

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
HYDERABAD | TUESDAY | 17 MARCH 2020



### WEATHER

Max: 34°C  
Min: 21.1°C  
RH: 44%  
Rainfall: Nil



Forecast: Clear sky.  
Max/Min temp. 35/21.0 C

### ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Uttarayanam  
Thithi: Phalguna Bahula Navami  
till 3.25 am (next day)  
Star: Moola till 11.49 am  
Varjyam: 10.10 am to 11.49 am  
9.54 pm to 11.35 pm  
Durmuhurtam: 8.49 am to  
9.37 am; 11.11 pm to 11.59 pm  
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm  
HOLIDAY CALENDAR  
Rajjab 21,1441 AH  
PRAYERS  
Fajar: 5.23 am  
Zohar: 12.35 pm  
Asar: 4.45 pm  
Maghrib: 6.32 pm  
Isha: 7.50 pm  
SUNSET TODAY 6.26 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.21 AM  
MOONSET TOMORROW 12.37 PM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 1.15 AM

### BRIEF

**Nirbhaya case convicts move ICJ**  
New Delhi: As the day of hanging of the four death row convicts in Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case nears, three of them have moved the International Court of Justice at Hague seeking a stay on their "unlawful execution", alleging the probe leading to their conviction was "flawed" and they have been treated as "guinea pigs". The petition was filed through the convicts' lawyer A.P. Singh

**Another Gujarat Cong MLA quits**  
Gandhinagar: Another Congress MLA in Gujarat has resigned ahead of the Rajya Sabha polls in the state, taking the tally of legislators who have quit the party to five. Speaker Rajendra Trivedi informed the House that five Congress MLAs - Pavin Manti from Gadhadra, Pradyuman-sinh Jadedja from Abdasa, Soma Koli Patel from Limbdi, V.J. Kakadiya from Dhari and Mangal Gavit from Dang - have quit.

**ED summons Subhash Chandra**  
New Delhi/Mumbai: The ED has summoned top corporate honchos, including Essel Group promoter Subhash Chandra, Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal and Indiabulls chairman Sameer Gehlot, to appear before it this week in connection with its money laundering probe against Yes Bank promoter Rana Kapoor and others, officials said on Monday.

**Gold price falls ₹1,300 in a day**  
Chennai: Gold and silver witnessed one of the steepest falls in the recent history as a sell-off triggered by margin calls in equity markets last week got extended on Monday. In the Delhi spot market, gold fell 11,300 per 10 gm from the previous close of ₹42,600 to ₹41,300 on Monday. Silver fell from ₹41,500 per kg to ₹37,000, losing ₹4,500.

**COUNTER POINT**  
Fewer, tension, shivering? It's not corona, it's due to...  
overdose of corona news!



**WORLD | 12**  
Biden commits to female running mate



**SPORTS | 15**  
No headway at Indian Premier League

**TABLOID**  
Coronavirus is not veg or non-veg

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## Drop religion from CAA, says Assembly

### KGR questions divisive politics, says dissent can't be termed anti-national

**IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY | DC**  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 16  
The Telangana State Legislative Assembly on Monday unanimously passed a resolution opposing the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and urging the Centre to amend the CAA (1991) to remove references to any religion or foreign country.

While initiating the discussion, the Chief Minister said that it was not a question of Muslims or Hindus, but one that affected the entire country. "In a civilized society like India, we can't tolerate (NPR) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) which could result in the exclusion of a large number of people".

The House expressed concern over the proposed implementation of the National Population Register (NPR) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) which could result in the exclusion of a large number of people.

The House expressed concern over the proposed implementation of the NPR and NRC which could result in the exclusion of a large number of people.

He pointed out that states like West Bengal, Kerala and Rajasthan had passed similar resolutions. "Condemning slogans like 'Goli maro sa... ko,' raised by some leaders during the Delhi election, the CM asked whether divisive and provocative politics were needed. While passing the resolution, the assembly urged the Telangana government to take all necessary steps to safeguard the people of Telangana from exercises such as NPR and NRC.

## MP CM may defy Gov on floor test

### Governor Tandon issues 2nd fiat to Nath to prove majority

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC**  
BHOPLAL, MARCH 16

**SHIVRAJ MOVES SC, SEEKS EARLY TRUST VOTE**

In a significant development, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath on Monday dropped enough hints that his government may not honour the fresh directive from Governor Lalji Tandon to face a floor test in the state Assembly on Tuesday to prove his majority.

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16  
The Supreme Court is likely to hear a plea by former MP Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday, seeking an early trust vote in the Assembly, contending that incumbent CM Kamal Nath has lost support of the majority.

Mr Nath who met the Governor in the evening, said he found no reason for a trust vote in the house since his government enjoyed a majority. In a strongly worded letter to Chief Minister Kamal Nath, Mr Tandon had dismissed the reasons assigned by the Chief Minister to skip the floor test on Monday as "baseless and meaningless" and cautioned him that "it will be deemed that the Kamal Nath government no longer enjoyed majority if it does not face floor test in the house on Tuesday".

The petition by Chouhan has sought direction from the SC to Speaker, the State assembly and Chief Minister to hold a floor test within "12 hours of passing of the order" by the top court and as per "direction" issued by the Speaker on March 14 and 15, 2020. Chouhan and other BJP MLAs have questioned the Speaker's decision to adjourn the proceedings of the assembly citing a crisis due to Covid-19.

## Centre bans all flights from UK, EU

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16



In a bid to contain the spread of novel coronavirus in India - with the number of positive cases reaching 114 on Monday - the government has banned the entry of passengers from the United Kingdom, member states of the European Union as well as the European Free Trade Association, and Turkey. The airlines have been asked not to board passengers from these nations with effect from 1200 GMT on March 16 and enforce this at the port of initial departure.

Fifteen tourists from Indonesia including three from Telangana, who are suspected to have symptoms of coronavirus, are being brought to Gandhi Hospital for isolation from Karimnagar. **Report on Page 2** —DEEPAK DESHPANDE

The government has also asked passengers coming over or transiting through the UAE, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait will be required to have quarantine for a minimum period of 14 days. This too will be effective from March 18. The government has also issued advisory asking all educational institutions, gyms, etc to be shut and travel to be avoided as a part of "social distancing" measures.

## 4th Covid +ve case in city, lens on Scotland returnee

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

Telangana confirmed its fourth Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) positive case on Monday, of a man who came to the city from Scotland recently. The two tests conducted on samples collected from him, after he was admitted to the Gandhi General Hospital (GGH), were

found positive for Covid-19 disease, the state health department said. Two other Covid-19 patients are already under treatment at the GGH here. One of them is a young woman, who recently returned from Italy, while the other is a man in his early 40s, who came back from The Netherlands.

The latest Covid-19 positive patient was in the city on a visit from Scotland. The department said that it was awaiting tests on 19 other individuals, whose samples were collected on Monday.

Three more test samples' results are also being awaited, the department said.

## Vikarabad panics over isolation ward

**KANIZA GARARI | DC**  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

Thirty travellers returning from 19 Covid-19 affected countries were shifted to Vikarabad, causing panic among the 29 tuberculosis patients to panic and flee the hospital. They left without waiting for the doctor's advice. These are active TB patients whose cough emits TB bacteria that can spread. No effort was made to trace them as they 'left against medical advice'.

Spitting 30 'suspected' patients and 27 from Virgiri Resort's lawns triggered the panic. The patients are not staying put in their rooms and are instead in the corridors, lawns and also down at the nearest temple.

"This is not isolation," chided health official, urging them to stay indoors. Medical and health officials complained to the collector for more staff. This is only the first batch of suspected cases. Patients were not following the informal guideline of dos and don'ts.

Vikarabad residents were in panic, shutting shops for the day. With over 200 suspected cases to be kept at the resort and TB hospital, residents fear the virus will spread. Police said only suspected cases are here and if they test positive, will be taken to Gandhi Hospital for treatment. Police urged residents not to fall prey to rumour.

## Tongue to cash is easiest way to attract coronavirus

**BALU PULIPAKA | DC**  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

Indians have a peculiar habit of using their index finger to collect spit from their tongues while counting cash. This could be a disaster waiting to happen, and worse, cash transactions in the time of the coronavirus is a cause for concern, as little or no information on whether individuals who are either suspected to be carrying the virus or those who have tested positive, have conducted such transactions.

Through the rapid response teams comprising officials and staff from various departments have been tasked with tracing people who were in close contact with such individuals, absence of concrete information about possible cash transactions has become a matter of concern.

This issue was flagged by the Confederation of All India Traders (Cait), which wrote a letter last week to Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Several scientific staff have pointed out that currency notes are hotbeds of infection causing microorganisms that could result in diseases such as respiratory tract infections, meningitis and ser-

dent BC Bhartia told Deccan Chronicle. "Though we raised this issue previously, it acquired additional urgency now." Asked if Cait has heard back from the finance minister, Mr Bhartia said it has been a one-way communication.

There has to be a proper study in the wake of the new health crisis and the government should suggest solutions, he added.

Inquiries in Telangana revealed that not much attention has been paid to the aspect of any cash transactions conducted personally by Covid-19 patients.

## Currency notes are found to hotbeds of microbes; officials turn blind eye to cash-based infection

### Ex-CJI Gogoi named for RS

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

**Page 8: Judges had highlighted crucial issues**

President Ram Nath Kovind has nominated former Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi to the Rajya Sabha. A notification in this regard was issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs late on Monday. The notification states that the nomination has been made to fill the vacancy caused due to the retirement of one of the nominated member.

Justice Gogoi was one of the five judges who had pronounced the verdict last year on the political-party-sensitive Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit and was also one of the four judges



Former CJI Ranjan Gogoi who had held an unprecedented press conference in 2018, which was perceived by many as a revolt against the then CJI Deepak Mishra. Justice Gogoi had retired in November last year.

**Page 8: Judges had highlighted crucial issues**



IN BRIEF

**EPFO curtails customer visits**

**Hyderabad:** The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) on Monday announced that it would curtail the visits of customers and stakeholders to its office in Barkatpura. A statement by the EPFO noted that the gathering of a large number of people raises the risk of Covid-19 transmission. It urged EPFO members not to visit the office unless for emergencies. For normal queries and grievances the office help line Nos. 18005999911 and 040-27564576 can be called during office hours. Official twitter account: @epfohyderabad (Barkatpura) and @epfohyderabad (Chaitanyapur). Facebook accounts: epfohyderabad and epfohyderabad.

**AI PILOTS SEEK URGENT FINANCIAL AID**

Air India pilots sought an urgent financial assistance from the government on Monday for the disinfection of national carrier amid the coronavirus pandemic. With global travel bans due to the pandemic, airlines across the world are starting at massive losses and fear going bust. Aviation think-tank Centre for Asia Aviation has already warned that most airlines across the world would go bankrupt if the government does not take a coordinated action. In a joint letter to civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri, the two Air India pilots' unions - Indian Aviation Guild and the Indian Commercial Pilots Association - said the Covid-19 crisis was wrecking havoc across the globe, putting the perilous time. Air India employees have gone above and beyond to get the people of the nation back to their countries worldwide, the unions said. "Despite cases of infections on our aircraft and even quarantine for our crew, the employees continue to do their duty at considerable personal risk," according to the unions. "We urge you to provide urgent financial aid to Air India so that we, the airlines employees, can keep on doing our jobs and (continue) serving the nation," the letter stated. According to Air India ratings, the domestic air traffic would be impacted negatively by 50 per cent, which would in turn also impact the load factor by 50-60 per cent till June on a year-on-year basis. Stating that the government had not infused any money into Air India in the current fiscal year, the letter said, "This makes it almost impossible for Air India to meet its monthly financial obligations."

**Getting back on track**



Foreigners busy checking out jewellery stalls in Charminar on Monday after a dry spell due to the fear of coronavirus. — P. SURENDRA

**GHMC hits illiterates in slums with Covid flyers**

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 16** In an exercise in futility, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) distributed pamphlets about Covid-19 to prevent its spread among the approximately 18 lakh slum-dwellers in GHMC limits - ignoring its own data that around 85 per cent of this population is illiterate. The corporation has not taken additional measures to improve hygiene in the slums or deploy additional manpower to clean garbage. Officials said this was the responsibility of the sanitation wing. It is not possible to issue hand sanitiser to an 18 lakh population," a senior official said. "Each individual has to take care of his or her personal hygiene. Slums, like the rest of the city, are supplied water on alternate days. Officials hope slum-dwellers will take care of their own hygiene." Other plans to create Covid-19 awareness in the slums include hiring autos with loudspeakers to announce preventive measures. Street plays are also planned for the near future.

**Three arrested for spreading fake coronavirus death news**

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 16** Three persons were arrested by Bhongir town police under Rachakonda commissionary for spreading fake news about the death of a person due to coronavirus. The three have been identified as Shiva Kumar Yadav, 24, Bharat Kumar, 20, and Bala HIRI PAVAN ANNA, 19, who live in Bhongir town. The three chose a photo from Google and created news that one Jupalli Bharat had died while undergoing treatment for coronavirus in the Gandhi General Hospital on Sunday. They went on to create a WhatsApp group called BHONGIR ANNA. It spread like wild fire all over Bhongir. When the matter came to the notice of police, they took up investigation and found that no such death had occurred. Police arrested the three on Monday and sections wherein they could be imprisoned for one year. Rachakonda commissionary has warned that stringent action will be taken against those who create fake news and spread panic among citizens.

**TEN SCHOOLS FUNCTION DESPITE CLOSURE ORDER**

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 16** Ten schools in the city were found to be functioning normally and conducting classes despite the government ordering shutting down of all schools in the wake of emergency due to Covid-19. School managements in areas like Gachibowli, Abid's, Uppal, Tarnaka, and Kondapur maintained that they have not received any official order from the government in this regard. District education officers, who received complaints from locals about the functioning of schools, however, said closure notices have already been served on all schools. The schools will have to remain shut till March 31. Meanwhile, teachers have to attend schools as they will have to take classes for students online. However, teacher representatives complain that 60 per cent of the schools do not have facilities or equipment for conducting virtual classes. Such study will also have no impact on students as they will not be receptive. Shutting down of schools has already put most of them in a holiday mood. Teachers are at their wii's end as management are pressuring them to use available technology for completing their portions. Managements are also asking teachers to work on either planning the portion or preparing schedules for the next year.

