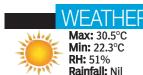
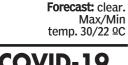
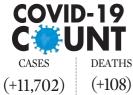
THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

**NELLORE | SATURDAY | 6 FEBRUARY 2021** 



Forecast: clear.





1,08,14,656 1,54,954 STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS (+169)(+1)

TS: 2,95,270 1,607 (+97)(+1)AP: 8,88,275 7,158

CASES AROUND THE WORLD 10,56,28,160

**DEATHS** 23,00,112 COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

> worldometers.info/ coronavirus

#### STROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttarayana Tithi: Pushya Bahula Navami till 8.13 am; Dasami till 6.26 am Star: Anuradha till 5.18 pm Varjyam: 10.39 pm to 12.11 pm Durmuhurtam: 6.50 am to 8.21 am

Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am **HIJRI CALENDAR** Jamadi- ul- Akhir 23,1442 AH PRAYERS (SHAHI MASJID) Fajar: 5.25 am **Zohar:** 12.24 pm

Asar: 4.34 pm Maghrib: 6.11 pm Isha: 7.23 pm SUNSET TODAY 6.10 PM **SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.37 AM MOONRISE** TODAY 00.26 AM



Now, the phone is mightier than the pen and the gun!

### SHORT AKES

### **Cong plans ISF**

alliance in WB Kolkata: Desperate to

reclaim its Muslim votebank from the ruling Trinamul Congress (TMC) in the West Bengal Assembly elections, the state Congress leaders have sought UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi's permission to include a third party in their alliance, Indian Secular Front, floated by influential cleric of Furfura Sharif, Pirzada Abbas Siddiqui. The Congress already has an alliance with the Left Front and the two

Reports on Page 4



NATION 4 **SC** grants interim

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



WORLD 5

**Biden calls out** Russia, China

SPORTS 8

**Captain Root leads England with a century** 



Vol. 18 No. 211 Established 1938 | 16 pages | ₹6.00

### Ramayapatnam port orphaned No takers for port construction contract, AP postpones last date

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC

Ramayapatnam port continues to be jinxed with contractors shying away from taking up the job of constructing the port. This has forced the Andhra Pradesh government to postpone the tender thrice

so far.
AP Maritime Board had floated the tender for constructing the first phase of the port with four berths and allied activities like dredging in November. However, it extended the last date of filing tenders thrice and the latest dead-

line is February 15. With regard to the two other ports - Bhavanapadu Machilipatnam APMB decided to change the location for the first

**FARMERS DEFY** 

**BAN TO ATTEND** 

SANJAY KAW and

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA

NEW DELHI, FEB. 5

mahapanchayat

Saturday.

**MAHAPANCHAYAT** 

Defying a ban, thousands of people attended a

Shamli in Uttar Pradesh

in solidarity with the

farmers who are protest-

ing for over two months

against the three agricul-

tural laws at the borders

of Delhi. Security, mean-

ing the southern states.
"Dilli mein hum nahi

kar rahe, wahan to raja

ne khud qile-bandi kar li

hai humare jaam karne

ki zaroorat hi nahi hai

(We are not going to do anything in Delhi, the

king there has already

fortified it, there is no

need for us to do a block-

ade)," he said, in a veiled jibe at PM Modi.

• THE TELUGU DESAM government had put all the three port projects in the backburner apparently under the influence of the existing private port operators.

• CHIEF MINISTER Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, however, wanted the officials to fast-track these projects.

• **HE ALSO** asked officials to explore the possibilities of launching operations in the defunct Machilipatnam, one of the oldest ports in India.

one and scope for the second as a result of which the two port projects will face more delays than Ramayapatnam, sources

The Telugu Desam government had put all the three port projects in the backburner apparently under the influence of the existing private port oper-

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, how-

"Megha Engineering India Limited initially showed keen interest to build the port in joint venture with companies havture with companies having experience in constructing ports," sources said adding that they raised several queries also. However, it developed cold feet, sources

and called for tenders.

Tata group also raised queries in response to the bid document and at one stage even proposed to take up the project under PPP mode but the government did not respond.

Aurobindo Group, which recently acquired majority stake in Kakinada Deep Water Port, is said to have been in consultation with

#### Unanimous results VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 5 Andhra Pradesh High Court, through an interim barred in 2 districts order on Friday, to the State Election Commission (SEC) to keep aside DC CORRESPONDENT the newly launched software application called

State election commissioner, N. Ramesh Kumar directed collectors of Chittoor and Guntur not to declare unanimous results as a large number of gram panchayats were found elected unanimous-

**HC** applies brakes

Asks AP Technology Services to check app

on SEC's eWatch

elections in gram pan-

plainants would be pro-

in the gram panchayat polls and detect any viola-tion of the model code of The petitioners contended that an app developed

by the Election Commission of India and another by the Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj department were available but surprisingly did not find acceptance with

**DC CORRESPONDENT** 

The app developed by a

private agency on demand

from the SEC, was meant

to keep a watch on poll-

related irregularities. The

court posted the next hearing to February 9.

A division bench of Chief

Justice Arup Kumar Goswami and Justice Ch.

Praveen Kumar heard a

batch of petitions challenging the SEC decision

to introduce its own app to

receive complaints from citizens on irregularities

'eWatch'

conduct.

the SEC. They argued that the app developed for the SEC by a private firm did not having the security certificate required under the Andhra Pradesh Cyber Security Policy, 2017. "Also, this app is not in compliance with several GOs issued on security

aspects.' Moreover, the petitioners contended that the SEC did not approach the Pradesh Technology Services for the conduct of a security audit vis-æ-vis this app and for issue of a security

certificate. The petitioners also raised apprehensions on security features of the app and whether personal information of comVIJAYAWADA, FEB. 5

In a statement issued here on Friday, he stated that reports of a large number of unanimous

The court asked the SEC about the purpose of the app by noting that the

model code of conduct had already been in force since January 9 and the elections are to be held shortly. It asked how much was spent on developing the app and who developed it. It asked the SEC whether the app was having the mandatory security audit certificate? The court also

questioned the SEC as to

why it had not used the

app already developed by the Panchayat Raj depart ment that was on offer.
Government pleader C. Suman informed the court that the AP Technology Services was the nodal agency for conducting security audit and issuing of a security certificate and said no app could be put into use without

ry certificate. He informed the court that the SEC secretary K. Kannababu had written a letter to the APTS seeking a security audit and said that it would take him five days to check the security aspects of the app.

obtaining such a mandato-

tricts was not consistent with the current trend in the state and he directed both the collectors to put the declaration of results on hold pending examination of the reports. He also directed them against declaring the results of such unanimous elections until they get clearance from the State Election Commission.

> Page 2: SEC calls for detailed reports

#### **GRAM PANCHAYATS SEEK FUNDS TO HOLD ELECTION**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 5

Gram panchayat secretaries have appealed to the SEC for funds to make arrangements for holding gram panchayat polls.
These officials pointed

out that it is their responsibility to make all arrangements at polling booths, like erection of barricades for voters to wait in a queue before voting, pitching up tents to provide them protection from sunlight. As polling officials arrive at polling booths the day before polls, they have to arrange for their accommodation, food at night, tea, breakfast, lunch and dinner on the day of polling from 6.30 a.m. In addition, lights. fans, chairs, and voting chambers must be organ-

Page 2: Basic amenities missing at booths

### CM orders 3 IT concept cities, Net in all villages

ever, wanted the officials

to fast-track these projects.

While he cleared ambigui-

ty over the location of the

port by finalising Ramayapatnam, he asked

officials to explore the possibilities of launching

operations in the defunct

Machilipatnam, one of the

Sources said the govern-

ment had chosen to build

the Ramayapatnam port at

its own cost instead of

oldest ports in India.

**DC CORRESPONDENT** VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 5

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Friday directed officials to establish three IT concept cities in Visakhapatnam, Tirupati and near Bengaluru in Andhra Pradesh, apart from providing internet facility at every village in Reviewing a meeting of

while, has been beefed up all across the Delhi-NCR officials on electronic poliin view of the nationwide "Chakka Jam" (blockadcy at his camp office in Tadepalli, the Chief Minisroads) on ter said an integrated technology park will be estab-Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait said the "chakka jam" will not take place in lished at Visakhapatnam, under which High-End Skills University, incubation centre, laboratories, Delhi, Uttarakhand and state data centre, IT tow-UP, but will be done in ers and other facilities other parts of NCR and would come. the rest of India, includ-

At the same time, he said it is important to provide strong internet network at all villages of the state within three years to develop the IT industry. A building must be con-structed in each village for an internet library. All facilities required for from Home" should be made available in it. Further, secretariats and RBKs in every village



AP and Telangana General Officer commanding R.K. Singh calls on Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy – BY ARRANGEMENT at the camp office on Friday

must be connected with

Mohan Reddy wanted setting up of an Emerging Technologies University also in Visakhapatnam for carrying out research in fields of robotics, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, block-chain technologies data analytics, advanced electronics, education, health, agriculture, water

resources and so on. Officials informed the CM that experts from various technological institutions, including IITs, will submit a report on this university soon, which will be very useful for engineering and other technical students in honing their skills.

instructed officials to set up IT concept cities over at least 2,000 acres in three places Visakhapatnam, Tirupati and nearer to Bangalore

quality infrastructure

but within AP limits. Page 2: CM calls for high

#### Fiery outbreak



Mumbai on Friday.

### Sugarcane farmers's dues still not cleared

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, FEB. 5

Days have turned sour and bitter for sugarcane farmers in the district. With the closure of the co-operative sugar factory in Chennur, the area under cultivation sugarcane across the district has come down significantly.

Sales have dipped alarmingly even though farmers here and there are cultivating sugarcane. In order to survive, some farmers are moving to other areas sell their produce.

However, they are facing problems as owners of industries are making haphazard payments. The ordeal is such that around 262 farmers have not received payments for the sugarcane yields of two years back. An industry in Nellore district's Podalakuru owes ₹3 crore to farmers in the district.

The aggrieved farmers brought their plight to the notice of Kadapa MP Avinash Reddy and Mydukuru MLA Raghuramireddy when they came to Chapadu for the inaugura-

buildings on October 18 last year. The MP immediately spoke to the assistant cane commissioner and urged him to come to the aid of the farmers. A few days ago, the farmers explained their problems to Ambati Krishnareddy, chief adviser to the state agriculture department. However, no action has been taken so far. Dastgiri Reddy, a farmer

He said that around ₹30 tion of new secretariat lakh was paid at the beginning of the shipment of sugarcane but the balance is pending for two years. Chinnakondareddy, another farmer, said he had supplied 1,000 tonnes to the factory, whose

owner paid him ₹2 lakh. And that was that. He said that he was in serious financial trouble and asked the authorities to intervene and clear farmfrom Rajugaripeta village said about 31,500 tonnes of sugarcane was sent to the factory from his village.

■ Page 3: Cultivation drops significantly

### **RBI lets investors** buy govt securities

parties.

SANGEETHA G. | DC with agency inputs CHENNAI/MUMBAI, FEB. 5

In a structural reform that would put India among a group of a select few countries, the Reserve Bank has now allowed retail investors easy access to government securities. Projecting 10.5 per cent growth for the next fiscal, the nation's central bank has kept the record low repo and reverse repo rates unchanged

while continuing its

accommodative stance.
"It is proposed to pro

vide retail investors with online access to the government securities market -- both primary and secondary -- directly through the Reserve Bank" RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said Friday, as he announced the monetary policy committee's decisions.

Further, to revive growth on a "durable basis", the MPC left the repo rate unchanged at four per cent, which was slashed by 115 basis points since March last

Reports on Page 7

HEALTH | HAZARD | Clandestinely sold in various towns, cities villages due to lax law enforcement agencies

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC

Banned smokeless tobacco easy to get in AP due to laxity on the part of law enforcement agencies.

TIRUPATI, FEB. 5 As a result, people continue having access to SLT and Despite the ban on import, are becoming more prone to manufacture, transportathe habit as time passes. tion, stocks and sale of Smokeless Tobacco (SLT) or This is resulting in an increase in oral cancer cases chewable tobacco and the every year. like, they are available According to a population-

based survey by the National Institute of Cancer aplenty in markets across Andhra Pradesh. The state government imposed a complete ban on Prevention and Research (NICPR), on average, more chewable tobacco products than one in every five on January 9, 2013 with the Indians used SLT products. As many as 20 crore adults, aim to save the society from such health hazards. But one-seventh of the popula-SLT products are clandestion, use SLT. Prevalence tinely being sold in various among men is higher. More than one among every three towns, cities and villages,

PEOPLE CONTINUE to have access to SLT and are becoming more prone to the habit as time passes. This is resulting in an increase in oral cancer cases every

AS MANY as 20 crore adults, one-seventh of the population, use SLT.

 PREVALENCE AMONG men was found to be higher in the study

males use SLT in some form. The NICPR data shows that over 14 crore men and almost six crore women use



high prevalence of 35.6 per cent in males and an overall prevalence of 18.4 per cent

among females. Also, a survey by the Anti-Tobacco and prevention society (ATPS) showed that the addicts are showing a disinterest in kicking the habit due to its strong aromatic and chemical flavours. A visit to different areas in

Tirupati revealed that chewable tobacco products are being sold in shops and consumed by people of all ages, especially youth. SLT products are sold in shops on the Tirumala bypass road, the Hare Krishna road, the Korlagunta-Karakambadi road, the Prakasam road and the Alipiri road.

Shopkeepers are now earn-

ing more money despite the ban on SLT products, as the black market quotes hefty prices. A packet of Khaini with MRP ₹10 is sold for ₹25 and a gutkha packet with MRP of ₹8 is sold for ₹15 to known hands. Mostly, labourers, hawkers and even children consume tobacco products.

Enforcement often apprehend small-time shopkeepers but big players in the racket remain untouched. Certain loopholes in the act are said to be of help to them. Officials are aware of the actual scene but are not keen on acting tough for obvious reasons.



#### SHORT TAKES **AP TEAM STUDIES TOWN PLANNING**

**IN GUJARAT** 

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 5

A high-level delegation of the Andhra Pradesh government met various officials, town planners and experts during their three-day tour of Gujarat to study the implementation of town planning schemes and their impact on planned urban development.

The study tour comes in the wake of Andhra Pradesh government's plans to implement town planning schemes in urban local bodies.

The delegation, led by Y. Srilakshmi, principal secretary, municipal administration & urban development department, and comprising senior government officials, municipal commissioners, town planners, and housing and urban development authorities, the 25-member delegation had a meeting with officials of the Institute of Town Planners India (ITPI) in

Ahmedabad. N.K. Patel, the national president of ITPI said, "The town planning model has been very successful in Gujarat, and has contributed to planned development in the state. However, it is also elaborate and quite a technical process. The Andhra government team is here to understand how the town planning model works. We made presentations about various aspects of integrated town planning with the dele-

The delegation made a field visit to a site in Ahmedabad to get a first-hand experience of a town planning scheme and conducted discussions with officials and town planners of Ahmedabad Development Authority on reconstitution of town planning schemes. Further, the delegation visited the Ahmedabad Municipal

Corporation to study the system of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), Slum Improvement Scheme, and Transit-Oriented develop-

#### **EX-MLA, HUSBAND RESIGN FROM** THEIR POSTS IN TD

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, FEB. 5

Former MLA of Kakinada Rural P. Anantha Lakshmi and her husband and TD senior leader Pilli Satyanarayana Murthy have resigned their posts in Telugu Desam party.

