

SHORT TAKES

Digithon drive in Narayanpet

Hyderabad: The digital literacy drive Digithon, organised by the Telangana Information Technology Association (TITA) for giving students basic computer skills, concluded on Monday. The two-day event, which saw participation of 13,600 students from 127 schools in Narayanpet district, was flagged off by IT secretary Jayesh Ranjan and Narayanpet collector Hari Chandana. A team of 130 techies and four medics from Hyderabad travelled to Narayanpet for the 16-hour training programme for students.

RGIA is 'Best Airport by Size'

Hyderabad: Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) has been adjudged the "Best Airport by Size and Region" as well as the "Best Airport in Environment and Ambience by Size" for 2019 in the Asia-Pacific region in the category of 15-25 Million Passengers Per Annum. The award, announced by Airports Council International (ACI), will be conferred on RGIA during the ACI Airport Service Quality (ASQ) awards ceremony at Poland in September. S.G.K. Kishore, CEO of GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL), expressed his gratitude for the support extended by Ministry of Civil Aviation in winning the award. Kishore added that GHIAL was quite sensitive towards the environment.

MMTS 'GREEN' REMINDER TO STATE GOVT

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 9
Taking cue from the 'Green Challenge', the Federation of New Bazar Colonies Association planted saplings near a railway station in a move to remind the state government to give its share for the MMTS phase-II project. The state government has to chip in with two-third of the cost for the project, the works for which are in progress. On the same day, Federation of Vivekanandapuram, Mathurpally Colony and Raghuvendra nagar Colony members also planted saplings at Ammuguda railway station as well.

Financial woes drive doctor to shoot himself to death

Suicide note reportedly written by doctor found in his room by police

GEETA VALABOU | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

Apparent financial troubles coupled with some alleged disputes in his family, reportedly drove Dr Ravinder Kumar, the managing director of Aditya Hospitals, to kill himself at his residence in Medchal on Monday morning. According to the police, Dr Kumar allegedly shot himself in his head using a 7.62 mm handgun, a licensed weapon he owned.



Dr Ravinder Kumar

His death came to light when Dr Kumar's sister-in-law Swapna called on him at his residence to inquire about his absence at the hospital in the morning. Dr Kumar allegedly shot himself in his head using a 7.62 mm handgun, a licensed weapon he owned.

The police also pressed into service a CLUES team upon discovering Dr Kumar's body. The police said their preliminary inquiries revealed that Dr Kumar was said to be depressed for some time now and was not in the habit of sharing his worries with others as he believed that he should not burden others with problems he faced. Whenever he was asked if he needed help, he left the house and disappeared for a day or two then returned to work.

A suicide note, purportedly written by Dr Kumar was found in the room in which he reportedly said that he was taking his life because of financial difficulties.

According to the police, Dr Kumar, who returned home from his brother's place around 9 p.m. on Sunday, had a heated argument with his wife Smitha on Sunday evening and allegedly also assaulted his wife. Soon after, his wife, accompanied by their son aged 11, left the house and went to a friend's place. From there Smitha went to her parents' house in Disiluknagar along with her son, the police said.

The police said that around 2 a.m. Dr Kumar called his in-laws and wanted to speak to his son through a video call but the call was reportedly cut.

When he did not turn up for work on Monday morning at the hospital, his sister-in-law called him on his phone about some surgeries scheduled for the day but since there was no response, went to his house and after trying to the door bell, she called

He emphasised lifestyle changes, not medicines

AIIT ANDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

"Meditation is not rocket science, Ajit," Dr Ravinder Kumar reassured me last week when I visited him for hypertension. He was managing my high BP successfully the past two years. It wasn't the medicines but our chats that meant so much to me. Never in a rush, he had adequate time for each patient, explained in great detail, and took pains to answer all doubts, howsoever trivial.

The reason I started noting his hospital was its proximity. I was in Damalguda, adjacent to my locality, Nagaram. Good hospitals and doctors are a rarity nowadays and I had stumbled on a goldmine. The rates were not exorbitant, required facilities were available and Dr Ravindra was a pro.

In this era of commercialisation he emphasised lifestyle changes, not medicines. He recommended meditation and yoga to me, always. In our interactions, around 25, he stressed that I quit my job as a journalist, dump the graveyard shift, and lead a "normal" stress-free life. "BP is the root cause of all major diseases," he always reminded me, urging me to manage the stress.

Last year around June, during one of my regular visit I was told that he "left" the hospital. The reception said that either he changed hospitals or left for abroad; they were not authorised to share his number. I believed the latter reason as once he had mentioned his desire to do research. I began hospital hopping. My pursuit of a good doctor led me in trouble as my body could not cope with new medicines. I kept changing doctors and medicines, but to no avail.

Last week I suddenly thought of calling up the hospital for his number. Lo and behold! I learnt that he was back. Relieved, I entered his chamber and he instantly recognised me, greeting me with warmth. He told me it was his "hospital only and now he wouldn't

MEDITATION IS NOT ROCKET SCIENCE, BP IS THE ROOT CAUSE OF ALL MAJOR DISEASES.

— DR RAVINDRA KUMAR
Managing director, Aditya Hospitals

go elsewhere. The only hitch, he said, was that he would reduce "seeing" patients. "But Dr, I will come to you only. I don't want a new doctor," I demanded. He readily agreed with his usual smile. What followed was a friendly catching-up wherein I also told him of my recent surgery. He examined it and assured me all is well. I was to consult him for another lingering, accident-related ailment but an emergency cropped up.

Now, things have changed, and for the worse: The shocking news that he was no more. A compassionate and capable doctor who taught me how to manage stress, unfortunately succumbed to pressures in his life. It reminded me of Bergman's *Wild Strawberries*, on how divorced a person's personal and professional lives can be. What seems to be, in fact can be an illusion. Behind a calm exterior can be a lot of turbulence which can prove fatal.

As for me, managing hypertension will never be the same again. But I promise you Dr, I will meditate regularly. You will be missed.

Wife regrets not taking early morning phone call

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

Ravinder's wife Smitha said, "We always fight regarding some or the other issues at home. But it was never serious. We fought for everything and after that it was normal. I found that he was always angry about something or the other. His suicide has left me and my son helpless." She said that her

husband called her late at night at 2 am but she was not able to take his call.

He left a message saying that he wants to see his son and make a video call if possible. But we both were asleep. Smitha says, "I thought of making a call in the morning. It was a mistake that I did not speak to him at night. Had I spoken to him he would not have killed himself." According to Ravinder's sister in law, Swapna, "I was working in Aditya Hospitals for over a period of four years. He once said that he was dealing with some major issues but did not disclose them. He thought I might share with his wife. Sometimes in the hospital he was very depressed and sometimes furious with the employees."



Hold back Census '21, TS to Centre

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

To stop the National Population Register (NPR) in its present form, it is important that census of 2021 is not taken up completely in Telangana and the resolution is only an assurance and not a permanent solution. The anti-CAA protesters stated that they are not going to stop till the central government revokes the order completely.

Mr Mushtaq Malik, convener of Therik-E-Shabaan explained, "Resolution in the Telangana Assembly does not mean that the process of census is stopped. To stop the process, the state government has to stop the order passed by the central government."

The state government cannot change the order which has been passed by the state. Hence there is no effect. The Kerala government has ch-

allenged the order in Supreme Court and that is a strong message from the people of the state."

NPR is the route to NRC and those steps are being paved by the government. There will first be a census which will take details and after that NRC will be implemented. Hence the assurance from the Assembly cannot be taken as the final word stated, the anti-CAA protesters. There are flash protests being carried out in the city but no social media shows as it was carried out earlier.

There are people who have heaved a sigh of relief after the announcement by Chief Minister K. Chandrababbarao. But many of them state that the effect will be limited as the enumerators are carrying out their process and till that is completely stopped or stayed, the effect of the resolution remains doubtful.

Rare drug-delivery system at IIT-H

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IIT-H) have come up with a unique drug-delivery system for treatment of fungal infections. Led by Dr Mudrika Khandelwal of the materials science and metallurgical engineering department, researchers are set

to roll out prototypes of anti-fungal hygiene products.

Khandelwal said the formulation could be used for mitigating vaginal candidiasis besides treating skin and mucocutaneous infections without inducing resistance in fungal species. The paper co-authored by Khandelwal and Shivakalyani Adepu, was published in international journal *Materialia*.



Youngsters enjoying rain dance at Monda Market as part of the Holi celebrations. — S. SURENDER REDDY

People stay indoors for Holi as Covid fear takes over city

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

A low-key celebration marked this year's festival of colours in the city with the coronavirus playing spoilsport. In normal circumstances, the cosmopolitan bonhomie culture of Hyderabad is to the fore during every Holi celebration. Many shows slated for the day were cancelled and for those that were on, tickets remained unsold. Incidentally, the state government celebrated

● **MANY SHOWS** slated for the Holi celebration were cancelled and for those that were on, tickets remained unsold. ● **POLITICIANS** and celebrities already declared they will be staying away from this year's festival in order to avoid large gatherings and human contact, which is a precaution advised by health authorities.

As it is, many politicians and celebrities have already declared they will be staying away from this year's festival in order to avoid large gatherings and human contact, which is a precaution advised by health authorities in view of Covid-19. However, youngsters and college students, oblivious of the danger, had a colourful day. Ashish Agarwal, a businessman from Adarsh Nagar said "we live in a joint family. All our relatives celebrated at our place as the threat of Covid-19 looms large."

His wife Shradha said, "We had different plans. Now that the virus has spread into the city, we decided to be cautious." Meanwhile, the annual Holi get-together of around 150 people organised by Junior Chamber International at some resort was called-off, said its president Hitesh Jashnani. Added Sanjay Kumar Taurani, "Every Holi, around 100 people meet and celebrate on the streets of Hyderabad. This time, given the circumstances, we called off the celebrations."

HEAVY RAINS IN TS DISTRICTS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

Telangana state witnessed moderate to heavy rainfall in several districts on Monday while very heavy rainfall was recorded at isolated places in Medak district. The highest rainfall of 13 mm was in Ramayampet of Medak. Meanwhile, the city received a cumulative rainfall of 0.5 mm.

Thunderstorms, accompanied by rainfall, brought temperatures down in Medak, which recorded the day's lowest temperature of 15 degrees Celsius. The highest temperature of 35.3 degrees Celsius was recorded at Mahbubnagar. Other districts that received moderate rainfall of up to 5 mm, as per the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), were Kamareddy, Karimnagar, Rajanna Sircilla, Nizamabad and Komaram Bheem. Hyderabad recorded maximum and minimum temperatures of 31.2 and 21.9 degrees Celsius respectively. The IMD has forecast about possible rain or thunderstorm post-noon until Wednesday.

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SHORT TAKES

DJ SEEKS RETURN OF PROPERTIES TAKEN BY POLICE

DC CORRESPONDENT KARIMNAGAR, MARCH 9

A Disco Jockey (DJ) operator has demanded that the police department handover his property, which was kept in safe custody at the police station in Karimnagar district. Kumar has alleged that the property which is in safe custody at the police station is missing and that is why it is not being returned.

Keshavuni Kumar, resident of Chintalapalli village of Keshavapattam mandal, gives on rent music system and speakers for functions and celebrations in his village and the surrounding areas.

On March 8, 2017, when the police was patrolling the area, they found Kumar operating his music system, when a ban was in force. The police seized his music system and registered a case under Section 180 of the Indian Penal Code and Section 76 of the City Hyderabad Police Act.

He was sent to the Huzurabad court for a mandal. His music system was kept in safe custody at the Keshavapattam police station. Kumar approached the court and filed a petition requesting that his music system be released.

On December 10, 2019, the First Class Magistrate of Huzurabad Court issued orders to the Keshavapattam police to hand over the seized music system to Kumar.

Accompanied by a court constable Kumar handed over a copy of the order to the Keshavapattam police officials. However, despite receiving the court order, the Keshavapattam police station has still to hand over the music system.

On Monday, Kumar demanded that the higher officials of the police department enquire into the matter and also sought severe action against the concerned police personnel.

GPS EQUIPMENT SCARES VILLAGERS IN AP

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, MARCH 9

A GPS equipment, that was found hung on a tree treated panic in Pasarlakota Badava village in Mamidikuduru mandal of East Godavari on Monday.

The Meteorological Department officials had set up the GPS equipment on a tree for assessing the climate changes and other conditions in view of oil and exploration activities. The people felt that it was a bomb and informed the police. The police rushed to the spot along with bomb squad and searched it.

Amalapuram DSP Masmoo Basha said that it was a GPS equipment, set up by the Meteorological department. He said that there is no need to worry.

COUPLE ENDS LIFE, JUMPS IN FRONT OF TRAIN

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, MAR. 9

An unidentified couple committed suicide by jumping before a moving train near Mungilipattu railway station in Chittoor district on Monday.

According to railway police, the middle aged man and a woman were seen walking along the railway track near Mungilipattu railway station who allegedly jumped in front of a moving train and committed suicide.

The bodies of the duo were mutilated and beyond recognition when police arrived on the scene. Railway police registered a case and is trying to establish their identities. They are aged between 45-55 years. Police registered a case and is investigating.

Hanging dangerously



A portion of a rusted signboard in front of RTC hospital near Tarnaka hangs precariously and poses a danger to vehicles and people walking on the road. — GANDHI

963 autos booked for no safety sticker

The initiative aims at women's safety

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

In their week-long drive, Cyberabad police have booked 963 autos in the city's IT corridor as the vehicles did not carry the mandatory "My Auto is Safe" stickers.

"MY AUTO IS Safe" stickers are issued by police in the state capital after verifying the antecedents of auto owners and their drivers.

The initiative was first launched in 2014 following the rape of a 22-year-old techie by two cabbies who lured her on the pretext of offering a lift. Post that, cabs and autos raving in the Cyberabad commissionerate limits were asked to register details of their vehicles, drivers and owners with the police under the "My Auto is Safe" project.

There are about 9,360 passenger autos plying in Madhapur, Gachibowli, Kukatpally and Miyapur areas. Cyberabad police took up week-long drive to check "non-safe" autos when they found some of them, particularly those registered with the erstwhile Rangareddy district RTAs, were transporting passengers in the IT Corridor without getting their vehicle registered under "My Auto is Safe" project.

During the drive, as many 963 autos were found violating the rules. Cases have been booked against the autos and drivers penalised, an official of Cyberabad police said, advising drivers and owners of autos to get their vehicle registered under the project. Otherwise, they would face legal action, the official added.

Burning the evil



People participate in Holika Dahana at Sindhi colony as a part of Holi celebrations on Monday. — SURENDRA

CLEAN CITY 6 per cent trained in waste management

Waste pickers aren't Swachh savvy

DURGA PRASAD SUNKU HYDERABAD MARCH 9

Around 80 per cent of the waste pickers belong to Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes communities. However, only six per cent of waste pickers and collectors have been given training in solid waste management.

