

DECCAN Chronicle

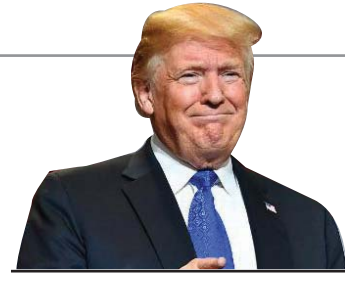
THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
HYDERABAD | FRIDAY | 7 FEBRUARY 2020



WEATHER

Max: 33°C
Min: 19.4°C
RH: 34%
Rain: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 32/20°C



WORLD | 9
US Senate acquits Trump



SPORTS | 16
Paanipuri seller rises in cricket

TABLOID
'I'm married... want a family... it will happen'

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AP, KIA DENY SHIFTING PLANT TO TAMIL NADU

NAGABHUSHANAM HOSKOTE | DC ANANTAPUR, FEB. 6

A report by international news agency Reuters about South Korean auto major Kia Motors planning to shift its manufacturing facility currently located in Penukonda, Anantapur district, to neighbouring Tamil Nadu created ripples in Andhra Pradesh political and industrial circles, but going by official clarifications that followed, seems to be a case of a false alarm.

Officials and representatives from the state government, Kia Motors, besides the Tamil Nadu government, denied media reports on shifting of the facility even as the opposition led by Telugu Desam (TD) launched a scathing attack against Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for what they described as "a retrogressive approach, driving away industry".

The TD, which has been trying to make the CM's decision to relocate the executive capital to Visakhapatnam a national issue, raised the now contested news of the shifting of Kia, in parliament.

Page 6: Opposition criticises Jagan govt.

Home, car loans will get cheaper

FALAKNAAZ SYED | FC MUMBAI, FEB. 6

As expected, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday unanimously voted to keep the policy repo rate unchanged even as predicting a higher inflation at 6.5 per cent in April-June quarter and a lower economic growth at six per cent in the next fiscal.

However, the central bank announced several regulatory measures to make funds cheaper for banks and borrowers, enable faster transmission of its past rate cuts to borrowers and incentivise the flow of credit to productive sectors of the economy.

In an attempt to boost credit flow, banks will be given a relief on cash reserve ratio (CRR) — a percentage of deposits that a bank has to hold in cash or with RBI — on incremental credit sanctioned for the purchase of automobiles and residential housing. The relief would also be available for loans sanctioned to MSMEs.

The move is expected to improve monetary transmission to crucial sectors like automobiles, real estate and MSME which are currently struggling due to NBFC crisis and



- For the 2020-21 fiscal, the RBI forecasts GDP growth rate at 6 per cent.
- It has raised upwards its retail inflation projection for the last quarter of the current fiscal to 6.5 per cent on increase in prices of milk, pulses

slowdown in the economy.

The RBI has also given a one-time permission to the banks for restructuring of MSME loans. For commercial real estate projects facing genuine difficulties, the date of commencement of commercial operations has been extended by one year. This will allow the banks to continue showing these loans as standard assets on their books and therefore do not need to make provisions.

Full coverage on Page 13

RAPIST KILLER OF HAJIPUR GETS DEATH

JAYENDRA CHAITHANYA T. | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

Almost 282 days after the arrest of serial killer Marri Srinivas Reddy, the fast-track court at Nalgonda on Thursday found him guilty in three offences, and awarded him the death penalty in two. In the third case, he was sentenced to life.

Hajipur, a village of nearly 300 families, wore a look of dread, with only the bereaved and their supporters sitting outside the gram panchayat office waiting for the morning till the special judge pronounced his verdict late in the evening.

Reddy (29) was a lift mechanic who was arrested on the allegations of kidnapping, rape and murder of two minor girls, and the kidnap and murder of a minor girl from the same village.

The accused was arrested by the police on April 30, when the police recovered the body of a missing 14-year-old girl from an abandoned well belonging to Reddy.

Srinivas Reddy confessed to the kidnap, rape and murder of the victim in April 2019.