The couple told the media here on Friday that the Telugu Desam party had given them a political birth and also chance for five times to contest the assembly polls. Anantha Lakshmi noted she won twice

Satyanarayana Murthy, a strong leader from a backward community, said the recent developments in the TD and the "high-handed" involvement of former home minister and Peddapuram MLA Nimmakayala China Rajappa in Kakinada Rural constituency, as also several other factors like insults, have deeply hurt both of them.

Murthy said he had given an advice to the party high command to give the constituency in-charge post to former MLA Boddu Bhaskara Ramarao, in the hope that this would strengthen the party. But, Rajappa ignored this. "Rajappa was also trying to damage my image," Murthy

He said Rajappa was involved in selection of candi-dates for the Grama Panchayat polls. "The TD cadre and my followers were exerting pressure on him against the wrong tendencies in the party in my constituency.

#### **YSRC NOW TARGETING STATUES: LOKESH**

**DC CORRESPONDENT** VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 5

Telugu Desam general secretary Nara Lokesh has alleged that "after the temple desecrations", the YSR Congress was now targeting statutes of great

He condemned the demolition of the statue of TD founder NTR at Dosakayalapalli village in Korukonda mandal of East Godavari district and held the YSRC responsible for this. "The legacy left behind by NT Rama Rao can never be wiped

out by acts of vandalism." He said it was obvious that YSRC gangsters and vandals were now targeting the statues of great personalities after they could no more continue with their "attacks on tem-

### YSRC against SEC decision on unanimous poll

One who does not even know the basics is functioning as our Election Commissioner, says MLA

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 5

The ruling YSR Congress has objected to the decision by the state election commission to freeze all unanimous Gram Panchayat results of Chittoor and Guntur districts. YSRC MLA Jogi Ramesh said "there is no provision in the law" to nullify unanimous elections.

Ramesh challenged SEC Nimmagadda Kumar to go and file a petition in the court along with TD chief Chandrababu Naidu if they felt unanimous elections were undemocratic.

Ramesh Chandrababu Naidu stay-ing in Hyderabad was doing dirty politics in Andhra Pradesh. "Naidu had appointed an incompetent person as the State Election Commissioner (SEC)," he alleged.
Noting the failure of SEC

Ramesh Kumar to transfer his vote from Hyderabad to his native place, Duggirala in AP, Ramesh said, "One who does not even know the basics is functioning as our Election Commissioner." He did not even know "vote can be done only at a place where one resided for 6 months.

The MLA said the unanimous results will depend on how the people of a village think. He questioned why at all should the SEC be freezing the results. "Presidential, MP, MLA and MLC elections are done at times in a unanimous manner. Then, how the SEC should oppose unanimous polls in the gram panchayat elections, he called

He said more than 90 per cent of the YSRC-backed candidates will win the elections. "Was there any complaint that the YSRC ever forced anyone not to file nominations," he asked.

Ramesh Chandrababu was leading politics on to the wrong direction by fighting the government with the help of the SEC. He demanded that the SEC cancel TD's election manifesto. The SEC should take disciplinary action against Chandrababu Naidu for violation of norms, he

MLA Ramesh alleged: "SEC Ramesh Kumar has taken the decision to hold the unanimous results in abeyance as he wants to help TD. Chandrababu belongs to Chittoor and the SEC hails from Guntur



Officials dispatch ballot papers and boxes from the District Panchayat Office for the upcoming gram panchayat elections in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

### YSRC seeks action against TD chief for poll code violation

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 5

Meanwhile, the YSR Congress lodged a complaint against the Telugu Desam chief, saying he violated the Model Code of Conduct in the ongoing gram panchayat elections. YSRC state general secretary Lella Appireddy has submitted the complaint to SEC Ramesh Kumar here on Friday.

Appireddy Chandrababu Naidu violated the election norms by releasing an election manifesto for grama pan-chayat polls. The GP polls are conducted on a non-

A senior member from AP

Panchayat Raj Secretaries Association said, "The

onus for making all requi-

polling booths for conduct

of polls lies with us. With

no funds available, we have

to meet expenses from our pockets. Senior officials

issue instructions only on

arrangements. But they

never tell us about the

source of funds. We appeal to SEC to release funds in

advance. This will enable

us make arrangements for

conduct of polls without

Though, majority polling

booths are in government

arranging money.

arrangements at

FROM PAGE 1

party basis under the democratic system but Naidu made a laughing stock out himself by releasing the TD manifesto, he said. He said the TD manifesto

largely circulated ong the masses among through TD cadres, newspapers, the electronic media and through numerous social media platforms. There is no use with the SEC's action of suspending the TD manifesto five days after the lodging of a complaint

against it.

Appi Reddy said the "simple" action of the SEC, of suspending the manifesto without taking

number of them are yet to

get basic amenities, like

clean washrooms despite

the Nadu-Nedu programme. This is forcing

gram panchayat secre-

arrangements for polling

Gram panchayat secretaries complain that senior

officers inspect arrange-

ments and pull them up for

not being up to mark, with-

out bothering about the source of funds for hiring

wooden poles, tents, lights,

fans, benches, desks, buck-

ets, mugs and other requi-

sites. For example, a gram

ing at Kolakaluru village of all necessary

Tenali mandal in Guntur district was placed under without any trouble, either

suspension by then joint to voters or polling staff.

facing hardships for panchayat secretary work-

to make makeshift

any serious action against Chandrababu Naidu, was ridiculous and it shocked people. He recalled that the SEC wrote letters to the governor with "objectionable" comments and

He also noted that while the SEC initiated action against higher officials, he did not take any action against Chandrababu Naidu despite clear evidence the TD chief violated the Model Code of Conduct for the elections. Appireddy demanded that the SEC take stern action against Naidu by registering crim-

allegations against YSRC ministers and CM Jagan.

ging at a polling booth fol-

lowing heavy rainfall before the polling day dur-ing 2014 assembly polls.

The secretaries say though

the panchayat secretary spent ₹1 lakh from his

pocket for making arrangements at the polling booth,

To avoid recurrence of

such incidents, gram pan-

chayat secretaries have sought ₹50,000 to ₹1 lakh in

advance for each gram

panchayat depending upon

the number of wards,

which range from 10 to 16.

This will help them make

arrange-

he was still punished.

JT. EXECUTIVE DIR. Basic amenities missing at booths DC CORRESPONDENT collector for the reason that there was water log-

Tirumala

posting. However, the order released late on Thursday stated that Basant Kumar will continue to be on deputation with the State Election Commission amidst the ongoing panchayat elections. The 2007batch IAS officer will be continued as the Nellore district's election

### Ahead of GP polls, TD withdraws manifesto

DC CORRESPONDENT

Telugu Desam on Friday

announced that the party

is withdrawing its pan-

chayat election manifesto

titled "Palle Pragathi Pancha Sutralu" in accor-

dance with instructions of

the State Election Commission (SEC). At the

same time, senior TD

leader and former MLA

Kumar maintained that

the party is exploring legal options in this

Addressing a press conference here, Dhulipalla

Narendra asserted that it

is the right of any political

party to declare its people-friendly policies during the times of elections. The

TD would explore all legal

and other options available to it for protecting

regard.

this right.

VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 5

FROM PAGE 1

**SEC CALLS FOR** 

**DETAILED** 

**REPORTS** 

Ramesh Kumar called for detailed reports from both of them and said that it was only after examining such reports would the SEC decide the next step. He said that they would take action in case of any failure on the part of any poll functionary.
On the other hand, the

state election commissioner complimented the government servants and the police personnel for their commitment and dedication in performing poll duties with the highest civil services norms and added that as he completed touring of all 13 districts in the state, poll arrangements were satis-factory. He said that the atmosphere in the districts was conducive for conducting polls in a free and fair manner and added that there were no visible instances of forced unanimous elections in any part of the state.

He said that the Covid-19 situation was under control and added that all the safety precautions were taken up. He stated that the district administration was confident of getting high poll percent-

It may be recalled that the SEC, on complaint of ruling YSRC, cancelled TD's manifesto for gram

panchayat polls.

The senior TD leader claimed that many parties had released their manifestoes in Karnataka, Sikkim and other states. Manifestoes are a natural part of elections, wherein parties state their policies. He said it is still beyond anybody's guess why the YSRC complained to SEC

against the TD manifesto. Just because YSRC has no manifesto of its own, it should not mean other parties should not release the same. The ruling party complained to SEC only out of fear that TD manifesto will receive a positive response from people,' Dhulipalla

remarked.

He accused the Jagan Mohan Reddy government of resorting to unconstitutional measures. This is clear from how TD AP president Atchannaidu ĥas been jailed without any prima facie charges against him. He alleged that YSRC leader Duvvada Srinivas came from a faraway place and created terror in Atchannaidu's Nimmada village, but no action was taken against him. The senior TD leader charged DGP Gautam Sawang with being a silent spectator while democracy is being murdered in every possible way in broad daylight in the mid-dle of the road. He alleged that YSRC activists in guise of "grama volunteers" are threatening voters that they would lose their pensions if they did not vote for YSRC-support-

### **AP WITHDRAWS SERVICES OF TTD**

The state government withdrew the services of Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Joint Executive Officer (Tirupati) P. Basanth Kumar, from the revenue (endowments) depart-ment and asked him to report to the General Administration Department for further

### **SEC WILL FACE CONSEQUENCES FOR SUPPORTING TD, WARNS MINISTER**

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, FEB. 5:

Panchayat Raj minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy said that the State Election Commissioner (SEC) Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar would event-ually face the consequences for supporting the Telugu Desam Chief Nara Chandrababu in the Panchayat Raj elections.

"The SEC was dancing to the tunes of Chandrababu Naidu. He was not only trying to blackmail the ruling party leaders, but also the state government officials", the minister alleged while addressing a press conference in Tirupati on

Launching a scathing attack on the SEC Ramesh Kumar for putting unanimous panchayat elections on hold in Chittoor and

Peddireddy questioned the authority of the SEC have to put on hold unanimously elected Panchayats. "The SEC Ramesh

Kumar is deviating from the rule book and is behaving unlawfully. We will retaliate against his unlawful behaviour, and we will move the privileges motion through the assembly speaker to initiate an action against him" the minister added.

Alleging that the SEC had launched an eWatch app developed by the TD Mr Peddireddy welcomed the AP High Court's decision to stop using the eWatch until February 9. Every single action of the SEC is intended to benefit the TD. He is hoping that Naidu will reward him with an MLC or some other post. But Naidu is an expert in using and dumping people.

### SEC directs govt to repaint PDS vehicles

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 5

Election Commission directed the civil supplies department to repaint the vehicles meant for door delivery of essential commodities under public distribution system, with any neutral colour of the choice of the government to launch the scheme in rural areas. The State Election

Commissioner in an order issued on Friday said that the vehicle was inspected personally by him and found that the colour scheme contained the party colours of the ruling YSRC. He said that the vehicle was also having images of both present Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and former chief minister Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy being displayed prominently together. He said that usage of images of both the present CM and the former CM was against the earlier judgment of the AP High Court. He further said that the vehicle was also having display of 'Navaratnalu' scheme.

The Election Commissioner said that the SEC was not going to impose a particular colour other than imposing a caveat not to adopt the party colours in any manner. He asked the civil supplies department to paint one vehicle with neutral colour and put it up for inspection of SEC to get its

THE STATE **ELECTION** Comm-

issioner in an order issued on Friday said that the vehicle was inspected personally by him and found that the colour scheme contained the party colours of the ruling YSRC.

• HE SAID that the vehicle was also having images of both the present Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and former chief minister Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy being displayed prominently together.

approach for launch of the scheme in rural area as the model code of conduct was already in force for conduct of gram panchayat polls. He laid stress on the part of the state government to make the reasonable modifications expeditiously and assured to give approval expeditiously.

He said that as the SEC was contemplating to hold MPTC/ZPTC elections sometime soon conclusion gram panchayat polls, the state government was barred not to go back to the original colour layout. He further said that the SEC wanted the state government to continue the neutral colour scheme until the completion of MPTC/ZPTC



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy congratulated NCC cadets at the camp office on Friday, who won the Prime Minister's Championship during the Republic Day celebrations recently.

### **CM gives ₹2L each to NCC winners**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 5

Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy has congratulated the NCC contingent that won the Prime Minister's Trophy at last month's Republic Day Parade and announced a cash reward of ₹2 lakh to each winner.

The contingent that won the PM Trophy called on the chief minister at his camp office here on Friday. The contingent of the NCC Andhra Pradesh, Telangana Directorate that won the PM Championship Banner showed the winning trophies to the CM. Jagan profusely congratulated them.

The cadets who received cash incentive were Shreyasi Bhakta, A. Sri Sai Priya, Rongali Bhargavi, Chilakapati Jyotsna, A. Hari Prasad, B. Bharat Nayak, D.D. Naga Suresh, V. Ram Prashant, P. Satish Kumar Reddy.

Youth services and sports

best crime detection to 66 police personnel for the second and third quarters

BEST CRIME DETEC-

DC CORRESPONDENT

VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 5

AP DGP Gautam Sawang presented awards for the of Year 2020 during a programme at the state police headquarters here on Friday. The DGP presented a certificate of appreciation to Kasibugga police station sub-inspector Kotturu

principal

DGP appreciates humane gesture of woman cop Sirisha for performing the funeral to an orphan. Gautam Sawang said. "It givens me immense pleas-

ure in recognising the good work done for the humanity by these worthies. He asked the police force to work with both dedication and a human touch, "which will make the AP police more peo-ple's friendly." The DGP presented the ABCD awards to police officials and policemen of Disha wo-

men police station in Gu-

ntur Urban, Vuyyuru Town PS, Mudivedu PS in Chittoor, Kovur PS in Nellore district, Nagari PS Chittoor district and Kurichedu PS in Prakasam district.

Praising the efforts of police officials and the police teams in resolving mysterious cases, he said "resort to technology is need of the hour" and asked the police to update their technology according to the needs of the department.

(Kakinada) Colonel K.V. secretary Ramgopal, AP Telangana Srinivas, station command-NCC directorate DDG Air er (Vijayawada) Colonel Commander T.S.S. Krishnan, director Colonel S. Nitin Sharma, commanding officer Group Captain Pankaj Gupta, army offi-Nag, group commander

cers Colonel Nalin Mohan, Colonel K. Nair, Lieutenant Colonel Bobin, Lieutenant Colonel P.V.N. Reddy and NCC cadets were among those who met the CM.

### CM CALLS FOR **HIGH QUALITY IT INFRASTRUCTURE**

**FROM PAGE 1** 

He said infrastructure in these concept cities should be of high stan-dards and their architecture should be unique. He pointed out that "Work from Home" concept has immensely developed due to the Covid pandemic. The same should be promoted towards cost saving. He directed officials to prepare a policy including government support to IT sector that encourages work-from-home con-cept. He asked officials to focus on bringing as many industries as possible at Electronic Kopparthi Park to increase employment opportunities.

Information technology minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy, higher education special chief secretary Chandra, chief minis ter's principal advisor Nilam Sawhney, finance principal secretary S. S. Rawat, IT principal secretary G. Jayalakshmi, IT special secretary B Sundar, energy principal secretary Nagulapalli Srikanth, technical edu-cation commissioner M. M. Nayak, AP State Fibernet Limited managing director M. Madhusudan Reddy and other senior officials were present at the review meeting.