**Varsities declare class shutdown**

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 16** Universities in the city made official announcements on Monday on the suspension of classes. Maulana Azzad Urdu National University (MANU) announced that it would suspend all classroom teaching across its 11 campuses, including its headquarters in Hyderabad, until March 31. It asked hostel students to go home by March 20. Students will be provided online resources so that they may continue their academic work. The teaching staff, however, would continue to work while taking precautionary measures. Elsewhere, the University of Hyderabad (UoH) has suspended all academic activities, including classes and examinations, until March 31. Students have been asked to return to their homes. Faculty members and non-teaching staff will continue to work as usual. The Academic Council meeting of the university scheduled for March 20, too, will be deferred. The vice-chancellor, however, said steps are being taken to keep admission-related proposals on track. Osmania University took the decision to close all hostels and messes on the campus. Research scholars and other hostel students have been asked to evacuate immediately. Electricity and water supply to the hostels and messes will be disconnected from Tuesday. **E-teaching at schools, coaching centres:** Several schools and coaching centres are making alternative arrangements to keep students on track with their studies. The Global Indian International School at Uppal has announced that it has started online classes. Narasimha Murthy, executive vice chairman of the school, said a time table has been sent to parents. Chirec International School sent out emails to parents regarding the same. Vision IAS, which offers coaching to candidates sitting for the civil services exam, announced that it would be shutting its centre in the city.

**Covid impact: HC, lower courts to hear 'urgent matters' only**

**VIJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 16** In the backdrop of an advisory from the World Health Organization (WHO) against mass congregations, consequent to the rapid spread of the global pandemic Coronavirus (Covid-19), and the several positive cases in the country and state, the Telangana High Court on Monday took a decision to restrict adjudication of cases to urgent matters only. This decision applies to not only the High Court but also all subordinate courts in the state. One division bench headed by Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice A. Abhishek Reddy, and four separate single benches headed by Justice P. Naveen Rao, Justice P. Naveen Rao, Justice Challa Kodandaram, Justice Shyam Akhter and Justice G. Sridevi respectively would hold the court on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays till March 31. For the next week, since March 25 (Wednesday) happens to be a public holiday owing to Ugadi (Telugu calendar new year), courts

would function on March 26 (Thursday). The High Court instructed the Telangana Chief Secretary to provide a thermal machine so that all those who come to court could be screened. Litigants, counsels and judges. As part of precautions and restrictions, the High Court cautioned that no litigation would be permitted to the court premises, except in family and child custody cases. Only the counsel, whose cases are listed before the Court, would be permitted to enter the HC campus. They shall be permitted to enter the Court Hall in batches of five each. The remaining advocates are instructed to wait in the corridors, the HC ordered. Other counsels, who do not have cases listed before the HC, were told to refrain from coming to the Court campus. Continuing on its earliest instructions to lower courts in the state, the Telangana High Court on Monday again issued precautions to be taken by unit heads of district courts. The district courts and other subordinate courts were instructed to entertain only urgent matters such as bail applications, temporary injunction applications, remand matters, etc. The trial in all other cases must be postponed for a period of three weeks, the HC said. After the full court meeting, Chief Justice Chauhan informed that the decision was necessitated given the situation in Telangana and across the entire country and the next three weeks, as per medical advisories, are very important. "We are going through a tense situation and we will be passing through a grave critical period over the next three years," the HC observed. Despite all precautionary measures taken by the state administration and the Union government, Coronavirus could not be contained, he said, adding that it was still spreading in its deadly wings every where. The Chief Justice, in a grim voice, said, "There are chances that India will undergo a situation like Italy." In cases of a stay application, cases would be automatically listed, or on mentioning, the stay will be extended. Bail applications, demolition cases and custody cases would be taken up, besides other dire urgent matters, if mentioned. All counsels were assured that none of the judges will pass any adverse orders. Women staff need not attend work with an advice to take care of their children at home.

**Hyderabad 75 YEARS OF DECCAN CHRONICLE**

**Hyderabad IMAGES AND MEMORIES**

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

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

We scoured the archives and collected anecdotal evidence from several corners of that era to discover delightful asides like how the mouchkar haddus got their name, how an odd street the Nizam's legendary treasurer for the royal family and how Indira Gandhi floored the Nizam.

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

**HYDERABAD: IMAGES AND MEMORIES**  
The hard-bound, ₹2,000, Soft cover, ₹1,500, at all Deccan Chronicle & The Asian Age offices across the cities

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SHORT TAKES FIRE AT SHOPPING COMPLEX, 40 RESCUED

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

A fire broke out in an electronic shop on the fifth floor of Taramandal commercial complex situated opposite AG Office and close to the Secretariat late Monday evening. Approximately 40 persons were rescued.

According to fire officials, they received a call around 7:50 pm and fire tenders were immediately rushed to the spot. The inmates rushed to the terrace to save their lives as there was no way to get out of the building. Around 25 firefighters were involved in the rescue operation.



A view of the building demolished at Karkhana on Sunday night.

MAN KILLED AFTER RAZED BUILDING'S DEBRIS FALLS ON HIM

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

A person died when debris from a building being demolished fell on him late on Sunday night under Karkhana police station. The deceased has not yet been identified.

According to Karkhana inspector P. Madhukar Swamy, the building was being demolished using a JCB when a portion of the front wall of the building came crashing down with a loud sound. There were several passersby near the building at the time. Many moved away while they realised that the wall was crashing down.

"However, the debris fell directly on one person standing in front of the building and he died instantly," the inspector said. Karkhana police have booked a case. Efforts are on to identify the deceased. The body has been shifted to Gandhi hospital for autopsy.

- S. SURENDER REDDY

R/C bus rams into van, 6 killed

Bus driver was busy on his cellphone

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

Six persons, including a seven-year-old girl, died when the van in which they were travelling was hit by an RTC bus in Medak district on Monday. Preliminary investigations by the police have revealed that the bus driver was busy on his mobile phone and rammed into the van as a result. Ten others, including the bus driver, have been admitted to a government hospital in Medak for treatment. The condition of a girl undergoing treatment is stated to be serious. Bodies of those dead have been shifted to the mortuary.

Passersby rushed to the accident site and called an ambulance to shift the injured to the hospital for treatment. The deceased have been identified as C. Madhavi, 36, Manjula 45, C. Manemma, 55, N. Durgamma, 40, and G. Rajitha, 36, who died on the spot, while D. Madhurima, 10, succumbed to her injuries at the hospital. While returning to the village at around 3:30 a.m., their van rammed into the lorry parked at the roadside on the highway. Police said Kistaiah, Krishna and van driver Anjaneyulu died in the mishap. The injured E. Kavya and her younger brother Ajay have been shifted to Ramayampet government hospital for treatment. It is suspected the driver of the van may have fallen asleep and lost control of the vehicle, resulting in the mishap. A case has been registered against the driver. The driver and his family have been handed over to their kin after autopsy, police said.

DGP REVIEWS HYDERABAD LAW AND ORDER AT MULUGU

WARANGAL, MARCH 16

DGP M. Mahender Reddy reviewed the law and order situation at Mulugu on Monday. He laid special emphasis on the strategies to be adopted to curb the movements of extremists in Mulugu and Jayashankar Bhupalpal districts.

He said that the review met focused on facilities and other necessities to be provided to the police, to improve the efficiency of the personnel. "Apart from discharging the primary duty of maintaining law and order effectively, the police department is also contributing to the efforts of the state government in the implementation of welfare and developmental programmes," he said.

Mr Reddy heaped praise on police and officials who peacefully conducting the biennial Sammakka-Saralamma jatara at Medarad, last month. He thanked the local who supported the police and the administration in their endeavours. IG V. Nagesh Reddy, Mulugu and Bhupalpal SP Sangarasingh G. Patil, Mahabubabad SP N. Koti Reddy were present along with others.

YOUTH ON PHONE CRUSHED TO DEATH BY TRAIN

Nellore: Despite the frequent reports in the media on loss of human life because of using mobile phones while walking on road or crossing railway tracks, people do not just that. A 25-year-old youth pursuing law was crushed under the wheels of a train on the railway track near the VIT University College here on Monday morning. The youth was engrossed in listening to music.

BOY RIDING CYCLE DIES AS TRACTOR RUNS OVER HIM

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

A 12-year-old boy who was cycling was killed when a tractor ran over him. The incident took place at the Vivekananda X Roads, Jillelaguda near Sangaiahpet village, it was hit by RTC bus coming from the opposite direction. In another mishap at Narsingi village, also, three persons were killed and two suffered injuries when the van (TS 17 C 2491) in which they were travelling in rammed into a stationary lorry (AP 09 TA 1611) on National Highway 44 during the early hours of Monday. Nursing sub-inspector D. Rajesh said E. Krishna, 28, of Damma-napet, P. Kistaiah, 60, and P. Anjaneyulu, 25, of Machireddy mandal, along with Kavya and Ajay, went to RGI Airport at Shamsabad in a van to drop Ravi, their relative, who was leaving for Dubai on Sunday night. While returning to the village at around 3:30 a.m., their van rammed into the lorry parked at the roadside on the highway. Police said Kistaiah, Krishna and van driver Anjaneyulu died in the mishap. The injured E. Kavya and her younger brother Ajay have been shifted to Ramayampet government hospital for treatment. It is suspected the driver of the van may have fallen asleep and lost control of the vehicle, resulting in the mishap. A case has been registered against the driver. The driver and his family have been handed over to their kin after autopsy, police said.

Revanth's brother gets relief from HC

MR P. Venugopal, senior counsel, appeared for the petitioners and informed the Judge that the accused have no role in the alleged offence.

He informed that this is the same case in which Mr Revanth Reddy has filed three criminal petitions seeking three different reliefs from the Court. In the same case in which Mr Revanth Reddy has filed three criminal petitions seeking three different reliefs from the Court. The Judge after hearing the submissions of the senior counsel directed. Cyberabad police not to take any coercive steps against Krishnareddy and Shivaji Vijayal Reddy till further orders.

IN THE COURT OF THE HON. BLE JUDGE ADDL. DISTRICT JUDGE, RAMBA... E.P. No. 39 OF 2018... The accused are: ...

38 students booked for cheating

Hyderabad, March 16: As many as 38 intermediate second year students were booked for malpractice during the conduct of Physics Paper II and Economics Paper-I by the Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education across

Man held at RGIA for smuggling gold

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

In a new modus operandi of gold smuggling detected by the Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) officials at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, an air passenger was caught carrying gold in the form of zip pullers on Monday. The AIU team of Hyderabad customs, along with the personnel of the Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) officials at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, an air passenger was caught carrying gold in the form of zip pullers on Monday. The AIU team of Hyderabad customs, along with the personnel of the Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) officials at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, an air passenger was caught carrying gold in the form of zip pullers on Monday.

RAPE VICTIM'S MOTHER TRIES TO END LIFE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

The heinous rape and murder of Kalpana by one Srinivas Reddy in Hajipur took a shocking turn on Monday when the victim's mother Bhagyamma attempted to hang herself from a tree at an isolated place around 12:30 pm.

She was vexed with the incident and felt unsatisfied with the land given to her by them. Bhagyamma took up the issue with the gram panchayat on Monday. She demanded more than half of the total land. Her argument was that she had lost her daughter. However, unhappy with the gram panchayat judgement, she confronted the head K. Ram Reddy on Monday. Her argument was that she had lost her daughter. However, unhappy with the gram panchayat judgement, she confronted the head K. Ram Reddy on Monday.

POLICE ARREST 20-YEAR-OLD RAPIST

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

A 20-year-old man from Bihar, who sexually exploited a minor and kidnapping her, was arrested by Balanagar police on Monday. According to police, the accused Kishore Mandal, a native of Jamalpur in Bihar, is working in the city as a labourer. Last December, he kidnapped her, was arrested by Balanagar police on Monday.

26th DEATH ANNIVERSARY Late SRI B. PURUSHOTHAM RAO Founder: HOTEL DWARAKA ...

OBITUARY S.A. RAHMAN (Sir) Retired Teacher Sachana Mandir High School ...

9th Day Ceremony Your Memories are always with us. May your Soul rest in peace.

Sri. Yalla Adinarayana Retired AAO, A.G.O. Hyderabad ...

SAD KESHA I have Angles and good Angels. I have Griefs and sorrows. I have light and dark. 2nd Mar 2020

Duvvuru Purushotham Retired AAO, A.G.O. Hyderabad ...

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE FARZANA B ITALIA DOB: 17 Mar 1982 ...

OBITUARY SYED ABDUL RAHMAN (Sir) Retired Teacher Sachana Mandir High School ...

13th ANNIVERSARY A High born man will be remembered for ever. P. K. Patil

SATHI, RAM REDDY GARU D.O.B.: 17-3-2007 ...

SHRADHANJALI G.R. VENUGOPALA CHARY Founder: Saccon Industries ...

10th DEATH ANNIVERSARY Late Sri Vuppala Krishna Rao Phalguna Bahula Navami ...

FUNERAL DUBbaka KRISHNA MURTHY Retired DCM/PT, Hyderabad ...

2nd DEATH ANNIVERSARY REMEMBRANCE Late Sri RAIKOTI ANAND PRASAD ...

3rd DEATH ANNIVERSARY "The memory of righteous will be blessing" (Prov. 10:7)

JOGUNOORI DANIEL PAUL We will cherish his love until our last breaths.

OBITUARY Sri. Yalla Adinarayana Retired AAO, A.G.O. Hyderabad ...

NAKKA SARAH LAZARUS O.B.E. May 1950 ...

1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth." (Rev. 14:13)

OBITUARY DEVAHALA ROBERTS ISAAC DOB: 24-06-1921 ...

OBITUARY K. SUNDARESHAN DOB: 11-01-1940 ...

OBITUARY FAIZ A dearest friend of 6 decades.

OBITUARY Late Sri Vuppala Krishna Rao Phalguna Bahula Navami ...

1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY Late Sri RAIKOTI ANAND PRASAD ...

IN BRIEF

CM SAYS LAND REGISTRATIONS TO COST MORE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

It is inevitable to make changes in a few sectors including the economic sector, for the development of Telangana and its survival, said Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Monday.

Mr Rao, while speaking at the Assembly, announced that the prices on land registrations, liquor, sand, mines, and even power would be increased. He said that charges in any other sector were not increased in the last five years of the TRS rule, and alleged that there have been instances of an increase in fares only during the Congress regime.

The Chief Minister criticised the attempts of erstwhile governments to ban liquor as the only way to control the consumption of alcohol in the state is to increase the fares.

He also said that the increase in bus ticket fares is to save the Road Transport Corporation. About ₹1,000 crores were allocated to the RTC in the budget and also started goods courier service in the RTC to generate profits for the corporation.

