

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | MONDAY | 18 JANUARY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 29.3°C
Min: 17.4°C
RH: 43%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 29/17 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+14,012)	(+159)
1,05,71,658	1,52,447

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+299)	(+2)
TS: 2,91,666	1,577
(+161)	(+1)
AP: 8,85,985	7,140

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

9,51,90,015
DEATHS
20,35,297
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
219

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttarayana

Tithi: Pushya Shuddha Panchami

till 9.15 am

Star: Purvabhadra till 7.43 am

Varjyam: 6.12 pm to 7.57 pm

Durmuhurtam: 12.48 pm to 1.33 pm; 3.01 pm to 3.46 pm

Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am

HUJRI CALENDAR

Jamadi- ul- Akhir 4,1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.46 am

Zohar: 12.36 pm

Asar: 4.27 pm

Maghrib: 6.08 pm

Isha: 7.19 pm

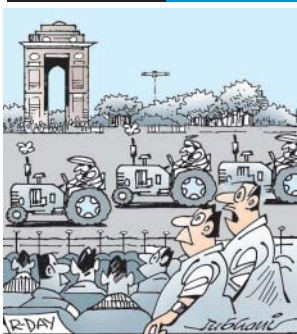
SUNSET TODAY 6.02 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.49 AM

MOONRISE TOMORROW 10.35 AM

MOONSET TODAY 10.46 PM

COUNTER POINT



Full dress rehearsal of farmers for the parade!

SHORT TAKES

Ustad Ghulam Mustafa dead

Mumbai: Legendary Indian classical musician and Padma Vibhushan awardee Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan passed away on Sunday afternoon at his residence here. He was 89. Khan's daughter-in-law Namrata Gupta Khan told PTI that the veteran breathed his last at 12.37 pm at his Bandra home.

■ Report on Page 4

Nepali climbers scale K2 in winter

Kathmandu: A team of 10 Nepali climbers made history by becoming the first to scale in winter the world's second highest mountain K2, considered as the world's most dangerous and challenging peak. K2 with its daunting 8,611 metres height is located in Gilgit-Baltistan side of the Karakoram range.

Kamal Haasan to undergo surgery

Chennai: Makkal Needhi Maiam chief Kamal Haasan on Sunday said he would be undergoing a 'follow-up surgery' on his leg and assured the people that he shall be back soon fully rejuvenated to resume his poll campaign. Due to an accident a few years ago, he had undergone a surgery on his leg.



NATION | 4

Missing Scindia raises 'eyebrows'

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



BJP state president Bandi Sanjay (from right) and Union minister of state G. Kishan Reddy seen at the BJP state executive meeting in Secunderabad on Sunday, along with state general secretary Gujjula Premendar Reddy, party co-incharge of Tamil Nadu Ponguleti Sudhakar, BJP OBC Morcha president Dr K. Laxman and party MLC N. Ramchander Rao.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

TS laughing stock of India due to KCR at helm: Bandi

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 17

Telangana state has become a laughing stock in front of the country for having K. Chandrashekar Rao as its Chief Minister for he is the only administrator who never comes to work at the Secretariat to run the state's administration, said BJP's Telangana state chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar.

Speaking at the BJP executive meeting in Hyderabad on Sunday, Sanjay targeted the Chief Minister Chandrashekar Rao for working in, what he alleged, was "total contrast" to the expectations and aspirations of the people of the state.

He further alleged that the CM camp office had become a platform for the land, sand and brick mafia.

CM Rao has reduced Telangana, a surplus budget state at the time of its

During the pandemic, instead of working to give strength and boost the morale of the people, the CM was sleeping in his farmhouse. The CM's office has become a platform for land, sand and brick mafia.

— BANDI SANJAY
BJP state president

formation, to a debt-ridden unit, he said, adding that the BJP was the only party which had the wherewithal to put an electoral end to this "worst administration ever" being run by the TRS.

During the pandemic, instead of working hard to give strength and boost the morale of the people, the CM "slept in his farmhouse," the BJP chief said.

The TRS' car (its symbol) has been already punctured by the BJP in the Dubakk and the GHMC elections, so Chandrashekar Rao was protect-

ing himself in office by keeping a 'Razakar party' beside him, said the BJP state chief.

Blasting the false claims of the TRS leaders that during their reign the state of Telangana added 13,500 investments, leading to creation of three lakh jobs, he said, "If there had been an iota of truth and even if a partial success was seen on ground as a reality, I would have been obsequious towards KCR and do *pooja* to him."

Strongly castigating the TRS supremo for destroying caste harmony and for creating rifts between people on caste lines instead of trying to bridge the gaps, Sanjay said, "by including Muslims in backward castes, he is stealing the rightful claims of the OBC in their reservation quotas due to them."

■ Page 2: BJP will show how to rule: Bandi

WORLD | 5

Banking heir Benjamin de Rothschild dies

NEW DELHI, JAN. 17

Currently battling a fresh wave of the raging coronavirus pandemic at home and hailing India as the "pharmacy of the world", Britain on Sunday officially invited New Delhi to attend the G-7 summit to be hosted by it in Cornwall from June 11 to 13 this year. It had first been confirmed last month that British PM Boris Johnson had invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to "join the UK-hosted G-7". Mr Johnson will also now visit India before the G-7 summit.

India is not a member of the G-7 bloc that comprises seven countries — Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Britain and the United States — termed as seven of the "largest" advanced economies in the world, but the G-7 host nation can invite other nations as guests to the summit. Australia and South Korea have also been invited to attend by Britain which

SPORTS | 8

Washington, Shardul keep India in contention



Vol. 20 No. 232 Established 1938 | 16 PAGES | ₹6.00

'World pharmacy' India invited to UK's G-7 meet

UK PM moves to 'deepen expertise' at elite summit

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, JAN. 17

● **BRITAIN HAS** also invited Australia and South Korea for the summit which will be held in Cornwall, from June 11 to 13 this year. The UK PM will visit India before that

launched a fresh condemnation on Sunday of "Russia's annexation of Crimea". This has made it clear that ties between the West and Russia will continue to remain strained, something that will worry New Delhi since Moscow has been its time-tested friend for decades. The Cornwall summit is also likely to be the first in-person G-7 leaders' meeting after Joe Biden takes charge as US President this week.

It may be recalled that Modi had earlier attended the G-7 summit in Biarritz, France, in August 2019 at the French government's invitation. He was also been invited by US President Donald Trump to attend the G-7 meeting that was to have been held in the US last year but was cancelled due to the pan-

demic. Britain on Sunday said: "The G-7 — which is made up of the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the USA and the EU — is the only forum where the world's most influential and open societies and advanced economies are brought together for close-knit discussions".

Hailing India on Sunday as the "pharmacy of the world", Britain pointed out that "India already supplies more than 50 per cent of the world's vaccines, and (that) the UK and India have worked closely together throughout the pandemic", adding: "Our Prime Ministers speak regularly and Prime Minister Johnson has said he will visit India ahead of the G-7".

In a statement, the British high commission in New Delhi said: "Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (has been) invited to attend G-7 as a guest. The UK will use the G7 presidency to unite leading democracies to help the world build back better from coronavirus and cre-

ate a greener, more prosperous future. Australia and South Korea (have) also (been) invited as guest countries." Britain said the three nations had been invited "to attend as guest countries to deepen the expertise and experience around the table".

The high commission added: "UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson will use the first in-person G-7 summit in almost two years to ask leaders, including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to seize the opportunity to build back better from the coronavirus, uniting to make the future fairer, greener and more prosperous."

It further said: "Prime Ministers and Presidents from the world's leading democracies will come together in the UK in June to address shared challenges, from beating coronavirus and tackling climate change, to ensuring that people everywhere can benefit from open trade, technological change and scientific discovery."

447 ADVERSE CASES ONLY AFTER 2.24 L JABS

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 17

Of all 2.24 lakh people who have been vaccinated, 447 developed minor complications. Only three persons who were hospitalised have now been discharged.

On the second day of vaccination, only 17,072 received their jabs in six states.

The states and Union Territories have fixed specific days for vaccinations.

■ Report on Page 4

Farmers' R-Day tractor rally on; SC hearing today

SANJAY KAW | DC
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JAN. 17

The farmers' unions on Sunday decided to go ahead with their proposed tractor parade in the national capital on Republic Day.

The decision has come just a day before the Supreme Court will hear the Centre's plea seeking an injunction against the proposed tractor rally or any other kind of protest that seeks to disrupt cele-

brations on January 26.

Kisan Sangharsh Samiti (Haryana) convener Mandip Nathwan, however, dispelled rumours that the protesters would unfurl the tricolour at Red Fort and that the tractors and tanks will roll together on Republic Day. "It's being said farmers will unfurl tricolour at Red Fort and tractors and tanks will roll together (on January 26). No such programme was finalised," he said.

Union agriculture minis-

ter Narendra Singh Tomar said most farmers are in favour of the new laws and the government, but All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) general secretary Hannan Mollah accused the Centre of "dragging" things in a bid to tire out the farmers.

Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait said farmers are prepared to protest against the farm laws "till May 2024" and termed the agitation by peasants at Delhi borders an "ideological revolution".

Guatemala immigration



Honduran migrants clash with Guatemalan soldiers as they attempt to reach the U.S. border in Vado Hondo, Guatemala on Sunday. Guatemalan authorities estimated that as many as 9,000 Honduran migrants crossed into Guatemala as part of an effort to form a new caravan to reach the U.S. border.

— AP

COLD WAVE IN NORTH INDIA PERSISTS

New Delhi, Jan. 17: Parts of north India remained under the grip of an intense cold wave on Sunday with night temperatures dropping below the 5 degrees Celsius-mark at some places and dense fog enveloping several areas.

The minimum temperature in Delhi dropped to 5.7 degrees Celsius but it is likely to rise over the next two days due to a change in the wind direction, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

The national capital will see shallow fog on Monday morning and light rain is likely to occur, the IMD said.

The city's minimum and maximum temperatures are expected to settle around 8 and 17 degrees Celsius. An IMD official said easterly winds are blowing in Delhi that are not as cold as northwesterly winds coming in from the snow-clad western Himalayas. Hence, the minimum temperature is likely to rise by a few notches over the next two days. Meanwhile, Delhi's air quality index (AQI) improved slightly to the 'very poor' category from 'severe' on Saturday as favourable wind speed helped in dispersion of pollutants.

— PTI

SAFETY | DRIVE

Cases of rash driving, drunk driving by minors rise alarmingly

Cops gear up to decrease road accidents

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, JAN. 17

The increasing instances of fatal road accidents in rural areas, particularly those involving two-wheelers, have forced police to spread awareness about road safety. Around four persons died when two motorcycles collided against each other in the districts.

The alarming rise is disturbing the police force, particularly because most

● **MOST TWO-WHEELER** drivers are without helmets, which are leading to deaths or serious injuries. On an average, every day, there are two to three reports of two-wheeler accidents on rural roads.

were cases of rash driving, drunk driving and those caused by minors. Most two-wheeler riders are without helmets, which are leading to deaths or

serious injuries. On an average, every day, there are two to three reports of two-wheeler accidents on rural roads.

B. Sai Kumar, sub-inspector of Vemsoor mandal, said, "The fatalities are alarming and there is a need to make rural youth aware of the importance of safe driving".

He said that they impose penalties on persons violating road safety measures, including driving without licenses, not wear-

ing helmets and rash driving.

"Penalties have been imposed against 9,000 vehicles with a majority of them being two-wheelers. We collected an overall fine of Rs 13.5 lakh from last year's January to December in Vemsoor mandal. This is the worst among all mandals on the count," he said.

On the increase in two-wheeler collisions, Sai Kumar said that nobody followed traffic rules and

road safety measures because they are unaware of most of them.

