

POWER | SHUTDOWN

Vasanthipuri Sub-Station
10 am to 11.30 am
Indiranagar, Lalapet Kaman,
Ganesh Temple, Isuka Bavi.

Gymkhana Sub-Station
11 am to 11.30 am
Balamrai, Balamrai Kaman,
Viman Nagar, Paigah Colony,
Margadarshi Colony, Shoppe-
rs Lane, Happy Enclave, P&T
Colony.

IN BRIEF

AYUB KHAN IS IN-CHARGE VC OF MANUU

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

Academic and mathematics professor Ayub Khan has been appointed as in-charge vice chancellor of Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) as per the directions by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). He has been appointed as officiating vice chancellor under the Statute 2 (7) of Manuu Act, 1996. Prof. Khan was appointed as pro vice chancellor of Manuu on March 27, 2019. Earlier, he was serving as mathematics professor at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. He was associated also with Delhi University.

IT PLATFORM TO MONITOR SCHEMES IN REAL-TIME

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (NIRDPR) in Hyderabad announced that it has developed an IT platform for real-time monitoring of nationwide programmes related to the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY). Named the Kausal Bharat, it is an enterprise resource planning (ERP) platform.

The platform will be used to capture data on projects under the DDU-GKY and collate it. The ministry of rural development will reportedly conduct inspections at its training centres using Kausal Bharat from April.

NIRDPR director-general said the platform would also have a mobile application for inspection of training centres and placement verification. States also don't have to pay anything to use this platform.

● **THE PLATFORM** will be used to capture data on projects under the DDU-GKY and collate it.

HC flags civic officials' power to raze buildings

'Draconian' provision being vested with authorities

VUJJINI
VAMSHIDHARA | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

The Telangana High Court observed that the amended Telangana Municipalities Act, 2019, which allows demolition of illegal constructions without giving notice to the owners, was a "draconian power" vested with municipal authorities.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice A. Abhishek Reddy was hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by advocate Mohan Chandra Parthasarathy which challenged Section 178 (2) of the Telangana Municipalities Act, 2019.

The petitioner submitted that the principles of natural justice should be followed, and apprehended that the law may be misused.

Reminding the govern-

● **THE PETITIONER** submitted that the principles of natural justice should be followed, and apprehended that the law may be misused.

● **HE SAID** a person must be heard before taking any action

ment of the Constitutional necessity that a person must be heard before taking any action against him or her, the bench said that the powers granted in the law fell foul of the rights guaranteed to a citizen under the Constitution i.e., the principles of natural justice."

Chief Justice Chauhan said, "Even a hardcore dacoit cannot be hanged without a trial... Where is the fairness? The aspect of principles of natural justice have been totally ousted by the Telangana state government."

Putting up firm stand,

Advocate-General B.S. Prasad reminded the court of its rebuke the other day, when it came down heavily on GHMC officials and other municipal authorities for not dealing firmly with those resorting to illegal constructions.

The Advocate-General said, "When the State has come up with a strong law, with an intent to keep the violators of law at bay, now the court is asking the State to follow principles of natural justice." He also submitted that the Bombay Municipal Act had similar provisions.

Reacting immediately, the Chief Justice said, "We are aware of the fact that there are a lot of illegal constructions. At the same time, we are also equally aware of the arbitrary powers vested with the municipal authorities. Therefore, the question would be, do we place cer-

tain limitations on the exercise of powers."

He said that the amended law spoke about setting up the Municipal Building Tribunal to deal with issues of deviations from the rules and violations.

The High Court had been told several times that the tribunal would be constituted soon but it had not been done so far, the Chief Justice said.

The High Court also pointed out that the state was making constitutional and statutory bodies unfunctional by not appointing the posts.

The Advocate-General informed the bench that the rules have not yet been framed about the procedure to be followed up to act on deviations and assured the court that he will advise the state government to frame rules adhering to the observations of the court.

The hearing was adjourned to March 11.

HC DISPOSES PIL AGAINST SBI'S NPR NOTICE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

The Telangana High Court on Monday disposed the Public Interest Litigation (PIL), which challenged issuance of a public notice by State Bank of India (SBI) to its customers asking them to produce the letter issued by National Population Register (NPR) as part of KYC documents.

The division bench, headed by Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan, was dealing with the PIL filed by Mr Khaja Aijazuddin, advocate from the city. It sought directions from the High Court to set aside that condition asked by the bank.

When the Court came to know that the SBI notice did not mandate submission of NPR document and denotes that any one of the stipulated documents be submitted, the Chief Justice told the petitioner to ignore it and there would be no loss if ignored.

Plagiarists trouble Urdu Academy

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

A syndicate of plagiarists is skimming off lakhs of rupees every year from the Urdu Academy's scheme of financial aid for publishing Urdu books.

Every year the Urdu Academy provides financial aid for publishing books in the Urdu language. Under the partial monetary aid scheme, the Academy provides a grant of ₹15,000 for books of 96-176 pages and ₹18,000 for books of more than 177 pages.

The Academy has allocated ₹25 lakh for this scheme. The purpose of the scheme is to encourage Urdu writers and authors of Urdu who are financially unable to publish their work. The Academy releases the aid in two instalments, on submission of the draft of the selected book and on submission of the printed book.

An Expert Committee selects the books deserving of financial aid. It provides financial aid not only to authors, but

also for compiling and editing the literary works of others.

There are complaints that people are copying the contents of rare and old books, compiling it in book format and submitting the script claiming it is their own work.

Some of them have submitted the same draft for consecutive years by changing the title page.

These content thieves do not hesitate to submit the contents of PhD and MPhil theses by scholars in universities on such famous writers as Mirza Ghalib, Munshi Premchand and Sadat Hassan Manto, which are available on the internet.

In the past, some have even compiled the articles of various writers that were published in newspapers.

Social activist Ahmed Arshad Hussain says that the basic difficulty is that no tool has been developed so far to check plagiarism in Urdu.

He suggested strengthening the terms and conditions of the grants to check such practices.

KTR inspects cable bridge works

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

Municipal administration and urban development minister K.T. Rama Rao made a surprise inspection of the ongoing works at the Durgam Cheruvu cable-stayed bridge.

While carrying out the inspection, the minister instructed officials and contract agencies to ensure that there are pedestrian ways and lighting systems to ensure complete safety for users of the bridge. He enquired about the various stages of the ongoing works.

L&T engineers informed Rama Rao that the cable-stayed bridge is in the final phase of completion.

The minister emphasised that officials must complete construction of the bridge on time, if necessary by increasing manpower and deploying additional equipment.

Mr Rama Rao also walked along the Jubilee Hills road number 45 to



Municipal administration minister K.T. Rama Rao meets officials during his surprise visit to check the progress of the Durgam Cheruvu cable-stayed bridge work on Monday.

Inorbit mall as part of his surprise visit.

He inspected construction works on the flyover coming up on road number 45 and instructed that

it be completed on time for convenience of people.

The minister told TRANSCO officials that they expedite shifting of

power lines, so that works pending on the flyover could be completed.

The officials assured the minister that the power lines will be shifted with-

in two weeks.

The minister said completion of all these works will help ease traffic congestion in the IT corridor.

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NOTIFICATION

Applications are invited for AP Integrated Common Entrance Test (APICET) for admission into 1st year of MBA/MCA* Course and 2nd year lateral entry into MCA* Course for the academic year 2020-21. Eligible candidates are informed to submit their applications through online mode only by paying the application registration and processing fee of Rs 550/- through Payment gateway/credit/debit card/net banking. The detailed information regarding APICET-2020 is available on the website <https://sche.ap.gov.in/icet>

Commencement of Submission of Online Applications	03-03-2020
Last date for submission of Online Applications	
Without late fee : 02-04-2020	With late fee of Rs. 2000/- : 12-04-2020
With late fee of Rs 5000/-: 20-04-2020	With late fee of Rs 10,000/- : 25-04-2020

APICET-2020 EXAMINATION WILL BE HELD ON 27th April 2020
FROM 10.00 A.M TO 12.30 P.M & 2.30 P.M TO 5.00 P.M

*Subject to AICTE & APSCH rules and regulations.

