second term and gave him a splendid election result even as the country reeled under his misguided policies that had brought ordinary Indians to their knees.

Political common sense suggests this outcome flowed from creating a communal schism by depicting the country's largest religious minority in lurid colours, culminating in the Balakot airstrike against Pakistan. Hatred and anger were mobilised against our western neighbour, which was made to stand in for the principal minority community. The signalling was crude but effective as it played on prejudice.

We are seeing the same strategy being repackaged in the campaign for the Assembly poll in New Delhi. Evidently, the party's hopes are again pinned on exploiting a vicious polarisation. His time around, Shaheen Bagh, a Muslim locality, has been made a substitute for Pakistan. Addressing NCC cadets — young impression-

able minds — two days after Republic Day (nothing is sacrosanct any more), the Prime Minister said India can make Pakistan bite the dust in no more than 10 days. Regardless of the realities of our geostrategic environment, this amounted to a proxy war or surgical strike against Shaheen Bagh and everything it stands for, not against any country.

When the PM leads the way, why blame communal motormouths like junior minister Anurag Thakur and a Delhi BJP MP for their shameful remarks (which the Election Commission has practically ignored), or even the Union home minister, who has said enough to cause national offence while campaigning in New Delhi? In the event, within a space of three days last week, two pistol-wielding Hindutva-crazed young men opened up with their guns — one at Shaheen Bagh and the other at Jamia Millia Islamia.

This is not the one-way dialogue the people of India, not just the protesters at the above locations, would have desired. But this is a signal to those who believe it is their right to protest peacefully. Nor is this only about the minority community, although they are an easy enough pitch to bat on. There was no protest on at JNU at the time, yet a Hindutva horde descended on it with clubs and rods because the idea of JNU, which has stood all these years for scrutiny and enquiry to advance knowledge creation, was anathema to it. At a fundamental level, it appears that those who question the govern-

ment's ways, or question the basic premise of its progenitor's philosophy, may be at risk of being abused, demonised or attacked. Our democracy is indeed at a crossroads.

Has the State then been hijacked by irregular elements already? That may be too large a proposition to advance just yet. But we can see that the compact struck between the State and its citizens (or Gramsci's "civil society") at the time of the founding of the Indian Republic in 1950 has come under strain on account of the spread of an ideology whose essential postulates are antithetical to democracy.

Will the BJP win the Delhi state election on February 8 through the diffusion of a particularly aggressive strain of the communal virus? That is possible but does not appear probable as of now. However, the party's current stance does seem to be a careful preparation for the longer term — the next Parliament election. It is evidently important to have national power in the bag.

Pakistan is of course essential to this preparation; indeed, it is hard to imagine the existence of a BJP without it. If there were no Pakistan, one would have to be invented to give the BJP — and its theories on Partition (and Muslims) — traction. The PM urged NCC cadets to "read the right kind of books" by "unbiased historians" to learn the truth about Partition, but he did not offer a single reference. Obscuration is needed in the game of name-calling to dominate what Gramsci called "the war of position".

Brexit, finally, but with no fireworks & no flashing lights



Kishwar Desai

London Diary

So finally we left! Amidst much flag-waving and singing and speeches outside Parliament, the UK exited the European Union. For many of us it was a bit of an anti-climax as it felt like that the whole thing had already been done! After all, it is something we have talked about, discussed, moaned over for the past three years. Once 11 pm (midnight in Europe) arrived on January 31, an image of the Big Ben was beamed onto 10, Downing Street, and the countdown ended. (The actual Big Ben is still under repair and so could not chime out the historic moment).

To be honest, I had expected all of the UK to erupt in celebration, but even though we were out and about, we found, ultimately, it was all normal in most parts of London, and our dinner was served by the usual Europeans. Of course, Prime Minister Boris Johnson had his own party to celebrate, and Nigel Farage was seen grinning ecstatically at Parliament Square in Westminster. But there were no fireworks, no flashing lights. In fact, one felt that our actual departure from the EU was quite subdued. This was even though the area around Whitehall was lit up in red, blue and white, and those celebrating sang "Rule Britannia" and draped the flag everywhere — including on their pets.

Some journalists old enough to remember said, somewhat wistfully, that joining the EU had evoked more excitement than this. And then let's not forget that parts of the UK, such as Scotland, had voted to Remain...

Could the dreaded coronavirus also have been responsible for this quiet acceptance? After all, face masks have begun to run out in the city (even though they are felt to be quite useless against this deadly but tiny virus). People may have felt that it was too risky to be rubbing shoulders in a crowd, where anyone could carry an infection. And then, how do you take a selfie wearing a mask?

But our real attention is on Wirral, where 83 Britons who had been stranded in China are now finally quarantined. The interesting thing about their flight into the UK was that they were reportedly served chicken tikka masala... now what could be the connection? The bad news is that two Chinese, one of them a student, have been identified with the virus in York, and then sent off to Newcastle to an infectious diseases unit.

More bad news for viewers of *The Crown* — there won't be any Meghan and Harry episodes as the series will pack up after the fifth sea-

son, which will have the stalwart Imelda Staunton playing the Queen. I won't be crying into my baked beans, in any case, because I feel we have more than enough coverage of royalty in the UK, and we certainly could do with less. Interestingly, the real-life Queen always has been very gracious and allowed this constant mining of her and family's life on screen, and on the internet, without a fuss. I don't know if she ever bothers to watch, but her stoic and stiff upper lip in these matters is remarkable.

One wonders if an upcoming exhibition on tantra in the UK will reinforce the stereotype of Indians as those "sex obsessed people" from the land of the *Kama Sutra*? The British Museum, by organising an exhibition entitled "Tantra: Enlightenment to Revolution" has no doubt hit upon a unique idea to encourage footfall — after all, who wouldn't like to come to an exhibition with plenty of naked people engaged in all kinds of activity? And at the same time, everyone can feel noble because this is meant for educational purposes only.

The exhibition will begin in April, and over five years of research have gone into collecting the 100 objects which will be displayed, many of which are from the British Museum itself. The curator, Dr Imma Ramos, says, according to reports: "The most important thing about tantra and what the philosophy is saying is that all aspects of existence are charged with divine power. We wanted to challenge the stereotypes that exist that it is just a hedonistic guide to sex."

She does add that it was during colonial rule that tantra began to be looked upon as mainly being focussed on sex. She hopes that she can demonstrate through the exhibition that tantra was a means to reach a higher goal — and that the images, especially of Kali, were also used by revolutionaries during anti-colonial protests in the past.

At last, some of the hidden treasures in the British Museum will see the light of day, and in a modern context which explores "female power, gender fluidity, religious pluralism, mindfulness and well-being," as the museum director Hartwig Fischer puts it, according to newspaper reports.

But the worry remains that much of this interpretation is still being done in the West — whereas it is about time that our museums in India began examining these Indian themes — and looking beyond the collections of the maharajahs.

The writer is an award-winning author. Her new book, *Jallianwala Bagh, 1919: The Real Story*, has recently been published.

Creation is manifestation of God in various forms



Sadguru Rameshji

Sab jag ishwar roop hai, bhalo buro nahi koyi Jaki jaisi bhavana, taiso hi phal hoyi

This couplet in Hindi means that the whole of creation is nothing but the manifestation (modified form) of God himself, hence, nothing in creation is bad and nothing is good. This couplet further explains that whatever we feel for anybody or for anything in this world, so will be the reaction and result from it in our life.

There are two aspects/secrets explained in the above couplet. One is the highest spiritual knowledge about creation and the second about the behavioural aspect of creation.

ation explains that God (God is referred here as the divine energy which is formless, omnipresent, omnipotent and eternal) has itself modified into various forms in the process of creation. Having taken various forms, it has got various attributes based on each form.

Whenever a substance or a thing changes its form, it also changes its qualities and attributes. It appears completely different from its original substance. For example, when ocean water evaporates, it converts itself into water vapour and is invisible to our eyes. Though we could see it as water, but now we cannot see it as water vapour. Not only that, we could have drunk it, taken a bath with it as water, but now, after it has converted into water vapour,

we cannot drink it nor we can bathe with it.

Similarly, this water vapour converts itself into clouds and thus gets a new name and form and new attributes. The process goes on and on till clouds convert into rainwater, rainwater into rivers and rivers merging back into the ocean. With every conversion, a new entity takes birth, overshadowing the original entity from which it has come into existence.

One became many and many became one. This is the process of creation. As water became vapour, vapour became clouds, clouds became rain, rain became rivers and rivers merged back into the ocean, similarly that One Divine Being became five elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth), mind, ego, senses, etc and the mixture of five elements further converted into various forms like mountains, trees, the atmosphere, ocean, food grains, animals, birds, humans, etc. Each entity has its own attributes and distinct qualities.

Thus the whole of creation

is nothing but the modified form of the Supreme Divine Being and that Divine Being alone has become many objects. Everything in creation is He and there is nothing other than Him. When everything is He, then there cannot be anything as good or anything as bad. This is the ultimate truth in spirituality.

When we start looking at everything and everybody as a manifestation of the Supreme Divine Being, then there will be no hatred, jealousy, fear or pride. There will only be love, compassion, concern and equality. This vision is the vision of enlightenment and salvation. With this vision, one would lead the life of a liberated soul and at the end of life, would merge with the Supreme Divine Being.

Sadguru Rameshji is a modern age spiritual guru and the force behind Poorna Ananda, a Hyderabad-based centre for spiritual evolution and joyful living. He can be contacted at www.poornaananda.org

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Bertrand Russell dead

PORT MADOC (Wales, February 3). Bertrand Russell, the British philosopher who fought to save the world from the horror of nuclear war died last night. He was 97. He died peacefully at his home near this North Wales Town at 00:30 IST today (Tuesday), a spokesman for the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation said.