Page 4: Fear of public ire forced rapist's kin to flee

PM defends NPR, CAA, hits out at Opposition

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 6

With the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) agitation having spread to the whole country with Delhi's Shaheen Bagh protests being the fulcrum of dissent against the law, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chose the floor of Parliament to pour scorn on the so-called "tukde gang" associated with the opposition, whom he blamed for provoking the protests against a notified law.

In his almost 100-minute speech in the Lok Sabha, the Prime Minister repeatedly took digs and made cryptic comments against



NEHRU WANTED to defend minorities in West Pakistan and East Pakistan. Was he communal, did he want to create a Hindu Rashtra...? I want to ask the Congress"

NARENDRA MODI, PM

Mr Rahul Gandhi and the leader of the Congress in the lower house Adhir Ranjan Choudhury.

The comments, often sarcastic and even tauntingly personal, left the treasury benches constantly in splits, as he compared Mr Gandhi to a 'tubelight', saying that it took the

Congress leader around half-an-hour to react to his speech, when the former got up to question Mr Modi on unemployment.

Mr Modi, who was replying to the motion of thanks on the President's address first in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday afternoon and then later in the Rajya

Sabha in the evening, said that for him every citizen was an Indian and not somebody belonging to a particular religion or community, adding that Muslims were being misled by those who speak the language of Pakistan. He chose to emphasise that CAA was not against any minority community and no citizen of the country would be endangered by the law.

He ridiculed the Congress and attacked it for imposing the Emergency, partitioning the country in 1947 and instigating the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

Page 8: Modi says protests will lead to anarchy

Coronavirus fears takes root in city

BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

Fear of the novel coronavirus has begun taking its toll in the city, as 20 more persons were admitted to hospital to test for the infection. In one curious case, two Chinese nationals employed by a private company here were not allowed back at work after they

returned from a holiday in China.

In another case, a private hospital jumped the gun and sent samples collected from a patient to Gandhi General Hospital for testing but in the process flouting government guidelines regarding the suspected infection.

Officials said 11 persons were admitted to Gandhi

and nine others to Fever Hospital on Thursday for check-ups and testing for coronavirus. The results are expected on Friday. So far, tests on 37 patients have returned negative.

In a case that highlights the fear over the disease, two Chinese nationals returned to Hyderabad from China in early January. They were tested, but still

the employer prevented them from joining work. They were back at Gandhi General Hospital for a second round of tests.

"The results of the first test we conducted were negative," Gandhi Hospital superintendent Dr Shrivani said on Thursday evening.

Page 2: Private hospital flouted testing rules

Sri K Chandrashekar Rao
Hon'ble Chief Minister

Sri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister

SRI G KISHAN REDDY
Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, G.O.I

SRI K TARAKA RAMA RAO
Hon'ble Minister for MA & UD, Industries & IT & C

SRI MD MOHAMMOOD ALI
Hon'ble Minister for Home, Prisons and Fire Services

SRI T SRINIVAS YADAV
Hon'ble Minister for Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Dairy Development & Cinematography

SRI T PADMA RAO GOUD
Hon'ble Dy. Speaker, TS Legislative Assembly

DR. SRI BANTHU RAMMOHAN
H. W. MAYOR, GHMC

L&T Metro Rail (Hyderabad) Limited is proud, as Hon'ble Chief Minister of Telangana State, Sri K. Chandrashekar Rao dedicates Corridor II : Green Line - JBS to MGBS, Hyderabad Metro Rail to the citizens of Hyderabad today!

Highlights of the Hyderabad Metro Rail Project

- ✓ The world's largest Public-Private Partnership (PPP) project in the metro sector
- ✓ JBS - MGBS - 11 Kms – 9 stations - Corridor II - Green Line. The Hyderabad Metro Rail Project is dedicated to the citizens of Hyderabad
- ✓ 9 Stations – JBS, Secunderabad West, New Gandhi Hospital, Musheerabad, RTC X Roads, Chikkadpally, Narayanguda, Sultan Bazar and MG Bus Station
- ✓ JBS - Hyderabad's second largest bus terminus; Parade Ground Station, the tallest metro station with 5 levels
- ✓ 69.2 Km network will now be in operation with the inauguration of the JBS to MGBS stretch
- ✓ Best-in-class, eco-friendly urban mobility system for the people of Hyderabad
- ✓ Project utilises cutting edge technologies (Communication Based Train Control, Modern Regenerative Rolling Stocks, Ballast less Tracks, QR Code Ticketing, etc.)
- ✓ The project has already won 150 plus awards thus far

