

## 3,000 beds ready in TS for coronavirus cases

### Infected man's condition is improving, says health minister

**BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 3**

The condition of the 24-year-old man who was admitted to the Gandhi General Hospital (GGH) in the city on Monday after testing positive for coronavirus infection was stable, health minister Etala Rajendar said on Tuesday. "In fact, his condition has improved since Monday," Mr Rajendar said.

The minister, while addressing a press conference, said that a total of 88 persons who had come into contact with the patient during his travel from Bengaluru to the city, and subsequently, have been contacted and advised to visit the Gandhi Hospital for Covid-19 tests.

Of these, 45 persons have already reported to the GGH, including 20 personnel from Apollo Hospitals in Secunderabad. The rest would also be coming in soon for the tests, he said.

Replying to a question, he said though the Central government guidelines do not mandate a test for those not displaying any symptoms, the state government was not taking any chances and had decided to go ahead and conduct tests.

He said that a team of health officials would soon visit Kerala, which had previously successfully controlled the spread of the Nipah virus and turned around the health of three Covid-19 patients last month. "We will learn from their experience and study how they did it," he said.

The government has made extensive arrangements for any eventualities, he said, elaborating further that till Tuesday, it had arranged for a total of 3,000 beds in both government hospitals and teaching hospitals run by private managements across the state.

"We have decided to add the government hospital in Vikarabad to the plan for creating more beds in isolation wards. We have been in touch with retired medical professors and other doctors as well as nursing staff who have expressed willingness to return to work if the need arises of the disease," he said.

"The Chief Minister has released ₹100 crore for emergency expenses to control the disease. There is absolutely no need for any panic or fear about the disease. People should remain calm," Rajendar said.

The minister said according to studies, 81 per cent of all Covid-19 cases are mild and resemble a common cold. Fourteen per cent of all those admitted for treatment of the disease have been cured and just three per cent from had resulted in fatalities, he added.



Doctors arrive at Gandhi Hospital on Tuesday wearing masks. — S. SURENDER REDDY

## Bus might have carried coronavirus to Pune too

**RAJESWARI PARASA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 3**

The private bus in which the first Covid-19 patient in Telangana travelled from Bengaluru to Hyderabad made multiple long-distance trips for a week from February 22, the morning which the 24-year-old arrived in the city. Till March 2, the bus ran between Hyderabad and Pune, with over 30 passengers on each trip. Health minister Etala Rajendar said it was wrong to assume that a person carrying the virus in a bus,

train, or plane would spread it to others. "It is not airborne and spreads through droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes without covering his or her mouth," the minister said. "If another person happens to touch the surface where the droplets fall and touches his mouth, eyes or nose, then the second person may possibly pick up the virus."

A senior state health and family welfare official said that coronavirus is known to have survived on surfaces for up to 12 hours at

normal room temperature. At temperatures regulated by air-conditioning, to around 22-23 degrees C, the virus is known to have survived on surfaces from nine to 12 days.

The Covid-19 patient took the February 21 night service from Bengaluru in the AC sleeper coach operated by an SR Nagar-based private travels company. While the bus capacity is 52, on that trip there were 21 bookings.

■ Page 2: No one reported symptoms: Bus operator

## Apollo doctors told to self-isolate for 14 days

**KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 3**

Twenty medical personnel of Apollo Hospitals in Secunderabad were asked to self-isolate for 14 days as they came in contact with the patient who tested positive for Covid-19. They include three senior doctors, para-medical staff like nurses, ward boys, administration personnel and also workers who cleaned the hospital floor when the patient was in hospital.

They were taken to Gandhi Hospital for testing and asked to stay home. The families of the three doctors are worried and called government officials on whether they should practice self-isolation. They are upset with the disruption to their schedule. The term "quarantine"

has a negative connotation, hence the term "self-isolation".

"We have explained that it is important for family to stay home," said a senior government official. "Some are calling to check on the rate of positivity of the infection transmitting. For that we have advised them to wait for the results. We do not want panic. It is only a precaution and it is in everyone's interest to curb the spread of the disease."

Spouses have to take leave, children are not to go to school, and families have been told to shun relatives and neighbours. "Practising isolation is important because no one knows to whom the virus has been passed," said a doctor.

■ Page 2: Self-isolation is for safety, say doctors

## I.T. SECTOR BEARS BRUNT, OFFICIALS PUT OFF TRAVEL

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 3**

Hyderabad's booming IT sector is finally beginning to see the effects of the coronavirus scare. Representatives of a few major MNCs and important delegations who were scheduled to hold discussions with the state government during the next few days have now delayed their travel plans.

"A couple of important visitors and delegations have rescheduled their visits. Many of these companies have been advised to minimise non-essential travel. So we are seeing some disruptions," IT secretary Jayesh Ranjan said.

The IT department has sent advisories and basic guidelines on coronavirus prevention to companies in the city.

## Namaste, not handshakes, advises WhatsApp

**ADITYA CHUNDURU | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 3**

The first coronavirus positive case in Hyderabad has scared the city's residents. Unclear of what to do, or whether this was even possible, they circulated messages and videos about the virus on WhatsApp and other social media platforms. Many were accurate, even helpful; some

were wildly misleading. On Twitter, coronavirus was the top hashtag for much of the day. Facebook posts on it were popular. According to Sharechat, people from TS and AP had been active, creating over 20,000 posts in Telugu.

A popular "advisory" on WhatsApp called for not playing Holi next week. It had a hint of xenophobia: "Please note CORONA

VIRUS is very harmful and generous for our life (sic) [...] HOLI festival is coming and most of colour balloons (sic) and all products are made of china products [...] One claimed coronavirus was a "biological weapon" created by China. Another read, "We never realised even death would be made in China."

There was much rumour-mongering. One message

claimed the patient who tested positive at Gandhi Hospital used one of general bathrooms in that hospital. The rumour became popular enough for an online Telugu news website to run it as a story claiming that the patient had infected someone else in the hospital.

■ Page 2: People spin conspiracy theories

MORE STORIES RELATED TO COVID-19 ON PAGES 2, 3, 8, 12, 13 AND 14

## India raps Iran's envoy for comments on riots

**DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 3**

India on Tuesday summoned Iran's ambassador Ali Chegeni and lodged a strong protest over the "unwarranted" comments by Iranian foreign minister Javad Zarif over communal violence in Delhi. The Iranian envoy was

conveyed that Zarif's "selective and tendentious" characterisation of incidents in Delhi are not acceptable. MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said. On Monday, Mr Zarif had called Delhi riots as organised violence against Indian Muslims.

■ Full report on Page 9

## UN body to implead in pleas against CAA

**DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 3**

In an unprecedented move, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has filed a petition against the Supreme Court against the Citizenship Amendment Act. While welcoming the "purpose of the CAA" to

protect "persons from persecution on religious grounds", the UN body raised the issue of exclusion of Muslims from the Act. In its reaction, the ministry of external affairs said no foreign party has "any legal standing" on matters relating to its sovereignty.

■ Full report on Page 9

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SHORT TAKES

SELF-ISOLATION IS FOR SAFETY, SAY DOCTORS

FROM PAGE 1

"It is for the safety of all. It took us time to make them understand they were in contact with the person who was in contact with the positive case. The cooperation of people will help contain the spread."

District medical and health officials have been talking with checking on them morning and evening via phone, and also pay surprise visits to ensure compliance.

"It is the medical version of Section 144," quipped a senior doctor from Apollo Hospitals. Medical manual of corona virus for quarantine:

1. Stay in small groups at home.
2. In a large family, the person who came in contact must self-isolate from the rest of the family.
3. Do not get stressed or anxious as that weakens the immune system and helps the virus attack the body.
4. Keep yourself calm by listening to music, read books, relax and sleep.
5. Eat balanced home-cooked food.
6. Use disinfectants for the surfaces at home.
7. In case of symptoms of cough, cold, fever or breathing problems, immediately rush to the notified government hospital.

NO ONE REPORTED SYMPTOMS: BUS OPERATOR

FROM PAGE 1

The company was told of the patient testing positive on Monday at 5 pm. "We immediately shared with the state government all information about the passengers of the bus. It was also shared with the Karnataka government at its request," Narendran Vallabhaneni, owner of the company, said.

"We contacted passengers via email and phone and informed them of the bus. It was also shared with the government and the government advice that all passengers should get themselves tested," he said.

The bus driver and cleaner were also sent to Gandhi General Hospital to be tested. Both tested negative.

"We inquired from passengers about their health and any symptoms such as fever, cold or cough. All said they felt fine and had no symptoms," Vallabhaneni said.

ISOLATION WARD IN GANDHI HOSP BARRICADED

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 3

The Gandhi Hospital has barricaded entry into the ward of the hospital building where the coronavirus isolation ward is located. The area is now out of bounds for the common people who are not allowed to move in the compound area.

There are only department doctors, paramedical staff and those patients who have been called by the doctors with appointment allowed inside the building.

There are police officials who are sitting outside wearing surgical masks and those who go inside have been given protective masks.

"The area from the hospital to the medical college has been barricaded so that the movement of students is also restricted."

"This is being done to ensure that there are no contacts with people who are 'suspected cases' and coming to the hospital."

AMID COVID-19, SWINE FLU CASES PERSIST IN STATE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 3

While there is much fear of Covid-19 in the state, sporadic cases of H1N1 (swine flu) are still occurring.

"The numbers are low and not as high as they were five years ago, but the virus is around and active."

Interestingly those travellers who have come from the US have tested positive for H1N1 and there is a second test being carried out to confirm it in the state.

With private hospitals also having the flu testing mechanism, it is in their laboratories that the tests are being done.

MANUAL FOR FIRST LINE OF CARE

Private hospitals are asking their employees to counsel members of their families so that there is no unnecessary fear. Here is a complete manual prepared for the family members.



● **HAND HYGIENE**, handling shared equipment, environmental cleaning, segregation of liners and segregation of patients is very important.



● **CLOSE CONTACT** means that keep a distance of 2 metres in care room in the hospital even if you have worn protective equipment, gloves and mask.



● **REGULAR CLEANING** with disinfectants must be done at the hospital level.



● **WEAR N-95** masks before entering the patient's room.



● **REFRAIN FROM** touching own eyes, nose, and mouth with gloved or ungloved hands during patient-care.



● **THE RELATIVES** who visit hospitals must be sensitized to not touch all surfaces like railings, door knobs, bed beds and they must wash hands immediately if they touch anything.

Doctors told to take virus head on

Preventive measures like regular, thorough hand hygiene, other protocols emphasised for med staff

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 3

Private hospitals are urging doctors and staff not to panic with one confirmed case of Covid-19 in Telangana state, as there are many flu cases reported to hospitals every day and most are harmless. With the staff of Apollo Hospital in Secunderabad coming in contact with the Covid-19 positive patient, there is understandable fear among health professionals and preventive measures like regular and thorough hand hygiene and other protocols is being emphasised.

Paramedical staff and doctors are the first line of care in hospitals and the continuous medical education programme under implementation is being revisited to deal with the cases.

The state government has asked all private hospitals to check the travel history of their patients and those who have recently travelled to the Covid-19 affected countries must be immediately referred to Gandhi Hospital.

Dr Bhaaskar Rao, managing director of KIMS Hospital, who attended a meeting with state health minister Etala Rajendra, said, "We have been asked to inquire about travel history of our patients. This has been added in the Covid-19 guidelines for private hospitals. We have asked everyone to follow the protocols."

Doctors and staff in hospitals have to wear masks when they are in the wards and those suffering from flu, cough and cold must maintain a distance of two metres from others. The pulmonology and emergency departments, where patients arrive first, require medical staff to be in protective gear of gown, gloves, N-95 respiratory masks and eye protection.



Covid-19 suspects self-admit at Gandhi Hospital in the city on Tuesday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

Summer onset may curb Covid-19

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 3

Hot and dry climate could play a role in curbing spread of the dreaded novel coronavirus strain Covid-19 in India, say meteorologists.