TIRUPATI, Date: 29-02-2020 Sd/-CONVENER, APICET-2020

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IN BRIEF Man held for trying to loot city ATM

Hyderabad: A 30-year-old man, who had broken an ATM at Dundigal, was caught red-handed by police during the earlier hours of Monday. According to police, assistant sub-inspector K. Y. Venugopal and home guard Brahman were on patrolling duty at Suraram when they noticed a man entering the Axis Bank ATM at around 3.20 am on Monday. They got suspicious when even after 15 minutes he did not come out of the ATM. The two policemen then went closer to the ATM only to find the money-dispensing machine broken. Seeing the policemen, the man tried to run away. But the police duo chased and caught him. The accused has been identified as M. Ramesh, 30, a resident of Dundigal area. The 30-year-old man had managed to break the ATM machine but could not lay his hands on the cash. Ramesh has been arrested and produced before a court.

SHE 'TEAM RUN' AT CHARMINAR ON MARCH 6

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

In view of the International Women's Day, the Hyderabad She Team is organising the fifth edition of the She Team Run at Charminar on March 6. In a curtain-raiser event held at Hyderabad police headquarters here, Hyderabad police commissioner Anjali Kumar said that the She Team is committed to ensuring the safety of women in the city and as part of the awareness campaign, a run at Charminar is being organised on March 6, which is the fifth edition of the She Team Run, which will be held in view of the International Women's Day on March 8. The run named as 'Run for Women Safety' will start at 6 am. The run will be of 2 km and 5 km. The students are invited for the run. Later, the Commissioner launched the T-Shirts and Medals and the poster for the run.

TASK FORCE RESCUES CHILD LABOURERS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

Fourteen children who were forced to work as labourers at bangle-making units in the city were rescued and two Bihar natives who trafficked in children were apprehended by the Hyderabad Task Force police on Monday. The Task Force sleuths and the Charminar police raided two bangle making units located at Patel Nagar and Raghavendra Colony on Monday. They found 14 children from Bihar, all aged below 14, working at the units under hazardous conditions. Task Force Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police G. Chakravarthy said the bangle units are owned by Tarun Chowdhary, 30, of Ghatkatari village in Bihar and Suntush Mangi, 27, of Horma village in Bihar. Mangi and Chowdhary migrated to the city a few years ago and have been running this business. About two months ago, they went to their native place and convinced parents of poor children to let them take the children to work in Hyderabad for ₹5,000 per month. The children were sent to a home while the accused persons have been arrested, said the Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police.

FINANCIAL STRESS Deceased from Ranga Reddy, worked as driver

Man jumps from flyover, dies

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

A man committed suicide by jumping off a flyover at LB Nagar Ring Road in Hyderabad at midnight on Sunday, March 1. The deceased has been identified as Narender Goud from Ranga Reddy district, who worked as a car driver in Hyderabad. He was taken to Orange Hospital and his family informed. The incident took

● He was taken to Orange Hospital while his family was informed. The incident took place at 2.30 am ● He took the step after being frustrated by family issues and financial hardship.

place at 02.30am According to his father

Bahrain man held for rape

Illegally confined 25-yr-old victim, raping her multiple times: Police

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

A 60-year-old Bahrain national was arrested on Monday for raping a 25-year-old woman from the city and also branding her with cigarettes when she tried to resist. The police also arrested a salesman who sheltered the Bahraini, while a couple who are charged with trafficking in women are still at large.

According to the police, on October 21, Ebrahim Shukralla Mohamed Bairaam, 60, a retired nurse from Bahrain came to the city and checked-in at a hotel in Nampally. Ebrahim contacted Saber, a resident of Nabeel Colony to arrange a woman for marriage. About a week ago, he moved to Barkas and took shelter in the house of Salam Bin Sayed Bafanna, who works as a

salesman. Saber and his wife Sameena, who were acquainted with the family of the 25-year-old victim and her elder sister Nafisa (name changed), contacted them and asked them to visit his house, as he had a client who wanted to buy their house. The police said that on February 25, Nafisa and her sister went to Saber's house where he introduced them to Ebrahim,

who put forth a proposal to marry one of the siblings, but they rejected his proposal. The same day, Saber's wife Sameena called Nafisa's younger sister and asked her to visit. She then took her to Ebrahim. When her sister had not returned even late at night, a worried Nafisa contacted Saber, but he denied knowing the whereabouts of the victim. "On Sunday, Nafisa heard that her sister was illegally confined in a house in Barkas. When she went there, Ebrahim was present. Learning that her sister was illegally confined by Ebrahim, who had raped her multiple times, and also branded her on the foot with a cigarette when she resisted him, Nafisa lodged a complaint on Sunday night," the police said.

Family says it never thought techie had financial issues

Close ones felt he would never take the extreme step

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

On Monday morning, when K. Satish visited the house of his sister Kotra Swati and brother-in-law Pradeep, he expected to talk to her for some time. However, they did not open the door when he knocked. He waited for some time and tried again. There was no response. He tried for two hours and finally called the police. They broke open the door, only to see all the four family members dead.

On hearing the news, the families of Pradeep and Swati went into shock and said they could not believe they faced any problem that forced them to take the extreme step.

Pradeep's father K. Yadaiah said he had never mentioned any family issues. He said Pradeep had borrowed ₹45 lakh to invest in business because he was not satisfied with working elsewhere and wanted to start his own unit.

Mr Yadaiah said Pradeep owned his house. He had converted his personal loan to a home loan and borrowed ₹22 lakh which he had invested as a safety measure.

"If he had said anything about his struggles about financial matters, the family would definitely have helped him. We never thought of this," the family member added.

Pradeep's neighbour Ramesh said, "His family was well off and would have helped him. We never saw the spouses fighting, in fact they are a most adorable couple." Every day the children used to play outside. We last saw them on Saturday afternoon, he said.



The family in happier times.

Decomposed bodies found at residence

From page 1

Mr Pradeep's body was found on a mat on the ground, in front of his mother's framed photograph. The bodies of Swati and Jaya Krishna were found lying on the bed, while baby Kalyan Krishna's body was on the ground on another mat. The bodies were sent to the Osmania General Hospital mortuary for autopsies.

The police said that Pradeep was struggling with debt and going through financial crisis. He said in the note that he had made some wrong choices in attempting to clear debts accrued when constructing a house and in

starting his company. Police said that as per Pradeep's note he did not want his children and wife to become a burden on his father, who lives in Nalgonda. So, he took the extreme step of poisoning the trio before taking his own life.

Police teams recovered ragi porridge and potato curry, which they suspect were laced with pesticides.

Early investigations revealed that neighbours had seen the family alive on Saturday afternoon, after Kalyan Krishna returned from school. He was still in his school uniform and a target board was on the bed, indicating that

the children had been playing.

"A friend of Pradeep's had called him at noon, but the latter's voice seemed tense. But he did not reveal anything to his friend," said V. Ashok Reddy, inspector, LB Nagar police.

He said that Swathi and two children were killed on Saturday afternoon, while Pradeep killed himself later the same day. The bodies were in a decomposed condition and the doctor opined that the Pradeep killed himself hours after his family.

Pradeep has been charged with the murder of his family, and a case of suspicious death has been registered.

NRI CELL OF POLICE SEIZES SIX PASSPORTS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

The NRI Cell that deals with cases of dowry harassment and domestic violence by NRI husbands, has ensured the seizure of passports of six persons and had non-bailable warrants issued against 32.

So far, 574 cases were registered against NRI husbands including 73 at the Women Safety Wing that functions under the NRI Cell. The other 417 cases were registered in the 17 women police stations across the state.

The women police station at Hyderabad Central Crime Station has received 137 cases, the highest in the state, followed by Saroonagar police station in Rachakonda with 78 cases, and the NRI Cell with 73 cases. South Zone Women PS received 65 complaints, Begumpet 34, Gachibowli eight, two women police stations at Warangal 42, Karimnagar women PS 21, Adilabad Women PS 11, Khammam and Nalgonda PS seven each.

Father held for killing daughter

DC CORRESPONDENT KARIMNAGAR, MARCH 2

Twenty-two days after 19-year-old college student Muttu Radhika was found killed in her own home in Karimnagar, the police arrested her father M. Komuraiah for the murder.

Police said Komuraiah told them that he had spent a huge amount of money to treat Radhika as she was suffering from polio. A surgery was also performed last year. She had recovered and joined a college. However, she fell ill again. Unable to pay for her treatment again, Komuraiah

decided to kill Radhika, the police said.