JOB SEEKERS URGE SHRC FOR RESULTS

DURGA PRASAD SUNUKI | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

Many job aspirants, who have taken written examinations for different notifications issued by the Telangana government, approached the Telangana State Human Rights Commission (TSHRC) requesting to direct the government to release the results. The job notifications released by Telangana government for various departments like Health and Electricity department amounts to 5,834 posts.

The government issued notifications for the health, medical and family welfare department, under the notification numbers 57, 67, 58, 59 in the year 2017 and 4, 5 in the year 2018. In Transmission Corporation notification number 4 and 5 in the years 2017. The government has not released written examinations for all those notifications. However, the results were not released. All the notifications were released after a long gap of 14 years. The past two years, fighting all the jobs they have been waiting for results with a hope to bag a job.

'Will quit if Cong proves charges'

KCR: Will use TS share of Godavari water

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao said that he would resign if the Congress party showed proof of any agreement that the erstwhile Congress government of unified Andhra Pradesh had entered into with Maharashtra over the utilization of Godavari waters.

Replying to the discussion on Appropriation Bill on Monday in the State Assembly, the Chief Minister countered the allegation of Congress Floor leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka that the government had failed to protect the rights of Telangana and conceded to the demands of upper riparian state Maharashtra by cutting down the height of the Kaleshwaram project.

He challenged the Congress floor leader to show proof of any agreement that the erstwhile Congress government had entered into with Maharashtra, saying, 'I will resign from the Chief Minister's post if you show me an agreement the Congress government entered into with Maharashtra. TRS government gave utmost priority to irrigation and had several rounds of talks with the Maharashtra Chief Minister on Kaleshwaram.'

He said, 'I invited Chief Ministers of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh for the inauguration of Kaleshwaram project, which is an indication that none of them had any objection to Telangana utilising its rightful share.'

TELANGANA STATE ASSEMBLY, COUNCIL ADJOURNED SINE DIE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

The Telangana Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council adjourned sine die on Monday ahead of schedule in the backdrop of Covid-19 threat prevailing over the state. The budget session had commenced on March 6 and was scheduled to continue till March 20.

Adjourning the assembly sine die, Speaker Pocharam Srinivas Reddy said the House passed six bills and two issues were taken up for a short discussion in which 76 members participated. The budget session also passed demands for grants, apart from a resolution against the NRC, CAA and NPR.

The House sat for eight days over duration of 48 hours and 41 minutes. While adjourning the assembly, Chairman G. Sukhender Reddy held that the House held business for seven days and sat for 28 hours and 22 minutes.

Mr Rao reiterated that the state government resolved to fully utilise Telangana's share in Godavari river waters for benefit of state. All steps were taken to utilise 530 tmc of water by next year, he said, adding, 'The State was inching forward to fully utilise 850 tmc of our share in Godavari waters.'

He took exception to Congress party's allegations that his government had not followed norms while taking up irrigation projects and said he would submit a detailed project reports to the House for scrutiny. He said that the state has 75 lakh acre of land in Telangana. This increased acreage will result in increase in incomes of farmers,' the CM said.

Activists applaud TRS government's resolution on CAA in Assembly

ATHER MOINI | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

There has been an overwhelming response to the resolution passed in the Legislative Assembly regarding CAA, NPR and NRC. Not only leaders from several parties, even the general public appreciated the state government's move while organisations against the Union Government's 'unilateral' acts welcomed the move and demanded the government to put a stay on NPR.

Convener Telangana-AP Joint Action Committee against CAA and NPR Mohammed Mushtaq Malik appreciated the move while organisations against the Union Government's 'unilateral' acts welcomed the move and demanded the government to put a stay on NPR.

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) for passing a comprehensive resolution against the CAA, NPR and NRC and

hoped that he would ensure that NPR will not be conducted in its present form. In a swift reaction, he also announced withdrawal of their call to lay siege of the Assembly buildings that was scheduled for March 19.

State President Jamaate-Islami Hind, Moulana Hamid Mohammd Khan, asked the government to issue a G.O to hold the process of census and NPR on par with Kerala and Delhi as there is no mention in the resolution about putting a stay on the NPR exercise in the state.

State President Jamiat Ulema Hind Moulana Hafiz Peer Shabbir Ahmed contended that Telangana has practically showed that it is in the forefront of safeguarding democratic values and secularism. Advocate and President Tahir e Millat Syed Jaseel Ahmed, State President Students Islamic Organisation (SIO), Dr Talha Fayyazuddin and General Secretary of Awami Majlis e Amal Mr Mujahid Hashmi appreciated the move while spokesperson of Majlis Bachao Tehreek Mr Aamjadullah Khan Khalid said the resolution is not clear about NPR. He criticized AIMM for not insisting for a stay on NPR.

Advertisement for DECCAN Chronicle featuring a photo of two men, a list of prizes (Akai LED TV, Samsung Digital Home Theater System, LG Multi Media System, Sony Clock Radio, Samsung Boreasil Set, Bajaj Non-Stick Kadai, Sheffield Dry Iron), coupon numbers, and purchase dates. Includes logos for HOME Decor Express, BAJAJ ELECTRONICS, DCGOLD HUNGAMA, and various co-sponsors like DARFAN, FortuneArrt, JAYDURGA FURNISHINGS, and COWBOY SOFAS.

Bhatti: KCR cheating people

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

Alleging that the proposed state Budget has daily several tmc of vacancies but the state government has shown the budget as ₹1.83 lakh crores. 'This is done basically to get more funds,' he alleged.

Mr Rao wants to turn the citizens into alcoholics and sell the lands to get more revenue to run the state and to clear the debts, Mr Vikramarka said. 'To increase the burden on the public, elec-

tricity charges are being hiked. If they had told this to the public before elections, they would have given a right judgment. The state took several loans on the name of projects,' said Mr Vikramarka. He further said that the state has ₹5 lakh crore debt and in the future, it cannot be cleared. When questioned about employment for youth, the CM is questioning back if the Congress can solve the employment problem if given an opportunity.

KLIS project completes milestone, is Asia's biggest

DC CORRESPONDENT SIRICILLA, MARCH 16

The wet run of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS) was conducted successfully last week with the completion of 9, 10, 11 and 12 package works under the third and fourth phases.

The officials lifted the water from the surge-pool, which is supplied from Sri Raja Rajeshwara Swamy reservoir (Mid Manair Dam), and pumped it to Annapurra reservoir constructed at Thimmapur village of Yellanthakunta mandal in Rajanna Siricilla district.

The Telangana government has taken up the KLIS project to turn the barren lands fertile and has completed the works of first and second phase (up to 8th package of the project) by supplying the Godavari water to Sri Raja Rajeshwara Reservoir.

The works were completed at a cost of ₹3,051 crore by acquiring 3,945 acres of land which included 323 acres of forest land, evacuating around 1,319 families from the villages which are under threat of being submerged. The 10th package is the key to the project which starts at Thimmapur village of Yellanthakunta mandal in which a surge-pool (biggest) and a reservoir (Annapurra) were constructed along with the 3.4-km canal and 7.6 km canal connecting the Sri Raja Rajeshwara reservoir.

Asia's biggest surge-pool constructed in between the hills at Thimmapur village with 92-metre depth and 56-metre width along with installing four Bussell motors, 106 mega watts capacity is the special feature of the 10th package. The water lifted from the surge-pool will be pumped into the Annapurra reservoir which has a storage capacity



Asia's biggest Surge-pool constructed at Thimmapur village of Yellanthakunta mandal under KLIS project package 10. - DC

of 3.5 tmc. The Annapurra reservoir was constructed with mud bunds on three sides which are of 6,075 metres in length and one NOF (Non-Over Flow bund) on the other side was constructed with cement and concrete which is of 34 metres height and 415 metres in length.

Under the 10th package, a 440/11 KV electricity sub-station was constructed at Thimmapur village. The water through pump sets at the surge-pool. In the third and fourth phases, daily several tmc of vacancies are supplied to Kondapochamma reservoir which has a storage capacity 13.5 tmc for about 120 days from MMD with a capacity of 25.87 tmc via Annapurra reservoir (3.5 tmc), Ranganyakassar reservoir (3.5 tmc) and Mallanna sagar reservoir (50 tmc) in a phased manner.

From MMD to Kondapochamma reservoir which has a capacity of 9,10, 11 and 12 packages of third and fourth phases, the water for irrigation needs will be supplied to about 31,000 acres of land in the three district of Karimnagar, Rajanna Siricilla and Siddipet. Meanwhile, the Ananthagiri village with 1,120 families and 2,340 members was evacuated before releasing the water from MMD to Annapurra reservoir. The government by fixing a cut-off up to 2017 year sanctioned R&R package to the villagers above 18 years of age. But the officials failed to provide basic facilities to the evacuees in the R&R colony. They did not construct school, health centre, toilets and community buildings and also did not provide drinking water facility in the colony. District collector D. Krishna Bhaskar along with Manakondur M. A. Rasamayi Balakrishna and Siddipet collector Venkatram Reddy had held a meeting recently and ordered the officials concerned to provide the required facilities to the R&R colony.

Advertisement for the Department of Health Research, Indian Council of Medical Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. It features a flowchart titled 'Revised COVID19 Testing Strategy in India: 16/03/2020' and 'WHOM TO TEST'. The flowchart shows that individuals with direct close physical contact of a laboratory confirmed positive case or a history of travel in the last 14 days to high risk COVID-19 affected countries should undergo home quarantine for 14 days. Those who become symptomatic within 14 days should undergo laboratory testing, while those with no symptoms should not. A note states: 'Throat swab + nasal swabs taken in Viral Transport Medium in one tube in cold chain. List of testing facilities: www.icmr.nic.in/content/covid-19. Health care workers managing respiratory distress / Severe Acute Respiratory Illness patients should be tested when symptomatic with acute respiratory illness. \*This is an evolving strategy'.

Dawp 17301/11/0017/1920

**SHORT TAKES**  
**THREE MAOIST INFORMERS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, MARCH 16

Three persons suspected to be informers of the CPM were taken into custody at Konyapalem under Enkor mandal on Monday.  
The three were identified as Madakam Bhima, 24, Madividu Andra, 25, and Madavi Malli, 24, of Tamirigudem in Oosarla block in Chattisgarh. The trio were found wandering in the chilli fields and the people who suspected their movements, informed the police.

# Despite recession, state sees investment

TS to set up 2,254 industries in various sectors with an employment potential of 1,70,888 people

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

In spite of economic recession in the country but across the globe, the Telangana state has witnessed a flow of investments in the current financial year. Through TS iPASS, so far the Telangana state has received ₹1,84,655.44 crore investment in various sectors as per the Socio Economic Outlook 2020 report. In the current financial year, up to 31st December, ₹24,577 crore investment has come to

Telangana state to set up 2,254 industries in various sectors with an employment potential of 1,70,888 people. In the last five years, the Telangana state has given permission to 11,857 industries with the investment of ₹1,84,655.44 crore and the total employment potential reached 13,98,056. Out of 11,857 industries, 9020 industries have commenced operations with an investment of ₹85,125.83 crore and provided employment to 6,23,071 people. About 764 industries are in the advanced stage with an investment of ₹28,116.96 crore and an employment potential of 2,87,112 people. While 645 industries are in the initial stage with ₹51,023.80 crore investment and 2,57,323 employment potential and 1,428 industries are yet to start construction works with the investment of ₹20,388.85 crore with 1,40,550 employment potential. The Telangana Engineering and Food process sectors have been experiencing heavy demand. Most of the

investments have come to Engineering, food processing, Agro based, cement and other sectors. Out of ₹24,577 crore investment ₹12,58 crore has gone to the engineering sector to set up 437 industries. The Socio Economic Survey 2020 report said that there is significant growth in the registration of new industrial units in Telangana. The total number of working manufacturing units in the state grew from 7,729 in 2009-10 to 12,476 in 2016-17, an increase of 61%.

**DETAILS OF INVESTMENTS UP TO 31ST DECEMBER 2019**

| Progress                  | No. of Industries | Investment (Rs in crore) | Total employment |
|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Commenced Operation       | 9,020             | 85,125.83                | 6,23,071         |
| Advanced stage            | 764               | 28,116.96                | 2,87,112         |
| Initial stage             | 645               | 51,023.80                | 2,57,323         |
| Yet to start construction | 1,428             | 20,388.85                | 1,40,550         |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>11,857</b>     | <b>1,84,655.44</b>       | <b>13,08,056</b> |

In the current fiscal year up to 31st December 2019

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SHORT TAKES

**COPS ISSUES NOTICE TO TD MLC ON MACHERLA ATTACK**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

The Gurajala police issued notices under Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) section 160 to Telugu Desam MLC Buddha Venkanna and former Telugu Desam legislator Bonda Umamaheswara Rao in the Macherla attack case asking the duo to present before police on March 17. YSRC activists had attacked, injured and damaged vehicles of Telugu Desam Ex MLA Umamaheswara Rao, MLC Venkanna and Andhra Pradesh High Court advocate Para Kishore in Macherla assembly segment in Guntur district on March 11. The police swiftly responded by registering a suo-moto case and later the police arrested YSRC leaders Paraka Kishore, Mallela Gopi and Bathula Nagaraju.

Interestingly the police did not receive any complaint from Telugu Desam leaders hence issued notices under the inquiry process. Gurajala Police Sub Division deputy superintendent of police K. Srihari issued notice to MLC Venkanna and former MLC Umamaheswara Rao to furnish details with support evidence documents at Macherla and Veldurthi police stations on March 17.

The Telugu Desam leaders Venkanna and Umamaheswara Rao came to Macherla without giving any prior information to the police violating the protocol norms.

DSP Srihari mentioned that the police filed two cases at Macherla and Veldurthi so they have to attend for inquiry and to record their statements.

**Poll postponement: SEC briefs Governor**

Ramesh explains circumstances leading to deferral by 6 weeks

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

State Election Commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar met Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan at Raj Bhawan on Monday. N. Ramesh Kumar took an appointment on Sunday to meet the Governor on Monday morning.

Mr. Kumar met the Governor and briefed him for about 50 minutes about the circumstances that led to the decision to postpone the election process by six weeks. Though the SEC was expected to brief media persons about his meeting with the Governor later in the day, he did not do so. No press release was also issued until late in the night.

The SEC authorities are tight-lipped about what transpired between the Governor and the SEC. It may be recalled that as reported in Deccan Chronicle on Sunday, soon after the SEC announced the postponement of the elections to local bodies by six weeks based on the Centre's health advisory on Coronavirus (Covid-19), besides taking into account the escalating

**YSRC moves SC against local polls delay**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 16

Determined to conduct the local body elections as scheduled, the State Government has written a letter to the State Election Commissioner (SEC) and filed a petition in the Supreme Court objecting to its postponement.