"When the sun is strong and temperatures are warm — like in April to June — intensity of sunlight and warm weather conditions could suppress the virus. There may be many reasons for decrease in cases of influenza and cold during summer, but the major one is that heat and dry weather can make it harder for respiratory droplets to spread viruses. Warm temperatures degrade the virus rapidly," Mahesh Palawat, chief meteorologist of private weather forecaster Skymet told *Deccan Chronicle*. The forecaster's assertion is based on studying historic patterns of flu and viruses, such as the 1918 Spanish flu, SARS in 2003 and the US flu.

Mr Palawat said, "It is possible that the intensity of sunshine, longer daylight hours and warmer weather during summer months suppress the virus. India is currently heading into the spring season. Soon, day temper-

atures in northern plains will also surpass 30 degrees Celsius. Central and south India are already experiencing maximum temperatures in mid-thirties," he pointed out.

Some experts are of the view that Covid-19 may become less active in the summer, but could return if not controlled during this summer itself. "Generally, the virus cannot survive in temperatures above 34 degrees Celsius, something that is already being witnessed in India. The virus dies whenever it is exposed to such temperatures. Thus

the chances of this infection spreading from person-to-person in Telangana during the summer are very low. But people who have already been infected and are carriers of the virus must be kept under observation," Dr K. Shankar, superintendent, Fever Hospital, told *Deccan Chronicle*. Meteorologists say that if higher temperatures can control Covid-19, then India is in a much better position compared to countries in higher latitudes, such as China, Japan and South Korea that witness much lower temperatures.

Infected person's house fumigated

RAJESWARI PARASA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 3

The Secunderabad Cantonment Board (SCB) fumigated the house of the coronavirus-infected person in Mahendra Hills, Ward V, on Tuesday morning. Bleaching powder was spread in surrounding lanes and the area generally cleaned up.

The lanes were cleared of garbage and plastic waste which had accumulated on open plots. As of now, there are 30 staff working on sanitation at the ground level in Mahendra Hills and 10 more will be added to maintain regular cleaning of the surroundings.

Mr Devender M, superintendent, health and sanitation department of the SCB, said, "Additional safety measures are being taken to ensure safety of the residents and the measures would also be intensified in the coming days."

Residents are being spread on basic safety practices and we are also planning to hold a colony residents' meeting for further safety measures in coordination with the



SCB personnel fumigate surroundings of the residence of the Covid-19 affected person in Mahendra Hills in the city on Tuesday.

— DC

PEOPLE SPIN CONSPIRACY THEORIES TOO

FROM PAGE 1

And conspiracies: a message by a "Taiwan expert" said people could self-diagnose by holding their breath for 10 seconds; if they were successful, they were not infected. In the same message, "Japanese doctors" advise people to drink water, claiming this would flush down the virus in the mouth into the stomach where the "acid will kill it." None were attributed to "experts".

Some claimed the confirmed case in Hyderabad was a lie altogether. In a residents' WhatsApp group, a person claimed, "lab reports from Pune are yet to confirm the diagnosis." (The health minister had announced that the samples were sent to Pune, where they tested positive.)

With the rumours and misinformation going viral on social media, people are afraid about the spread of the disease.

After the first positive case of coronavirus was detected in Hyderabad, the people from Vizag, Vijaya-

Medical screening protocol revised

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 3

With a total of 76 countries now infected with Covid-19, there are 80,443 cases worldwide. Some 48,128 have recovered. The highest number of cases outside China continues to be in South Korea, Iran and Italy.

India has suspended all visas granted to foreign nationals from Italy, Iran, South Korea, and Japan in the wake of three people, including a tourist, testing positive for Covid-19 recently. Visas given to Chinese nationals had already been suspended.

Given these conditions worldwide, the Central government has given a revised travel advisory and also stated that there must be immediate implementation of it.

1. All regular (sticker) visas/e-visa (including visa on arrival for Japan and South Korea) granted to nationals of Italy, Iran, South Korea, Japan and issued on or before March 3, 2020 and who have not yet entered India, stand suspended with immediate effect. Those requiring to travel to India due to compelling reasons, may seek fresh visa from nearest Indian embassy/consulate.

2. Regular (sticker) visa/e-visa granted to nationals of People's Republic of China, issued on or before February 2, 2020, were suspended earlier. It shall remain in force. Those needing to travel to India under compelling circumstances may apply for fresh visa to nearest Indian embassy/consulate.

3. Regular (sticker) visas/e-visas granted to all foreign nationals who have travelled to People's Republic of China, Iran, Italy, South Korea and Japan on or after

● Passengers arriving directly or indirectly from China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, Italy, Hong Kong, Macau, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand, Singapore and Taiwan must undergo medical screening at port of entry.

February 1, 2020, and who have not yet entered India stand suspended with immediate effect. Those requiring to travel to India under compelling circumstances may apply for fresh visa to nearest embassy/consulate.

4. Diplomats, officials of the UN and other international bodies, OCI cardholders and aircrew from the above countries are exempted from such restriction on entry. However, their medical screening is compulsory.

5. Passengers of all international flights entering into India from any port are required to furnish duly filled self-declaration form (including personal particulars i.e. phone no, address in India) and travel history, to health officials and immigration officials at all ports of entry (foreign and Indian) other than those restricted, arriving directly or indirectly from China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, Italy, Hong Kong, Macau, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand, Singapore and Taiwan must undergo medical screening at port of entry.

7. Indian citizens are advised to refrain from travel to China, Iran, Republic of Korea, Italy, and advised to avoid non-essential travel to other Covid-19 affected countries.

New breathalyser straws for all tests

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 3

The Hyderabad traffic police has said it will ensure that a fresh new straw will be used after each breathalyser test.

The test is used to measure alcohol level in the blood and prevent drivers with amounts of alcohol above the recommended amount, from driving.

The affirmation comes in the wake of questions being raised on Monday, after the first Covid-19 case was confirmed in the city, about the safety of people asked

to use breathalisers during the checks. In the last week, the city's North Zone police — under whose jurisdiction Mahendra Hills, the area in which the Covid-19 patient resides — has seen 18 drunk driver checks.

The test is used to measure alcohol level in the blood and prevent drivers with amounts of alcohol above the recommended amount, from driving.

The affirmation comes in the wake of questions being raised on Monday, after the first Covid-19 case was confirmed in the city, about the safety of people asked

AP govt prepares for health emergency amid outbreak

Taiwanese tests -ve for coronavirus

DC CORRESPONDENTS VIJAYAWADA/VISAKHAPATNAM, MARCH 3

In order to meet any health emergency due to coronavirus, the state government has set up isolation wards in 56 government hospitals and 32 private hospitals having 632 beds dedicated to suspected coronavirus cases. It has also procured over 1 lakh N-95 masks, 12,444 personal protection equipment and adequate stock of medicines.

A 24x7 call centre was also set up with phone number 08662-2410978 at the office of state health and family welfare and

control rooms were set up at all offices of district medical and health officers. A rapid response team, comprising experts like micro-biologist, physician, epidemiologist, SPM professor and paramedical staff, was formed at every district.

The government is also training health personnel from all 13 districts at Visakhapatnam, Guntur and Tirupati. The collector has been appointed as the nodal officer in each district for coordinating the government efforts to contain the spread of coronavirus epidemic, which infected over 80,000 people and killed over 3,000 world-

● **A RAPID** response team, comprising experts like micro-biologist, physician, epidemiologist, SPM professor and paramedical staff, was formed at every district.

● **HEALTH PERSONNEL** from all districts are being trained at Visakhapatnam, Guntur and Tirupati.

The government suggested people to alert the nearby government hospital or government call centre in case they

find people who arrived to India from abroad after February 1, 2020, and are showing symptoms like cold, cough and fever.

Deputy Chief Minister and health minister Alla Kati Krishna Srinivas asked people not panic and said Chief Minister Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy has conducted review meetings on coronavirus with officials.

With the rumours and misinformation going viral on social media, people are afraid about the spread of the disease. After the first positive case of coronavirus was detected in Hyderabad, the people from Vizag, Vijaya-

wada and other cities in the state are scared to travel to the former capital city.

As many as 6,470 persons were screened at Visakhapatnam airport since January 25. Out of them, 50 persons were kept at self-isolation at their home. So far, blood samples of 11 suspected cases were sent for testing and all of them were found to be negative.

Over 1,100 staff in the ships were examined and Vizag, Ganguvaram, Krishnapatnam, Kakinada and Ravva ports were screened and no one was found to be infected with the Covid-19.

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, MARCH 3

A Taiwanese national, who was quarantined at Sri Venkateswara Ramannagar, Ruita Government General Hospital (SVRRGGH) in Tirupati on Saturday on suspicion of being infected with coronavirus, was tested negative.

According to reports, the Taiwan citizen, who had

come to Chittoor district last month for commissioning a new plant at a factory, had complained of sore throat and running nose on February 29.

In view of the outbreak of coronavirus epidemic in China, he was subjected to medical tests. The suspect was confirmed on Tuesday that the Taiwanese had not been contacted with coronavirus.

**WEATHER**  
 Max: 33.4°C  
 Min: 21.7°C  
 RH: 40%  
 Rain: NIL  
 Forecast: Cloudy sky. Thundershowers likely. Max/Min temp. 28/18°C

**ASTROGUIDE**  
 Vikari: Uttarayana  
 Tithi: Phalguna Shuddha Navami till 1.53 pm  
 Star: Migasira till 11:18 am  
 Varjyam: 7.45 pm to 8:19 pm  
 Durnuhartam: 12:04 pm to 12:51 am  
 Rahukalam: 12 noon  
 HILIRI CALENDAR  
 Jumada al-Awwal 7, 1441 AH  
 Praves  
 Fajar: 5.32 am  
 Zohar: 12.38 pm  
 Asar: 4.44 pm  
 Maghrib: 6.29 pm  
 Isha: 7.36 pm  
 SUNSET TODAY 6:23 PM  
 SUNRISE TOMORROW 6:02 AM  
 MOONRISE TOMORROW 12:13 AM  
 MOONSET TODAY 12:43 AM

**POWER SHUTDOWN**  
 LV Prasad sub-station  
 10 am to 12 noon

Road No.14, Nandimarg, Road No. 10, Dubai Building, Danam Nagendar house area.

Kalyannagar sub-station  
 11:30 am to 1 pm  
 Vengal Rao Nagar A.B.C.D blocks, e-Seva, Srinivasa Colony West, Madhuram Nagar B block.

**COUNTER POINT**  
  
 There is no need to panic!

**SHORT TAKES**  
**TELANGANA SEEKS MASKS FROM CENTRE**

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 3**  
 Telangana on Tuesday appealed to the Centre to seek face masks to be used by medical professionals involved in treating or containment of Covid-19 cases, or suspected cases of the disease in the state.  
 Health minister Etala Rajendar said during the day he had telephone conversations with Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhman and health secretary Preeti Sudan about the steps being taken by the state to treat Telangana's only Covid-19 patient and steps being taken to prevent the spread of the disease in the state.  
 "I asked them to send us masks as we may not have adequate stocks because of shortages," he said.

