

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
HYDERABAD | FRIDAY | 6 MARCH 2020

## WEATHER

Max: 35°C  
Min: 19.5°C  
RH: 52%  
Rain: Traces  
Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 36/22°C

## ASTROGUIDE

Vikar: Uttarayana  
Tithi: Phalguna Shuddha Ekadasi till 11.41 am  
Star: Punarvasu till 10.33 am  
Varjyam: 6.02 pm to 7.32 pm  
Durmuhurtam: 3.55 am to 9.42 am; 12.51 pm to 1.38 pm  
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon  
HILARI CALENDAR  
Rajjab 10, 14, 15 AH  
PRAYAS  
Fajar: 5.31 am  
Zohar: 12.37 pm  
Asar: 4.43 pm  
Maghrib: 6.30 pm  
Isha: 7.36 pm  
SUNSET TODAY 6.23 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.30 AM  
MOONRISE TODAY -  
MOONSET TOMORROW 2.43 AM

## COUNTER POINT



Not gold... he is smuggling masks!

## EPFO slashes interest rate

New Delhi: Retirement fund body EPFO on Thursday lowered the interest rate on provident fund deposits by 0.15 percentage point to a seven-year low of 8.5 per cent for the current financial year. The EPFO had provided 8.65 per cent rate of interest on EPF for 2018-19 to its around six crore subscribers. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Central Board of Trustees.

Full report on Page 14

## Motor insurance may cost more

New Delhi: Third-party insurance premium for cars, two-wheelers and transport vehicles may go up with Irdai proposing substantial increase in premium rates from the next financial year starting April 1, 2020. The Irdai has proposed to increase the third-party motor insurance premium rates for cars below 1,000 cc to ₹2,182, insurance for bikes would cost ₹24 more.

## Delhi judge clears air on transfer

New Delhi: Justice S. Muralidhar on Thursday cleared the air over the controversy on his transfer from the Delhi High Court to Punjab and Haryana HC, saying that the Supreme Court collegium had decided to transfer on February 12. The controversy erupted after the judge was transferred on February 25 — the day a he had pulled up police for failing to register FIRs against three BJP leaders.

Another report on Page 10

## Indira in top 100 TIME women

New York: Former prime minister Indira Gandhi and freedom fighter Amrit Kaur have been named by the TIME magazine among world's 100 powerful women who defined the last century in a new project that "spotlights influential women who were often overshadowed." The US magazine named Kaur as "Women of the Year" for 1947 and Indira Gandhi for 1976 in special covers created by the publication.

## NATION | 10

Khamenei: Control extremist Hindus

## SPORTS | 15

Ronaldinho grilled over alleged fake passport

## TABLOID

The virus joke is on William

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# NEGATIVE

## NIV clears techie, Apollo staffer

Health minister heaves a sigh of relief; doctors express doubts over result

BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Negative. The test results on samples from two suspected coronavirus infections conducted at Gandhi National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, caused state health officials to heave a sigh of relief on Thursday. The medical community, however, reacted with disbelief. The samples were sent to NIV because of a heavy viral load. Over 24 hours of anxiety after inconclusive results from samples from two suspected coronavirus infections in the city from the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, caused state health officials to heave a sigh of relief on Thursday. The medical community, however, reacted with disbelief. The samples were sent to NIV because of a heavy viral load.

According to the Centre's guidelines, only those samples that test positive in a state government laboratory are to be sent to NIV. Those that test negative are not to be sent for re-testing.

The two cases tested positive in the Gandhi Hospital lab, but now test negative at NIV. The medical community is asking questions, considering the diagnostic kits are the same in both labs, on whether there is a margin of error in testing. Incidentally, copies of the NIV reports arrived just as Mr Rajendar began his daily news conference on Covid-19. "This does not mean we are letting our guard down. There will be no let up in our efforts to keep Covid-19 at bay," he said.

"People of Telangana are fortunate," Rajendar said, adding that initially when they sent the samples to NIV, they believed that the results of the IT employee who returned from Italy might return as positive.

The health minister was relieved that the house-keeping staffer from Apollo Hospitals in Secunderabad was also cleared as Covid-19 free. "We were praying that the tests come out negative. Let's hope there will be no more cases. Till today, there is not a single case of local transmission of the disease."

The government was making every effort to stop Covid-19 in the State. "This is a global and national emergency," the health minister said. He also urged people to practice good hygiene, whether when coughing or sneezing, and particularly with reference to hand hygiene, the state health minister urged people not to panic or spread fear about the disease.



Schoolchildren wear masks at a school in Hyderabad on Thursday.

— Deepak Deshpande

## Delhi closes schools till March 31 to stop virus

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 5

To prevent the possibility of spread of coronavirus, the Delhi government has ordered immediate closure of all primary schools in the national capital till March 31.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said on Thursday that all Delhi government aided, private and schools run by civic bodies will remain shut. The government has also advised heads of departments (HoDs), autonomous bodies, and municipal corporations to suspend the biometric attendance system in the wake of coronavirus outbreak.

One more case of novel coronavirus was reported in Ghaziabad in the National Capital Region, taking the total number in the country to 30 so far.

## MODI'S VISIT TO BRUSSELS GETS POSTPONED

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Brussels this month to hold a summit meeting with the European Union has been postponed in view of the global spread of coronavirus. Mr Modi was expected to visit Brussels on March 13 for the summit, which was set to lay ground for deeper trade and investment ties.

—PTI

## INSURERS CLAIM HEALTH POLICY COVERS COVID-19

FALAKNAZ SYED MUMBAI, MARCH 5

Your basic health insurance or mediclaim policy will cover you against Covid-19 for tests and hospitalisation cost up to the sum insured, said health insurers.

The clarification has come a day after insurance regulator said "insurers are advised to design products covering the costs of coronavirus treatment."

A health cover is triggered when the insured is hospitalised for minimum 24 hours. However if quarantine is advised, the cover may pay you partially or may not pay you at all. Most health policies cover upto 30 days of pre-hospitalisation expenses and 60 days of post-hospitalisation expenses.

Full report on Page 14

## Patient's colony faces boycott

RAJESWARI PARASA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

The family of the 24-year-old techie who tested positive for Covid-19, are being practically ostracised by many. Some residents of Ravi Colony, where the techie stays, are also suffering.

One family in a nearby house has moved away, and others are being asked to stay at their relatives' base temporarily. "Our relatives are more worried than us," said a family living in a lane next to that of the techie.

Authorlekshwar drivers are refusing to enter the colony, said Ms D. Rekha, a resident. Some residents complained that their domestic helps had stopped coming to work. It may help matters that the Ravi Co-operative Housing Society on Wednesday submitted a representation to the Secunderabad Sanitation Board to isolate the techie's family.

The letter said: "There are 18 people living in the house and it appears no precautions are being taken by any organisation to avoid spreading of the coronavirus in the colony." Society president K. Sanjeev Reddy said: "About 200 people came to my house and demanded that the family be isolated. How many times can I explain that the disease does not spread through the air? They will probably listen to reason if a doctor tells them. We need an awareness camp."

Residents even approached the Tukaramgata police enquiry whether it was possible to restrict the entry of the patient's family into the colony. On hearing this, health minister Etala Rajendar castigated the residents. "Are we living in the 21st century or a primitive age when people should behave like this? This is just not right," he said.

## Nirbhaya's 4 rapists to be hung on 20th

Exhaust all legal remedies; victim's parents are happy

PRAMOD KUMAR and SANJAY KAW NEW DELHI, MARCH 5

After exhausting almost all legal remedies, all the four convicts in the Nirbhaya gangrape-murder case are due to be hanged till death in Delhi's Tihar Jail at 5.30 am on Friday, March 20. Additional sessions judge Dharmendra Rana on Thursday issued fresh death warrants after being told by the Delhi government that the convicts had exhausted all their legal remedies.

This is the fourth time that the court has issued death warrants against the four convicts. The first warrant for their execution was for January 22, the second for February 1 and the last one was for March 3.

Now, the only way to delay the hanging of the convicts is if the Supreme Court grants a fresh stay on their death warrants, which is possible only if one of the convicts — Pawan Gupta (25) — makes his case before the court that President Ram Nath Kovind had not applied his mercy petition on Wednesday. But similar pleas by the other convicts — Anshuk Kumar Singh (32), Vinay Sharma (26) and Akshay Kumar Singh (31) — had earlier been rejected by the nation's highest court.

The second remote possibility of getting a stay on the execution of the convicts is if their lawyers get relief from the Supreme Court, which at present is hearing a matter on whether death row convicts in the same case can also be hanged separately.

On Thursday, after fresh death warrants were issued against the convicts in the Nirbhaya's mother Asha Devi said: "The morning of March 20 will be the morning of our lives. Our struggle will continue till they are hanged... If there is any chance, I want to see them (convicts) dying." Lawyer A.P. Singh, who helped the four convicts in filing multiple petitions challenging the execution, termed the death warrants as a "judicial killing". He said: "Media pressure has already killed them. They have been killed four times with four death warrants. They have been hanged three times."

Even Nirbhaya (fearless), in his dying declaration made in front of a magistrate on December 21, 2012, eight days before she died, had stated: "I want them (convicts) to be hanged so that no other criminal can do this kind of torture and ill-treatment to any other girl. In fact, such criminals should be burnt alive."

On the fateful night, six men attacked Nirbhaya after she boarded a bus with a male friend. The two were returning after watching a movie at the Select Citywalk mall in Connaught Place. One committed suicide inside Tihar Jail.

Another was a juvenile who was set off after being sentenced to a reform home for three years, the maximum punishment for a minor.

## MLA's kin assaults Bigg Boss winner

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Ritesh Reddy, the brother of Tandur MLA Rohit Reddy, and his associates allegedly attacked Rahul Sipliguni, Bigg Boss Telugu 3 winner and play-back singer, in Prisms club late on Wednesday night.

Police booked a case. Officials said Rahul Sipliguni reportedly got into a scuffle at a pub in Gachibowli.

"I went to a pub at 8:30 PM and sang a song on popular demand and entered the pub crowd," Rahul told the media. At around 11.45 pm, a gang of about six men emerged from the washroom, passing lewd comments to a female friend. When I tried to stop them they left, but abused me. I confronted them and they attacked me. One even hit me on the head with a beer bottle."

Rahul continued: "I came to know that these people had a history of attacking others. Ritesh Reddy was the first to attack. Afterwards, I went to a private hospital for treatment. I returned to my home at 5 am." Inspector R. Srinivas said: "We have booked a case of causing hurt and sexual harassment against Ritesh Reddy and six associates. At present the suspects are absconding and efforts are on to nab them."

## CRIMINAL CASE

Bansal's wife claims former Flipkart CEO had been assaulting since their marriage in 2008

## Sachin Bansal faces dowry, sexual abuse charges

M.K. ASHOKA | DC BENGALURU, MARCH 5

Dowry harassment and criminal assault cases have been filed against former Flipkart CEO Sachin Bansal by his wife Priya Bansal here.

The police have registered cases under the Indian Penal Code and the Dowry Prohibition Act on February 28. Apart from torturing for dowry before marriage,

with his work to take care of me, I requested him to allow me to go to Chandigarh and stay with my parents. He relented on the condition that I stay at his parents' home," she said in her complaint. "On my arrival at their residence, I was once again received with abuses and rebukes by his parents. To my shock, the Secunderabad Suburban Court had become pregnant and forbade me from telling any-



Sachin Bansal one specially her relatives that I was with child."

In her complaint, she further claimed that her husband had been assaulting her till October 2019 and had intimidated her several times. Priya further alleged that Mr Bansal had also sexually harassed her sister, when she was in Delhi. "When this issue was discussed before our marriage ceremony, Sachin refused to do this with my sister. But did not show any remorse nor seemed apolo-

getic in the least," Priya said in her complaint to the Bengaluru police. "Though there is a mention of this incident in the FIR, the police said appropriate sections have not been applied yet." The police have registered case under IPC 488A (dowry harassment) and under Sections 3 and 4 of Dowry Prohibition Act.

Priya said she married Sachin Bansal in April 28, 2008, as per the wishes of the investigation of the case.





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FROM AP  
**11 SAMPLES TEST NEGATIVE IN AP: GOVT**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, MARCH 5

The Andhra Pradesh government on Thursday said that 11 samples have so far tested negative while results were awaited for another 13 samples for Coronavirus (Covid-19). According to a bulletin released by the state government, as many as 361 people who have travelled from Covid-19 affected countries have been identified and placed under surveillance across AP, of which 102 people were on home isolation and 218 people had completed the 28 days observation period.

Special chief secretary of health and family welfare, Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy said that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared the recent Covid-19 epidemic, which has so far affected 75 countries, as a public health emergency of international concern. WHO has classified the risk assessment as very high at both the regional and global level.

Dr Jawahar Reddy said that in this context, Andhra Pradesh has strengthened surveillance for containment, control and prevention of Covid-19. He said that till date, 361 passengers from Covid-19 affected countries have been identified and placed under surveillance.

He said that 130 people are under home isolation and 218 people have completed the 28 days observation period. As many as 12 passengers have been admitted to a hospital, and are stable. Of the total 24 samples collected till date, 11 samples have tested negative for Covid-19, while result are awaited for another 13 samples.

A control room has been set up in the state and all districts, he said. Isolation wards have been set up in all government general hospitals and district hospitals. Dr Reddy advised public to should follow cough etiquette by covering nose and mouth, using a handkerchief while sneezing / coughing.



Vegetable vendors await buyers as the Monda Market wears a deserted look on Thursday amid the ongoing Covid-19 scare across the city and the state. —P SURENDRA

# Covid-19 hits Monda Market

Bustling market in city wore deserted look amid fears of epidemic

**SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 5**

The Monda Market, a big wholesale and retail vegetable market in Secunderabad, always thronged by crowds from dawn to dusk, wore a deserted look on Thursday with the fear around the coronavirus.

As many of the retailers, including individual buyers, hesitate to visit the market with the fear of Covid-19, the daily earnings of the retailers have plummeted. Most affected are the hamalis (daily wage labourers), rickshaw pullers and the small-time vendors

Mohammed Bano, 50, ekes her livelihood from the retail sale of vegetables. She said that she has been in the market for the past three decades and never saw this kind of situation.

She said "We sell about 700 to 800 kgs daily but since Monday, there are no sales. We are not even able to sell 200 kgs of vegetables, though the rates of vegetables are low compared to earlier days. For the last four days, there are no takers and these all are perishable goods. At the end of the day, we are forced to sell them as cattle feed."

**● MOST AFFECTED** are the hamalis (daily wage labourers), rickshaw pullers and the small-time vendors.

**● Mohammed Bano** ekes her livelihood from the retail sale of vegetables. She said that she has never saw this kind of situation in the last 30 years of her work.

Ms Samakka, an old woman who exclusively sells cabbage and green chilli, said "Today, the market price of cabbage is just ₹10 per kg but there is no one to buy. People here were talking about some

disease which came to our city. We are not sure when it will go and when the business will pick up." The story of Ms Papamma, a widow in her later thirties, is pathetic. She works as a porter for domestic customers and each customer pays her ₹10 or ₹20.

She said generally she earns ₹200 to ₹300 in a day which is enough for her and her only son, but for the last four days she is returning home with less than ₹50 in her hand. She termed this situation as dark days in her life.

Mr Ashok Kumar, seller of leafy vegetables in the market, said "We mostly

sell to domestic customers, but because of the coronavirus, we have no buyers. Whatever little sale we have is from the hoteliers, messes, and canteens"

Mr Yadaiah and Mr Venkataiah, rickshaw pullers dependent on the market, are jobless, resting on the carts of their rickshaws. When this correspondent asked about their earnings as the market wore a deserted look, one of them pulled out from his pocket a ₹20-note and said his entire earning in the day is just that.

He said if this situation continues long their families will suffer starvation.

# Act against virus like Kerala: HC

VIJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Dreading the potential spread of Covid-19 to the city's slums, the Telangana high court on Thursday directed the state government to duplicate Kerala's strategy in containing positive Covid-19 cases.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice A. Abhishek Reddy, dealing with PILs apprehending the state's vulnerability to Covid-19 and other epidemics, said God forbid the coronavirus does not spread further.

The bench directed it to be vigilant so that there no new positive Covid-19 cases in coming days. The court directed the state to follow Kerala's lead. The World Health Organization also recognized and commended Kerala's efforts at stabilization.

The court's amicus curiae, S. Niranjan Reddy, appointed to give directions to the government on combating virus, submitted his report in it, the senior counsel mentioned preventive and curative steps to be taken, and submitted that Telangana's measures were not adequate to fight and contain the virus.

He stressed the state should follow guidelines issued by the Centre's Director General of Health Services, which prescribe elaborate procedures of investigating, controlling, preventing and curing the disease. Further, the state can invoke the Epidemics Act, 1897 in the present situation, which puts restrictions on travelling.

The bench further directed the State to ensure that slums are closely monitored and in

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case of an outbreak of coronavirus, it should consider the possibility of creating the isolation wards near the slums.

"Telangana Government should also consider the distribution of sanitizers, disinfectant, masks etc., to residents of slums through the public distribution system, free of cost," the court directed. "Considering the fact that the first case came from Dubai, and travelled from Bangalore to Hyderabad by bus, Telangana State should consider setting up screening centres at major railway and bus stations in the state," the chief justice ordered. "The strategy should be planned for clearing such passengers".

Earlier, Dr K. Shankar, Director of Hyderabad's Institute of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, briefed the Bench on the preventive measures taken by the government. He submitted that state and district level committees were constituted to monitor the situation on a minute to minute basis. Isolation wards were established in nine other major towns and at district headquarters.

Advocate-General BS Prasad said the State will file the latest report in a week.

**TANISHQ**

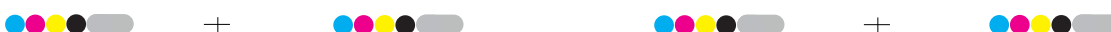
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**SHORT TAKES**

**TS HAS BEST FACILITIES TO COMBAT VIRUS**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Telangana state has the best facilities in the country to combat and control Covid-19 disease, health minister Etila Rajendar has said. Addressing a press conference on Thursday, Mr Rajendar said the preparations by the government with respect to treating possible and actual Covid-19 patients have been appreciated by the Centre.

"In addition to nearly 3,000 beds, we have already planned the necessary equipment. If need be we can scale the availability of isolation facilities to 80,000," he said. "We have double bedroom houses that are yet to be handed over to beneficiaries and if need be, we can press them into service to treat Covid-19 cases," Mr Rajendar said. He said Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Naidu, who has already released ₹100 crore for fighting the disease, suggested that the health department gear up to provide 10,000 beds in a short period if the need arises.

As many as 1,200 health department staff has already been deployed in the GHMC area alone with Covid-19 related work such as keeping tabs on those in home isolation and tracing contacts of potential patients.

On Thursday, a team of Central officials visited the city to study the state's preparedness on the Covid-19 front. They visited Gandhi Hospital, the international airport and interacted with health department officials.

**DRUNK DRIVER TESTS TO GO ON, SAY COPS**

**GEETA VALABOJU | DC**  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

The police is going ahead with drunken driving checks claiming the process of checking was fully hygienic. There have been speculations circulating on every possible social media platform on whether the drunken driving tests were suspended because of the virus scare.

Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat said, "For every check, a new straw is used by the traffic police. All traffic officers involved in checking have been well-trained and take all required precautions." He said, "We request people not to spread rumours in social media and disturb the normal tempo of duties. The government has been taking all measures required. The public is requested not to panic and not to believe in rumours and false news in this regard."

The drive would continue as usual, Mr Bhagwat said. He also said that they would take all steps to prevent the deadly virus. Not only do the police take public safety seriously but also their own safety too.

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The drive would continue as usual, Mr Bhagwat said. He also said that they would take all steps to prevent the deadly virus. Not only do the police take public safety seriously but also their own safety too.