An astonishing 59 per cent of waste pickers are not even heard of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. These are the findings of a national survey conducted by Dalit Bahujan Resource Center (DBRC) with assistance from Alliance for Indian Waste pickers.

Speaking to Deccan Chronicle, Alladi Deva Kumar, National General Secretary of DBRC, said, "Works undertaken and executed by Municipal corporations in their limits formed the yardsticks for Swachh Sarvekshan rankings. Waste pickers had a major role in these rankings. Civic bodies contributing to the nation's GDP as they are collecting the waste that is sent to energy plants which in later stages is useful for recycling."

Incidentally, waste pickers come under manual scavengers category. Incidentally, around 70 per cent of those oblivious of Swachh Bharat, presume that it is not related to their work. Mr Kumar said, "They usually stay on the roadside or near dumping yards. They don't have any permanent houses. In the absence of a regular shelter, they are not issued identity cards like Aadhar card, thereby denying them the privilege of government welfare schemes. Even worse, they are subject to several discriminations, including caste, gender, physical bearing, among others. Even pregnant women cannot go to hospitals. They are eligible for benefits of some schemes but due to lack of awareness, they have failed to utilise them. The government has completely failed in integrating waste pickers into the municipal corporations, said Mr Kumar.

Newly-wed man hangs himself

GEETA VALABOJU HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

A newly-wed South Central Railway employee allegedly committed suicide at Neredmet on Monday. The 26-year-old, Rahul Yadav, was found hanging at his residence.

PRELIMINARY INQUIRIES revealed that family issues forced the 26-year-old Yadav to take the extreme step.

they got suspicious and tried to break the doors. The parents found him hanging in his room from the ceiling. As soon as they found the body hanging, they rushed to a nearby hospital where he was declared brought dead.

Preliminary inquiries revealed that family issues forced him to take the extreme step. However, the police could not find any suicide note in his room or at home. The Neredmet police registered a suspicious death case and started an investigation. The body was sent to Gandhi Hospital for an autopsy.

6-yr-old boy slips from 3rd floor, dies

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

A six-year-old boy, who was having his lunch on an apartment's balcony accidentally slipped on to the ground from the third floor and died at Petbasheerabad on Monday.

SRIHAN REDDY, son of Nithin Reddy and Sravya was in a play school. The family lives at Laxmignaga Enclave near Konark pipeline road.

On Sunday night, Sravya, along with her son, went to her maternal house at Jeedimetla.

Two drown after Holi festivities in Warangal

DC CORRESPONDENT WARANGAL, MARCH 9

Holi celebrations at Kapula Hanaparthy village of Warangal Rural district turned tragic on Monday as two youngsters drowned in the Paya Lake while washing themselves after playing Holi. The deceased were

identified as Davud Rakesh (8) and Kandakatta Yashwanth (16). Another boy Sarfo Raj Kumar was rescued by locals.

OBITUARY
YASH CHETAN BOGHANI
 D.O.B: 17.10.1996 to D.O.D: 09.03.2020
 Son of Chetan and Divy Boghani
 "You were a light in our lives that will remain forever."
 Antim Yatra starts from our residence Trilohary on 10-Mar-2020 at 11.30 a.m. to Swarg Vatika, Trilohary. Contact No. 98853 4724, 98490 12170
 From Boghani and Mehta Family
 Basi: Plot No. 128, Asha Colony Colony, R.K. Puram, Trilohary. (CA-3285)

RESPECTFUL HOMAGE
 Brahma Kshatriya Society Salutes its Community's Legend for his Contribution to Medicine Science

GHOTI CEREMONY (CONDOLENCE MEETING)
 will be held today, 10th March 2020 at our Residence in Hyderabad on 10.03.2020. In Grief: Family Members Contact: 98494 84440

Dr. V.N. WAGHRAY
 M.D. (Gen) M.R.C.P. (U.K.)
 D.O.B: 19.07.1927 D.O.D: 02.03.2020
 Chief Ceremony (Condolence Meeting)

IN THE LOVING MEMORY
 My father, Late V. Suresh Babu, My salvation comes from him. Psalms 62:1

REMEMBRANCE
 My father, Late V. Suresh Babu, My salvation comes from him. Psalms 62:1

Dr. BEELA BEELA
 APPA RAO THIRUMALAMMA
 D.O.B: 27.4.1961 D.O.D: 7.4.1994
 D.O.D: 10.03.1996
 In Grief: Family Members
 B.R. Mohan Rao & Laxmi Mohan Daughters:
 Veemala Krishna Mancharamma, Nandamuri Vijaya Laxmi & Veemala Bhagya Laxmi Grand Children (S/1920/D/1965)

OBITUARY 13th DAY CEREMONY

Smt. S. PADMAVATHI GARU
 Date of Death 27.2.2020
 In fond & loving memory.
 Inserted by: Family Members (S/1920/D/1963)

M.B. NARASIMHA
 S/o Maria Baliah
 D.O.D: 09.03.2020
 Funeral on 10.03.2020, Mareddy Hindu Smashan (S/1920/D/1964)

33rd ANNIVERSARY
D. PREM KUMAR
 D.O.B: 10.3.1948 D.O.D: 6.9.2008
 Fondly remembered by
 D. NALINI (Wife)
 Avudaini & Mananna Preethi & Mithun Children & Spouses and All Relatives (S/1920/D/1963)

25th Anniversary In Loving Memory
Sri B.V. Ramana Rao
 (Found. of Ahrayudha School)
 29-11-1937 to 03-03-1996
 Your noble, your philosophy and guidance are our path of success. Your values and beliefs are inspirations in our lives. When I think of you, tears roll down my cheeks unbidden, just the way it rains. In love you Ma.
 Inserted by: NARAYANA (Son) & FAMILY (S/1920/D/1963)

IN BRIEF

No permission for Chalo Assembly

Hyderabad: An advisory was issued by Anjani Kumar, Hyderabad city police commissioner, in which he stated that no permission will be given to any organisation for Chalo Assembly. The advisory is issued not only for Hyderabad but for all districts of Telangana. It is learnt that some organisers including Teachers Union have given a call for Chalo Assembly. During Assembly Session no gathering is allowed in the city, especially in the vicinity of the Assembly. Smooth running of the Assembly sessions is the foundation of a healthy democracy. It is our responsibility to ensure that there is no disturbance in that. Any attempt to mobilise crowd in the Chalo Assembly calls by Teachers Association will attract strict legal action, added Mr Kumar.

CM wishes people on occasion of Holi

Hyderabad: Chief Minister K. Chandrababbar Rao greeted the people in the State on the occasion of Holi. The Chief Minister said that people should celebrate Holi, the festival of colours, with happiness and joy.

UNSEASONAL RAINS HITS FARMERS

DC CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD, MARCH 9

Farmers who had cultivated jowar, wheat and chana have incurred losses with unseasonal rains lashing the district of the erstwhile Adilabad district on Sunday.

Damage to crops was reported from Markagouda, Bheempur and Nipani villages of Bheempur mandal in district. The last pickings of cotton were also damaged due to rain in Adilabad district.

A major reason for loss was farmers not having tarpaulins to cover their produce that was harvested and kept in their agriculture fields. In some cases, standing crops were damaged. For example, wheat and jowar crops that were to be harvested in various villages of Bheempur mandal were damaged.

Meanwhile, farmers of red gram are a disappointed lot as officials at the agriculture market yards are not purchasing the crop. Certain farmers accused officials of delaying purchase of red gram as they have colluded with middlemen.

Other farmers allege that market yard officials are purchasing the red gram from middlemen instead of genuine farmers. With availability of 24-hour free power supply, many farmers have started cultivating chana and groundnut as the second crop. Chana and wheat are also being grown in villages of Jainad and Indravelli mandals. These crops are part of a discernible shift in cropping patterns after the state government started providing free power throughout the day in the erstwhile Adilabad district.

A MAJOR reason for the loss was farmers not having tarpaulins to cover their produce that was harvested and kept in their agriculture fields.

OTHER FARMERS allege that market yard officials are purchasing the red gram crop from middlemen

Infighting hits Nalgonda TRS

Partymen act friendly before high command, try to boost groups

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

The TRS which completely dominated other political parties in the 2018 Assembly elections in Nalgonda district is now witnessing its own leaders trying to dominate others. Though the leaders are acting friendly before the high command, internal issues prevailed between the leaders and they are trying to make their own groups to prove their strength to the high command.

During the last Assembly elections in 2018, the ruling party got a majority of seats in the erstwhile Nalgonda district, but in the Lok Sabha elections, the

IN THE Lok Sabha elections, the Congress surprised the TRS and won two Lok Sabha seats.

IT IS believed that a rift between the party leaders cost them the seats

Congress surprised the TRS and won two Lok Sabha seats. However, it was believed that a rift between the party leaders was the reason for losing in the Lok Sabha elections.

After the Lok Sabha elections, the party working president K.T. Rama Rao had given a free hand to the MLAs for selection of the municipal candidates in their constituencies. Since then, the cadre has been scattered throughout the con-

stituencies since group started to form.

A cold war is said to have prevailed in Nalgonda, Kodad, Nakirekal, Bhuvanagiri, Munugodu constituencies, which led to the party winning eight municipalities out of the 18 municipalities. The party sources said that in Nakirekal constituency the rift is rumored to have reached its peak between MLA Ch. Lingaiah and former MLA V. Veeresham. The associates of Veeresham succeeded in winning the posts of Sarpanch, MP, TC, ZPTC and Municipal elections, at some places as rebel candidates.

A senior TRS leader said that there were domination issues at Munugodu constituency

since 2015, between MLC K. Prabhakar and former MLA K. Prabhakar Reddy.

In Narayanapuram Gram Panchayat, the associates of both the leaders had a serious rift, and the party high command had then given a strong warning to the cadre several times, but the cold war did not stop.

In the Nalgonda Assembly constituency Zilla Parishad chairman B. Narendar Reddy expected that he would get the MLA ticket from the party, but K. Bhupal Reddy who joined TRS by leaving TDP was given the opportunity instead. Narendar Reddy, who was disappointed over this over is said to be dissatisfied even with the

post of ZP chairman, said sources.

Meanwhile, at Bhuvanagiri, issues were said to be continuing between MLA P. Shekhar Reddy and ZP chairman E. Sandeep Reddy. Disagreement over several issues arose between the two, as Sandeep Reddy was trying to gain a foothold in the constituency.

Sandeep Reddy's cadre alleged that the M.L.A., who promised to give preference to those who left the TD before the election, were unhappy as the new cadre was not taken care of in the recent municipal and cooperative elections. Sandeep Reddy's associates were not given tickets which is making them to revolt now.

Budget effect



Hussainagar being cleaned up using machines that use modern technology after a massive hike in Budget for city. —DEEPAK DESHPANDE

Telangana Budget is fraud on people: BJP

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

BJP state president Dr K. Laxman termed the Budget presented by the TRS government on Sunday as "fraudulent" and intended to cheat people of the state.

Speaking to the media here on Monday, Dr Laxman said that there was no clarification from the Treasury benches on how they would make good the fiscal deficit. He said that the state did not mention funds received from the Centre.

He said the Budget was unrealistic and not in tune with the current position of the state.

The BJP president wanted to know about

DR LAXMAN said there was no clarification from the Treasury benches on how they would make good the fiscal deficit. He said that the state did not mention funds received from the Centre.

HE SAID the Budget was unrealistic and not in tune with the current position of the state.

the number of villages covered under Mission Bhagiratha and the number of people who stood to benefit from the double bedroom housing scheme.

The government has neglected education and health sectors and has left schools in dire straits, he said.

Dr Laxman regretted that funds allocated for the irrigation sector was insufficient and the ruling party was cheating unemployed youth by not allocating funds for "Nirudhyoga Bruthi".

"KCR's family is responsible for the economic slowdown in the state. How can there be a robust growth in times of recession," he said and alleged that the government was taking the state into a debt trap.

"Where is the money paid by Hyderabad people going?" he wondered while alleging that Chief Minister K. Chandrababbar Rao was enacting the role of the protagonist in the Tollywood blockbuster Shankar Dada MBBS with his false promises.

Shankar heads Adilabad BJP

DC CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD, MARCH 9

The senior BJP leader Payal Shankar was appointed as party Adilabad district president for the second time. The party

president K. Laxman issued orders appointing him as the BJP district president. Party leaders and activists congratulated the Shankar over being appointed as district president and

activists led by town leader Dinesh Matolia burst crackers and distributed sweets. State executive committee member Ch. Suhasini Reddy also tried for the post but in vain.

NIZAMABAD | POWER | With BJP at Centre, a district chief is powerful

MP's aide is BJP's dist prez

NARENDR PULLOOR | DC NIZAMABAD, MARCH 9

Nizamabad Member of Parliament D. Arvind's aide Baswapuram Laxminarsaiah was elected as president of BJP Nizamabad district unit.

Replacing the existing president Palle Ganga Reddy of Armour, the BJP state unit has announced the candidature of Mr Laxminarsaiah.

Mr Laxminarsaiah is native of Nizamabad and active in politics for the last two decades.

During his student days, Laxminarsaiah served as union president. Later, he worked for the Congress and TRS. Along with D.



Baswapuram Laxminarsaiah

Arvind. Mr Baswapuram Laxminarsaiah joined the BJP in 2017. During Lok Sabha elections and municipal elections, he actively worked for the victory of BJP candidates. After con-

sidering various equations, the BJP leadership finalised the name of Laxminarsaiah for the district president's post. In the BJP, a district president plays a key role in party

affairs. There is demand for the BJP district president's post as the party is in power at the Centre. Mr. Arvind said that Baswapuram Laxminarsaiah deserves the post of district president. "He (Laxminarsaiah) worked hard for the victory of BJP both in Lok Sabha and municipal elections," he said. He hoped that under the leadership of Baswapuram Laxminarsaiah, BJP will be strengthened in Nizamabad district. Meanwhile, Mr Laxminarsaiah thanked MP Arvind and the BJP state leadership for giving him an opportunity to serve the

Mayor thanks CM for ₹10,000 cr gift

Hyderabad, March 9:

GHMC Mayor Bonthu Ram-mohan thanked Chief Minister K. Chandrababbar Rao at the GHMC Head Office, along with corporators for allocating ₹10,000 crore to GHMC in 2020-21 Budget, for all round development of Hyderabad. Addressing a press conference on Monday, the Mayor thanked the Chief Minister and minister K.T. Rama Rao's efforts in getting the much required funds for

GHMC from government. He said a Master Plan was being prepared to provide facilities/infrastructure to develop Hyderabad on par with other world class cities.