One of the world's greatest pacifists, he was married four times, wrote more than 40 books and was a winner of the Nobel Prize for literature.

A unguay figure with a crop of unruly white hair, Earl Russell was born on May 18, 1872, into the Russell family, who had been Dukes of Bedford since the seventeenth century. Earl Russell was reported to have been suffering from influenza just before his death.

His passion for causes was not dimmed by advancing years and only last December he appealed to the U.N. to back an international war crimes commission to probe alleged tortures by Americans in Vietnam.





Peace plan

Jared Kushner insists that Middle East peace plan is a real effort to break logjam

IN BRIEF

OIC rejects Trump's Mideast plan

Jeddah: The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation on Monday rejected US President Donald Trump's peace plan for the Middle East, calling on its 57 member states not to help implement it. The pan-Islamic body, which represents more than 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide, "rejects this US-Israeli plan as it does not meet the minimum aspirations and legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and contradicts the terms of reference of the peace process", it said in a statement. A meeting of foreign ministers at OIC headquarters in the Saudi city of Jeddah called on "all member states not (to) deal with this plan or cooperate with the US administration efforts to enforce it in any way or form". Under the US plan unveiled last week, Israel would retain control of the disputed city of Jerusalem as its "undivided capital" and annex settlements on Palestinian lands.

First UN 'mercy flight' leaves Yemen

Sanaa: Children in critical need of medical care were evacuated Monday from Yemen's rebel-held capital Sanaa, in what the United Nations hopes will be the first of many mercy flights. Seven young patients and their families had gathered at Sanaa airport, closed to commercial flights since 2016, clutching their transport documents for the trip to Amman. "This is the first of what we hope and believe will be many flights," said UN Resident Coordinator for Yemen Lise Grande. "It's a very important day, it's a day of hope. It shows that everyone wants the people who need help to get that help," she told reporters. "The key is to have many flights, bigger planes, so that the people who need aid can get to the places where they will receive it." Yemen's internationally recognised government, backed by a Saudi-led military coalition, has been fighting Iran-backed Huthi rebels since 2014 when they seized control of the capital. In November, the coalition — which controls Yemen's airspace — said patients needing medical care would be allowed to fly out of Sanaa.

Many injured in California shooting

Lebec, California: Multiple people were injured early Monday in a shooting on a Greyhound bus in California, the California Highway Patrol said. Fort Tejon CHP spokesman Rich Anthes couldn't confirm to news outlets the number of victims or their conditions, but the agency said the shooter was a passenger on the bus. The bus was heading north on Interstate 5, Anthes said. Further details weren't immediately released. The Kern County sheriff's and fire departments responded to the scene near Lebec in Kern County, north of Los Angeles and south of Bakersfield, according to local news outlets. Photos from the scene showed the bus parked at a Valero gas station at the base of the Grapevine section of the freeway. An email and call to CHP wasn't immediately returned.

I-DAY: LANKA DROPS TAMIL NATIONAL ANTHEM

Colombo, Feb. 3: For the first time since 2016, there will be no Tamil national anthem at the 72nd Independence Day celebrations in Sri Lanka and it will only be rendered in Sinhalese, the government announced on Monday, amply demonstrating the administration's priority for the majority Sinhala community. The then Sri Lankan government in 2015 started including the Tamil national anthem as a means of achieving reconciliation with the Tamil minority community. This will be the first time since 2016 that there will be no Tamil national anthem at the Independence Day celebrations in the country. The national anthem will be sung only in Sinhala, officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs said on Monday. Sri Lanka's Constitution provides for the singing of the national anthem in both Sinhala and Tamil. The Tamil version 'Sri Lanka Thaye' is a direct translation of 'Namo namo matha' in the Sinhala language. "The national anthem in Tamil is not just another song but the Sri Lankan identity of the Tamil speaking community," said Mano Ganesan, a Tamil politician who was the former minister of national integration and had been responsible for the Tamil version being accommodated during the previous Independence Day celebrations.

Don's trial set for final arguments

Democrats say acquittal, expected later this week, will be invalid because no witnesses testified

Washington, Feb. 3: President Donald Trump's impeachment trial resumes for final arguments on Monday before an expected acquittal later in the week that Democrats have said will be invalid because no witnesses testified. The president was impeached in December for abuse of power over pressure on US ally Ukraine to announce investigations that would have helped him politically, including into Joe Biden, a leading challenger for this year's presidential ballot. Biden is among the candidates Monday in the Iowa caucuses that choose the state's Democratic nominee and mark the official start of election season. The selection process in largely rural Iowa, coinciding with final impeachment arguments in Washington, will be closely watched as a sign as to which of 11 Democratic candidates are gaining early momentum to challenge Trump in November's election.

■ US PRESIDENT Donald Trump drew scorn and laughter on social media after placing the Kansas City Chiefs in the wrong state following their Super Bowl victory. Trump said the chiefs had made Kansas State proud, but the team actually hails from neighbouring Missouri.



US President Donald Trump, First Lady Melania and their son Barron arrive at the White House from a trip at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida. — AP

At only the third impeachment trial of a US president, Trump is all but assured of being acquitted Wednesday, the day after his annual 'State of the Union' speech, which the president said will carry a "very, very positive message". Republicans hold 53 seats in the Senate to 47

for the Democrats, but a two-thirds majority, or 67 senators, is needed to remove him from office. Adam Schiff, the leader of the House prosecutors, known as impeachment managers, told CBS that it was "pretty remarkable" that senators on both sides had acknowledged

that Democrats proved their case against the president. "But I'm not letting the senators off the hook. We're still going to go into the Senate this week and make the case why this president needs to be removed. It will be up to the senators to make that

final judgment, and the senators will be held accountable for it." Republican Senators Lamar Alexander and Joni Ernst said Trump's behaviour was troubling but not impeachable. Alexander, of Tennessee, suggested Trump had been naive in asking a for-

■ MICHAEL BLOOMBERG traded insults with Trump, calling the president "a pathological liar who lies about everything: his fake hair, his obesity and his spray-on tan". The comment came in response to abusive tweets and remarks the president made in a Super Bowl interview.

would vote Wednesday to acquit the president. "I think generally speaking, going after corruption is the right thing to do, but he did it in the wrong manner... I think that he could have done it in different channels," she told CNN. Trump is also accused of obstruction of Congress for ordering officials not to comply with subpoenas for documents and testimony as part of the impeachment inquiry. On Friday, just two Republicans - Mitt Romney of Utah and Susan Collins of Maine - joined Democrats in voting to introduce witnesses, a practice they said was followed at every other impeachment trial in US history. A narrow majority of Americans believe Trump abused his power and obstructed Congress by withholding documents and testimony during the impeachment inquiry, according to a new NBC/WSJ poll. — AP

US wants more from Taliban

Tashkent, Feb. 3: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Monday demanded "demonstrable evidence" from the Taliban that it can and will reduce violence before signing a deal that would lead to Afghanistan peace talks and a withdrawal of American troops from the country. Speaking at a news conference in neighbouring Uzbekistan, Pompeo said a deal is close but that they have been close before and failed because the Taliban was unable to demonstrate its seriousness. He said more work remains to be done so that peace talks can get started. "We're working on a peace and reconciliation plan, putting the commas in the right place, getting the sentences right," he said. "We got close once before to having an agreement: a piece of paper

that we mutually executed and the Taliban were unable to demonstrate either their will or capacity or both to deliver on a reduction in violence." "So, what we are demanding now is demonstrable evidence of their will and capacity to reduce violence, to take down the threat, so the inter-Afghan talks ... will have a less violent context," he said. "We're hopeful we can achieve that but we're not there yet, and work certainly remains." Pompeo's comments came just two days after US peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad arrived in Kabul and told Afghan President Ashraf Ghani there has been "no notable progress" in talks with the Taliban. However, Khalilzad said he was hopeful of reaching an understanding with them on a reduction of hostilities, without offering any time frame. — AP



Police officers inspect a bus at the scene of Sunday's terror stabbing attack in the Streatham area of south London, on Monday. — AP

London stabber has Lanka connection

London, Feb. 3: A man shot dead by the Scotland Yard after he went on a stab frenzy on a busy high street in south London was a convicted Islamist terrorist, with family links to Sri Lanka, who was recently released from prison after serving half of his sentence period for preparation of acts of terrorism, police said. The Metropolitan Police said Sudesh Mamoor Faraz Amman, a 20-year-old British national with extended family in Sri Lanka, had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (ISIS). In a statement in Arabic via its Amaq propaganda agency, the Islamic State on Monday claimed responsibility for the London attack and said Sudesh was a "fighter"

with the group, according to the SITE Intelligence Group, a US-based monitoring firm which monitors jihadist activities. Amman was sentenced to three years and four months in prison in December 2018 after being charged with 10 terrorism-related offences. He was aged 18 that time. He was released under licence last month. He was under surveillance. "The suspect had been recently released from prison where he had been serving a sentence for Islamist-related terrorism offences. We are confident that this is an isolated incident that has been contained," said Met Police Deputy Assistant Commissioner Lucy D'Orsi on Sunday night. Of the 10 offences under

which Amman was jailed, seven were of making records of information likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism and three of dissemination of terrorist publications. Police had been told of extremist material being posted on the social media app Telegram by an account called @stranger-tothisworld, which turned out to be of Amman. He had used documents about making explosives, weaponry and carrying out terrorist attacks. Among them were manuals on bomb-making, knife-fighting and close combat. Reports at the time also said he had told his girlfriend she should murder her "kuffar" (non-believer) parents. — PTI