CM POINTED out that "Work from Home" concept has immensely developed due to the Covid pandemic.



### SHORT

#### **VIZAG-CHENNAI CORRIDOR WILL CREATE 1.1CR JOBS**

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 5

The proposed Vizag Chennai Industrial Corridor impact the industrial development and employment potential, creating 1.1 crore new jobs in the southern region.

Industry sources said VCIC would jack up the GDP by six times and manufacturing output by seven times. It will be a real driver of growth for Andhra Pradesh, the sources added. The corridor is part of the East Coast Economic Corridor and the first coastal corridor in India.

VCIC is aligned with the golden quadrilateral and poised to play a critical role in driving India's Act East Policy and Make in India campaign.

#### **AP TO HOST 29TH MEETING OF OUTH ZONE COUNCIL**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 5

AP to host the 29th meeting of the Southern Zonal Council in Tirupati on March 4.

Union home minister Amit Shah and chairman of the Southern Zonal Council (comprising the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Puducherry as Members and UTS of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep as Special Invitees) has now fixed the 29th meeting of the Southern Zonal Council on 4 March 2021 in

Tirupati.
The chief ministers/ lieutenant governor/ administrators of eight states/UTs in the southern zone will participate along with their respective chief secretaries, advisers and other senior officers in keeping with important agenda items. On the whole, approximately 90 to 100 dignitaries/officers are expected to participate in this meeting.

#### **YOUTH STABBED AFTER CLASH AT BADMINTON GAME**

DC CORRESPONDENT

A fight broke out between two teams while playing badminton in a local court in the Kollamitta area in Sullurpeta of Nellore district late on Thursday night has ended in the stabbing of a youth. Another person was also hospitalised as he received severe

According to reports, some youngsters from the Kollamitta area were playing badminton in a local court on Thursday evening. During the game, a small dispute broke out between two groups - one led by Madduru Pawan Kumar and Sai Kumar and another group led by Nimmala Anil Kumar, 22.

After a heated argument, Pawan and Sai Kumar left the place and returned with knives to attack Anil Kumar, who had left for his home. The duo later reached Anil's house and attacked him with knives, before fleeing from the spot. Anil's relatives and friends immediately shifted him to a private hospital, where he died while undergoing treatment.

### **Steel plant employees** take out massive rally

MPs and MLAs of all parties protest proposed privatisation

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 5

Visakhapatnam Steel Plant employees and 16 trade unions continued to protest against the privatisation of the steel plant for the second day on Friday. The employees took out a massive motorcycle rally from the steel plant to the Gandhi statue at RTC Complex which later culminated into a dharna and public meeting. Vizag and Anakapalle

Lok Sabha members attended the dharna members M.V.V. Satyanrayana and K. Satyavathi, Ga-juwaka MLA Tippala Nagi Reddy TD MLA Velagapudi Ramakrishnababu. State president of CI-TU Ch Narsinga Rao, CPI State joint secretary J.V. Satyanarayana Murthy and president of the recognised union of the steel plant Steel Employees Union J. Ayodhyaram.

Addressing the gathering, Lok Sabha member M.V.V. Satyanarayana said YSRC was opposed to the privatisation of Vizag Steel Plant, and the issue would be taken to the notice of chief minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

"We will stage dharna at the main gate of the steel plant and block the privatisation in the Parliament," the MP said and added that the elected representatives would support the agitation programme of trade union and steel plant employees. Lok Sabha member from Anakapalle Dr K. Satyanvati said the steel plant had been the pride of Andhra Pradesh her party would not allow

privatisation move. Gajuwaka Gajuwaka MLA Tippala Nagi Reddy said the privatisation of steel plant would spell doom for the BJP at the centre. Jana Sena leader Kona Tata Rao said his party

the central government's

would take the issue to the national capital and fight until the privatisation move was dropped. CITU State president Ch. Narsinga Rao said the PM would not privatise the Vizag Steel Plant. He said the centre, which

failed to extend financia support during losses, has no right to privatise the steel plant. "People sacrificed to get the steel plant, and now more will come forward to repeat the same

for its protection," Narsinga Rao said. Union president J. Ayodhyaram said the steel plant has been providing ₹42,000 crore annually in dividends and taxes to the central and State government. For expansion, the plant spent ₹18,000 crore and created 5,000 new jobs. It is a conspiracy to privatise the steel plant, the biggest factory



Employees of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant take part in a bike rally in big numbers in protest against the privatisation move by the central government on Visakhapatnam Steel Plant on the national highway in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

### State should buy Vizag plant: TD

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 5

Telugu Desam national general-secretary and MLC Nara Lokesh on Friday demanded that the YSRC government oppose the privatisation of the prestigious Visakha Steel Plant. "It is a matter of pride for all Andhras." He pro-posed that the ruling YSRC pass a resolution in the assembly that the state government should buy the steel plant. "When a similar situation arose in Chhattisgarh, its government passed a unanimous resolution in the assembly to buy the Nagarnar Steel Plant, he

In a letter sent to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, Lokesh said the Visakha Steel was incurring losses because it had no captive iron ore mine of its own. The state government should immediately ask the Centre to allot an iron ore mine exclusively for the Visakha Steel."

He said the YSRC government is doing a historic injustice to the people of North Andhra by playing a 'dubious role' vis-a-vis the Visakha Steel. "This is yet another betrayal by the ruling YSRC leaders to have set their sights on the steel plant's costly lands. The plant was saved only after over 32 people sacrificed their lives in an agitation. During his tenure, former chief minister Chandrababu Naidu fought against its privatization and forced the central government to withdraw the move in 2000," he said.

Lokesh said over 40,000 employees were dependent on the steel plant and lakhs of people were having indirect employment.

TD would not keep silent, it would protect the steel plant," he said and appealed to all to fight this out by chanting the slogan 'Visakha Ukku Andhrula Hakku' (Visakha Steel a right of



Visakhapatnam Steel Plant employee displays placards during a protest near GVMC Gandhi Statue iunction in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

### **WITHDRAW PRIVATISATION MOVE: GANTA**

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 5

Former minister and Visakhapatnam North MLA Ganta Srinivasa Rao has appealed to the central government to withdraw the privatising proposals /isakhapatnam Plant.

Taking to the social media, the senior TDP functionary from north coastal Andhra, Ganta Srinivasa Rao asked the public and trade unions to oppose the central government's strongly. "Steel Plant should not

be seen as a mere factory but as the pride of the people of Andhra Pradesh," he said and added that the central government should look for alternative sources for income but not Vizag Steel Plant.

He said Visakhapatnam Steel Plant is the only factory in the country that was operating without captive mines. The plant was incurring ₹5,000 crore additional funds annually for prod

The former minister warned that the agitation would be intensified and would be more serious than the present farmers agitation being held in New Delhi. Visakhapatnam East

Velagapudi Ramakrishnababu said the Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy should lead an all-party delegation to New Delhi and pressurise the central government on the privatisation. He also suggested that

the CM pass a resolution in the Assembly opposing the privatisation move.

FILM | REVIEW | Film starts with PM declaring lockdown due to Covid

### Cultivation drops significantly

He urged political leaders in the district to work for re-opening Chennuru Sugar Factory.

Sugarcane was formerly cultivated on thousands of acres in the Chapadu mandal. Now the acreage of crop cultivation has been significantly reduced.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy assured that steps will be taken to reopen the Chennur sugar

**ONE DEATH** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

Andhra Pradesh regis-

tered 97 fresh cases of Covid-19 and one death

on Friday. According to state health authorities,

out of 33,876 samples tested, 97 persons were infected with Covid-19.

Out of 1,32,76,678 samples tested so far, 8,88,275 people were found

infected with the virus

and of them, 8,80,046

were recovered in the

course of treatment while 1,071 are still

Among daily cases of confirmed Covid-19,

confirmed Covid-19, Chittoor topped the

state with 25 cases, followed by 11 in Krishna, 10 in Visakhapatnam,

eight in East Godavari,

seven each in Guntur

and Nellore, six each in Anantapur, Kadapa, West Godavari, five in Srik-

akulam, three in Praka-

sam, two in Vizianaga-

Krishna continues to

lead the state by regis-tering the highest num-ber of cumulative Covid

active cases with 260 fol-

lowed by 126 in Chittoor,

124 in Guntur, 116 in Ea

st Godavari, 97 in Visa-khapatnam, 71 in West

Godavari, 62 in Nellore,

58 in Kadapa, 55 in Prak-

asam, 43 in Kurnool, 34

in Anantapur, 14 in

Vizianagaram and 11 in Srikakulam.

ram, one in Kurnool.

active with the virus.

VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 5

been taken so far except for a committee appointed by the government to look into

the matter.

With the Chennur Sugar Factory remaining shut, farmers in the district have been moving sugarcane to a industry private Podalakuru for the past few years. However, they are not getting payments.

Ambati Krishna Reddy told Deccan Chronicle that he has taken the issue to

Reddy.

The factory management is in a financial crisis, but they assured to settle all pending bills, he said.

Assistant cane commissioner John Victor, speaking to Deccan Chronicle, said that he has already discussed the payment of dues with factory management. They have promised him to pay half of the dues within a week and the remaining is to be paid after a month.

#### **AP RECORDS 97** SEVEN SUFFER FROM AEFI AFTER SHOTS **COVID CASES, DC CORRESPONDENT**

Seven nursing students, who were administered the Covid-19 vaccine in the gov-ernment-run hospital in Tirupati, developed minor complaints as part of the Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFI) on Friday According to the offi-cials, seven nursing stu-

dents, studying General Nursing and Midwifery (GNM) at S.V.R. Ruia Government General Hospital in Tirupati were admitted in the same hospital after they reported AEFI following the jab they took on Friday morning. Dr E.B. Devi said that the seven nursing students had developed vomiting, headaches, and other mild symptoms.

#### **JAGAN TO ATTEND ANTARVEDI LAKSHMI** NARASIMHA SWAMY KALYANOTSAVAM

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, FEB. 5

Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy celestial marriage (Kalyanotsavam) will be conducted from February 19 to 28 at shrine Antarvedi in Sakhinetipalli mandal of East Godavari District. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will attend the first day of the pro-

In September 2020, the Chariot of the temple was gutted, and the government has made a new chariot. Now, district administration is making arrange-ments for the shrine pro-

gramme. On February 19, the auspicious Ratha Sapthami festival, the Kalyanotsavam pro-

### Cashew to be purchased from Vandan-Vikas centres

DC CORRESPONDENT

Rampachodavaram ITDA is making arrangements to purchase cashew directly from the cashew garden farmers through Vandan-Vikas Centres,' sponsored by the central government in summer. It will avoid the role of mediators in the sale and purchase transactions of cashew nuts from tribal people. ITDA project officer C.V. Praveen Adhithya told the officials to inspect the Broiler Automatic machines which process the 320 kilos capacity of cashew nut.

He also proposed organic cashew nuts and said that at present there is more demand for organic cashew nut. He said there are 61 Vandan-Vikas centres in agency area and a cashew nut pro-cessing unit will be set up in Pandirimamidi village.

**DC CORRESPONDENT** VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 5

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) signed an MoU with the Diocese of Vizagapatam Society (responsible for running two Vishakha Vimala Vidyalayams supported by RINL) for infrastructural development ment in Vishakha Vimala Vidyalayams at RINL.

society.

#### HPCL, VISAKHA **VIMALA IN RINL SIGN MoU**

A release on Friday said RINL has been extending the financial support to these two schools providing quality education to children coming from underprivileged sections of the

#### PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited Regd. Office: PSEB, Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-14700 GURU HARGOBIND THERMAL PLANT, LEHRA MOHABBAT

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1. The prospective bidders can obtain clarification regarding tender specifications from this office. For registration of digital signatures and uploading of tender, information may be sought from http://eproc.punjab.gov.in

2. It is informed that in case the tender process is not completed due to any reason, no corrigendum will be published in newspapers. Detail regarding corrigendum may be seen on PSPCL official website i.e https://pspcl.in.

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Mechanical Mtc. Circle-II, O&M.

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#### Governor Biswa Bhushan dals. The officials inspected Harichandan and Chief minthe Tirupati airport.

**ALL SET FOR PRESIDENT VISIT TO CHITTOOR** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

Officials of district adminis-

tration and police department

have been making elaborate

arrangements for the President of India Ramnath

Kovind visit to Chittoor dis-

trict on February 7. AP

TIRUPATI, FEB. 5

Tirumala man Mr Y.V. Subba Reddy.

After a review meeting with officials at Annamaiah Bhavan in Tirumala along with TTD EO Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy and Additional EO A.V. Dharma Reddy, the TTD Chairman said that the foundation for Goddess Sri Padmavati temple at Chennai would be laid by the pontiff of Kanchi Mutt Vijayendra Saraswati

### TTD KEEN TO INCREASE PILGRIM FOOTFALL

TIRUPATI, FEB. 5

TTD EO Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy said that the pilgrim footfall to Lord Venkateswara temple at Tirumala would be enhanced gradually in a cautious manner with strict adherence to the Covid-19

Before receiving calls from the pilgrim callers as part of the Dial your EO' programme held on Friday, TTD EO briefed about activities mulled by TTD. He said, there was an overwhelming demand from devotees to restore arjitha sevas and enhance the number of darshan tickets at

ister Y.S. Jaganmohan will also arrive in the district to receive the President of India. Tirupati Urban district SP Ch. Venkata Appala Naidu and RDO Kanaka Narasa Reddy on Friday reviewed the arrangements for the presi-

dent's one-day visit to

Madanapalle and Sadum man-

in AP, he added.

### TTD TO LAY FOUNDATION FOR TEMPLE IN TN

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, FEB. 5

Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) will lay the foundation stone, on February 13, for constructing a new temple dedicated to Goddess Padmavathi, the divine consort of Lord Venkateswara, in Chennai. said TTD trust board chair-

DC CORRESPONDENT

guidelines.

Tirumala temple.

### Telugu zombies fail at box office KAVIRAYANI | DC Film: Zombie Reddy

rashanth Varma made his debut as director with the psychological thriller 'Awe'. It won the National Award. His second film has also been appreciated and he likes to experiment. Thus, he is introducing zombies to Telugu cinema for the first time with 'Zombie Reddy'. Teja Sajja, who earlier worked as child artiste, is now the lead

actor of this film. Mario (Teja Sajja) is an online game designer. His latest game gets negative feedback with a wrong bug. To fix it, he needs his friend Kalyan (Mirchi Hemanth's) help, who is getting married in Kurnool. So, Mario, along with two of his friends, travels from Hyderabad to Kurnool to fix the bug. On the way near Kurnool, Mario's vehicle hits an unknown person who bites the hand of Mario's friend.

they

Kurnool, Mario comes to

reach

**Cast:** Teja Sajja, Anandi, Daksha Nagarikar, Prudhvi, Mirchi Hemanth, **Getup Seenu and others Director: Prashanth Varma Rating:** 2 stars



has played his part confi-

Kalyan has become the scapegoat between two factionists. Mario is also suspicious about Nandini Reddy (Anandi), who comes as part of wedding arrangements. Once the wedding ceremony is over, Mario's friend turns into a zombie. Within a night all villagers too turn zombies. What happens to Mario's friend and how they escape from zombies know that his friend is the crux of the story.