With ₹10,000 crore, he said works would be taken up to improve and develop facilities like sewerage, storm water drainage, corridor improvement, junction improvement, water, electricity, FODs, underpass, skyways and footpath. —JVN

PCRA
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Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India
Extension of last date of submission of application for Engagement of Sector Expert on Full Time (Temporary Basis) in PCRA
The last date for submission of application for Engagement of Sector Expert on Full Time (Temporary Basis) as mentioned in the Notification published in the newspapers on 12.02.2020, has been extended upto 20.03.2020. The detailed information on notification and candidature are available on the website i.e. www.pcra.org. Other terms and conditions remain unchanged.
Bd/ dwp/33104/11/0096/1920 Executive Director - PCRA

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Department of Rural Development
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This Ministry had invited applications for filling up the post of Registrar & Director (Administration) in NIRD&PR, Hyderabad (PB- Rs. 37400-47000 + G.P. Rs. 8700 as per 6th CPC) on deputation basis, which was advertised in the Employment News dated 16-24 January, 2020. It is hereby informed that the last date of receiving the applications has been extended to 15th March, 2020. All the applications in the prescribed format should be sent through the Cadre Controlling Authority to the Under Secretary (Training), Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Rural Development, Room No 363, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi - 110001. For details, refer the website: www.rural.nic.in or www.nird.org.in
LAST DATE: 15th March, 2020 (05:30 P.M.)
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Sd/- (R.K. Singh)
Under Secretary to the Govt. of India
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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 fabled 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 stories like how the mullah had his name, how an aide saved the Nizam's legendary treasures for the royal family and how Indira Gandhi forced 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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SHORT TAKES

MUKKOTI FESTIVAL HELD IN TIRUMALA

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, MARCH 9

The annual 'Mukkoti' festival of Kumaradhara Theertham was observed on a grand note coinciding with the auspicious 'Magha Pournami', at Tirumala on Monday.

A special puja was performed by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) in the sacred 'Theertham on the day. The three crore Theerthas, believed to be present in the Seshachalam ranges, are broadly divided into four categories viz., 'Dharma Ratiprada', 'Gnaana Prada', 'Bhakti Vairagya Prada' and 'Mukti Prada'.

The Kumaradhara Theertham falls under the last category and is considered as the first and foremost with its significance explained in 'Vamana, Varaha, Padma and Markandeya Puranas of Venkateswara Mahatmya'.

According to Vamana and Varaha Puranas, the 'Theertham' attained the name after an old man was transformed into a teenager by the Lord moved by his devotion. In Sanskrit, the teenager is referred to as 'Kamavara' or 'Kumaradasa' and hence the name.

Devotees thronged in large numbers to take part in the torrent festival on Monday. TTD had made elaborate arrangements.

Annappasadam and buttermilk was provided to devotees, while the engineering and forest wings of the TTD provided them the way to reach the Theertham with ease by making necessary arrangements.

The devotees had to trek through the Seshachalam hills to reach the Kumaradhara Theertham in Tirumala.



Shia community members take out Sehra processions from various places in the old city to Koh-e-Moula Ali on occasion of birthday of Hazrat Ali. — P. SURENDRA

Rallies, prayers mark birthday of Hazrat Ali

ATHER MOIN | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

Followers of both Shia and Sunni sects of Islam from the Old City celebrated the birth anniversary of Hazrat Syedna Ali ibne Abi Taalib, cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Mohammed, here on Monday. Congregations were held in mosques, dargahs, khanqas and aashoorkhanas. Ulemas of different schools of thought paid glowing tributes to

the achievements of Hazrat Ali and called upon the community to follow his footsteps to rid the world of injustice, hatred and turmoil. They discussed his persona and contributions towards Islam. Shia dominated areas like Darushifa, Noor Khan Bazar, Dabeerpura, Etebar Chowk and Mandi Mir Alam were bathed in red with flags and bunting, while almost all buildings were decorated. Several youth wore red

shirts or kurtas to symbolize the birth of Hazrat Ali ibne Abi Taalib. As part of the celebrations, processions were taken out from the Old City to Koh-e-Moula Ali in Malkajgiri. Sehra (feetoon) procession was also taken out by different Shia organizations. Podiums were set up along the route from where political and community leaders received and welcomed the processions, which merged with the central pro-

cession at Darushifa. It made its way to Koh-e-Moula Ali via Chaderghat, Nimbolliadda, Barkatpura and Parnaka. A devout Syed Ali Jafery said, "The birth anniversary is also regarded as an auspicious time for new beginnings and to decide wedding dates. People cutting across sects and faiths celebrate the birth, he said.

Bio-toilet from RTC scrap set up in JBS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

The first bio-toilet bus made from scrapped RTC buses has started functioning from Monday at the Jubilee Bus Station (JBS) changeover point. Similar toilets, which are provided for use by both men and women staff, are to come up at other changeover points, including LB Nagar, Uppal and Secunderabad Crossroads.

Though the bus bio-toilet project was inaugurated in December last year by transport minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar in the presence of RTC MD Sunil Sharma, the first such bus toilet could be commissioned for use only more than two months later at JBS.

The delay is due to procedural process that had to be gone through at the Road Transport Authority, said an official of the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC). "Ten more scrapped buses are in line for renovation into bio-toilets. However, they too are awaiting clearance from the transport department," he official stated.

● **ALTHOUGH THE** bus bio-toilet project was inaugurated in December last year by transport minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar in the presence of RTC MD Sunil Sharma, the first such bus toilet could be commissioned for use only more than two months later at JBS.

● **THE MOBILE** bio-toilets have provision for a changing room too and would be immensely useful, particularly for women conductors at the point of changeover, which is generally during the afternoon.

The mobile bio-toilets have provision for a changing room too and would be immensely useful, particularly for women conductors at the point of changeover, which is generally during the afternoon. The staff can also rest in the bus for a while. There are several changeover points in the twin cities where there are no toilet facilities, particularly for women. The bus bio-toilets would thus be of immense use at these points.

MEET ON CLOUD COMPUTING HELD AT MANUU

Hyderabad, March 9: MANUU Coding Club (MCC) of Computer Science & Information Technology Department, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, in collaboration with Millat Foundation For Industry Research and Development (MIFRD) organized one day workshop on Cloud Computing with Amazon Web Services on March 7, 2020.

A total of 70 students from B.Tech., M.Tech., M.C.A. and PhD programmes attended the activity.

Dr. Pradeep Kumar, Head Department inaugurated the workshop. Resource persons from various companies and organizations — Luqman Shariff (Co-founder, FX Labs, Hyderabad), Hidayatullah Khan (Founder, Sentilist, Bangalore), Saif Khan (Network Solutions Specialist, IHT Pvt. Ltd., Bangalore) and Syed Saif Abrar (Technical Leader, IBM, Hyderabad) spoke on technical aspects of Cloud Computing. — INN

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IN BRIEF

PCC Prez visits CAA protest camp

Rajahmundry: Pradesh Congress Committee President Shaik Mastan Vali visited CAA and NRC protest camp at Azad Chowk where Muslims and Constitution Protection Samithi members are on protest for past 80 days.

Nathwani in YSRC RS list

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

The ruling YSR Congress on Monday officially announced the candidature of industrialist Parimal Nathwani for Rajya Sabha, along with ministers P. Subhash Chandra Bose and M. Venkata Ramana, besides industrialist Alla Ayodhya Rami Reddy.

esh Ambani, has to contest RS polls from Andhra Pradesh as a YSR Congress candidate. On both the occasions when Mr Nathwani went to Upper House from Jharkhand earlier, he remained as an Independent candidate.

announced the candidatures here on Monday. Mr Mukesh Ambani objected so much for Mr Nathwani that he flew down to Vijayawada to meet the Chief Minister and make a formal request. The nomination became easier in view of Mr Ambani's promise to make investments in the state. Mr Jagan got the news carried to Mr Nathwani through his confidant Machilipatnam MP V. Balashowry. The industrialist thanked the Chief Minister and made his commitment to develop the state through a tweet to which he tagged Prime

Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The Chief Minister rewarded loyalty while selecting RS candidates. Mr Bose and Mr Venkata Ramana who are all set to lose their Cabinet berths due to the chief minister's decision to abolish the legislative council were accommodated in the Upper House. Mr Ayodhya Rami Reddy was closer to the Chief Minister and had unsuccessfully contested from Narasaraopet in the 2014 Lok Sabha election. He is also the chairman of Ramky Group.

Software helps net culprit

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, MARCH 9

A special software designed at the instance of Nellore SP Bhaskar Bhusan came in handy for investigation team to follow his movements. The cops used the descriptions of the criminal as described by a north Indian a few days ago, and subsequently a techie from Bengaluru, whose phone Varma had used at the Nellore RTC bus stand on February 25. Though he was admitted to a hospital after undergoing a surgery at Hyderabad, SP Bhaskar Bhusan guided Nellore DSP J.

After being held, Varma maintained his composure and pleaded innocence, saying that he is an IIT graduate from Dhanbad and not the person they were looking for. Srinivasulu Reddy and investigation Officer I. Srinivasan to follow movements of Varma from the command control. The team finally caught Varma near the Rythu Bazar in Nellore around 11.30 am on February 25. After being held, Varma maintained his composure, saying that he is a graduate from IIT Dhanbad and

not the person they were looking for. After further grilling, he gave in and admitted his guilt after the police team, which had traced two mobile phones he had stolen at his house. Varma confessed that he chose the path of crime because he was in dire need of money and selected the thief because he was aware of their immense wealth through a common friend. He said he drew inspiration from the film Eemadu, starring Venkatesh and Kamal Hassan, to keep police from reaching him by frequently changing locations and avoiding CC cameras.

DECCAN Chronicle Presents



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SHORT TAKES

'PRIYANKA MAY GET RS SEAT FROM ASSAM'

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUAHATI, MARCH 9

In what has given a new twist to the ongoing hectic lobbying in the Congress for the Rajya Sabha polls...

Informing that All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) has proposed the name of Priyanka Gandhi, Mr Bora, however clarified...

Priyanka entered active electoral politics ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and has been Congress' Uttar Pradesh in-charge.

Insiders in the Congress are to be believed, the party is also considering bringing Jyotiraditya Scindia...

Through at the state level, the Congress and AIUDF have not decided on the common candidate as yet...

Refusing to divulge more on this issue, Mr Bora claimed that the Congress in alliance with AIUDF...

After rejecting the offer of AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal for an electoral alliance...

Meanwhile, indicating deepening political crisis in Madhya Pradesh, six state ministers...

The six ministers did not turn up in the cabinet meeting held here late on Monday night...



Senior Congress leader Digvijay Singh arrives at Chief Minister Kamal Nath's residence for a meeting in Bhopal on Monday.

MP cabinet ministers quit to mollify Scindia

New team may have more leaders loyal to Jyotiraditya

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, MARCH 9

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath on Monday asserted that he would still attempt to force the government...

In a statement issued here late on Monday night, Mr Nath said he was confident of overcoming the current political impasse...

He regretted that BJP was creating an unhealthy trend in MP politics by indulging in horse-trading.

Meanwhile, indicating deepening political crisis in Madhya Pradesh, six state ministers considered close to 'rebel' Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia...

The six ministers did not turn up in the cabinet meeting held here late on Monday night...

meeting convened hurriedly in the chief minister's house at 11 in the night...

The ministers who stayed away from the cabinet meeting were health minister Tulusi Silawat...

He regretted that BJP was creating an unhealthy trend in MP politics by indulging in horse-trading.

Meanwhile, indicating deepening political crisis in Madhya Pradesh, six state ministers considered close to 'rebel' Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia...

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Meanwhile, indicating deepening political crisis in Madhya Pradesh, six state ministers considered close to 'rebel' Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia...

The six ministers did not turn up in the cabinet meeting held here late on Monday night...

BJP convenes MLAs meeting today

From Page 1

Significantly, not a single Congress MLA or state minister owing allegiance to AICC general secretary Jyotiraditya Scindia was present at the meeting.

The meeting also assumed significance with chief secretary S.R. Mohanty and senior officer of the chief minister's office taking part in it.

All the 20 ministers who attended the cabinet meeting submitted their resignation to the chief minister for reconstituting it to the chief minister...

The move was seen here as a bait for Mr Scindia to accommodate more MLAs, loyal to him, in the new ministry.

Amid apprehensions on future moves by Mr Scindia, who has been sulking for being marginalised in the party...

The meeting also assumed significance with chief secretary S.R. Mohanty and senior officer of the chief minister's office taking part in it.

per that the party's young Turks, Milind Deora and Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot...

Three-time chief minister Narottam Mishra, who has lost the power in the state in the November 2018 assembly elections...

But, BJP is a cadre-based party and the high command takes a final call on such important issues.

The BJP's performance in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls had stunned the TMC...

order and women safety are some of the key issues lacking in the state under Ms Banerjee's rule.

The BJP's performance in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls had stunned the TMC...

CONG BANKS ON BICKERING IN BJP IN MP

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | BHOPAL, MARCH 9

Will 'bickering' in BJP in Madhya Pradesh over post of chief minister in the event of fall of Kamal Nath government...

Political circle here is abuzz with such talks with speculations of either senior BJP leaders of MP staking claim for the coveted post...

Sources in the BJP said the Congress leadership of the party was trying to resolve the issue among the chief minister aspirants in BJP in the last couple of days.

The claimants for the post were believed to be former chief minister and BJP national vice-president Shivraj Singh Chouhan...

Congress veteran Digvijay Singh had earlier accused Mr Chouhan and Mr Mishra of masterminding the current political crisis...

But, BJP is a cadre-based party and the high command takes a final call on such important issues.

The BJP's performance in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls had stunned the TMC...

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The BJP's performance in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls had stunned the TMC...

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Two killed in blast in Army camp

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, MARCH 9

Two local labourers were killed and as many wounded in a mysterious blast inside an Army camp in southern Anantnag district on Monday.

Officials said that five labourers were working inside the Army's 21 RAD camp in Khindru area off side Anantnag town when the blast occurred.

Two others Fida Hussain and Shabir Ahmad, also local residents, are being treated at Anantnag's government-run medical college hospital...

The police said that the nature of the blast is being investigated and that they are in touch with the Army in this connection.

A defence spokesman here said that an "accidental explosion" took place at the Army camp at Khindru, injuring four civil labourers.

The injured were immediately evacuated to the nearby medical facility but, unfortunately, two of them succumbed to their injuries...

Separately, the security forces shot dead two militants reportedly associated with Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) during a fire fight that broke out in neighbouring Shopian district early Monday.

INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH ANSARI NAGAR, NEW DELHI

Webinar-interview shall be conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi, from 23th to 25th March 2020 for selection of Candidates for appointments to the post of (Assistant) Professor, Associate Professor and Lecturers in the Bhopal Memorial Hospital & Research Centre...

INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH ANSARI NAGAR, NEW DELHI

RECRUITMENT NOTICE FOR SCIENTIFIC POSITIONS: 1. One post of Scientist in the rank of CASF in the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Madhya Pradesh...

BJP MEETING TO DISCUSS RS SEATS TODAY

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

The BJP central election committee (CEC) is likely to meet on Tuesday to discuss the Rajya Sabha polls scheduled on March 26 for 55 seats falling vacant in 17 states.

Of the 55 seats, 51 seats are falling vacant on different dates in April after the retirement of sitting members. Four seats are already vacant following resignations...

The BJP is confident of bagging at least 16 seats of the total 55. Currently, the ruling BJP-led NDA is in minority in the Upper House but the BJP hopes to lead the number race by the end of this year.

Her tweet and advertisements which appeared in several local newspapers have been creating ripples in Bihar politics.

Modi seeks feedback from MPs in WB

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

With the crucial Assembly poll in West Bengal lined up for next year and Mamata Banerjee-led ruling TMC making it sure that it will not be an easy task for the BJP to oust it, Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself is keeping a tab on the BJP's BJP can improve its vote-share among other organisational issues.

Most of the MPs, it was learnt, told the Prime Minister that the state government "misuses" the state police against the BJP cadre and also told him that the law and order and women safety are some of the key issues lacking in the state under Ms Banerjee's rule.

Her tweet and advertisements which appeared in several local newspapers have been creating ripples in Bihar politics.

Political analysts are of the view that her entry with a road map for the state's development may create hurdles for Chief Minister Nitish Kumar who has been facing attacks over "deteriorating law and order scenario" and "rising unemployment" in Bihar.

The assembly elections in Bihar are slated to be held later this year.

JD(U) leader's K based daughter forms political party in Bihar

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, MARCH 9

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NOTICE INVITING TENDER GOVERNMENT OF MADHYA PRADESH

Table with columns: No., Part No., Name of Work, Estimated Amount of Contract (Rs. in lakh), L1 No., L1 Price (Rs. in lakh), Bid Due Date (DD/MM/YY), Bid Opening Date (DD/MM/YY), Completion Period (Month).

SHORT TAKES

PHARMACIST HELD IN MAHA FOR STEALING MASKS

Pune, March 9: Amid the coronavirus scare and the increased demand for surgical and N95 masks, a pharmacist from a reputed hospital in Pune has been arrested for allegedly stealing masks and other medicines worth over ₹35,000, police said.
The 28-year-old accused stole masks, injections, tablets and some ointments collectively worth ₹35,750 on Saturday from the hospital pharmacy where he was working, an official at Koregaon Park police station said on Sunday. He has been booked under Indian Penal Code sections for theft.
While no confirmed case of novel coronavirus has been reported from Maharashtra so far, the scare over the infection is spreading.
To prevent hoarding of masks which are in great demand, the anti-drug department earlier urged chemists to not stockpile them.

MAN BOOKED FOR DUMPING USED MASKS IN OPEN

Thane, March 9: Amid the coronavirus scare, a man has been booked for allegedly dumping used face masks at an open space in Thane district, police said on Monday.
The matter came to light after some television channels showed clippings of used masks stored at a godown in Bhiwandi township on Saturday.
Taking suo moto cognisance of the reports, district health officer Manish Renge directed the Food and Drug Administration, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board and the police to carry out an inspection of the godown.
However, even as the authorities could complete their task, the accused, Imran Shaikh (22), allegedly removed all the masks from cartons and dumped them at an open space at Purna village on Retibunder Road in Bhiwandi, a police official said.

Later, videos of the masks dumped in the open were also telecast by some channels following which the district health officer issued a warning against a case against Shaikh on Sunday evening.
Shaikh has been booked under Indian Penal Code Section 289 (whoever unlawfully or negligently does any act which is likely to spread the infection of any dangerous disease), Narcotic police station's senior inspector Maloji Shinde said. The accused has not yet been arrested.

\$3BN REVENUE LOSS FOR AIRPORTS FEARED

Mumbai, March 9: Prolonged duration of the coronavirus outbreak could result in a revenue loss of US\$3 billion for airports in the Mumbai region, a global airports' grouping said on Monday.
Airports Council International (ACI) Asia Pacific also urged regulators and governments to implement well-defined adjustments and relief measures tailored to suit local-level contexts.
Asia-Pacific is suffering the highest impact, with passenger traffic volumes down by 24 per cent for the first quarter of the current year, compared to projected traffic levels without Covid-19, as per ACI World estimates.
Citing the ACI World Airport Traffic Forecasts, it predicted that US\$ 12.4 billion revenue for the first quarter in the Asia-Pacific region in the "business as usual" scenario, the ACI-APAC said in a release.
"The impact of Covid-19 is projected to have a revenue loss of US\$ 3 billion," it said.
Within the Asia-Pacific region, mainland China, Hong Kong SAR and the Republic of Korea remain at the centre of the effects with sizeable losses in traffic volumes, it added.
Meanwhile, there is a sharp spike in the number of Covid-19 cases in several countries in the Middle East, expecting to significantly impact the region downwards by a negative 4.2 per cent as travellers and airlines adjust their plans and seat offers in the coming days and weeks, it added.
Against this gloomy background of sharp declines in traffic and passenger numbers, airports' aeronautical revenues and non-aeronautical revenues are rendering similar declines, the ACI-APAC said in the release.
ACI is a grouping of airports. It serves 688 members, operating 1,979 airports in 176 countries.



A view of an effigy based on the theme of novel coronavirus for Holika Dahan in Mumbai on Sunday. —PTI

POSITIVE CASE SURFACES IN KARNATAKA

AKSHEV THAKUR | DC BENGALURU, MARCH 9

A software engineer who returned here from the US recently has tested positive for the novel coronavirus, becoming the first Covid-19 patient in Karnataka.
The details of the passenger are not yet divulged.
As many as 432 samples of 992 persons have been identified for observation. Of them, 266 persons have completed 28 days of observation and 700 persons are continuing home quarantine.
The number of symptomatic persons have been sent for testing and 364 samples are reported as Negative and remaining 68 samples results awaited.

A circular has been issued for the closure of pre-KG, LKG and UKG schools of BBMP and Bangalore Urban districts until further orders.

The government has also ordered for closure of anganwadis also.

ITALY-RETURNED MAN TESTS +VE IN PUNJAB

Chandigarh, March 9: A Hoshiarpur resident, who returned from Italy last week, has been tested positive for coronavirus. This is the first such case in Punjab.

"The man who returned to Amritsar by an Air India flight from Milan in Italy has tested positive for coronavirus," Health Minister Navjot Singh Sidhu said. He also mentioned that Amritsar International Airport was hit by the virus on March 4 along with this two other family members. Punjab Principal Secretary (Health) Anurag Asgharwal said. The patient is a resident of Hoshiarpur, he said, adding he was confirmed that the man returned from an airport and got admitted to a government hospital in Amritsar.
After he was found corona positive last week, his samples were sent to NIV, Pune, which has confirmed that the man is suffering from coronavirus afflictions. —PTI

Jaishankar meets kin of students stranded in Iran

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, MARCH 9

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, on Monday arrived in Srinagar on a surprise visit. The officials, however, said that the visit was primarily aimed at interacting with the families of Kashmiri students and pilgrims stranded in Iran.

Srinagar's DC Shahid Iqbal Choudhary told this newspaper that the J&K government prepared a list of over 400 local students currently studying in various universities and colleges in Iran where the coronavirus cases have increased over the past couple of weeks, giving sleepless nights to their families back home.
"This list was shared with the Government of India with a request that necessary arrangements may be made for the return of these students and pilgrims stuck in Iran," he said.
He added that Jaishankar chose to visit Srinagar himself to interact with the families of these students and pilgrims to assure them that efforts are underway for their return from Iran.
The official sources

here said that the Minister flew into J&K's summer capital almost quietly. He then held interaction with the families of the students and other local stuck in Iran at Kashmir Convention Centre on the banks of Dal Lake.
Though reporters were denied entry into the residence in Iran and pilgrims stranded in Iran, he said that the minister told a group of 25 families whose wards are in Iran that the government of India is to fly home the pilgrims who are changing their residences in Iran and lack adequate facilities.
For students, he said that to bring them back was the government's top priority for them, unlike pilgrims, are better placed in their respective campuses.
The sources said that the relatives of those stranded in Iran including students and Shia pilgrims from the Valley presently in Qom, about 140 km to the south of Tehran, demanded that the Centre airlift them from Iran immediately.
The minister also met the representatives of local hoteliers, tour and travel operators and houseboat owners.

Amidst coronavirus scare, PM's Dhaka visit deferred

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh has been cancelled after Dhaka informed India and other countries on Monday that it is deferring the birth centenary celebrations of the founder of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman due to the global coronavirus epidemic.
New Delhi, in a statement on Monday evening, said Modi's visit had been "deferred", adding that Bangladesh would convey the decision to the event to New Delhi later.
India also "expressed understanding of the circumstances that necessitates this deferral".
Bangladesh had apparently announced the postponement in Dhaka late on Sunday night.
Modi was to travel to Bangladesh to participate in the centenary birth anniversary celebrations on March 17 of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, usually known as Bangabandhu — who successfully led the Bangladesh freedom struggle in 1971.
Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur who was assassinated in 1975. "We have received formal notification from the government of Bangladesh that a decision has been taken by them to defer the public events being organised to celebrate the centenary of the birth of the Father of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, on account of the detection of cases of COVID-19 in Bangladesh, and the larger global public health situation in this regard," the MEA said on Monday.
The impact of this deferral applies also to the large gathering planned for March 17, at which Modi was invited, the MEA added.

IAF AIRCRAFT LEAVES FOR COVID-HIT IRAN

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

India sent a military transport aircraft with a specialist medical team on board to Iran on Monday night to bring back Indians stranded in the coronavirus-hit nation.
According to the Indian Air Force, its C-17 Globemaster military aircraft left for Iran from the Hindon airbase at 3:30 pm.

"An IAF C-17 'Globemaster' aircraft got airborne on Monday at 2:30 hrs from Hindon airbase to air lift Indian citizens from Iran. The aircraft has a specialist medical team onboard. Indian citizens will be flown to Hindon where medical facilities including quarantine have been set up," the IAF tweeted.

The C-17 "will return to India in the early hours tomorrow (Tuesday) morning. IAF is ensuring the required operational and medical measures are in place for an expeditious and safe return of Indian citizens from Iran," it said.
"About 2,000 Indians are living in Iran. Three days ago, a Mahan airline plane had brought swab samples of 300 Indians from Iran to India."

The health minister appealed to all returning from foreign countries to voluntarily quarantine themselves at home and provide information to the health authorities.

Humidity in air generally helps virus to grow, says Aiims chief

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

"Temperature, virus spread not linked"

Temperature, virus spread not linked

Colombo, March 9: Sri Lanka on Monday suspended Buddhist pilgrimages to India in view of the coronavirus outbreak, saying these trips are mostly undertaken by elderly people who are most vulnerable to COVID-19. "A majority who go on these trips are elderly people who would be vulnerable to the virus in the Eastern province. While the virus has not claimed any life in Sri Lanka, the central bank has warned against adverse effects on the tourism and export sectors. There has only been one reported case of Covid-19 in the island nation.

3-year-old tests positive for Covid

Boy had returned from Italy via Dubai

GLIVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 9

A three-year-old who had returned from Italy by a Dubai flight tested positive for coronavirus in Kerala on Monday. This is also the first case in the country where a child has been infected.
With the latest case, the number of confirmed positive for coronavirus has risen six. All are currently admitted in isolation wards.
The child had returned along with his parents at a Cochin International airport on an Emirates Flight EK 503, on Saturday. He has shown symptoms of fever during the universal screening. Soon he was shifted to the isolation ward at Ernakulam Medical College.

Samples of the parents have also been tested for lab tests, the officials added.
Those who have come in contact with the child have been put under surveillance.
After preliminary check, the individual who interacted with the family at the airport has now been identified.
Besides, the passengers who were on the same flight have been directed to report to the officials of the Atakkal temple here in the earliest for laboratory tests.

Currently, as many as 13 pilgrims are under observation at the Ernakulam Medical College hospital.
Of the five persons who were tested positive in Pathanamthitta district, two elderly patients have been shifted to the Kottayam Medical College.
Around 150 persons who came in close contact with the Covid-infected family have been identified and these include 58 who are being tracked closely with the three persons.

The persons have been admitted to isolation ward in Pathanamthitta and five in Kollam district.
Meanwhile, lower primary and upper primary schools in Pathanamthitta district have been closed for two weeks in view of the Covid-19 scare.
Severe restrictions have been imposed on religious festivals, marriage receptions and community feast to minimise the risk of infection in society.

District collector has directed the school authorities to cancel annual functions and farewell parties.
Efforts are continuing to trace all people who had come in contact with the infected persons.
The health authorities are constantly monitoring the condition of home quarantined persons.
They will be shifted to isolation wards in case of strong symptoms.
According to health authorities, more than 3,000 people may have come in direct or indirect contact with the three-member family who was tested positive for Covid-19 on Sunday since their return to state from Italy on February 29.

Some of the people admitted to the district hospital are in the high risk category.

Pongala celebrated wearing masks

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 9

Notwithstanding Covid-19 scare, lakhs of women took part in Atakkal Pongala festival here on Monday.

Many devotees were seen wearing masks to contain a possible infection but the number of worshippers was relatively low this time.
The devotees occupied either side of main roads, premises of government and private establishments, groves and open spaces to perform the annual festival.

They prepared prasadam consisting of rice, jaggery, coconut, banana and ghee as offering to the Goddess.
Usually, women from south Kerala and neighbouring Tamil Nadu through the temple, offered Sabarimala of women, in large numbers for the festival.

The offering is made annually to Atakkal Bhavathy, the presiding deity of the famous Atakkal temple here. In 2009, the event entered the Guinness Book of Records for having the world's largest gathering.
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The health minister appealed to all returning from foreign countries to voluntarily quarantine themselves at home and provide information to the health authorities.

She said 1,116 people are under watch in Kerala for coronavirus — 967 under home quarantine and 149 in isolation wards of hospitals.

Covid-19 because of strict enforcement of precautionary measures.

After the outbreak in Wuhan, the government had issued directions to all coming from China to Korea, Japan and South Korea to strictly monitor their travel history. Many are reportedly not providing proper information at the airport health desk and immigration counter.

They are participating in public functions including religious and mass gatherings posing serious risk in directly or indirectly contact with their close relatives but also to the society at large. This kind of irresponsible behaviour which puts the lives of others at risk will not be allowed at any cost, she said.
The health minister said that the state had been able to check the spread of

LANKA SUSPENDS BUDDHIST PILGRIMAGE VISITS TO INDIA

Colombo, March 9: Sri Lanka on Monday suspended Buddhist pilgrimages to India in view of the coronavirus outbreak, saying these trips are mostly undertaken by elderly people who are most vulnerable to COVID-19. "A majority who go on these trips are elderly people who would be vulnerable to the virus in the Eastern province. While the virus has not claimed any life in Sri Lanka, the central bank has warned against adverse effects on the tourism and export sectors. There has only been one reported case of Covid-19 in the island nation.

