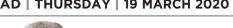




HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | 19 MARCH 2020



SPORTS 16 **IOC hints Olympics** may be postponed

TABLOID Dhoni takes to badminton



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Vol. 83 No. 78 Established 1938 32 PAGES ₹6.00

held captive,

says top court

Asks Speaker when will he

decide on MLAs' resignations

AN APPEAL

WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Max/Min

temp. 36/23ºC

Max: 36.2°C Min: 22.7°C

RH: 29% Rainfall: Nil

We are in a critical stage of our fight against the Coronavirus (Covid-19), and the coming 7-10 days will determine how we weather the disease. Please take it seriously and follow these precautions:

- Avoid all travel unless absolutely critical.
- Avoid all gatherings, congregations and meetings.
- Maintain social distance.
- Maintain personal hygiene; wash your hands frequently.
- In case of any symptoms, self-report to (Gandhi/the nearest) Hospital.
- Follow doctors' advice. Heed government
- advisories. Don't believe or spread

rumours.

- Editor-in-Chief

IN BRIEF **CBSE exams** postponed

New Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Wednesday postponed ongoing class 10, 12 examinations till March 31. "All ongoing CBSE examinations in India and abroad postponed till March 31 and will be rescheduled thereafter... after an assessment of the situation," CBSE secretary Anurag Tripathi said. "All ongoing evaluation work will be suspended during the period," he added.

Sensex crashes below 29,000

Mumbai: Global recession fears, rising coronavirus cases and the Supreme Court's stand on self assessment of dues by telecom companies led to panic sell-ing in the equity market on Wednesday. The Sensex crashed 1,709.58 to end below 29,000 point -28,869.51 - for the first



8 new Covid cases in one day MLAs can't be

Seven cases relate to Indonesians, one from Medchal; total reaches 13 This takes the total num-

BALU PULIPAKA and KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

Tuesday.

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

The Telangana govern-

ment has urged the Centre

to ban all incoming inter-national flights into the

country to prevent the fur-

ther 'import' of Novel Cor-

Speaking to Union health

minister Harsh Vardhan on Wednesday, state health minister Etala

Rajendar urged him to

impress upon the Central

government to ban all

international air travel

The state government

has steadfastly held that

every one of the six Covid-

19 positive cases recorded

in Telangana was that of an individual who got infe-

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC

into India.

onavirus (Covid-19) cases.

Telangana to 13, including one patient, the first, a youth from Mahendra Wednesday witnessed the most serious surge in coro-Hills area of the city, a techie, who was cured and navirus (Covid-19) cases in Telangana, with the state discharge from the hospihealth department annoutal a few days ago.

ncing a total of eight new positive cases of the dis-The first of the eight new cases announced on Wednesday was declared ease late at night. Of these in the evening at around 5 eight cases, seven are from among the 10 Indonesian pm by health minister preachers who were brou-Etala Rajendar, who said that one of the 10 Indonesian preachers had ght to the Gandhi Hospital here from Karimangar on tested positive for the dis-

ber of Covid-19 cases in

• The 58-year-old Covid-19 Indonesian patient, the first in the group of preachers to be found positive, is in a critical condition

ease. However, late at night, after 11 pm, Telang-ana health department released a special bulletin announcing that seven more Indonesians had tested positive for the disease. Worried over the fallout, the government is planning a widespread testing

for the disease in a 3-kms radius of the district collectorate, close to the mosque in Karimnagar, where the Indonesians had stayed for three days, before being sent to the Gandhi_Hospital in the

Covid-19 positive Indone-sian patient, the first in the group of preachers to be found positive, was reported to be in a critical condition at the Gandhi Hospital, with breathlessness, severe persistent

cough and other acute symptoms. Doctors were monitoring diagnostic tests for the viral load in the patient's body, its affect on the lung system, and possible pneumonia.

The response of the immune system to the viral load is being checked to adjust medication accordingly. "He is not on ventilator support, but his condition is being moni-tored," the minister said.

Page 4: Scotland returnee from Medchal tests positive

Ban all foreign flights: Etala

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, MARCH 18 The Supreme Court is set

to decide the fate of 16 rebel Congress MLAs of Madhya Pradesh, who hold the key to the sur-vival of the Kamal Nath government as the weeklong political crisis in the state took an ugly turn on Wednesday, with Congress workers holding protests at several places

The Supreme Court, which began hearing petitions on the ongoing political turmoil in the state filed by various parties and individuals, observed that as of now the constitutional court (the bench hearing the case) knew that 16 MLAs of MP, lodged in a resort in Bengaluru, tilted the balance one way or the other. A division bench of Justices D.Y. Chandra-

chud and Hemant Gupta also made a significant observation that the 16 MLAs may or may not take part in the business of the House, but they cannot be held captive since they need to be ensured free exercise of their choice in this regard. The bench also declined an offer for the production of the MLAs in judges' chambers and rejected a proposal to send its registrar-general to meet them. The court then adjourned the hearing in the matter

till Thursday. another d the Karntaka High Court on Wednesday dealt a blow to the Congress as it rejected a writ petition filed by Congress' Rajya

The resignation of an MLA has to be said to be

> something on TV, this is a new jurisprudence **MP SPEAKER**

N.P. PRAJAPATI TO **SUPREME COURT**

Sabha nominee and former chief minister Digvijay Singh who had sought access to the 16 rebel party MLAs.

Earlier, high drama was seen in Bengaluru as several senior MP Congress leaders, including Mr Singh, held a staged sit-in before the resort where the 16 MLAs were staying, demanding access to

The police deployed at the resort stopped them from storming the resort and later detained them. The Congress leaders, who included six ministhe Kamal ters government, were later released.



into the country, given the population density and the cted in a different country threat of mass spread of and carried it back. The first positive case of

the disease," he said. The minister said that while it was finally a call for the Centre to make, if it wants to bring Indians back home, it can do so in special flights and keep all such returnees in special camps, under its control, in Delhi.

Chairing a review meeting on secondary transmission of disease from infected individuals arriv-

ing in the state, Mr Rajendar urged Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar to take every possible step to ensure quarantine facilities for all international passengers arriving into Telangana.

"Arrangements must be made for all such passengers to be placed under quarantine. We should be prepared to house an increasing number of people in such facilities," he said, adding, "we have planned for keeping 5,000 persons with symptoms in isola-tion and more than 20,000 asymptomatic persons under quarantine at differ-

WB top official's son skips screening

with three Covid-19 patients at a birthday party in The Oxford University student was found to be deliberately





(Covid-19).

demanded that the ongoing budget session of parliament be curtailed in view of the Coronavirus scare, but the government was unwilling to accede.

them.

India at this stage". "The Central govern-

Covid-19 in Telangana was

confirmed on March 2 and

He said that while the

Telangana government "was concerned about

well-being of Indians stuck

abroad, it is not advisable

to get people who are stuck

in other countries into

the sixth on March 18.

KOLKATA, MARCH 18 The coronavirus scare has hit the heart of the Wednesday within two days of his meeting with Baneriee govern the bureaucrat mother of ment — the state secretariat — as West Bengal home the state's first Covid-19 patient who had taken her secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay went under "home son to the secretariat isolation" along with his instead of admitting him

wife Sonali Chakrabarti to a hospital. Bandopadhyay, who is vice-chancellor of Calcutta University, from

At least 10 more government employees, who were around them, are also in isolation at home.

The development

London.

ent locations in the state.

Page 2: TS can isolate at least 1,000, says minister

. . **VENKAIAH SAYS**

MPs CAN'T WEAR MASKS IN RS

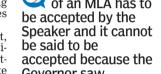
DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu, in his role as the chairman of the Rajya Sahba, objected when members entered the Upper House on Wednesday wearing face masks as protection against the Coronavirus

Opposition members

Trinamool Four Congress (TMC) MPs came to the House masks: Derek ing O'Brien wore a black mask while his deputy, Sukhendu Sekhar Ray wore white.

in the state. Governor saw



Nifty-50 sank 498.25 points to end at 8,468.80. Full report on Page 14 day after the Covid-19 virus was confirmed in the teenaged boy after his return from the United King. He came into contact

quarantined at a hospital by using his mother's influence

Full report on Page 9

Page 8: Kamal Nath firm on no floor test













QUARANTINED

TO 'ADJUST'

PASSENGERS TOLD

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

With increasing number

of international trav-

ellers arriving in the city

each day at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA), and the

state government has

firmed up its implementa-

tion plans to mandatorily

quarantine every asymptomatic individual arriv-

appealed to such people to understand the con-straints under which quarantine facilities have

Health minister Etala Rajendar appealed to all

those being placed under

quarantine that meeting specific demands from such individuals might

not be possible in every case, while addressing at

a press conference here

on Wednesday. Some facilities like west-

ern commodes in rooms.

where they have been lodged might not be possi-

ble to provide in a hurry.

'The quarantine facilities

have been identified on an

urgent basis and the gov-

ernment is doing its best

to make them as comfort-

able as possible for every-

ing here for 14 days. The state government has

been created.

ASTROGUIDE

Vikari; Uttarayanam Thithi: Phalguna Bahula Ekadasi till 5.59 am (next day) Star: Uttarashada till 2.51 pm Varjyam: 7.14 pm to 8.59 pm Durmuhurtam: 10.24 am to 11.12 am and 3.11 pm to 3.59 pm Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm **HIJRI CALENDAR** Rajjab 23,1441 AH **PRAYERS** Fajar: 5.22 am Zohar: 12.34 pm Asar: 4.45 pm Maghrib: 6.32 pm Isha: 7.40 pm SUNSET TODAY 6.26 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.20 AM MOONSET TOMORROW 2.25 PM MOONRISE TOMORROW 3.01 AM

COUNTER

You have RC, driving licence, helmet... but this challan is for not wearing mask!



HR panel to hear only urgent cases

Hyderabad: In the backdrop of Telangana government's precautionary measures to avoid contracting the COVID-19, the Human Rights Commission took a decision to restrict adjudication of cases for dire urgent matters only. The Telangana State Human rights commission (TSHRC) to take up the cases, received through post or in-person without court hearing till April 9 starting from March 19. As a part of precautions and restrictions, the TSHRC decided to take up urgent matters only twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday, by way of court hearings. The order further stated that regular matters, which are already directed to be listed, will automatically be adjourned and the parties who received the notices from the office of the Commission need not attend before the Commission till April 9. The parties/advocates/departments' representatives may the case status required, through helpline number 040-24601572 during working hours.

Old City oblivious to Covid-19 precautions

Residents not taking preventive measures to protect themselves from the deadly virus

ATHER MOIN | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

Even as the entire world is in grips of panic and is reeling from shock at the growing tentacles of coronavirus (Covid-19), and unlike fellow residents in rest of the city, majority of the people in the Old City of Hyderabad are neither scared nor much bothered by Coronavirus.

Old City people are not taking precautionary measure to protect them-selves from the pandemic. They do not hesitate in shaking hands with friends, or even strangers, and roaming in the streets

without using masks. Most of the people Deccan Chronicle spoke to were not aware about the severity of pandemic. They said that they had heard about Covid-19. but do not pay much attention on it.

"We have neither time to take precautionary measure nor do our women understand it. We are living in an atmosphere, where historically, less attention was paid to health and hygiene. If we follow precautions, most of us would not be able to focus on earning our bread and butter," most resident argue.

Mohammed Ayyan Quadri, a student from Jahanuma, said that people here are less aware about the pandemic, because a large number of them are not educated. There are many pockets in the old city, migrants from where other places reside, who work as either artisans or daily wagers. Most people are away from news channels

and newspapers. "Though a section of people read Urdu newspapers, these newspapers have not given enough focus about the issue and therefore the readers have not sensed the urgency or criticality of the issue. Most of the population in old city have neither time nor money to follow pre-cautions given by doctors and experts," Mr Quadri said. Moulana Mohammed Farooq Quadri said, "it is our belief that no contagious disease is conveyed without almighty's per-mission. We the Muslims do wudhu (ablution) five times in a day before prayer and think it is enough to sanitize our-



People move around without taking precautions in the wake of coronavirus pandemic near Charminar on Wednesday.

official

Scared netas skip launch of 40 basti clinics

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

made

tions.

However,

an

announcement that a five-

member team would work

expeditiously to identify

sites and open dispen-

saries at the earliest. The team identified about 163

locations, however, the

corporation faced a back-

lash at three sites and

began work at 160 loca-

The corporation com-

pleted the construction of

40 dispensaries and hired

staff to make them opera-

tional from March 18.

sources in the corporation

said that none of city lead-

ers and ministers were

highly-placed

Fear of the dreaded coronavirus has made ministers forego the inauguration the 40 Basti Dawakhanas in city slums scheduled for March 18, thereby ignoring the instructions of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao who in January had instructed the civic authorities to construct 227 dawakhana additionally apart from existing 123 on a war-foot-

ing. Following his instruc-tions, in a knee-jerk reaction, the corporation had



ready to inaugurate them due to fear of coronavirus. Sources said that while few of them were busy in taking preventive measures to curtail the spread of coronavirus spread, the remaining said that they cannot inaugurate citing the situation in the city. Basti Dawakhanas, since their launch, have been

extending quality treat-ment to the poor and the downtrodden in slum areas Even, consultations dur-

ing evenings are opera-tional at 18 dispensaries and in the offing is the ophthalmology service.

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

At present, specialist services are being offered in nine areas, including general medicine, physiotherapy, pulmanology, derma-tology, paediatrician, orthopaedician, general surgeon, psychology and ENT twice a week or based

on appointments. However, ignoring the coronavirus crisis, neither GHMC official nor the politicians have made an effort to make the newlyconstructed dispensaries operational.

Basti Dhawakhana initiative is a joint collaboration by the city's municiadministration, Centres

IIT-H develops sanitiser

Greater Hvderabad Corporation Municipal (GHMC) and the Central government, which have allocated ₹1,200 crore for Health and Wellness Centres under the Ayushman Bharat programme.

The intent of the project was to establish a health centre at areas which lack Urban Primary Health Centres (UPHC) and also to reduce the burden on tertiary hospitals like Osmania General Hospital, Niloufer and Gandhi Hospital, includ-

ing Urban Primary Health

novel coronavirus, it is better that people do not gather in large groups. "I am not celebrating my birthday this year. I request everyone to practice safety and social distancing. Please do not

in the campus for stu-dents, staff and faculty at faculty lounge, meeting halls, cafes and laboratories, among other areas. "This has been done purely to support the community at a time when it is critical to adopt safe and hygienic practices. We have not thought of commercialisation. Our motto is to help people around us. We can assure that these are as safe as any commercial sanitiser, and possibly more effective," said Shivakalyani Adepu. Dr

tined passengers, as many

as 2,020 individuals can be

housed at rate of two per-

sons per room, or half that

number if government

and health authorities

decide only one person

DON'T VISIT ME, **SAYS HEALTH MINISTER**

one." he said.

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

Health minister Etala Rajendar on Wednesday urged his supporters and TRS party workers not to visit him at his home or office in connection with his birthday on Friday. The minister said given the current situation

when the state is busy combating the spread of

LOKAYUKTA **ADVISORIES ON** COVID-19

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

Following the outbreak of the Covid-19, offices of Upa-Lokayukta and Lokayukta in Telangana and Lokayukta of Andhra Pradesh have issued separate circulars asking complainants, public servants and officials not to visit their office premises in Hyderabad till March 31.

The circulars mention that public servants, who have been summoned to explain their stand on complaints received against them, also need not to come. The offices will, however, continue to receive complaints as usual.

bacteria." Moulana Quadri said, "human body weakens and diseases take over when immunity is weak. The immune system of our people is very active and strong. In fact unhygienic atmosphere and bad food habits of old city enhances immunity.

from all viruse

Mohammed Rafi of Golconda said that we are living in an area in which mosquitoes abound. This has made us stronger. He said it was not possible to take precautionary measures prescribed by doctors for people who are poor.

Doctors are advising to wash hands five to six times in a day, use masks and avoid mingling with people or join crowds. Undergoing isolation becomes impossible for us, as we will lose our daily wage. He said that instead of asking people to take precautionary measures, government should take action to curb the pandemic.

Suspects from abroad and different parts of Telangana visit Gandhi Hospital for Covid-19 test on Wednesday. - S. SURENDER REDDY

At a time when there is rising corruption and street fight over sanitisers and face masks over the growing Covid-19 fears, a group of researchers at IIT Hyderabad have found a solution to the problem for the institute communi-

ty. Dr Shivakalyani Adepu, a research scholar, along Dr Mudrika with Khandelwal, Associate Professor, from the department of Materials Science and Metallurgical

developed their own hand sanitiser with 70% alcohol in it.

THE RESEARCH

scholars have

Engineering, at the institute have developed their own hand sanitiser with 70 per cent alcohol in it, in accordance with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Centre for Disease Control (CDC) standards. Disease Around 10 litres of this hand sanitiser has already been distributed

to Hyderabad come he said, with particular reference to his followers his Huzurabad from constituency.

TAKE COVID-19 SERIOUSLY, ETALA **TELLS PEOPLE**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

The Telangana governon Wednesday ment appealed to people to take the threat of the possible spread of Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) seriously

Mincing no words, health minister Etala Rajendar told a news conference here that shutting down of schools, colleges and other businesses such as cinema halls and puns was not an opportunity for families to celebrate 'holidays'.

TS can isolate at least 1,000, says Etala

From Page 1

flights were almost empty.

two

Shambhavi and Koumudhi,

friends,

'My

Addressing a press conference after the meeting, Mr Rajendar said that Telangana has ramped up its ability to cope with Covid-19 cases. "We have in place facilities to treat up to 1,000 Covid-19 patients at a time," he

said. The state govern-ment has already begun to send everyone landing in city's Rajiv Gandhi international airport from seven countries designated as high risk — China, South Korea, Germany,

14-day quarantine. Such passengers are being housed in Haritha Plaza hotel at Vikarabad, the Forest Research and Training Academy at Dulapally and some other locations, he said.

belonging to various Central and state government organizations in Rajendranagar, including Prof and others.

Javshankar Agricultural University. NAARM, NIRD, MANAGÉ

should be quarantined in The government has Between 12 buildings France, Italy, Iran, and each of the 1,010 rooms, he Spain — into a mandatory identified a host of hostels identified to host quaranadded. PANIC | MODE Fear of getting infected by Covid-19 in a flight packed with 300 passengers bothered all on board, says Anushka No food, scared: Ordeal of a UK student returning home

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

As the Emirates flight EK-012 took off from London's Gatwick Airport at 9.40 am on March 17, Anushka Singhvee, a student at the University of Buckingham, who was onboard along with two of her varsity friends, was on the edge.

For the last 15 days, she had been taking all precautions to ward off the Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19), particularly keeping distance with other individuals. But once on board the flight, she found herself in the midst of over 300 people, a majoritv of them students from different universities across UK headed back to India, all of them in an understand-

able panic mode.

Eleven hours later, after a brief stopover in Dubai, when the flight touched down at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA), Shamshabad, at 2.17 am, all passengers alighted from the aircraft and began lining up for the mandatory screening for Covid-19.

Anushka's heart must have sunk when she saw some passengers, who had travelled in the same flight, getting placed under quarantine, indicating they had shown some symptoms of the virus. When her turn came, she was asked to fill two forms, was screened thoroughly and made to wait. Minutes later, she was cleared to go, but advised self-quarantine.

and I, made up our minds to Pursuing her BSc in Philosophy at Buckingham leave UK and return to University, Anushka, a resident of Gachibowli, is India within two hours. With great difficulty, we among hundreds of stu-dents studying in the UK, who went into a panic mode after the Centre imposed travel restrictions and prohibited Indian passport holders residing in UK and other countries from entering India after March 18. The Emirates man, which brought scores of students. including Anushka, to Hyderabad, reached only a couple of

booked tickets on March 16 evening and boarded the flight next morning. The decision to prohibit Indian passport holders from entering the country from March 18 onwards has caught all students offguard, since it gave us very little time to react. We just wanted to ensure we reach India before March 18," said Anushka, sharing her experience with Deccan hours before restrictions *Chronicle*, from the comfort were to come into force. of her home, even if Over the last fortnight, a sequestered. majority of international

The ordeal began for her after the university sounded a choice of returning home to foreign students



Anushka Singhvee

due to worldwide lockdown late on Monday evening. Hours later, Indian students learnt about travel restrictions from March 18. UK is amongst the worst affected by the Covid-19 epidemic.

put in UK) immediately as we were not sure what would happen in near future. The next day morning, we were on an Emirates flight with our masks and

gloves on," she recalls. It was hardly a memorable flight. With vegetarian meals much in demand on flights due to myths that meat might transmit Covid-19, many passengers including her had to go hungry as there was a shortage of vegetarian meal on the flight.

"There were quite a few who could not get a vegetarian meal. We travelled with-out food all the way to Hyderabad," she said. But more than hunger, it was the fear of getting infected by the deadly virus in a Prashant and Barkha, along

with other family members (whether to return or stay flight packed to capacity was what was bothering all were relieved when they finally spotted their daughpassengers.

"At the Hyderabad airport, I was asked to fill two forms. One pertained to queries about my health and personal details. I was asked to mention whether I had cold, cough or fever. Thereafter, there screening. was Though I had no symptoms, I was preparing myself in case health officials would have suggested a mandatory quarantine. Though I was lucky enough, the sight of other passengers being placed under quarantine had me scared," she said, adding that it took close to two hours to come out of the airport. her Outside, parents,

For the family, there are still tense moments ahead as their elder daughter Preksha, who is pursuing her business studies in Canada, is presently on

ter coming out at around 4

"The last 24 hours have

been the most tense

moments. Anushka had

joined the university only

in January this year. We are

not sure what the situation

will be in a month from now

and whether she can go back to UK," said Prashant,

a businessman.

am.

flight and would be arriving in Hyderabad tomorrow. "I am keeping my fingers

crossed," Prashant added.

'We had tõ decide

Umasankar^{pg 3}

IN BRIEF THUNDERSTORM **EXPECTED OVER** TELANGANA

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

The pre-monsoon season has begun well in advance for the state, say officials of the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD). In this regard, the local weather office has issued a thunderstorm warn-ing for the state for the next 48 hours.

In its warning it said: "Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning very likely to occur at isolated places over Telangana.' According to officials of the department, there would be chances of light rainfall over the state; however, the thundering activity would be higher than the amount of rainfall.

"We had issued a thunderstorm warning, and we predict that there would be light rainfall, coupled with thunder activity over the state," K. Naga Ratna, director, IMD told Deccan Chronicle. The rainfall was caused by a trough travelling over the state spanning northern Tamil Nadu to

Vidarbha, she said. Unusually, this year, these rains — pre-monsoon showers had arrived on time. "This year, the showers began on the dot-on March 1-these showers were aiding in keeping the maximums in control, to an extent," she said.

Speaking about the summer forecast, she said that the day time temperatures in the state, were on the rise. "Compared to the last 24 hours, the temperatures were on the rise. Every day we are witnessing a rise of one degree," she said.

THERE ARE chances of light rainfall over the state; however. the thundering activity would be higher than the amount of rainfall.

• THE RAINFALL was caused by a trough travelling over the state spanning northern Tamil Nadu to Vidarbha, said K. Naga Ratna, director, Indian Meteorological Department

ICMR to test 150 random samples

Results to ascertain if there is local transmission which is an indication of spread

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

Around 150 samples of severe acute respiratory infections have been collected by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) from tries. These ascertain whether any northern and western states to ascertain whetaken place. Medical experts, folther there is any local lowing the transmission transmission of Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) disease in the country. wave from contacts, have found that the first Samples from southern states are yet to be col-

lected. The samples are from those patients who have hospitalised in been

SANJAY SAMUEL

HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

The Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exams for the academic year

2020 are starting from

March 19. Keeping in

mind the novel Coronavirus, which is at the threshold of wide-spread, the SSC has

come up with new pre-

cautions and instruc-

The minister for educa-

tion, Sabitha Indra Reddy in a press release,

around 5,34,903 students

appearing for the exami-

nations in 2,530 centres

across the state. All the required precautions have been taken to

ensure the smooth con-

duct of the examina-

tions, which will end on

that there are

PAUL | DC

tions

said

KARIMNAGAR **ON HIGH ALERT** FOR OUTBREAK

PULI SHARAT KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, MARCH 18

A high alert has been declared over possibility of outbreak of coronavirus infections here in Karimnagar with BC welfare minister Gangula Kamalakar announcing on Wednesday night that everyone who lives in a three-kilometer radius of the mosque in which a team of 10 Indonesian preachers stayed for a couple days, will be tested for the virus.

Kamalakar was Mr asked by the state government to lead the efforts to contain the disease spread here in the city and district following confirmation that eight of the Indonesians, tested positive for Covid-19. On Wednesday, the dis-

April 6. The minister also added that students administration trict shifted 13 more people will be allowed inside the centres from 8.30 am in two batches patches — Hospital Gandhi in onwards, an hour before Hvderabad for testing the examination starts for the disease and also five minutes

both private and govern-• THE SAMPLES are ment sector but have no history of travel or confrom those patients who have been hospitalised tact with those who have in both private and govtravelled to any of the ernment sector but have Covid-19 affected counno history of travel or contact with those who results will have travelled to any of local transmission has the Covid-19 affected countries.

which have been reported.