Prashanth Varma is young and came to notice with his debut film 'Awe'. Thus, one can expect something when he is introducing zombies to Telugu. He starts the film with an interesting point Prime Minister Narendra Modi declaring lockdown because of the Coronavirus, which is followed by few engrossing

scenes. But Prashanth Varma goes wrong once the story shifts to Kurnool, where he concentrates more on faction comedy. Most of these comedy scenes are spoofs from earlier faction films. The zombie thing comes only after one hour and he mixed it up with factions. Few scenes look good but, after some time, the director has completely gone overboard with

zombies. Even the climax is not convincing as he adds some devotional and supernatural things to the zombie concept. It is a completely clichéd narration in the name of localising the zombie thing. Except here and there by way of a few comedy

good. He has played his part confidently. He was a known child artist and now, as a lead actor, has a bright future. He is good at dialogue delivery and timing. Anandi is actually surprised with her performance and she did it with ease. She played her role perfectly as Nandini Reddy. Daksha is good as friend of Mario. Getup Seenu provides a few

laughs along with Mirchi

Hemanth. The cinematog-

raphy by Anith is good as

also the background music by Mark Robin.

nothing. Prashanth Varma should concentrate

more on screenplay and

When it comes to per-

formance, Teja Sajja is

narration.

Prashanth

Prashanth Varma has not been successful introducing zombies to Telugu with his 'Zombie Reddy' With clichéd narration, he has depended more on faction film spoofs. The film offers some laughs here and there. If the director could concentrate more on story and engaging narration, it could be a

### SHORT TAKES

#### **FOREST GUARD KILLED BY POACHERS IN MP**

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, FEB. 5

A forest guard took on the poachers in a Madhya Pradesh jungle 'singlehandedly' and shot video of his attack by them in his mobile before his

Blood-ridden body Madanlal Verma (52), a forest guard posted in Ratanpur beat of Punjapur forest range in Dewas district, was found on the bank of a water body inside the jungle on the intervening night of Thursday and

His cell phone, recovered near his body, has led to disclosure of the attack on him by the poachers and his subsequent death.

"We have recovered the footage of the video showing his attack, shot by the slain forest guard himself in his cell phone. The accused were not captured in the video", Dewas divisional forest officer P.N. Mishra said

#### **POLICE TOLD TO FILE REPORT ON KANGANA'S CASE**

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC

A magistrate court in Mumbai on Friday directed the police to submit a progress report on the inquiry it had ordered into a complaint against actor Kangana Ranaut and her sister for posting alleged hateful messages on social media.

On Friday when the matter came up for hearing, the Amboli police sought further time to file their report on the complaint filed by advocate Ali Kaashif Khan Deshmukh alleging that the sisters tweeted hateful contents against a particular community.

Initially the magistrate in Andheri had ordered an inquiry in October, 2020 and asked the police to file their report by December 5, 2020 into the sisters' tweets from April 2020, but the police sought more time to complete the inquiry. Even though the magistrate had given a final chance to file their report during the last hearing on January 5.

However, the police sought further time on Friday.

#### **INDIA-U.S. TO JOINTLY CONDUCT** 'YUDH ABHYAS'

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, FEB. 5

Indian and US armies will conduct exercise 'Yudh Abhyas' from Monday at Mahajan Field Firing Range (MFFR) in Rajasthan.

Some 500 soldiers (250 from each side) will participate in the exercise to be conducted from February 8 to 21.

This annual training exercise enhances combined interoperability capabilities through training and cultural exchange, which foster enduring partnerships.

Yudh Abhyas provides excellent opportunities for professional and cultural exchanges that strengthen partnership between Indian and US military through shared learning and training," said US embassy in a state-

Training commences with expert academic exchanges and professional development workshops that focus on training at the corps-level and below: combat against conventional, unconventional and hybrid threats; humanitarian assistance and disaster

### **Government ready to listen** to protesting farmers: Tomar

Says govt's offer to amend the farm laws does not mean they are flawed

DC CORRESPONDENTS NEW DELHI, FEB. 5

Asserting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Centre are committed to the welfare of farmers, minister agriculture Narendra Singh Tomar on Friday said neither the Opposition members who criticised the three new farm laws, nor the farmers' unions, which had held more than 10 rounds of discussions with the government, have been able to point out what is "kaala" (black) in the laws which they are claiming are "kaala kanoon" (black laws). Intervening in a discussion on the motion of

thanks to the President's address in the Rajya Sabha, Tomar reiterated that the new laws are aimed at boosting farmers' incomes and the government's offer to amend them to assuage the farmers' sentiments does not mean they are flawed. As the government continued its defence of the laws, the Congress, which is supporting the farmers' unions protests against the laws, sought a Supreme Court-monitored probe into the Republic Day violence, when a protesting mob turned violent and unfurled a Sikh religious flag at the Red

While the Rajya Sabha saw the agriculture minister strongly defending the laws, the Lok Sabha wit-nessed sloganeering by Opposition members who demanded the repeal of the laws. The Lower House saw multiple adjourn-ments before it was adjourned for the day till

'The farmers unions, the Opposition parties have failed to point out a single flaw in three new farm laws. We are not standing on prestige. We have been

KOLKATA, FEB. 5



Farmers plant flowers near the spikes fixed by the police during their protest against the new farm laws, at

asking what is black in this law, and no one is answering," said Tomar in the Rajya Sabha, where he attackéd Congress, that is leading the protest in Parliament as indulging in "khoon ki kheti"

Amid the uproar in Parliament, the Prime Minister held a strategy meeting with Union home minister Amit Shah, parliamentary affairs minis-ter Prahlad Joshi and I&B Javadekar on how to tackle the ongoing protests by the farmers and the Opposition campaign.

will be responsible for

joined the BJP in pres-

ence of its national gener-

al secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya in New

Delhi on January 20 accused the TMC of

threat on his life. "It is the handiwork of

the ruling party. Similar

posters surfaced in my

name earlier also. This

time threat of my murder

has been given. I accept

those who gave it to me. I

will go nowhere, leaving

Only three days ago,

posters targeting the young MLA were circulat-

ed in his constituency.

One of them stated, "The evil has gone. TMC has

already won it. Only the

celebration is left. Flee

Local TMC leader Ajoy

De, however, claimed,

"Our party does indulge

in such shameful activi-

allegations are baseless.

removed the posters.

TMC is not involved in

Bhattacharjee's

the police

from

Arindam."

Later

Shantipur,

Shantipur," he said.

challenge

Insisting that the protests over farm laws are limited to only "one state (read Punjab)" and that the farmers are being "instigated", Tomar said, "I made it clear that the

WB MLA told to

leave or get killed

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC Shantipur, otherwise you

after his defea

Trinamul

tion to the BJP from the

Congress in poll-bound West Bengal, Shantipur

MLA in Nadia Arindam

Bhattacharjee has been

asked to leave his Assembly constituency

within a week or else he will be murdered.

Bhattacharjee, who won as a Congress MLA for

the first time in the 2016

Assembly election before defecting to the TMC next

year, in posters which

came to light on Friday

morning at many parts

including Bagdebipur

and Karamchapur of the town, a day before the first Rath Yatra of

BJP is scheduled

be launched by ty president J.P.

president

Nadda from Nabadwip in

Written in blue and

Bengali, one of the

posters states, "Agami

saatdiner modhye Arindam Bhattacharjee

tumi Shantipur chharo,

nahole tomar khuner

daay tumi nije (within

next seven days, you leave

the district.

The threat was issued to

make amendments but it doesn't mean there is any problem in the farm laws. People in a particular state are misinformed. Farmers are being misled that others would occupy their land if these laws are implemented. Let me know if there is a single provision in the contract farming law which allows any trader to snatch away the land of any farmer," said the minister.

In an apparent reference to a booklet released by the Congress recently against the laws, the minister hit back, "The world knows water is required for farming. Only the Congress can do farming using blood.

He also said the government had not "defamed" the farmers, as alleged by

### Shivraj, Nath hold closed-door meet

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, FEB. 5

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday held a closed-door meeting with his predecessor and veteran Congress leader Kamal Nath here sparking speculations on 'track 2 talks' to end the impasse over the ongoing farmers' stir.

The one-to-one meeting held in the Chief Minister's official residence here, lasted about 20 minutes. Neither the Chief Minister nor Nath spoke to the media to detail what

WB Cong seeks alliance with

transpired in the meeting. Congress spokesman here Narendra Saluja, however, indicated that the two leaders discussed the farmers' issues.

"Farmers' issues cropped up in the meeting", Saluja told reporters giving credence to the speculations on track 2 talks to end the impasse over the over 2-month-long farmers' stir in Delhi.

Incidentally, Nath left for Delhi after the meeting on a week-long visit to the national capital where he was scheduled to meet several senior leaders of

### Centre to give 1 more chance to **UPSC** aspirants

Centre on Friday told the Supreme Court that it is agreeable to give an extra chance as a one-time relaxation to UPSC civil service aspirants, who had appeared in their last attempt in the 2020 exam amid the Covid-19 pandemic and are otherwise not age-barred.

"Relaxation, only to the extent of providing one extra attempt for Civil Service Examination (CSE), specifically limited to CSE-2021, may be granted to only those candidates who appeared for CSE-2020 as their last permissible attempt and are otherwise not age-barred from appearing in CSEthe Centre told a bench headed by Justice

A.M. Khanwilkar.
In a note filed in the apex court, the Centre said that no relaxation shall be granted for CSE-2021 to those candidates who have not exhausted their permissible number of attempts or to those who are otherwise agebarred from appearing in CSE-2021 as per the prescribed age limits of different categories, or to any other candidate for any other reason whatso-

"This relaxation for the candidates and to the extent as prescribed above, shall be a one-time relaxation only and shall apply only for appearing in CSE-2021 and shall not be treated as a precedent," it told the bench, also comprising Justice Dinesh Maheshwari.

The Centre said that the

ate any vested right whatsoever or any other purported right on ground of parity or otherwise, in favour of any other set/class of candidates at any time in the future.'

"As per the suggestion of this court, the Union of India is agreeable for the following ex-gratia, onetime, restricted relax ation to be granted to the prospective candidates, subject to the same being part of a consent order, disposing off the petition," the note, filed by Additional

General S.V. Raju, said.

The bench told Raju to circulate the note and asked the petitioners to file their responses to it. The top court said it would hear the matter on February 8.

The bench is hearing a

plea seeking grant of one more chance in the UPSC's civil services exam to those aspirants who could not appear in their last attempt in 2020 due to the pandemic.

On February 1, the Centre had told the top court that it cannot grant an extra chance to civil services aspirants who could not appear or prepare well for their last attempt in the UPSC civil service exam in 2020 due to the pandemic, while reiterating that it would amount to extending "dif ferential treatment" to similarly placed candidates. However, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta had on February 1 sought time to discuss the issue

### After 18 months, 4G back in J&K

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC

High speed 4G internet services were restored in entire Jammu and Kashmir late on Friday evening, exactly after a gap of 18 months.

The authorities said that the decision to this

effect was taken after the review of the security situation in the Union territory and in view of the recommendations of a committee set up by the government to look into

the issue some time ago. The announcement was Secretary Information, Rohit Kansal, who is also government spokesperson, through a tweet. It said, "4G mobile internet services being restored in entire J&K @diprjk"

A formal order signed by Shaleen Kabba, principal secretary (home), said that in view of the advice of the special committee constituted on the directive of Supreme Court and upon "careful review" of the overall security scenario the restrictions on mobile data services and fixed line Internet connectivity is revoked "except to the extent that the pre-paid SIM card holders shall be provided excess to the Internet connectivity only after verification as per the norms applicable for post-paid connections" In August last year, the authorities had restored high-speed 4G

service

THE ANNOUNCEMENT was made by Principal Secretary Information, Rohit Kansal, who is also government spokesperson, through a tweet.

'experimental basis' in two districts of the erst-while state-Udhampur and Ganderbal, more than a year after a comboth Jammu region and Kashmir Valley regions ahead of the Centre's abrogating Article 370 and bifurcating the state Territories on August 5,

Though the landline and mobile phone and 2G bandwidth internet services were restored in a phased manner across what is now called the UT of J&K earlier, 18 out of 20 of its districts continued to be deprived of the high-speed 4G internet.

2019.

A series of judgements given and observations made by the Supreme Court in the past had failed to end what the critics called was J&K's ʻdigital siege"

Welcoming the government's decision to end the ban on high speed internet services after 551 days, former chief minister and National Conference leader Omar Abdullah tweeted "4G Mubarak! For the first time since Aug 2019 all of J&K will have 4G mobile data. Better late than

### Pfizer pulls out of vaccination race

with agencies input NEW DELHI, FEB. 6

Vaccine firm Pfizer on Friday announced its decision to withdraw its application for Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) of its Covid-19 vaccination in India.

Pfizer was the first pharmaceutical firm to seek an emergency use authorisation from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) for its Covid-19 vaccine in the country, after it secured such clearance in the UK and Bahrain.

Emergency Use Authorisation future, the statement said.

of its Covid-19 vaccine, Pfizer participated in the Subject Expert Committee meeting of the Drug Regulatory Authority of India on February 3. Based on the deliberations at the meeting and our understanding of additional information that the regulator may need, the company has decided to withdraw its application at this time," a company spokesperson said in a state-

Pfizer will continue to engage with the authority and resubmit its approval request with additional information as it "In pursuance of the becomes available in the near

ed in a case for allegedly hurting religious sentiments by passing objectionable remarks about Hindu deities during a show, the Supreme Court on Friday released him on an interim bail.

The top court also stayed the Madhya Pradesh High Court order of January 28, which had refused to grant him bail noting that to "promote harmony" is one the constitutional

duties.

ISF to win Muslim votebank **RAJIB CHOWDHURI** can't even hide his desper-KOLKATA, FEB. 5 ation to consolidate their came after month-long perate to reclaim its

Muslim votebank from ruling Trinamul Congress in the forthcoming West Bengal Assembly elections, the state Congress leaders have sought UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi's permission to include a third party in their alliance, Indian Secular Front, floated by influential cleric of Furfura Sharif, Pirzada Abbas Sid-

The Congress already has an alliance with the Left Front and the two parties are in the middle of seat-sharing talks.

On Thursday, leader of the Opposition in the state, Abdul Mannan, wrote to the Congress president, "Amidst the dialogue process with the Left Front on electoral alliance, I would like to add a possibility of a grand alliance in Bengal to target more winnable seats. You are aware that Congress party in West Bengal stood in the state for the support of minority votes since many years. But the result of the last Lok Sabha election shows following AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi's visit to Siddiqui last month.

that minority vote has shifted from the party. Best example is the district of Murshidabad where Muslim population is not less than 70 per cent, Congress is far behind in every Musim dominated Assembly segments. The same picture is in Malda and we have been uprootcompletely in all Muslim dominated segment of the district of Uttar Dinajpur."

Dr Mannan's move came after month-long talks with Siddiqui following AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi's visit to Siddiqui last month and his pledge to back him, apparently to split the Muslim votes to help the BJP.

Slamming him, BJP IT cell in-charge Amit Malviya tweeted, "The true nature of 'secular' politics is nothing but Muslim appeasement and here Abdul Mannan, Congress leader in Bengal, in a letter to Sonia Gandhi,

if Hindus don't matter!" Dr Mannan observed "Out of 30 per cent Musl-

im population in Bengal, the percentage of Bengalispeaking Muslim is 90 per cent which had been the traditional votebank of Congress. We have failed to hold that support for various reasons. Introduction of a new political entity in the name of Indian Secular Front (ISF) is a threat for all secular parties. They have made a concept paper (attached) to target Muslms, dalits, tribals and all unprivileged masses within the secular fabric of the country.