DECCAN Chronicle

10 MARCH 2020

Just another day of awards, posturing

Don't we Indians just love to celebrate? With our ingrained propensity for ritual and pagantry and our enthusiasm for turning even forced marriages into big fat monsoon (or springtime) weddings...

It was supposed to be a day of reflection and stocktaking — Women's Day. Not just have fun, but contemplate. How far have we, India's women, come since the days of widow-burning, misconstrued, misrepresented and misnamed as sati...

Does the PM genuinely believe that an upbeat hashtag and the Ujjwala Yojana will win the allegiance of the woman voter? In fairytale justice of sorts, it is an eight-year-old who apparently called out his bluff...

Licpriya's own account is managed by her guardian, so her snafu may not be wholly authentic, but what about others chafing under the burden of bad laws (the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act would not recognise women as equal guardians)...

Women cricketers an inspiration

The atmosphere at Melbourne Cricket Ground, with 96,174 fans present, can be overwhelming even for those endowed with strong nerves. To face champions who have done it on big occasions many times was an insurmountable challenge for the Indian women's team.

They were then outplayed in a chase that could be daunting for the most talented batting lineup, and a billion hearts sank. The positives that flowed from the Indian women's team's march to the T20 world cricket final may have evened out the disappointment of the defeat...

The lesson they may have learned from habitual winners Australia on staying and playing positive cricket on big occasions may stand a young Indian team in good stead. They have come a long way since the days when women's cricket was played by dedicated amateurs with little organisational support...

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Let's defend India with what we can afford

Subhani
Mohan Guruswamy

Mohamed Reza Pahlavi, the second and last Shah of Iran from the Pahlavi dynasty, was the son of an Iranian gunnery sergeant who managed to seize control of that country in 1925 and crown himself king.

In history for all those students who think that weapons confer status, India's diplomatic and military establishment seems gripped by garish visions of an India sitting at the global high tables like the UN Security Council. India's new middle classes talk easily about India becoming a superpower, and against this rising tide few are willing to question why? Recent studies reveal that as much as 70 per cent of Indian households make do without the minimum standards evolved by international bodies such as the UNDP to be considered above the poverty standard.

India's pursuit of iron-clad national security and its global status ambitions makes it annually invest some \$20 billion (around \$1,20,000 crore) of weapons, putting us in a league with the world's military leaders want even more, and to this extent they now have a vested interest in weapons acquisitions. Most of our other engineering imports are to facilitate our own production, either as plant and machinery or as components. Thus, they contribute to overall value addition. The military hardware imports are a one-way street, as the only country to benefit from it are the exporting economies.

A little over a week ago, Biden seemed finished. The socialist outsider Bernie Sanders looked unstoppable. Then Biden won in South Carolina and the race flipped. Two of Biden's rivals in the so-called "moderate lane", Pete Buttigieg and Amy Klobuchar, dropped out and endorsed him. The "Joementum" carried on to Super Tuesday this week, as Biden notched significant wins across the South and in Minnesota and Massachusetts. Sanders won in California, but he is now behind.

being planned for acquisition is not even required. Take, for instance, the French-built Dassault Rafale fighter-bomber that the IAF is desperately seeking. Each of these aircraft will cost at least ₹1,600 crore, and the IAF wants 126 of them. It will get 36 of them for now. Not being satisfied with this, the IAF is thinking ahead and now wants large numbers of an even more costly fighter — the US F-35. This will be in addition to the 272 SU30MKI fighter-bombers the IAF is in the process of inducting. Those knowledgeable about this will argue that the SU30MKI confers far greater lethality than the Rafale and costs about ₹650 crore each, so why buy Rafales? This is a disquieting question then defence minister Manohar Parrikar had posed. Besides, the SU30MKI is already being assembled by HAL at Nashik and its AI-31FP turbofan engines at Koraput.

Then let's consider what is the aircraft the Rafale is supposed to replace? It's the now outdated MIG-21 series. The MIG-21 is as comparable to the Rafale as cheese is to chalk. The MIG-21 is described as a frontal aviation aircraft designed for ground attacks, not enemy aircraft and on occasion to drop small bombs and conduct ground attacks. It has a very limited range and endurance. The logical replacement for the MIG-21 is another light single engine interceptor such as the Tejas LCA or even the more expensive Saab Gripen. It does not have an expensive heavy twin-engine long-range fighter-bomber. It's akin to a used car that replaces a Maruti 800 with a Mercedes E-class or a BMW 5-series. That's not a very good deal, is it? If you cannot, good sense tells you that one should shop around for a Swift or an Amazon. Clearly, there is no scope for a guns versus butter debate here, but for a sensible and rational gun vs gun discussion. There is a case for cutting the cost for buying the costlier superfighter if the Lower unit and maintenance costs means that we can buy these light fighters in greater numbers. If we add 126 Rafales to our SU30MKIs, the upgraded MIG-29s and Mirage-2000s, it will mean that the IAF will be operating over 500 4-generation fighter aircraft. This is a lot more than even the US Air Force does. These kind of numbers might just set off an arms race with China, and

with its much bigger GDP the People's Republic can impose unacceptable economic costs on us. Even then, the military brass will want even more. This is the time for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to put his foot down and direct the IAF to forget the MMRCA and prepare to induct the Tejas, and also to order the IAF and HAL to get their act together and ramp up production of the Tejas LCA to quickly replace MIG-21s. The Indian Navy has cut its coat according to the cloth it was given, and has quickly moved with the development of the naval variant of the Tejas. Then why can't the IAF? More than just numbers, India needs a strategy to keep the Chinese deterred. This strategy must be to outpace China's economic interests and inflict huge costs on any Himalayan adventure. India must also in other theatres of our choosing. The PLA might have the advantage of interior lines in Tibet and Xinjiang, but the IAF and the Indian Army maintain bases and formations close to the border on the plains, giving them the advantage of female more troops and calling them to strike formations makes little sense, as high altitude battlefields require acclimatisation and the conflicts in all these theatres will be long over before they can be deployed into battle.

US President Donald Trump was rewarded for his visit with a \$3.6 billion order for attack helicopters. He went back happy. The dependence on helicopter gunships for ground attacks again is an iffy thing. There is no alternative. If we now about how they may not be all that useful against heavily-defended territory, we should forget how the Afghan Mujahideen exacted a heavy toll of Soviet aircraft. The US military in the Afghanistan back in the 1980s. Unfortunately, however, our commanders seem to have embarked on a numbers game, with potential adversaries and among our allies. If the strategy is to be able to deter future wars, putting faith in numbers is clearly not the answer. Indian means are limited, and we must think of defending India only with what we can afford.

The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also speaks in the Chinese economy.

LETTERS

RANA'S ARREST

How long do we have to face money laundering cases in banks (Yes Bank's Rana Kapoor arrested, DC, March 9). What is the government machinery doing? Though we have talented and highly educated chartered accountants, company secretaries and auditors to take care of bank audits, why are such cases surfacing? I urge the finance minister and the RBI Governor to focus on all banking operations.

Omprakash Koyalkar Hyderabad

CHICKEN RUMOURS

Whenever rumours of some viral fevers are spread, poultry farmers cut prices of broiler chicken while the prices of eggs, mutton, fish and prawns are intact. Poultry farmers must educate people instead of reducing prices. Kebabs, chicken fry and curries are prepared at a very high temperature with spices, turmeric powder and masala, killing all bacteria. So eating chicken is safe.

J. Vijay Kumar Secunderabad

BEYOND BELIEF

While on one hand we find articles related to empowerment of women very enriching, giving us a hope of having a dream and making it happen, on other hand we see neglect of female medical staff in Chinese hospitals, who have been in the forefront of the fight against the virus. If a developed nation treats women like this, what is their fate in uneducated, patriarchal societies?

Navya Alishah Hyderabad

CM'S CITIZENSHIP

No one doubted the CM's Indian origins (CM has no birth record, DC, March 9). It was never in question when he led the agitation for a separate state and called Andhra people settlers. It was immediately pointed out that his family also migrated from Andhra at some time before he was born. Was that not a proof that his Indian origin was established even without having a birth certificate?

K. Srinivasa Charyulu Chaddupally

Ajoy asked to quit: Crisis in Bengal UF

CALCUTTA, March 9 The one-year-old United Front in West Bengal stands today on the precipice of a final collapse with its second largest constituent, the Bangla Congress, directing its President and the Chief Minister, Mr. Ajoy Mukherjee, to quit 50 YEARS AGO IN

Mr. Sushil Kumar Dhar, General Secretary of the Party told a crowded Press Conference immediately after the marathon 14-hour deliberations of the Party executive for the past two days that the Bangla Congress was also withdrawing itself from the United Front in its present form.

Freddy Gray
Will Joe Biden win in Nov. as no one thinks that he can?
I met Joe Biden last month, after one of his town hall events in New Hampshire. His team had turned the music up loud, presumably so that 77-year-old Joe — the gaffe machine from Scranton, Pennsylvania — would not be recorded saying something stupid as he mingled with the fans and reporters.

again, smiling. His dentures were brilliant; his eyes mad blue. He had no idea what I was talking about. I tried one last time, screaming "Boris Johnson!" in his ear. Somewhere deep in his psyche, something stirred. "Bori...," he said. Then the empress returned and he went to hug some old ladies. It's not fair to mock the elderly, and no doubt US politicians have far more pressing matters on their minds than Brexit. But Joe Biden is emerging as the Democratic Party's choice to be the next leader of the free world, and he's clearly not all there.

lost his thread while trying to cite the Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, all men are women created by the... you know... you know, the thing." He called Super Tuesday "Super Thursday". On Tuesday night, he grabbed his wife's hand and said "This is my little sister, Valerie". Team Biden is quick to point out that, since his childhood, he has suffered from a stutter. Long before the spectre of dementia hung over him, Biden was notorious for putting his mouth in his foot, as he would say.

By arrangement with the Spectator

SHORT TAKES

iPhone
FEWER APPLE
SMARTPHONES
SOLD IN CHINA

Shanghai, March 9: Apple sold fewer than half a million smartphones in China in February, government data showed on Monday as the Covid-19 outbreak halved demand for all such devices. China placed curbs on travel and asked residents to avoid public places in late January, just ahead of the Lunar New Year festival, a major gift-giving holiday. Those restrictions stayed largely in place through most of February.

In total, mobile phone brands shipped a total of 6.34 million devices in February, down 54.7% from 14 million in the same month last year, data from the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology showed (CAICT). It was also the lowest level for February since at least 2012, when CAICT started publishing data.

Android brands, which include devices made by Huawei Technologies and Xiaomi, accounted for most of the drop, as they collectively saw shipments decline from 12.7 million units in February 2019 to 5.85 million, the data showed.

Shipments of Apple devices slumped to 494,000, from 1.27 million in February 2019. In January, its shipments had held steady at just over 2 million.

Meanwhile, the tech giant based out of Silicon Valley in California will increase investment in China and build its first Asia-Pacific research and development centre in the country to bolster its presence as sales of its products dropped there in the first two months relegating it to fifth place. —Agencies

APP COS TO
PAY THOSE
WITH VIRUS

New York, March 9: Multiple rideshare and food delivery companies are following in the footsteps of Uber, which announced it would compensate its drivers who catch the new Covid-19.

Uber on Saturday announced that drivers who provided documentation that they had been diagnosed with Covid-19 or quarantined by health authorities would "receive compensation for a period of up to 14 days." This has already begun in some markets, and we are expected to implement mechanisms to do this worldwide," an Uber spokesman told AFP in a statement.

"We believe this is the right thing to do," said Andrew Macdonald, the senior vice president of rides and platform.

Other rideshare and delivery companies have indicated they intend to follow suit — a shift for such organizations, which often ensure their drivers do not qualify as full-time employees and thus cannot claim social protections. Meal and food delivery services DoorDash and Instacart told AFP on Sunday they were in discussions with other companies in their sector, such as Lyft and Postmates, to take the global health crisis into account.

DoorDash said it was working "to protect the health and safety of our community in response to the spread of Covid-19, including exploring options with our partner companies to compensate" affected drivers.

It also highlighted a delivery instruction feature that lets drivers drop food off at the door "with a photo of where the food should be left through the app." Meanwhile, a Senator, Mark Warner, is encouraging them to go further and consider ensuring workers don't face financial consequences as a result of the virus. —Agencies

So, recognise faces behind virus mask

Chinese company says it has developed the country's first such technology amid epidemic

Beijing, March 9: A Chinese company says it has developed the country's first facial recognition technology that can identify people when they are wearing a mask, as most are these days because of the Covid-19, and help in the fight against the disease. China employs some of the world's most sophisticated systems of electronic surveillance, including facial recognition.

But the Covid-19, which emerged in Hubei province late last year, has resulted in almost everyone wearing a surgical mask outdoors in the hope of warding off the virus, posing a particular prob-

lem for surveillance.

Now Hanwang Technology Ltd, which also goes by the English name Hanvon, said it has come up with technology that can successfully recognise people even when they are wearing masks. "If connected to a temperature sensor, it can measure body temperature while identifying the person's name, and then the system would process the result, say if it detects a temperature over 38 degrees," Hanwang Vice President Huang Lei told Reuters in an interview.

The Beijing-based firm said a team of 20 staff used core technology developed over the past 10

years, a sample database of about 6 million unmasked faces and a much smaller database of masked faces, to develop the technology.

The team began work on the system in January, as the Covid-19 outbreak gathered pace, and began rolling it out to the market after just a month.

It sells two main types of products that use the technology. One performs "single channel" recognition that is best used at, for example, entrances to office buildings.

The other, more powerful, product is a "multi-channel" recognition system that uses multiple surveillance cameras."

It can identify everyone in a crowd of up to 30 people "within a second", Huang said, adding "When wearing a mask, the recognition rate can reach about 85 per cent, which can ensure that most people can be identified," Huang said, adding the success rate for people without mask is about 99.5 per cent. A big customer, he said, is the Ministry of Public Security, which runs the police.

Using Hanwang's technology, the ministry can

cross-reference images with its own database of names and other information and then identify and track people as they move about, Huang said.

"It can detect crime suspects, terrorists or make reports or warnings," he said. But the system struggles to identify people with both a mask and sunglasses, he said.

"In this situation, all of the key facial information is lost. In such cases recognition is tough," Huang said. The company has about 200 clients in Beijing using the technology, including the police, and expect scores more across 20



—Reuters

COVID-19 HITS TECH WORLD

Checkpoint Software Technologies 'Global Trust Index' reveals cybercriminals are exploiting interest in Covid-19 to spread spam campaign.