The patterns show that peak wave was noted on March 4, with 22 cases cases are on the rise and and another on March 17 there would be another with 23 cases. In between peak either on March 24 or March 27. Whether these dates, there have been 15 positive cases these are contact or local

• IF SOMEONE is suf-

fering from fever, cough

or cold, they will be pro-

STANDBY invigilators

assigned invigilators fall

• ALL CENTRES have been strictly instructed

to provide sanitizers and

liquid soap, fresh and

clean drinking water at

the centres for the stu-

• THEY ALSO asked to

request students not to

congregate after exams

grace period for the late-

comers will be allowed to

avoid crowding at the

entrance. If someone is

suffering from fever, cough or cold, they will

be provided with a sepa-

rate room. There are

some standby invigila-tors, who will replace if

any assigned invigilator

vided with a separate

will take over if

room

sick

dents.

transmissions would be an indication of the spread.

A senior infection specialist explained, "our definition for testing right now is only contact transmission. We are not going beyond. ICMR is now opting for testing SARI, as that is the next step of verification. These samples would also have to be tested twice. If the first test is

positive and they are to re-confirm it – it still means there is community transmission. Even if one test in 150 samples positive, it means is

falls sick.

Talking

Chronicle, B.

Deccan Venkata

to

Narasamma, the District

Education Officer of Hyderabad, said that there are 362 centres

from Hyderabad. All the

centres have been strict-

ly instructed to provide

sanitizers and liquid soap, fresh and clean drinking water at the

centres for the students.

They have also request-

ed the students not to

congregate after writing

the exam. Md Ishaq, who

is appearing for the exams, said that keeping

the epidemic of COVID-

19 in mind, the school

management prescribed

a list of precautions which include carrying

your own water bottle

The principal of St

Theresa's High School

said that schools and

classrooms have been

sanitized properly and

all the invigilating staff

have been given all the

instructions by the gov-

Help us to help you

and a sanitizer.

ernment

there is local spread." Epidemiologists on field suspect possibility of local transmission

but say that it will be "mild". Will the government admit or give data? No, say medical experts. The data coming out from day one has led to doubts of actual numbers

A senior pulmonologist explained, "Actual numbers are not being released on the day of confirmation. The data is being released slowly and gradually, which is a Tests are only necessary clear indication that it is in case of fever," the doctor added. being managed. Hence,

there could be a difference in what is being shown and the actual picture.

"High level of secrecy is being maintained and no one is allowed to talk or give out any kind of information exchange. The buzz is that there is already a lot of panic and the government does not want to create more. Let everyone practice social distancing, isolation in case of cold and cough, and allow the virus to eliminate itself.

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C-V suspect case **SSC** exams start today shifted to Gandhi amid tight health vigil

CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD, MARCH 18

from person Indravelli mandal headquarters was shifted to Gandhi hospital, Hyderabad on suspicion of suffering from the coronavirus, given his symptoms. He was shifted to Gandhi hospital on the advice of

Maharashtra and returned to Indravelli two days ago and complained of cough, cold and fever. However, it would be confirmed whether or not he really is infected with the coronavirus only after seemedical ing his reports.

doctors of RIMS,

Adilabad. The man

had gone to Pune,



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Ministry of Health and Family Welfare **Government of India**

NOVEL C RONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Practise Social Distancing... Safety comes first!

Do's 🕗





Maintain at least 1 metre distance in hospitals, malls, market places, restaurants, public transport, etc.



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Non-essential social, commercial, religious, cultural, sporting events, etc.



Shaking hands and hugging as a matter of greeting

Non-essential travel







F @MoHFWIndia





IN BRIEF **RAILWAYS SETS UP TEAMS FOR CORONAVIRUS**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

Railway minister Piyush Goyal held a meeting with members of the Railway Board and general managers of all zones via video conference to review measures being undertaken to control and contain the threat of Covid-19 outbreak.

While appreciating the meas-ures taken so far, Mr Goyal directed the officials to constitute a "Covid-19 Response Team" consisting of six executive directors from the Railway Board. This team would coor dinate the ministry's efforts across all zones. It will be in touch with one nodal officer in each of the 18 zones.

Mr Goyal asked for the creation of an online dashboard to oversee operations by the zones. He also instructed them to issue advisories to travellers to cancel non-essential travel and not travel if they are running a fever. In case passengers show symptoms, they can take the help of railway staff and get instant medical atten-tion, he said.

COPS ON GUARD TO TAKE ON CORONAVIRUS

DURGA PRASAD SUNKU | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

Among the measures taken up by police to contain Covid-19 is supply of sanitizers and face masks to its personal, including those guarding the quarantine facilities, where the level of risk is high.

One of such facilities is Haritha Plaza in Vikarabad, which houses asymptomatic international travellers arriv ing in the city round-the-clock. Speaking to Deccan Chronicle, Vikarabad superintendent of police M. Narayana said, "Sufficient police personnel have been deployed here in shifts for 24 hours. We are also taking proper precautions by providing them masks and sanitizers. We have asked constables and officers to avoid direct contact with asymptomatic international travellers. We want them to be vigilant about their own hygiene.

Sanitisers and face masks are also being supplied within the areas of Hyderabad commissionerate. City police commissioner Anjani Kumar said they were providing protecand ev to the police station. They were also working together with the community to prevent the spread of corona. "Show your love for our city Go out for essential works," is the commissioner's message. Anjani Kumar asked people to avoid rallies in favour or against any issue. He said, This is the time to fight the virus and not mobilise people for other causes. We request all leaders to cooperate, or else cases will be booked against them" Abids inspector K. Ravi Kumar said, "We have provided sanitizers to our receptionist, general duty head consta ble, station house officer and patrolling staff. Each and every petitioner or victim who visits the police station is first provided sanitizers to clean their hands." He said public are being educated that Covid-19 it is not an airborne disease and can be avoided by taking precautionary measures.

Poor ticket sales: Special trains to TS, AP cancelled

Services announced over last few weeks for post-school exam rush

ADITYA CHUNDURU I DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

The railways announced a slew of cancellations on Friday due to effects of the Covid-19 outbreak. Almost all of the train services cancelled so far are of special trains, announced over the past few weeks to cater to increased rush postschool examinations.

Major special trains connecting the twin cities to hubs in Andhra Pradesh such as Vijayawada, Kakinada, Machlipatnam and have Visakhapatnam been cancelled.



Other major trains Hyderabad to Kalabu-ragi, Mumbai LTT to Karimnagar, Chennai to

been cancelled. Secunderabad, Hvderabad

– have also Ernakulam been cancelled

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, an South Central Railway official said cancellations of booked tickets had skyrocketed in the past few days. "Normally, when counted with waiting lists and so on, our cancellation rate is less than 18 per cent. Now it is more than 40 per cent across all trains (special and regular). The travellers are choosing to stay safe and not travel anywhere," he said. The official added that despite the cancellations, to

the notice. Since

the occupancy rate in these trains wasn't so bad. "However, it didn't

make sense operating special trains when tickets in regular trains are available so easily," he said. The official indicated that more cancellations were on the cards in the coming days and announcements could happen at short

Meanwhile, the cancellations have led to a great deal of confusion and tension among travellers. mostly special trains are being stopped, travellers with booked tickets in them

are wondering if they should make alternate plans

Scotland returnee tests positive

FROM PAGE 1

In another case not related to the Indonesian group, a patient in Telangana, a 22year-old bachelor from Medchal, who is pursuing a BBA degree in Scotland since 2019, tested positive for Covid-19, the government confirmed on Wednesday.

He arrived in the city on Monday and went home. The next day he developed cough and fever and reported to the Gandhi Hospital. The state health department said he had four close contacts, who the authorities were trying to trace. The passengers on his flight to Hyderabad are also being contacted.

27-YEAR-OLD TESTS NEGATIVE FOR VIRUS

MAJLIS-E-AZA SYED-US-SHOHDA (A.S)

BASILSILE HAFTA BARA-E-ESALE SAWAB

LATE SYED HUSSAIN BOLOOKI

Marooza : Khanwada-e-Marhoom Bolooki Family

S/o. LATE SYED ALI AKBAR BOLOOKI

(CAFÉ BAHAR)

Batariq : 19th March 2020

Ba Roz : Thursday Ba Waqt : Baad Namaz-e-Maghrib (7:30pm

Bamugam :

Darbar-e-Hussaini Purani Haveli

Hujjath ul Islam Moulana Ali Hyder Farishta Sahab Qibla

Bayan Farmayenge

Aomineen Se Guzarish

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Hai ke Shirkat Farmakar

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, MARCH 18

Much to the relief of Nellore district administration and health officials, the swab samples of a 27-year-old youth tested negative at the virology lab in SVIMS, Tirupati.

The youth working in Chennai went voluntarily to GGH at Nellore complaining about cough, cold and fever

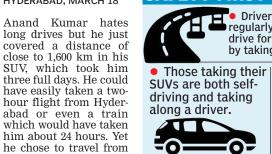
on Monday evening. District Collector MV Seshagiri Babu disclosed this while adding that there are no more suspected cases as of

now. He said they have identified 868 people who returned from foreign countries recently during house to house survey as well as with the help of list provided by Bureau of Immigration, Government of India

Road trips favourite transport mode as buses, trains turn risky

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

journey.



Hyderabad to New Delhi, where he had some official engage-ments, by road, which take a flight, I was in two minds after being told by family and was disinfected before friends that airports are commencing the long high risk areas where there is every possibili-With airports and railty of virus spreading rapidly as so many peo-ple keep flying in and way stations or even buses being seen as "high risk" zones for the out," said Anand, a senspread of the deadly ior executive in a pri-Coronavirus, a growing vate firm which has its branches in both Hydernumber of people are now undertaking road abad and Delhi besides journeys in their four other cities. Describing wheelers to reach their the journey as tiresome, destinations, be it for he said he always hated personal or official work. "I had to visit long drives. "But I have decided to travel by road Delhi for official work and though I wanted to to any city as I feel that is the safest form of

TELANGANA HOSTELS NOT TO BE CLOSED



Drivers who hit the highways E Drivers who hat the safe to regularly say that it is safe to drive for about nine hours a day by taking breaks every two hours.

• Though there are good eating options along all highways, people are mostly carrying home cooked food in the wake of 0-Coronavirus scare.

> travel in the present times and that too without getting into contact with other individuals,' says the 38-year-old.

A home maker, Sarika Singhvee, a resident of Gachibowli had booked her air ticket to Bengaluru. She cancelled it in the last minute after fears of virus getting infected at airports was weighing heavy on her mind. She then undertook the nearly 600 km journey in her SUV along with her daughter Pranika.

Over the past one week, most people inter-

Cabbies 'harassed' by

outbreak.

driver just to make my long journey comfort-able. But the flip side is that the journey gets expensive due to night halts and fuel and the

who will be leaving for Mumbai on business

work

they had travelled to Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, Chennai and even Delhi from Hyderabad in the safety and comfort of their four wheelers, only to avoid taking a flight or train which could have got them in contact with many peo-ple. According to an official in the ministry of Road Transport and Highways, road travel in private vehicles is expected to increase in the wake of Coronavirus "I can drive for a few hours but I took along a

drivers too charge more. It is also time taking and can drain physically and mentally," says Abhishek Singh, a resident of Banjara Hills,

viewed separately by Deccan Chronicle said

DENTISTS URGED TO ATTEND ONLY EMERGENCY CASES

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

The Telangana Dentists Association has urged all its members to opt for only emergency cases and desist from handling elective cases till March 31.

The request has been issued due to the shutdown being observed in hospitals for Covid-19.

Many dentists have clients who come from abroad for treatment and as their travel history is a cause of concern, they must refrain from handling such cases till March 31.

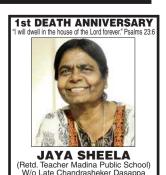
THE REQUEST has been issued due to the shutdown being observed in hospitals for Covid-19.

• MANY DENTISTS have clients who come from abroad for treatment



D.O.B

1-08-1953



and your hand we cannot touch, we sti

have so many memories of the one who loved us so much, we know your prayers will always protect us.

Inserted by: Sons, Daughter, Daughters-in-law & Grand Children



• SANITISERS AND face masks are also being supplied within the areas of Hyderabad commissionerate.

ANJANI KUMAR asked people to avoid rallies

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

Social media was abuzz with several complaints, on Wednesday morning, about students and wor king professionals being forced to vacate the hostel facilities by their owners across the city. Following the com-plaints, the state government issued an advisory "We saying, have received concerns from the IT firms that some of their employees are being asked to vacate their hostels by the owners. It has been decided that working employees' hostels will not be closed and owners are instructed to not forcibly evict the occupants." The advisory further

stated that in case of any forceful closing of hostels, the public can reach out to the Hyderabad City police. It also instructed the companies to make their own assessment of the emerging situation and take prudent decisions with respect to measures taken, with intimation to the Nodal Officer.

DC CORRESPONDENT ONE CUSTOMER HYDERABAD, MARCH 18 shouted at a cabbie for not wearing a mask

in the car coughed.

The ongoing Covid-19 **ANOTHER ONE** gave outbreak is causing major problems for app-based cab drivers. a 10-minute lecture for sneezing while driving Customers, the few remaining ones, are

refusing to sit in the to clean the handles. I said I didn't have anycars if they deem them thing. He refused the unclean. One customer on a shared ride, as per ride and walked away. a driver's account, stepped out of the vehi-Another customer shouted at me for not cle as soon as someone using a mask. The strangest customer Kumar, a driver affiliwas the one who gave me a 10-minute long ated with one of the two major cab aggregalecture for sneezing in tors, said that until last the car while driving!"

week he would spend 15 he explained. Reddy, another driver, hours on the road for said he was at GVK One to pick up a cus-20-25 trips every day. Since Monday, he has made less than 10 trips tomer as part of a pool a day. "The airport is a ride. "There were a few major spot for us. But it others in the back seat has become a deserted place now," he said, of the car. The new customer got in the car while recounting bizand sat in the front arre encounters with seat. Before I could customers. One cusmove the car, the new tomer, he said, peered person coughed lightly. into the car, looked One guy sitting in the back got livid and demanded to know how around and asked him to sanitise the vehicle right in front of him. the man could cough "He insisted that I use like that!" he some sanitiser solution exclaimed. The older

paranoia over corona customer got down and left without paying. "When I complained to the company about him, they scolded me and blocked my account for a few hours,' he added. The drivers also noted that they would like to provide masks to their customers but they had gotten too expensive for them.

The drivers com plained that both Uber and Ola could help them out. Reddy said, We keep getting notifications in their apps, asking us to use masks and sanitisers. How can we do that if you

(the companies) won't provide them to us?" Reddy said that in the short run, the companies could relax the incentive scheme and suspend EMI paysuspend EMI pay-ments. Kumar said, "I bought my car through the aggregator and I pay the EMI on it every month. If they could allow us to not pay until this coronavirus business gets over, it would be a great help to

Part of city heading to water shortage

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

Even as the city is in the tight grip of scare unleashed by the Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) epidemic, at least a part of the city is heading towards another major crisis — an acute shortage of drinking water. This is because the TRS government has rejected the proposal of Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB), requesting the government to allocate Singur / Manjeera (S-M) water to

the city. The K. Chandrashekar Rao-led government has made it emphatically clear that supply of drinking water from Singur/ Manjeera to the city would be stopped permanently and would be

compensated with water sources from Godavari. About 20 per cent of the citizens who come under the S-M catchment area. including Serilingampally, Rajendranagar, Kukatpally and others, would suffer acute water crisis during summer because of this stand of the state government.

Till recently, the S-M reservoir has been fulfill-MGD from Godavari and 17 MGD from Osmansagar ing drinking water needs and Himayathsagar. Surprisingly, the current of around 40 per cent of the city's population. The year water levels in the 120 million gallons per day twin reservoirs are drop-(MGD) regular supply from the S-M reservoir ping at an alarming pace and the HMWSSB has was cut down to 57 MGD been using it sparingly. for the past one-and-a-half Against this backdrop, year, and subsequently, HMWS&SB due to poor monsoon, reached out to the state drinking water supply from this source has been government to release water from S-M reservoir

stopped completely. since to reduce the burden However, authorities on of electricity charges and paper claimed that the load on Godavari water shortfall of 57 MGD supply supply, since it would not be possible to meet all of the demand with only from Manjeera and Singur is being met through 35

Godavari water source during peak summer.

even took the issue to notice of government during the recently concluded Assembly session. However, the government ruled out the idea and said the water board must make alternative arrangements, even if difficult. The board, during the previous year, had said that it would ensure sufficient water supply to the affected areas by setting up 20 additional water filling stations, which would hardly make much impact.



Paradise Function Hall, 8-3-235, Yousufguda Checkpost, Hyderabad (Landmark: Metro Pillar No. MNYP34). — Emula family, children & grandchildren.

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

MARATY. ABEL VEENTH JONTHAN Be still, close your Eyes, Breath deep side,Listen to my Music in your Hear JESUS, On the other side Inserted by:Tata, Dadu, Mom, Angel & Family M. Ravi Anil Kumar. Ph:9949992872

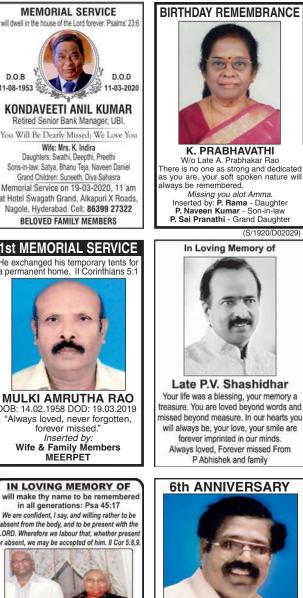
IN MEMORY OF

KONDAVEETI ANIL KUMAR Retired Senior Bank Manager, UBI **Mrs. JOSEPHINE LOUIS** You Will Be Dearly Missed; We Love You Ex. ASO, Uppal MRO DOB: 19.03.1963 DOD: 12.05.2016 Wife: Mrs. K. Indira DOB: 19.03.1963 DOD: 12.05.2016 Holy Mass at 6.00 a.m. 12.00 Noon 8 6.00 p.m. on 19.03.2020 at St. Mary Basilica, Secunderabad. We love you, we miss you but we experience your love every moment of our life Inserted by: Husband: Eugene Louis Sons: Joel & Noel Louis Dauchter-in-l aw: Immaculate Mary Daughters: Swathi, Deepthi, Preethi Sons-in-law: Satya, Bhanu Teja, Naveen Daniel Grand Children: Suneeth, Diya Sahasra Memorial Service on 19-03-2020, 11 am at Hotel Swagath Grand, Alkapuri X Roads Nagole, Hyderabad. Cell: 86399 27322 **BELOVED FAMILY MEMBERS** Daughter-in-Law: Immaculate Mary **BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE 1st MEMORIAL SERVICE** assed from death into life" John 5:2 He exchanged his temporary tents for a permanent home. II Corinthians 5:1

D.O.B.19-03-1998 D.O.D 26-07-2015 I am not gone, But merely walking with



on's, Daughter's, Son in Laws, Daughter in Law Grand Children's, Great Grand Children's.







Water board officials

officials

Children, Daughters-in-law, irand Children, Great Grand Childre (Neel, Ethan, Joel & Meshika) Ph: 7893015354

SHORT TAKES **RS: KESHAV**, **SURESH ELECTED UNOPPOSED**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

The Election Commission of India (EC) on Wednesday declared that the official candidates nominated by the TRS Dr K. Keshava Rao and K.R. Suresh Reddy — have been elected unanimously for the Rajya Sabha. Chief Electoral Officer Shashank Goel, in a press release, said that both candidates have been elected unopposed

After the formal declaration of the results, a foregone conclusion, Dr Keshava Rao and Mr Suresh Reddy, speaking to the press, thanked TRS supremo and Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao for nominating them to the upper house of Parliament.

Dr Keshav Rao is set to retire from the Rajya Sabha after completing his first term on April 9. Mr Chandrashekar Rao has re-nominated him. Mr Rao has also kept his word to former unified AP assembly speaker Mr Suresh Reddy, promising him a "good position" when he shifted from the Congress to the TRS in 2018.

BJP ASKS GUV TO CALL FOR SESSION ON CAA

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

The Telangana BJP leaders gave a representation to Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan, requesting to instruct Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao to call for a special session of the Assembly for a day to withdraw the Telangana state Assembly resolution against Citizenship Amendm-ent Act (CAA) and the National Population Register (NPR), and to instruct the government to co-operate to commence NPR in the state. The BJP leaders also appealed the Governor to advise the Chief Minister and the cabinet to refrain from spreading misconceptions amongst the peo-

ple. The BJP leaders in their representation to the Governor stated that the Telangana Assembly passed a resolution on March 16 against the CAA, NPR and the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

WAIVE ALL CROP LOANS, SAYS SHABBIR

Kavitha entry to MLC polls enthuses state TRS cadre

S.A. ISHAOULL DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) cadre are wondering and speculating hard about the near-future role in the party of Kalvak-untla Kavitha, daughter of Chief Minister and party supremo K. Chandrashekar Rao, after her entry into active state politics.

Ms Kalvakuntla had cho sen to keep a low profile and stay off active politics after her shocking defeat in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. In fact, Ms Kavitha, who took an active role in building a strong base for the party in Nizamabad district, and ensured victory of the party in all Assembly segments in the December 2018 Assembly elections, had kept away for several months from all party matters. After her defeat in the

Lok Sabha elections, there was pressure on party top leadership to bring her into active politics in the district as TRS cadre were losing morale with growing influence of the BJP in the district. The cadre cited the results to the Nizamabad Municipal Corporation, wherein the BJP emerged the single



Former MP K. Kavitha filed nomination papers for MLC by-elections of Nizamabad local authority constituency in Nizamabad on Wednesday. – DC

largest party, even though the TRS managed to grab control of the council with support from its ally, the MIM, as proof of the growth of the saffron party.

In this backdrop, party leaders hoped the party supreme would nominate Ms. Kavitha to the Rajya Sabha, instead, former AP Assembly speaker K.R. Suresh Reddy, who hails from Nizamabad district, was sent to the upper house. Instead, Mr K Chandrashekar Rao has chosen his daughter for an MLC seat from Nizamabad authorities conlocal

stituency, which has a term of less than two years

Sources in the party disclosed that Mr Rao fielded his daughter with a prolonged strategy as the constituency covers almost the entire district and she would have all protocol privileges to participate in all meetings, along with ministers and MPs. The position would help her build her career and a stronghold in the district. After announcing name of Ms K. Kavitha, roads

and buildings minister Vemula Prashanth Reddy told that press

Nizamabad local authorities constituency, the TRS had 523 votes and Congress has 140, while BJP had only 83 votes. "The victory of Ms Kavitha is certain," he said.

Sources in the party said that the party had no option but to bring her back into politics to count-er Nizamabad BJP MP D Arvind. She is also crucial for TRS to build better coordination in district party, in view of alleged lacking of coordination between ruling party MLAs and ministers from the district and the party workers

HC grants bail to Revanth

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

The Telangana High court on Wednesday granted regular bail to Congress MP Anumula Revanth Reddy in a criminal case where he charged with illegal usage of Drone camera to capture images of private properties of individuals, including some belonging to IT

Minister, K.T. Rama Rao. Justice K. Lakshman, heard the criminal peti-tion filed by Mr Revanth Reddy and granted him bail. While granting the bail, the Judge imposed two conditions on the petitioner (A) to execute two Sureties worth ₹10,000 each and (B) petitioner is not to interfere with the investigation.

The Judge observed that the accused being a Member of Parliament and considering that the Parliament session is underway, he is being granted bail. He also exempted Mr Revanth Reddy from appearing before the police, given his status as a sitting MP.

Earlier, senior counsel Mr. Salman Khurshid, appeared for Mr Revanth Reddy, and informed the court that all accused were enlarged on bail, a day after their arrest while Mr Revanth Reddy

Uttam: Revanth is being harassed

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

leaders of the state. Uttam Kumar Reddy said, "We will take the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president and Nalgonda MP N. Uttam Kumar Reddy has accused the government state harassing A. Revanth Reddy, TPCC working president and Lok Sabha member from Malkajgiri, by foisting false cases against him.

Speaking to reporters in New Delhi on Wednesday, he said the entire Congress party and all leaders of Telangana are standing behind Revanth Reddy. He alleged that Telangana police are working as agents of the ruling party. At its behest, they are violating the law

violating the rights of an MP. We will also lodge a complaint with the Privilege Committee of Lok Sabha about the Telangana police infringing on the rights Revanth Reddy.' He said he will be meet-ing Home Minister Amit Shah to complain against

and harassing opposition

arrest to notice of Lok Sabha Speaker that the

Telangana government is

the state government's Revanth Reddy. The TPCC The TPCC chief said if

police continue with such a kind of attitude, they will certainly damage their own image.

was under Judicial rem-and since March 6. Further, he all Sections included by the police in the Remand Order are bailable including Sec.188 IPC. Public prosecutor Mr. Pratap Reddy submitted

that the accused had loitered over private proper-

ties, including the premis-es of a State Minister. Further, Mr Pratap Reddy explained that this was not a case of bailable and attracted punishment under Sec 336 of Indian Penal code and Section 7 of the Criminal Amendment Act, 1932.

Speed up works in Old City: KTR

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

Municipal administration officials to expedite footand urban development minister K.T. Rama Rao on Wednesday held a review meeting with city decation, water partments and instructed officials to speed-up ongoing developmental works lic toilets, nala widening in the Hyderabad parliaworks and other inframentary constituency. He instructed the Grea-

structure related projects. Regarding road widening ter Hyderabad Municipal works, the MA&UD minis-Corporation (GHMC) to ter aske speed-up works taken up dinate ter asked officials to coorwith railway

under strategic road devel-opment plan (SRDP). Beauthorities and other departments to shift public sides this, Mr Rao asked utilities so as to complete works without any delay. over-bridges (FoBs), road He instructed them prewidening works, junction pare proposals for laying a four-lane road on both sides of the Musi river improvement and beautifisupply pipelines, development of under the east-west corrisport complex, parks, pubdor project.