UK TO ANNOUNCE NEW RULES FOR MILITANTS AFTER STABBING

London: The British government plans to announce new rules for the imprisonment of convicted terrorists after an Islamic militant who was recently released from prison stabbed two people in south London, the second such attack in less than three months. Home Secretary Priti Patel, who is in charge of the police, said the government would release its plans Monday. Following Sunday's attack and a November 29 attack in which two people were killed in central London, the government said it would effectively

stop the early release of convicted extremists, double terror sentences and overhaul the conditions under which they are released back into the community. The government will be "announcing some fundamental changes, in addition to what we've already said, that we will do to deal with counter-terrorism and counter-terrorist offenders," Patel said late Sunday. The incident in London recalled a November stabbing attack carried out by another man who had served prison time for terrorism offenses. — AP

CONTRASTING VISIONS ■ Johnson, Barnier trade blows, expose deep gulf

Post Brexit, Britain, EU set red lines

London, Feb. 3: Britain and the EU on Monday laid down their red lines for post-Brexit trade talks, offering contrasting visions for their future relationship that raise the prospect of clashes to come. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson envisioned his country as a global champion of free trade, emphatically rejecting EU insistence on full alignment with Brussels. But he still pledged not to "undermine EU standards", after the UK finally went its own way on Friday after nearly half a century in the bloc and an 11-month transition period began. Worries over trade negotiations sent the pound sinking more than 1.1 per cent against the dollar in London midday deals on Monday. "I see no need to bind ourselves to an agreement with the EU,"



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson outlines his government's negotiating stance with the European Union after Brexit, during a key speech at the Old Naval College in Greenwich, London, on Monday. — AP

Johnson said in a speech at the Old Royal Naval College, which chronicles Britain's past as a maritime superpower. "We will restore full sovereign controls over our borders, immigration, competition, subsidy rules, procurement (and) data protection." He added: "We will not engage in some cut-

throat race to the bottom. "We are not leaving the EU to undermine European standards. We will not engage in any kind of dumping, whether commercial, social or environmental." In Brussels, EU chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier formally offered a deep future relationship but only as long as Britain makes guarantees to trade fairly. Barnier said fisheries and fair trade would be his top priorities in the talks, with a special focus on denying Britain "unfair competitive advantages". But Johnson

Iran knew it shot down plane: Tapes

Kiev (Ukraine), Feb. 3: A leaked recording of an exchange between an Iranian air-traffic controller and an Iranian pilot purports to show that authorities immediately knew a missile had downed a Ukrainian jetliner after takeoff from Tehran, killing all 176 people aboard, despite days of denials by the Islamic Republic. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy acknowledged the recording's authenticity. In Tehran on Monday, the head of the Iranian investigation team, Hassan Rezaeifar, acknowledged the recording was legitimate and said that it was handed over to Ukrainian officials. After the January 8 disaster, Iran's civilian government maintained for days that it didn't know the Revolutionary Guard had shot down the

aircraft. A transcript of the recording, published by Ukrainian 1+1 TV channel, contains a conversation in Farsi between an air-traffic controller and a pilot reportedly flying a Fokker 100 jet for Iran's Aseman Airlines from Shiraz to Tehran. "A series of lights like ... yes, it is missile, is there something?" the pilot calls out to the controller. "No, how many miles? Where?" the controller asks. The pilot responds that he saw the light near the city of Payam, near where the Guard's Tor M-1 anti-aircraft missile was launched from. The controller says nothing has been reported to them, but the pilot remains insistent. "It is the light of missile," the pilot says. The controller then tries to contract the Ukrainian jetliner, but unsuccessfully. — AP



Tool for artistes

Actor-director Andy Serkis says egalitarian acting is a great tool for artistes going ahead in the 21st century

IN BRIEF

Ice Age: Cooking secrets revealed

London: Ancient Siberian hunters created heat-resistant pots so that they could cook hot meals surviving the harshest seasons of the last Ice Age by extracting nutritious bone grease, and marrow from meat, according to a study. The research, published in the journal *Quaternary Science Reviews*, also suggests there was no single point of origin for the world's oldest pottery. The last Ice Age reached its deepest point between 26,000 and 20,000 years ago, forcing humans to abandon northern regions, including large parts of Siberia. From around 19,000 years ago, temperatures slowly started to warm again, encouraging small bands of hunters to move back into these vast empty landscapes, said researchers, including those from the University of York in the UK.

Alarms may help reduce grogginess

Melbourne: Do you often feel groggy while waking up from sleep? A melodic alarm like 'Good Vibrations' by the Beach Boys may help, according to a study. The research, published in the journal *PLOS One*, suggests that the sounds people wake up to could be affecting how groggy and clumsy they feel in the morning. The researchers from RMIT University in Australia found that melodic alarms could improve alertness levels, while harsh alarm tones may increase levels of morning grogginess. They noted that the finding could have important implications for anyone who needs to perform at their peak soon after waking, such as shift workers and emergency first responders. "This study is important, as even NASA astronauts report that sleep inertia affects their performance on the International Space Station," said Associate Professor Adrian Dyer, from RMIT University. "We think that a harsh 'beep beep beep' might disrupt or confuse our brain activity when waking, while a more melodic sound like the Beach Boys 'Good Vibrations' or The Cure's 'Close to Me' may help us transition to a waking state in a more effective way," Dyer said in a statement.

Study: Seals clap to communicate

Melbourne: Wild grey seals can clap their flippers underwater during the breeding season, as a show of strength that warns off competitors, and advertises to potential mates, a study based on video footage has found. This is the first time a seal has been seen clapping completely underwater using its front flippers, according to the study published in the journal *Marine Mammal Science*. "The discovery of 'clapping seals' might not seem that surprising, after all, they're famous for clapping in zoos and aquaria," said lead study author, David Hocking, from Monash University in Australia. "But where zoo animals are often trained to clap for our entertainment these grey seals are doing it in the wild of their own accord," Hocking said. The research is based on video footage collected by naturalist Ben Burville, a visiting researcher at Newcastle University in the UK. The footage which took Burville 17 years of diving to catch on film shows a male grey seal clapping its paw-like flippers to produce a gunshot-like 'crack' sound.

VEGAN DIET MAY LOWER HEART DISEASE RISK

Washington, Feb. 3: Diets with reduced sulphur amino acids which occur in protein-rich foods, such as meats, dairy, nuts and soy are associated with a decreased risk for cardiovascular disease, according to a study published on Monday. Amino acids are the building blocks of proteins. A subcategory, called sulfur amino acids, including methionine and cysteine, play various roles in metabolism and health. "For decades, it has been understood that diets restricting sulphur amino acids were beneficial for longevity in animals," said John Richie, a professor at Pennsylvania State University in the US. "This study provides the first epidemiologic evidence that excessive dietary intake of sulphur amino acids may be related to chronic disease outcomes in humans," Richie said. The study, published in the journal *Lancet eClinical Medicine*, examined the diets and blood biomarkers of more than 11,000 participants from a national study in the US. It found that participants who ate foods containing fewer sulphur amino acids tended to have a decreased risk for cardiometabolic disease.

China builds hospital in 9 days, toll 361

Number of confirmed cases climbs to 17,238; 1,000-bed hospital built in record time

Beijing/Wuhan, Feb. 3: China on Monday opened a 1,000-bed hospital built in record nine days in Wuhan city, the epicentre of the coronavirus, and started clinical trials for a drug to treat the virulent virus as the death toll in the outbreak soared to 361, with 17,238 confirmed cases. A noted Chinese health expert Zhong Nanshan said that based on the fresh evidence, the novel coronavirus which is spreading rapidly in China and the world may reach its peak in the next 10 to 14 days, contrary to earlier estimates of clamping sooner. This means that the cases would drastically increase in the next two weeks before slowing down. The death toll in China's coronavirus epidemic soared to 361 with 57 deaths on Sunday while the number of confirmed cases climbed to 17,238, Chinese health officials announced on Monday.

Among Sunday's deaths, 56 were reported from Hubei Province, the epicentre of the virus outbreak, and one from southwest China's Chongqing, the commission said. The Philippines already reported the first overseas death of the virus while 148 cases have been reported from abroad. India has reported three cases of the coronavirus, all of them in Keralaites who returned from Wuhan. China opened a 1,000-bed makeshift hospital in Wuhan built in record nine days to exclusively treat the coronavirus patients.

On Wednesday, another 1,300 bed makeshift hospital will be opened adjacent to it. Together, they will open up 2,300 bed hospitals exclusively to treat the coronavirus patients. The new facility will ease the shortage of beds in the city resulting from an increasing number of patients infected with the virus, official media reported. Medical personnel from the People's Liberation Army will take over the new Huoshenshan Hospital. —PTI

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'1917' dominates Baftas 2020, Joaquin Phoenix best actor

London, Feb. 3: British filmmaker Sam Mendes' war drama *1917* ruled the 2020 edition of Baftas with seven wins, including best film, best British film and best director but it was best actor winner Joaquin Phoenix calling out the "systemic racism" of the industry that received a lot of attention at the awards ceremony. Phoenix, who was awarded the Bafta for his titular performance in *Joker*, accused the industry of sending out "a clear message to people of colour that you are not welcome here."

Both British Academy of Film and Television and Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences were heavily criticised for the lack of representation and diversity after the nominations were announced. The acting categories had shut out people of colour while no women directors were recognised in the directing segment.