4,000+

Covid-19-related domains have been registered globally since January 2020.

3 Percentage of domains found to be malicious
5 Percentage of domains found to be suspicious

CHECKPOINT RECOMMENDS

50 Percentage of Covid-19-related domains more likely to be malicious than other domain registered since January 2020.

10 Percentage of Italian organisations hit by phishing campaign on Covid-19.



Australia sues Facebook over data privacy

Sydney, March 9: The Australian privacy regulator filed a lawsuit against Facebook accusing the social media giant of sharing the personal details of more than 300,000 people with political consultant Cambridge Analytica without their knowledge.

In the Federal Court lawsuit, the Australian Information Commissioner accused Facebook of breaching privacy laws by disclosing 311,127 users' information for political profiling via a survey product, "This Is Your Digital Life", on its website.

"The design of the Facebook platform meant that users were unable to exercise reasonable choice and control about how

their personal information was disclosed," Information Commissioner Angeline Falk said in a statement.

The suit sought unspecified damages, adding that each breach of privacy law could draw a maximum penalty of A\$1.7 million (\$1.1 million). The fine would amount to A\$29 billion if the court awarded the maximum for each of the 311,127 instances.

A Facebook spokeswoman said the company had engaged "actively" with the Office of the Information Commissioner over the past two years as part of the investigation. "We've made major changes to our platforms, in consultation with inter-

national regulators, to restrict the information available to app developers. We implement new governance protocols and build industry-leading controls to help manage and protect and manage their data," she said in a statement.

"We're unable to comment further as this is now before the Federal Court."

PERSONALITY QUIZ Last July, Facebook was fined a record \$5 billion by the US Federal Trade Commission after a probe triggered by the same user personality quiz from 2014 to 2015.

In all, Facebook was accused of inappropriate sharing information



belonging to 87 million users globally with the survey tool of now-defunct British firm Cambridge Analytica. The consultancy's clients included US President Donald Trump's 2016 election campaign. In the months after Trump's election, Cambridge Analytica registered a business in Australia but never went to work for an Australian political party. In the Australian lawsuit, the Information Commissioner said Facebook did not know the exact nature of the data it shared with Cambridge Analytica. "This is 'Your Digital Life' program, but that it failed to take reasonable steps to protect users' personal information."

"As a result, the Affected Australian Individuals' personal information was exposed to the risk of disclosure, monetisation and use for political profiling purposes," the court filing said.

"These breaches amounted to serious and/or repeated interferences with the privacy of the Australian Affected Individuals," it added. —Reuters

E-learning, Nintendo: Coping with school shutdowns in Japan, HK

Tokyo, March 9: When Mayumi Iijima heard that schools across Japan would close over the new Covid-19 outbreak, leaving her to juggle her job and two small children, her first reaction was horror. "I just said 'no, no, no... what are we supposed to do'?" the 40-year-old, who has two children, said. "I have human resources in Tokyo, said."

Like parents from Italy to Iran, Iijima is struggling to find a way to entertain and educate her children during school closures that the UN says have disrupted education for more than 290 million students worldwide.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shocked the nation and dismayed parents nationwide with his call for schools to close through the spring break, but that was not all.

Meanwhile, in Tokyo, popular areas like Harajuku and Shibuya are packed with teenagers, with younger children flocking to playgrounds. "This one good thing is that I can play Nintendo Switch for ages," he said, adding that his family's usual 45-minute rule had

been scrapped. In Hong Kong, schools have been shut since early February, with the closure now set to last until after Easter.

Many teachers are turning to conference call applications to interact with students, but that requires good WiFi access and computer literacy. Primary school teacher Billy Yeung works at a school where many students come from low-income families and parents are often unsure how to download documents. "Some parents told me

they don't have WiFi at home," he said. "One told me that they have used their data by downloading teaching materials."

Elsa Wong, a single mother, is trying to home school her 11-year-old son. "I feel like it is easier to concentrate and it's less stressful," said 14-year-old Leo, who normally has nine lessons a day but now has only two 45-minute sessions via a video-chat application. —AFP

1984 | REDUX?

Ruling party is portraying its leader as firmly in charge during epidemic

China turns to propaganda to correct image

CHINA'S TRYST WITH TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED PROPAGANDA

XUEXI QIANGUO

- In 2019, President Xi Jinping launched an app called "Study of the Great Nation".
- The app contains news and videos about Xi and his ideology "Xi Jinping Thought".
- In fact, there is a sort of competition on the app, with users earning points for reading articles and commenting on them.
- The app already has over 100 million registered users.
- The app is designed by Alibaba Group.



BILIBILI

- Communist Party of China often plays its propaganda material through the use of "bullet screens".
- Bullet Screens are an interactive feature that enables viewers to "shoot" text comments across the screen as the video is being streamed.
- Bilibili, one of the biggest video streaming sites in China, often plays host to propaganda produced by CCTV and the state propaganda department.
- In 2015, the Communist Youth League also began to hold regular courses on the site aimed at promoting patriotism.

Beijing, March 9: As the rest of the world grapples with a burgeoning virus outbreak, China's ruling Communist Party has deployed its propaganda playbook to portray its leader as firmly in charge, leading an army of health workers in a "people's war" against the disease. The main evening news on state TV regularly shows President Xi Jinping and his underlings giving instructions on the outbreak or touring related facilities. Coverage then segues to doctors and nurses on the front lines, "drawing on a tradition of upholding model workers and the importance of sacrifice in the name of the people and the party."

For the Communist Party, the epidemic is both a crisis and an opportunity. It seeks to avoid blame for any mishandling of the outbreak, notably a slow initial response that allowed the virus to take hold. Conversely, it seeks credit for overcoming the crisis, enhancing the legitimacy of its rule. State media, a tightly controlled internet and mass mobilization campaigns have all been harnessed for the effort. It also highlighted a delivery instruction feature that lets drivers drop food off at the door "with a photo of where the food should be left through the app."



The tried and true formula appears to remain effective at promoting the party's version of events, though the rise of social media is an ever-present challenge. A growing minority has long questioned the party line, but even many of them accept it out of habit or a lack of alternatives. Most passively embrace a narrative that is repeated over and over, said Steve Tsang, director of the China Institute at the University of London's

School of Oriental and African Studies. Li Desheng, a 22-year-old student who said news webcasts are his main source of information, said he had stopped watching the party and the government, saying they had failed to be effective at stopping the spread of the virus. "There is a Chinese internet that says, 'Point to a deer, call it a horse,'" the philosophy major said in an interview conducted via instant messaging. "If

you say a deer is a horse, then that is a distortion of fact. When watching a news webcast... at least at present, I think a deer is still called a deer, and a horse is called a horse, so I believe the report."

It's not just a matter of what is shown, though. It's also what's omitted. State media trumpeted the throwing up of new medical facilities for the virus, without reporting on the woes of people unable to find a hospital bed that necessitated the

Herculean effort. It touted crackdowns on wild animal markets and plans to shut them down, without questioning why they hadn't been sufficiently regulated since SARS, a similar virus outbreak in 2002-03.

June Teufel Dreyer, a China expert at the University of Miami, said the party may have lost control of the narrative, but she called "engaged public opinion," but that it's difficult to know what portion of China's 1.4 billion people that represents. Zhou Songyi, another 22-year-old student, said she doesn't find any useful information on the site, but she said that without cashiers could grow to \$50 billion, US venture firm Lounp Ventures has estimated. Dilip Kumar, Amazon's vice president of physical retail and technology, said the company had inserted a credit card into a gated turnstile to enter, rather than scan an app. The turnstiles will display the logo "Just Walk Out technology by Amazon," but all other branding and store aspects will be controlled by the retailer using the service. Items picked up by a customer and any guests who enter with them will be added to the virtual cart. The store will then bill the credit card once the person or group leaves the store, no bar code scans or checkout lines necessary. Kumar said Amazon will install the technology at retailers' stores. —Reuters

IN BRIEF

Two US soldiers killed in Iraq

Baghdad: Two American soldiers fighting the Islamic State group in Iraq were killed during an operation...

One shot at in Alabama concert

Los Angeles: One person was shot and critically injured after gunfire broke out the Alabama concert of rapper Lil Baby.

2 killed in Pak fire exchange

Islamabad: A Pakistan Army colonel and two terrorists were killed in an exchange of fire on Monday after security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation...

Four more die in Pak heavy rains

Peshawar: With the death of four more persons, the death toll in rain-related incidents in Pakistan's northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province rose to 27 on Monday...

NORTH KOREA FIRES THREE PROJECTILES

Seoul, March 9: North Korea fired three unidentified projectiles into the sea on Monday, according to a media report.

MEAL MATTERS

Washington, March 9: Playing games on computer screens during a meal may decrease the amount of food a person eats...



Officials and guests react after hearing loud blasts during Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's swearing-in inauguration ceremony, at the Presidential Palace in Kabul on Monday.

Caliphate hit Kabul, claims IS

2 blasts interrupt swearing-in of rivals as political crisis looms

Beirut/Kabul, March 9: The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for an attack on Kabul's presidential palace in Afghanistan where rival presidential inaugurations were taking place.



Ashraf Ghani

parallel government. On Monday Ghani, dressed in traditional Afghan palace compound, a suit-clad Abdullah inaugurated himself as president...

envoy Zalmay Khalilzad. Minutes earlier, in another corner of the sprawling presidential palace compound, a suit-clad Abdullah inaugurated himself as president...

ATTEMPT ON LIFE: SUDAN PM ESCAPES BLAST

Cairo, March 9: Sudan's prime minister survived an assassination attempt on Monday after a blast in the capital, Khartoum, Sudanese state media said.

Biden picks up Booker's support

Washington, March 9: Joe Biden picked up another key endorsement on Monday in his race for the White House...



Joe Biden

more that unites us than divides us." Booker said on Twitter, "He'll restore honor to the Oval Office and tackle our most pressing challenges."

advantage. Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, gained the endorsement of civil rights leader Jesse Jackson on Sunday...

MH17 trial starts with calls for justice

Badhoevedorp, March 9: Four men accused of murder over the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 in 2014 went on trial in the Netherlands on Monday...

THE SUSPECTS were not present in the dock, but judges were expected to rule that the hearing could continue in their absence.

atrocious disaster. The courtroom in the high-security building was packed with relatives, lawyers and journalists, with many family members expected to speak during the trial.

US Prez to skip St. Patrick's Day lunch

TRUMP'S VIDEO RETWEETED 'MANIPULATED'

Washington, March 9: Twitter has used a new policy to identify misleading content for the first time since a post retweeted by US President Donald Trump that appeared to show Democratic Party rival Joe Biden endorsing his re-election.

luncheon in 2017 and 2018 when Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., was speaker and in 2019, after Pelosi, D-Calif., won back the gavel.

Police gun down man with knives

UK ADVOCATE ACCUSED OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

London, March 9: Britain's opposition Labour party has suspended an anti-racism campaigner over accusations of Islamophobia, the activist revealed on Sunday.

Trevor Phillips, who has headed several high-profile public bodies including the Equality and Human Rights Commission, said he had been suspended after he suggested Muslims were "different".

"Armed officers responded. Taser and a police firearm were discharged during the incident. London Ambulance Service attended and the man was pronounced dead at the scene at Great Scotland Yard short time later," the statement said.

Images from the scene show police lights flashing in the side road to Great Scotland Yard, the headquarters of the Met Police, where the man was shot.



Police stand guard by a cordoned off area after the incident in Westminster, London on Monday.

Playing games while eating may cut food intake: Study

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the US evaluated the food consumption of participants on two separate occasions over the course of the study...



Researchers in evaluating people for problems such as Alzheimer's disease and attention-deficit disorder.

The game, called Rapid Visual Information Processing, tests users' visual processing speed and working memory, the researchers said. It has been used extensively by researchers in evaluating people for problems such as Alzheimer's disease and attention-deficit disorder.

Participants in the study were instructed to her the speed bar on the keyboard whenever they saw three consecutive odd numbers appear on the screen.

IN BRIEF

Germany cases cross 1,000

Berlin: The number of Covid-19 cases in Germany has passed 1,000, official data from the Robert Koch Institute disease control center showed on Monday. There are now a total of 1,112 confirmed cases in Europe's biggest economy, with the region of North Rhine-Westphalia reporting 484 infections — the highest number among Germany's 16 states.

Bootleg booze kills 27 in Iran

Tehran: Twenty-seven people have died from methanol poisoning in Iran after rumors that drinking alcohol help cure the novel Covid-19 infection, state news agency IRNA reported on Monday. The outbreak of Covid-19 in the Islamic Republic is one of the deadliest outside of China, where it originated. Twenty have died in the southwestern province of Khuzestan and seven in the northern region of Alborz after consuming bootleg alcohol, IRNA said. Drinking alcohol is banned in Iran for everyone except some non-Muslim religious minorities. Local media regularly report on lethal cases of poisoning caused by bootleg liquor. A spokesman for Jundishapur medical university in Ahvaz said 218 people had been hospitalised there after being poisoned.

Marshall Islands bars air travellers

Majuro: The Marshall Islands has taken the radical step of banning all inbound air travellers for a two-week period in a bid to prevent the novel Covid-19 reaching the Pacific island nation. The emergency measure came into effect late Sunday and imposes "total suspension of travellers coming into the Marshall Islands immediately" until March 22, the country's health department said. In addition, both air and sea arrivals from 19 countries — including China, Japan, South Korea, Germany, France and Spain — were barred with some exceptions to allow delivery of food supplies. The Marshalls, a group of islands and atolls about halfway between Australia and Hawaii, has also ordered cruise ships and yachts not to dock at its ports.

EMBASSIES CLOSE IN NORTH KOREA

Seoul, March 9: Several embassies in North Korea closed Monday as many diplomats were flown out following weeks of tight quarantine restrictions imposed by Pyongyang over the spread of the novel Covid-19. North Korea has not confirmed a single infection but has imposed strict rules, including closing its borders and putting thousands of its own people into isolation. It has also subjected hundreds of foreigners — including diplomats — to a virtual lockdown in their own premises. Russian ambassador Alexander Matsegora declared the conditions as "morally crushing". Those restrictions were finally eased last week after more than a month. Swedish ambassador Joachim Bergstrom tweeted a selfie from the city centre with the caption: "I have never been standing on Kim Il Sung Square." Monday's evacuation came after reports that a special flight was being arranged for diplomats and foreigners from Pyongyang to Vladivostok.