During the meeting, Mr Rao sought proposals for laying vacuum dewatering cement concrete (VDCC) roads and to fasten land acquisition process on 20 stretches meant for road-

widening, and to post a special officer for this purpose.

Mr Rao asked HMWS&SB officials to asked repair water leakages, and if necessary, replace the old pipelines with new ones to ensure better water supply. He told them to make sure there was no shortage of water supply in summer. He said that a

sum of ₹200 crore was sanctioned for purpose of nala widening and to replace old sewerage pipelines.

Cops foil Cong welcome rally for Revanth's release

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

High drama was wit-nessed at the Cherlapally jail where Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee working president and the Medchal-Malkajgiri Lok Sabha member, Α. was Revanth Reddy, released on Wednesday. Mr Reddy, it may be recalled, was lodged in the

prison in a case related to Mr Reddy's residence flying of a remote controlled drone over Minister K.T. Rama Rao's farmhouse in Janwada in the city outskirts.

The Congress leader's release from the prison on bail was sought to be turned into a big event by some of his party's leaders who arrived at Cherlapally to take out a rally all the way from the prison to

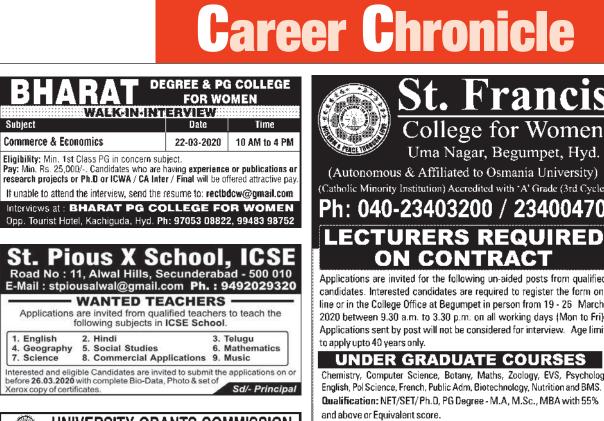
Anticipating such a possibility, the Rachakonda police had earlier in the day imposed Section 141 in the area adjoining the prison. When Congress and workers leaders arrived to receive Mr Reddy, the police said the TPCC working president be taken and would dropped home in a police vehicle.



Riverfront

MADDY DEEKSHITH I DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 18 The proposed Greater

Infrastructure Corpomental protection. ration (TSIIC), Musi Funding for all major infrastructure projects Development Corporation Lim-ited (MRDCL), and will be under the Hyderabad and urban Hyderabad Road Deve agglomeration budget. The state government has earmarked ₹10,000 crore for the current financial year and overall ₹50,000 crore over five years. Sources claimed that the Hyderabad regional council is inspired by the Cape Breton Council, Regional Halifax Regional Council and councils in New Zealand, Scotland, Israel, France, Hong Kong, etc. The best model that would suit the Hyderabad and its periphery will be implewould mented. A decision pertaining to the regional council will be taken once the Coronavirus lations and environsubsides.



DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

Former minister, Mohammed Ali Shabbir, demanded that the state government waive all crop loans in a single take and not split them into four installments, like it did in the past.

Shabbir, in a media state-ment on Wednesday, said that the guidelines for the crop loan waiver scheme issued by the state government on Tuesday were not comprehensive and promises no major relief for farmers.

He said that the government plans to waive off outstanding loans up to ₹25,000 in the first phase and for remaining farmers, it proposes to waive off the amount in four installments.

Hvderabad Regional Council (GHRC) comlopment Corporation Limited (HRDCL). prising eight municipal corporations and seven A Principal Secretarymunicipalities within rank officer will be the the outer ring road (ORR) will have board administrative head. Sources said that an administration member members representing will head the transport the municipal corporation and urban local wing comprising all bodies and it would be either headed by the modes of transport including HMRL, MMTS, RTC, etc. The GHMC mayor or MA&UD minister. department will extend It would also have a public connectivity in CEO for administration the regional council at pace with the growing population. The remwith board members representing all city departments including aining members will focus on projects like GHMC, Hyderabad Metimplementation of the ropolitan Development Authority (HMDA), sewerage master plan, Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited (HMRL), polthe ring road construction, the construction of ice, MMTS, RTC, Telaflyovers, land use regungana State Industrial

COURT ORDERS **Oppn hails the decision, says it's an eye-opener** SC upholds SEC call, lifts MCC

in force.

been any, we would have

apprised the SEC of the

factual situation, which would have justified the

He pointed out that it is

really curious that the SEC

is on caveat and opposing

the writ petition filed by the state, which "clearly

indicates the SEC is taking

a political line." The ASG

said the SEC wants to crip-

ple government function-

ing by taking sides politi-

Nadkarni argued.

MD. ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 18

A bench of the Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld the decision of the Andhra Pradesh State Election Commission to postpone the elections for the local bodies in view of the globally widespread Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) epidemic, serving a huge blow to the YSRC state government which contested the decision as being 'motivated' and 'misplaced'.

The SC bench, headed by Justice Sharad Chief Arvind Bobde, upheld the decision of the AP-SEC on the postponement of elections for six weeks in view of the Covid-19 but gave relief to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's government by suspending the restrictions of the model code of conduct (MCC) till further orders, which paves the way for the YSRC government to make a mega event of 26.6 lakh house pattas distribu-

• THE SUPREME court order makes way for the YSRC government to make a mega programme of 26.6 lakh house pattas distribution scheduled on Telugu new year Ugadi

tion programme scheduled on Telugu new year Ugadi. The main opposition Telugu Desam party and other opposition parties hailed the SC decision in upholding the SEC's decision on postponement of polls, saying it must come as an "eye-opener" for the YSRC party. view that the state was ready for elections," Mr

The state government, however, saw it as a posi-tive decision, while some analysts called it a "winsituation" win with enough positive for both the state government and the SEC, with the apex court verdict supporting postponement of local body election as taken by SEC and the lifting of the MCC with immediate effect as

desired by the government. cally. The court asked the The SC took objection to "how can you have the SEC's stand of both both sides. You want to postponing elections on the postpone elections and also one hand and declaring that the MCC would be in have a model code of conduct. You want to bring the force. Additional solicitorstate to a standstill."

general (ASG) A. Nadkarni The ASG pointed out that contended on behalf of AP this was a ploy and politigovernment that the SEC cal lines are drawn and they want the government to stop functioning. The has passed a curious order, postponing elections and yet saying the MCC will be SEC contended that there was an "attempt to distrib-'There was no prior conute freebies, which will sultation with the govern-ment, and if there had affect the purity of the election"

To which the state contended that political lines were already drawn. Why should the SEC contest developmental pro-grammes of the state? The Court said that MCC

must be lifted immediately and could be re-imposed when the next date for elections is notified. There shall be no interference with any developmental activities already initiated and the SEC shall not interfere with that, the SC bench ruled.

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date will not be considered.

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Additional Commissione



hatched a plan to run a brothel. M. Niranjan Reddy,

inspector of police, Panja-gutta, said, "The accused procured the sex workers

and others from different

parts of India offering

them ₹1,000 per session

per person and have

IN BRIEF **₹5.2L property**

recovered, 1 held

Hyderabad: Sleuths of the LB Nagar police station have arrested a burglar and recovered property worth ₹5.2 lakh from him. He has been identified as Sriramadasu Jagan, a resident of Masjid Galli and native of Neredcharla in Suryapet district. He was an auto rickshaw driver who turned into a habitual offender owing to bad habits. Police recovered from him 12 tolas of gold, 11 tolas of silver and a CBZ bike, all worth ₹5.2 lakh. He was produced before a court and remanded to judicial custody on Wednesday.

Fake sanitiser makers held

GEETA VALABOJU | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

A duplicate hand sanitiser manufacturing unit was busted at Cherlapally under Kushaiguda police station limits on Wednesday. The products were sold as 'Semuns Cleanse' hand sanitiser and 'Kausthuba Coclean 19' hand sanitiser.

Sleuths of the Special Operations Team (SOT) of Rachakonda, along with police officers of Hyderabad and Ayush Drug Inspectors from Telangana, raided the duplicate manufacturing unit and seized huge

Cleanse Semuns Kausthuba Coclean 19 stocks at Kushaiguda and Abdullapurmet and material raw worth ₹60 lakh.

They arrested Managing Director of Seven Hills Softgel Company Krishna Kiran, General Manager Vemuri Venkata Subramanyam and Marketing Manager Vemuri Vishwanath. Police recovered 180 cartons containing 25,000 100ml bottles, eleven drums of Iso-propyl alcohol weighing 162 kgs and other material worth ₹40 lakh.

Investigations revealed that Kakarlapudi Krishna



Police seizing products at a duplicate hand sanitiser manufacturing unit in Cherlapally on Wenesday.

Kiran obtained a licence for Ayush Softgel capsules and Syrups in 2018 and started operations at IDA Cherlapally.

Since the demand for hand sanitisers has increased multifold after has the outbreak of Covid-19, demand for the products has skyrocketed while retailers sold them at exorbitant rates. Commissioner of Police

Mahesh Bhagwat said, "Normally, hand sanitisers turn dry as soon as they are applied on hands. But this particular compa-ny's sanitiser does not." The accused distributed their products, Medipro, in Telangana and Andhra

Pradesh. While the approximate cost for manufacturing is ₹46 per bottle including

GST, the accused priced

them at ₹144. "We have seized 50 lakhs bottles of fake sanitisers from the manufacturing unit and its sub-unit. The groups appointed distributors in both States and supplied them to leading medical shops," police said. Meanwhile, in another similar operation, police raided a manufactur ing unit at Abdullapurmet and arrested Chandan Panjwani, Anil Kumar and Bommu Shanker.

Around 2,500 fake sanitiser bottles and other raw material worth ₹10 lakh were seized from the spot

Main Sponsor:

Sex worker business busted, one arrested

DURGA PRASAD SUNKU | DC HYDERABAD MARCH 18

Panjagutta police apprehended a man running a sex worker business and rescued one sex worker on Wednesday.

Identifying the accused as Inti Pavan, police said that he along with anoth-er accused, Kiran, who was absconding, running a brothel

According to the police, the accused are working as junior artists in the film industry, wanted to earn easy money and





Presents





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-

FIVE NABBED

FOR RAPING

TWO MINORS

IN BRIEF

SERB EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR SWATI GHOSH



Dr Swati Ghosh Acharyya

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

Dr Swati Ghosh Acharyya, a professor from the University of Hyderabad is selected for the prestigious SERB Women Excellence Award, 2020.

Her research encompasses the development of novel corrosion-resistant materials and surfaces. Her team has recently developed an eco-friendly route for bulk synthesis of graphene under ambient conditions. Graphene-based nanocomposites have been fabricated by her team to synthesise corrosion resistant, abrasion resistant, hydrophobic, high temperature resistant and high strength coatings. These would be used for fabrication of water purification membranes and self-powered corrosion resistant sensors for heavy metal ion detection in water.

Her project 'Real-time detection of heavy metal ions in groundwater by stripping voltammetry using indigenously fabricated self-powered, corrosion-resistant, pH insensitive, flexible nano-composite based electrochemical sensors: concept to product (RISE)' has been recommended under the Women Excellence Award of Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) of the Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India, with a ₹5 lakh annual grant for 3 years.

Presents

Chevella murder: Cops 6 Inter copycats, fail to make headway

Police: Jewellery links woman to Guj. or Maha

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

The mystery over the identification of the woman, who was found murdered at Chevella continues, as the police could only correlate that the woman could be a native of Maharashtra or Gujarat, based on the type of gold ornaments recovered, which they anticipate belonged to her.

On Tuesday morning, the body of an unidentified woman was found murder for gain. under a bridge located on the outskirts of Thangadpally village in Chevella mandal of Rangareddy district in der and her hands were tied. The Chevella police, who registered a case, Cyberabad police comsent Chevella

missionerate limits. The woman was killed and was disrobed before hospital mortem. her body was dumped in an isolated area. Her face was smashed with a boulverified the ornaments

with the jewellery stores to learn which part of the • ON TUESDAY morning, the body of an unidenticountry made such fied woman was found designs, found that the under a bridge located woman, aged between 25 on the outskirts of and 30 could be hailing Thangadpally village in from Maharashtra or Chevella mandal of Guiarat. Meanwhile, forensic Rangareddy district in doctors have already

Cyberabad police commade it clear that they missionerate limits. did not identify forcible Forensic experts have penetration on the woman, which cleared made it clear that there was no sexual assault. In that she was not sexually addition. leaving behind assaulted, before she was the gold ornaments killed. cleared that it was not

In addition, leaving behind the gold ornaments cleared that it was not murder for gain. The doctors informed

the investigators that the woman had a habit of using tobacco products after checking her mouth. "The death possiher bly took place between 2 to 3 am on Tuesday. She was strangulated before her face was smashed

with a boulder. She is a married woman," said sources close to the Cyberabad police.

The police have also identified that the ring recovered from the spot was of a new model and also detected a hallmark on it, but has become so difficult to find the ring manufacturer. The footage of the CCTV cameras installed

in nearby places were of no help so far. The viscera and blood samples have been collected and stored and the body is preserved at the Chevella government hospital. from An official Cyberabad, who is part of

the probe said, "She had also undergone a tubectomy procedure. No one has contacted the police so far about a missing woman or close to the descriptions of woman killed." the

2 staff arrested DC CORRESPONDENT SPEAKING TO Deccan HYDERABAD MARCH 18 Chronicle, K Chandra

Six Intermediate students, who were caught masscopying during the Chemistry and Commerce supplementary exams on Wednesday, were arrested Golconda police. Reportedly, taking ₹8,000 tipped about mass-copying, per paper, a few of the col-lege staff were helping the our task force team raided the premises Wednesday students, who are believed morning and caught four to have resorted to this college staff and six stusince the Mathematics dents red-handed. Two examination. escaped from the spot."

Identifying the 29-year-old correspondent of New Madina Junior College at Tolichowki, Shoib Tanveer, and faculty members Shabha, Shahida Shareen and Syed Kaleemuddin have been caught by the police who said they helped the eight students in mass-copying. The

arrested students have been identified as Mohd Iqbal Abbas, Ahamad Nazeer, Mohd Riyan Nazeer, Nisar Ahmed appearing for the second year Chemistry supplementary exam while Firaz Mirza, Mohd Ahmed Hussain were writing the Commerce-II exam.

Deccan Speaking to have been sent to judicial Chronicle, Κ Chandra custody.

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 18 Kamatipura police arrested two persons and th-Shekar Reddy, Inspector of ree juveniles in connect-Golconda police station ion with the rape of misaid. "The students from nor girls, who are sis-ters. Identifying the accused as Mohd different private colleges were writing their papers in the New Madina Junior College centre. On being

Shekar Reddy, Inspector of Golconda police station

said, "The students from

different private colleges

were writing their papers in the New Madina Junior

College centre. On being

tipped about the mass-copy-

ing, our task force team

raided the premises Wednesday morning during

the examination and caught

four college staff, including

the correspondent, and six

students red-handed. Two

A case was booked against all of them and all arrested

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escaped from the spot.'

accused as Mohd Shafeeq and Mohammed Saif Ali, police said the two, along with three juveniles, exploited the innocence of the two minor girls.

According to the police, one of the juveniles befriended a sister, aged 17 years, about a year back_and proposed to her. They girls are school and tuition mates.

According to G. Rambabu, Inspector at Kama-tipura PS, "One day while the girl was returning home from tuition, the boy took her to a graveyard in front of Vazir Ali Mosque and assaulted her sexually." Later he shared his experience with the other four, who also raped her at differ-

ent locations. Later Saif Ali, also sexually exploited the victim's 14-year-old sister. All the accused were arrested and sent to judicial custody.

Unto

DISCOUNT

AK-47 theft: 5 cops suspended

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

The Telangana police department has suspended five of its personnel for negligence in safeguarding weapons stored at the Bell of Arms in Husnabad police station. An AK-47 and a 9-mm carbine, along with 30 live rounds, were stolen from Husnabad police

station in early 2017. Strangely, no investigation was taken up and no efforts were made to trace and recover the stolen weapons.

the body to the

The special teams of

Cyberabad police, who

government

for a post-

In February this year, police found the weapons to be in possession of a shepherd D. Sadanandam, a resident of Akkannapet village in Siddipet district. He even used the AK-47 rifle to fire at his

neighbour G. Gangaraju because of rivalry. Subsequently, Sadanandam was arrested and his questioning revealed that it was he who entered the Bell of Arms and stole the AK-47, 9-mm carbine and 30 live rounds of AK rifle. An inquiry was con-

ducted to identify person-

nel whose negligence had

led to the theft

sub-inspector Sanjay, assistant sub-inspector Manemma, head constable Sampath, and constables Ashok and Manoj were placed under suspension. When contacted, Siddipet commissioner Joel Davis said, "Five personnel, who were found to be responsible for the missing weapons, have been suspended after an inquiry.





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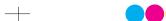
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TAKES SHORT

PAWAR TO DEPOSE BEFORE BHIMA PANEL

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, MARCH 18

Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar has been summoned by Koregaon Bhima inquiry commission to appear before it on April 4 Pawar will have to appear before the commission in Mumbai, as the scheduled hearing by the commission was shifted there in view of the coronavirus outbreak.

The commission's tenure ends on April 9, however, it is likely to get extension, sources said.

A two-member inquiry commission is conducting the probe into the 2018 Koregaon-Bhima violence.

In Februrary, social group Vivek Vichar Manch member Sagar Shinde had filed an application before the commission, seeking summoning of Pawar in view of certain statements made by him in the media about the 2018 caste violence.

Taking note of Vivek Vichar Manch's application the Commission had first sought time from Pawar for his appearance and later sent him the summons.

Sagar Shinde of the Manch demanded that NCP chief be summoned in view of certain statements made by him in the media about the 2018 caste vio lence.

Shinde had given reference of the NCP press conference conducted in February 18, in which Pawar had alleged that right-wing activists Milind Ekbote and Sambhaji Bhide had created a "different" atmosphere in Koregaon-Bhima close to Pune city.

NCP chief spokesperson and cabinet minister for minority affairs Nawab Malik said that the commission had asked Pawar for a convenient date for appearing before it.

Pawar had informed the commission that owing to the ongoing Parliament session, he would appear on April 4 in afternoon at 3 pm.

CONG FUMES OVER 'MASS SURVEILLANCE'

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

Terming reports of "mass sur-veillance" on citizens as "extremely disturbing", the Congress on Wednesday said the "sinister plot" which has been put in place was a transgression of the Right to Privacy guaranteed by the



Madhya Pradesh Congress Party MLAs leave after meeting Governor Lalji Tandon at Raj Bhavan in Bhopal on Wednesday. The MLAs met the Governor to demand the release of their party MLAs from Bengaluru

Nath firm on no floor test

MP CM likely to visit B'luru to meet rebel MLAs; Regrets calling up Shah, BSY

From Page 1

The 16 legislators promptly made a plea to the tion that he was not going Karnataka director-general of police in writing, saying they did not want to meet the Congress leaders of Madhya Pradto face a floor test to prove his majority since he had on several occa-sions in the last 15 months had won the trust esh and sought protection from them. They also released videos which went viral on the vote in one form or another. He dared the BJP to move a no-confisocial media to make their stand clear on the dence motion against him in the House to dismatter. lodge his government

In another develop-ment, Chief Minister Kamal Nath on Wednes-day dropped hints that he might visit Bengaluru to meet the 16 MLAs if Former chief minister and BJP vice-president Shivraj Singh Chouhan, however, took a jibe at

from power.

him for shying away from

"reminding" him that his

Wednesday filed a com-

facing a floor test as ordered by the governor, needed. Mr Nath regretted that he had called Union home minister Amit Shah and Karnataka government had been reduced to minority. In another develop-ment, the BJP on Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa on the phone seeking their interven-

tion to secure the release

of the 16 Congress MLAs, Commission alleging an but did not get any response from them. Commission alleging an attempt by Mr Singh to influence the 16 MLAs ahead of the March 26 He reiterated his asserbiennial Rajya Sabha elections in the state.

Interestingly, governor Lalji Tandon on Wednesday snubbed Assembly Speaker N.P. Prajapati for seeking his intervention in securing the release of the 16 rebel Congress MLAs, remind-ing him that it was the job of the executive (to free the legislators).

'You are knocking at the wrong door", Mr Tandon said, while replying to the Speaker's communication to him. Congress workers held demonstration at the BJP's state headquarters here and at the resi-dences of some of the rebel Congress MLAs, accusing them of trying to destabilise the Kamal plaint with the Election Nath government.

Digvijay detained by police in B'luru

DC CORRESPONDENT **BENGALURU, MARCH 18**

In a major twist to Madhya Pradesh Congress MLAs' stay in Bengaluru resort, former Chief Minister MP Digvijay Singh approached Karnataka High Court, seeking a

direction for permission to meet the MLAs. The writ petition filed in the Karnataka High Court contended that Singh was candidate for forthcoming elections to Rajya Sabha and it was his right to seek votes from the voters.

Senior Counsel A.S. Ponnanna contended

that the police were obstructing meeting of Singh with his own voters. Since the election was fast approaching, he sought emergency hear-ing of the case and requested the bench to give suitable direction to the police.

Meanwhile, earlier in the day, high had pre-vailed in near Ramada Resort, Yelahanka, when Singh, along with other Congress leaders were detained by police, while trying to barge into the resort.

Singh was accompanied by Madhya Pradesh minister Jitu Patwari and other Congress leaders

Supreme Court removes Manipur Cabinet minister

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

In a major decision, the Supreme Wednesday Court on barred T. Shyamkumar – a Cabinet minister in **BJP-led** Manipur government from entering the state Assembly and ordered that he would cease to be a minister forth-

with A bench headed by Justice Rohinton Fali Nariman with Justice S. Ravindra Bhat said that T. Shyamkumar is 'restrained from entering the Legislative Assembly till further orders of this Court. Needless to add, he will cease to be a minister of the Cabinet immediately." The court passed the order

taking recourse to its plenary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution.

The top court took the major decision noting that despite it giving time to Manipur Assembly Speaker to take decision on the petitions seeking the disqualifi-cation of MLAs who had crossed the floor, the Speaker did not take any call.

Noting the "chequered history" of the case, the court in its order on Wednesday referred to its January 21, 2020, judgment pointing out that 13 disqualification peti-tions which were filed, starting from as early as April, 2017 have not yet been decided by the Speaker of the Manipur Legislative

Assembly. By its January 21, 2020, judgment, the court had given Manipur Assembly Speaker a month's time to decide on 13 disqualification petitions pending before him.

till date nothing moved in the matter. It also noted that Solicitor General Tushar Mehta sought time till

A BENCH headed by Justice Rohinton Fali Nariman passed the order taking recourse to its plenary powers under Article 142 of

pg 8

the Constitution. THE COURT took the decision noting that despite giving time the Speaker did not take any call.

March 28, assuring that decision on disqualification petitions would be taken by that time.

However, senior counsel Kapil Sibal, appearing for the petitioner Keisham Meghachandra Singh told the court that it (court) should have itself decided these cases as the Speaker. even after one month's period given to him, did not take decision and had sought eight week's more time which was subsequently not pressed. Sibal on Wednesday urged the court to take up

the matter and decide it. The top court by its January 21, 2020, judgment had urged the parliament to take a call for setting up an independent tribunal to 'swiftly and impartially' decide on the disqualifica-

Ramasubramanian had said

in their January 21, 2020.

tion of lawmakers in the parliament and the State assemblies under the antidefection law. "It is time that Parliament have a rethink on whether disqualification petitions ought to be entrusted to a Speaker as a quasi-judicial authority when such

Speaker continues to belong to a particular political party either de jure or de facto", a bench comprising Justice Rohinton Fali However, court noted that Nariman, Justice Aniruddha Bose and Justice V.

VIJAYAWADA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (VMC) 'e' Procurement Notice No.CE-19/VMC/AE/2019-20, Dt. 18-03-2020. of work: Providing Foot paths & Centre to Gulabithota in Vijayawada City. (2nd Call) (Value of works Rs.300.00 Lakhs Contact S.E (W),VMC, Vijayawada - 98665 14183 Further details can be seen @ <u>www.apeprocurement.gov.in.</u> : 19-03-2020 from 03.30 P.M Down load of bid documents starts from Last date / time for receipt of Tenders : 03-04-2020 up to 4.00 P.M. Sd/- D.Marianna CHIEF ENGINEER SOUTHERN RAILWAY

judgment

Pawar among 37 elected unopposed New Delhi, March 18: NCP chief Sharad Pawar, RS ELECTIONS NCP minister Fauzia Khan.

Supreme Court.

The reports which have emerged in the public space are extremely disturbing because the Government has decided that it will carry out mass surveillance against the citizens of India," Congress spokesperson and Lok Sabha MP Manish Tewari told the media.

A media report has said that the government has been seeking call data records (CDRs) of all mobile subscribers across several pockets of the country for specific days over the past few months.

Tewari said that a sinister pre-meditated orchestrated plot has been put in place in order to unleash a mass surveillance programme on the citizens of India, which is an absolute transgression of the Right to Privacy guaranteed by the Supreme Court in a 9-0 judgement. "We strongly condemn and we deprecate this assault on the fundamental freedom which have been provided in the Constitution and have been interpreted by the Supreme Court.