**4 INDIGO CREW MEMBERS UNDER WATCH**

New Delhi, March 3: Four Indigo crew members, who were on a Dubai-Bangalore flight on February 20 with a coronavirus-infected Hyderabad resident, have been under observation since March 2, the airline said on Tuesday.  
 On Monday, a 24-year-old software engineer from Hyderabad, who works in Bangalore, was found to be the first confirmed case of novel coronavirus from Telangana.  
 The techie had worked with people from Hong Kong in Dubai last month, where he is suspected to have contracted the disease. He had returned to Bangalore on the Indigo flight of February 20, before travelling to Hyderabad in a bus.  
 "The affected passengers in Hyderabad travelled on the concluding ceremony of the two-day inter-collegiate festival on Tuesday.  
 The festival organisers turned the event into a unique workshop for sensitising the large crowd of college students about the precautionary measures that can be taken to check the spread of coronavirus."  
 "We are following all the prescribed Airport Health Organization (APIO) guidelines and are taking preventive measures for our crew operating flights to regions affected by coronavirus, the low-cost carrier added. —PTI



As a precaution against coronavirus, policemen wear masks at the Gandhi Hospital on Tuesday. — S. SURENDER REDDY

**Exporters make a killing out of masks, sanitisers**

Place crores worth orders for China, UAE, Oman, Saudi Arabia

**10 lakh pieces**  
**GHMC officials 'steal' money meant for masks**

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 3**  
 The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) on Tuesday issued a circular requiring 18,000 sanitation workers to wear face masks provided to them as a preventive measure against the Coronavirus.  
 The civic body said that the instructions were given to all deputy commissioners and sanitary field assistants (SFAs). But a civic official claimed that the masks would last for just the current month, and that they are yet to provide hand sanitizers to the workers.  
 Investigations revealed that lower rung officials have swindled about ₹4 crore meant to procure masks and other safety gear for sanitation workers.  
 The civic body has provided jackets, face masks, gloves, shoes, soap, coconut oil, brooms etc to the workers so that their health is not affected by the work they do. All that has been provided however is jackets — money for the other safety gear has landed in the pockets of civic officials.  
 The average life expectancy of a sanitation worker is only 45 years and official admits is a greater threat to them than the Coronavirus. The GHMC is supposed to spend ₹1908 per sanitation worker annually. According to official records, it has been spending ₹218 per litre of coconut oil, which is to be given every worker twice a year, ₹490 for slippers of male workers and ₹243 for female workers, ₹1,983 for shoes, ₹177 per radiator jacket and ₹278 per worker for other sweeping equipment.  
 "These expenses are incurred only on paper nothing has been handed over to the field staff except the jackets. The authorities claim that they have been providing the masks and other safety gear but workers are not using them," said P.S. Rahul Raj, additional commissioner (sanitation) said. "Though instructions to wear face masks were given as a preventive measure, we are still caught in a dilemma whether the official instruction would create panic among citizens. People can misinterpret the corporation itself asking its workers to wear masks as a preventive measure."  
 The reasoning is specious, with one case already detected in the state, no one will think taking precautions is likely to create panic.  
 Mr Raj also said a decision to provide hand sanitizers will be taken by the government and the municipal corporation will act accordingly.

high. Manufacturing units in Hyderabad and other cities, which used to sell the masks for ₹2 earlier, are now quoting ₹22 per piece. Since the orders are in bulk (each order is for seven lakh pieces of masks) and they are making a 1,000 per cent profit, they are willing to slightly come down on the price. Thereafter, we have our share and then it depends on what rate the dealers in those countries are selling them for," a middleman, who was super busy coordinating with the manufacturers, said.  
 He said that all orders are being taken only after advance payment of 50 per cent is made and the balance is being paid post delivery. "The delivery is not taking more than 24 hours as there are major manufacturing units which can make up to one million masks a day. In Hyderabad, there are about four to five firms which can make a few lakhs of masks per day, informed an employee in a manufacturing firm. For the purpose, all manufacturing firms have employed thousands of people to meet the deadline. "It is a win-win situation for all," the employee said.  
 What has come as a surprising development is that even the raw materials required to arrest the spread of the virus. Besides face masks, sanitisers, there is high demand globally for goggles meant for eye protection, coveralls with hoods, surgical masks, disposable medical latex gloves, face shields, surgical caps and disinfectants to combat the virus.  
 "The demand for these items, particularly face masks is at an all time

**College fest goes on despite virus scare**



College students perform a dance during the cultural festival organised at Kasturba Gandhi Degree and PG College for Women at West Marredpally on Tuesday. — P. SURENDRA

the news was announced by the state government, about five to six thousand students still gathered in large numbers in the nearby Kasturba College.  
 "There was no fear. It's the college fest and coronavirus cannot dampen the spirit of students. We plan to make today's event a success and our whole gang is here," pointed out Roshini Himtani, an MBA student from Osmania University. "My parents kept telling me to take precautions, cover my

**Better saaf than sorry!**  
  
 Amul Always Safe!

**7 panels to tackle Covid-19 in state**

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 3**  
 The Telangana Government on Tuesday set up seven committees for management of Covid-19 disease in the state.  
 The decision to set up these committees was taken at a meeting of the Cabinet sub-committee on health comprising health minister Etala Rajendar, Municipal Administration Minister K.T. Rama Rao and Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Minister Erabelli Dayakar Rao.  
 It was decided to set up a state level monitoring committee, a training committee, a hospital management committee, a contact tracing & surveillance committee, a IEC media coordination committee, a procurement committee, and a 104 helpline coordination committee.  
 Mr Rama Rao, speaking at the sub-committee meeting, said that there was no need for any panic or worry over the disease as the state government was fully geared up to meet any eventuality. He also warned that anyone seeking to profit from the disease in any manner or spreading false information and rumours, will be caught and meted out with strict punishment.

**Don't shake hands, say namaste: Etala**

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 3**  
 It is time to stop shaking hands with friends or strangers that one comes across. "It is best to greet one another from some distance using the traditional 'Namaste' with folded hands," Health Minister Etala Rajendar said on Tuesday.  
 Appealing to people to practise good hand hygiene and basic clean habits of covering the mouth with a small towel or handkerchief while coughing or sneezing, Mr Rajendar said, "Just by ensuring hand washing and keeping them clean can prevent any possibility of catching a disease like Covid-19 by 99 per cent."  
 Mr Rajendar also said that the primary responsibility of ensuring safety of others around, by a person who believes he or she may have contracted Covid-19, rests with that individual, who must practise basic hygiene methods.  
 "If anyone has a cold or a cough and fever, we appeal to them to visit a doctor for a check-up. If they are found to be referred for a test for the disease," he said.  
 "The health minister said that the government will launch a publicity campaign on good hygiene and Covid-19 preventive measures."  
 "The health minister said that the government will launch an intensive publicity campaign on good hygiene and Covid-19 preventive measures through the state over the next 10 days. Cost is not an issue when it comes to educating people on this subject and preventing the disease from spreading," Mr Rajendar said.  
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**Schools near patient's house under watch**

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 3**  
 In schools within a three-km radius of Mahendra Hills, where the techie infected with coronavirus, state awareness campaigns have been started by the school education department regarding symptoms of Covid-19 and precautions to be taken against the coronavirus.  
 Hyderabad district education officer (DEO) Venkata Narsamma said that teachers and school administrators have been instructed to be vigilant about symptoms of the disease in the children and to inform students about safety measures they must take. Five students from a Korli BPS school were admitted to the hospital for fever higher on Tuesday. Education department officials say they are closely watching the students in case there is more to it than fever.  
 Teachers are voluntarily educating children on the condition.  
 Ms Chava Ravi, a government teacher, said that teachers and heads of schools are passing on the instructions given by the Telangana health ministry to the students, and this includes, most importantly, frequent hand washing and maintaining hygienic conditions.

**ACTIVIST SUNITA TESTS NEGATIVE**

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 3**  
 Sunita Krishnan of Prajwala, who was admitted to Gandhi Hospital's isolation ward, has tested negative for Covid-19. She had travelled to Bangkok and had self-reported to the hospital.  
 Ms Krishnan has now been asked to practise isolation for 14 days.

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IN BRIEF

Notice against TRS legislator

Hyderabad: The Telangana High Court issued notice to Patancheru TRS MLA G. Mahipal Reddy in a writ of quo warranto which sought directions from the court to restrain him from acting as MLA...

HIGH COURT DISMISSES KARVY PLEA

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 3

Justice Abhinand Kumar Shrivastava of the High Court dismissed a plea filed by Karvy Stock Broking Limited, which apprehended that there would be coercive steps against the company following the Centre's decision to order a probe by the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO)...

KTR: FARMER LOANS TO BE WAIVED SOON

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 3

The state government will soon start paying out money for the farm loan waiver scheme as promised in the 2018 Assembly elections, TRS working president and minister K.T. Rama Rao announced on Monday...

Mr Rama Rao even instructed the DCB and DCMS members to reach out to all farmers and explain to them the various welfare schemes taken up by the state government.

Revant land issue in focus

Cong MP, brother may be booked for cheating, Gopanally land-grab

SA. ISHAQUI IDC HYDERABAD, MARCH 3

The noise is tightening around Telangana Pradesh Congress working president and Lok Sabha member Revant Reddy as well as his younger brother A. Kondal Reddy for their alleged involvement in the illegal occupation of lands in Gopanally area near the financial district of the state capital.

CHANDRAKALA, who is enquiring into allegations against the Malkajgiri MP and his brother, has also accused Revant Reddy of occupying a lake.

Revant Reddy is accused of committing several irregularities to encroach on public and privately-owned lands at Gopanally.

THE MALKAJGIRI MP and his brother have been accused of encroaching on public and private lands at Gopanally in Serilingampally mandal.

Several victims have also accused Revant Reddy of occupying a lake in the area.

Sources said since the mutation of land claimed by the MP and his brother is illegal, they will have to face legal consequences.

It is learnt that the revenue authorities are quite likely to lodge a complaint of cheating, land grabbing and violation of W.A.T.A. Act against the MP and his brother in the next couple of days.

Owaisi asks why Lok Sabha isn't allowed to discuss Delhi riots

ATHER MOIN IDC HYDERABAD, MARCH 3

MIM president Asaduddin Owaisi on Tuesday criticised the Union government for opposing a discussion in the Lok Sabha on the deadly Delhi violence as it would disrupt the peace.

Mr Owaisi said this after he attended a meeting convened by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla in Parliament earlier in the day. The Speaker wanted to have a dialogue with representatives of all parties for the smooth functioning of the House as, on the first day of the second phase of the Budget session, Opposition members had stormed the well of the house.

In a series of tweets, Mr Owaisi said that the government was arguing that a parliamentary debate on the Delhi violence, in which over 45 people have been killed, would disrupt the peace.

He argued that Parliament had discussed the Gujarat 2002 riots and a parliamentary delegation was sent to the state following the riots. The government is now opposing discussion in the Lok Sabha about the Delhi carnage, he said.

He said, "Let the debate happen in compliance with the rules of the House and if someone violates them it must be expunged from the record. But parliamentarians cannot be prevented from speaking. I volunteered to be the first to speak."

Mr Owaisi also said that appointing a Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha cannot be delayed any further as it burdens the office of the Speaker. The Deputy Speaker must be appointed at the earliest.

"The Chief Minister is committed to implementing his promise to farmers and waive crop loans. The procedure is being worked out and an announcement will be made within a few days," he said.

In his party manifesto for the Assembly elections in December last year, the TRS had promised to waive farm loans up to ₹1 lakh to farmers.

"The government is committed to pro-poor and pro-farmer schemes. Telangana is the only state that introduced farmers' welfare schemes like Rythu Bandhu and Rythu Bheema, which are unique in the country," Mr Rama Rao added.



Islamic scholar and Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind president Maulana Syed Arshad Madani addresses a conference, 'Save Democracy', at an event in the city on Tuesday.

Majority has rejected politics of hate: Jamiat

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 3

Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind president Maulana Syed Arshad Madani apprehended that the politics of abomination will once again divide India. "We are not desperate as the majority of the country and Muslims have rejected this politics of hate," he called for a public meeting to create consensus among different communities in case the state government did not change its stand on NPR.

He added that in the past many major riots happened, but events were not highlighted like in the Delhi riots. People are openly speaking about what is happening and rejecting the politics of hate, he pointed out.

The moulana said "We want to know what the opinions of people of different faiths on the secular nature of the constitution and we are fully convinced that all of them want India to remain secular. It is clear that if India will not remain secular, it will not remain united."

He said that at the time of independence, Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind had told the Congress that only if it assured that the constitution would be secular, would they support it.

that people coming forward to rescue victims of other communities is a good sign that the idea of coexistence is strengthening. "There are many instances in the Delhi riots of people of different faiths protecting places of worship. Many Hindus saved the lives of Muslims and many Muslims shielded the Hindus," he said.

He added that in the past many major riots happened, but events were not highlighted like in the Delhi riots. People are openly speaking about what is happening and rejecting the politics of hate, he pointed out.

The moulana said "We want to know what the opinions of people of different faiths on the secular nature of the constitution and we are fully convinced that all of them want India to remain secular. It is clear that if India will not remain secular, it will not remain united."

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it. The Congress had given this assurance in writing. It pledged to protect not only the religious identity of the Muslims but also provide liberty to propagate the faith. It assured that Muslims could live in India with their cultures and languages.