A lunch motion petition was also filed in the AP High Court against the decision to postpone the elections. Meanwhile, SEC Nimmadagadda Ramesh Kumar met governor B. Harichandan to explain the reasons behind postponement.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy took strong objection to the unilateral decision of the SEC and directed the officials to respond swiftly to set right things. He emphasised that coronavirus can be prevented if councillors, sarpanchs, municipal chairmen, corporators and mayors are elected. All these elected representatives can add strength to the government machinery and local bodies would be strengthened. The Chief Minister further said that funds

from the Union Government would not be released if elections are delayed and there is no assurance that elections would be held by the next financial year.

The government filed petition in the apex court on the Covid-19 status and seizure of funds due to delay in conduct of elections.

In a separate development, a petition was filed in the AP High Court objecting to the postponement and demanding elections be held as schedules.

Telugu Desam and only used Covid-19 as a pretext.

Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney also wrote a letter to the SEC, asking him to revoke his decision to defer elections. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy spoke out and accused the SEC of being motivated by caste considerations to helping the

pre-election violence. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy

spoke out and accused the SEC of being motivated by caste considerations to helping the

**Jagan upset over weekend visits of IAS, IPS to Hyd**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has become angry over IAS officers posted in the State flying to Hyderabad and other places every weekend without taking permission.

Several IAS officers have their families in Hyderabad. They head home every Friday evening and return to Vijayawada Monday morning. Some officers leave the work place Friday afternoon itself.

Jagan recently conducted a review meeting in which some officers were not present. On enquiry, he was told about the weekend visits of some IAS officers without taking permission from the government. In fact, some even go to New Delhi without any official work.

On coming to know of this, the infuriated Chief Minister directed the Chief Secretary Neelam Sahani to take immediate action. This was confirmed by officials of Chief Minister's office (CMO).

Ms Sahani has issued a circular to all IAS officers in which she made it clear



Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy

**JAGAN CONDUCTED** a review meeting in which some officers were not present. On enquiry, he was told about the weekend visits of some IAS officers without taking permission.

**MS SAHANI** has issued a circular to all IAS officers in which she said that no officer, Secretary or HoD is to leave Vijayawada without prior clearance from the concerned authorities.

**CM ALSO** objected to some IAS officers working from home and not visiting the Secretariat. That no officer, Secretary or

HoD is to leave Vijayawada without prior clearance from the concerned authorities. She added that local body elections were round the corner, annual examinations were underway and there were other important matters that needed immediate personal attention.

She also said that Chief Minister wishes that visits of officers should be restricted and in the interest of the State.

Moreover, such work should be for a full-day and not something that can be finished in half-a-day. The Chief Minister also objected to some IAS officers working from home and not visiting the Secretariat. Apparently, some are conducting review meetings at their residences. The government has mandated that all IAS officers should compulsorily work from the Secretariat. Incidentally when administration was shifted to Vijayawada from Hyderabad, officers used to take prior permission from the government to visit Hyderabad on weekends. Over a period of time, they have stopped informing the authorities.

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**SHORT TAKES**

**Local polls in Bengal put off**

**Kolkata:** The municipal election in West Bengal has been postponed amidst scare of Covid-19. The decision, taken by the West Bengal State Election Commission unanimously at an all-party meeting on Monday, coincided with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's announcement of extending the shutdown in all educational institutions by two more weeks and a creation of ₹200 crore-fund to tackle the outbreak. Also, the budget assembly of the West Bengal Assembly will be cut short over the novel coronavirus pandemic and the House will not meet after Tuesday.

**Big Boss-2 contestant booked**

**Thiruvananthapuram:** The Ernakulam police has registered case against Big Boss Malayalam season-2 contestant Rajith against a group of people for assembling in large numbers on the premises of Cochin International Airport late on Sunday night amid Covid-19 threat. The crowd had gathered in blatant violation of the restrictions on mass gatherings. The police registered the case against Rajith, four other persons and 10 identifiable persons. All have been booked for unlawful assembly, rioting, disobeying orders of officials on creating obstruction in public way and restricting their movement and causing danger to the public.

**Guj orders closure of national parks**

**Ahmedabad:** Gujarat government on Monday ordered closure of national parks, sanctuaries and conservation reserves in the state in view of coronavirus threat. A circular issued by the Chief Wildlife Warden Shyamal Tikadar said the state's national parks, sanctuaries and conservation reserves will remain closed till March 29. It said the sites under lockdown include Sakkarbaug Zoological Park in Junagadh, Devaliya Safari Park and Ambardi Safari Park, which attract thousands eager to sight the Asiatic lion.

**School sealed for flouting order**

**Jammu:** A private higher secondary school in Samba district was sealed on Monday for allegedly flouting the government's order of closure of all educational institutions in Jammu and Kashmir over the novel coronavirus pandemic, a police official said. A team of revenue and police officers, headed by Sub-Divisional Magistrate C. P. Kotwal, sealed the institution in Vijay Pur area of Jammu region after it was found conducting classes in defiance of the order. It submitted a detailed report to the deputy commissioner, the spokesperson said.

**SC LENS ON PRISONS AMIDST COVID SCARE**

**PARMOOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 16**

The Supreme Court on Monday expressed concern over the possibility of contagious Covid-19 proliferating in the overcrowded prisons in the country, and issued notice to the states and the Union Territories on the steps to be taken to prevent the spread of contagious virus.

Noting that like most other viral diseases, the "susceptibility of Covid-19 is greater in over-crowded places, mass gatherings", a bench comprising Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde and Justice Nageswara Rao issued show cause to the chief secretaries and the home secretaries of the states and the administrators of the Union Territories why directions should not be issued for dealing with the present health crisis arising out of coronavirus. The top court has also issued show-cause notice to the Directors General in charge of the Prisons and Department of Social Welfare of all the states and the Union Territories. The court has further sought suggestions for "immediate measures, which should be adopted for the medical assistance to the inmates in jails and the juveniles lodged in the Remand Homes and for protection of their health and welfare."



Priest offer prayers for speedy recovery of those affected by the coronavirus at Hanuman temple in Mirzapur on Monday. — PTT

**PLAINT AGAINST CHINESE PREMIER FILED**

**NAYEAR AZHAD | DC PATNA, MARCH 16**

While the government is taking measures to control the spread of coronavirus, a lawyer from Muzaffarpur has filed a complaint against Chinese president Xi Jinping and China's ambassador to India Sun Weidong for allegedly hatching a conspiracy to spread coronavirus. The complaint has been filed by lawyer Sudhir Kumar Ojha based on a thriller novel written by Dean Kooztl The Eyes of Darkness. Talking to this newspaper Ojha said that, "the sole intention is to spread coronavirus, according to the book used a biological weapon to impose supremacy over the world."

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**Siddhivinayak, Tuija Bhavani temples closed**

**DC CORRESPONDENTS BHOPAL / MUMBAI, MARCH 16**

Amid threats of coronavirus pandemic, major shrines in Madhya Pradesh on Monday barred entry of devotees to their sanctum sanctorum. The authorities of the famed Mahakal temple in district headquarters of Ujjain issued a directive to the devotees not to gather in one place inside the shrine and stop entering its sanctum sanctorum. Similarly, other ancient shrines in Madhya Pradesh such the Ram temple in Orchha also imposed similar restrictions in various districts as a preventive measure to check the spread of coronavirus infection.

**Doctors of the anaesthesia department are also under surveillance. Most elective surgeries have been postponed and only emergency cases are being taken up.**

Senior doctors, patients and their bystanders have been categorised as primary contacts, the secondary contact list figures mainly family members of the doctors. Senior doctors of six major departments have been asked to remain under home quarantine and arrested the officers-bearers of the association. Cases were registered against two persons in Kozhikode district who violated instructions of state government issued in connection with Covid-19. The two persons who returned from abroad had been directed to undergo mandatory 28 days home quarantine. However, they violated the instruction following which notices which are equivalent to arrest, were slapped against them. The police has come out with strong instructions

**● In Aurangabad, several historical sites including the world famous Ajanta and Ellora Caves will be shut from Thursday.**

The state government has opened 50 quarantine centers across the state to admit the suspected coronavirus affected people. The state government has also ordered the authorities of both state and central jails in MP to train the inmates to make masks for their supply to district hospitals in the state. MP has so far not reported any corona positive case. In similar developments, as Maharashtra has registered the highest number of Covid-19 positive cases in the country, the state government has been forced to undertake unprecedented preventive measures to stop the spread of coronavirus. The authorities have decided to close some prominent tourist and religious attractions including the world-famous Ajanta and Ellora caves near Aurangabad, the popular Siddhivinayak temple in Mumbai and the Tuija Bhavani temple in Osmanabad. In addition, Mantralaya and Raj Bhavan tour for citizens has been suspended till March 31.

**CONCERN OVER MONKEY FEVER EXPRESSED**

**BARAVINDA SHETTY | DC BENGALURU/MARCH 16**

When the entire focus of the state machinery has been shifted to combat coronavirus pandemic, two of ruling party MLAs have cornered their own government for not bothering to control Kyasanur Forest Disease, popularly known as Monkey Fever, which has claimed 15 lives in one year in Shivamogga and Uttara Kannada districts. "Though Chief Minister B.S.Vediyarappa hails from Shivamogga, the health and family welfare department officials have not taken any interest to contain the Monkey Fever. They have not provided proper curative to the patients suffering from the disease, alleged BJP MLAs. While the entire health machinery in the state for last fortnight is focusing on combating coronavirus, no one has bothered to contain Monkey Fever, which is spreading fast in Shivamogga. Dozens of patients have been admitted to government hospital of Shivamogga under the name of Monkey Fever. BJP's Haratal Halappa of Sagara and Araga Jnanendra of Thirthahalli took minister B. Sreeramulu to task for neglecting the disease.

**Chief minister Uddhav Thackeray in a review meeting on Monday asked district collectors to ensure there is no crowding at religious sites like temples, mosques, churches etc, though worship there may continue.**

He has also directed that political events, meetings etc should not take place. He said foreign tours have been banned and gram panchayat and other local body meetings have been postponed. In Aurangabad, several historical sites including the world famous Ajanta and Ellora Caves will be shut from Thursday. The other sites that have been put under lockdown are the Bibi-ka-Maqbara, Aurangabad Caves, Daulatabad (Devgrh) Fort, all of which attracts robust tourist footfalls, including foreign nationals. "All monuments in Aurangabad under the Archaeological Survey of India and Maharashtra government will remain closed from March 19 to April 7. Tourists who have been allowed to visit these sites over the next two days have already been screened by the ASI," said collector Uday Choudhary. Entry restrictions to Mantralaya, the state secretariat, which sees thousands of visitors daily will also be in force, health minister Rajesh Tope said.

**Odisha closes all schools, postpones examination**

**AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, MARCH 16**

Odisha government on Monday ordered closure of all government, public and private schools as a part of its preparation to check Covid-19. As a precautionary measure, examination of students of all classes from Standard I to Standard IX and XI were also postponed till further orders. In a notification issued by school and mass education minister Samant Ranjan Dash said the entire evaluation process will be conducted as per schedule and students will not be affected. School and mass education minister Samant Ranjan Dash said the entire evaluation process will be conducted as per schedule and students will not be affected. School and mass education minister Samant Ranjan Dash said the entire evaluation process will be conducted as per schedule and students will not be affected. School and mass education minister Samant Ranjan Dash said the entire evaluation process will be conducted as per schedule and students will not be affected.

**Docs scared as radiologist tests +ve**

**DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 16**

The premier medical institution Sri Aurobindo Tirunall Institute of Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST) Thiruvananthapuram has been virtually closed after a doctor who returned from Spain tested positive for Covid-19. The radiologist returned from Spain after attending a training programme. His final confirmation report came on Sunday following which there was scare in the institution. Subsequently the health officials began an exercise to identify the primary and secondary contacts. Senior doctors, patients and their bystanders have been categorised as primary contacts, the secondary contact list figures mainly family members of the doctors. Senior doctors of six major departments have been asked to remain under home quarantine and arrested the officers-bearers of the association. Cases were registered against two persons in Kozhikode district who violated instructions of state government issued in connection with Covid-19. The two persons who returned from abroad had been directed to undergo mandatory 28 days home quarantine. However, they violated the instruction following which notices which are equivalent to arrest, were slapped against them. The police has come out with strong instructions

**Anti-HIV drugs hold ray of hope**

**Thermal screening at SC, Parliament; Centre advocates social distancing for all**

**From Page 1**

However, Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan claimed that three more people have tested positive for Covid-19, three days after she fled from a hospital without telling the authorities, officials said. A group of Ministers took stock of the situation and preparedness on these issues, and on Monday Delhi announced shutting

**● In Agra, a 25-year-old woman has tested positive for Covid-19, three days after she fled from a hospital without telling the authorities, officials said.**

ing the states to close down all educational establishments (schools, universities, etc), gyms, museums, cultural and social centres, swimming pools and theatres. Students were advised to stay at home and avail of online education wherever possible. It also suggested that private sector organisations should encourage employees should encourage people to work from home and meetings, as far as possible, should be done through video conferences. "People were urged to maintain at least a one-metre distance from each other. While asking people to avoid unnecessary movement in public places, the advisory urged people to put off all non-essential social and cultural gatherings and keep all personal planned weddings to a limited gathering." Similar advice from the government has advised states to keep off sports and other activities and regulate mass gatherings to avoid overcrowding. Several states have already taken these measures, and on Monday Delhi announced shutting

down spas, pubs, night-clubs, weekly markets and all gatherings of 50 or more people. In Delhi, thermal screening was carried out at the Supreme Court and in Parliament. Thermal screening of passengers in trains and railway stations has also begun in several places and trains are being sanitised. The Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee has also advised the entry of foreigners who haven't completed their 15-day stay in India in all gurdwaras to prevent the transmission of Covid-19. Assam too ordered the shutting of protected organisations and asked all offices and institutes to stop using fingerprint-based attendance systems. The Andaman and Nicobar administration announced the shutting down of its beaches and all entry of foreigners from March 16 till 26, and tourists have been asked to avoid going to the islands during this period. In Rajasthan doctors have said that a combination of two anti-HIV drugs has proved crucial in the treatment of Covid positive cases. Additional Health Secretary (Medical and Health) Rohit Kumar Singh said the patients' condition improved after the two medicines administered the anti-HIV drugs. Three of the four severely ill patients now been declared coronavirus-free.