"There is still need for hygiene," said techie Sudhakar Sharma, from Madhapur. "One has to enter into the mouthpiece of the breath analyser, which then detects blood alcohol content. The same device is used multiple times during traffic checks. As the virus is feared to spread through coughing or sneezing, the use of breath analysers under such circumstances can be highly unhygienic and one of the ways for the virus to spread from person to person," Mr Sharma told Deccan Chronicle.

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A. Siddiqui, Advocate  
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**Info not disclosed to govt, Prof transferred**

**Microbio HOD moved from Gandhi to Fever hospital**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Dr K. Nagamani, the professor and head of the department of microbiology of Gandhi Medical College, has been transferred to Fever Hospital for not disclosing to the state government that a patient had tested positive for Covid-19 infection.

The sample of the techie from Mahindra Hills when it tested positive was sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV) at Pune for the second test following the protocol of informing the state government.

Interestingly, Prof Nagamani was monitoring her team 24x7 but was caught 'unawares' as the Centre released the status of the patient after the NIV result before the state government could get notified. There was utter shock and dismay in Prof.

Nagamani's department after the press release issued by the Centre was circulated. According to sources, a detailed explanation was sought from the professor and it was stated that there must now be a committee of microbiologists to deal with these daily reports and sample testing.

The sudden announcement led to a major embarrassment in the state government. To ensure that these mistakes do not occur again, a team of six microbiologists in three shifts has been formed. They will be in touch with the senior officials of the state department and update them regularly.

A senior doctor in Gandhi Hospital explained, "The state government officials will receive reports three times in a day and they will then update the health minister who will release the report."

**Measures taken**



People, in the rumour of the virus infection, approach Gandhi hospital for further treatment on Thursday. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

**Private hospitals to collect throat swabs for Covid tests**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Throat swabs for detecting Covid-19 will now also be taken from patients in private hospitals as well, but the samples will be tested only in Gandhi Hospital. The private hospitals are gearing up to take the samples and assist the government as everyone cannot go to Gandhi Hospital for tests.

Ms Sangita Reddy, chief managing director of Apollo Hospitals, and national president of the Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries, said private hospitals, she said private hospitals should be "geared up as the lessons from China show that the spread is large. We have to be prepared and are ready to assist the government. We have a team of infectious disease specialists who had gone to Saudi Arabia during the outbreak of MERS virus. These experiences can be utilised for containment of Covid-19."

**Govt to lay protocol for virus treatment**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

A day after announcing that private and corporate hospitals will be allowed to admit possible Covid-19 suspects and also provide treatment to confirmed cases, if any the State government has said that such hospitals will have to follow a protocol laid down by the government.

"If a patient admitted to a private hospital is confirmed as having the disease, the hospital must follow a State Health Department treatment protocol. Private hospitals cannot and will not be allowed to deviate from such a treatment plan," health minister Etila Rajendar said. The minister also said that once a case is confirmed, no private hospital will be allowed to bill the patient as per its whims and fancies.

The other private hospitals in the city have also started checking the travel history of their patients. Dr Bhaskar Rao, managing director of KIMS Hospital, says, "We have been given a set of guidelines by the government which are being followed now. The instructions are that we must be ready to assist the government in tackling the situation."

**Food industry remains intact**

**T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC**  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Fears of the dreaded coronavirus (Covid-19) notwithstanding, eating out as popular as ever with Hyderabadites. Thousands of food samples have been taken for analysis, but there is no downward trend when it comes to eating out or ordering food from outside. "We have been extremely cautious; all our delivery executives are being sent notifications as and when we receive them from the World Health Organisa-

tion (WHO). Restaurants are also keeping in mind requisite preventive measures," said a high-ranking official from a food delivery application, who did not want to be named. She added that delivery executives usually wear a mask when making deliveries. Restaurants and hotels that serve food on their premises have beefed up hygiene in their kitchens. "The kitchen where the food is prepared is usually hot, with temperatures between 30-40 degrees

Celsius. It has been widely publicised (though by no means proven) that the virus does not survive in such temperatures, so there is no chance that one could contract the disease," Mr Ashok Reddy Kancharla, owner of SYN caterers and president of the Hyderabad Hotels Association, told Deccan Chronicle. He said all wait staff in the hotel have been asked to wash their hands with soap after meeting a customer. The worst hit are brands launches, say industry insiders.

"While, eating out is still progressing at the usual pace, events, campaigns and brand launches that would witness the presence of a foreigner have been cancelled," said Mr Anurag Katkar, president of National Restaurants Association of India (NRAI). He said all wait staff had two events lined up with foreign delegates, but owing to the rising number of reported cases, they withdrew at the last moment.

**SHABBR TELLS GOVT TO SUPPLY MASKS, SANITIZERS**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Former minister Mohammed Ali Shabbir on Thursday said that the state government take immediate measures to regulate supply of surgical masks and hand sanitizers and control their prices.

In a media statement, Mr Ali said that the prices of surgical face masks and hand sanitizers have increased by more than 10 times ever since the first case of coronavirus was confirmed in Hyderabad last week.

The former minister alleged that the surgical mask, which was originally priced at ₹5.5 per piece, is now being sold for ₹25-30 and selling like hotcakes. Even the hand sanitizers are being sold over and above the MRP.

"The increase in number of coronavirus cases and suspected has created a sense of panic among the people. As advised by the authorities, people want to take all precautions like wearing a mask and cleaning their hands with sanitizers. However, the precaution is turning out to be a burden on the common man due to black-marketing," he said.

Mr Ali said that the health minister had entered into denial mode when Telangana state, especially Hyderabad, was hit with dengue cases last year. He said the health minister had entered into denial mode when Telangana state, especially Hyderabad, was hit with dengue cases last year. He said the health minister had entered into denial mode when Telangana state, especially Hyderabad, was hit with dengue cases last year.

**5<sup>th</sup> DEATH ANNIVERSARY**  
A prayerful remembrance of a dear Husband, Father and a guiding Light to many souls.

You will remain in our hearts & Miss you always

**LATE S. GURDAYAL SINGH ARORA (G.S. Arora)**  
(S/o Late. S. Ram Singh Ji Arora)  
Inherited by: Sardarni Surjeet Kaur Arora (Wife)  
Daughters & Son-in-laws, Grand Sons & Grand Daughters

**M/s. NAVJEEVAN CHIT FUNDS** Mob. : 9311058880

**OBITUARY**  
With profound grief, we would like to inform the demise of Sri Gopal Rao Gopalakrishna on 04th March 2020.  
Last rites will be performed at Jayabharati Orage Centre, D-Block, Gopabhogal, at 11 am on 7-3-2020.  
**WITH LOVE & AFFECTION**  
Wife: Manjula Davaloor  
Son & daughter in Law : Sri Ram Davaloor & Lakshmi Priya Davaloor  
Daughter & son in law : Srividya Ravella & Sudhanush Ravella  
Grandchildren : Vidur & Vineeth, Moksha & Kavya

**SLEPT IN THE LORD**  
"Father, I have stilled against Heaven and in your sight, and I am no more worthy to be called by son." Luke 15:21  
I am a sinner, forgive me. If it is by will "LORD, remember me when you come into your Kingdom." Luke 23:42

**EDWARD P. Y. SAMUEL VINAYASAGAR**  
S/o Late P. Y. Edward P. Y. Susudass & Mrs. Prema Venkatesh & Husband of Dr. Edward P. Daisy Hemalatha Vinayyasagar  
Funeral & Burial Service TODAY, 6 March, 2020 at 4 PM at CSI Wesley Cemetery, Bhogida, Secunderabad.  
Inherited by: Wife & members of the Family 98669-65332, 99499-88220

**HOMAGE**  
Prof (Dr.) V.N. WAGHRAY  
D.O.B: 19th July 1927 D.O.D: 02nd March 2020  
Teacher of Teachers  
1. Clinician par Excellence  
2. "Banned" "Human Being"  
3. Ethical Medical Practitioner of rare quality  
5. Hundred percent Christian  
**May His Soul Rest in Peace**  
1. Prof. (Dr.) A. Gopal Krishna Emeritus Clinician, O.M.C. Old Students Association Trust  
2. Prof. (Dr.) K.K. Sahu Former Chairman, A.P.I.  
3. Prof. (Dr.) M.A. Teeganta Senior Cardiologist & Honorary Consultant, O.G.H.  
4. Dr. R.M. Sahoo Senior Superintendent, M.A. Teeganta State Super Speciality Hospital, O.M.C. Old Students Association Trust  
5. Dr. S. Shyam Sunder Prasad, P.R.C.S.  
6. Dr. P. Rajender Reddy Chairman, O.M.C. Old Students Association Trust  
7. Dr. K. Krishna Reddy Managing Trustee, O.M.C. Old Students Association Trust  
8. Dr. S.S. Teeganta President, O.M.C. Alumni Association  
9. Dr. S. Krishna Kumar Secretary, O.M.C. Alumni Association  
S/o Late: M. J. Subbarao  
D.O.B: 24.06.1939 D.O.D: 06.03.2019  
Inherited by: Tony Joseph, Sophia Susan, Thomson Joseph, T.T. Francis, Sheena Thomson & Grandchildren: Diana, Flora, Pally Sneha. Ph: 986622760, 8650120120. Tel.No. 040-27954272. (S/1820001969)

**OBITUARY**  
These beautiful bright, beautiful life has finished his race on 5th March 47  
Irapati Suvarna Latha David  
W/o Late Irapati David Raj  
Slept in the Lord on 3rd March 2020  
The Body will be at residence on Saturday, 7th March 2020 from 7:30 am to 11:30 am only  
Funeral: Garrison Cemetery on 7th March 2020 at 1:00 pm  
Inherited by: Family Members  
Ph: 9866530787, 040232061312 (S/1920001969)

**OBITUARY**  
1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY  
Jesus said "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies." John 11:25  
M.A. JOSEPH  
Retd. S.M. Malkajgiri Station, S.C.R.  
DOB: 24.06.1939 DOD: 06.03.2019  
Inherited by: Tony Joseph, Sophia Susan, Thomson Joseph, T.T. Francis, Sheena Thomson & Grandchildren: Diana, Flora, Pally Sneha. Ph: 986622760, 8650120120. Tel.No. 040-27954272. (S/1820001969)

**OBITUARY**  
10th DEATH ANNIVERSARY (In Loving Memory)  
Mrs. PAMELA TULLY  
W/o Late Geegary Tully  
D.O.B: 23.07.1924 D.O.D: 05.03.2020  
Mass At: St. Mary's Basilica Church, Secunderabad-56.  
On March at 10 a.m.  
Followed by Funeral Service at Methodist Cemetery.  
Inherited by: Loved Ones  
Ph: 702601104 (S/1920001969)

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Ph: 702601104 (S/1920001969)

**OBITUARY**  
14th DEATH ANNIVERSARY  
Mrs. THIPARALA ELIZABETH  
Retd. Deputy Director (Food Fed) Andhra Pradesh  
W/o Late Thiparala Suresh Chandraiah  
DOB: 27.04.1905 D.O.D: 06.01.2006  
Funeral & Burial Service at St. George's Church, Secunderabad-56.  
On March at 10 a.m.  
Followed by Funeral Service at Methodist Cemetery.  
Inherited by: Loved Ones  
Ph: 986697857, 8886949192 (S/1920001969)

**OBITUARY**  
14th DEATH ANNIVERSARY  
Mrs. P.C. NANCY JAMES  
24-06-1939-06-03-2009  
Devised justice awaited  
Followed by Funeral Service at Methodist Cemetery.  
Inherited by: Family Members  
Ph: 982119777 / 998855317 (S/1820001969)

**OBITUARY**  
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IN BRIEF

MLA says clean state Assembly

Hyderabad, March 5: Congress MLA T. Jayaprakash Jagan Reddy on Wednesday urged the state government to take appropriate preventive measures against Covid-19 in the legislature complex during the Budget session beginning on Friday. As part of measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19, various government agencies have initiated special sanitization campaigns on their respective premises. Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar stressed the need for improving cleanliness and hygiene at all police stations. He also requested to set example of cleanliness and hygiene on all our premises. City police officers are requested to set example of cleanliness and hygiene at all police stations and ensure this.

SHIFT WARD FROM GANDHI, SAYS TJUDA

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

The currently designated isolation ward for Covid-19 patients must be shifted from Gandhi Hospital to the Telangana Junior Doctors Association (TJUDA) on Thursday.

In a representation given to the superintendent of the hospital, TJUDA has emphasised that Gandhi Hospital is a general hospital, frequented by thousands of immune-compromised patients and they are at risk from the highly infectious virus.

The isolation ward is on the seventh floor of the main building where there are heart patients, surgical wards, dialysis and kidney patients, intensive care unit etc. There are three other buildings which have different specialties and an emergency and out-patient section.

TJUDA says the isolation ward in the main building is putting all these patients at risk as they can be easily infected due to the highly contagious nature of the virus.

They have also stated that being a multi-specialty hospital, thousands of people come every day from the districts and also nearby areas visit it or are admitted and all of them are being put at "grave risk".

There is also the teaching college next to the hospital where thousands of students study and frequent wards for bedside practice.

The term 'isolation' means to be far away and does not apply to Gandhi Hospital in any sense, since it is visited by thousands of people night and day.

To ensure that there is 'isolation' in the true sense, the government must shift the Covid 19 facility to hospital which deal with infection diseases and are also isolated in the true sense of the term, like Chest Hospital in Huzurabad and TB hospital in Vikarabad.



The IT corridor in Hyderabad largely sported a deserted look on Thursday as a large number of employees chose to work from home. —R. PAVAN

Covid-19: Techies opt to work from home

Amid scare, 70 per cent in IT corridor choose option

KANIZA GARARI AND T.S.S. SIDDIHARTH DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

A day after the Coronavirus scare gripped the IT corridor in Hyderabad when it was revealed that a second positive case of the virus had been detected, employees have opted to work from home for the next 48 hours.

On Wednesday, 70 per cent of employees opted to work from home after they came to know that a techie working in an office in the Mindspace building had been asked to isolate himself.

The techie has complied and is till at home though on Thursday his test results from the National Virology Institute in Pune have

shown negative for the virus. Nevertheless, the office located in the Mindspace building has shut down and employees have decided to come back to work only on Monday.

"We were asked to stay at home and work. So on Thursday and Friday, we will be working from home. Until this mess is sorted out," said an IT employee.

The negative result has led to further confusion and there are questions being asked whether the 'warning' given by the health department was valid.

A senior manager said, "Is this some kind of joke? One day the health department said the result is positive and the next day says negative?

Whom to trust? How can there be lapses like this?" There is anger because official letters were issued by the company in which the techie worked asking employees to work from home. Moreover, it creates an atmosphere of panic.

"Should we now wait for all the results before taking action? The health department must not react till they have all the clearances from all their testing labs. It is making of us look like fools," said a techie.

Officials of the Society for Cyberabad Security Council (SCSC) said that they have asked IT companies not to shut down as this will trigger panic.

"The people who have taken a work-from-home option are those who had

applied for it on Wednesday. No company has asked their employees to work from home," said a member of the society.

He added that the Cyberabad police commissioner has issued a strict warning about spreading false messages on social media.

Principal Secretary, IT, Jayesh Kanjan said the positive Covid-19 cases in the country are those with a travel history to foreign countries.

Observing that some IT firms which are not related to any sort of Covid-19 precautionary measures had also sent their employees home on Wednesday, he said such steps are not warranted. It would create a panic situation.

Faith beats Covid-19 fears; people flock to offer prayers

ATHER MOIN IDC HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Places of worship showed no decline in numbers despite the Covid-19 fear in the old city. People attended prayers as usual. People who attend daily prayers contend that it is high time to implore forgiveness from the Almighty. Instead of refraining from congregation, there should be mass prayer meetings seeking relief from the calamity.

There is no decrease in attendance for prayers in places of worship of different faiths. It observed that people who are attending the prayers do not hesitate to shake hands with each other. Rather people are hesitating to participate in private meetings, gatherings, weddings etc and avoiding consuming the dishes made from chicken even in posh wedding halls.

Moulana Abdur Raheem Khurram Jama, a theologian, said that religious hygiene is the main reason for not fearing attending public prayers in mosques as it is a prerequisite to wudu (ablution which involves washing the hands, mouth, nostrils, arms, head and feet with water three times) before offering namaz. It is important to mention that doctors are suggesting washing

● THERE IS no decrease in attendance for prayers in places of worship of different faiths. It observed that people who are attending the prayers do not hesitate to shake hands with each other. Rather people are hesitating to participate in private meetings, gatherings, weddings etc.

hands for a minimum of 20 seconds which is a practice for the past 1400 years by Muslims.

Chief priest of Chilkuri Balaji temple, Sri C. S. Rangarajan, said God-fearing people do not fear with any virus or disease. He claimed that the number of attendees has increased. They have no fear in assembling at places of worships. He said devotees told him that they are coming to perform puja to get rid of the virus. People come here to soothe their hearts. They repeat here for healing. It is a real fact that people turn to their creator in difficult times. He said that a few people using masks, but does not avoid attending the puja.

Shia cleric, Moulana Syed Waheeduddin Hyder, said "Our community is preparing for the five-day birthday celebrations of our caliph Hzt. Syedna Ali ibne 'Alib from Sunday." The birth-day of Hzt. Ali falls on 13th

Rajab of the Islamic calendar, i.e. 9 March. He said "According to Almighty Allah, The Holy Quran is the cure for all illnesses. If we recite the Quran, it heals hearts. When you read, listen or learn it, it will not only make all your problems disappear, it will also heal you, fix all your ailments and make you live a better life," he said.

Convener of the Telangana-AP Joint Action Committee against CAA-NPR, Mohammed Mushtaq Malik, said we do not desert from the scheduled agitation as it is related to life and death issue of Indians. However, we asked our volunteers to take necessary precautionary measures while meeting others as part of their activities. He said "If police authorities grant permission, we will hold public meeting on March 15 at Lal Bahadur stadium."

Meanwhile, Dr. Allama Prabhu, a dentist and his friend, Abid Khan, of Magdool Brothers on Thursday distributed 1,000 masks for free among the visitors of Chaurmahal and Macca masjid and hawkers and GHMC workers. Masks were also provided to some foreign tourists. Dr. Prabhu said main purpose of distributing the masks is to create awareness about maintaining hygiene.

Etala slams IT firm for shutting over Covid-19

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Health minister Etala Rajendar on Thursday castigated the management of DSM, the Information Technology (IT) company that shut its office here in the city declaring that one of its employees had tested positive for Covid-19.

It may be recalled that the firm had asked all its employees to leave the office on Wednesday and work from home after 'confirming' that one of its female employees, who returned recently from a trip to Italy, had tested positive for Covid-19.

● IT MAY be recalled that the firm had asked all its employees to leave the office on Wednesday and work from home after 'confirming' that one of its female employees, who returned recently from a trip to Italy, had tested positive for Covid-19.

This sparked fears among the company's staff and many of them went to Gandhi Hospital to get themselves tested for the disease.

Terming the company's action of declaring a positive Covid-19 case on its own and then shutting down the office

as "overreaction," Mr Rajendar suggested that there was no reason for 'emptying the building.' He said the Police and IT Departments had to get involved in the issue in an attempt to make everyone see reason and use proper judgment.

"Such overreactions cause a loss to everyone, and to society. By all means, let us all take precautions but not overreact," Mr Rajendar said.

We did 21 tests yesterday and all of them were negative. Today, we collected samples from 10 persons for tests and the results will be available on Friday," he said.

Mask paranoia needless: Min

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Not everyone in the Cabinet appears to have received the memo from health minister Etala Rajendar, who has been shouting himself hoarse on the subject for the past few days, that not everyone needs to wear a N95 mask to keep away the Covid-19 disease spread by the novel coronavirus.

Hours before Rajendar repeated his plea at a press conference on Thursday that only patients who have tested positive for the disease and medical personnel need to wear the masks, tourism minister V. Srinivas Goud was photographed sporting a N95 mask during an inspection of an isolation ward set up at the Government Hospital in Mahbubnagar. The only other person to wear a similar mask at the event, was Mahbubnagar collector S. Venkat Rao.