1917 also took home the Baftas for cinematography, production design, sound and special visual effects. Todd Phillips' *Joker* managed two more awards in the best original score and casting categories. —PTI



Sam Mendes Joaquin Phoenix

AWARDS: IN CATEGORIES

BEST DIRECTOR Sam Mendes	FILM NOT IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE <i>Parasite</i>	BEST ACTOR Joaquin Phoenix
BEST ACTRESS Renee Zellweger		
ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY <i>Parasite</i>	BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY Jojo Rabbit	BEST COSTUME Little Women
BEST EDITING Ford v Ferrari	Outstanding British contribution Andy Serkis	BAFTA RISING STAR Micheal Ward
CINEMATOGRAPHY, PRODUCTION DESIGN, SOUND AND SPECIAL VISUAL EFFECTS <i>1917</i>		BEST ORIGINAL SCORE AND CASTING CATEGORIES <i>Joker</i>

I don't think anybody wants a handout or preferential treatment, although that's what we give ourselves every year. I think people just want to be acknowledged, appreciated and respected for their work. This is not a self-righteous condemnation because I'm ashamed to say that I'm part of the problem — JOAQUIN PHOENIX, actor

WEINSTEIN ACCUSER TO FACE CROSS-EXAMINATION AT NYC TRIAL

New York, Feb. 3: A key accuser in the New York City rape trial of Harvey Weinstein is set to face a potentially grueling cross-examination about why she maintained a relationship with him despite her allegations that the once-powerful movie mogul sexually assaulted her. The 34-year-old woman, who will return to the witness stand Monday, told jurors last week that Weinstein trapped her in a New York hotel room in March 2013, and angrily ordered her to undress as he loomed over her, and then raped her. Still, she kept in touch, sending him flattering emails, because "his ego was so fragile," she said, and it "made me feel safe, worshipping him in this sense. ... I wanted to be perceived as innocent and naive." A second attack came eight months later at a Los Angeles hotel, where she worked as a hairdresser, after she told Weinstein that she was dating an actor, she said. "You owe me one more time!" he screamed. She said she begged him not to take off her clothes, but he said, "I don't have time for games," and ripped off her pants before pushing her legs apart and raping her. —AP

PEOPLE'S VOICE

Post rebellion, Harry, Meghan settle in British Columbia

Can't pay for royals' security: Canadians

Montreal, Feb. 3: A clear majority of Canadians feel their country does not have to pay for security for Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle, who have settled in British Columbia. Seventy-seven per cent of people surveyed by Nanos Research, for CTV, believe the Canadian taxpayer does not have to pay for the Duke and Duchess of Sussex because they are not in Canada as representatives of the Queen. Canada is a parliamentary monarchy and Queen Elizabeth II is the reigning



Prince Harry with Meghan Markle.

head of state. Only 19 per cent of Canadians would not object to their country assuming a share of the security costs. There has been no official announcement about the question of security

Hong Kong shuts most China crossings over virus as medics strike

Hong Kong: Hong Kong announced it was closing all but two land crossings with the Chinese mainland on Monday to slow the spread of a deadly new coronavirus as medics staged strikes calling for the border to be completely sealed. The semi-autonomous financial centre has 15 confirmed cases of the disease, most brought from the mainland where the epidemic began and has so far killed more than 360 people. On Monday afternoon city leader Carrie Lam said all land crossings would be closed at mid-

Cocktail of flu, HIV drugs appears to help fight coronavirus: Thai doctors

Bangkok: Thai doctors have seen success in treating severe cases of the new coronavirus with combination of medications for flu and HIV, with initial results showing vast improvement 48 hours after applying the treatment, they said. The doctors from Rajavithi Hospital in Bangkok said a new approach in coronavirus treatment had improved the condition of several patients under their care, including one 70-year-old Chinese woman from Wuhan who tested positive for the

coronavirus for 10 days. The drug treatment includes a mixture of anti-HIV drugs lopinavir and ritonavir, in combination with flu drug oseltamivir in large doses. "This is not the cure, but the patient's condition has vastly improved. From testing positive for 10 days under our care, after applying this combination of medicine the test result became negative within 48 hours," Dr. Kriangkra Atipornwanich, a lung specialist at Rajavithi, told reporters. —Reuters

Fires ease, but smoke blows into Oz capital

Melbourne, Feb. 3: Bushfires eased near Australia's capital, Canberra, on Monday, as temperatures dipped, but officials warned heavy smoke was set to blow into the city with a shift in the wind. While a fire continued to burn out of control southwest of Canberra, warnings were downgraded to "advice" for people in the area, with no properties under threat. Around a quarter of the land in the Australian Capital Territory, home to Canberra, has been hit by wildfires over the past few weeks, fueled by hot and windy conditions. "A change in wind direction is expected to bring heavy smoke over urban areas of Canberra," the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Emergency Services said on its website.



Firefighters control a spot fire near Bredbo, south of the Australian capital Canberra. —AP

DOZENS OF KOALAS KILLED AFTER LOGGERS BULLDOZE PLANTATION

Sydney, Feb. 3: Dozens of koalas have been euthanized and some 80 more are being treated for injury and starvation after their habitat was logged, prompting an Australian government investigation Monday. Victoria's environment department said the state's conservation regulator was investigating a "very distressing incident" at a bluegum plantation near the coastal town of Portland that resulted in the deaths of dozens of koalas. "If this is found to be due to deliberate human action, we expect the conservation regulator to act swiftly against those responsible," the department said. Those responsible could face steep fines under laws designed to protect Australia's native wildlife.

The environment department said approximately 80 koalas had been removed from the plantation site over the weekend for medical treatment, while others had to be put down. "Wildlife welfare assessment and triage will continue with qualified carers and vets," the department said in a statement. "Plans are being made to translocate remaining animals offsite if they are well enough to be moved." Friends of the Earth said the plantation was logged in December in what it called a "massacre" that left hundreds of koalas dead or injured. The conservation group said the scale of the incident was uncovered when local residents witnessed dead koalas being bulldozed into piles in recent days. —AFP



GST revenue collection	
1,10,828	Jan '20
1,03,184	Dec
1,03,492	Nov
95,380	Oct
91,916	Sep
98,202	Aug
1,02,083	Jul
99,939	Jun
1,00,289	May
1,13,865	Apr
1,06,577	Mar
97,247	Feb
1,02,503	Jan '19

Figures in ₹ crore Source: Bloomberg

Kia Seltos, MG Hector beat slowdown

Beating the slowdown blues, new entrants South Korean car maker Kia Motors and the MG Motor brand owned by China's SAIC Motor are showing that good models priced rightly could thrive in a slowing economy. Kia Motors' first offering, Kia Seltos SUV, last month, became the sixth-largest selling model in India. It sold 15,000 units last month. MG Motor India also sold 3,130 units in January. The company will unveil an all-new product named the Gloster on Feb. 5 at the Auto Expo in New Delhi/NCR.



quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	39872.31 0.34
Nifty 50	11707.90 0.39
S&P 500*	3,257.67 1.00
Dollar (₹)	71.39 -0.07
Pound Sterling (₹)	93.49 -0.43
Euro (₹)	79.30 0.28
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	41,748.281 0.67
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	55.64 -0.98
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.503 -0.096
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.546 0.027

* As of 9:30 pm IST

Sebi proposes acquisition via bulk, block deals

The Sebi has proposed allowing completion of open offers by acquiring shares through stock exchanges for all types of transactions, including bulk deals and block deals. In the discussion paper, the Sebi has proposed depositing 100 per cent amount in escrow account if an open offer is followed indirect acquisitions and recommended payment of interest.

McD finds new partner for north and east



US fast food chain McDonald's has selected MMG Group chairman Sanjeev Agrawal as its new partner to operate its outlets in north and east India. MMG Group has interests in bottling and marketing of soft drinks, oil and gas and hospitality. The development comes almost nine months after McDonald's bought out estranged partner Vikram Bakshi.

GMR Hyderabad to operate Bidar airport

GMR Hyderabad International Airport (GHIAL) has signed the concession agreement, under the Centre's regional connectivity scheme, to commission, operationalise and maintain the civilian enclave at the Bidar Airport in north Karnataka. GHIAL would start the airport operations this week, with the operation of one daily flight to Bengaluru.

D1/D3 gas field in KG-D6 block shuts down

D1/D3 gas field, India's first deepwater gas field that went into production in April 2009, ceased to produce on Monday after RIL and BP PLC extended its life by four years. D1/D3 field, in Block KG D6 (KG-DWN-98/3), gave a peak output of over 61 million standard cubic metres per day in 2010, but had been on a decline from sand & water ingress. Only three out of the 18 wells were producing.

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Rise in inflation, recovery signs in economy to guide MPC RBI may hold rates, dovish tone

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, FEB. 3

Despite the government refraining from fiscal activism in the Union Budget, the inconvenient rise of the inflation trajectory over 7 per cent driven partly by higher food prices is likely to make the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India to keep rates on hold while continuing with an accommodative stance on February 6.

Moreover, the economy is also showing nascent signs of recovery from December. Manufacturing activity expanded at its fastest pace in nearly eight years in January and electricity supply rose after five months of decline.

Thursday's policy will be the central bank's first bi-monthly monetary policy of 2020.