Union minister Ramdas Athawale and Rajya Sabha deputy chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh were among 37 candidates elected unopposed on Wednesday to Rajya Sabha as the deadline for withdrawal of nomina-

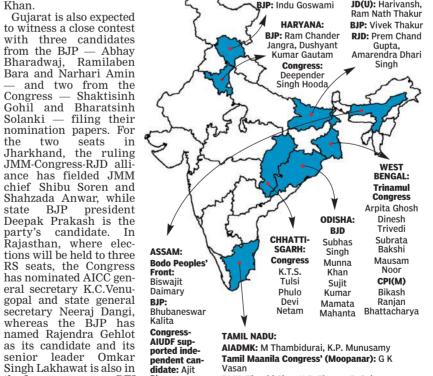
tion ended. Nominations had been filed for 55 Rajya Sabha seats in 17 states for the March 26 election. Out of these, candidates were declared elected unopposed to all seven seats in Maharashtra, six seats in Tamil Nadu, two seats each in Haryana, Chhattisgarh and Telangana; four seats in Odisha, five seats each in Bihar and West Bengal; three seats in Assam and one seat in Himachal Pradesh by the returning officers as no other candidates were in Bhagwat the frav.

Priyanka Chaturvedi, who had quit the Congress last year and joined Sena's the Shiv Sena, AIADMK Chaturvedi and former

Gujarat is also expected

leader and former Lok Sabha deputy speaker M Thambidurai. veteran lawver K.T.S.Tulsi and Congress party's Deepender Singh Hooda were among other prominent candidates. Polls will be held on March 26 for the remaining 18 RS seats — four

Solanki — filing their nomination papers. For two seats the each in Gujarat and And-Jharkhand, the ruling hra Pradesh, three each JMM-Congress-RJD alliin Rajasthan and Madhya ance has fielded JMM chief Shibu Soren and Pradesh, two in Jharkhand and one each in Shahzada Anwar, while state BJP president Manipur and Meghalaya. Deepak Prakash is the NCP leader Pawar and Union minister of state party's candidate. In for social justice Ramdas Rajasthan, where elections will be held to three Athawale, both sitting members, were among RS seats, the Congress seven elected unopposed has nominated AICC genfrom Maharashtra. The eral secretary K.C.Venugopal and state general others elected from the state were BJP's Udaysecretary Neeraj Dangi, anraje Bhosale and Bhagwat Karad; whereas the BJP has named Rajendra Gehlot Congress general secreas its candidate and its tary Rajiv Satav, Shiv senior leader Priyanka Singh Lakhawat is also in the frav. -PTI



DMK: Tiruchi Siva, N.R. Elango, P. Selvarasu

Corrigendum – 3 for RFP for Selection of Principal Consultant for GIS Mapping and Data Integration of Towns of Bihar

Bhuvan

In the light of COVID-19 pandemic and request received from prospective bidders, bid submission date of completed proposal for 11न०वि० GIS (RFP)-02/2020 ...127., is being extended.

Last date of online submission of completed proposal on www.eproc.bihar.gov.in has been extended to 30.03.2020, 06:00PM. Hard copy shall be submitted till 31-03-2020 03:00PM at address mentioned in REP.

All prospective bidders are advised to submit their application in accordance with the RFP, Corrigendum-1, Corrigendum-2 & Corrigendum-3. For clarification, kindly contact us at the email address: urbansecbih@nic.in, tcpobihar@gmail.com

> Special Secretary **Urban Development and Housing Department,**

PR No. 017777(Urban)2019-20 Govt. of Bihar

अवैध शराब एवं मादक द्रव्य के संबंध में शिकायत टॉल फ्री नं. 18003456268 या 15545 पर करें

E-TENDER NOTICE FOR SUPPLY OF MEDICINE/SURGICAL/LAB Principal Chief Medical Director, Headpuarters, Southern Railway, for and on beha of the President of India, invites ONLINE open tenders for the following supply contract as per Tender Notice given in IREPS website. Firms are requested to log on to http://www.irens.gov.in->E-Tender->Goods & Services (New) and quote against this tender. No Manual quotations will be antertained. Closing time for the tende is 11.00 hours on the date noted against each below.

SI, No	Tender No.	Description	Quantity	Due Date
1	SR1931340030245	SUPPLY OF REAGENTS FOR ABG ANALYSER.	90000 Test	06/04/2020
Principal Chief Medical Director				

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता, मनियारी जल संसाधन संभाग मुंगेली, जिला–मुंगेली (छ.ग.)

// निविदा निरस्तीकरण आदेश //

आदेश क्रमांक 1198/ व.ले.स./2019-20 मुंगेली, दिनांक 13.03.2020

इस कार्यालय द्वारा आमंत्रित निविदा सूचना क्र. 08/व.ले.लि./2019-20 दिनांक 31.01.2020, सिस्टम कं. 60449 (प्रथम आमंत्रण) "मनियारी जलाशय सँच्य क्षेत्र के विकसित 2524.92 हे. (जल उपभोक्ता संथा डिंडौरी एवं साल्हेघोरी के अंतर्गत) प्रधानमंत्री कृषि सिंचाई योजना के लक्ष्य के अनुरुप कृषकों को एग्रीकल्चर, हार्टीकल्चर, सेरीकल्चर से प्राप्त योजनाओं एवं सुविधाओं से कृषको को परिचित कराते हुए जागरुकता कार्यक्रमों का कियान्वयन किया जाना है। (लागत राशि रुपये 851.84 लाख) की निविदा में कोई भी निविदाकार द्वारा भाग नही लेने के फलस्वरुप उक्त निविदा को "निरस्त" किया जाता है।

G-77974/2

C-92/2020

RO . 612-

कार्यपालन अभियंता मनिवारी जल संसाधन संभाग. मुंगेली, (छ.ग.)

OFFICE OF CH C-3, Shakti Vihar, F Tel. No. 0175-2 e-mail: see CIN: U40109PB2010S0 Website: www.pspcl.in E-ter	ad Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001 IEF ENGINEER / METERING VSPCL, Patiala, Punjab - 147001 218871, Fax 0175-2200284, -hq-metering@pspcl.in GC033813, Registration No.: 33813, indering portal: https://eproc.punjab.gov.ir		
Tender Specification No.	MQP-149/2019-20/PR		
Short Description	Procurement of DLMS Compliant, Head held, High Speed, Portable DMRI/CMRI.		
Quantity	328 no.		
Tender Documents	Tender documents can only be down loaded from website https://eproc.punjab.gov.in		
Start date of downloading	17.03.2020 from 13.00 Hrs onwards		
Last date of downloading of documents	16.04.2020 up to 17:00 Hrs.		
Last date of Bid submission	17.04.2020 up to 17:00 Hrs.		
Bid opening (Part-I&II)	24.04.2020 at 11:30 Hrs.		

.gov.in.Tender ID is: 2020 POWER_46176 Note : Corrigendum, if any after the publication of this tender enquiry shall only be uploaded on website https://eproc.punjab.gov.in and will not be published wspapers

SE/HMC
PSPCL, Patiala.

SC asks Centre, J&K if it is going to release Omar soon

PARMOD KUMAR I DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

comprising

matter on merits.

place

when

and

Arun

week

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Centre and the administrator of Union Territory of J&K if it is going to release the former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah – who is now in detention under Public Safety Act.

Omar Abdullah was whether detained on August 4-5, Abdullah 2019, shortly before the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution and subsequent bifurcation of the J&K into in two Union Territories take J&K and Ladakh. Seeking to know if Mishra

Omar Abdullah was Shah would be sitting being released, a bench again.

Justice senior counsel As Mishra and Kapil Sibal appearing for petitioner Sara Abdullah Pilot urged Justice M.R.Shah said, for "If you are releasing him, then release him the court to fix a short date, the court said under the existing soon or we will hear the Asking the lawyer curtailed arrangement appearing for the the wake of in Centre and Jammu and Covid-2019, only six Kashmir administrabenches are sitting and

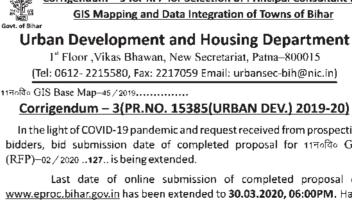
tion to take instruction it is not certain when Omar their next turn would is come. going to be released, the "Probably next week court adjourned the

we are sitting and the hearing indicating that matter will be taken up at that time," the bench said. Sara Abdullah has the further hearing the matter may next challenged the further Justice detaining of her broth-Justice er and former Chief

Minister Omar Abdullah under the PSA and prior to the invoking of the Public Safety Act, the former Chief Minister was detained under Section 107 of the Code of Criminal

Procedure. Section 107 of the CrPC provides for steps he taken to bv magistrate for keeping peace.

The release of former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah a few days ago has raised hopes of the possible release of other two former Chief Ministers Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti.







metro, to curtail its pas-

tined himself at his resi-

dence for the next 14 days

from Saudi Arabia, where

he had gone to attend a

meeting on March 10.

sengers by 50 per cent.

SHORT TAKES

Man spreads fake

news, arrested

Bhubaneswar: Four persons, including three web-media journalists, were on Wednesday arrested on the charges of spreading misinformation and misleading messages on social media regarding coronavirus in different places of Odisha. As per reports, the four persons were arrested in Kendrapara on the charge of posting a false and misleading message in social media platforms regarding coronavirus.

Covid hits Railways hard

Hassan: Owing to fear of contracting Covid-19 (Novel Corona Virus), passengers opting for refunding after cancellation of their journey tickets by trains from South Western Railways, Mysuru division has gone up to ₹3.5 lakh a day from its earlier daily refund of ₹60,000 to ₹70,000 costing railways dearly. To make the matters worse for the Railways, apart from losing revenue from cancellation of bookings, even reservation bookings have also dipped drastically, says Railway officials while stating that trains from SWR connect to various parts of the country and there occupancy rate has been down. "Some trains record less than 20 per cent occupancy rate," said Divisional Manager of South Western Railways, Mysuru division Aparna Garg on Wednesday.

Israel condemns racist attack

Jerusalem: Israel on Wednesday condemned as deplorable and unacceptable the brutal racist attack on an Indian-origin Jew by two persons who called the victim a "Chinese" and yelled 'Corona! Corona' in Tiberias city. "The brutal attack on Am-Shalem Singson is deplorable and I condemn it in the strongest sense. This act of violence is totally unacceptable," Deputy Director General at Israel's Foreign Ministry Gilad Cohen tweeted. "To our Indian friends: This is not the Israeli way! I wish a speedy and full recovery," Cohen said. Am-Shalem Singson, 28, from the Bnei Menashe community, hailing from the northeastern states of Manipur and Mizoram, was admitted to the Poriya hospital with severe chest injuries last

Bird flu: 989 more birds killed

week

Maha count rises to 45; CBSE exams off

Prime Minister to address nation on Thursday evening; Suspected Covid patient ends life in New Delhi

VINEETA PANDEY | DC with agency inputs NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the school students. nation on Thursday The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) also postponed evening on the situation arising out of coronavirus outbreak and the efforts to combat it. "PM Shri @narendramodi will ongoing class 10, 12 examinations till March 31. "All ongoing CBSE examinaaddress the nation on 19th tions in India and abroad March 2020 at 8 pm, during postponed till March 31 which he will talk about and will be rescheduled thereafter... after an assessment of the situaissues relating to Covid-19 and the efforts to combat it," the PMO tweeted. tion." Anurag Tripathi said.

In another tweet, the PMO said Modi chaired a The ICSE board exams high-level meeting to review the ongoing efforts to contain Covid-19. "Ways for classes 10 and 12 have not been postponed, board chief executive and secreto further strengthen tary Gerry Arathoon said. India's preparedness were The discussed," it said. Exam

ARMY REPORTS ITS FIRST CASE; 10 SOLDIERS QUARANTINED

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

In first case of coronavirus in Indian Army, a jawan from Ladakh Scouts has tested positive for Covid-19.

Indian Army has quar-antined 10 soldiers at the Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre in Leh, after the jawan from the Centre tested positive for Covid-19. The Center has also been put under a lockdown.

The 34-year-old jawan's father had recently returned from Iran after a pilgrimage and was in quarantine.

a precaution, As Indian Army has postponed all courses starting from coming Monday. The courses which are in progress will continue with precautions. However, all non-essential training, conferences and move-ment of the Indian Army has been cancelled. It has asked Army personnel that all non-essential foreign travel must be avoided.

The jawan, who has tested positive for coronavirus had taken casual leave from February 25 till March 1 and had rejoined the Centre on March 2. His father had

With schools in almost IITs and engineering col- on Wednesday night, soon for private sector laboratoall states shut, the HRD leges was postponed. The exam was earlier schedministry decided to launch e-classes on Swayam Prabha DTH channels for Swayam

CBSE secretary

uled from April 5-11. Late on Wednesday evening, the authorities reported first confirmed Covid-19 case in Kashmir Valley. Government spokesman Rohit Kansal tweeted that the affected person is a resident of Srinagar's Khanyar area who had returned from abroad on Monday. He said that he has been put in isolation and surveillance has started in the 300 radius of his residence. A 35-year-old man sus-

pected to be infected with Covid-19 allegedly committed suicide by jumping off the seventh floor of the Joint Entrance Safdarjung Hospital buildfor admission to ing in the national capital

after he was admitted to the isolation facility by airport authorities, said the police.

Earlier, Union health minister Harsh Vardhan reviewed the preparedness of hospitals, availability of testing kits, personal pro-tective equipment, medi-cines and adequate isolation wards in view of the novel coronavirus, whose total number of cases in India has now risen to 151. One private diagnostic centre was given a licence to conduct tests while the applications of three more are under process after the government allowed the private sector to do Covid-

19 testing. A day after the health ministry issued guidelines

ries intending to initiate Covid-19 testing while appealing to them to do the tests free of cost, Swiss firm Roche Diagnostics India received a licence for conducting tests after approval from drug regulator DCGI.

The Drug Controller-General of India is also assessing giving a license to another private diagnostic firm, bioMérieux, which has also sought approval to conduct tests. Officials said two Indian diagnostic companies -Trivitron Healthcare and Mylab Discovery Solution — have also sought approval from DCGI for the coronavirus testing kits developed by them. On Wednesday, 14 fresh cases

reported from various parts of the country included one from the

134 are active cases under treatment, while 14 persons have been discharged from hospitals.

deaths so far. The positive cases include 25 foreign nationals.

The number of Covid-19 cases in Maharashtra increased to 45 on Wednesday. A 28-year-old woman from Pune, with a travel history to France and the Netherlands and a 21-year-old male from Pimpri Chinchwad, with travel history to Philippines, Singapore and Colombo, tested positive on Wednesday.

Moreover, a woman from Mumbai with travel histo-ry to the US and a 50-year-Indian Army. Out of the total number, old male from Ratnagiri, with a travel history to

Dubai, were found positive. The state government has also decided to work

There have been three with 50 per cent strength in the administration. It also urged public transport authorities, including the Railways, BEST and

Former Union minister and BJP MP Suresh Prabhu has self-quaranas a precautionary measure following his return



(Clockwise) Parliamentarians observe silence during an obituary reference in Rajya Sabha during the Budget Session of Parliament on Wednesday. A few MPs were seen wearing mask due to the Covid-19 scare. An official uses a thermal screening device on a devotee at Garh Ganesh Temple in Bikaner. A woman using hand sanitiser at the entrance of a shopping mall in Vaishali, Ghaziabad on Wednesday. Independent MP Navneet Ravi Rana (L) and BJP MP Himadri Singh sanitize their hands at Parliament. Four Trinamul Congress MPs came to the House wearing face masks. Seen here is TMC MP Mahua Moitra sanitizing her hands at Parliament. Trinamul Congress MP Sukhendu Sekhar Ray said on Wednesday that he has gone on home quarantine in wake of the coronavirus pandemic and would not take part in the rest of the Budget Session. _ PT

JUICE' LANDS

MAN IN POLICE

Mysuru: With confirmation of bird flu or Avian influenza or H5N1 in Mysuru, culling operation continued for the second day. On Wednesday, 13 Rapid action teams led by officers of Mysuru city corporation and department of animal husbandry and veterinary sciences killed 989 poultry birds including 304 broiler chicken, 20 pet birds, six turkey chickens and 499 native chickens. Mysuru DC Abhiram G. Shankar said. "After decapitation, all the birds are scientifically disposed of, by deep burial method with disinfection of the burial area."

LOANS UP TO ₹25K FOR BUYING ESSENTIAL ITEMS

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM MARCH 18

State Bankers Level Committee has recommended one year moratorium on all bank loans in Kerala. The recommendation was made at the subcommittee of the State Level Bankers Committee meeting here on Wednesday. The moratorium has been

proposed for 12 months beginning from January 31, 2020. Besides, the committee has also recommended disburse-

ment of loans for buying essential commodities.

Loans from ₹10,000 to ₹25,000 will be provided to people who are not having income due to the problems caused by Covid -19. SLBC convenor Ajith Krishnan who gave details of the decisions, said the moratorium will be applicable to people who have repaid loans without any delay till January 31. The facility will be provided only to those who make a request in this regard. Those availing the facility will have to pay higher interest. The Committee on Tuesday had responded positively to Kerala government's request for moratorium on all bank loans.

returned from Iran after pilgrimage by Air India flight on February 27 and was quarantined from February 29 at Heart Ladakh Foundation.

Even though soldier had rejoined from his leave but he was helping his family also during the quarantine period and was staying at Chuchot village for some time as well," said sources. The father of the jawan reported positive for Covid-19 on March 6 and he was isolated at Sonam Nurboo Memorial Hospital in Leh.

The soldier was also quarantined on March 7 and was detected to be positive on 16 March and was isolated at SNM Hospital. The sister of the soldier, his wife and two children are also quarantined at SNM Ĥeart Foundation.

An Army officer attached to the College of Military Engineering in Pune has been asked to self-quarantine after he showed symptoms of

Kolkata teen used mom's influence to skip screening

DC CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA, MARCH 18

The coronavirus scare has hit the heart of the Mamata Banerjee government — Nabanna, the state secretariat — as West Bengal home secretary Alapan Bando-pad-hyay went under "home isolation" along with his wife Sonali Chakrabarti Bandopadhyay, who is also vice-chancellor of

Calcutta University, from Wednesday within two days of his meeting with the bureaucrat mother of the state's first Covid-19 patient who had taken her son to the secretariat instead of admitting him to a hospital.

At least 10 more government employees, who were around them, are also in isolation at home. The development came a day after the Covid-19

retail outlets as they

feared it could result in

the spread of Covid–19.

the teenaged boy after his return from the UK. The Oxford University student was found to be deliberately ignoring advisories to get quarantined at a hospital by using his mother's influence.

Furious over his and his mother's callousness, CM Mamata Banerjee cautioned: "There is no space for the VIP or LIP. The rules to be followed in my home and yours are the same. Nothing can be more callous than roaming around with symp-toms like an irresponsible person which can infect others also. '

Landing at the Kolkata Airport on March 15, the 18-year-old boy, whose father is a doctor, skipped the "thermal screening" for Covid-19, giving the reference of his mother, a West Bengal Civil Service

virus was confirmed in (Executive) officer posted as a special secretary in the state home and hill affairs department at Nabanna, which also houses the CMO. He was then advised to visit the Infectious Diseases Hospital at Beliaghata for tests, but he did not, sources said.

Alerted by airport officials, the state health department contacted his mother and strongly recommended that she take her son to a hospital. On March 16, the woman bureaucrat took her son to M.R. Bangur Hospital, where he was examined in the deputy superintendent's office and was asked to take admission at

the ID Hospital. But, instead, his mother took her son in her office car to Nabanna, where she attended a meeting with Mr Bandopadhyay.

Huge chaos at Delhi airport

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

There was total chaos at Indira Gandhi International Airport here on Wednesday after passengers were not allowed to leave the airport premises without getting tested for novel coronavirus. Passengers posted videos on the social media to show the chaos

as they confronted security personnel after their passports were taken away after they had cleared immigration.

People were seen arguing with the airport police and some even shouting at them to "shoot us" as the police said they couldn't be allowed to go without medical checkups. Later, the government posted advisories and

CUSTODY guidelines in the public domain for all passengers to understand why each

Taking to Twitter, the Delhi airport issued an advisory asking people travelling from China, Iran, South Korea, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, UAE, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait to undergo compulsory quarantine for a

minimum of 14 days. Delhi airport also said after the medical checkup, all symptomatic passengers will be sent for isolation while the asymptomatic would be refereed to the state health team.

Among asymptomatic passengers, those with high risk will be sent for 14-day quarantine while the rest will be allowed to go home after counselling.

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, and every one has to be MARCH 18 tested on entering India.

The attempt to make some money in the name of coronavirus proved costly for a restaurant owner in Varkala in Fhiruvananthapuram district of Kerala.

The restaurant owner was arrested by police for putting up a board 'Anti Corona juice' avail-

The restaurant owner, who is a foreigner, was taken into custody for a brief period and issued strict warning against repeating such acts before being let off. The 60-year-old person of British origin has been running the restaurant 'Coffee Temple' for many years near.

The juice made of ginger, lemon, gooseberry was named as 'anti coro-na' drink. A glass of juice was priced at ₹150. Varkala which is an international tourist spot, had reported a Covid-19 positive case recently.

It may be recalled that an Italian tourist who stayed in a resort was tested positive. The tourist had visited various places in the town and reportedly attended a temple festival thus coming into close contact with a large number

of people. Officials said there was already scare among the people in the town due to Îtalian tourist irresponsible behavior.

The restaurant owner might have thought of cashing in on the fear prevailing among people over community spread.

MONEY | MATTERS Government is reluctant to close bars as it is a major source of state income Kerala not to shut bars, liquor retail outlets

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 18

However, the govern-Giving a major relief to ment has rejected the tipplers in Kerala in the demand and directed bar wake of Covid-19, the owners to take precaution-Kerala government has ary measures like increasdecided not to close bars, beer parlours and retail ing the gap between tables, sanitizing, disinfecting interiors of bars and keepoutlets even as the decision drew flak from docing alcohol-based hand tors' associations and antiwash.

The government is reluc-The Opposition parties, ndian Medical tant to close bars as it is a major source of income. Association and anti-During 2018-19 the governliquor campaign activists ment sold liquor worth had raised the demand for ₹14,504.67 cr. The total closing down bars, liquor sales registered an

rejected the demand and directed bar owners to take precautionary measures like increasing the gap between tables, sanitizing, disinfecting interiors of bars and keeping alcohol-based hand wash.

increase ₹1,567 crore as liquor worth ₹12,937 cr was sold in 2017-18. According to studies, 31 per cent males, 3 per cent women and 5 per cent rush at outlets, queues

below the age of 21 years consume liquor in Kerala. Over one lakh people are totally addicted to alcohol. Excise minister T.P. Ramakrishnan said shutting of bars and liquor outlets could cause more problems. "We all know what hap-

pened when arrack (local liquor) and bars were shut in Kerala," he said while indirectly referring to the hooch tragedy which claimed many lives and the increase in substance abuse. "We will cut down the

will be regulated complying with the instructions of health department," he added. However, the IMA state leadership said social distancing along state with hand washing is crucial for preventing the spread of virus. Closed environment in bars and air-conditioned rooms increase the possibility of virus transmission.

Anti-liquor activists say people coming to beer bars and liquor outlets belong to high risk group. There is no social distancing near cash and delivery counters. Many other

states and countries have shut bars and liquor vends. Kerala should also follow suit.

Kerala has 270 beverages outlets run by State Beverages Corporation, 36 outlets of Consumerfed, 570 bars and 365 beer and wine parlours.

Also, in view of the alert sounded by Indian Council for Medical Research on possible spurt in the cases in the coming days, the government has taken several measures to step up besides surveillance appealing to the people not to lower their guard.

liquor activists.

Indian



• The government has



Chronicle 19 MARCH 2020

Co-opt private sector in fight against Covid-19

Vorld Health Organisation is quite clear on how to contain the Covid-19 pandemic. The most effective way to prevent infections and save lives is breaking the chains of transmission, says its director-gen-eral Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "Once again, our message is: test, test, test," he said the other day, underlining the importance of testing. The Government of India and the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) seem to have taken a cue from the WHO advisory and moved fast to incorporate private labs to conduct Covid-19 tests as per the ICMR guidelines. It has allowed 73 private laboratories to take up the test other than the 52 that are in the government sector now, taking the total number of testing labs to 125. The test tests must be done free of cost, as per the ICMR advisory.

While the government move must be appreciated, one must keep in mind the fact that India continues to be one of the least tested among the 170 Covid-affected countries. As per ICMR data, a total of 12,351 samples from 11,461 indi-viduals have been tested as on March 18. This amounts to 8.95 tests per million population. True, the figure is improving: it was five per million population on March 13, but is woefully inadequate compared with the other nations such as Italy and South Korea who have four-figure numbers for the same. Only nations such as the United States, which have been roundly criticised for their inadequate response, have figures similar to that of India. The ICMR testing strategy, which was released on Tuesday, advises that all asymptomatic peo-ple who have undertaken international travel, all contacts of laboratory-confirmed positive cases and healthcare workers managing respiratory distress or severe acute respiratory illness should be tested only if they become symptomatic with fever, cough, difficulty in breathing and so on. It remains to be seen if limiting the tests to symptomatic people is a wise idea. It is suggested that one of the reasons why South Korea was able to limit the casualties to the minimum despite having the large number of affected people was that it went in for higher number of tests: it was 4,099 per million people as on March 9. The ICMR has said it reviews the situation frequently. The research body of the government must factor in the data available from such countries and revise the strategy accordingly.