Incidentally, not a single patient was admitted to the ward and Goud, Mr Rao and others were being shown around the facility by the hospital's doctors.

The N95 masks are used in treating serious cases of respiratory diseases, are currently hard to come by



Tourism minister V Srinivas Goud and Mahbubnagar district collector S Venkat Rao seen sporting N95 masks during an inspection in Mahbubnagar on Thursday. —DC

in the market. In fact, the state government has pleaded with the Centre to send 50,000 of such masks as it fears that it does not have adequate stocks of the N95 masks if the situation changes for the worse in terms of Covid-19 management.

As Mr Rajendar explained, it is only people with symptoms or admitted to isolation wards who require normal surgical masks, let alone N95 masks. He was asked by reporters about action being taken by

the government on pharmacies and surgical supplies stores charging large sums for the masks from worried people rushing to buy them.

The health minister then promised that beginning Friday, a crackdown will be launched and inspections put in place on pharmacies and other stores selling a variety of masks and ensure that they are sold at the Maximum Retail Price.

"People are worried and buying masks but they are not required for everyone.

A handkerchief or a small towel will do for someone with a cold or a cough. Hand hygiene is the most important thing," he said.

Asked whether the tourism minister wearing a N95 mask, that too askance and not properly as it should be worn, was acceptable in the light of his own call to people not to rush to buy or wear masks, Mr Rajendar said "Sometimes, people are worried. If I go to the isolation ward at Gandhi, I will be wearing a mask."

**BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS**  
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution  
(Department of Consumer Affairs), Govt. of India  
Manak Bhawan, 9 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110002

**CORRIGENDUM TO ADVERTISEMENT NO. 1/2020/ESTT.**

- In serial modification to Advertisement No. 1/2020/ESTT, dated 14 Feb 2020 issued for recruitment to the post of Technical Assistant (Lab) and Senior Technician in the Bureau of Indian Standards, the nomenclature of vacancies deleted and the post of Technical Assistant (L&D) may be read as under:
 

Chemical	08	Accountancy	0*	Bio Chemistry	01
IT&S technology	01	Bio-technology	01	Mechanical	01
Physics	01	Electrical	01	Electronics	01
Microbiology	06	Civil	00		
- The last date of receiving online applications has been extended upto 15 March 2020 16 PM.
- Other terms and conditions of the advertisement shall remain same.

Director (Establishment) Bureau of Indian Standards  
Date: 08/03/2020 11:00:17:1920

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare Government of India

Help us to help you

**NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**

Protect yourself and others!  
Follow these Do's and Don'ts

**Do's**

- Practice frequent hand washing. Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol based hand rub. Wash hands even if they are visibly clean.
- Cover your nose and mouth with handkerchief/tissue while sneezing and coughing.
- Throw used tissues into closed bins immediately after use.
- See a doctor if you feel unwell (fever, difficult breathing and cough). While visiting doctor wear a mask/cloth to cover your mouth and nose.
- If you have these signs/symptoms please call State helpline number or Ministry of Health & Family Welfare's 24x7 helpline at 011-23978046.
- Avoid participating in large gatherings.

**Don'ts**

- Have a close contact with anyone. If you're experiencing cough and fever.
- Touch your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Spit in public.

Together we can fight Coronavirus

For further information:  
Call at Ministry of Health, Govt. of India's 24x7 control room number +91-11-2397 8046  
Email at [ncov2019@gmail.com](mailto:ncov2019@gmail.com)

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare



IN BRIEF

48 special trains to ease the rush

Hyderabad: There are 48 special trains arranged by South Central Railways (SCR) between various destinations from Hyderabad to Ernakulam and Hyderabad to Tiruchirappalli, 24 services to each destination to clear the extra rush of passengers from 9th March, 2020 to 27th May, 2020. The special service would contain only reserved coaches of AC II tier, AC III tier and sleeper classes. The schedule of the special trains is available on the official website of South Central Railways.

# Foreign companies pay high for masks

Overseas companies are frantically purchasing medical disposable masks from India at short notice

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC HYDERABAD MARCH 5

Here is a 'Letter of Intent' from a Singapore-based company to Hyderabad-based firm Medsol Health Solutions LLP dated March 2. Commodity: 3-ply medical disposable mask. Quantity: 20 million pieces on the spot and another 20 million pieces per month. Price: \$0.35 per piece (\$25.67). Payment: 10 per cent deposit and the remaining 90 per cent after delivery.

As business houses across the world are frantically purchasing medical disposable masks from Indian firms in huge quantities following the outbreak of the deadly coronavirus, top executives of overseas companies are air-dashing to India at very short notice, finalising deals in a matter of hours, making huge online cash transfers, and flying back with the cargo - all in a matter of 24 to 48 hours. Business-wise, the coronavirus outbreak has ended up with all the players

involved in the business making their millions. But fears loom large about a possible shortage of masks for the Indian populace what with manufacturing firms ignoring retailers and striking massive deals with foreign companies via middlemen or exporters. With the price of masks in the international market being high, there is every possibility of prices shooting up further in the Indian market in the days to come. Already, retailers are selling masks at higher prices domestically and so

far the government has had no control over it. According to those involved in the export of face masks, the price of masks has seen a 100 per cent increase in the last fortnight and is likely to increase further. Overseas companies are wooing middlemen and manufacturers and as a result, the profit margin for all those involved has gone up by ten times if not more, they said. This is why no one is willing to waste time and deals are being struck in a jiffy. The foreign companies

see a huge potential in the business in the coming months and are stocking up like never before. "On an average, the overseas companies are selling one to two million face masks per day in the international market after purchasing from us. They get in touch with three or four different firms through the middlemen and are buying everything that is available. Since the manufacturers are directly dealing with middlemen or exporters, the retailers are not able to lay hands on

enough stocks, which may lead to shortage in the Indian markets," a businessman associated with the flourishing trade told *Deccan Chronicle*. There are close to a hundred small and medium manufacturing firms across the country, and about half of them have the capacity to make one lakh units per day. Businessmen from Singapore, Malaysia, the Gulf countries and even China have been making bulk purchases from Indian dealers over the past one month.

Earlier the manufacturing cost of a mask was about ₹2, but it has now gone up to about ₹7 due to the rise in the price of raw materials. "Prices are changing every day as per the demand. But our suppliers are willing to give a good price considering our requirement is in millions. The manufacturing units are running 24/7 and yet they are unable to meet the growing demand," Mr Roshan Singh, who owns Medsol Health Solutions LLP, based in Srinagar colony in Hyderabad, told this.

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**IN BRIEF**

**Two booked for stealing ₹32 lakh**

**Hyderabad:** Abids police arrested two persons, Abdul Majeed and Shaheen Begum, for allegedly stealing ₹32 lakh from a parked scooter. Police said Majeed knew that his colleague Abdul Rahman would be carrying the cash in the dickey of his scooter. To steal the money, he drew up a plan and struck a deal with Shaheen Begum for ₹1 lakh. As per the plan, Majeed took the Abdul Rahman to a kiosk to buy paan. When his attention was distracted, Shaheen Begum opened the dickey of Rahman's scooter by using a duplicate key and made way with a bag containing ₹32.10 lakh. The Abids crime team investigated the case and arrested the two accused.

**Spas booked for illegal activities**

**Hyderabad:** The Punjagutta police, along with the West Zone Task Force conducted raids at two different salon and spa centres and found that they had been violating various rules and employing women to massage men. According to Punjagutta sub-inspector J. Chandra Shekar, police raided Lotus Family Salon at Lal Bangla, Punjagutta, and Tenzler Wellness Spa & Beauty Salon in Srinagar Colony. A case was booked against the organisers B. Komal Rathore, P. Vinay and Padada Tannisha for not following the guidelines and rules. During the raid, the police found that the spa management did not have a professional therapist, qualified doctors and or physiotherapist and customer registry was not maintained.

**On spraying pesticide, farmers harvest death**

**Hopes pinned on Bill replacing versions of Insecticides Act**

**HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 4**

Four months on, Mangam Jugadi Rao, a tribal farmer from Adilabad in Telangana, awaits justice for his son Mangam Arjun, a tribal farmer aged 27 years who died due to pesticide inhalation poisoning in October 2019.



Mangam Jugadi Rao, father of M. Arjun who died of pesticide inhalation.

**SUSTAINABLE FARMING**  
There are broad demands laid down by sustainable farm livelihoods and farmers' rights.

- Periodic safety reviews of registered pesticides to be undertaken every five years.
- Adequate representation and powers to state governments. States like Telangana, Maharashtra, Punjab and Kerala wanted to ban a particular herbicide like glyphosate in their respective states but were not allowed to do so for a long time.
- Mandatory recording of data by state governments related to farmer deaths due to poisonous inhalation.
- Compensation funds to be set up for affected farmers need to be made more sound in terms of legal groundwork.
- Collection of assets from the pesticide industry for compensation to be provided to farmers.
- Ban on all kinds of advertisement and promotions of pesticides.
- To empower the pesticides management board being set up as a regulatory body instead of an advisory panel.
- Review committee for pesticides to be constituted independent of the registration committee.

He had sprayed monocrotophos and acephate insecticides on his cotton crop for two days, before getting admitted to the hospital complaining of vomiting and dizziness. He was hospitalised for two days before he died. The then district collector of Adilabad, Divya Devarajan, had supported the family by sanctioning a cow as an alternative livelihood option. This is the story of many farmers across the country, sowing the seeds of death. "Farmers, especially in parts of Telangana and Maharashtra are unaware of the hazardous nature of such pesticides," says Narasimha Reddy Doshi, director of Pesticides Action Network India. But Jugadi Rao's hopes, and those of thousands of other families on farms across the country, are tied to the likely tabling of the Pesticides Management Bill, 2020, during the current budget session. This will replace the earlier versions of the Insecticides Act, 1968 and insecticides rules, 1971.

The draft pesticide management bill, 2017, was released by the union ministry of agriculture and farmers welfare (MoFAR) for stakeholder comments on February 19, 2019. However, it had various issues and concerns, which the stake-

holders now hope to be addressed in the upcoming bill.

Our biggest concern right now is that no one has seen the bill to be tabled in parliament," said Kavitha Kuruganti, a social activist and national convener at the alliance for sustainable and holistic agriculture (ASHA). The upcoming bill is of huge importance, as agriculture in India is largely dependent on chemicals. Its overuse and misuse have had a huge impact on the health of humans, animals and the environment, she added.

While there is no particular database maintained as to how many farmers get affected due to inhalation poisoning issues. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) says 7,500 cases of accidental intake of pesticide poisoning took place in 2018. "This data doesn't seem to take into account the farmer deaths while working in pesticide-sprayed fields or while spraying it themselves," Kuruganti pointed out. Kuruganti further added that there is a need to educate farmers as well to give up use of pesticides and instead rely on natural measures to kill pests in their fields, like allowing predators that eat pests to thrive.

**In Sectt case, TS cites Patel statue**

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 5**

The state government on Thursday told the High Court that its proposal to construct the integrated Secretariat Complex should be allowed as it falls under the realm of policy-making.

Advocate-General B.S Prasad put forward the ruling of the Gujarat High Court in the case of constructing the Statue of Unity costing more than ₹2,500 crore. He said the Gujarat High Court had ruled that it was a policy decision of the state and the courts could not interfere in the issue. Referring to several other judgments, the Advocate General requested the court to reject the pleas filed against the construction of the new Secretariat complex and to vacate the stay orders issued by the court. Petitioners' counsels submitted that building a new Secretariat was a waste of public money. They argued that the money could be used for public welfare schemes like construction of social welfare hostels for the downtrodden sections of people.

Mr Satyam Reddy, senior counsel, appearing for Congress MLC Jeevan Reddy sought the intervention of the court to stay the impending demolition of the Secretariat. He said the government was reeling under a severe financial crisis and should not embark on the costly exercise of building a new Secretariat at this juncture.

He said that the state government and considered and dropped different venues like the Bison Ground in Secunderabad and the Chest Hospital at Erragadda before zeroing in on the location of the Old Secretariat for the new complex.

He said Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao was working from Pragathi Bhavan since 2015 and had never come to the Secretariat. The home minister was working from the DGP's office. The administration was being carried out smoothly. "The decision to demolish the Secretariat at Safabad is monopolistic," Mr Satyam Reddy said. The court adjourned the cases to Friday allow counsels of other petitioners to complete their arguments.

**WE HUB HELPS OUT WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 5**

Ahead of the International Women's Day on March 8, We Hub, the state government's initiative for women entrepreneurs, showed how it was helping out women techies.

We Hub CEO Deepthi Ravula said, "We have built this facility with the support of the Telangana state government, in a way that women are benefited and made to feel comfortable and empowered at their workplace," she said.

The 51-seat facility adjacent to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University is open 24x7, with a child play area as well as a mother's room to accommodate children of its staffers and co-workers.

With a team of six to seven people, We Hub aims at collaborating with corporates, government entities, industry and academia to encourage women across socio-economic strata, geographical borders and operational capacities.

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SHORT TAKES  
JOURNALIST,  
EX-EDITOR  
PASSES AWAY

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Senior journalist and former editor of a vernacular daily Potturi Venkateswara Rao, a former chairman of AP Press Academy, died on Thursday morning at his residence in Hyderabad. He had not been keeping well for long. Mr Rao, born on February 8, 1934, at Potturi in Guntur of Andhra Pradesh was a journalist for more than five decades at various well-known Telugu newspapers including Andhra Prabha, the sister publication of Deccan Chronicle. He had started his career as a journalist in 1957. Mr Rao had authored and co-authored a few books, including one on former prime minister P V Narasimha Rao. Chief Ministers K. Chandrasekhar Rao and Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy praised their deep condoleance over the demise of the senior journalist.

DALIT ACTIVISTS:  
ONLY 60% FUND  
USED BY STATE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Not more than 60 per cent of the funds allocated under Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Development Funds (SCDF and STDF) have been utilised. Dalit activists have demanded that the government utilises those funds for the welfare of the marginalised communities. On Thursday, Dalit activists met finance minister T. Harish Rao and requested a special session of the Assembly be held to discuss the issue. They stated that in the last six years, ₹69,379 crore was allotted to the Scheduled Castes out of which ₹39,256.40 crore were spent, which amounts to 57 per cent of the money allocated. Of the ₹40,801.67 crore allotted to the Scheduled Tribes, ₹19,801.94 crore were spent which amounts to 48.53 per cent. The budget allocated to the SC Special Development Fund is only on paper. Most of the money has been diverted or misused they said. In the last five financial years 2019-20, a total of ₹ 12,400 crore were allotted to the SCDF, ₹10,696 crore released of which ₹6,153.87 crore were spent.

Mr P. Shankar, State convenor, SC/ST Budget Monitoring Committee, said, "The Chief Minister assured spending at least ₹10 crore every year for the development of SC and ST tribal population in the state. The assurance has remained on paper." Mentioning the TRS flagship programme of giving three acres of land to every landless Dalit farmers in the state Mr Shankar said, "Land was only given to only 6,104 Dalit farmers in the state. The government also failed to provide irrigation to the agricultural lands for cultivation."

Revanth held for taking pictures using drone

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Congress Member of Parliament for Malkajgiri A. Revanth Reddy was arrested by Narsingi police commissioner for using a camera-equipped drone to take pictures of farm lands in Miyakhangadda belonging to a prominent Telangana Rashtra Samithi leader. The police has also booked Mr Revanth Reddy's brother A. Krishna Reddy and others and said that they will carry out an in-depth investigation before proceeding further. On Wednesday, six persons, including Revanth Reddy, Jaipal Reddy, Vijay Simha Reddy, D Rajesh, E Shiva and O Prakash Reddy — were arrested in connection with this case. Inspector M. Gangadhar of the Narsingi police said, "On Thursday Mr Reddy surrendered at Narsingi police station, along with the police on how his name was included in the case. Following due procedure and after explaining the case to him he was arrested and later produced before the local court and taken to judicial custody. Inspector Gangadhar said he registered a case for the illegal use of a drone camera at Miyakhangadda near the cricket grounds. The Cyberabad police said that during the investigation, it was found that Mr Revanth Reddy's brother A. Krishna Reddy is the proprietor of Upparally, to send his brother Praveen Reddy to meet one Jaipal Reddy, a resident of Upparally, and Mr Prakash Reddy, a resident of Miyakhangadda. They reached the nearby cricket grounds, found the highest point and made videos of a private person's property, with an intention to violate

TRS juggling RS seats, new names emerge

KCR changes mind, decides to send Kavitha to RS

S.N.C.A. ACHARYULU IDC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

In the selection of Rajya Sabha candidates in the TRS, "equilibrium" and changing and new names are emerging. Telangana Rashtra Samithi president and Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has reportedly finalised the two Rajya Sabha candidates to be fielded by the party. He has changed his mind and yielded to the pressure from party circles and other quarters and decided to send his daughter and former MP K. Kavitha to the Rajya Sabha. For the second seat, Mr Rao selected

Bandi Parthasaradhi Reddy, chairman and managing director of Hetero Drugs. Mr Reddy from Khammam district, has been a very close associate of Mr Rao for a long time. Former Khammam MP Ponguluri Srinivasa Reddy will be given a Legislative Council seat. Rajya Sabha member K. Kesava Rao, who is reportedly being considered to be fielded by a Council seat. A close associate of Mr Chandrasekhar Rao said, "At present, Kavitha and Parthasaradhi's names have been finalised. At the last minute KCR may change his mind which cannot be ruled out."

From Telangana state, the TRS will win both the Rajya Sabha seats given its strength in the Assembly. Mr Chandrasekhar Rao wants that Ms Kavitha fight in direct elections instead of going to the Rajya Sabha. But some TRS leaders have pressurised him to give send her to the Upper House he was reportedly pressured by family members as well. Earlier Mr Chandrasekhar Rao considered giving the Rajya Sabha ticket to Mr Srinivasa Reddy who sacrificed his Khammam Lok Sabha seat for Mr Nama Nageswara Rao. But Parthasaradhi Reddy has emerged as

the dark horse. TRS leaders said that Mr Parthasaradhi Reddy would be used to initiate to supply drinking water to Tamil Nadu in consultation with Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. The delegation from Tamil Nadu led by ministers S.P. Velumani and D. Jayakumar called on Mr Rao at Pragathi Bhavan and requested him to take initiative to supply

KCR talks to Jagan, assures drinking water supply to TN

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Thursday assured a delegation comprising ministers and senior officials of Tamil Nadu that he would take initiative to supply drinking water to Tamil Nadu in consultation with Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. The delegation from Tamil Nadu led by ministers S.P. Velumani and D. Jayakumar called on Mr Rao at Pragathi Bhavan and requested him to take initiative to supply

since the suffering of Tamil Nadu is well-known, they can extend cooperation to the state. He suggested the delegation send a formal request proposal from the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to him and to Mr Reddy. He said that there should be a meeting between officers and experts of the three states to prepare a report. Mr Rao said, "Let the officers come to a consensus for taking a final decision and when this materialises let India learn through this as how states can cooperate each other."

MLC ELECTION FOR NIZAMABAD ON APRIL 7

Hyderabad: The Election Commission has fixed the schedule for the election of a casual vacancy in the Legislative Council from Nizamabad Local Authorities Constituency. The poll is being held to fill the vacancy caused by the disqualification of Mr Bhooopal Reddy. The notification will be issued on March 12, last date for the nominations is March 19. Polling will be held on April 7.

SAMBIT PATRA: OWASI IS THE NEW JINNAH

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

BJP spokesperson Dr Sambit Patra on Thursday described MIM Asaduddin Owaisi as the "new Muhammad Ali Jinnah". He said that like Jinnah, Mr Owaisi was provoking the people in the name of Muslims against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). He was delivering a conference. A Talk on Constitutional and moral imperatives of the CAA, Decoding the Politics.

He alleged that TRS was acting on the direction of the MIM. The condition of the ruling party was pitiful, he said. Its body is of the TRS and the soul is of the MIM.