'Wuhan virus' qui: China flays Pompeo

Terms his statement as 'despicable behaviour' and an attempt to stigmatise the Communist nation

Beijing, March 9: China on Monday condemned US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo for branding the Covid-19 as the "Wuhan virus", terming his remarks as "despicable behaviour" and an attempt to stigmatise the Communist nation. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has officially named covid-19 as Covid-19. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a media briefing here responding to Pompeo's comments. "Certain US politicians turning a blind eye to science and the decision of WHO has rushed to stigmatise China and Wuhan under the pretext of Covid-19. We condemn such despicable and despicable behaviour," Geng said. Pompeo last Friday repeatedly referred to the Covid-19 as "Wuhan virus", pointing to the Chinese city where the virus first emerged in December last year and also blamed Beijing for not sharing enough information about the disease while putting the US "behind the curve".



Inmates relatives form a human chain and a road blockade during a protest gathering over measures, including a ban on family visits, outside the Poggioreale prison in Naples on Monday.

According to WHO, the Covid-19 cases have been reported in over 100 countries and regions, including the US, India, South Korea, Italy and Iran. The WHO report said a total of 105,586 confirmed cases of the Covid-19 have been reported worldwide as of Sunday, an increase of 3,656 infections from the previous day, including 3,610 new cases outside China.

Pompeo seemed to blame the Chinese government for the outbreak of the novel Covid-19. CNN said in its report on his comments. "Remember this is the Wuhan Covid-19 that's caused this and the information that we got on the front end of this thing wasn't perfect and we're not in a place where much of the challenge we face today has been behind the curve," he said on CNBC. He said it "has proven incredibly frustrating to work with the Chinese Communist Party to get our hands around the data set, which will ultimately be the solution to attacking this risk."

Six Italian inmates die during protest

Rome, March 9: Italian penitentiary police said Monday that six inmates protesting virus containment measures at a northern Italian lock-up have died after they broke into the infirmary and overdosed on methadone. The protest Sunday in Modena was among the first of more than two dozen riots at Italy's overcrowded lock-ups that grew Monday. Human rights advocates have been warning that increasing tensions over fears of Covid-19 were hitting inmates particularly hard, especially after restrictions were imposed on family visits to prevent transmissions. On Monday, inmates climbed onto the roof of the San Vittore prison in Milan and set off a painted sheet reading "Indulto", Italian for pardon. Donato Capece, secretary general of the penitentiary police union, accused the government of abandoning the prison system, refusing to provide sufficient measures to prevent the spread of the virus among inmates and leaving guards on their own to deal with prisoners who could now only speak to relatives by phone or Skype. "The administration is completely absent," he told *The Associated Press*. "They have left the penitentiary police in jeopardy." He confirmed six inmates at the Modena prison had died from overdoses. He ticked off the more than two dozen prisons where protests were underway, including in Poggioreale where some prisoners had escaped. Italy's overburdened court system has ground to a near halt because of virus containment measures. — AP

South Korea sees lowest new virus infections for two weeks

Seoul, March 9: South Korea, which has one of the world's largest Covid-19 totals outside China, on Monday reported its smallest daily rise in cases for two weeks. A total of 248 cases were confirmed on Sunday, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) said. Each morning, the South announces how many cases were diagnosed the previous day, and gives an update every afternoon with the current day's figures so far. 96 on Monday, taking the total to 7,478. The 248 figure for Sunday was the third consecutive daily fall and the lowest for any single day since late February. "The slowing trend should continue," President Moon Jae-in told aides in a statement, but warned: "We should not be complacent at all." The South was the first country to report significant covid-19 numbers outside China, where the disease first emerged. But in recent days the focus of global concern has been moving towards Italy and Iran. The South has had 51 deaths, according to KCDC. Specialists say a key factor behind the South's much lower fatality rate from the virus relates to the profile of people being infected — nearly half the country's infections are in people aged below 40. And most of the South's cases are connected to the Shincheonji Church of Jesus, a secretive religious group often condemned as a cult, most of whose members are women. But global figures show it is most deadly among old population, and men in particular. "We have a large number of infectious involving people aged in 20s and 30s because of the Shincheonji factor," said Kim Dong-hyun, president of the Korea Society of Epidemiology. "With these groups in the calculation, it leads to low death rates." Scores of events in South — from K-pop concerts to sports matches — have been cancelled or postponed, with school and kindergarten breaks extended by three weeks. Hundreds of churches held online services on Sunday. — AFP

COSTA FORTUNA: SINGAPORE TO ALLOW IT TO DOCK

Singapore, March 9: Singapore will allow a cruise ship carrying about 2,000 people to dock after it was barred by Malaysia and Thailand over Covid-19 fears, officials said Monday. The Costa Fortuna was turned away from the Thai holiday island of Phuket and the Malaysian state of Penang in recent days, despite having no suspected virus cases among its passengers and crew. But the ship carrying dozens of people from Italy, which has been hard hit by the virus — will be allowed to dock at its home port of Singapore Tuesday as scheduled. A doctor onboard will check passengers and crew before they disembark, and everyone will undergo temperature screenings before entering Singapore. — AFP

CHINA CHARGES XI CRITIC WITH 'SUBVERSION'

Beijing, March 9: Right outspoken Chinese rights activist who called for President Xi Jinping to step down over the Covid-19 outbreak has been charged with "inciting state subversion", rights activists said Monday. Xu Zhiyong was detained since February 15, after publishing a series of blogposts criticising the Communist Party's response to the Covid-19 outbreak. Police at Dongziokou station in Beijing told Xu's sister on Saturday that he had been moved to "residential surveillance in a designated location". Hua Ze, a human rights activist in close contact with Xu's relatives, told AFP. "This is a form of extrajudicial detention lasting up to six months where detainees are denied access to lawyers and relatives, and are vulnerable to torture and coercion, according to activists. Hu Jia, a veteran Chinese rights activist, said police threatened Xu's sister. — AFP

Iran announces 43 new covid-19 deaths, raising the toll to 237

- Seven more countries — Cambodia, Austria, Hungary, Egypt, Peru, Bulgaria and Maldives — have seen local transmission of the virus, bringing the number of countries and regions where local transmission emerged up to 53.
- A Japanese politician Hiroyuki Morota apologised Monday after he made \$86,000 auctioning face masks online.
- Singapore reported 10 more Covid-19 cases on Monday, taking the total number of people infected by the disease to 160.
- Shanghai Disney Resort partially reopened Monday more than a month after shutting down due to the covid-19 outbreak in late January.
- A total of 17 others have been hit in Croatia, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Serbia.
- Albania will close schools and ban public gatherings for two weeks after confirmed the first two cases on Monday.

China reported 25 new deaths, the lowest number in more than a month, taking the death toll to 3,119 and just 40 new confirmed cases, prompting authorities to close 11 temporary hospitals in Wuhan.

By the end of Sunday, 114 confirmed cases, including three deaths have been reported in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 10 confirmed cases in the Macao SAR, and 45 in Taiwan, including one death.

California readies for ship arrival

San Francisco, March 9: Federal and state officials in California were preparing Monday to receive thousands of people from a cruise ship that is scheduled off the coast of San Francisco with at least 21 people aboard infected with Covid-19. Fences were being installed at an 11-acre site at the Port of Oakland, as authorities said flights and buses to whisk over 3,500 passengers from 54 countries aboard the Grand Princess to military bases or their home countries for a 14-day quarantine. "We're making every effort to get them off the ship as safely and quickly as possible," said Dr. John Redd of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, who urged passengers to remain in their rooms. As the US death toll from the virus reached at least 21 and the number of cases worldwide soared above 110,000, California Gov. Gavin Newsom and the mayor of Oakland sought to reassure the public that none of the Grand Princess passengers would be exposed to the US public before completing the quarantine. The number of infections in the United States climbed above 500 as testing for the virus increased. The Port of Oakland was chosen for docking because of its proximity to an airport and a military base, Newsom said. US passengers will be transported to military bases in California, Texas and Georgia, where they'll be tested for the Covid-19 virus and quarantined. About 1,100 crew on the ship, 19 of whom have tested positive for the new virus, will be quarantined and treated aboard the ship, which will dock elsewhere, Newsom said. "That ship will turn around — and they are currently assessing appropriate places to bring that quarantined ship — but it will not be here in the San Francisco Bay," he said. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the National Institutes of Health's infectious diseases chief, said Sunday that the decision to close a city or region, as Italy has done, is "possible". US Surgeon General Jerome Adams said communities will need to start thinking about cancelling large gatherings, closing schools and letting more employees work from home, as many companies have done in the Seattle, Washington, area amid an outbreak at a care home that has killed 17, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown declared a state of emergency Sunday because of the virus. On the Grand Princess, passengers Steven and Michele Smith of Paradise, California, said they hope their time spent on the ship in quarantine will count toward the 14 days they are expected to isolate themselves. But they said officials have not yet provided an answer. "We would love to get credit for the three or four days we've spent on our cabin," Steven said. The Department of State was working with the home countries of several hundred passengers to arrange their repatriation. — AP

Dairy may help you live longer, says study

Boston, March 9: Eating more protein from plant sources or dairy while cutting down red meat consumption could help people live longer, new research claims. In a study of over 77,000 Americans with an average age of 50, those who ate the most plant protein were 27 per cent less likely to die of any cause, according to the researchers from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in the US. The team found that replacing 5 per cent of daily calories from total animal protein with the equivalent number of calories of plant protein was linked to a nearly 50 per cent decrease in the risk of dying of any cause. "It isn't enough just to avoid red meat, but to substitute what you choose to eat in place of red meat," said Zhilei Shan, a postdoctoral research fellow at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. "Healthy plant proteins like nuts, legumes and whole grains contain more than just protein — they include other beneficial nutrients such as healthy fats, antioxidant vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals (compounds derived from plants), which have been associated with lower risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some cancers," said Shan. — PTT

Water bodies placed in one of nine 'thermal regions' for temperature sorting

System to forecast warming of lakes globally

London, March 9: Scientists have developed a new system to better predict future warming of the world's lakes due to climate change, and the potential threat to cold-water species such as salmon and trout. The researchers from the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH) predict that by the year 2100, for the most extreme climate change scenario, average lake temperature will be around 4 degrees Celsius warmer. The study, published in the journal *Nature Communications*, also predicts that 66 per cent of lakes globally will be classified in a warmer thermal region than they are now. The researchers devised the first system that classifies lakes globally, placing each of them in one of nine 'thermal regions'. Lakes are grouped depending on their seasonal patterns of surface water temperatures, the researchers said. The coldest thermal region includes lakes in Alaska, Canada, northern Russia and China, and the warmest covers lakes in equatorial South America, Africa, India and southeast Asia, they said. "Thanks to cutting-edge analysis using satellite images of more than 700 lakes, taken twice a month over 16 years, we produced the first global lake temperature classification scheme," said lead author of the study Stephen Maberly, a professor at UKCEH. "By combining this with a lake model and climate change scenarios we were able to identify that northern lakes will be particularly sensitive to climate change," he said. The researchers noted that even relatively small changes in temperature can have a negative impact on aquatic wildlife. — PTT



Representational picture of Lake Malawi. — AFP

SHORT TAKES



Pranavi, Thaniyath fashion Hyd win

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

All-round performances from captain Pranavi Chandra and Thaniyath helped Hyderabad to an eight-wicket win over Himachal Pradesh in their last league match at the Women's Under 19 One-Day Trophy cricket tournament in Gwalior on Monday. Pranavi scored an unbeaten 23 and claimed a wicket while Thaniyath helped Hyderabad to an eight-wicket win over Himachal Pradesh in their last league match at the Women's Under 19 One-Day Trophy cricket tournament in Gwalior on Monday. Pranavi scored an unbeaten 23 and claimed a wicket while Thaniyath helped Hyderabad to an eight-wicket win over Himachal Pradesh in their last league match at the Women's Under 19 One-Day Trophy cricket tournament in Gwalior on Monday. Pranavi scored an unbeaten 23 and claimed a wicket while Thaniyath helped Hyderabad to an eight-wicket win over Himachal Pradesh in their last league match at the Women's Under 19 One-Day Trophy cricket tournament in Gwalior on Monday. Pranavi scored an unbeaten 23 and claimed a wicket while Thaniyath helped Hyderabad to an eight-wicket win over Himachal Pradesh in their last league match at the Women's Under 19 One-Day Trophy cricket tournament in Gwalior on Monday.

Kartek in main draw of ITF event

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

Hyderabad tennis player G. Sai Kartek Reddy qualified for the main draw of the men's singles ITF tournament being held in Hyderabad on Monday. In the first round of qualifying matches, Kartek defeated Gunjan Jadhav in straight sets at 6-4, 6-4. Later in the final qualifying round, Kartek got the better of Arjun Mahadevan 7-6, 6-2 to book his spot in the final.



Chandni is No.1 in U-14 category

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

Hyderabad teen Chandni Srivastava, after getting selected to represent India in Under 14 World Junior Championship in Gold Coast (Australia), has achieved another major milestone in her young career — she has become the No.1 ranked U-14 player in India. In the last 6-7 months, Chandni has won six Super Series Under 14 titles. Her impressive performances in tournaments had helped her attain the top 3 rank in the later part of 2019. Her strong showing continued this year, the latest being U-14 Super Series titles in January at SMTA, Hyderabad and the final World Cup, Kolkata which propelled her into the Indian U-14 team for the World Junior Championship.

Chargers, Tigers register wins

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

Cyberabad Chargers defeated Ranga Reddy Raiders in the Telangana Premier Kabaddi Season-3 league match at the Kotla Vijay Bhasker Reddy Indoor Stadium on Monday. D. Raj Kumar of the winning team was adjudged Best Raider of the Match for his 10 points while teammate C. H. Ravinder won the Best Defender of the Match for saving 6 points. In another match, Mancharli Tigers walloped Warangal Warriors 51-33 after leading 21-15 at half-time. G. Raju's 17 points went in vain for the Warriors while Karthik Yadav of Tigers was voted Best Defender.



