

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
HYDERABAD | SUNDAY | 15 MARCH 2020

## WEATHER

Max: 34.4°C  
Min: 21.7°C  
RH: 48%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Max/Min temperature 35/21°C

## ASTROGUIDE

Vikari; Uttarayana  
Tithi: Phalguna Bahula Saptami till 3.21 am (Monday)  
Star: Anuradha till 11.27 am  
Varjyam: 5 pm to 6.35 pm  
Durmuhurtam: 4.47 pm to 5.34 pm  
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm  
HJRI CALENDAR  
Rajjab 19,1441 AH  
PRAYERS  
Fajar: 5.24 am  
Zohar: 12.35 pm  
Asar: 4.45 pm  
Maghrib: 6.31 pm  
Isha: 7.39 pm  
SUNSET TODAY 6.26 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.23 AM  
MOONRISE NA  
MOONSET TODAY 10.53 AM

## COUNTER POINT



Let's shift rebel MLAs to the most secured place... Wuhan, China!

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Tollywood releases to be hit by coronavirus

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Shivraj wants MP floor test before Session

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HOW SMART DEVICES ARE OUTSMARTING CROOKS

## TAPLOID ANUSHKA ON LOVE, LIFE AND PRABHAS

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Vol. 83 No. 74 Established 1938 | 40 PAGES PLUS A FREE COPY OF 16-PAGE SUNDAY CHRONICLE | ₹7.00

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Concerned with the rising cases across the country, the home ministry said that grants earmarked under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) can be utilised to procure essential equipment and take measures to quarantine people in order to combat the coronavirus outbreak.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on

Saturday took to Twitter to share the health ministry's guidelines on home quarantine. Educational institutions in several states, meanwhile, suspended classes from a week to till further order.

The Union Home Ministry has issued a two-page directive to all states, specifying list of items eligible for SDRF and norms of assistance.

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An employee in protective gear walks past a dinosaur relief as he prepares to spray disinfectant at Jaya Ancol Dream Park, closed for public in the wake of coronavirus outbreak in Jakarta, Indonesia on Saturday. — AP

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Meanwhile, the man reached Mancherial on March 2 and went to the government hospital with complaints of fever, cough and cold. After an initial check-up he was directed to Gandhi Hospital.

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POWER SHUTDOWN

**Bansilalpet sub-station**  
11 am to 1 pm  
Old Jalkhana Feeder  
Hill Street, Anjaliah Complex,  
Old Gasmandi, Barladodi,  
Monda Market, City Light  
Hote, X Roads, RP Road.

**Monda Market sub-station**  
12 noon to 1 pm  
Gurudwar Feeder  
Secunderabad Gurudwara,  
Second Bazaar, Passport  
Office, Clock Tower Main  
Road, Church Road,  
Rezimental Bazaar, Hospitals  
Secunderabad.

SHORT TAKES

GOVT PREPARED TO FIGHT COVID, SAYS KISHAN

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Secunderabad MP and MoS Home Affairs Kishan Reddy visited the ESI Medical College here on Saturday to review the performance of the hospital. He expressed pleasure upon the achievement of the Medical College and Hospital and said, "I am very happy that a hospital in my constituency has received the honour of being the Best Super Speciality Hospital. We will do everything to provide the best facilities to ESI Medical College and Hospital."

The minister also announced the opening of a new OPD building, along with new staff quarters for the hospital at a cost of ₹280 crore. A 1,000 will also be provided. "We want to reach every village, every individual in the state with low cost yet equally effective medicines," Mr Reddy added.

Addressing the concerns on the 2 new Covid-19 positive cases in state, he said the Centre in partnership with the states is taking steps to control the situation like no other country.

"India is the only country that is prepared better than most western countries. The Modi government has taken precautionary measures from the beginning and we are the only country to be sending teams of doctors to various countries to test Indian citizens stranded there and issue them a safety certificate after specific tests, to travel back," said Mr Kishan Reddy.

GOVT RESTORES DIAGNOSTIC LAB SIGNATORY STATUS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

A professional with MSc degree in Medical Microbiology or Medical Biochemistry with three years of laboratory experience can become authorized signatory in a diagnostic laboratory for tests, according to a notification issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

A Ph.D. in medical microbiology or medical biochemistry shall be required for medium and advanced laboratories. This notification came after the Board of Governors during a super-session of Medical Council of India gave its decision regarding the role of authorized signatory to the ministry.

Dr. Sridhar Rao, President, National M. Sc Medical Teachers' Association said, "It was indeed a long battle to win back our rights. Signing authority was snatched away from us and many of our members lost jobs or were demoted at workplace and faced lot of hardships. Clinical scientists signing laboratory reports is practiced all over the world, including in the US, the UK, European Union, West Asia countries, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Nepal and others."

TB patients flee as Covid suspects arrive

Vikarabad TB hospital, Haritha Resorts to quarantine 200 patients with Covid-19 symptoms from the state

KANIZA GARARI | DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Six tuberculosis patients left Vikarabad TB hospital on Saturday morning against medical advice, as suspected Covid-19 patients are being moved to this hospital. Two hundred suspected cases are to be moved to the hospital and to Haritha Resorts in the state.

The 29 patients who are undergoing treatment for TB in the hospital are worried as the hectic activity of cleaning continues to accommodate the new patients. Government officials have visited the hospital to take stock of the situation and the isolation units that have been set up.

Paramedical staff is upset at not being provided sanitisers and masks. Nor have they been given the training and protocols to be followed in dealing with suspected coronavirus patients.

According to sources, senior pulmonologists and extra staff will be sent here from other government hospitals. Wards are being readied here as Gandhi Hospital cannot take the extra load.

The hospital is a multi-speciality hospital and has a large number of medical students which makes it a high risk zone. The government has decided that Gandhi Hospital will continue to be the testing centre and admit cases but as the numbers increase, the Vikarabad hospital will be used as well.

CINEMA HALLS, BARS, SHUT FOR ONE WEEK

From Page 1

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao announced closure of cinema halls, bars and restaurants, and membership clubs for one week. A further decision will be taken a week later after reviewing the situation.

Appealing to people not to panic, the chief minister said that these steps are precautionary to contain the spread of Covid-19.

The state government had readied 1020 isolation beds, 321 intensive care units and 240 ventilators in the state for suspected patients, the chief minister said.

Four locations have been identified for quarantine. A task force comprising medical and health, panchayat raj, forest and police department officers has been constituted to monitor the situation and make periodic review for the Chief Secretary.

KCR warned media houses and social media users of serious consequences for indulging in false news and asked the media to carry news reports only after confirmation from the health department.

● The Telangana State government had readied 1020 isolation beds, 321 intensive care units and 240 ventilators in the state for suspected patients, Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao said.



Medics interact with a patient at a help desk set up in view of Coronavirus pandemic at Gandhi Hospital on Saturday.

- PTI

Govt prepared to tackle Covid: KCR

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Saturday told the State Assembly that the state government was fully prepared to tackle the situation and has been making necessary arrangements for the past 11 days since the first case of Covid-19 was reported.

He asserted that the state government was taking all necessary steps to prevent the spread of the virus in the state and people should not panic. He told members that a patient with a travel history to Italy had tested positive for Covid-19. Two more persons who had travelled to Italy are also suspected to be Covid-

19 positive. With the second case of Corona virus (Covid-19) reported in Hyderabad, the Chief Minister convened a high level meeting with senior officials of the department concerned in the Assembly Committee Hall.

Before the meeting he told the House that he has called for an urgent Cabinet meeting on Saturday evening to initiate preventive measures to curtail spread of the disease. He said that Delhi and Karnataka have already initiated measures such as temporary shutdown of crowded places such as cinema halls, malls and educational institutions to contain the spread of the virus and the Cabinet will discuss preventive measures along those lines and finalise a course of action.

He told the House that a team of 200 medical staff is on duty at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport along with Central government teams for round-the-clock monitoring of arriving passengers with history of foreign travel.

"If any suspected cases are found, they are being immediately quarantined. We have already prepared isolated locations like Dhulapally Forest Academy and Haritha Resorts at Vikarabad, among others, to keep the suspected cases, and we have established isolation wards in several government and private hospitals to treat positive cases," the

CM told the House.

There are 150 rooms in the Dhulapally Forest Academy and 30 suites in Haritha Resorts.

He requested the Speaker to take the views of the members of the House with regard to preventive steps to stall the spread of the virus in the state. Mr Rao took serious exception to the Congress Legislature Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka saying that the state and central governments had not taken effective preventive measures.

Mr Vikramarka had also referred to the statement the Chief Minister had made earlier in the House that a paracetamol tablet will be enough to cure Covid-19 patients and that

the virus will not survive in temperatures of more than 27 degrees celsius. The Chief Minister said that the Centre has been taking effective steps and monitoring the situation and issuing instructions from time to time to all state governments and the Telangana government has been closely monitoring the situation for the past 11 days.

He advised the Congress member "not to make such irresponsible statements just because you can."

Later the Chief Minister chaired the high level meeting to examine precautionary measures being taken across the world and replicate them to give confidence to people in the state.

Covid fear worries Swiggy, Zomato delivery boys

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Swiggy and Zomato delivery executives are wary of working during the current Covid-19 outbreak.

While both companies have announced multiple precautionary measures, executives are nonetheless worried about being at high risk of contracting the virus.

A few days ago, Swiggy, in a statement, announced that it would be training its executives on respiratory hygiene and other matters.

A representative of the company said, "We have taught our delivery partners to notice symptoms. If they report any, they will be referred to a medical professional for a free consultation." Additionally, the statement said restaurants have been briefed about maintaining hygiene.

● A FEW days ago, Swiggy, in a statement, announced that it would be training its executives on respiratory hygiene and other matters.

● A DELIVERY executive for one of these companies, however, said he was not satisfied with the response. "No sanitisers or masks are being provided to us. Many executives don't even know about the virus," he said.

Zomato too has announced several measures. Deepinder Goyal, founder of the company, announced that it will focus on 'contactless delivery,' wherein executives could place food out-

side a customer's door instead of directly handing it to them.

Also, he said that executives would be supported financially in case they are diagnosed with Covid-19.

A delivery executive for one of these companies, however, said he was not satisfied with the response. "No sanitisers or masks are being provided to us. In fact, many executives don't even know about the virus," he said. Also, he added, most restaurants he was visiting through the day were not practicing better hygiene standards than usual.

"Most chefs and waiters are not listening to us. There is nothing we can do to reduce our risk," he said.

Another executive said his manager was still unaware of the prescribed precautionary measures.

Work out at home, advise gym centres

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

With reports of novel coronavirus ruling the roost in the city, several gyms and fitness centres here in the city have informed their members that they workout from home using online video modules.

The entities have referred to the directives issued by certain state governments that the fitness centres be closed with immediate effect as a precautionary measure to prevent the Coronavirus.

In a mail to its members, a nationwide fitness centre said: "Your health is important to us. In light of the outbreak of coronavirus, we have implemented several precautions to ensure your safety. Yesterday, governments of several states issued directives that fitness centres be closed

● FOR THOSE who are insistent on their workout regimen, these gyms and fitness centres have asked people to join live classes online, where the trainer would webcast the workout for people to be followed at home.

with immediate effect. While we have already done the needful for those cities, we have decided to temporarily stop all classes across the rest of the country starting immediately until further notice as an additional precautionary measure."

For those who are insistent on their workout regimen, these gyms and fitness centres have asked people to join live classes online, where the trainer would webcast the workout for people to be followed at home.

FOREIGN RETURNEES POSE VIRUS RISK TO AP

DC CORRESPONDENTS  
VIJAYAWADA, NELLORE, KADAPA, MARCH 14

The situation in Andhra Pradesh is turning grim with the list of passengers returning from Covid-19 affected countries increasing every day.

The Central government on Saturday furnished state government authorities with fresh information of 2,000 travellers entering different parts of Andhra Pradesh. This is in addition to the 1,600 passengers whose identification process is on.

Official sources told Deccan Chronicle that so far 800 people have been contacted and put under observation.

"The situation as of now is under control but we are concerned because the possible threat is widening," a senior health official said. The number of people getting hospitalised is increasing though only one positive case has been identified - in Nellore district. A 40-year-old woman who recently came from Kuwait was admitted to hospital with a severe cough, but the Tirupati test facility has reported her negative for the virus.

Authorities are calling people on phone who have been in contact with suspected cases. Health officials are also literally going door to door to identify people with cold and cough.

As yet there is no shutdown of public places as in Hyderabad as elections are ongoing till the end of this month.

A virus testing facility has been set up in Vijayawada in addition to the one in Tirupati and two more facilities, one of them in Kakinada, are to be set up.

Health officials expressed reservations about the efficacy of thermal screening at airports. The Nellore youth who tested positive was cleared at the thermal screening and developed symptoms later. "It is more important for the returnees to maintain home isolation voluntarily," an official said. In Nellore district, samples of a third suspected case turned out to be negative on Friday much to the relief of district authorities and medical and health department officials.

The suspected case is a 40-year-old woman from Nellore City who returned from Kuwait a few days ago.

The woman was shifted to the Government General Hospital in Nellore after a survey team tracing people who had returned from abroad noticed that she was coughing continuously.

Her sample was sent to SVIMS, Tirupati on Friday.

Joint Collector Dr V Vinod Kumar told this newspaper that her samples have tested negative for Covid-19.

Covid affects import of dry fruits

ADITYA CHUNDURU | DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Come the festive season of Ramzan next month, Hyderabadis might not be able to break their fasts with dates. Multiple wholesalers and retailers in the city said they are unable to import dry fruits from overseas.

Shipments of Kimia dates, one of the most popular kind, grown in Iran, have completely stopped coming to the city. Other import-dependent products such as cashews and almonds are also becoming hard to come by.

Sohanlal, a major wholesaler from Begum Bazaar, said business has been affected in a big way. "All our incoming shipments are blocked. In December, one of

our employees visited Iran to place an order for dates. The shipment is ready now, but it is stuck at a port there. No transporter is willing to bring it to India," he said.

He said that buyers too have shrunk. "A few months ago, Chinese and American buyers would place massive orders with us. Now, none of them are active. I was able to sell five tonnes of almonds a month, now I have sold just one tonne," he said.

The Covid-19 outbreak has resulted in losses of over ₹50 lakh to his business, he added.

Vijay, of Shivram Peshawari and Bros, one of Hyderabad's oldest wholesalers, said the current situation is unprecedented. "There are a lot of sudden developments. We have very

● SHIPMENTS OF Kimia dates, one of the most popular kind, grown in Iran, have completely stopped coming to the city. Other import-dependent products such as cashews and almonds are also becoming hard to come by.

● The Covid-19 outbreak has resulted in losses of over ₹50 lakh to his business, a prominent businessman said.

little idea of what can be expected. We have never dealt with such fluctuations in prices before," he said. While adding that it was

too early to say what next month would look like, he said imports of pistachios, almonds, dates and even cashews have been affected. "For instance, India imports most of its almonds from the USA. Right now, we are not getting much of it, and what we do get is not of good quality," he said. The drop in the rupee's value compared to the dollar too has affected imports, he said.

Both Sohanlal and Vijay, along with several other dry fruit retailers and wholesalers in the city, said that even day-to-day sales have been affected.

Vijay said, "Our store in Madhapur is seeing at least 30-40 per cent drop in visitors. People seem to be wary of stepping out of their homes," he said.

US puts visa curbs till April 15

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Starting 5.30 pm on March 14, all existing visas have been suspended until April 15, 2020, except for diplomatic, official, United Nations (UN) or international organisations, employment, and project visas, the US Embassy in India announced on Saturday.

Indian citizens are asked to avoid non-essential travel abroad, particularly to China, Italy, Iran, Republic of Korea, Japan, France, Spain, and Germany.

Indian nationals presently abroad are advised to avoid non-essential travel and could be quarantined for a peri-

od of 14 days on their arrival in India,' it said.

As of March 13, 2020, India had reported 75 confirmed cases of the novel Coronavirus Covid-19, and one death. Of the 75 cases, 58 cases are Indian nationals and 17 are foreign nationals.

Visa-free travel facility granted to OCI (overseas citizen of India) card holders is kept in abeyance till April 15, 2020.

However, OCI card holders already in India can stay in India as long as they want.

Visas of all foreigners already in India remain valid and they may contact the nearest FRRO/FRO through e-FRRO module for extension/conversion etc. of

their visa or grant of any consular service, if they choose to do so.

Any foreign national who intends to travel to India for compelling reason may contact the nearest Indian Mission.

In addition to visa restrictions already in place, passengers travelling from /having visited Italy or Republic of Korea and desirous of entering India will need certificate of having tested negative for Covid-19 from the designated laboratories authorised by the health authorities of these countries.

This is in enforcement since 0000 hrs of 10th March, 2020 and is a temporary measure till cases of COVID-19 subside.

● INDIAN NATIONALS presently abroad are advised to avoid non-essential travel and could be quarantined for a period of 14 days on their arrival in India,' the statement said.

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# Covid-19 throws film industry into a tizzy

## In the wake of coronavirus, state prohibits movie screenings and limits public gatherings

ADITYA CHUNDURU | DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

The Telugu film industry is in for a tough time because of the Covid-19 outbreak. The Telangana state government on Saturday evening announced that cinema halls and other public gatherings have been prohibited. Insiders, including producers and multiplex owners, said the move, while necessary, would have long-standing ramifications for the industry.

Even before the government had announced the measure, the industry had started feeling the jitters. In a major development, producer Dil Raju's Sri Venkateswara Creations announced that it would be indefinitely postponing the release of V, featuring Nani and Aditi Rao Hydari. It was

scheduled to release on March 25. Nani's extremely active community of "fans" was devastated by the development. A member of one fan group on Facebook said he would have watched the movie if it were released now, even at the risk of contracting the virus.

A source close to Raju said the production house didn't have a choice. "We have been noticing the gradual drop in footfalls across theatres in the Telugu states. People are simply not coming because of Covid-19. It made no sense for us to release such a big-budget movie right now. For a movie like this to be profitable, we need everyone to see it, not just the die-hard fans. Also, since we don't know when the situation will get better, we have not anno-

unced a new date," he said. The shutdown, sources said, would have a marginally lower impact because of its "lucky" timing.

March is usually a dull time because it is exam season. Things pick up in the last week, when exams get over. That is when the blockbusters are released. A producer said the biggest losers due to the shutdown will be the theatre owners who have leased their properties to "exhibitors."

"It is a peculiar practice in Telugu cinema. Exhibitors are people who buy the right to screen movies and rent theatres to do so. They pay monthly rents to the owners. Now they won't be required to do so. Exhibitors, who are the most powerful people in the industry, will save a great deal. On the other hand, theatre ow-

ners will have to dig into their pockets to sustain their staff," the producer said.

The owner of a multiplex mall complex from Attapur said the situation was indeed bad. His multiplex and the shops in the complex had been reporting low footfall since the end of February. "If this shutdown continues for another month, we will have a lot of problems," he said. He, however, noted that some malls in the IT corridor areas such as Madhapur and Kondapur were still experiencing brisk business due to the 'IT crowd'. "These malls will experience the biggest losses now. IT employees were still happy to watch movies, now they won't have the opportunity," he said.

Speaking to Deccan Chronicle in the afternoon, before the announcement

was made, D. Suresh Babu of Suresh Productions, one of the largest production companies in the Telugu film industry, termed the situation as "pure chaos". But he added that the theatre shutdown would become just another news cycle, indicating that there were more important things going on.

K.L. Damodara Prasad, producer and secretary of the Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce (TFCC), termed the Covid-19 situation a "natural calamity". "It is too early to assess the monetary losses. However, it is clear that there will be many effects. Releases of movies are being delayed. Shoots are being cancelled, especially those planned overseas because of travel restrictions," he said.

It is learnt that except for

actor Prabhas and actress Pooja Hegde, who are in Georgia, most actors and production houses have cancelled their overseas shoots. An insider said they will be forced to make logistical changes and shoot for these portions within India. The source close to Dil Raju said, "Most productions will wait for a few days for improvement. If this doesn't happen, they will shoot in India itself. Delaying shoots, and thereby releases, is not practical after a point."

## VIRUS RUMOUR-MONGERS WILL BE JAILED: TOP COP

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

City Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar has cautioned people against spreading false news and ones that are spreading fear in a society. He warned that those found guilty of such nuisance and those spreading fear in the name of Covid-19 would be liable for punishment under NDMA Act section 54.1. Punishment can be up to one year imprisonment and fine, he said.

## SCR TO MAINTAIN AC COACHES TEMPERATURE AT 23-25°C

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

The South Central Railways (SCR) on Saturday announced that as part its precautions against the dreaded Covid-19 it would not be supplying woolen blankets in its A/C coaches by default. Travellers would have to ask for them if they need, until April 15. Bedsheets, pillows and covers would be supplied as usual. Also, temperatures in these coaches would be maintained between 23 and 25 degrees.

## COVID-19 HITS GHMC SURVEYS, PROPERTY TAX COLLECTION

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

After the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), recent developments pertaining to the Covid-19 has affected the ongoing surveys conducted by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC).

The civic body has embarked on a geographic information systems (GIS) survey to bring all unassessed property into the property tax ambit. The survey was first halted by citizens under the misconception that the centre with the support of the corporation was gathering the personal information of every individual. People even confronted officials and restrained them from taking pictures.

Upset over the developments, the corporation sought the help of local corporators and asked them to explain to the public the purpose of the GIS survey. It had also managed to complete 38 per cent of the survey.

However, recent developments have forced the civic body to bring the survey to a grinding halt. The corporation asked the field staff to stop the survey after the Covid-19 cases reported in the city. Officials also worry about the annual property tax collection. As of today, they are already falling short of ₹500 crore against the target of ₹1,800 crore.

According to highly placed sources, the corporation divided the Greater Hyderabad area into 340 sections and prepared docket. The corporation has also brought over 12,000 unassessed properties in to the tax net.

Sources said that the recent decision by the corporation to stop the GIS survey would badly hit the ongoing property tax collection and said that it would be herculean task to reach the set target within the 15 days remaining for the end of the financial year.