He alleged that Mr Owaisi had been provoking poor Muslims in order to gain politically. He said that the agitations taken out against the CAA were not protests but war against the democracy of India.

BJP state president Dr K. Lakshminarayana said that intellectuals and educated people to follow the motto of 'Each One Teach One' due to educate the people on the CAA.

● SAMBIT PATRA said that like Jinnah, Mr Owaisi was provoking the people in the name of protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)

● HE ALLEGED that Mr Owaisi had been provoking poor Muslims in order to gain politically. He said that the agitations taken out against the CAA were not protests but war against the democracy of India

Excellence award



Governor Dr Tamilisel Soundararajan presenting an award for outstanding contribution and excellent service to Metro Rail operator Akhila Cherupalli on the occasion of Women's Day celebration 2020 at Koti Women's College on Thursday.

Session starts today, to see Harish Rao Budget

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Finance minister T. Harish Rao will present his annual budget after taking over the portfolio for the 2020-21 fiscal. On March 11, Mr Harish Rao took charge as finance minister on Thursday, 7, 2019, Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao had presented the Budget for 2019-20 in the Legislative Assembly two days later. Mr Harish Rao presented it in the Legislative Council. This time legislative affairs minister Vemula Prashanth Reddy will present the Budget in the Council.

● THIS TIME legislative affairs minister Vemula Prashanth Reddy will present the Budget in the Council

● THE GOVERNMENT will introduce key Bills, including the Revenue Act and the New Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation Act during the session

including the Revenue Act and the New Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation Act during the session. Finance department officials are expecting allocations for arm loan waiver besides prioritized allocations to irrigation, agriculture, education and health in the 2020-21 Budget. Opposition parties, particularly Congress, are planning to raise the issue of farm loan waiver and promises made by the ruling party during elections. The Congress will raise the coronavirus issue and arrest of Congress MP A. Revanth Reddy.

Revanth, Kondal approach HC

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 5

Justice A. Rajashekar Reddy heard two writ petitions filed by Congress MP A. Revanth Reddy and his brother Kondal Reddy seeking a direction to the revenue officials not to interfere with his land at Gopannapally in Serilingampally. Senior counsel P. Venugopal representing the petitioners informed the court that the land measuring 31 guntas in Survey No. 127 in Gopannapally was purchased by the petitioners in 2005 through a registered sale deed.

He told the court during a lunch motion that the revenue divisional officer, Serilingampally without following due procedure, relying on the report of the talisdar or issuing a Shikharjhar, state order, to evict the petitioners. Mr Venugopal insisted that the court a direction to the revenue officials to issue notice to the petitioners before taking action. Advocate-General B.S. Prasad appeared for the state and sought time till Friday to get instructions. The judge directed the revenue officials not to take any action till Friday.

make public transport, water and electricity free for the citizens as the Delhi government has done," said Shikharjhar, state engineer, Telangana Engineering Students Joint Action Committee.

GSB STATE BANK OF INDIA... Hyderabad, March 5

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED... Hyderabad, March 5

भारतीय विमानपत्तन अधिकरण AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA... Hyderabad, March 5

KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LTD... Hyderabad, March 5

VIJAYAWADA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (VMC) INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)...

CITY UNION BANK LTD. Hyderabad, March 5

POSSESSION NOTICE (Commonhold Property)...



SHORT TAKES

SIKKIM SCRAPS ILPS TO FOREIGNERS

Gangtok, March 5: The Sikkim government on Thursday decided to scrap issuing Inner Line Permit (ILP) to foreign nationals following coronavirus scare as a precautionary measure, a senior official said. "In view of rapid spread of coronavirus, no ILP may be issued to foreign nationals, including those from Bhutan, with effect from Thursday," a Home Department notification issued by Joint Secretary Parina Gurung said. In addition, no permits will be issued by the Tourism and Civil Aviation Department for travel to Nathula with immediate effect, she said. Foreign nationals are required to obtain ILP from the state government to visit Sikkim, while a domestic tourist must get permits from the Tourism and Civil Aviation Department to visit Nathula, a mountain pass in East Sikkim district which links the state with China's Tibet Autonomous Region.

FSSAI SAYS IMPORTED FOOD SAFE

New Delhi, March 5: Food safety regulator FSSAI on Thursday said imported food items, including those from coronavirus-affected nations, are "safe" for human consumption but cautioned people against eating raw or undercooked meat and unprocessed food products. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said a committee constituted to examine this issue has not found any "conclusive evidence" of the food-borne transmission of the deadly virus. Coronavirus predominantly affects the respiratory system and spread from human to human via droplets while sneezing, coughing, contaminated hands and surfaces. The committee said meat from cooked livestock and poultry is safe to eat, it said in a statement. As a precautionary measure, the committee advised against consumption of raw or undercooked meat as well as unprocessed food products. Frozen food items must be consumed only after cooking them properly. Good hygienic practices must be followed before consuming raw fruits and vegetables, the FSSAI added.

KERALA MODEL HAILED BY EXPERTS

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 5 Kerala model of tackling infections including Covid-19 is gaining international attention. The state which had reported the first three confirmed cases of Covid-19, medical students who returned from epicenter Wuhan in China, had taken effective measures that bore fruits. The successful handling of the Covid-19 cases has found appreciation from various quarters. During a BBC talk show on Covid-19, experts hailed the state government for putting in place a robust health care system by which it has been able to tackle infections like Nipah, Zika and Covid-19.

DOUBLE WHAMMY

People sheltered in northeast Delhi hit by cold

Riot-hit families fear coronavirus

New Delhi, March 5: Hundreds of riot-hit families sheltered at an Eidgah in Mustafabad in Northeast Delhi are regularly urged to wash their hands and maintain cleanliness. Volunteers provide medicines and sanitizers and health experts counselling. Already battling mental trauma following the deadly communal riots, the families are now faced with another challenge - the threat of novel coronavirus. The volunteers and health professionals don't say the word 'coronavirus' for fear of stoking panic among the people at the camp who include a large number of children. A lot of people have been complaining about cough, cold, vomiting and fever, said Laik Ahmad, from Doctors' Unity Welfare

Testing times



School students wear mask to mitigate the spread of coronavirus as they arrive to appear for an examination in Agra on Thursday. - PTI

9 TOURISTS FROM ITALY UNDER WATCH, SENT TO DELHI

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, MARCH 5

A group of nine Italian tourists who were whisked away from Khajuraho on Tuesday to a hospital in Chhatrapur in Madhya Pradesh for medical check up to confirm if they were affected by coronavirus infection were sent to Delhi on Thursday by a bus after being found 'stable'. The tourist team escorted by their guide Raj Bahadur Singh arrived in Khajuraho from Agra on Tuesday evening. They were scheduled to return to Lucknow on Wednesday by flight. However, they were stopped from embarking their flight in Khajuraho and taken to district hospital in Chhatrapur after the local administration received a call from authorities concerned in Delhi that the tourist group escaped health scrutiny in Delhi airport after their arrival from Italy a few days ago.

According to a subdivisional magistrate, a team of district officers rushed to the Khajuraho airport to stop the nine foreigners from embarking their flight. The district hospital in Chhatrapur and later shifted to isolation ward at a hospital in Nagauron which has been declared as dedicated hospital for suspected coronavirus cases in the region. Several pathological tests were conducted on them which found them to be negative for Covid-19. In MP, 23 people who have visited foreign countries recently have so far been quarantined,

which has put the elderly, women and children to a lot of trouble. Members of healthcare teams said representatives of various organisations have been visiting the camp and there is a need for everyone to take proper precautions. "We have enough soap and water but there's a shortage of masks," Ahsan Saifi, another doctor, said. Ankita Upreti from Self-Employed Women's Association said volunteers have been trying to ensure there's no panic among people due to the virus, which has infected 30 people across the country. "These people have gone through so much. There are lot of problems to deal with and we have not been able to pay attention to coronavirus threat properly. For now, we are asking people to

Safety first: Kin kept away at funeral of man who tested -ve

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 5

A 36-year-old man belonging to Kannur district in North Kerala who died after testing negative for Covid-19, was cremated after his body was wrapped in layers of cloth as per the safety protocol in force in the state. The family members were not permitted to come anywhere near to his mortal remains for paying their last tributes because of the safety protocol. The youth who arrived from Malaysia died at the isolation ward of

Kalamassery Medical College hospital on Saturday. According to hospital sources, the man had been suffering from pneumonia, was diabetic and died due to multi organ failure. On reaching Cochin International Airport on Friday, he had reported severe symptoms of fever. Though he was shifted to an isolation ward, the end came soon. The blood samples were sent to National Institute of Virology, Pune, for laboratory examination. The results were found to be negative. The parents had faced difficulty in getting direct access to his body

owing to the strict protocol. His body was wrapped in multiple layers of cloth and polythene for being transported to his native place. No one was allowed to come near the body. Relatives, friends and close acquaintances were allowed to offer homage from a distance of 2 meters. The body was cremated by his relatives and neighbours who wore protective gear. Reacting to the incident, Health Minister K.K. Shailaja said the administration was forced to take the precautionary measures because of the severe symptoms presented by the deceased.

Centre: No shortage of drugs for 3 months

Ahmedabad, March 5: The government on Thursday asserted there is no shortage of medicines or raw ingredients for drugs and that adequate supplies are available for next three months, amid coronavirus outbreak. A group of ministers is also monitoring the situation on a daily basis to ensure preparedness for the challenge posed by the outbreak.

Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers D.V. Sadananda Gowda said all initiatives are being taken to ensure there is no impact of the disease in India. "There is no shortage of any APIs in the country. We have sufficient APIs (active pharmaceutical ingredients) and medicines in the country," he said adding "for another three months there is no shortage for undertaking production in the pharma sector". Gowda was addressing the 8th pharmaceutical exhibition and conference on pharmaceu-

tical and medical industry organised by Department of Pharmaceuticals, Gujarat government and industry chamber Fici. "Our government has taken all initiatives to ensure that as far as our country is concerned, coronavirus should be stopped, and there is no hazard as far as this issue is concerned," he said. Speaking on the preparedness for coronavirus in the country, Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilizer Mansukh Mandaviya said the government has formed a group of ministers for this and it is tackling and monitoring the situation on a daily basis. "A task force has also been set up regarding APIs and I am leading it. We have decided to increase the production of active pharmaceutical ingredients in the country so that we are not dependent on any country for them," he said. - PTI

NC SAYS 350 FROM KASHMIR STUCK IN COVID-HIT IRAN

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 5

Amid the growing threat of Coronavirus epidemic, National Conference Lok Sabha MP Hasnain Masoodi on Thursday blamed the Centre over what he termed its 'lack of urgency' over the evacuation of 350 Kashmiri students who are stranded in Iran, which is among major nations hit by the virus. Supporting his claim, Shiv Sena MP Arvind Sawant also sought to know from the government, what it was doing to evacuate 1,000 Indians who are stuck in Iran. Masoodi, while participating in a half-an-hour discussion in Lok Sabha over the subject, said that there are 1,000 pilgrims from Kargil and 250 students from Kashmir who are stranded in the Persian Gulf nation. "They are confined in hostels and do not have access to the internet. The government, it appears to me, is unimpressed by the plight and no urgency is being shown at all". Masoodi said that he has met the external affairs minister twice over the issue of the evacuation of Indians from Iran, but nothing is being done. Referring to the statement read out by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan in Lok Sabha over the measures being taken by the government to curb the virus, the National Conference lawmaker said that in just a passing reference was made about those people stuck in Iran. Sawant said that the Health Minister has spoken to Iran about taking care of Indians stuck there, but the main concern of families is union people is when will they return to India.

PM calls off visit to Brussels

Total number of positive cases of Covid stands at 30

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 5

The total number of positive cases of novel coronavirus (Covid-19) has reached 30 in India after a Ghaziabad resident with travel history to Iran tested positive for Covid on Thursday. The wide-spread infection has led to postponement of the India-Europe Union Summit scheduled for March 13 that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was to attend. However, PM will travel to Dhaka to attend the birth centenary celebrations of Banga Bandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh's father of the nation. The total number of cases include the previous 3 suspects from Kerala, who have now been discharged. In addition, there are 3 from Delhi and NCR (two with travel history from Italy and one with travel history of Iran); 6 contacts of the first Delhi case with travel history of Italy; 1 from Telangana with history of Dubai travel and Singapore contact; 16 Italians and one driver (Indian) who was with the Italian tourist group.

"Total of 6,49,452 passengers have been screened at the airports till date from 6,550 flights. In addition, there are 29,607 persons who are under the IDSP community surveillance and concern of ministers," union Health ministry said. Amid rising cases of coronavirus, the Union Health Ministry has asked states to form rapid response teams at district, block and village levels, stating cases of community transmission have been observed. To prevent the possibility of spread of coronavirus, the Delhi government has ordered immediate closure of primary schools in the national capital till March 31, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said on Thursday. Some of the prominent public places such as the famous Mughal Garden will be closed from Saturday even as people started panic-buying hand sanitizers and masks. Five people who came in contact with a Covid patient who works in Gurgaon and lives in west Delhi have been tested and quarantined till their results come in, Delhi government health officials said. The Paytm employee, who tested positive, came in touch with 91 people in Gurgaon. In Jammu, two people, who had a travel history to coronavirus-hit Italy and South Korea, fled from a state government hospital's isolation ward, but were brought back.

Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority
Ministry of Corporate Affairs
Government of India
PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT
Investor/Depositors whose shares, unpaid dividends, matured deposits or debentures etc. have been transferred to Investor Education and Protection Fund under Companies Act, 1956/2013 can now claim online refund
For Investors : How to File the Claim?
Register yourself on IEPF Website: www.iepf.gov.in
Fill the new web form IEPF-5 ONLINE
Attach scanned copy of requisite documents with form
Take print out of auto generated advance receipt and indemnity bond (IEPF website ->Forms-> Web Forms IEPF-5 -> MCA Services)
Send all documents to the company
Company to e-verify the claim in 30 days
On the basis of verification report, refund of shares and amount by IEPF Authority.
Note: Claimants are advised to file e-form IEPF-5 only when all documents are available
FOR COMPANIES: How to Process?
File the details of nodal officer in new e-form IEPF-5 (IEPF website -> Forms -> Register for filing web form.
e-verify the form IEPF-5 within 30 days of filing of the form.
Company to retain all original documents.
For ANY QUERY Claimants can call Toll Free Number 1800-114-667 or log on to www.iepf.gov.in or send mail to Email: iepf@mca.gov.in
Note: Claimants are requested to BEWARE of any middlemen or broker for settlement of claims. The process of filing the claim to IEPF Authority is simple and transparent. The requirement of documents is enumerated in the Instruction kit as well as in the FAQ section.
davn 07110/11/0012/1920



**SHORT TAKES**  
**AUTOCLAVE NOT FOR MILITARY USE: CHINA**

New Delhi, March 5: China said on Thursday that the industrial autoclave seized from a Pakistan-bound Chinese ship at the Kandla port is a heat treatment furnace shell system and not a dual-use item under the non-proliferation and export control as alleged by the Indian officials.

Asked about reports that officials of Defence Research and Development Organisation confirmed that the industrial autoclave seized from the Chinese ship 'Da Cui Yun' can be used for the manufacture of very long range ballistic missiles or satellite launch rockets', Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said it is not for military use.

"China has noted the relevant reports. As a responsible major country, China has been strictly fulfilling the international non-proliferation obligations and international commitments," Zhao said.

"After seeking the information, we know that this item is actually a heat treatment furnace shell system, produced by a private company in China. This is not for military use and it is not a dual-use item under the non-proliferation and export control," he said.

He said the Chinese merchant ship and its crew have declared this item truthfully beforehand with the Indian authorities, so there is "no concealment and forced declaration".

**ASSAM COPS RESCUE 350 WORKERS**

**MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, MARCH 5**

In what has widened the bitterness between the neighbouring states, Assam police on Thursday rescued more than 350 workers of Assam from different areas of trouble-torn Meghalaya, rocketed by violence between tribal and non-tribal.

Among those rescued, mostly from Western Assam's Kokrajhar, Dibrugarh and Goalpara districts were working as daily wage labourers in Sohra and Ichamati area of East Khasi hills district of Meghalaya, hit by violence.

The labourers who heaved a sigh of relief after they reached Garabari district in Assam, said, "Situation is very tense there. We didn't get food for last 5-6 days. We survived only on water."

BJP MLA Ashok Kumar Singh, who was also the part of rescue team of the state government, said Assam government has acted promptly. They were in great distress. We will rescue everyone who is stuck up in Meghalaya.

He, however, claimed that 1,000-1,500 people were stranded in the violence-hit area.

"I came to know that a large number of people from Sapagram and other parts of lower Assam are stranded in the wake of the violence in Meghalaya. So, I met Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and he instructed me to rescue them," he said.

Director General of Police GP Singh to do the needful," said the BJP MLA.

**AURANGABAD AIRPORT RENAMED**

**Mumbai, March 5:** Maharashtra government on Thursday approved renaming the airport at Aurangabad as Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj Airport.

Sambhaji Maharaj was the son of Maratha warrior King Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the state cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, an official said.

Industries Minister Subhash Desai, who belongs to Thackeray's Shiv Sena party, said the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance of the Sena, Congress and NCP had committed to fulfilling the promises made to the people of the state.

The airport is situated in Chikhalthana area of Aurangabad. Thackeray said the Aurangabad Municipal Corporation had passed a resolution to rename the airport after Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj.

The issue had figured in the Lok Sabha as well.

The cabinet decision will be sent to the Union civil aviation ministry for approval, he said.

Mumbai airport had been named as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Airport while Kolhapur airport was named after Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj.

**Colours of peace**



Students play with colours during Basant Utsav celebration, at Rabindra Bharati University in Kolkata on Thursday.

**Seven Cong MPs suspended**

**Gross misconduct, violation of rules listed as reasons for the decision**

**DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MARCH 5**

Seven Congress MPs were on Thursday suspended from the Lok Sabha for the rest of the budget session for 'gross misconduct' and 'violation of rules'.

The chief Opposition party was quick to term it as undemocratic and said that they would consult all other Opposition parties for a joint protest against the move.

The House has been witnessing repeated disruptions since the beginning of the budget session on March 2 with Opposition forces demanding a discussion on Delhi riots and the government insisting on holding such a discussion only after Holi.

However, on Thursday, the Opposition agreed to a discussion on the coronavirus threat in the House in the morning. As soon as the House reconvened, the Opposition again started demanding a discussion on Delhi violence but the chair pushed through the passage of the Mineral Leasing Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

The Congress members were in the Well demanded by Hanuman Beniwal of the Rashtriya Loktantrik party, a regional outfit from Rajasthan which is backed by the BJP, who made the remarks against the Gandhi family.

BJP MP Rama Devi, who was presiding over the House named seven Congress MPs — Gaurav Gogoi, T.N. Prathapan, Dean Kuriaokose, Manicka Tagore, Rajmohan Umithan, Benny Behanan and Gurjeet Singh Anuja.

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Following which

**I want to see the convicts dying: Nirbhaya's mom**

**● NIRBHAYA'S MOTHER** said, "The morning of March 20 will be the morning of our lives."

New Delhi, March 5: The Supreme Court on Thursday said it would hear on March 23 the appeal filed by the Centre challenging the Delhi High Court order that the four death row convicts in the Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case have to be executed simultaneously.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed the bench, headed by Justice R. Banumathi, that the trial court has fixed March 20 as date of execution of the four convicts who have exhausted all their legal remedies.

Mehta told the bench, also comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan and S. Bopanna, that these convicts have made a mockery of the system by their delaying tactics and taken it for a ride.

The bench said it would hear the matter on merits on March 23 and made it clear that no adjournment will be granted.

The Delhi High Court verdict held that the four death row convicts in the Nirbhaya case have to be executed together and not separately.

It had also faulted the authorities concerned for not taking steps for issuance of death warrant after the rejection of appeals of the accused by the Supreme Court in 2017.

The Delhi government had tried to topple all legal remedies of the convicts have been exhausted and nothing survives now.