The president of the ISF is a Hindu but the person behind the front is a Muslim religious leader named Pirzada Abbas Siddiqui who belongs to the Eminent Religious Family of Furfura Sharif, Hooghly. He is not only popular for his oratory skill among Muslims but among dalits and rribals also. Lakhs of people gather in his meeting in dalit and tribal areas.

### BIG | RELIEF | Apex court stays MP High Court order, production warrant issued against Faruqui

### SC grants bail to comedian Munawar Faruqui

relief to comedian Munawar Faruqui, arrest-

It also stayed the produc-

warrant issued against Faruqui by a trial court in Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh in connection with the FIR lodged in the state.

A bench of Justices R.F. Nariman and B.R. Gavai said issued notice on two petitions filed by Faruqui seeking bail in a case in Indore in Madhya Pradesh and clubbing and quashing of FIRs lodged for the same alleged offence in different

The top court sought response from Madhya Pradesh government on

both the pleas filed by Faruqui and from Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Maharashtra govern-ments on the plea seeking clubbing and quashing of

This being the case, we issue notice in both the petitions, and stay the Judgment of the High Court. The petitioner is released on ad-interim bail on conditions to the satisfaction of the trial court. In the meantime, there shall be the production warrants

as well, the bench said.

At the outset, advocate Saurabh Kirpal, appearing for Faruqui said, This is a case of victimisa-

He said that allegations made in the FIR are vague in nature and procedure of arrest laid down by the court in its 2014 verdict was not followed.

The bench noted the submission and said, The counsel has pointed out to us that quite apart from the fact that the allegations made in the FIR are vague that the procedure contained in Section 41 CrPC as adumbrated by

our Judgment in Arnesh Kumar Versus State of Bihar and others has not been followed before arresting the petitioner.

internet

Farugui and four others were arrested on January 1 following a complaint by a BJP MLA's son that alleged objectionable remarks about Hindu deities and Union home minister Amit Shah were passed by him during a comedy show at a cafe in Indore on New Year's day. One more person was arrested subsequently.

The high court, in its

28, had refused to grant him bail noting that to the constitutional duties. It had also turned down the bail plea of another accused in the case.

court had said it would not comment on merits of the case, but based on the material seized, the witnesses' statements and considering the fact that probe was going on, no case was made out for grant of bail.

SHORT TAKES

#### **GAS EXPLOSION** IN S. GERMANY, **MANY HURŤ**

Berlin, Feb. 5: Several people were injured in a gas explosion on Friday in or near a building in the southern German town of Memmingen.

The explosion occurred at about 6 am and damaged the building used by the Bavarian Red Cross, which also had apartments above, authorities told the dpa news agency. Five people were injured, one seriously, police said.

The source of the explosion was a defective gas line that ran under the street in front of the building, dpa reported. Authorities warned that other explosions were possible and evacuated the area. The building was seriously damaged, police said.

#### **COPS CHARGE PAIR OVER SEX SLAVE RING**

Brisbane, Australia, Feb. 5: A man and woman in Australia were charged with drugging several women and forcing them into prostitution on Friday, with police alleging girls as young as 17 were tattooed as property and held in

"sexual servitude". A 35-year-old Brisbane man is accused of giving at least four victims "stupefying drugs" and along with a suspected female accomplice faces multiple charges relating to unlawful prostitution.

Police said raids at two properties in Brisbane's southern uncovered four female victims and authorities believe more have yet to be

'The investigation is still ongoing however the women are now safe thanks to the information from members of the public and the diligence of our officers," Queensland Police Service Detective Inspector Juliet Hancock said in a statement.

"We believe there are other victims who have been exploited by the man, and I encourage them to come forward and con-

#### 2-YR-OLD INDIAN **BOY BECOMES YOUNGEST DONOR**

Dubai, Feb. 5: A two-year-old Indian boy has become one of the youngest donors of hair in the UAE, as part of a charity drive to help cancer patients, according to a media

At two years and 10 months, youngest children to have enrolled into the Friends of Cancer Patients' (FOCP) hair donation campaign, the Gulf News reported.

His mother, Neha Jain, a housewife, said Taksh was inspired by his older sister, who donated her locks for a similar cause in 2019. "My son used to listen to that and started telling us that he too wanted to give his hair like his sister. I was touched and started growing his hair.

Jain said they are going to wait for Taksh's hair to grow a little longer, before it is finally donated. The FOCP launched the hair donation drive on Thursday, marking World Cancer Day. As of now, seven schools in the UAE are part of the initiative.

#### **TALIBAN ATTACK KILLS 10 AFGHAN MILITIAMEN**

Afghanistan, Feb. 5: At least 10 pro-government Afghan militiamen were killed in fierce overnight fighting after their checkpoint came under attack from Taliban fighters in northern Afghanistan, officials said on

The attack on the local militia, many of which work with overstretched security forces, came as violence surges across the country despite peace talks between the warring Taliban and Afghan government.

Insurgents attacked the checkpoint in the restive Kunduz province during the night, provincial governor Abdul Sattar Mirzakwal told

reporters.
"Their attack was repelled initially but the militiamen were attacked again by Taliban fighters which led to intense fighting," Mirzakwal

"Unfortunately, 10 uprising forces (pro-government militi-amen) were killed." Kunduz Kunduz provincial council member Amruddin Wali confirmed the attack but said at least 15 mili-

tiamen were killed. There was no immediate comment from the Taliban.

### **Biden ends US role in Yemen** war, calls out Russia, China

### US Prez also freezes Trump's plans to redeploy troops from Germany

Washington, Feb. 5: President Joe Biden ended US support for Saudi Arabia's devastating war in Yemen and dramatically increased the welcome to refugees, ushering in a major reset in American foreign policy.

In his first major speech on foreign affairs as president, Biden also froze former president Donald Trump's plans to redeploy troops from Germany and vowed a tough approach against what he described as a rising authoritarian threat from China and

Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris traveled together to the State Department in a symbol of a renewed focus on diplo-Trump's tumultuous four years.

"America is back. Diplomacy is back," Biden told a socially distanced auditorium of diplomats.

In a speech shortly afterward, Biden said the United States would end all support including con-nected arms sales for ally Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen, which he said "has created a humanitarian and strategic catastro-

He appointed a US special envoy for Yemen, veteran diplomat Timothy Lenderking, who Biden said would support UN efforts to reach a ceasefire and revive peace talks between the government and Huthi rebels who control much of the country, including the capital

"This war has to end," Biden said.

Saudi Arabia reacted to Biden's speech by reasserting its commitON AMERICA

Biden said the **United States will** welcome up to 1,25,000

refugees in the first fiscal year of his administration - far above the record-low 15,000 last approved by Trump, who was a vociferous critic of non-Western immigration.

Biden said that he had warned Vladimir Putin that the US will no longer be "rolling over in the face of Russia's aggressive actions." "We will not hesitate to raise the cost on Russia and defend our vital interest and our people.'

**ON YEMEN** US President said that the war in Yemen "has to end", pledging to terminate US support for Saudi-led offensive operations and to halt arms sales. "This war

has to end," Biden

ON GERMANY

Putting on hold plans set in motion by Trump to reduce the US troop presence in Germany, a corner-stone of NATO security since the start of the Cold War.

ment to a political solution in Yemen, according to state media.

Riyadh also welcomed Biden's "commitment to cooperate with the kingdom to defend its sovereignty and counter threats against it," the official Press Agency

Trump — who argued arms sales were creating US defense jobs — viewed the war as a way to hit back at the Huthis' ally

Biden backs a return of diplomacy and a nuclear accord with Iran but, strikingly, he only indi-rectly mentioned Tehran in what was billed as a broad-brush speech on his international priorities.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken also said he will revisit Trump's

last-minute designation of the Huthis as a terrorist

group.

In Yemen, senior political official Hamid Assem voiced hope that Biden's plan will mark the end of a six-year war that has left tens of thousands dead.

"The Biden administra-tion saw that the war in Yemen carries a heavy cost and that America's reputation has been tarnished by the killing of the people of Yemen," he said.

In another sharp reversal, Biden said the United States will welcome up to 1,25,000 refugees in the first fiscal year of his administration the record-low above 15,000 last approved by Trump, who was a vociferous critic of non-Western

moral leadership on refugee issues was a point of bipartisan consensus for so many decades when I first got here," said Biden, who was elected to

**US will confront** 

of China, Russia

'authoritarianism'

"We shine the light, the lamp, of liberty on oppressed people. And our example pushed other countries to open wide their recovers." their doors as well." Among groups seeking asylum, Biden said his administration would welcome LGBTQ people fleeing persecution over their sexual orientation.

the Senate in 1972.

Biden also put on hold plans set in motion by Trump to reduce the US presence Germany, a cornerstone of NATO security since the start of the Cold War.

Trump's decision

seen as linked to his tense Chancellor Angela Merkel — whose welcome to mostly Syrian migrants he belittled.

Defense Austin Lloyd later said he had ordered a Pentagon review of US military "force posture" around the world in consultation with

Biden has pledged to keep up Trump's hard stance on China — but also to toughen the US stance on Russian President Vladimir Putin, for whom the defeated US president voiced admira-

"I made it clear to President Putin — in a manner very different from my predecessor that the days of the United States rolling over in the face of Russia's aggressive actions, interfering with our elections, cyber attack and poisoning its citizens are over," Biden said.

Moments before the speech, the State Department said that Blinken spoke by telephone with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and, among other issues, raised the purported poisoning of opposition leader

Alexei Navalny — who was arrested last month on his return to Moscow and has inspired thousands to take to the

Biden said the United States "must meet this new moment of advancing authoritarianism including the growing ambitions China to rival the United States and the determination of Russia to damage and disrupt our democracy.



The USS John S. McCain (DDG 56) destroyer is moored in a dock at the Yokosuka Naval Base on June 01, 2019

### Beijing warns off US warship near South China Sea

**Beijing, Feb. 5:** China on Friday warned off a US warship sailing near contested islands in the South China Sea, Beijing said, the first such encounter made public since the inauguration of

President Joe Biden. The USS John S. McCain "broke into China's Xisha territorial waters without the permission of the Chinese government," Beijing's military said in a statement, using its name for the disputed Paracel

Islands. The People's Liberation Army "organized naval and air forces to track, monitor and warn off' the warship, the Chinese military said, blasting the US for "seriously violating China's sovereignty" and "harming regional peace."The Arleigh Burke-class guided misdestroyer

Thursday also conducted a routine transit through the waterway separating the Chinese mainland and Taiwan, which Beijing says constitutes part of its territory.

Washington has argued

law and help defend right of passage through the region amid competing claims by China and other governments.

China lays claim to nearly all of the South China Sea, including the Paracel Islands.
Taiwan, the Philippines,

Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all also claim parts of the region, believed to hold valuable

oil and gas deposits.
Further angering those countries, and the US, Beijing has moved to build reefs into artificial islands capable of hosting

military planes. The US navy in late January sent an aircraft carrier group into the South China Sea on a socalled "freedom of navigation exercise," its first routine operation in the region under the Biden administration.

China has stepped up military, diplomatic and economic pressure on Taiwan since the 2016 election of President Tsai Ing-wen, who refuses to accept Beijing's stance that the island is part of "one China".

### US House strips posts of 'QAnon Congresswoman'

Washington, Feb. 5: The Democratic-led US House voted on Thursday to discipline a congresswoman who embraced QAnon conspiracy theories and endorsed violence, capping weeks of mounting turmoil over holding to account a lawmaker whose extremist rhetoric caused a rupture in

Republican ranks. Conservative first-term congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene, facing bipartisan opprobrium for a series of disturbing comments and support of social media posts advocating the assassination of Democratic lawmakers, was stripped of her two assignments on the House education and budget committees

The punishment was meted out in a modestly bipartisan vote of 230 to 199 which occurred hours after Greene, a fierce supporter of former president Donald Trump, took to the House floor to renounce the conspiracy movement and expressed regret for spreading misinformation.

Eleven Republicans defied their party to join all voting Democrats in disciplining Greene, whose alarming actions before she ran for office included posting video of herself harassing a teen school shooting survivor and casting doubt on the September 11, 2001 attacks.

"No member ought to be

**US Senate okays** \$1.9 tn Covid relief

Washington, Feb. 5: The returns to the House, approved a budget resolution that's a key step toward fast-track passage of President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion Coronavirus relief plan without support from Republicans. Vice President Kamala Harris was in the chair to cast the tie-breaking vote, her first.

Democrats in the chamber applauded after Harris announced the 51-50 vote at around 5:30 am The action came after a gruelling all-night session, where senators voted on amendments that could define the contours of the eventual Covid-19 aid bill. The budget now

where it will have to approved again due to the changes made by the Senate.

Final passage unlock the next phase in drafting of the virus relief bill, with the work divided among several congress sional committees. Senate Majority Leader

called passage of the resoon the road to recovery.'

By moving on a fast track, the goal for Dem-

permitted to engage in the kind of behavior that Representative Greene has and face zero consequences." number two House Democrat Steny Hoyer told the chamber. "This vote can be a first

error of those who so far have chosen to do noth-But Republicans blasted the action against one of their own as shattering

with members of leadership warning of potential political payback should

they regain power. Number three Republican Liz Cheney, fresh from surviving a challenge to her leadership step in correcting the after she voted to impeach Trump last month, said that while Greene's comments were reprehensible, Democrats business determining which Republicans sit on committees." — AFF congressional precedent.

Chuck Schumer D-N.Y., lution the "first big step to putting our country back

ocrats is to have Covid relief approved by March, when extra unemployment assistance and other pandemic aid expires. -AP

leader Aung San Suu Kyi was arrested on Friday, days after a coup that has sparked outrage and calls by US President Joe Biden for the generals to relin-

quish power. The arrest came after the streets of Myanmar's biggest city filled for a third night with people banging pots and honking car horns, voicing their opposition to Monday's coup. On Friday dozens of teachers at Yangon's Dagon University staged a

rally where displayed a

three-finger salute bor-

aide to ousted Myanmar

• U.S. PRESIDENT Joe Biden called on Myanmar's generals to

Indonesian protesters release pigeons during a protest against the military coup in Myanmar, outside the Myanmar

"relinquish power" Thursday and demanded they free civilian leaders detained in this week's coup, as his administration said it was considering sanctions.

rowed from Hong Kong and Thailand's democracy movements, and sang a popular revolution song. The military detained de facto leader Suu Kyi and president Win Myint early Monday, ending the country's 10-year dalliance

with democracy that had followed decades oppressive junta rule. Win Htein, considered Suu Kyi's right-hand man,

was arrested at his daughter's house, said Kyi Toe, a press officer for the National League of Democracy. The 79-year-old NLD stalwart has spent long

stretches in and out for detention for campaigning against military rule. Ahead of his arrest. Win Htein told local media that the military putsch was 'not wise", and that its leaders had taken the country "in the

wrong direction".

ntry should oppose as much as they can the ac-

Political Prisoners, Yangon-based group that monitors political arrests in Myanmar, more than 130 officials and lawmakers have been detained in relation to the coup.