However, after independence, force was used to declare India a Hindu country as Muslims got their own courts. "Our elders approached Nehru and reminded him of their pledges and told them we were not the responsible for partition as the Indian Muslims did not sign on the deed of Partition. The Congress maintained its promise and adopted a secular Constitution," he said.

He said everyone should strive to discourage the politics of hate as it will destroy the country. The people who depend on the politics of hegemony want to cash in on everything. The BJP tried to raise issues like Article 370, Babri Masjid and triple talaq in Jharkhand, people rejected the BJP in the Delhi elections.

Rivalry breaks out among ministers

KTR steps in to pacify leaders angling for power in districts

IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY IDC HYDERABAD, MARCH 3

With the reorganisation of erstwhile 10 districts into 33 new districts, the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samiti has to contend with turf wars among its own ministers and party leaders.

TRs working president K.T. Rama Rao is said to have intervened to pacify the various factions and calm the situation before it blew up within the party.

Sources in the party disclosed that in Warangal, minister Satyavathi Rathod is annoyed with the alleged interference of her colleague Errabelli Dayakar Rao in Mulug and Mahabubabad districts.

When this issue came to the notice of Mr Rama Rao, he told Mr Dayakar Rao to concentrate on the other new districts in the erstwhile Warangal district as Ms Satyavathi will take care of Mulug and Mahabubabad.

When a similar issue arose between ministers Etala Ramakrishna and Gangavathi Kamalakar, Mr Rama Rao

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Party working president K.T. Rama Rao divided their jurisdictions.

As far as Adilabad district is concerned, all the MLAs loyal to minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar, those supporting former MP Pongulati Srinivas Reddy, and those in favour of former minister Tummala Nagaveswara Rao.

It has also come to the notice of Mr Rama Rao that ministers, MLAs and MLAs are not working in co-ordination in Nizamabad, Nalgonda and Rangareddy districts, sources disclosed.

He also said that the TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao is said to have intervened to pacify the various factions and calm the situation before it blew up within the party.

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DESPERATE MOVE Sr counsel wanted external agency to test fitness of buildings

COURT REFUSES PLEA TO CHECK SECTT BUILDINGS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 3

The Telangana High Court on Tuesday firmly rejected the plea of senior advocate Sarasani Satyam Reddy, who wanted any Central agency, IIT Hyderabad or experts or technical committee from outside the state to evaluate the lifespan and strength of existing Sectt buildings.

Senior counsel is representing the petitioners in the Legislative Council members' plea of Mr Reddy was highly disputable and any such direction could be issued by only civil courts.

The petition is that the government proposes to demolish the buildings to construct new ones and you have to explain why they should not be demolished. But, you cannot go beyond jurisdiction," the court told Sarasani Satyam Reddy.

However, Mr Reddy submitted that he was asking the court to refer the technical committee which had recommended the building of a new secretariat complex was appointed by the state government and its members acted "according to the dictatorship of the head of government."

Earlier, Advocate-General B.S. Prasad cited a series of judgments of the Supreme Court which said that the Congress cannot interfere into the policy decisions of governments. He aid Mr Reddy had not even filed the locus to file the PIL as he had political affiliation and was a political rival of the ruling party.



IN BRIEF

**DA case: Hostel warden convicted**

**Hyderabad:** A social welfare hostel warden who was arrested by the Anti-Corruption Bureau for possessing disproportionate assets in 2006, was convicted on Tuesday, along with two others. The trio was sentenced to three years in by the court. The ACB had registered a case against Ramavath Motiya Naik, a hostel warden at Golconda, and his aides R. Vijayalakshmi and R. Kesha Naik. After investigation, the case was charge-sheeted before the Principal Special Judge Court for SPE and ACB cases at Hyderabad.

**Hyd jewels beautified Taj**

**Former museum official reveals how Taj Mahal and Charminar are similar**

**ATHER MOIN | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 3**

Mohammed Abdul Qaiyum, former Deputy Director of the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Andhra Pradesh, revealed that gems and diamonds from Hyderabad were used in the beautification of the Taj Mahal, which was made with Lahori bricks and covered with Makrana marble. Mohammed Qutub Shah had sent a large quantity of diamonds for use in the

Taj Mahal. Mr Qaiyum was presenting an audiovisual presentation 'Revisit the Glory of Taj' on the structural details and history of the Taj Mahal organised by Media Plus Foundation. He said the Moghul Emperor Shah Jahan was born in the year when the construction of the Charminar was completed, passed by Hyderabad on their way to Machilipatnam. They used the

outer ring road. The main structure of the Taj Mahal is 925 feet away from the main gate, which is the best point from which to view the beautiful monument. Likewise, the distance between the Charminar and Machli Kaman is exactly 925 feet and from there you can see the Charminar perfectly. The conception of the corners of the Taj Mahal was taken from the Charminar monuments. Mr Qaiyum said Makrana marble used in

the Taj Mahal has the quality of absorbing light and colour. The actual colour of the marble is light sky blue, but it looks different in the morning, at noon, in the evening and in the moon light. The Taj Mahal was completed in 22 years and 20,000 artisans, including 37 master artists, worked on it. It spreads over 42 acres. Shah Jahan directed the artisans to construct a lawn for the mausoleum of his beloved wife Arju-

mand Banu (Mumtaz Mahal). Many models were presented before him and he liked the model presented by Turkish master architect Eisa. Arjumand Banu was first buried in Zainababad and shifted to the Taj Mahal after six months. On her death bed she had asked Shah Jahan to promise her two things - that he will not marry another woman after she dies and that he will build an extensive mausoleum in her memory. Which the King more than fulfilled.

**Works on police HQ pick up pace**

**Hyderabad, March 3:** Home minister Mohammed Mahmood Ali on Tuesday inspected the construction site of Integrated Command and Control Center at Banjara Hills, along with DGP Mahendar Reddy, Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar, joint commissioner A.R. Srinivas and other senior police officials. Speaking to the media, the minister said the construction work was almost complete and internal and external works were being done.

He instructed the speedy completion of the remaining works to make the centre ready for inauguration at the earliest. The work is going on in full swing, he said. Built at a cost of ₹350 crore, the ICCO is a part of the modernisation of the police department, he said. The ICCO has two towers, one of 19 floors and the other of 14. It will be equipped with video analytics that will be connected to over one lakh CCTV cameras, and a giant video hall among other facilities. — INVA

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• FEROZ NAGAR	• NIZAMPET	• YEDYADRI	• GANDHAPARK
• GANDHAPARK	• NIZAMPET	• YEDYADRI	• WANG-2
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SHORT TAKES

**Tiktok video helps son trace 'missing' father**

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL, MARCH 3

Tiktok videos are frowned upon for their weird content. But, one Tiktok video proved a boon for a family from Nandyal to trace their breadwinner who had left his house six years ago.

Ammappuri Pullaiah, a cobbler from Harjananavada of Nandyal town had left his house six years ago after a quarrel with his wife. His wife Naganjanamma, sons Venkata Narasimulu, Siva Narasimulu, Uday Shankar and his daughter searched for him everywhere, but their efforts proved futile. They approached the police as well without success.

One of his sons, Venkata Narasimulu made a video on Tiktok four months ago, seeking God's help in finding his father and seeking the help of his viewers to share the clip with others till it reached Pullaiah.

The young man's prayers were answered. The video reached his father, who was living lonely in Gandhi Dam area of Gujarat since he had left Nandyal working in a clothes manufacturing unit as a leader. He immediately responded to the Tiktok video. He also obtained mobile phone numbers of his family and spoke to them.

Venkata Narasimulu and younger son Uday Shankar rushed to Gujarat and, after spending two days with their father, the three returned to Nandyal on Tuesday night. Venkata Narasimulu said he was happy to meet his father after six years. "I prayed every God and Goddess in at least hundred temples in the state seeking blessings in tracing my dad. Now, my mother and father and all our family members are happy, thanks to social media," he added.

**NPR with 2010 format acceptable: Jagan**

'Minorities feel insecure about some questions in form'

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 3

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday announced that the state would request the centre to follow the 2010 format for the National Population Registry (NPR) exercise. This would spare citizens from revealing their mother tongue, place and dates of birth of their parents.

In a tweet, Mr Reddy said that the state assembly would pass a resolution in this regard in the ensuing budget session. He seems to have taken a cue from Nitish Kumar, his Bihar counterpart, who got a resolution passed in the assembly

that NPR would be done strictly in accordance with the 2010 format. But, it is not clear yet what the state government would do if the Centre decided to go ahead with the NPR exercise with its new 2020 format. The basic difference between the two formats was collecting data of parents' place and date of birth that created fear among several people, particularly those from the Muslim community. "Some questions proposed in the NPR are causing insecurity in minds of minorities of my state," Mr Reddy said, adding that after elaborate consultations within his party it was

decided to request the centre to revert to the 2010 format. As many as 15 details of individual members of each household were gathered during 2010. But in 2020, the centre wants to collect additional information pertaining to mother tongue, places and dates of birth of both parents even if they are not living in the same house, or even alive.

While states like West Bengal and Kerala have already announced that they would not take up the NPR exercise, several non-BJP states have expressed concerns at a high-level meeting held by union home secretary

with chief secretaries of all states.

Mr Reddy had initially supported the NDA government's controversial CAA. The YSRC government had even issued a gazette notification taking up NPR. However, his party members from the minority community, including deputy CM S.B. Amzath Basha, convinced Mr Reddy to oppose any move of the centre that goes against the interests of Muslims. Ruling party MLA from Guntur East Md Mustafa threatened to resign if his party failed to pass a resolution in the assembly opposing CAA, NPR and NRC at a public meeting recently.

**AP CMO unofficially bans Amaravati from datelines**

S.N.G.N. ACHARYULU | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 3

The state government is learnt to have unofficially banned the use of Amaravati dateline on press notes released to the media by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO).

Significantly, the media communiqués issued by the CMO conveying official news are having Tadepally or Velagapudi datelines, instead of Amaravati.

It was the regime of former CM N Chandrababu Naidu that first started using the Amaravati dateline on press notes issued by the Chief Minister's Office.

Interestingly, Naidu's residence is at Undavalli while Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is residing at Tadepally. Whoever may be the CM, official review meetings of chief ministers are conducted either at the secretariat or at their official residence.

Information about Naidu's meetings, whether at the Secretariat or his residence, was issued by the then Chief Minister's Office with Amaravati dateline, as



retariat or his residence. When the review meeting is held at the CM's residence located at Tadepally, the press note issued by the CMO is using the Tadepally dateline. If the review meeting is conducted at the secretariat situated in Velagapudi, the CMO is mentioning Velagapudi as the dateline. The mention of Amaravati is thus being avoided.

Incidentally, the temporary secretariat was constructed by the Naidu regime at Velagapudi. The AP assembly building was also established in Velagapudi. Since then, the Jagan Mohan Reddy government has, in the name of decentralising administration, decided to create three capitals, with Amaravati being the legislative capital.

A senior officer of the CMO clarified that they may use Amaravati dateline on press notes related to the assembly, because Amaravati is the legislative capital.

He maintained that the CM's residence at Tadepally and secretariat at Velagapudi are not part of the legislative capital Amaravati.

**Reliance man sure of YSRC ticket**

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 3

Member of Rajya Sabha, Parimal Nathwani, who served as group president of corporate affairs at Reliance group of industries, on Tuesday said that he had urged Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to give a Rajya Sabha seat to him.

Mr Nathwani is an independent member elected to the Upper House from Jharkhand.

Speaking with media-person at the central

● **ANDHRA PRADESH** Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to give a Rajya Sabha seat to him. Mr Nathwani is an independent member elected to the Upper House from Jharkhand.

● **HE SAID** that three days ago, when Chairman of Reliance Mukesh Ambani and he met CM Reddy, Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy to give a Rajya Sabha seat to him. Mr Nathwani is an independent member elected to the Upper House from Jharkhand.

Parimal Nathwani said that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy asked him for three days time before he could take a decision on this.

He said that in the ensuing Rajya Sabha elections in Jharkhand, one seat would go to the Bharatiya Janta Party and another to the Congress, and as such, there was no chance to him to contest from there.