"Those found violating rules are counselled and asked to take an oath that would wear helmets whenever riding a bike. Even their family members are educated about the dangers of road accidents caused by violations of road rules", he said.

The road safety drive has been taken up in all 26 villages of Vemsoor mandal.

SHORT TAKES

AP GOVT REJECTS
ASHOK GAJAPATI
RAJU'S DONATIONDC CORRESPONDENT
VIZIANAGARAM, JAN. 17

In another humiliation meted out to senior TD leader Pusapati Ashok Gajapati Raju, the AP endowments department on Saturday rejected his donation of ₹1,01,116 for making a new idol of Lord Rama to be placed in the Sri Kodanda Rama Swamy temple at Ramatheertham in Vizianagaram district.

The previous idol was desecrated by miscreants a few weeks ago. Venting his anger on Twitter, and attaching the donation slip, Raju said "First, they unilaterally dismissed me as hereditary trustee / chairman without as much as a notice in complete contravention of section 28. Now, they reject my offerings to the Lord as a representative of the founder family for the vigrahas."

Assistant commissioner, endowments, Ch Ranga Rao said the new idol was being prepared by the TTD free, and therefore there was no need for any donations.

YOUTH DIES
IN RING WHILE
PLAYING KABADDIDC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, JAN. 17

A youth died in the ring during a district-level kabaddi competition at a model school in Gangayapalli in Valluru mandal, police said on Sunday. He was M. Narendra (28) from Kondapeta of the Chennai mandal.

The incident occurred at the second session of the kabaddi post lunch, the play being in the final. Narendra went to the opponent team player's court, and fell down when caught. He rose, walked two steps and fell down again. The co-players and the staff gave him first-aid and he was immediately shifted to the Kadapa Government General Hospital RIMS. Doctors there confirmed that he was dead. Police said Narendra had completed his Master in Commerce. His parents were in the dhobi profession. He was having a brother and two sisters.

IRON MESH PUT AT
ALL ENTRY, EXIT
POINTS

From page 1

"On Saturday night, we received information about wild boars straying. As an immediate measure, we have arranged iron mesh and chain-links at all entry and exit points along the four mada streets. To put an end to this menace, we are in consultation with forest officials for chalking out plans to erect such fences on the outer corridor of Tirumala, so that the wild animals will not be able to enter the inner corridor", Reddy explained.

In fact, the abode of Lord Venkateswara located in the midst of the lush green Seshachalam biosphere, is home to many wild and endangered animals, including elephants, leopards, hyena, golden jackal, Indian fox, jungle cat, sloth bear, spotted deer, mouse deer, and four-horned antelope.

The TTD, which manages the affairs of the holy shrine, keeps a tab on the movement of wild animals especially leopards and elephants to keep them at bay from the temple town. They rely on advanced surveillance systems and take measures accordingly.

299 NEW COVID
INFECTIONS IN
TELANGANADC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 17

Telangana state added 299 fresh Covid-19 cases and two fatalities until Saturday night, raising the caseload to 2,91,666 and the toll to 1,577, as per the state health department's bulletin issued on Sunday. The case fatality rate stood at 0.54 per cent, it said.

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation area contributed the maximum of 57 cases followed by Medchal-Malkajgiri district with 26 and Karimnagar district with 24. The bulletin said 379 people had recovered from Covid-19 between Friday and Saturday, taking the total recoveries to 2,85,898, translating into a recovery rate of 98.02 per cent.



Union minister of state G. Kishan Reddy speaks with party leader Vijayashanthi and others at the BJP state executive committee meeting at Sikh Village in Secunderabad on Sunday. — S. SURENDER REDDY

Expose KCR failures,
graft: BJP to cadres

TRS leaders grabbing land, looting state: Chugh

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 17

BJP state affairs in-charge Tarun Chugh urged the party cadre to expose the TRS government's failures and corruption and fight against them.

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao is 'looting' the state under the guise of Bangaru Telangana, and ruling party leaders were grabbing land in the name of development, Chugh alleged.

Addressing the party's state executive committee meeting here on Sunday, he said that the people had begun thinking of BJP in power and the party will need to seize the mood and consolidate its position in the State.

The BJP leader criticised the Chief Minister for failing to fill up the over two lakh government jobs.

He made it clear that they will highlight the developments achieved by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Reminding that former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao had assured to construct Babri Masjid, he said that Modi was honouring his word about constructing Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. Chugh said that the Modi government also took a daring decision on Article 370.

● **ADDRESSING THE party's state executive committee meeting here on Sunday, he said that the people had begun thinking of BJP in power and the party will need to seize the mood and consolidate its position in the State.**

Protests stall 'plan'
to remove Kadiri
temple balipeethamDC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, JAN. 17

Speculation over the removal of the bali peetham in the historic Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple at Kadiri has led to tension, following protests. While the issue was viral on social media that bali peetham was being removed as part of the road-widening process, the government had to react and ruled out any such removal.

Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple was built centuries ago with gopurams set up at all eight directions in Kadiri town. Along with gopurams, bali peethams were also fixed as part of tradition. On Sunday, news spread that bali peetham at west gopuram was being removed as part of road widening. A group of activists

reached the temple and staged protest. The issue went viral after BJP state Secretary Vishnuvardhan Reddy tweeted that the government was acting against traditions and hurting sentiments of devotees.

Interestingly, the endowment department released a press note that there was no attempt to remove the bali peetham stone.

Executive officer Venkateswar Reddy said that priests were performing poojas and offerings at bali peethams. "On coming to the fourth bali peetham, while performing poojas one after the other, suddenly a group of protestors came and staged protests", the Eo said and ruled out its removal.

Anantapur in-charge collector A. Siri said that such reports were untrue.

From Page 1

Bandi Sanjay said, "In the coming days, once the BJP comes to power, we will show TRS how a government must actually be run and what a Chief Minister and Cabinet who actually works can achieve."

He was also extremely critical of the KCR government for registering "false cases" against BJP leaders. "Such unleashing of police brutality and illegal arrests will not stop the BJP's commitment towards the people or slow down our fight against this corrupt TRS government."

Minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy, who also addressed the gathering, said, "The people of Telangana are fed up with the TRS government, which has created a record as the worst administration ever." Asserting with certitude the likelihood of coming to power of the BJP, Kishan Reddy said, "Across the state, discussions have already started amongst common people as to not if but when the BJP government will come in the state to rescue them from the TRS."

"Senior IAS and IPS officers are confiding in private that a change in government is definitely going to happen in the coming days. The next two years will be crucial for all of us, even as with each passing day, people are losing faith completely in the TRS government," said Kishan Reddy.



BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar is seen with former MP A.P. Jithendar Reddy and other leaders at the executive meeting of the party. — DC

Admonishing the state government for its indifference to propriety, he said, "After Independence, there has never been an election in which teachers served as officials during polls. But the TRS government headed by KCR conducted elections for the GHMC without teachers. The KCR government promised to give ₹10,000 to flood victims after elections, which proved to be yet another broken promise of the TRS."

"At the call of the BJP, the people defeated KCR's daughter Kavitha and his relative. People of Telangana are waiting for change. By having an alliance with the MIM, the TRS got some seats, else they would have not won 50 plus seats in GHMC," Kishan Reddy said.

The Telangana BJP

leaders must take inspiration from the Bengal BJP unit and fight against this government from the ground level up, he said.

"Intellectuals across the country are supporting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Under his leadership, the BJP will continue to win more elections and get support from the people. In the upcoming MLC elections, for the BJP to win two seats is important. To achieve this goal, karyakarthas from the grass-root-level to state leadership must work tirelessly to ensure BJP's MLC candidates Ramchander Rao and Premendhar Reddy win," he said.

The BJP will also win the Warangal election. If we had a little more time, the BJP would have given Hyderabad a new mayor, he added.

Vinod says fill
KV vacanciesDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 17

Telangana Planning Board vice-chairman Boyini Vinod Kumar on Sunday demanded that the Centre expedite efforts to fill up vacancies with regular staff in Kendriya Vidyalayas (KV) in the state.

The schools are a popular choice of parents who expect quality education and one that would be better than local educational institutions.

Vinod Kumar wrote a letter to Union education minister Ramesh Pokhriyal seeking that vacancies in KVs be filled on priority.

He said the current staff of the 35 KV schools in Telangana state was brought to his notice by aggrieved parents, who were worried about their children due to non-availability of su-

fficient teaching staff. Kumar pointed out that the deputy commissioner of KVs in Hyderabad has given information with regard to unfilled vacancies across Telangana. Of 1,208 sanctioned strength of teaching staff, only 959 regular staff is working while there are 131 contractual teaching staff.

He stated that when he was a Member of Parliament, he had interacted with students, teachers and principals of Karimnagar KV. He realized that being understaffed they were unable to provide quality education.

Caution needed even
after vaccination: DocBALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, JAN. 17

Even as hopes run high that the vaccines to prevent Covid-19 will help the country overcome the pandemic and put an end to the spread of the disease, caution should continue to be the watchword even among those who are getting the vaccines, according to Dr Ranga Reddy Burri, president of Infection Control Academy of India.

One of the questions that is being asked, with the vaccination drive on across the country, is whether those receiving the vaccines can do whatever they want from now on. "The answer," according to Dr Ranga Reddy, is a resounding "no."

"No one is going to turn into a superman or a superwoman post vaccination. Getting the vaccine does not mean that one can go around and enjoy a fairytale lifestyle," he told *Deccan Chronicle* during an inter-

view.

What was a normal lifestyle, of going out, meeting people, enjoying oneself or just going to work and being with colleagues all day long, have now acquired the aura of a fairytale lifestyle because of the ease with which Covid-19 spreads from person to person.

It is important that everyone who gets the vaccine continues to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour. Dr Ranga Reddy cautioned against euphoria among the vaccine recipients saying the four weeks between the first and the booster doses and then the two weeks more needed for the body to produce the protection from the virus means it takes time for the protection to kick in.

"Wear a mask, wash hands regularly, maintain physical distance from others and avoid crowded places. There is simply not enough data for determining whether a person, after receiving both doses of the vaccine, can con-

tract the virus, or spread it as a silent asymptomatic person," he explained.

Despite the current challenges of understanding how the vaccines will behave, Dr Ranga Reddy said that as the days go by, more data that will come that might answer such questions. He said: "I think it is fantastic how scientific and medical communities responded to the pandemic by getting the vaccines out quickly. Vaccines in general, are a boon to humanity, they are good for public health. People should understand how human history evolved and changed for the better because of vaccines."

Everyone, Dr Ranga Reddy said, should take the vaccine when their turn comes. Leave the debates on which vaccine is best, what is the level of protection etc., to the scientists and the medical professionals. The vaccine is our best bet to begin the end of the Covid-19 pandemic, he said.

COVID PATIENT ENDS LIFE AT PVT HOSPITAL IN HYDERABAD

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 17

A 77-year-old man who was undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Kondapur after testing positive for Covid-19 died by suicide on Sunday. According to the police, the deceased, Narayana, was also undergoing

treatment for depression. "Narayana tested positive for Covid-19 on Wednesday and was being treated in an isolation ward on the second floor of the hospital building. He was not cooperating with the doctors and the hospital staff had informed his family," police said. On Sunday around 10 am, he jumped

from the window of his ward. Upon receiving information, the Madhapur police reached the spot and took up investigations after booking a case of suspicious death. The body was shifted to the Osmania General Hospital for post-mortem examination and later handed over to the family.

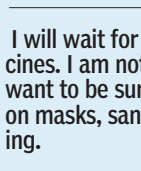
Some want Indian vaccine,
others do not want jab at allSANJAY SAMUEL PAUL
AND HARLEEN MINOCHA
HYDERABAD, JAN. 17

With the Covid-19 vaccination drive now well underway across the country, and Telangana state set to start Day 2 of the drive on Monday, *Deccan Chronicle* spoke to people from the city to find out what their thoughts were about the vaccination.