Police commissioner V.B. Kamalasan Reddy said the police hunch that Radhika was murdered by someone known to her came true with Komuraiah's arrest, Mr Reddy said.

Radhika's body was found in her house in Karimnagar with her throat was slit on February 10. Her parents informed their neighbours who called the police. Komuraiah initially told the police that they found the body when they returned home from work and claimed that she was murdered during a robbery.

PHOTOJOURNALIST HACKED TO DEATH IN MULUGU DIST.

DC CORRESPONDENT, WARANGAL, MARCH 2

A photojournalist, B. Sunil Reddy, was hacked to death by unidentified persons in Mulugu district on Monday night.

Sunil had accompanied Devender, who had lent money to the owner of a bakery. They both met the police regarding the issue in the evening and later met the bakery owner to negotiate the repayment. It was said the accused took Sunil into their house and later killed him.

CONDOLENCES

Obituary notice for Bolledu Joseph Sukumar, died on 1st March 2020. Includes details of his education and family.

Beloved Parents 8th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Anniversary notice for Mrs. CH. MANIKYA, died on 08-10-2011. Includes details of her life and family.

60th BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

60th birthday notice for Mrs. CH. MANIKYA, died on 08-10-2011. Includes details of her life and family.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Notice for Late Sri JOSYULA SUBBA RAO, died on 24th Feb 2020. Includes details of his life and family.

Deeply mourned by Wife Rachael, Sons Jamien and Jason

Notice for Lt. Col. Jagan Rao [Retd], died on 01.03.2020. Includes details of his military service and family.

Uthavna

Uthavna notice for Shri MEGHRAJ AGARWAL, died on 29-02-2020. Includes details of his life and family.

UTHAVANA

Uthavana notice for Shri GULAB CHANDJI, died on 29th Feb. 2020. Includes details of his life and family.

SHRADHANJALI

Shradhanjali notice for Sri Gyankumarji Agarwal, died on 01-03-2020. Includes details of his life and family.

They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection...

Notice for DASARI RAJARAMANI DASARI GNANARATNAM, died on 07-07-1931. Includes details of her life and family.

7th Anniversary

7th anniversary notice for Ashley Justin Masquiren, died on 3-3-2013. Includes details of his life and family.

Shradhanjali

Shradhanjali notice for Shri MEGHRAJ AGARWAL, died on 29-02-2020. Includes details of his life and family.

OBITUARY

Obituary notice for Dr. V.N. WAGHRAY, died on 02-03-2020. Includes details of his education and family.

PRAYER MEETING

Prayer meeting notice for Sri Gyankumarji Agarwal, died on 01-03-2020. Includes details of the meeting and family.

In Fond Remembrance

In Fond Remembrance notice for Bro. Paul Abishegam, died on 03-03-2014. Includes details of his life and family.

6th Anniversary

6th anniversary notice for Late Sri Naran Yadagiri Goud, died on 03.03.2014. Includes details of his life and family.

10th ANNIVERSARY

10th anniversary notice for Late Sri Naran Yadagiri Goud, died on 03.03.2014. Includes details of his life and family.

INTEQAL PUR MALAL

Inteqal Pur Malal notice for Habeeb Jaffar Al Hamed, died on 2nd March 2020. Includes details of his life and family.

SHORT TAKES
HC QUASHES
QUOTAS IN PR
ELECTIONS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 2

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Monday ruled that reservations in elections to the Panchayat Raj institutions should not exceed 50 per cent. It set aside the Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy government's earlier order fixing reservations at 59.85 per cent.

The judgment delivered by a division bench headed by Chief Justice J.K. Maheshwari cleared decks for panchayat raj polls in the state though it put the government in a tight spot.

While the state would lose ₹3,000 crore if elections were not held before March 31, the entire administration is busy with the house sites programme for weaker sections and public examinations to SSC and intermediate students. The legislators would also be busy with the Budget session scheduled to commence later this month.

Sources told The Deccan Chronicle that the government might initiate the poll process and approach the Centre with a request to release the 14th Finance Commission funds. The officials were said to have kept ready the reservation formula with 50 per cent and conveyed their readiness to hold elections. "We are actively considering a proposal to hold elections to mandal and zilla parishad immediately and gram panchayats at a later date," sources said adding that a final decision would be taken after holding discussions in the cabinet on Wednesday.

Municipal administration Minister Botsa Satyanarayana told mediapersons that the government would honour the verdict and take steps to complete election process within a month.

No new welfare plans for AP in next fiscal

Govt's focus will only be on sustaining on-going schemes

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 2

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is unlikely to announce any new welfare initiatives in the next fiscal even as he is determined to aggressively pursue monetisation of government lands for augmenting Andhra Pradesh's revenues.

The Chief Minister, according to sources, has been convinced by his finance managers to refrain from piling additional burden on welfare, whose cost has almost touched ₹ 45,000 crore in the current financial year. Focus will now be only on sustaining the on-going schemes.

The finance department is giving final touches to the state's 2020-2021 budget, which will be introduced in the assembly in the next few days. Sources say the Chief Minister has given his nod to bring down the outlay to less than ₹2 lakh crore as against current year's outlay of ₹2.25 lakh crore.

"For decades, successive governments have kept on increasing the budget fearing criticism from Opposition that spending is being compromised," a senior official pointed out. But the Chief Minister has, however, decided to be realistic this time. Income and expenditure trends available so far indicate that only about 60-65 per cent

Jagan to monetise govt lands in prime locations

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 2

The state government will aggressively pursue monetisation of government lands, both vacant as well as with buildings, which have been identified in all major cities and towns.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has held a detailed discussion on putting government lands to effective use with National Building Construction Company chairman and managing director P.K. Gupta, who called on the CM here on Tuesday.

In the first phase, government lands in prime areas of major cities will be monetised through NBCC, which will create

and sell commercial space. If an area has huge potential, the government will relocate its existing offices and take up commercial development on such areas, sources indicated.

AP had taken up the "Mission Build Andhra Pradesh" initiative with NBCC in November last year. Following up on the project, it took up the elaborate exercise of identifying vacant government lands, small parcel sites with dilapidated government buildings, and lands with government office buildings in good condition.

"We have identified potential lands. We will have better clarity once the house sites' programme of the state gov-

ernment is over, because of some of the lands might be used for that scheme," a revenue official told Deccan Chronicle. "We have also proposed to take up immediate construction on few sites, whose potential is very high," he stated.

The state government is hoping to increase its revenues by promoting construction activity on a large scale. Apart from the Mission Build Andhra Pradesh initiative, the housing department is hoping construction activity will witness a fillip, thereby increasing tax revenues from large-scale construction of houses on sites allotted to weaker sections.

of the estimated revenue will be realised. This will automatically have a bearing on the 2020-21 budget outlay.

The estimated revenue in the first ever budget of the Yuva Jana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) government for 2019-2020 was ₹1.78 lakh crore. Of this, ₹85,000 crore have been realised till end of January due to

cut in devolution of funds and grants from the centre, besides a fall in the state's own revenues.

Sources said the government is expecting that financial stress in the next fiscal will ease out. The present government has cleared half the arrears of ₹ 40,000 crore passed on to it by the previous TD government.

"In addition, we lost about ₹15,000 crore due to certain self-goals, which would not be repeated next year," a senior official said, referring to developments like non-availability of sand for months together, which badly hit construction activity that resulted in a cascading effect on Andhra Pradesh's economy.



GSLV-F10 launch vehicle is seen moving towards the launch pad from the Vehicle Assembly Building at Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Shar, Sriharikota.

- DC

Isro readies launch of hi-tech earth focus satellite

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 2

The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) is gearing up to launch the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (Gslv-F10) with Geo Imaging Satellite (Gisat-1) from the Second Launch Pad of Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR in Sriharikota.

The launch is tentatively scheduled at 5.43 pm on March 5, subject to weather

conditions. Weighing about 2,268 kg, Gisat-1 is the first state-of-the-art agile earth observation satellite which will be placed in a geosynchronous transfer orbit by the Gslv rocket.

Subsequently, the satellite will reach its final geostationary orbit about 36,000 km above the earth using its on board propulsion system. A four-metre diameter Ogive shaped payload fairing is being flown for the first time in this flight, which is the

14th of the Gslv. Operating from geostationary orbit, Gisat-1 will facilitate near real time observation of the Indian sub-continent, under cloud free condition, at frequent intervals.