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Hi-tech cops

DGP Mahendar Reddy says police has leveraged artificial intelligence based real-time crowd monitoring to ensure safety at Medaram Jatara

ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Uttarayana Tithi: Magha Shuddha Trayodasi till 6.25 pm Star: Punarvasu till 11.56 pm Varjyam: 12.36 pm to 2.07 pm Durmuhurtam: 9.06 am to 9.51 am; 12.53 pm to 1.38 pm RahuKalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon HIJRI CALENDAR Jumada al-Sani 12,1441 AH PRAYERS Fajar: 5.45 am Zohar: 12.40 pm Asar: 4.38 pm Maghrib: 6.19 pm Isha: 7.28 pm SUNSET TODAY 6.14 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.46 AM MOONRISE TODAY 4.18 PM MOONSET TODAY 4.50 AM

COUNTER POINT



No cash, no liquor... bullets will do!

SHORT TAKES

TELANGANA KVs HAVE 178 VACANCIES

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

There are about 178 vacancies to be filled in Kendriya Vidyalayas (KV) in Telangana state. Some KVs don't even have a principal and vice principal for this academic year, according to information provided by Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan to the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

There are no principals in about six KVs — Mahbubnagar, Mahabubabad, Jharasangam, Sircilla, Tirumulgiri and Karimnagar.

Three other regional KVs do not have vice principals as well. The schools which lack principals are being temporarily run by vice-principals.

There are 35 Kendriya Vidyalayas or central government schools functioning in the state of Telangana. Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, which oversees the functioning of these schools, has informed that there are 178 teaching posts lying vacant against 1293 sanctioned posts in different KVs located in the State of Telangana, which includes principals and vice principals.

An official of a Kendriya Vidyalaya who did not want to be named, said, "It's not just the Telangana region, countrywide there are about 5,000 vacancies in various KVs. The Central government is expected to release notification soon to fill all the vacancies. Meanwhile, teachers are being taken on a contract basis as well to ensure that the teaching-learning process is not hampered."

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POLLS | POSTPONED

SCB to press Centre for funds

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

With the postponement of elections to the Secunderabad Cantonment Board, members are putting pressure on the Central government to release grant-in-aid of ₹100 crore for the development of the SCB.

Members claim that they have lost much time in their last tenure due to the model code of conduct in force for assembly and then parliamentary elections, and will now concentrate on developmental activities.

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Metro Green Line starts today

KCR to launch 11-km route between JBS-MGBS covering nine stations

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

All is set for the inauguration of the third corridor of the Metro Rail — between Jubilee and Mahatma Gandhi bus stations — in the city by Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Naidu on Friday.

This 'Green Line' between the two bus stations is 11 km long. The line, which begins at Jubilee Bus Station covers nine stations — JBS-Parade Ground, Secunderabad West, Gandhi Hospital, Musheerabad, RTC crossroads, Chikkadpally, Narayanguda, Sultan Bazaar — and ends at the Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station. Since MGBS is the final halt of the route, L&T Metro Rail Hyderabad (L&TMRH) has built a 600-metre viaduct extending the overhead viaduct beyond the terminal station for allowing the trains to move forward and return on the alternate platform for the return journey.

The Chief Minister is expected to take the first full ride of the service on Friday evening after inaugurating the service. HMRL is the world's largest metro project in the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode.

The number of passengers using the Metro every day has crossed four lakh, and the new corridor is expected to add around two lakh more passengers each day, according to HMRL managing director N.V.S. Reddy.

The Red Line of the Metro between LB Nagar and Miyapur covers 29 km, and the Blue Line between Nagole and Raidurg covers a similar distance.