In the run-up to the budget, speculation was rife if the sharp slowdown in economic growth would trigger consumption-oriented fiscal activism by the government. However, the Centre instead chose to adopt a "middle path". It pegged the FY20 (revised estimate) deficit at 3.8 per cent of GDP and FY21 at 3.5 per cent. This overshoot was backed by evoking the 'escape clause' under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Mechanism (FRBM), which allows for a 0.5 per cent deviation on targets, provided certain underlying conditions are fulfilled. This rests on the premise of slow growth conditions which have been caused by structural reforms in the economy with unanticipated fiscal implications. There will also be no extra borrowing this year with the gross borrowing target for the remaining part of the year maintained at Rs 7.1 lakh crore, while gross issuance for FY21 at Rs 7.8 lakh crore. Given the largely neutral impact on growth, the fiscal trajectory is unlikely to have significant implications for inflation.

"The choice of fiscal consolidation over activism should signal that the government has limited space to reverse the growth slowdown, and the RBI continues to have some obligation towards policy heavy-lifting. Despite this clarity, we believe that a rate cut in February is highly unlikely, owing to the inconvenient rise of the inflation trajectory over 7 per cent, driven partly by higher food prices," said Sonal Varma, chief economist at Nomura Research.

"Instead, we expect the RBI will maintain its accommodative stance and offer forward guidance to emphasise that it sees the current inflation spike as transitory, with headline inflation likely to head back towards and then

Mfg activity hits 8-year high

Bengaluru, Feb. 3:

India's manufacturing activity expanded at its quickest pace in nearly eight years in January with robust growth in new orders and output, a private survey showed on Monday, suggesting the economy may be getting back on firmer footing.

In response to the jump in sales, factories hired new workers at the fastest rate in more than seven years.

If sustained, the improvement in business conditions could point to a gradual economic recovery in coming months, as forecast by analysts in a Reuters poll last month, after growth slowed to a more than six-year low in the July-September quarter.

The Nikkei Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index, compiled by IHS Markit, jumped to 55.3 last month from 52.7 in December. It was the highest reading since February 2012 and above the 50-mark separating growth from contraction for the 30th straight month.

"The PMI results show that a notable rebound in demand boosted growth of sales, input buying,

production and employment as firms focused on rebuilding their inventories and expanding their capacities in anticipation of further increases in new business," Pollyanna De Lima, principal economist at IHS Markit, said in a news release.

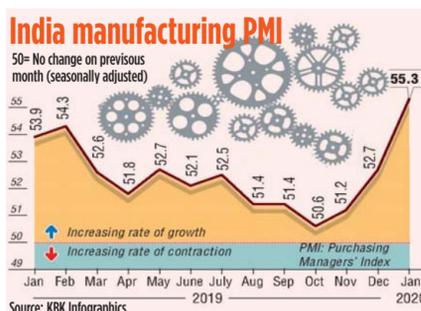
A new orders sub-index that tracks overall demand hit its highest level since December 2014 and output grew at its fastest pace in over seven and a half years, pushing manufacturers to hire at the strongest rate since August 2012.

Meanwhile, both input costs and output prices rose at a slower pace, indicating overall inflation may have eased after hitting a more than five year high of 7.35 per cent in December, although probably not below the Reserve Bank of India's medium-term target of 4 per cent.

That might keep the central bank on the sidelines over the coming months.

"To complete the good news, there was also an uptick in business confidence as survey participants expect buoyant demand, new client wins, advertising and product diversification to boost output in the year ahead," added De Lima.

—Reuters



below its 4 per cent target over the next 12 months.

Also, the RBI is likely to project growth to pickup sequentially but highlight that it will remain below potential over the year. Such dovish communication should set the stage for a 25bp repo rate cut sometime in Q2, in our view," added Varma.

Both Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation and Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation rose on the back of higher food prices. Retail inflation rose to over five year high of 7.4 per cent in December 2019, breaching the upper target limit of 6 per cent.

The increase in inflationary pressure emanated from a sharp rise in onion prices (4.2 times) due to crop damage; firming global commodity indices, particularly FAO food price index and crude oil prices besides mobile tariff hike of 15-50 per cent. While food prices may soften from January onwards owing to the arrival of the kharif produce and robust rabi sowing, the moderation could be gradual as the food inflation has become more generalised.

Madhavi Arora, economist-forex and rates at Edelweiss Securities, said, "We expect rates to be on hold but the MPC may

Electricity supply up after 5 months of dip

SUDARSHAN VARADHAN
NEW DELHI, FEB. 3

The country's electricity supply rose 3.25 per cent, albeit from a low base, during January after five straight months of decline, provisional government data showed, in a relief for power producers.

Power supply rose to 106.36 billion units in January, up from 103.01 billion units last year, an analysis of daily load despatch data from state-run Power System Operation Corp Ltd (POSOCO) showed.

The Central Electricity Authority would release official data on power demand later this month.

Higher electricity supply could mean a rise in power demand, as electricity deficit in India is marginal. Electricity demand is seen by economists as an important indicator of industrial output.

—Reuters

have some trace of dovishness given that the government has shown fiscal prudence in the Budget. The government's fiscal stance looks optically to be non-inflationary. Inflation is likely to ease off as vegetable prices have cooled off but may remain higher than the RBI's comfort zone in the coming months."

Monetary policy remained accommodative during 2019-20. The RBI cut the repo rate cumulatively by 135 basis points (bps) between April-October 2019 while maintaining a pause in December policy. However, lending rates tarried with just a 50 basis points decline.

China accused the United States on Monday of whipping up panic over coronavirus with travel restrictions and evacuations as Chinese stocks plunged on the first day back from the extended Lunar New Year holiday.

Washington has "unceasingly manufactured and spread panic", Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told reporters,

FMCG stocks, DDT-gainers in demand

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, FEB. 3

FMCG and paint stocks were in big demand on Monday, thanks to the budget's focus on boosting consumption. Investors also lapped up multinationals that benefit from the abolition of dividend distribution tax, or DDT.

The top gainers among the fast moving consumer goods sector included Nestle India (5.68 per cent), Hindustan Unilever (5.06 per cent), GlaxoSmithKline Consumer (4.82 per cent), Britannia (4.31 per cent), Dabur (2.47 per cent), and Gillette (2.23 per cent).

However, index heavy-weight ITC falls 5.09 per cent as the budget raised the excise duty on cigarettes and most brokerages were bearish on the

Cancer robs 3.5 lakh lives a year in India

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, FEB. 3

Cancer is responsible for the death of about 3.5 lakh people annually in India and about 4.7 lakh new cases of cancer are detected annually, according to Tata Memorial Hospital data. Worldwide, cancer is the second leading cause of death, was responsible for an estimated 9.6 million deaths in 2018.

Globally, about 1 in 6 deaths is due to cancer.

US whipping up panic: China

KEVIN YAO & WINNI ZHOU
BEIJING/SHANGHAI, FEB. 3

China accused the United States on Monday of whipping up panic over coronavirus with travel restrictions and evacuations as Chinese stocks plunged on the first day back from the extended Lunar New Year holiday.

Washington has "unceasingly manufactured and spread panic", Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told reporters,

noting that the WHO had advised against trade and travel curbs. "It is precisely developed countries like the United States with strong epidemic prevention capabilities and facilities that have taken the lead in imposing excessive restrictions contrary to WHO recommendations," she added.

Chinese stocks closed down almost 8 per cent, wiping \$393 billion off the market value. A gauge of global stocks was near seven-week lows.

—Reuters

stock. ITC's FMCG business also suffered in the third quarter due to the slow down across rural and urban markets. The BSE FMCG Index rose 0.72 per cent to 11,461.64 points against the Sensex's gain of 0.34 per



cent in volatile trade. Multinational stocks and high dividend-paying domestic companies that gained over abolition of DDT include ABB (1 per cent), Siemens (1.44 per cent), Colgate-Palmolive India (3.37 per cent), Asian Paints (6.82 per cent), Coal India (2.85 per cent) and Bajaj Auto (4.71 per cent).

Insurance stocks were mixed after the heavy selling they faced on the budget day. SBI Life Insurance gained 2.09 per cent and HDFC Life Insurance was up 0.49 per cent while ICICI Pru Life Insurance shed another 1.98 per cent.

Housing finance companies shares fell sharply led by Indiabulls Housing Finance (-7.71 per cent), LIC Housing Finance (-2.66 per cent), GIC Housing Finance (-3.24 per cent) and HDFC (-0.44 per cent).



New Delhi, Feb 3: Buyers of Air India and oil firm Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) will not get a free hand to shed excess workforce as the government will build in certain protection to employees in the share sale agreement, Dipam secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said.

Public sector companies often have more people on their rolls than their private sector counterparts and companies wanting to take them over would likely right-size them to remove inefficiencies.

In an interview with PTI, the secretary of the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (Dipam) said the government will follow a two-stage bidding process for selling its entire holding in Air India and BPCL.

First preliminary interest from potential bidders is invited, followed by them being given access of data room on the companies for due diligence. In the second stage, price bids are invited.

While in the case of Air India, the expression of interest (EOI) has been invited by March 17, an offer seeking the same for BPCL is likely to be floated in the next few days.

Asked if the bidders will get a free hand to right-size the companies after the acquisition, Pandey said, "There will be certain protection to employees and there will be other conditionalities and this will be listed out in the share purchase agreement (SPA)."

He did not give details of the conditionalities. An SPA will be signed with the acquirer who offers the highest bid for buying out government stake.

The government is selling its entire 100 per cent stake in Air India but wants effective control to stay with Indian nationals.

The airline, which started as a Tata Airlines in 1932 and was later acquired by the government, has not made profits

since 2007. It has a total debt of Rs 60,074 crore, of which bidder has to takeover Rs 23,286.5 crore. In the case of BPCL, the government is selling its entire 53.29 per cent stake in the company that will give buyers ready access to 14 per cent of India's oil refining capacity and about one-fifth of the fuel market share in the world's fastest-growing energy market.