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**53 EVACUATED FROM IRAN IN QUARANTINE**

**DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 16**

The second batch of 53 evacuees from Iran on Monday reached Indian Army's quarantine facility at Jaisalmer. The first batch of 236 Indian nationals evacuated from Iran were quarantined on Sunday at the Indian Army Wellness Centre at Jaisalmer. As per the procedure, preliminary screening of these persons was undertaken at the airport upon arrival. "Thereafter, they were moved to the Quarantine facility at Jaisalmer, where they will undergo 14 days Quarantine under professional medical supervision," said sources. The Wellness Centre at Jaisalmer is fully equipped with the supervision of skilled medical authorities, said officials. Soldiers have volunteered to provide care and support to our countrymen returning from overseas. Last week, 83 individuals who arrived from Italy were quarantined at Indian Army facility at Manesar. Earlier, Indians evacuated from Wuhan (248) and Japan (124) were quarantined at Manesar. Till now some 560 evacuees have been quarantined at Armed Forces' facilities.

**SC LENS ON PRISONS AMIDST COVID SCARE**

**PARMOOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 16**

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**Couple locked up in flat in Thrissur**

**GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 16**

In a bizarre incident in Thrissur district, members of a local residents association locked up a couple in their flat suspecting they had Covid-19. The couple had returned to Kerala from their work place in Saudi Arabia. The members of the association pasted a sticker "corona-infected" on the door of the couple's flat. Soon after the incident a case was registered against the police swung into action

**COVID | SCARE | Neighbours suspicious of couple as they were back from Saudi**

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and arrested the officers-bearers of the association. Cases were registered against two persons in Kozhikode district who violated instructions of state government issued in connection with Covid-19. The two persons who returned from abroad had been directed to undergo mandatory 28 days home quarantine. However, they violated the instruction following which notices which are equivalent to arrest, were slapped against them. The police has come out with strong instructions

to those who returned from abroad during the last 28 days to immediately report if they have not yet, to their nearest health authorities. They could call on toll free numbers 1077 or 1056, or get in touch with the primary health centers. The doctors of medical college hospital Thiruvananthapuram who treated an accident victim have been put under two week quarantine for Covid-19. The person who sustained serious injuries in an accident in Kollam dis-

trict on Sunday was under surveillance for Covid-19. He was taken to hospital and treated at the casualty wing and emergency surgery unit of the hospital. In view of quarantine, the patient had ventured out during which he met with the accident. The doctors who were unaware of the Covid-19 quarantine status of the patient have been directed to undergo surveillance for two weeks. The incident has also brought into focus the hazards faced by the doctors.

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DECCAN Chronicle

17 MARCH 2020

C-virus testing: India must do much more

It's imperative we form the widest possible coalition to fight the spread of coronavirus; hence the initiative by India to bring together the South Asian nations on the new defunct platform of Saarc is welcome.

Our neighbours have responded positively to the call made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a joint effort on the proposal for a Covid-19 Emergency Fund, to which India will make a contribution of \$10 million.

While regional efforts are important, the India must look at the home front without delay, as a comparison with nations that have gotten down with Covid-19 shows a disturbingly similar pattern with India in terms of the pandemic's progress.

Will BJP topple Kamal Nath?

In the midst of a coronavirus pandemic and an economic free-fall that will lose, due to Covid-19, another per cent of GDP growth (according to a former economic adviser to the Prime Minister) from an already anemic 4.5 per cent — some say even this is inflated — the government is focused on toppling the Madhya Pradesh Congress government led by chief minister Kamal Nath.

However, Kamal Nath is no amateur. Speaker N.P. Prajapati did what was expected of him — he postponed any trust vote till March 26, citing Covid-19 fears.

Our Constitution is clear on the demarcation of domain. The legislature belongs to the people's representatives and is run by the Speaker, not the governor.

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Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27809304, Fax: 040-27802526
Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patnam, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.) Ph: 0866-2552284/2552287, Telefax: 0866-2552324
Visakhapatnam: Sarva No.1/5A Beach Road, Near Kalisigga Repoway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 011 (A.P.) Ph: 0891-252333/2523234, Fax: 0891-2752285
Rajahmundry: Venagiri, Dhawaleswararam Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-241761/2417208, Telefax: 0883-2417208
Anantapur: Thipavon colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903, Fax: 08554-276904
Karnimangur: Survey No.1341, Vaidhalpally Colony, Jagtiala Road, Karnimangur - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908, Telefax: 0878-2220438
Nellore: Survey No.5272, Barrampally Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chennamangala Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-248581/2, Telefax: 0861-248580
Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/48/3051, Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/4290325
Bangalore: 50 Floor, IIMCT Commercial Complex, 50 Feet Road, Koramangala, Bangalore-560 095 Ph: 080-4346500, Fax: 080-2286652
Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422-2312125
Kochi: No.3-5, 3rd Floor of I.D.D. TRADE TOWER, Kaloor-Kadavandara Road, Ernakulam, Ph: 0484-403948
Thiruvananthapuram: St Joseph's Press, TC 151040, Cotton Hill, Thycad (PO), Thiruvananthapuram 695 014
Kozhikode: Door No 6/1002 E, First Floor of City Mall, Opp. YMCA, Kanner Road, Kozhikode - 673 001, Fax: 0495 4019 018
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Subhani

Cong needs a leader to give India a real choice

Anand K. Sahay Far & Near

Jyotiraditya Scindia's defection to the BJP was a business decision. Once he lost the Lok Sabha election in May last year to his secretary, who had joined the BJP, Mr Scindia would have known he would be following suit to protect his investment in politics at the present juncture.

This is a straightforward transactional view of politics. The "taint" of ideology does not factor into the consideration in such matters for those who insist on a bang for their buck, quite in contrast to the likes of a Mani Shankar Aiyar or a Shashi Tharoor, for instance, although these two individuals may be far apart in their worldview.

It remains to be seen if many in the Congress will emulate Mr Scindia's example. The decision may be guided by the answer to the following questions: Can the BJP place them in a more advantageous position? How many more can be sent to the Rajya Sabha? How many more can be made Union ministers? Are they so influential at the mass level that the BJP will be tempted?

Mr Scindia is a maharaja, at least to his hangers-on. Even though he got how pathetic things got to be. Among the points of negotiation he successfully worked out with the BJP was apparently the assurance that in New Delhi he would be given the same government bungalow which was once allotted to his late father.

The scion of the erstwhile royal family of Gwalior was humoured in a matter so petty because he brought with

him the promise of the destabilisation of a Congress government in a major state. How many potential deserters are in a position to set the wheels of "Operation Kamal" in motion? This is a point worth pondering because in the pro-Scindia circles the point has been sought to be made that the male heir of the Gwalior line has "belled the cat" in the Congress (whose enervated leadership appears to have developed severe cramps and currently seems incapable of performing even the most basic functions expected of it).

And then life seemed to ebb out of the Congress leadership. As party president, Rahul Gandhi had enervated the mood in the party by putting up a terrific show in the Assembly elections in Gujarat, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. His critics within the party and outside it were silenced. The emphatic Lok Sabha defeat did not entirely change the scenario.

Mr Gandhi did the honourable thing by resigning. He took on the responsibility for the defeat. This raised his stature as no one thought a dynast would do. The common belief is that they think they are entitled to occupy the top slot. The Congress leader's problem was that he did not follow up on his resignation plan by ensuring an orderly change of guard. Worse, he mysteriously chose to isolate himself, exactly as the Congress opponents may have wanted.

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LETTERS TACKLING CORONA

Coronavirus is taking a heavy toll of the nation and everyone seems vulnerable to the disease. Educational institutions and some offices have been shut as a precautionary measure.

C. Mohan Secunderabad

YOGI, A DICTATOR

It is shocking to see that UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is ruling the state like a dictator. A few days ago, the Allahabad High Court passed an order calling for removal of banners of anti-CAA protesters.

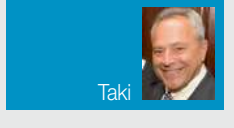
Vedur Prithvasi Hyderabad

Ajoy Mukherjee resigns

CALCUTTA, MARCH 16 WEST Bengal's United Front Government died a lingering death tonight with Mr Ajoy Mukherjee announcing that he had resigned because "to continue as Chief Minister will amount to committing a treachery on the people."

In a special broadcast over the Calcutta station, Mr Mukherjee said, "I do not speak Dutch and don't know anyone who does, but they were very fair. My part was in English and they didn't touch it up or any American feminist-type rubbish. If it had been an American crew, I'd probably be at Rikers by now, keeping you know who company."

By arrangement with The Spectator



Taki

Mediating on life and death in the age of coronavirus

It should be a weatherman, no sooner had I announced snow to be a Gstaad rarity than it came down non-stop. But then it rained, so everything's hunky-dory.

Older rich people who don't ski are being given the same government bungalow which was once allotted to his late father.

Life should be celebrated for its ephemeral beauty, with death recognised as being ever-present and just around the corner. It's as natural as life and everyone's bound to experience it.

What is it they say about the mouths of babes? But death is on everyone's mind nowadays, especially in this small community inhabited by people who don't have the chore of the daily nine-to-five.

I saw my friend Henry Wyndham the other night, and he's not the kind to ask Ivan-type questions. He does raise money for cancer patients. I saw him at a dinner given by Mick Flick, the Mercedes Benz guy, who sat up late with me and spoke about the white-suited pre-Mick Flicks that were once a part of the town.

There are some not so nice ones, who I won't mention. Gstaad itself can be a very pleasant community in March when the hazy-glitzy leave and the slopes become skiable again.

Not only are they the richest people in that rather large country, they are also the nicest. The mother, Jackie Desmarais, who died a couple of years ago, was one of the best women I've ever met. She was a Spectator reader and when I was at her incredible house in Montreal for a wedding I was rather down because both my mistress and my wife were about to dump me.



# Covid's impact through lens

Authorities around the world turned to increasingly drastic measures to try to slow the spread of the new Covid-19 on Monday. Countries have suspended domestic and international flights besides banning entry of foreigners. Educational institutions have been shut, streets desolate and eateries shuttered as governments have issued directives on public gatherings as foreign returnees have been put on quarantine



**BANGKOK**

A woman reaches for items at a supermarket as people shopped amid concerns over the spread of the Covid-19 in Bangkok on Monday. — AFP



**NICOSIA**

Cyprus soldiers stand guard at the closed Ledra crossing checkpoint in the old city of the Cypriot capital Nicosia on Monday. — AFP



**SAUDI**

An electronic billboard displays a Saudi health ministry message advising people to wash their hands for 40 seconds as precaution against Covid-19 in Riyadh. — AFP



**PRAGUE**

Few people are watching an Astronomical Clock at the Old Town Square in Prague, Czech Republic, on Monday. — AP



**FRANCE**

A man stands next to a closed restaurant terrace on Monday in Strasbourg, eastern France as protective measures are taken in France against the spread of the Covid-19. — AFP



**FRANKFURT**

A 10 km queue of trucks stuck on the A12 motorway near the Polish-German border from outside the eastern German town of Frankfurt (Oder) on Monday, as measures are taken to slow down the spread of the novel Covid-19. — AFP

**LONDON**

Artist Kaya Mar holds up a Covid-19 themed painting with Prime Minister Boris Johnson in Westminster in London, Monday. — AP



**WUHAN**

A volunteer disinfects a residential area amid the Covid-19 outbreak in China's central Hubei province on Monday. — AFP



## Woman to be Biden mate

Washington, March 16: Former Vice President Joe Biden has vowed to pick a woman as his vice presidential candidate if he wins the Democratic presidential nomination in which he is currently leading against Bernie Sanders. The race to

win the Democratic presidential nomination has reduced to a direct contest between Biden and Vermont Senator Sanders. Both of them clashed during a Democratic primary presidential debate hosted by the CNN. "I would pick a woman to

be my vice president," Biden said in response to a question during the debate. "I committed that if I'm elected president have an opportunity to appoint someone to the courts will I'll appoint the first black woman to the courts," he asserted. — PTI

## Duma nod to Putin reform

Moscow, March 16: Russia's Constitutional Court on Monday approved amendments proposed by President Vladimir Putin to the country's basic law, giving him the option of serving two further terms in office. The Constitutional

Court published the ruling on its website and immediately sent the ruling to Putin, who could now stay in power until 2036. The court issued a speedy decision after Putin signed the final reform package on Saturday, though it had

a week to consider its ruling. Putin, 67, last week backed a last-minute proposal by the first woman in space, Valentina Tereshkova, to add an amendment to the reform package allowing his possible return to the Kremlin after 2024. — AFP

## Sex abuse: Priest sentenced

Lyon (France), March 16: A French priest who acknowledged sexually abusing at least 75 boys over decades was sentenced Monday to five years in prison, in France's worst case of clergy abuse to reach trial. The court in Lyon issued the verdict

against 74-year-old Bernard Preynat behind closed doors because of the spreading Covid-19 outbreak dating back to the 1980s, but he wasn't removed from the priesthood until last year. Victims of Preynat's abuse welcomed his conviction. — AFP



## quick BITES

### INDICATORS

| INDICATORS             | %               |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Sensex                 | 31,390.07 -7.96 |
| Nifty 50               | 9,197.40 -7.61  |
| S&P 500*               | 2,537.81 -6.39  |
| Dollar (₹)             | 74.27 -0.48     |
| Pound Sterling (₹)     | 91,253.1 1.62   |
| Euro (₹)               | 82.89 -0.40     |
| Gold (10gm) (₹)        | 41,610.455 1.09 |
| Brent crude (\$/bbl)   | 30.75 -9.16     |
| IN 10-Yr bond yield    | 6.208 -1.636    |
| US 10-Yr T-bill yield* | 0.767 -1.962    |

\*As of 9:30 pm IST

## CCI imposes ₹302 cr penalty on Grasim Inds.

The Competition Commission has slapped a penalty of Rs 302 crore on Grasim Industries for abusing its dominant position in supply of VSF to spinners. Besides, the company has been directed to "cease and desist" from indulging in anti-competitive practices as well as put in place a transparent "discount policy". The CCI said Grasim charged discriminatory prices and imposed supplementary obligations on its customers.

## Siam moves SC over BS-IV registration



Auto industry body Siam said it has filed an application in the Supreme Court seeking sale and registration of BS-IV vehicles till March 31. Siam president Rajan Wadhwa said some states have recently issued circulars saying no applications for registration of BS-IV vehicles would be accepted on or after certain dates, which are much ahead of March 31. The cut-off dates range from February 29, to March 25, 2020, it said.

## ONGC declares 100% interim dividend

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) declared 100 per cent interim dividend and said it has sufficient funds to continue operations in an era of extreme volatility in oil prices. In a statement, ONGC said it declared an interim dividend of Rs 5 per equity share of Rs 5 each. "The government, which owns 62.78 per cent stake in ONGC, will get Rs 3,949 crore in dividend and taxes.

