nicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA **NELLORE | MONDAY | 25 JANUARY 2021**

NEW DELHI, JAN. 24

January 26.

"Barricades and other

security arrangements will

be removed and the farm-

ers will enter the national capital. Later, they will

return to their destinations

atter covering a respectable distance," a

senior police official said.

Police said that the rally will be conducted in three

parts — first from Singhu

border will have a 62 km-

long route, then from Tikri

border with around 60 km

route and Ghazipur Border with 46 km route.

Police also said that there

are intelligence inputs sug-

gesting that there are ele-

ments, which pose a threat

to the proposed rally and may disrupt it. "After analysis of Twitter handles

it was revealed that there

are 308 such accounts cre-

ated in Pakistan which are

attempting to create confu-

sion and thus disturbances

during farmers' rally,"

Delhi Police's cyber teams

are keeping a vigil on

social media to track mis-

HEALTH WORKER

police said.

covering



Forecast: clear. Max/Min

temp. 31/23 ºC



(+139)(+13,676)1,53,502 1,06,68,332

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS (+197)(+1)TS: 2,93,253 1,589

(+158)(+0)7,147 AP: 8,87,010

CASES AROUND THE WORLD



worldometers.info/

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttarayana Tithi: Pushya Shuddha Ekadasi till 10.54 pm Star: Rohini from 11.57 pm Varjyam: 3.08 pm to 4.54 pm; 6 am (Monday) Durmuhurtam: 4.34 pm to5.18 pm Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm **HIJRI CALENDAR** Jamadi- ul- Akhir 11,1442 AH

> Fajar: 5.23 am **Zohar:** 12.21 pm Asar: 4.26 pm Maghrib: 6.02 pm SUNSET TODAY 6.05 PM

PRAYERS

(SHAHI MASJID)

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.38 AM MOONRISE TODAY 3.03 AM **MOONSET TOMORROW 4.24 AM**



Not prison cells of freedom fighters... they want to see where current leaders

TAKES

Cold wave to hit North India

New Delhi: Parts of north and central India will experience a fresh spell of chill during the next three-four days with 'cold to severe cold wave' conditions likely over the plains, the India Meteorological Department said on Sunday. Dense fog is likely to persist till January 26.

NATION 4

'Modi boosted gas, diesel, petrol (GDP)



WORLD 5

Russia defends curbs on Navalny protests

SPORTS 8

Ashwin high on series Down Under



Vol. 18 No. 199 Established 1938 | 16 pages | ₹6.00

Bodo pact marked end of Farmers' tractor rally to Assam insurgency: Shah

deccanchronicle.com, facebook.com/deccannews, twitter.com/deccanchronicle

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, JAN. 24

Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday said that the BJP led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi can keep Assam free of corruption, terrorism and pollution. Addressing a public

meeting to commemorate the completion of one year of the Bodo Accord, Mr Shah asked the people to elect a BJP government in Assam for speedy development of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). "Form an NDA government in Assam with absolute majority in the upcoming election and ensure the development of Bodoland," he said. Assam is among the five states in the country slat-



Union home minister Amit Shah at the BJP's public rally in Nalbari, Assam on Sunday

ed to have elections in 2021. The other states and Mr Shah, who address sed another public rally at Nalbari, said, "I have

"Prime Minister Naren-

Union Territories are Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry.

seen many rallies in my life, but I am so happy to

see today's rally... Development will be placed in Bodoland through this BTR Accord. More than people lost their lives, I assure you that the BTR will become a more developed region in Assam in coming days."

process to end insurgency in the Northeast by signing the Bodo Peace Accord. Efforts were made for settlement for the Bru-Reang issue and 700 members of 8 armed groups laid down arms," he said. "I am here to assure people of BTR that the Government of India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will implement all BTR Accord clauses," he

Snow covered



An earth-mover clears snow from a road following heavy snofall, at Bhaderwah, in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday.

Delhi police cyber teams keep strict vigil for miscreants **BHASKAR HARI SHARMA** After several rounds of talks between Delhi Police and the farmers' unions, the police on Sunday allowed their proposed "tractor rally" inside the national capital on "Protesting farmers can enter Delhi but can't disturb the Republic Day parade," the Delhi Police said on Sunday evening, declaring that the tractor rally will begin amid tight security after the Republic Day parade on Rajpath, which terminates at the iconic Red Fort close to

start after R-Day parade

Mobile tents being set up by farmers during the agitation against the Centre's farm laws at the Ghazipur border in New Delhi on Sunday.

creants who may try to create panic.

Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Shrivastva issued a circular and directed all officers and men, as well as Central Police (CAPF) and other forces to be deployed for Republic Day Parade security to remain in a ready position to move at short notice for law and order arrange-

Giving details about the parade, Deependra Pathak,

police (intelligence), said, The rally will start from Singhu border and pass through Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar, Kanjhawala, Bawana, Auchandi Border, Kundli-Manesar-Palwal expressway and will return to Singhu border. It will cover around 62 kilometres stretch. Police teams have done the assessment of these

farmers have been given the route which will pass special commissioner of through Nangloi, Najaf-

Manesar–Palwal express-way and then will head back to Tikri border. They will cover a distance of around 63 kilometres," he

"The farmers tractor rally from Ghazipur border will pass through Apsara Border, Hapur Kundli-Manesar-Palwal expressway and conclude at Ghazipur. Those farmers' groups will cover 46 kilometres," the special CP said.

"For the Delhi Police, it will be a challenging task. We have spoken to Haryana and Uttar Haryana and Uttar Pradesh police officers about how it will be conducted in a convenient way... We have also told farmers that the expected number of tractors should be distributed in a way that the rally is concluded in a peaceful and disciplined way. Adequate security will be provided to the rally by the police," a police official said.

Police said that the farmers union 'Sanyukt Kisan Morcha' had assured them that they will go back to their respective places from where the rally starts.

While police tried to convince farmers' leaders to hold their tractor parade outside the national capital. they were adamant on holding the proposed rally on Delhi's Outer Ring

Earlier three rounds of meetings were held between the unions and police officers from Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, but it was during over the tractor parade on Friday where both sides reached an agreement.

Kadapa to get one lakh

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, JAN. 24

Approximately one lakh

Gandhi National Rural Em-ployment Guarantee Sche-me (MNREGS). Officials from District Water Manag-ement Authority (DWMA) are on the job of finalising plans towards this.

tions only supports the poor in summer. It must be noted that those who

for livelihood returned to their hometowns last year because of coronavirus.

DWMA plans to employ more than one lakh people a day in summer. It was decided to provide 1.33 crore working days for the year 2020-21. However, as of January 20, 1.34 crore working days have been created

With the deadline set for

labour attendance. It was decided to ensure that attend every day from

February 1.

DWMA project director
Dr Pandillapalli Yadubhushan Reddy said they would provide work to all those having a job card. He said everyone who returned because of Covid-19 should be provided work. He said the target has been completed with the orders of collector Chevuru Harikiran. "We are planning to employ 1.5

DIES 5 DAYS AFTER TAKING JAB IN AP DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 24

A health worker died while undergoing treatment five days after taking the Covid-19 vaccine in Guntur district on Sunday. The relatives and health workers staged a protest following the death of B. Vijayalaks-hmi, an ASHA health worker, alleging that reaction to the vaccine had caused the death.

Demanding justice, they said that Vijayalakshmi had got the vaccine on January 19 but developed complications two days later. She was admitted to the Government General Hospital (GGH) in Guntur. The government had failed to provide proper treat-ment, they alleged, and sought compensation for her family.

■ Page 2: Collector agrees on relief to victim's family

PARENTS KILL 2 DAUGHTERS AS HUMAN SACRIFICE

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, JAN. 24

In what was claimed to be a case of human sacrifice, a former college principal and his wife allegedly bludgeoned their two daughters, who had completed their post-graduation, to death with a blunt like object at their residence in Sivalayam street of Madanapalli town in Chittoor district late on Sunday night.

■ Full report on Page 2





iobs under MNREGS

persons from Kadapa dis-trict will be employed every day under the

Rural employment scheme for drought condi-

March 31, officials are

lakhs of labourers would

lakh persons per day in

optimistic that more job cardholders will be able to find employment. Gram panchayats and mandals have been targeted for

AFTER | EFFECTS Survivors develop diabetes; face heart, lung issues

Govts claims Covid not

fatal but doctors worried

BALU PULIPAKA I DC HYDERABAD, JAN. 24

The state and Central governments have been for long promoting a narrative that with the case fatality ratio being low, there is nothing to fear from Covid-19. Early detection is all that is required, except in some odd

of this storyline. The narrative appears to have worked, with people no longer really afraid of the disease. One just needs to step out to see mask-less people, with many elected

GP

cases of patients with serious comorbidities, to recov-

er has been the cornerstone

AT RISK

1,05,01,194 Total cases all-India

(including active cases as on Jan. 24).

84,40,955 Potential risk of developing serious health issues in six months, 80% of

representatives including ministers acting no differ-

According to several doc-

all-India total.

tors who have been treating Covid-19 patients for nearly a year now, it is just a matter of time before this makebelieve safety bubble will burst. Other than some cursory comments on post-Covid-19 recovery care, little was done to create awareness on what patients need to look out for, after recovery. "We are seeing that nearly 80 per cent of those

who have recovered from

Covid-19 are developing dia-

betes, and fibrosis in the

lungs in about six months,'

a doctor involved in treating

and following-up with recov-

Everyone who has recov ered from Covid-19 must get themselves tested for diabetes and have a thorough examination of their lungs after six months, which appears to be the threshold for these two diseases to begin manifesting in the survivors, the doctor said. These are not the only dis-

eases a Covid-19 survivor needs to watch out for. Since the disease is one of inflammation, the immediate term impact is being seen on the heart, doctors

ered patients told *Deccan* Page 2: Covid-19 may affect cardiac health

CMYK

SHORT TAKES

COVID-19 MAY AFFECT CARDIAC HEALTH

FROM PAGE 1

"Blood vessels are inflamed in Covid-19 patients, which means vascular walls become thick and their inner diameter gets restricted. This is the reason why the resting pulse rate in almost every Covid-19 patient goes up post immediate recovery," a doctor explained.

What this means is that the heart begins to work harder than before exposure to Covid-19, resulting in increased pulse rate. It has been found that the heartbeat can swing wildly too, the doctor said, recommending that post survivors should ideally begin taking more interest in their cardiac health.

"We have seen vascular constriction more often than not in children who suffered from Covid-19," a doctor told *Deccan Chronicle*, adding what this means to the quality of life of the children is something he was worried to even speculate

"We are also seeing cases among Covid-19 infected women who are developing complications during pregnancies, as well as pregnant women losing their babies because of the vascular inflammation-related issues," the doctor said.

If the governments do not start educating people at least on these aspects, if not the other commonly lingering effects such as fatigue, bouts of breathlessness and sore throat among other Covid-19 symptoms, then we are looking at a health care time bomb that could well explode in the next couple of years when the yetto-be-clearly-understood nearand mid-term impacts of Covid-19 on general health begin making themselves felt,

KADAPA TO **BE MADE HO OF WALAMTARI**

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, JAN. 24

AP government has decided to make Kadapa headquarter of state-level Water and Land Management Training and Research Institute (WALAM-TARI). The institute will also have regional centres at Nellore, Amravati Visakhapatnam.

The state government has directed Department of Water this regard. WALAMTARI was established Hyderabad in 1982. After partition of Andhra Pradesh, the institute has Telangana. This has led to nonavailability of a proper training and research centre for water and land management.

Following this, the state government has decided to set up a state-level institute, apart from three regional WALAM-TARI centres in Andhra Pradesh. The centre has also stepped in to provide necessary support required by the state government

COLLECTOR VOWS RELIEF TO VICTIM'S KIN

FROM PAGE 1

After primary treatment, she was admitted to the GGH. Lakshmi also fell ill but recovered. Family sources said Vijayalakshmi suffered a brain-stroke and went into a coma

TD Guntur East in-charge Md Naseer and other leaders demanded ₹50 lakh compensation, government job to a fami ly member, and a house. CPM Guntur district east secretary Pasam Rama Rao recalled that Vijayalakshmi Coronavirus warrior and was entitled to the ₹50 lakh compensation.

Guntur collector I. Samuel Anand Kumar rushed to the spot and assured to send a proposal to the government seeking release of compensation. house site and job to a family member. He assured to provide all possible aid from the government side after which the protestors withdrew their agi tation.

Meanwhile, Director of Medical and Health department Dr Geetha Prasidini conducted a meeting with medical experts and discussed the sideeffects of the vaccine.

She said that only a few people had experienced simple reactions after taking the vaccine. She said they are waiting for an autopsy report of Vijayalakshmi to know the exact cause of her death.

Marching in step



Policemen march during a rehearsal at the IGMC Stadium to practice for the Republic Day celebrations, in Vijayawada on Sunday.