The corporation till date has collected ₹1,304 crore. With tight deadlines, the civic authorities have knocked the doors of the state government and asked them to amend the GHMC Act in compliance with the new Municipal Act. Officials argue that the new Municipal Act enables the corporation to minimise human interface where the property owners could self-certify their structure and clear property tax bills online.

A senior GHMC official, on condition of anonymity, said, "We have a great opportunity to amend the GHMC Act during the ongoing assembly session. If self-certification is extensively implemented in the civic body, targets could be achieved during the early bird rebate scheme (which offers the tax payer a five per cent rebate)."

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**IN BRIEF**  
**ZOO TO REMAIN SHUT FOR VISITORS**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

In order to prevent the spread of Novel Coronavirus, the Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad, will remain closed for visitors as per instructions of the Telangana State government until further orders.

The zoo registered a large number of visitors in the recent past as several animals, including a pair of Giraffe, has been brought to the park.

The zoo also runs several safari trips where many wild animals such as Asiatic lion, Bengal tiger, sloth bear etc. are housed.

# Frauds post fake Covid files to cheat people

The malicious documents are related to coronavirus

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

The novel coronavirus, that has taken the world by storm, is now being employed by cyber crooks as a means to gather more clicks on their phishing websites or to make unsuspecting customers download malicious files.

Cybersecurity detection technologies have found malicious files disguised as documents related to the newly discovered coronavirus - a virus that has been at the top of media headlines due to its dangerous nature.

As it turns out, a few cybercriminals from the city too have been using this technique to pilfer money from unsuspecting persons in the city. However, no case has been registered as yet.

"Anytime something big happens, cybercriminals are the first to contemplate and figure out

**AVOID DOWNLOADING FILES WITH EXTENSION**

- Worm.VBS.Dinihou.r
- Worm.Python.Agent.c
- UDS: DangerousObject.Multi.Generic
- Trojan.WinLNK.Agent.gg
- Trojan.WinLNK.Agent.ew

- HEUR: Trojan.WinLNK.Agent.gen
- HEUR: Trojan.PDF.Badur.b

**WAYS TO PROTECT ONESELF**

- Avoid suspicious links, promising exclusive content. Refer to official sources for trustworthy and legitimate information.
- Look at the downloaded file extension. Documents and video files should not have either .exe or .lnk formats.

ways to make money out of people. They usually send out mails claiming to be from the World Health Organisation (WHO) or some government body," Pavan Duggal, a cyber law expert, told *Deccan Chronicle*.

According to Kaspersky, a global cybersecurity and anti-

In fact, these files contain a range of threats from Trojans to worms which are capable of destroying, blocking, modifying or copying data, as well as interfering with the operation of computers or computer networks. "These files ultimately lead to phishing links wherein the hacker would demand for some money to release the system," said an expert from Kaspersky. The message in these mails is short and asks readers to open a link within the email or open an attachment for detailed safety measures and whom to contact. Once the reader clicks the link, she is re-directed to a fake website, created to steal the user's details. In case the email attachment is opened, it leads to the automatic installation of a key-logger that can steal and send the activity log of infected computer to the remote cybercriminal.

**1.34 CR AP HOMES TO BE SCREENED**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 14

The Andhra Pradesh government has decided to make use of the volunteers to screen 1.34 crore households to find out if there are any people who have returned from abroad and ascertain if

they carry any Covid-19 symptoms. On shutdown, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will review the situation on Sunday. "There is a need for closing down educational institutions and movie halls and other places of public gathering," a senior CMO official said.

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General public is hereby informed and notified that our client has entered into an agreement with Sri R.RAJAKUMAR, S/o. Sri R. Chandralah, Smt. SANTOSH LAKSHMITHA, W/o. Sri Rajesh Lakshmi, Sri JAYESH GUJA, S/o. Sri Bankalal Guja and Sri ALANANDRAO, S/o. Sri A. Langa Rao, for purchase of the property bearing municipal No. 7-4-107, forming part of survey No. 221, situated at Gagan Pahad village, Rajendranagar mandal, Rangareddy district, admeasuring 3,290 square yards or 2,752 square meters, along with shed, and bounded on North by land in survey No. 220, South by land in survey No. 221, East by land in survey No. 180 and 152 and West by Land in survey No. 221 and common passage/Road and has paid substantial amount of sale consideration

In the event of anybody having any claim or interest in the said property or any objection for said transaction, must approach the undersigned along with all the original documents substantiating the claim or objection within one week from this date and thereafter no claim or objection will be entertained and our client will proceed for completion of registration formalities of the transfer deed.

Mrs. SHYAM SAGRAWAL, BABITA SAGRAWAL, L. Praveen Kumar S. L. Prakash Kumar, Advocates, E.No. 274/193 & 401, R.K. Residency, 28/237, Hyderabad. S.No. 5, Himayath Nagar, Hyderabad - 29. D.No. 15-03-2020. Ph: 91-40-2322700, 966887188

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

We are investigating the title of Sri. Mohd Sirajuddin Ahmed and his GPA Holder Sri Kadeewani Sultana, residents of Hyderabad, Telangana State in relation to the plot situated at Nallagandla Residential Complex, Nallagandla Village, Rangareddy District, Telangana State, bearing the extent and boundaries as described in the schedule hereunder and hereinafter referred to as the "Schedule Property".

NOTICE is hereby given to all persons including any individual, a Hindu Undivided Family, a company, banks, financial institution(s), non-banking financial institution(s), a firm, an association of persons or a body of individuals, whether incorporated or not, lenders and/or creditors, having any objection, claim, right, title and/or interest in respect of the Schedule Property or any part or portion thereof, by way of title, memorandum of understanding, exchange, mortgage, pledge, charge, gift, trust, inheritance, succession, possession, lease, tenancy, maintenance, easement, license, bequest, bequest, share, assignment, decree or order of any court of law, lien, attachment, development rights, right of way, lis pendens, reservation, agreement, FS/FAR consumption, or any liability or commitment or otherwise or demand of any nature whatsoever, to inform the same in writing, supported with the original documents, to the undersigned within a period of 7 (Seven) days from the date of the publication of this notice, failing which, the claim or claims, if any of such person or persons shall be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.

**SCHEDULE PROPERTY**  
All the land admeasuring 258.33 Sq. Yards bearing Plot No. 652 in Category MIF of "Nallagandla Residential Complex" in Survey Nos. 302 to 310, 320 to 322, 324 to 361, 363 to 365, 384, 385, 387 to 391 and 399 situated at Nallagandla Village, Serilingampally Mandal, Rangareddy District, Telangana State and bounded as follows: NORTH: Plot No. 553-MIG; SOUTH: Plot No. 551-MIG; EAST: 9.00 Mts. Wide Road; WEST: Plot No. 545-MIG;

M.V. Pratap Kumar (AP/609/2008) Akhila Janardhan Reddy, Advocates, 3rd Floor, Incoar 9 Building, Above D Mart, Kavuri Hills, Madhapur, Hyd-53. ajr18.mvp@gmail.com Ph: 8978574120

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

We act for our Clients 1. Sri. D. Vijayakrishna, S/o. Late D. Venkatesh, aged 37 years, Occ. Business. R/o. Door No. 8-3-266/S85, Plot No. 85, Sagar Society Beside Bhanap School, Banjara Hills Road No. 2, Hyderabad-500035 and 2. Smt. A. Nagamani, W/o. Mr. A. Nagabrahman, aged 51 years, R/o. Flat No. 502, Sowjanya Arcade, SBI Colony, Srinagar Colony 500073, and issue the following Public Notice:

That No.2 of our Client is the mother of No.1 of our Client. She also have a daughter viz. Smt. Raasi @ Vijayalakshmi, W/o. M. Srinivas, aged 40 years, R/o Flat No. 204, Apamea Senore Valley Villas, Ambedkar Nagar, Film Nagar, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh 500 008. In view of the differences arose with our Clients No.1 & 2. with Mrs. Raasi @ Vijayalakshmi in the line of finances, property and other social commitments and transactions, she on her own has relinquished all her rights in the property of our Clients. Further, she has also given self-declaration that she does not have or possess any such rights which are connected with our Clients as they belong to the same blood. Further she has also relinquished all her rights which are related and acquired by birth or in any other manner for the past, present and future. Smt. Raasi also declared that she will never interfere with our Clients personal or official property issues legally or any other manner and here onwards she completely withdrawn from their society and relationship. She also declared that she don't have any right, claim or interest in the Property of her brother Sri D Vijayakrishna who is the Managing Director of M/s. Kolars Healthcare India Pvt.Ltd.

Hence, the General Public are hereby cautioned that hereafter Smt. Raasi @ Vijayalakshmi, will not have any right, claim or interest upon the Property of our Clients and our Clients are not responsible for her Debts, Responsibilities, Liabilities if any to anybody.

Sd/-  
P.Yasasvi  
For JY Lawyers  
503, Vassee Estates, Beside Big C,  
Above Peter England Building,  
Opp. Big Bazar Road, Ameerpet,  
Hyderabad - 016.  
Email: jy.lawyers999@gmail.com  
Cell: 9000878567



A visitor checks the Head-Mounted Display, a virtual reality device, during the Wings India-2020, at Begumpet Airport on Saturday. — S. SURENDR REDDY

# Covid, a challenge for aviation sector: Puri

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Union minister of civil aviation Hardeep Singh Puri said on Saturday that the current situation arising out of the coronavirus pandemic is challenging, especially for the civil aviation sector.

"It is being personally monitored and directed by the Prime Minister and his office. Within hours of the first evidence becoming available, we started screening passengers coming in from 12 most affected countries. We then increased it to include screening of passengers coming in from any country across the world."

He claimed that "Our airports constitute a

benchmark for how airports should be running across the globe, specially the 30 airports where proper screening is already in place. We have screened 10,876 flights coming in from across the globe, including 11,71,061 passengers. Some 3,225 of these passengers required further screening. I am sure that once people get the right perspective, know where we are, look at the recovering numbers, we will not only overcome this challenge, but will see robust vibrant growth in the civil aviation sector," he said Speaking at "Wings India 2020", an aviation related event being held here.

IT minister K T Rama Rao said: "With respect

to aviation and aerospace, there has been tremendous growth with further room to grow for us. Our focus should be on skill development and MRO (maintenance, repair and overhaul) infrastructure and foreign investment. In order to fuel this, during 'WINGS India 2020' we inaugurated FSTC flight simulator at Shamshabad Airport."

He said the MRO sector has a huge potential for employment generation along with significant investments from overseas.

"We are working together to bring in reforms and policies that will enable us to bring in more employment opportunities for young India," he added.

# Expect doubling effect in 7.5 days

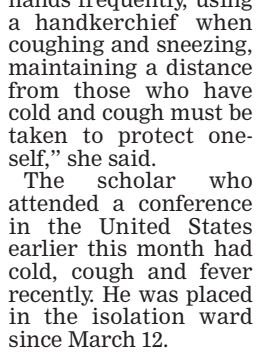
From Page 1

"The doubling effect happens in 7.5 days, based on the epidemiology of the disease," said Dr K.K. Aggarwal of the IMA. "This shows it is still contact transmission only. The doubling effect can happen now. Within a 10-day period we will have a clear picture of the spread and the containment plan's effectiveness."

Private doctors are getting web-counselling on protocol. They are

urged to not allow cases of pneumonia of unknown origin to leave hospitals. Such cases are a part of the disease pattern and must be treated to prevent spread. Private hospitals are seeing a number of pneumonia of unknown origin, but due to a lack of clarity these are being treated - and if there are no results, referred to other hospitals. This is not the appropriate trend in times of a disaster, warned senior doctors.

- January 30: First Covid-19 positive case in India
- March 4 to 13: Rise in cases noted
- March 16: Next wave is expected
- Testing Covid-19 in H1N1 and pneumonia of unknown origin will be an indication of community spread.
- Cases doubling in 1-3 days will be an indication of community spread.



ways to make money out of people. They usually send out mails claiming to be from the World Health Organisation (WHO) or some government body," Pavan Duggal, a cyber law expert, told *Deccan Chronicle*.

**INNA LILLAHI WA INNA ILAIHI RAJEWON MAJLIS-E-ZIYARATH (PURSA)**  
**LATE SYED HUSSAIN BOLOOKI**  
S/o. LATE SYED ALI AKBAR BOLOOKI (CAFÉ BAHAR)  
Date of Birth : 21-03-1952  
Date of Death : 12-03-2020  
Today : Sunday 15th March 2020  
Venue : **DARBAR-E-HUSSAINI**, Purani Haveli, Hyderabad. Time : 4-30pm  
Please kindly recite Suray-e-Fateha for Marhoom  
Inserted by :  
**Wife, Sons, Daughters, Sisters And All Bolooki And Jawkar Family 9866236161**

**IN REMEMBRANCE**  
**POTTURI VENKATESWAR RAO GARU**  
Former Press Academy Chairman  
DOB: 08.02.1934 DOD: 05.03.2020  
Our dearest uncle not only we, the whole world miss you  
With heavy hearts  
P.E. Ravi Kumar  
P. Paul J.S. Kumar  
P. Anil Kumar  
(S/1920/D02019)

**11th DAY CEREMONY**  
**Sammeta Tulasiram**  
DOB: 2-6-1947 DOD: 6-3-2020  
11th Day Ceremony will be held on 16th March 2020, 11:30 AM, at Plot No.34, Rudranagar Colony, Near (Narthaki Theatre), Luthukunta, Secunderabad - 500015.  
Inserted by:  
**Family members**

**SHRADHANJALI**  
**SHRI HIROO GOBINDRAM BHAVNANI**  
(1928-2020)  
Rottarian, Hon. Member of Secunderabad Club and friend to so many attained the Lotus Feet of the Lord on 11-03-2020 surrounded by family.  
(S/1920/D02012)

**SAD DEMISE**  
**Mr. RAJENDER PAMPATI**  
We Regret to Inform you that Mr. Rajender Pampati Passed away at Home (USA) on Wednesday 11th March 2020.  
We Miss You  
**MURUMAMULA FAMILY, KOTHAPALLY FAMILY**

**Thanks Giving Service**  
Surely he shall not be moved forever; the righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance Psalms 112:7  
**Dr G. S. PREM RAJ**  
S/o Late GA Samuel  
DOB: 05-04-1955 DOD: 09-03-2020  
"Your memory a treasure, you are loved beyond words and missed beyond measure, remember the happy time comes celebrate in honour of his life at our Residence Chaitanyapuri at Today at 6:30pm.  
Inserted by: **FAMILY MEMBERS**  
Ph: 9402404528

**SHRADHANJALI**  
**SHRI HIROO GOBINDRAM BHAVNANI**  
(1928-2020)  
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(S/1920/D02012)

**SHRADANJALI**  
**BHAGWANDASJI DARAK**  
S/o. Late Shri Ramkaranjji Darak  
Expired on 10th March 2020  
Your memories will be always in our hearts.  
**M/S. PREMIER AGENCIES**  
# 18, R.R. Towers, Abids, Hyd.1  
Ph : 23202037

**PAGDI CEREMONY**  
**Smt SHOBHA PURSNANI**  
(1928-2020)  
Pagdi Ceremony on 15th March From 5 to 5:30 PM, at Hira Hall, Abids.  
Inserted by:  
**VINOD PURSNANI**  
Contact: 9966475108

**OBITUARY**  
**Late PANASA JAGAN BABU**  
(Retd. D.E., APSEB)  
DOB: 30.7.1943 DOD: 14.3.2020  
"May your soul rest in peace"  
Funeral on 16.3.2020 at Bansilapet at 11.00 a.m.  
Inserted by: **Family Members**  
Ph: 8330934478 / 9989900630

**PAGDI**  
**MOHINI RUPANI**  
W/o Late Jairamdas Rupani  
Pagdi Ceremony will be held for Ladies & Gents Sunday (15.03.2020) at Sindhu Bhavan, Sindhi Colony, P.G. Road, Sec'bad, Between 5.00 - 5.30 p.m.  
From:  
Motiram Rupani, Sham Rupani, Hirai Rupani  
**RUPANI FAMILY & BIRADARI**  
Contact: 9966427193, 9989684006

**OBITUARY**  
**Dr. N. RAVINDRA KUMAR**  
M.B.B.S., M.D.  
Managing Director of Sri Aditya Hospitals (Dammaiguda)  
DOB: 18-Apr-1976 DOD: 09-Mar-2020  
Memorial Service will be held on Sunday, 15th March 2020 at our Hospital Premises at 4:00 pm.  
In Grief: **Wife, Son & Family Members**  
Phone: 9985143304

**FOND REMEMBRANCE**  
"A day never goes, without remembering you"  
**Sri A.K.MENON**  
Sri "A" Grade Loco Pilot & Former President S.C.R.E. Sangh/HYB  
Inserted by: **Wife: A.Durga Devi**  
Sons, Daughter-in-laws & Grand Children  
(S/1920/D01996)

**OBITUARY**  
**Late Mrs. BLANDINA GNANAPRAKASHAM**  
(Retd. Principal Wesley Girls High School, Sec'bad)  
DOB: 20-09-1933 DOD: 15-03-2014  
You remain in our hearts forever  
Inserted by:-  
**Children, Grand Children & Great Grand Children**

**PAGDI**  
**Mrs. D.B. SUSHEELA**  
DOB: 15.03.2019  
Inserted by:  
Grand Son: U. Benny Prasheth Kumar  
Daughter-in-law:  
**Mrs. Shanthi Jyothi Albert**  
(S/1920/D01978)

**4th ANNIVERSARY**  
The Memory of Righteous will be blessing. -Prov.10:7  
**Mrs. MOPARTY LIZAMMA**  
(MADGULA ELIZABETH)  
Gifted to This World 08-05-1934  
Called Back Home 15-03-2016  
Inserted by: Children & Grand Children  
Ph: 040-23513987, 9642961659, 9247310161.

**1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY**  
"Blessed are the dead who are in the Lord Jesus Christ" Rev 14:13  
**BALWINDER KAUR**  
D.O.D 16.03.2012  
Guru Ka Langar on her 8th year 15-03-2020 at our home in Shamshabad from 10 am onwards  
Inserted by:  
Sons: Guru Preeth Singh, Jasjeet Singh  
Ph: 9441930448, 09937505555

**82nd Birthday Remembrance**  
I will dwell in the house of the lord forever Ps 23:6  
**C.A. Chandra Seker** B.A., B.Ed.  
(Retd. Joint Director of Intermediate Education, A.P)  
DOB: 15-3-1938 DOD: 5-10-2010  
Years Everlasting  
Wife - Mrs. Sarojini Chandra Seker  
Sons, Daughters, Sons-in-law, Daughters-in-law and Grandchildren

**10th Death Anniversary**  
Your Blessings will always guide us in every step of our life.  
Inserted by :  
**M.SEEMA - Daughter**  
**M.RAMKUMAR - Son-in-law**

**5th DEATH ANNIVERSARY**  
You were in our lives everyday and you will be in our hearts every minute and you will be in our memories every minute  
4th Anniversary on 27 March 2019  
D-888, Jal Vayu Towers, Elchi Gudda, Lower Tank Bund  
Inserted by:-  
Wife: S.M. Seshu Kumari & Family Members  
Children & Grand Children  
"We Thank you for everything"  
RSVP - 789320891 / 92  
(S/1920/D02014)

**12th Day Ceremony**  
Please join us on 16-03-2020 (Monday) in between 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at our Residence H.No.7-4-941, Street No.6, Near Yashodha Nilayam, Yashodara Nagar, Sagar Road, Hyderabad-74, to pay homage in Loving memory of **Late Sri K. Madhusudan Rao (K.M.Rao)** (Retd. Perfusionist and Advocate) who left for his heavenly abode on 5th March, 2020  
Wife: **Dr. K. SUJATHA**  
**Peoples Sanjivini Hospital, B.N. Reddy Nagar, Sagar Road, Hyderabad-Cell:9502896989**

**SHRADHANJALI**  
**SHRI HIROO GOBINDRAM BHAVNANI**  
"Though you are not with us your memories are always in our hearts."  
Remembered by:  
Kavita & Chandur, Bharti & Murli Vimla & Jammu Advani, Bharti Shah Awan, Puspaha Gupta, Raj Bala Valid, Puspaha Singh, Reetu Aswani  
(S/1920/D02011)

**SHRADHANJALI**  
**SHRI HIROO GOBINDRAM BHAVNANI**  
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(S/1920/D02012)

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**SHRADANJALI**  
**BHAGWANDASJI DARAK**  
S/o. Late Shri Ramkaranjji Darak  
Expired on 10th March 2020  
Your memories will be always in our hearts.  
**M/S. PREMIER AGENCIES**  
# 18, R.R. Towers, Abids, Hyd.1  
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DOB: 30.7.1943 DOD: 14.3.2020  
"May your soul rest in peace"  
Funeral on 16.3.2020 at Bansilapet at 11.00 a.m.  
Inserted by: **Family Members**  
Ph: 8330934478 / 9989900630

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**Children, Grand Children & Great Grand Children**

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**Mrs. MOPARTY LIZAMMA**  
(MADGULA ELIZABETH)  
Gifted to This World 08-05-1934  
Called Back Home 15-03-2016  
Inserted by: Children & Grand Children  
Ph: 040-23513987, 9642961659, 9247310161.

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Inserted by:-  
Wife: S.M. Seshu Kumari & Family Members  
Children & Grand Children  
"We Thank you for everything"  
RSVP - 789320891 / 92  
(S/1920/D02014)



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TELANGANA: MAHABUBNAGAR | KHAMMAM | KARIMNAGAR | WARANGAL | NIZAMABAD  
ANDHRA PRADESH: VIZAG | GAJUWAKA | KAKINADA | RAJAHMUNDRY | VIJAYAWADA | GUNTUR | NELLORE | TIRUPATI

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\*Terms and Conditions Apply: On selected Samsung products only. 75 days offer is under the EMI offer. EMI and approval of EMI is at the sole discretion of the finance company and the decision of the finance company management is final. 0% finance is available on selected models and brands only. 0% finance on mobiles and laptops are only for limited period. Finance offer is not valid for products below Rs.10,000/-. Finance offer is not applicable on Samsung & LG Products. Free gifts are not applicable on Laptops, Mobiles, Home Appliances and Kitchen Appliances. Product images shown here are only for demonstration purpose. Please check the products before purchase. Cashback offer is applicable for Bajaj Finance customers. Offer is applicable on True Bajaj Finserv, on select models and brands not applicable on Sony, Samsung and LG products. \*Free gift is applicable on select brands and products and is not applicable on mobiles and laptops.