The permission granted to private laboratories to test should be seen only as the first step to co-opt the sector into the fight that India is undertaking against Covid-19. This is not a challenge the government alone can take up; India must now prepare a plan to face the impending challenge, marshalling all the resources at the command of the government and the private sector. And enhancing testing facilities is only elementary. As the WHO chief said, we can-not stop this pandemic if we don't know who is infected.

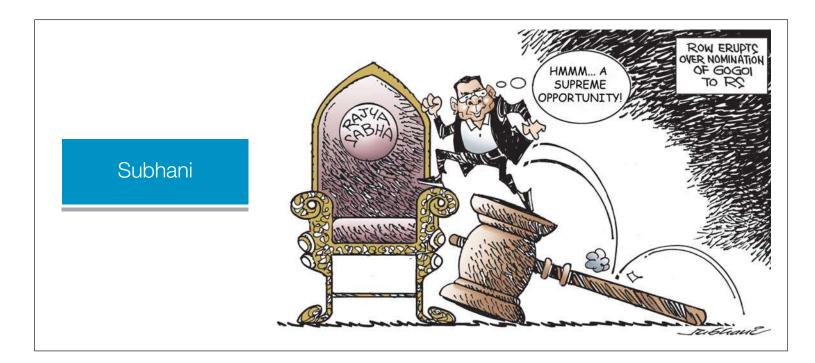
Call of the sea

hoy there, mates, give us your coordinates! It is a heady time for sol-diers, sailors and countrywomen as another of the last few remaining Amale bastions fall — close on the heels of granting permanent commission to women in the Indian Army in February, the Supreme Court on Tuesday extended permanent commission to women in all streams of the Navy, come bloody war or sickly season. It has directed the Centre to grant this career opportunity to short service commission female officers within three months, while also granting pension benefits to retired women officers not granted the same. The division bench headed by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, which also included Justice Ajay Rastogi, was hearing the Indian Navy's appeal challenging the 2015 verdict of the Delhi high court that cleared it in *Union of India & Ors vs Lt Cdr Annie Nagaraj & Ors.* Though it was the first of the three wings of the Indian armed forces to open up permanent commission to women – in 2008, it was granted to women in air

traffic control, education, law and logistics - while in 2017, three other streams -executive, electrical and engineering were opened up - the fact is that it does not allow women to be positioned on ships. But now the court has dismissed as flimsy the Centre's argument that the Russian-made vessels used in the Navy do not have facilities for women. It has dubbed it as one of "101 excuses" and observed that "women officers can sail as efficiently as men officers".

Indeed, even as there is debate on whether or not combat roles should be given to women, they actually serve in this role in the Air Force, which last year qualified its first women fighter pilots. Last year, too, Sub-Lieutenant Shivangi became the first woman pilot for the Indian Navy. Navy chief Adm. Karambir Singh had then himself pointed out that women naval officers already perform combat tasks, such as firing torpedoes and missiles at enemy warships while serving as observers and weapons systems officers on board maritime aircraft like the P-8I Poseidon.

Clearly, it is only "organisational issues" that were being used to deny women Navy officers equality, as senior advocate Aishwarya Bhati argued on behalf of Seema Chaudhary commissioned in the Indian Navy's Judge Advocate General branch in August 2007. Chaudhary was among the 17 female officers fighting this case. Bhati had also been the lawyer for Babita Puniya and other petitioners in the women Army officers' lawsuit. While the court was emphatic in stating that "to cast aspersions on the ability of women and their role and achievements in the army is an insult not only to women, but also to the Indian armed forces", let us pause a moment to acknowledge our dues to these individual doughty warriors.



Navigating uncertainty in time of coronavirus



et us face it.

There are no

certainties in the time of a

pandemic.

Perhaps the only thing one can say with confi-

dence is that while life

in the shadow of Covid-19 is tough for everyone,

the most vulnerable peo-

ple will suffer the most. In the United States,

where more than 100 people have already died, people are being asked to avoid large

crowds, stockpile shelf-

stable foods in case they

end up quarantined, and stay home from work and contact a doctor if

But many low-income

people can't afford to fol-

low such advice easily;

they are engaged in work that can't be done

remotely, and the major-

ity of low-income jobs don't offer paid sick

In India, the vast majority of people work

in the informal sector.

Millions are daily wage-

earners who don't get

paid sick leave.

they are ill.

days.

Patralekha Chatterjee **Dev 360**

cases

tests.

Covid-19.

Take

rashtra looks like the

The Indian Council of Medical Research says

there is no evidence that

"community transmis-sion" has taken place till

date. India is ramping up laboratory capacity and gearing up for more

This is the time to look at some of the prickly issues which will be key

to how India manages

strategies, for example. These include "social distancing" measures as

well as quarantine mea-sures — both at home and at the government's

isolation centres. These

are meant to check the

spread of the disease

among the community. But there are daunting

challenges here, and not

just of ensuring hand-

washing with soap on a

al reported instances of

mass scale.

There have

containment

Very few states have a public health system that inspires trust in the public. The quality of

hygiene in many quar-antine facilities leave much to be desired But fear and lack of trust can have devastating consequences for public health. Then, there is the issue

acute fear of social isola-

tion and stigma.

worst-affected state, fol-lowed by Kerala. The higher numbers could mean that these states of stigma. are doing a good job in diagnosing infected

Across the world, there been several have instances of racial slurs directed at people of Chinese origin just because Covid-19 originated in Wuhan, China. Prejudices are tum-bling out in India too. There have been several reported instances of people from the Northeast being harassed and called "Coronavirus".

It is vital to learn from the HIV and AIDS epi-demic and fight fear and stigma with solidarity. India has to improve its public health facilities drastically so that people are not terrified by the idea of being in isolation wards in govquarantine ernment facilities. Equally, we must

realise that people are unlikely to come forward to report symptoms if they do not trust the system or are afraid of being stigmatised.

re are th masks Fina

riers which impact sup

ply chains. "Not every nation produces the medical sup-plies needed to tackle the coronavirus. Those that do can still face shortages as health care systems come under pressure," pointed out Global Trade Alert, which monitors protec-

tionism Worldwide, there are 25 import or export restrictions on medical testing kits as of now. Nineteen relate to tariff increases," says Simon Evenett, professor of economics at the University of St Gallen, Switzerland, and Coordinator of Global Trade Alert.

Availability of testing kits is just one element of pandemic prepared-

"Community spread would involve older patients who are at higher risk. This would increase the demand for intensive care, including ventilators. The experience of Hubei and Lombardy regions provide an indication of the number of intensive care beds needed: roughly 10 per cent of the total numbers infected. Creating the facilities take time. The government may need to identify buildings, procure oxygen cylinders,

LETTERS **RS NOMINATION**

Quid pro quo is corruption in the system at its best. The BJP has given a gift for verdicts in Babri Masjid, Assam NRC, Rafale scam, etc in its favour. Probably people can now better understand the intentions behind so many verdicts of Justice Gogoi. It shows that every department in the system, even the Supreme Court, can be influenced.

Syed Maaz Razvi Hyderabad

A functioning republic is a gift to the nation by the Constitution mak-ers who build checks and balances. But its credibility is tested due to conduct of the powers of the day (Gogoi's RS nomination sends the wrong signal, DC, March 18). A Rajya Sabha member (that too a nominated one without voting rights) has no role to play. Justice Kurian Joseph was right in advis-ing against compromising the noble principles of independence

and impartiality of judiciary. Dr S.V. Rama Krishna Hvderabaa

CORONAVIRUS

When people are trying to keep the virus at bay, masks and hand sanitizers are vanishing from stores and medical shops. Thankfully, WHO has clarified that masks are not mandatory. However, some selfish citizens have stocked them and sellers are profiting by selling them in black market. These people are the real traitors and anti-nationals.

N. Nagarajan Hvderabad

Covid-19 has brought the world to a economy. People have cut down expenses and are taking up only essential work. Further, they are busy buying medicines to avoid Covid-19. In families, safety comes

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 n_0 for Covid-19, a new virus for which there is no

vaccine as yet. How do we navigate uncertainty and turbu-lence in the days to

come? One way is to recognise that the pandemic is exposing every society's weaknesses, be it in the developed or developing world. We must not fixate so much on "numbers" on a daily basis. Instead, it is vital to take a hard look at preparedness and contingency plans in every sphere and plan for the worst-case sce-

nario. How is India coping? The total number of officially confirmed officially novel coronavirus cases in India has crossed 138, out of which 114 are Indian nationals and 24 are foreigners. By the time this column is published, the figure would have shot up further in most likelihood. There have been three deaths in the country so far. At 39 cases, Maha-

people suspected of havcoronavirus the ing infection in the country running away from quarantine facilities. Éleven persons who were kept in isolation wards, and whose test results were awaited, fled from a Navi Mumbai hospital. In Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh, a man who had been admitted to the isolation ward of a hospital after he complained of fever and throat pain escaped through a window. He was intercepted and brought back. In an unusual move, the Maharashtra govern-ment has decided to "stamp" behind the left

palm of all persons who have been asked to be in "home quarantine" in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. All these incidents

point to several disturbing realities. Many people harbour grave doubts about the quality of healthcare in public hospitals and there is

critical issues of capacity and health security. The health authorities say the government is expanding the number of laboratories that can test patients for Covid-

But there are other issues relating to health infrastructure and testing kits. As of now, India has about 1.5 lakh testing kits. Government scientists say India has placed orders for a million more testing kits. In the time of Covid-19. it is important to bear in mind that there can be formal and informal bar-

India has to improve its public health facilities drastically so that people are not terrified by the idea of being in isolation wards in government quarantine facilities

ventilators and recruit personnel immediatepoints out Rajeev Sadanandan, former Kerala health secretary and currently CEO of the Tata Trust-funded first Health Systems Transformation Plat-

form (HSTP), in a recent article for the Observer Research Foundation 'This may at worst be a wasted effort. But if support is needed, and not provided, it could lead to avoidable deaths, loss of morale of health workers and anger in the community," adds Mr Sadanandan.

These are wise words from a man who worked closely with Kerala health minister Shailaja at the time of the Nipah outbreak. The world applauded Kerala for the way it handled Nipah.

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T.S.C. Mohan Secunderabad

3 bombs hurled at Chenna **Reddy's residence**

By a staff reporter HYDERABÂD, March 18 THREE country-made bombs were hurled at the house of Dr. M. Chenna Reddy, Chairman of the Telangana Praja Samithi, at Tarnaka in the early hours of today. However, the doctor and his family

members 50 YEARS AGO IN escaped unhurt. Chronicle

But, a driver, sleeping near the car in the portico was injured and the rear windscreen of the car was smashed. One bomb hit the window of the room in the ground floor and another hit the window of a room on the first floor where Dr. Chenna Reddy's son was sleeping. The third one fell in the portico.



Cartoonists have right to free speech

'm no fan of Steve Bell, the *Guardian* cartoonist. I can't say I've ever laughed at one of his squibs, which are witless and crude. Some would call him fearless', but he just seems cruel and over the top to me. When the *Guardian* finally puts him out to grass, which surely won't be long, he will disappear into the inkwell of history. But having said all that, I would defend to the death his right to produce his tasteless car-toons, as well as the right of his newspaper to publish them.

Last week, the Guardian printed a Steve Bell caricature of Priti Patel sitting next to Boris in the House of Commons that was widely condemned as "racist". The rea-son? He depicted her with horns on her head and a ring through her nose, which many saw as a derogatory reference to her Indian heritage. "This cartoon is offensive on every level," tweeted the British Tamil Conservatives. "It's anti-

Hindu. It portrays the Home Secretary, of Hindu origin, as a cow. A sacred symbol for Hindus. It's racist and misogynist. It's plainly unacceptable! It may constitute a hate crime."

That's complete nonsense, I'm afraid. The Tamils, along with thousands of other conservatives who claimed to be outraged by Bell's cartoon, are doing exactly what the left has been doing for the past 25 years, namely interpreting something in the worst possible light so they can pretend to be offended.

The fact is, Bell is not portraying Priti Patel as a cow, let alone a sacred one, but as a bull. After all, bulls have rings through their noses, cows do not. If you're in any doubt, Google "sacred cows". Admittedly, there are such things as sacred bulls in Hindu culture, but was that really Bell's intended reference? Drawing the Home Secretary as a bull makes sense, given the allegations made against her by members of the civil service, most of which boil down to saying she's aggressive and confrontational. Incidentally, I don't think she should be remotely ashamed of that. If I were her I'd buy the cartoon and give it pride of place in my downstairs loo.

But let's suppose Bell's critics are right and he is trying to depict Patel as a sacred cow. So what? Yes, many Hindus would find that offensive, but that's the price you pay for living in a free society. I'm sure tens of millions of Christians found Life of Brian offensive, but that's not a reason to pillory its creators or distributors. Effective satire is often extremely offensive. Indeed, it's hard to imagine a truly memorable piece of satire that isn't. As John Cleese once said: 'No one has the right not to be offended.

Some of those expressing disgust at Bell's cartoon have pointed out that the tribunes of the progressive left would be absolutely up in arms if a cartoonist for a right-of-centre paper depicted Diane Abbott or Dawn Butler in an equally unflattering way, including the *Guardian*. No doubt that's true, but the correct response in the face of such faux outrage is to reject it out of hand, not to embrace this censorious approach and apply it to our political opponents.

If we accept that some jokes or cartoons should be ruled out of bounds because someone, somewhere might find them offensive, then the other side has won. When faced with an "unacceptable" caricature of one of their own, conservatives should defend the cartoonist's right to free speech and tell anyone on their side who claims to be upset by it to grow a thicker skin. Steve Bell's cartoon is no more a "hate crime" than Amber Rudd's speech on immigration was at the 2017 Tory party conference.

No, the point worth making is the opposite one: to attack the *Guardian* for not standing up for free speech. In the week following the launch of the Free Speech Union — the membership organi-sation I've helped set up to defend free speech — the *Guardian* pub-lished a piece attacking it (and me) every day. According to their columnists, it's a political cause that only benefits male, pale and stale conservatives and therefore isn't worth defending.

Turns out, the speech rights of male, pale and stale socialists are also at risk. We don't generally do corporate memberships at the FSU, but I'm willing to make an exception for the *Guardian*. I've a feeling its journalists are going to need our protection as the left turns on itself and begins to purge the ideologically impure.

> By arrangement with the Spectator







How worried should we be about coronavirus?



o are we all going to die or is it going to fizzle out? In Naples the police drive along the streets with loudhailers, warning every-one to keep indoors; in Britain the government declines to close schools, call off sporting fixtures and persuade people out of the pub. Something feels not quite right: either there is huge overreaction or under-reaction to Covid-19. Britain's health secre-tary Matt Hancock has not helped calm fears by announcing that the government has been working on a worst-case scenario of 80 per cent of the population catching the virus and 500,000 dying from it.

It isn't easy for the scientists, either. In a fast-developing disease there is, inevitably, a shortage of up-to-date, peerreviewed studies to give you an accurate picture. But from s, what we do have so far, this is y- what we can tell about coronin avirus Covid-19.

Firstly, how many of its victims does it kill? You may well have heard the figure of 3.4 per cent reported over the past week or two. This came from an announcement by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and was widely reported as evidence that the disease is more deadly than previously imagined, given that previous estimates had put the mortality rate at one to two per cent. What the WHO was at pains to

explain was that the 3.4 per cent is simply the number of deaths divided by the number of reported cases, known as the Case Fatality Rate (CFR). What it doesn't do is account for the possibility that there may be many more people who have been infected with the virus who have gone unrecorded, most likely because their symptoms have been so mild that they have not sought treatment. Two studies have tried to esti-

mate how many infected peo-ple will go on to die from the disease. A team at Imperial College looked at the results of coronavirus tests performed on nearly 1,000 citizens who were flown to their home countries on repatriation flights from China, and used this to estimate the extent of underreporting of the virus in Hubei province. They were able to estimate an overall Infection Fatality Rate (IFR) of 0.9 per cent — with a range of uncertainty between 0.37 per cent and 2.9 per cent. The Institute for Disease Modelling, based in America's Washington state, performed the same exercise

The best guide we have to the virus' ability to spread is a study from the Shenzhen Centre for Disease Control and the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. It has not yet been peer-reviewed but has been pre-published.

and came up with a very similar number: an IFR of 0.94 per cent (with a range of uncertainty between (0.5 per cent and 4 per cent). The latter study also measured a sharply rising death rate with age.

But how likely are you to catch the disease in the first place? Is it remotely possible that 80 per cent of us will go down with it? The best guide we have to the virus' ability to spread is a study from the Shenzhen Centre for Disease Control and the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. It has not yet been peerreviewed but, thanks to the

importance of the subject, has been pre-published. It looked at a total of 1,286 people who were in close contact with coronavirus sufferers in Shenzhen, a city adjoining Hong Kong. The study found that 14.9 per cent of people who shared a room or apartment with a coronavirus sufferer went on to contract the infection themselves. Of those who had close contact with a sufferer outside the home, 9.6 per cent went on to become infected. There were, however, some missing results from the study. If these people were included, and assumed not to have contracted the virus, the infection rate fell to 11.2 per cent for people who shared households with an infected person and 6.6 per cent who had close contact outside the home. Children were found to have a slightly lower risk of picking up the infection, but not by much. They were, however, found to have less severe symptoms than adults.

Finally, how many people in the world are really infected with Covid-19? The WHO produces a daily situation report on the virus. The report for Tuesday, March 17, for example, showed that 179,112 globally have been confirmed as being infected, a rise of 11,526 on the day before. There are 81,116 confirmed cases in China, 8,320 in South Korea, a snowballing 27,980 cases in Italy and so on. But for reasons given above, this is likely to be only the tip of the iceberg, as many people who have contracted the disease will have such minor symptoms that they have not come into contact with healthcare services. Many might even be unaware they have the disease. Whether we can trust the data reported by China and certain other countries is another matter.

But two peer-reviewed studies have attempted to quantify the size of the iceberg itself. They did this by looking at the numbers of people who had travelled out of Hubei province by aircraft and gone on to spread the disease elsewhere. If, for example, it takes 5,000 plane passengers to travel between Wuhan and Bangkok before a case of Covid-19 pops

up in the latter city, that gives a clue to how many people in Wuhan might have the disease. A team at the University of Austin, Texas, for example, estimated the number of people likely to have been infected with Covid-19 in Wuhan by January 22 as 11,213 (with a range between 1,590 and 57,087). On that day, the WHO put the number of recorded cases in the whole of Hubei province at just 270. A University of Hong Kong study produced an estimate for the number of infected people in Wuhan on January 25 at 75,815 (range 37,304 to 130,330). On that day, the WHO put the number of reported cases in the whole of China at just 1.297. That is what evidence we

That is what evidence we have so far: an infection that is likely to be far more widespread than officially reported figures suggest, yet neither as contagious nor as deadly as many fear. You can decide yourself how worried you should be.

> By arrangement with the **Spectator**

Inadequacies in fighting coronavirus raise questions on Tokyo Olympics



Japan, a country prone to earthquakes, tsunamis and typhoons, is also known for its capacity to use advanced measures to counter disasters effectively. But the present coronavirus epidemic has undoubtedly created one of the most serious challenges to the Japanese government under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

The coronavirus could not have hit Japan at a more inappropriate time. Indeed, Mr Abe was expecting rosy days in 2020 for two reasons. First, it was he who took the initiative to host the Summer Olympics in Tokyo during July/August this year and he went all out to make it one of the most spectacular events of the decade. ernment is reported to have spent a whopping \$26 billion on the preparations of the games. Mr Abe believed that if the 1964 Tokyo Olympics had heralded the advent of a new Japan on the Asian scene, the 2020 mega event would demonstrate Japan's preeminence as an economic and technological giant striving to promote peace and harmony in the world. Though the Olympics are scheduled to be held only from the last week of July, coronavirus has already cast a shadow of doubt on the upcoming event. Many people have raised the question on whether it would be wise or practical to go ahead with the games when thousands of Japanese and foreigners are expected to gather in Tokyo. The key question they raise is: Can normalcy be restored and the virus contained in time before the commencement of the event? Second, the long-anticipated state visit to Japan by Chinese President Xi Jinping in April has already been postponed and no fresh dates for his visit have been announced so far. Sino-Japanese relations have shown strong signs of improvement in recent months. No Chinese President has made a state visit to Japan since 2008,

and in that sense, Mr Xi's visit would have been a significant landmark in their bilateral engagements. Both Mr Abe and Mr Xi were expected to redefine their bilateral relations in the light of the present favourable conditions and project a new vision of their partnership for the coming years. But considering the rapidly spreading coronavirus, both leaders decided to postpone Mr Xi's visit. The coronavirus has definitely deprived the two countries, at least for the time being, of a great opportunity to define the dawn of a new era.

At present, recording a total of more than 1,000 coronavirus cases, Japan ranks fifth among the most affected countries like China, Italy, South Korea and Iran The number of

and the virus soon spread among 3,700 crew members and passengers. Japan was caught unawares and not fully equipped to tackle the problem. There were reports of the absence of testing equipment and shortages of masks and toilet papers. Many believed that Mr Abe was too preoccupied with preparations for President Xi's visit to Japan to give adequate attention to the coronavirus issue. There was a realisation in Japan that its lack of

response to the coronavirus stemmed from two reasons. First, while Japan has the capacity and expertise to respond effectively to natural disasters, the same cannot be said about its measures to counter the spread of infectious diseases. Having failed to undertake proactive mea-sures in the initial stage, Mr Abe has now taken some strong steps. For instance, he ordered the closure of all schools until the end of March. He also enforced severe restrictions on the entry of thousands of Chinese and travellers. issued to 2.8 million Chinese and 17,000 South Koreans have been suspended. Chinese and Korean visitors will be asked to stay in separate and designated facilities like hotels. Entertainment and amusement centres theme parks have and closed down and people have refrained from going to hotels for family parties. Sports and music pro-grammes have been cancelled. But these measures also have had a strong negative impact on the economy. For instance, the nonentry of thousands of Chinese and Korean tourists in particular have seriously hurt the tourist industry. Tourists from China and South Korea accounted for nearly 50 per cent of all travellers to

devastating impact on the people. Such a declaration of emergency would also authorise prefectural governors to regulate people's activities. A bill to revise the existing laws has already been tabled before the Japanese Diet. As expected, some parties have objected to the bill on the grounds that it would violate people's rights and privacy. With a view to strike a compromise, Mr Abe has tried to mould a consensus on the issue by meeting with five major Opposition political parties. But Mr Âbe appears to have almost succeeded in convincing his rivals on the need for revising the existing laws.

Finally, the present coronavirus crisis has highlighted two major inadequacies in the Japanese system in fighting the spread of infectious diseases. The first one relates to financial limitations. In the current parliamentary debates on the issue, many lawmakers stressed the need for substantially increasing the financial and personnel strength of mstn Infectious Diseases (NIID) on the lines of the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It is reported that the draft budget allocated for NIID for the fiscal 2020 is only 6.4 billion yen, and its total staff is 348. On the contrary, in the US, the CDC is operating with a budget 200 times larger and a staff 40 times bigger. The second one relates to the absence of a centralised controlling agency with a swift response system. Until now, the Cabinet Secretariat has acted as the controlling agency tasked with spearheading measures to stop the spread of infection. But it has specialised in crisis management at times of large disasters like earthquakes. hijackings, terrorist bombings and missile threats. It lacks experience in undertaking counter-measures to control infections. In the current session of the Japanese Diet, there were demands that "We need to have a commanding organisation which specialises in infection control like the American Centre Disease Control for and Prevention".

Coronavirus: Now is a vulnerable time with Boris, Trump at helm



mid the multifarious known unknowns of the coronavirus epidemic, it is fascinating to see how many media outlets in the West are more focused on the tumbling stock markets than on the human toll.

Suddenly, socialism by any other name is the flavour of the day, as governments are impor-tuned to rescue floundering capitalist enterprises. And it doesn't end there. In certain particularly shameless ideological circles, there are arguments being made for exploiting the crisis as an opportunity to reinforce neoliberal economic structures with "reforms" relating to company tax cuts, labour market "flexibility", and even pension schemes.

- Which, if you think about it, might not be such a bad outcome. - Since last week,

Western central banks from the US to the EU, Britain and Australia have been deploying the tools at their disposal to stave off a market meltdown — thus far to little effect. The key indices remain in free fall as Covid-19 keeps spreading, with the epicentre shifting from Asia to

Europe. Like so many other aspects of the highly infectious disease, where it will spread next remains uncertain. The coronavirus thus far hasn't reached deep into Africa. Asia, of course, is a different story. The rate of infection

The rate of infection has been sharply declining in China, wherefrom

initial insouciance of the regime in Tehran is one factor in the unfolding tragedy, but Western primarily American sanctions are also taking a toll, not least by limit-

ing the nation's access to medical supplies. India and Pakistan have thus far got off pretty lightly, but there are no grounds for complacency. It's worth recalling that during the socalled Spanish flu pandemic that provided a horrific coda to the depredations of the First World War a little more than 100 years ago, western India (a united British colony at the time) accounted for up to 60 per cent of an estimated global death toll of at

least 50 million. The mortality rate of the Spanish flu has commonly been compared in recent weeks with that of the novel coronavirus currently confronting us, boiled down to a figure of 2.5 per cent. But it doesn't require a particu-larly mathematical mind to figure out that back in 1918, 50 million repreworld's population, rather than the one-third of humanity that is believed to have been infected. At present, the level of fatalities anyhow seems to vary widely from one country to another, with Iran faring much worse than South Korea, for instance, and Italy emerging as something of an outlier in Europe Amazingly, Italy appears to have been receiving more assistance from China and Cuba than from the EU. Meanwhile.