- C. NARAYANA RAO

SEC not concerned for staff: Union

Says poll panel chief putting staff lives at risk by scheduling polls amid vaccination drive

DC CORRESPONDENT

AP Government Employees Federation chairman K. Venkatrami Reddy on Sunday clarified that he had only spoken about the rights enshrined in the Constitution during emergency conditions and had not made personal remarks against anyone.

He was reacting to State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar lodging a complaint with DGP Gautam Sawang about a threat to his life following the remarks of Venkatrami

The employees leader had made the remarks while strongly opposing the scheduling of local body elections next month Addressing a press meet

Sunday, Venkatrami Reddy alleged that political leaders were distorting his comments although he had not mentioned anything against the SEC. He hit out at Ramesh Kumar for "not caring about the lives of

Condemning the SEC's alleged "hypocrisy," he said, "The SEC addressed



AP Government Employees Federation chairman K. Venkatrami Reddy and others address the media in Vijayawada on Sunday.

was attended by not more than 10-15 people. Despite there being a distance of at least 15 feet between press personnel and him. he chose to be surrounded by a glass shield to protect Reddy said.

"On the other hand, without paying heed to what the government is saying, he has decided to for the local body polls, thereby putting the lives of thousands of

a press conference which employees in danger. Aren't our lives valuable,'

> Venkatrami Reddy recalled that government employees had joined the Nava Nirmana Deeksha when the TD government had let go of the demand for special category status and opted for the special package offered by the NDA government at the

Employees had joined the satyagraha deeksha behes when the TD government him."

had demanded the special category status. He said that the SEC can conduct the elections with the employees who are willing

Questioning the timing of the notification, the employees' leader said "If the SEC was so committed to empowering the local bodies, why didn't he call for polls when they fell due in 2018? Even now, all we are asking is for him to delay the polls by 60 days so that all the employees are vaccinated before they are asked to interact with thousands of citizens as part of election duties. We aren't against the election. We aren't for any political party. We just want to be

Responding to the SEC referring to elections being held in other states, Reddy said, "That was done at a time when none had a clue about when the vaccine would be out. But now the process to vacciemployees has already started. Therefore, we are requesting the SEC to delay the polls by two months but to no avail. The SEC is acting at the behest of forces behind

Desam wants Guv. to ensure polls are held

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 24

Yanamala Ramakrishnudu, Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council. on Sunday asserted that it is the constitutional responsibility of AP Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan to restore "rule of law" and prevent breakdown of administrative machinery.

Ramakrishnudu said it is unprecedented that government officials and employees are openly refusing to take up election duties. He observed that in no other state had employees publicly defied a decision taken by the State Election Commission (SEC) on holding of polls to local bodies.

Ramakrishnudu wanted the Governor to invoke Article 243K (3) and conduct elections towards ensuring "self-rule" in local bodies. He charged that there is constitutional breakdown caused by the

RAMAKRISHNUDU SAID it is unprecedented that government officials and employees were refusing to take up election duties. He observed that in no other state had employees publicly defied a decision

'fascist" regime of Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy. "The YSRC government should govern by rule of law and not whims and fancies of one individual," he said.

taken by the SEC.

Accusing the CM of having no respect for democ racy, Ramakrishnudu said Jagan Mohan Reddy was undermining Constitution, judiciary, legislature and even the media. He alleged that false cases are being filed against media personnel to terrify them. There is no "Grama Swaraj" in villages, which YSRC party workers are domineering,

he stated.

EX-PRINCIPAL, WIFE 'SACRIFICE' **DAUGHTERS**

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, JAN. 24

In what was claimed to be a case of human sacrifice, a former college principal and his wife allegedly bludgeoned their two daughters, who had completed their post-graduation, death with a blunt like object at their residence in Sivalayam street of Madanapalli town in Chittoor district late on Sunday night.

According to the police, the accused couple Padmaja and Purushottam Naidu, both in their 50s, killed their their daughters Alaikhya, 27, and Sai Divya, 22, graduation. Naidu was a former principal of a women's degree college in the

On Sunday night, police raided the couhouse ple's Shivalayam street after a tip-off that some strange sounds were coming from there. When police forcefully entered the house, Alaikhya and Sai Divya were found lying dead- one in the puja room and another just outside with their body covered with redcoloured cloth.

As per Madanapalli DSP Ravimanohara Chary, police learnt during their preliminary investigation that the family had superstitious beliefs and were alleged-ly involved in occult practices.

"During the course of preliminary investiga-tion, the accused have confessed to have made human sacrifice. They narrated a story and requested us to leave their house in the night and come back on Monday morning to see their daughters alive. They asked us to give them some time to perform some occult puja to bring their daughters back to life," DSP Chary

told this newspaper.
The DSP said, "The couple told us that miracles were occurring in their house for the past few years. They said they had received a divine message to sacrifice their daughters, as Kali Yuga was going to end on Sunday night and they will be reborn on Monday in the beginning of Satva Yuga They asked us to leave our footwear outside as the house had been cleaned after 'evil' left

the premises. "We are taking the couple into custody and a case will be registered. The bodies were sent to the government hospital for autopsy and investigation is on," he said.

VEERRAJU AND PAWAN MEET FOR LS BYPOLL

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 24

state president Somu Veerraju met Jana Sena chief K. Pawan Kalyan at the latter's home here on Sunday and discussed strategies to win the Tirupati Lok

Sabha byelection.

The two parties in the alliance have finalised a candidate. During a recent meeting with JS leaders and activists in Tirupati, Kalyan sought to field his party's candidate. Pawan had expressed dissatisfaction over atti-

candidate selection. According to reports, Pawan had claimed his party havd good support in the constituency and wasready to campaign if the BJP agreed to field a JS candidate.

tude of the BJP vis-a-vis

At the meeting here, the two leaders touched on the idea of fielding a common candidate. They agreed to evolve a consensus through more meetings. Both stressed on the need for united

efforts by BJP and JS to win power in AP by 2024. Veerraiu later said the talks were fruitful and a win would help the party confidently march ahead for the 2024 hustings.

Kalyan appealed to the vouths to contest the panchayat elections and work for development of

Danger to girls keeps increasing

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL, JAN. 24

Safety of girl children in the district is becoming a major cause of concern as child marriages, sexual assaults, illegal trafficking and ill treatment of females is on the rise.

As per data of Integrated Child Development Society (ICDS) from 2011 to 2020, circumstances had forced at least 381 girl children in the district to turn child labourers instead of going to schools. 51 girls entered into child marriages, 13 female babies were found abandoned.

At least 15 girls were trafficked and 20 turned into beggars as they had been deserted. Crimes against girl children like sexual abuse and kidnap also increased. An official reeled out

these statistics even as Sunday, January 24. is celebrated as the National Girl Child Day, an official pointed out.

While 40 POCSO cases had been registered in 2019, 52 such cases had been filed in 2020. Eight female children had been kidnapped in 2020 while the number was seven in 2019. 31 girls became victims of rape in 2020.

ICDS district project director K. S. Bhagya Rekha said they are workhad been registered in 2019, 52 such cases had been filed in 2020. Eight female children had been kidnapped in 2020 while the number was seven in 2019. 31 girls became victims of rape in 2020.

ing to protect girl children in coordination with 23 departments of the state government, including police and labour departments. They are organising special drive programmes to create awareness among parents, particularly about sexual offences and child marriages. Bhagya Rekha further said they are maintaining a Shisu Gruha to protect and secure abandoned, surrendered and deserted

children in Kurnool city. District superintendent of police K. Fakeerappa announced a financial incentive of ₹10,000 from his own salary to police officers who ensure that accused in POCSO cases are convicted within one

month of filing the case. The SP said the police is also conducting awareness programme in all schools of the district, so that students are sensitised about reporting to police any strange behaviour from individuals in TECH THAT

New codes confuse parents during counselling Few take new BTech courses, students opt for old favourites

VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 24

Students and parents have preferred conventional engineering courses over emerging technologies. This is an aspect that has clearly emerged from the available trends of engineering seats being allotted in AP during the first phase of seat allotments.

The regular BTech CSE (computer science engineering) is in huge demand. New courses in emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, data science, machine learning, internet of things and cyber security have not found many tak-

Ninety-four per cent of CSE seats have been filled. Lack of awareness about the benefits of new courses and no information with regard to available job opportunities are causes for the lukewarm response, observers say Of the total 22,672 BTech

CSE seats, 21,312 seats have already gone in the first phase of allotments itself, which reflects the demand for this course. In contrast, there are 2,178 seats in computer

science, artificial intelli-

Of the total 22,672 BTech CSE seats, 21,312 seats have already gone in the first phase of allotments itself, which reflects the demand for this course.

Ninety-four per cent of CSE seats have been filled in the first phase of admis-

gence and machine learning. But only 1.346 of them have been filled, according to the data on admissions after the first phase. Of the 1,885 seats in CSE

data science, 1,243 have been filled. Likewise, of 1,533 seats in computer science artificial intelligence and data science 980 have been filled. Of 1,099 seats available in CSE artificial intelligence, 773 seats have been filled.

Similarly, CSE cyber security has 633 seats in which 401 have been filled. CSE internet of things has 497 seats of which 331 have been filled.

BTech artificial intelligence and machine learning have 276 seats. Only 181 have been filled. There are 184 seats in BTech internet of things (IoT) of which 85 have been filled. science, artificial intelligence and machine learning. But only 1,346 of them have been filled, according to the data on admissions after the first phase. CSE cyber security has 633 seats in which 401 have been filled.

In contrast, there are

2,178 seats in computer

137 seats are available in B.Tech artificial intelligence of which 76 have

With regard to BTech cyber security, 43 seats of total 115 seats have been filled. Only CSE

blockchain technology with cyber security have got a good response, as 253 of total of 275 seats have been already been taken in the first phase of admissions.

Educational experts feel parents and students are confused over the codes. For example, CSE Cyber Security is shown as CSEC, CSE Data Science as CSED and CSE Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning as

Experts point out that engineering streams are

changing. In the coming years, there will be a good demand for AI, data science, ITO, cyber security, machine learning and blockchain technology.

K.V.K. Rao, secretary Sederation of Self-Federation Financing Technical Institutes, said the main cause is absence of knowledge among students and parents about emerging engineering streams. He said they had written a letter about changing of the codes into an easier form to highlight awareness about modern courses, which are future of the world.

Students S. Tharannum, P. Gayatri and others, who have opted for CSE, told Deccan Chronicle they can study all subjects thoroughly in CSE. They can then opt for specialised courses in their higher semesters during the third year through Choice-Based Credit Systems (CBCS). They said they can take emerging technology courses under

The students also point out that presently, majority of corporate companies are choosing CSE students compared to students of emerging courses.

DECCAN CHRONICLE | NELLORE | MONDAY | 25 JANUARY 2021

SLAMS PAWAN

YSRC MLA DC CORRESPON NELLORE, JAN. 24 DC CORRESPONDENT

> Giddalur legislator Anna Rambabu criticised Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan for accusing him over the death of a Jana

burst of Pawan Kalyan against Rambabu during his visit to Ongole on Saturday to console family members Vengaiah Naidu who ended his life allegedly after the legislator scolded him for questioning

He was reacting to the out-ourst of Pawan Kalyan against roads in Giddalur segment. Speaking to media persons on Sunday, Rambabu denied any role in the suicide of Vengaiah Naidu. He admitted that he politics Chiranjeevi gave ticket to him.

GOLD AUCTION NOTICE

GSTN - 37AABCT0343B1ZX

Muthoot Finance Registered Office: 2nd Floor, Muthoot Chambers, Banerji Road, Kochi-682 018, Kerala, India. CIN:L65910KL1997PLC011300, Ph:+91 484 2396478.2394712,

Notice is hereby given for the information of all concerned that Gold Ornaments pledged with under mentioned branches of the company, which were overdue for redemption and which have not been redeemed so far in spite of repeated notices, will be auctioned at the concerned branches on 05.02.2021 at 10.00 AM.