GREEN PROJECT

### Unveils \$43 billion deal, involves 33 different entities Korea plans biggest offshore wind farm

**Seoul, Feb. 5:** A \$43 billion deal was signed Friday to build what the South Korean government said will be the world's biggest offshore wind power complex, as it seeks

ity by 2050 South Korea has few energy resources of its own and relies on imported coal — a cheap but dirty fuel — for around 40 per-

to achieve carbon neutral-

cent of its electricity.
President Moon Jae-in declared the carbon neutrality goal last year but at the same time is looking to phase out nuclear power, leaving the country depending on renewables to square the circle.

Moon oversaw the signing of the 48 trillion won (\$43 billion) agreement to build the complex off Sinan in the country's southwest, which he said would be seven times bigger than the world's current largest offshore wind With a maximum capaci-

ty of 8.2 gigawatts, the gov-

ernment is banking on it

being the equivalent of six

nuclear power stations.

to accelerate the process. SOUTH KOREA also plans to cut its existing nuclear power plants — currently the country's only significant

low-carbon energy source — from 24 to 17 by 2034, reducing the sector's energy output by nearly half. Moon said that the coun-The agreement involves

MOON WARNED it could take more than five years

to start construction, although the government will try

try's position on the Korean peninsula gave it a geographical advantage. "We have the infinite notential of offshore wind power to the sea on three sides, and we have the

world's best technology in

related fields," he added.

different entities, among them regional governments, the electricity generator KEPCO, and maior private firms including Doosan Heavy Industries & Construction and SK E&S.

Moon warned it could

take more than five years to start construction, although the government will try to accelerate the

process. Seoul last year announced a target of becoming one of the world's top five offshore wind energy powerhouses by 2030.

South Korea also plans to cut its existing nuclear power plants — currently the country's only significant low-carbon energy source — from 24 to 17 by 2034, reducing the sector's energy output by nearly

#### **RUSSIA EXPELS EU DIPLOMATS OVER NAVALNY ROW, TIES AT 'LOW POINT**

the

Moscow, Feb. 5: Moscow said on Friday it was expelling diplomats from Poland, Germany and Sweden for participating in unsanctioned demonstrations last month in support of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

The move comes hours the European Union's top diplomat Josep Borrell met Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Moscow and described the bloc's ties with Russia as at a "low point" over

Navalny's jailing.
Borrell "strongly condemned" the action, a spokesman said, while Sweden branded it "com-

The Russian foreign ministry said in a statement that an unspecified number of diplomats from the three EU countries took part in "illegal demon-strations" on January 23 and had been declared persona non grata. "They were ordered to leave Russia in the near future," the ministry said, adding that Moscow expects diplomats from the countries to "strictly fol-

pletely unfounded"

Russian police have arrested more than 10,000 people at mass demonstrations.

low the norms of interna-

tional law" in the future.

Key Aung San Suu Kyi aide held

tions they are seeking to take us back to zero by destroying our govern-ment," he told Frontier Myanmar in the coup's aftermath. Suu Kvi has not been seen in public since Monday. According to the Assistance Association for

## Chronicle

6 FEBRUARY 2021

### US remarks a wake-up call Delhi can't ignore

he American government's statement on Thursday — in which the right of peaceful protest, free speech, and unhindered access to the Internet were flagged as signs of a "thriving democracy" — is a straightforward response to the egregious steps of the Narendra Modi government in recent days. These are the first substantive public observations on India by the two-week-old Biden administration. The message — in the backdrop of the farmers' agitation in the country, and the comments by journalists and other public figures in that context—accords with the sentiments of millions of Indians, and millions worldwide, who are surprised by the turn of events and processes in India for some time.

President Joe Biden's administration has underlined first principles in a neutral, moderate voice. Also, the US state department's cautionary observations which was reiterated by the US embassy in India — was in response to a question by the American newspaper *The Wall Street Journal*, not off its own bat. This is a

useful device suggestive of an official criticism, but not quite.

It will be obvious except to the dense that the present US administration's first

The US state department's cautionary observations was in response to a question by the Wall Street Journal. not off its own bat. This is a useful device suggestive of an official criticism, but not quite.

public observations on India came immediately after the Narendra Modi government targeted some international icons, including the famous pop star Rihanna, the teen Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg (who is nominated for the Nobel Prize) "and others" for lending support to the farmers' stir (since it is being railroaded by a monstrous government, actions which have drawn considerable domestic criticism).

Through a tweet, the climate activist offered a "toolkit" to back protesters. This is standard mobilising tactic for activists everywhere with the use of "Twitter storm" and the like. Supporters of the ruling party in India do this routinely when playing polarising games at elec-

The so-called "toolkit" has moved the Indian government, including its normally staid external affairs ministry, and the ruling party, to smell an international "conspiracy", no less, to defame India. This is laughable, of course.

The Delhi Police, frequently a violent and communal force, has filed a FIR against international personalities without naming anyone. This is a fig leaf. It is clear that Ms Rihanna and Ms Thunberg, "and others" (including the US vice-president's lawyer-writer niece Meena Harris), are the principal objects of its ire. These FIRs—the official call for investigation—by the Delhi police, which is

directly controlled by Union home minister Amit Shah, are related to extremely serious criminal offences such as sedition and attempt to cause disharmony as between communities. Before the international celebrities, it had been the turn of journalists in India — last week six well-known editors, in a long string of journalists in recent times, and senior politicians like Shashi Tharoor — to face exactly the same official allegations. The US state department's remarks appear to have

In its sorry response, the India's external affairs ministry is self-congratulatory, calling India a "vibrant" democracy with "shared values" with the United States. In today's climate, is it? No amount of seeking to falsely equate the January 6 attack on the US Capitol and the January 26 move by infiltrators in the entirely peaceful farmers' movement to create chaos at the Red Fort, hides the ugly reali-

### Don't pardon Rajiv killers

iven the embarrassing task of granting clemency to seven life convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, the Tamil Nadu Governor, Banwarill Purohit, has ducked the responsibility. He has passed the political football back to the President of India saying he is the appropriate authority to take the call though he may find it difficult to explain why he sat on it for two-and-a-half years before declining to decide. The prisoners for life, some of whose sentences were commuted to life and thus got a reprieve from the gallows, have been languishing in Tamil Nadu prisons for close to three decades. The question that arises is whether they deserve any sympathy.

Mercy may be a quality that is twice blessed, as the Bard of Avon put it, but sympathy for the conspirators of a heinous crime aimed at one who had been Prime Minister of India may be totally misplaced even if some of them may have, innocently or otherwise, contributed very little to the plot like buying a 9-volt battery to complete the circuit to blow up the explosives hidden in the body belt worn by the assassin Dhanu. The plot, hatched by LTTE's murderous chief Velupilla Prabhakaran, seemed to have came straight out of a Frederick Forsyth novel and was carried out on Indian soil near Chennai, killing 18 including Rajiv Gandhi and the assassin and injuring 43 bystanders on May 21, 1991.

Sympathy on humanitarian grounds for the surviving plotters has been built up in the strange political ambience in a state that once viewed a Tamil Eelam in northern Sri Lanka as a desirable outcome. Rajiv Gandhi, confused by a welter of opinions on the Tamils issue, may have erred in judgment in sending a peace keeping force to the island nation and paid the price. No government at the Centre could be seen as weak in pardoning the killers of a Prime Minister. The ball is back with the President even as the top court will continue to grapple with the legal challenges to lifetimes in prison.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER

K. Sudhakar

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Farrukh Dhondy **Of Cabbages** & Kings



"Gratitude is an angel With a very short memory. Jealousy, a demon With a stimulated long one Indifference shrugs its shoulders In dismissal whenever he Encounters a strong emotion

was a Greek called Aristarchus who in 200 BC first said that the earth was a globe. Galileo was cer-Ltain of it and in later centuries the Portuguese Magellan added the decisive circumnavigating proof. An early definition of "globalisation" was born.

exchange of capital and of labour -

what neo-troglodytes believe). It certainly included a political programme and was opposed to global action on climate change.

doxical. On the one hand, Brexit caused the UK to leave one of the planet's largest trading blocs to go it alone, and on the other hand it trumpeted intentions to open Little England to an ambitious programme of international trade, an invitation to capital to come here with the promise of low taxes and Rishi Sunak's free ports, while at the same time stopping the England" — both policies perpetrated,

THE WORLD IS SHRINKING ... BUT WE ARE SPENDING MORE TO

GO AROUND IT

Yeh Rihanna-Wihanna,

Greta-Vreta... kaun hai?

same Sikh Regiment,

dealing with this strange situation that

their traumatised fami-

lies can do little about.

Jeet Singh's son Veer

works as a guard. He said: "Our fathers fought for India in their youth. The government has disrespected them

by putting such veterans

in jail." The two farmers

own an acre of farmland each, on which they grow wheat. Today, they

are languishing in jail and being called "Khalistanis" and "ter-

rorists". Rihanna sang *Unapologetic* in 2012. You go figure who

deserves an apology in

Soon, everybody had

jumped in to express their two bits' worth. I

saved my *gyaan* and stayed out — savouring

grilled calamari at a

beach shack seemed a

far more worthwhile pursuit. I thought lazily

and idly to myself, try-ing hard not to get dis-tracted by the over-

dressed Gurgaon crowd

swigging beer at the next table: "Why is everybody frothing at

the mouth and dissing

remembered. If VVIP

Bharatwaasis did not

step up publicly and lec-

ture us on our duty as citizens ("call out

Rihanna, tell her not to

meddle in India's affairs,

let the world know we

can handle our own

internal matters..."), their bag of sarkari

snatched away. The

more relevant counter

question to all those big

names who have passed

the patriotic test with

flying colours — did

Perhaps Rihanna

does indeed pos-

sess remarkable

understanding of

political, social and

cultural issues in

distant lands she

chances are, she

what her PR team

places before her.

goes along with

foot in. But the

may never ever set

complicated

would

Then

Rihanna?"

goodies

Subhani

Shobhaa De

tweet. Mayhem followed

as all *desi* patriots

scrambled to counterat-

tack these impudent folks who had dared to

question our official

stand on the farmers

protests. People who had

absolutely nothing to do

with either the farmers

or the government, jumped in feet first to

damn and attack the

accusing them of gener-

ating an international

conspiracy designed to break up our vast coun-

try and hand it over to

China! Stumped? So was

Goan weather had start-

ed to play tricks with my mood and thinking

(without feni, let me

hastily clarify), upar

se... I was going through

zabardast tweets posted

by super-patriotic Indians, basically ask-

ing Rihanna and Co to

butt out of India's

affairs. Someone bril-

liant called Sambit Patra

(know him?) thundered on a bigoted/compro-

mised television chan-

Rihanna tweet about the 1984 riots?" Excellent question, Shri Patra.

But the singer was born

in 1988 and Twitter start-

ed only in 2006. Koi baat

nahi — loyalty game

fully on, even if the goof-

ups are totally embar-rassing. So much for

credibility. Hot air has

its uses when the audi-

ence itself is grossly

Confession: I am pretty

clueless myself. But

when I read accounts of

two elderly fauji farmers

(Jeet Singh, 70, and Gurmukh Singh, 80) being picked up by the Delhi police as suspects,

charged with an act of

violence (FIR No. 31)

they were allegedly a

part of ... nothing makes

sense! Lodged in Tihar

Jail, the two men who

had served the Army for

over two decades in the

uninformed.

"Why

... as it is, the sultry

"influencers"

was in salubrious

trying to dodge zil-lions of Dilliwallas

who have as good

as taken over this gor-

geous state and estab-

favoured villages and hamlets. Poor Goans, I thought to myself. First

came the Israelis, then the Russians — and now

become a mini-Gurgaon,

and the locals aren't amused. In such a surre-

alistic setting, it was a bit tough for me to focus

on a single tweet posted

by a Barbados-born

singer and the havoc it

generated across India.

Well, I'm getting carried

netas and assorted celeb-

rities/influencers who jumped in, and boom!

Rihanna went viral. Be

honest - how many of

you reading this column

had even heard of

maybe, you had heard

her. And even danced to

her tracks, but did

Rihanna and what she

tweeted impact your life even remotely? No, *na*? I

recall enjoying Under

my umbrella, which

brought Rihanna into

the global stage way

back in 2007. After that, I

totally forgot all about

Now, I am unlikely to

forget! The 32-year-old

singer with a staggering

100 million followers on

Instagram. No wonder

our *netas* got sufficiently

hilaaoed and obviously

rattled, when she had

the gumption to tweet in

support of our protest-

ing farmers. More than

226.3K retweets fol-

lowed, with 490.3K users

Whoa! What was going

Uske baad, that opinionated Greta what's-

her-face, got into the act

and lagaoed her own

Rihana

hungama?

— it was Dilli

before this

Okay

Arpora

"klonies"

their

desperately

across

origins are Indian and Indo-African. Yet now, gentle reader, the most dreadful reminder that the tide of globalisation is upon us is not the rush of refugees from Africa to Europe or the determination of Japanese car manufacturers to relocate to countries where the promise of profit is the greatest. Independent of the will of capital and labour, nature has shown its near-apocalyptic hand. There have been plagues before, and Sars and Ebola did spread from one country to another, but Covid-19 and its menacingly developing variants is, after the very early spread of the ancestors of homo sapiens to all corners of the globe, the first truly fast-moving

Daniel Defoe wrote his *Journal of the Plague Year* as a novel covering events in London 1665. Then Shakespeare, it is said, wrote Macbeth and King Lear under lockdown in the early years of the seventeenth century. The Internet has alerted me to several literary efforts attempting to capture the ennui, isolation, change in shopping

thhodee si publicity sey kya farak padtha? - fd). The globalist way of looking at these times is to see them as a battle between two species of evolved life - the mutating, deadly coronavirus strains and the scientifically analytical and cre-

nuity of political ordering. The scientific effort of the geneticists, doctors, epidemiologists and others who have not only invented and deployed five developed vaccines, and with many more to come, but have found treatments to alleviate the

symptoms of the infected. The political efforts, subject to all manner of constraints and forces,

Covid lockdowns. No doubt there will be whole novels about what Netflix programmes some scribbler watched with photographs of the meals they cooked in these dreadful months. I myself have found time to complete two books which have nothing to do with how I spend my time or what I cook but are brilliant fictional... (I've repeatedly told you that this space is not for your idiotic self-advertisements — Ed. Sorry yaar, iss mushkil vakhth mey

ative genius of scientists and the inge-

including crass cronyism — as in Britain where jobs and public funds

Reblace

### **DRIVING LICENCE**

The driving licence requirement in MP is baffling (MP makes character certificate must for DL, DC, Feb. 5). The comical logic of this order is to curb crimes against women. Is there any connection between assault of women and men driving vehicles? Will a teetotaler and spotless men be the future vehicle drivers in MP. Are women drivers exempt?

even one of them under-stand the highly com-

plex farmers' problem? Frankly, it beats most

analysts. Without get-

ting to the bottom of

what is nothing short of

an unfortunate impasse

at the moment, why ignite more fires? Who

is Rihanna to us? Had

her tweet been ignored,

we would not have

attracted even more global scrutiny — it was as if the entire govern-

ment machinery at the

time was busy dealing

with a famous foreign

Most super celebrities hire PR teams to manage

social media accounts

and project a finely cali-

brated public image.