● I urge everyone to take the vaccine shots in India. I would personally prefer the Covaxin vaccine. I trust our own than the foreign vaccine that is available.

— ASHWIN KUMAR, Financial and wealth management professional



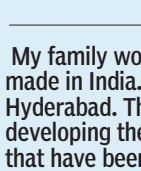
I will wait for the results of all vaccines. I am not against taking it but I want to be sure. Till then, I will depend on masks, sanitisers and social distancing.

— KULWANT KAUR, Legal counsellor



● I am leaning towards the Bharat Biotech vaccine. They are in their third stage trial. By the time it'll be our turn, they would have bettered it. I'd want an Indian-made vaccine.

— REKHA RAJENDRA, Retired Banker



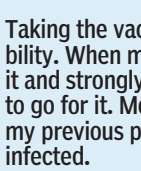
My family would opt for a vaccine made in India. Bharat Biotech is in our Hyderabad. They are working hard and developing the vaccine, unlike others that have been pushed for emergency use.

— PAYAL VALERA, Baker



● I have never taken any medication. I am 63 and fit. When everyone taking the Covid-19 vaccine, the virus is controlled, and I don't see the necessity for me to take it.

— RAJA JITHENDER DESHMUKH, Agriculturalist



Taking the vaccine is a social responsibility. When my turn comes, I will take it and strongly recommend everyone to go for it. More than 20 officers at my previous police station were infected.

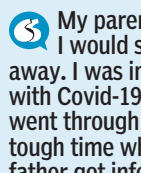


— C. ANJIAH, Inspector



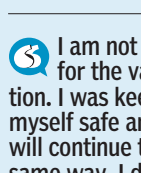
● I will definitely go for the Covid-19 vaccine and also take my family along for it. We had a tough time when I was infected with Covid-19 while performing my duties.

— A. GOPALRAO, Govt. employee



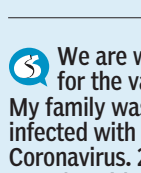
● My parents and I would stay away. I was infected with Covid-19. We went through a tough time when my father got infected. The immunity we have built is enough.

— D. VINEETH ABISHEK, Senior tax consultant



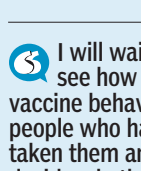
● I am not going for the vaccination. I was keeping myself safe and I will continue the same way. I don't want anything injected which will lead to complications.

— J. SUNDER SINGH, JNTU junior assistant



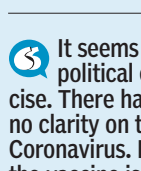
● We are waiting for the vaccine. My family was infected with the Coronavirus. 2020 went by without any gatherings and events. The vaccine will be a curtain raiser for social gatherings.

— MARIAN RAJU, Senior driver



● I will wait and see how the vaccine behaves on people who have taken them and then decide whether or not to go ahead, I cannot risk my family and my parents.

— SHABAD RAJU, Realtor



● It seems like a political exercise. There has been no clarity on the Coronavirus. Now, the vaccine is here and there is not much information. I will stay away.

— M.A. NAYEEM, Talab Katta resident

OTHER STORIES

INELIGIBLE FOR
ARMY, YOUTH
DIES BY SUICIDEDC CORRESPONDENT
NIRMAL, JAN. 17

A youth Pravin has reportedly committed suicide by hanging to a tree in their agricultural fields with the disappointment of being ineligible in terms of marks percentage for the army job in Kubheer on Sunday. He wanted to join the army since he was interested in the commando job in the Indian army.

It is learnt that Pravin wanted to get into the army and become a commando job which was his dream, but he got disappointed after knowing from the coaching centre that he was ineligible for the job.

MAN ATTEMPTS
TO KILL SON,
ARRESTEDDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD JAN. 17

A 55-year-old drunken man allegedly murdered his son following an argument over the latter's marriage at their house in Shadnagar on Sunday, the Nandigama police said.

The accused, Yellaiah, and his son Naresh, labourers and residents of Chegur village in Kothur mandal, used to frequently argue over the issue. Police said Naresh would often come home drunk and pick up an argument over it and abuse his father.

This happened again on Sunday, and Naresh insisted that his marriage be solemnised without delay. Yellaiah, who was in an inebriated condition, attacked his son with a sickle. Naresh was severely injured and rushed to Osmania General Hospital for treatment where he died. On receiving information, the police booked a case of murder against Yellaiah and arrested him.

M'NAGAR WOULD
BE SPORTS HUB
OF TS: GOUDDC CORRESPONDENT
MAHBUBNAGAR, JAN. 17

Mahbubnagar would be made the sports hub of Telangana state, said minister V. Srinivas Goud while participating in the concluding session of the five-day National Paramotor Championship held for the first time in India at Mahbubnagar.

The Aerospots Paramotor Adventure Training Institute, the first of its kind in India, would be set up at Mahbubnagar, about 90 km from Hyderabad, at a 15-acre piece of land which would pave way for adventure and aviation-related sports, he said.

The town has good road and rail links with Hyderabad and Bengaluru, among others.

Nitin Kumar of Haryana was adjudged as the overall champion of the National Paramotor Championship and will represent India at the Thailand International Paramotor Championship. The solo championship was won by Satyanarayan while Imaduddin Farooqui won the spot landing division.

GHMC DRIVER
HELD FOR ₹39
LAKH THEFTDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD JAN. 17

A temporary driver with the GHMC was arrested for stealing ₹39 lakh worth gold and silver ornaments among other things from a pawn shop owned by his previous employer.

The loot was recovered from a garbage bin where the accused had hidden it, within 24 hours by the Market police of Secunderabad.

Police said the accused, Mohammad Aadil alias Arhan, 28, had decamped with 1009.60 grams of gold, 209 grams of silver along with ₹50,000 in cash. The arrest was made based on a complaint by N. Anil Jain.

Following the complaint, four teams were formed with the help of Karkhana police and North Zone Task Force. The accused was identified with the help of CCTV cameras and caught.

Police found that Arhan had been previously arrested as a minor for stealing bikes and three years ago in a theft case. Arhan had worked as a car driver for Anil Jain from 2015 to 2017 and was well-versed the shop layout, police said. He entered the shop by climbing the pipes and removing the grills.

Mini Medaram jatara
to begin on Feb. 24

Villagers come together to cleanse the temples

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, JAN. 17

The mini version of the mega Medaram Jatara, one of the largest in Asia, will be held this year from February 24 to 27. Amid apprehensions about whether the jatara would be held this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, the temple trust committee and the endowment department officials declared the dates on Sunday.

While the state government holds the biennial fair officially, the temple priests conduct the jatara at devotees' request every off-year.



Cheryala Abhinitha

DECLARED BRAIN
DEAD, GIRL SAVES
THREE LIVESDC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, JAN. 17

The parents of a 20-year-old girl, Cheryala Abhinitha, decided to donate their daughter's organs after she was declared brain dead by the doctors following an accident.

The Telangana Eye Organ Body Donors Association president Konreddy Malla Reddy appreciated the family members for understanding the importance of donating organs. He said despite reeling under the burden of losing their daughter at such a young age, the parents, Chandrashekar and Krishnaveni took a noble decision to donate organs to three people and give them another chance at life.

Abhinitha, a resident of Julaiwada in Hanamkonda is a B.Tech final year student. She met with an accident at Hunter Road on January 14 this year, and after undergoing treatment at hospitals in Hanamkonda and Hyderabad, she was declared brain dead by the doctors.

"We approached the parents of the girl and explained to them how their daughter could give life to three others who are in need. They were understanding and made an all-important decision," Malla Reddy said. Jeevandan NIMS, Hyderabad Chairman Dr Swarna Latha took up the transplantation process, and the liver and two kidneys were transplanted to three people.

DC CORRESPONDENT
KANCHANPALLI
(KOMARAM BHEEM
ASIFABAD), JAN. 17

An ancient drinking water well, around 400 years old, is still quenching the thirst of people and cattle in interior Komaram Bheem district. This is located on the outskirts of Kanchanpalli village in Lingapur mandal.

The well is popularly known as 'Kantam Kuhi'; broadly meaning a drinking water well that even in summer has a minimum of neck-deep water level. It never dried in the duration of the past six generations. The wooden logs used in the well are as old and still intact. Locals say the Gond rajahs dug up this well.

The traditional water pumping system called 'Ethem' is attached to this well. Etham is used when water level goes



File photo of the altars of Sammakka and Saralamma at Medaram shrine in Warangal.

The chief priest of the shrine Siddaboina Arun said that on Wednesday, February 24, rituals including temple cleaning, worship and village confinement would be held. On Thursday the 25th, deities Sammakka and Saralamma will be

worshipped with turmeric and vermilion. However, the 'manda melige' ritual would be held on the 24th and 25th.

"The deities, Sammakka and Saralamma, are worshipped according to our aboriginal traditions. As part of Manda Melige, the villagers would come together to cleanse the temples. The devotees would be allowed to have darshan of the deities on 26th and 27th," he said. The temple trust committee members explained that all facilities would be provided for the devotees.

15 more held for aiding
Akhila Priya in kidnapDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD JAN. 17

The Hyderabad city police have arrested 15 more suspects in connection with the Bowenpally kidnap case on Sunday. According to the police, the accused, M. Siddhartha, an event manager, had arranged about 20 persons to pose as income-tax officials and execute the kidnap of Pravin Rao and his two brothers on January 6.

"Akhila Priya, the prime suspect in the case, along with her husband, M. Bhargav Ram Naidu, conspired with her brother Jagath Vikhyath Reddy and her follower Srinivas Choudhary alias Guntur Srinu. They conducted meetings at her residence in Lodha Apartments in KPHB and a school in Yousufguda on executing the kidnap in the first week of January," said Anjani Kumar, Hyderabad police commissioner.

Kumar said that Srinu contacted Siddhartha and asked him to recruit young men to execute their plan with a promise to pay ₹5 lakh to him and ₹25,000 to each person. Bhargav Ram, through Mallikarjun



Police commissioner Anjani Kumar speaks at a press conference to announced the arrest of 15 persons in the Praveen Rao kidnap case. — BY ARRANGEMENT

Reddy and Sampath, got 10 stamp papers. Srinu along with the duo bought six basic mobile phones and procured toy pistols, rope and plasters used in the offence, the police said.

"On January 5 evening, all the suspects assembled at a school in Yousufguda, where they were briefed by Bhargav Ram about the execution of their plan posing as cops and I-T officials," Anjani Kumar said adding that a recipe of the victims' house in Manovikas Nagar was

also done.

The police seized five cars including one driven by Bhargav Ram and Vikyath Reddy and registered in the name of Bhargav Ram's mother. The suspects will be produced before the court for remanding in judicial custody police said.

On the other hand, teams deployed to nab Bhargav Ram, Guntur Srinu and others in Hyderabad and Allagadda and other places in Andhra Pradesh were still on the job, commissioner said.

Tiger trap operations
suspend by forest officialsDC CORRESPONDENT
KOMARAM BHEEM
ASIFABAD, JAN. 17

Forest officials temporarily suspended the tiger rescue operations on Sunday after six days of its launch, and the rescue teams that came from Maharashtra and Warangal returned to

their bases.

The operations will resume if and when a new cattle-kill occurred in the area and a tiger movement is noticed.

The officials took the decision after realizing that the tiger has changed its path and not visiting the forest area near the Kandi Bheemanna temple on

the outskirts of Papannapet village in Bejjur mandal.

The veterinary doctor and shooter involved in the operations went back to their bases.