ALLURU-(AP)(2767)- MSL- 7666, 7707, B V NAGAR - (AP)(4684)- MSL- 947, 948, CHIRALA(0713)- MSL- 26719, CUMBUM - (AP)(3785)- MSL- 6927, 7950, 8852, 9142, GIDDALURUA-(AP)(2077)- MSL- 9520, GUDUR(0802)- MSL- 23521, 23887, KANDUKUR(0805)- MSL- 14383, KANIGIRI - (AP)(3461)- MSL- 4567, KAVÁLI(0741)- MSL- 19064, 21714, 23016, 23177, MAŘKAPÚR(0744)- MSL- 23417, 25103, MARTÚR - (ÁP)(4273)- MSL- 4897, MUTHÚKÚŘ - (ÁP)(3816)- MSL 3807, 5681, \$758, NAIDUPÉT(AP)(1603)- MSL-9236, 10007, 10444, 10562, 10603, NELLORE - DARGAMITTÄ(3463)- MSL-9646, 10516, 10542, 10543, NELLORE - PADMAVATHI CENTRE(3237)- MSL- 11984, NELLORE -STONE HOUSEPET(2160)- MSL- 11759, 12842, 12980, NELLORE(0597)- MSL- 36648, 38175, 38302, 38608, NELLORE-RAMALINGAPURAM(2230)- MSL- 21231, 22654, 22819, 22828, 22956, NELLORE-VEDAYAPALEM(1548)- MSL- 27724, 28923, 28924, 30412, 30777, 31870, 31880, 31891, 32122, 32191, ONGOLE - COURT CENTRE(4220)- MSL- 4686, ONGOLE(0598)- MGL- 1852, MSL- 61686, 62354, 62637, ONGOLE-KURNOOL ROAD(2104)- MSL- 9063, ONGOLE-SANTHAPET(1480)- MSL- 22491, 22492, 22555, PODILI-(AP)(2254)- MSL- 9045, SINGARAYAKONDA (AP)(3328)- MSL- 8975, 9271, 9272, SULLURPET(AP)(1805)- MSL- 24474, 24559, VENKATAGIRI-(AP)(2216)- MSL- 10293, 10681, VETAPALEM -(AP)(2131)- MSL-

In case we are unable to conduct the auction at the branch on the notified date, the same will be conducted through Shriram Automall India Ltd.,(SAMIL) on their online auction platform https://gold.samil.in on 10.02.2021 between 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM for recovering the outstanding amount. In case the auction process is not completed on 10.02.2021, the same will be re-auctioned within 7 working days on the same terms and conditions without any further notice.

For further information, Terms & Conditions and getting registered to participate in auction, interested buyers may login to the website or contact

Note: Customers can release the gold ornaments before the auction date (05.02.2021).

Place: NELLORE Date: 25.01.2021

For Muthoot Finance Ltd, Shriram Automall India Ltd. **Board approved Auctioneer**

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4-lane bridge on Penna river

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, JAN. 24

Irrigation Department has sent a proposal to the Union government for the construction of a four-lane bridge on Penna river in Nellore as the existing two-lane bridge has become very old and congested due to heavy traffic movement.

The irrigation wing is also gearing up to build a disclosed these details after soon after the compretaining wall for Jafar inspecting the ongoing the barrage works.

Canal passing through Nellore City at an estimated cost of ₹45 crore. In addition to this, proposals have been sent to construct flood banks on both sides of Penna river by spending ₹75 crore to prevent inundation of areas abutting the river in Nellore as had happened

Water resources minister Dr P. Anilkumar Yadav has

during recent floods.

works of a barrage-cumbridge on Penna river in Nellore on Sunday.

He said that the progress of the barrage works have been affected because of heavy rains and floods last year, for the first time not in the last three decades.

The minister said that they would take up the flood bank works as well as the construction of retaining wall for Jafar Saheb Canal soon after the completion of

BARA SHAHEED DARGAH TO GET FACELIFT: MLA

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, JAN. 24

Nellore rural legislator Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy has laid the foundation stone to build a compound wall around the Idgah located in the premises of popular Bara Shaheed Dargah in Nellore at an estimated cost of ₹45 lakh.

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SHORT TAKES

RAM TEMPLE IN 3YRS; TO COST ₹1,100 CR: TRUST

Mumbai, Jan. 24: The Ram temple in Ayodhya will be built in around three years and the construction cost of the project will exceed ₹1,100 crore, a prominent functionary of the temple trust has said.

"The main temple will be built in three to three and a half years and will cost ₹300-400 crore. The expenditure on the development of the entire 70 acre land there will exceed \$\frac{1}{100}\$ crore," said Swami Govind Dev Giri Maharaj, treasurer of Ram Janmabhoomi Tirath Kshetra Nyas.

He said he arrived at these figures of the concepting of the concepting the control of the concepting the concepting the concepting the conception of the concepting the conception of the conception that the con

figures after consulting experts involved in the Ram temple construction project. The Nyas (trust) has not come out with an official statement so far on the expenditure involved in the project, he said

while talking to a TV channel.
"It was possible for us to raise funds (for the temple construction) from some corporate people. Some (corporate) families had approached us, requesting us to hand over the (temple) designs and assuring us they will complete the temple project, but I humbly declined that request," he said.

CENTRE OFFERS JABS TO ENVOYS POSTED IN INDIA

VINEETA PANDEY | DC NEW DELHI, JAN. 24

The Indian government on Sunday offered vaccination against Covid-19 to foreign diplomats posted in India. Embassies have been asked to give the names of diplomats and their family members who want to be vaccinated by Friday though no dates for their vaccination has been

given so far. Over 16.13 lakh healthcare and frontline workers have been vaccinated till date. On Sunday, the ninth day of the vaccination drive, 31,466 people were vaccinated in five states. Union health ministry officials said 10 cases of AEFI were reported on Sunday. India on Sunday reported 14,849 cases of Covid-19 and 155 deaths. In the coming week the government plans to intensify its immunisation coverage to complete its target of inoculating 3 crore healthcare and frontline workers well in time so that the vaccination drive for the rest of the population can be rolled out. It is expected that the diplomatic missions will be covered in the

In a letter to all diplomatic missions, the MEA said that 'as a gesture of goodwill and solidarity," the Government of India is considering to offer Covid-19 vaccination to "eligible foreign diplomats and their family members" accredited to all diplomatic missions, including consulates, United Nations and its specialised agencies, and other international organisations based in India.

FIR FILED AGAINST **TANDAV ACTORS** IN MP, K'TAKA

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC with agency inputs BHOPAL/BENGALURU JAN. 24

A case was registered against actors Saif Ali Khan and Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub in a police station in Datia in Madhya Pradesh late on Saturday evening for their roles in OTT web series Tandav which sparked a furor among Hindu bodies for "hurt-

A FIR was filed against the two actors in Kotwali police station in district headquarters of Datia following a complaint lodged by the local unit of Hindu Jagarn Manch, police said on Sunday.

ing religious sentiments"

Earlier on January 21, a delegation of the outfit led by Ravi Sharma filed a complaint with local sub-divisional officer of police Sumit Agrawal saying that the two actors slighted

Hindu deities in the film. Meanwhile, A case has also been registered by the Bengaluru police against the

cast and crew of Tandav. Based on a complaint by one Kiran Aradhya, the case was registered on Friday against Tandav director Ali Abbas Zafar, producer actors Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub and Saif Ali Khan and the head of India Originals of Amazon Prime Video, Aparna Purohit.

Cases have been registered under section 295A, 298, 153A and 34 of the IPC for insulting religious belief and promoting religious enmity between groups.

Tractors converge on Delhi for rally

25,000 tractors from UP, U'khand; 12,000 from Amritsar, 10,000 from Doaba to take part

Chandigarh/Ghaziabad, Jan. 24: More batches of farmers from Punjab on Sunday set out for Delhi to participate in the proposed tractor parade on January 26.

Farmer unions protesting the Centre's three farm laws had said they would go ahead with their tractor parade in Delhi on Republic Day. They had announced to take out the tractor parade on the Outer Ring Road in Delhi. A batch of 500 tractorstrolleys left Amritsar and several groups of growers from Phagwara, Hoshiarpur and other places of Punjab moved towards the national capital to take part of the tractor parade, farmer leaders said.

Kisan Sangharsh Union leader Baldev Singh Verka in Amritsar said, "Today as many as 500 more tractor trolleys left for Delhi to join the tractor parade. Each tractor-trolley will carry 20 persons along with bedding and eating arrangement for fourteen hour-long journey to Delhi". He said on Saturday,

around seven hundred tractor trolleys had left for Delhi. Gurbachan Singh Chabba, spokesperson of the Kisan Sangarsh Committee said so far, around 12,000 tractor and trolleys had already left Amritsar and Tarn districts. While most of the tractor convoys from Doaba region had left for Delhi on Friday and Saturday, many left on Sunday also to take part in



Tractors arrive for farmers at Singhu border in New Delhi on Sunday, during an ongoing protest against the new farm laws.

the tractor parade, said Satnam Singh Sahni, General Secretary Bharti Kisan Union (Doaba). Sahni, who returned here from Delhi's Singhu bor-der on Saturday night to further mobilise farmers for the parade. He said a total of around 10,000 tractors from Doaba region would join the parade to highlight agitating farmers' demands and the "stubborn" attitude of the central government

towards them.
Around 25,000 tractors from Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand will participate in the 'kisan parade' on January 26, Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait said on Saturday.

Farmers moving towards UP Gate from the two states on their tractor trolleys were intercepted by police in different districts but farmers will arrive here at every cost, he said. "Around 25,000 tractors

would arrive here and a

tractor rally would be brought out on Republic Day. Apart from the districts of western Uttar Pradesh, farmers would take out rallies in every district," Tikait said in a statement. "No political person will be allowed to participate," the BKU national spokesperson said. District administrations are sending notices to farmers and mounting pressure on them not to participate in the rallies citing Covid-19 norms and section 144 of the CrPC, he claimed.

Meanwhile, authorities in some Haryana districts close to the national capi-

tal have issued advisories against unnecessary travel towards Delhi over the next couple of days in view of a January 26 trac-tor parade by protesting farmer unions.

On Sunday, thousands of tractors were seen plying on the highways in the state heading towards Delhi, resulting in traffic congestion at several points on the GT Road, a police officer in Karnal

The Haryana Police issued an advisory stating that in view of the security and traffic arrangements for Republic Day and the proposed tractor parade, there would be dis-ruptions in vehicular movement on the national highway from Karnal and Rohtak towards Delhi dur ing January 25-27. -PTI

Farmers tableaux to depict protest

parade by agitating farmers will feature a number of tableaux from across states depicting village life, the protest against the Centre's contentious farm laws, and hailing their courage, according to organisers.

A farmer leader said that directions were issued to all organisations participating in the protest to prepare tableaux for the parade, "Around one lakh

participate in the parade. Around 30 per cent of these will have tableaux different including the history of the farmers' movement in India, the role of women farmers and farming practices followed in different states," he said.

A few children from Maharashtra's Vidarbha region have also planned a tableau on farmer sui-

Maha farmers to march to Capital

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, JAN. 24

Protesting against the Centre's farm laws, thousands of farmers from various districts of Maharashtra reached Mumbai on Sunday via a vehicle march. They are expected to march towards Delhi to support the protesting farmers on Republic Day.

The Nashik to Mumbai rally is part of the call given by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM). Morcha (SKM),

which is leading the protests in Delhi. The farmers have started their statewide vehicle march from Nashik to Mumbai

on Saturday.

Arriving in cars, jeeps, vans and trucks flying red flags, the farmers reached the city's iconic Azad Maidan, where they will hold a massive rally on January 25 to protest the controversial agriculture laws. The rally will then march to the Raj Bhawan and submit a memoran-

INDIA, CHINA HOLD NINTH **ROUND OF TALKS**

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JAN. 24

India and China on Sunday held the ninth round of Corps Commanders level talks to resolve the nine-month-long military stand-off in eastern Ladakh.

The meeting started at around 11 am in Moldo on the Chinese side of the Line of Actual Control.

The Indian delegation was led by 14 Corps Commander Lt-General P.G.K. Menon and included a joint secretary from the external affairs ministry.

Sunday's between Commanders in the sec-tor from India and China to discuss disengage-ment and de-escalation was held after a gap of around two-and-a-half

months.

The meeting was held when China is consolidating its position all along the LAC. India is expecting a hot summer in 2021 all along the LAC and is keeping a tight

India has maintained that it will only accept complete disengagement by the Chinese troops and restoration of the status quo ante of April 2020 at the LAC.

India's position is that it was China which first moved its troops at the LAC and China will have to be the first to withdraw from these posi-

J&K ENCOUNTER: ARMY CAPTAIN NAMED IN CHARGESHEET

Shopian, Jan. 24: The Army captain involved in the fake encounter in Kashmir's Shopian dis-trict last July and two other civilian accused haven't provided any information about the source of weapons planted on the three slain youths and had also attempted to destroy the evidence, a police charge sheet said.

Captain Bhoopendra Singh had also provided wrong information to his superiors and the police about the recovery made during the staged encounter, the charge sheet filed by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Jammu and Kashmir Police before the chief judicial magistrate here said.

The case relates to the July 18, 2020 encounter in Shopian's Amshipura in which three youths were killed and dubbed as terrorists. Later, the Army ordered a Court of Inquiry after reports appeared on social media that the three youths were innocent.

"No leads regarding the source of illegal weapons as illegally arranged by accused' for planting on the bodies were provided, the

charge sheet said. "By staging the encounter," the three accused "have purposefully destroyed evidence or real crime that they have committed and also have (been) purposefully projecting false information as part of a criminal conspiracy hatched between them with the motive to grab a prize money of ₹20 lakh," it



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during his election campaign at Poondurai in Erode district on Sunday, ahead of

Stalin deceiving people, says CM

Coimbatore, Jan. 24: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K. Palaniswami on Sunday accused DMK president M.K. Stalin of deception for posing with Lord Muruga's spear like weapon, 'Vel' and said the divine symbol has come to leader of opposition's notice since Assembly elections were round the corner. On the second day of his

campaign here, the AIADMK leader referred to a photograph of the DMK chief holding the Vel alleging it was an act of deceit. The AIADMK respected all religions equally, but it was not the case with the DMK which involved in 'deception,' in such matters, he alleged.