Workers speed up works ahead of the inauguration of Metro Rail station at Jubilee Bus station on Thursday. — DECCAN CHRONICLE



Works under progress at the Metro Rail station near Gandhi Hospital. — S. SURENDER REDDY.

Better commuter experience on anvil: L&T

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 6.

The Hyderabad Metro Rail project, which has transformed the city into one of the most modern in the country by providing 'best-in-class' mobility for commuters, will mark a new era with the launching of the third corridor of the Metro Rail between Jubilee Bus



K.V.B. Reddy

Station and Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station, MD & CEO, L&T Metro Rail (Hyderabad) Limited,

K.V.B. Reddy has said. "With an integrated urban transportation using inter-modal connectivity, I am certain that the completion of all three corridors will mark the beginning of an era of seamless commuting in Hyderabad. The impact of Metro Rail has been immense for as a Mass Rapid Transport System. It has enabled the city to

realise its full potential for growth," he said. L&T Metro (Hyderabad) Limited has engaged, equipped and empowered commuters through all possible media and communication channels, educating them to understand our goals and values and understand operations and services of the metro rail system, he said on the eve of the launch.

IMD predicts thunderstorms

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

As reported in these columns, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), has issued a thunderstorm warning for the state on February 8.

The warning says: "Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning very likely to occur at isolated places over Telangana."

Going by the IMD's glossary, isolated places translates to rains over 25 per cent or less number of stations of a region (usually a meteorological subdivision) reporting at least 2.5 mm rainfall.

The rainfall is owing to a confluence zone forming over the state due to the meeting of humid winds from the Bay of Bengal, and dry winds from the west — and there

THUNDERSTORMS accompanied with lightning very likely to occur at isolated places over Telangana

IT MEANS rains over 25% or less number of stations of a region

will be chances of some rainfall.

"The winds carrying the humidity are meeting with the dry winds of the west over the state, forming a confluence zone. Under its influence there are chances that there would be light rainfall over the state. Apart from bringing rain, the clouds will form a layer of moisture over the area, preventing the sun's heat from escaping," said Mahesh Palawat, chief meteorologist of Skymet.

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Speed up Metro Rail in Old City, says Owaisi

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

MIM president Asaduddin Owaisi, the Hyderabad MP, has raised objection to the delay in constructing the Metro Rail corridor in the Old City.

Reacting on a tweet of Hyderabad Metro Rail on

the inauguration of Metro Corridor 2 from Jubilee Bus Station (JBS) to Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station (MGBS) on Friday, Mr Owaisi asked the authorities when the work will be started on the MGBS-Falaknuma stretch. He said "Amazing that you have funds for JBS & MGBS, when will

@hmgov start and complete MGBS to FALAKNUMA (sic)." In another tweet, he wrote, "What about the Dar Ul Shifa to FALAKNUMA Metro line you have funds to lay & start JBS Metro station but when it comes to South of Hyderabad you have no answer (sic)."

Activists cry foul over forest land to naval unit

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC HYDERABAD, FEB. 6

The state government's decision to hand over 2,900 acres of forest land in Damagundam to the Central government for naval authorities to establish a VLF (very low frequency) radar centre, has prompted a city-based welfare society to launch an online petition addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking for the radar construction to be stopped.

"This project is a great threat not just to the lush green forest reserve but also to fauna that exists there. The facility sought to be built in the Damagundam Reserve Forest is an Extremely Low

AROUND 1,000 acres of forest will have to be cleared to create the base and this is deadly for both flora and fauna, activists feared.

DEFENCE personnel inspected the site

Frequency (3 to 30 hertz) base station which will be used as a communication hub for submarines," Ram K. Challa, of B the Change Welfare Society told Deccan Chronicle.

He said some 1,000 acres of forest will have to be cleared to create the base and this is deadly for both flora and fauna. "There is a wide variety of fauna in the forest. It is home to deer species

such as sambar, black-buck, cheetal (spotted deer) chowsingha (four-horned antelope), chinkara (Indian gazelle), mouse deer, as well as jungle bakri (wild goat), rabbit, hare, wild boar, bush pig, porcupines, python, monitor lizards and many more creatures. They will no longer have a habitat and they could encroach into cities or become endangered," he added.