For corporate bookings or bulk orders, please email us at corporatesales@bajajelectronics.in



IN BRIEF

2 children drown in Musi river

Hyderabad: Two children, aged nine and 10 years, drowned in a well in Musi river under Bahadurpura police station limits on Saturday evening. Identifying the deceased as Rohan Singh(10) and Akshar(9), police said they were residents of Jiyaguda. At around 4.30 pm, they came to Kasibugga temple on the banks of Musi river. The children tried to catch fish in a well on the rear side of the temple and accidentally fell into the well and died. The police fished out the bodies and sent them to Osmania Hospital mortuary for autopsy. The police have booked a case of suspicious death.

18-year-old girl assaulted

Hyderabad: An 18-year-old girl was assaulted by a miscreant near the Necklace Road Railway Station on Saturday. Punjagutta police said the girl was on her way to work from M.S. Maktha to Somajiguda. When she reached the Necklace Road Railway Station, a person, identified as Pradeep, intercepted and tried to drag her away. He assaulted her when she resisted. The girl managed to escape and complained to her mother. Both of them then approached the Punjagutta police and lodged a complaint. Police has booked a case of voluntarily causing hurt and assaulting a woman with intent to disrobe her. Efforts are on to nab Pradeep.

Chilli thrown at woman for gold

Hyderabad: Two men allegedly snatched a gold chain of a woman, whom they stopped to ask for an address in Mallikarjuna nagar, Malkajigiri. The incident took place on Saturday when the victim Mamidla Lavanya was on the way to pick up her son from Seven Hills High School. According to police, Lavanya, like every day, was heading to school around 11.30 am when two people with helmets came on a two-wheeler and asked for the address of Seven Hills High School. Even as she was explaining that she was going to the same place, the pillion-rider took chilli powder and threw it on her eyes and snatched the gold mangalsutra weighing about 3 tolas and fled. According to Lavanya, she found it difficult to open her eyes. A case has been registered and police have launched a massive hunt to nab the two chain-snatchers.

EMPTY COACH CATCHES FIRE AT MOULA ALI

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

A railway bogie was gutted after fire broke out in the compartment at Moula Ali railway station.

According to the fire officials, the train was parked at Moula Ali railway station. The gutted compartment had three of its doors locked with just one door left open.

"Since there was no electricity supply to any of the compartments, we are suspecting it might be the work of some miscreants," said M. Mallesh who attended the fire call.

The fire officials received a call at around 10.37 am and rushed to the station which is 3.5 km from the fire station. Three fire engines from Malkajigiri, Moula Ali and Cherlapally were rushed to the spot. The train had around 20 compartments and it was bound to go to a workshop for some repair work. "We were able to confine the fire only for one compartment," said Mallesh.

● **TRAIN** was parked at Moula Ali railway station. The gutted compartment had three of its doors locked with just one door left open.

● **THE TRAIN** had around 20 compartments and it was bound to go to a workshop for some repair work

● **FIRE OFFICIALS** rushed to the station 3.5 km from the fire station after getting a call at 10.37 am

Market marvel



The Moazzam Jahi Market which is being renovated, looks resplendent in the evening.

Abetting suicide: Woman charged

GEETA VALABOJU | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

A woman has been charged with abetting the suicide by her daughter. The daughter hanged herself as she was troubled over the continued illicit relationship between her mother and her husband.

According to Meerpet police, Naveen, who works as a caterer, had got into a relationship with a woman Anitha. Soon Anitha asked Naveen to marry her daughter Vandana.

● **POLICE SAID** Naveen continued his sexual relationships with Anitha

Despite marrying her daughter, Naveen continued his sexual relationships with Anitha. This caused anguish to Vandana, who asked her husband to stay away from her mother.

But the relationship between her mother and husband continued. There used to be frequent quarrels between

Naveen and Vandana over the issue. The husband and wife again got into an argument on Friday. A vexed Vandana committed suicide on Saturday by hanging herself with a sari. However, she left a suicide note demanding action against her mother.

Investigating officer and sub-inspector V. Maraiiah said they treated the suicide note as a complaint. Vandana's mother Anitha has been arrested and sent for remand.

Explosion after bin set on fire

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

A minor explosion occurred when a garbage bin was set on fire at Shivarampally in Rajendranagar on Saturday morning.

Speaking to Deccan Chronicle K. Sathaiiah Goud, Mailaredevally inspector of police said, "At around 8:30am on Saturday, a

trash bin was set on fire, resulting in an explosion." After receiving the information, the police reached the spot along with the dog squad and clues team. Preliminary investigation showed that an explosive substance was thrown in the trash. The police are yet to identify which substance that caused the explosion.

2nd Saturday irks lecturers

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Working on a second Saturday appears to be getting on the nerves of staff and lecturers of colleges in the city. This has been in vogue after the State Government revised holidays in October following the extension of Dasara vacation on account of the TSRTC strike.

The decision to hold classes on second Saturdays was taken to ensure that students can make up time lost.

Sajida Khatoun who teaches commerce in a degree college said "We get one extra day-off, which is a second Saturday to rejuvenate for a whole month and this has been taken away from us." While this is so, the real disturbing fact, she said was the very poor turnout by students on second Saturdays.

"There are only five to 10 students in a

class on those days while the average class strength is seventy," she said.

Satish Kumar, a representative of unaided lecturers association wanted to know why teachers and students were being "penalised for the failure of the government."

He also said, "Unaided lecturers are paid somewhere around ₹10,000 to ₹15,000 per month, whereas aided lecturers are paid in excess of ₹1 lakh for the same amount of work. However, workload falls on the unaided staff."

Dr Shobhana. D, principal of Sarojini Naidu Vanitha Mahavidyalaya, said "In a semester, there must be 90 working days. Completion of semester is the main issue and to compensate for days lost, the options are either to extend the number of hours on regular working days or add more working days."

Explosives found inside temple

DURGA PRASAD SUNKU | DC HYDERABAD MARCH 14

Two beer bottles filled with a combustible substance and cloth stuffed into them were found in Nalla Pochamma temple located a few meters away from the Madannapet police station on Saturday morning.

According to S.V.N. Shivaram Sharma, ACP, Santoshnagar, the beer bottles filled with kerosene and a cloth stuffed in them were discovered by temple priest on Saturday morning.

While one bottle filled with kerosene was found on the tin shed of the temple, another broken

bottle was found in the temple compound. At around 4:30 am on Saturday morning, the temple priest noticed a beer bottle and alerted the temple management committee.

Later, the committee members approached the Madannapet police and lodged a complaint with them.

The police have booked a case of defiling a place of worship with intent to insult the religion. After the incident came to light, there was mild tension in the area.

The police are verifying the CCTV footage in the surrounding areas to identify the miscreants and arrest them.

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**Ministry of Civil Aviation**  
**Rajiv Gandhi Bhawan, New Delhi**  
**Advertisement for the post of Vice Chancellor, Rajiv Gandhi National Aviation University, Amethli (U.P.)**

Applications are invited for filling up the post of Vice Chancellor, Rajiv Gandhi National Aviation University, an Autonomous Institution under the administrative control of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India.

2. The details of age limit, essential qualifications and experience etc. along with prescribed format for application are available on the website of the Ministry of Civil Aviation ([www.civilaviation.gov.in](http://www.civilaviation.gov.in)) and [RGNAU \(https://www.rgnau.ac.in\)](http://rgnau.ac.in).

3. Eligible and interested persons may send their application in the prescribed format to "The Section Officer, SD&IT Division, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Room No. 257, 2nd Floor, B-Block, Rajiv Gandhi Bhawan, New Delhi" or email it to [vcrgnau-appt@gov.in](mailto:vcrgnau-appt@gov.in). The last date for receipt of application is 15.04.2020 by 1600 hrs.

(Kameshwar Mishra)  
 Under Secretary  
 davn 03101/1/0004/1920

**CITY UNION BANK LTD.**  
 Administrative Office : No. 24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612 001.  
 Phone : 0435-2402322, 2401622 Fax : 0435-2431746

**POSSESSION NOTICE (Immovable Property)**

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of City Union Bank Ltd., having its Administrative Office at No.24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612 001 and one of the Branch Offices at 23-75/25/1, Ground Floor, R.K. Nagar, Anand Bagh Cross Road, Malkajigiri under the Requisition and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) & (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice dated 19-10-2019 followed by paper publication dated 25-12-2019 calling upon the borrowers No.1) Mr. Bandi Rajkumar, S/o. Mr. Yadagiri Bandi, 12-1-1337/1, Shanthi Nagar, Lallaguda, Secunderabad, Telangana - 500 017. No.2) Mr. Bandi Naveen, S/o. Mr. Yadagiri Bandi, 12-1-1337/1, Shanthi Nagar, Lallaguda, Secunderabad, Telangana - 500 017. No.3) Mrs. Bandi Kavitha, W/o. Mr. Bandi Rajkumar, 12-1-1337/1, Shanthi Nagar, Lallaguda, Secunderabad, Telangana - 500 017. No.4) Mr. Bandi Srikanth, S/o. Mr. Yadagiri Bandi, 12-1-1337/1, Shanthi Nagar, Lallaguda, Secunderabad, Telangana - 500 017 to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice being Rs.91,96,037/- (Rupees Ninety One Lakh Ninety Six Thousand and Thirty Seven Only) within 60 days from the date of the said Notice with subsequent interest thereon from 16-10-2019 with monthly rests.

The borrowers above named having failed to repay the amount despite the receipt of the above referred statutory notice, NOTICE is hereby given to the borrowers above named and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the Property described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on this 11th day of March 2020.

The borrowers above named in Particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the Property and any dealings with the Property will be subject to the charge of City Union Bank Ltd., for an amount of Rs.82,64,095/- (Rupees Eighty Two Lakh Sixty Four Thousand and Ninety Five Only) as on 24-02-2020 and interest thereon from 25-02-2020 till the repayment of entire dues.

**Immovable Property Mortgaged to our Bank**  
 (Property Owned by Mr. Bandi Rajkumar, S/o. Mr. Yadagiri Bandi)

An extent of 566.55 Sq.yds. or 464.44 Sq.Mtrs. of site/land and superstructure already existing and superstructure to be put up thereon in future situated at Plot No.249, North Part, Plot Nos.250 & 251 Part, in Survey Nos.47 Part & 48 Part, situated at Boduppal Village and Gram Panchayat, Ghatkesar Mandal, Rangareddy District. Bounded by:- North - 25 feet wide Road, South - Plot No.246, Plot No.247 & Plot No.249 South Part, East - 25 feet wide Road, West - Plot No.251 Part.

Place: Hyderabad-Malkajigiri, Date: 11-03-2020 Authorised Officer

**SOUTHERN RAILWAY**  
**CHENNAI - 600 023**

**MATERIALS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE FOR THE SUPPLY OF STORES**  
**No. E-30/2020**

The following e-Tenders are published in IREPS website. Firms are requested to login to <https://www.ireps.gov.in> Login->E.Tender->goods & services (New) and quote against these tenders. Manual quotations will not be entertained for these tenders. Closing time for all tenders 14:30 hours.

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Description	Due date
1	06200147	INDIAN RAILWAY WATER MARK PAPER 61CM. WHITE REEL 585SM	23.03.2020
2	06205006	WHITE SECURITY BOND PAPER 130 GSM PLUS/MINUS 5 PERCENT WITH IR LOGO WATER MARK	16.03.2020
3	44200241	COUPLER BODY WITH SHANK WEAR PLATE	20.03.2020
4	04200616	AUXILIARY RESERVOIR 200 LITRES CAPACITY	23.03.2020
5	06204308	SOFT BLANKET GREY	24.03.2020
6	01200227	CYLINDRICAL ROLLER BEARING	27.03.2020
7	26191443	SHUNTING CONTACTOR TYPETCP	02.04.2020
8	04191023B	MINOR ELASTOMER PAD	03.04.2020
9	04191120A	HOSE CONNECTION 1/2", 600MM LONG	03.04.2020
10	21190505	36 MONTHS POH KIT	03.04.2020
11	44200516	NON-ASBESTOS L TYPE COMPOSITE BRAKE BLOCK	03.04.2020
12	15190270A	CAST IRON COMPONENTS (MACHINED)	06.04.2020
13	26202020	BRUSH HOLDER ASSEMBLY	06.04.2020
14	26202260	PRIMARY SUSPENSION SPRING	07.04.2020
15	44200504	SET OF PIPES AND PIPE FITTINGS	07.04.2020
16	44200444	BOGIE CENTRE PIVOT TOP	08.04.2020
17	43190796	DRAFT GEAR ARRANGEMENT	09.04.2020
18	44200545	FLAP DOOR ARRANGEMENT	09.04.2020
19	11190629C	110 V, 200Ah LOW MAINTENANCE LEAD ACID BATTERY	13.04.2020
20	26190505B	TRACTION MOTOR TYPE: HS15250A	15.04.2020
21	26201655	A-9 AUTOMATIC BRAKE VALVE ASSEMBLY	16.04.2020
22	26201733	HITACHI TRACTION MOTOR GEAR CASE	16.04.2020

Attention: Micro Small Enterprises (MSEs). The benefits provided to MSEs under Public Procurement Policy for goods and services are as per details provided in the link <https://www.ireps.gov.in> -> ireps public documents-> southern railways.

Principal Chief Materials Manager

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement system**

Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-

SN	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01	07190447	SET OF SIDE BUFFER ASSEMBLY	60 NOS	09-04-20
02	20201230	BRAKE SHOE COMPLETE (STANDARD SIZE)	3000 NOS	13-04-20
03	09202027	BOGIE CENTRE PIVOT BOTTOM WITH HORIZONTAL WEAR LINER	814 NOS	13-04-20
04	07190254	SECONDARY SPRING ( INNER ) FOR LHB COACHES	196 NOS	14-04-20
05	09205002	BOGIE MOUNTED BRAKE SYSTEM (BMBS)	50 SET	15-04-20
06	20203017	REVISED ARRANGEMENT OF TRANSITION SCREW COUPLING FOR CENTRE BUFFER COUPLER	391 NOS	17-04-20
07	02201855	INTER VEHICLE COUPLER Z.S. COUPLING 400 AMP.	194 SET	17-04-20
08	02201756	CONDENSER FAN MOTOR	682 NOS	04-05-20
09	09202202	SLACK ADJUSTER COMPLETE TYPE	182 NOS	29-05-20
10	02202519A	SMF VRLA 110V -120 AH, BATTERY SET	50 SET	15-06-20

NOTE -1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for details.  
 2. No Manual offer will be entertained.  
 Tender Notice No. 44/2019-2020 Dated : 13.03.2020 806/2020

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**

**E TENDER NOTICE NO. SG-664-18-Tele-2019-20 Dhanbad, dt-11.03.2020**

**E TENDER IS INVITED ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA FOR THE UNDER MENTIONED WORK.**

SI.No. - (1) Name of the work: Replacement of over aged exchange at RNQ, DHN, CPU, GMO & BRKA with Server based IP based exchange.  
 (2) Approx. Cost of the work: ₹ 2,88,75,639.32 (3) Earnest Money : ₹ 2,94,400.00 (4) Date & time for closing of tender: 30.03.2020 at 16.00 hrs. 5. Any E-Tenders which is sent by Post / Courier / FAX or self. Manual proposals although the letter is on firms letter pad or received in time will not be accepted. The above E-Tenders, E-Tendering document alongwith full information is available on website i.e. <http://www.ireps.gov.in> Note : Tenderers are requested to visit the website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> atleast 10 days before last date of closing for latest corrigendum / corrections etc. in response to this E-tender.  
 Sr. Div. Sig. & Telecom Engineer, Dhanbad PR/2418/DHN/S&T/T/19-20/40

रा.इ.सू.प्रौ.सं  
**NIELIT**  
 National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT)  
 (An Autonomous Scientific Institute of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Govt. of India)  
 NIELIT Bhawan, Plot No. 3, PSP Pocket, Institutional Area, Sector 8, Dwarka, New Delhi 110077  
 Phone No: 011-25308300 Helpline No. (Toll Free): 1800116511

**Announcement for submission of Online Examination Application Forms (OEAFF) with respect to the 'O' / 'A' / 'B' / 'C' Level Examinations of NIELIT to be held in July 2020**

Applications are invited from the registered candidates of NIELIT for submission of Online Examination Application Forms (OEAFF) for its O/A/B/C level examinations. Detailed calendar of events for July 2020 examinations is as indicated below:

Event	Date
Availability of Online Examination Application Forms at: <a href="https://student.nielit.gov.in">https://student.nielit.gov.in</a>	March 16, 2020
Online Examination Application Form (OEAFF) verification for Institutes at: <a href="https://onlineaccr.nielit.gov.in">https://onlineaccr.nielit.gov.in</a>	March 16, 2020
Last date of submission of Online Examination Application Forms (OEAFF) with requisite fee for Direct and Institutes' candidates	May 08, 2020
Last date for forwarding the Online Examination Application Form by institutes after verification and payment	May 13, 2020
Commencement of the theory examinations of 'O'/'A'/'B'/'C' levels	July 11, 2020
Commencement of Practical Examinations	July 25, 2020
Declaration of 'O', 'A', 'B' & 'C' Level Results	Last week of October 2020 (Tentative)

For latest updates please visit website regularly

**IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS:**

- The Examination Application Forms are to be submitted through **online mode only** along with online payments of related fees through Net-Banking/Debit/Credit Card/ RTGS-NEFT.
- Candidate can avail the services of CSC (Common Service Centre) for filling up of Online Examination Forms and/or Payment of the Examination Fees. The locations of CSCs are available at [www.csc.gov.in](http://www.csc.gov.in).
- There is an Examination Application Form processing fee of Rs.100/-, in addition to the requisite fees for the applied Theory/Practical modules.
- Before filling the form, candidates are advised to go through the related instructions given at [www.nielit.gov.in/sites/default/files/SL\\_OEAFF.pdf](http://www.nielit.gov.in/sites/default/files/SL_OEAFF.pdf)
- Candidates who have already created login with NIELIT may use the same user ID and Password to fill the OEAFF
- Institute authorized to conduct the courses under NIELIT have to verify candidature of the students who have forwarded their Examination Application Forms through them and pay the Examination fees using the link [onlineaccr.nielit.gov.in](http://onlineaccr.nielit.gov.in).
- New evaluation pattern has been introduced w.e.f. July 2018 Exams. Please see NIELIT website for further details. [www.nielit.gov.in/sites/default/files/leadquarter/pdf/180212\\_cabc\\_notification.pdf](http://www.nielit.gov.in/sites/default/files/leadquarter/pdf/180212_cabc_notification.pdf)

<http://www.nielit.gov.in> [NIELITIndia](https://www.facebook.com/NIELITIndia) [@NIELITIndia](https://www.instagram.com/NIELITIndia) [NIELITIndia](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNIELITIndia) [/school/NIELITIndia](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNIELITIndia)



**SHORT TAKES**

**RETIREMENT: GOVT INACTION UPSETS DOCS**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Doctors of Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences in the state capital are very upset that despite a meeting of NIMS' executive committee on increasing the retirement age of doctors, no action has yet been taken in this regard.

Incidentally, Dr M. Jyotsna, professor of radiology, is to retire on March 31.

The state government had increased the retirement age of its doctors to 65 years through an order issued in June 2019. Through all government medical colleges and teaching hospitals in the state increased the retirement age of their doctors, the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences has not yet done so, leading to major dissatisfaction amongst doctors working with the institute.

Authorities of NIMS had organised a meeting 10 days ago, but the issue of increasing the retirement age of doctors belong to this premier hospital has not yet been settled.

Senior faculty members are upset that their precious time is being lost. Certain key doctors of NIMS will have to retire if bureaucracy keeps delaying the decision on increasing the retirement age, which has already been increased at all other hospitals.

A senior doctor explained, "There is regional politics at play. This will only result in loss for the institute and students. The state government must intervene and take immediate steps."

● **AUTHORITIES OF NIMS** had organised a meeting 10 days ago, but the issue of increasing the retirement age of doctors belong to this premier hospital has not yet been settled

● **SENIOR FACULTY** members are upset that their precious time is being lost

## JAC wants state govt to put NPR on hold

Convener says they don't trust Amit Shah's statement

ATHER MOIN | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Telangana-AP Joint Action Committee against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Population Register (NPR) demanded the TRS government to announce a stay on NPR on or before March 18, otherwise it will siege the Assembly buildings the next day.

The convener of the JAC Mr Mohammed Mushtaq Malik said, "We do not trust the statement given by Home Minister Mr Amit Shah in the Parliament as in the past Kalyan Singh government did not adhere to the assurance of protecting the structure of Babri Masjid in 1992."

Addressing the media, Mr Malik said, "We appreciate the statement of Chief Minister, Mr K. Chandrasekhar Rao given in the Assembly regarding NPR, but it is not enough and we hope he will take concrete steps towards staying NPR in the state."

He said the government should not only come with a resolution against NPR in the Assembly, but also announce that it will not in favour of conducting NPR survey with additional questions which create fear among the common people.

He said that merely passing a resolution against NPR is not enough as



TS and AP Joint Action Committee against CAA, NRC and NPR convener Mushtaq Malik and others addressing a press conference in Azampura on Saturday. — INN

the union government is not bound to abide the request of a state government's resolution passed by the Assembly. The state government has to send a letter to the union government intimating it about a stay on the exercise unless the concerns shown by the state government are settled. He also said that the state government has to prepare to challenge NPR in the Supreme Court under Article 131 of the Constitution of India.

Mr Malik also added, "The union government should roll back the orders issued in the

month of July 2019 regarding NPR. Earlier, BJP's Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mr Kalyan Singh had filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court that he will not allow any damage to the Babri Masjid structure and we saw what happened in 1992."