Perhaps Rihanna does

indeed possess remark-able understanding of

complicated political,

issues in distant lands

she may never ever set

foot in (unless the money is good, of course). But the chances

are, she goes along with

whatever her alert and

socially aware PR team

places before her. In simple words, it is

shrewd brand building.

It shows her as a think-

ing star concerned with

humanity. That's it! Yes, a tweet from such an

individual does snow-

ball into a bigger contro-

versy, if it catches on –

like it did this time.

These are the expected repercussions in the age

of celebrity — deal with

them wisely, as a gov-

ernment. By falling into

the trap, we fed the mon-

ster and kept the story alive. Mogambo is very

naraaz, okay? Get

smart, you guys. Focus on *asli* matters.

Rihanna's other hit was

titled: "Bitch, better have my money..." She has made hers. The "bitch"

has delivered. Where

does that leave us? Still

roping in celebrities to

counter Rihanna! Hello! She has moved on, okay?

She is probably tweeting

about saving endan-

gered dolphins in some

Readers can send

feedback to www.shobhaade.

blogspot.com

bewakoofi, I tell you!

and cultural

entertainer's tweet!

Parthasarathy Mandadi Tirupati

#### **POLICE TACTICS**

The police under MHA and BJPruled states seem to be emboldened due to Centre's unseemly tactics in dealing with the agitating farmers. The fortress-like barriers at Delhi borders, Bihar DGP's diktat against the agitations are the recent examples. It's time the PM steps in and creates a solution. **K. Nehru Patnaik** *Visakhapatnam* 

#### **ELECTION MEMORIES**

Come elections, it is amusement time. All political rivals wash dirty linen in public. Far reaching allegations against each other go on air confusing the electorate about the bonafides of all the candidates in fray. All these years, the YSRC leadership remained silent and is now making hue and cry about the 'cash for vote' case against TD leaders. And soon TD will 'start' making fresh demands to speed up DA cases against Y.S.Jagan Mohan Reddy. It is a mutual bashing club active during elections only.

Govardhana Myneedu Viiavawada

### YEARS AGO IN hronicle

#### **Astronauts** land on moon

HOUSTON, FEBRUARY. 5 Alan Shepard and Edgar Mitchell today landed in the stark highlands of Fra Mauro on man's third expedition to the surface of the moon. 'We're on the surface. We made

a good landing", said Ed Mitchell. The astronauts left lunar orbit at 1435 IST with a firing of their adjustable descent engine, and slid on their backs and feet first past hipparcos and ptolemaus crater and over the rim of the sea

Then, at a point called "high gate" they rolled over rightside

are given to Tory friends and support-

— profiteering and fraud are confused and less laudable. Here, gentle reader, are a couple of

shameful statistics: First: The International Labour

Organisation estimates that the plague has cost the workers of the world a loss in earnings of \$3.7 trillion. According to Oxfam, the increase in wealth of the world's top billionaires in ten moths of the plague has been \$3.9 trillion.

Next: As of January 23, 39 million people in the so-called "first world" had received an anti-Covid vaccina-tion. The number of people who have been vaccinated in the continent of Africa, excluding South Africa, was 29. Yes, you read that correctly. No, I haven't missed out the words "thousand" or "million". There are reports, since that grim statistic, saying that subsequently other nations have allocated funds to get the vaccines across

This isn't about generosity, it's selfpreservation in a globalised world in which the enemy species has to be fought and subdued, if not annihilated through... err... globalisation?

To ensure safety in a globalised world, all must get the vaccine...

Condemning it as the wrong one." - From the Opera Bheeda Pareeda Translated from Hungarian by Bachchoo

Today "globalisation" means an exchange of culture and trade amongst most if not all nations of the world and it would certainly include the phenomenon of the spread of the Internet to every crook and nanny of

A Marxist definition would concentrate on the international flow and with American motor car manufacturing relocating to the Far East and Coca Cola being concocted, bottled and sold from the Uighar districts of western

Its inevitability hasn't led to popularity. There are Canutes who wish to turn back the tide. The most boastful and vociferous of these in recent times was one Donald Trump, whose opposition to globalisation may not have included the conviction that the world was flat (though one can never be sure that attempted to reverse the flow of capital out of, and labour into, the United States of America. It negated international treaties designed to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons

Britain's political position was paraimport of even necessary labour. Welcome to "Free port and deport ironically, by British ministers whose

inhabitant of everywhere. Earlier plagues hit single countries. arrangements, etc during today's DECCAN CHRONICLE | NELLORE | SATURDAY | 6 FEBRUARY 2021

# quick

**INDICATORS** 50,731.63 0.23 14,924.30 0.19 Nifty 50 3,886.96 S&P 500 0.39 72.92 0.06 99.84 0.72 Pound Sterling (₹) 87.35 0.14 46,738▼163 0.34 Gold (10gm)\* (₹) Brent crude (\$/bbl)\* 59.57 1.24 6.071 IN 10-Yr bond yield -0.05 US 10-Yr T-bill yield\* 1.153 0.014 \* As of 8:30 PM IST

#### Forex reserves jump to record \$590.18 billion

Foreign exchange reserves rose \$4.85 billion to touch a record high of \$590.18 billion in the week ended January 29, according to RBI data. In the previous week ended January 22, the reserves rose by \$1.09 billion to \$585.33 billion. Foreign currency assets rose by \$5.03 billion to \$547.22 billion. The gold reserves declined \$164 million to \$36.29 billion. The SDRs with the IMF were down \$4 million to \$1.51 billion.

### **Brookfield India** Reit gets 8 times subscription



The IPO of Brookfield India Rea Estate Investment Trust (Reit) got subscribed 8 times on the final day of subscription on Friday. It received bids for 60,59,44,400 units against 7,62,78,200 units on offer. The category meant for institutional investors was subscribed 4.80 times and those of other inveshit the capital market with its Reit public issue on Wednesday to raise up to Rs 3,800 crore.

### Hero MotoCorp Q3 consolidated PAT rises 14%

The country's largest twowheeler maker Hero MotoCorp has posted 13.7 per cent rise in its consolidated profit after tax at Rs 1,029.17 crore for the third quarter against Rs 905.13 crore in the year-ago quarter. Revenue from operations rose to Rs 9.827.05 crore from Rs 7.074.86 crore. On a standalone basis, the company reported a 23.17 per cent increase in its PAT at Rs 1.084.47 crore against Rs 880.41 crore.

### Paypal to shut payment services within India

Digital payment solutions provider Paypal said it will stop offering domestic payment services within India from April The US-based firm will instead focus on enabling more international sales for Indian business es. "We will continue to invest in product development that enables Indian businesses to reach nearly 350 million PayPal consumers worldwide, increase their sales internationally," a PayPal spokesperson said.



### ■ RBI sees growth at 10.5% in FY22, inflation in 5-5.2% range in H1

### Rate cut cycle seems over

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, FEB. 5

In order to revive "durable" growth in the economy, the Reserve Bank of India kept the record low repo and reverse repo rate unchanged while continuing its accommodative stance to ensure enough liquidity in the system. The RBI has also projected a real GDP growth of 10.5 per cent for the next fiscal.

The six members of monetary policy committee (MPC), which ended its three-day deliberations on Friday, unanimously voted to leave the policy repo rate unchanged at 4 per cent. The repo rate had been slashed by 115 basis points since late March last year when the pandemic hit the economy

The reverse repo rate stands unchanged at 3.35 per cent. This is the fourth time in a row that the MPC

Pandemic-hit micro units,

which largely rely on informal channels for funds, have something to cheer, as the RBI has

incentivised credit flow to

new borrowers. In order to

reach out to the stressed

sectors, banks can now provide funds under the

on-tap targeted long-term

repo operation (TLTRO)

scheme to NBFCs. The

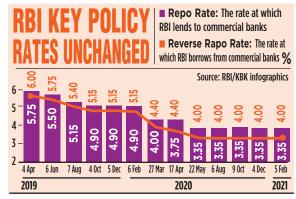
Reserve Bank of India also

wants to come out with a regulatory framework for

the micro lenders.

**SANGEETHA G** 

CHENNAI, FEB. 5



Easier credit for micro units

has decided to keep the policy rate unchanged. 'MPC also decided to con-

tinue its accommodative stance of monetary policy as long as necessary-at least through the current financial year and into the next year-to revive growth on a durable basis and mitigate the impact of Covid-19, while ensuring that inflation remains within

micro, small, and medium

enterprise (MSME) bor-

rowers, scheduled com-

mercial banks will be

allowed to deduct credit disbursed to 'new MSME

borrowers' from their net

demand and time liabili-

ties (NDTL) for calcula-

tion of Cash Reserve

Ratio. New MSME bor-

rowers' are those who

have not availed any cred-

it facilities from the bank-

ing system as on January

will be available for expo-

sures up to Rs 25 lakh per

borrower for credit extended up to the fort-

2021. This exemption

the target going forward," RBI governor Shaktikanta

Finding inflation within the tolerance band, the RBI projected 10.5 per cent real GDP growth for 2021-22-in the range of 26.2 to 8.3 per cent in the first half (H1) and 6 per cent in Q3. Consumer Price Index inflation has been revised to 5.2 per cent for January-

"Banks can deduct credit

disbursed to new MSME

borrowers from NDTL, for

CRR calculation. This should give a boost to further lending to the MSME sector," said Padmaja Chunduru, MD and CEO,

Indian Bank.
However, Rs 25 lakh

loans are largely meant for

micro units and very few

of such units have expo-

sure to formal credit sys-

tem. "The RBI could have

been bolder by raising the

borrowing limit to Rs 1 crore. This would have

helped a lot of small and

medium enterprises as

well. There are several

small and medium enter

March (Q4) of FY21 from 5.8 per cent predicted earlier. CPI inflation could be 5.2 per cent to 5.0 per cent in H1 of FY22 and 4.3 per cent for Q3 of FY22.

"After breaching the upper tolerance threshold continuously since June 2020, CPI inflation moved below 6 per cent in December for the first time in the post-lockdown period, supported by favourable base effects and a sharp fall in key veg-etable prices," the RBI

"Today's upbeat policy statements on growth and inflation restate our view that the rate cut cycle is over. Even as headline inflation trends lower, with economic recovery being underway, services gradually starting to open up, and pricing power coming back in some segments, core inflation will likely see some upside pressure

prises which are not eligible for ECLGS scheme as

that is meant for only

those who have a loan out-

standing," said Anil Bhardwaj, secretary gen-eral, Federation of Indian

RBI further finds that

supporting revival of activity in specific stressed sectors that have both backward and for-

ward linkages have multi-

plier effects on growth.

For this it has proposed to

provide funds from banks under the TLTRO on-tap

scheme to non-banking

finance companies for

incremental lending to the

MSMEs (Fisme).

through the year," said Suvodeep Rakshit, vice president and senior economist Institutional Equities.

Ensuring liquidity, the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the bank rate were left unchanged at 4.25 per cent. Further, signalling a rollback of pandemic-era policies, the RBI said it would gradually restore the cash reserve ratio (CRR) in two phases in a non-disruptive manner to 3.5 per cent from March 27 and 4 per cent

from May 22, 2021. "CRR normalisation will open up space for a variety of market operations of the RBI to inject additional liquidity," Das said. CRR the amount of deposits banks must set aside as reserves—of all banks was reduced by 100 basis points to 3 per cent for a period of one year ending on March

#### **DEMAND NOW ACTUAL, NOT PENT-UP: DAS**

Mumbai, Feb. 5: RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said demand in the economy has moved from being of pent-up nature to actual one, and the momentum is

likely to sustain. "Demand has now moved beyond pent-up demand to actual demand coming up. I think the demand curve is expected to be now much more sustained, Das told repor-ters during the post-policy conference call. He said high-speed indicators are pointing towards a growth in

—PTI

### Soon, retail investors can directly buy gilts



**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD** with agency inputs MUMBAI, FEB. 5

announced online access to government securities for retail investors direct ly through the bank in a path breaking reform. It also sought to ease the worried bond market by extending statutory liq-uidity ratio (SLR) hold-ings under the held to maturity(HTM) category for one more year till

March 2023. In a major move, the central bank opened an infinite source of lending to the government through the retail bond programme. The RBI said it will allow retail investors to directly buy government debt, making India the first Asian country to do so and among a handful globally.

The central bank, tasked with managing Rs 12 lakh crore in government borrowing target next fiscal, hopes the move will allow greater depth to the gilt market in particular and the overall debt market in general, thus deepening the financial markets as lack of depth has been the biggest bane of the domestic debt market all this while.

In effect the RBI has opened a long, endless tap

for the government to borrow from—just as is done in the domestic stock market now, with the only difference being this will be under direct the watch of the RBI.

Currently, the RBI allows small investors to buy government bonds via the Gobid platform on BSE and NSE, but it has not gained any traction.

While no country allows a direct retail participation as the RBI has done now, Britain, Brazil and Hungary allow small investors to buy/sell via third-party controls.

This is the second major step that the RBI is taking encourage investors to enter the gilt market after it had allowed entry through the stock exchanges a few years back but did not elicit the intended result. Further, the RBI allow-

ed FPIs' investment in defaulted corporate bonds outside the short-term limit set from time to time. "In order to further promote investment by foreign portfolio investors (FPI) in corpo-rate bonds, FPI investment in defaulted corpobonds will be exempted from the shortterm limit and the minimum residual maturity requirement under the M e d i u m - T e r m Framework,," RBI said.

#### night ending October 1, 2021, RBI said. 'In order to incentivise new credit flow to the Oil nears \$60 on growth

hopes and Opec+ cuts

**ALEX LAWLER** LONDON, FEB. 5

Oil hit its highest in a year on Friday, closing in on \$60 a barrel, supported and supply curbs by producer group Opec and its allies.

New orders for US-made goods rose more than expected in December, pointing to continued strength in manufacturing. President Joe Biden's drive to enact a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus aid bill also gained momentum on Friday.

Brent crude was up 85 cents, or 1.4 per cent, at \$59.69 by 1438 GMT after hitting its highest since February 20 last year at \$59.79. US crude was up \$1.02, or 1.8 per cent, at \$57.25.

"The conditions still remain supportive for oil markets," said Jeffrey Halley, an analyst at brokerage Oanda. "Oil should find plenty of willing buyers on any material dip. Brent is on track to rise more than 6 per cent this week. The last time it

pandemic had yet to take hold, economies were open and people were free to travel, meaning demand for gasoline, diesel and jet fuel was

The rollout of Covid-19 vaccines, however, is fuelling hopes of lockdowns being eased, boosting fuel demand. But even demand optimists such as Opec do not expect oil consumption to return to prepandemic levels until

Oil also gained support from supply curbs by producers. Opec and its allies, collectively known as Opec+, stuck to their supply tightening policy meeting Wednesday. Record Opec+ cuts have helped to lift prices from historic lows last vear.

"Opec+ discipline has been a real positive," said Michael McCarthy, chief market strategist at CMC Markets.

Further boosting the market, a weekly supply report showed a drop in US crude inventories to their lowest since March.

### **KOREAN MINISTER** DROPS WTO BID. **CLEARS WAY FOR NIGERIAN CANDIDATE**

**SAM KIM** 

Korean Trade South Minister Yoo Myung-hee World Trade Organization, leaving former Nigerian Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala as the only remaining candidate for the job.

Yoo made the decision after discussions with the US and other major nations, and took various issues into account "comprehensively" including the need to revitalise the multilateral organisation, according to a statement from Korea's trade ministry on Friday.