Registrations for witnessing launch of the mission from Launch View Gallery in SHAR in Sriharikota have commenced. Further details can be accessed from <https://www.shar.gov.in/VSCREGISTRATION/>

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IN BRIEF

Selection of Haj assistants

Hyderabad: Telangana State Haj Committee Chairman Mohd. Masiullah Khan has informed that the interviews of Khadimul Hujjaj will be held on March 4 between 10 am and 5 pm at Haj House, Nampally, Hyderabad. In this programme, TSHC chairman, two members of Central Haj Committee and TSHC executive officer B. Shafiullah will be present. The draw of lots will be held on March 5 at 3 pm in the presence of the media. A total of 207 applications have been received for Khadimul Hujjaj category of which 184 applicants are eligible for the interview.

NRIs seek non-availability certificate

Municipal officials say there has been rise in number of people coming to register births

MADHY DEEKSHITH | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 2

Fearing the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and National Population Register (NPR), people are thronging to the city to register their births. The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation in a span of six weeks has issued 120 non-availability certificates, which is a primary process prior to the registration of birth of those born outside India and children born at home.

Municipal officials say there has been a huge increase in the numbers since two days, and 200 says 150 above applications have been issued. On average 200 non availability certificates are issued annually but in two months alone 120 have been issued. According to section 20 of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969, there is a special provision for registration of births and deaths of citizens who are born or have died out-

side the country. In the case of any child of Indian parentage born outside India, in respect of whom information has not been received as provided under the Citizenship Act, 1955 (57 of 1955), the parents of the child when they return to India with a view to settling down here, may at any time within 60 days from the date of the arrival of the child in India, get the birth of the child registered under provisions of this Act. Similarly, if the child was born in India and the provisions of section 13 can apply to the birth of such child after the expiry of the period of the aforesaid 60 days. Section 13 says, any birth of which information is given to the registrar after the expiry of the period specified, they could be registered on payment of such late fee. The municipal corporation would issue the non-availability certificate to the applicants and they would be asked to visit the District Collectorate, where a Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) will conduct a survey.

where a person of the rank of Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) will conduct a survey. After conducting the survey, if the revenue official is satisfied, the application will be redirected to the civic body for the issuance of a birth certificate for children who are born outside India. Authorities also claim that a birth certificate issued by the Indian Embassy in any country is valid across the globe. Such birth certificate issued by the embassy should be produced within 60 days of the arrival for getting registration. Since many people are ignorant of this provision, they been thronging the civic body and paying brokers in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) and Revenue department. The middleman collects a whopping ₹15,000 for each birth certificate. Officials stressed that the due process has to be followed for children who were delivered at home in the city.

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IN BRIEF

Samsung starts building R&D centre

Hanoi, March 2: Samsung Electronics has started building a \$220 million research and development centre in Vietnam, the South Korean tech giant's local unit said on Monday. Construction of the centre in Hanoi will be completed by the end of 2022, Samsung Vietnam said in a statement, adding that the centre will employ between 2,200 and 3,000 people. Samsung is the largest single foreign investor in Vietnam, with investments totalling \$17 billion, it said. The centre is the largest of its kind in Southeast Asia and will enhance the company's research capability in such areas as artificial intelligence, internet of things, big data and 5G, it said. The Vietnamese government earlier on Monday announced the commencement of building of the R&D centre. — Reuters

2 in Amazon down with Covid-19

Washington D.C., March 2: Amazon.com said late on Sunday that two employees in Milan, Italy, have contracted Covid-19 and are under quarantine. "We're supporting the affected employees who were in Milan and are now in quarantine," company spokesman Dan Perlet said. The world's biggest online retailer said it was unaware of any U.S. employees who had contracted the virus. On Friday, Amazon told employees to stop non-essential travel, within the United States and beyond. The company also confirmed on Sunday it is moving some recruiting interviews to video rather than in person. The United States on Saturday hiked its travel advisory and urged U.S. citizens not to travel to the Veneto and Lombardy regions of Italy. — Reuters

Soon, free WiFi in flights in India

New Delhi, March 2: The central government on Monday permitted airlines operating in India to provide in-flight Wi-Fi services to passengers, according to an official notification. "The Pilot-in-Command may permit the access of Internet services by passengers on board an aircraft in flight, through Wi-Fi on board, when laptop, smartphone, tablet, smartwatch, e-reader or a point of sale device is used in flight mode or airplane mode," the notification stated. While taking the delivery of its first Boeing 787-9 aircraft at Everett on last Friday, Vistara CEO Leslie Thng had told reporters that it would be the first plane in India to provide in-flight Wi-Fi services. — PTI



FB REMOVES NETANYAHU POLL VIDEO

Jerusalem, March 2: Facebook has removed a video by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for claiming that he was very close to victory, in violation of election laws that forbid the publication of data, according to a media report on Monday. Israelis voted on Monday in parliamentary elections. Netanyahu claimed on Sunday that his ruling Likud party's internal polling showed he was a stone's throw away from a Knesset majority that would allow the formation of a right-wing government. "Our data from three hours ago shows we are at 59.7 seats," he told supporters, referring to his bloc of right-wing and religious parties. We are very close to victory, the prime minister claimed. Discussing polling data is forbidden as per Israeli election laws during the seventy hours preceding polls. Facebook said that they had received a complaint asking that they remove campaign material that violated the local law, and therefore removed it, Ha'aretz Online reported. — PTI

Lundmark new Nokia CEO

Suri, who headed the group for 6 yrs to step down in September 2020

DAWN OF A NEW ERA AT NOKIA



• Pekka Lundmark is currently President and CEO of Fortum, a leading energy company based in Finland.

• As per media reports, he consistently delivered robust total shareholder returns and positioned Fortum to be a strong player in the transforming global energy sector.

• Previously, Lundmark served as President and CEO of Konecranes, a global material-handling technology firm.

• Interestingly, from 1990-2000, he held multiple executive positions at Nokia, including Vice President of Strategy and Business Development.



• 2014: Nokia appoints Rajeev Suri, the CEO of its mobile networks division, as the group's new chief executive following the completion of the Microsoft deal.

• 2015: Nokia sells its mapping and location service HERE to a consortium of German automakers.

• 2016: Nokia agrees to buy Franco-American rival Alcatel-Lucent - a deal intended to help it compete with Sweden's Ericsson (ERICB.ST) and China's Huawei (HWT.UJ) in the networks market.

• 2017: Nokia launches the world's fastest network chips, breaking into the Juniper (JNPR.N) and Cisco (CSCO.O) dominated core router market and giving a boost to its network business.

Lundmark, head of Fortum since 2015, held multiple executive positions at Nokia between 1990 and 2000, including vice president of strategy and business development at Nokia Networks. Lundmark led Fortum to embark on a bold attempt to gain control of its German rival Uniper, resulting in a power deal between the companies that has yet to be resolved. Before his time at Fortum, Lundmark led Finnish crane maker Konecranes for 10 years until 2015. "He has a record of leadership and shareholder value creation at large business-to-business companies; deep experience in telecommunications networks, industrial digitization, and key markets such as the United States and China," Nokia Chairman Risto Siilasmaa said in a statement. The chairman also cited his focus "on strategic clarity, operational excellence and strong financial performance."

News reported that the Finnish telecom network equipment maker was considering asset sales and mergers. However, a source close to the company told Reuters there was no truth to the report. The Finland-based mobile handset maker declined to comment. — Reuters

AT&T launches online TV services

New York, March 2: American multinational conglomerate AT&T is launching a new internet-delivered TV service Monday as it struggles with a shrinking DirecTV satellite business.



WHAT IS VIDEO STREAMING SERVICE?

The new service, AT&T TV, will have most of the same channels offered on DirecTV, but it will come over the internet rather than a satellite dish. AT&T has been testing the service in 13 markets and is now making it available to anyone.

AT&T will send subscribers an Android streaming-TV box to use the service. The free device will also come with Netflix and other streaming apps, the way Comcast's X1 cable box does. The company is trying to adapt to the shift to streaming video, as subscribers to traditional cable and satellite TV services fall.

In May, it's launching HBO Max, a month streaming service that will marry HBO shows with original programs and TV shows and movies from WarnerMedia.