Accusing Stalin of deceit,' the Chief 'deceit,' the Chief Minister claimed Stalin spoke one thing for the outside world but in his

MODIJI HAS BROUGHT GROWTH IN GDP (GAS, DIESEL, PETROL): RAHUL

attacked the Centre over rise in fuel prices, saying people are suffering due to inflation, while the Modi government is busy in tax collection.

The former Congress chief's attack came a day after petrol and diesel prices in the country touched new all-time highs after rates were increased for the fourth time in the week. "Modi ji has brought about the tremen-

heart of hearts he knew it was not his conviction. "The God will not grant for the AIADMK." you boon if you only

Chennai, Jan. 24: dous growth in GDP — Congress leader Rahul gas, diesel and petrol — Gandhi on Sunday prices," Gandhi said in a prices," Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi.

"People are suffering due to inflation, while the Modi government is busy in tax collection," alleged.

The increase in prices took the petrol price in Delhi to ₹85.70 per litre and in Mumbai to ₹92.28. Diesel rate climbed to ₹75.88 a litre in the Delhi and to ₹82.66 per litre in Mumbai, the price data

receive Lord Muruga's Vel. The boon will be only time been accused of offending Hindu beliefs and sentiments by the BJP and 'Hindu Munnani,' a noted Sangh Parivar outfit

in Tamil Nadu. Recently, Stalin had slammed the BJP and Munnani for trying to build a 'perception' that his party was against the Hindus. "It is not the truth," the DMK chief had said. Palaniswami alleged, "Since elections are round the corner, the Vel is visible to his (Stalin's) eyes only now and till now it was not visible to him." "The God will give you (DMK) appropriate punishment through the elec-

tions," he said. On Saturday, DMK workers had presented a glittering Vel made of silver to Stalin at a party's rural outreach programme in Tiruvallur district. — PTI

TMC vows to take revenge

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, JAN. 24

A day after "Jai Shree Ram" chants prompted West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to refuse to address the Centre's Parakram Diwas celebration as a mark of protest in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's presence at Victoria Memorial, her nephew and Diamond Harbour Trinamul Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee vowed to take "revenge" against the BJP "in every inch" as the ruling party demonstrated across the districts, crying of an 'insult" to its supremo at the official event, to swing the public mood in the poll-bound state.

Advising the BJP workers to chant 'Jai Shree Ram' at their homes and on religious occasions Banerjee on Sunday told a party rally at Kultali in South 24 Parganas, "They polluted the environment when our elected CM was about to address the official event on the solemn occasion. When they did not allow her to speak,

she protested and did not deliver her address to make the PM feel that no insult to iconic freedom fighter Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose is tolerated here. They did not learn a lesson even after demolishing the bust of another legend: Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar in 2019."

In a threatening mood he added, "It was Mamata Banerjee's magnanimity that she gave the slogan: Bodla Noy, Bodol Chai (We want change, not revenge). That is why they are now making tall talks. After coming to power again, revenge will be meted out to them in every inch Be ready for that. You will be paid back in full. I will see then how much power you have."
The TMC MP also

declared to quit politics if he can not wipe out the saffron party in the coming Assembly election. Apart from him, TMC ministers like Firhad Hakim and Bratya Basu also tore into the BJP for raising religious slogans in political overtones at a government event to "insult" the CM.

States to look for malnourished kids

New Delhi, Jan. 24: Identifying severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in children and their referral to hospitals, using AYUSH concepts and monitoring through 'Poshan Tracker' are among highlights of the government's new guide-lines which aim to improve nutritional status of children and women in the country.

In a letter to all states and UTs, the women and child development ministry asked all chief secretaries to launch a drive

for identification of severe acute malnutrition in children for referral to hospitals, if required, and AYUSH centres and complete this exercise by January 31.

"The states shall launch

a drive for identification of SAM children for referral to hospitals (if required) and AYUSH centres in accordance with the detailed action plan approved by the district nutrition committee to be finalised in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer. This exercise shall be completed by January 31, 2021,"

GOVT'S NEW guidelines aim to improve nutritional status of children and women.

the ministry said. The ministry shared the guidelines and stressed on the need to ensure that entitlements Supplementary Nutrition

Programme reach the intended beneficiaries in a time-bound manner as per quantity and nutritional standards.

The ministry said it has streamlined guidelines on quality assurance, roles and responsibilities of duty holders, procedure for procurement, integrating AYUSH concepts and data management and monitoring through 'Poshan Tracker' for transparency, efficiency and accountability in delivery of supplemen-

tary nutrition. The ministry has asked all states to mandatorily implement Tracker that uses centralised data architecture to align with digital technology systems of other ministries

WATER | WOES Families say no household is connected to piped water supply

J&K: Villagers pool funds for pipelines

Bhaderwah (J&K), Jan. 24: Claiming neglect over the past seven decades, the villagers in remote Thanhala Panchayat in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district have set out on a mission this winter to bring potable water to

their homes. To fulfill their objective, the mostly below poverty line (BPL) families of the snow-bound village in the lap of mighty Ashapati Glacier got into a hurdle recently and decided to contribute ₹40,000 to purchase the required water pipes to get connected to the nearest water source. "We are living by the example of the proverb 'God helps those who help themselves' as the government had miserably failed to ensure tap water in our homes over the years. In the absence of the facility. we have to fetch water round-the-year from a nearby source even during this harsh winter and the lurking threat of avalanches," a local resident Aijaz Ahmad said.

BPL FAMILIES decided to contribute ₹40,000 to purchase required water pipes to get connected to the nearest water source.

About 30 families live in the village bordering Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh, just 1.5 km from the interstate Bhaderwah-Chamba road. The villagers depend on the labour work in Bhaderwah town for a living. Despite 'Har Ghar Nal Yojna' under 'Jal Bhaderwah to make temporary arrangements to

Jeevan Mission', villagers claim that none of the households are connected with the piped water supply. When contacted, Additional Deputy Comm-Bhaderwah, issioner, Rakesh Kumar said that providing potable water to every household is the pri-

ority of the government. "The area being rich in natural water resources, I will take up the issue with the concerned department

provide piped water to the village in view of extreme cold wave conditions unless permanent gravity line is laid under Jal Jeevan Mission," he said. Talib Hussain, another

> get piped water supply but no one listened to their "Under these circum-

resident, said they literal-

ly ran from pillar to post to

stances, we have no other option but to pool money from our daily wages to bring water to our homes,"he said.

SHORT

11 IRAQI FIGHTERS DIE IN **IS AMBUSH**

Samarra, Iraq, Jan. 24: At least 11 fighters from Iraq's state-sponsored Hashed al-Shaabi force were killed in an ambush by the Islamic State group north of the capital on Saturday, Hashed security sources said.

The jihadists used light weapons and the cover of darkness to target the Hashed Iraq's Salahaddin province, two days after a twin suicide attack claimed by the group killed 32 people in Baghdad.

"IS launched an attack on the Hashed's Brigade 22," said one of the unit's officers Abu Ali al-Maliki.

Maliki said the brigade commander was among those killed before reinforcements from the federal police came to the unit's aid.

Hashed security sources said the total toll was 11 dead and

'STEALING' FILES: TESLA SUES EX-EMPLOYEE

San Francisco, Jan. 24: Tesla has sued a former employee for allegedly stealing about 26,000 confidential files in his first week of working at the company, according to a court

filing seen by AFP. The company said on Friday that within three days of being hired, software engineer Alex Khatilov "brazenly stole thouscripts that took Tesla years to develop" and transferred them to his personal Dropbox, a cloud storage service.

Tesla said that when confronted by Tesla's security team, Khatilov claimed he had only transferred "a couple of personal administrative documents", whilst trying to delete

the evidence. Khatilov told the New York Post the software files ended up in his Dropbox by mistake when he had been trying to make a backup copy of a folder on his computer.

SCOTLAND WILL HOLD VOTE REFERENDUM

London, Jan. 24: Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon on Sunday said she planned to hold a legal referendum on independence from Britain despite Westminster's showed a majority would vote

If her Scottish National Party (SNP) wins a strong showing in regional elections in May, Sturgeon said she would seek a fresh referendum even though Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said such a vote should only be held once in a generation.

"I want to have a legal referendum, that is what I am going to seek the authority of the Scottish people for in May and that's what I intend to do," she told the BBC's Andrew Marr

Johnson "will flatly refuse the demand," The Sunday Times quoted senior government sources as saying.

PM OLI EXPELLED FROM NCP'S **MEMBERSHIP**

Kathmandu, Jan. 24: The ruling Nepal Communist Party's splinter faction led by Prachanda' expella Prachanda' on Sunday expelled Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli from the party's general membership.

The decision to remove Oli from the party's general membership was taken at the Standing Committee meeting of the faction led by former prime ministers Prachanda and Madhav Kumar Nepal after Oli failed to produce explanation to his recent moves as sought by party lead-

ership, sources said. Earlier in December, the splinter group had removed Oli, one of the two chairmen of the ruling party, as the party chair. Madhay Nepal was named as the party's second chairman. Prachanda is

the first chairman of the party. The Prachanda-led faction on January 15 sought clarification from Oli alleging that he was carrying out activities that go against the party's policies. The faction decided to strip Oli off even from the ordinary membership of the party after he chose not to furnish any clarification, party

sources said. Oli had been accused of violating party statute by the

Russian cops go on the rampage

3,500 protesters arrested at rally in support of jailed Putin critic Navalny, says monitor

Moscow, Jan. 24: Nearly 3,500 protesters were arrested at demonstrations in support of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, a monitor reported on Sunday, as authorities probed vio-lence on the part of both protesters and police.

Police clashed with demonstrators in Moscow as tens of thousands took to the streets across the country on Saturday fol-lowing Navalny's call to demonstrate against Vladimir Putin's 20-year rule.

A number of protesters were injured, including a woman in Saint woman in Saint Petersburg who was hos-pitalised with a head injury and was in inten-

sive care Sunday. The West condemned the arrests and "harsh tactics" used against tactics" used against demonstrators, with EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell saying the bloc would discuss "next steps" on Monday.

Saturday Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, said it launched criminal inquiries in Moscow over the use of violence against law enforcement, hooliganism and property damage.

"Investigators are continuing to study and analyse a large amount of photo and video materials," the Committee said. In a separate statement, investigators said Sunday a 36-year-old man hit two policemen at the Saint Petersburg protest and

was detained. But Saint Petersburg prosecutors also said they were probing violations "on the part of law enforcement" and the use

of force against a woman. The statement was released after local media published a video showing a middle-aged woman falling to the ground after being kicked by riot

In the video, a woman — identified as Margarita Yudina — is seen asking three policemen in full riot gear why they are detaining a young protesteman then kicks her in the

tive since taking office, has given his senior lead

ers two weeks to send him

reports on sexual assault

prevention programmes

in the military, and an assessment of what has

Austin's memo, which

went out Saturday, fulfills

a commitment he made to

senators last week during

confirmation hearings.

He had vowed to immedi-

ately address the prob-

lems of sexual assault and

This is a leadership

issue, Austin said in his

two-page memo. We will

lead. Senator after senator

demanded to know what

Austin planned to do

about the problem, which

defense and military lead-

ers have grappled with for

years. Reports of sexual

assaults have steadily gone up since 2006. — *PTI*

harassment in the ranks.

worked and what hasn't.

US condemns 'harsh tactics'

Washington, Jan. 24: Washington on Saturday rebuked Moscow over its use of "harsh tactics" against protesters demanding the release of jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

United States condemns the harsh tactics against protesters and journalists this weekend cities throughout Russia," State Department spokesman Ned

Price said in a statement. Navalny being taken into custody and the arrests of his supporters were "troubling indications of further restrictions on civil society and fundamental freedoms," he added.

'We call on Russian authorities to release all

stomach. Saint Peters-burg's Dzhanelidze hospi-tal said Yudina was hospi-

talised with a head injury.

"She is in a serious condition," a hospital representative told AFP on Sunday. "She's in intensive care." Moscow

authorities for their part

insisted that no one remained hospitalised in the capital following the

Officials said in a state-

ment on Sunday that 29

people were taken to hos-

pitals and received med-

ical assistance after the

"No one required fur-

head of

Kremlin's human rights council, Valery Fadeyev, said most of those

detained in Moscow had

He also defended the

detentions, saying the protests were illegal and

took place during a coron-

avirus pandemic. "I see no

violations whatsoever,'

he said. "These events are

Review military sex assault

programmes: Defence secy

Washington, Jan. 24:
Defence Secretary Lloyd
Austin, in his first direc-

Defence Secretary Lloyd

Austin spoke to his coun-

terparts from Japan, Britain, and South Korea, the

Pentagon has said. During

his interaction with Japa-

nese Defence Minister No-

buo Kishi, Austin reiterat-

ed America's commitment

to the US-Japan alliance

and emphasised on the

importance of maintain-

ing peace and security in

the Indo-Pacific region, Pentagon spokesperson

"Austin and Kishi discu-

ssed a range of security

issues in the Indo-Pacific

and exchanged views on

ensuring the readiness of

the alliance despite the

challenges posed by Covi-

d-19," Kirby said. They also discussed the need to

continue implementing

John Kirby said.