Moulana Naseeruddin, state organiser of Wahadat e Islami said, "In case the speaker adjourns the Assembly sine die before March 19, we will adopt other options to pressurise the KCR government. Our Chief Minister is in principle against the NPR and expressed his reservations over the proofs sought

under NPR. He has to show courage and has taken a firm stand to stop NPR in its present form."

Mr Amjadullah Khan Khalid, spokesperson of MBT said, "On one hand, the Chief Minister is expressing concern over NPR and on the other the police are registering cases against the people who are protesting peacefully against the union government's move. He demanded the Chief Minister to withdraw all cases registered in this connection since no one has disturbed the law and no damage to any public or private property has happened so far."

## 'Struggle to build India' concert at OU

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

A concert 'Struggle to build India' was held on Saturday in the Osmania University Arts and Social Sciences campus by

Artalyst (an informal body of artists in Telangana).

Artalyst, a self-declared catalyst for change through art is a forum for singers, documentary filmmakers, poets, story-

tellers, mime artists and theatre artists who envision a stronger India.

"The recent political developments and decisions on CAA, NPR and other similar issues have prompted us to start a

platform for change. Art is an impactful and effective yet peaceful means to propagate ideas. That is the reason we use it to get the nation thinking," said Syed Hassan, coordinator of the event.

## BIFURCATION OF AP CONTINUES TO HAUNT CONG

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Even six years after it occurred, the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh still haunts the Congress party in the two Telugu states, and particularly in the rump state of AP.

In ongoing local body elections, the Congress party has been unable to contest all the seats. Some senior Congress leaders have fielded candidates in some seats by paying the security deposit themselves instead of from the party's coffers.

Of the total 652 ZPTC seats up for election in AP, the Congress is contesting only 368 seats. And of the total 9696 MPTC seats, the Congress is contesting only 395.

Each ZPTC candidate has to pay ₹6,000 as security deposit and each MPTC candidate has to pay ₹3,000 as security deposit. This amount is refundable if the candidate secures one-sixth of the total valid votes polled.

But Congress candidates are not sure they will get back the deposit and many have dropped out for that reason. In the municipal elections it was the same story.

In Telangana too, in the local body elections, the Congress did not contest all the seats.

In 2014 and 2019 Assembly elections in AP, the Congress was not able to open its account. In Telangana state, the party failed to get more than 25 of the total 119 seats. In the 2014 Telangana Assembly elections, it won 63 seats and in 2018 Assembly elections it won 87 seats.

The Congress has paid a heavy price in both Telugu states for its decision to spin off Telangana as a separate state.

## KCR: Cong is the real corona

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

Terming the Congress as the biggest coronavirus in this country, Chief Minister, K. Chandrasekhar Rao, advised the Congress MLAs in the assembly not to horrify the people with regard to the coronavirus.

He announced in the house that if necessary, the government will spend ₹5,000 crore to prevent the spreading of the Covid-19 in the state.

While making the statement in the assembly on Coronavirus, he objected to the remarks of the Congress legislative party leader, Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, that neither the centre nor the state governments have taken effective preventive steps to tackle the virus.

He said that the state

government is effectively handling the situation ever since a positive case of Covid-19 was reported in Hyderabad and the doctors succeeded in curing the first positive patient and he was discharged from the hospital.

Mr Rao said that the state government doesn't want to horrify the people by revealing all the steps it has been taking to prevent the spread of virus in the state. He said, "We are taking 100 innumerable preventive steps and don't want to create panic in the people."

Stating that special masks are required for the doctors handling Covid-19 patients, the government is taking steps to procure such masks and orders were also issued for the seizure of masks to prevent export to other states.

## HC finds fault with Transco's job notice

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 14

The Telangana High Court has found faults with the Telangana State Transmission Corporation (Electrical) Ltd. (TS Transco) for issuing a fresh appointment notification to fill up the posts of Sub-Engineer (Electrical) in 2017, by keeping aside the notifications issued by erstwhile AP Transco in the United Andhra Pradesh State.

The division bench comprising Justice M.S. Ramachandra Rao and Justice K. Lakshman had heard the pleas of aspirants, who challenged the TS Transco's declaration, which divulged that the three notifications issued by erstwhile AP Transco deemed to have lapsed

and the mentioned posts will be filled up with the new notification.

The bench made it clear that the decision of TS Transco proposing to fill up posts of Sub-Engineer (Electrical) were illegal, arbitrary and violate Article 14 of the Constitution of India and the court had set aside the new notification issued in 2017.

The Bench also directed the TS Transco to continue the process of selection to the said post of Sub-Engineer (Electrical) pursuant to the notifications issued by the erstwhile AP Transco in the years 2011 and 2012 and to issue appointment letters to all selected candidates, subject to their meeting all other eligibility conditions.

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Government of India

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## Farooq meets Omar in sub-jail

Congress' Azad meets Farooq, calls for restoration of democracy in J&K

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC  
SRINAGAR MARCH 14

Senior Congress leader and former chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad on Saturday said that "restoration of democracy" in Jammu and Kashmir is prerequisite for starting a political process in the erstwhile state.

He said that to begin with, the government should release all political leaders and activists detained in August last year when the Centre abrogated Article 370 and bifurcated J&K into two

Union Territories (UTs). He also demanded restoration of J&K's statehood, saying that splitting it up into UTs was an "insult" of its people.

Mr. Azad after meeting National Conference (NC) president and J&K's three-time chief minister Farooq Abdullah at his residence here, a day after he was released from a 32-week-long detention, said, "The restoration of democracy is the first and foremost requirement for any political process to start with."

He added, "Political process is the basis of democra-

cy. India is famous in the world for its democracy and not size but you cannot call it democracy when three former chief ministers are jailed for seven and a half months and a fourth one (he himself) can come here and go back only after seeking permission from Supreme Court...ministers, legislators and office-bearers of small and big political parties have been incarcerated too".

He said that setting these political detainees free and restoring J&K's statehood will set off a political

process which will also salvage it from its troubles and ensure development. "J&K will not see development if you put leaders in cage like parrots. You have to release them and start a political process which will facilitate elections and whosoever is elected to power will take it on to the path of development," he said.

Earlier during the day on Saturday, Mr. Abdullah along with his wife Molly and daughter Safia Khan and her children met his incarcerated son Omar Abdullah who is lodged at

Srinagar's Hari Niwas guesthouse declared as a 'subsidiary' jail in August last year.

Though Abdullah Sr. did not say anything about it, the sources close to him said that it was an emotional meeting between him and his son. His wife and daughter equally felt poignant during the meet.

Mr. Abdullah had soon after his release on Friday had requested the J&K authorities that he be allowed to see his son for the first time in more than seven months.

## Shivraj now wants floor test before Budget session begins

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, MARCH 14

Exactly into a week of political crisis in Madhya Pradesh, Governor Lalji Tandon commenced legal consultations on Saturday. Mr. Tandon held discussions with former Governor of MP Captain Singh Solanki and former advocate general of the state P. Kaurav to explore options before him to end the prevailing political crisis in MP triggered by the resignation of 22 rebel Congress MLAs.

The exercise by the

Governor to end the impasse in the state began with Opposition BJP and ruling Congress differing over timing of floor test for Kamal Nath government to prove its majority in the House.

A day after Chief Minister Kamal Nath met the Governor to place his government's stand to "release" 22 rebel Congress MLAs, currently lodged at a resort in Bengaluru must precede the floor test in the House, a BJP delegation led by former CM and BJP national vice-president Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday sub-

mitted a memorandum to Mr. Tandon seeking trust vote by the state government before the commencement of the ensuing Budget Session of the Assembly, scheduled to begin on Monday.

Also, speaker of Assembly N.P. Prajapati late on Saturday evening accepted resignations of six out of 22 rebel Congress MLAs. The MLAs whose resignations were accepted on Friday expelled from the state ministry by Governor Lalji Tandon following recommendations by chief minister Kamal Nath.

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**SHORT TAKES**

## YES BANK MORATORIUM TO BE LIFTED

New Delhi, March 14: The moratorium on Yes Bank will be lifted by March 18 and the new board led by CEO and MD Prashant Kumar will be put in place by the end of this month, the government said.

The government notified the Yes Bank Reconstruction Scheme 2020 late on Friday. Under the plan, SBI cannot reduce its stake in the bank to below 26 per cent for a period of three years, while other investors and existing shareholders will have a lock-in period of three years for 75 per cent of their investment in Yes Bank.

Apart from Kumar, the reconstructed board of Yes Bank will have Sunil Mehta (former PNB non-executive chairman) as non-executive chairman, and Mahesh Krishnamurthy and Atul Bheda as non-executive directors.

The Yes Bank Reconstruction Scheme 2020 shall come into force on March 13. The RBI had on March 5 put a moratorium on Yes Bank, restricting withdrawals to ₹50,000 per depositor till April 3. It superseded the board of the troubled private sector lender and appointed Prashant Kumar as administrator.

"The order of moratorium on the reconstructed bank issued by the government... shall cease to have effect on the third working day at 18:00 hours from the date of commencement of this scheme," the notification said.

"The office of the administrator of the reconstructed bank shall stand vacated immediately after 7 calendar days from the date of cessation of moratorium... and a new board of directors shall be reconstituted..." the notification said.

# Excise duty on petrol, diesel hiked by ₹3/ltr

The move will help government garner ₹39,000 cr

## Cong slams govt over duty hike

New Delhi, March 14: The government on Saturday hiked excise duty on petrol and diesel by a steep ₹3 per litre each to garner about ₹39,000 crore additional revenue as it repeated its 2014-15 act of not passing on gains arising from slump in international oil prices.

Retail prices of petrol and diesel will not be impacted by the tax changes as state-owned oil firms adjusted them against the recent fall in oil prices and the likely trend in the near future, industry officials said.

According to a notification issued by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, special excise duty on petrol was hiked by ₹2 to ₹8 per litre in case of petrol and to ₹4 a litre from ₹2 in case of diesel.

Additionally, road cess was raised by ₹1 per litre each on petrol and diesel to ₹10. With this, the total incidence of excise duty on petrol has risen to ₹22.98 per litre and that on diesel to ₹18.83.

The tax on petrol was ₹9.48 per litre when the Modi government took office in 2014 and that on diesel was ₹3.56 a litre.

Officials said the increase in excise duty will result in annual increase of government revenues by about ₹39,000 crore. The gains during the remaining three weeks of the current fiscal would be less

than ₹2,000 crore. Petrol and diesel prices, which are changed on a daily basis, were cut by 13 paise and 16 paise respectively as oil companies adjusted the excise duty hike against the drop in prices that warrants from international rates slumping the most since the Gulf war. Petrol now cost ₹69.87 a litre in Delhi and a litre of diesel comes for ₹62.58. The government had between November 2014 and January 2016 raised excise duty on petrol and diesel on nine occasions to take away gains arising from plummeting global oil prices.

In all, duty on petrol was hiked by ₹11.77 per litre and that on diesel by 13.47 a litre in those 15 months that helped government's excise mop up more than double to ₹2,42,000 crore in 2016-17 from ₹99,000 crore in 2014-15.

It cut excise duty by ₹2 in October 2017 and by ₹1.50 a year later. But it raised excise duty by ₹2 per litre in July 2019. Government sources said that while the benefit of reduction of crude

prices in the first quarter of this year has significantly gone to the consumer, the Centre has taken this step of increasing duty to raise some revenue in view of a tight fiscal situation.

Issue both inside and outside Parliament to democratically pressure the government to pass on the benefit of low international crude oil prices to the people.

The government on Saturday hiked excise duty on petrol and diesel by a steep ₹3 per litre each to garner about ₹39,000 crore additional revenue.

In 2014-15 too, the Centre had not passed on to the public the gains arising from the slump

in international oil prices.

Industry officials, however, said retail prices of petrol and diesel will not be impacted by the tax changes as state-owned oil firms have adjusted them against the recent fall in oil prices and the likely trend in the near future.

Maken said the total incidence of excise duty on petrol has risen to ₹22.98 per litre and that on diesel to ₹18.83 per litre.

# GST Council raises tax on mobile phones to 18%

New Delhi, March 14: GST rate on mobile phones will be hiked to 18 per cent while that on maintenance repair overhaul (MRO) services for aircraft will be lowered to 5 per cent with effect on April 1, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday.



Nirmala Sitharaman

Briefing reporters after the 39th GST Council meeting, she said Infosys Chairman Nandan Nilekani made a detailed presentation for the transition into a better GST Network system and the requirement of hardware to enhance capacity for addressing the system related issues that are being faced by taxpayers in the IT system.

Demand for more skilled manpower, better hardware to enhance capacity has been agreed to by the Council, she said.

The GST Council has decided that a completely enhanced capacity, a leaner system of GST Network with capacity enhance, staff response, better solutions, which were envisaged and proposed by Nilekani by January 2021, should be completed by July 2020, Sitharaman said.

With regard to GST rates, the minister said there are

The GST Council has decided that a completely enhanced capacity, a leaner system of GST Network with capacity enhance, staff response, better solutions, which were envisaged and proposed by Nilekani by January 2021, should be completed by July 2020

— NIRMALA SITHARAMAN  
Union Finance minister

four sectors — footwear, textiles, fertiliser and mobile phones — which face inverted duty structure wherein inputs are taxed at a higher rate than finished products.

"It was decided by the Council to raise the GST rate on mobile phones and specified parts which presently attract 12 per cent to be taxed at 18 per cent.

"For all other items where there is duty inversion, if there is a need to calibrate the rates for removing inversion, it was decided in one of the future meetings we will take up the issue," she said.

Counterpoint Research Associate Director Tarun Pathak said, "This will impact the pricing and especially at a time when we are

staring at uncertainty in the larger electronics supply chain due to coronavirus. An increase in price means a section of users will either go for second hand or even turn to grey market".

The GST rate on hand-made and machine-made matchsticks has been rationalised to 12 per cent from 5 per cent and 18 per cent respectively. The GST rate on Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) services in respect of aircraft would be reduced from 18 per cent to 5 per cent with full Input Tax Credit and change the place of supply for B2B MRO services to the location of recipient. — PTI

● **GOVERNMENT SOURCES** said that while the benefit of reduction of crude prices in the first quarter of this year has significantly gone to the consumer, the Centre has taken this step of increasing duty to raise some revenue in view of a tight fiscal situation.

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**SHORT TAKES**

## 3 CORONAVIRUS SUSPECTS IN ODISHA

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC PURI, MARCH 14

Three persons, including a girl from Lithuania was on Saturday were suspected of being infected with the deadly coronavirus. They were later admitted to hospitals.

Reportedly, a minor girl hailing from Lithuania was suspected to have Covid-19 and later admitted to Puri District Headquarter Hospital. She had arrived in the pilgrim town around two weeks back on a tour with her family.

They stayed at a hotel near the sea beach. Apparently, she complained of cold and cough followed by fever. The family panicked when she didn't get better. They took her to a private hospital in Mochi Sahi for a checkup, where doctors suspected symptoms of Covid-19 in her.

The family immediately shifted the girl to the Puri District Headquarters Hospital. As per the latest information, she will be shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack after the preliminary test. Arrangements are being made for her treatment at an isolation ward at the state-run hospital, sources added.

Earlier in the day, a couple hailing from Chikiti in Ganjam district suspected with the killer virus was admitted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur. Their samples were sent for examination. The husband was working in Abu Dhabi and returned to India on March 11.

## 4 SUSPECTED PATIENTS RETURN HOME FROM HOSP

Nagpur, March 14: Four city-based persons, who were kept in an isolation ward at a government-run hospital here for suspected coronavirus infection, returned home even as the hospital staff "requested" them against doing so as their test results were awaited, officials said on Saturday.

The incident occurred late on Friday night at the Indira Gandhi Government Medical College and Hospital, they said.

However, three of them got admitted to the hospital on Saturday afternoon again and the fourth one expected to come back after the authorities instructed them to do so.

"Four persons, including two women, had come to the IGGMCH on Friday morning to give their blood samples for suspected coronavirus infection. They were kept in the isolation ward. They left the hospital on their own, although the doctors and other medical staff had requested them not to do so as their test results were awaited," Nagpur district collector Ravindra Thakre said in a press conference.

"Two of them are close contacts of those found positive for coronavirus in Nagpur earlier. Two others had recently travelled to Thailand and Netherlands," he added.

None of the four showed symptoms of coronavirus infection and their result is expected soon, Thakre said.

## PVT COS. ASK STAFF TO WORK FROM HOME

NISCHITH N | DC BENGALURU, MARCH 14

As a precautionary measure to tackle the coronavirus scare, many private companies have offered a work from home option to employees. The virus even touched the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru as it suspended all academic activities for 15 days with immediate effect followed by the government order. The institute issued two days notice to all students to vacate the campus before March 16.

The circulated notice mentions by IISc says that all the academic, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are suspended for 15 days, effective from March 14. These include classes, examinations, seminars, conferences, visits, laboratory work and project work for interns etc. It also clearly says that residents of the campus and the faculty should stay home, avoid social gatherings and maintain social distancing to prevent the spread of the virus.

The Infosys in Bengaluru has evacuated one of its satellite office buildings following reports of its employee coming in contact with a suspected coronavirus patient.



Children wearing face masks amid concerns over the spread of coronavirus, return home after knowing that public gatherings and schools are shut following late-night state government order, at a village in Kannauj in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday. — AP

## MODI TO LEAD INDIA AT VIDEO CONFERENCE OF SAARC NATIONS

New Delhi, March 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead India at a video conference of all Saarc nations at 5 pm on Sunday to chalk out a joint strategy to fight coronavirus in the region, the Ministry of External Affairs said.

Modi on Friday proposed formulation of a joint strategy by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) nations to fight coronavirus, a suggestion that was backed by all the member states.

"Coming together for common good" 15 March, 1700 IST. PM Narendra Modi will lead India at the video conference of all Saarc member countries, to chalk out a strong common strategy to fight Covid-19 in the region," MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said in a tweet.

Calling on the Saarc nations to set an example for the world, Modi had reached out to the eight-member regional grouping and pitched for a video conference among its leaders to chalk out a strong strategy to fight coronavirus, which has killed nearly 5,000 people globally.

In other developments, the US Embassy and Consulates in India have cancelled all visa appointments from March 16 in the wake of coronavirus outbreak.

A statement issued by the US Embassy here said, "US Mission India posts, in light of the global Covid-19 pandemic, are cancelling immigrant and nonimmigrant visa appointments from March 16, 2020, onward."

"Your visa appointment stands as cancelled. Once Mission India resumes regular operations, appointments will be made available," the statement said. — PTI

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The Infosys in Bengaluru has evacuated one of its satellite office buildings following reports of its employee coming in contact with a suspected coronavirus patient.

## Covid-19 is 'notified disaster'; Maha cases spike to 26

From Page 1

The home ministry had issued a notification declaring coronavirus a 'notified disaster' and said ₹4 lakh will be given to the family of deceased persons, but later revised it.

The Union Home Ministry has issued a two-page directive to all states, specifying list of items eligible for SDRF and norms of assistance.

As part of the first head defined under 'measures for quarantine, sample collection and screening', the latest sanction will include provisions for temporary accommodation, food, clothing, medical care for people affected by the virus and sheltered in quarantine camps.

A state executive committee will regulate the utilisation of funds in this context from the SDRF, which is funded by the Union Home Ministry. As part of the second authorisation meant for procurement of essential items, the directive said that cost of setting up additional testing laboratories with the government and the cost of consumables can be drawn from SDRF. Personal protection equipment for healthcare, municipal, police and fire authorities can also be bought on SDRF funds.

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## US COUPLE TRACED FROM KOCHI AIRPORT

Alappuzha, March 14: An American couple, which allegedly gave the slip to police after being admitted to the coronavirus isolation ward of the medical college hospital here following complaints of fever and cough, was traced to Kochi airport and placed under observation.

The two were traced on late Friday night and admitted to the Kalamassery medical college hospital isolation ward, police sources said. They had visited the hospital here with fever and were sent to the isolation ward, but left the place shortly thereafter.

The officials maintained that more than 4,000 people who had come in contact with the 84 positive cases are under surveillance. Also, 12,29,363 passengers have been screened from 11,406 flights at the 30 designated airports. In addition, instructions to enforce quarantine for all incoming passengers as per the guidelines are being implemented. As

per government data, the total number of 84 confirmed cases includes 17 foreigners — 16 Italian tourists and a Canadian. In Maharashtra, a day after deciding to shut down gyms, cinema halls and swimming pools, the government on Saturday decided to shut all malls, schools, colleges, training centres and anganwadis of ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) in all major cities till March 31. However, Classes 10 and 12 and university exams will be held as per the schedule and grocery stores, which sell commodities of daily need will remain open. The public health department of the state sent a circular in this connection to the higher and technical education and school education department Saturday. Meanwhile, the number of patients suffering from coronavirus has risen to 26 in the state.

The Aligarh Muslim University suspended all classes till March 22. Institutes in Pune and neighbouring Pimpri-Chinchwad area which are affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University will remain closed in view of the coronavirus outbreak till further orders. Panjab University also decided to suspend classes till March 31 in the wake of coronavirus scare.

— PTI

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## SWAMINARAYAN SECT CLOSES ALL TEMPLES

Washington, March 14: In view of the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus, the Swaminarayan sect has announced to close all its temples globally and suspend routine activities until further notice as part of its efforts to protect the health of volunteers, visitors and local communities.

The Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam (BAPS) Swaminarayan Sanstha, which runs about 100 temples in the US, over the weekend in particular is visited by thousands of devotees every month.

The BAPS is a volunteer-driven organisation that aims to improve society through individual growth by fostering Hindu ideals of faith, unity, and selfless service. To prevent large gatherings, BAPS mandirs (temples) will be closed throughout the world, but devotees will be given daily darshan through the websites of each mandir, the BAPS said in a media release.

BAPS will continue to provide spiritual guidance to devotees and Hindus around the world to keep their faith and spirituality alive, it said.