AT&T also has an online package that started as a cheaper service with fewer channels than a traditional bundle, but it is shedding customers after price increases.

AT&T is now trying to downplay that service in favor of the new AT&T TV.

Customers don't need to be AT&T internet or wireless customers to sign up, although there are dis-

counted packages available. And the company is promoting the service by saying it won't count against AT&T data caps. — AP

LINKEDIN GOING SNAPCHATTY



• Professional networking site LinkedIn is testing the "stories" feature.

• While Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp (where it is called 'status') already have the story feature.

• Stories were first introduced by Snapchat in 2013 and became an instant success. So much so that Facebook was interested to Snapchat.

• Instagram was the first social media app to take a cue from Snapchat and introduce the stories feature in August 2016. It later also introduced the live video feature too.

• The latest innovation is being seen as an attempt by LinkedIn to reach out to a younger audience, which uses the feature on other apps.

• The sequencing of the Stories format is great for sharing key moments from work events, the full-screen narrative style makes it easy to share tips and tricks that help us work smarter, and the way Stories opens up new messaging threads makes it easier for someone to say, "and by the way... I noticed you know Linda, could you introduce me?"



PETE DAVIS, LinkedIn official

'Monday effect' may be impacting your deliveries

Washington, March 2: The "Monday effect" — that letdown of returning to work after a weekend — along with other factors may lead to longer times between ordering and shipping, and more errors in order fulfillment, according to a study.

MONDAY MORNING BLUES

Researchers, including those from Lehigh University in the United States, found that process interruptions that occur when operations are shut down over the weekend, along with human factors like the "Monday blues", hurt supply chain performance on Mondays.

• Researchers, including those from Lehigh University in the United States, found "Monday blues" hurts supply chain performance on Mondays.

• The study, published in the journal Information Systems Research, is the first to look at the impact of the "Monday Effect"

• The researchers used a dataset of more than 800,000 transaction records gathered during a 12-month period from the US General Services Administration to look at variations in operations performance by days of the week.

The study, published in the journal Information Systems Research, is the first to look at the impact of the "Monday Effect" on supply chains, the sequence of processes that move a product or service from creation to customer. The researchers used a dataset of more than 800,000 transaction records gathered during a 12-month period from the US General Services Administration to look at variations in operations performance by days of the week. They also analysed order and fulfilment data from one of the largest supermarket chains in China.

The team, including researchers from the University of Maryland and University of California, San Diego in

the US, found the "Monday Effect" was prevalent and significant. For example, time between receipt of a purchase order and shipping is 9.68 per cent longer on Mondays than other weekdays, on average, said Oliver Yao, a professor at Lehigh University. Mondays, it turns out, are subject to both process- and human-related impacts, said

Yao. The researchers noted that weekends create bottlenecks at distribution centres that are tackled on Mondays as orders are processed, picked, staged and shipped to customers. Humans completing processing activities are impacted by adjusting to returning to work, more prone to errors and less efficient, they said. Most supply chain managers are unaware of this impact, but they can take steps to counteract the "Monday Effect", Yao said. The most effective way to reduce the Monday performance gap, the researchers explained, is integrating technology solutions, such as automated order processing systems. Yao found using electronic markets can improve Monday performance by as much as 90 per cent. For example, technology reduces the Monday performance gap by 94 per cent in order-to-shipment time, 71 per cent in complete orders fulfilled, and 80 per cent in the portion of shipments that have incorrect numbers of products, he said. — PTI



AMAZON SET TO FIGHT \$277M EUROPEAN UNION ORDER

Brussels, March 2: Amazon will on Thursday seek to overturn an EU order to repay about 250 million euros in back taxes to Luxembourg at Europe's second-highest court.

The European Commission said in its 2017 ruling that the tax deal, which covered the period from May 2006 to June 2014, meant almost three-quarters of Amazon's business went untaxed.

The EU competition watchdog said the Grand Duchy allowed the U.S. online retailer to shift a significant portion of its profits from a subsidiary to a holding company without paying tax, giving the company an unfair advantage.

At issue was the royalty paid by the subsidiary Amazon EU on certain intellectual property rights to Amazon Europe Holding Technologies, a company which the European Union said had no employees, no offices and no business activities.

Amazon said in its filing to the General Court that the EU had not proven its case, which it claims is riddled with legal and factual errors. The hearing in Luxembourg, of case T-318/18, will run to Friday. The company said the EU ruling also breached principles of legal certainty, because it relied on a flawed reference framework.

It accused EU enforcers of discrimination by using 2017 OECD guidelines for a tax deal agreed with Luxembourg in 2003. In addition, Amazon said the EU has no case as the 10-year limitation period has expired.

Apple, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, Starbucks and scores of other multinationals have also been caught in the EU crackdown in recent years over their tax deals with countries in the bloc. — Reuters

FUTURE | READY Researchers claim AI, ML could advance sleep care

AI may help treat sleep disorders

Washington, March 2: Artificial intelligence (AI) may help improve the efficiency and precision in sleep medicine, resulting in more patient-centred care and better outcomes, according to researchers. The data collected during polysomnography — the most comprehensive type of sleep study — is well-positioned for enhanced analysis through AI and machine-learning, according to a statement from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. "When we typically think of AI in sleep medicine, the obvious use case is for the scoring of sleep and associated events," said lead author and committee Chair Cathy Goldstein.

"This would streamline the processes of sleep laboratories and free up sleep technologist time for direct patient care," said Goldstein, an associate professor at the University of Michigan in the US. Because of the vast amounts of data collected by sleep centres, AI and machine learning could advance sleep care, resulting in more accurate diagnoses, according to the statement published in the Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine. AI could also boost prediction of disease and treatment prognosis, characterisation of disease subtypes, precision in sleep scoring, and optimisation and personalisation of sleep treatments, the

statement said. Goldstein noted that AI could be used to automate sleep scoring while identifying additional insights from sleep data. "AI could allow us to derive more meaningful information from sleep studies, given that our current summary metrics, for example, the apnea-hypopnea index, are not predictive of the health and quality of life outcomes that are important to patients," she said. "AI might help us understand mechanisms underlying obstructive sleep apnea, so we can select the right patient at the right time, as opposed to one-size-fits-all or trial and error approaches," Goldstein said.

The researchers noted that important considerations for the integration of AI into the sleep medicine practice include transparency and disclosure, testing on novel data, and laboratory integration. The statement recommends that manufacturers disclose the intended population and goal of any programme used in the evaluation of patients. They should also test programmes intended for clinical use on independent data, and aid sleep centres in evaluation of AI-based software performance, the researchers said. "They hold great promise for medicine in general," she explained. — PTI



IN BRIEF

Nigeria 'bandit' attack kills 50

Kano (Nigeria): At least 50 people were killed in attacks by armed 'bandits' on villages in Nigeria's northern Kaduna state on Sunday, local officials said. "So far 50 bodies have been recovered but the figure is not conclusive and is very likely to rise as rescue efforts are still under way," Zayyad Ibrahim, a lawmaker in the Nigerian parliament, said on Monday. Local councillor Dayyabu Kerawa said the attacks were in retaliation for villagers allegedly assisting local military operations against the so-called bandits.

Laden doctor on hunger strike

Islamabad: The Pakistani doctor who helped the CIA track and kill Osama bin Laden has launched a hunger strike from his prison cell, his lawyer and family said on Monday. Shakeel Afridi has been languishing behind bars for years since his fake vaccination programme helped US agents track and kill the Al Qaeda leader in 2011. "It is to protest the injustices and inhumane attitudes being committed against him and his family," his brother Jamil Afridi said. His attorney Qamar Nadeem also confirmed the hunger strike. Afridi was jailed for 33 years in May 2012 after he was convicted of having ties to militants, a charge he has always denied. His sentence was later reduced by 10 years. Some US lawmakers have branded the case as revenge for his help in the search for the Al Qaeda chief.

7 Rohingyas shot dead in B'desh

Cox's Bazar: Bangladeshi elite police on Monday shot dead seven suspected Rohingya gangsters involved in drug and people smuggling, a spokesman for the force said. Tensions are rising in south-east Bangladesh two and a half years after hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees fled a military offensive in Myanmar. The latest gunfight came after a recent spike in human smuggling as gangs lure refugees onto rickety fishing boats for often dangerous sea journeys to Malaysia. The Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) said it was involved in a three-hour shootout with members of a bandit group led by notorious Rohingya gang leader known as Zokir. "So far we have recovered seven bodies with bullet wounds," RAB spokesman Abdullah Sheikh Sadi said. He added that it was unclear if Zokir was among the dead.