## Exporters hit by trade slowdown, seek relief

With the slowdown in global trade in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, the Engineering Export Promotion Council of India sought relief measures from the Centre. The exporters have found themselves in a "state of turmoil" as shipments to the top destinations have been paralysed. "Trade is crippled in most of these destinations due to a near collapse of the global supply chain as the cargo movement has stopped,"

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# Coffee Day probe finds ₹2,000 crore missing from accounts

SARITHA RAI & ANTONY MARCH 16

An investigation into Coffee Day Enterprises Ltd, initiated by its board after the death of founder V.G. Siddhartha, is likely to conclude that at least Rs 2,000 crore (₹271 million) is missing from its accounts, according to people familiar with the matter. The months-long probe following the suicide of Siddhartha in July examined the financial transactions of the country's largest coffee chain and its dealings with dozens of private companies owned by the entrepreneur. The draft report, running more than a hundred pages, points to billions of rupees that have gone missing, said the people, asking not to be identified because details aren't public. The report also highlights hundreds of transactions

between the founder's listed and personal businesses that were not conducted at arm's length, the people said. Though the report is in its final stages, the probe details could change before its release, expected as early as this week, they said. The missing funds could total more than Rs 2,500 crore, one person said.

"The investigation report is still a work in progress, and not finalized," a spokesman for the company said. "The board of directors and the company are unaware of its content at this point of time. Hence it would be premature to speculate on the investigation findings."

The priority for management and Siddhartha's family "is to keep the business running in a challenging environment and meet all stakeholder commitments, including 30,000 jobs associated with the group," the



V.G. Siddhartha

spokesman said. The probe began about a month after the suicide of the 59-year-old founder last year. The company brought in Ashok Kumar Malhotra, a retired senior official from the enforcement agency to investigate and a senior Supreme Court lawyer is assisting in the case, the company then said.

The Coffee Day empire has since been battered by the founder's death. Its shares plummeted about 90 per cent and its

market value dropped to about \$80 million. Trading was suspended in February. Lenders to Coffee day, IndusInd Bank and RBL Bank, filed suits on Monday, with losses of more than 17 per cent.

The regulators are tracking the situation and may use the company's final report as part of a deeper dive into its internal affairs, the people said. Coffee Day showed about Rs 2,400 crore in cash and cash equivalents on its balance sheet as of March 2019, the most recent figures the company has issued.

After the death of Siddhartha the company faced a severe liquidity crunch and had "zero cash in the bank," according to one of the people. It struggled with day-to-day expenses and paying salaries to staff, a strain, the person said. The draft report details personal

guarantees by Siddhartha for loans taken by Coffee Day and his unsecured loans at high interest rates from local money lenders, the people said. It also probes Coffee Day's defaults to coffee growers and other vendors, they said.

A related issue is that coffee estates owned by Siddhartha and several employees had been used as collateral for bank loans. The report found that valuations for properties were inflated to get the loans, one person said.

Investigators have examined several theories about what happened to the company's money, including whether Coffee Day was manipulating its finances to show cash and profit and whether Siddhartha was taking cash out of the listed company to pay off a large investor to whom he had guaranteed a return, the person said. From

the filings of his listed and private companies, the entrepreneur's loans had totaled more than Rs 10,000 crore, and he had been squeezed by borrowing to repay interest on earlier loans, the person said. The purported suicide note of Siddhartha said he had tried his best but failed as an entrepreneur. "I am solely responsible for all mistakes," the letter read. "Every financial transaction is my responsibility. My team, auditors and senior management are totally unaware of all my transactions. The law should hold me and only me accountable. I have withheld this information from everybody including my family." As the report nears release, Coffee Day is finalising a deal with Blackstone Group Inc. for real estate assets. A large tranche of the payment is due in about a week, one person said. —Bloomberg

## Jet's Naresh Goyal, Indiabulls' Gehlaut also called to summons over Yes deals

New Delhi/Mumbai, March 16: The Enforcement Directorate has summoned two corporate honchos, including Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambani and Essel Group promoter Subhash Chandra, Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal and Indiabulls chairman Sameer Gehlaut, to appear before it this week in connection with Yes Bank dealings, officials said on Monday.

DHFL CMD Kapil Wadhwani, recently arrested by the ED in another case, has also been called for questioning as part of its money laundering probe against Yes Bank promoter Rana Kapoor and others. The officials said Ambani, 60, was first called for questioning on Monday but he sought exemption from appearing on some personal grounds. "The agency took up the money laundering probe against Kapoor and others after the Reserve Bank imposed a moratorium on the crisis-hit Yes Bank earlier this month. The ED has accused Kapoor, his family members and others of laundering "proceeds of crime" worth Rs 4,300 crore by receiving alleged kickbacks in lieu of extending big loans through their bank that later allegedly turned non-performing assets (NPA).

## Another case against Kapoor

Mumbai, March 16: The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday filed a special court here on Monday that that over Rs 201 crore loans sanctioned by Yes Bank during the tenure of Rana Kapoor to a joint venture company of HDIL group were used to repay previous dues by the now bankrupt realty company. Kapoor, the former MD and CEO of Yes Bank, was arrested by the agency on March 8 under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. As his remand ended on Monday, Kapoor was produced before the special PMLA court judge P.P. Rayavdiya. Additional solicitor general Anil Singh, appearing for the central agency, sought six more days of remand for Kapoor as they need to probe him further in connection with the case.

The ED told the court that its investigations have revealed that Yes Bank had sanctioned Rs 201 crore loans in parts to Max Realty Marketing, a joint venture of De Shaw Group and promoters of HDIL Group. —PTI

take the probe into the case forward and hence the questioning and recording of statements of these business heads under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) is essential.

While Essel Group has an alleged unpaid loan of Rs 4,600 crore towards Yes Bank, Dewan Housing Finance Limited has an amount of about Rs 3,700 crore. "Essel Group has never made any transactions with Mr. Rana Kapoor or his family or that matter any private entities controlled by them," Chandra said in a tweet.

"I have been requested by ED to make a statement on the information which is already available with them. I will be more than happy to be personally interviewed at their office, honouring their request, in order to extend all the required co-operation," Chandra tweeted.

Jet Airways loan amount is stated to be about Rs 550 crore, said. —PTI

## Panic rules; Sensex sheds over 2,700 pts

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MARCH 16

The market's bounce back on Friday proved short-lived, as Sensex and Nifty-50 fell close to 8 per cent on Monday under heightened fears of impending and Covid-19-led economic slump and its impact on corporate earnings.

Federal Reserve which cut its lending rate to near zero and also announced its quantitative easing programme worth \$700 billion, failed to enthuse Asian and European markets, and in opening trade on Monday the US market had to be halted as benchmark indices hit the lower circuit. These concerns had to be halted as benchmark indices hit the lower circuit in the first minutes of trading on Wall Street.

Economic, trade and impact equities across the globe, analysts said. These concerns will most likely weigh on the market, which would take a while to recover from this significant price damage. Volatility is likely to continue in the coming days and any bounce could be muted. The Nifty-50 fell 7.61 per cent and closed at 9,197.40, down by



757.80 points.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies dropped by Rs 7,62,290.23 crore to Rs 1,21,83,952.59 crore at the close of trade. The market's volatility indicator, India VIX index, surged to the highest level in the last 10 years at 68.8, indicating continued swings in the market in the near future. Siddhartha's Khemka head-retail research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said, "Easing monetary policy action across the globe shows the impact coronavirus would have on the economy. These concerns will most likely weigh on the market, which would take a while to recover from this significant price damage. Volatility is likely to continue in the coming days and any bounce could be muted. The Nifty-50 fell 7.61 per cent and closed at 9,197.40, down by

and not panic."

The foreign portfolio investors continue to run away from the Indian market, as they were net sellers of equities worth Rs 3,689.85 crore, as per provisional data. The weakening of the Indian currency, partly responsible for FPIs selling, closed at Rs 74.27 per dollar, down by 35 paise from the previous close at Rs 73.92. The selling in Indian market resumed as the market opened on the news of monetary policy action being reported from various parts of the country, with Maharashtra reporting a rise in the fourth of the total cases.

As more and more economic activities are getting affected, the impact on the economy is likely to be significant, as RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said, "Coronavirus: Pandemic can affect economic activity in India."

## Sports sponsorship crosses ₹9K cr

Mumbai, March 16: ESP Properties, the entertainment and sports division of GroupM (RTM), released a 2020 report on sports sponsorship in India. Sports sponsorship grew at a healthy 17 per cent and by the sports sponsorship industry crossed the Rs 9,000 crore mark in 2019.

2019 was the year for cricket, which dominated the sports advertising sector. IPL & ICC Business

NOTE  
media spends. On-ground sponsorships grew by 25 per cent, for the first time, crossing the Rs 2,000 crore mark. Overall, the industry's upsurge was Rs 1,347 crore, of which Rs 800 crore was contributed by media spends alone, growing at 18 per cent. Digital shot up by a whopping 84 per cent from Rs 1.2 crore to Rs 875 crore. While TV continues to grow as the biggest medium, it spends in sports, brands are also having a clear digital plan along with a presence on TV to build a rapport with their consumers by reaching out to them in more than one way. The year 2019 also saw fantasy sports applications growing fast as advertisers and this traction will be carried forward into 2020 also.

## RBI boosts liquidity, but no rate cut yet

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, MARCH 16

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday avoided an emergency interest rate cut akin to the steep rate cuts in multiple major global central banks to limit the economic fallout of the coronavirus and to assuage markets, but announced several measures to enhance liquidity in the system.

In a hurriedly called press conference, kept after market hours, Shaktikanta Das, RBI governor, announced another six months US dollar/ruppee swap on March 23 to limit rupee volatility and long-term repo operations (LTRO) in multiple tranches up to a total amount of Rs 1 lakh crore at the policy rate to ensure additional liquidity through LTRO and swap transactions will ensure the twin objectives of further compression in term structure of interest rates and ensuring dollar liquidity.

Das also elaborated on the Yes Bank revival plan and the fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Indian economy and markets. At several times during the press conference Das asked Yes Bank customers not to rush to withdraw their money when the moratorium is lifted.



He also unequivocally supported private sector banks, stating that he has written to all state governments that "there is no reason for them (state governments) to stay away from private banks. The health of the banking sector is safe and sound."

"This time, the identity of the bank in difficulty which is Yes Bank, is retained. If required, RBI will support Yes Bank with respect to liquidity. We would like to assure depositors their money is completely safe and there is no need for worry. In the history of Indian banking, depositors of scheduled commercial banks have never lost money. After 6 pm on March 18, they can withdraw their money but there is no need for panic withdrawal," Das said. On a question on why the rates were not cut, Das said, "According to the prevailing law, the rate cut call has to be taken by the

monetary policy committee, but I don't rule out anything. Depending on the evolving situation, we will take the necessary steps in the form of our action." He reiterated that the RBI stands ready to take the necessary measures and has several tools at its disposal to address the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the Indian economy, which could be deployed if required even ahead of the next monetary policy scheduled for March 31 or April 2. "Our response will neither be premature nor delayed," Das said.

Some of the major global central banks have announced multiple rate cuts to ease monetary policy measures so far this month to limit the economic fallout of the coronavirus. In many as 43 central banks reduced rates, including the world's most powerful US Federal Reserve, which slashed its rates by 150 basis points to near zero just three days ahead of the FOMC meeting on Saturday. Following this, Bank of Japan brought its policy rate to near zero by two days and announced a set of measures to support the economy by doubling the pace of ETF and REIT purchases to 12 trillion yen and 180 billion yen per annum, respectively. Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at Care Ratings said, "We expect the RBI to announce a 50 basis points rate cut at its next MPC on April 2."

## Centre moves SC, seeks 20 year window for AGR dues

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, MARCH 16

The Centre on Monday moved the Supreme Court seeking modification of its October 24, 2019, order, seeking 20 years window for the payment of Rs 92,000 crore aggregate gross revenue dues by telecom service providers. The DoT has sought the modification of its October 24, 2019 order, seeking 20 years window for the payment of Rs 92,000 crore aggregate gross revenue dues by telecom service providers. The DoT has sought the modification of its October 24, 2019 order, seeking 20 years window for the payment of Rs 92,000 crore aggregate gross revenue dues by telecom service providers.

The unprecedented market volatility has dealt a blow to primary market offerings, with SBI Card making a muted listing and Antony Waste Handling Cell pulling out its initial public offering (IPO). Shares of SBI Cards and Payment Services made a lakshkure debut on the bourses, listing at more than 12 per cent discount to the issue price of Rs 755 per share, marred by the negative market sentiments on Monday. SBI Card shares listed at Rs 658 on the BSE and at Rs 661 on the NSE, down and up 84 per cent, but a sharp recovery in the first hour of trading took the stock to Rs 755. But the share price soon started declining in the crashing market, which posted the second biggest fall in history. "I don't know when the bench will sit."

## Muted listing for SBI Card, Antony Waste pulls out IPO



RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MARCH 16

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"The DoT has told the top court that it is considering the huge amount which is payable by the telecom service providers there would be certain inevitable consequences which may not be in any one's interest."

exchanged hands on the NSE and Rs 286.54 crore on the BSE. The deliverable quantity on the NSE stood at 56.94 per cent, indicating buying by investors who missed out on the IPO allotment or wanted to buy at a lower price. Shares of promoter State Bank of India fell 84 per cent on the BSE, closing at Rs 223.25.

Antony Waste Handling Cell withdrew its initial public offering, as it was subscribed only 0.49 per cent till Monday, even after the subscription date was extended to March 16 and the price band was reduced marginally to Rs 294-300 share from Rs 290-300. The IPO of the municipal waste management institute that opened on March 4 saw participation by marquee investors like Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Vantage Equity Fund. However, benchmark indices have fallen by 20 per cent since the filing of the re-herding prospectus. "As the global situation around Covid-19 continues to evolve, investors appear to have entered risk-off mode," the company said.

# Oil ministry has sought ₹5,000 cr from finance ministry India to raise cheap oil to boost strategic reserves

New Delhi, March 16: India plans to take advantage of low prices for oil from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to top up its strategic petroleum reserves (SPR) from two sources familiar with the matter said on Monday.

Global oil prices have fallen around 40 per cent in March as the impact of the coronavirus pandemic has destroyed demand, while supplies are growing following Moscow's refusal to back deeper output cuts at a meeting of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its OPEC+ allies.