Meanwhile, Nirbhaya's mother said, "The morning of March 20 will be the morning of our lives."

She said the struggle would continue till the time they are hanged and hoped that March 20 will be the final date of hanging.

She also said that if there is any chance, she would want to see the convicts dying. "While Nirbhaya is asked to ensure they get such punishment that such crime is not repeated ever. If there is any chance, I would like to see them die," she said. — PTI

**MP: 'MISSING' CONGRESS MLA RESIGNS**

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY and SREERAMA CHAKRABARTY | DC BHOPAL/NEW DELHI, MARCH 5**

In a dramatic turn of events, a ruling Congress MLA on Thursday resigned from the assembly, indicating a looming crisis ahead for the Kamal Nath government.

The Congress legislator from Suwasara in Mandla district Harsdeo Singh Dang sent his resignation letter to assembly speaker N.P. Prajapati and Chief Minister Kamal Nath.

Dang was among three Congress MLAs and one independent legislator who were allegedly 'holidaying' in Bengaluru.

The four MLAs have been 'missing' since last one week is an ensuring that our government stays in power and also the development of the state.

"Fourteen to fifteen MLAs of the opposition party are in touch with us constantly. We share good relations with them. But it doesn't mean that we start poaching them," Patil added.

Meanwhile, Bharatiya Janata Party leaders in the state have maintained that the MVA government will collapse on its own due to internal conflicts.

The Bharatiya Janata Party emerged as the single largest party in Maharashtra after the Vidhan Sabha polls in October last year.

But, it failed to form the government after the Uddhav Thackeray-led Sena snapped ties with it over the issue of sharing the chief ministerial post and formed the MVA government with the NCP and Congress.

**15 BJP MLAs IN TOUCH WITH MVA GOVT: CONG**

**DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, MARCH 5**

While the Congress had alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party was trying to topple the Kamal Nath government in Madhya Pradesh by poaching its MLAs, Madhya Pradesh Congress Party (NCP) minister Jayant Patil on Thursday claimed that 14 to 15 BJP MLAs are in touch with the ruling coalition government, but we are not willing to commit the mistake of 'poaching' opposition MLAs.

Patil said that Jayant Patil, who is a water resources minister in the MVA government, said, "Our focus is on ensuring that our government stays in power and also the development of the state."

"Fourteen to fifteen MLAs of the opposition party are in touch with us constantly. We share good relations with them. But it doesn't mean that we start poaching them," Patil added.

Meanwhile, Bharatiya Janata Party leaders in the state have maintained that the MVA government will collapse on its own due to internal conflicts.

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**Police put riots death toll at 44**

**New Delhi, March 5:** Police on Thursday put the death toll in northeast Delhi's communal violence at 44.

An official with Delhi Health Minister's office said 53 people were killed in the riots but did not give any break-up.

The figure of 53 was given when clarity was yet to emerge on whether three bodies at the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan (LMP) hospital and five at the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital were related to the communal violence or not.

"The death toll stands at 44. We are still waiting for figures from the police," North East Delhi District Magistrate Shashi Kaushal said.

Additional PRO, Delhi Police, on Thursday confirmed that the death toll stood at 44. More than 200 people were injured in the riot and Delhi's communal violence.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Police said that it has registered over 600 cases in connection with the riots in northeast Delhi.

Out of 654 cases registered, 47 were related to the Arms Act, it said in a statement. In total, 1,820 people have been either detained or arrested so far in connection with the communal violence, the police said. The communal violence in northeast Delhi, which was sparked by protests over the amended Citizenship Act, and has left 42 dead and over 200 injured. — PTI

**Khamenei asks India to 'stop extremist Hindus'**

**Tehran, March 5:** Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Thursday asked the Indian government to confront what he called "extremist Hindus and their parties," saying the hearts of Muslims all over the world are "grieving over the recent communal violence in Delhi."

His remark comes two days after India summoned Iranian Ambassador Ali Chegeni in New Delhi and lodged a strong protest over the "unwarranted" comments by Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif over communal violence in the national capital.

"The hearts of Muslims all over the world are grieving over the massacre of Muslims in India."

The govt of India should confront "extremist Hindus and their parties" and stop the massacre of Muslims in order to prevent India's isolation from the world of Islam, Khamenei tweeted.

Khamenei, who controls all major security and foreign policy decisions, tweeted in English, Urdu, Persian and Arabic along with a photograph of a child grieving over the body of a man who was killed in the recent violence in Delhi.

In a tweet on Monday, Zarif said Iran condemned the "wave of violence against Indian Muslims" and urged Indian authorities to "not let senseless deaths prevail."

Next day India summoned Iranian Ambassador Chegeni and conveyed to him that Zarif's "selective and tendentious" characterisation of incidents in Delhi are not acceptable. The ties between India and Iran have been on an upswing over the last few years.

Notwithstanding US sanctions against Iran, India has been maintaining cordial relationship with Tehran and have been actively involved in development of the strategically located Chabahar port in the Gwadar region. — PTI

**Ex-AAP leader Tahir arrested**

**New Delhi, March 5:** A Delhi court on Thursday dismissed a plea by suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain seeking to surrender before it in connection with alleged killing of Intelligence Bureau (IB) official Ankit Sharma, after which the police arrested him.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Poojita Poojita rejected Hussain's plea saying that the relief sought by him was outside its jurisdiction.

As the court dismissed Hussain's plea, a Delhi Police team, which had already arrested, arrested him and took him into custody.

Hussain moved the surrender application before the court saying that he was willing to join the investigation and wanted to surrender in the case.

Advocate Mukesh Kalra, appearing for Hussain, argued before the court that Hussain was facing life threats and was forced to move a surrender plea before Rouse Avenue court instead of Karakoram court. — PTI

**Justice Muralidhar receives a moving farewell at Delhi HC HC Muralidhar compared to Kohli**

**TRANSFER | BLUES**

**SANJAY KAW | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 5**

Justice S. Muralidhar, whose transfer after his severe criticism of the police at a hearing on Northeast Delhi violence sparked a political controversy, was compared to the "Kohli" in a moving farewell at the high court on Thursday.

At the ceremony, Delhi high court Chief Justice D.N. Patel said, "We are losing a most eminent judge who can discuss any topic of law and decide any type of matter."

The order for Justice Muralidhar's transfer to the Punjab and Haryana high court came on February 26, hours after he raised questions on the Delhi police's inaction on hate speeches by BJP leaders and in the violence that left over 40 dead.

The Union government had said the judge's transfer was routine, recommended by the Supreme Court collegium on February 12, and his consent had been taken as is the norm.

A controversy erupted after the notification of Justice Muralidhar's transfer was issued by the Centre on the night of February 26.

At the farewell ceremony at Delhi High Court Bar Association secretary Abhijit said, "The Kohli of the high court will be going a few 100 km away." The ceremony saw many lawyers in their black robes line a giant hall and stairways with senior judges seated around tables at the centre.

Addressing the gathering, Justice Muralidhar said, "When justice has to triumph, it will triumph. Be with the truth, justice will be done."

Advocates during farewell party of Justice S Muralidhar at Delhi High Court in New Delhi on Thursday.



Advocates during farewell party of Justice S Muralidhar at Delhi High Court in New Delhi on Thursday.



IN BRIEF

Lanka seizes drugs worth \$33 million

Colombo: Two foreign tawlers packed with over \$33 million worth of heroin and crystal methamphetamine were seized in Sri Lanka's biggest-ever drugs bust at sea, a navy spokesman said on Thursday. Troops found 400 kg (about 880 pounds) of heroin and 100 kg (600 pounds) of the drug "ice" on board the two vessels, spokesman Isuru Sooriyabandara said. The street value of the seized narcotics was estimated by officials to be 6,000 million rupees. The vessels, as well as a Sri Lankan fishing boat, were escorted on Thursday to a harbour near the capital Colombo.

5 killed as heavy rains lash Pakistan

Peshawar: Five persons, including four children, were killed and eight were injured in rain-related incidents in northwest Pakistan on Thursday. All deaths occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, most of which were due to roof-collapse incidents, a Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) official said. In the first incident, three children of a 10-year-old boy were killed when the roof of his house collapsed in the morning in Takhtbai tehsil, which is nearly 70 km from provincial capital Peshawar. The labourer's wife and three other children were injured in the incident. In another roof collapse incident, an eight-year-old boy died in Qudrat Abad village.

French TGV train derails, 21 hurt

Ingenheim: A French high-speed TGV train travelling from the eastern town of Strasbourg to Paris derailed on Thursday after an embankment collapsed into the tracks, seriously injuring the driver and hurting 20 others. The driver, whose injury was not specified, was evacuated by helicopter following the accident near Ingenheim, around 30 kilometres (20 miles) northwest of Strasbourg. The train was still intact but the locomotive was leaning on its side and four other wagons were also off the tracks, according to reports. "Despite going off the tracks, the TGV remained upright," the operator said in a Twitter post that included a picture of what it called "major landslides." The crew chief on the train said he suffered a back injury and one passenger was hurt in the face, the SNCF said. A total of 21 people were injured, according to local authorities.

Berlusconi dumps GF to date 30-yr-old

Rome, March 5: Italy's former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, famed for his steamy dinner parties, has split from his long-term girlfriend reportedly to date a woman 54 years his junior. At the height of the coronavirus epidemic, Berlusconi has killed 107 people in Italy and turned pockets of the country into red zones, but he remains one of the man at the centre of world-famous "bunga bunga" soirees brought Italians a welcome distraction. The 83-year-old billionaire has left 34-year-old Francesca Pascale after a 12-year relationship, but the couple "remain friends", his Forza Italia party said in a statement on Wednesday. Pascale, who once said in an interview that she asked Berlusconi to marry her every day, appeared to have been caught off guard when she was "astonished" by the statement, according to the daily Repubblica. "I will hold him dear forever. I wish him all the happiness in the world and hope he finds someone who will take care of him as I have," said the blonde, who first caught Berlusconi's eye when she founded a fan club for him. The twice divorced media magnate has previously ditched her for a younger model: 30-year-old Maria Fascina, an MP from his party. If true, Fascina has snaggled a man dubbed "the immortal" who dominated Italian politics for more than two decades despite sex scandals, serial gaffes and legal woes. Berlusconi was sentenced in 2013 to seven years in jail for paying for sex with a 17-year-old starlet known as "Ruby the Heart-Stealer", though that conviction was later overturned.

4,700-year-old history



Tourists visit the step pyramid of Djoser in Egypt's Saqqara necropolis, south of Cairo on Thursday. Egyptian authorities inaugurated the famed step pyramid of Djoser, one of the earliest built in the country's ancient history, after years of renovation. The 4,700-year-old structure is nestled in the ancient capital of Memphis, a UNESCO World Heritage site, home to some of Egypt's most fascinating monuments. Renovation works started in 2006 but was interrupted in 2011 and 2012 for 'security reasons' due to turmoil caused by a popular uprising that toppled late president Hosni Mubarak.

Cracks in Open Skies deal

US says treaty to improve confidence between militaries violated by Russia

Washington, March 5: US Defence Secretary Mark Esper accused Russia on Wednesday of violating the Open Skies Treaty designed to improve transparency and confidence between the militaries of the two superpowers. Esper told a congressional hearing Russia had been blocking the United States from conducting flights over the Baltic Sea city of Kaliningrad and near Georgia that are permitted by the 18-year-old agreement. "We've also been denied access to military exercise overflights," he said. "I have a lot of concerns about the treaty as it stands now."

The deal, which has 32 other signatories, permits one country's military to conduct a certain number of surveillance flights over another each year on short notice. The aircraft can survey the territory below, collecting information and



Mark Esper pictures of military installations and activities. The idea is that the more rival

important to many of our NATO allies, that they have the means to conduct the overflights," he said. The Pentagon operates two old DC-135 aircraft for the overflight operations, and Esper acknowledged the need to update the aircraft, even if the Pentagon has not set aside the cash. "At this point time, until we make a final decision on the path forward, I'm not prepared to recapitalize aircraft," he said.

Russia had been blocking the United States from conducting flights over the Baltic Sea city of Kaliningrad and near Georgia that are permitted by the 18-year-old agreement says Esper. "The Pentagon operates two old DC-135 aircraft for the overflight operations, and Esper acknowledged the need to update the aircraft, even if the Pentagon has not set aside the cash. "At this point time, until we make a final decision on the path forward, I'm not prepared to recapitalize aircraft," he said.

Bomb threats: Russian planes targeted

Moscow, March 5: Three Russian passenger planes flying domestic routes on Thursday were targeted with anonymous bomb threats, while airborne, local media said.

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Russian air strikes Thursday killed at least 15 civilians including a child in the last major opposition bastion of Idlib in northwestern Syria, a Britain-based war monitor said.

Former UN head Javier Perez dies at 100

Lima, March 5: Former UN chief Javier Perez de Cuellar, who was known for his peace-making efforts including brokering a ceasefire in the Iran-Iraq war, died Wednesday in his native Peru, aged 100, his son said. Perez de Cuellar served as UN secretary general from 1981 to 1991, when he was often described as a "pacifist by vocation and nature." President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the security services were working to identify the culprit. "Let's hope that sooner or later they will

be caught and punished in accordance with the law," Peskov told reporters. A spokesman for Shermetyevo airport refused to comment on the bomb threats and spokespeople for Russia's Transport Police said they were unaware of the incidents.

On Tuesday, two Russian planes flying to Moscow from the far eastern city of Vladivostok and the Siberian city of Novosibirsk made emergency landings while en route due to anonymous bomb threats.

In recent months Russia has seen a raft of bomb hoaxes that forced the evacuation of courts, schools and malls.

On Tuesday, two Russian planes flying to Moscow from the far eastern city of Vladivostok and the Siberian city of Novosibirsk made emergency landings while en route due to anonymous bomb threats.

Owner sought time, rebels snapped back saying women should be at home

Huthi rebels shut Yemeni women's cafe

Dubai, March 5: The Huthi rebels arrived without warning, heavily armed and in a furious mood, as they barged into Ophelia, the only cafe for women in the Yemeni capital Sanaa, and demanded it be shut down immediately. When owner Shaima Mohammed asked for a little time to allow her customers to gather their things, one of the Huthis snapped at her. "Women should be in their homes. Why are they going out in public?" "Armed men filled the street, directing obscenities at the women as they left," Shaima recounted in a Facebook post as she announced the cafe's closure.

The tense incident, one of a series in the rebel-held north, illustrates the Huthis' determination to impose their own moral order on Yemenis who

have already endured five years of grinding conflict. In recent months, restaurants where men and women mingle have been shut down, scissor-wielding militia have policed men's hairstyles, and rebel

forces have patrolled college campuses to enforce dress codes. Much of the crackdown

has been rolled out without any official decree or documentation, but the agencies saw a copy of a Huthi letter sent to non-government groups, illustrating the new mood as it laid out rules for workshops. "Exclude all activities that aim to stir laughter, joy or entertainment among the trainees, and that lead to the lowering of barriers and modesty between women and men."

Global court to investigate war crimes in Kabul

The Hague, March 5: Appeals judges at the International Criminal Court gave the green light Thursday for prosecutors to open an investigation targeting the Taliban, Afghan forces and US military and intelligence personnel for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The global court upheld an appeal by prosecutors against a pretrial chamber's rejection in April last year of Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda's request to open a probe in Afghanistan. Pretrial judges last year acknowledged that widespread crimes have been committed in Afghanistan, but rejected the investigation saying it wouldn't be in the interests of justice given the unlikely lack of cooperation meant convictions would ultimately be unlikely. That decision drew fierce criticism from human rights organisations who said it neglected the desire of victims to see justice in Afghanistan and effectively rewarded

states that refused to cooperate with the court. Even though an investigation has now been authorised, it remains to be seen if any suspects eventually indicted by prosecutors will appear in court in The Hague — both Afghanistan and the United States have strongly opposed the investigation and the US government refuses to cooperate with the global court. At a hearing in December, prosecutors argued that pretrial judges at the global court overstepped their powers in April last year. The appeals judges agreed. The Appeals Chamber considers it appropriate to amend the appealed decision to the effect that the prosecutors is authorised to commence an probe into alleged crimes committed on the territory of Afghanistan since May 1, 2003, as well as other alleged crimes that have a nexus to the armed conflict in Afghanistan." Presiding Judge Piotr Hofmanski said. — AP

Biden ahead as Bloomberg exits

Washington March 5: Joe Biden, counted out just days ago, took control of the race for the Democratic presidential nomination on Wednesday after racking up stunning primary victories over Bernie Sanders and earning the endorsement of deep-pocketed billionaire Michael Bloomberg. President Donald Trump hailed the "incredible comeback" of the 77-year-old former vice president in the Super Tuesday contests and directed a stream of insults at Bloomberg after the fellow New Yorker ended his campaign.



Six Pios win Congressional Primaries in U.S.

Washington, March 5: "We had a great night last night and tremendous support from all across the nation," Sanders 78, the leftist senator from Vermont, expressed confidence in his chances of winning the nomination despite being "disappointed" with his showing on Tuesday, when in the centrist Biden won at least 10 of the 14 states at stake. "We go forward basically neck and neck," Sanders told reporters in his hometown of Burlington, Vermont, where the self-described democratic socialist got his start in politics as mayor four decades ago. "I have every reason to believe the campaign will win this thing," Sanders said. "I firmly believe that we can campaign to defeat Donald Trump."

A file picture of Yemeni women walk in the old city market of the capital Sanaa.

forces have patrolled college campuses to enforce dress codes. Much of the crackdown has been rolled out without any official decree or documentation, but the agencies saw a copy of a Huthi letter sent to non-government groups, illustrating the new mood as it laid out rules for workshops. "Exclude all activities that aim to stir laughter, joy or entertainment among the trainees, and that lead to the lowering of barriers and modesty between women and men."



DECCAN Chronicle

6 MARCH 2020

Pleas against all hate speech must be heard

It looks like the Supreme Court has decided to stop looking the other way when the executive usurps citizens' basic democratic rights...

The Supreme Court, which the other day threw up its hands on acts of hate and said it cannot prevent riots, has now asked the high court to explore the possibility of a peaceful resolution of the dispute...

A bench headed by Justice S. Muradliwal, who has since been transferred, had issued a directive to the Delhi police on February 26 to take a conscious decision on filing FIRs against the BJP leaders for inciting violence in a day...

The Supreme Court, that has now asked the high court to see in the plea of the aggrieved, however, disappointed its votaries when it told a petitioner that it would hear him only after the allegations, impleaded, levelled by the solicitor-general, that he had talked it off, was checked.

True, the majesty of the law must be honoured by one and all. But our system has well-laid procedures to handle those who refuse to do so. Not hearing them is not part of it, as per our constitutional scheme...

A Supreme Court bench had earlier asked anti-CAA protesters to stop violence if they were to be heard. It will be said if the court is now in the process of evolving a new system where it will pre-qualify people before hearing them.

Cryptocurrency law needed

The Supreme Court's judgment, which lifted the Reserve Bank of India's ban on banks providing banking facilities to cryptocurrencies...

While there is no single definition of cryptocurrency, the intention of its creator, Satoshi Nakamoto, was to have an alternative to government-backed currency. The cryptocurrency CC has no regulator and functions independent of government control...

Another drawback of cryptocurrency is the anonymous transfer of money globally. Global anti-money laundering body Financial Action Task Force (FATF) fears that terrorists may use cryptocurrency transfer money to fund their nefarious activities...

Technology experts, however, see positives, such as low cost of money transfer globally. While the cost of traditional international remittance varies between five and seven per cent, cryptocurrency could do it for a price far less than one per cent...

Petitioner Internet and Mobile Association of India argued that cryptocurrency is merely a digital good, not a currency, and therefore the RBI has no locus standi on this. It also opposed the RBI action as the activity of cryptocurrency exchange was not banned by law...

Let's hope that Parliament takes into account the views of the Supreme Court while legislating on cryptocurrency and brings out a balanced law.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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Subhani

Can Telangana take on the heat stress this year?