JAPAN, S. KOREA, UNITED KINGDOM

Washington, Jan. 24: US US force realignment ini-

ther hospital treatment,"

the statement said.

been released.

protests.

those detained for exercising their universal rights and for the immediate and unconditional release of Aleksey Navalny," Price said, using an alternative

spelling.
"We urge Russia to fully cooperate with the international community's investigation into the poisoning of Aleksey Navalny and credibly explain weapon on its soil."

In Russia tens of thousands nationwide ans-wered Navalny's call to rally, which he issued after he was detained at a Moscow airport on arrival from Germany, where he had been recovering from a near-fatal poisoning with a nerve agent.

US INTERFERING IN 'DOMESTIC AFFAIRS': KREMLIN

Moscow, Jan. 24: The Kremlin on Sunday accused the US embassy of interfering in Russia's domestic affairs after the mission distributed a "demonstration alert" to US citizens in Russia recommending they avoid

Ahead of the demonstrations, the US embassy issued a safety warning to Americans based in

"Of course, these publications are inappropri-ate." President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov told a state TV channel.

"And of course indirectly, they are absolutely an interference in our domestic affairs," he added. He accused the US embassy of "indirectly" supporting the violation of Russian legislation and protests".

tiatives including contin-ued efforts regarding the

construction of the Fute-

nma Replacement Facility

affirmed that the Senkaku

islands are covered by

Article V of the US-Japan

Security Treaty and that

the US remains opposed to

any unilateral attempts to

change the status quo in

"Austin thanked Kishi for Japan's continued leadership in implement-

ing UNSC Resolutions

regarding North Korea

and encouraged minister

Kishi to strengthen Jap-

an's contribution to the

role that the alliance con-

tinues to play in providing

security in the Indo-

Pacific region," Kirby

the East China Sea

Russia.

Snowing in London



Snow settles on one of the Trafalgar Square lions in central London on Sunday.

Vaccine immunity will take 3 weeks: UK medical officer

London, Jan. 24: One of England's leading medical officers on Sunday urged the public to continue to follow the strict lockdown rules because any vac-cine-related immunity from Covid-19 takes at le-ast three weeks to kick in. Professor Jonathan Van-Tam, England's Deputy Chief Medical Officer, also warned that there is no clear evidence yet to show that vaccinated people cannot transmit the

deadly virus on to others. "Regardless of whether someone has had their vaccination or not, it is vital that everyone follows the restrictions and public health advice, as protection takes up to three weeks to kick in and we don't yet know the impact of vaccines on transmission." said Van-Tam. His warning comes as the UK registered another high daily death toll from the virus of 1,348 this weekend.

He pointed to an addi-

tional 32 vaccination sites coming on stream to add to the thousands of venues where the National Health Service (NHS) has been delivering 140 jabs a minute, taking the vaccinated total to over 5.8 million. "The vaccine is righ-— let's stay patient, stay at home and support the NHS as it continues to roll

out the vaccine," he said. A Living Museum where the BBC filmed a hit drama series 'Peaky Blinders based on the notorious Birmingham gang in the 1920s is among the new

Hindu priests charge more for SA funerals

Johannesburg, Jan. 24: Cashing in on the fearful atmosphere prevailing in South Africa amidst a second wave and a new variant of the Covid-19 virus, some Hindu priests in the country are allegedly charging exorbitant rates for conducting funerals of coronavirus victims.
The priests are under

fire for charging between 1,200 rand (\$79) and 2,000 rand (\$131) to conduct a funeral, according to Pradeep Ramlall, a mem-ber of the Hindu Dharma Association of South Africa and Manager of the Clare Estate Crematorium in Durban.

charging people, he told the Weekly Post newspaper as he slammed the priests who are over-charging. Ramlall said the organisation has received a number of complaints from people whose relatives succumbed. In view of a second wave and a new variant of the virus, the crematorium

This is not right. As per

our scriptures, this is our

munity. If a family wants

to give a priest a donation, then that is acceptable but priests should not be

has had to introduce double shifts amid daily

A NASAL SPRAY **THAT BLOCKS OUT COVID-19**

London, Jan. 24: A nasal spray which can prevent a Coronavirus infection for up to two days is being prepped for mass production by scientists at the University of Birmingham with the hope of having them available over-the-counter in pharmacies in a few months, a UK news-paper report said on Sunday. Dr Richard Moakes, the study's lead researcher, told 'The Sunday Tolograph' that Sunday Telegraph' that he is confident in the spray's formula to help unlock society from social distancing restric-

Oman limits jobs for expats

DC CORRESPONDENT **NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24**

nation Oman's reported move on Sunday to bar certain jobs for forcommercial and administrative positions in insurance companies, shops and car dealerships as well as nationalise some jobs in the private sector is set to impact Indian workers there. Although there was no official reaction from New Delhi till late on Sunday evening, it

is expected that India will examine the matter to ascertain what impact the move will have on Indian nation. A huge number of work in the entire Gulf region spanning several countries

According to media reports, the Omani reports, the Omani Labour Ministry was quoted as saying, "A num-ber of jobs in the private sector will be nationalised," adding that certain jobs in insurance

dealerships, including finance, commercial and administrative positions, will be "limited to Omanis only". Oman also reportpermits of foreigners in those professions will not be renewed after their expiry date.

According to media reports, Oman has undertaken the move in an effort to create more employment opportunities for its citizens amid an econom-

Biden talks to Boris, Obrador

Washington, Jan. 24: US President Joe Biden spoke to British Prime Minister Boris Johnson over phone and conveyed his intention to strengthen the relationship' "special between the two countries and revitalise transat-lantic ties, the White House has said.

During the call on Saturday, Biden noted his readiness to work closely with Johnson as the United Kingdom hosts the G-7 and United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) this year.
"The president conveyed

his intention to strengthen the special relationship between our countries and revitalise transatlantic ties, underscoring the crit-

agreed to work closely to stem the flow of irreqular migration to Mexico and the United States, as well as to promote development in the Northern Triangle of Central America.

ical role of NATO to our collective defense and shared values," the White House said in a readout of the call.

Biden also noted the importance of cooperation, including through multilateral organisations, on shared challenges such as combatting climate change, containing deadly Covid-19, and

security, it said.

The leaders also discussed the need for coordi-

nation on shared foreign

policy priorities, including China. Iran, and Russia, the White House said. Biden also spoke to Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador on Friday to review bilateral cooperation on a range of issues, particularly regional migration, according to a readout of the call issued on Saturday. "The president outlined his plan to reduce migration by addressing its root causes, increasing resettlement capacity and lawful alternative immigration pathways, improving processing at the borfor asylum, and reversing the previous administration's draconian immigra-

tion policies," it said.

Biden and Obrador agreed to work closely to stem the flow of irregular migration to Mexico and the United States, as well as to promote development in the Northern Triangle of Central America.

They also recognised the importance of coordination to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, the White House said. After his swearing in on January 20, Biden has so far spoken with three world leaders. His first call was to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

11 TRAPPED **MINERS SAVED**

Beijing, Jan. 24: Eleven miners, trapped underground for two weeks following a blast in a gold mine in east China's Shandong Province, have been rescued, the state media reported on Sunday. Authorities have been racing to dig out 22 miners trapped underground in the partially built gold mine in the city of Qixia in Shandong Province, since the explosion blocked their exit on January 10. The rescuers set free two workers on Sunday, bringing the number of rescued

miners to 11.

-PTI

WATER DANGER

Over 1,000 large dams in India will be roughly 50 years old in 2025

Ageing dams in India, US pose threat: UN

New York, Jan. 24: Over a 1,000 large dams in India will be roughly 50 years old in 2025 and such aging structures across the world pose a growing threat, according to a UN report which notes that by 2050, most people on Earth will live downstream of tens of thousands of dams built

in the 20th century.
The report, titled 'Ageing water infrastructure: An emerging global risk' and compiled by United University's Canadian-based Institute for Water, Environment and Health, says most of the 58,700 large said. "By 2050, most people century, but dams constrdams worldwide were conon Earth will live down-ucted then will inevitably structed between 1930 and 1970 with a design life of It said at 50 years, a large

concrete dam "would most probably begin to express signs of ageing." Ageing signs include increasing cases of dam failures, progressively increasing costs of dam repair and maintenance, increasing reservoir sedimentation, and loss of a dam's functionality and effectiveness, "stinterconnected" manifestations, the report stream of tens of thousands of large dams built in the 20th century, many of them already operating at or beyond their design life," according to the UN University analysis.

The analysis includes dam decommissioning or ageing case studies from the USA, France, Canada, India, Japan, and Zambia and Zimbabwe. According to the report, the world is unlikely to witness another large dam-building revolution as in the mid-20th

be showing their age.

The report said that 32,716 large dams (55 per cent of the world's total) are found in just four Asian countries: China, India, Japan, and South Korea — a majority of which will reach the 50year threshold relatively soon. The same is true of many large dams in Africa, South America, and Eastern Europe, it said.

In India, there are over 1,115 large dams that will be roughly 50 years old in

2025, more than 4,250 large dams in the country will be over 50 years old in 2050 and 64 large dams will be more than 150 years old in 2050, it said. The report said that approximately 3.5 million people are at risk if India's Mullaperiyar dam in Kerala, built over 100 years ago, "were 'The dam, in a seismical-

ly active area, shows significant structural flaws and its management is a contentious issue between Kerala and Tamil Nadu States," it said. The report

added that dams that are well designed, constructed and maintained can "easiice but predicts an increase in "decommissioning" — a phenomenon gaining pace in the USA and Europe — as economic and practical limitations prevent ageing dams from being upgraded or if their or

iginal use is now obsolete. In the US, the average age of 90,580 dams is 56 years. More than 85 per cent of US dams in 2020 were operating at or beyond their life expectancy. — PTI

splinter group.

















Chronicle

Is power only language in which to talk farm laws?

unions during the 11th round of talks that there are no problems with the farm laws and that the government offered to suspend them for up to 18 months as a sign of respect for farmers is unhelpful, to say the least, in ending the stalemate. Instead, it casts a shadow over the sincerity the government displays in the talks.

It has been almost three months now that the farmers are in Delhi, agitating, demanding the repeal of the three laws that seek to rework the way agriculture in this country is conducted. They also want a legal assurance that the minimum support price (MSP) regime is retained. The government has been non-committal on all these demands

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha, the umbrella union of the 40 agitating farmers unions, cannot be faulted for rejecting the government's offer to suspend the laws and discuss them "clause by clause" for many reasons. First, such an offer has no legal backing. A bill, passed by Parliament and signed into law by the President,

Talks are unlikely to reach a conclusion if the government goes into them with the stand that all is well with the laws

cannot be kept in abeyance by the government. There has been no legal mechanism to ensure the laws are not acted upon, except that the government may delay the framing of the rules, but that cannot be a legitimate route a government can take while negotiating on critical laws that have serious ramifications for the future.

The government, as Mr Tomar has stated, has been insisting that the laws are for the good of the farmers and the agriculture sector. The farmers, on the other hand, fear that it's a bogey the government advances

and that it would, ultimately, want to withdraw from the sector and throw them at the mercy of the corporates. The government can either say the laws are good or they are bad; and it has said they are good. It is up to the government to explain what it seeks to gain by sticking to its stand and then offering negotiation, at a iuncture when the Supreme Court has stayed the operation of the laws. Second, the farmers cannot be faulted for not taking the bait of clause-by-clause discussions as the government had failed to follow the regular, democratic law-making process in this case. It was in an unholy haste to rush them through the legislature.

The government agreed to the discussion only after the farmers showed their grit at the gates of the national capital. If the government understands only the language of power, then the farmers need to continue to talk that. The government may be concerned about the elderly farmers suffering in the extremely cold weather of Delhi; but for them, it's a do-or-die struggle, and they may be willing to pay the price for it.

The government has of late allowed the proposed tractor rally by the farmers' unions on Republic Day. The government must show the same spirit of accommodation and seriousness of purpose while sitting with the farmers next time. It's unlikely to reach a conclusion if the government goes into the talks with the stand

Heed General on arms buys

ast week, Army chief Gen. M.M. Naravane did well to highlight in the public sphere the hidebound, time-consuming, procedures for defence acquisitions that impact our military capabilities and preparedness, especially in relation to potential adversaries who are able to absorb innovations in military technologies more speedily.

If our armed forces are working for a revolution in military affairs (RMA), it is inescapable that we also bring about a revolution in bureaucratic affairs (RBA), General Naravane aptly pointed out. It seems plain common sense to us that RMA — which the major powers have already brought about, and is an area in which India lags behind — cannot be achieved without RBA taking place. It is a rude awakening to hear from the country's military leader that while the Defence

Procurement Procedure 2016 was 450 pages, the Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 is 681 pages. It's got worse, rather than better. This is surely a travesty.