Leading Opec producers Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi have said they will increase output while filling prices, giving big consumers the chance to fill up at discounted prices. "It is an opportune time for us and for our partners," said the National Oil Company and Saudi Aramco to the SPRs. "The deals to fill the SPRs, if there is any delay, we might fill the SPRs on our own," said an official familiar with the matter, asking not to be named.

India has built strategic storage at three locations in south India to store up to 36.87 million barrels of oil or five million tonnes to protect against supply disruption.

The country is the world's third biggest oil importer and consumer and imports about 80 per cent of its oil needs

Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd, a company charged with building of strategic storage, has signed a memorandum of understanding with the UAE's national oil company ADNOC for the lease of half of its 2.5 million tonnes Padur facility.

Last year, it signed an MoU with Saudi Aramco for the lease of a quarter of Padur SPR.

A second source, who also requested anonymity, said the oil ministry has written to the finance ministry to seek about 49 to 50 billion rupees (\$673.7 million) to buy oil in 8-9 very large crude carriers for filling the storage.

Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd (ISPR) and India's oil and gas ministry have agreed to an immediate comment, while ADNOC and Saudi Aramco declined to comment.

The deals to fill the world's third biggest oil importer and consumer, imports about 80 per cent of its oil needs and has built strategic storage facilities at three locations in south-

ern India to store up to 36.87 million barrels of oil or about 5 million tonnes to protect against supply disruption.

ISPR, a company charged with building of strategic storage, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the UAE's national oil company ADNOC for the lease of half of its 2.5 million tonnes Padur facility.

The leases allow the national oil companies to store their oil, some of which will cater for India's strategic needs, while they

can sell the rest to Indian refiners.

Padur has four compartments that hold about 4.6 million barrels each. The ISPR has received 1 VILCC with Arab Mix to fill one compartment and will get a second VILCC in April, a third source said.

The ISPR has already leased half of the 1.5 million tonnes capacity in Mangalore storage to ADNOC, which has stored about 5.5 million barrels of Das oil in the cavern, while ISPR has retained the remainder. "This is the right time to fill the SPRs before prices start moving against our interest."

India has also filled its 1.03 million tonnes Vizag facility with Basra oil from another Opec producer Iraq.

While India is primarily taking advantage of low prices as a consumer nation, US President Donald Trump aimed to help US energy producers struggle to cope with the price fall by announcing he would take advantage of low prices to fill up the emergency stockpile of oil reserve. — Reuters

## Crude oil slips below \$30 a barrel after four years

New York, March 16: Oil prices fell below \$30 a barrel on Monday as the worldwide coronavirus outbreak worsened over the weekend, exacerbating fears that government lockdowns to contain the spread of the disease would spark a global recession.

Top global oil producers Saudi Arabia and Russia have failed to agree on how to react as the reduction in global economic activity destroys oil demand and has turned on each other to start a price war.

Saudi Aramco reiterated on Monday its plans to boost output to record levels to take a bigger share of the global market. Brent crude LCOc1 was down \$3.75, or 11.1 per cent, to \$30.10 a barrel by 1:26 pm EDT (5:26 pm GMT). The international benchmark earlier fell to \$29.52 a barrel, its lowest since January 2016.

Saudi Aramco is likely to sustain higher oil output planned for April in May, Chief Executive Amin Nasser said, signalling the top customer will be able to access full banking services from Wednesday evening, as the moratorium will be lifted earlier.

The RBI had on March 5 put a moratorium on Yes Bank restricting withdrawals to \$50,000 per depositor till April 3. However, the government in a notification on Saturday said the moratorium will be lifted by 18:00 hrs on March 18.

"We will resume full banking services from Wed, March 18, 2020, 6 pm. Visit any of our 1,132 branches from Mar 19, 2020, post commencement of banking hrs to experience our suite of services," Yes Bank said in a tweet.

You will also be able to access all our digital services & platforms @RBI @FinMinIndia," it said. — Reuters

## Gold price plunges ₹1,300 after selloff in US markets

SANGEETHA Q. CHENNAI, MARCH 16

Gold and silver witnessed one of the steepest falls in the recent history as a sell-off triggered by margin calls in equity markets last week got extended on Monday despite the US Federal Reserve lowering interest rates.

In the Delhi spot market, silver lost ₹200 per 10 gm from the previous close of ₹42,600 to ₹41,300 on Monday. Silver saw one of the biggest single-day falls from ₹41,500 per kg to ₹37,000, losing ₹4,500 per kg.

US Silver futures on Multi Commodity Exchange crashed by 16 per cent to test the floor of ₹38,756 in one of the biggest single-day falls in the history of MCX.

In the international market, gold fell more than 80 dollars per ounce during the intraday session



amid constant concerns over the coronavirus spread," said Ajay Kedia, MD, Kedia Commodities. The market is in fact surprised by Monday's fall as the lowering of interest rate by US Federal Reserve is generally positive for gold.

"Investors are surprised with today's fall in bullion as generally it has been observed that whenever there is a rate cut by Federal Reserve in the US, gold jumps, but today the Federal Reserve held its second emergency meeting this month, voting to cut overnight rates to zero per cent, similar to the levels of the global financial crisis. Despite this bullion crashed," said Kedia.

According to Himanshu Gupta, vice president and head of commodities and currencies research, Globe Capital, investors are a bit more cautious about asset classes at this moment.

## Customers can access Yes Bank's services from tomorrow evening

New Delhi, March 16: Yes Bank notified the reconstruction plan for cash-strapped Yes Bank and said the moratorium will be lifted by 6 pm on March 18, much earlier than the earlier date of April 3.

The order of moratorium was on the reconstructed bank issued by the government, shall cease to have effect on the third working day at 6 pm from the date of commencement of this scheme," the notification said.

The lender has posted a net loss of ₹18,654 crore for third quarter ended December 31 due to heavy provisioning for bad loans. It had posted a profit of ₹1,001 crore during December quarter of 2018-19.

Besides, the customers have been allowed for inward RTGS/NEFT/IMPS

based transaction services to pay for their Yes Bank credit card bills and loan EMIs from any bank accounts including Yes Bank accounts.

"Outward NEFT/IMPS/RTGS will resume from March 18, 2020, 6 pm. The limits for transactions across digital channels will continue to remain what they were prior to the imposition of the moratorium. However, from March 19, 2020 post commencement of banking hours, transactions at branches will not have any limits," the bank said in a statement.

Among others, customers will be able to pay towards their utility bills and use the UPI platform, Google Pay and PhonePe, Amazon Pay, Freecharge.

"With over 14,000 con-



Traders work during the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on Monday at Wall Street in New York City. Trading on Wall Street was halted immediately after the opening bell Monday, as stocks posted steep losses following emergency moves by the Federal Reserve to try to avert a recession due to the coronavirus pandemic. — AFP

## Wall Street hammered as recession fears grow

Hits circuit breaker third time in last 2 weeks

New York, March 16: Stocks lost more than six per cent on Wall Street Monday as huge swaths of the economy come closer to shutting down due to the coronavirus outbreak from airlines to restaurants.

Emergency actions taken by the US Federal Reserve late Sunday to prop up the economy and get financial markets running smoothly again may have raised fears even further, some investors per earlier in the selling began immediately with Wall Street, and losses were sharp enough that it triggered a temporary trading halt for the third time in the last two weeks. The losses had been even steeper earlier in the morning, and they spread around the world. European stocks and crude oil were down five per cent or more.

The world's brightest spot market, Japan, where the central bank announced more stimulus for the economy, and stocks still lost 2.5 per cent. The spreading coronavirus is causing businesses around the world to shut their doors. While that can slow the spread of the virus, it's also taking cash out of the pockets of businesses and workers. That has economists slashing their expectations for upcoming months, and JPMorgan Chase says the US economy may shrink at a two per cent annual rate this quarter and three per cent in the April through June quarter. To many investors, that meets the definition of a recession, and the question is how long it will last.

The best-case scenario for many investors is that the economic shock will be steep but short, with growth recovering later this year after businesses reopen. Pessimists, though, are preparing for a longer haul.

Strategists at Goldman Sachs say the S&P 500 could drop as low as 2,000 in the middle of the year, which

would be a 41 per cent drop from its record set just a month ago.

American Airlines and United Airlines both slashes their routes to flights over the weekend as customers cancel trips and the US government curbs and closes travel agencies have also seen sharp drops in demand from customers.

Restaurants, movie theaters and other businesses that depend on drawing crowds appear to be next to get squeezed.

Several states and the country's largest city are ordering restaurants to

## Most airlines may go bankrupt in 2 months

Mumbai, March 16: The coronavirus pandemic will bankrupt most airlines worldwide by the end of May unless governments and the industry take coordinated steps to avoid such a situation, an aviation consultant warned.

Many airlines have probably been driven into technical bankruptcy or substantially breached covenants already, Sydney-based consultancy CAPA Centre for Aviation warned in a statement on Monday.

Carriers are depleting cash reserves quickly because their planes are grounded and those that aren't are flying more than half empty, it said.

Coordinated government and industry action is needed — now — if catastrophe is to be avoided, CAPA said. Otherwise, "emerging from the crisis

will be like entering a brutal battlefield, littered with casualties," it said.

Most of the biggest carriers in the US, China and Middle East are likely to survive because of government help or support from their owners, CAPA said.

Airlines have been among the biggest corporate casualties of the virus outbreak as the industry has grinds air traffic to a halt. Carriers from America to Australia's Qantas Airways Ltd. have slashed capacity while some like Sweden's SAS AB have temporarily laid off most staff. Flybe, Europe's biggest regional airline, has already collapsed.

Carriers could face as much as \$115 billion in lost revenue this year, according to the International Air Transport Association. — Bloomberg

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## Centre raises borrowing target to ₹51,000 cr

New Delhi, March 16: After reviewing the cash position of the Centre, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in consultation with the government raised the borrowing target from short-term securities by ₹51,000 crore during the month.

This is in line with the Revised Estimate announced by the government in the Budget 2020-21.

According to the earlier calendar, the treasury bill borrowing target was ₹24,000 crore through treasury bills of various tenures.

However, under the revised calendar, the government will borrow ₹75,000 crore through the treasury bills in three tranches.

According to a statement by the finance ministry, treasury bills worth ₹25,000 crore will be auctioned on March 18 and similar amounts on March 25 and April 9. The Budget 2020-21 raised the net borrowing to ₹4,90 lakh crore from ₹4,40 lakh crore in the Budget estimate.

"The Government of India in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to have the flexibility to modify the notified amount and timing for auction of treasury bills." — PTI

## Bajaj Auto launches BS-VI range 3-wheelers

New Delhi, March 16: Bajaj Auto Ltd on Monday said it has launched its BS-VI range of commercial vehicles across brands — RE, Maxima and Maxima Cargo.

The company has launched a complete product across the RE, Maxima and Maxima Cargo brands and thus has transitioned to BS-VI regime for the entire three-wheeler range, Bajaj Auto said in a statement.

The BS-VI compliant RE brand now comes with fuel injection (FI) technology in a 236 cc engine across the RE, Maxima, CNG, LPG and petrol, it added.

In the Maxima brand, the same engine has been re-configured to meet BS-VI emission norms, the company said.

The diesel range across RE and Maxima brands meet the stringent BS-VI norms through systems like exhaust gas recirculation and catalytic converter with the same 470 cc diesel engine. Bajaj Auto said it will also be providing three full free services inclusive of labour, filter and oil change across the range. — PTI

## New version of MCA 21 portal will utilise AI capabilities

New Delhi, March 16: The new version of MCA 21 portal, which is mainly used to submit filings under the companies law, will utilise artificial intelligence and machine learning capabilities.

The MCA 21 system, which has come under the Corporate Affairs Ministry, was started in 2006, and currently the second version is operational.

"MCA 21 Version 3 envisages various areas such as helpdesk solution, e-consulting, machine learning and threat management for utilising the capabilities of Artificial Intelligence (AI/ML)," Minister of State for Corporate Affairs Shri. J. P. Thakur told the Lok Sabha on Monday.

He was responding to a query on whether the government will introduce AI system in the MCA 21 portal.

"Quantum of funds allotted for the implementing AI/ML is included in the total cost approved by the Competent Authority and a breakup of cost for AI/ML is not separately available," the minister said. — PTI

## Coronavirus brings Las Vegas to a halt

Las Vegas, March 16: The owners of iconic Las Vegas casinos such as Bellagio and Wynn Las Vegas are shutting down as the coronavirus pandemic prompts authorities to lock down public gathering places.

MGM Resorts' operations in Las Vegas include the MGM Grand and Mandalay Bay. The company said it will suspend operations at

casinos and hotels indefinitely by Tuesday. It will not be taking reservations for arrivals prior to May 1.

Wynn Resorts will also close its Las Vegas operations, including its namesake casino and hotel, as of Tuesday if it seals the closures as expected to be in effect for two weeks, after which it will evaluate the situation.

Casino operators have been struggling to cope as the virus took crimped travel and tourism to the gambling haven of Macau in January while China went on lockdown. The damage accelerated in March, with MGM already losing 37 per cent of its value halfway through the month and Wynn diving nearly 33 per cent.

The new generation Creta will be offered in a total of 14 variants.

## Slowdown blues fail to beat Hyundai Creta, Jeep Wrangler

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, MARCH 16

While the Indian automobile market is bleeding, there is no slowdown for new car models like the all new Hyundai Creta SUV priced between ₹30 lakh and ₹17.20 lakh and the imported Jeep Rubicon SUV priced at ₹17.20 lakh and the imported Jeep Wrangler Rubicon SUV priced at ₹18.90 lakh.

South Korean car maker's total booking crossed 14,000 units out of which 10,000 units were booked within a week of bookings opening on March 2 with a down payment of ₹25,000.

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, the world's eighth largest Italian-American automaker, in a statement said it had sold the first batch of the imported Jeep Wrangler Rubicon SUVs launched on March 3 has been sold out in India in record time.

"We have ordered a second batch with more vehicles to meet the demand for the Jeep Wrangler Rubicon," the company said, adding that the sales will also be able to access all our digital services & platforms @RBI @FinMinIndia," it said.

New Skoda Octavia RS 245 priced at ₹36 lakh. The performance-specced Octavia, which was launched in India at the Auto Expo 2020 in Delhi was opened for bookings on March 1 only through a virtual online platform, 'buxyodaonline', for an amount of ₹1 lakh.

The South Korean car maker on Monday launched the second generation Hyundai Creta in the country at an introductory price tag of ₹9.90 lakh for the base petrol manual at pan-India showroom. The top-range diesel auto-



matic costs ₹17.20 lakh. The new Creta now competes with the popular Kia



Seltos, MG Hector, Renault Duster and Nissan Kicks. "With over 14,000 con-



SHORT TAKES



David Warner (left) and Aaron Finch.