Hema Vaishnavi

The state of Telangana is no stranger to heat waves, and after experiencing an unusually hot winter, the dreadful summer looms ahead. According to the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), this year is likely to be among the hottest years.

Although the Telangana state government has responded to the 2015 heatwave shock by coming up with a heat action plan every year, whether it is really serving the purpose remains a question.

Broadly speaking, the action plan misses out on two major aspects - accurately identifying the most vulnerable groups and their respective needs and the scope of mitigation.

While it does recognise people engaged in outdoor activities as one of the most vulnerable groups, it blankets all outdoor occupations into a single category.

Workers in outdoor occupations consist of the most diverse, most affected groups, and often remain without the means to act on warning signs. It could be construction workers, vendors, and daily wage workers, especially the urban poor, who are essentially non-unionised and part of the unorganised sector.

Another category of urban workers who are exposed to heat comes in the form of delivery boys, and with the rise of e-commerce, the number of such delivery jobs are also increasing.

Another set of workers who are particularly affected are around coal mines and thermal power

plants. Absenteeism among workers in the open cast mine projects (OCs) has become commonplace because of the lack of proper implementation of measures that address workplace safety during high temperatures.

Workers have been demanding that shift timings be changed to early morning and evening hours because the heat relief measures come in too little and too late. The Heat Action Plan is mostly advisory in nature with such solutions who oversees the implementation?

Even the darkest clouds, though often appear with a silver lining. As Arundhati Roy, who has consistently been warning fellow Indians against the inexorable rise of fascist tendencies, noted in a speech on Sunday: "People on both sides have shown themselves capable of horrifying brutality as well as unbelievable courage and kindness."

That was true even during the cat-and-mouse game between Narendra Modi, preferred to look the other way, as prime minister, he was initially too busy wrapping himself around the belly of the beast, so to speak, to pay any heed to the events unfolding all around him in Delhi.

He skipped the press conference that concluded Donald Trump's visit, leaving the beast to assure everyone that his host "wants people to have religious freedom, and very strongly".

There are, no doubt, numerous others whose names and specific details history may not record, but they are very much a part of the battle for India's soul unleashed by the soulless Hindutva.

On the other side of the border, there are those who interpret the irrational passions witnessed lately

LETTERS

COVID-19 PANIC

I request the Telangana government to supply masks free of cost and start an awareness campaign in the state. The fear of coronavirus is real and I request people not to assemble in groups and gatherings at public places and avoid playing holi this year.

Ramvikas Vivan Raj K.N. Hyderabad

It is unfortunate that the West Bengal Chief Minister saw a conspiracy in Covid-19 (Didi: BJP hyping on virus to divert attention from riots, DC, March 5). She must be aware of the damage caused by it all over the world. Instead of supporting the efforts of the government she is criticising it.

Dhishraj Dangoria Hyderabad

INDIAN PARLIAMENT

For the third day in succession both Houses of Parliament could not function with Opposition insisting on discussion on Delhi riots and government agreeing to have it after three days. There has been taking place for several years now with both the BJP and Congress refusing to come to an understanding. This is resulting in no healthy discussions. Many of the serious matters concerning people and country are not discussed. At this rate, Parliament will lose its importance.

S. Sridhar Hyderabad

ACT FAST JUDICIARY

Law and order in India has gone to dogs (Preez rejects merit petition in Nirbhaya case, DC, March 5). Is the Indian judiciary so inefficient that it needs to change dates three times to pass a final judgment for such a barbaric crime? There is so much manipulation and corruption and there is a deliberate delay. Let justice delayed not be justice denied.

Fatimazafar Sumudrabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle. Chavan assures Centre's help to West Bengal.

NEW DELHI, March 5. Home Minister Y.B. Chavan today assured the Rajya Sabha that the Centre would provide all the assistance that the West Bengal Government might require to be about an improvement in the law and order situation in the state.

The Gen. was "concerned" at the deterioration in the law and order situation in that State, he said.

Mahir Ali View from Pakistan

Until recently, many of those who hailed the advent of the Modi regime as some kind of a new dawn for India often sought to justify their allegiance by pointing to the absence of mass violence. That argument, never entirely credible, has lately been laid to rest in the national capital.

Beyond the fact that the anti-Muslim pogroms in New Delhi and the consequent violence on both sides were instigated by Kapil Mishra, who failed to win a seat in the BJP in last month's legislative assembly elections, the chief culprit was the bigoted intolerance unleashed from on high.

The BJP's landslide victory in last year's Lok Sabha elections was undoubtedly a motivating factor. The ruling party's intended trajectory should have been obvious long before then, but the popular endorsement enabled it to drop its unconvincing disguise. The fascist face of the RSS no longer needed to be concealed behind a mask.

The re-conquest and defenestration of Kashmir was barely contained in

India. Perhaps the Modi government saw that as a green light for slithering forward with other items on its agenda. But the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens provoked widespread protests, commencing in the form of a frequently vicious official backlash.

Delhi was, in many ways, a horror waiting to happen. In New Delhi and the events of the past 10 days have evoked memories of the madness of Partition, as well as of the atrocities committed against Sikhs in New Delhi in 1984 - endorsed back then by a different ruling party - and against Muslims in Gujarat in 2002.

That was true even during the cat-and-mouse game between Narendra Modi, preferred to look the other way, as prime minister, he was initially too busy wrapping himself around the belly of the beast, so to speak, to pay any heed to the events unfolding all around him in Delhi.

He skipped the press conference that concluded Donald Trump's visit, leaving the beast to assure everyone that his host "wants people

to have religious freedom, and very strongly". Preferably not in India, though. But it would be pretty pointless trying to explain that to a US president who himself thrives on bigotry and the notion of divide and rule.

Even the darkest clouds, though often appear with a silver lining. As Arundhati Roy, who has consistently been warning fellow Indians against the inexorable rise of fascist tendencies, noted in a speech on Sunday: "People on both sides have shown themselves capable of horrifying brutality as well as unbelievable courage and kindness."

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"Today, none of our relatives could attend my daughter's wedding," he told reporters. "But our Muslim citizens are here. They are our family."

There have been several reports about Delhi high court judge S. Muradliwal, who was promptly transferred after he questioned police inaction, as well as police superintendent Neeraj Jadav, who took a risk by crossing the Uttar Pradesh state boundary to put himself and his team between a rampaging mob and the residents of Kanwar Nagar in Gokalpuri, Mohinder Singh and his son Inderjit made about 20 trips within an hour on their motorcycles to ferry up to 80 of their Muslim neighbours to Karamdampuri.

There are, no doubt, numerous others whose names and specific details history may not record, but they are very much a part of the battle for India's soul unleashed by the soulless Hindutva.

On the other side of the border, there are those who interpret the irrational passions witnessed lately



IN BRIEF

Food crisis feared in Africa, Mideast

Amman (Jordan): The head of the UN's food agency warned of "absolute devastation" in Africa and parts of the Middle East in coming months if wealthy nations grappling with an economic downturn linked to the new coronavirus don't step up aid efforts in countries in need. David Beasley, head of the World Food Programme, said that the convergence of several crises could further destabilise conflict-scarred regions. "If the coronavirus continues to create panic, and there is an economic downturn, I was telling the European leaders, and leaders around the world, we don't have enough money set aside to address the needs in Africa, East Africa, West Africa, in the Middle East right now," Beasley said in an interview in Jordan late on Wednesday.

Xi's state visit to Japan postponed

Tokyo: A state visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping this spring has been postponed as preventing the outbreak of the new coronavirus is "the biggest challenge" for the two countries, Japan's top government spokesman said on Thursday. A state visit by Xi to Japan will be held at a convenient time for both of us, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said. Tokyo, "The biggest challenge now for both countries is the prevention of the spread of the new coronavirus. It is necessary to give first priority to this." Xi had been expected to make a state visit in the spring after Prime Minister Shinzo Abe formally invited him during last year's G20 summit in Osaka. The last state visit by a Chinese president to Japan was in 2008, and Xi's trip was cast as a key signal of warming bilateral ties.

Aussie tasered in toilet paper fight

Sydney: A fight over toilet roll ended with a man being tasered, Australian police said on Thursday. The coronavirus concerns drive panic buying. Police were called to a store in the New South Wales town of "Tasertown", about four hours drive north of Sydney, after the man allegedly lashed out and attacked another customer and a worker. Over 50 people have been confined to have the virus in Australia so far with the latest case including an eight-month-old baby in Adelaide. Coronavirus fears have triggered runs on several products, including hand sanitiser and face masks, with images of shoppers stacking shelves with toilet rolls spreading on social media. A fiery truck crash in Brisbane on Wednesday night further fuelled concerns after it was revealed it to be carrying lo roll.

SINGAPORE REPORTS FIVE MORE CASES

Singapore, March 5: Five new cases of coronavirus were reported in Singapore, taking the total number of people infected by the deadly virus to 117 in the island city-state, Health Ministry here said on Thursday. The new cases include three Singaporean women linked to the SAFRA Jurong cluster, an armed forces club in the West Coast, and a French national. The fifth patient is a male Singaporean citizen. The French national working in Singapore had travelled to France, Portugal and the UK between February 8 and March 3. The Singaporean citizens have no recent travel history to affected regions, the Ministry of Health said. As of March 5, Singapore has confirmed 117 cases, it said. To date, seven coronavirus patients are in the intensive care units while the remaining cases are still in hospital but stable or improving. A total of 81 cases have fully recovered from the infection and have been discharged from hospital. Two of them were discharged Thursday, the Ministry said. It said contact tracing for the confirmed cases was going on. As of March 5, a total of 3,251 close contacts have been identified and they have been quarantined, the Ministry said. —PTI

Emergency in California, US toll hits 11

Feds investigate nursing home in Seattle at centre of outbreak; 39 cases reported in the area

Seattle, March 5: California Governor Gavin Newsom late on Wednesday declared a statewide emergency due to coronavirus. Washington and Florida had already declared emergencies, and Hawaii also joined them on Wednesday. Washington also announced another death, bringing its total to 10. Most of those who died were residents of Life Care Center, a nursing home in Kirkland, a suburb east of Seattle. At least 39 cases have been reported in the Seattle area, while researchers say the virus may have been circulating undetected for weeks.



A woman wearing a mask poses for photos in front of the Spanish Steps, in Rome, a tourist attraction on Thursday which wore a deserted look following the virus outbreak in Italy. —AP

Federal authorities announced an investigation of the Seattle-area nursing home at the centre of an outbreak of the new coronavirus as the US death toll climbed to 110. Officials in California's Placer County, near Sacramento, said on Wednesday an elderly person who tested positive after returning from San Francisco to Mexico cruise had died. The victim had underlying health problems, authorities said.

Vice President Mike Pence was expected to meet with Washington Governor Jay Inslee near Olympia on Thursday. Seema Verma, head of the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, said the agency is sending inspectors to Life Care, along with experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to figure out what happened. It is unclear whether the nursing home followed guidelines for preventing infections. Last April, the state's Life Care \$67,000 open infection-control deficiencies following two flu outbreaks that affected 17 patients and staff. An unannounced follow-up inspection in June found that Life Care had corrected the problems, Verma said. —AP

THOUSANDS HELD ON CRUISE SHIP OFF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles, March 5: Thousands were stranded on a cruise ship off the California coast on Wednesday over fears of the new coronavirus after passengers and crew members on board developed symptoms. Officials delayed the ship's return from Hawaii in order to carry out testing on board for those potentially infected. The ship's return from its current voyage was being delayed to allow for "ample timing" for testing of "a number of passengers and crew members that have developed symptoms," California Governor Gavin Newsom told a press conference. "So we're holding that ship, which has thousands of passengers as well as the crew, and we'll be conducting those tests," he added. Eleven passengers and 19 crew members were potentially infected with the virus, Newsom said. —AFP

IRAN MINISTER FOR LIMITING USE OF PAPER MONEY

Dubai, March 5: Iran's health minister on Thursday encouraged the public to reduce its use of paper money as it aids the spread of the new coronavirus, an unprecedented move after the kingdom suspended the year-round umrah pilgrimage. State television relayed stunning images of an empty white-tiled area surrounding the Kaaba — a large black cube structure inside Mecca's Grand Mosque, which is usually packed with tens of thousands of pilgrims. The move was a "temporary preventive measure" but the upper floors of the Grand Mosque were still open for prayers, a Saudi official said. He called the measure "unprecedented". Earlier on Wednesday the kingdom halted the umrah pilgrimage for its own citizens and residents. The move came after authorities last week suspended visas for the umrah and barred citizens from the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council from entering Mecca and Medina. Saudi Arabia on Thursday declared three new coronavirus cases, bringing the total number of reported

Islam's holiest shrine emptied

Mecca, March 5: Saudi Arabia on Thursday emptied Islam's holiest site for sterilisation over fears of the new coronavirus, an unprecedented move after the kingdom suspended the year-round umrah pilgrimage. State television relayed stunning images of an empty white-tiled area surrounding the Kaaba — a large black cube structure inside Mecca's Grand Mosque, which is usually packed with tens of thousands of pilgrims. The move was a "temporary preventive measure" but the upper floors of the Grand Mosque were still open for prayers, a Saudi official said. He called the measure "unprecedented". Earlier on Wednesday the kingdom halted the umrah pilgrimage for its own citizens and residents. The move came after authorities last week suspended visas for the umrah and barred citizens from the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council from entering Mecca and Medina. Saudi Arabia on Thursday declared three new coronavirus cases, bringing the total number of reported

Iran curbs travel between big cities

Dubai, March 5: Iran will set up checkpoints to limit travel between major cities as the new coronavirus has killed at least 107 people across the Islamic Republic. The announcement in Iran came as Palestinian authorities said the storied Nativity Church in Bethlehem, built atop the spot where Christians believe Jesus was born, will close indefinitely later in the day over coronavirus fears. These mark the latest disruptions of life across the Mideast from the new virus, which has seen over 4,740 confirmed cases. Iran's Health Minister Saeed Namaki announced his country's new restrictions at a televised press conference. He added that schools and universities

FRIDAY PRAYERS CANCELLED IN IRAN'S PROVINCES

Tehran/Cairo, March 5: Friday prayers in Iran were cancelled across all provincial capitals amid the country's growing coronavirus outbreak, state television said. Friday is the main congregational day of prayer in Islam, and traditionally an important event for Iran's clerical ranks. The report comes as Tehran and other areas cancelled Friday prayers last week over the outbreak. Meanwhile, Egypt's minister of Awqaf Al-Ahram Ahmad Jama has said that cancelling Friday prayers due to an outbreak of the new coronavirus is permissible. "If the virus spreads in a Muslim country and it becomes necessary to cancel the Friday prayer, if [the prayer] can be then performed as a noon prayer at home.... the official told Egyptian private TV Al-Mehwar on Tuesday night. —Agencies

300 MILLION STUDENTS OUT OF SCHOOLS

Rome, March 5: Almost 300 million students worldwide faced weeks at home due to the deadly new coronavirus, as the IMF urged an all-out global offensive against the epidemic. More than 95,000 people have virus first emerged over 3,200 have died worldwide from the virus, which by Thursday had reached more than 100 countries and territories. Bosnia and South Africa confirmed their first cases and Greece's cases surged after 21 travellers recently returned from a bus trip to Israel and Egypt tested positive for the virus. Most deaths and infections are in China, where the virus first emerged late last year, prompting the country to quarantine entire cities, temporarily shut factories and close schools indefinitely. However, it has quickly spread beyond China's borders. Several countries have implemented extraordinary measures, with UNESCO announcing on Wednesday that school closures in more than a dozen countries is unparalleled and, if prolonged, could threaten the right to education. South Korea — second to China in terms of infections with cases jumping past 6,000 on Thursday — has reported over 80,000 infections. —AFP

SOUTH AFRICA REPORTS ITS FIRST VIRUS CASE

Johannesburg, March 5: South Africa on Thursday confirmed its first case of the novel coronavirus, a 39-year-old male who travelled to Italy, health ministry said. "This is the first official told Egyptian private TV Al-Mehwar on Tuesday night. —Agencies

First death reported in Switzerland

Geneva, March 5: A 74-year-old woman suffering from the new coronavirus has died in Switzerland, marking the country's first death in the outbreak that has claimed more than 3,200 lives globally, police said on Thursday. The woman, who was hospitalised in the western city of Lausanne with severe pneumonia, died overnight, regional police in the canton of Vaud said in a statement. The

woman, who also suffered from a pre-existing chronic illness, had been considered "high risk" from the virus. Covid-19 produces mild symptoms in 80 per cent of cases, but for the elderly and those with underlying severe pneumonia and multiple organ failure. Globally, it is estimated that 10 per cent of those who have contracted the virus. More than 95,000 people

TO DATE, Switzerland has registered 58 confirmed cases of Covid-19 since the disease first surfaced. THE UN'S European headquarters in Geneva has also closed its doors to visitors

which by Thursday had reached some 80 countries and territories. To date, Switzerland has registered 58 confirmed cases of Covid-19 since the disease first surfaced in the country on February 25. MGM, Universal and Bond producers, Michael G Wilson and Barbara Broccoli, announced today that after careful consideration and thorough evaluation of the global theatrical marketplace, the release of No Time To Die will be postponed until November 2020. The film will be released in the UK on November 12, 2020 with worldwide release dates to follow, including the US launch on November 25, 2020, the statement by the makers read. The announcement comes

international Labour Organisation said it had decided to cancel a meeting of its governing body, which had been expected to draw around 500 people from more than 70 countries this month, after conducting a risk assessment. The United Nations' European headquarters in Geneva has also closed its doors to visitors and has curbed some activities linked to the Human Rights Council. —AFP

AI aided app eases at-home risk check

Washington, March 5: The app can send them a risk assessment and alerts the nearest facility with testing ability that a health check is likely needed. The application, described in the journal Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology, uses artificial intelligence (AI) to help public health officials with real time information on emerging demographics of those most at risk for the novel coronavirus (Covid-19). According to the researchers, including those from Augusta University in the US, the app can help better target

prevention and treatment initiatives. "We wanted to help identify people who are at high risk, help expedite their access to screening and to medical care and reduce spread of this infectious disease," said Arun S.R. Srinivasa Rao, study co-author from Augusta University. The scientists noted that the app asks individuals where they live, and other demographics like gender, age, and race.

REAL WORLD Movie to be screened in UK on Nov. 12, and in US on Nov. 25

London, March 5: The makers of new James Bond film, No Time To Die, have postponed the release of the much-awaited Daniel Craig-starrer to November this year in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. The novel coronavirus or COVID-19, which originated in China, has spread to over 60 countries, including the US, Italy and Iran. No Time To Die, which is the fifth and final appearance of Craig as the iconic British spy, was originally scheduled to hit the screens in the UK on April 8 and in North America on April 10. According to the official James Bond Twitter account, No Time To Die will now be released in the

UK theatres on November 12, followed by a November 25 release in the US. Dates of worldwide theatrical release will be announced in due time. "MGM, Universal and Bond producers, Michael G Wilson and Barbara Broccoli, announced today that after careful consideration and thorough evaluation of the global theatrical marketplace, the release of No Time To Die will be postponed until November 2020. The film will be released in the UK on November 12, 2020 with worldwide release dates to follow, including the US launch on November 25, 2020, the statement by the makers read. The announcement comes

the poster of the movie No Time To Die

to delay the release in the wake of the outbreak. According to Deadline, No Time To Die will now face off on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving with Warner Bros' Will Smith-starrer, King Richard, Disney's live-action Mulan, and Sony's comedy The Happiest Season. In view of the increasing number of coronavirus cases worldwide, many production banners such as Paramount Pictures have halted production on their films, with Disney Plus cancelling its Europe launch event and Amazon Studios pulling out of participation from the South West (SXSW) festival. No Time To Die, which is 25th installment of the action spy franchise, has been plagued by problems since its start. Last year, Craig suffered an injury during the film's shooting in Jamaica. —PTI





quick  
BITES

## INDICATORS

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	38,470.61 0.16
Nifty 50	11,269.00 0.16
S&P 500*	3,074.87 -1.77
Dollar (₹)	73.53 0.02
Pound Sterling (₹)	94.81 0.79
Euro (₹)	82.05 0.08
Gold (10gm) (₹)	44,250.17 0.35
Brent crude (\$/bbl)	51.17 0.04
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.239 0.012
US 10-Yr T-bill yield	0.944 -0.046

\* As of 9:30 pm IST

## HSBC winding up plea against IL&amp;FS S'pore arm

HSBC has filed a winding up petition in a Singapore plea against ITNL Offshore Pte Ltd, an overseas subsidiary of IL&FS Transport Services Ltd (ITNL), for recovery of dues totalling more than Rs 1,000 crore. The global bank is seeking to recover its funds parked in bonds worth RMB 1,000 million (over Rs 1,050 crore) maturing in 2021, which were issued by ITNL Offshore Pte Ltd. Case is listed for March 20 hearing.