— PTI

NISCHITH N | DC BENGALURU, MARCH 14

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# WB, Goa too opt for lockdown

## Indo-Bhutan border at Jaigaon in N. Bengal sealed

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, MARCH 14

Following the footsteps of several states, the West Bengal government on Saturday announced a shut down of all schools and colleges from March 16 to March 31 in the wake of upto the Covid-19 pandemic.

Only the board examinations like ongoing higher secondary examination have been exempted from the shutdown.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said, "It has been decided that all government, government-aided, private educational institutions — schools, colleges, universities, Madarsas, Shishu Shiksha Kendras and Madhyamik Shiksha Kendras will remain closed from March 16 to March 31 in public interest."

Several states including Kerala, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh have already taken similar decision.

Ms Banerjee added, "The internal examinations of these institutions will also remain suspended during the said duration. However, the Board examinations will be held as per schedule."

She said that the decision was taken "in view of the evolving situation on the spread of Covid-19, the advisories issued by WHO, the UN and the Central government and as a matter of abundant precaution to check its spread" in the state.

At present six persons with suspected symptoms of Covid-19 have been

kept in isolation in a hospital while 1,977 more are under home surveillance among the 2,56,682 persons who have been screened in the state.

No one has tested positive so far.

In another move, the state government sealed the Indo-Bhutan border at Jaigaon in Alipurduar of North Bengal.

The district police, manning the entry point at the border at Jaigaon, halted goods and travellers' movements from India to the neighbouring country from Friday evening after getting a notification from Bhutan for stopping tourist and business activities following Covid-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile the services of two India-Bangladesh trains would remain suspended for one month.

The Eastern Railway stated that acting on the union health ministry's advisory, "operation of existing Indo-Bangladesh cross border passenger train, i.e., Maitree and Bandhan passenger services shall remain suspended during the period March 15 to April 15 or till further orders whichever is earlier."

The Goa government also on Saturday announced closure of educational institutes and public places including casinos, swimming pools and pubs in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak in the country till March 31.

The order will come into force from Sunday (March 15) midnight.

No confirmed coronavirus case has been found in the coastal state.

## Anti-Covid mattress costs for ₹15,000

From Page 1

While the country is in a lockdown, one Indian company has an innovative way of making money during the Coronavirus. It is selling "anti-coronavirus mattresses" priced at ₹15,000. The punch line: "anti-Coronavirus mattress pe soyega India toh badega India (India will forge ahead if India sleeps on the anti-Coronavirus mattress)."

While a section hawks their magical and "desi" remedies with impunity, Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan, a trained physician himself, claimed that "such statements were coming from people without the proper knowledge on a particular subject and for a virus that the entire world is coping with, should not be supported." He went on record saying, "I would not support such statements..."

— PTI

NISCHITH N | DC BENGALURU, MARCH 14

As a precautionary measure to tackle the coronavirus scare, many private companies have offered a work from home option to employees. The virus even touched the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru as it suspended all academic activities for 15 days with immediate effect followed by the government order. The institute issued two days notice to all students to vacate the campus before March 16.

The circulated notice mentions by IISc says that all the academic, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are suspended for 15 days, effective from March 14. These include classes, examinations, seminars, conferences, visits, laboratory work and project work for interns etc. It also clearly says that residents of the campus and the faculty should stay home, avoid social gatherings and maintain social distancing to prevent the spread of the virus.

The Infosys in Bengaluru has evacuated one of its satellite office buildings following reports of its employee coming in contact with a suspected coronavirus patient.

Assam transport minister Chandra Mohan Patowary reviewed the preparedness of the state to handle the possible emergency situation in meeting which was attended by the health officials, divisional superintendents of Assam State Transport Corporation, executive and junior engineers of Inland Water Transport, and representatives of bus operators, cab operators, auto rickshaw operators, Ola, Uber, Rapido services etc.

The minister said, "Transport system is an essential service for daily mobility for the masses. In view of coronavirus, safety is a top priority for everyone working in, and using, public transport."

He also directed to ASTC divisional superintendents and IWT junior engineers to conduct awareness drives.

— PTI

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## FEAR | FACTOR Donors apprehensive of visiting hospitals treating Covid suspects

# Covid curbs hit blood banks hard

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 14

With severe restrictions imposed in the state in the wake of Covid-19, blood banks in many parts of the state are not getting enough voluntary donors causing shortage of blood.

Since the patients tested Covid positive are undergoing treatment at the medical college hospitals, a section of people have apprehensions regarding visiting such facilities. These include voluntary blood donors.

With schools and colleges closed, the number

of volunteers coming for blood donation through National Service Scheme, Student Police Cadet, NCC and various clubs has also come down drastically.

Health officials fear that if the situation continues in this manner shortage of blood will start affecting emergency surgery, accident victims, trauma care facilities, labour rooms.

"Yes there is panic among people because of the fake messages and scare being created on social media. The caretakers of the patients are finding it difficult to get blood at a short notice from the blood bank," said

a relative of a patient admitted to the medical college hospital here.

Health authorities, however, said the situation is under control and there is no need for any panic at this stage. "We are issuing statements to allay the fears of the people. Visiting hospitals or medical colleges does not involve any risk if you take precautions. Only if a person comes into direct contact with an infected person or the objects that he has used, one can get the infection. One needs to wash hands with sanitiser, use masks and also avoid touching mouth,

face, nose," said a health worker. The authorities are now planning to make alternative arrangements for blood donation.

In other development, the relatives of a patient who died of cardiac arrest in Kottayam accused the hospital authorities of harassment and negligence. The patient whose son was under quarantine for Covid-19, had complained of uneasiness and low sugar levels. The relatives called up Kottayam General Hospital for ambulance but they were kept waiting for nearly 45 minutes. Later, the patient was rushed to Kottayam

Medical College in a private vehicle but his life could not be saved. The hospital authorities said that the patient died of cardiac arrest.

Since the patient belonged Chengala, a place which had reported Covid-19 cases and was father of the youth under quarantine, the hospital authorities should have taken precautionary measures. But they didn't take any steps, allege relatives.

Even for post-mortem examination, the relatives were made to buy gloves, mask and a kit costing ₹1,300.



**IN BRIEF**

## March 22 Guinea referendum

**Conakry:** Guinea's President Alpha Conde has set March 22 for the constitutional referendum on his proposed reforms that opponents worry will allow him to bypass term limits and stay in power. The vote, originally set for March 1 but delayed over local and international concerns about its fairness, will take place at the same time as legislative elections, a presidential decree said on Friday. The campaign will run until March 20 despite some restrictions put in place on rallies since the first case of Covid-19 was confirmed in the country. The West African country has seen huge opposition rallies over the proposal to change the constitution.

## Iraqis try to keep momentum going

**Baghdad:** At the once bustling hub of the largest anti-government protest movement in Iraq's modern history, crowds have dwindled, and donation boxes have sprouted up. Loudspeakers resound with calls by activists for funds to keep their hard-fought revolution alive. The six-month-old movement has faced one setback after another, from the shifting positions of a mercurial Shiite cleric to an apathetic political class. Where once Baghdad's Tahrir Square had seen thousands every day, now only a few hundred protesters turn up. Morale has been dampened among young Iraqis who first took to the streets on October 1.

## Sanders wins Northern Mariana

**Vermont:** Bernie Sanders won the Northern Mariana Islands Democratic caucuses Saturday. Sanders won with 84 votes, while former Vice President Joe Biden received 48 votes and two went uncommitted. Sanders' win in the contest translates to four national delegates, while Biden captured two. The Northern Mariana Islands, which has been a US territory since 1975, participates in the presidential primary process but not the general election. In 2016, Hillary Clinton won the Democratic caucuses while Donald Trump won the Republican caucuses. Biden has a near 150-delegate lead over Sanders, after the former vice president racked up a series of victories.

## RACE BIAS: LEGAL ACTION AGAINST UK HOME OFFICE

**London, March 14:** A UK police watchdog is taking legal action against the country's Home Office for alleged race discrimination, claiming to be paid less as a white official as compared to his black predecessor. Matthew John Parr, one of the five Inspectors of Constabulary who oversee the UK's police forces, including the Metropolitan Police, took his claim to the employment tribunal in 2018 and the case is to come up for a full hearing this year.

The details came to light this week as a High Court judge ruled to lift restrictions on it being reported after UK Home Secretary Priti Patel lost an appeal for the proceedings to be kept confidential. "Although the Appellant is the Home Secretary, and although the Respondent is the holder of an office to which he was appointed by the Queen on the recommendation of the Home Secretary, and although his work is the inspection of police forces, the confidentiality alleged in this case was not a matter of any state secret, or sensitive policing, or public interest immunity, or private discussions of public policy, or anything of that sort," notes Justice Martin Griffiths as part of his ruling dated March 6, dismissing the appeal for confidentiality. In his claims for equal pay and sex and race discrimination, Parr says that his £140,000 a year salary is too low compared with the £185,000 salary of Wendy Williams, the last inspector appointed before him, and alleges gender and race-related grounds for that discrepancy.

The UK Home Office insists his lower salary is the result of a drive within the department to reduce senior staff salary burdens. In reference to the case, which will now go on for a full tribunal hearing, Justice Griffiths notes: "His (Parr) named comparator is the HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary) appointed before him, who is a woman of BME (black and minority ethnic) heritage." — PTI



Mourners and militia fighters chant slogans against the US during the funeral procession of two fighters of the Popular Mobilization Forces who were killed during the US attack against militants in Iraq, during their funeral procession at the Imam Ali shrine in Najaf, Iraq, on Saturday.

# Second rocket attack at Iraqi base, 5 injured

Three coalition, 2 Iraqi troops hurt in strike at al-Taji

**Baghdad, March 14:** A military base in Iraq has been hit by a second rocket attack in a week, injuring three coalition troops and two Iraqi troops, a US army official said.

It was the 23rd such attack since late October on installations across Iraq where American troops and diplomats are based, with the latest rounds growing deadlier. None of the attacks have ever been claimed but the US has blamed headline elements of the Hashed al-Shaabi, a network of armed groups incorporated into the Iraqi state. At least 33 rockets hit Iraqi air defence units at the Taji air base on Saturday, the country's military said, in one of the largest such volleys yet.

Col. Myles B. Caggins III, a spokesman for the international Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR), confirmed on Twitter that rockets hit the al-Taji base early on Saturday local time. Caggins said damage assessment and an investigation were underway.

Iraq's Baghdad Operations Command said earlier on Saturday that several Katyusha rockets landed inside the parking garage in the area of Abu al-Ezzam," it said. The statement added that the owner of the parking garage, employees and all those present were taken in for questioning by Baghdad police.

## Taliban prisoner release on hold

**Kabul, March 14:** The Afghan government has postponed its plan to release Taliban prisoners, a senior official said Saturday, throwing a precarious peace process between the insurgents and Kabul into deeper crisis.

President Ashraf Ghani earlier this week announced that the authorities would free 1,500 insurgents as a "gesture of goodwill" before negotiations begin, in an attempt to resolve one of the long-running disputes that had roiled talks.

The insurgents had earlier rejected the offer and demanded that up to 5,000 captives are released ahead of talks, citing the US-Taliban deal signed last month that excluded Kabul. On Saturday Javid

injured in an attack on the same base on Wednesday.

The US said Thursday it had assessed that an Iranian-backed group was responsible for the rocket attack. The two Americans were the first to die in Iraq since December when a US contractor was killed in a rocket attack on a base near Kirkuk.

The December attack prompted retaliatory US airstrikes against militia targets in Iraq and Syria. Trump administration officials pointed to the contractor's death as their justification for air strikes that killed Iran's second most powerful leader, Gen. Qassem Soleimani, and spiked tensions around the world. The latest attack on the al-Taji base comes after the US carried out retaliatory airstrikes on Thursday against multiple Iranian-backed militia sites in Iraq.

At least six people were killed and 11 others were injured by the US-led coalition air strikes, Iraqi military said in statement.

The Iraqi military said the US-led coalition attack violated the partnership agreement. "The joint operations command strongly condemns this attack that targeted the Iraqi military establishment, which violates the principle of partnership and coalition between the Iraqi security forces and the party that planned and executed this attack." — Agencies

# Russian Prez signs reform law

**Moscow, March 14:** Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday signed the package of constitutional reforms he had proposed, including a clause giving him an option to run for two more terms.

The Kremlin has published the 68-page law spelling out the constitutional reforms on the official website. Putin's signature triggers a special procedure for the package, which differs from the way laws usually go into effect. The reforms will be sent to the Russian Constitutional Court which has a week to rule on whether to approve the law, which would reset Putin's constitutional limit on terms in power. The law will then be voted on by the Russian public.

The Kremlin has named April 22 as the day of the vote, and Russia's Senate Speaker Valentina Matvienko on Saturday told journalists that the voting "must take place despite various worries about Covid-19". Some speculated in recent weeks that the Kremlin will initiate vot-

ing over the internet, which the opposition has slammed as a sure way to falsify the result. Putin, 67, stunned the country on Tuesday when he backed a last-minute proposal to add a condition to the reform package for his possible return to the Kremlin after 2024, when he is constitutionally required to step down.

The measure, added on the day when the State Duma lower house was voting for the reforms, was swiftly passed and the bill subsequently sailed through the upper house and regional parliaments. The Russian leader had proposed to change the constitution in January, but until this week denied that he is seeking to extend his rule. His spokesman said Putin changed his mind due to global instability. The amendments also change the balance of power, increasing the role of the State Council advisory body, and giving both parliament and the president additional instruments of authority. — AFP

## Drowning of boy: 3 get 125 yrs each

**Ankara, March 14:** Three human traffickers have been sentenced in a Turkish court to 125 years each in prison over the tragic drowning in 2015 of Syrian toddler Alan Kurdi, who was pictured lying face down on a beach in a harrowing photo that became the symbol of the refugee crisis.

The men, who were the organisers of a trafficking ring, were captured by Turkish security forces this week in the southern province of Adana and sentenced on Friday, according to state news agency Anadolu. They were on the run after fleeing during their trial. Other Turkish and Syrian defendants have also received prison sentences following the toddler's death in September 2015.

The men were sentenced at the Bodrum High Criminal Court in Mugla for the crime of "killing with eventual intent". The 3-year-old's body was washed up on a beach in Bodrum, in southern Turkey, after a boat carrying refugees sank off the coast. An officer was pictured carrying the lifeless child away. The heartbreaking image of the boy on the beach went viral around the world, often with a Turkish hashtag meaning "flotsam of humanity". — Agencies

**Beirut, March 14:** At least 384,000 people have died in Syria, including more than 116,000 civilians, since the war began in March 2011, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Saturday.

Sparked by deadly repression of peaceful pro-democracy protests, the conflict has drawn in outside powers in a complex war involving rebel factions, jihadist groups and foreign interests. As the war enters its 10th year, the government of President Bashar al-Assad now controls more than 70 percent of Syrian territory, thanks to the military support of its allies Russia, Iran and Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

The conflict is the "worst man-made disaster since World War II", the United Nations human rights chief declared in 2017. The war has destroyed the economy and caused more than 11 million Syrians to flee their homes. According to the Observatory, the latest death toll includes about 22,000 children and 13,000 women. — AFP

**SU DO KU**

5		8	3		4
1	3		2		5 7
	4		6		9
		5		7	
7		5	2	3	
	6			2	
9		4		7	
2	1		5		6 9
6		9	1		2

**YESTERDAY'S ANSWER**

7	3	4	1	9	5	8	6	2
6	5	9	4	2	8	7	1	3
8	1	2	3	7	6	4	9	5
2	7	1	9	8	3	6	5	4
9	6	5	2	1	4	3	7	8
3	4	8	6	5	7	9	2	1
4	2	7	5	3	9	1	8	6
1	8	6	7	4	2	5	3	9
5	9	3	8	6	1	2	4	7

**WHAT TO DO**

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only one correct solution.

**SU DO KU 2**

5		4		3			9
	3		9				7
			8				
8	6			5		1	4
2		3				8	5
7	5			4			6 3
			7				
	7			3			4
3		2		6			7

**YESTERDAY'S ANSWER**

7	8	3	5	2	4	9	1	6
5	6	1	3	7	9	8	4	2
9	2	4	8	6	1	5	3	7
8	3	7	9	5	6	1	2	4
2	4	9	1	8	7	3	6	5
1	5	6	2	4	3	7	8	9
4	9	5	6	1	8	2	7	3
6	1	2	7	3	5	4	9	8
3	7	8	4	9	2	6	5	1

Did you think the SU DO KU on the left was easy? Try this. Check the solution tomorrow. Tips available at www.sudoku-ys.com DC-AGE SU DO KU FORUM: Discuss the SU DO KU puzzles printed and contribute mind teasers of your own at www.sudextel.com/forum



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DECCAN Chronicle

15 MARCH 2020



Vivek Shukla

Off the beaten track

Delhi's burnt mosques await a second Gandhi

After a gap of 72 years, Delhi is once again looking for another Gandhi to build more than one dozen damaged mosques in gory riot-hit parts of the capital. Remember, do not forget that after ending his last fast on January 18, 1948, to bring sanity in Delhi which was engulfed in unprecedented communal violence post Partition of the country in 1948 and three days before he was assassinated, a weak and weary 79-year-old Mahatma Gandhi was visiting the Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki Dargah at Mehrauli in South Delhi in freezing cold.

Those were the days when South Delhi was almost a barren land but for some villages beyond 1929 built Safdarjung Airport. Gandhiji reached there before eight in the morning to see the damage done to holy dargah during the communal orgy. Those were the days when he was staying at Birla House at 5, Albuquerque Road (now Tees January Marg).

Gandhi was there with Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, health minister in Nehru's cabinet. Even though it was Urs time there, yet the mood was

sombre and very depressing. After the holy place was attacked and vandalised, many local Muslims left their homes for safer places as they left even this time in riot-torn areas like Shivpuri, Chandbagh, Mustafabad and Karawal Nagar of due to fear in the worst-ever Hindu-Muslim clash here after 1947 that took the lives of over 50 people. Even staffers of the dargah abandoned it as they feared for their lives.

Writes Pyare Lal Nayar, Bapu's PA, in Mahatma Gandhi Purnahuti "Bapu was devastated to see some parts of the dargah damaged. It was being attacked by refugees coming from Pakistan. They were given make-shift accommodation close to the Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki dargah by the government."

At the dargah, Gandhiji appealed to everybody to live peacefully and asked refugees to rebuild the damaged parts of dargah. Gandhiji had also asked Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to get dargah repaired as it had sustained extensive damage during the riots.

Finally, Gandhiji asked Nehru to allocate ₹50,000 to repair the damages. Of course, it was a huge amount in those days. After his visit, Gandhi himself wrote, as per his collected works (Volume 98 p.98-99): "Esteemed as second only to the shrine at Ajmer, it (the Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki dargah) is visited every year not only by Muslims but by thousands of non-Muslims, too."

Before leaving the dargah, Gandhiji told the large assembly, "I have come on a pilgrimage. I request, Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs who have come here with cleansed hearts to take a vow that they will never allow strife to raise its head, but will live in amity, united as friends and brothers. We must purify ourselves and meet even our opponents with love."

"This shrine (the Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki dargah) was subjected to the wrath of mobs. The Muslims living in the vicinity... for the last 800 years had to leave... Though Muslims love the shrine, today no Muslim can be found anywhere near it... It is the duty of the Hindus, Sikhs, the officials and the government to open the shrine again and wash off this stain on us... The time has come when both India and Pakistan must unequivocally declare to the majorities in each country that they will not tolerate desecration of religious places, be they small or big. They should also undertake to repair the places damaged during riots," Bapu also said.

This was Bapu's second visit to Mehrauli area. He first visited there to see Qutub Minar with Hakim Azmal Khan and Kasturba Gandhi during his first visit to Delhi from April 12 to April 15, 1915.

The Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki dargah comes alive every year during autumn time when Phoolwalon ki Sair, the annual Delhi flower festival that celebrates communal harmony, takes place here. It is indeed a tribute to Gandhiji who stood firm that India has to survive on secular ethos.

The seven-day festival was revived by Nehru in 1961, who had dutifully followed the instructions of Bapu earlier and rebuilt the dargah. During the festival, both Hindus and Muslims offer a floral chaadar and pankha at the dargah. A floral pankha and canopy is offered at the ancient temple of Devi Yogmaya, too, also in Mehrauli.

Alas, Delhi does not have even a pale shadow of Gandhiji today who can embrace Muslims when they are feeling so lost, lonely and hurt in 2020. Delhi does not have any personality from the political to the religious fields who can publicly chide all those who were responsible for the senseless orgy of bloodshed and damaging of mosques.

However, the situation was not so hopeless back in 1984 when Delhi witnessed a pogrom of Sikhs after the killing of Mrs Indira Gandhi. At least, Delhi had had the likes of Atal Behari Vajpayee, Chandrasekhar, Justice R.S. Narula, Lt. General Jagjit Singh Aurora, hero of the 1971 war, noted writer Dr Maheep Singh and would-be writer Amitav Ghosh, as well as hundreds of political activists who came out to help Sikhs. Sadly, things look so dark and depressing in 2020.