Jack Ma, the entrepreneur behind Alibaba and the richest man in Asia, has begun donating test kits to the US as well as other Western countries. It is particularly unfortunate that during a crisis such as this, a couple of the most vulnerable countries boast leaders such as Donald Trump and Boris Johnson. Given its National Health Service, Britain is not as badly off as the US, where a public health system is conspicuous by its absence.

A Harvard epidemiolo gist recently commented that he and his colleagues initially treated the Johnson govern-ment's faith in "herd immunity" — the hope that if enough people are exposed to the virus, they will in time develop immunity to it — as a spot of British satire. The idea of daily media briefings by the British Prime Minister is also not particularly reassuring. But it's no match for Trump's rapid evolution from "who cares?" to "everything is under isn't, with the US President himself this week advising state governors to fend for themselves in obtaining test kits. But then, he presides over a country whose denizens reportedly have been rushing out to stock up on assault weapons. Amid all the self-isolation, mandatory quarantining and social distancing, panic-buying toilet rolls would seem to be the safer option.

cases in Japan includes 706 people aboard the cruise ship *Diamond Princess* which was quarantined at Yokohama port. The epi-demic has so far claimed 12 lives, six of whom were connected with the cruise ship. According to reports, 27 out of the total of 47 prefectures have reported about the impact of the virus. Hokkaido accounts for the highest number of cases and the prefecture has declared a state of emergency. Other prefectures that have reported more than 30 cases are Kanagawa and Tokyo, Aiichi.

Aiichi. Many believe that when the epidemic started in January 2020, Mr Abe appeared to be rather slow in reacting to it. But in February, the situation became quite serious with the quarantining of the cruise ship *Diamond Princess* in Yokohama port

Shinzo Abe believed that if the 1964 Tokyo Olympics had heralded the advent of a new Japan on the Asian scene, the 2020 mega event would demonstrate Japan's pre-eminence as an economic and technological giant

Japan in 2019. Second, there is a strong realisation in Japan that the existing laws dealing with infectious diseases are not adequate to fight Covid-19, which is different from the earlier known infectious viruses. The Shinzo Abe government is now finding it necessary to enact a new law. If the law is enacted, it will give Mr Abe the power to enforce a state of emergency in certain areas in the country in order to cope with the rapidly spreading coronavirus that could have a

The writer is a distinguished fellow at the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi informed, is the way the world will rapidly return to a "growth path" after the looming global recession. The starkly exposed inadequacies of privatised healthcare are an unlikely topic in such forums, where Mammon is the star, sustained by a supporting cast not of human beings but "clients" and "consumers". And the very idea of extending corporate socialism to the rest of humanity is dismissed as a recipe for the end of the world as we know it.

sprang. South Korea, the next worst-hit nation, has been remarkably successful in keeping the fatality rate extremely low. Adhering to advice from the WHO has also paid off for Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore. Iran has been a different story altogether, with an alarming rate of fatalities relative to the numinfections, it's widely ber of although assumed that the actual rate of infections is considerably higher than the reported figures. The

By arrangement with **Dawn**

Saying 'Yes' and banking on God is a leap of faith



oday, Christians celebrate the feast of Saint Joseph just man, silent worker, ste-

adfast protector — also remembered on May 1, International

Nazareth — foster-father of Jesus

and legal spouse of Mary — was a carpenter. The poor "Holy Family" of Jesus, Mary and Joseph laboured through life's

Day. Joseph

of

Workers'

ups and downs with many "Yeses" to God. The Bible doesn't record even a single word Joseph uttered; yet, his silent "Yes" to God, Mary and Jesus,

spoke volumes. Through an angelic apparition he was first advised to accept pregnant virgin, Mary or Miriam — who Christians and Muslims believe conceived through the power of God's spirit — as his wife. Next, nes at Jesus' birth in the most trying of times, he was told to flee to Egypt with Mary and Jesus, to

escape the murderous designs of King Herod. He said "Yes". From Egypt, Joseph is told to return to Nazareth. The Bible says that he unfailingly protects his family and promotes Jesus' growth "in wisdom, in stature,

and in favour with God and other people." Heroically, through toils, trials and travels he banks on God, becoming patron-saint of parents, workers and protectors. In a world wherein we

In a world wherein we often say "No" to newness, to change, to love and serve selflessly, why don't we say "Yes" more frequently?

Francis Gonsalves is a professor of theology. He can be contacted at fragons@gmail.com

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Resolving Disputes by Instilling Trust Disputes Solutions Soluti



IN BRIEF

4 Pak armymen, 7 ultras killed

Peshawar: Four Pakistan Army personnel, including an officer, and seven terror ists were killed in an exchange of fire on Wednesday after security forces conducted an intelli gence-based operation in northwest Pakistan, the army said. Acting on a tip-off, security forces launched the operation in Datta Khel area of North Waziristan district bordering Afghanistan. In the intense exchange of fire, seven terrorists and four army personnel soldiers including an officer of Lieutenant rank, were killed, the army said in a press statement. The officer was identified as Agha Muqaddas Ali Khan

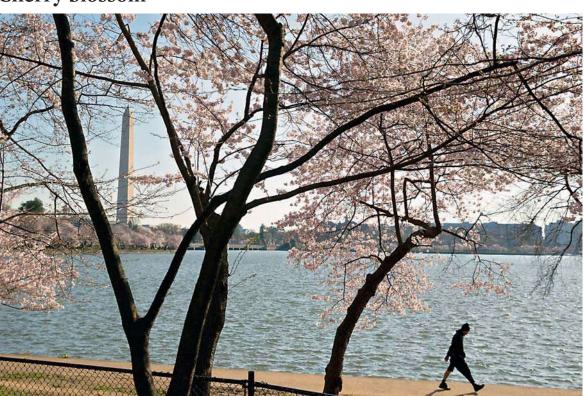
St. Patrick's Day: 1 dead in shooting

Corpus Christi (US): One woman was killed and another injured in a shooting on St. patrick's Day at an Irish pub in southeast Texas authorities said. The shooting happened Tuesday night at Molly's Irish Sports Pub in Corpus Christi and a suspect is in custody, police spokesman Travis Pace said. When officers arrived, they found one woman dead and another who had been shot in the torso, the Corpus Christi Caller Times reported. Police interviewed witnesses and identified a suspect, who was later arrested after a brief foot chase, Pace said. The suspect's name was not immediately released but Pace said that person will likely face charges of murder and aggravated assault. Pace said the investigation was ongoing but "it's not a random act of violence.'

US court stays Texas execution

Washington: A US court has ordered a 60-day stay of an execution scheduled for Wednesday in Texas because of the novel coronavirus. A Texas court rejected John Hummel's appeals arguments on Monday, but in the end still granted him relief "We have also determined that the execution should be stayed in light of the current health crisis and the enormous resources needed to address the execution," the ruling said. Hummel, 44, was sentenced to the death penalty for the 2009 killings of his pregnant wife, their five-year-old daughter and his father-in-law. He was scheduled to receive a letha

Cherry blossom



The Washington Monument is visible behind a man walking along an almost empty Tidal Basin lined with cherry blossoms that are about to peak, on Wednesday, – AFP

Iraq's Shiite parties line up to oppose new PM-designate

Baghdad, March 18 Iraq's typically divided Shiite political parties lined up on Wednesday to signal their opposition to premier-designate Adnan al-Zurfi, less than 24 hours after his nomination. The 54-year-old lawmak-

er and former Najaf governor was nominated Tuesday to be Iraq's new Adnan al-Zurfi prime minister, the second attempt to replace outgo-ing premier Adel Abdel Mahdi this year.

Zurfi has 30 days to form a cabinet, which must earn a vote of confidence from iraq's 329-member parliament. But several Shiite blocs have already signalled their displeasure with the way Zurfi was selected.

On Wednesday, the State of Law coalition, led by exprime minister Nuri al-Maliki, and lawmakers linked to the relatively



moderate cleric Ammar said al-Hakim thev opposed the president's unilateral selection of the

prime minister. President Barham Saleh, they insisted, should have referred to parliament's largest bloc to select a nominee. The powerful Fatah bloc, the political arm of the Hashed al-Shaabi military network, had also slammed Zurfi's nomination as unconstitutional. Along with some smaller parties. those

already signalled their dis-

opposed could add up to more than 100 lawmakers voting against a Zurfi-led cabinet.

One key Shiite leader, cleric Moqtada Sadr, said Wednesday he would not announce a position on Zurfi's nomination. Kurdish and Sunni blocs, meanwhile, will likely be supportive of the candidate. Zurfi was a longtime member of the Dawa party, the historic opposition force to dictator Saddam Hussein, who was ousted in a 2003 US-led invasion. A dual US-Iraqi national,

Zurfi spent roughly a decade in the United States and returned after the invasion to serve as governor of his native city of Najaf under the USdominated occupying for-ce. Respected as a statesman focused on improving public services and security, many hope he could shelter Iraq from spiralling tensions between Tehran and Washington.

In his first public statement late Tuesday, Zurfi pledged to hold elections within a year of forming his cabinet and vowed to respond to the demands of protesters hitting the streets for months over government graft and inefficiency. He also promised to improve security in the country, which has seen more than two dozen rocket attacks targeting foreign installations since late October. -AFP

NEW ZEALAND DECRIMINALISES **ABORTION**

Biden sweeps three US states

1,991 votes needed to clinch Dem candidature

Washington, March 18: Former vice president Joe Biden has claimed victory over rival Bernie Sanders by sweeping three key primaries in Florida, Illinois and Arizona, inching closer in the race to become the presumptive Democratic presidential nomi-nee to face US President Trump in November's election. Biden, 77, won the three primaries with an impressive margin, trouncing Vermont Senator Sanders, 78, to become the Democratic party's presidential nominee.

Whereas Ohio, which was supposed to hold a primary on Tuesday, post-poned it due to the coron-avirus pandemic. As of Tuesday, Biden had 1,121 pledged delegate in his kitty with Sanders trailing behind with 839 delegates

Either of the two presi-dential aspirants need 1,991 of the 3,979 pledged delegates to win the nomi-nation during the Democratic National Convention in Wisconsin in July. In his speech, Biden laid out his vision for America, call on Americans to come together to address this global health pandemic, and describe how we will come out of the crisis

stronger as one nation. Biden spoke from his home in Delaware keep-ing the guidelines of avoiding a gathering of 10 or more people. He urged supporters of the Sanders campaign to join him. Commending the remarkable passion and tenacity of Sanders' supporters, he said that they have shifted the fundamental conver-

"I hear you. I know what's at stake. I know what we have to do," Biden said in an impressive speech. "This is over. It's over. The election is over tonight. I think that is very clear," former US president Barack Obama's adviser David Axelrod said.

In his brief address, Biden said that tackling this pandemic is a national emergency akin to fighting a war. It will require leadership and cooperation from every level of government. "It will require us to move thoug-



Democratic presidential candidate and former vice president Joe Biden gestures as he speaks during a campaign rally in Detroit.

Trump is tentative Rep. Prez nominee

Washington, March 18: US President Donald Trump has become the Republican party's pre-sumptive presidential nominee after his home state of Florida awarded him with enough numbers to cross the pledged delegate threshold.

As per the national delegate count, Trump on Tuesday had 1,330 pledged delegates in his kitty. A Republican presidential aspirant needs 1,276 of the total 2,550 pledged dele-gates. A formal nomination would be announced at the Republican National Convention in August. Trump's campaign in a statement said that the

The primary season saw him shatter records for vote totals and vote percentages. With Florida's 122 delegates awarded to the President, he has 1,330 delegates, above the 1,276 needed to win the nomina-tion. "The Republican Party is more unified and energized than ever before and it's because of President Trump's leadership and clear record of

of Florida put him above the delegate threshold to

become the presumed 2020

Republican nominee for

president.

accomplishment on behalf of all Americans," said Brad Parscale, Trump's 2020 campaign manager — PTI primary in his home state manager.

Sanders to assess campaign after loss

paign

Washington, March 18: ering his options as more Leftist Bernie Sanders states postponed their pri-Leftist Bernie Sanders was under fresh pressure Wednesday to bow out of the race for the Democratic White House nomination after losing the three latest primaries in contests hobbled by the coronavirus pandemic.

Political moderate Joe Biden swept all three of Tuesday's contests, build-ing a solid lead in delegates to the party's July nominating convention as Democratic voters appeared to coalesce around him as the best chance to defeat President Donald Trump in November. Sanders, once the race's frontrunner, was consid-

the weekend, with people

allowed out of their homes only to buy food,

medicine or to go to work

if they can not do so from

- AFP

home.

with supporters to assess his campaign." Biden handily trounced Sanders in each of Tue

mary votes amid a nation-

shutdown for the COVID-19 emergency.

manager Faiz

"The next primary con-

test is at least three weeks

away," said Sanders' cam-

Shakir in a statement.

be having conversations

Sen. Sanders is going to

injection at a prison in Huntsville, Texas. Like every execution, Hummel's would

involve many people prison guards, lawyers, witnesses, his family and that of the victims - to be present, at a time when health authorities have warned against large gatherings in order to stop the spread of virus.

PROBABILITY **EXPERTS WIN ABEL MATHS**

Oslo, March 18: The Abel Prize for mathematics was on Wednesday awarded to Israeli-American Hillel Furstenberg and Russian-born Gregory Margulis, both probability exp erts, the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters said

The pair were honoured "for pioneering the use of methods from probability and dynamics in group theory, number theo-ry and combinatorics," the Academy said in a statement. Furstenberg, 84, is affiliated

with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, while Margulis, a decade younger, is at Yale University. Furstenberg and Margulis invented so-called random walk techniques, or a path consisting of a succession of random steps. The study of random walks is a central branch of probability theory.

The pair used the technique "to investigate mathematical objects such as groups and graphs, and in so doing introduced probabilistic methods to solve many open problems," the statement said.

Their work "has opened up a wealth of new results" in diverse areas of mathematics and "brought down the traditional wall between pure and applied mathematics". Born in Berlin, Furstenberg and his Jewish family fled Nazi Germany for the US just before the start of World War II.

After starting his career at top universities like Princeton and MIT, he left the United States for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1965 and stayed there until his retirement in 2003.

Russia behind Turkish

Washington, March 18: that Assad's rundown air The United States for the first time held Russia force could effectively hit Turkish forces but until responsible for the deaths now the United States had of dozens of Turkish steered clear of blaming troops in Syria as it vowed Russia, mindful of official accountability. An airstrike last month

to crush rebels.

said.

statements by Ankara. After the killings, Turkey killed dozens of Syrian government troops in the Idlib region killed 34 Turkish soldiers, as retaliation but Pres-ident Recep Tayyip Erdalthough Ankara blamed Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and reached a ogan flew to Moscow to negotiate a ceasefire with his counterpart Vladimir new ceasefire deal with Moscow. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, announcing new sanc-tions on Syrian officials Putin that includes joint Russian-Turkish patrols. Idlib has been the last on Tuesday, placed blame battleground major between Assad's forces against jihadists and their on Russia, which along with Iran has backed Assad in his bloody quest rebel allies, who are backed by Turkey. The offensive launched in "We believe Russia has killed dozens of Turkish December caused a new military personnel in the course of their military operation," Pompeo told humanitarian crisis in Syria's brutal nine-year

civil war with close to one million people fleeing in reporters, without naming a specific incident. the dead of winter. Pompeo announced new "We stand with our NATO ally Turkey and will consanctions against Syrian Defense Minister Ali Ayoub, accusing him of sider additional measures that support Turkey at the destroying an earlier truce through the offenend of the violence," he Analysts widely doubted sive. -AFP

US NAMES I.S. **CHIEF ON TERROR BLACKLIST**

Washington, March 18: The US has placed the new ISIS leader on its blacklist of terrorists, naming him as Amir Mohammed Abdul Rahman al-Mawli. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that al-Mawli was named the group's leader after an October raid by US commandos killed its chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The organization had

earlier named Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Quraishi as its new head, but US officials acknowledged they knew little about him — and later came to believe that ISIS was using his nom de guerre.

Al-Mawli "was previous-ly active in al-Qaeda in Iraq and is known for torturing innocent Yazidi religious minorities, Pompeo said. — AFI -AFP

Wellington, March 18: New Zealand's parlia-ment voted Wednesday to decriminalise abortion, in a move Justice Minister Andrew Little said modernised legislation and gave women control over their bodies. Despite its progressive reputation, New Zealand had until now maintained abortion as an offence under the 1961 Crimes Act, with jail terms of up to 14 years for those who procured a termination.

While the law was never enforced and women who underwent abortions were not liable for prosecution, Little said the change was needed. "From now abortions will be rightly treated as a health issue," he said in a statement. "The previous law required a woman seeking an abortion to go through many hoops. The changes agreed to

by parliament will better ensure women get advice and treatment in a more timely way. $-A\check{F}P$

httully and decisively to quickly address both the public health crisis and the economic crisis we're in. It will require us to pay attention to the medical and scientific and health -PTIexperts".

sday's battlegrounds. In the biggest prize of Florida, the 77-year-old former vice president grab bed 62 per cent of the vote against 23 per cent for 78year-old Sanders.

Spanish royals cancel US visit

Madrid, March 18: Spain's King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia can-celled Wednesday a planned visit to the United States on April 21 Spanish royal couple in the United States in the future, the statement added. Spain is the fourth hardest-hit nation in the United States on April 21 world by the coronavirus where they were due to meet with US President pandemic, with over 13,700 confirmed cases as of Wednesday and the number of deaths rising Donald Trump due to the coronavirus outbreak. The royal palace said in to almost 600. a statement that the goal The nation of around 46 was to allow "the United States and Spain to conmillion people is on a near total lockdown since

tinue to dedicate all of their resources and atten-tion to the response to COVID-19.' Trump and his wife Melania hope to host the

Gulnara Karimova

UZBEKISTAN EX-LEADER'S DAUGHTER JAILED

Tashkent, March 18: A court in Uzbekistan on Wednesday sentenced the daughter of the country's late longtime leader Islam Karimov to more than 13 years in prison for extortion and embezzlement.

Gulnara Karimova, the 47-year-old daughter of Islåm Karimov, who died in 2016, is a former diplomat and pop star whose legal problems began in 2014 as rumours spread that she could become

her father's successor. In a closed-door session, a court in the Uzbek capital Tashkent convicted Karimova of fraud and sentenced her to 13 years and four months in jail.

The court said it found Karimova guilty of extortion and embezzle-ment among other crimes. It did not say what activities led to the charges she was convicted of.

It was the latest case against Karimova, who had already begun serving time for earlier sentences. -AFP

NEW | STUDY When we sleep, the brain cells that hold onto a particular memory reactivates Scents can alter how our brain processes

Boston, March 18: Scents can alter how memories are processed in the brain, according to a study that suggests odours may be used to treat memoryrelated mood disorders. The traditional theory

suggests that our memories start out being processed by a small, horseshoe-shaped brain area called the hippocampus, which infuses them with rich details, noted the researchers from Boston University in the US. Over time, especially

Steve Ramirez, senior when we sleep, the set of author of the study pubbrain cells that holds onto lished in Learning and a particular memory reac-Memory.

tivates and reorganises. The researchers created The memory then becomes processed by the fear memories in mice by giving them a series of harmless but startling electric shocks inside a front of the brain — the prefrontal cortex — instead of the hippocam-pus, and many of the details become lost in the special container. During the shocks, half of the mice were exposed to the shuffle, the researchers scent of almond extract, said. "If odour could be used while the other half were not exposed to any scent. The next day, the researchers returned the to elicit the rich recollection of a memory — even of a traumatic experience mice to the same container - we could take advantage to prompt them to recall of that (therapeutically)," said assistant professor their newly formed memories. Once again, the mice in the odour group got a whiff of almond extract during their session, while

the no-odour group was

not exposed to any scent However, this time neither group received any new electric shocks.

Consistent with the systems consolidation theory, both groups exhibited significant activation of the hippocampus during this early recall session, indi-cating they remembered receiving the shocks from the day before.

During the next recall session 20 days later, the researchers found that in the no-odour group, processing of the fear memory had shifted to the prefrontal cortex as expected.

Picture for representation only -PTI



soldiers' deaths: Pompeo

pg 13

IRANIAN WOMAN

MAKES RECOVERY

Tehran, March 18: A 103-year-old woman in Iran

has recovered after being

infected with the new Co

vid-19, state media report-

ed, despite overwhelming

evidence the elderly are most at risk from the dise-

ase. The unnamed woman

had been hospitalised in the central city of Semnan

for about a week. IRNA

news agency said. But she was "discharged after ma-

king a complete recove-

ry", Semnan University of

Medical Sciences head

Navid Danayi was quoted as saying by IRNA late Tuesday. — AFP

IN BRIEF

850M students not at school: Unesco

Paris: More than 850 million young people, or nearly half the world's student population, are barred from their school and university grounds because of the Covid-19 pandemic, UNESCO said Wednesday. Calling it an "unprecedented challenge" for education, UNESCO said schools had been closed in 102 countries. with partial closures in 11 more – and there would be more closures.

Italy struggles to make room

Brescia: Three weeks into Italy's Covid-19 crisis, Dr. Sergio Cattaneo has seen an unused ward outfitted into an intensive care unit in six days, a hospital laundry room converted into a giant stretcher-filled waiting room and a tented field hospital erected outside to test possible new virus patients. "If the spreading of this epidemic is not put under control, it will bring all hospitals to their knees." Cattaneo's new ICU added six more beds to the hospital.

Medical system troubled: Kim

Seoul: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un acknowledged that his country lacks modern medical facilities and called for urgent improvements, state media said Wednesday, in a rare assessment of the North's health care system that comes amid worries about the Covid-19 in the impoverished country. Outside experts say a Covid-19 epidemic in the North could be devastating due its chronic lack of medical supplies and outdated health care infrastructure. He made the comments during a ceremony marking the start of construction on a new hospital.

Pakistanis decry squalid camp

Lahore: Hundreds of Pakistanis who returned home from a pilgrimage to Iran are stuck in filthy Covid-19 quarantine camps with limited medical care, and fear squalid conditions are helping spread the virus. Residents of Taftan camp with Iran said the facility lacks running water or flushable toilets, with detainees only able to wash every few days. Government figures show half of the 241 confirmed cases of novel Covid-19 in Pakistan are in people who went on the countries hardest-hit by the disease. "I have been using the same mask for over seven days now," one quarantined pilgrim said. "If I didn't have the virus when I first got here. I wouldn't be surprised to find out that I have it now."

2,00,000 hit; Europe shuts borders

Covid controls lead to traffic jams, slow passage of vehicles carrying critical supplies

Berlin, March 18: Desp erate travellers choked European border crossings on Wednesday after natio ns implemented strict controls in an attempt to slow the spread of the Covid-19 virus, creating traffic jams miles long and slowing the passage of trucks carrying critical supplies. The number of people

infected worldwide crested the 200,000 mark and deaths topped 8,000, with the number of people now recovered at more than 82.000. according to a tally kept by Johns Hopkins University. In an attempt to alleviate some of the pressure from eastern Europeans stuck in Austria trying to return home. Hungary overnight opened its borders in phases. Bulgarians were first allowed to cross in carefully controlled convoys, then

Romanians had a turn. But by early Wednesday on the Austrian side of the border, trucks were backed up for 28 kilometres and cars for 14 kilometres as rules allowing only Hungarians or transport trucks through the country's bor-

ders kicked back in. European Union leaders have been working on how to make sure that food, medical supplies and other essential goods keep flowing but so far borders have been clogged. Looking ahead, they're also trying to figure out ways to allow seasonal agricultural workers, needed to keep the production of food going, to travel back and forth across essentially closed borders. Nations around the wo-rld were facing the same issues, with the US and Canada working on a mutual ban on nonessential travel between the two countries. In Southeast Asia, the ca-useway between Malaysia and the financial hub of Singapore was eerily quiet after Malaysia shut its borders, while the Philippines backed down on an order giving foreigners 72 hours to leave from a large part

of its main island. President Donald Trump's administration was considering a plan to immed-iately return to Mexico all people who cross America's southern border illega lly, according to two officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity beca-use the plan hasn't been finalised. In far-flung Hawaii, the governor encouraged travellers to postpone their island vacations for while the governor of Nevada — home to Las Vegas ordered a monthlong closure of the state's casinos. Worried about the economic fallout of the glob-al shutdown, the US, Britain and the Netherlands announced rescue packages totalling hundreds of billions of dollars. German Chancellor Angela Merkel said European leaders agreed in a conference call to the commission's proposal for an entry ban to the bloc along with Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Britain — with "very, very limited exceptions". Germany will implement the decision immediately. But so far. European Union efforts to smooth the transition have failed. -AP



Polish border authorities conducted strenuous health checks before allowing people to return in an attempt to fight the spread of the novel Covid-19.

Prince Harry taking 'measures' **'WARTIME' SCENE London, March 18:** Brit-ain's Queen Elizabeth II's grandson Prince Harry is **PANIC-STRICKEN INDIAN STUDENTS IN UK DESPERATE TO GET HOME**

London, March 18: Indi-

an students in the UK are

monarch, who turns 94

next month, was to host a

series of garden parties

and Easter related events

but will now spend time

indoors in Windsor, south-

east England, in consultat-

ion with her medical expe-

said to be taking "appropr-iate measures" after he was seen hugging Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton at an event in the UK earlier this month before flying out to join wife Meghan Markle and son Archie in Canada.