The Army chief quotes the late defence minister Manohar Parrikar as saying that the system and procedures of military procurement is built on "distrust" — or, should we say, mistrust. The premium is on the detailed crafting of bureaucratic rules that attempt to take in every future infraction of procedure, and not on the quick availability of a much-needed equipment or defence system. In a word, the idea is to catch the thief, as it were. This is pathetic.

The whole system still appears to be paying the price for the then Opposition crying foul over the procurement of Bofors artillery guns with the purpose of bringing down the Rajiv Gandhi government. As we know since then the successive gov-

ernments have not been able to establish corruption on the part of the then PM.

We must move on if we are to grow as a credible regional power, leave alone international power. The way things are, any mid-way course-correction in acquisition or introducing of a newly available useful technology requires the whole Quality Requirement procedures to start all over again. Sometimes more than a decade passes. By then what has been got at great cost is already antiquated.

Gen. Naravane is right. There must be built-in flexibility clauses for the end user (our armed forces) as well as the manufacturer. Similarly, overhaul of procurement procedures are needed in the civilian domain to gain efficiency and cut delays.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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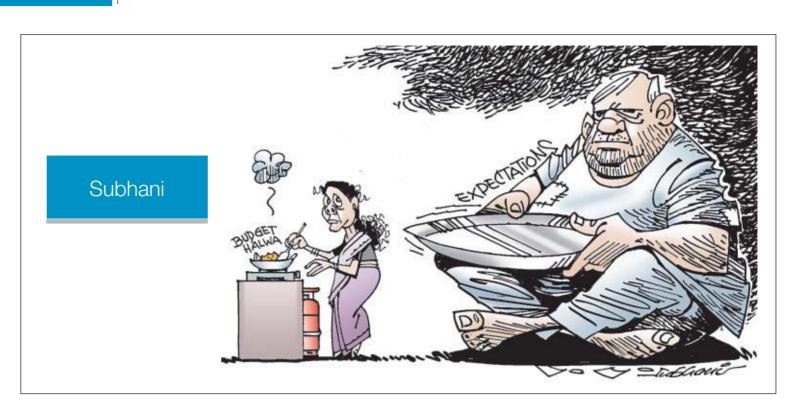
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Trump to Biden: Modi's US ties in need of reset



Sanjaya Baru

Sanjayovacha

nding his muchacclaimed address to a joint session of both Houses of the American Congress in July 2005, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said, to rapturous applause: "Partnerships can be of two kinds. There are partnerships based on principle and there are partnerships based on pragma-tism. I believe we are at a juncture where we can embark on a partnership that can draw both on principle as well as prag-matism. We must build on

this opportunity."
The India-US relationship has waxed and waned depending on how this mix between values, defined by principles, and interests, based on prag-matism, has worked out. As a new administration with a very different and well-defined ideological orientation takes charge in Washington D.C., diplomats and observers in both countries will wait to see what kind of a balance would be struck between the two considerations in taking the India-US relationship forward.

For a long time, when leaders of both countries met, they could only speak about their shared democratic values because their interests were so wide apart. The simultaneous occurrence in 1991 of India's economic opening up and the end of the Cold War added the ballast of shared interests to the relationship. India's desire to secure new markets, new technologies and foreign investment as well as its need to diversify the country's sourcing of defence equipment and bolster its national security, at a time when China was rising and jihadi terrorism had come closer home, created a powerful and potent mix of values

Long-term and durable bilateral relations between

nations do require a balance between values and interests. The principles by which nations define themselves their values, but a purely values-defined relationship cannot endure unless it also addresses the individual needs of both partners. While political and intellectual leaders define values, it is left to diplomats to identify and secure the pragmatic foundations of a relationship.

Several developments at home and around the world over the three decades, from 1990 to 2020, ensured that the bilateral relationship grew from strength to strength. However, even as global developments continued to favour closer India-US relations, domestic political and economic developments during the tenures President Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi Trump did emerge as potential problems for the durability of the relationship. Mr Trump's "America

First" policies created new uncertainties for India's "interests", in areas such as trade and immigration while Minister Modi's "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" trade and industrial policies and India's desire to maintain its good equations with Russia and Iran, raised concerns in Washington. However, the weakening of the "interests" side of the equation was balanced by greater emphasis on the "values" side, with Mr Trump hailing India's democracy while turning a blind eye to Mr Modi's majoritarian communal politics, in his campaign against non-democratio China. If Mr Trump had been re-elected it remains to be seen how this equation would have worked out. President Trump may well have continued to ignore the BJP's politics, but would perhaps have

demanded his pound of

ket access side.

making on India.

On the Indian side, Mr Modi has weakened India's global standing as a multicultural, pluralistic, liberal and secular democracy, especially in his second term in office, while at the same time pursuing insular trade policies that raise hackles Washington D.C. How Mr Modi intends to redefine and rework his approach to the new America of Mr Biden and Ms Harris

remains to be seen. The fact that vice-president Kamala Devi Harris is partly of Indian origin and that several Indian Americans have been

pluralistic, liberal democracy, office, while at the same time pursuing insular **Washington D.C**

flesh on the trade and mar-What now with the Joe Biden administration is no

guarantee of a smooth ride

or India in the US capital.

While the interest groups

that lobby for good rela-tions between India and the US may have better

access to the Biden-Harris

team, the team itself may

have many whose values

clash with the BJP's majoritarianism. Listen carefully to Mr Biden's

In the past it used to be

assumed all too easily that

Indian Americans are India's diplomatic asset. Indeed, they were. Their

role in ensuring congres-

sional support for the India-US civil nuclear

agreement cannot be underestimated. Prime Minister Modi's rallies in

New York and Houston,

attended by enthusiastic

Indian Americans, also

helped Indian diplomats build bridges with Mr Trump's people. However, those Indian Americans

lost out in this election.

The Indian Americans

now in office are the ones who may well have dis-liked external affairs min-

ister S. Jaishankar refus-

to meet

Congresswoman Premila

Jayapal and her delega-tion, or his quoting Donald

Trump approvingly in his

Among senior Biden

administration officials

there are many from the

Obama administration

who know India and

Indians well, including the

new CIA director William

Burns and the pointman

for Asia, Kurt Campbell.

They may well wish to

strengthen relations with

India. It remains to be seen

if their diplomatic "prag-

matism" in the pursuit of

"interests", is able to score

over the assertion of "prin-

ciple" by those who seek to

defend the liberal, democ-

Democratic Party. Clearly,

Prime Minister Modi will

have to undertake some

reset in his domestic poli-

tics and policies to ensure

that he gets as warm a

reception in Joe Biden's

America as he did in

The writer is an econo-

editor, a best-selling

author and former

Manmohan Singh

mist, a former newspaper

adviser to Prime Minister

ratic "values"

Donald Trump's.

speech.

Biden-Kamala Harris duo? Clearly, their values are very different from Mr Trump's, and in a world where domestic politics increasingly influences foreign policy no country can ignore the influence of these "new values" at home on US foreign policy. At the same time, given the domestic economic pressures and promises made, Mr Biden may well not be able to ease up on the demands being made on India on the trade and economic side.

Consider then the emerging balance between principles and pragmatism — the "principles" dear to the new Democratic administration in the US may favour Mr Modi's India less than the principles that defined Mr Trump's attitude; and domestic policy pragmatism may require Mr Biden to stay the course on the economic demands the United States has been

nominated to serve the

Mr Modi has weakened India's global standing as a multicultural, and secular especially in his second term in trade policies that raise hackles in

PETROL PRICES

Petrol and diesel prices are hiked every now and then in spite of public protests. Now, it has reached all-time high. As most commodities are transported, the impact of price hike will reflect on commodities. The Centre does not care.

> K.L. Rao Visakhapatnam

GP ELECTIONS

With regard to gram panchayat polls, it is a bizarre situation in AP (SEC notifies GP polls, phase-1 on Feb. 5, DC, Jan. 24). Since the ruling party and SEC are at loggerheads, the situation has exacerbated. However, it calls for coordination and a 'give-and-take' policy to make the election possible. Ironically, both are affirming that they are doing this for the governance and in the interest of people. Dr C. Ghanshyam

Visakhapatnam

The gamut of GP polls is getting murkier in spite of a pending SC verdict. The state government's contention of postponing them on the grounds of safety of staff and voters as well as the ongoing vaccination since 16/1, seems valid.

K. Nehru Patnaik

Visakhapatnam

STRANGE DEMAND

The eve of elections brings out the maverick in our politicians without an exception (India should have 4 capitals: Mamata, DC, Jan. 24). The free spirits in them come out alive as they make strange statements. Unfortunately, our people are also sentimentally 'attuned' to this kind of electioneering, which should change for good.

Govardhana Myneedu



UGC may set up 'open varsity' HYDERABAD, January. 24

Dr. D.S. Kothari, chairman of the UGC today called for "linking education to the community" and disclosed that the Commission was giving "loud thinking" to the establishment of an "open univer sity" as in the United Kingdom. Such an "open University", Dr Kothari said, would admit per sons above the age of 25 without any rigid formal education so that

an individual with motivation and desire for higher education would have the opportunity to enter a university.

Chandrajit



Reviving growth: Govt needs to do a fine balance in Budget on Feb. 1

economic activity resuming and the vaccine becoming a reality, the challenge of lives versus livelihoods is largely addressed. The next big challenge facing the government is getting growth back.

The government has been fiscally prudent in its Covid interventions, with support to industry coming in the form of loan guarantees and reform measures. However, as private consumption, investments and exports remain sluggish, the burden to nurture the unexpected but buoyant recovery falls primarily on public expenditure, at least in the immediate term.

Government spending in areas with high multipliers is important for demand creation, employment generation and catalysing private investments. The RBI estimates the Central government capex has a multiplier effect of 2.45 in the year the expenditure is incurred and 3.14 next year. This shows a hike in capital expenditure by the government crowds in higher private investments benefiting the economy in the next few years. Private investments have been slow even before the pandemic, and this boost can get them back on track. Higher investments, public and private, will lead to employment generation, boosting consumer demand and savings The virtuous cycle of public expendi-

ture, demand generation, private investment and employment generation can put the economy back onto a high growth trajectory. However, the fiscal situation is now

under stress driven by a shortfall in revenue collections due to a fall in GDP induced by the Covid-19 crisis, constraining higher public spending. Supporting economic recovery and

growth via greater public expenditure as well as ensuring prudent fiscal management to safeguard macro-economic stability is an immediate concern the Budget must address.

CII suggests a seven-point agenda. One, prioritise public investment in infrastructure and Infrastructure has one of the highest multiplier effects on the economy and boosts long-term competitiveness. Therefore, the government must hike its infrastructure spend by one per cent of GDP, including higher allocations for Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. The pandemic highlighted the importance and need for a robust public health infrastructure. India should look at increasing its public health

expenditure to three per cent of GDP by

Two, the government should look at fiscal deficit management from a three-year perspective. The deficit target for next year should be realistic. Three, the government should ensure

greater transparency in the deficit numbers, inspiring confidence in markets, rating agencies and investors. This implies realistic revenue projections, avoiding off-Budget borrowings, realistic estimation of costs of schemes and accounting fully for borrowing for food subsidy. Last year's Budget listed off-Budget expenditures and their financing as an annexure. This year it should build on this positive step.

Four, given the uncertainties set a range-bound deficit target, instead of pursing a single number, as was recommended by the economic advisory panel of the 15th Finance Commission. Performance Index framework to cap-

Five, adopt a suitable Fiscal ture both the quantum and quality of the deficit. Higher expenditure on areas like infrastructure, healthcare, education and sustainability boosts the economy's productivity and efficiency, leading to higher growth, which helps

pay for itself in the long run. CII wants a composite Fiscal Perfor-

mance Index with six components: (i) Quality of revenue expenditure: measured by the share of revenue expenditure other than interest payments, subsidies, pensions and defence in GDP; (ii) Quality of capital expenditure: measured by share of capital expenditure (other than defence) in GDP; (iii) Quality of revenue: ratio of net tax revenue to GDP (own tax revenue in case of states); (iv) Degree of fiscal prudence I: ratio of fiscal deficit to GDP; (v) Degree of fiscal prudence II: ratio of revenue deficit to GDP; and (vi) Debt index:

Change in debt and guarantees to GDP. Six, the government should look at raising revenues through non-tax measures. It should look at aggressive disinvestment, taking advantage of booming capital markets. The disinvestment plan should include both loss-making and profit-making PSUs. To get better valuations, that is often a concern, the government could announce a list of PSUs where it plans to bring down its holdings below 51 per cent. The positive market sentiment this creates may lead to higher interest and valuations.

Monetisation of assets of the government and public sector enterprises, like surplus land and buildings, profitable brownfield assets like roads. transmission lines, airports, power

plants, etc, could be another source of significant revenue. State governments should also be encouraged to do so.

The proceeds should be ring-fenced for creating health infrastructure and other physical infrastructure in both urban and rural areas.