He said that three days ago, when Chairman of Reliance Mukesh Ambani and Nathwani met Chief Minister Mr Jagan

Mohan Reddy, Mr Reddy was requested to give Mr Parimal Nathwani a Rajya Sabha seat.

According to Mr Parimal Nathwani, Mr Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy responded saying, "the YSRC has no convention to give tickets to outsiders. However, give me three days time to take a decision on this."

Reportedly, Mr Parimal Nathwani expressed confidence about getting a Rajya Sabha seat from the YSRC and getting re-elected to the House of Elders.

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SHORT TAKES

FADNAVIS TO FACE TRIAL IN AN ELECTION CASE

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 3

In a setback to former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, the Supreme Court has dismissed his plea for the reconsideration of 2019 judgment asking him to face trial for not disclosing the details relating to two criminal cases pending against him in his affidavit filed for 2014 Maharashtra Assembly election.

Dismissing the plea by Fadnis seeking reconsideration of October 1, 2019 order, a bench of Justice Arun Mishra, Justice Deepak Chaurasia and Justice Anirudha Bose said, "We find no ground to interfere in the review petitions. The same are dismissed."

The order that was passed on February 18 — the day open court hearing on Fadnavis plea for the review of 2019 order took place — but was uploaded on the top court website on Tuesday (March 3).

Seeking the reconsideration of 2019 order, Fadnavis had told the top court that a lower court taking cognizance of a complaint relating to non-disclosure of information about two criminal cases would not qualify to be declared in an election affidavit.

Fadnavis had contended that there could be a large number of complaints against a Chief Minister but not against them can be listed in a declaration at the time of filing nomination papers. He had said that no judgment would have large repercussions and needs to be looked into.

The top court by its October 1, 2019, judgment had ordered the reopening of the election case asking a Nagpur court to consider afresh the charges about the concealment of information about two criminal cases in the 2014 affidavit.

Noting that Fadnavis had the "knowledge" of the two cases against him which he had not mentioned in the affidavit at the time of filing nominations on the top court had said, "We unhesitatingly arrive at the conclusion that the order of the learned trial court pronounced by the HC by the impugned judgment and order dated 3rd May, 2018 is legally not tenable and the same deserves to be set aside which we hereby do."

PULWAMA ATTACK: FATHER, DAUGHTER HELD

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, MARCH 3

National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday formally arrested a father-daughter duo from Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district for their alleged role in the February 14, 2019 terror attack, in which more than 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were killed.



Teachers and students of Shriram Millennium school leave the campus as the school closed for two days after a student parent-tested positive with novel coronavirus, in Noida on Tuesday.

Covid-19 fears: 2 Noida schools shut

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 3

A day after a Delhi man was found positive for the deadly coronavirus, six of his family members who he met in Agra have been quarantined. Two private schools here cancelled classes on Tuesday for the next few days as a precautionary measure over the father of a student testing positive for coronavirus.

One of the schools, where the Delhi man's son is a primary class student, said it will remain shut from March 4 to March 6. The parent had thrown a birthday party last week for the child, triggering fears that the students who attended it might be at risk.

Army officer hospitalised in Mhow

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 3

19 government and six private hospitals. As many as 3.5-lakh N95 masks has been arranged. We have over 8,000 separation kits for staff treating coronavirus patients," said Jain.

MODI HITS OUT AT MANMOHAN

New Delhi, March 3: Hitting out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his remarks that his predecessor, Manmohan Singh looks at Bharat Mata Ki Jai with suspicion, the Congress on Tuesday said an "auspicious slogan" like that should not be drawn into "crass" and "cheap" political debate.

Addressing the BJP parliamentary party meeting, Modi took a dig at Singh, saying the former PM finds a "bad smell" even in a slogan like Bharat Mata Ki Jai and looks at it with suspicion.

21 Italians, 3 Indians sent to ITBP quarantine centre

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 3

New Delhi, March 3: As many as twenty-one Italian tourists and three Indian tour operators have been sent to an ITBP quarantine facility in Delhi on Tuesday for suspected coronavirus exposure, official sources said.

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PM reveals Twitter mystery

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 3

After sending the social media users into a daze and igniting speculations that he was "thinking of giving up my social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram & YouTube" the coming Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted on Tuesday ending the speculation by saying that he will be handing over his social media accounts to women who inspire, on March 8 which is celebra-

21 Italians, 3 Indians sent to ITBP quarantine centre

Jaipur: "His (Italian) Wednesday The Centre already has 112 people, 76 Indians and 36 foreigners, since February 27 after they were evacuated by an IAF plane from Wuhan, the epicentre of the disease. Meanwhile, an Uttar Pradesh couple, part of a 25-member cargo ship crew on Tuesday, were also being sent to a semi-detached to SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack, after doctors suspected them to have been hit by Covid-19.

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DECCAN Chronicle 4 MARCH 2020

No more than a trick to sidetrack, chill riot flak

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday night tweeted that he was considering leaving social media on Sunday. (The irony of announcing this on social media was lost on some.)

The PM's threat was never going to be permanent — his party has most effectively used social media such as Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp as weapons in the political fight to dominate the public narrative and to gain power.

As the PM himself on Tuesday confirmed, he would leave social media only for a day. Sunday is International Women's Day, and the PM's handle would be devoted to the posts by women who inspire him.

The PM has always been seen to support the cause of women, as with the "Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao" slogan, even though the Women's Reservation Bill continues to languish in a parliamentary limbo for over two decades.

More likely it was to distract from the unfavourable social media coverage the international community was giving on account of the Delhi riots.

Don't blame Iran

Iran's unequivocal condemnation of the Delhi communal riots in calling them out as "organised violence against Indian Muslims" carries a clear message on how the four-day mayhem in the capitals is being viewed beyond our shores.

Messages regarding international perceptions of apprehensions regarding the safety of India's biggest minority community in the wake of the riots have come from near and far, from the UN, USA, Indonesia, and so on.

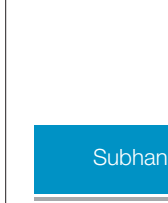
Only an impartial inquiry into the Delhi riots, which brought about a recurrence of communal violence not seen for a couple of decades, would help dispel the notion that the instigators would get away.

Majoritarianism would be seen to prevail once again prevail if those who spewed inflammatory speeches go scot-free. The Delhi police, seen to be a passive spectator while the flames were lit, are in charge of the investigation and the charge sheets.

DECCAN CHRONICLE T. VENKATESWARLAKRISHNAN Editor

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Subhani

Bengal war: Just political smarts won't be enough

Shikha Mukerjee

Political acumen, that special quality of mind that can manoeuvre through the intensely competitive ecosystem of elections, will be tested in the next round of elections, covering both the local bodies and the state assemblies.

The next series will be an equally challenging test of political consciousness about the wider implications and greater responsibilities of every voter who chooses to participate. From local body elections up to the state Assembly, every vote will contribute to the larger struggle that is underway, between two ideas of India, between a majoritarian State and an inclusive, secular one.

As much as other issues, parliamentary democracy in a multi-party federal State will also be on trial. The one-size-fits-all blueprint of the Bharatiya Janata Party will be tested against the many faceted politics of entrenched regional parties. Different baggages from the past will be shadows that will create discomfort for the leaders, organisations, parties and voters.

In West Bengal, it seems to have looked at the maths and come to the conclusion that if the party could gain six plus per cent votes in Delhi, where too, it was the only challenger to the Aam Aadmi Party, by blowing the dogwhistle, the BJP can expect to cover the three plus per cent distance that separates it from the Trinamool Congress in terms of vote share, as the 2018 general election results showed.

The BJP has used its only narrative, with its variations and additions, to attract voters. In 2014, the BJP's vote share was 17 per cent. In 2016, its vote share in the state Assembly elections was 10.2 per cent. In West Bengal, BJP has succeeded in attracting voters, but not all voters are the "core" support it needs to win without resorting to dangerous and incendiary adventurism.

While the voter will have to make a conscious choice to affirm the culture of fraternity, the political leadership of secular parties must find ways of minimising the space available for the BJP

LETTERS

HM'S NEGLIGENCE

The second in power in the Union Cabinet, Mr Amit Shah, was applauded by his party for handling of the Delhi riots, read: for his negligence and delay in controlling the Delhi riots. The BJP has always been laibacked in taking action against any of its members. Major acts of crime of well-known members are brushed aside.

Syeda Falza Kirmani Hyderabad

PUCCA WASTE

The HMRL MD's idea to decorate walls at Metro stations with words like, kaiku, hau, nakko, collegian, schoolan to educate outsiders into a better language is not only ridiculous but waste of public money. Those who hold the chair of authority must not indulge in such wasteful expenditure.

M. Jeevanand Scudderand

They missed for 95 minutes!

LONDON, March 3. The world's Marathi Kissing record was set here tonight by a college couple who say they are just good friends.

Jenny Winnie, 19 and David Atkinson, 20, kissed for 95 minutes, 40 seconds, leaving the 50 YEARS AGO IN CHRONICLE other contest for kissing for breaking the school's record. The contest was a Woodhull Polytechnic in Southeast London, where David is studying business and Jenny, humanities. It was in aid of the school's charity week.

The rules were strict, each couple had to be standing and their lips touching all the time.



Arifa Noor

View from Pakistan Politics in the age of TV: Ex-PM Abbasi leads the pack

THE angry politician is back on television. Last week, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi was released from jail after the Islamabad High Court allowed him bail. Since his release, he has been giving television interviews at a pace matched by few others.

Most of his contemporaries — from any party — are not this generous with the television cameras. Former prime ministers from the PPP such as Yousuf Raza Gilani and Raja Pervaiz Ashraf are rarely found in front of the cameras except at press conferences. Perhaps this is because it is a widely prevalent view that overexposure on television is to be avoided for celebrities — be they of the entertainment kind or from the political world — but is this really true in the present age of television-led politics of Pakistan?

levels — the creation of the media. But what does this really mean?

One aspect of this was Khan's comfort in front of the cameras: he set himself apart by agreeing to give interviews — rather indiscriminately — to a wide variety of anchors from all the news channels. This was in sharp contrast to the PML-N and PPP leadership which rarely gave interviews when they did so, the interviewers appeared to have been carefully chosen. This is a precedent followed by the younger generation — be it Marwan Nawaz or Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari.

Khan was different; he was accessible. A television channel anchor once remarked perceptively that there was a comfort level during interactions with Khan, which was not present during meetings with the Sharifs or Asif Zardari. While meeting the latter two, much thought goes into the phrasing of the question and how it is asked, she pointed out, while with Khan one doesn't have to worry about being deferential.

decorum usually prevalent while talking to heads of states.

And this is proving true for Abbasi as well. In the past couple of years, he has grown in stature, so much so that in the PML-N's reorganisation, a new post was created for him and there were few who questioned why. And this was not just because he served as prime minister. Earlier, the PPP had two prime minister who were not from the party's first family and they seemed to have made little impact. Can one say that one reason for it was their failure to be comfortable on camera? Yousuf Raza Gilani interacted regularly with journalists but in the old style — small groups were called to Prime Minister House for background interactions every week but interviews were few and far between. He left little impact despite serving for around four years.

This is not to say that their individual characteristics are irrelevant to play a role; they do. But in addition, television is not to be discounted. Abbasi was one of the few, or the only prime minister, who continued to give one-on-one interviews liberally, to those who are deemed friendly

Shikha Mukerjee is a senior journalist in Kolkata

By arrangement with Dawn

IN BRIEF

Nawaz awaits medication

London: Former Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif is awaiting a medical procedure in the UK which restricts his travel, a Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) spokesman has said.

Oli's 2nd kidney transplant

Kathmandu: Nepal's Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli has been admitted to a hospital in Kathmandu for his second kidney transplant after suffering from serious illness, hospital sources said.

18 killed as boat sinks in Amazon

Sao Paulo: At least 18 people were killed when a boat sank in the Amazon rainforest region, Brazilian authorities said Monday, as survivors described fleeing the foundering boat in terror.

TALIBAN LAUNCH DOZEN ATTACKS ON AFGHANS

Kabul, March 3: The Taliban carried out dozens of attacks on Afghan army bases, officials said on Tuesday, hours after ending a partial truce and throwing into doubt peace talks between Kabul and the insurgents.