The tiger did not revisit the spot of attack so far, though the forest officials had arranged manchan and cages to trap it.



Atram Bheem Rao of Kanchanpalli village is quenching thirst of cattle from 'Kantam Kuhi' well on the outskirts of Kanchanpalli village in Lingapur mandal of Komaram Bheem Asifabad district. — DC

Chronicle that Raja Jangu Babu belonged to the family's first generation.

He said the people of the surrounding villages too draw drinking water from this well. Cattle grazers along with their cattle frequently come to

the Kantam Kuhi to quench their thirst; as do agriculture labourers and farmers from the surrounding agriculture fields.

The water level in the well, at times, is so high that one can collect water by just bending the body.

KHAMMAM TO BE
AS ROLE MODEL:
PUVVADA AJAYDC CORRESPONDENT
KOTHAGUDEM, JAN. 17

Minister for Transport Puvvada Ajay Kumar said that the drainage works and road widening projects are going on the speedway. He said that the government wants to make the town a role model and that people should have all facilities in their area. The Minister laid the foundation stone to various works worth Rs 1.25 crore in 16, 17 and 21 divisions. Each division will have central lighting, junctions and road widening facilities. He asked the people to use the dust bins and make the streets as clean and green.



V. Hanumantha Rao

MODI AND KCR ARE
NEGLECTING
PINGALI VENKAIAH:
HANUMANTA RAODC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 17

Senior Congress leader V. Hanumantha Rao alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao were ignoring the memory of Pingali Venkaiah, who designed the National Flag. The Congress leader, on Sunday, wrote to AICC president Sonia Gandhi asking her to direct all state party unit chiefs to hoist the Tricolour on April 1 to send a message to the Prime Minister and to Chandrashekar Rao.

On April 1, 1921, Venkaiah had designed the flag and presented it to Mahatma Gandhi during the All India Congress Committee session in Vijayawada.

"Modi speaks about integrity and rich heritage of our country and claims to be a true patriot. But where is his integrity when he cannot respect a person who designed the National Flag," Hanumantha Rao said.

"Chandrashekar Rao celebrates former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's centenary celebrations, what is the reason behind his forgetting the National Flag designer," he asked.

● where is his integrity when he cannot respect a person who designed the National Flag.



A human chain formed by opposition parties in support of Delhi farmers in Khammam on Sunday. — DC

Farm laws are to
benefit Ambani and
Adani: VikramarkaDC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, JAN. 17

A human chain has been formed by the opposition parties and various trade unions supporting agitating farmers in Delhi demanding to take back the three farm acts.

Congress, CPI, CPI-M and CPI (ML) New Democracy and journalist unions were involved in the human chain. CLP leader Bhatti Vikramarka said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah passed the farm laws in Parliament to benefit Mukesh Ambani and Adani. He said that the small and marginal farmers would be driven out from their lands with the acts in a lesser time. He said that the fears of farmers on the three acts should be taken into account.

CLP leader said that there is no single provision to benefit the farmers, and are convenient to the corporates. CPI-M state secretary

T. Veerabhadram said that the people of India understood the mental agony of farmers on the new farm acts, but not the central government.

He said that the government should take back the laws first and talk with the farmers later. "No government that pains the peasants will not sustain long, he said.

The human chain is formed from Mayuri Centre to Collectorate on Sunday. CPI leader Bagam Hemanth Rao said that the farmers showed their bravery by continuing their stir in Delhi. There is no other way for the government to take back its laws. He said that the people from all walks of life are extending their support to the farmers' agitation.

New Democracy leader Potu Ranga Rao said that the farmers are ready to continue their stir for long and the government should understand their core issues against the farm laws.

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SHORT TAKES

INDIGO FLIGHT
MAKES EMERGENCY
LANDING IN BHOPAL

Bhopal, Jan. 17: An IndiGo Airlines flight going to Kolkata from Surat with 172 passengers on board made an emergency landing at Bhopal's Raja Bhoj Airport on Sunday due to a technical glitch, said an official.

Raja Bhoj Airport Director Anil Vikram said that the flight made an emergency landing just after 12 noon. "The IndiGo Airlines flight from Surat to Kolkata carrying 172 passengers made an emergency landing at 12.04 pm on Sunday. The landing was safe. The pilot informed the ATC (Air Traffic Controller) about the technical glitch and made an emergency landing safely," he said. Of the 172 passengers, 19 have to go further to Guwahati and Amritsar from Kolkata, and these passengers were sent to Bengaluru by flight to help them get connecting flights to their destinations, he said.

"For the remaining passengers, a plane is coming from Nagpur, which will take them further to Kolkata," the airport director said.

SHAH: DOUBLING
FARMERS INCOME
BIGGEST PRIORITY

Bagalkote (Karnataka), Jan. 17: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said doubling farmers income was the biggest priority of the Narendra Modi government and that the three central farm laws would ensure manifold hike in their earnings.

Since coming to power, the Modi government had increased the budget for the farm sector and also the minimum support price (MSP) for various crops, he said.

"I want to say that if there is any big priority of the Narendra Modi government it is to double the farmers income," he said at an event in Kerakalmatti village in this district in Karnataka.

Speaking after laying the foundation stone and inauguration of farmer-friendly projects of the MRN group, headed by newly inducted Karnataka Minister Murugesh R. Nirani, Shah listed out various programmes and initiatives of the central government for the welfare of the farmers.

Chief Minister B. S. Yediyurappa led BJP government in the state too has not left any stone unturned to work for the welfare of farmers, the Home Minister said.

If there was any government that was in the forefront of implementing central schemes and programmes in the country, it was the government here, he added.

CBI BRINGS
SUBHRA KUNDU
FOR QUESTIONING

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, JAN. 17

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) officials on Sunday brought Subhra Kundu, the wife of Rose Valley Group chairman Gautam Kundu, to Bhubaneswar for questioning.

As per sources, the CBI is keen to conduct further probe in connection with the Rose Valley chit fund scam in Odisha. The group has allegedly cheated thousands of depositors, promising high returns on investments in its illegal schemes.

According to CBI sources, the amount of money garnered by Rose Valley through such schemes could be more than ₹12,000 crore.

The CBI is expected to conduct an intensive investigation to ascertain the involvement of other persons in the scam in Odisha. Subhra Kundu's husband Gautam Kundu is also in jail since March 2015.

As per reports, Subhra was also running a jewellery chain — Adrija — which has been sealed since the investigation started. Subhra Kundu was reportedly arrested from her apartment in south Kolkata. She was earlier brought to the CBI office at the CGO complex at Salt Lake for questioning.

Subhra had also faced interrogation several times by the CBI and ED since 2015 when her husband was arrested.

At least 174 chit fund firms, including Rose Valley Group, AT Group, Seashore and Micro Finance Group have looted 20 lakh people, especially small depositors, by promising high returns on their investments, get links with the ponzi firms.

Indian Navy prepares for Republic-Day



Indian Navy contingent prepare for the Republic Day parade in full swing, starting their practice in the early hours practices, at Rajpath in New Delhi, on Sunday.

— PTI

Missing Scindia at party
function raises eyebrows

Opposition Congress described the development as a 'sign of rift'

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, JAN. 17

Senior BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia's absence at a party function here on Sunday, organised to felicitate new office-bearers of the state unit, has raised many eyebrows here with the Opposition Congress describing the development as a "sign of rift" between him and state BJP leadership.

Madhya Pradesh Congress unit vice-president Raja Pateria said Scindia's absence was significant considering the inadequate representation given to his camp in the recent reorganisation of the party. "Only one leader from Scindia's camp has been accommodated. This indicates all is not well in the BJP in MP", Pateria said.

Madan Kushwaha, a leader from Gwalior considered Scindia's loyalist, has been appointed state secretary. The BJP dismissed the charges, describing it a "conspiracy theory manufactured by the Congress."

"It is not necessary for Scindia to attend all party events. He has expressed his best wishes to all the newly-appointed office-bearers individually. Many senior leaders such as Union minister Narendra Singh Tomar were also not present at the function. It is the Congress which promotes the 'my men, his men' culture. The BJP shuns such culture," state BJP secretary Rajneesh Agrawal said.

State party president V.D. Sharma and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan were among the senior party leaders who were present on the occasion.

Hailing Sharma for giving an opportunity to the next generation leaders in his team, the Chief

Cong seeks to fight 130 seats
in WB, Left rejects demand

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, JAN. 17

Bargaining for the main face of its alliance with the Left Front in the coming West Bengal Assembly elections, the Congress has sought to contest in as many as 130 out of 294 seats with a plan to finalise their joint candidates list within this month. But the Left parties have clearly rejected the Congress' demand, leading to an argument over the seat-sharing formula between the two partners at a meeting on their alliance in Kolkata on Sunday.

Congress Lok Sabha leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, who placed his party's demand for 130 seats, became so angry at the Left's response that he almost stormed out of the meeting. Chowdhury, who is also the state Congress chief, was stopped by Rajya Sabha MP Pradip Bhattacharya, who was present along with the party's Assembly leader Abdul Mannan.

At the meeting, Chowdhury named six districts—Malda, Murshidabad, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur, Bankura and Purulia—where the Congress would field a majority of its 130 candidates, party insiders said. Left Front chairman Biman Bose and other leaders, including CPI(M) state secretary Suryakanta Mishra, reminded the Berhampore MP that Left candidates should be fielded in these districts in

Minister said BJP always promoted young people unlike the Congress which never dared to look

SHIV SENA TO CONTEST IN UPCOMING
WEST BENGAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

SONU
SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, JAN. 17

In a bid to damage the prospects of the BJP, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena on Sunday formally announced that it would contest the upcoming West Bengal Assembly elections. The elections which are expected to witness a high-octane fight may be scheduled in April-May this year.

Shiv Sena spokesperson and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut said, "So, here is the much awaited

update. After discussions with Party Chief Shri Uddhav Thackeray, Shivsena has decided to contest the West Bengal Assembly Elections. We are reaching Kolkata soon." Raut also Tweeted this decision in Bangla.

In 2019, the Sena had contested the Lok Sabha elections in West Bengal. Last year, it had contested the Bihar elections. However, all its candidates had failed to save even their deposits. The Sena polled 0.05 per cent of the total votes in the Bihar elections.

view of their votebank. Ironically, the Congress, which won 44 seats in the 2016 Assembly polls, has been reduced to 24 in the House after 19 of its MLAs defected to the ruling Trinamul Congress and one to the BJP. The Left, which had 33 MLAs five years ago, has been reduced to 25. With no outcome from Sunday's meeting, the two partners will sit again on January 25 before an announcement on their seat-sharing formula and candidates' list, possibly on January 28.

Silent on the Congress' demand of 130 seats, Chowdhury later said: "The Congress and the Left have to fight the Assembly polls unitedly as a secular democratic

alliance to defeat a communal BJP and an autocratic Trinamul Congress. We are heading in that direction. Our meeting, held in a cordial environment, was not only peaceful but also a friendly discussion through exchange of opinions. None of us wants to put anything onto each other. We want to finalise our seat-sharing within this month. It is a process and cannot be finalised overnight. As the Left will discuss it among its constituents, we will do the same."

Echoing him, Bose said: "There is no gap in understanding between the Congress and the Left. There is no bitterness between us over the lack of results on the seat-sharing."

SHIV SENA, CONG
IN SLUGFEST OVER
RENAMING OF
AURANGABAD

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, JAN. 17

The political slugfest over the renaming of Aurangabad city as Sambhajnagar has continued as the Shiv Sena and the Congress — the alliance partners in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in Maharashtra — have accused each other of indulging in vote bank politics over the issue.

The Shiv Sena has said that the renaming might affect the vote bank of 'secular parties' as it will upset the Muslim community. However, calling its alliance partner a 'hypocrite,' the Congress said Sena is raising the renaming issue for the fear of losing its voters.