## Lenders approve ₹23,000 cr RCom resolution plan



With lenders approving a Rs 23,000 crore resolution plan for Reliance Communication, as much as Rs 5,500 crore will flow to Chinese banks, clearing about 55 per cent of their principal dues, including of those lenders to whom firm's promoter Anil Ambani had given a personal guarantee. In a regulatory filing, RCom said the CoC approved the resolution plan submitted by UV Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd.

## Opec plans biggest oil cut since 2008 crisis

The Opec agreed to cut oil output by an extra 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd) in the second quarter of 2020, the deepest cut since the 2008 financial crisis, to support prices hit by the coronavirus outbreak, but made its action conditional on Russia and others joining in. Saudi Arabia has been pushing Opec and allies for a 1.5 mbpd cut for the second quarter of 2020 while extending existing cuts of 2.1 mbpd to end-2020.

## BMW drives in new locally made X1 SUV

BMW, India's second biggest luxury car maker, introduced its entry level mid-size SUV in the form of the BMW X1 SUV priced at Rs 35.90 lakh to Rs 42.90 lakh at pan-India showroom to grow and expand its leadership in the entry level luxury car market in the country. The new BMW X1 is offered in a range of three trims: SportX, xDrive and M Sport. The top-spec BMW X1 M Sport in diesel engine is priced at Rs 42.90 lakh.

Printed & Published by Venkateswarlu on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press, Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd, #563/9/D&B/E, Behind Andhra Bank Pet Basheerabad, Kompally, Ranga Reddy Dist. Editor: T Venkateswarlu. Reg No: AP-NENG/2008/24282. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of the Editor, Financial Chronicle is prohibited.

## Basic mediclaim policy covers Covid-19

FALAKNAZ SYED  
MUMBAI, MARCH 5

Your basic health insurance/mediclaim policy will cover you against Covid-19 for tests and hospitalisations cost up to the sum insured.

Most individual health insurance policies cover up to 30 days of pre-hospitalisation expenses and 60 days of post-hospitalisation expenses. Usually, health cover is triggered when the insured is hospitalised for minimum 24 hours. However, if quarantine is advised, the cover may pay you partially or may not pay you at all. Read your health insurance policy contract to

know the terms. In case you are insured by your company's group health insurance, you would have to check on what the policy covers as group policies are tailor made to corporate needs.

Incase you plan to buy a health policy now, remember that there will be a one-month waiting period for your cover to be active. Also, read the policy wordings on exclusions and coverage limitations. While policies cover hospitalisation expenses, they may cover OPD and quarantine expenses depending on the exact policy wording. Meanwhile, non-life insurance and pure health insur-

ance companies said that they are evaluating the insurance regulator's suggestion to design products covering the cost for coronavirus while some insurers ruled out the need for a separate coronavirus cover as all standard policies anyway would cover the insured against such pandemic. Mayank Bathwal, CEO at Aditya Birla Health Insurance said, "In the past few years, the world has had outbreaks of dreaded viruses such as Ebola, Zika, Nipah, and now Corona. A health insurance policy covers all infections, and Corona is one such infection. Hence, all covers such as in-patient

treatment, pre-hospitalisation, and new hospitalization (NPH) ambulance cover that your health policy offers will be available to you, to fight against this pandemic." Atul Sahai, MD & CEO of New India Assurance, the country's largest non-life insurer, explained, "Individual mediclaim policies cover the hospitalisation cost as permissible under the policy for all diseases that are not excluded in the policy contract and that require 24 hours of hospitalisation." "Regarding specific product for coronavirus, we are evaluating the Irdai advisory and exploring related data."

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India a day earlier issued guidelines on handling of claims reported under coronavirus suggesting that "insurers are advised to design products covering the costs of treatment for coronavirus." The guidelines said where hospitalisation is covered, insurers should ensure that the cases related to corona virus disease (Covid-19) are expeditiously handled. "The costs of admissible medical expenses during the course of treatment including the treatment during quarantine period shall be settled in accordance to the terms," Irdai said.

## Third-party premium to be increased

New Delhi, March 5: Third-party insurance premium for cars, two-wheelers and transport vehicles may go up with regulator Irdai proposing substantial increase in premium rates from April 1.

The Irdai has proposed to increase the third-party (TP) motor insurance premium rates for cars below 1,000 cc to Rs 2,182, up about 5.3 per cent from the existing Rs 2,072 during FY21. Similarly, for cars falling between 1,000 cc and 1,500 cc, premium to be raised to Rs 3,383 from Rs 3,221. TP for two-wheelers below 75 cc is proposed at Rs 506, up from Rs 482. The rate increase has also been proposed for taxis, buses and trucks. —PTI

Administrator appointed; ₹50K limit set on withdrawals  
RBI supersedes Yes Bank board, caps withdrawalsFC BUREAU  
MUMBAI, MARCH 5

Deep in trouble Yes Bank was placed under a "moratorium" on Thursday night with the RBI supplanting depositor withdrawals at Rs 50,000 per account a month and superseding the board with immediate effect.

The Reserve Bank of India said the decision was taken in consultation with the government to protect depositors' interest. The RBI also superseded the board of private bank, which has been struggling to raise required capital for the last six months. The central bank also appointed former chief financial officer of SBI, Prashant Kumar as the administrator of Yes Bank. "The Reserve Bank came to the conclusion that in the absence of a credible



revival plan, and in public interest and the interest of the bank's depositors, it had no alternative but to apply to the central government for imposing a moratorium under Section 49 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949," the RBI said in a statement. The statement said the bank management had indicated that it was in talks with various investors and they were

likely to be successful. The bank was also engaged with a few private equity firms for capital raising. These investors did hold discussions with senior officials of the Reserve Bank but for various reasons eventually did not infuse any capital. "Since a bank and market-led revival is a preferred option over a regulatory restructuring, the Reserve Bank made all

efforts to facilitate such a process and gave adequate opportunity to the bank's management to draw up a credible revival plan, which did not materialise," the statement said. In the meantime, the bank was facing regular outflow of liquidity, the RBI said, justifying its actions. The actions come hours after reports emerged that the government has approved to a plan by which State Bank of India and other financial institutions would bailout Yes Bank.

If the plan is implemented, it would be the first major instance in many years where a private sector lender would be bailed out using public money. The curbs on Yes Bank come after similar action was taken against PMC Bank in September.

## EPFO cuts interest rate to seven-year low of 8.5%

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 5

The EPFO on Thursday recommended a 15 basis points (bps) cut in the interest rate on provident fund deposits to 8.5 per cent, a seven-year low, for the current fiscal (FY20) from 6.8 per cent in the previous fiscal (FY19).

It is believed that the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation has recommended a lower interest rate to make up for the poor returns on the fund's investments and losses caused by investments in debt-ridden companies.

A government official said the retirement fund would have incurred a loss had it retained the interest rate at last year's level of 8.65 per cent. "The EPFO would have left with a surplus of over Rs 300 crore if it had provided 8.5 per cent rate of interest on the EPF this fiscal. There

## A steep cut

Fiscal year	Ff interest rate (%)
FY2020*	8.50
FY2019	8.65
FY2018	8.55
FY2017	8.55
FY2016	8.80
FY2015	8.75
FY2014	8.70

\* Source: Govt. (\* Subject to finance ministry approval)

would have been a deficit if the EPFO had provided a rate of more than 8.55 per cent for the current fiscal," the official said. A source said the EPFO's earnings on debt market instruments, including government securities and fixed deposits, have been negatively impacted this fiscal. "It is also expected that investors would be forced to shift a portion of their investments in government securities and its newly launched debt funds and other instruments," the source said. The finance ministry has reportedly been pressing

the EPFO to lower the rate to align it with the interest rate on the country's small savings schemes. Anyway, a final call on the rate rests with the finance ministry. Announced the new rate after the CBT meeting, labour minister Santosh Gangwar said, "The EPFO has decided to provide 8.5 per cent interest rate on EPF deposits for 2019-20 in the CBT meeting today. The EPFO will have a surplus of over Rs 700 crore on providing 8.5 per cent rate of the official said. The EPFO on EPF for this fiscal."

When contacted for comments on the steep cut in the EPF rate, government officials clarified that "the government takes such decisions from time to time in line with market movement for aligning the EPF interest rate with other small saving schemes run by the government, such as public provident fund, post office saving schemes, national savings certificate and others."

## World first for Zydus Cadila in liver drug

New Delhi, March 5: Zydus Cadila has received approval from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) for its new drug application for Saroglitzaz to treat a particular condition of liver, commonly known as NASH. In a statement, the drug major said on Thursday.

The Ahmedabad-based firm said the approved product is the first ever drug anywhere in the world for treatment of non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) which is a progressive condition of the liver. The condition starts with fat accumulation in the liver known as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease and progress to cirrhosis and liver failure.

The company had launched Saroglitzaz in India in September for treatment of patients with Type-2 diabetes. NASH is a large unmet medical need as there is currently no approved drug for the treatment anywhere in the world, the firm said. —PTI

## Wealth tax, STT, CDT kept out of Vivad Se Vishwas

New Delhi, March 5: Disputes relating to wealth, securities transaction taxes and equalisation levy will not be covered under the Vivad Se Vishwas amnesty scheme. Issuing a detailed FAQ, the Income Tax Department has clarified that the declarant has to deposit the disputed tax amount within 15 days after determination of the tax liability by a designat-

ed authority. It also said that a declarant will be entitled to refund in case the amount already paid is more than the amount payable under the scheme. In cases where taxpayer's appeals are pending before appellate forums, high courts and the Supreme Court, he will have the option to settle the dispute on payment of 100 per cent of the disputed tax (25 per cent in search cases) and get complete

waiver of interest and penalty if paid by March 31. The liability would be up to 110 per cent (35 per cent in search cases) for payments during April-June. The FAQ clarified that in cases where the revenue department has gone in for appeal, the declarant will have to pay 100 per cent of the disputed tax (62.5 per cent in search cases) and/or 125 per cent of the disputed tax (25 per cent or fee by March 31. —PTI

## SBI Card mops up ₹2 L cr

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, MARCH 5

SBI Card's initial public offering of shares worth Rs 10,354 crore received bids worth over Rs 2.03 lakh crore with the public issue getting subscribed 26.49 times on the final day of bidding, said sources close to the merchant bankers.

The stock exchange data on the NSE, however, showed the final subscription at 22.45 times at press time. On the last day of bidding high net worth investors' portion saw a sharp surge in bidding with HNI or non-institutional portion getting subscribed 45.24 times.

The retail individual category was subscribed 2.50 times, shareholders category was subscribed 25.36 times while the employee category, which had a discount of Rs 75 per share, was subscribed 4.74 times. SBI Cards and Payment Services' IPO received over 39.03 lakh applications. SBI holds 74 per cent in this subsidiary while the rest is held by PE investor Carlyle Group. SBI stake will go down by 4 per cent and Carlyle's by 10 per cent.

## HC dismisses Kochhar's plea against termination

Mumbai, March 5: The Bombay High Court on Thursday dismissed a Chanda petition filed by Shambhu Kochhar against her termination as managing director and CEO of the ICICI Bank, noting the dispute arises from a contract of personal services.

A division bench of Justices N. M. Jambard and M. S. Karnik accepted the bank's contention that Kochhar's petition was not maintainable as the dispute was contractual in nature. The court said in its order.

Courts cannot exercise their writ jurisdiction where the employment in a private entity is regulated by contracts, it further said. "By contractual duties are enforceable as matters of private law by ordinary contractual remedies such as damages, injunction, specific performance and declaration," the high court said.

The bench in its order noted that even if an institution is performing a public duty and is amenable to writ jurisdiction, all its decisions would not be subject to judicial review. "The private body is discharging a public function and the denial of any rights in connection with the public duty imposed on such body, the public law remedy can be enforced," the court said. It took note of the fact that ICICI was a private bank as it was owned by a board of directors and did not receive any funds from the government. —PTI

## No equal opportunities, say IIM women alumni

Mumbai, March 5: About 49 per cent women from the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) say they do not feel they have the equal opportunities for career growth as the men in their organisations, a survey said. "The first ever pan-IIM survey on 'Women in the Workplace' was conducted by 'The star in me' — a global career advancement platform for women, in collaboration with IIM Kozhikode Alumni Association."

The survey was done online among 400 alumni and current students from 20 IIMs across the country. Around 49 per cent of the respondents said they do not have equal opportunities for career growth as the men in their organisations. More than 65 per cent of the respondents said their organisations' top leadership or management need a renewed focus on eliminating unconscious bias, strengthening mentoring and sponsorship initiatives and create a level

playing field for women." The star in me Co-Founder Ania Kasiwal said. Asked about the challenges they faced at work, the respondents cited the lack of mentorship, lack of strong professional networks, gender discrimination and unconscious bias as the key concerns. Interestingly, while women agree that strong professional networks are essential for success, 71 per cent said they take a passive approach towards building a network. —PTI

## Ultra rich to raise equity allocation

FC BUREAU  
MUMBAI, MARCH 5

Property has taken a back seat and equities have gained currency as the most advanced asset class for India's ultra rich in 2019, despite the global headwinds for equity markets. Equity investments remained the most attractive asset class for Indian ultra high net worth individuals, according to real estate consultants Knight Frank's, wealth report for 2020.

"About 83 per cent of Indian ultra high net worth individuals (UHNWIs) in India are planning to increase or maintain their allocations in equities, followed by bonds (77 per cent) and ahead of property (51 per cent)," said the report. "In 2019, for Indian UHNWIs, equities remained the most preferred asset class in the portfolio with 29 per cent allocation, followed by 21 per cent allocation for bonds and 20 per cent into property investments," the report said. "The ultra rich expect that the risk-adjusted returns will be higher in equities in 2020," said

with HNI or non-institutional portion getting subscribed 45.24 times.

The retail individual category was subscribed 2.50 times, shareholders category was subscribed 25.36 times while the employee category, which had a discount of Rs 75 per share, was subscribed 4.74 times. SBI Cards and Payment Services' IPO received over 39.03 lakh applications. SBI holds 74 per cent in this subsidiary while the rest is held by PE investor Carlyle Group. SBI stake will go down by 4 per cent and Carlyle's by 10 per cent.

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SHORT TAKES

Proteas beat Oz, win ODI series

**Bloemfontein:** Janneman Malan, snubbed for South Africa's upcoming tour of India, hit a match-winning century as the Proteas clinched their one-day international series against Australia with a six-wicket victory in the second match at the Mangung Oval on Wednesday. Malan made 129 not out to enable South Africa to chase down a target of 272 and seal the series with a game to spare — their first win in five series in all formats in home internationals this season. Malan, 23, was out for a first-ball duck on his ODI debut in the first match in Paarl on Saturday and was not selected in a 15-man squad which will depart on Sunday for a three-game tour of India. The younger brother of Test batsman Pieter Malan gave credit to Jon-Jon Smuts (47), Heinrich Klaasen (51) and David Miller (37 not out), with whom he shared partnerships of 91, 81 and an unbeaten 90 after Quinton de Kock had been bowled in the first over by Mitchell Starc. "They were great partners to have in the chase. My partners kept me calm when I was itching a bit," said Malan. He made his runs off 139 balls and hit seven fours and four sixes. Malan had to share the man-of-the-match award with Lungi Ngidi, who took six for 58. — AFP

Archer extends Sussex contract

**London:** England pace bowler Jofra Archer has signed a two-year contract extension with Sussex, the club announced on Thursday. The 24-year-old rarely gets to play for his county due to his England commitments after making an instant impact in being their leading wicket-taker in the triumphant World Cup campaign. The Barbados-born star also held his nerve to bowl the decisive Super Over that saw England edge New Zealand in the final last year. The deal will keep him in the club — who are presently in the second tier of the county championship — till at least the end of the season. "Sussex gave me an opportunity right at the beginning of my career, so I am very happy to stay with the club. I really enjoy playing with at Sussex and it was really nice to come back down last year to play a few games with them," Archer told the Sussex Cricket website. — AFP

Reain positive: Sachin to women

**Mumbai:** Batting great Sachin Tendulkar on Thursday advised the Harmanpreet Kaur-led Indian women's team, which have made its maiden T20 World Cup final, to remain positive and "just be in the moment". India will face Australia in the summit showdown on Sunday. India entered final after their last-four clash against England was washed out in Sydney. They had topped the group. "Just be in that moment and go out and play. I was there next to the trophy, and our few team members were there from our women's team. I said it would be nice to see you with this trophy in India," Tendulkar said. "Go out and give your best. And that is what my message to them is. Don't take any pressure, though it is easier said than done. I genuinely want to tell them that just stay together, you don't need to spend time with the outside world. If you are in company with each other and keep talking positive things because good things have happened to our team and they have inspired so many youngsters," he added. — PTI

Honour & privilege to serve India again: Joshi

**New Delhi, March 5:** Newly-appointed selection committee chief Sunil Joshi on Thursday said getting a chance to serve Indian cricket again was an honour and privilege. "The 49-year-old Joshi played 15 Tests and 69 ODIs between 1986 and 2001, taking 41 and 69 wickets respectively. He has coached state teams of UP, Jammu and Kashmir and was part of the Bangladesh support staff until the 2019 World Cup. "I deem it an honour and a privilege to serve our beloved country again. I am thankful to the CAC Chairman Mr Madan Lal, Mr R.P. Singh and Mr Madan Sulakshana Naik for considering my candidature," the former India spinner told. "The advisory committee (CAC) comprising Lal, Singh and Naik on Wednesday added Joshi and former India pacer Harvinder



Singh to the five-member selection panel. They were picked from south zone and central zone respectively. The selection panel's first assignment is to pick the team for the home ODI series against South Africa beginning March 12 in Dharamsala. — PTI

Rain washout puts India women into their maiden T20 World Cup final

**Sydney, March 5:** An unbeaten run in the group stage propelled India into their maiden Women's T20 World Cup final against defending champions Australia after their last-four clash against England was washed out here on Thursday, prompting both captains to say that reserve days are essential for knockout clashes. Persistent rain since morning delayed the toss and eventually the semifinal was called off without a ball being bowled, taking Indians into the summit clash and leaving England players in tears. India will take on four-time winners Australia, who defeated South Africa by five runs in what was also a rain-hit semifinal match, curtailed to 13 overs after Australia's innings.

The two teams will clash on Sunday, which also happens to be International Women's Day. "Really frustrating. Not how we wanted the World Cup to finish for us. No reserve day, no chance of playing and ultimately that loss against South Africa cost us," a dejected England captain Heather Knight said after the game was abandoned.