The intra-Afghan negotiations are due to begin on March 10 according to a US-Taliban deal signed on Saturday, but a dispute over a prisoner swap has raised questions about whether they will go ahead.

Bibi in talks to form coalition

Exit polls gives majority to Likud Party

Jerusalem, March 3: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday began talks with lawmakers to form a coalition government led by him after the exit polls projected majority for his Likud Party in the country's unprecedented third parliamentary elections.

According to the exit polls published shortly after the voting ended on Monday, 70-year-old Netanyahu's right-wing party will win 59 seats, just two short of the majority in the 120-member Parliament.

Israelis voted on Monday for the third time in less than a year to break the deadlock on government formation, with the country's longest serving premier Netanyahu fighting for his political survival amid indictments on graft charges.

Meanwhile, the Central Election Committee said that it has completed counting almost 97 per cent of the votes polled

New environment



Two polar bear cubs and their mother Valeska explore their enclosure at the Zoo Am Meer (Zoo at the sea) in Bremerhaven, Germany, on Tuesday.

U.S. 'BULLYING': CHINA WARNS OF RETALIATION

Beijing, March 3: China threatened on Tuesday to retaliate against US "bullying" after Washington imposed staff cuts on Chinese state media, two weeks after expelling three Wall Street Journal reporters.

The US said its decision Monday to require Beijing's state-run media to cut the number of Chinese nationals employed in the US was based on levelling numbers between the countries rather than hitting back over concerns.

Foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said China "strongly opposes and condemns" the US announcement, adding that it effectively means the expulsion of Chinese journalists.

Turkey fighter jet down Syria plane, kills pilot

EU DIPLOMATS HEAD TO TURKEY AMID MIGRANT CRISIS CONCERNS

Beirut, March 3: A Turkish fighter jet on Tuesday downed a Syrian regime warplane in the northwestern Idlib province and the pilot was killed, a monitoring group said.

Turkish F-16 downed the regime plane over Idlib province, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor and a source at the Turkish defence ministry said.

Istanbul, March 3: Top EU diplomats headed to Turkey on Tuesday amid concern over a fresh migrant crisis, as Austria accused Ankara of trying to "blackmail" the bloc by opening its borders to thousands of refugees seeking to flee to Europe.

Rights groups also slammed Turkey for using the refugees as a bargaining chip by pushing them towards the Greek border. Thousands of migrants have since December battled to retake the jihadist-dominated stronghold, where Ankara backs some rebel groups.

The Turkish ministry said a L-88 On Tuesday, a surface-to-air missile fired by regime forces hit an Idlib residential neighbourhood, killing nine civilians including five children.

Biden surges ahead in race

Washington, March 3: Assured of his impressive lead in the Tuesday primaries, US President Donald Trump on Monday said that the ex-US vice president lacks the enthusiasm of his super Tuesday rivals.

The "Super Tuesday" primaries, held in as many as 15 states including Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Vermont and Virginia.

For the Democratic party, the results of the "Super Tuesday" could allocate 1,379 of the 3,979 pledged delegates for the Democratic National Convention in Wisconsin later this summer, which would select its nominee for the presidential elections in November.

Priti's ex-aide received £25,000 payout

London, March 3: Embattled UK Home Secretary Priti Patel was hit with a fresh allegation related to her ministerial role in the past on Tuesday, after claiming that her former aide received a 25,000 pounds payout from the government.

It was the Indian-origin minister, who is under pressure to quit as home secretary since the resignation of her top civil servant amid allegations of bullying, denies the allegations and rejects the backing of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson as being a "fantastic" minister.

quid as home secretary since the resignation of her top civil servant amid allegations of bullying, denies the allegations and rejects the backing of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson as being a "fantastic" minister.

According to legal documents seen by the BBC, an unnamed junior employee in the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), brought a formal complaint of bullying and harassment against the department, her line manager and an employment minister at the time, after being dismissed from her role in October 2015.

ing and harassment against the department, her line manager and a colleague. The female staff member allegedly took an overdose of prescription medication in the office and later took a further overdose at home, in what is described as an attempt to kill herself and was rushed to hospital where she spent the night in resuscitation, according to the documents.

William, Kate in Ireland after Queen's 2011 visit

Dublin, March 3: Prince William and his wife Kate began a tour of Ireland on Tuesday, in the latest high-profile trip by senior British royals since Queen Elizabeth II's landmark three-day visit in 2011.

was a major issue. On Tuesday, William and Kate — who officially hold the titles of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge — were due to meet Ireland's President Michael D. Higgins and Prime Minister Leo Varadkar in Dublin.

to quit as home secretary since the resignation of her top civil servant amid allegations of bullying, denies the allegations and rejects the backing of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson as being a "fantastic" minister.

PUBLIC NOTICE ALERTING PARENTS AGAINST NON-AFFILIATED SCHOOLS. It is brought to notice that some non-affiliated schools are misleading the parents/guardians by showing wrong information about being affiliated with CBSE through display boards at schools, prominent locations and on websites etc.

IN BRIEF

Fifth of UK staff could be off work

London: Up to one fifth of employees could be off work in Britain when the Covid-19 outbreak peaks...

France schools shut over virus

Paris: Tens of thousands of students in virus cluster zones are home from school in France on Tuesday...

Contagion: Pope tests negative

Vatican City: Pope Francis, who is suffering from a cold, has tested negative for the Covid-19...

EARTH 'WATER WORLD' 3BN YEARS AGO

Washington, March 3: Earth may have been covered by a global ocean that turned the planet into a 'water world'...



Volunteers spray disinfectant with a robot at a residential area in Wuhan of China's central Hubei province on Tuesday.

6 succumb to Covid-19 in US

All casualties from Washington state, number of confirmed cases cross 90

Washington, March 3: The number of deaths in the US from the deadly Covid-19 rose to six on Monday...

Indian-American in task force

Washington, March 3: Leading Indian-American health policy consultant Seema Verma has been appointed as one of the key members of the White House Covid-19 Task Force...

through the National Security Council. In a tweet on Monday, US Vice President Mike Pence announced the appointment of Seema Verma...

@SeemaCMS and @SecWilkie, he said. Responding to her appointment, Verma, 43, said, "Thank you @POTUS Trump, @VP Pence, and @SecAzar for the opportunity to serve America's patients & represent the @CMSGov perspective, which focuses on enforcing essential health and safety standards in America's healthcare facilities and protecting patients," she tweeted.

Virus dance bats for hand-washing

Hanoi, March 3: Home-made videos featuring a catchy Vietnamese song and an accompanying dance about the necessity of hand-washing during the Covid-19 crisis have racked up more than 2 million views on video app TikTok...

hand-washing dance moves, making sure to rub in between their fingers and their fingernails - which health professionals have recommended. Spin-offs include office workers grooving at their desks and even people dressed in the Hmong ethnic minority outfits dancing in front of a waterfall.

China: Uptick in imported cases

Beijing, March 3: China reported on Tuesday an increase in cases of the new Covid-19 coming from abroad, as the country where the disease first emerged now worries that its administration has taken the most aggressive action to protect the service sector...

DON'T NEED TO PANIC: CHINA'S ENVOY TO U.N.

United Nations, March 3: China's UN Ambassador Xi Jinping said there is no need to panic over the Covid-19 epidemic and that Beijing does not plan to discuss the situation in the Security Council during its Presidency this month...

Infections in Pak rise to five

Islamabad, March 3: A 45-year-old woman, who returned from Iran, tested positive for the deadly Covid-19 in Pakistan, taking the total number of the Covid-19 infections in the country to five...

IRAN SAID A British-Iranian woman Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, jailed in Tehran, is "in perfect health" after the dual national reportedly expressed fears of contracting the virus.

A GERMAN cruise ship with 1,200 passengers is moored in southern Norway waiting for the test results of two passengers who had been on land to be tested for the new Covid-19.

ABOUT 100 health workers are under isolation in northern Spain, and at least 120 others are being closely watched by authorities after at least five doctors and nurses were infected with the new virus in hospitals.

THE SVISS army said that all soldiers would be confined to the country's military installations after a virus case was found in their ranks.



The Emanuel-Lasker-Oberschule secondary school in Berlin's Friedrichshain district, that had to be closed as one of the school's teachers is infected with Covid-19.

Iran: 11 more have died

Tehran, March 3: Covid-19 has claimed 77 lives in Iran, officials said on Tuesday, as the emergency services chief became the latest high-ranking official to be infected.

Combat virus: Khamenei ordered armed forces to assist in the Islamic Republic's supreme leader to assist its Health Ministry in combating the spread of the new Covid-19. The decision by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei comes as Iran has the highest death toll from the virus and the

China fatalities climb to 2,943

Beijing, Mar 3 (PTI) The Covid-19 death toll in China climbed to 2,943 with 31 more deaths, while 125 confirmed cases were reported, the lowest since the virus outbreak in the country. Chinese health officials said on Tuesday even as the deadly disease wrecked havoc globally with the total number of deaths crossing 3,000 and infections

surging past 89,000. China's National Health Commission, (NHC) said on Tuesday it received reports of 125 new confirmed cases of Covid-19 and 31 deaths on Monday in the country. According to the World Health Organization, there are 89,527 confirmed Covid-19 cases and 3,056 deaths reported globally in 67 countries.

NATURE'S WRATH Landscape littered with debris of walls and roofs, snapped power lines and broken trees Tornadoes shred 40 buildings around Nashville, kill 8

Nashville (US), March 3: Tornadoes ripped across Tennessee early Tuesday, shredding at least 40 buildings and killing at least eight people. One of the twisters caused severe damage in downtown Nashville. Daybreak revealed a landscape littered with blow-down walls and roofs, snapped power lines and huge broken trees, leaving city streets in gridlock. Schools, courts, transit lines, an airport and the state capitol were closed, and some damaged polling stations were moved only hours before Super Tuesday voting was set to begin.

Residents of the historic Germantown neighbourhood walked around in dismay as emergency crews closed off roads. Roofs had been torn off apartment buildings, large trees had been uprooted and debris littered many of the sidewalks. "A tornado skipped across the county," Nashville Mayor John Cooper told the Tennessee while visiting an emergency shelter early Tuesday. "You do have people at the hospital and frankly there have been fatalities," Tennessee Emergency Management Agency spokeswoman Maggie Hannan

confirmed eight deaths, including one in Nashville, two in Putnam County, four in Wilson County and one in Benton County. The tornadoes were spawned by a line of severe storms that caused damage across Tennessee as it moved through the state after midnight. Buildings, roads, bridges, utilities and businesses were affected. One of the twisters, near downtown Nashville and reportedly stayed on the ground into Hermitage, about 10 miles east of the city. Other areas reporting extensive damage included Mt. Juliet. "Our community has been impacted significantly," the Mt. Juliet Police Department tweeted. Multiple homes were damaged and multiple injuries were reported, the department said. "We con-

tinued to search for injured. Stay home if you can." Police officers and fire crews were responding to about 40 building collapses around the city. Metro Nashville police said, John C. Tune Airport, Nashville International's sister airport in West Nashville, sustained significant damage due to severe weather," spokeswoman Kim Gerlock said in a statement early Tuesday morning. "Several hangars have been destroyed and power lines down," she added, adding that there are no reported injuries. Gerlock asked that the public avoid

the airport until further notice and that the Airport Authority has activated its Emergency Operations Center to coordinate response. A video posted online from east Nashville showed what appeared to be a well-defined tornado moving quickly across the city, flashing with lightning along the way. The disaster impacted voting in Tennessee, one of 14 Super Tuesday states. Some polling sites in Nashville were moved, and sites in Nashville as well as in Davidson and Wilson counties were opening an hour late.