When contacted for a comment, defence personnel in the city said that they are not at liberty to share any details on the radar or its purpose.

"Recently, there was a site inspection of the works," was all that a defence official could say.

ed, and the board members cite lack of funds as the main reason for this.

However, now the members are saying that they are expecting at least half of the grant-in-aid funds from the Central government.

Members told this newspaper that they are mounting pressure on the Central government for funds and have received a positive response and funds would be released soon and the work start.

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Cancun	93,568	352,881
Sao Paulo	105,259	361,238
Buenos Aires	105,933	339,375
Rio de Janeiro	111,040	336,660
Santiago de Chile	112,751	336,271

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Big loss

TD MP Galla Jayadev says shifting of KIA Motors will have a negative impact on investments, employment

AP govt denies Kia exit, opposition criticises

FROM PAGE 1

Telugu Desam MPs, who wanted the Central government to intervene in the three capitals issue, raised a similar demand on Thursday, sought to know "what the central government would do when multinational companies were subjected to harassment".

The YSRC government has been on a fire-fighting exercise since the morning when the news of Kia shifting first broke out.

Rajat Bhargava, special chief secretary, industries, who is currently in

Lucknow participating in the defence expo, issued a statement that both the AP government and Kia Motors deny the reports of shifting.

Later, he spoke to his Tamil Nadu counterpart, and came up with another statement by evening, in which Mr Bhargava said that the TN principal secretary, industries, had conveyed to him that they were not in talks with Kia Motors and there were no discussions between them in this regard.

"Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu enjoy cordial relations," said Mr Bhargava. Kia Motors, which denied

any plans to shift the plant from AP to Tamil Nadu in the news report of the foreign agency itself, again dismissed the report as "baseless". Manohar Bhatt, national head of sales and marketing, Kia Motors, said that the news report had "indeed shocked the company".

According to an official press release from the government, Mr Bhatt called that the news report the "worst form of imagination and concoction".

"I don't know who is behind this news," Mr Bhatt was further quoted by the

government press release.

Finance minister Buggana Rajendranath convened a press conference at Amaravati and described the news as "propaganda, aimed at tarnishing the state's image".

YCP Parliamentary Party leader V. Vijaya Sai Reddy also tweeted against the news report.

Meanwhile, former chief minister and TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu came down heavily on Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, saying he was "driving away industry from the state".

"I had to struggle a lot to bring Kia Motors here. Now the Chief Minister says the incentives promised to them would not be honoured," Naidu said, adding that the Tamil Nadu government officials confirmed having talks with Kia.

Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan too joined the issue, saying that there is every reason to believe the report, as it came from Reuters, a world renowned news agency. He said that youth of the state would have to pay heavy price as industry after industry has been leaving the state.

Kia has big plans for Anantapur

DC CORRESPONDENT ANANTAPUR, FEB. 6

KIA Motors, the world's eighth largest automaker, with its first ever plant in India located in Andhra Pradesh at Erramanchi in Anantapur district, succeeded in producing cars within a short period.

The 536-acre barren lands of Erramanchi in Penukonda mandal on

National Highway 44 close to the Bengaluru international airport was shaped into a 'Korean City' in two years.

The unit had invested ₹13,000 crore and was producing Seltos cars with diesel and petrol versions for the Indian market since December last.

The unit, which occupies 536 acres, is capable of an annual production

capacity of up to 300,000 units, boosting KIA's global manufacturing capability along with creating over 3,000 direct and 7,000 indirect jobs.

A US\$ 2 billion investment by KIA and its vendor partners ensures availability of world-standard technologies and development of high-quality local manufacturing skills.