N. KOREA FIRES 2 PROJECTILES INTO THE SEA

Seoul, March 2: North Korea fired what appeared to be two short-range ballistic missiles on Monday, the South's military said, weeks after Pyongyang threatened to demonstrate a "new strategic weapon" and its deadline for Washington to offer sanctions relief expired. The launch was the nuclear-armed North's first for more than three months and came as nuclear negotiations with the United States remain at a standstill. The two devices were fired eastwards over the sea from the Wonsan area on the east coast and flew 240 kilometres (150 miles) at a maximum altitude of 35 kilometres, the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff said. They were "believed to be short-range ballistic missiles," a JCS official said. South Korea's security ministers expressed "strong concern" that the North was "carrying out actions giving rise to military tensions," the presidential Blue House said. Japan's defence ministry said there was no indication of anything coming down in its waters or exclusive economic zone, but added: "Recent repeated launches of ballistic and other missiles by North Korea are a serious issue." The launch came as Pyongyang battles to prevent a Covid-19 outbreak and days after the one-year anniversary of the collapsed Hanoi summit between leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump. Negotiations have since been deadlocked over sanctions relief and what the North would be willing to give up in return, despite a high-profile June meeting in the Demilitarized Zone that divides the peninsula.

End to truce: Taliban to target Afghan forces

Kabul, March 2: The Taliban said on Monday they were resuming offensive operations against Afghan security forces, ending the partial truce that preceded the signing of a deal between the insurgents and Washington. The declaration comes only a day after President Ashraf Ghani said he would continue the partial truce at least until talks between Afghan officials and the Taliban kick-off, supposedly on March 10. It ran for one week ahead of the signing of the historic accord in Doha and continued over the weekend. "The reduction in violence... has ended now and our operations will continue as normal," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told AFP. "As per the (US-Taliban) agreement, our mujahideen will not attack foreign forces but our operations will continue against the Kabul

administration forces." Fawad Aman, deputy spokesman for the defence ministry said, "We have not had any reports of any big attacks in the country yet." Since the deal signing on Saturday, the Taliban have been publicly celebrating their "victory" over the US. Under the terms of the deal, foreign forces will quit Afghanistan within 14 months, subject to Taliban security guarantees and a pledge by

the insurgents to hold talks with the Kabul government. The dramatic fall in attacks due to last week's partial truce offered Afghans a rare opportunity to go about their daily lives without fear of violence. Ghani warned the insurgents Monday that he was not committed to a key clause in the Doha deal involving the release of thousands of Taliban prisoners. — AFP

3 killed, 11 hurt as bomb goes off

Khost, March 2: A bombing at a football match killed three people and injured 11 others on Monday in eastern Afghanistan, a police official told AFP, as the Taliban announced an end to a partial truce in the country. "A motorcycle rigged with a bomb exploded during a football match," said

Sayed Ahmad Babazai, police chief of eastern Khost province, giving details of the toll. Abdul Fatah Wakman, president of the Khost Football Federation said the three killed were brothers. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. The limited truce between the Taliban, US

and Afghan forces preceded the signing of a landmark deal on Saturday. But on Monday the Taliban said they would resume attacks against Afghan forces, a day after President Ashraf Ghani committed to continuing the truce till talks between Kabul and the Taliban kick off, likely on March 10. — AFP



Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg participates in the Edmund Pettus Bridge crossing reenactment marking the 55th anniversary of Selmas Bloody Sunday in Alabama. He announced his campaign's end in a speech at the Century Center in Indiana. — AFP

Buttigieg exits Prez campaign

Gay candidate's withdrawal to shake up race, boost challenger Biden

Washington, March 2: Pete Buttigieg, the openly gay US presidential candidate, on Sunday ended his campaign to be the Democratic nominee — giving a major boost to fellow centrist Joe Biden. The 38-year-old Buttigieg's surprise decision was set to shake up the race this week when 14 states vote on "Super Tuesday." It is expected to further boost the fortunes of Biden after the former vice president scored a resounding victory in South Carolina's primary on Saturday in the contest to see who faces President Donald Trump in November. Biden has emerged as the chief moderate challenger to frontrunner Bernie Sanders, the firebrand leftist who has taken the race by storm and is looking to score big wins on

SUPER TUESDAY

- The US territory of American Samoa will have its caucus that day; as a territory it will not participate in the general election in November.
- The Democrats Abroad primary, for Democrats living outside of the United States, will also begin voting on March 3, and conclude on March 10.

• States of Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, and Virginia will all hold their presidential primaries on that date.

1,357

of the 3,979 pledged delegates to be awarded to the candidates in the Democratic primaries will be allotted on Super Tuesday.

1,617

total delegates could be awarded to the candidates.

- The two most populous states in the country, California and Texas, allot 415 and 228 delegates, respectively, on Super Tuesday.

Tuesday in states such as crown jewel California. Buttigieg, a military veteran and former mayor of South Bend, Indiana,

addressed supporters in his home town. "The truth is that the path has narrowed to a close — for our candidacy, if not for our

cause," he said. Buttigieg did not mention Sanders by name in his speech, but he has publicly stated he believes the 78-year-old senator's "inflexible" political approach would fail in a match-up against Trump. "We need a broad-based agenda that can truly deliver for the American people, not one that gets lost in ideology," he said. Buttigieg however stopped short of endorsing Biden or any other candidate. He emerged as a major player by narrowly winning the Iowa caucuses, earning widespread attention for his unflustered and professional approach in an often bitter Democratic nomination battle. But his third place finish in Nevada and a worse showing in South Carolina confirmed he had struggled to build a broad coalition, including support from black voters — a key Democratic demographic. — AFP



Nawaz Sharif

PAK TO REQUEST UK FOR SHARIF'S DEPORTATION

Lahore, March 2: Pakistan will request the British government to deport Nawaz Sharif, a senior official said while alleging that the "absconding" former prime minister was playing a "fixed match" regarding his illness while in London. Casting doubts on the illness of the 70-year-old three-time former prime minister, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information Firdous Ashiq Awan said Sharif has neither undergone any heart surgery nor was he admitted to hospital for any emergency during the last three months. Sharif left for London in November last year for treatment after the Lahore High Court allowed him to go abroad on medical grounds for four weeks. — PTI

Israelis vote in third general polls

Jerusalem, March 2: Israelis started voting on Monday in an unprecedented third parliamentary elections in less than a year to break the deadlock on government formation, with the country's longest serving Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fighting for his political survival amid indictments on graft charges. Neither Netanyahu, who heads the right-wing Likud party, nor his main challenger, Benny Gantz — leader of the Blue and White alliance — were able to put together majority coalitions following the last two elections.

• **NEITHER NETANYAHU** nor his main challenger, Benny Gantz were able to put together majority coalitions following the last two elections. The final opinion polls suggested the latest round is too close to call. Some 10,631 polling stations opened today morning at 7 am Israel time to enable about 6.45 million eligible voters to cast their ballots. There will also be 14 special polling stations for Israelis quarantined due to possible exposure to Covid-19. Exit polls will be released immediately

after 10 pm, with final results expected on Tuesday morning. Israel's highly divided polity threw two inconclusive elections result in April 9 and September 17 polls with nobody managing to muster support of 61 Knesset members. If the results of the third round of polls are aligned with current predictions, the stalemate is likely to linger which complicates the pitch for the Israeli prime minister who will go on trial in just two weeks after Monday's vote. Netanyahu, 70, stands trial over a series of corruption allegations, which

he has denied. He claimed on Sunday that his party's internal polling showed that he was a hair's breadth away from a Knesset (Israeli Parliament) majority that would allow the formation of a right-wing government, an announcement that led to charges of breaking election laws against him. Attorney Shachar Ben Meir filed a petition against Netanyahu with the Central Elections Committee on Sunday accusing the Netanyahu of breaking election laws that forbid the publication of polling data in the three days before an election. — PTI



Migrants receive food distributed by NGOs near the Pazarkule border gate in Edirne, at the Turkish-Greek border on Monday. — AP