Finch, Warner raise concerns

Melbourne: Australian white-ball captain Aaron Finch and opener David Warner have raised concerns over the effectiveness of the self-isolation policy of the government to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lynn leaves Pak Super League

Lahore: Australia top-order batsman Chris Lynn who played for Lahore Qalandars in the Pakistan Super League, on Monday left for home midway into the tournament.

FATIGUE WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN: AMIR

Karachi: Fatigue had a role to play in Mohammad Amir's decision to retire from Test cricket, the Pakistan fast bowler said.

New Delhi, March 16: No headway was made during Monday's teleconference by the eight IPL franchise owners as the situation in the past 48 hours has not changed much in the wake of the novel coronavirus pandemic in the country as well globally.

The start of the 13th IPL has been suspended from March 29 to April 15 with India currently registering 114 positive cases and two deaths for Covid-19.

"Nothing concrete was discussed in today's meeting (on-call). It was just a follow up meeting.

The situation has not changed in 48 hours, so talking about hosting the IPL is still pre-mature."

"We have to wait and watch. We will keep doing these calls on a weekly basis to take stock of the situation," he said.

"Among the six to seven options that are there in case the situation improves by April 15, one is dividing the teams into two groups with top four qualifying for the knockouts.

BE PROACTIVE IN FIGHT AGAINST CORONA: ROHIT

New Delhi, March 16: India opener Rohit Sharma on Monday advised people to be smart and proactive in their fight against the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

India dying to work with Pak: Akhtar

Lahore, March 16: Even as India and Pakistan continue to have hostile relations, former cricketer Shoaib Akhtar believes India's path of progress goes through Pakistan and that's why New Delhi is "dying to work" with Islamabad.

Clarity on IPL schedule

Franchise owners' tele-conference ends with no concrete discussion on league



A hotel staff checks South African player's temperature with a device at a hotel in Kolkata on Monday.

Asked if the franchisees are ready for the losses they will incur, the official said there was no other choice.

"See, we will be having basic losses of around ₹15-20 crore which comes with paying salaries and other things that come with the successful organization of the league.

"The insurance companies have specifically excluded event cancellation due to Coronavirus in the ₹2000 crore insurance policy bought to cover the IPL matches by broadcaster Star India.

Stakeholders may lose big money

FALAKNAZ SYED MUMBAI, MARCH 16

Broadcaster Star India and sponsors of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2020 and of other cricket matches are unlikely to get any reprieve from insurance companies if the matches are further postponed or even cancelled as Covid-19 spreads its tentacles in the country rapidly.

The insurance companies have specifically excluded event cancellation due to Coronavirus in the ₹2000 crore insurance policy bought to cover the IPL matches by broadcaster Star India.

The tentative schedule is April 15 to May 30 including a total of 60 matches.

The maximum sum insured is around ₹45 crore for league and ₹60 crore for playoffs.

When the policy was bought, Corona was emerging as a global risk spreading fast, even while it was not declared as a pandemic.

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Cricketers return home, teams cancel IPL camps

New Delhi, March 16: The eight Indian Premier League (IPL) franchises have called off their respective pre-tournament camps till further notice, three days after the COVID-19 pandemic forced a suspension of the league.

The request everyone to follow the guidelines provided by the Health Ministry and stay safe," RCB president said.

Three-time champions Mumbai Indians, Chennai Super Kings as well as Kolkata Knight Riders have already cancelled their camps.

State governments, which have denied permission for matches, will be ready to go the green light should the situation improves.

BCCI officials told to work from home

New Delhi, March 16: The Covid-19 pandemic has forced India's biggest sports body BCCI to virtually shut down its headquarter in Mumbai from Tuesday with its employees being advised to work from home.

It has been learnt that the employees have been asked to 'work from home' with all the cricketing operations already being suspended till further notice.

The BCCI last Friday postponed the IPL-13 from March 29 to April 15, along with all other domestic tournaments, including the Irfan Cup and the Women's Challenger Trophy.

The franchise owners are hoping that in case the IPL starts on April 15, the

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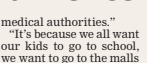
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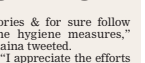
Suresh Raina sports a facemask as he prepares to leave Chennai on Monday.



"The only way we can come to normalcy is by all of us coming together. We can do this by being a little smart, a little proactive, knowing our surroundings and as and when we get any symptoms inform your nearest medical authorities."



"I have travelled extensively across India, have seen the country very closely, I can say today, India is dying to work with Pakistan. India's path of progress goes through Pakistan, I am convinced."



"I don't understand why you have to eat things like bats, dogs, and cats. I'm really angry," Akhtar said in a video posted on his social media.



Suresh Raina sports a facemask as he prepares to leave Chennai on Monday.

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SHORT TAKES

McLaren official recovering well

London: A McLaren Formula One employee who tested positive for the coronavirus in Australia is showing no signs of symptoms while 14 other staff in quarantine in Melbourne are doing well, the team said on Monday. McLaren had already pulled out of the season-opening Australian Grand Prix as a result of the test before last weekend's scheduled race was cancelled. Formula One has postponed the next three races and is hoping to start the season in Europe at the end of May, which would mean the Dutch and Spanish Grands Prix not going ahead as planned with Monaco also under threat. "I am happy to report that our team member affected with the virus is recovering well and the symptoms have gone and our people in quarantine are in good spirits," said McLaren CEO Zak Brown. "The support they have been getting from their team mates, our partners, members of the F1 community and fans from around the world has been fantastic and we thank you all of them," he added. — Reuters

'Stranded' Anand turns commentator

Chennai: His return to India on hold due to travel restrictions forced by the COVID-19 pandemic, India's five-time world champion chess icon Viswanathan Anand will complete his maiden commentary assignment while being in self-isolation in Germany. The 50-year-old wizard was to return to Chennai on Monday after competing in the Bundesliga Chess League but had to stay back near Frankfurt given the travel restrictions. His wife Aruna said, "Anand, who is set to do the commentator's hat for the FIDE Candidates tournament that begins in Yekaterinburg, Russia, to spot the challenger to world champion Magnus Carlsen, will handle the role from his present location. The event starts on Tuesday. "He will be commenting for the Candidates tournament for a while and he will also keep him busy," Aruna said. — PTI

Ban on FMSCI prez overturned

Chennai: The Indian Motor Sport Appellate Committee (IMSAAC) on Monday overturned a ban imposed on the president J. Prithviraj from officiating in national championships, following the charges of trespassing motorists during the Rally of Jodhpur last year. According to a press release issued by the Coimbatore Auto Sports Club, the IMSAAC has upheld his appeal, declaring that the ban imposed on Prithviraj was violative of all principles of natural justice. "He was not put on sufficient notice before imposing (such a) major punishment," the release quoting the order, stated, absolving him of any lapses while organising the rally. "I am glad that justice has prevailed," Prithviraj said. — PTI

INDIAN SHOOTERS TAKE PART IN OLYMPIC TRIALS

New Delhi: It was business as usual for India's top shooters Monday as they competed in the Olympic team selection trials at a time when a pandemic has brought daily life to a grinding halt around much of the world. As the 2020 March 2020 as per schedule. The venue of both the competition will be SAI NSNIS Patiala. AFI said in a release. "Spectators will not be allowed inside the competition venue."

The likes of Manu Bhaker, Chink Yadav, Apurvi Chandela, and Nehruvi Ghosh and Eshwari Valarivan, among others, participated in the trials for their respective pistol and rifle. India had last month pulled out of the Nicosia Shotgun World Cup and later the March 15-26 ISSF World Cup in Delhi was postponed to May — all due to the novel coronavirus outbreak. — PTI

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Games hang in balance

Report suggests IOC rules out staging Olympics behind closed doors

Tokyo, March 16: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has ruled out staging the Tokyo Games behind closed doors because it would be anathema to the philosophy of international sports organisations on Tuesday in response to the coronavirus outbreak. With less than five months to go until the scheduled start of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics on July 24, questions have been raised as to whether the Games can go ahead. The virus, which originated in China late last year, has killed more than 6,000 people around the world and infected more than 160,000.

Almost every major sport has shut down but the IOC and the Tokyo Organising Committee are continuing to maintain the Games will go ahead in July. While such an approach has drawn criticism, those with knowledge of the situation say the IOC wants to give athletes every chance to compete in Tokyo and it believes there is no need to make a quick decision regarding postponement given the opening ceremony is four months away, the Guardian reported.

Some sports, including horse racing and snooker, are continuing behind closed doors but such an approach has already been rejected by the IOC in internal meetings. One source said: "It would go against everything we stand for. The Olympics is more than just a series of competitions, it is about bringing everyone together to celebrate sport."

Another put it more bluntly: "An event with closed doors and no spectators is not an option." Any major disruption to the Games' scheduling would have serious consequences for sponsors. Broadcasters, including Olympic and 4,400 Paralympic athletes, staff, airlines, hotels and attracted organisers and could saddle sponsors with \$1bn in lost ticket sales.



Snow falls on the Olympic rings near the New National Stadium in Tokyo on Sunday.

Standards so athletes who are on the borderline can be selected even if they are unable to compete in the coming months because of the pandemic. Nearly 60% of athletes have qualified but with qualifying events, including those for climbing, boxing, fencing and judo, having been cancelled or postponed, many athletes are worried about being left in the lurch.

The problem will be discussed at an executive board meeting on Tuesday and the IOC is already looking at ways to house more athletes in Tokyo if the number increases. Olympic organisers have also held conference calls with individual sports to discuss how best to plan for the Games amid the Covid-19 outbreak. The Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, said on Monday he wanted the Olympics, which has cost at least \$20bn and attracted more than \$3bn in domestic sponsorship, to represent a world victory over coronavirus. — Agencies

No deadline for Olympic decision

Sydney, March 16: The leader of the IOC's coordination commission for the Tokyo Olympics said there is no May deadline to cancel the Games and he remains confident the event will go ahead despite sports coming to a virtual standstill globally amid the coronavirus outbreak. John Coates, who will have to go into government-mandated self-isolation when he returns to Australia this week from Olympic business in Europe, told the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper: "It is all proceeding to start on the 24th of July."

But Coates, an IOC vice president and head of the Australian Olympic Committee, told the paper

in a telephone interview from Switzerland that the IOC didn't recognize the deadline and he thought it would be in Europe after the weekend. "It's never been the IOC's position. It was Dick's idea. There is four months to go," Coates told the newspaper on Monday. Coates was in Europe when the Australian gov-

ernment announced the mandatory two-week self-isolation on all people arriving in the country after the weekend. The latest restrictions, including bans on gatherings of more than 500 people, came in the wake of the cancellation of the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne over the weekend, and the suspension of



This picture shows the surroundings of Everton's Goodison Park football ground on the day that the club should have played the Merseyside derby against Liverpool in the English Premier League in Liverpool on Monday.

FATE OF EURO 2020 TO BE DETERMINED AS UEFA SET TO HOLD CRISIS MEETING

Paris, March 16: A decision over whether to postpone football's Euro 2020 by up to a year, with all the sporting and financial consequences that would entail, is set to be made when UEFA holds a crisis meeting on Tuesday as Europe battles the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. European football's governing body will hold a videoconference with representatives from all 55 member associations as well as from clubs and players bodies.

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sporting events and large-scale gatherings in parts of the world affected by the virus outbreak.

OLYMPIC FLAME HANDOVER CEREMONY TO BE CLOSED In Athens, The Olympic flame handover ceremony for the Tokyo Games will take place without spectators in an effort to contain the coronavirus outbreak, the Greek Olympic committee said on Monday.

The committee said the accreditation cards that had been issued for Thursday's ceremony at the stadium in Athens where the first modern Olympics were held in 1896 would not be valid. The committee cancelled the remainder of the Olympic torch relay last week after crowds gathered in southern Greece to watch part of the torch relay in Sparta, where the torch was carried by actor Gerard Butler. — Agencies

Paris, March 16: Paris Saint-Germain has suspended all sporting activities until further notice due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Ligue 1 leaders said on Sunday.

The French top-flight has already been put on hold as has the Champions League since last week due to the deadly spread of COVID-19. "Sporting activities for all our professional clubs will remain provisionally suspended for a period starting tomorrow March 16 until an undetermined date," the Ligue 1 champions said.

PSG had announced the freezing of all their sporting sections including football and handball until Sunday and will announce a further update on Wednesday. Elsewhere in France, fellow Ligue 1 side Nice also stopped their activities and closed their training centre.

Earlier on Sunday, Lyon defended president Jean-Michel Aulas after he had suggested cancelling out the French season.

WTA SUSPENDS SEASON UNTIL MAY 2

The WTA Tour announced on Monday it was suspending the women's tennis season until May 2 because of the coronavirus pandemic. "The WTA Tour is now suspended until May 2," a WTA spokesperson said. The ongoing global coronavirus outbreak, the WTA tournaments in Stuttgart, Istanbul and Prague will not be held as scheduled.

"We will make a decision in the week ahead regarding the remaining WTA European play court events and will continue to monitor this situation closely and its impact on the 2020 Tour season." The ATP Tour last week put its season on hold until April 27. — AFP

ATALANTA IN QUARANTINE DUE TO VIRUS

Milan, March 16: Atalanta players and staff are self-isolating after five of their Champions League opponents Valencia's players tested positive for coronavirus, the Serie A club announced on Sunday. Gian Piero Gasperini's side beat Valencia 4-3 at the Mestalla last week to advance to the Champions League quarter-finals 4-3 on aggregate, and Argentina defender Ezequiel Garay is among the La Liga outfit's players to have since tested positive for COVID-19. As a result Atalanta said in a statement they would be "self-isolating at home in compliance with hygiene rules". All sports in Italy have been suspended until April 3, but Atalanta had been due to resume training on Monday. They will now be stopped until March 24. On Saturday Atalanta forward Josep Hlicic donated the ball with which he scored all four of his team's goals against Valencia to a hospital in Bergamo, which is at the centre of Italy's coronavirus drama.

ITALIAN LEAGUE COULD BE SPREAD OVER TWO SEASONS

The President of the Italian football federation (FIGC), Gabriele Gravina, said that the 2019/20 Serie A campaign could be spread over two seasons in order to bring the league to a conclusion.

All sports events in Italy have been put on hold until April 3, putting the coronavirus outbreak in the Italian football season in doubt. At a FIGC meeting, the body confirmed that the option of holding playoffs to decide the champions and relegated teams was being considered, as well as declaring the current standings as final or not declaring a champions at all. There are currently 12 rounds of league action left to be completed. — AFP

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