DECCAN Chronicle

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- ABIDS
- ATTAPUR
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- BANJARA HILLS
- BN REDDY NAGAR
- BODUPPAL
- CHANDA NAGAR
- CHINTAL
- DILSUKHNAGAR
- ECIL
- FORUM MALL
- GACHIBOWLI
- HABSIGUDA
- HAYATHNAGAR
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- KARMAINGHAT
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- KONDAPUR
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- NIYAPUR
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Fully electric

Piyush Goyal says Railways will be 100 per cent electricity-driven in next 4 to 5 years, the largest such network in the world

SHORT TAKES

1 LYNCHED ON RUMOURS OF CHILD-LIFTING

Dhar, Feb. 5: A 35-year-old man was lynched while six of his friends were seriously injured in an attack by a group of villagers armed with sticks and stones amid rumours that a child-lifter gang was on the prowl in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district, police said. The victims, all hailing from Indore, had travelled to Baroli village, to recover money from some local labourers but were attacked by a mob, district superintendent of police Aditya Pratap Singh said. He said the labourers allegedly spread rumours that the seven men were child-lifters, apparently to avoid returning the money they had taken as advance from one of the victims.

DGCA: FOLLOW VISHAKHA GUIDELINES

New Delhi, Feb. 6: Aviation regulator DGCA has told CEOs of all airlines to strictly follow the Vishakha guidelines to deal with the cases of sexual harassment in their respective organisations, according to an official communique. The DGCA, in a letter to the CEOs, stated that it has received "numerous" complaints from women working as pilots, cabin crew and in other technical areas regarding sexual harassment by their senior colleagues. "All the airlines are hereby advised to ensure strict compliance of the Vishakha guidelines. They should also give wide publicity about this committee among the employees to facilitate hassle-free reporting and disposal of matter in accordance with relevant national regulations," the DGCA said.

Nirbhaya plea to be heard today

The Supreme Court bench agreed to hold an urgent hearing of the Centre's plea

New Delhi, Feb. 6: The Supreme Court will hear on Friday a plea by the Centre and Delhi government challenging the Delhi High Court judgment holding that all the four death row convicts in Nirbhaya gang-rape and murder case will be executed together and not individually. A bench comprising justice N.V. Ramana, Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Krishna Murari agreed to hear the matter on Friday upon a mentioning by additional solicitor general K.M. Natraj, seeking an urgent hearing of the Centre's plea. The Centre and Delhi government had moved the top court on Wednesday evening hours after Delhi High Court rejected their plea against January 31, 2020, trial court order staying the execution of death sentence till further orders. Both the Centre and the

Delhi government had moved the High Court against January 31, 2020, trial court order staying the execution of death sentence till further orders. Meanwhile, a Delhi court sought response from the four death row convicts — Pawan Kumar Gupta, 25, Vinay Sharma, 26, Akshay Kumar, 31, and Mukesh, 32 — on an application by Tihar Jail authorities seeking issuance of fresh death warrants against them. The notice seeking response from four death row convicts was issued by additional sessions Judge Dharmendra Rana. Having rejected the Centre and Delhi government's plea against the trial court's order, the High Court in its judgment on Wednesday had faulted the authorities for not taking necessary steps after top court had in May 2017 upheld the death sen-

tence of the four convicts. The High Court judge Justice Suresh Kumar Kait in his order had said, "I have no hesitation in saying that after dismissal of the SLP (Special Leave Petition) by the Supreme Court in May 2017, nobody took steps for issuance of death warrants for their execution." Justice Kait had further said, "All authorities were sleeping and waiting for convict Akshay to file review petition on December 9, 2019 challenging the Supreme Court's verdict upholding his death penalty. His review plea was dismissed by the apex court on December 18, 2019." The High court said, "a horrible, dreadful, cruel, abominable, ghastly, gruesome and heinous offence of rape coupled with a bone-chilling murder of a young woman, which shook the conscience of the entire country." — PTI

7 KILLED DUE TO GAS LEAK IN U.P. FACTORY

Sitapur, Feb. 6: Seven people, including three children, were on Thursday killed after inhaling poisonous gas in a carpet factory at Jalalpur village in Bisvan area police said. The incident took place due to gas leakage, they said. "We are on the spot. More details are awaited," a senior official said. District magistrate Akhilesh Tiwari said a rescue operation was being carried out. The administration has confirmed the death of seven people including three children. The factory owner is at large after the incident, officials said. Sub divisional magistrate, Bisvan Suresh Kumar said experts have arrived for investigation from Lucknow and a National Disaster Response Force team is also present at the spot. "The affected area has been evacuated. Any information about the tragedy would be given out after investigation. Some dogs were also found dead around the factory area," the official added. — PTI