MANILA MALL SECURITY GUARD SURRENDERS, FREES HOSTAGES

Manila, March 2: A sacked security guard who shot one person and took about 30 others hostage at a Manila shopping mall on Monday surrendered to authorities, ending a day-long standoff that terrified shoppers and drew a massive police response. The guard walked out of the V-Mall, where he was allowed to speak briefly to the press before heavily armed officers tackled and arrested him. He complained about be-

ing mistreated by his employers. Hostages were also led out of the building, but police did not say whether any of them had been hurt nor the exact number caught up in the violence. The drama started when the suspect shot a security guard, who was rushed to hospital in stable condition, said Francis Zamora, mayor of the San Juan City. Zamora told reporters the hostage-taker was upset after losing his job. — AFP

PUBLIC HEALTH Presently, abortion allowed in cases of rape or if mother's health is at risk

Argentina abortion: Prez proposes legalisation

Buenos Aires, March 2: Argentina's President Alberto Fernández has said he will send a bill to legalise abortion to Congress within the next 10 days. Mr Fernández, who was sworn in as president in December, has previously described abortion as "a matter of public health." In Argentina, abortion is

allowed only in cases of rape, or if the mother's health is in danger. It is largely prohibited across Latin America, except in restricted cases. If the bill is passed, Argentina will become the largest country in the region to legalise abortion. "Abortion happens, it's a fact," the president said in his first annual address to Congress. "A state

should protect citizens in general and women in particular. And in the 21st Century, every society needs to respect the individual choice of its members to decide freely about their bodies," he said. Mr Fernández also promised to introduce a programme to improve sex education. A previous attempt to change the law

in Argentina, where the population is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, failed. In 2018, a bill to legalise abortion within the first 14 weeks of pregnancy was narrowly approved by Congress, but was later rejected by the country's Senate. Unlike last time, however, the country's president is behind the bill.

The debate surrounding abortion in Argentina was reignited in February last year, when an 11-year-old rape victim gave birth by C-section. The girl, who had been raped by her grandmother's 65-year-old partner, had requested an abortion but the procedure was repeatedly delayed over questions about the identity of her guardian.

Cuba, Uruguay and Guyana are currently the only Latin American countries to permit abortion in the first weeks of pregnancy. While some other countries allow abortion in the case of rape or risk to the mother's life, it is completely banned in El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti. — Agencies

IN BRIEF

Singapore cases increase to 106

Singapore: Singapore's Health Ministry confirmed four more Covid-19 cases on Sunday, including a Japanese national and two maids from Myanmar and the Philippines. Three of the latest cases are from a cluster at Wizlearn Technologies in the Science Park hub within the residential and industrial region on the west coast. The other is a 54-year-old Japanese who was in Singapore on a work pass, reported the Channel News Asia. Among the new cases is a 25-year-old maid from Myanmar, who was in the Indonesian island of Batam, from February 21-23. Another is a 41-year-old Filipino woman, also on a work pass here but does not have any travel history to China.

Indonesia has first infection

Jakarta: Indonesia on Monday reported its first confirmed case of Covid-19, after health officials hit back at questions over its apparent lack of infected patients. A 64-year-old woman and her daughter, 31, tested positive at a Jakarta hospital, said health minister Terawan Agus Putranto. "This morning I received the test results and they were positive," he told reporters in the capital. "Both are in good condition...they don't have serious breathing difficulties." Officials said that the pair may have been in close contact with a Japanese national who has since tested positive after returning to Malaysia. Last month, Indonesia criticised a US study that questioned why the Southeast Asian archipelago of over 260 million, with strong links to China, had not recorded a case of the virus.

Chilean writer Sepulveda falls ill

Lisbon: Chilean writer Luis Sepulveda, who lives in northern Spain, has contracted the new Covid-19, according to the health authorities in Portugal where the best-selling author recently visited. The 70-year-old author started showing symptoms of the virus on February 25 after he had returned to his home in Spain's Asturias region from a literary festival in neighbouring Portugal. The regional Asturias government announced on Saturday that it had detected the first Covid-19 case in the region, without identifying him. "The patient is stable. His wife, a 66-year-old woman is also displaying the symptoms and is being tested," and both have been admitted to hospital, it added. The Portuguese authorities called on all those who had been in contact with Sepulveda during last month's Correntes d'Escritas literary festival in Porto to make themselves known. So far Portugal hasn't registered a single confirmed case of the Covid-19 outbreak while Spain has had 73 cases. Sepulveda was exiled from Chile in 1975 because of his political activities.

ENERGY MEET SHELVED OVER CONTAGION

Houston, March 2: Growing Covid-19 cases in many countries, including in the US where two persons have died from the disease, has prompted the organisers to cancel one of the world's most prestigious annual energy conferences to be held here.

The 39th CERAWeek energy conference, which brings together oil ministers and industry executives, was set to be held in Houston from March 9 to 13, with delegates from over 80 countries expected to attend. "In light of growing concerns around Covid-19, we've made the difficult decision to cancel CERAWeek 2020 and CWAgora," CERAWeek said a tweet. The organisers said on Sunday they spent several weeks focusing on the health and safety of conference attendees and speakers, established a medical partnership with Houston Methodist Hospital and created an extensive protocol. However, IHS Markit, the London-based information and insights company and the organiser of the conference, determined that the Covid-19 was moving quickly around the world. "We have made this decision reluctantly and after deep consideration. We recognise the dedication and importance of the CERAWeek community. We thank you for your engagement and your commitment to CERAWeek," IHS Markit said in a statement.

2nd person succumbs to Covid-19 in US

Researchers say contagion may have been circulating for weeks undetected in greater Seattle area

Seattle, March 2: Health officials in Washington state said Sunday night that a second person had died from the Covid-19. Researchers said the virus may have been circulating for weeks undetected in the greater Seattle area. In a statement, Public Health-Seattle & King County said a man in his 70s died Saturday. On Friday, health officials said a man in his 50s died of Covid-19. Both had underlying health conditions, and both were being treated at a hospital in Kirkland, Washington, east of Seattle. Washington state now has 12 confirmed cases. State and local authorities stepped up testing for the illness as the number of new cases grew nationwide, with new infections announced in California, Illinois, Rhode Island, New York and Washington state. Authorities in the Seattle area said two more people had been diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus, both men in their 60s who were in critical condition, and two health care workers in California were also diagnosed. A man in his 50s died in Washington on Saturday, and health officials said 50 more people in a nursing facility in Kirkland, Washington, are sick and being tested.

On Sunday night, the International Association of Fire Fighters said 25 members who responded to calls for help at the nursing facility are being quarantined. The first US case was a Washington state man who had visited China, where the virus first emerged, but several recent cases in the US have had no known connection to travellers. In California, two health care workers in the San Francisco Bay area who cared for an earlier Covid-19 patient were diagnosed with the virus on Sunday, the Alameda and Solano counties said in a joint statement.

The health care workers are both employed at NorthBay VacaValley Hospital in Vacaville, California, and had exposure to a patient treated there before being transferred to UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento, the statement said. That patient was the first person in the US discovered to have contracted the Covid-19 with no known overseas travel. Alameda County declared a state of emergency on Sunday following the news. Elsewhere, authorities announced Sunday a third case in Illinois and Rhode Island and New York's first cases as worried Americans swarmed stores to stock up on basic goods such as bottled water, canned foods and toilet paper.

The hospitalised patient in Rhode Island is a man in his 40s who had travelled to Italy in February. New York confirmed Sunday that a woman in her late 30s contracted the virus while travelling in Iran. The patient is not in serious condition. She has respiratory symptoms and has been in a controlled situation since arriving in New York, according to a statement from the governor's office. As the fallout continued, Vice President Mike Pence and Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar sought to reassure the American public that the federal government is working to make sure state and local authorities are able to test.



Two people walk away from the Pyramid, the main entrance to the Louvre museum, located in central Paris on Monday. The Louvre was closed for a second day running after staff refused to work due to Covid-19 fears. — AFP

Chinese gets death for stabbing 2 at outbreak control checkpoint

Beijing, March 2: A Chinese court has sentenced a man to death for fatally stabbing two officials at a checkpoint set up to control the spread of the new Covid-19 outbreak. The virus has infected over 80,000 people and killed nearly 3,000 in mainland China — prompting a wide network of temperature checks, travel restrictions, residential checks and closures nationwide.