Writing for 'Rokhthok', the weekly column in Sena mouthpiece 'Saamana', party MP Sanjay Raut said, "Secular parties like the Congress are of the view that Aurangabad should not be renamed as Sambhajnagar. They feel that minority communities like Muslims will not be happy if Aurangabad is renamed and it will affect their vote bank."

"However, Aurangzeb was never secular. He was religiously blind and harboured hatred towards other religions. He considered Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj as his enemy and killed Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj brutally. Hence, there should not be any city named after Aurangzeb at least in Maharashtra. Call it 'Shivbhakti' (devotion to Shivaji Maharaj) or Maharashtra's self-esteem," said Mr Raut.

2.24 lakh get jab;
447 adverse
cases reported

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 17

As the Covid-19 vaccination drive entered the second day, India for the first time reported Sunday that its share of active cases within the total number of infections has shrunk below two per cent. Of the 2,08,826 positive cases reported in the country, the number of active cases had now gone below 1.98 per cent.

While over 1.91 lakh healthcare and frontline workers were vaccinated on the first day, only 17,072 received their jabs in six states on Sunday. The states and UTs have fixed specific days for vaccinations.

Of all 2.24 lakh people who have been vaccinated, 447 developed minor complications. Only three persons who were hospitalised have now been discharged.

India is the only nation in the world, including the United States, Britain and France, to have vaccinated the highest number of people on the first day of the immunisation drive. It is also the only country in the world which started a mass vaccination drive at a time when its infection rate is on the decline. In contrast, in European nations where the vaccination drive started before India, there has been a steep rise in the number of viral infections, posing a serious challenge to their medical facilities.

India has been report-

ing less than 20,000 daily cases in the past 10 days. Its total recovered cases — 10,196,885 — exceed the active cases by 99,88,059. The country's death toll is now 1,52,274, with 181 fatalities reported in the last 24 hours.

Of the total active Covid-19 cases, Kerala has the highest number, at 68,633, followed by Maharashtra at 53,163, Uttar Pradesh at 9,162, Karnataka at 8,713, West Bengal at 7,151, and Tamil Nadu at 6,128.

A day after India took its first steps out of the pandemic with shots of the Covishield and Covaxin vaccines, the Congress Party on Sunday hit out at the Centre, asking why didn't Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his ministers take vaccine shots. Congress spokesman Randeep Surjewala also asked the government if people below the poverty line will get free coronavirus vaccines. He raised questions over the price of Covishield and Covaxin doses, and the Centre's decision to allow the export of one of the vaccines before immunising everyone in the country.

In Delhi, where 4,319 healthcare and frontline workers were vaccinated on Saturday, health minister Satyendar Jain said there were 51 cases of minor complications. He said there was one "serious adverse" case, in which the patient was admitted to the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences.

Two Chinese
held in money
laundering case

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 17

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested two Chinese nationals in a money laundering case. Charlie Peng and Carter Lee were arrested in connection with a probe linked to an alleged hawala racket worth an estimated ₹1,000 crore that involved shell or dubious firms. They were produced before a local court here on Saturday that sent them to 14 days custody.

The ED case against Peng stems from an income-tax department (ITD) investigation of last year and an FIR filed by the Delhi Police special cell against him in 2018. Peng's name had cropped up last year in connection with the detention of two persons in Himachal Pradesh who were allegedly tracking Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama's movements on his directions. The Chinese national and some of his alleged associates, including bankers, were raided by the Income Tax Department in August.

Peng, sources had alleged, had a fake Indian passport. Tax officials had claimed that he created a web of sham compa-

nies to launder hawala funds to and from China in the past two-three years. Sources had said his front or showcase business was import and export of medical and electronic goods and some other items.

Peng was arrested by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police in September 2018 on charges of fraud and forgery and was allegedly running an illegal money changer. Both ED and I-T department, sources had said, are also probing allegations if Peng was "bribing" some Tibetans living in Delhi.

In a statement in August last year, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) had, without identifying the entities involved, stated that its searches were based on "credible inputs that a few Chinese individuals and their Indian associates were involved in money laundering and hawala transactions through a series of shell entities". It had said the "subsidiary of Chinese company and its related concerns have taken over ₹100 crore bogus advances from shell entities for opening businesses of retail showrooms in India". Similar charges are being probed against Lee by the ED, they said.

END OF AN ERA

Veteran hailed from family of musicians, got basic classical music training from his father

Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan passes away at 89

Mumbai, Jan. 18: Legendary Indian classical musician and Padma Vibhushan awardee Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan passed away on Sunday afternoon at his residence here. He was 89.

Khan's daughter-in-law Namrata Gupta Khan said that the veteran breathed his last at 12.37 pm at his Bandra home. "Today morning he was fine. We had a 24 hour nurse at home. During his massage he vomited and I ran immediately his eyes were shut and he was breathing slowly. I tried connecting to doctors and when they came he had already died," Namrata said.

She said the family is in shock due to Khan's sudden demise as he was keeping well. The musician was going to turn 90 on March 3. Khan had suffered a brain stroke in 2019 and left side of his body was paralysed. Namrata also shared the news of Khan's demise on her Facebook page.

"With a very heavy heart, I inform you all that my father, in-law the pillar of our family and a legend of our nation, Padma Vibhushan Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan sahab has left for his heavenly abode few mins ago," she posted on the social media platform.



President Ram Nath Kovind confers the Padma Vibhushan on classical singer Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan during the Padma Awards 2018 function at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on March 23, 2018.

— PTI

Khan's last rites will be performed at Santacruz Kabrastan later this

evening. Born on March 3, 1931 in Badaun in Uttar Pradesh, Khan was the eld-

est son in a family of four brothers and three sisters.

His father, Ustad Waris Hussain Khan was the son of celebrated musician Ustad Murred Baksh, while his mother, Sabri Begum, was the daughter of Ustad Inayat Husain Khan, credited as the founder of the Rampur-Sahaswan gharana of music.

Khan got his basic classical music training from his father and later studied music under his cousin, Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1991, followed by Padma Bhushan in 2006 and Padma Vibhushan in 2018.

In 2003 he was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi award, the highest Indian recognition given to practicing artists.

Soon after Khan's demise his collaborators from Indian music industry including legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar and music composer A.R. Rahman took too social media to pay tributes to the maestro.

Mangeshkar said she was "deeply saddened" by the news of Khan's death. "I got to know the news of passing away of Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan Saheb. I am deeply saddened. He was not only a

very good singer but also a very good human being," she said, adding, her niece had also learnt music from him.

Rahman remembered Khan as the "sweetest teacher". "The sweetest teacher of all... May the Ghafoor-ur-Rahim give you a special place in the next world #UstadGhulamMustafa," he wrote. Ustad Amjad Ali Khan said Khan's passing away has left him heartbroken. "He was one of the most respected and versatile Vocalists of our country. My deepest condolences to his family. May his soul Rest In Peace," he tweeted. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

BANKING HEIR BENJAMIN DE ROTHSCHILD DIES

New York, Jan. 17: Benjamin de Rothschild, who oversaw the banking empire started by his father in 1953, has died. He was 57. The Edmond de Rothschild Group, the company he was chairman of, said that de Rothschild died of a heart attack Friday afternoon at his home in Pregny, Switzerland.

Since 1997, Benjamin de Rothschild headed the banking group, which was named after his father. Today, Edmond de Rothschild Group says it manages assets worth 160 billion euros, or \$190 billion. Forbes magazine estimates de Rothschild's net worth at \$1.5 billion. He is a descendent of the Rothschild family, which has a nearly 300-year history running European banks.

In a press release announcing his death, the Edmond de Rothschild Group said de Rothschild was passionate about finance, sailing, cars and wine. He was also a philanthropist, involved in the Adolphe de Rothschild Foundation Hospital, the company said. He is survived by his wife, Ariane de Rothschild, and their four adult daughters.

PALESTINIAN VOTE: EU ASKS ISRAEL TO HELP

Brussels, Jan. 17: The European Union on Saturday welcomed a promise by Palestinian leaders to hold their first elections in 15 years, urging Israel to facilitate the ballots.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said elections would be held in May and July, as part of a warming of ties between his Fatah party and its Islamist rival Hamas.

"This is a welcome development," said a spokesman for EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell. He said the bloc "stands ready to cooperate with relevant actors to support the electoral process" and urged Israel to "facilitate the holding of these elections throughout the Palestinian territory".

The statement from Abbas said he expected polls to be held "in all governorates of Palestine, including east Jerusalem", which was annexed by Israel following the 1967 Six-Day War but is considered occupied territory by much of the international community.

Israel bans all Palestinian Authority activity in east Jerusalem, and there was no indication the Jewish state would allow a Palestinian vote within the city.

The 2005 Palestinian presidential vote saw Abbas elected with 62 percent support to replace the late Yasser Arafat.

In the last Palestinian parliamentary elections in 2006, Hamas won an unexpected landslide.

The polls resulted in a brief unity government but it soon collapsed and in 2007, bloody clashes erupted in the Gaza Strip between the two principal Palestinian factions, with Hamas ultimately seizing control of Gaza.

ANTI-NETANYAHU PROTESTS ON IN ISRAEL

Jerusalem, Jan. 17: Hundreds of protesters braved a cold night in Jerusalem on Saturday to press on with their calls for Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu to step down over corruption charges against him.

Demonstrators gathered at a Jerusalem square near Netanyahu's official residence. The weekly protests have been taking place for over seven months. Netanyahu is charged with fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three cases involving billionaire associates and media moguls, charges that he denies.

The protesters insist Netanyahu cannot properly lead the country while under indictment for corruption. His trial is set to begin evidentiary hearings next month. Israel will hold its fourth national elections in two years in March, in what will likely be another referendum on Netanyahu as he faces a challenge from defectors within his Likud party. The protesters also say Netanyahu and his government have bungled the Coronavirus response.

The country has seen its economy hit hard by virus curbs and is again under a nationwide if partial lockdown. Netanyahu has used vaccination drive, in which more than a tenth of its population has been immunised, to try to belittle the protesters and their cause. They say the PM is working to end the outbreak while they hold demonstrations.

National Guards in Washington

Step taken to keep eye on possible protests

Washington, Jan. 17: By the busload and plane-load, National Guard troops were pouring into the US capital on Saturday, as governors answered the urgent pleas of defence officials for more troops to help safeguard Washington even as they keep anxious eyes on possible violent protests in their own states.

Military leaders spent chunks of Thursday evening and Friday calling states in an unprecedented appeal for more National Guard troops to help lock down much of the city in the days before President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration. In dribs and drabs, governors responded, some agreeing to send an extra dozen, 100 or even 1,000, while others said no.

The calls reflect fears that violent extremist groups are targeting the city in the wake of the deadly insurrection at the US Capitol on Jan. 6. The threats range from armed insurgents to possible attempts to plant explosive devices at so-called soft targets. But as Washington begins to resemble an armed camp, with more than 25,000 Guards due in the city by early next week, concerns about violence at state capitals has grown. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said she turned down the federal request to send at least 100 more National Guard troops to D.C. "I didn't think that we could safely fill that commitment," Brown said.

Oregon has already agreed to send 30 to Washington, but state leaders are worried about violence at the state capital in Salem. Others agreed, setting off a dizzying torrent of military flights and convoys into the region. "The peaceful transfer of power is a central tenet of American democracy, and Connecticut stands ready to aid in the protection of our country," said Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont, who had initially approved sending 100 Guard and on Friday agreed to send 200 more. All told, more than 130 US Air Guard flights in the past 72 hours have carried at least 7,000 Guard troops to Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, according to US officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal numbers.