"There is a two-stage process. There will be EOI and request for proposal or RFP (in the first stage) and due diligence-cum-bidding stage (in the second)," Pandey said. "After the bidding stage, the highest bidder (will be identified). The highest bidder meeting the reserve price will sign the SPA."

Asked about concerns over valuation of BPCL, he said Dipam has valuation methodologies. "There is an independent asset valuer and then there is a transaction advisor who will do the business valuation. Then, the value will be arrived at. But, this valuation or the reserve price will not be revealed unless the financial bids are received."

Officers' unions of blue-chip public sector undertakings have opposed BPCL privatisation, saying family silver worth Rs 9 lakh crore is being sold for a fraction of the sum.

"Our comprehensive evaluation of the assets of BPCL reveals true worth of BPCL to be Rs 9 lakh crore. Today's market cap of BPCL is Rs 1.06 lakh crore," Mukul Kumar, convener; Federation of Oil PSU Officers said. —PTI



World Cancer Day

their education and upbringing, if any unforeseen thing happens," said Anil Kumar, chief executive officer, Axiommax Oncology, which makes available patient friendly calendar packs for all four oral hormone therapy molecules prescribed in the breast cancer treatment—namely, Anastrozole, Letrozole, Exemestane and Tamoxifen.

Axiommax has, as part of its corporate social responsibility, created motivational videos—Hausala Tu Kabhi Na Haarna (Never Give Up) in multiple Indian languages and sung by renowned names that encourages patient and caregivers, and asks them to never give up, as today cancer is preventable, detectable early, treatable, manageable, controllable, liveable, curable and conquerable.



Historic triple

Tamim Iqbal warmed up for his Test comeback with a triple century – the highest first-class score ever recorded on Bangladeshi soil. He scored 334 not out for East Zone against Central in the BCL

SHORT TAKES

Kohli like Imran, says Manjrekar

New Delhi: Former cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar on Monday said Virat Kohli's India reminded him of the Pakistan team under Imran Khan for their strong self and ability to win matches from jaws of defeat. "India under Virat in NZ reminds me of Pakistan under Imran. Strong self belief as a team. Pakistan under Imran found different ways of winning matches, often from losing positions. That only happens when the self belief is strong," Manjrekar tweeted. The cricketer turned commentator expressed his opinion after India completed a rare 5-0 whitewash with a seven-run victory over New Zealand in the final T20 International in Mount Maunganui on Sunday.

Manjrekar also lauded K L Rahul, now also shouldering wicket-keeping duty, for his impressive showing in recent times. "Find of the T20 series in NZ for me is the 'batsman keeper' KL Rahul. Absolutely brilliant! 'Samson & Pant...' the next batting brigade of India obviously have the skill & the power game they just need to infuse a small dose of Virat's batting 'smarts' (mind) into their game," Manjrekar wrote. — PTI

Indian fan banned in New Zealand

Mount Maunganui: A fan, reportedly of Indian descent, has been banned from entering the Bay Oval here for the rest of the country's domestic season after he was accused of abusing a commentator following the fifth T20 International between India and New Zealand. According to a report in *stuff.co.nz*, a 24-year-old man was arrested after he managed to sneak into the ground seeking an autograph from a commentator on Sunday. But, after his request for an autograph was met with a denial, he allegedly started abusing the commentator, prompting the security personnel to intervene and escort him out of the stadium. The commentator's identity has not been revealed. Last month, a spectator from Auckland was banned by New Zealand Cricket (NZC) from attending matches for two years for his racist rant at England fast bowler Jofra Archer during a Test match here in November. New Zealand Cricket's public affairs manager Richard Boock said the man would be banned from grounds here for the rest of the home season, though his was not racist abuse. — PTI

New selectors by this month: Dada

Mumbai: BCCI President Sourav Ganguly on Monday said the two replacements in the selection panel will be picked by the end of this month. The BCCI has sought application to replace — Chairman MSK Prasad (South zone) and Gagan Khoda (West Zone) — in the five-member panel. The BCCI recently formed the new Cricket Advisory Committee comprising former India players Madan Lal, RP Singh and Sulakshana Naik. "The new CAC has been constituted and the new selectors should be picked by this month," Ganguly said. Among the applicants are former India players Ajit Agarkar, Laxman Sivaramakrishnan, Ameya Khurasia and Nayan Mongia. — PTI

Scramble at top

Calf injury rules Rohit out of NZ tour, Agarwal in for ODIs; Gill back for Tests

New Delhi, Feb. 3: In a blow to India, limited-overs vice-captain Rohit Sharma was on Monday ruled out of the upcoming ODI and Test series against New Zealand after sustaining a calf injury during the fifth T20 International in Mount Maunganui. Rohit retired hurt after scoring 60 off 41 balls after he pulled his calf muscle while going for a quick single during the match that India won on Sunday.

"He is out of the tour. Right now, it's not looking good. The physio is assessing him. We will get to know how bad it is but he is not taking any further part in the series," a top BCCI source said on conditions of anonymity. India are set to play three ODIs, starting Wednesday, and two Tests after that. It has been learnt that Mayank Agarwal will be replacing Rohit as the third opener in the ODI set-up along with KL Rahul and Prithvi Shaw.

Agarwal was the logical choice in the white-ball format since he was the reserve opener in the side during the home ODI series against the West Indies when Shikhar Dhawan was absent due to knee injury. In the Test squad, Shubman Gill will join KL Rahul and Prithvi Shaw as the third opener in the absence of Rohit. During India's last two Test series at home (vs South Africa and Bangladesh), Gill was the back-up opener to Rohit and Agarwal. His place was sealed in the squad after scores of 83 and 204 not out in a drawn first 'A' Test against New Zealand in Christchurch.

Rohit's injury is a big blow to the Indian team especially after his stupendous show across formats in 2019. He continued his match-winning efforts first against Australia at home followed by two fine knocks in the recently concluded T20 International series against New Zealand, which India won 5-0. It included a stellar Super Over show where he hit back-to-back sixes. — PTI

The Test squad is yet to be officially announced but it is learnt that it has already been selected and only the official announcement is due. The old selection committee under MSK Prasad picked the replacements but it might take some time for the official announcement as convenor of the selection committee, secretary Jay Shah, is on his way to New Zealand along with treasurer Arun Dhimal. "Once the secretary's approval comes, the replacements will be officially announced. But the selectors have already sent the names," the source added. It has still not been ascertained whether Rohit has endured a calf muscle tear but he looked in severe pain even after physio Nitin Patel attended to him. Despite that, he smacked a six off Ish Sodhi but had to be replaced after it became unbearable for him.

Calm demeanour helped MS become best captain: Rohit

New Delhi, Feb. 3: Mahendra Singh Dhoni's calm demeanour under pressure has helped him emerge as India's most successful captain and a role model for youngsters, feels swashbuckling opener Rohit Sharma. Dhoni had led India to victory in the inaugural T20 World Cup in 2007 and then notched up a title triumph at the 2011 World Cup, beating Sri Lanka in the final at Mumbai. He also led the Chennai Super Kings to victory three times in the Indian Premier League. Rohit, who made his debut under Dhoni during the T20 World Cup in South

Africa, was effusive in his praise for his former captain. "Whole India knows MS Dhoni is the one who has been like that. It has helped him to make such good decisions on the field and now you see he is the most successful Indian ICC Trophies with him and many IPL titles as well," Rohit said in a chat show *Curly Tales*. "He is the best captain India has seen and there is a reason behind it and that reason is him being calm and composed under pressure situation." Rohit said during his captaincy days Dhoni used to put the young

and inexperienced bowlers at ease, getting the best out of them. "I have seen him handle a lot of younger bowlers when they get under pressure, he goes around and puts his arm around their neck and talks to them what he needs to do and what not. You know when a younger player is being treated like that by the senior member of a team, you obviously feel confident and want to deliver for the team," Rohit said. Dhoni, who was recently dropped from the BCCI's list of centrally contracted players, hasn't played since last year's 50-over World Cup. — PTI



Rahul jumps to second in T20 ranks

Dubai, Feb. 3: KL Rahul reaped rewards for his stellar all-round show in India's 5-0 drubbing of New Zealand as he rose to a career-best second position in the ICC T20 Rankings released on Monday. Rahul scored 224 runs, including two fifties and a 40 plus score, in the five-match series besides keeping wickets.

Pakistan's Babar Azam maintained pole position while India vice-captain Rohit Sharma entered the top-10 of the batsmen rankings. Skipper Virat Kohli remained in ninth position. Among other Indians, Shreyas Iyer (up 63 places to 55th) and Manish Pandey (up 12 places to 58th) are others who have advanced in the latest rankings. The story is similar for the India bowling attack as Jasprit Bumrah has gained 26 places to reach 11th position, Yuzvendra Chahal has advanced 10 places to 30th and Shardul Thakur's eight wickets in the series have lifted him 34 places to 57th position. Navdeep Saini (up 25 places to 71st) and Ravindra Jadeja (up 34 places to 76th) have also moved up. New Zealand captain Kane Williamson's 160 runs in the series have taken him from 23rd to 16th position. — PTI

Mike hails India's versatile bowlers

Hamilton, Feb. 3: An all-weather bowling attack and batsmen's improved ability against pacers in overseas conditions have made India a formidable unit across formats, feels former New Zealand head coach Mike Hesson.