Her India counterpart Harmanpreet Kaur also agreed that the semifinals should have had a reserve day, a request which was made by host Cricket Australia but turned down by the ICC. "Unfortunately we didn't get a game, but there are reserves and we have to follow it. Having reserve days in the future will be a great idea," said Kaur. Knight said her team paid the price for not starting the tournament well. "It's all very English isn't it, talking about the



India captain Harmanpreet Kaur (left) and her English counterpart Heather Knight shake hands after play was abandoned due to rain in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup semifinal in Sydney on Thursday. — ICC

weather and getting knocked out. It felt that we gained a bit of momentum in the last few games and we were pumped up for the semifinals," she added. "Lessons are to win the first game I guess (laugh). It's become a trend, not to start well in tournaments, and that has cost us." India had topped Group A with four victories in as many matches while England had finished second in Group B with three wins and a defeat. "From day one, we new we have to win all the games because in case the semifinals don't happen, that would be hard for us. In that

sense, credit to the team for winning all the games," said Kaur. "Everybody is looking in great touch — Shafali (Verma) and Smriti (Mandhana). They are giving us good starts, and that helps. Me and Smriti are trying to spend more time in the nets," she added reflecting on her and Mandhana's so far indifferent form. "We are looking more positive now. Unfortunately we haven't come up with big innings, but our teammates are, and at the end of the day it's a team game."

Having reserve days is a great idea: Harmanpreet

**Sydney, March 5:** It was double delight for Captain Harmanpreet Kaur as India entered their maiden T20 World Cup final and in attendance, for the first time, in her international career, were her parents. "It was the first time they were going to watch me playing cricket since my dad did when I was in school, and my mother has never watched me play cricket," Harmanpreet said at the post-match conference. "They wanted to see today's game, but unfortunately, they didn't get to watch. "It means a lot because from day one I wanted them to watch me playing cricket and today I got this opportunity. They have come here to watch all of us playing, and I hope we get all support from all the parents and try to win this tournament."

Hope for a rule change: Knight

Her parents will remain in Australia to watch India play in the final at the iconic MCG, which will take place on her 31st birthday. After the abandoned match, the India skipper thought scheduling a reserve day after the semifinals would be a great idea. "Unfortunately we didn't get a game, but there are rules and we have to follow it. Having reserve days in the future will be a great idea," she said. — PTI

tion and the game tonight is potentially going to be rained off as well, so you'd hope now there is going to be a rule change and moving forward, no other team will have to experience going out of a World Cup purely because of rain. Hopefully it changes," she said after the abandonment of the game. It's gutting, you put in a lot of hard work. There's not a lot we can do about it, we're just going to have to rue that first game," she added. — PTI

Australia beat SA, to play India in the title match

**Sydney, March 5:** Four-time champions Australia used their rich big-match experience to surpass a spirited South Africa by five runs in a rain-hit semifinal here on Thursday, setting up a title clash against first-timers India.

There were fears that the second semifinal between Australia and South Africa at the SCG too will be washed out because of the rain. The India and England match earlier in the day. But the weather improved just enough to get a game albeit a curtailed one. Australia skipper Meg Lanning led from the front with unbeaten 49 off as many balls to take her team to 134 for five in 20 overs. South Africa returned during the innings break and South Africa were set a revised target of 98 runs in 15 overs as per the D/L method. South Africa ended at 92 for five despite a fighting 41 not out off 27 balls from



Australia celebrate their win over South Africa in the semifinal on Thursday. — TWITTER

Laura Wolvaardt, leaving them dejected. South Africa were reeling at 24 for three before Wolvaardt and Sune Luus (21) brought them back in the game with a quickfire 47-run stand. In the end, Wolvaardt, who smashed three sixes and two fours, had too much to do on her own. Hosts Australia, who did not have the services of injured star all-rounder Ellyse Perry, were ecstatic

after Jess Jonassen was able to defend 19 runs in the final over with South Africa getting only 15. With the win, Australia advanced to their sixth successive final out of the seven editions held so far. — PTI  
**Brief scores:** Australia 134/5 in 20 overs (Lanning 49 not out, de Klerk 3/19) vs South Africa 92/5 in 13 overs (Wolvaardt 41 not out, Schutt 2/17).

Kuldeep eyes India return through IPL

**New Delhi, March 5:** He is open to everything. Whatever cricket I played till date, he backed me a lot. It was a team decision keeping in mind the conditions. Kuldeep last played a Test in January 2018 against Australia in Sydney, while his last T20 match was against Sri Lanka in January this year. He featured in only one of the three ODIs in the New Zealand series which India lost 0-3. He is now eyeing the IPL, starting March 29, to make a strong statement and return to the India fold. "IPL is such a platform which changes every year. You need to be active every time and adapt to the changes. I am right now fully prepared for IPL. — PTI

Not a sure shot starter anymore, spinner Kuldeep Yadav is seeking to cement his place in India's T20 World Cup team with a sensational IPL. Only a year ago, he was looked upon as India's best spin bowling option in overseas conditions, but a slump in form led to him losing that status. "I don't feel anything went wrong. It depends on combination. In New Zealand the wickets were quite different, you might have seen that there were no spin tracks in Tests. Moreover, it was not a long Test series as well." Kuldeep said on Thursday. "(Coach) Ravi bhai (Shastri) backs me a lot.



As an Indian, I am absolutely thrilled India has made it to the finals. But as a cricketer I feel for the English girls. I'd never want to find myself or my team in that situation. Congratulations girls. This is big. #INDVENG #T20WC. — MITHALI RAJ

Congrats Team on reaching the final! You guys deserved it after a superb performance in the group stage. — JHULAN GOSWAMI

Would have been great to see the match, but many congrats to @BCCI Women for making it to the finals of the #T20WorldCup. — VVS LAXMAN



Congratulations to the Indian Women's team on qualifying for the @T20 World Cup final. We are proud of you girls and wish you all the luck for the finals. — VIRAT KOHLI

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SHORT TAKES

**Harika stuns world champ, in joint lead**

**Lausanne:** Indian Grandmaster Dronavalli Harika stunned world champion Ju Wenjun in the third round to grab a share of the top spot in the FIDE Women's Grand Prix chess tournament here. Harika, the world No.9, has two points after three rounds along with four others. The Indian outlasted the 29-year-old Chinese player, ranked No.5 in the world, in 54 moves with white pieces late on Wednesday. The others on two points include Russians Alina Kashinskaya and Alexandra Gorychikina, Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine and Georgia's Nana Dzagnidze. Three of the six games on the day were decisive ones with Kashinskaya and Muzychuk registering wins. Kashinskaya defeated former world champion Alexandra Kostenik while Muzychuk got the better of France's Marie Sebag in 38 moves. The 29-year-old Harika faces Dzagnidze in the fourth round later on Thursday. The strong tournament featuring 12 players, including world champion Wenjun, is the third in the series of four Grand Prix from which two with the highest points would qualify for the next candidates event. —PTI

**Katsumi halts Bagan juggernaut**

**Kalyani, West Bengal:** Mohan Bagan were held to a 1-1 draw by defending champions Chennai City, a Katsumi Yusa strike halting the I-League leaders' juggernaut here on Thursday. Bagan's Papa Babacar Diawara continued his fine form in front of goal, finding the back of the net for the eighth game on the trot, in the 45th minute. His strike broke the deadlock at the stroke of half time but Katsumi came back to haunt his former club, netting the equaliser for Chennai in the second half, and deservedly walked away with the Hero of the Match Award. Bagan gaffer Kibushi Vichou made three alterations. Gurinder Kumar and Asitkanta Mehta were called upon, while Shilton D'Silva made a rare start in midfield. Chennai's captain Akbar Nawas made one change to his preferred 4-4-2, with Jishnu Balakrishnan making way for the debutant Mohan Bagan remained on top with 36 points, while Chennai stayed seventh with 20 points. The first half was evenly contested, with Chennai enjoying slightly more possession. Chances were abundant for either side to score, but the visitors squandered their early openings. —PTI

**INDIA TROUNCE UZBEK 3-0 IN FED CUP**

**New Delhi:** India bounced back to beat Uzbekistan 3-0 in the Fed Cup Asia/Oceania Group I campaign, after their loss to China on Day One in Dubai. On Day Two of the round-robin tournament, Rutuja Bhosale and Anika Raina were again given singles duty, while Sowjanya Bavisetti won her first Fed Cup point for India in the second doubles appearance with Riya Bhatia in as many days. It took a grueling three hour long battle for Bhosale, world No. 433, to emerge from a set down and earn India's first point in the competition as she defeated Agul Amanmuradova 2-6, 6-2, 7-5, who is ranked 35 places above her at 398 in the world. The 27-year-old Anika continued with her good form of 2020 to pocket India's first point in the tournament. Raina won 7-5, 6-1 against Sabina Sharipova in one hour and 34 minutes and gave India an unbeatable 2-0 lead. Indian team's determined efforts continued in the third and final rubber of the day to blank Uzbekistan. Riya and Sowjanya triumphed 6-3, 6-1 in the doubles tie against Karimjanova Yasmina and Normurodova Setora. India and Korea will play each other on day three, Chinese Taipei and Indonesia are the other two remaining teams in the competition who are yet to meet India. —Agencies

**Manchester City, Leicester into FA Cup quarters**

**London, March 5:** Tottenham manager Jose Mourinho defended Eric Dier after the England international was booed into the stands following his side's FA Cup exit to Norwich on Wednesday. Dier climbed over rows of seats to confront a fan, who had allegedly been involved in an altercation with the player's brother. The incident rounded off a terrible night for Tottenham, who saw another chance of silverware slip away 3-2 on penalties after a 1-1 draw against the side bottom of the Premier League. "When someone insults you and your family is there and your family gets involved with somebody who is insulting you, in this case a younger brother, I think Eric did what we professionals cannot do but I, repeat, probably everyone of us would do," said Mourinho. Dier scored his penalty in the shootout, but Erik Lamela, Troy Parrott and Cedon Anderson were missed from the spot to condemn Spurs to a fourth straight defeat in all competitions. On the prospect of the club taking disciplinary action against Dier, Mourinho added: "If the club does that I will not agree, but he did wrong." Jan Vertonghen headed Tottenham into an early lead, but Mourinho's decision to hand 36-year-old defender Michel Vorm his first appearance of the season backfired. The Dutchman split a long-range effort from Kenny McLean and Josip Drmic bundled home the rebound to level 12 minutes from time. Both sides then tired badly in extra-time, but neither could find a winner. Mourinho again blamed his stretched resources without the injured Harry Kane and Son Heung-min to injury for defeat. "Some of my players



Norwich City's Josip Drmic (left) scores past Tottenham Hotspur's Michel Vorm in their FA Cup fifth round match at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London on Wednesday. The match ended in a 1-1 draw. —AFP

were really in trouble and they made an incredible effort to try," said Mourinho. Norwich will host Derby or Manchester United in their first quarter-final since 1992. Manchester City will travel to Newcastle in the last eight after winning a 20th consecutive domestic cup tie 1-0 win at Sheffield Wednesday thanks to Sergio Aguero's winner. Wednesday goalkeeper Joe Wildsmith failed to

get a strong enough hand to the Argentine's low strike eight minutes into the second half. A solitary goal was scant reward for the dominance of Guardiola's men, but they maintained hopes of a cup treble after lifting a third consecutive League Cup and beating Real Madrid 2-1 in the first leg of their Champions League last-16 tie. Leicester also booked their place in the last eight with a much-needed

1-0 win over Birmingham thanks to Ricardo Pereira's late header. The Foxes have won just one of their last seven Premier League games to stall their charge towards the Champions League next season. Brendan Rodgers' men were again without Jamie Vardy through injury and needed right-back Ricardo to get the only goal when he headed home Marc Albrighton's cross eight minutes from time. —PTI

**THE RESULTS**

Leicester	1
Birmingham	0
Sheffield Wednesday	0
Manchester City (Aguero 53)	1
Tottenham	1
(Vertonghen 13)	1
Norwich (Drmic 78)	1

Norwich won 3-2 on penalties

**ASHISH SAILS INTO ASIAN OLYMPIC QUALIFIERS**

**Amman (Jordan), March 5:** Asian silver medalist Ashish Kumar (73kg) sailed into the quarter-finals of the continental Olympic Qualifiers for boxing with a stunning win over fourth-seeded Kyrgyz Omurbek Bekzhigit Uulu in the last-16 stage here on Thursday. Ashish prevailed 5-0 in the mostly lop-sided contest to set up a clash with Indonesia's Muskhil Robert Muskhita. Muskhita defeated New Zealand's Ryan Scaife in his pre-quarterfinal bout. Making the semifinals would assure Ashish of his maiden spot in the Olympics scheduled in July-August this year. Up against a spunky rival, who he defeated in the Asian quarterfinals last year, Ashish played the waiting game to perfection, allowing Uulu to expend himself trying to connect. Uulu swung his arms more than the Indian but it was Ashish who needed more accurately in the opening three minutes. Ashish's powerful and precise right hand served him well in the final three minutes, as judges ruled unanimously in his favour. —PTI

**Legend Ronaldinho is held for passport fraud**

**Asuncion (Paraguay), March 5:** Former Barcelona and Brazil striker Ronaldinho Gauchó is being investigated by Paraguayan authorities after arriving in the country with what police said was a "presumably adulterated" Paraguayan passport. Ronaldinho and his brother and business manager Roberto de Assis were both questioned by law enforcement officials in their hotel room on the outskirts of Asuncion on Wednesday and have been summoned to appear on Thursday for further questioning, police said in a statement. The public prosecutor's office, who collaborated with the police in their investigation, said their cell phones and passports were seized. "The authenticity of the documents is being checked as is the dates they were stamped," the public prosecutor's office said. Both men were allowed to remain overnight in their presidential suite at the country club where they were staying, the public prosecutor's office said, while police



Former Brazilian football star Ronaldinho Gauchó (right) enters Paraguay's attorney offices in Asuncion, Paraguay, on Thursday. —AP

● Ronaldinho Gauchó along with his brother Roberto De Assis are being investigated by Paraguayan authorities for arriving with alleged adulterated Paraguayan passports.

added that the investigation is ongoing. The brothers were invited to Paraguay by a local casino owner and had arrived on Wednesday to take part in a soccer clinic for children and a book launch. The former Gremio,

Flamengo and Paris St Germain forward last played professionally in 2015. The former Gremio, Flamengo and Paris St Germain forward last played professionally in 2015. —Reuters

**INDIAN ARCHERY TEAM PULLS OUT OF ASIA CUP**

**Kolkata, March 5:** The Archery Association of India on Thursday withdrew its team from the upcoming Asia Cup world ranking tournament in Bangkok owing to the coronavirus threat there. The season-opening stage 1 tournament is scheduled to be held in Thailand's capital from March 8 to 15. "This would have been India's first international competition since their return from a five-month suspension. "After reviewing the current alarming situation on account of coronavirus and taking into consideration the travel advisories issued by SAI and IOC, Archery Association of India is worried about the health of our team and cannot take any risk under the circumstances," AAI assistant secretary Gunjan Abrol wrote to World Archery secretary General Tom Dielen. "Hence it has been decided to withdraw the team from the Asia Cup Stage 1 World Ranking Archery tournament to be held in Bangkok from March 7-15." India were to send a second-string team for the tournament and all the arrangements had been done. —PTI

**CORONAVIRUS THREAT**

**Scared shuttlers leave academy**

**GANDHARV KAMALA | DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 5**

International badminton players — such as Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, Sourabh and Sameer Verma have already left for their homes from the Pallela Gopichand Academy, Hyderabad, as news of an IT employee from the Babaji Mindspace IT Park, testing positive for Coronavirus grasped the city on Wednesday. "As soon as the news of an IT employee testing positive for Coronavirus reached us we were all worried. I was scared. I spoke with my parents and they told me to play if I was comfortable. But I did not want to take any risk so I decided to go back to my home in Amalapuram. — SATWIKSAIRAJ RANKIREDDY World No.10 men's doubles player

(Shetty) will go to Mumbai tomorrow (Friday). Dhruv (Kapila), Arun (George) and Pranjoy will also head to their respective homes most likely by tomorrow; the 2019 French Open doubles champion added. "After the news broke of another confirmed case of Covid-19, our parents asked us to return home. So we took an early morning flight out of Hyderabad and are now currently driving to our house," the World No.31 title news-paper. A source close to the Academy said, "A lot of parents have called us up and told us to send their kids home. At least five kids have returned and few more will leave in the coming days. I have it and pass it to my parents," the 19-year-old added. "A lot of players are also leaving the Academy. Some left today while some are leaving tomorrow (Friday) or the day after (Friday

**CHIRAG, SATWIKSAIRAJ TO SKIP ALL-ENGLAND**

**New Delhi, March 5:** Indian shuttlers, including H.S. Prannoy and World No.10 men's pair of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, have withdrawn from next week's All England Championships due to concerns surrounding the coronavirus outbreak. The season's first World Tour Super 1000 tournament, the prestigious All England Championships, which counts towards qualification for Tokyo 2020 begins on March 11. "Some of the players have written to the Badminton Association of India, informing about their decision to withdraw from the All England Championships. Top doubles pair of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, Manu Attri and B. Sumeth Reddy, H.S. Prannoy, Sameer Verma and Sourabh Verma have so far withdrawn," BAI secretary Ajay Singhania said. —PTI

"However, Saina Nehwal, P. V. Sindhu, Kidambi Srikanth, Ashwini Ponnappa and N. Sikki Reddy and Pranay Jery Chopra will be participating in the tournament," the BAI Secretary said. Chirag said players were concerned about travelling via Dubai. "I am worried about the Coronavirus outbreak. In United Kingdom the number of infected has touched 50, so it is a concern. Also we had to travel via Dubai Airport, which is one of the busiest airports, it makes one vulnerable," Chirag said. Chirag and Satwik had pulled out of the 2019 edition as well due to latter's shoulder injury. Sameer, Pranay, Manu, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, Sourabh and Verma had to draw last year and therefore doesn't have to defend any ranking points. —PTI

**Olympics will go on, asserts Bach**

**Lausanne, March 5:** International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach insisted that the nightmare scenario of either cancelling or postponing the Tokyo Olympics was dismissed at a key meeting on Wednesday despite the global spread of the deadly coronavirus. "Neither the word cancellation nor postponement was mentioned today (Thursday), during the Executive Board meeting," Bach told reporters. "I will not add fuel to the flames of speculation. Our statement from yesterday (Wednesday) is very clear — we are fully committed to the success of the Tokyo Games," Bach added. The Olympics take place from July 24-August 9. Bach said that a working group had been created made up of the IOC, Tokyo 2020 organisers, the city of Tokyo, the Japanese government and the World Health Organisation (WHO). "We have this joint working group which holds regular meetings. We examine



every question which may arise but we do not speculate on possible future developments," added Bach. Pressed on what allowed him to display such confidence in holding the Olympic Games in Tokyo, Bach said that the IOC relied on information from a wide range of experts. "I don't want to be questioned over who would make the final decision over a possible cancellation or postponement of the Games, Bach refused to speculate. "I don't want to give legal advice. The issue is not on the table and has not been considered," said Bach a former Olympic fencer-turned-lawyer. —AFP

**Italy to host sporting events indoor**

**Rome, March 5:** Italy ordered on Wednesday that all major sporting events be held behind closed doors until April 3 as the country grapples with the deadly coronavirus outbreak. The measure was announced as the Italian government stepped up its response to an epidemic that has killed 107 people and infected more than 3,000 others in Italy in the past two weeks.

In a decree released on Wednesday, the government states that "all sporting events and competitions of all types, whether private or public" can proceed in sports facilities behind closed doors — namely in the open air but without the presence of spectators. This week's Italian Cup semifinals Juventus against AC Milan in Turin and Napoli's clash with Inter Milan at the Stadio

● The Italy government has ordered all major sporting events be held behind closed doors until April 3.

San Paolo — have been expected to be moved to the coming weekend, with every other matchday

pushed back a week. Italy's Six Nations rugby union match against Ireland in Dublin, scheduled for Saturday, has already been postponed. The Davis Cup qualifier between Italy and South Korea in Cagliari on Friday and Saturday will also have to be held without fans. —AFP

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20  
Printed and Published at the  
T. Venkateswaru on behalf of  
Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited.  
Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press,  
located at Plot No. 9, Alwal Village,  
Vallabh Nagar Taluk, Medchal  
Malkajgiri Dist. Telangana.  
Published at 36, S.D. Road,  
Secunderabad.  
RNI Registration No. 208/1957.  
Editor: Aditya Sinha