640 Indians evacuated from Wuhan: Centre

New Delhi, Feb. 6: The government has evacuated 640 Indians from coronavirus-hit China and the complex operation was done with Beijing's assistance, the ministry of external affairs said on Thursday. MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said apart from those evacuated, 10 other Indians have indicated that they want to come back from China, but were unable to clear the health screening process. "We are in regular contact with them and exploring all possibilities for their return," Kumar said. In the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, normal visas and all existing e-visas from China that have been issued are no longer valid, he said. — PTI

MEA steps up efforts to fetch 21 Malayalis

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEB. 6 The ministry of external affairs on Thursday initiated steps to bring back 21 Malayali students who are stranded in China following the novel coronavirus outbreak. Efforts are being made to evacuate the students who are stranded at Kunming airport in China. Of the 21 medical students of Dalian University, 15 are girls and they decided to return to India after the area in which they were residing witnessed a significant increase in the number of cases. According to reports, the students could not return earlier as their visas were to be renewed. They got their visas renewed the other day. Subsequently they decided to return on a Scoot Airlines flight via Singapore on February 3. However, when the students reached the airport they were told that only Singapore nationals were permitted to board the flight. This was due to the ban imposed on the arrival of foreign nationals from China in Singapore.

Mukerjea freed in Sheena Bora case

Mumbai, Feb. 6: The Bombay High Court on Thursday granted bail to former media baron Peter Mukerjea, arrested in the Sheena Bora killing case, observing that prima facie there was no evidence of his involvement in the crime. Justice Nitin Sambre granted bail to Peter Mukerjea on a surety of ₹2 lakh and directed that he should not contact his children Rahul

Mukerjea and Vidhi Mukerjea and other witnesses in the case. The court, however, stayed its order for a period of six weeks so as to enable the CBI to file an appeal. Peter Mukerjea was arrested on November 19, 2015 in the case, in which his former wife Indrani Mukerjea is the main accused. The court, in its order, noted that there is prima facie no evidence to

infer that Peter Mukerjea was involved in the commission of the crime. "When the incident took place, the applicant (Peter Mukerjea) was not in India. The trial in the case is already underway. The applicant is in jail since over four years and has recently undergone a bypass surgery," Justice Sambre said. "Except for statement of the approver in the case,

Shyamwar Rai, there is no reference to Peter Mukerjea in any evidence. There is no other evidence to show his involvement in the conspiracy," the court said. Justice Sambre said on April 24, 2012, the date of the alleged killing, there was direct involvement of Indrani Mukerjea and her previous husband Sanjeev Khanna in the offence, as alleged by the CBI. — PTI

nCoV: Kerala stops breath analyser tests

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb. 6: With three persons having been tested positive for novel coronavirus and over 3,000 persons under surveillance in the state, the Kerala police has decided to put on hold breath analyser tests which are carried out routinely to check drunken driving. State police chief Lokanath Behara has issued a circular directing traffic police to avoid breath analyser tests during the vehicle checks. However, vehicle checking will continue as usual for all traffic violations including drunken driving. The breathe analyser tests will remain suspended till further orders. With the government having already declared coronavirus a state calamity, the precautionary measures and medical guidelines to check the spread of the infection will continue to be enforced strictly in the state. The state has a high rate of road accidents resulting in large number fatalities and major injuries. With drunken driving being one of the major reasons for road accidents, the traffic police have always given top priority to check the menace. — PTI

CHINESE MAN GOES TO COPS FOR HELP, RUSHED TO HOSP

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb. 6: A Chinese youth, who approached the city police here seeking help to get a hotel accommodation, was rushed to an isolation ward of a hospital for observation. The tourist, who was on a trip to India, reached the state capital on Tuesday, police said. When all efforts to get a hotel accommodation failed, he approached the city police with a complaint that he was unable to get a room. As soon as the police heard that he had arrived from China, where the coronavirus outbreak toll has climbed to 563, they rushed him to the isolation ward, they said. — PTI

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