Hesson, who will take charge of Royal Challengers Bangalore in the 2020 IPL season, also said the 5-0 rout of New Zealand in the T20 series shows the current lot of Indian players is exceptionally talented. "India are far better side now at present and they are improving all the time. Their bowling attack now suits all conditions around the world because their bowlers, pacers and spinners, are so good. That's something they haven't always had," Hesson said. "And their batsmen's ability to play pace bowling has also got better the more they have toured. So this group of players is exceptionally talented group. This series' win will help them (for the World Cup in Australia later this year)."

Up next is a three-match ODI series, and India-New Zealand will play the first match in Hamilton on Wednesday. Hesson said New Zealand's new-look pace attack will have its task cut out. However, he feels the subsequent two-Test series will be a different proposition despite New Zealand's recent 0-3 loss in Australia. "New Zealand

had a poor tour of Australia and they would be hurt with that. But up to that point, their Test cricket was exceptional in the last 2-3 seasons, probably even longer. "New Zealand know these conditions well. From a Test bowling point of view, if there is something in the surface, likes of Tim Southee will exploit it and Trent Boult should be back as well. Neil Wagner asks different questions too, so I am really looking forward to it. "India will have an expectation of winning this Test series. But New Zealand is a very tough place to come and win Test matches. You cannot take anything for granted and I am sure India won't," said Hesson.

Hesson also blamed New Zealand for making some questionable decisions during the T20 series in which they lost back-to-back games in a Super Over. — PTI

Mike Hesson



Kapil raises doubts over Dhoni future

New Delhi, Feb. 3: Legendary all-rounder Kapil Dev on Monday raised fresh doubts over Mahendra Singh Dhoni's future in international cricket, saying "I don't think you can come back from anywhere" after not playing for so long. The two-time World Cup winning captain, who has not played since India's semifinal loss in the World Cup in the United Kingdom, was last month dropped from the BCCI's list of centrally contracted players. "If you haven't played cricket for so long then I don't think you can come back from anywhere," Kapil, India's first World Cup winning captain, told *ABP News*.

Kapil also felt Dhoni's form in the IPL could be crucial. "... But he still has IPL, his form there will be important and selectors should see what is best for the country," he said. "Dhoni has done a lot for the country but when you don't play for 6-7 months, you leave a doubt in everyone's mind. And then that creates a lot of discussions which shouldn't happen." The 38-year-old's omission from the contract list was not unexpected considering that he has not played any international cricket for months. India head coach Ravi Shastri had said that Dhoni may soon end his ODI career but could be in contention for a spot in the T20 World Cup squad provided he does well in the IPL. Since the World Cup, Dhoni has missed the tour of the West Indies and the home series against South Africa, Bangladesh, the West Indies, Australia and the limited overs assignments against New Zealand. — PTI



MS Dhoni

Fancied India take on Pakistan in high-voltage semifinal showdown

U-19 | WORLD CUP

Potchefstroom (South Africa), Feb. 3: Four-time champions India will back themselves to reach their third successive final at the U-19 World Cup when they face arch-rivals Pakistan in a last four clash here on Tuesday.

Both teams go into the semifinal unbeaten. While India beat Australia in the quarterfinals, Pakistan outplayed Afghanistan. Pakistan captain Rohail Nazir played down the hype surrounding the game but an India-Pakistan contest is always a high-pressure one which tests the character of players on either side. Doing well in the game makes them overnight stars and the players know that. "It is a high pressure game and has a lot of buzz in the world. We will play it like a normal game and hope to do well," said Pakistan opener



Cricketers from Pakistan and India gear up for their training session ahead of the U-19 World Cup semifinal. — ICC

Mohammad Hurraina after the win over Afghanistan. Like at the highest level, the India juniors have had the upper hand over Pakistan of late, having beaten them

in the Asia Cup last September when they emerged tournament winners. India, who are the defending champions of the U-19

World Cup, had inflicted on Pakistan a 203-run hammering in the last edition in 2018. However, history counts for little and the Priyam Garg-led India will

LIVE on TV

India vs Pakistan on STAR Sports 3 FROM 1.30 PM

have to play their best cricket to knock Pakistan out of the competition. Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal has been the backbone of India batting, scoring three half-centuries in four games including against Australia.

The rest of the batsmen have not done much to write home about and if the lower-order had not rescued India in the quarterfinal, the outcome of the game could have been different. Not to forget the match-winning spell from pacer Kartik Tyagi. Atharva Ankoekar and in-form leggie Ravi Bishnoi shared a 61-run stand for the seventh wicket to give their team a fighting chance. — PTI



Zaheer Khan during a promotional event in Mumbai. — PTI

Zaheer backs India colts to have it easy

Mumbai, Feb. 3: Former India speedster Zaheer Khan is hopeful that the talented bunch of India juniors will bring their A game to the fore against arch-rivals Pakistan in the ICC U-19 World Cup semi-final on Tuesday. India have comprehensively beaten Australia in their quarter-final. "Well, the U-19 kids are doing very well. They have been in some tough situations and they have fought back from there, so that goes a long way in a tournament like (the) World Cup, when you are competing against different nations," Zaheer said at a promotional event. "When you are talk about India-Pakistan (matches) that brings out extra edge also to the whole competition. So I am sure the boys will be geared up for the big occasion and they will do well," Zaheer said. — PTI



In seventh heaven

Sofia Kenin rises to career-high seventh in world after her surprise Australian Open triumph while Ashleigh Barty retains her top position in the WTA rankings

SHORT TAKES

Boxers claim six golds in Sweden

New Delhi: India's junior and youth boxers dominated the ring at the Golden Girl Championship in Borås, Sweden, claiming 14 medals, including six gold, the overall championship trophy and the 'Best Boxer' award. While the junior women's team clinched five gold, three silver and one bronze medal, the youth team secured a single gold and four bronze medals at the event. Haryana's Prachi Dhankar (50kg), playing in the junior category, won the 'Best Boxer' award. Besides Prachi, Etholbi Chanu Wangjam (54kg), Lashu Yadav (66kg) and Mahi Raghav (80kg) also won gold medals. In the youth category, Musskan (54kg) claimed the sole gold medal while Sanya Negi (57kg), Deepika (64kg), Musskan (69kg) and Sakshi Jahdale (75kg) settled for bronze. — P/TI

Rizvi, Rhythm win national trials

Thiruvananthapuram: Shahzar Rizvi of the Indian Air Force emerged triumphant in the men's 10m air pistol T1 trials while Haryana's Rhythm Sangwan won the women's 25m pistol T1 competition at the National Shooting Trials for rifle and pistol disciplines here on Monday. Shahzar shot 241.5 in the men's 10m air pistol final to outlast Naveen of Haryana who finished 0.4 behind with 241.1. Arpit Tomar of Uttar Pradesh came third. In the women's 25m pistol, yet another Olympic event, Haryana recorded a 1-2 when Rhythm topped the final charts with 28 hits to state-mate Gauri Sheoran's 26. Maharashtra's Abhidnya Ashok Patil came third with 23. Earlier, Shahzar had shot 578 in qualifying to bag the eighth and last qualifying spot. Naveen had qualified second with 581, while Arpit was fifth in qualifying with 579. — P/TI

Fed Cup postponed for three weeks

New Delhi: The Fed Cup competition, which was moved out of China and scheduled to begin from Tuesday in Kazakhstan, has been postponed for three weeks due to the outbreak of Coronavirus. The Asia/Oceania Group I event was originally scheduled to be hosted by the city of Dongguan in China from February 4-8. According to All India Tennis Association, the ITF has confirmed the postponement of the tournament after the government of Kazakhstan prohibited the organisation of international sports events due to the threat of coronavirus outbreak. "The ITF is working with WTA to ensure availability of top players and are also exploring further venue options to host this event," the AITA said. — P/TI

THANIYA, SANJANA TOP RANKINGS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

Telangana girls are doing well at the national tennis rankings with Thaniya Sarai Gogulamanda and Sanjana Sirimalla topping the Under 12 and Under 16 categories respectively. In the Under 14 section, Chandni Srinivasan is second. Sanjana also occupies the ninth spot in the Under 18 category. Thaniya is a 11-year-old sponsored by Sania Mirza Tennis Academy under the Rural Talent Scheme. Rishita Reddy Basireddy, at No.6, is the other Telangana player in the top 10. T. Sai Janvi of Andhra Pradesh is 10th, according to latest rankings released by the All India Tennis Association. In the Girls Under 14, Saumya Ronde (No.4) and Andhra Pradesh's Poka Ridhi Choudhary (No.7) figure in the top 10.



Thaniya



Sanjana

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20

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No stopping Novak

Melbourne, Feb. 3: Novak Djokovic put Roger Federer on notice as he won his 17th Grand Slam title at the Australian Open and warned he was going all-out for the Swiss's record of 20 — and his mark for weeks as world number one.

Djokovic, who came through a mid-match slump to win his eighth title in Melbourne, is relentlessly totting up the victories that could soon end the debate over who's the greatest in history.

The five-set victory over Dominic Thiem was his eighth in eight finals in Melbourne, putting him alongside Federer and Nadal as the only men to win the same Slam eight times.

It makes Djokovic, 32, the first man in the Open era, and only the second in history, to win Grand Slam titles in three different decades — and as a not-insignificant bonus, returns him to world number one.

In an ominous sign for his rivals, the Serb has started the year unbeaten with Wimbledon, the French Open, the Tokyo Olympics and the US Open all lying in front of him as tantalising opportunities.

He is clear-sighted about his goals: overtaking Nadal's 19 Major titles and Federer's 20 to become the all-time Grand Slam king, and outdoing the Swiss master's record 310 weeks in the top ranking.