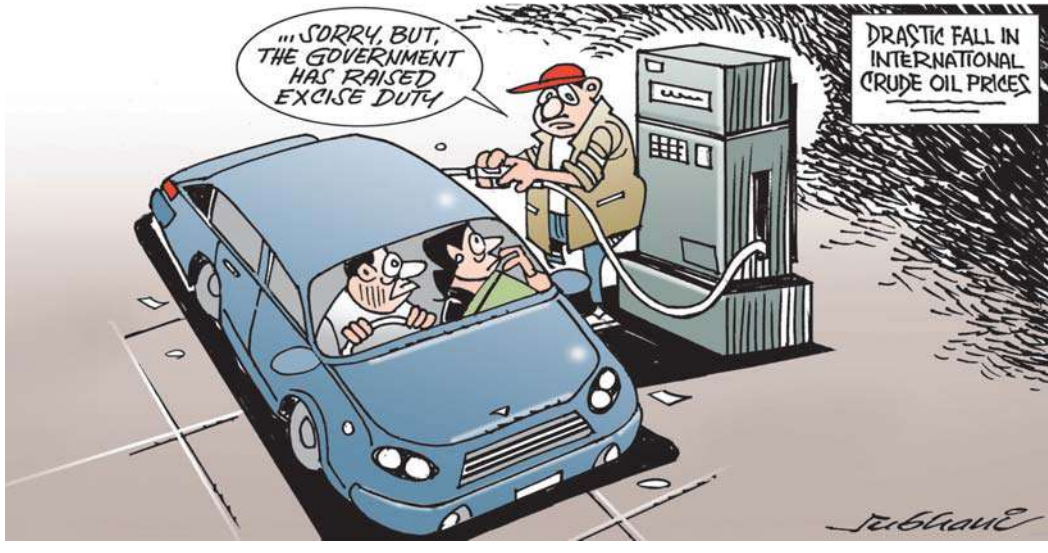
While the Delhi Waqf Board is going to start work for repair of mosques damaged in the violence, that won't serve the cause. That won't put balm on the wounds of Muslims. Will Delhi embrace Muslims and give them a bear hug? Will Hindus rebuild the damaged mosques? They must. Muslims, too, must reciprocate in terms of helping in the rehabilitation of Hindus who have suffered losses during the riots.

Vivek Shukla is a veteran journalist and the author of Gandhi's Delhi



Gandhi at the Bakhtiyar Kaki dargah

Subhani



Caste kills more in India than C-virus



Sujatha Surepally

No More Mansplaining

As long as caste in India does exist, Hindus will hardly intermarry or have any social intercourse with outsiders and if Hindus migrate to other regions on earth, Indian caste would become a world problem. — Dr B.R. Ambedkar

Most "honour killings" reported in our newspapers are caste killings, or killings in the name of caste. The issue of "honour" involves not just dominant caste families but also others. The construct of "honour" is meant to control women and curb their liberty, especially with respect to the right of choosing their life partners.

Marriage is an institution which has strengthened caste system. Caste underpins marriage and anyone who challenges it faces torture and nasty, brutish violence, frequently resulting in death. This even as the Constitution declares caste discrimination and untouchability offences.

Since formation in 2014, Telangana has witnessed at least 50 murders related to inter-caste love liaisons and marriages. In many cases, one of the partners was dalit. Desidisa, Kula Nimulana Porata Samithi, Kula Vivaksha Porata Samithi and Kulantara Vivahaala Vedika documented these cases. Several others went unreported.

A few weeks ago, US President Donald Trump and his family visited the Taj Mahal. One wonders whether Mr Trump, multiple instances of whose sexual misconduct are well-known, or Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who reportedly deserted his wife, will ever understand the language of love. As of the moment, India is fast becoming a global symbol of hatred and bigotry.

On the eve of International Women's Day, news began to break about the suicide of Maruthi Rao — at Arya Vaishya Bhavan, Khairatabad. Rao had been accused of murdering Pranay Perumalla, a young dalit, in September 2018. He had allegedly killed him for marrying his only daughter, Amruta Varshini. Amruta belongs to the Vaishya community. Pranay's murder had sparked outrage almost equal to that caused by Rohith Vemula's suicide in 2016.

While Pranay was killed, Amruta was trolled on social media by Vaishyas. She was condemned for having been an unfaithful daughter. Even though Pranay was dead, the trolls did not spare him either, accusing him of covetousness. Not a word was said to Rao for having so viciously ended a young life.

Rao, his brother Shraavan and five other accomplices in Pranay's murder were in jail for some time. After coming out on bail, Rao tried his best to bring his daughter home. He was rebuffed by Amruta. She was committed to raising her newborn boy in the company and care of her in-laws.

That rebuff drove Rao to suicide. And the trolling started again. This time, Amruta was held responsible for her father's death. Clearly, the trolls had not been chastened by the depth of the tragedy.

Police reports, mean-

In February 2019, there were two other murders — those of Shushruta, a dalit pharmacy graduate, and her baby, Devansh. They were burnt alive by Ramesh, the husband, who belongs to a backward class.

On the eve of Women's Day, news began to break about the suicide of Maruthi Rao in Khairatabad. Rao had been accused of murdering Pranay Perumalla, a young dalit, for marrying his daughter, in 2018.

while, say that another body had been found, this time at Rao's farmhouse, a month back. Pranay's murder case was also coming to trial after police filed a 1,600-page chargesheet. Relatives say there was also an ongoing property dispute between Rao and his brother. Perhaps, Rao sought solace in Amruta's return, but she was steadfast and that did not come about.

The problem is the fact that no one shamed Rao right at the start. This is the reason why caste murders are so common in our society. In 2018, Gaddi Kumar, belonging to the Yadav community, was found dead in Shankarapatnam of Karimnagar district. It is said that he had been in love with a Goud girl. The girl went on to reveal that her relatives had killed him.

In 2017, Manthani Madhukar, a dalit man, was killed; sparking off outrage and resulting in a second post-mortem after politicians and relatives of the Munnuru Kapu girl he had been dating tried to pass off his death as suicide. Till date, the post-mortem report hasn't come out.

A few days after Pranay's murder, Sandeep, a dalit man, was attacked for marrying Madhavi, an upper caste woman, by Madhavi's father, Manohara Chary near Gokul Theatre in Hyderabad. Both suffered injuries. Madhavi is still undergoing surgeries. Sandeep's mother, a widow, is taking care of her despite financial stress.

In February 2019, there were two other murders — those of Shushruta, a dalit pharmacy graduate, and her four-month-old boy, Devansh. They were burnt alive by Ramesh, the husband, who

belongs to a backward class. The incident happened at Ghatkeswar near Hyderabad. Shushruta had been tortured from day one by her in-laws. She had been driven out of her marital home. Shushruta struggled for justice, knocked on the doors of every institution, including the state human rights commission. She had wanted to challenge her husband who said, "dalit women do not stick to one person, they have loose morals".

If we collect data nationwide, we will find more people dying of "honour killings" than on the border or of an epidemic. These days, parents match the financial status of the bride and groom before agreeing to a marriage. But when it comes to marrying dalits, women are deserted and men murdered.

There is another difference when it comes to dalit men and women. When a dalit man marries a dominant caste woman, it is called an Ambedkarite marriage. If something similar is done by a woman, it is still seen as betrayal by the family.

The important question is, how successful are parentally arranged marriages?

It is shocking to hear a woman police officer say that children who marry of their own choice are being unfaithful to their parents. India boasts of being a progressive society and now with the visit of Mr Trump, the Indian diaspora, too, wants us to believe that we have reached the pinnacle of progress. But we are utterly wrong in treating marriage as a family affair, outside the purview of the courts and the law.

The fact is that we have failed to understand simple truths necessary for the success of the family. No family will survive unless we respect the individual's freedoms. Love, failed or successful, erases the manmade gap between castes and religions, gives hope to a society.

Sujatha Surepally is a professor of sociology at Satvahaana University and a dalit and women's rights activist

LETTERS

CORONAVIRUS

We parents are concerned about schools functioning amidst the Covid-19 outbreak. The state has reported multiple cases and it is becoming increasingly unsafe to send children to schools. Some states have postponed the reopening date of schools and I believe the government should impose the rules for all schools to be postponed until the situation is under control. The matter needs to be looked into at the earliest as such viruses can spread quickly in mass gatherings.

Dr Uma Karri Hyderabad

When the whole world, including the US is on high alert due to threat of coronavirus, and closing down mass gatherings, including imposing curbs on visas, and asking people to work from home, it is high time the Chief Minister closes schools without taking chances. Further, he can cancel all final examinations for school children this year and promote everyone to next academic year by barring exams. The portions remaining can be covered in the beginning of next academic year.

R. Manohar Hyderabad

With many schools and cinema theatres shut down across the country, including major sporting events like the IPL, it is time the government does its bit to stop religious congregations at mosques, temples and churches. Religious leaders need to be sensitized about the risks to people from Covid-19. A large number of worshippers are senior citizens who are vulnerable to the disease.

M. Saleemuddin Hyderabad

All organisations both government, private and educational institutions may cancel seminars, meetings, etc for at least a month. We see many global meetings being held in Hyderabad despite the virus scare. Let us help ourselves and help our nation in preventing the spread of this dreadful disease.

A.S. Murthy Hyderabad

When Covid-19 is a worry all over the world and scientists and rulers are engaged in finding solution to this pandemic, the least that world leaders can do is to forget about cultural differences and concentrate on spreading awareness among citizens about the severity of the epidemic and the precautions to be followed. Our origins or culture is not a question now and the utmost priority is to stop this dreadful disease.

M.P. Nair Secunderabad

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

US Rejects Afro-Asian demands

UNITED NATIONS, (New York), March 14

The United States today dismissed Afro-Asian demands that all communications should be cut off with Rhodesia and that U.N. sanctions against the Salisbury

regime should be extended to include South

Africa and Portugal. Addressing the U.N. Security Council U.S. Ambassador Charles Yost said, "the cutting off of communications would not contribute to a solution of the problem, but end to harden further the attitudes of the illegal minority regime."

Scindia drama: Nephew makes life difficult for aunt Yashodhara

Season of friendship

Jyotiraditya Scindia's defection from the Congress party took everyone by surprise including his two politician aunts — Vasundhara and Yashodhara Raje Scindia. While both were quick to welcome him "home" i.e. the BJP, Yasho is particularly impacted. The youngest daughter of Rajmata Vijaya Raje Scindia was until now the BJP face in Gwalior-Chambal region. Nephew Jyotiraditya's entry is set to make him the focus of BJP politics. Sensing the changed equations, Yasho is busy burying her dif-

ferences with Shivraj Singh Chouhan who, incidentally, is getting set to return as chief minister of Madhya Pradesh.

Narottam, Jaitley or Islam?

So who was responsible for bringing Jyotiraditya Scindia into the BJP? Several names are doing the rounds. A little-known BJP spokesman, former banker Zafar Islam, is getting credit while BJP leader Narottam Mishra from Datia is seen as the man who worked behind the scenes. Some

BJP leaders think late Arun Jaitley had convinced Scindia to change sides but he did not live to see the outcome. The Scindia family has been close to Jaitley for decades.

Shivakumar's gain

The Congress is still in shock over Scindia's exit. However, some things changed soon after his defection. In Karnataka, a long-pending issue of the new state unit chief was clinched swiftly. D.K. Shivkumar was named KPCC chief at the risk of resistance from Siddaramaiah and



By WAQYANAWIS

other faction-leaders in the state. Apparently Shivakumar was reluctant to "rescue" rebel Congress MLAs from Madhya Pradesh who were brought to Bangalore without having the formal designation of Karnataka party chief.

Raja loses out

Prashant Kishor has started advising the DMK's M.K. Stalin, but he has also started ruffling feathers. For one, he has reportedly been telling Stalin that DMK should go it alone in Tamil Nadu by drop-

ping the baggage of the Congress party and the communists. His advice seems to have started having an impact. The DMK didn't even have a cursory talk with its allies before sending the nominees for the Rajya Sabha. CPI general secretary D. Raja was nursing a hope of returning to the Rajya Sabha with the help of the DMK. But he only came to know about the DMK's own nominees when the list came out.

The writer is a keen observer of the goings-on in backrooms of power



# Hear the immigrant ask again, do good or do well?



**Neha Bhatt**  
review

In Aravind Adiga's tense, bruising new novel, *Amnesty*, the most physically striking thing about the protagonist Danny, short for Dhananjaya Rajaratnam, is the blond highlights in his hair. Or so he imagines, with his own attention often drawn to his coloured hair to consider the ways in which it presents him to the world and makes him stand out.

But Danny is trying hard to fit in, to be less visible, by adopting distinctly Australian ways, to master the Australian tongue, to say "I reckon" generously and tie his sentences with "ridiculous" at the end. He slips up occasionally and immediately fears the consequences, for he has plenty to lose. Danny is a Sri Lankan immigrant working as a "legendary" cleaner in Sydney, with a loyal clientele thanks to his careful, efficient housecleaning skills. But his secret is this: he came to Australia on a student visa four years ago, dropped out of the college that turned out to be more a racket than education, and with refugee status denied, is now living in the country illegally. He's at the mercy of a grocery store owner who knows his vulnerable status and allows him to live in the backroom of his shop as long as he gets a cut of his pay.

The suspenseful, often breathless, novel unfolds over a day, with events in the present packed into the precise brackets of a ticking clock. At 8.46 am, Danny has a seat by the window in the train,

**In *Amnesty*, Danny's magnetic, sharply witty voice is doing the telling. In Danny's view, Sydney is divided in two kinds of suburbs, 'thick bum' and 'thin bum' — the working class and the thin, fit, rich youngsters who get their homes cleaned by people like Danny.**

running his fingers through his golden hair, tensing when he feels someone watching him. By 9.47 am, as Danny goes about his day cleaning homes, he hears there's been a murder, and the victim was one of his clients, Radha Thomas. And if he's to be perfectly honest, the murderer, too, is likely one of his clients, who was having an affair with Radha. Danny should be calling the police, telling them what he knows. But if he does make the call, he is sure to get deported, and worse.

By 11.43 am, Danny is having uncomfortable phone chats with the client he suspects to be the murderer, and a strange, eerie cat-and-mouse game begins. Meanwhile, detailed flashbacks take us to Danny's past: his early years in Sydney and the struggles back home in Sri Lanka, and this is where the novel derails, slowing down, loosely written, but mercifully pulled back to the tracks as it races to the finish.

This sharply observed immigrant story hinges on that time-tested, devastating moral question: should you save yourself or do the right thing? This choice acquires even graver tones given Danny's situation living on the margins. The *White Tiger* author is obviously intensely invested in telling the underdog story several times over; but it is his ability at being able to tell them afresh from varied angles operating within entirely different universes that shines. Sydney as it swings between the lives of those who are made to belong and those who don't is acutely captured through Danny's eyes. As *Amnesty's* narrative dives deeper into the toxic, exploitative nature of Danny's association with Radha and her lover, whose messy affair Danny becomes an unwitting witness to, Adiga craftily peels away the psychology of a man in search of his rightful place in the world, a man frequently mocked even by those his own colour as he maintains a powerful dignity.

As Danny tastes the difference between living as a minority in Sydney, with a steady Vietnamese girlfriend, Sonja, versus his life back in the mysterious, lagooned Batticaloa in Sri Lanka with its stories of singing fish and mermaids, he wrestles with the affliction of a deep dichotomy. Adiga's novel feels pertinent and timely in a moment when the immigrant experience has become the story of our time, and how it's told and

who tells it is in question.

There is no doubt that in *Amnesty*, Danny's uniquely magnetic, sharply witty voice is doing the telling. Adiga gets under his skin and inhabits the city as he would, a city Danny views as divided in two kinds of suburbs, "thick bum" and "thin bum" — the former occupied by the working class, the latter by the thin, fit, rich youngsters who get their homes cleaned by people like Danny. For his survival, Danny is at the mercy of others, in a matter of universal social injustice. But when it's in his power to bring justice to another, he is once again made powerless by the system. By 2.46 pm, the detective from Homicide is on call with him, asking what he knows. How much should he tell?

There is a difference, believes Danny, between him and the other illegals. "For them, shame was an atmospheric force, pressing down from the outside; in him, it bubbled up from within. Even if I were granted citizenship in this country, I would still be ashamed of myself." By 7 pm, Danny would perhaps see himself a little differently. The reason *Amnesty* works is because it has a golden heart, like the tips of Danny's hair. And a hero who isn't invisible at all.

*Neha Bhatt is an independent journalist and book critic based in Delhi. She tweets @nehahhatt70 and @bookishbadish on insta.*

## Once lured by the Canadian dream, a 'good wife' grows up



**Kulbir Kaur**  
review

The first question which lingers on the mind of the reader, after reading the first few pages, is this — why did Samra agree to marry a man 11 years her senior whom she had never met and above all, especially, when her father asked her repeatedly, even on

the day of wedding, to not to go for it? Maybe, in addition to sharing borders, history and culture, Indians and Pakistanis also share their fascination for foreign lands, and in this case, Canada appeared to be the Prince Charming riding on a horse of opportunities. How could she reject something that was the envy of all her friends and young cousins? (p.17). So the use of the expression, "escaping the life I never chose", seems inappropriate.

The entire book, a personal journey, centres on the notion of "patriarchy" and a struggle of a young mother to shake off its tentacles and chalk out her own path. Do you know why the patriarchal system, despite its oppressive nature, has managed to survive for so many centuries? It is us, the women, who have completely internalised its ethos and always look for excuses to justify its hold over the female sex.

Samra, a young girl, "gold-star-student", who loves to play outdoor games like cricket and tennis and climb trees, is born in a family where "education and learning were family pastimes". When in school, she not only formed a girls' cricket team but also started a school newspaper. Just like hundreds of small girls, she also faced male abuse and inappropriate touching early in life.

A bright girl with immense hunger for perfection who wanted to be a "cricket columnist", Samra soon faced a new chapter of her life when at the tender age of 17 she was cajoled into accepting a marriage proposal to a man much senior to her and hence moved to Canada.

The following years in Canada were characterised by the stages mentioned in "Cycle of Abuse" (p.231). During the "tension period", her husband, the abuser, would get angry and annoyed with her. Samra, the abused, felt uneasy and submitted to her abuser to avoid conflict. The next stage, "incident or acting out", marked the onset of emotional, physical and sexual abuse, followed by a "honeymoon period" (apologies and promises for a better future) and finally the "calm period" when Samra believed that it wouldn't be repeated. But the rhythm of her married life followed the cycle of abuse so often that she decided to move out and be her own person. She did not want her daughters to live in a house marked by domestic violence as she had done. The author, when a child, would hide in the closet along with her sisters to escape her parents' fights and very early in life had realised that "home was an unpredictable place" (p.21).

Though her relationship with her husband forms the core idea of the book, another bond with its bitter-sweet taste is also prominent in her writing. Samra and Amma, her mother-in-law, were competitors sometimes, friends too when Amma gifted her an eye-shadow compact, business partners and then opponents, if not enemies. Samra opines that it is essential for women to come together, push boundaries and support each other. Empowered women empower women. Education and the support of some people gave her "wings to fly" and allowed her to dream. Winner of the prestigious John H. Moss Scholarship, she graduated from the University of Toronto in June 2013 and with the publication of her personal story, her life took a different turn.

Having experienced abuse and bravely escaping it through her sheer hard work and steely determination, Samra, now an educator and a motivational public speaker, is a source of inspiration for millions of women. She rightly points out that "many are still struggling for the basic rights of safety and respect". Even in Canada, around 6,000 women and children are forced to sleep in an emergency shelter every night to escape domestic violence.

There is a flow in the story and one can experience all the emotions, especially if you happen to be a woman. The authoritative male family system, sexual violence, ambition, love, jealousy, struggle, compromise, manliness, hijab, talaq, domestic violence and above all, what it means to be a "man-less" woman in society (p. 298). There is also an interesting contrast between Ruwais (UAE) and Pakistan. Unlike Ruwais, "For young girls in Pakistan, there was no playing outdoors or riding our bikes. No tennis or squash or cricket. And when we went outside, we had to leave our jeans and T-shirts tucked in the closet" (p.5).

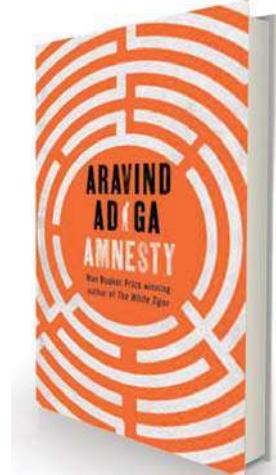
Some of the parts stay with you — moments when she slips back into her past life doubting her decision, being shaken by the treatment meted out to a "separated woman", her humiliation at the food bank and her being tricked into an elevator and abused by a neighborhood uncle.

Can you blame her entirely for this initial submission, surrender and resignation? Be it her mother, her husband or relatives, they have all been programming into her albeit-wrong notions about how a woman, a good wife, should behave. When one of the relatives once asked Samra, "What's the point of winning awards and scholarships if you failed at the real purpose of being a woman?" the question stays with her. But, as the personal journey of the author shows, "real women" decide their own purpose. This is summarised by Samra beautifully when she says, "my honour lies in my freedom to be [the best] me — unapologetically".

*Kulbir Kaur teaches sociology at Shyama Prasad Mukherji College, Delhi University*



**A GOOD WIFE: ESCAPING THE LIFE I NEVER CHOSE**  
by Samra Zafar  
PenguinRandomHouse, ₹499



**AMNESTY**  
By Aravind Adiga  
Pan Macmillan, ₹699

## 'I haven't written my best story'

On the sidelines of the Jaipur Literature Fest, **MANORANJAN BYAPARI** tells **SUCHETA DASGUPTA** all about what informs his craft, why he would appreciate a break from the school kitchen and what it takes to become a writer of award-winning stories.

**Manoranjan Byapari**  
**Q&A**



**You are a working class hero and a man of many adventures. To inform our readers, could you tell us the different places you have lived in? What are the many jobs that you did for a living?**

My jobs? I have been a goatherd, a tea shop help, a porter, a rickshaw driver, a night guard, a sweeper, a crematorium guard, a cook and so many other things. I was born in Barisal, Bangladesh. I have lived in the Bankura Shiromanipur camp, Siliguri, Jalpaiguri, Lucknow, Bastar, Kolkata and one or two other places as well. I have lived many lives in one, and I drew on them all to write my novel, *Chhera Chhera Jeebon (Life in Slices)*.

**When did you go to prison and for what reason? How many months did you spend behind bars? When and how did you secure your release?**

It was the end of 1974 or perhaps the early part of 1975. A case of rioting and attempt to murder was lodged under sections 147, 148 and 307 of the IPC. I spent 26 months in jail. The hearings went on for some more time until I was exonerated.