Thousands more are in buses and military trucks, thundering up highways toward Washington. Army Gen. Dan Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, called adjutants general around the country, and others, such as Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy, called governors to seek help.

— AP

Man arrested with gun at checkpoint

Washington, Jan. 17: A man with a loaded handgun and more than 500 rounds of ammunition has been arrested in Washington at a security checkpoint near the US Capitol, authorities said.

Wesley Allen Beeler, of Virginia, had driven to a checkpoint on Friday evening and tried to use a phony credential to access the restricted area where President-elect Joe Biden will be inaugurated next week, according to a document filed in Washington, DC Superior Court.

As officers checked against an authorised access list, one of them noticed decals on the back of Beeler's pick-up truck that said "Assault Life," with an image of a rifle, and another with the message: "If they come for your guns, give 'em your bullets first." Under questioning, Beeler told officers he had a Glock handgun in the vehicle.

A search uncovered a loaded handgun, more than 500 rounds of ammunition, shotgun shells and a magazine for the gun, the court document said. Beeler was arrested on charges including possession of an unregistered firearm and unlawful possession of ammunition, a police report said.

Following his arrest, Beeler said it was "an honest mistake" and that he was

BIDEN TO PRIORITISE LEGAL STATUS FOR IMMIGRANTS

San Diego, Jan. 17: President-elect Joe Biden's decision to immediately ask Congress to offer legal status to an estimated 11 million people in the country has surprised advocates given how the issue has long divided Democrats and Republicans, even within their own parties.

Biden will announce legislation his first day in office to provide a path to citizenship for millions of immigrants in the United States illegally, according to four people briefed on his plans. The president-elect campaigned on a path to citizenship for the roughly 11 million people in the US illegally.

— AP

a private security guard who got lost on his way to work near the Capitol.

Washington is under a high state of alert ahead of Biden's Wednesday inauguration, after a mob of President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the Capitol on January 6.

Five people died in the assault, including a police officer.

— AFP

Day 1: Biden to sign executive orders

Washington, Jan. 17: Joe Biden's top aide said Saturday the incoming president would sign about a dozen executive orders on his first day in office, as police fearing violence from Trump supporters staged a nationwide security operation ahead of the inauguration. Incoming Biden chief of staff Ron Klain said in a memo to new White House senior staff that the executive orders would address the pandemic, the ailing US economy, climate change and racial injustice in America.

"All of these crises demand urgent action," Klain said in the memo.

"In his first 10 days in office, President-elect Biden will take decisive action to address these four crises, prevent other urgent and irreversible harms, and restore America's

place in the world," Klain added. As he inherits the White House from Donald Trump, Biden's plate is overflowing with acute challenges.

The US is fast approaching 400,000 dead from the Covid-19 crisis and logging well over a million new cases a week as the Coronavirus spreads out of control.

The economy is ailing, with 10 million fewer jobs available compared to the start of the pandemic. And millions of Americans who back Trump refuse to recognise Biden as the legitimate president.

Biden this week unveiled plans to seek \$1.9 trillion to revive the economy through new stimulus payments and other aid, and plans a blitz to accelerate America's stumbling Covid vaccine rollout effort.

— AFP

Auspicious Kolam drawings mark inauguration kickoff

Washington, Jan. 17: Kolam, a traditional Indian art form of drawing geometric patterns on the floors as a sign of welcome, was part of the virtual kick-off ceremony of the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden and his deputy Kamala Harris, who traces her origin to Tamil Nadu where these auspicious designs adorn almost every household. In Tamil Nadu, where

Harris has roots, women draw Kolams on the ground to invite health and prosperity into houses where they are displayed.

Pictures of thousands of Kolam tiles were on Saturday woven into a video to welcome Biden and Harris in the spirit of 'Presidency for All' and to showcase the multi-cultural heritage of America.

More than 1,800 individuals from across the US

and many from India participated in the online initiative to create thousands of Kolam designs. "Many believe Kolams symbolise positive energy and new beginnings. People from various communities collaborated from homes with eco-friendly materials," said Shanthi Chandrasekar, an award-winning multimedia and multidisciplinary artist from Maryland.

— PTI

TEST | FIRING

Washington, Jan. 17: NASA conducted a test firing of the engines for its giant Space Launch System (SLS) lunar rocket on Saturday but they shut down earlier than planned, the space agency said.

The "hot-fire" test at the Stennis Space Center in Mississippi was supposed to last a little over eight minutes — the time the engines would burn in flight — but they shut down just over a minute into the burn.

"Teams are assessing the data to determine what

caused the early shutdown, and will determine a path forward," NASA said in a statement.

The SLS rocket is intended to launch the Artemis missions that will take US astronauts back to the Moon.

Despite being cut short, NASA said the test of the RS-25 engines had provided valuable information for the planned missions.

"Saturday's test was an important step forward to ensure that the core stage of the SLS rocket is ready for the Artemis I mission,

and to carry crew on future missions," said NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine.

● **THE "HOT-FIRE"** test at the Stennis Space Center in Mississippi was supposed to last a little over eight minutes — the time the engines would burn in flight — but they shut down just over a minute into the burn.

● **THE SLS** rocket is intended to launch the Artemis missions that will take US astronauts back to the Moon.

● **NASA'S EVENTUAL** goal is to establish an Artemis Base Camp on the Moon before the end of the decade, an ambitious plan that would require tens of billions of dollar of funding and the green light from President-elect Joe Biden and Congress.

Although the engines did not fire for the full duration, the team successfully worked through



People jog along the river front as they exercise in Battersea Park in London on Sunday, as surging cases of the novel Coronavirus are placing health services under increasing pressure. Britain recorded another 55,761 cases of Coronavirus on Friday, although new cases have fallen nearly 14 percent in the last week.

— AFP

Pfizer tries to ease Europe's worries on vaccine delivery

Mexico sees 2nd straight day of 20,000 Covid-19 infections

Mexico City, Jan. 17: Mexico posted its second straight day of more than 20,000 Coronavirus cases Saturday, suggesting a surge in a country already struggling in many areas with overflowing hospitals. There were 20,523 newly confirmed cases Saturday, after 21,366 infections were reported Friday.

That was about double the daily rate of increase just a week ago. Reporting normally declines on weekends, suggesting next week may bring even higher numbers. The country also recorded 1,219 more deaths, a new record. The country has now seen almost 1.63 million total infections and has registered over 140,000 deaths so far in the pandemic. The country's extremely low testing rate means that is an undercount, and

Worries have grown that delays in the delivery of Pfizer-BioNTech shots could hamper a European vaccine rollout which has already faced heavy criticism across the continent. Work is ongoing at the Pfizer plant in Belgium to increase capacity, and the firm and its German partner BioNTech said Saturday it would allow them to "significantly" scale up vaccine production in the second quarter.

Deliveries would be back to the original schedule to the EU from January 25, they pledged. Several Nordic and Baltic countries have described the situation as "unacceptable", while Belgium's vaccination strategy task force condemned a lack of consultation by Pfizer over the deliveries as "incomprehensible". France, which crossed 70,000 Covid-19 deaths on the weekend, is set to begin a campaign to inoculate people over 75 from Monday. Russia plans to begin mass vaccinations the same day.

Despite the rollout of vaccines, countries still have few options but to rely on movement and distancing restrictions to control the spread of the virus. Curbs will be tightened in Italy and Switzerland from Monday, while Britain will require testing of all international arrivals.

The number of infections in the United States — the worst-hit country — soared to more than 23.7 million on Saturday, with close to 400,000 deaths, according to a Johns Hopkins University tally.

The pandemic has battered the American economy, with millions left jobless, and President-elect Joe Biden has vowed to step up efforts to end the pandemic.

Biden will sign executive orders on the day he is inaugurated next week, including action on the coronavirus crisis.

The incoming administration has pledged to set up thousands of immunisation sites, deploy mobile clinics and expand the public health workforce in a bid to revive the stuttering rollout of vaccines.

In some nations, that resentment has sparked protests. Roughly 10,000 people marched in Austria's capital Vienna against coronavirus restrictions on Saturday, calling on the government to resign.

Britain's government said on Sunday it is looking at requiring all incoming travellers to isolate in hotels, expanding on new Coronavirus restrictions entering into force in the coming hours. All arrivals to the UK will have to quarantine and show negative tests for Covid-19 from Monday at 0400 GMT, after the government scrapped "travel corridors" from countries with lower case loads following the emergence of new strains.

The *Sunday Times* said the government planned to go further, emulating countries such as Australia and New Zealand in requiring travellers to self-isolate in hotels at their own charge, using GPS and facial-recognition technology to check they are staying put.

— AFP

FB PUTS WARNING ON CARDINAL VIDEO

Mexico City, Jan. 17: Facebook has placed a warning screen over a rambling chat by retired Mexican Cardinal Juan Sandoval Iniguez in which he claims Coronavirus vaccines contain a satanic microchip.

The Facebook screen warns viewers, "This post repeats information about Covid-19 that independent fact checkers say is false." However, viewers on Saturday could still see

the video, which was posted Jan. 12. Sandoval Iniguez is the emeritus archbishop of the archdiocese of Guadalajara, where he retired in 2011 after reaching the age of 75. He turns 88 in March.

In the video, he refers to "the chip that they are planning to put in the vaccine to control you, it is the mark of the beast." The video is titled, "The plot to impose a new world order without Christ."

— AP

official estimates suggest the real death toll is closer to 195,000.

Teams vaccinating frontline health care workers administered about 25,000 shots on Saturday, bringing the total so far to over

463,000. The numbers are still inadequate for the 750,000 frontline health care workers, each of whom will require two doses. Mexico has reported severe reactions to the Pfizer vaccine.

— AP

Pak approves use of Oxford vaccine

Islamabad, Jan. 17: Pakistan has approved the emergency use of Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine and the government hopes to make the drug available by the first quarter of the year, as the country's Coronavirus tally surged to 519,291.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister Imran Khan on Health Dr Faisal Sultan confirmed on Saturday that the Drug Regulatory Authority Pakistan (DRAP) has granted approval for emergency use of the Oxford-AstraZeneca Coronavirus vaccine across the country, according to a report in the *Geo TV*.

Minister for Planning Asad Umar, who is also the chief of National Command and Operations Centre (NCO), the country's Coronavirus control body, said that the vaccine will be rolled out by March, the report said. In the first phase, the vaccine will be given to health workers and those aged 65 years and above, he said. The vaccine is designed by scientists at the University

ALL TRAVELLERS TO SINGAPORE MUST TEST ON ARRIVAL

Singapore, Jan. 17: All travellers, including Singaporeans and permanent residents, will need to take a Covid-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test upon arrival in Singapore, the Ministry of Health (MOH) has announced. This will take effect from 11.59 pm on January 24 as part of tighter border measures to manage the risk of imported Covid-19 cases, reported the *Channel News Asia*. Singapore has seen an increase in the number of Coronavirus cases.

— PTI

ty of Oxford and produced by AstraZeneca, a British-Swedish multinational pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical company. Pakistan reported 43 deaths in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of fatalities to 10,951.

— PTI

Artemis I mission to test the SLS, unmanned Orion spacecraft to take place before '21 end

NASA test of mega Moon rocket engines cut short

the countdown, ignited the engines, and gained valuable data to inform our path forward." It is not yet known what caused the early shutdown but SLS programme manager John Honeycutt told reporters they had seen a flash in a thermal protection blanket on one of the engines and were analyzing the data.

"In my opinion the team accomplished a lot today, we learned a lot about the vehicle," Honeycutt said.

NASA's Artemis I mission to test the SLS and an

unmanned Orion spacecraft is scheduled to take place before the end of 2021.

The following Artemis II mission in 2023 will take astronauts around the Moon but will not land. Artemis III will send astronauts, including the first woman, to the Moon in 2024.