Seven, further rationalise subsidies and non-productive expenditure. Some of the measures that can help achieve this objective include: pursue Aadhaarenabled direct benefit transfer (DBT) for food and agri-input subsidy. A policy of giving subsidised kerosene and LPG through DBT only to BPL families

should also be explored. The term for extension of the urea subsidy, given by the CCEA, will come to an end in 2020. The government should use this opportunity to carry out urea price decontrol and rationalise the fertiliser subsidy based on

soil heath card scheme data. Savings can accrue from rationalisation of power subsidies. For the deserving, the subsidy could be provided through direct benefit transfer. This will also reduce the cost of power for industrial users, helping Indian manufacturing become more competitive.

The writer is the director-general of the Confederation of Indian Industry

DECCAN CHRONICLE | NELLORE | MONDAY | 25 JANUARY 2021

quick BITES

INDICATO	RS	%
Sensex	48,878.54	-1.50
Nifty 50	14,371.90	-1.50
S&P 500*	3,841.47	-0.30
Dollar (₹)	72.97	0.03
Pound Sterling (₹)	99.67	0.57
Euro (₹)	88.79	-0.16
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,861▼263	0.53
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	55.64	-0.82
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.939	-0.29
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.094	-0.013
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

Reliance spins off O2C business into new unit

Reliance Industries Ltd has completed spin-off of the firm's oil-to-chemical (O2C) business into a new unit that will help it pursue growth opportunities with strategic partnerships, RIL has said. The O2C business unit holds Reliance's oil refinery and petrochemical assets and retail fuel business but not upstream oil and gas producing fields such as KG-D6 and textiles business.

FPIs invest over ₹24,400 crore in stocks this month



Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) remained net buyers to the tune of Rs 18,456 crore so far in January as global liquidity led to continued investment in emerging markets. According to depositories data, overseas investors pumped in Rs 24,469 crore into equities but pulled out Rs 6,013 crore from the bonds market during January 1-22. The total net investment during the period stood at Rs 18,456 crore.

NCLT admits Devas Multimedia, names liquidator

The National Company Law Tribunal has admitted the petition filed by Antrix Corporation, the commercial arm of Indian Space Research Organisation, for winding up Devas Multimedia and has appointed a provisional liquidator for the firm. A two-member NCLT Bengaluru bench of the NCLT has directed the provisional liquidator to take control of the management, properties and actionable claims of Devas Multimedia.

NIIF invest less than ₹5,000 crore in five years

The National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) in its five years of existence has made equity investments of less than Rs 5,000 crore in infra projects, sources said. The Rs 40,000-crore NIIF was set up in Dec. 2015 for investing in greenfield, brownfield and stalled projects. NIIF has made an equity investment of Rs 4.689 crore while the co-investment by its partners stood at about Rs 7,053 crore by Sept.



■ Lockdown reverses trends in space demand

Apartment size expands as office space shrinks

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JAN. 24

Bucking a four-year declining trend, average apart-ment sizes grew by 10 per cent in Covid-hit 2020 while office spaces have started shrinking. A major contributor to this trend reversal is the new work from home (WFH) culture.

The average apartment sizes in the top seven cities rose by 10 per cent to 1150 sq. ft. in 2020 from 1050 sq. ft. in 2019.

Last year, space-starved Mumbai saw the highest, 21 per cent, increase in apartment sizes to 932 sq ft from 773 sq ft in the previous vear.

Among the big seven cities, Hyderabad has the largest average apartment size of 1750 sq ft, says an update from Anarock Property Consultants.

The average apartment sizes have been reducing since 2016. In 2016 it was 1440 sq ft and by 2017 it had declined 13 per cent to

"The two main reasons



for apartment sizes reducing in previous years were affordability and millennials' preference for low-maintenance homes. Keen to generate more buyer interest with smaller price-tags, developers whittled down their flat sizes. But 2020 saw an almost immediate reversal of buyer preferences. With the accent suddenly being on accommodating the WFH and learn-fromhome culture, flat sizes began increasing for the

said Anuj Puri, chairman, Anarock Consultants.

The same work from home (WFH) culture saw the average size of office space shrinking in 2020. According

Nobroker.com, companies are choosing smaller office spaces now compared to pre-Covid times as many of them have adopted WFH as an option for at least a part of their employees.

Start-ups, IT companies

during the lockdown and are looking to work out a hybrid model in the future where work-from-office would be on a rotational basis for the employees. About 30-40 per cent of the companies, mainly driven by start-ups, IT and financial services companies, have let go of their leased office spaces either partially or completely postlock-down.

This led to a drastic fall in demand for office space, especially larger sapce.

"While we have witnessed the overall office demand fall by about 50 per cent during the November-January period compared to the same period a year ago, the demand for office spaces which are lesser than 5000 sq ft is witnessing a less severe decline in demand," said Amit Agarwal, co-founder and CEO of NoBroker.com
Demand for small office

space has fallen only by about 25 per cent during

Separate cheques for vehicle, insurance likely

Buyer of a new vehicle may have to pay the cost of streamlining the process review the MISP guideand bringing the practices lines. The panel examined of vehicle insurance, being sold by automotive dealers. vehicle and insurance prethe current practice of colmium through separate cheques, if the recommen-

dations of a committee to review MISP guidelines are accepted by the Irdai. ance intermediary to dis-The insurance regulator had issued Motor Insurance Service Provider (MISP) guidelines in 2017

MISP refers to an automobile dealer appointed by the insurer or the insur-

first time in four years,"

tribute and/ or service motor insurance policies of vehicles sold through it.

lecting the premium payment from the customer. It observed a lack of transparency in the cost of insurance premium when the customer buys the vehicle through the dealer and makes the payment via

ment to the insurance company from his own account, "the customer does not know the insurance premium being paid as it is subsumed in the cost of the vehicle", the committee said. The panel recommended

the customer should make payment to the insurance

MUTUAL FUNDS ADD 72 LAKH FOLIOS IN 2020

New Delhi, Jan. 24: Mutual funds added 72 lakh folios in the pandemic ravaged year 2020 as higher disposable income and low interest deposits investors bank attracted towards this financial instrument.

In comparison, the industry had seen an addition of 68 lakh investor accounts in 2019, data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed.

Folios are numbers designated to individual investor accounts An investor can have multiple folios.

According to the data, the number of folios with the 45 fund houses rose to 9.43 crore at the end of December 2020 from 8.71 crore at the end of December 2019, registering a gain of 72 lakh folios.

In the year 2020, many investors added to their mutual fund investment during the market correction due to Covid-19 and the recovery phase as well, said Harshad Chetanwala, co-founder MyWealthGrowth.com.

"First time investors chipped in during this period as the markets were looking attractive and existing investors diversified their investments in new schemes as well. Both these actions did result in new folio creation," he

According to him, the number would have been higher, but a segment of investors also opted to book profits and shuffle from non-performing funds.—PTI

Chip shortage: VW may claim damages from supplier Bosch



Jan. German car manufacturer Volkswagen is looking into possible claims for damages against its sup-Bosch Continental due to a lack of semiconductors, Automobilwoche magazine reported on Sunday.
Automakers around the world are shutting assembly lines due to problems in the delivery semiconductors, which in some cases have been exacerbated by the former Trump administration's actions against key Chinese chip facto-

The shortage has affect-The shortage has affected Volkswagen, Ford Motor Co, Subaru Corp, Toyota Motor Corp, Nissan Motor Co Ltd, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles and other car makers.

Citing people familiar with the matter, Automobilwoche report-ed that Volkswagen was in talks with alternative suppliers of semiconductors but there were concerns this could lead to higher prices.

Volkswagen wants to make sure that both Bosch and Continental

share the burden and partly compensate the company for the resulting additional costs, the magazine reported.

Contacted by Reuters, a Volkswagen spokesman declined to comment, and Bosch and Continental did not immediately respond to

requests for comment. The magazine cited Bosch company sources which said the car sup-plier was ready to discuss the matter directly with its customers and suppliers in due course.

German economy minister Peter Altmaier has asked his Taiwanese counterpart Wang Meihua to persuade Taiwanese manufacturers to help ease the shortage of semiconductor chips, which is hampering its fledgling economic recovery from the

Covid-19 pandemic. Altmaier asked Wang to address the issue in talks with Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Ltd (TSMC), the world's largest contract chipmaker and one of Germany's main suppli-—Reuters

Q3 SEES 19 IPOs WORTH \$1.84 BN, SAYS EY REPORT

New Delhi, Jan. 24: Reflecting strong momentum, India witnessed 19 initial public offerings (IPOs) worth \$1.84 billion in the December quarter of 2020 and the market sentiment remains positive in what could be a stellar 2021, according to a

There were 10 IPOs in the main market and nine in the small and medium enterprises (SME) segment during this period.

There were 19 IPOs valued at \$1.836 billion and the largest was that of Gland Pharma's with an issue size of \$869 million. There were just 11 IPOs in the year-ago quarter.

India ranks ninth globally in terms of the number of IPOs in 2020 with 43 IPOs raising \$4.09 billion, as per the report by EY.

Real estate, hospitality and construction and diversified industrial products were the most active sectors in terms of the number of IPOs, with three IPOs launched in each sector (including main and SME markets), the report said.

said in 2020, global IPO volumes continued to accelerate, increasing by 19 per cent to 1,363 while proceeds rose 29 per cent YoY to \$268 billion. — PTI Diamond trade roaring back from WFH shoppers THOMAS BIESHEUVEL & YULIYA FEDORINOVA

The global diamond trade spent years in the doldrums, only to be crippled by the pandemic just as things started looking up. Now, at last, business is booming again.
Factories in the industry's

"engine room" —the Indian city of Surat—are so desperate to boost production that the most-skilled cutters and polishers are being headhunted with offers of 50 per cent pay hikes and perks like free food and housing. Miner De Beers is poised for its biggest rough-diamond sale in three years, even after raising prices, and rival Alrosa PJSC said last week it expects the recovery will keep going for some time.

The boom is being driven by bumper holiday jewellery sales, particularly in the vital US and Chinese markets. For years, diamonds faced growing competition from travel as a form of luxury spending. Now, with vacations on hold due to lockdowns and other restrictions, consumers are put-ting their disposable income into online purchases.

"People have not only learned to work remotely, but also buy online, including diamonds," Alrosa chief of sales Evgeny Agureev said in an interview. Money was previously spent on trips or on dinners at expensive restaurants, but now part of this demand has gone to diamonds. Online sales almost doubled last year to about 20 per cent of the

The sales boost is feeding

through to surging demand for polished diamonds, at a time when stocks held by factories and traders had shrunk dramatically following the initial Covid-19

But for an industry long familiar with dramatic booms and busts, it's unclear whether the rebound will take hold, or represents only a temporary respite. Some industry participants are also concerned that the market is running too hot, risking a slump later in the year.
Annual diamond jewellery

demand had been stagnant at about \$80 billion for the past five years and the sector's middlemen were struggling to turn a profit. As global vaccines roll out and other luxury purchases become viable again, there's a risk that the industry finds itself facing the same old challenges as before. For now, money is pouring in. Signet Jewellers Ltd reported a 7.8 per cent jump in holiday sales in North America, by far the industry's biggest market. The jeweller's online sales surged in the period. It was a similar story in China, the second-biggest market, where Chow Tai Fook reported an 18 per cent rise in quarterly

India, where about 90 per cent of diamonds are cut or polished, imported almost \$2 billion in rough diamonds last month as cutters and polishers raced to meet the increased demand and restock their inventories.

De Beers and Alrosa have both

responded by raising prices, seeking to recover some of the ground they lost last year when demand



collapsed. But while De Beers implement-

ed an increase of about 5 per cent in its first sale of the year last week, customers are still buying. The sale hasn't vet been finalised but the miner was on course for its biggest rough-diamond auction in three years—at about \$600 million—according to people familiar with the situation.

Still, the first sales of the year are the traditionally the busiest. when the industry's middlemen rush to restock. If sales slow later in the year, prices could come

under pressure again.

The risks of a short-lived revival are compounded by the billions of dollars of rough diamond stocks held by the two big miners. So far, they've resisted the temptation to start offloading the inventories.

'There's a dilemma for the miners. If they choose not to sell, they lose out on monetising stock, but if they sell too much they risk over-saturating the market." said Anish Aggarwal, a partner at specialist diamond advisory firm Gemdax. "If they get this right, there will be support for prices.'

At the moment, the middlemen who cut, polish and trade the world's diamonds are making money. In the so-called secondary market-where buyers sell to gem manufacturers who don't have direct access to De Beers or Alrosa—boxes have been changing hands at premiums above 5 per cent, and some in double digits, even after the price rise. That suggests manufacturers believe they can make a profit at current prices.

Rough diamond prices generally have recovered back to pre-panprices are slightly higher. That's good news for mostly small and private family-run businesses that cut, polish and trade the

"So long as midstream stocks don't get saturated, margins can be defended," said Aggarwal. "All industry stakeholders-miners midstream and retailers—will need to work in a measured way to enable this to continue.