Hamilton was pictured with British actor Idris Elba and Sophie Trudeau, the wife of the Canadian Prime Minister — both of whom have since tested positive for Covid-19.

In another development, the Queen has cancelled all her appointments for the next few months and is set to leave Buckingham Palace in London on Thursday to be based at Windsor Castle for an extended period of time amid the Covid-19 pandemic outbre-ak which has claimed 71

COVID SCOURGE ACROSS WORLD

Mexico City borough has announced that | • "We don't know exactly how long this is Latin America's most famous re-enactment of the crucifixion of Christ will be closed to the public for the first time in 177 years to prevent the spread of Covid-19

desperate to return to Ind-ia and have flooded the Intry and calm some of the panic among the students, dian High Commission many of whom are on vishere with queries about as that are close to expiry when they are likely to get and others who simply back home and be with thwant to be with their loveir families, as New Delhi ed ones as all face-to-face bans travellers from Britclasses begin to be cancelain starting on Wednesdled. Many were booked on ay due to the fast-spreadflights later this month ing Covid-19 pandemic. but are now stranded at le-Universities and student ast until March 31. — *PTI* lives in the country. The

associations in the UK are

putting out advisories to

rts and the UK government. Her regular "audienc-' with PM Boris Johnson are to continue but as a "sensible precaution and for practical reasons", a number of other changes are being made to the rest of her diary. -PTI

IN UK AS 71 DIE OF CONTAGION

London, March 18: The UK must act like a "wartime" government and do whatever it takes to support the country's economy, Prime Minster Boris Johnson said as Britain's death toll from the Covid-19 rose to 71 and the number of cases stand at nearly 2,000. The cases exploded by 407 to 1,950 on Monday, the biggest daily rise. "We must act like any wartime government and do whatever it takes to support our economy," he said. Opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn urged the government to suspend home rental fees and ban evictions of tenants during the Cov-id-19 crisis. -PTI

147: Iran's biggest jump in fatalities **103-YEAR-OLD**

Tehran, March 18: Iran reported its single biggest jump in deaths from the new Covid-19 on Wednesday as another 147 people died, raising the country's overall death toll to 1,135. The nearly 15 per cent spike in deaths — amid a tot-al of 17,361 confirmed cases in Iran — marks the biggest 24-hour rise in fatalities since officials first acknowledged virus cases in

Iran mid-February. Still, even as the number of cases continues to grow, food markets were still packed with shoppers on Wednesday and highways crowded with traffic as fami-lies travelled between cities ahead of the Persian New Year, Nowruz, on Friday. Iran's deputy health minister Alireza Raisi urged the public to avoid travel and crowded places. He told Iranians the coming period represented two golden weeks" to try curb the virus from spreading. He criticised people for not adhering to the warnings to stay home, saying the virus is very serious. 'This is not a good situation at all," he said. Iran's President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday defended

criticism that officials acted too slowly and may have even covered up initi al cases before infections rapidly spread across the country. In a speech to his Cabinet, Rouhani said the government was "straightforward" with the nation saying it announced the his government's response outbreak as soon as it learto the Covid-19 outbreak in ned about it on February the face of of widespread

ing our northern border

with Canada," Mr Trump tweeted. He said trade

Both countries had alre

ady issued sweeping travel

bans but had maintained

exemptions for each other.

Canada relies on the US for approximately 75% of

-Agencies

would not be affected.

its exports.

USA-CANADA BORDER TO BE SHUT

Washington, March 18: US President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau have agreed to close the US-Canada border to all non-essential travel in an attempt to curb the spread of Covid-19. "We will be, by mutual

consent, temporarily clos-

France reports 27 fresh deaths

Paris, March 18: French health authorities have said that 27 more people had died from the Covid-19 in the country, bringing death toll in Fran he total

ce to 175 people. There are

now 7,730 confirmed cases

RUSSIA ANNOUNCED Covid-19 cases jumped almost 29 per cent overnight to 147 despite the Kremlin imposing



quickly.

POPE URGES HUGS TO FIGHT OFF ISOLATION

Vatican City, March 18: Pope Francis stressed Wednesday the importance of families and friends making small gestures such as hugs and phone calls during times of isolation in a pandemic. "We must rediscover the concrete nature of small things, of making small gestures toward those around us — family, friends," the 83-yearold pontiff told the *La Repubblica* newspaper.

They are gestures of tenderness, of affection, of compassion, which are nonetheless decisive and important — for example, a hot dish, a caress, a hug, a phone call." Italian rules instruct everyone to keep one metre (three feet) apart while in public but say nothing about what people can do at home. Most business have been closed and public events cancelled since last week.

Italian streets stand deserted except for the few who go out shopping or walk their dogs. The Argentine-born Pope has made no secret of his own discomfort at having to communicate with the world's 1.3 billion Catholics via livestream. The Vatican's Saint Peter's Square has also been sealed off

He complained of feeling like he was sitting in a "cage" this month while delivering his first Sunday Angelus Prayer into a camera instead of out of his Vatican window facing thousands of faithful. Italy was the first country in Europe to be seriously hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. Its 2,503 official Covid-19 deaths account for more than half of those reported outside China.

I think that all of us who are not experts initially single confirmed case for the second consecutive underestimated the Covid-19. day on Tuesday even as 11 But now it is clear that this is people died of the deadly disease in the country, taka virus that will keep us busy ing the toll to 3,237, health for a long time yet. officials said on Wednes-- URSULA VON DER LEYEN

day. Wuhan had reported a President, European single confirmed case on Monday as China began Commission

Rio de Janeiro's Christ the Redeemer statue, which last year saw almost 2 million visitors, closed at day-end Tuesday and won't reopen for at least a week.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Oureshi said on Wednesday that he will self-isolate for five days after his recent trip to China as a precautionary measure to limit the spread of the deadly Covid-19 that has infected 249 people in the country. months," said Canadian PM Justin Trudeau. Bangladesh reported its first death while four new infections were detected, taking

case tally in the country to 14. A summit of European Union leaders scheduled for next week will be held by videoconference because of Covid-19.

• The number of people infected by Covid-19 in Spain soared past 13,700 with the number of deaths rising to almost 600, government data showed.

Sri Lanka on Wednesday imposed a curfew in the Western coastal areas

EPIDEMIC CLAIMS 11 MORE LIVES IN CHINA AS WUHAN HAS SINGLE CASE

Beijing, March 18: The phased withdrawal of thoepicentre of the novel usands of medical person-Covid-19 outbreak Wuhan nel deployed in the hardcity in China reported a hit Hubei province.

For the second day on Tuesday, the city reported only one new confirmed case. China's National Health Commission (NHC) said 11 new deaths and 13 new confirmed cases of novel Covid-19 infection were reported in the country on Tuesday. -PTItry on Tuesday.

STEALING INFO

Washington, March 18: China is engaged in a dis-information campaign to shift its responsibility in the spread of the Covid-19, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has alleged. "Now is not the time for recrimination. Now is the

time to solve this global pandemic and work to take down risks to Americans and people all across the world," he told reporters on Tuesday.



"There will come a day when we will go evaluate how the entire world responded. We know that the first government to be awa-re of the 'Wuhan virus'

Cases of tricking people into giving up credentials are rising

was the Chinese governm-ent. That imposes a special responsibility to raise the flag to say, 'We have a problem, this is different and unique and presents risk'," he added. It took an "awful long time" for the world to become aware of this risk that was sitting there in China, the top American diplomat said.

sibility to share all of the-ir data, all of their information in as timely and accurate a fashion as they have the ability to do not only because it is the right thing, but because that is how you save lives of your

own people," he said. He added that the Chin ese Communist Party had

"We'll do the after-action when the time is right. Every nation has a respon-

a responsibility to do this not only for others who are now suffering, but for their own people.

US toll 105 as virus affects all 50 states

Washington, March 18: The number of deaths due to the new Covid-19 in the US has reached 105, with the outbreak spreading to all 50 states, even as President Donald Trump mounted a warlike effort to contain the situation, including an economic stimulus package of \$1 trillion. The first fatality from Covid-19 was reported from the Washington state on February 26.

Less than a month later,

the toll has crossed 100.

As of March 17, the figure

stood at 105 and the num-

ber of confirmed infectio-

ns crossed 6,500.

NEW YORK is to get a 1,000-room hospital ship that will dock in the city's harbour to fight Covid-19, Governor Andrew Cuomo said.

The World Health Organisation has declared Covid-19 a pandemic. President Donald Trump has said that the crisis in the US might continue till July and August. According to The Washington Post, most of the deaths have occurred in people over 70 and those with underlying conditions. PTI Washington, March 18: It may look like an email from a supervisor with an attachment on the new 'work from home policy" But it could be a cleverly designed scheme to hack into your network.

The abrupt move of millions of people to working remotely has sparked an unprecedented volume of attacks to trick people into giving up credentials to attackers, according to security researchers. "We've never seen anything like this," said Sherrod DeGrippo, head of threat research for the security firm Pr-oofpoint. "We are seeing

campaigns with message volumes up to hundreds of thousands which are leveraging this Covid-19.

The pandemic has created a perfect storm for cyb-erattacks, with millions of people working in unfamiliar, less secure circumstances and eager for information about the virus and new organisational policies being implemented. This opens up an avenue for malicious actors using phishing emails or "social engineering" to gain access or steal sensitive information. When someone is working form their home it is a similar threat profi-

le as at an airport or a Sta-rbucks, you just don't have that protection you might have in the workplace, DeGrippo said.

"And $\overline{i}f$ we are home with family where we feel safe, you might see a member hop on to do homework and might not understand security controls. Keeping mom's and dad's computer for mom and dad is the right thing to do."

Tom Pendergast of security and privacy training firm MediaPRO said many of the millions of people adjusting to the new landscape are unprepared for teleworking. -AFP



tight controls on movement and saying the situation is under control.

ople were currently hospitalised including 699 in intensive care.

Seven percent of those

His comments came as who have died are aged under 65. "We are progres-France entered the first day of a lockdown ordered sively moving to a general by President Emmanuel Macron which orders peoepidemic over the territople to stay at home and prry" of France, he said, ohibits all non-essential urging people to "stay at movements. Salamon said home" and keep contacts of those infected, 2.579 peto a minimum.

of Covid-19 in the country, France's top health official The world is at war with a hid-Jerome Salomon told reporters on Tuesday, a iump of over 1,000 on the den enemy. WE day earlier. WILL WIN! We have to get rid of this, we have to win this war and ideally

- DONALD TRUMP.

US President





quick

INDICATO	%	
Sensex	28,869.51	-5.59
Nifty 50	8,468.80	-5.56
S&P 500*	2,390.98	-5.46
Dollar (₹)	74.26	-0.006
Pound Sterling (₹)	88.42	1.74
Euro (₹)	81.49	0.41
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	40,241 ▼ 311	0.77
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	26.21	-8.77
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.296	0.492
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.060	6.426
* As of 9:30 pm IST		

NCLT gives 90 days more for Jet Air resolution

National Company Law Tribunal allowed 90 days' extension for the corporate insolvency resolution process of Jet Airways. Jet's resolution professional had last week filed an application in the NCLT seeking 90 days' extension for the insolvency process of the grounded airline after it failed to attract any bidder. The committee of creditors had on February 18 set a new deadline of March 10 for submission of bids.

Oyo parent gets \$807 mn from current investors



Oravel Stays, the parent company of Oyo, has received \$807 million (around Rs 6,000 crore) from existing backer Soft Vision Fund and Ritesh Agarwal-led RA Hospitality Holdings. In October, Oyo had said that it will raise \$1.5 bn for expansion in the US and strengthening Europe operations. The firm

SC pulling up telcos, recession fears worsen sentiments **Sensex cracks below 29000** as panic, carnage continue

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MARCH 18

Global recession fears, fresh coronavirus cases and the Supreme Court coming hard on telecom companies led to more panic selling in the equity market on Wednesday. Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty-50 sank another 5.5 per cent to fresh three-year lows, in line with the massive selling witnessed in the Asia-Pacific and Europe

regions. Confirmed coronavirus cases in the country rose to 151, and as the disease was still in the second stage, the next two weeks were crucial in preventing it from spreading to the community level, medical experts said. Globally, the confirmed cases of coron-avirus topped 2-lakh mark, with 1 lakh more cases

tries included China (81,000), Italy (31,000) Iran

(16,000), Spain (11,000),

Germany (9,000), South

London, March

Benchmark WTI oil on

Wednesday slumped 12

per cent to the lowest level since 2002, at under \$24

per barrel, as the coron-

avirus slashes global

demand for crude. WTI slid to \$23.60 per

barrel, while Brent North

Sea oil touched a 2003

trough at \$26.65 a barrel.

This is the third straight

day of losses for crude oil

Investment banks and

consultancies have been

million barrels per day (bpd) by late March and an

annual decline in 2020 of

1.1 million bpd, which it

said would be the biggest

on record.

this week

(8,000) and US

just 12 days.

Korea

(5.000)

(AGR) dues was in violation of its October 24 order and that all dues must be paid. After the apex court

lashed telecom companies, there was massive selling in blue-chips, particularly banks having exposure to the telecom sector and the telecom stocks that may get hit by court's stance. The Sensex closed 5.59 added after March 6, in The worst affected coun-

per cent, or 1,709.58 points, down at 28,869.51 while the Nifty-50 fell 498.25 points, or 5.56 per cent, to 8,468.80. Investors lost another Rs 5.98 lakh crore as BSE's market capitalisation fell

Oil projected to touch

Rystad Energy has gone

even further, projecting a

vear-on-vear decline in

The Supreme Court said to Rs 1.13.53.329.30 crore as that the self-assessment of adjusted gross revenue against Rs 1,19,52,066.11 crore crore on Tuesday.



KBK Infographics

It was the worst day for index heavy weights, led by IndusInd Bank (-23.90 per cent), HDFC Bank (-9.92 per cent), Kotak Mahindra Bank (-11.23 per cent), HDFC (-7.47 per cent), Bajaj Finance (-11.11 per cent) and Hero Motocorp (-7.86 per cent), on the BSE.

Reliance Industries also fell 3.97 per cent while ICICI Bank lost another 2.96 per cent after massive 8.92 per cent fall in the previous session.

Telecom stocks that fell sharply included Bharti Airtel (-6.14 per cent), Bharti Infratel (-22.62 per cent) and Vodafone Idea (-34.85 per cent).

The only saving grace was big value buying seen in PSU stocks in late afternoon trade. The PSU stock that gained included ONGC (9.83 per cent), Punjab National Bank (6.52 per cent) and Bank of India (2.37 per cent) while SBI closed flat at Rs 214.65, down just 0.12 per cent.

Arun Kumar, market strategist, Reliance strategist, Securities, said, "The Nifty 50 hit a new three-year low by surpassing last Friday's low of 8,556. Though, the index is highly oversold on near-term basis, market technical displays incremental pain. The next significant support falls around Nifty-50's historical support in the zone of 7,890 - 8,000."

Analyst said volatility index India VIX, which hit 12 year high of 64.57 on Wednesday, was still indi-cating wild market movements in the near future and no predictable range for the benchmarks. S Ranganathan, head of research at LKP Securities, said, "What we witnessed today in our markets was truly unnerving to every investor as our market cap to GDP virtually touched 2008 global financial crisis lows.



SC lashes out at telcos

for self-assessing dues

cles appearing in the news-papers relating to AGR assessment by TSPs.

Expressing its displeas-ure over the way its In a warning to the top echelons of the TSPs, a October 24 order, directbench headed by Justice ing TSPs to pay outstand-Arun Mishra, and com-prising Justices Abdul ing AGR dues of Rs. 92,000 crore, was sought to be Nazeer and M.R.Shah, said scuttled, the court all the managing directors deferred, by two weeks, hearing on the Centre's service providers would be made rescue plan to give service personally responsible and hauled up for conproviders a window of 20 years to pay AGR dues in tempt if any such write-up annual installments couconcealing truth appeared pled with interest. "The time-frame of 20 Telling in an unequivo-cal terms that amount decided by its October 24

years is unreasonable. The telecom companies have to clear all dues mentioned in the judgment," the court said noting that till other day, when the matter was argued before it leading to October 24 judgment, the Centre had "fought tooth and nail for levying interests and penalties.

assessment of AGR dues The desk-officer of the the court said, making it department of telecommunications (DoT) was clear that it cannot permit encroachment of its pow-ers by allowing selfagain in trouble as the court said it would sum-

mon the secretary, DoT and desk officer for permitting the TSPs to carry out self-assessment of their respective AGR dues. In the last hearing of the

matter DoT's desk-officer invited the wrath of the top court for issuing a communication January 23, that had said that no coercive action be taken against the service providers for not comply-ing with the court's October 24 order.

A Bloomberg report said the ruling could send Vodafone Idea into bankruptcy. It now leaves few options for Vodafone Idea, which owes \$4 billion -- of which the carrier has paid about \$930 million. It also comes as a disappointment to rival Bharti Airtel, the other survivor of a brutal price war sparked by the entry of Reliance Jio Infocomm in 2016.

While Bharti Airtel has raised funds to meet the payment demand by way of rights issue of shares and bond sales, Vodafone Idea has pinned its hopes on a relief package. UK-based Vodafone, which owns about 45 per cent of the local venture, has signalled its reluctance to

Small savings

rates may be

plow any more money. Shares of Vodafone Idea plunged 35 per cent and Bharti Airtel fell over 6 per cent.

E-com firms step up temp hiring to meet coronavirus-led demand

PARMOD KUMAR WITH AGENCY INPUTS

The Supreme Court on

Wednesday pulled up the

telecom service providers

(TSPs) for undertaking the

self-assessment, or reassessment, of the

adjusted gross revenue

(AGR) dues decided by its

October 24, 2019 judgment

and took exception to arti-

concealing the truth.

telecom

judgment was final, the

court described as "fraud"

the TSPs carrying out self-

assessment of their respective AGR dues. "We will be party to fraud if we allow self-

by telecom companies,

in future.

NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

merce companies are hiring more temporary staff to meet the additional demand for door-step delivery.

BigBasket usually increases its headcount by 2 to 3 per cent every month. However, this time there has been a surge of 5 to 10 per cent. The e-grocer is hiring around 2.000 people in March. "We have witnessed 100 per cent increase in demand. Usually the growth in demand would be 5 per cent over the previous month. But in March, the demand has grown by 10 to 15 per cent over February. This requires additional hands for delivery as well as warehouse management. The stock levels also have been increased to ensure availability,' said Abhinay Choudhari, co-founder of BigBasket.com. Grofers too is increasing its headcount to deliver products as it has also seen a similar growth in demand for products.



'Over the last couple of days, we have seen customers buying items on our platform in large



During the current quarter, the government refrained from cutting interest rates on small savings schemes, such as Public Provident Fund and National Savings Certificate moderating despite bank deposit rates. Currently, there is a difference of nearly 100 basis points between deposit rate of banks and small savings rate for one-year maturity.

\$20/bbl next quarter cent from a year earlier. Virgin Australia became the latest airline to shut its international network with the suspension of all overseas flights, while Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison warned that the situation could

last six months or more. Elsewhere, Iraq's oil minister pleaded for an emergency meeting between members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) and non-Opec pro-

SANGEETHA G

CHENNAI, MARCH 18 With online orders rising due to fears and shut downs over the coronavirus pandemic, e-com-

otted 15,325 Series F compu sorily convertible cumulative preference shares to the two entities, at \$52,643.22 per share

BMW to shut down European factories

German carmaker BMW said it would close European and South African factories accounting for half its output for a month, matching other car giants stricken by coronavirus containment measures. It also warned that profits this year would be significantly lower as a result of the crisis. BMW's factories around Europe combined with the South Africa plant accounted for half the 2.56 million cars it built in 2019.

Bajaj Finance reappoints Jain as MD

Bajaj Finance said its board has reappointed Rajeev Jain as managing director for a further period of five years with effect from April 1, 2020, the company said in a regulatory filing. Jain is the managing director of our company since April 1, 2015. He has more than 26 years of experience in the consumer lending industry. He was earlier with Countrywide Consumer Financial Services, ANZ Grindlays Bank and Amex.

Printed & Published by T Venkateswarlu on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press at Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. #563/9/D&9/E, Behind Andhra Bank Pet Basheerbagh, Kompally, Ranga Reddy Dist. Editor: T.Venkatram Reddy, RNI Reg No.APENG/2008/24282. © All rights eserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle ® is prohibited.

making heavy cuts to their demand of 2.8 million bpd. demand forecasts as a or 2.8 per cent, this year. growing number of the "To put the number into world's largest cities and context, last week we proeconomies restrict movement.

jected a decrease of just 600,000 barrels," Rystad "The oil demand colsaid. lapse from the spreading In addition to imposing coronavirus looks increassocial restrictions not ingly sharp," Goldman Sachs said in a note, foreseen since World War Two, the world's richest nations casting a fall in Brent prepared to unleash trilprices to as low as \$20 in lions of dollars of spendthe second quarter, a level ing to reduce the fallout not seen since early 2002. from the coronavirus. The bank expects a demand contraction of 8

The impact on demand is starting to show in official statistics, with Japan's trade bureau saying on Wednesday that crude imports into the world's third-biggest economy in February were down 9 per

ducers to discuss immedi ate action to support the market.

A price war between Opec leader Saudi Arabia and Russia after the collapse of talks on coordinated output cuts is increasing pressure on the market.

Kremlin The on Wednesday said that Russia would like to see the oil price higher than current levels.

Saudi Arabia's energy ministry, however, said it had directed national oil company Aramco to continue to supply crude oil at a record high 12.3 million bpd over the coming months. -Agencies

quantities across cities as categories. well as Mumbai, Bangalore, Pune and Ahmedabad have seen a higher surge with nearly 80 per cent growth fol-lowed by Delhi NCR and Hyderabad, at a 60 per cent spike in business. We have seen a rise in the number of orders by 45 per cent," the company said.

Big e-commerce platforms like Amazon and Flipkart are also stepping up hiring to meet higher demand. Though Amazon India has not revealed its hiring plans yet, it has approached flexi staffing companies seeking more hands.

Rituparna Chakraborty, president, Indian Staffing

tres and delivery network to meet the surge in demand.

In the US, Amazon is

opening 1,00,000 new full

and part-time positions

across the fulfillment cen-

ed demand.

"Amazon and our network of partners are helping communities around the world in a way that very few can-delivering critical supplies directly to the doorsteps of people who need them. Getting a priority item to your doorstep is vital as communities practice social distancing, particularly for the elderly and others with underlying health issues. We are seeing a sigincrease nificant demand, which means our labour needs are unprecedented for this time of year," Amazon Inc said in its blog.

Rates on small savings schemes are revised on quarterly basis On December 31, the government kept interest rates for savings schemes like PPF and

NSC unchanged at 7.9 per cent for the January-March quarter while the rate for the Kisan Vikas Patra maturing in 113 months was kept at 7.6 -PTIper cent.

Surging US dollar is next big Gold falls as investors headache for world economy

MICHELLE JAMRISKO MARCH 18

King Dollar is creating a new headache for virusbattered economies globally, with emerging markets especially vulnerable as they try to cope with collapsing currencies and plunging demand. Investors are fleeing emerging markets in record numbers and piling

into the safe-haven greenback, with two emergency interest-rate cuts this month by the Federal Reserve doing nothing to diminish the dollar's

appeal. With the dollar more integrated into the world economy than ever before, its gains are an added stress for businesses and governments as they brace for soaring costs on their dollar debt. The dilemma for emerging market central banks is that as they slash interest rates to support growth, they risk destabilising their curren-

POUND NOSEDIVES AGAINST **DOLLAR TO 1985 LOW**

London, March 18: Sterling tanked on stood at \$1.1861."Sterling has completed one of its Wednesday against the steepest declines in memdollar, hitting its lowest ory by hitting its weakest since 1985 as level since 1985, excludlevel investors snapped up the safe haven US currency in markets panicked by the coronavirus outbreak. The pound slid about 1.9 per cent to \$1.1828, according to Bloomberg data. It later

cies as well if they cut too much.

"The surge in the dollar is another blow to emerg-ing markets," said Mitul Kotecha, senior emerging markets strategist at TD Securities in Singapore. "The demand for the dollar has outweighed any hit to the US currency from sharply lower Fed rates. EM assets will continue to Africa, Indonesia and Brazil are expected to reduce their key rates in coming days. New research from the

Bank for International Settlements shows that since the global financial crisis, unexpected dollar appreciation depresses world trade growth. A reason for this could be a tightening in financial conditions as dollar lending to emerging markets slows, according to the research paper.

Outflows from emerging markets are already at record levels, reaching \$30 billion in 45 days amid the virus outbreak, according the Institute International Finance. All

major emerging-market currencies tracked by Bloomberg have weakened against the dollar since January 20-the onset of Covid-19 concerns in Asia—with the Russian ruble and Mexican peso dropping almost 20 per cent. -Bloomberg

shift to safety of cash



prices Gold have remained quite volatile in the past few sessions as US dollar gaining strength despite the US Federal Reserve bringing down the interest rate. The Covid-19 pandemic fears are forcing investors to keep cash in hand rather than investing in assets. Though the long-term prospects of the metal are bright, volatility will continue in the short-term.