Bengal players celebrate a Saurashtra wicket on the first day of the Ranji Trophy final at Rajkot on Monday. — PTI

Bengal edge ahead

Rajkot, March 9: Heavyweight Cheteshwar Pujara turned up with fever as Bengal nosed ahead against a scratchy Saurashtra on an attritional opening day's play in the Ranji Trophy final here. Avi Barot and Vishwaraj Jadaia struck gritty half-centuries before Bengal pacer Akash Deep struck late in the final session to leave Saurashtra at 206 for five at stumps on Monday. Akash Deep, who was Bengal's standout bowler with three wickets, had Chetan Sakariya caught behind, bringing the end of the day's play. With the pacers doing the bulk of the job, only 80.5 overs could be bowled. An unwell Cheteshwar Pujara walking off the field after scoring five off 24 balls put the home team in a spot of bother after Barot (54 off 142) and Jadaia (54 off 92) played themselves in. The India pacer Barot had fever due to throat infection but will bat on the second day, said skipper Jaydev Unadkat. Saurashtra, playing their first final at home, opted to bat in friendly conditions. The Bengal pace attack has delivered all season and the team relied on

hitting the spinner for three consecutive boundaries. Medium pacer Akash Deep provided the second wicket to Bengal when he removed a well-set Barot with a ball that pitched around off stump and straightened, taking a faint edge to Wriddhiman Saha. Jadaia and centurion of the semi-final against Gujarat, Arpit Vasavada (29 not out) took Saurashtra to 155 for two in 61 overs. Bengal pacers lifted their game in the final session with Akash Deep casting Jadaia with a sharp incoming ball soon after the batsman completed his second half century of the season. Two overs later, Porel trapped Saurashtra's leading run-getter Sheldon Jackson who had got going with two cover drives off Kumar's tempting half-volleys. Kumar was guilty of offering too many freebies to the rivals. Jackson's fall finally freed Pujara in the middle but he walked off the field looking unwell, having consumed 24 balls. — PTI

BRIEF SCORES
Saurashtra 206/5 in 80.5 overs (Avi Barot 54, Vishwaraj Jadaia 54, Arpit Vasavada 29 not out; Akash Deep 3/41) vs Bengal. Desai was dropped twice while Barot got one life. Bengal got their first wicket in the third over after lunch when Desai, surprised by the extra bounce generated by left-arm spinner Shabbaz Ahmed, pushed it straight into the hands of the silly-point batsman. Barot and Desai were 82 for one in the 38th over. Though there was assis-

Fans likely to be kept at bay during South Africa ODI series

New Delhi, March 9: The cricket crazy fans love getting up close and personal with star cricketers, something that might not be possible in the wake of rising Coronavirus cases in India. Currently, 49 people have been tested positive for COVID 19 in India with a sizeable number being Italian tourists. It could well start with the upcoming ODI series against South Africa where the likes of Quinton de Kock and Faf du Plessis have been briefed about health safety measures, including restrictions on fan interaction, "selfies", etc. But it will not be restricted to the South Africa series alone and the cash-rich Indian Premier League, starting March 29, could also have some strict health-related guidelines which will bar a cluster of fans from engaging with players, trying to shake hands or come close for a selfie. Players have been briefed on preventive measures while they are travelling overseas. These measures cover a variety of protocols to follow for the safety of both themselves and those around them. Fan interaction, selfies and pictures were included in the brief, a source close to the South African team management said on condition of anonymity. There has been specific health advisory on avoiding large gatherings and the South African team's medical unit and their security officers are expected to take appropriate measures to ensure that the players don't get Lanka series. — PTI

Right time for women's IPL: Gavaskar

New Delhi, March 9: The legendary Sunil Gavaskar feels that it is appropriate to set the ball rolling for a full-fledged Women's Indian Premier League to unearth more talented players after the national team was crowned the 2017 World Cup final by defending champions Australia. First-time finalists India were beaten by 35 runs but the unbeaten run before that is an indicator that things are moving in the right direction, said Gavaskar. "To Sourav Ganguly and the BCCI, I would like to say maybe next year, look at having a women's IPL because that will unearth a lot more talent. There is already a lot of talent which we see and that will come to the fore with this performance of this Indian team throughout this tournament," he told India Today. Gavaskar said a WIPL should be on cards even if there's isn't enough Indian talent to have an eight-team IPL. "Even if there are not 8 teams, a women's IPL will start with winning a lot more trophies."

POONAM IS LONE INDIAN IN ICC TEAM OF TOURNAMENT

Dubai, March 9: Leg-spinner Poonam Yadav was the lone Indian to make the ICC Women's T20 playing XI of the World Cup, which featured teenage sensation Shafali Verma as the 12th player and was dominated by Australia. Five players from Australia made the side of the tournament. Alyssa Healy, Beth Mooney, Meg Lanning, Jess Jonassen and Megan Schutt were included along with four England players. Healy and Mooney did quite a bit of damage with the bat and the two reprised their roles as openers in the final XI. — PTI

Dhoni future rests on his show in IPL

Rajkot, March 9: The addition of two new members, including the chairman, in the national selection committee has not changed the panel's stance on MS Dhoni, who will "have to perform" in the upcoming IPL to be considered for T20 World Cup selection, a top BCCI official told. The Sunil Joshi-led selection panel met for the first time in Ahmedabad on Sunday to pick a rather "straightforward" squad for the three ODIs against South Africa beginning in Dharamsala on March 12. Pit-again Hardik Pandya, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Shikhar Dhawan made their way back into the side. Joshi's predecessor MSK Prasad had made it clear that the team has moved on from Dhoni and he has to first play to be considered for selection. Dhoni, who has not played since the World Cup semi-final loss to New Zealand in July, will be making his highly awaited comeback in the IPL beginning March 29. "It was a pretty straightforward selection meeting and since Dhoni was obviously not in the reckoning this time (for South Africa series), there was no formal talk about his future," a BCCI source told. "He will be back in the reckoning only if he has a good IPL. And why only him, there are so many senior and young players who will play in the IPL. If they do well, they are ought to be considered too. So, you could see some surprise inclusions," he said. The T20 World Cup will be played in Australia in October-November and the games India play after the IPL leading up to the mega event will also be a factor in the final squad selection. "But the performance in the IPL could be the clincher," the source added. Head coach Ravi Shastri has hinted that Dhoni could be back after a good IPL, but his future remains a subject of intense speculation as he has not played a game in more than seven months. With his hair in July, will be making his highly awaited comeback in the IPL beginning March 29. "It was a pretty straightforward selection meeting and since Dhoni was obviously not in the reckoning this time (for South Africa series), there was no formal talk about his future," a BCCI source told. — PTI



CSK skipper M.S. Dhoni during a training session at M.A. Chidambaram Stadium on Monday. — TWITTER

SA PLAYERS MAY NOT SHAKE HANDS

AUSTRALIANS ARE NOT SO WORRIED
Australia's cricketers will continue to shake hands, Coach Justin Langer said Monday, despite England enforcing a strict no-contact policy to prevent spread of the coronavirus. Australia's three-

TOP-5 TEAMS

Rank	Team	Points
1	Australia	291
2	England	278
3	New Zealand	271
4	India	265
5	South Africa	246

BATTING (TOP-5)

Rank	Player	AUS	Pts
1	Beth Mooney	AUS	762
2	Suzie Bates	NZ	750
3	Shafali Verma	IND	744
4	Sophie Devine	NZ	742
5	Alyssa Healy	AUS	714

BOWLING (TOP-5)

Rank	Player	ENG	Pts
1	Sophie Ecclestone	ENG	779
2	Megan Schutt	AUS	763
3	Shabnim Ismail	SA	743
4	Amelia Kerr	NZ	740
5	Jess Jonassen	AUS	728

Dubai, March 9: Teenage Indian batting sensation Shafali Verma on Monday lost the top spot in the ICC women's T20 international rankings as she slipped to third after managing only two runs in the World Cup final against Australia in Melbourne.

The 16-year-old Shafali (74 points) had grabbed the top spot at the end of the league stage of the just-concluded women's T20 World Cup in Australia which she won for an unprecedented fifth time. Australia opener Beth Mooney, who hit 78 not out in the final on Sunday, jumped two spots to number one with 782 points to her kitty. Mooney scored 259 runs at an average of 64 in six innings, the highest aggregate by anyone at a single event in the competition and was named Player of the Tournament. She has topped the rankings for the first time in her career. Rodriguez remained static on ninth. Alyssa Healy has risen two slots to fifth position after a blistering 39-ball 75 in the final against India while South Africa's Laura Wolvaardt has advanced 13 slots to reach a career-best 31st place after a valiant 27-ball 41 in their semifinal against Australia. — PTI

VIRUS EFFECT

Juve get top spot in empty stadium

Milan: Aaron Ramsey starred as Juventus beat title rivals Inter Milan 2-0 on Sunday to reclaim top spot in the Italian league in a game played behind closed doors due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Juventus' game against Inter in Turin did go ahead, although in an empty Allianz Stadium, with the defending champions taking a one-point lead over Lazio. Juve coach Maurizio Sarri told Sky Sport Italia that he "doesn't know what is the right thing to do" when it comes to the thorny question of cancelling matches. "What have to I ask is whether it's right to take away two hours of enjoyment from those who are stuck indoors or if there really is a serious risk for the players and staff," said the 61-year-old.

INDIAN WELLS TENNIS POSTPONED

The ATP and WTA tennis tournament in Indian Wells, California, has been cancelled over fears surrounding the coronavirus outbreak, making it the first major sports event in the US to be scrubbed due to health concerns.

The tournament, one of the biggest outside the four tennis Grand Slams, was cancelled just days before it was due to begin.

OLYMPIC FLAME CEREMONY CLOSED TO PUBLIC

In Athens, the Olympic Flame lighting ceremony for this summer's Tokyo Games will be held without spectators due to the coronavirus outbreak, the Greek Olympic Committee said. The committee said that only 100 accredited guests from the International Olympic Committee and Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee will be allowed to attend Thursday's event in Olympia, where the ancient Games were held.

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RED-HOT DEVILS

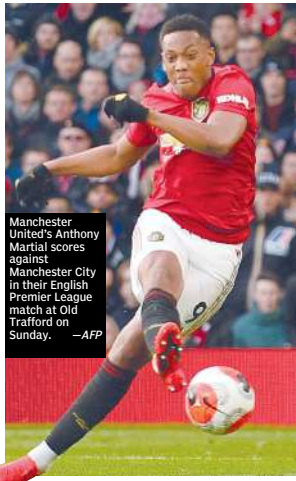
Man U complete derby double with 2-0 win

Manchester, March 9: Manchester United completed a first Premier League double over Manchester City for 10 years as Anthony Martial and Scott McTominay punished two errors from visiting goalkeeper Ederson for a 2-0 win at Old Trafford on Sunday.

Victory keeps United hot on the heels of Chelsea for a top-four finish in the Premier League just three points behind the Blues in fifth place, which could be good enough for Champions League football next season. Outgoing English champions City are banned from European football for the next two years pending an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport, and on this display seem to already be concentrating on completing a treble of cup competitions this season.

A seventh league defeat of the campaign for City means Liverpool are now just a maximum of two wins away from claiming a first league title in 30 years.

City dominated possession early on, but lacked their normal potency without the injured Kevin De Bruyne as United created the better chances on



Manchester United's Anthony Martial scores against Manchester City in their English Premier League match at Old Trafford on Sunday. —AFP

the counter-attack. The January signing of Bruno Fernandes has been key to United's 10-game unbeaten run and the Portuguese's first

THE RESULT

Manchester United 2
(Martial 30, McTominay 90+6)
Manchester City 0

impact in the game put Daniel James through, but the Welshman fired too close to Ederson.

Martial also allowed the Brazilian to make a comfortable save with a clear sight of goal after out-muscling Fernandinho. City's defensive deficiencies have allowed Liverpool to streak 25 points clear. But it was an uncharacteristic error from Ederson that gifted United the lead.

Fernandes was the creator again with a scooped free-kick to pick out the Frenchman and his shot squeezed under Ederson's right hand and crept in at the near post.

VAR overlooks penalty shout Confidence was now flowing through United as Fernandes headed wide at the end of an excellent team move before Fred was controversially booked for diving when he appeared to have been taken down inside the

area by Nicolas Otamendi. United fans were frustrated VAR did not intervene on that occasion and when it did early in the second half, City were nearly the beneficiaries.

Sergio Agüero was flagged offside long before he fired past David de Gea, but the Argentine was only fractionally off when the move was reviewed.

Moments later Ederson escaped gifting another goal as a routine backpass rolled under his foot and the former Benfica stopper needed to produce a last-ditch tackle on Martial to deny United breathing space.

City then slowly started to up the pressure. Phil Foden's long-range drive forced De Gea into a fingertip save.

Rahem Sterling then could not stretch to get a good connection on Riyad Mahrez's cross and De Gea got down well to deny Gabriel Jesus.

However, where United may have buckled earlier in the season, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men held firm to record a third win in four meetings with City this season.

McTominay sealed the three points deep into stoppage time. —AFP

OLYMPIC | QUALIFIER



M.C. Mary Kom celebrates after her 5-0 win over Irish Magno of Philippines on Monday.

Magnificent Mary books Tokyo ticket

Amman (Jordan), March 9: Six-time world champion M.C. Mary Kom (51kg) and world number one Amit Panghal (52kg) qualified for the Olympic Games, while Manish Kaushik (63kg) remained in the hunt for a Tokyo ticket despite losing his quarterfinal bout in the Asia/Oceania qualifiers here on Monday.

Second-seeded Mary Kom notched up a comfortable 5-0 win over Philippines' Irish Magno in her quarterfinal bout for a ticket to her second Olympic Games. She won a bronze in the 2012 London Olympics when she was first introduced at the showpiece.

The 37-year-old will square off against China's Yuan Chang in the semifinals. Chang is a former Youth Olympics champion. Earlier, world silver-medallist and top seed Panghal edged out familiar foe Carlo Paalam of

Philippines in a 4-1 split verdict to be assured of his maiden Olympic appearance and a medal at the qualifiers.

"I dedicate my Olympic quota to my uncle Raj Narayan, it's his birthday and he is someone who gives me a lot of courage," said Panghal after his bout.

World bronze-winner and Commonwealth Games silver-medallist Kaushik, however, lost 3-3 to third seed Chinzorig Baatarsukh of Mongolia after an intense battle but is not out of contention for an Olympic berth just yet.

Kaushik has to win the box-off between losing quarterfinalists as the top six boxers will claim Tokyo tickets in the 63kg category.

He will face Australia's Commonwealth Games champion Harrison Garside in the box-off. The two clashed in the CWG final in 2018 with Garside ending up on the winning side. —PTI

Tottenham look for big leap at Leipzig

London, March 9: Tottenham travel to Leipzig on Tuesday needing to overturn a 0-1 first leg deficit to prevent adding an early Champions League exit to a season spiralling out of control.

Saturday's 1-1 draw at Burnley stopped the rot of four consecutive defeats in all competitions that has seen Jose Mourinho's men

fall behind in the race for a top four finish in the Premier League and eliminated from the FA Cup by bottom-of-the-table Norwich.

Failure to fight back in Germany will also halt the progress Spurs have made in the Champions League in recent years.

Under Mauricio Pochettino, Tottenham went further in the competi-

tion for each of the past three seasons, culminating in a rollercoaster run to the final last season.

Rather than using defeat in Madrid to Liverpool last June as a springboard to continue competing with the European elite, Spurs have unravelled.

Pochettino was sacked just three months into this season after five-and-a-half years in charge that

transformed the club's fortunes. The Portuguese has 25 trophies to his name, but the last of them came three years ago and recent spells at Chelsea and Manchester United did little to suggest he was the man to take Spurs forward. So it has proved with Mourinho's negativity contributing to the gloom around the club. —AFP

Live on TV

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

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