_Bloomberg

Cancelled **Keystone XL** pipeline may yield 48,000 tonnes of scrap



JOE DEAUX

The scrapping of Keystone XL not only means the end of multibillion-dollar pipe dream for TC Energy Corp--it also leaves behind 48,000 tonnes of

President Joe Biden revoked permits for the oil pipeline on his first day in office, killing a cross-border project that had won a four-vear reprieve under his Republican predecessor, Trump. The pipeline would have spanned would have spanned almost 1,900 kilometres. TC Energy anticipated needing about 660,000 tonnes of steel just for the US portion.

About 150 km of pipe had been installed and an additional 2.2 km had been completed at the Canada-US border as of the end of 2020, the Canada Energy Regulator said in a January 22 email. That would amount to nearly 48,000 tonnes of steel assuming standard dimensions of line pipe, according to Bloomberg calculations based on industry criteria.

The benchmark steel price is about \$1,060 a tonne, which would value the haul at almost \$51 million—though as scrap it would be sold for less. Once sold, the scrap metal is remelted by the buyer and formed into new steel products. TC Energy may to have

to sell already delivered metal to secondary mar-—Bloomberg

DESTINY'S | DESIGNS Police found that nearly 90 DC Avantis were used for fraudulent financing Dilip Chhabria: From high-flying auto designer to jailbird

K.J. BENNYCHAN MUMBAI, JAN. 24

It's an irony that what was supposed to be a big leap 'forward' for Dilip Chhabria, the only supercarmaker who built the country's first real sports car DC Avanti, has turned out to be his nemesis. Chhabria, the founder of

DC Designs, was arrested by the Mumbai police on December 28, 2020 allegedfor cheating and defrauding car buyers and financiers, and the man who changed the face of automobile design in this part of the world since the early 1990s is now languishing in a city jail. But the final blow to what

was his biggest, boldest dream was when a DC Avanti customer from Tamil Nadu claimed to have found his prized possession already registered in someone else's name in Haryana and was also hypothecated twice.

This happened soon after the comedian Kapil Sharma moved the economic offences wing of the city police complaining that despite paying full amount for a vanity van long ago, Chhabria did not deliver the van.

According to the joint commissioner

(crime) Milind Bharambe, the police have found that nearly 90 DC Avantis were used for fraudulent financing by availing multiple loans on the same car and they peg the scam at around Rs 100 crore. The police have also found that most of these 90 vehicles were registered with two or at times three RTOs in

various states. Avanti in Italian means forward' and launching DC Avanti was meant to be his fast forward move. But fate had it differently. The car, billed as the first

Indian sports car, was unveiled by Amitabh Bachchan at the 2012 Auto



Expo in New Delhi and it

hit the road in 2015 after being in the making from Though the car had ade-

quate ground clearance compared to the Italian namesake and had a killer pricing at just about Rs 42 lakh, it failed on many grounds in performance ing up as expected. All he could manage was to sell 120-odd cars.

Chhabria set up DC Designs way back in 1993, bringing a whiff of fresh air after securing a degree from the Art Centre College of Design in Pasadena in California, the Mecca of auto design, to offer design and prototyping services to auto firms and customers. His timing was so perfect as he launched himself into what was then an unknown territory called automobile designing in a market that had no choice

except a Maruti, Premier

Padmini and Ambassador. cesses was his modification on a Maruti Gypsy which he christened as BTS (Better than Sex), earning him wide publicity and making him the goto guy for auto design.

Soon Chhabria was going

places and he made personal history—in January 2003, the stunning prototype of the V8 Vantage he developed for the British supercar maker Aston Martin was on display at the Detroit Motor Show! But all that is history and

a new history is being made in the jail today.

DECCAN CHRONICLE | NELLORE | MONDAY | 25 JANUARY 2021

Down under, offie rises from the Ash-es

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, JAN. 24

R. Ashwin would not have featured in the first Test against Australia at Adelaide if Ravindra Jadeja had been available. Ashwin himself knew that. And that's why it felt like starting all over again for the off-spinner who has been constantly put under the microscope despite proving his worth time and

Apart from taking 12 wickets – he dismissed big fish Steve Smith thrice — in three Tests, Ashwin scored a gritty unbeaten 39 to save the Sydney Test. In a chat on Sunday, Ashwin spoke about the importance of his Sydney knock and how he has been subjected to unfair comparisons other spinners. Excerpts:

Is this the best that you have bowled in Australia? Looking back, you can say that but I think this is just another dimension of cricket that I'm seeing myself in. It didn't look like I was going to start the series in all honesty but Jadeja damaged his hamstring and that is how I got an opportunity in the first Test. Yes, 2018-19 was good, but I think 2020-21 was one of the best if you compare the last three years.

Before each Test, I sat and On the importance of his

watched match videos for eight hours on the bounce. I made my own plans about where the fielders should be. For example, how Tim Paine got out in Melbourne came from what happened in Adelaide with the short-leg fielder and where the ball might go. So these are orchestrated moves and thanks to the freedom the team management gave me in how I should be working it.

On his back injury: It (back injury) was looking good for the fourth Test in Brisbane and looked like I would play. But there was some unfortunate turn of events. Even the swimming pool access was cut. The pool is an important activity in the recovery process. Then we had to do a plunge pool activity but it is not the same. The physio also felt if the recovery process was in place, there was a good chance I could play. It was a freakish injury. By day three or four, I was alright to bowl. After that 1-1 draw, things took a U-turn. The way things happened in Sydney and Brisbane, we had to quarantine. Sometimes it was question-

was insensitivity around people commenting on why we were complaining. The rules were not



R. Ashwin

Sydney knock: There have been questions raised over my batting since that West Indies tour. But another thing that needs to go into consideration is I was an allformat player and sometimes the roles of people playing Test cricket alone don't really sit down well or people don't quite make an effort to understand how it works. I feel ever since that particular thing where I've just been playing Test cricket, it's pretty much a one game here or there and I'm constantly fighting with someone else for the lone spinner spot. And if I have to be judged purely on my batting skills and batting averages, then I think a decision based on an innings or two alone to drop me out of a particular series wasn't quite justified. I am looking to fight for my place and when I'm just move on.

If I can't be excellent, I should about me at the end of the series. doing that I need to emphasise on my primary skill which is to pick up wickets, which I think over the last two years in South Africa, England or Australia, I have done justice to.

Despite being on the international stage for more than a decade, why do you feel that you have to prove yourself in every game? I have had some wonderful interactions with batting coach Vikram Rathour (a former selector) throughout this series. He told me that they were looking to leave me out after the England series in 2011-12. He said, 'We didn't quite think that you were bowling well'. But I made close to 400 runs in that series and picked up 14-15 wickets. It's a battle that I have always fought. territory for me.

Whenever I was pitted against another off-spinner, the series has turned out well for me. From 2013 to 2015, I was competing with Harbhajan who had made a comeback. In 2015-16, it was Jayant Yadav. For me, competition has always got the best out of me. I feel whatever I have left ahead of me will also be along these lines. So I have decided to play every Test like it's my first.

On comparisons with Nathan Lyon and the duel with Smith: There has been a lot of noise about how I am bowling, and constant references to someone like Nathan Lyon. During the previous tour in Adelaide, I picked up six wickets and kept on bowling despite a tear in the abdomen. After the match, there were comparisons between us. I felt it was extremely insensitive after a good performance. That was the lowest I ever felt in my life. I feel I have been constantly put under the microscope. I did take it personally. So rather than me competing against Lyon, I thought I must be competing against Smith.

Lyon is a lovely bowler and I have respect for him. But my focus was on something else. There were records that Smith had never got out to spinners in Australia. I wanted to turn that around. I am entitled to think I am, probably, the best in the world. I wanted to think along those lines. I thought 'who is the best in the series?' I can't compete with Virat Kohli so I decided to compete against Smith, A lot of people were talking about who will dismiss Smith. But, nobody even gave me a chance. Then, I

Now, there will be comparwith Washington isons Sundar...

Honestly, I have always said it is irrelevant who walks alongside me into the ground. When I walk into the next Test, I will be looking at Burns, Sibley, Crawley, Root. Why would I worry about someone who is going to stand beside me because for all you know I'm walking with a guy who is going to help me over the next five days and he has to do his job and I have to do mine. These are insignificant things.

Is there a tinge of disappointment that you were not considered for the vice-captaincy role when Rahane took over from Kohli?

am not disappointed and it's irrelevant to me. I go out there and make my own plans and get the fields that I want. The captains and vice-captains that I have played with have been very supportive of whatever I have wanted. Leadership is just leading yourself and keeping your space upbeat for any situation that arises. If you can help another teammate, that's also leadership, so it really doesn't



Sai Sandhipa

Sandhipa scores a century

Hyderabad, Jan. 24: Sai Sandhipa scored a century in the Hyderabad Cricket Association's A-2 Division league matches played on Sunday.

Opener Sandhipa made 112 in 222 balls and hit 12 boundaries for Time CC but could not prevent his side from losing by 66 runs to International CC, who had made 307.

Brief scores: A-2 DIVISION (TWO-DAY)

Day-2:
■ International CC 307 in 76.5 overs bt Time CC 241/7 in 90 overs (Sal Sandhlpa 112 — 222b, 12x4). Points: International 5, Time 0.
■ New Star CC 257 in 77.2 overs bt Tirumala CC 114 in 50.5 overs (Deepak Nayak 3/23, Yasir Arafat 3/31). Points: New Star 5, Tirumala 0.

Record sailors sign for R-Day regatta

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JAN. 24

The Republic Day Regatta at Hussain Sagar this year will have an unprecedented 114 entries as it kicks off the sailing calendar of India.

This is the largest ever fleet of Optimist Class boats to sail in the Hussain Sagar and those passing by can witness them bobbing around like colourful flowers bringing the lake to life with kids upwards of 8 years to 18, battling for medals and trophies.

With 90 entries in the Sub-Junior Optimist Class and 24 in the Junior Laser Class the entries this year have come from all across the state.

In the under-18 Junior Class, to be sailed in the Laser 4.7 with 27 entries Nitin Nayak from MJPT School, who is the current

Telangana State Champion is the favourite closely followed by Lakshmi Nookarathnam of Udbhav and Gaddam Mallesh also of MJPT. In the Sub Junior Optimist

Class India No.1 Jhansi Priya Laveti will sail closely followed at second seed by Vaishnavi Veeravamsham and third seed Ravali Parandi all of Udbhav School at Rasoolpura but the field is wide open and one never knows what dark horses the light and fluky wind conditions will produce.

The weather has suddenly dropped to conditions that will favour the lighter sailors with winds hovering around just 5 to 9 knots but superb conditions for a lions share of the fleet that has almost 60 beginners who have been trained across in four



Action from the final day of the 23rd JK Tyre FMSCI National Racing Championship in Coimbatore on Sunday.

Sandeep, Amir on top in JK Racing

Chennai's Sandeep Kumar and Amir Saved from Kottayam emerged champions in the Formula LGB 4 and Novice Cup category respectively in the 23rd JK Tyre-FMSCI National Racing Championship here on Sunday.

At the Kari Speedway, the final day provided plenty of sparks as the Formula LGB 4 championship went down to the wire till the last lap of the last race. It was heartbreak for Ashwin Datta, who led overnight in the Formula LGB 4 category with 63 points.

Sandeep's experience and ice cool nerves stood him in good stead as he finished fifth in the last race. He totalled 66 points to seal the Formula LGB 4 championship. Ashwin finished with 63

points, as per provisional standings. Vishnu Prasad was third with 54 points. Teen sensation Amir Sayed crowned himself in glory in the Novice Cup category.

> THE RESULTS Formula LGB 4

Race 4 (14 laps): 1. Mohamed Ryan (MSport) 20:21.929, 2. Vishnu Prasad (MSport)

24: 20:23.545, 3. Arya Singh (Dark umar Don Racing) 20:25.170.

Race 5 (15 laps): 1. Diljith TS (Dark Don Racing) 23:58.426, 2. Sandeen Kumar A. (Dark Don Racing) 23:58.890, 3. Sarosh (Ahura Racing) 23:59.793

Race 6 (15 laps): 1. Vishnu Prasad (MSport) 21:01.907, 2. Mohamed Ryan (Msport) 21:07.490, 3. Sarish Hatarai (Ahura Racing) 21:14.292.

(MSport) 14:17.157, 2. Chetan (Momentum Surineni Motorsports) 14:31.672, 3. Aman Chaudhary (DTS Racing) 14:32.509. Race 6 (10 laps): 1. Amir Sayed (MSport) 16:34.084, 2. Chetan Surineni (Momentum

Race 5 (10 laps): 1. Amir Sayed

Motorsports) 16:56.452, 3. Neym Rizvi (MSport) 17:01.933. OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

Surineni

Champion: Sandeep Kumar (Dark Don Racing) 66 points. First Runner-Up: Ashwin Datta (Dark Don Racing) 63 points.

Second Runner-Up: Vishnu Prasad (MSport) 54 points.

Champion: Amir Sayed (Msport) 120 points. First Runner-Up: Dhruvin Gajjar (DTS Racing) 49 points. **Second Runner-Up:** Chaudhary (DTS Racing) 46 points.

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