In its configuration for Artemis I, the SLS will stand 322 feet (98 metres), taller than the Statue of Liberty, and is more powerful than the Saturn V rockets used in the Apollo

missions that sent the first astronauts to the Moon.

NASA's eventual goal is to establish an Artemis Base Camp on the Moon before the end of the decade, an ambitious plan that would require tens of billions of dollar of funding and the green light from President-elect Joe Biden and Congress.

A manned return to the Moon is the first part of the Artemis programme to set up a long-term colony and test technologies for a crewed mission to Mars in the 2030s.

— AFP

DECCAN
Chronicle

18 JANUARY 2021

Transparency the key to success of vaccine drive

India has a population of 136 crore people and the highest number of Covid-affected people after the United States, and hence a campaign to inoculate the entire population is critical to the success of humanity's fight against the pandemic. It ought to be an exercise without parallel in history for the sheer number of the target group and the logistical and economic challenges it would face. The Union government is working with the states and vaccine manufacturers to ensure that about three crore people, who are mainly Covid warriors, are inoculated in the first phase with two made-in-India vaccines in a drive that began on Saturday. Reports say 1.91 lakh people were vaccinated on the first day against a target of three lakh.

Everyone wants the campaign to be a success, but it is regrettable that the government has been less than transparent about it. Prime Minister Narendra Modi takes justifiable pride in the fact that both the vaccines are made in India and underlines the role of Indian scientists in making it happen. But the truth

is that one of the two vaccines, Covaxin, which is developed jointly by the Indian Council of Medical Research and Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech International Limited, and manufactured by the latter, has been in a clinical trial mode. Those people who were given the Covaxin jab were made to sign a consent form, which says that they are participating in a trial. A section of doctors in the government-run Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital in Delhi insisted that they be given the vaccine developed by Oxford University and manufactured by Pune-based Serum Institute of India. They said they are a bit apprehensive about the lack of complete trial in the case of Covaxin.

This is unfair and unacceptable. If a vaccine is under trial and has not gone through the due process, then its administration should be called a clinical trial, and not vaccination. It should be given only to volunteers and its administration should not be part of the inoculation campaign. This is the minimum the government owes to the people. The Prime Minister's statement that Indian vaccine scientists, medical system, Indian process and institutional mechanism are trusted globally and that this trust is earned with a consistent track record is true, but it does not square with the present campaign. Also true is the fact that about 60 per cent of children the world over receive life-saving vaccines which are made in India and passed through stringent Indian scientific tests; but the only point is that Covaxin has not gone through those tests.

That the head of All India Institute of Medical Sciences and the member (health) of Niti Aayog took the Covaxin jab proves nothing; it can only be seen as a persuasive act. Even if the Prime Minister is administered the vaccine, it proves nothing except sending a message on vaccination, not on the vaccine. The government must be upfront about the whole programme and respect science and scientific processes. Tom-tomming national pride is not a great idea in the face of a pandemic.

Subhani



Bolstering corporates was intent of farm laws



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

The recent Supreme Court decision staying the farm laws, protecting the minimum support price regime and directing that no farmer would be dispossessed of his land is appropriate under the given circumstances. Perhaps if the committee appointed by the Supreme Court could also have also been constituted in consultation with the protesting farmer unions, it would have inspired far greater confidence.

When the Supreme Court finally does decide to hear the farm laws matter, for many petitions that deal with equally contentious decisions taken by the current government continue hanging fire in the apex court, it must keep in mind that agriculture, with its allied sectors, are the largest source of livelihoods in India.

A total of 70 per cent of our rural households still depend primarily on agriculture for their livelihood. Of them, 82 per cent of farmers are small and marginal. On the whole, about 60 per cent of the Indian population, i.e. 81 crore people, are agriculture-dependent.

They can be called small entrepreneurs, for they mostly own the land they till and it is their labour on that small patch, varying from one to five acres, that keeps the home fires burning. The average size of a land holding in India is 1.16 hectares. This is roughly 2.8 acres. Moreover, these farm laws also have the added potential of making us import-dependent bringing back the spectre of ship-to-mouth that the green revolution finally surmounted in the early 1970s.

These farm laws are actually intended to give Corporate India a legal licence to muscle in on these small guys who have unequal or no bargaining power.

Look at what has happened to the Indian economy over the past 80 months. The chairperson

of the Competition Commission of India in a recent interview stated, "The Commission has now decided to undertake market studies in pharmaceutical sector, telecom sector and digital market sector... The Commission has received cases with allegations of anti-competitive conduct by market players in these sectors as well as reviewed various combination notices in these sectors..." The goal is to ensure that competition remains "vibrant" and "there are enough players who are able to participate in the award of concessions".

A classical example of this is the aviation sector where the government despite opposition from both the department of economic affairs (DEA) ministry of finance and the Niti Aayog allowed the Adani Group of companies to take six key airports and also acquire a controlling stake in both the Mumbai and the upcoming greenfield Navi Mumbai Airport. These seven airports, namely Ahmedabad, Mangalore, Lucknow, Jaipur, Guwahati, Thiruvananthapuram and Mumbai, roughly handled 80 million passengers during the last fiscal (2019-20). This converts into nearly one-fourth of the 340 million odd domestic air passenger traffic.

On the 11th of December 2018 when the NDA/BJP government's public private partnership appraisal committee (PPPAC) considered the civil aviation ministry's privatisation pitch, the DEA in a note ostensibly red-flagged it, stating, "These six airports projects are highly capital-intensive projects, hence it is suggested to incorporate the clause that not more than two airports will be awarded to the same bidder duly factoring the high financial risk and performance issues. Awarding them to different companies would also facilitate yardstick competition."

Niti Aayog also surprisingly demonstrated spine and, in a note, opined, "A

bidder lacking sufficient technical capacity can well jeopardise the project and compromise the quality of services that the government is committed to provide."

Brushing aside these concerns, the government still went ahead and allowed one company with no previous experience in airport management to take control of all these airports albeit through a public auction.

However, therein lies the problem. Even if it is through the bidding route allowing monopolies to develop in sector after sector of the economy tantamount to creating economic oligarchies and chaebols.

An oligarchy is a country or industry that is controlled by a small group of powerful people while a chaebol denotes a "wealth clique" in Korean. They are popularly assumed to have been influenced by the Japanese zaibatsu — both sharing the same Chinese characters and meaning. Like chaebols, zaibatsus were also family controlled conglomerates that dominated the Japanese economy until they were finally extinguished by the United States during its occupation of Japan post World War II.

Country after country has had to deal with these oligarchies and chaebols for ultimately they start influencing the politics of nation in the most pernicious manner possible. The US had to bring the Sherman Anti-Trust Act way back in 1890 to curb concentrations of power that interfere with trade and reduce economic competition. The unsaid part of it was that do not allow corporations to become so powerful so that they start "controlling by influence" the policy frameworks and governance of the state. However, where the government is itself engaged in facilitating the development of these oligarchic chaebol-like struc-

These farm laws are actually intended to give Corporate India a legal licence to muscle in on these small guys who have unequal or no bargaining power

tures it becomes even more sinister to put it mildly.

The US has used its anti-trust laws to reign in various entities, including Standard Oil, AT&T, Kodak and Microsoft in the twentieth century, to name a few.

Way back in 1909, the Department of Justice of the US government filed a federal anti-trust lawsuit against Standard Oil arguing that the company restrained trade through its preferential deals with railroads, its control of pipelines and by engaging in unfair practices like price-cutting to drive smaller competitors out of business.

On May 15, 1911, the Supreme Court ordered the dissolution of Standard Oil Company, ruling it was in violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. The court's decision forced Standard to break into 34 independent companies spread across the country and abroad. Many of these companies have since split, folded or merged today. The primary descendants of Standard include ExxonMobil, Chevron and ConocoPhillips. Recently, the US government has gone after Big Tech companies with a wave of anti-trust lawsuits for it considers their market dominance among other things as dangerous for democracy.

Similarly, South Korea has for long grappled with the malevolent influence of chaebols on their politics. Russia is a typical example where a noxious combination of big business and entrenched political interest are controlling that country since the exit of Boris Yeltsin at the turn of the millennium.

The Supreme Court, therefore, must be mindful of the true intent of these farm laws. It is to further the agenda of further consolidating these oligarchies and chaebols that control a significant part of the Indian economy already and, therefore, are, through their financial, media and other muscle, disproportionately significant players in our democratic and governance ethos.

The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal. Twitter handle @manishtewari.

LETTERS

VACCINATION

It is unfortunate that the Opposition is against whatever the government does. Repercussions of such a stand will be irreparable and damage the country's reputation. Every political party must introspect and put themselves in the shoes of the ruling party and cooperate when something good is being done.

Rau Nidumolu
Hyderabad

The vaccine has come when the virus is almost disappearing on its own. It is weakening and not spreading fast as only a few positive cases are being reported now. At this stage, it will be difficult to judge the effectiveness of the vaccine to produce the desired results. However, people should not be forced to vaccinate. Political leaders who promised free vaccine before Bihar polls, must fulfil them.

J. Vijay Kumar
Secunderabad

With the surge in Covid cases abroad and lack of information regarding herd immunity, it is the responsibility of every citizen to take Covid vaccination to eradicate the dreaded pandemic. Till then we must follow social distancing, hand washing and wearing masks when we go out.

V. Nagendra Kumar
Hyderabad

FREE WATER

The government's 20,000-litre free water scheme to every household is not reaching genuine citizens. They are facing hurdles in linking Aadhaar online as the bills in a few cases have only the initials instead of the full name as it appears in the Aadhaar card. This is the first time consumers are asked to link Aadhaar details to avoid benefits.

Chandrasekhar
Secunderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN
Chronicle

TPS has one-point manifesto

HYDERABAD, JANUARY. 17 The Telangana Praja Samithi leader, Dr. M. Chenna Reddy, said here today that the Samithi had been converted into a political party only to fulfil the requirement to get a common symbol for TPS candidates in the elections.

Dr. Reddy, who was replying to a question at a "meet the people and the press programme", said the TPS was equidistant from all other political parties though it was "absolutely clear" that "we stand for all progressive things."

Kishwar
Desai
London Diary

Long UK lockdown defeats Britons; Spurs' 'shot in arm' for soccer fans

So not only is it very cold but the forecast is also bleak. And the worst is that another lockdown has been announced! As of 2 am on Monday, all travel corridors to the UK will be shut. As they used to say 'Fog in the Channel. Continent isolated. Lockdown in UK. The World isolated!'

Those were the days! But now the tables have turned. It is the UK that has become even more of an island!

Theatres were pleased last November they could open but now they are shut again as are pubs and restaurants. We have vaccinations slowly covering the population but as of now it will be Easter before the over 50s will be covered. That leaves the younger half of the 70 million to come.

However, what is astonishing is that the latest photos show that the stoic Briton is completely fed up and would rather party than live in isolation. So where will this lead — except for more infections and more deaths? One despairs! This was once a disciplined

and well-regulated country. But now as Covid continues to rampage through lives — I am worried about the consequences. With at least 1,000 deaths everyday, in a small nation like this... what terrible impact will Covid have on households, on the economy?

The British may have been great at finding a vaccine that work — coming second, though not first — with AstraZeneca. But technology does not seem to be a strong point. Despite the tough stance of home secretary Priti Patel about fighting crime and immigrants, it turns out the Home Office has managed to wipe out 150,000 (or could be 400,000 no one knows for sure) people's arrest records and with it much sensitive information — their fingerprints, DNA and arrest history. At least that makes those 150,000 happy. No so long ago, a National Health computer lost thousands of names of people who had been infected. We need an abacus urgently.

Meanwhile... Brexit is still causing problems. Now the Atlantic storm

Filomena has ruined the Spanish lettuce crop and we have a serious lettuce shortage.