The withdrawal comes after dozens of former US government officials urged President Joe Biden to endorse Okonjo-Iweala after the Trump administration blocked her selection. The opposition halted the selection process because WTO decisions are made on the basis of a consensus of its members.

- Bloomberg

### sector specialists in depts New Delhi, Feb. 5: In a

major move, the Centre has decided to induct more private sector specialists into different govthe crucial decision-making level of joint secretaries and directors.

As per the requisitions received from Department of Personnel & Training (DoP&T), talented and motivated Indian nationals willing to contribute towards nation building are being invited to join the government at the level of joint secretary on contract basis in the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance and

Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, a statement issued by the Personnel Ministry said. Private sector individu-

Centre to induct more pvt

арроинеа аг the level of director on a contract basis in the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Department of Financial Services, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Law & Justice, Department of Education & Literacy, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Ministry

Transport & Highways Ministry of Jal Shakti, Ministry of Civil Aviation and in the Ministry of Skill Development and

The detailed advertisement and instructions to the candidates will be uploaded on the Union Commission's website on 6th February, the statement said.

Interested candidates can apply from 6th February to 22nd March, it said.

Candidates will be short-listed for interview on the basis of the information provided in their online application, the statement

### PNB clocks ₹506 cr profit in Q3

New Delhi, Feb. 5: Punjab National Bank (PNB) reported a standalone net profit of Rs 506 03 crore for December quarter 2020-21. It had posted a net loss of Rs 492.28 crore in the yearago period.

Total income during the

quarter rose to Rs 23,298.53 crore as against Rs 15,967.49 crore a year ago. On a consolidated basis, there was a profit of Rs 585.77 crore during the latest quarter. The lender had posted a net loss of Rs

501.93 crore in same period

Consolidated income rose to Rs 23,639.41 crore from Rs 16.211.24 crore. PNB said the current results are not comparable with the year-ago period since the previous figures are of preamalgamated period.—PTI

### **TAXPAYERS TO BE INFORMED OF REVIEWS**

New Delhi, Feb. 5: Taxpayers will be informed upfront about the reasons their I-T returns are getting reopened for scrutiny satisfactory reply would the case get opened up again, CBDT chief P. C. Mody said on Friday.

The 2021-22 Budget has lowered the time limit for reopening of tax cases to three years from six years. For serious tax fraud cases involving income concealment of Rs 50 lakh and above, 10year old cases can be reopened.

chairman The Central Board of Direct Taxes said the rationalisation of reopening of cases announced in Budget would bring in more certainty to taxpayers. "What was a heavily litigated area, we have tried to rationalise it to the extent that it is no longer left to the discretion of assessing officer. It would be more of information-based attempt to reopen the cases," said at a CII event. —PTI

traded at \$60 a barrel, the

### **COURSE** | TO SUCCESSS | If you're not loved and supported, you're not going to be very productive Coursera CEO and the science of well-being

**CHERYL LU-LIEN TAN** NEW YORK, FEB. 5

Jeff Maggioncalda, CEO online education provider Coursera, knows what it is like to put his professional life on pause. In 2015, Maggioncalda took a break from working in financial services and ended up travelling the world with his wife for two-and-a-half years, spending four weeks at a two-and-a-half time in South Africa, China, Southeast Asia

"We drove from Berlin to Munich. We went through all the Indonesian islands. We went to Komodo and saw komodo dragons-it was really extraordinary,' said Maggioncalda, 52, whose Mountain View, California-based company has offered online courses and degrees from universities and experts to more than 75 million

And what did he take away from the journey that is applicable now? "I realised I'm a learner,"

said Maggioncalda, who joined Coursera in 2017. 'Adopting a growth mindset, being open-minded, being curious, being openhearted to new people and new ideas and learning is important right now. The world is going to look fundamentally different— and that will help you become a pioneer in the new normal.'

Maggioncalda shared his thoughts on the course to success with



Reuters. Edited excerpts

What courses can help people the most profes-

sionally right now? If you don't feel centred, confident, loved and supported, you're not going to be very productive. Taking care of your menthe foundation for good performance and a strong On Coursera, I'd suggest

"The Science of Well-Being," which is all about how we make choices that make us happier and mentally healthier, and Finding Purpose and Meaning in Life," which is about how to find a centred, meaningful path in a chaotic life.

And then I'd suggest "AI Everyone," which teaches everyone with any background the basics of AI.

What will help us stay ahead of the curve? Employers are going to be looking for employees who are well-balanced and multidisciplinary people who know about a number of different

domains. Try to develop a bal-anced skill set. Make sure you can increasingly communicate visually, with data. Learn basic data fluency skills, math, statistics, computers—G Suite, Microsoft, the basics of programming.

What work equipment is invaluable now?

A wire Ethernet cable—I do not rely on Wi-Fi. I use it at home. When I've had to travel, I'll bring a 100foot (30.5 m) Ethernet cable because you just don't know what the Wi-Fi is going to be like.

What will work look

like once the pandemic is over?

My dream in the new nor-

mal is to become a nomadic CEO, to travel with my wife everywhere around the world where have Bulgaria, London, India and see our customers, our employees and partners. Rather than just be there for a few days, I'll

stay there for two or three weeks. Also, in a world where we're not all tethered to offices, we can spend more time with people that we love. I'm really into creating family traditions where you don't have to take vacations in order to spend time with

people you love. — Reuters

### MAHINDRA Q3 **CONSOLIDATED** PAT DOWN 6%

**MICHAEL GONSALVES** PUNE, FEB. 5

Mahindra & Mahindra on Friday reported 6 per cent drop in its consolidated profit after tax from continuing and discontinued operations at Rs 159.60 crore for the third quarter ended in December. It had posted a consolidated PAT of Rs 170.69 crore in the same period last year, the automaker said.

and Bolero models' consolidated revenue from operations stood at Rs 21,625.95 crore during the quarter against Rs 19,430.29 crore a year ago. Out of the net loss, M&M said Rs 563.84 crore is attributable to its bankarm Ssangyong Motor Company.

The maker of Scorpio

SHORT TAKES

#### **Shastri pitches for** break post IPL

Chennai: Indian cricketers must get a two-week break after this year's IPL to recover from fatigue since staying in biobubbles is "mentally draining" head coach Ravi Shastri said on Friday

The Indian players have not taken a break since the IPL 2020 in September in the UAE. The IPL was followed by a challenging Australia tour comprising four Tests, three ODIs and three T20Is

With the final spot in the World Test Championships at stake India is currently hosting England in a bilateral series consisting of four Tests, five T20Is and three ODIs

"I do believe you need a break

from international cricket at

some point. After the England series, yes they go into the IPL. Again after the IPL, a couple of weeks off is a must," Ravi Shastri told Star Sports "Because in these quarantines in these bubbles, it is mentally draining. You are a human, at the end of it all," he further

added The 14th edition of the IPL will held between April and May this year. - PTI

#### Sthalekar in Oz **Hall of Fame**

Sydney: Former Australia women's cricket team captain Lisa Sthalekar has been inducted into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame, the country's board (CA) announced on Friday. One of the world's elite spin-bowling all-rounders, the Pune-born cricketer has represented Australia in eight Tests,

125 ODIs and 54 T20IS in a career spanning 12 years from 2001-13, scoring almost 4,000 runs. Sthalekar was a member of four Australian World Cupwinning teams across the OD and T20 formats and captained Australia in three ODIs against New Zealand in 2006 She was named Women's International Cricketer of the Year in 2007, and was awarded

and 2008 In August 2020, Lisa Sthalekar became the 27th Australian to be inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame

the Belinda Clark Medal recog-

nising Australia's best women's

international cricketer in 2007

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Editor: Kaushik Mitter

# Sweeping success

### Root sweeps his way to 20th Test ton, puts England on top

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR I DC CHENNAI, FEB. 5

With a ringside view from behind the stumps, Rishabh Pant could easily see it. Shoulders drooped and heads bowed — the team's body language, at one time, was as flat as the surface. The wicket-keeper's constant egging, urg-ing his teammates to lift themselves, summed up Team India's frustrating opening day on the field.

Joe Root (128 not out) and Dom Sibley (87) gave a masterclass on how to play spinners in subcontinental conditions with a brilliant 200-run stand for the third wicket as England stole a march over India on a featherbed in the opening Test here. At stumps, England, who won the toss, were 263/3 for 89.3 overs. Opener Sibley was dismissed lbw by Jasprit Bumrah in the last over of the day.

While Root, playing his 100th Test, unleashed his potent weapon, sweep, in all possible ways — reverse, slog and even switch hit — to slam his 20th Test hundred, third in as many matches, Sibley personified resilience and proved to be the perfect foil for his

in-form skipper.
The pitch had little to offer the bowlers, but the England batsmen had to show a lot of patience. Sibley's marathon stay in the middle — 286 balls and 382 minutes — was significant as the 25-year-old not only absorbed the pressure early on, but also wore the Indian bowlers out with his dogged defence. With classic oldschool technique, Sibley used his long strides effectively. He got closer to the pitch of the ball, didn't have any qualms in defending good deliveries and rotated the strike dilimently to keep the Judion gently to keep the Indian

spinners at bay.
Root joined forces with
Sibley after Rory Burns
(33) and Dan Lawrence (five-ball duck) fell to R. Ashwin and Bumrah, respectively, before lunch. Burns, who made a solid opening stand of 63, plotted his own downfall when he played a reverse sweep to lob a simple catch to Pant. It was Ashwin's slowest ball of the first



England's Joe Root celebrates after scoring a century against India on the first day of their first Test match at M. A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Friday.

#### **SCORECARD**

England 1st innings: Rory Burns c Rishabh Pant b Ravichandran Ashwin 33, D. Sibley Ibw b Jasprit Bumrah 87, D. Lawrence Ibw b Bumrah O, J. Root not out 128. Extras (LB-4, NB-11) 15. Total (for 3 wickets in 89.3

FoW: 1-63, 2-63, 3-263. Bowling: Ishant Sharma 15-3-27-0, Jasprit Bumrah 18.3-2-40-2, Ravichandran Ashwin 24-2-68-1, Shahbaz Nadeem 20-3-69-0, Washington Sundar 12-0-55-0.

When Bumrah trapped Lawrence with the help of a reverse swing, England were two down for 63. India had the visitors under the pump, but Kohli may be guilty of letting the guard down later. His decision to take both Ashwin and Ishant

off the attack post-lunch was inexplicable. The packed leg-side field which had proved effec-tive against the Aussies couldn't stop the England batsmen from scoring.

Root who averaged more than 100 in the recent Sri Lanka Tests continued his

purple patch. The contest between Ashwin and Root was fascinating. The England skipper cleverly negated the offie by not employing sweep shot. As Root grew in confidence, the sweeps were a delight to watch

More than three years after making his Test debut, Bumrah got to play his first match at home. He bowled just a three-over opening spell before Ashwin was introduced as early as in the eighth. Shahbaz Nadeem who made it to the side following a knee injury to Axar Patel couldn't trouble the batsmen and bowled a

bunch of no-balls.

#### **NUMBERS GAME**

JOE ROOT SCORES HUNDRED Joe Root became the 15th Englishman and 69th player overall to complete a century of Test matches after appearing in the Chennai Test on Friday (February 5). The England skipper who made his debut in India, at Nagpur in 2012. also played 50th Test match on Indian soil, at Visakhapatnam, in 2016.. After making an unbeaten 128 off 197 balls with 14 fours and one six in England's first innings, the right hand top-order batsman, also became the ninth batsman to score hundred in 100th Test match. Australian Ricky Ponting is the only batsman to make two hundreds in 100th Test match. England's Colin Cowdrey, Alec Stewart, South African Graeme

Smith and Hashim Amla, Pakistan's Javed Miandad and Inzamamul-Hag and West Indian Gordon Greenidge also scored a century in their 100th Test match before Joe Root.. The 200-run stand

between Joe Root and Dom Sibley is England's second best third wicket stand in India and fifth best overall. Alastair Cook and Kevin Pieterson's 206-run stand is

England's best third wicket stand in India. **Anil Choudhury** became the 63rd Indian umpire to officiate in Test cricket. He made his debut as a Test umpire after stood in 20 one day internationals and 28 Twenty-20 interna-

tionals Nitin Menon and Anil Choudhury are the two Umpire in this Test match. The last time two Indian umpires stood in a home Test was in the Ahmedabad Test against Sri Lanka in February 1994, when Kapil Dev went past Richard Hadlee's record of most wickets in Tests. The umpires then were A.L. Narasimhan and V.K.Ramaswamv.

- S. PERVEZ QAISER

# Captain targets total of 600-700

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 5

Skipper Joe Root who scored a scintillating century in his 100th Test and guided England to a commanding position against India wants to make it count. England had made 477 in the first innings the last time they played a Test here in 2016, but eventually they lost by an innings. So, Root knows the importance of a big total.

"I think we have to try and get as many runs as we can. We want to bat the whole of tomorrow and possibly a bit into the third day, then things could fall in place. We will try and score 600-700," said Root.

Root knows it's not easy to bat long in the humid conditions here. "But, I am ready for more. We have to try and consolidate our position. It's an impressive start, but we have to make it count. That's the most challenging part for us," he added.

The flat surface had nothing for spinners on Friday, but Root expects the track to wear out. "It's an unusual looking surface but it played pretty well. I think it's going to spin as the game goes on. With a bit of reverse swing, it was a contest against India's bowlers. I was just trying to get used to the

I think we have to try and get as many runs as we can. We want to bat the whole of tomorrow and possibly a bit into the third day, then things could fall in place. We will try and score 600-700.

— JOE ROOT England Test captain

surface, get used to the bounce, and as I got in, I found it easier," added

Root was all praise for his opener Dom Sibley. "It was a fantastic innings. He had a few question marks over his game after the Sri Lanka series. To go out there and put a performance early on in the series is amazing. It's a high quality attack and we had to deal with spin and reverse swing," he added. Root became only the third Englishman to score a century in his 100th Test, following in the footsteps of Colin Cowdrey and Alec Stewart.

"It was very special. I had wonderful evening last night with the teammates, who had a little surprise for me and Ben Stokes in particular said some very nice words. So to turn up today and play the way we have, it's really important," Root added.

### **WE BOWLED WELL IN PATCHES: BUMRAH**

**DC CORRESPONDENT** 

It turned out to be a challenging 'home' debut for Indian speedster Jasprit Bumrah. Operating in short spells, Bumrah picked up two England wickets, but found the dry conditions difficult for a pacer.

"It was an interesting first match for me here. The pitch was on the flatter side and there was no lateral movement. The ball got scuffed up as the wicket was hard and dry. We are not trying to complain about the wicket. We are trying to figure out the options and resolve the issues," said Bumrah.

'When the ball becomes soft, it doesn't shine as well as we want it to. In India, the ball gets scuffed up easily. So to make the ball heavy, you have to shine one side sometimes, with sweat, and it doesn't really serve the purpose. You can't make one side heavy with sweat and it doesn't really work that way. But these are the rules and we have to make do with what we have at the

moment," added Bumrah. Bumrah said India bowled well in patches. "I felt we created a lot of pressure. We didn't give too many runs except in the last session. In the beginning of the last session, I think our body language was a bit down with not many wickets coming in. And also, it's not easy to keep yourself going in the searing heat," he added.

SEASON OF SMILES

JU TITAN