**When and how did you meet Shankar Guha Niyogi and what was the nature of your interaction with him?**

I used to be part of a rickshaw drivers' trade union and I came into conflict with CITU [Centre of Indian Trade Unions]. They wanted us to join them but we had seen that they would take subscription

from us and disappear when we really needed help. Then they would force us to strike work and ferry voters for free during elections. When we did not agree to joining them, they beat us up. So I left West Bengal and went to Chhattisgarh. My father had once lived there. I began putting up in Bastar. I had heard of Mr Niyogi's good work in Dalli. He had been mobilising support for a Lok Sabha candidate in Dandakaranya and we joined him. That's how I met him. I had been working under him for the Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha since 1989. In 1991, he was shot dead.

**You have written about Harichand Thakur, the founder of the Matua sect of the Vaishnavas. What is it about Harichand Thakur that you felt needed documentation?**

Harichand Thakur led a fight against brahminism. He founded a religious cult in which he said there was no need to follow ritual. He opposed the requirement of priests for conducting worship. He was influenced by Buddhism. Yet some people have turned him into an incarnation of Vishnu and brought him right back into the mainstream Hindu fold. Thus his movement has been brought down. So I researched his life and wrote *Matua Ek Muktisena (Freedom Fighters of Matua)*. It was to preserve his legacy for the future generations.

**Who are the other heroes of**

**the Namasudras?**  
Jogendranath Mandal is the greatest political leader of the Namasudras. He was the man who has contributed most in terms of sending B.R. Ambedkar to the Constituent Assembly. Vallabhbhai Patel and his group had got him defeated in Maharashtra. It was Jogen Mandal who brought him to East Bengal, canvassed for votes on his behalf and got him to win the crucial ballot that sent him to the Constituent Assembly.

**Do you write about the future or the past? Have you ever felt you lost a story because you lived through it until there was nothing left to write about?**

I have lost many stories. But I haven't written my best story yet. When I write it, I will feel that I have written everything, I will no longer wish to write anymore. I write about the future, too, and I write for the future, and to help build a better future.

**What is the most satisfying piece you have written and why?**  
Every piece I write I feel happy I

have written it. Two of my novels I waited long to write. One was *Matua Ek Muktisena*. The other was *Maron Sagor Pare (Beyond Death's Shore)*.

**What is the connect between reading and writing? Do you find time to read?**

The person who does not want to read cannot write. If you don't read a hundred books, you cannot write one of your own. It's not just about the information — how else will you know about switching perspective and about different styles of writing?

**Who is your favourite writer and why?**

I have four favourite writers — Mahasweta Devi, Samaresh Basu, Shrilal Shukla and Jajabar (Binoy Mukhopadhyay). Let me tell you about Shrilal Shukla's *Raag Darbari*. It is set in Bihar where homes are built so close to one another that they don't paint the outer walls. A motherless girl is told by her father — do not go out the door. There are men outside waiting to do evil things to you. The girl is a faithful daughter. She doesn't disobey her dad. So she has never stepped outside the door. Whenever she needs anything, she jumps from terrace to terrace to go wherever she wants to go. As I said, it is all about perspective.

**You call yourself a chandal both by caste and by temperament. What is your comment on Kamalkumar Mazumdar's *Antarjali Yatra* which revolves around just such a character? Kamalababu should have made the girl live and elope with the chandal.**

**Describe your wife. How did you meet her?**

My wife is a very good girl. It is because she has stood by me through thick and thin that I can

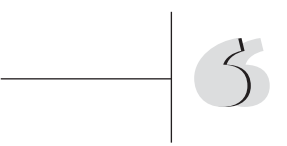
write my stories. I met her when I had fought off some people trying to abduct her. Later on, we became friends. I went to the orphanage where she lived and they arranged our marriage.

**What is your next project?**

I had lived with adivasis and observed them closely while I was working with Shankar Guha Niyogi. Their society, culture, and even sexual mores are very different from others. Have you heard of ghotul? Besides that, they barter their produce and there is relative prosperity. There is no feudalism. I had written a novella, *Onyo Bhuban (A Different World)*, on their lives. Now they will republish it, so I am adding a few pages.

**Does casteism exist in Bengal? How does it play out in Bengali society today?**

Casteism doesn't exist in West Bengal the way it does in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh or Bihar. There is no untouchability. Low caste people cook in dominant caste homes and they eat the food. The trouble begins when a lower caste person acquires education or relative power and prosperity. When they see them as a rival, the upper caste people will plot to stop his progress. Manoranjan Byapari has won a Sahitya Akademi award, the 24 Ghanata award, the Gateway Litfest Writer of the Year, the Hindu prize. He got shortlisted for the JCB Prize and the DSC Prize. He is a writer, no doubt, but he must still cook for a living. For five years, he has been requesting the state government of West Bengal for lighter work because his knees have been operated upon, so he cannot stand for too long, but no. The man has published 18-20 books, what more does he want to write? This is how casteism works; it decides on your behalf, it clips your wings, it curtails you.



**Rebecca Solnit**, mother of the term, 'mansplaining', with her 2014 essay collection (*Men Explain Things to Me*) on the theme, has written her first memoir. This time, her work is much more than a feminist manifesto — it is an exploration of the feminine experience of emotional power play and intimacy. *Recollections of My Nonexistence* is its curious title. Says a reviewer, to read Solnit is to brush up against emotions and intuitions you almost don't recognise, because language is seldom used to approach them.

## Tales from behind the veil: Moroccan women talk about lies and sex



**Alex Peake-Tomkinson**  
review

The Moroccan-born Leila Slimani has made her name writing novels of propulsive intensity. *Lullaby*, the story of a nanny who kills the two children in her care, was the first to be published in English (it was also the most read book in France in 2016). *Adele*, about a sex addict who takes little pleasure from increasingly violent and self-destructive sexual encounters, came next. It was while on a book tour of Morocco discussing *Adele* that Slimani hit on the idea for *Sex and Lies*. Many young women

**A radio presenter mentions a 13-year-old who called in, explaining her father married her to one of his mates. The girl said: 'I want to go to secondary school and play with my friends. Can you call my husband? I would really like to satisfy him but he doesn't want to touch me.'**

approached her at readings, wanting to tell her about their own sexual experiences, and it is these stories — that "shook

me, upset me, that angered and sometimes disgusted me" — that she has collected in this slim volume. In her introduction, Slimani references Scheherazade and says it is "because she reclaims her right to tell her own tale that she becomes not merely the object but the subject of the story". Slimani also pays tribute to the courage of her interviewees in overcoming *hshouma* (shame) to speak about their experiences.

There is plenty of horror here. A radio presenter mentions a 13-year-old girl who called in, explaining that her

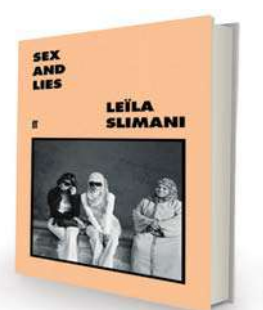
father had married her to one of his mates. The girl said: "I want to go to secondary school and play with my friends. Can you call my husband? I would really like to satisfy him but he doesn't want to touch me."

There is also much baroque detail — a fatwa, for instance, banned women from touching bananas and cucumbers because they look like the male sex organ. Much of this is fascinating, but since Slimani sets no boundaries around her study, it is hard to know what it all amounts to.

In the same way that Lisa Taddeo's bestselling *Three*

*Women*, published last year, was criticised for showing only a partial view of female sexuality (the women were all white, under 40 and predominantly straight), one can't gain much of an overview of Moroccan women's sexuality from these pages. Perhaps because the stories are told in the women's own words, they don't live in quite the same way as Slimani's fiction does. But the author deserves credit for giving a voice to those for whom 'just being myself is activism'.

*By arrangement with the Spectator*



**SEX AND LIES**  
by Leila Slimani  
Faber, £12.99



IN BRIEF

Rwanda's first patient is Indian

**Kigali:** An Indian national in Rwanda has been tested positive for the novel Covid-19, becoming the first confirmed case of Covid-19 in the east African country, health officials said on Saturday. The country's health ministry, in a statement, said that the Indian citizen arrived here from Mumbai on March 8. "The patient had no symptoms upon arrival in Rwanda and reported himself to a health facility on March 13, where he was immediately tested," the ministry said on Twitter. He is currently under treatment in stable condition, isolated from other patients, the statement said, adding that the tracing of all contacts has been conducted for further management. This is the second case in east Africa, after Kenya recorded the first case of Covid-19 on Friday. The deadly novel Covid-19 that first originated in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December last year has claimed over 5,000 lives.

Swiss army to help fight virus

**Geneva:** Switzerland's armed forces said Saturday that the army is prepared to deploy to help in the battle against the Covid-19 pandemic, which has infected more than 1,000 people in the country. The army will as of Monday deploy one of its four hospital battalions, army chief Thomas Sussli said in a tweet. The battalion will be carry out a "special service towards the security and protection of us all," he wrote. While he did not clarify the specific service to be provided, he pointed out that more than 90 percent of the personnel in Switzerland's hospital battalions "work in other professions, but have civilian-recognised, military-acquired basic care training." Army spokesman Daniel Reist said that the battalion, made up of between 500 and 600 people, will be prepared to support work at hospitals across the country if requested.

LatAm toll rises to five

**Montevideo:** Argentina announced its second Covid-19-related death on Friday as Ecuador reported its first, taking the total death toll in Latin America to five as the virus shows signs of spreading rapidly. Venezuela, Uruguay, Guatemala and Suriname reported their first cases of the Covid-19 pandemic. Overall cases in the region have more than doubled in the last two days to over 340 as the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) warned governments on Thursday to prepare their health services to cope. Several Latin American countries have tightened restrictions on travel links with Europe, from where many people in the region are descended and still have family. A 61-year-old Argentine man who returned from Italy on February 24 and had previously suffered from pneumonia died of "respiratory failure," the Chaco provincial health ministry said in a statement.

43M-YR-OLD PENGUIN FOSSIL FOUND

**Buenos Aires, March 14:** Argentine researchers have announced the discovery of fossilized skin on the remains of the wing of a 43-million-year-old penguin on Marambio Island in the Antarctic. The fossil was actually discovered during a research mission in 2014. The fossil was then studied at the La Plata Museum by Argentine paleontologist Carolina Acosta Hospitaleche, the agency for scientific disclosure at La Matanza National University said on Friday. The fossilized skin belongs to the Palaeudyptes gunnari, one of the many extinct types of penguins that lived in Antarctica during the Eocene period, which lasted from around 56 to 34 million years ago. At that time, Antarctica was covered in woodland and boasted a diverse fauna. "The fossilization of the skin of this wing is unique because it's the first conserved example in the world of a penguin with skin," said Acosta Hospitaleche. "The skin was conserved as a fossil on both surfaces of its wing, enveloping the bones that have remained articulated in their original position," she added.



Shoppers are faced with partially empty shelves at a supermarket in London on Saturday, as consumers worry about product shortages, leading to the stockpiling of household products due to the outbreak of the novel Covid-19. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who has faced criticism for his country's light touch approach to tackling the Covid-19 outbreak, is preparing to review its approach and ban mass gatherings, according to government sources Saturday.

Trump declares emergency as Covid-19 crisis deepens in US

**Washington, March 14:** US President Donald Trump on Friday declared a national emergency over the novel Covid-19, unlocking up to \$50 billion in federal funds to combat the fast-spreading pandemic that has killed over 5,000 people and triggered fears that the deadly outbreak will lead to a global economic recession. The announcement came as infections and deaths soared in Europe, with the World Health Organisation (WHO) calling the continent the pandemic's current epicentre. The deadly virus, which has killed over 5,000 people globally, including 41 in America has spread to 46 of the 50 US States, with nearly 2,000 cases being reported from across the country. "It could get worse. The next eight weeks are critical," Trump told a press conference at the Rose Garden in the White House. "To unleash the full power of the federal government today I'm officially declaring a national emergency," he announced and said that the action will open up access to up to \$50 billion in the fight against Covid-19. The declaration of a national emergency, a rarely used presidential power, allows the Federal Emergency Management Agency to assist state and local governments and coordinate the nation's response to the crisis. The deadly virus, which originated in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December last year, has infected more than 134,000 people globally.

President says he will most likely be tested for contagion

**Washington, March 14:** US President Donald Trump said he will most likely be tested for the novel Covid-19, stressing that he had displayed no symptoms. "I didn't say I wasn't going to be tested. Most likely, yeah," Trump said on Friday. His remark came after he was repeatedly asked at a press conference at the White House Rose Garden as to why he was not undergoing tests given that he had last weekend met a Brazilian official who was found positive for the virus later. Trump had met Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and his communications chief Fabio Wajngarten at his Florida resort Mar-a-Lago. Wajngarten tested positive for the virus, while Bolsonaro tested negative. "Not for that reason, but because I think I will do it anyway,"

Trump said, two days after the White House said there was no need for the president to undergo tests for the Covid-19. The US president said the tests would be conducted "fairly soon". "We're working on that. We're working out a schedule," he said. To a question, Trump said he has "no symptoms" of the virus. "We have no symptoms whatsoever. We had a great meeting with the president of Brazil, Bolsonaro, great guy, very, very tremendous. He's doing a fantastic job for Brazil. He tested negative, meaning nothing wrong this morning," he said. "We got that word too because we did have dinner with him. We were sitting next to each other for a long period of time," Trump said, adding that he sat with Bolsonaro for

probably two hours, "but he's tested negative, so that's good". Earlier this week, White House Press Secretary Stephanie Grisham had said, "The President has not received Covid-19 testing because he has neither had prolonged close contact with any known Covid-19 patients, nor does he have any symptoms." "President Trump remains in excellent health, and his physician will continue to closely monitor him," the press secretary had said. The White House Medical Unit and the United States Secret Service has been working closely with various agencies to ensure every precaution is taken to keep the first and second Families, and all White House staff healthy. —PTI

RELIEF BILL: FREE TESTING BESIDES PAID SICK LEAVE

**Washington, March 14:** The Democratic-controlled House, with President Donald Trump's support, early Saturday passed a bill to provide free testing for the Covid-19, as well as paid sick and family leave, strengthened unemployment insurance and increased food aid to ease the hardship on families. The legislation will be taken up by the Senate next week. It would require paid leave for workers who contract the virus or who care for those who do and additional food aid for the poor and senior citizens. For most people, the virus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, it is more severe illness, including pneumonia. —AP

VIRUS 'THEORY': U.S. SUMMONS CHINESE ENVOY

**Washington, March 14:** The United States on Friday summoned China's ambassador after a senior official in Beijing tweeted the "ridiculous" suggestion that the US military started the COVID-19 pandemic, the State Department said. David Stilwell, the top US diplomat for Asia, issued a "stern representation" to Ambassador Cui Tiankai a day after foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian tweeted the conspiracy theory. "China is seeking to deflect criticism for its role in starting a global pandemic and not telling the world," a State Department official said. "Spreading conspiracy theories is dangerous and ridiculous." —AFP

Like Europe, UK to ban all large events

**London, March 14:** British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who has faced criticism for his country's light touch approach to tackling the Covid-19 outbreak, is preparing to review its approach and ban mass gatherings, according to government sources on Saturday. Emergency legislation is due to be passed next week in parliament and the ban would come into force from next weekend. The legislation could see the cancellation of events such as the Wimbledon tennis tournament and the Glastonbury music festival, due to begin at the end of June, as well as major horse races including Royal Ascot and Grand National. The government's current plan is to delay the peak of the outbreak until the weather becomes warmer to cushion the blow on the health services, and the advice so far is for people who show symptoms to self isolate for a week. The health officials advising the government argue that taking drastic measures too early would have only limited benefit and would risk tiring a population before the peak of the crisis. —AFP

es, and gives doctors, hospitals and healthcare providers maximum flexibility to respond to the virus and care for patients. "We will remove or eliminate every obstacle necessary to deliver our people the care that they need and that they are entitled," Trump said, announcing a new partnership with the private sector to vastly increase and accelerate the capacity to conduct tests for the virus. "We want to make sure that those who need a test can get a test very safely, quickly and conveniently. But we don't want people to take a test if we feel that they shouldn't be doing it and we don't want everyone running out and taking tests," he said, adding that tests should be taken "only if you have certain symptoms". —PTI

With 97 fatalities, Iran toll up to 611

**Tehran, March 14:** Iranian state TV said on Saturday the new Covid-19 outbreak has killed another 97 people, pushing the death toll in the country to 611 amid 12,729 confirmed cases. Iran is suffering from the worst outbreak in the Middle East. The virus has also infected a number of senior officials there. Saudi Arabia earlier said it would halt all international flights to the kingdom for two weeks in the latest effort to contain the spread of the new virus. Gulf nations have been scrambling to contain the pandemic, which has spread to more than 100 countries and infected more than 130,000 people. For most people, the new Covid-19 causes only mild

or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people recover from the new virus in a matter of weeks, but the outbreak has caused more than 5,000 deaths worldwide. The state-run Saudi Press Agency, quoting an unnamed Interior Ministry official, said flights would be cancelled starting Sunday. In the United Arab Emirates, health officials ordered the elderly to stay home because of the Covid-19 outbreak and authorities said some federal employees could begin work from home. —AP

Spain counts 1,500 new cases in 1 day

**Madrid, March 14:** Spain confirmed more than 1,500 new cases of Covid-19 between Friday and Saturday raising its total to 5,753 cases, the second-highest number in Europe after Italy. The country was expected to declare a state of alert on Saturday to try to mobilise resources to combat the virus, which has so far killed 136 people in Spain. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez was due to speak at a cabinet meeting at 1300 GMT to announce the state of alert and new measures expected to limit the movement of people. On Friday said the government would adopt a series of extraordinary measures in order "to mobilise all the resources of state to better protect the health of all of its citizens". The number of cases in Spain has increased tenfold

● **CHINA'S DECISION** to shutdown Covid-19-hit Wuhan city and the national emergency response delayed the spread of the virus to other Chinese cities by nearly three days and the overall efforts had cut the number of confirmed cases outside the city by 7.44 lakhs in mid-February, an international study has said. The Wuhan travel ban alone had reduced 202,000 cases in China since Sunday, and bars, restaurants and all sporting and cultural institutions have been closed. The Madrid region, which is the country's worst-hit with nearly 3,000 cases, has ordered the closure of all non-essential businesses. —AFP

<p><b>120</b> Covid-19 fatalities and 4,200 infections in Spain have compelled the government to declare a state of alert over the rapid spread of the virus, said Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.</p>	<p>Russia will close its land borders with Poland and Norway to foreigners in a bid to limit the spread of the new Covid-19.</p>
<p><b>146</b> South Africans repatriated from China on Saturday over the Covid-19 pandemic, the health ministry said. It is the first such movement of citizens by a sub-Saharan country.</p>	<p>Denmark will close its borders to foreigners from Saturday.</p>
<p><b>24</b> March: Date till when the Czech government has closed most shops, restaurants and pubs in a bid to stem the spread of the novel Covid-19. The measure does not apply to shops selling food and electronics, pharmacies or petrol stations.</p>	<p>Pakistan on Friday ordered the closure of all education institutions in the country till April 5 in view of the Covid-19 outbreak.</p>
<p>International visitors to New Zealand must self-isolate for 14 days upon arrival to help slow the spread of the new Covid-19, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said Saturday.</p>	<p>Colombia President Iván Duque has ordered his nation's border with Venezuela closed as a virus containment measure.</p>

REVIEW OF STUDIES According to the researchers, kids are less likely to be unwell or develop severe symptoms

Virus : Children are less severely affected than adults

**Melbourne, March 14:** Children have fewer symptoms and less severe disease from infection with the novel Covid-19, according to a review of studies which suggests that kids infected by a household contact often show symptoms before them. The review, published in the *Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal*, noted that the novel Covid-19, SARS-CoV-2, seems to cause fewer symptoms and less severe disease in children compared with adults. According to the researchers, including Petra Zimmerman from

the University of Fribourg in Switzerland and Nigel Curtis from the University of Melbourne in Australia, children are just as likely as adults to become infected with the virus, but are less likely to be unwell or develop severe symptoms. "However, the importance of children in transmitting the virus remains uncertain," the scientists cautioned in the study. "Covid-19es are a large family of viruses that can cause infection and disease in animals, capable of rapid mutation and recombination, leading to novel viruses that can spread

from animals to humans," they said. According to the study, there are four Covid-19es that circulate in humans, mostly causing respiratory and gastrointestinal symptoms -- ranging from the common cold to severe disease. Over the past two decades, the scientists said there have been three major disease outbreaks due to novel Covid-19es -- SARS-CoV in 2002, MERS-CoV in 2012, and now SARS-CoV-2 in 2019. "The term Covid-19 is used for the clinical disease caused by SARS-CoV-2," the researchers explained. While trans-

mission of SARS-CoV-2 appears similar to that of the related SARS and MERS Covid-19es, the new virus has a lower fatality rate, they said. While it can still cause serious and life-threatening infections particularly in older people and those with pre-existing health conditions, the scientists said, children appear to have milder clinical symptoms than adults, and tend to be at a substantially lower risk of severe disease. They said this was also true in the SARS and MERS epidemics. Based on data from China since

February 2020, the study noted that children and adolescents accounted for only two percent of SARS-CoV-2 hospitalisations. However, they said children are less frequently symptomatic, and have less severe symptoms they are less often tested, leading to an underestimate of the true numbers infected. The researchers added that children are also less frequently exposed to the main sources of transmission. "Most infected children recover one to two weeks after the onset of symptoms, and no deaths had been reported." —PTI



A woman plays with her daughter as they wait at Barcelona airport in Spain on Saturday. Spain's prime minister has announced a two-week state of emergency from Saturday. —AP



**SHORT TAKES**

**Stay strong and fight it, says Kohli**

**New Delhi:** India captain Virat Kohli has urged his countrymen to take all necessary precautions in the wake of novel coronavirus pandemic, which has claimed lives of over 4000 people across the globe. "Let's stay strong and fight the #COVID19 outbreak by taking all precautionary measures. Stay safe, be vigilant and most importantly remember, prevention is better than cure. Please take care everyone," Kohli tweeted. Former India batsman VVS Laxman also took to twitter, asking people to come together to deal with this deadly disease. "One who stays away can save the rest. Requesting everyone to take the necessary precautions & be responsible. If you have symptoms, please get yourself tested. If you have tested positive please be in isolation and help prevent others. Together we can overcome this soon #COVID19," Laxman wrote on his twitter handle. — PTI

**Ferguson returns negative for Covid**

**Sydney:** New Zealand fast bowler Lockie Ferguson on Saturday tested negative for COVID-19 and will be returning home following the postponement of the ODI series against Australia due to the outbreak of the deadly disease. "Homeward bound. Lockie Ferguson has also been cleared to fly and will return to New Zealand tomorrow. #AUSvNZ," the BlackCaps tweeted on Saturday. The 28-year-old pacer was placed in isolation immediately after Friday's first ODI against Australia at the SCG following complains of a sore throat. He underwent tests on Saturday which returned negative, clearing the pacer. On Friday, Australian pacer Kane Richardson was also tested for COVID-19 following complains of a sore throat. — PTI

**Sanjay's absence raises eyebrows**

**New Delhi:** Former Test batsman and noted commentator Sanjay Manjrekar's absence from the BCCI's world feed commentary panel for the recent ODI series against South Africa has raised quite a few eyebrows. Manjrekar, one of the most accomplished voices among Indian experts got embroiled in controversies in recent years for some of his views on air. "Yes, he wasn't a part of the panel for this series but it doesn't mean that during the next series, he won't be there. I don't know what exactly was the trigger," a BCCI official said. — PTI

# BCCI to wait & watch

Owners not worried about IPL schedule as Board explores options

## Cash rich league can be truncated: Dada

**Mumbai, March 14:** Suspended till April 15 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 13th edition of IPL can only be a truncated one provided the situation improves, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly said on Saturday.