On Wednesday, gold fell as much as 2.7 per cent as investors to dump most assets for the safety of

cash. Gold has fallen from its recent highs above \$1,700 per ounce to touch a recent low of \$1,450. In the Indian market, gold prices have slid from around ₹45,000 per 10 gm to ₹39,700. The fall in the bullion market was a result of the equity market crash as the hedge funds went on to



book their profits in gold

to cover margin calls in

equities. "Hedge funds had to

cover their losses in equi-

ties and hence they were

increasingly booking prof-

its in gold, which had gone

up around 40 per cent in

the past one-and-half

year," said Jateen Trivedi,

senior research analyst,

commodities and curren-

cies, LKP Securities. However, gold should have moved up after the

US Federal Reserve low-

ered the interest rates and

announced the bond buy-

ing programme. Both are

factors that, in any nor-mal scenario, would have

supported another rally in

gold. But, gold has

remained highly volatile,

between \$1,460 and \$1,530. The average daily move ment in gold has significantly moved up in March compared to what it was in February.

moving in a wide range

'The pandemic scare is making investors hold on to cash rather than investing it any asset class. This sentiment has supported US dollar,' said Himanshu Gupta, vice president and head of commodities and currencies research

Globe Capital. While the volatility will continue in the short

term, the fundamentals are supportive of gold in the medium to long-term. "Once the epidemic sub-

sidies, we will start hear ing about the impact of it on the global economy in the coming quarters. This will see investors flocking towards gold," said Gupta. Goldman Sachs has low-ered the three-six month gold forecast to \$1,600, but has retained the 12-month forecast at \$1,800.

ing... the brief dive of the October 2016 flash crash,"

struggle as investors steer clear of relatively risky assets and maintain a bias for safe havens.

Turkey's central bank was the latest emerging market to make an emergency rate cut. South Korea, Chile, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Pakistan already eased this week following the Fed's action on Sunday, and South

said Markets.com analyst Neil Wilson. "This seems to be an offloading of favour of safer dollars." -AFP

TAKES SHORT

My focus is on **IPL for now: ABD**

New Delhi: Even as the world is engulfed by the coronavirus pandemic, a burning question in every cricket fanatic's mind is whether AB de Villiers will indeed come out of retirement and represent the country in the World T20 that is slated to be played in Australia later in the year. While there have been quite a few opinions on the matter, the former South Africa skipper is keen to follow the "wait and watch" policy rather than making a statement. De Villiers said that he is taking things slowly, he will assess the situation only after playing the Indian Premier League and check what is possible and what isn't. "Let"s wait and see what happens. My focus is on the Indian Premier League at the moment, and helping Roya **Challengers Bangalore realise** our full potential. Then we will sit down and have a look at the rest of the year and see what is possible," he explained. The fate of the 13th edition of the IPL though hangs in balance due to the coronavirus outbreak. And while the BCCI and the IPL franchises are keeping no stones unturned to ensure that the tournament is played, it will all depend on the calls taken by the Indian government and the health department While the South African feels that workload management is a personal call, he does believe that the mental and physica demand on the top stars is massive thanks to the non-stop cricket action. - Agencies

Finch not sure of **IPL participation**

Sydney: Australian captain Aaron Finch spoke about the coronavirus pandemic and how it has been affecting cricketers in the country. Finch, the limited overs captain of the team said that Australia's travel advi-sory issued on Tuesday makes things uncertain for those in the country who have contracts with Indian Premier League (IPL) teams The 2020 season of the IPL has been postponed from an April 15 start and Finch, who has been signed up by Roya Challengers Bangalore (RCB) this season said that it is hard

to plan anything under the cir-cumstances. "We've never seen anything like this," Finch told SEN. "That (travel advice) has changed over the last couple of hours. That could change in two weeks or three weeks, it's hard to plan anything. But it's just about making sure everyone around you personally is safe and you're doing everything you can to stop the spread," he

said Paine said that while he would

Count(y) on it

292

odd

Vihari says he is gearing up for a County stint

New Delhi, March 18: Gade Hanuma Vihari wanted to utilise the summer months playing county cricket in England but the Covid-19 pandemic has put paid to the India allrounder's plans for the time being. Slowly becoming a key member of

the Indian Test side, the 26-year-old wants to hone his skills with a prominent county side but now the deal will be inked when the situation comes under control and travel bans are lifted globally.

"I was supposed to play four English county games this season. I would only be able to tell you the name when all the paperwork is complete. Right now, it's on hold due to the unavoidable situation (COVID-

The Andhra man is confident that he will be able to travel to the UK during the later part of the county season which is played from April to September. "Hope once it's under control, I will be able to play those games. It will be a learning experi-ence for me," said the soft spoken Vihari.

The BCCI, in recent years, has allowed top cricketers who are not playing in the IPL to compete in county cricket during the summer months. The likes of Cheteshwar Pujara, Ishant Sharma, Ravichandran Ashwin and Ajinkya Rahane are some of the prominent Test specialists who have plied their trade in division 1 and 2 of English county.

Vihari's commitment to the game can be gauged from the fact that he played for his employers Nelson CC in the Tamil Nadu CA league on Tuesday. He scored 202 not out against Alwarpet CC in a drawn game. "I work for Nelson and I am committed to play when I am avail-able. It was good match practice. Now I am back in Hyderabad. I will be taking a break for the time being," he informed.

Talking about his 55 off 70 balls against New Zealand on a green top at the Hagley Oval in Christchurch, the gutsy right-hander was a touch disappointed. "I wouldn't call it my best innings. Yes, I was playing well but that innings didn't get a victory for my team. It was good to score runs in tough conditions but you value it more when the team wins,' he said.

Vihari, who made his debut in England, has a decent Test record of 552 runs in nine games with an aver-age of just under 37. Incidentally, he has eight of his nine Tests abroad. "I have the self belief and the team believes that I have the technique to get success in overseas conditions," he said. — PTI



DQ 15

Vrinda Rathi (left) and Janani Narayanan.

Vrinda & Janani make ICC grade

Dubai, March 18: The number of women match officials across different International Cricket Council panels has gone up to 12 as Chennai's Janani Narayanan and Mumbai's Vrinda Rathi were on Wednesday na-med in the International

Cricket, a 12-month cam-

paign anticipated to build

on the momentum of the ICC Women's T20 World

Cup 2020. The campaign,

86,174 people watched the final of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2020 final at the Melbourne Cricket

Ground on International

Women's Day, aims to cre-

ate more excitement around the women's game

ahead of the ICC Women's Cricket World

Cup 2021 in New Zealand.

Adrian Griffith, ICC Senior Manager– Umpires and Referees:

"These are exciting times for women's cricket, and

it is only appropriate that

we have more women offi-

cials at the international

The

Janani, 34, who idolises the late David Shepherd of England and retired India umpire Srinivas Venkatraghavan, has been umpiring in Indian Panel of IC Development Umpires. domestic tournaments since 2018. Janani said: "It feels ICC announcement comes soon after the launch of 100 per cent

great to know that Vrinda and I have been inducted into the ICC's development panel. This gives me the chance to learn from seniors on the circuit and improve in the years to come.

UMPIRES PANEL

level," she said.

"Cricket has become part of my daily routine since the 90s and I look forward to be associated with the sport at a higher level," Janani added.

Rathi, 31, a former varsity player who has kept scores in international matches, has also been umpiring in Indian domestic cricket since 2018. Rathi was inspired to take up umpiring after watching retired woman umpire Kathy Cross of New Zealand at the Women's World Cup 2013. - Agencies

WHEN VIRAT'S ANTICS IRKED AUSSIE **COACH LANGER DURING TEST SERIES**

New Delhi, March 18: Australian coach Justin Langer has revealed that he felt like a "punching bag" after Virat Kohli's aggressive celebrations during India's 2018-19 tour while also calling out the "double standards" when it comes to sledging in cricket. India, led by Kohli,

enjoyed an unprecedent-ed summer Down Under, the Border

our hands behind our backs and we just had to take it. You must be feeling the double standards the way their captain is carrying on and we sort of have to be careful,' Langer said in *Amazon*'s released docu-series titled

Gavaskar Trophy 3-1, their first-ever Test series

"We can't fight back

because it felt like we had

win in Australia.

BANGAR TURNS DOWN BATTING CONSULTANT ROLE FROM BANGLA

New Delhi, March 18: Former India batting coach Sanjay Bangar has decided against taking the Bangladesh Cricket Board's offer to become its Test team's consultant citing his personal and professional commitments.

Bangar was offered to coach Bangladesh batsmen in red-ball cricket eight weeks ago but he could not take up the offer as he signed a two-year contract with Star Sports in the interim. 'They offered me the position eight weeks ago. But in the interim, I finalised

finalised my contract with Star which gave me the opportunity to balance out my personal and professional com-

m i t m e n t s However, I look forward to work-ing with BCB in the future," Bangar said. Former South Africa batsman Neil McKenzie is pri-marily working with the

Bangladesh side for the shorter formats. Bangar was with the Indian team from 2014 to 2019. The West Indies tour, which took place after the World Cup, was his last assignment with the Indian team.

Bangar was the only one whose contract with the Indian team was not renewed with head coach Ravi Shastri, bowling coach Bharat Arun and fielding coach R Sridhar retaining their roles. He has been busy commentating on the game ever since he was replaced by Rathour. The 47year-old played 12 Tests and 15 ODIs for India between 2001 and

"We have spoken with Bangar (for Test batting consultant) but nothing is finalised yet," BCB chief executive Nizamuddin Chowdhury told reporters in Chowdhury tolu reported Dhaka earlier on Wednesday. — PTI



Former national volleyball player and secretary of the Sarojini Cricket & Fitness Academy G. Kiran Reddy (right) felicitates former volleyball coach I. B. Rajendra Prasad on his appointment as Sports Director of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation in the City on Wednesday.

HCA matches off due to coronavirus

Hyderabad: Owing to the pandemic coronavirus, the Hyderabad Cricket Association have cancelled all their one-day knockout and league matches. The association have also put off biometric attendance for its employees for now

U-15, U-18 football trials on Sunday

Hyderabad: The Reeds Football Academy is organising footbal trials in the boys Under-15 and Under-18 categories at their Bowenpally Ground in the city on Sunday. Players born between 2006 and 2007 are eligible for the U-15 trials and those born in 2003 can participate in the U-18 category. Interested footballers must reach the venue by 7 am along with a photocopy of their Date of Birth proof and one passport size photo. For further details contact 9030035854 or 9030815397

CORONA EFFECT

DADA GETS MUCH NEEDED BREAK

New Delhi: With the IPL postponed to April 15 and the BCCI office shut down in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic, board president Sourav Ganguly has got a welcome off day from his busy schedule. With the sporting world going into a complete shutdown, the ever-busy former India captain got a chance to cool his

heels on Wednesday. "Corona virus scare .. happy to sit in the lounge at 5pm . free... can't remember when I did last," Ganguly posted on Instagram. The BCCI employees have been told to work from home while there has been no headway about the fate of IPL even though a curtailed one looks imminent if the situation comes under control. Ganguly himself had indicated that a shortened IPL is a possibility if things improve after April 15. – PTI

CORONA IS BIGGER THAN THE GAME: PAINE

Melbourne: Australian Test captain Tim Paine on Wednesday said the threat of COVID-19 pandemic is bigger than the game of cricket and needs to be taken seriously, justifying the suspension of almost all the ongoing action. "As hard as it is for all cricketers at the moment I think it is time that we take a break. I know it's even harder this time of year when you've got finals and trophies are on the line and it's all there to be won but this is bigger than us, bigger than the



game of cricket but it's something that needs to be taken very seriously," Paine said via - PTI Twitter.

PROTEA CRICKETERS TOLD TO SELF-ISOLATE

Johannesburg: The South African cricket team has been asked to self-quarantine for the next 14 days after returning midway from an ODI tour of India due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Cricket South Africa's chief medical officer, Dr Shuaib Manjra, was quoted as saying that the players have been told to isolate themselves and will be tested for the deadly virus in case any symptoms show up. "We have recommended the players social distance themselves from others and self-isolate for a minimum of 14 days. think that is proper guidance to protect themselves, people around them, their families and their communities," he was quoted as saying by the media here.

- PTI

PCB AWAITS TEST RESULTS OF PLAYERS

Karachi: The Pakistan Cricket Board on Wednesday said around 100 people, including players, associated with the now-suspended Pakistan Super League have undergone Covid-

mer

19 tests. PSL was postponed on Tuesday after the country's Cricket Board revealed that a foreign player showed symptoms with former captainturned-commentator Ramiz

Raja revealing that it was England's Alex Hales. Hales later said he has gone into selfisolation. "We are expecting the first results later tonight (Wednesday) or tomorrow (Thursday)," a PCB official said. - PTI

Monkeygate lowest point: Ponting

Melbourne, March 18: ly abusing Australian allrounder rounder Andrew Symonds during the sec-Australia's two-time world Cup-winning forond Test at Sydney. "Monkeygate was probaskipper Ricky Ponting considers the 2008 'Monkeygate' scandal the lowest point bly the lowest (point in career as of his captaincy stint as Losing the 2005 Ashes he feels he was not in series was tough but I control of what was hapwas in full control of pened at that time. that. But I wasn't in full The scandal unfolded control of what happened when senior Indian offduring the Monkeygate spinner Harbhajan Singh thing," was charged with racial-Australia to 48 wins from

77 Tests and 164 triumphs in 228 ODIs, said.

Harbhajan was eventually cleared of the charge and Symonds' career went into a downward spiral after the incident. captain).

'It was a low point and also because it dragged on for so long. I remember coming off the ground during the Adelaide Test match and Ponting, who led speaking to Cricket Australia officials about

the case because the hearing was at the end of the Test

Adelaide match," Ponting added. The incident created a lot of bitterness between the two teams with India threatening to pull out of the tour before the ICC intervened "We all felt let down by

the end result (of the the Monkeygate controversy)," Ponting added. -PTI



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TAKES SHORT

No plans to push Wimbledon yet

London: Wimbledon organisers are still planning to play the Grand Slam this year, despite the coronavirus chaos that led the French Open to be pushed back until September. Wimbledon is scheduled to run from June 29 to July 12, but All England Club chiefs are aware the sporting schedule has been decimated by the deadly pandemic. Wimbledon remain hopeful that play at the grasscourt tournament will be able to go ahead if the spread of the virus is slowed. UNCERTAINTY LOOMS OVER US OPEN

The US Tennis Association acknowledged Tuesday that developments in the coronavirus pandemic could dictate moving the US Open, now scheduled to start in August. But the American federation said it wouldn't determine any new date for its flagship Grand Slam without consulting the other major championship organizers, the International Tennis Federation and the ATP and WTA tours. – AFP

Berlusconi, Agnelli donate big money

Milan: Italy's former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi and the country's multi-industry Agnelli dynasty have pledged 10 million euros (\$11 million) each to fight the coronavirus crisis

The Turin-based Agnelli family, whose business interests include the Fiat Chrysler group and football giants Juventus, matched the donation made by the former AC Milan owner Berlusconi. AC Milan forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic set up an online fundraiser on Wednesday to help hospitals at the center of the coronavirus outbreak in Italy, with the target of raising 1 million euros (\$1.09 million). "Italy has always given me so much and, in this dramatic moment, I want to give back even more to this country that I love," Ibrahimovic said in a video message to launch the fundraiser. - AFF

Roger, uncle of Mayweather, dies

Los Angeles: Roger Mayweather, a two-time world champion turned trainer and uncle of unbeaten boxing great Floyd Mayweather, has died at the age of 58. "My uncle was one of the most important people in my life inside and outside of the ring," said Floyd Mayweather, who was trained by his uncle for much of his great champion and one of the best trainers in boxing," Floyd Mayweather said. "Unfortunately, his health was failing him for several years and now he can finally rest in peace. Roger meant the world to me my father Floyd Sr., my uncle Jeff, our whole family, everyone in and around the Mayweather Boxing Gym and the entire boxing world." Roger Mayweather won world titles at super featherweight and super lightweight, earning 59 wins in a 20-year ring career. - AFP

Games on tenterhooks Dark cloud over Tokyo Olympics, admits IOC

Lausanne, March 18: Olympic chiefs acknowl-edged Wednesday there was no "ideal" solution to the staging Tokyo Olympics amid a backlash from athletes as the deadly coronavirus pandemic swept the globe.

"This is an exceptional situation which requires exceptional solutions," an International Olympic Committee spokesperson said after criticism from top athletes that they were being forced to take health risks should the July 24-August 9 Games go ahead as scheduled during the Covid-19 outbreak.

'No solution will be ideal in this situation, and this is why we are counting on the responsibility and solidarity of the athletes," the IOC spokesperson added. OC spokesperson Olympic pole vaun Naterina champion Stefanidi and British heptathlete Katarina Johnson-Thompson had earlier both voiced con-cerns after the IOC said it was "fully committed" to running the Games as scheduled from July 24.

ZERO RISK CONSIDERATION

On Tuesday, minutes before the IOC statement, the Euro 2020 football tournament was delayed for a year, bowing to the crisis that has paralysed Europe and drastically curtailed international travel.

Olympic qualifying tournaments are among the swathe of sports events that have been cancelled or postponed, with only 57 percent of athletes booking their places so far.

Johnson-Thompson, the world heptathlon champi-on, criticised the IOC for telling athletes to train "as best they can", saying it was at odds with stringent government health meas-

IOC COULD ADJUST QUALIFYIN

Almost any athlete will concede that getting picked for an Olympic team is as much of a challenge as competing for

one. The IOC acknowledged on Tuesday just how fraz-zling the whole process could be this year, and a few leaders from the athlete community weighed in on how the uncertainty our aguing th monies," Perrottet wrote. He added: "The Nazis While pushing forward for its planned July 24 start for the Tokyo Games, knew a good propaganda the IOC outlined how the symbol when they saw invitations might be sorted out if the dozens of Olympic trials and qualifiers slated for this spring and summer around the globe get cancelled or postponed due to the coron-



A man walks past giant Olympic rings near the new National Stadium in Tokyo last Saturday.

lympic torch relay born in Berlin

Tokyo, March 18: The torch relay was not always a fixture of the modern Olympics, which began in

The relay tradition started at Adolph Hitler's 1936 Berlin Ólympics the Games of the XI Olympiad and was the brainchild of Carl Diem, who was the head of the organising

committee. The Tokyo Olympic relay is scheduled to begin its Japan leg on March 26 in northeastern Fukushima prefecture.

Tony Perrottet, in his 2004 book "The Naked Olympics" published to coincide with the 2004 Athens Olympics captured the paradox of the Nazi regime appropriating the relay.

"Ironically, considering its repellent origins, the torch race has come to symbolize international brotherhood today, and remains a centerpiece of own pomp-filled



Dutee hit as event is postponed

New Delhi, March 18: India's fastest woman Dutee Chand is wary of missing out of the Olympics after she was deprived of her trainingcum-competition stint in Germany due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected her plans to qualify for the Tokyo Games.

The 24-year-old Dutee was to train and take part in Olympic qualifying events in Germany from March 2 but despite getting the visa and sponsor-ship, she could not make it there as Europe has now turned into an epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak.

"I was to go for a train-ing-cum-competition stint in Germany from March 2. I was planning to run in some quality competitions in Europe and hop-ing to qualify for the Olympics. But all my plans fell apart due to this coronavirus," Dutee told .

"I don't know. I am wor ried that I may not qualify for the Olympics," Dutee said when asked about how confident she is about qualifying for Tokyo Olympics. — PTI

Durant is positive for corona

New York, March 18: Kevin Durant is reported-ly among four Brooklyn Nets players who have tested positive for the new coronavirus and are in

isolation. The injured Durant, who has yet to play for the Nets since signing for the club last year, confirmed to The Athletic website he had tested positive for the virus.

"Everyone be careful, take care of yourself and quarantine. We're going to get through this, Durant was quoted as saying. News that the two-time NBA Finals MVP was among those who had contracted the virus came soon after the Nets confirmed four players had tested positive for Covid-

19. "Four Brooklyn Nets players have tested positive for the Covid-19 virus. All four players are and



avirus. There are still around 4,700 out of nearly 11,000 Olympic spots to be

Perrottet recounts how the Olympic flame was run from Greece to Germany over 12 days, ending with the lighting of a "colossal brazier in the Berlin stadium before the Fhrer's approving gaze." Each of the torches car-

athlete Bulgaria,

— Agencies arms

Hungary, Czechoslovakia ried the logo of German manufacturer

In this file photo, an athlete lights the lamp surrounded by German soldiers before the 1936 Berlin Olympics. -AP

Krupp, Perrottet wrote. the images of Greek gods The first person to set off and goddesses and wanted on July 20, 1936, was Greek the Olympics to promote his idea of the supremacy, Konstantin Kondylis. The torch meanthe perfection, of the dered through Greece, German nation. Yugoslavia, Austria and

Germany with each runner covering a kilometer or 0.62 miles. Perrottet wrote that Hitler admired

step of Greek athletics.

"Hitler took considerable personal interest in the ritual, and pumped funds into its promotion: Nazi propaganda The machine covered the torch relay slavishly, broadcast

radio reports from every the route, and filled the Games with the iconography of ancient in London in 1948. There have been modifications

The first Olympic flame appeared at the 1928 Amsterdam Games, and then again in 1932 in Los Angeles. There was no relay until

but Winter Olympic torches have not always been lit 1936, and it's been continusince then. The ous there.

under the care of team physicians," the team said in a statement. Olympics were canceled during World War II (Tokyo was to hold the The Nets said they were notifying known contacts 1940 Games) and resumed

along the way. The flame

for the Summer Olympics

has always been lit in

Ancient Olympia, Greece,

of the players including those from teams who played against the Nets shortly before the NBA shut down its season indefinitely on March 12. The last team to play the Nets was the Los Angeles Lakers, who were stunned 104-102 by Brooklyn on March 10. -AFP

TWO MORE JUVENTUS MEN REPORT SICK

Rome: Juventus's France World Cup winner Blaise Matuidi and Hellas Verona's Mattia Zaccagni have both tested positive for coronavirus, their Italian League clubs confirmed on Tuesday. "Matuidi has undergone medical tests that have revealed his positivity to the Coronavirus-Covid-19," the Italian champions said. Juve added Matuidi is asymptomatic and currently "in voluntary home isolation". Daniele Rugani was the first top-flight footballer to be diagnosed with coronavirus last Wednesday, sending the entire team into guarantine. In total 13 Italian League players have officially been diagnosed with the illness including seven from Sampdoria and three at Fiorentina. Zaccagni had already been in self-isolation as a precautionary measure after Verona played Sampdoria on March 8. – AFP

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Vimal lashes out at overseas coaches

New Delhi, March 18: Former India badminton coach Vimal Kumar is extremely disappointed with the way Indonesian doubles coach Flandy Limpele left abruptly in an Olympic year and said foreign appointees must be held accountable for departing without completing their tenures.

decided.

Limpele, who was hired last March, recentstepped down as India's doubles coach, citing family reasons, becoming the fourth such foreign coach to have resigned without completing the tenure. "It was very unfortu-

nate and unprofessional of Flandy to leave this way. When the doubles players had qualified for Olympics and had chances of doing well, to leave in the middle of it, was disappointed,'

Vimal, who served as India's chief national coach from 2003 to 2006, said "I had a long chat with

him in January. He had said then that some players were not disciplined but he said he will work with them and then sud-



It was very 5 unfortunate and unprofessional of **Flandy Limpele to** leave this way. When the doubles players had qualified for **Olympics and had** chances of doing well, to leave in the middle of it, I was disappointed.

> VIMAL KUMAR, former Indian badminton coach

denly he left just before All England," he added. Earlier, Korean Kim Ji Hyun, who guided P. Sindhu to a world championship gold, made an unceremonious exit last September. Renowned Indonesian coach Mulyo Handovo also resigned



"I think they have to be made accountable. We need to be very clear that they stick to the group, or the certain number of players that they have to handle. It should be in contract," the Vimal said

"We are paying them huge money, so we have to take that responsibility. They just can't walk off without notice," he said

Only four Indian shut-— Sindhu, B. Sai tlers Praneeth and men's doubles pair of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy are assured of a spot at the Fokyo Games. There is little hope that Saina Nehwal and Kidambi Srikanth will be able to make the cut, especially after Badminton World Federation (BWF) was forced to postpone all events due to the Covid-19 pandemic. -PTI



KUN UNITED HYUNDAI	SABOO HYUNDAI	TALWAR HYUNDAI	FUSION HYUNDAI	LAKSHMI HYUNDAI
Lakdi-ka-pul 99851 11147, 99853 04535 ECLL 'X' Roads 98850 60500, 98850 10033 Hi-tech City 99857 06787, 98851 17758 Shaikpet 98850 10011, 81420 00025 Gachibowli 98850 77577, 98850 51019	Mettuguda, Secunderabad 040-6681 1111 98850 77777, 92480 77777	S.P. Road, Begumpet 99488 66620, 91000 85208 Jubilee Hills 96660 22254, 91006 77714 Erragadda 99488 86620, 81068 99556 Banjara Hills 91006 77708, 80082 77436	Bowenpally 80870 04488, 73373 32222 Medchal 91009 03327 Siddipet 70361 11120, 80870 04488 Medak 91007 49727	Himayatnagar 809 6666 104, 809 6666 473 Malakpet 888 6663 595, 809 6666 065 LB Nagar 79979 66069, 809 6666 054 Madinaguda 809 6666 224, 809 6666 386 KPHB Manjeera Mall 88866 28256, 79979 66770