SHORT TAKES

Tajikistan cancels Indian U-16 tour

New Delhi: Indian U-16 football team's exposure trip to Tajikistan has been cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak. The U-16 boys, currently the U-15 SAFF champions, were slated to depart on March 5 to play two friendlies against Tajikistan, the AFC U-16 Championship runners-up. "Please note that as directed by the government of the republic of Tajikistan due to the situation around the coronavirus, the citizens of 35 countries including India cannot visit Tajikistan," Tajikistan Football Federation said in an official mail to All India Football Federation. "In view of the above, all friendly matches between our teams stay cancelled," the mail added. The deadly virus, which has killed over 3,100 people and infected over 90,000 globally, has wrecked havoc on the international calendar of various sporting events across the globe and has even put the upcoming Tokyo Olympics under doubt. —PTI

Coronavirus risk looms over Euro

Paris: This Wednesday marks 100 days to go until the start of Euro 2020, but as preparations are fine-tuned for the first European Championship to be played across the continent, a coronavirus outbreak could pose a potentially serious threat to the tournament itself. The decision to stage the second 24-team Euros in 12 different cities in 12 different nations, from as far apart as Baku to Dublin and Glasgow, was certainly an ambitious move. UEFA say all venues and transport links are ready, but demand for tickets is through the roof, and there are no obvious security worries. Except for the coronavirus outbreak, its unknown potential consequences, which could cast a shadow over the entire event. Most matches in the Italian League were called off at the weekend with the country the hardest hit by the outbreak in Europe. Meanwhile, neighbouring Switzerland — with 24 confirmed cases — on Monday announced the postponement of all games in its top two divisions until the end of March. "The health of persons is much more important than a football game," insisted FIFA president Gianni Infantino at the weekend. I think we all hope that this can be contained, but of course we will take advice, but it's got to be health first, sport second, Gianni added. Football Association of Wales chief executive Jonathan Ford told the UK's Press Association. Wales are due to play in Rome at the Euros. The coronavirus crisis was raised at an executive committee meeting of European football governing body in Amsterdam on Monday. —AFP

Now, virus attacks Olympics Games could be delayed: Japan minister to parliament

Tokyo, March 3: Japan's Olympic minister said on Tuesday the contract to hold the Tokyo Games only specifies the event has to be held during 2020. Seiko Hashimoto's response to a question in the upper house of parliament implies the Olympics could be held later in the year and would not have to start on July 24 as planned. The Paralympics open on August 25. "The Tokyo Olympics are being threatened by a fast-spreading virus that has been blamed for 12 deaths in Japan and has shut down most schools, sports competitions and Olympic-related events in the country. The virus that started in China has been detected in at least 70 countries, with 90,000 cases and 3,100 deaths. "The IOC has the right to cancel the Games only if they are not held in 2020," Hashimoto told parliament. "This can be interpreted to mean the games can be postponed as long as they are held during the calendar year," he added.



IOC president Thomas Bach and Tokyo organisers have repeatedly said they would have sway over any changes. The international Olympic Committee gets 73 per cent of its \$5.7 billion income in a four-year Olympic cycle from selling broadcast rights. —AP

IOC president Thomas Bach and Tokyo organisers have repeatedly said they would have sway over any changes. The international Olympic Committee gets 73 per cent of its \$5.7 billion income in a four-year Olympic cycle from selling broadcast rights. —AP

Para Rugby test event postponed

Tokyo, March 3: A Tokyo Olympic test event featuring Paralympic wheelchair rugby has been called off because of the virus outbreak, which is threatening the Games that are expected to open in less than five months. The test event was to take place on March 12-15 in Tokyo and original plans called for athletes from abroad. Tokyo organisers on Tuesday said the Japan Para Sports Association cancelled the event in line with the Japanese government policy that is discouraging large-crowd event over the next several weeks, a move aimed at stemming the spread of the virus. Each passing day sees events canceled and that puts the future of the Olympics in jeopardy. Tokyo organisers said in a statement they would hold a wheelchair rugby test event in some form in April. The Olympics have been cancelled three times — in 1916 (Berlin), 1940 (Tokyo) and 1944 (London) — all during wartime. Tokyo organisers have 17 test events remaining on their schedule. The last one is to end of May 8. —AP



Bam Adebayo (left) of the Miami Heat goes for a fist bump with his teammate Meyers Leonard during an NBA game in this file photo.

England players ditch hand shakes

London, March 3: England captain Joe Root said his players will not be shaking hands on their tour of Sri Lanka in a bid to avoid the coronavirus. Root was quizzed on the coronavirus on Monday as England prepared to depart for their two Test tour. The Yorkshire batsman said instead of shaking hands, England players will greet each other with fist bumps. England were hit by a series of gastroenteritis and flu problems before and during the first Test on their recent tour of South Africa.



England cricket team captain Joe Root arrives with team for their tour of Sri Lanka at a hotel in Colombo on Tuesday.

are in regular contact with the authorities and will proceed as advised, but at this stage we fully expect the tour to continue as planned." England will play the first of two practice games against a Sri Lanka Board Presidents XI in Katunayake on Saturday ahead of the Tests, which will form part of the ICC World Test Championship. "The conditions will be a bit different with the time of year we are going this time," he said. —AFP

NO THREAT TO IPL DUE TO VIRUS, SAYS CHAIRMAN

Mumbai, March 3: IPL governing council chairman Brijesh Patel on Tuesday ruled out any threat to the upcoming cash-rich T20 league due to the novel coronavirus outbreak as of now but said the authorities are keeping a tab on the situation. The IPL begins with a clash between Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings at the Wankhede Stadium on March 29 while the final will take place on 24 May. Asked whether there is any threat to IPL due to coronavirus, Patel said, "There is no threat as of now and we are keeping a tab on the situation." BCCI president Sourav Ganguly too ruled out any threat to the IPL or the South Africa series, beginning with the first ODI on March 12 at Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh. Another senior BCCI official said that the South African team was coming as per the schedule for the three-match ODI series. —PTI

NBA PLAYERS TOLD NOT TO HIGH-FIVE

Los Angeles, March 3: Fist bumps are in, but high-fives are out — NBA stars have been given a series of recommendations as the league attempts to limit the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on the sport. ESPN reported on Monday that a memo sent to teams had outlined short-term measures aimed at protecting players from exposure to the virus, which has left six people dead in the United States so far.

The NBA memo recommends that players interacting with fans should bump fists rather than high-five. The league also advises players to avoid taking items such as pens, balls and autographs. "The health and safety of NBA players, coaches, staff, and fans is paramount," the NBA and NBA Players Association said in the memo. "We are consulting with infectious disease experts, including the Centers for Disease Control, and a world-renowned infectious disease researcher at Columbia University. "We are also in regular communication with each other, NBA teams including team physicians and athletic trainers, other professional sports leagues, and of course, many of you."

Some players have already taken steps to limit their exposure to the virus. Portland Trail Blazers star C.J. McCollum said Saturday he was no longer signing autographs.

"Make sure y'all washing y'all hands with soap for 20 seconds & covering ya mouths when you cough," McCollum wrote on Twitter. "I am officially taking a break from signing autographs until further notice." Other players were more circumspect.

Boston's Kemba Walker said he would continue to sign autographs but add that he'll just walk around with his own marker. —AFP

The league also advises players to avoid taking items such as pens, balls and jerseys to autograph.

Arteta gamble pays off as Arsenal win

Portsmouth, March 3: Mikel Arteta admitted he took a risk by making nine changes for Arsenal's 2-0 win over Portsmouth in the FA Cup fifth round but insisted he had no choice because some of his stars were still shell-shocked after their Europa League exit. Arteta's side reached the FA Cup quarter-finals thanks to goals from Sokratis Papastathopoulos in first-half injury time and Eddie Nketiah six minutes after the break at Fratton Park on Monday. It was a much-needed boost for Arsenal, who crashed out of the Europa League in a painful last-gasp defeat against Olympiakos on Thursday. Arteta conceded that fielding such an inexperienced line-up — only David Luiz and Bakayoko started in their places — could have put Arsenal's only chance of silverware this season in jeopardy. "The boys deserve the chance and I know it is risky to play them in this competition but they are worth a risk. Arteta said of his young side. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, who was in tears after missing a crucial chance against Olympiakos, and Mesut Ozil were both absent, while Alexandre Lacazette and Nicolas Pepe were on the bench. "I assessed the team and physically some of us were knackered, some of them had issues, some of them mentally were hanging on what happened that day. So I tried to pick the right team knowing how they were and I made the most of it. If you win, it is okay but if we had lost obviously it would have been the wrong decision. "The energy the focus and the willingness and desire to play in this competition



Arsenal's Eddie Nketiah (right) celebrates after scoring against Portsmouth in their FA Cup fifth round match at Fratton Park Stadium in Portsmouth.

moment," said Arteta. "He will be assessed in the next few days and we will know more. I don't know if it's the bone or ligaments, we don't know yet." Portsmouth manager Kenny Jackett said Arsenal were worthy of their place in the next round after surviving an early barrage from the third-tier promotion chasers. —AFP

Juve, Inter gear up for Cup glory, amid Corona chaos

Milan, March 3: Juventus and Inter Milan can get their seasons back on track with Italian Cup semifinal return-legs midweek, which take place amid Serie A fixture chaos caused by the coronavirus. Locked in a battle for the league title the pair have been overtaken by surprise package Lazio as the city of Rome remains relatively virus-free. Inter Milan haven't played in Italy since being beaten at Lazio on February 16 as the virus concentrated in the Lombardy and Veneto regions. Their home match against Sampdoria and the weekend's schedule title clash with Juve were both postponed, provoking a furious reaction from the club's CEO Beppe Marotta, who wanted the match played behind closed doors. "Two Europa League pre-quarterfinal matches against Ludogorets is all Inter have had for preparation in that time, and their disrupted schedule comes in the midst of a dip in domestic form that has left the former league leaders third behind Lazio and Fiorentina.

RONALDO HEADS HOME TO ATTEND TO AILING MOTHER

Lisbon, March 3: Portuguese star Cristiano Ronaldo skipped training with his Italian club Juventus Tuesday to dash to the Madeira home of his mother, victim of a stroke, local press reported. "All we can say is that he's not at training for personal reasons," Juventus said without giving further details. According to the Diario de Noticias da Madeira, Ronaldo was expected to make a whistlestop return to Funchal, capital of the Portuguese island living in the Atlantic, arriving Tuesday afternoon but departing Wednesday in good enough time to be available for the Italian Cup semifinal between Juve and AC Milan. Ronaldo's mother Dolores Aveiro suffered the stroke early Tuesday. The 65-year-old is now reportedly conscious and in a stable condition in a hospital. —AFP

dational rivals Juventus. GATTUSO CRACKS NAPOLI WHIP They face stiff opposition in Napoli, who look a side reborn since Genaro Gattuso replaced Carlo Ancelotti as coach in December. They have surged up the league table into sixth and impressed when they held Barcelona to a draw at the Stadio San Paolo in midweek. The reigning league champions meanwhile host AC Milan in the other semifinal on Wednesday in a match that will be open to the public, or at least a portion of it. The Italian government decided a halt to sports events in the regions of Lombardy, Veneto, Emilia Romagna and provinces in northern Italy. Ronaldo badly hit by the virus until March 8, unless the event is held behind closed doors. "I decrease the bans fans from areas not named by the government would be able to travel to Turin (in Piedmont) to watch the match. —AFP

THE RESULT Portsmouth 0 Arsenal 2 (Sokratis 45+4, Nketiah 57)

SHORT TAKES

India to take on England in semis

Sydney: India will take on England in the Women's T20 World Cup semifinals, it was decided on Tuesday following the rained-out game between South Africa and the West Indies here.

The abandoned game meant South Africa and West Indies shared a point each which was enough to push the former to the top spot with seven points, leaving England second.

England, who finished with three wins and a loss in the group stage, face India on Thursday in a repeat semifinal of the 2018 edition.

Australia will meet South Africa in the other semifinal.

AUSTRALIA LOSE PERRY Defending champions Australia were dealt a heavy blow Tuesday as star player Ellyse Perry was ruled out of the rest of Twenty20 World Cup with a hamstring injury.

The world's top-ranked women's all-rounder limped off in pain after attempting a run out during Australia's narrow win over New Zealand on Monday. Cricket Australia said she would miss the four-time champion's semifinal on Thursday. — AFP

Pandya hits 105 off 39 balls in T20

Navl Mumbai: On a comeback trail, India all-rounder Hardik Pandya smashed his way to a sensational 105 in just 39 balls for Reliance 1 in the DY Patil T20 Cup here on Friday. Hardik, who returned to competitive cricket last week after undergoing a back surgery, slammed eight fours and 10 sixes in his sizzling innings as Reliance 1 posted 252 for five against CAG in the Group C encounter.