Djokovic has so far clocked up 276 weeks as

number one and could pass second-placed Pete Sampras's 286 in April, and Federer's 310 on October 5.

"Obviously at this stage of my career, Grand Slams are the ones I value the most. They are the ones I prioritise," said Djokovic.

"Grand Slams are one of the main reasons why I am still competing and still playing full season, trying to obviously get the historic number one (record). That's the other big goal," he said.

"HUGE WIN" With five Major titles in just over two years, and unbeaten by Nadal and Federer at the Grand Slams since 2014, there's no question who's now the leading member of the Big Three.

The latest rankings tell the story at the top of men's tennis: Djokovic is number one, Nadal, one year older at 33, is second and 38-year-old Federer is a relatively distant third.

— AFP

HUGS, GURU AND TREE IN DJOKER'S SUCCESS

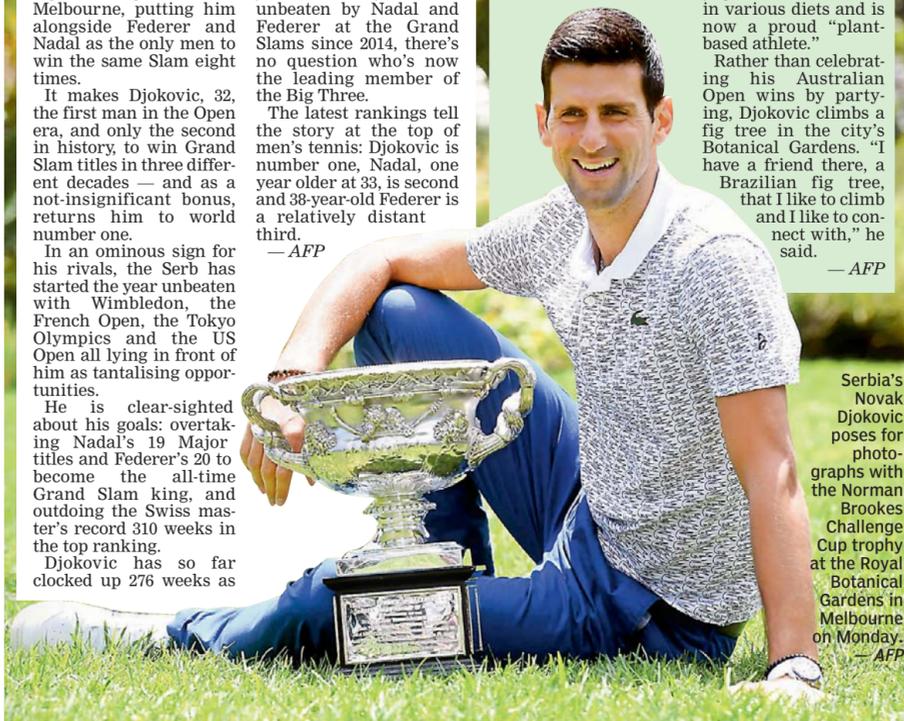
Melbourne, Feb. 3: A strict vegetarian diet, spiritual guru and family hugging-sessions aren't methods employed by most athletes, but they have helped Novak Djokovic turn himself into one of the best players ever. The Serb has distinguished himself with his willingness to turn to the unusual, from hyperbaric chambers to meditation and

Spanish guru Pepe Imaz, a former journeyman player whose "love and peace" philosophy drives his teachings.

Djokovic's daily routine, as listed by *The New York Times* last year, involves getting up before dawn with his family, watching the sun rise and then doing hugging and singing sessions, and yoga. He has dabbled in various diets and is now a proud "plant-based athlete."

Rather than celebrating his Australian Open wins by partying, Djokovic climbs a fig tree in the city's Botanical Gardens. "I have a friend there, a Brazilian fig tree, that I like to climb and I like to connect with," he said.

Serbia's Novak Djokovic poses for photographs with the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup trophy at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Melbourne on Monday. — AFP



Daniel continues Maldini tradition at mighty Milan

Milan, Feb. 3: Daniel Maldini made his Serie 'A' debut with Italian giants AC Milan on Sunday to follow in the footsteps of his father, club legend Paolo, and grandfather Cesare.

The 18-year-old Maldini had already taken part in pre-season friendlies, but had to wait for his first senior appearance for the seven-time European champions.

It finally came in the 93rd minute of a 1-1 draw against Hellas Verona at the San Siro.

"My debut was a dream, shame about the result. We could have done more, but there was still a lot of emotion," said the young Maldini.

"Verona are a tough team, we deserved the three points but we brought home a draw. We hope to win the next one," he continued.

Midfielder Maldini made his debut 35 years after his father Paolo and 66 after his grandfather Cesare. "This debut was a goal that I had set myself, now we hope to go on like this. I felt a strong emotion but my father reassures me," he added.

His grandfather Cesare, who died in 2016, played for 12 seasons with the club, winning four league titles and the European Cup.

Cesare also coached the team twice, from 1972-1974 and in 2001.

Paolo — considered among the best defenders of all time — holds the record for matches played in Serie 'A' alongside Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon with 647, all for AC Milan. He won seven Scudetti and five



AC Milan's Daniel Maldini runs on the pitch as he makes his Serie 'A' debut during the match against Hellas Verona at Milan's San Siro Stadium on Sunday. — AP

Champions League trophies. He plays in the Italian lower divisions.

At city rivals Inter Milan, 17-year-old Filip Stankovic, son of club great Dejan, received his first call-up to the first team when he was named on the bench for their game against Udinese.

— AFP

Rituparna stuns Zhang; Priyanshu punches big

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 3

Rituparna Das caused a huge upset by stunning World No. 14 Beiwen Zhang as the Pune 7 Aces clashed with the Awadhe Warriors in their hunt for a semifinal spot at the Premier Badminton League at the GMC Balayogi Indoor Stadium here on Monday.

Showing admirable composure, the former Indian national champion surged to a gritty 15-13, 15-12 win over the fancied American from the Warriors.

In her first ever meeting with the former India Open champion, Rituparna refused to be intimidated by her higher-accomplished opponent as she put in a performance to remember against the Awadhe Trump. Exhibiting her full repertoire of net flicks and by riding on her exquisite placement of the shuttle, the World No. 100 was able to put Zhang in a spot of bother.

Later, Chris and Gabrielle Adcock beat Awadhe's Christinna Federsen and Ivan Sozonov 15-6, 15-9 in the mixed doubles.

In the men's doubles, Awadhe's World No. 24 pair of Ko Sung Hyun and Shin Baek Cheol beat Pune's Hendra Setiawan and Chirag



Rituparna Das (above) of Pune 7 Aces plays a shot to Beiwen Zhang of the Awadhe Warriors. Priyanshu Rajawat (below) of Hyderabad Hunters celebrates his win over Lee Dong Keun of Mumbai Rockets.



Shetty 6-15, 15-9, 15-12. Late on Sunday night, rising star Priyanshu Rajawat stole the show

as P. V. Sindhu put up a masterclass to guide Hyderabad Hunters to a 4-3 win over Mumbai Rockets.

Rajawat, ranked 284th, summoned all his strength to defeat World No. 49 Lee Dong Keun 15-13, 15-9. Trailing 5-8, the 18-year-old from Dhar in Madhya Pradesh showed remarkable speed and power for a youngster to claw his way back. His impressive footwork and smart placement had Keun in trouble as Rajawat kept targeting his backhand. With the crowd roaring, the youngster surged to 14-11 before wrapping up the opener.

With a mix of powerful smashes and delicate drops, Rajawat rolled to 8-5 and kept his cool to maintain the lead and seal the match.

Earlier, Sindhu beat Shriyanshi Pardeshi 15-5, 15-10; Parupalli Kashyap won his first match of the season after tasting a defeat in four consecutive ties. The Mumbai trump beat World No. 42 Daren Liew 15-8, 15-13.

In men's doubles, Kim Sa Rang and Kim Gi Jung of Mumbai strolled past Ben Lane and Vladimir Ivanov 15-10, 15-8 before Sikki Reddy and Vladimir Ivanov won deciding mixed doubles with a 15-8, 15-8 scoreline against Kim Sa Rang and Pia Zebadiah.

NAGAL GOES DOWN TO TROICKI IN TATA OPENER; KARLOVIC TOO OUT

Pune, Feb 3: Indian star Sumit Nagal put up a strong fight against Serbian ace Viktor Troicki before going down in the singles first round at the Tata Open Maharashtra here on Monday.

India No.2 Nagal, who took a set away against legendary Roger Federer during his debut Grand Slam match at 2019 US Open, put up resistance before going down 6-2, 6-7 (4-7), 1-6 against the former World No. 12.

In another match, Germany's Cedrik-Marcel Stebe beat last edition's finalist Ivo Karlovic 6-3, 6-4.

Meanwhile in the doubles first round, Italian pair of Paolo Lorenzi and Stefano Travaglia made winning start as they thrashed Lithuania's Ricardas Berankis and Russian Evgeny Donskoy 6-3, 6-4. — Agencies

THE RESULTS
■ Men's singles first round: Viktor Troicki bt Sumit Nagal 6-2, 6-7 (4-7), 1-6; Cedrik-Marcel Stebe bt Ivo Karlovic 6-3, 6-4; Yuichi Sugita bt Thomas Fabbiano 6-3, 6-0.
■ Men's doubles first round: Paolo Lorenzi-Stefano Travaglia bt Ricardas Berankis-Evgeny Donskoy 6-3, 6-4.

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Buenos Aires	105,933	339,375
Rio de Janeiro	111,040	336,660
Santiago de Chile	112,751	336,271

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