Asked if the cash-rich event could be a curtailed one, Ganguly said, "It will happen, because if it is April 15, then, in any case 15 days are gone, it has to be truncated. How truncated, how many games, I can't say at the moment." Ganguly, a decorated former India captain, was speaking to reporters after the end of the IPL Governing Council meeting here. The Board's top boss reiterated that safety is their top priority, a day after the IPL was postponed and the three-match ODI series between India and South Africa called off. "We will monitor further. Safety is most important and with the current situation with what is going around the world and in India, with government directives, we have even postponed the remaining domestic matches."

The decisions to postpone the cash-rich league and the ODI rubber were taken hours after the Delhi government suspended

**6** If it starts on April 15, then, in any case 15 days are gone, and it has to be truncated. How many games? I can't say at the moment.

— SOURAV GANGULY, BCCI president

all sporting activity in the national capital due to the ever-growing health crisis. Delhi is home to the Delhi Capitals IPL franchise. In the meeting between the franchise owners and the BCCI brass, six to seven options were discussed, including a curtailed IPL. "We met with the owners, to tell them how it can happen and where do we stand at the moment. At the moment, it is just postponed. We will assess the situation," Ganguly said.

"It will be reassessed every week. I can't say at the moment (about any deadline). I have to be worked around. As much as we want to host the IPL, we also need to be careful about the security." — PTI

**Mumbai, March 14:** A curtailed Indian Premier League was one of the options discussed at Saturday's meeting between BCCI and the eight IPL franchise owners in wake of the COVID-19 pandemic even as Kings XI Punjab's Ness Wadia said that he doesn't know when the T20 event will commence.

The BCCI on Friday suspended the IPL from March 29 to April 15 due to government-imposed travel restrictions and refusal of three states to host any matches.

"We cannot and no one, you know, is in a position today to say when it's going to start. We will review the situation after two to three weeks. And hopefully by then the cases will reduce," Wadia said after IPL owners' meeting with BCCI president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah.

A Board source, however, stuck to listing the options that were discussed at the meeting. "There were six to seven options discussed during the meeting between team owners and BCCI including a curtailed IPL," the source said on conditions of anonymity here.

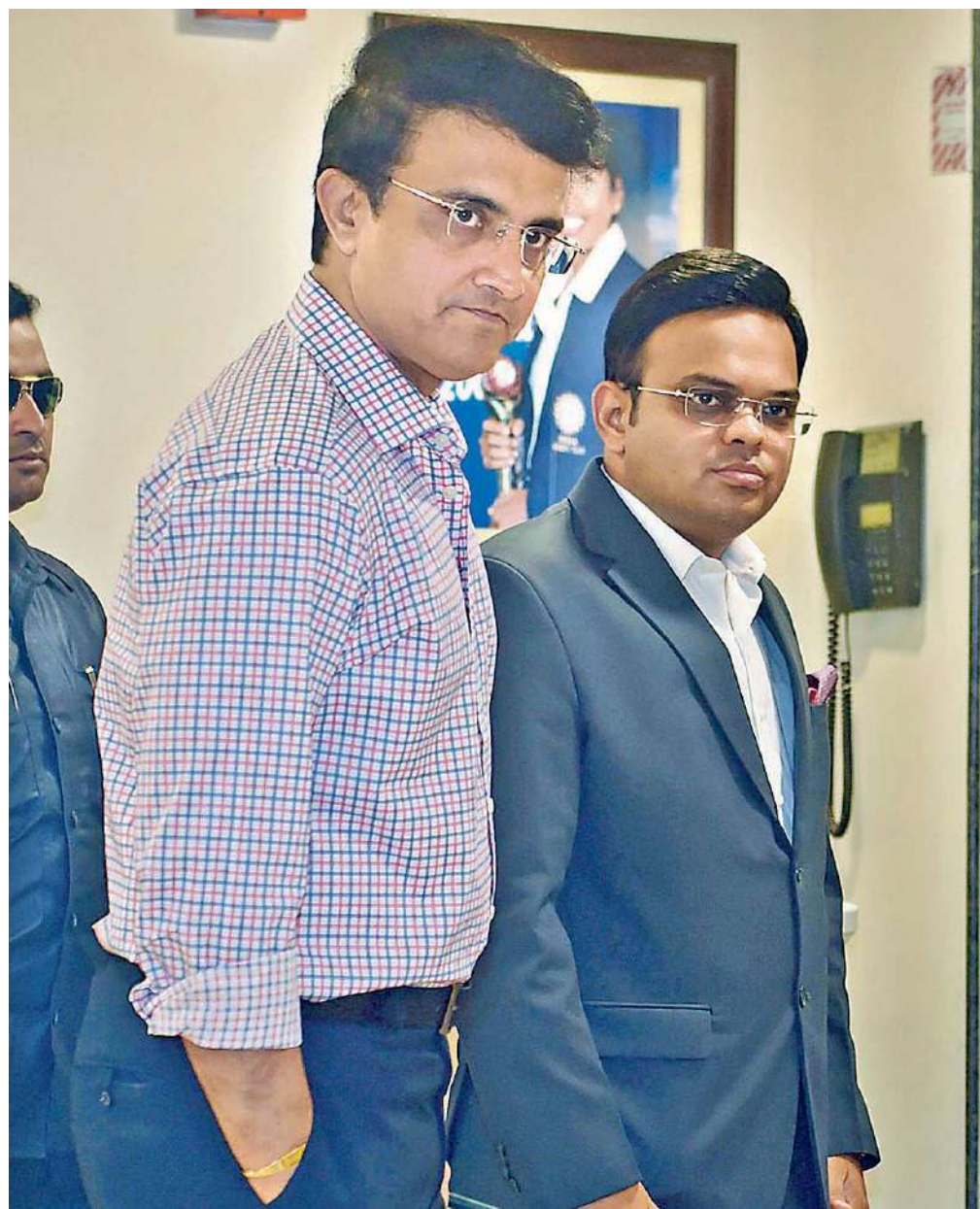
Wadia made it clear that at this moment, the health safety measures are paramount. In India, there have been two deaths and more than 80 positive COVID-19 cases, resulting in a government directive to shut the fans out of sporting events to avoid large gatherings.

"The second option right now is that teams could be divided into two groups of four and then top four go into the play-offs. The third option is increase of double headers (played on weekdays)," the source informed.

The fourth option is holding all matches in just a couple of centres with restricted movements of players, support staff and TV crew. Another option is to play behind closed doors and have all the 60 games in a shorter time frame which will ensure that the stakeholders do not lose out truckloads of money.

The source also confirmed that shifting the tournament abroad was not discussed at all in the meeting. COVID-19 has resulted in more than 5,000 deaths globally. Wadia said: "BCCI, IPL and (official broadcaster) Star (Sports) are clear that we are not looking at financial loss."

"At the meeting everyone agreed that human beings come first and finance comes



BCCI president Sourav Ganguly (left) and secretary Jay Shah arrive for the meeting to discuss IPL's fate with franchise owners. — PTI

second. We are here to adhere to governments directives. I don't see anything being decided before the end of the month. We have to wait and watch and hope situation improves," Wadia further said.

"No decision can be taken until there is clarity. Clarity will only be in two three weeks. As far as your next question is will foreign players come on? I don't know. There is a ban till the April 15 and then we'll see. So if IPL happens, great if it doesn't happen, so be it," Wadia further added.

Delhi Capitals owner Parth Jindal tried to downplay the discussion on options. "As

things progress and evolve, BCCI will call for another meeting to discuss all the options. Today's meeting was to tell us that they are watching the situation, all of us are watching and we will take a call in due course," said Jindal.

Asked whether there will be more double-headers the season, Jindal said, "We didn't discuss anything, we need to assess the situation." — PTI

**Kings XI Punjab co-owner Ness Wadia doesn't know when the T20 event will commence, but insists that safety of people comes first.**



**BCCI puts all domestic tournaments on hold**

**Mumbai, March 14:** The BCCI on Saturday put on hold all its remaining domestic tournaments, including the blue riband Irani Cup match between Rest of India and Ranji Trophy champions Saurashtra, because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a statement signed by BCCI secretary Jay Shah, the Board said prominent tournaments that stand postponed are the Irani Cup, Vizzy Trophy, Senior Women's One-Day Knockout and the Senior Women's One-Day Challenger, among others.

The junior women's tournaments, put on hold until further notice, include the Under-19 One-Day knockout, Under-19 T20 League, Super League and knockout, Under-19 T20 Challenger Trophy, Under-23 knockout and Under-23 One-Day Challenger.

**Australia vs NZ series called off**

Meanwhile, the two remaining games of the Chappell-Hadlee ODI series between Australia and New Zealand were on Saturday cancelled as the visiting side will have to hurry back home to avoid a new set of travel restrictions owing to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

"In response to the New Zealand government's latest travel

restrictions, Cricket Australia has been advised the New Zealand team will be returning home immediately," Cricket Australia said in a statement.

"Cricket Australia and New Zealand Cricket will work together to identify a future opportunity to play both series," it added.

**NZ government puts restrictions**

It has been learnt that on Saturday, the New Zealand government tightened border restrictions and stating that all those entering the country from Australia would be subjected to a mandatory 14-day self-isolation period.

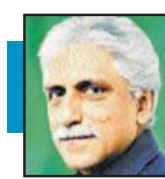
This new restrictions, which come into from Sunday midnight, would have led to the New Zealand team being quarantined if it stayed back to complete the assignment.

"NZC understands and supports the government's position. This is a time of unprecedented risk and peril, and the personal health and well-being of our players is paramount," a statement from NZC said.

The Chappell-Hadlee series was the last international series still being played following the abandonment of England's tour of Sri Lanka and South Africa's one-day series in India on Saturday.

— Agencies

## Is sport more important than life?



**Ayaz Memon**  
**Over The Top**

The BCCI's announcement on Friday suspending the IPL till April 15 came after a week of mounting suspense whether the league — among the most valued sports properties in the world — would be able to start on schedule, March 29. With Covid-19 being declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the world in a panic about the spread and impact of the virus, virtually all sports events have been badly hit. The IPL could hardly be an exception. A cursory glance at the international sports calendar highlights the havoc caused by menacing virus. In the US, which actually reacted late to the threat, the NBA (Basketball), NHL (Hockey), MLB (Basketball), NCAA (College Athletics) stand suspended indefinitely. The PGA (Golf) has been suspended for three weeks.

In Europe, major football leagues like Spain's Spanish League, Italy's Italian League, Portugal's Primeira Liga and League of Ireland are among those leagues that are suspended.

The Premier League, after initially announcing it would go ahead with matches, was to take a call on suspending the season as I write this article.

In China, Japan, South Korea sports tournaments at virtually every level have been suspended without time limit being defined. The Australian Grand Prix, scheduled for Saturday, was cancelled just a couple of days back.

In tennis, the ATP is suspended for six weeks and the

Women's Tennis Association have suspended the season for five.

Some leagues, notably in football, are continuing with matches behind closed doors. This means there will be no spectators at the stadia, but live coverage of the matches will be beamed to homes. The German Bundesliga, Champions League and Europa League are among these. But the situation here too could change swiftly.

In cricket, the Australian Cricket Board dithered about whether to cancel the ODI series against New Zealand or not, then decided to go ahead with the matches without spectators. But the series is still under threat.

Kane Richardson (since cleared) and Lockie Ferguson reported flu-like symptoms, which have caused alarm not just in the cricket administration Down Under, but all over the world. England have postponed their tour of Sri Lanka.

The IPL was still hanging fire, but in this scenario, it became impossible for the BCCI to remain impervious to the crisis.

The decision to suspend the League and — less significantly — defer the ODI series against South Africa was inevitable.

Apart from the WHO alert, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) also issued an advisory that the tournament be suspended, leaving the final decision to the BCCI. But the missive was unambiguous, sealing the issue.

Given the ramifications of even shifting playing dates — leave aside calling off the tournament — the Indian

cricket Board was understandably reluctant to take a hasty call. A tournament of this scale is a monumental logistical exercise where even minor tweaking at such a late stage has serious consequences.

Then there is the financial aspect. The IPL is a multi-billion dollar enterprise. The interest of every stakeholder — franchise owners, broadcasters, sponsors, players, fans, not to mention the BCCI itself — had to be scrutinized minutely before reaching a decision.

However, there was no room to manoeuvre. Had the BCCI been dogmatic about holding the tournament, not only would it have raised a stink, but there was still no guarantee that the IPL could have been conducted successfully.

As it stands, the Indian government has decided that people coming from high-risk countries — which is now becoming every country in the world) will not be given visas. And what if several overseas players refuse to come, unwilling to spend days in quarantine as may be required?

But a pandemic is not limited by country, colour, caste, class. This kind of sentiment can have a cascading effect, and could see the IPL virtually bereft of talent, overseas and domestic. The crux issue is, of course, the peril involved to everybody. While sport plays a big role in our existence, and cricket in India particularly so, is it more important than life itself? The answer is an emphatic no: not even if there is the slightest risk.

All things considered, the decision to suspend the IPL is the right one. If the Covid-19 threat abates, the tournament can commence with a rejigged itinerary, including more double headers etc. It's an unfortunate for everybody, but there are not ordinary times we live in.

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**SHORT TAKES**

**AIFF suspends all competitions**

**New Delhi:** The All India Football Federation on Saturday suspended tournaments at all levels, including the flagship I-League, till March 31 owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. The suspension will come into effect from Sunday. "Adhering to the advisories issued by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, and directives from several State Governments, all footballing activities under the aegis of AIFF stay suspended till March 31, 2020," AIFF said in a statement. The AIFF had said all the remaining 28 matches of the I-League would be played in empty stadiums. — PTI

**FIH Pro League put on hold**

**Lausanne:** The International Hockey Federation on Saturday suspended the ongoing FIH Pro League, which also involves India, till April 15 citing the dreaded Covid-19 pandemic. The FIH said its decision was based on "information and recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the decisions taken by a number of governments and local authorities around the world...". "The International Hockey Federation (FIH) and all participating National Associations (NAs) have decided to put all FIH Hockey Pro League matches currently scheduled until 15 April on hold, with immediate effect," a statement from the world body read. India are next scheduled to play Germany in Berlin on April 26. — PTI

# A Third-time King

## Hernandez nets brace as ATK savour ISL glory

**Goa, March 14:** ATK lifted the 2019-20 Hero Indian Super League trophy following a 3-1 win against Chennaiyin FC in the final held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here on Saturday. Javier Hernandez (10') and Edu Garcia (48') put ATK in the driving seat but Nerijus Valskis (69') reduced their advantage to set up a tense end to the contest. Hernandez scored another in injury time (90+4') to confirm a record third title. The final was off to a blistering start as Andre Schembri made a good run to the byline on the right in the first minute and found Rafael Crivellaro in the centre with a good cross, but the Brazilian mishit his effort. Schembri threatened again minutes later, this time with a pass to Valskis whose shot hit the crossbar. ATK drew first blood with their first major sight of goal in the 10th minute. John Johnson's cross-field ball found Roy Krishna on the left flank who delivered a good cross towards the edge of the box. Javier Hernandez, who was left unmarked, smashed a half-volley into the ground and beat goalkeeper Vishal Kaith to give ATK the lead.



A jubilant ATK team celebrate with the ISL trophy after defeating Chennaiyin FC 3-1 in their final played at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Goa on Saturday. — BIPLAB BANERJEE

The contest remained open but Chennaiyin suffered an injury setback midway through the first half. Midfielder Germanpreet Singh had to be replaced and Edwin Vanspaul took his place. ATK went close to doubling their lead in the 23rd minute out of utter chaos inside the box which produced three back-to-back

attempts. Krishna cut in from the right and unleashed a powerful strike which was saved by Kaith. Javier Hernandez then had the ball at his feet twice, but on both occasions, his shot was blocked. Chennaiyin put pressure on the ATK defence and carved out a golden chance from a free-kick

after the 30-minute-mark. Schembri met Crivellaro's delivery into the box but Arindam Bhattacharya pulled off an excellent save to keep ATK's lead intact. The scoreline remained 1-0 in favour of ATK at the break, but the Kolkata side had a concern of their own as Krishna had to be replaced by Mandi Sosa.

ATK scored the all-important second goal and doubled their advantage two minutes into the second half. Williams picked up the ball in midfield and fed Edu Garcia into the box. The Spanish midfielder beat Kaith to make it 2-0. The Chennaiyin attack struggled to create clear-cut chances. — Agencies

**ALL ENGLAND | BADMINTON**

## Lee Zii out lasts Long in quarters

**London, March 14:** Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia savoured a "revenge" victory over Chen Long as the world number 13 moved into the All England badminton Championship semi-finals on Friday. Lee stunned the Chinese two-time champion 21-12, 21-18 to end the number three seed's hopes of a memorable third title in Birmingham. Chen, the champion in 2013 and 2015, had previously beaten six-time All England champion Lin Dan 21-17, 21-8 to progress into the quarter-finals. But he was no match for Lee who was motivated to avenge the result the last time the two met at the Denmark Open in October. The unseeded Malaysian needed only 49 minutes to breeze past Chen and keep alive his hopes of lifting the trophy for the first time. "Last time I played against Chen I lost to him, so it felt like a case of revenge for me today," Lee said.

**● The World No. 13 Lee Zii Jia got the better of Chen Long in straight games 21-12, 21-18 and stormed into semifinals of the All England badminton Championship.** Lee, 21, is bidding for his first BWF World Tour event title since 2018. In the other men's quarter-finals, Viktor Axelsen beat China's Yu Qi Shi 21-15, 21-7. Top seed Tien Chen Chou defeated Tzu Wei Wang 21-11, 21-12, while Anders Antonsen beat Rasmus Gemke 21-10 21-13. China's Chen Yufei, the reigning women's singles champion, came from behind to beat world number five Ratchanok Intanon 17-21, 21-15, 21-17. The 22-year-old has already won titles in Switzerland, Thailand and Australia, as well as her All England triumph last year. — AFP

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20  
Printed and Published by T. Venkateswarlu on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Plot No. 9 Alwal Village, Vallabh Nagar Taluk, Medchal Malkajgiri Dist. Telangana and Published at 36, S.D. Road, Secunderabad-3. RNI Registration No. 3081/1957. Editor: Aditya Sinha

**CORONAVIRUS | SCARE**

## We want to hold Olympics: Japan

**Tokyo, March 14:** Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Saturday resisted pressure for changes to the Tokyo Olympics schedule even as sporting events worldwide fall victim to the coronavirus pandemic.



Abe pledged Japan would host the Games as planned in July and said he had no immediate intention to declare a state of emergency over the virus outbreak, which has now seen more than 140,000 people infected across the globe and over 5,400 killed. His comments come two days after US President Donald Trump suggested the Japanese capital postpone the Games for a year as the spread of the virus wreaks havoc on the sporting calendar.

"We will respond by closely coordinating with officials concerned, including the IOC (International Olympic Committee). There is no change in this," Abe told a news conference.

"We want to hold the Olympics as planned without any trouble by overcoming the spread of infections," he said.

Organisers, Japanese government officials and the IOC have insisted preparations are on track and there will be no postponement or cancellation.

England's football Premier League, America's NBA basketball season and the Augusta Masters golf major are just some of the competitions swept aside by the pandemic.

On Friday Abe and Trump spoke on the phone about the outbreak and Olympics after Trump proposed a delay. "We agreed that Japan and the US will cooperate and closely coordinate for success in the Olympics," Abe said.

The Japanese parliament on Friday approved legislation that gives Abe the power to declare a state of emergency to combat Covid-19 but Abe insisted such a declaration was not yet necessary. The coronavirus has infected more than 700 people across Japan and been linked to 21 deaths. — AFP



League said in a statement. Clarke said at the meeting that he did not think it was feasible for the season to be completed, according to a report in the Times.

Richard Masters, the Premier League chief executive, is reported to have said it would at least allow time to consider the potential consequences. The decision was taken after Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta and Chelsea winger Callum Hudson-Odoi tested positive for Covid-19. Arteta welcomed the move to put the season on hold.

Liverpool are 25 points clear at the top of the Premier League with nine games remaining, chasing their first Premier League title for 30 years. — AFP

## EPL may not be completed: FA

**London, March 14:** Football Association chairman Greg Clarke has reportedly told the Premier League he does not believe the domestic football season will be completed because of the coronavirus pandemic. The Premier League suspended all fixtures at an emergency meeting on Friday. Matches in the English Football League, FA Women's Super League and Women's Championship are also on hold. "It was unanimously decided to suspend the Premier League with the intention of returning on 4 April, subject to medical advice and conditions at the time," the Premier

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