Playing his second match post surgery, Pandya also claimed five wickets in a splendid all-round show as Reliance 1 bowled out CAG for 151 to claim a 101 run win in their final league match at the Reliance Corporate Park in Ghansoli. The sensational performance of the all-rounder from Ghansoli was watched by chairman of selectors MSK Prasad. Pandya has been on the road to recovery after going under the knife following a lower-back injury five months ago. The 26-year-old, who missed out on playing in the 2019 World Cup, had started bowling at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru after returning from a long rehab in UK. — PTI



Kevin Pietersen during a promotional event in Guwahati on Tuesday. — PTI

Pace project

Christchurch, March 3: Aware that his star-studded pace attack isn't getting any younger, India captain Virat Kohli says the team's 'think-tank' will need to have the next crop of speed merchants ready soon enough as one can't squeeze the 'life out' of established names.

While Jasprit Bumrah, 26, is expected to lead the pace pack for many more years, Ishant Sharma, who will be 32 this year, and Mohammed Shami (29) have already reached the peak of their prowess. Not to forget Umesh Yadav, who will turn 33 this year.

"These guys are not getting any younger so we need to be very careful and very aware and accept that these are situations that can potentially come up and have guys who can

replace them and ready up and running as soon as possible," Kohli said.

Ishant's poorly handled rehabilitation, which saw a recurrence of ankle tear, and the kind of workload that Shami has taken in the past two years, are indicators that this team you has to be ready for transition in the perhaps the next couple of years.

"...we do need to recognise who are the next three-four guys that can keep the standard up because you don't want to feel a void suddenly if a couple of guys miss out," Kohli gave enough indications that the management is zeroing in on new talents with an eye on future.

With Indian team's packed schedule across formats, Kohli said that it's inhuman to "squeeze

the life out of individuals." "That's what happens in cricket. Mini transitions happen every now and then, and you need to be aware of them," Kohli said.

"You can't squeeze the life out of individuals, and when they are done, you have no back-up. I think we as a side are pretty aware that these things are quite possible," he added.

Navdeep Saini is already a part of the set-up and there are two or three more names in the pipeline, the skipper said. "Saini is one who has come into the system. We have two-three more that we have an eye on," he said. "We need to be very careful and we need to understand that this is one factor that has got us a lot of success and we need to make sure that standards are kept high," he added.

Kohli wants the next crop to replicate the kind of success that the trio of Yadav, Ishant and Shami (Bumrah excluded) has got over years. "We recognise and understand guys who can do a similar job potentially as well as these, Umesh included." — PTI



(from left) Ishant Sharma, Md Shami and Umesh Yadav.

Kapil tells Kohli to practice more to overcome age factor

New Delhi, March 3: Kapil Dev feels slowing down of reflexes could be the reason behind Virat Kohli's struggles in New Zealand and the Indian skipper needs to "practice more" to overcome the age factor.

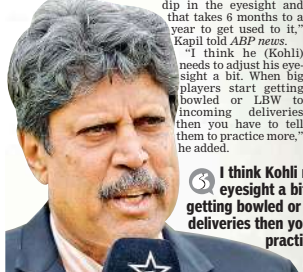
The 31-year-old Kohli managed just 38 runs in

the two Tests at an average of 8.50 in New Zealand. In the preceding limited overs series, he managed to score 180 runs including a half century, making it a forgettable tour for the India skipper. "With every big batsman there comes a phase. This is the age, after turning 30 everyone says there is a dip in the eyesight and that takes 6 months to a year to get used to it," Kapil told ANI news.

"I think he (Kohli) needs to adjust his eyesight a bit. When big players start getting bowled or LBW to incoming deliveries then you have to tell them to practice more," he added.

The World Cup winning Indian captain said that several batsmen like Virender Sehwag, Rahul Dravid and cricket legend Vivian Richards have faced similar difficulties. "It shows that your eyes and your reflexes have slowed down a bit and in no time your strengths turn into your weaknesses. From 19-24, your eyesight is at the optimum level but after that, it depends on how you work on it."

"Sehwag, Dravid, Viv Richards all faced similar difficulties in their career. So Kohli needs to practice more," he added. Kapil feels playing in the IPL will help the 31-year-old to adjust. — PTI



I think Kohli needs to adjust his eyesight a bit. When big players start getting bowled or LBW to incoming deliveries then you have to tell them to practice more. — KAPIL DEV

Kohli indicates 'mini transition' of pace unit in near future

The Cricket Advisory Committee comprising Madan Lal, RP Singh and Sulakshana Naik shortlisted five candidates to replace outgoing selection panel chief MSK Prasad and replacement member Gagan Khosla.

As many as 44 applications were received for the two positions and among those who had applied were former India pacer Ajit Agarkar, considered a frontrunner for the job, and former wicketkeeper Nayan Mongia. "Agarkar's name was very much considered but in the end the CAC shortlisted Siva Prasad, Chauhhan, Joshi and Harvinder. He can be considered when the tenure of the other three selectors (Jatin Paranjape, Sarandeep Singh and Devan Gandhi) ends," a BCCI official said. — PTI

INDIA RETAIN NO.1 SPOT IN TEST

Dubai, March 3: India on Tuesday retained their number one spot and captain Virat Kohli remained static at second in the ICC rankings despite a dismal Test series against New Zealand.

India have 116 rating points, six more than New Zealand with third-placed Australia accumulating 108 points. The 0-2 result against New Zealand was India's first series loss in the World Test Championship.

Kohli remains in second position in the batting rankings despite a forgettable Test series in which he made 38 runs in four innings, the ICC said in a statement. — PTI



Prasad, Joshi, Siva short-listed for selectors job

New Delhi/ Mumbai, March 3: The Karnataka duo of Venkatesh Prasad and Sunil Joshi were on Tuesday shortlisted along with three others for the national selectors' job, the interviews for which will be held in Mumbai on Wednesday.

Former India spinners LS Sivaramakrishnan and Rajesh Chauhan have also been called for interviews and so has been former India medium pacer Harvinder Singh. The interviews begin at 11 am local time.

The Cricket Advisory Committee comprising Madan Lal, RP Singh and Sulakshana Naik shortlisted five candidates to replace outgoing selection panel chief MSK Prasad and replacement member Gagan Khosla.



L. Sivaramakrishnan

INDIA RETAIN NO.1 SPOT IN TEST

Table with 2 columns: Team, Points. 1 India 5,211, 2 New Zealand 3,959, 3 Australia 4,320, 4 England 5,253, 5 South Africa 3,537

TOP-5 BATSMEN

Table with 2 columns: Player, Ratings. 1 Steve Smith (Aus) 911, 2 Virat Kohli (India) 886, 3 Marnus Labuschagne (Aus) 827, 4 Kane Williamson (NZ) 813, 5 Babar Azam (Pakistan) 800

TOP-5 BOWLERS

Table with 2 columns: Player, Ratings. 1 Pat Cummins (Aus) 904, 2 Neil Wagner (NZ) 843, 3 Jason Holder (WI) 830, 4 Tim Southee (NZ) 812, 5 Kagiso Rabada (SA) 802

Southee defends Kohli's outburst in second Test

Christchurch, March 3: New Zealand pacer Tim Southee on Tuesday defended Virat Kohli's outburst during the course of the recently concluded second Test here, saying the India captain is a "very passionate guy" who tries to "bring out the best in himself". Kohli allegedly swore at Kane Williamson during animated celebrations after his dismissal in the second Test. "He's very passionate... and very energetic in the field. He tries to bring out the best in himself," Southee told Radio New Zealand. — PTI



Tim Southee

Bengal storm into Ranji trophy final

Kolkata, March 3: Mukesh Kumar ran through Karnataka's second innings with a career-best six-wicket haul as Bengal hammered their star-studded opponents by 174 runs to enter their first Ranji Trophy final in 13 years here on Tuesday.

The low-profile pacer, who had dismissed India regular K. L. Rahul in Karnataka's first innings, became the hero in the second essence with his 6/61 as Bengal took less than two hours to dismiss Karnataka on day four. Resuming their monumental chase of 352 at 98 for three, Karnataka lost their remaining seven wickets for 79 runs in 16.3 overs. The penultimate day's proceedings lasted just 115 minutes after which the hero-of-the-day Mukesh Kumar was seen carried on his shoulders by Akash Deep.

Bengal, who won their previous Ranji title during Sourav Ganguly's debut season way back in 1989-90, had lost to Mumbai by 132 runs in their last final appearance in 2007.

Mukesh Kumar, who had previous best figures of 6/62, looked at his ominous best taking five wickets in just 60 balls with an imperious spell that read 4-29-29. He opened his account in the third over of the day with India batsman Manish Pandey (12) edging it to

BRIEF SCORES: Bengal 312 & 161 bt Karnataka 122 & 177 in 55.3 overs (Devdutt Paddikkal 62, Mukesh Kumar 6/61). Saurashtra 304 & 274 (Arpit Vasavada 139, Chirag Jani 51, Chintan Gaja 7/71) vs Gujarat 252 & 7/1 in 9 overs.

Shreevats Goswami behind the stumps. Then in his next over he dismissed K. V. Siddharth (0) and S Sharath (0) off successive deliveries to snuff out any revival hopes by heavyweights Karnataka. First Siddharth fell to an away going delivery and was caught by skipper Abhimanyu Easwaran, and on the next ball Mukesh bowled an inswinger to trap the wicketkeeper-batsman. Bengal will face the winners of Gujarat and Saurashtra clash, underway in Rajkot, in the final from March 9 and it will be an away match for them. Bengal also halted a third treble bid by Karnataka who recently were crowned the domestic one-day Vijay Hazare Trophy and T20 (Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy) champions. Karnataka's last treble had come in 2014-15 when they had achieved the feat twice on the trot. — PTI

CSIR INNOVATION AWARD FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN 2020. Inspiring Young Scientific Brains of India. Inviting entries from School Children (below 18 years) to support their scientific temperament. Award categories: 15 awards for novel scientific concept/idea/design/solution of existing societal problems. Prizes: ₹1 lakh, ₹50,000, ₹20,000, ₹10,000. Submission till 30th April 2020. www.csir.res.in/Latest

Golfer Dustin to skip Olympics

Los Angeles, March 3: Former world number one Dustin Johnson has become the first high-ranking golfer to withdraw from this year's Olympic games...



Dustin Johnson in his polo shirt. Photo: Getty Images

Dustin Johnson has become the first high-ranking golfer to withdraw from this year's Olympic Games, citing a tight schedule.

length, Winkle said in comments to Golfweek. "At the end of the day, it's a matter of personal preference and priority. As much as he would be honored to be an Olympian, the FedEx Cup playoffs are also very important to him..."

FRENCH CYCLING SIDE HELD LIKE HOSTAGES: OFFICIAL

Paris, March 3: The head of a French cycling team quarantined in Abu Dhabi since last week's aborted UAE Tour said on Tuesday riders felt like victims of a "hostage-taking".



India's Gaurav Solanki (second from left) poses after his 5-0 win over Kyrzggan Solanki in the men's 57kg category at the Asian Olympic Qualifiers...

Gaurav, Ashish punch through

Amman (Jordan), March 3: The seasoned duo of Gaurav Solanki (57kg) and Ashish Kumar (75kg) advanced to the pre-quarterfinals of the Asian Olympic Qualifiers for boxing with dominating wins in their respective opening round bouts here on Tuesday.

Solanki dominated from the word go, helped by Ulu's poor defence. The Indian was relentless and accurate in his attacks, scoring mostly through clean straight punches. Later, Ashish also produced a confident performance against a surprisingly strong rival.

Harika opens with draw at Swiss Grand Prix

Lausanne, March 3: India's number two Dronavalli Harika started her campaign in the FIDE Women's Grand Prix here with a draw against Swedish Grand Prix Craemling in the first round.

would qualify for the next candidate event. India's World No.2 Koneru Humpy leads the Grand Prix standings after two events from March 3, while Grandmaster Harika is joint fifth with Wenjun (120 points, 1 event).

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