Many villages and communities have also implemented their own blockades and tough measures to keep people out, fearful that travellers could infect their communities. On Sunday a court handed down a death sentence to a 23-year-old man after he stabbed two officials at one local village checkpoint. The incident happened on February 6 when Ma Jianguo was driving a minivan through a checkpoint at Luo Meng village in Honghe, southwestern Yunnan province, where he was stopped. After Ma refused to cooperate with officials, his passenger began trying

China toll at 2,912 after 42 fatalities

Beijing, March 2: China has reported 42 new fatalities from the novel Covid-19 outbreak, taking the death toll in the country to 2,912, Chinese health officials said on Monday, as the rapid spread of the epidemic wreaks havoc globally causing over 3,000 deaths. The deadly virus has spread to more than 70 countries and infected more than 88,000 people. China's National Health Commission said on Sunday it received reports of 202 new cases. — PTI

to remove the roadblock, the court said, and the local official started filming Ma and the other man on his mobile phone. A furious Ma stabbed the official — a local poverty alleviation cadre — in the chest and abdomen with a knife

- The epidemic has killed 3,000 globally.
- Virus has hit over 70 countries and infected more than 88,000
- 32,652 patients still being treated and 44,462 patients discharged
- By Sunday, 98 confirmed cases with two deaths in Hong Kong, 10 confirmed cases in Macao SAR, and 40 in Taiwan with one death.

and then attacked another official who came to the victim's aid. The two died from their wounds. The court said that though Ma "voluntarily surrendered and truthfully confessed", the killings were "extremely vicious". — AFP

Iran council member close to Khamenei succumbs

Tehran, March 2: Iranian state radio says a member of a council that advises Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has died after falling ill from the new Covid-19. The report Monday said Expediency Council member Mohammad Mirmohammadi had died. He was 71. The council advises Khamenei, as well as settles disputes between the supreme leader and parliament. His death comes as other top officials have contracted the virus in Iran.

WHO sends first medics, supplies to Tehran **Dubai, March 2:** The World Health Organisation on Monday sent its first planeload of aid to Iran to help fight Covid-19, dispatching six medics with tonnes of medical equipment and test kits aboard a UAE military aircraft. As supplies worth more than \$300,000 were loaded onto the plane in Dubai, Robert Blanchard of the WHO warned that global supplies were running low. "What we see now is

that demand has greatly exceeded our available stocks... and we are struggling to get access to more supplies." — AFP

FOREIGNER WITH SIGNS IN EGYPT QUARANTINED

Cairo, March 2: Egypt on Monday reported its second case of novel Covid-19, more than two weeks after announcing the first confirmed infection in Africa. The foreigner is showing "minor symptoms" and has been quarantined, the ministry and the World Health Organisation said in a joint statement. Other people who had contact with the patient are undergoing medical tests, it added.

Egypt announced its first confirmed case of novel Covid-19 on February 14. The patient, a Chinese national, was released last week after recovering, the statement said. Cairo has been cooperating with French and Canadian authorities after they both announced seven confirmed cases from travellers coming from Egypt.

With the number of cases rising in the Gulf, Qatar imposed a temporary ban on visitors coming from Egypt via transit points on Sunday citing the spread of Covid-19. Kuwait stopped short of a flight restriction but added extra screening measures for travellers boarding their flights from Egypt. Egyptian Health Minister Hala Zayed travelled to China on Sunday amid mounting criticisms and satirical posts on social media of her ministry's handling of the outbreak. At a press conference at Cairo airport, she praised Beijing's efforts to contain the spread of the virus. The global death toll from the epidemic surpassed 3,000 on Monday after dozens more were killed in China and cases soared around the world. — AFP

Sect leader repents for spreading virus

Seoul, March 2: The leader of a secretive South Korean sect linked to more than half the country's 4,000-plus Covid-19 cases apologised Monday for the spread of the disease. Shincheonji head Lee Man-hee's plea for forgiveness came after Seoul city authorities filed a murder complaint against him for failing to cooperate in containing the epidemic. South Korea's case numbers — the largest total anywhere outside China — are expected to rise further as authorities carry out checks on more than 266,000 people associated with the Shincheonji Church of Jesus, which is often condemned as a cult.

"I would like to offer my sincere apology to the people," said Lee, his voice breaking. "Although it was not intentional, many people have been infected," the 88-year-old said, twice getting to his knees to bow before reporters in Gyeongju, his head to the floor. "I seek the forgiveness of the people." "I am very thankful to the government for its efforts," he added. "I also seek the forgiveness of the government." Lee is revered by his fol-

- SOUTH KOREA reported nearly 500 new Covid-19 cases Monday, sending the largest national total in the world outside China past 4,000.
- FOUR MORE people had died, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said, taking the death toll to 22.
- OF THE 476 new cases announced Monday — taking the total to 4,212 — more than 90 percent were in Daegu and the neighbouring province of North Gyeongsang.

lowers as the "Promised Pastor" who has taken on the mantle of Jesus Christ and will take 144,000 people with him to heaven on the Day of Judgement, which he will usher in within his own lifetime. A 61-year-old female member developed a fever on February 10 but attended at least four church services in Daegu — the centre of the outbreak — before being diagnosed. — AFP



A paramedic checks the temperature of an official before a meeting with Thailand Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha at the Government House, Bangkok. — AFP

Architect, who preaches mindful development, hopes to save Bangkok Thai secret weapon in climate change battle

Bangkok, March 2: Bangkok's future hangs in the balance. Rising sea levels, unchecked development, groundwater extraction, and rapid urban population growth has left millions vulnerable to natural disasters — scientists warn the city itself may not survive the century. New analysis by the Nestpick 2050 Climate Change City Index says the Thai capital could be hardest hit by global warming. And while it is not alone facing such a threat — Venice, New Orleans, and Jakarta are predicted to be underwater by 2100 — it does have a secret weapon in its battle to negate the impact of a hotter planet: Renowned architect Kotchakorn Voraakhom who

preaches mindful development over mindless construction. "We are talking life and death in this situation," says the 39-year-old who is hoping to bring Bangkok back from the brink, as scientists warn extreme weather — flooding and droughts — could ravage the city, leaving as much as 40 percent submerged in the next decade. Kotchakorn says: "I don't want to face it with fear. At this moment we have a chance to make change... We have to do it right now to show the coming generations that this is possible. It is not about sitting and waiting and doing the same thing." No one can accuse the Harvard graduate of resting on her laurels: She made her name showing how the effects of climate change can be mitigated by ensuring the issue is at the heart of city planning. She and her firm Landprocess created the internationally acclaimed Chulalongkorn University



Bangkok's unchecked development (L) and Thai architect Kotchakorn Voraakhom — AFP

Centenary Park, an 11-acre (4 hectares) space in central Bangkok, which tilts downward at a three-degree angle, allowing rainwater to flow through the flanking grass and wetlands. Water that's not absorbed

by the plants runs down to a pond at the base of the park, where it can be stored and filtered for use during dry spells or released gradually. In cases of severe flooding, the park can hold up to a million gallons of water. Kotchakorn rails against Bangkok's unchecked development — over 10 million live in the metropolis packed with skyscrapers, factories, malls and hotels — warning that an "addiction to growth" is jeopardising its ability to thrive. "We think about how we're going to have more growth in our annual development... What if we shift the orientation from growth to really consider our actions on the environment, listen to the land

more," she says. "It doesn't mean I am against development but I want it to be very meaningful, very mindful, and at the right pace — so we don't actually kill our future." Today her ideas have been embraced at home, and abroad — she gave an acclaimed TED talk in 2018, and last year TIME Magazine included her in its "100 Next" list of global rising stars. But convincing clients, authorities, and other businesses to see the big environmental picture has not been easy in a megacity obsessed with economic targets and expansion. Driving change as a woman in a patriarchal society has been an additional challenge. — AFP

BLAME DISEASES FOR DAYTIME SLEEPINESS

Boston, March 2: Experiencing daytime sleepiness may be associated with the risk of many diseases, including diabetes, cancer and high blood pressure in older people, according to a study. The condition called hypersomnolence is defined as excessive daytime sleepiness even after seven or more hours of sleep it can be debilitating for some, affecting how they perform at work and in other activities. "Paying attention to sleepiness in older adults could help doctors predict and prevent future medical conditions," said author Maurice M. Ohayon of Stanford University, US. — PTI