A cheerful event did happen the other day. It was rather like a battle between the elephant and the mouse. The mouse did not win but it did get to ride on the elephant's back for a bit. The FA Cup is a contest where all the football teams — the best ones from Premier League down to local village teams playing in a small league — can contest with each other. Rather like the Mumbai Indians of the IPL playing with a team from a village in Bihar. This year Marine, a village team established back in 1884, and playing in the Northern Premier League Division One, North West, was drawn against the mighty Premier League North London side, Tottenham Hotspurs, in the Third Round. This was on the Marine's home grounds rather than in London on Spurs' home turf. Anyway no spectators are allowed due to Covid. Anyone would expect the mighty

Spurs to send their third reserve side to play the minnows 160 places below them in national ranking. But Jose Mourinho, the Spurs Spanish manager, selected their regular top side with a few stars and promising youngsters hoping to show he took the fixture seriously.

The result, alas, was not the unexpected victory of the mouse. The elephant won. But Marines were able to sell 30,000 tickets for watching on Zoom at £10 each. Their ground facility only accommodates 3,185 in all with 389 seats and rest standing. But thanks to Covid and the Big team bringing all the stars, the Marines cleaned up. Their game was shown on BBC. They lost 5-0 but who is counting the goals. Their good luck continued. After a match, players often exchange their shirts as a gesture of friendship. In Covid Times, this is forbidden. But the Spurs promised to send the Marine team a freshly washed set of shirts which then the entire team wore on the day. It is the gesture that made the day.

Good news at last about Noor Inayat Khan. This famous daughter of a Sufi music master fought in the Second World War with the spy code name Madeleine on the British side. She was sent to France where she worked as a radio operator. She was captured but refused to say anything about her associates because, being a Sufi, she would not tell a lie. She was sent to the Dachau concentration camp where she died. Now there will at last be a TV series with Freida Pinto. This is good news for me as well. Long ago, my husband and I had spotted this as excellent story to make a film, and bought the rights for a book on it and even lobbied for it for a long time. But we found the process of filmmaking very daunting, and so am thrilled that 15 years later — something is happening on the OTT platform.

Kishwar Desai is an award-winning author. The Longest Kiss: The Life and Times of Devika Rani is her new book.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	49,034.67	-1.11
Nifty 50	14,433.70	-1.11
S&P 500*	3,768.25	-0.72
Dollar (₹)	73.04	0.00
Pound Sterling (₹)	99.71	0.01
Euro (₹)	88.70	0.17
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,690▲286	0.00
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	55.10	-2.34
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.988	1.08
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.087	-0.92

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Bank credit up 3.2% in first nine months of FY21

Bank credit grew 3.2 per cent to Rs 107.05 lakh crore in the first nine months of the current financial year against a growth of 2.7 per cent in the same period of 2019-20. In the fortnight ended March 27, 2020, bank advances stood at Rs 103.72 lakh crore. Bank deposits rose 8.5 per cent to Rs 147.27 lakh crore in the April-December 2020 period against an increase of 5.1 per cent a year ago, RBI data shows.

FPIs invest close to ₹18,500 cr in stocks this month



Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) put in Rs 14,866 crore in Indian capital markets in the first half of January with participants expecting strong third-quarter results by companies. As per depositories data, FPIs invested a net Rs 18,490 crore into equities but pulled out Rs 3,624 crore from debt segment between January 1 and January 15. This translated into a total net investment of Rs 14,866 crore.

Alkem arm recalls over 20K bottles of drug in US

Ascend Laboratories LLC, subsidiary of Mumbai-based Alkem Labs, is recalling over 20,000 bottles of antibacterial drug cephalixin for oral suspension from the US market, as per a report by the US drug regulator. The US-based Ascend Laboratories is recalling bottles of cephalixin for oral suspension, USP, 125 mg per 5 ml, manufactured by Alkem Laboratories, according to the US FDA's Enforcement Report.

2021 to be good year for Indian IT: Balakrishnan

The year 2021 will be good for India's information technology sector and most of the companies in the space are expected to clock high single digit growth, according to IT industry veteran V. Balakrishnan. The former CFO of Infosys said Indian IT companies have handled the Covid very well in terms of transitioning to work-from-home and capturing new business opportunities in the wake of the pandemic.



■ May propose SLR, CRR requirements for big players

RBI mulls stricter norms for NBFCs

AFTAB AHMED, SWATI BHAT & NUPUR ANAND
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, JAN. 17

India's central bank is likely to propose tightening rules on "shadow banks" in a bid to strengthen solvency and sustainability of a sector that has been showing signs of stress in recent years, two sources said.

The Reserve Bank of India has been trying to tighten regulatory norms on the sector since Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services, the largest non-bank financial company, went bankrupt in 2018 and Dewan Housing Finance Corp and Altico Capital defaulted on payments in 2019.

The RBI is expected to set out proposals in a discussion paper this week, recommending that bigger shadow banks maintain a statutory liquidity ratio, the sources said.

India's banks must maintain at least 18 per cent worth of deposits that they must hold in cash, gold or government securities.

The RBI could also suggest large non-banks be required to maintain a cash reserve ratio. For banks this ratio is 3 per cent, reduced from 4 per cent in a measure the central bank imposed that is to be reversed after March 31. The move could be a huge cash drain for the sector which is currently free from maintaining these reserve ratios, allowing them to lend to subprime lenders as well.

CUTTING SYSTEMIC RISKS

- RBI is expected to recommend phased implementation of reserve ratios
- Currently banks must maintain at least 18% of deposits as statutory liquidity ratio
- They must also set aside 3% of deposits as cash reserve ratio
- Mandating the ratios could proved to be a huge cash drain for the sector

FINMIN LOOKS AT BANK INVESTMENT COMPANY

New Delhi, Jan. 17: The finance ministry is looking at other avenues for affordable capital infusion, including setting up of a Bank Investment Company (BIC), as the RBI has raised concern over the issuance of zero coupon bonds for recapitalisation of public sector banks (PSBs), sources said.

Setting up BIC as a holding company or a core investment company was suggested by the P. J. Nayak committee. The report recommend-

ed transferring shares of the government in the banks to the BIC, which would become the parent holding company of all these banks, as a result of this, all the PSBs would become 'limited' banks. BIC will be autonomous and it will have the power to appoint the board of directors and make other policy decisions about subsidiaries. BIC will serve as a super holding company and reduce the dependence of PSBs on government support. —PTI

The proposal is expected to recommend a phased implementation of the reserve ratios, giving non-banks time to comply, one official said.

"Cost of compliance to rules and regulations should be perceived as an investment, as any inadequacy in this regard will

prove to be detrimental," RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said in a speech on Saturday, referring to increased regulation in recent years for banks and shadow banks.

One official said that move is to avoid failures of big shadow banks that could pose systemic risks

and is expected to encourage some of the larger ones to move towards becoming full-time banks.

But shadow banks believe the new norms will hurt their operations.

Shadow banks enjoy "certain flexibilities which allow them to do last-mile financing which banks can't do," said an executive at a non-bank. "Blurring the lines" between banks and non-banks would "be detrimental for India, where financial inclusion is still low."

At its last monetary policy meeting last month Das said regulations of shadow banks need review and that a discussion paper would be issued by mid-January.

There are nearly 10,000 shadow banks in India but just over two dozens are thought to be large enough to pose systemic risks, sources said.

Raising liquidity ratios "or other liquidity buffers could pose a drag on their earnings" said A.M. Karthik, head of financial sector ratings at Ibra. Lenders will also have to manage their treasuries more effectively, which would entail additional operating costs, he said.

The RBI will also recommend stricter checks on thousands of smaller non-banks, one official said. The central bank may not propose norms such as statutory lending or cash-reserve ratios, but it will recommend more scrutiny of their books, the official said. —Reuters

WFH bares wage disparity for industrial homeworkers

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JAN. 17

While the pandemic has brought 'work from home' to the limelight as a strategy to prevent mass unemployment, traditional homeworkers in India earn 60 per cent less than their counterparts who do not work from home, finds a study by the International Labour Organisation.

In India home work is dominated by industrial homeworkers, who are employees working from their home premises. The Periodic Labour Force Survey in 2018 has identified 31 lakh as homeworkers. When 2.35 million home-based beedi rollers and almost 8,00,000 home-based embroiderers were recast as probable homeworkers, the total homeworkers in India stood at 62,41,333, says ILO.

Around 66 per cent of these homeworkers are women. Most of them are in the age group of 35-59 years of age. Further, 58 per cent are into craft and related trades.

The industrial homeworkers of India are paid by piece and their earnings are just 41 per cent that of workers who do not work from home. The monthly earnings of garment workers in India are 11 per cent of the average Indian wage.

The earnings gap is 18 per cent due to fewer hours and 82 per cent due to very low hourly wages as they are paid per piece. In India homeworkers in all occupational categories are paid less.



The gender wage gap is higher among homeworkers in low or middle income countries like India, Mexico and Argentina. However, average weekly working hours for women homeworkers were higher at 36 hours, while it was 28 hours for non-home-based women workers.

At one end of the category of homeworkers are some of the poorest workers in the world of work, such as the 2.5 million women rolling beedi in India, while at the other end are the well-educated and highly paid employees of leading corporations working remotely from their home. In India, the Department of Telecommunications has given IT workers an exemption that allows them to work from home. This has led to 90 per cent of India's 4.3 million strong IT workforce shifting to full-time telework, says ILO.

"Given the possibility of other labour market disruptions in the future, homeworking may well feature as a key method of operation adopted by firms and their workers," says ILO. Hence, the governments have the responsibility of establishing comprehensive home work policies. Key policy areas include improving the visibility of homeworkers, raising awareness of their rights and responsibilities, setting fair wages and limiting working hours, ensuring safe and healthy workplaces, eliminating child labour, applying a strategic compliance model of enforcement, ensuring social protection coverage, ensuring access to quality childcare and promoting training and career development.

REALTY SECTOR ASKS FOR ITC ON LEASED PROPERTY

New Delhi, Jan. 17: The government should allow commercial real estate developers to set off GST paid on inputs like cement from the tax liability on rental income to avoid double taxation and boost the office market realty firms and consultants said on Sunday.

In its Budget recommendation for the 2021-22, industry body CII has demanded that Section 16 read with Section 17(5) of the CGST Act should be amended to enable the real estate players to avail ITC (input tax credit) on procurement of goods and services during the construction phase when the space is intended for commercial leasing or renting.

The denial of ITC, leads to blockage of funds for a real estate player, it said.

"In case of commercial leasing of properties and outlets at malls, the renting of such premises attracts 18 per cent which is available as credit to the client. Disallowance of credit during the construction phase leads to the increased cost of construction, working capital loss and increased financing costs," the CII said. —PTI

Publishers seek duty waiver as newsprint cost shoots up

New Delhi, Jan. 17: The cost of paper used in printing newspapers and magazines has jumped 20 per cent in the past three months due to a demand-supply imbalance post-pandemic, prompting news publishers to rush to the government seeking the waiver of 5 per cent import duty to cut cost.

An industry that was facing headwinds from a slowing economy even before the pandemic was hit hard when most readers stopped buying newspapers and magazines on fears of viruses.

While no medical studies have established the virus transmission theories, sales did not pick up even after lockdown restrictions were relaxed, industry leaders said.

Now, the rising cost of newsprint created due to a drastic fall in supplies after 3 million tonnes of manufacturing capacities were either closed or converted to brown paper grades worldwide has dealt a second blow that is threatening the survival of the industry. Indian Newspaper

Society (INS) president L. Adimoolam said most newspapers have stopped sending the hard copies to the rural areas with readership of less than 50 copies to reduce the distribution cost.

In a representation to finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the INS has suggested cutting the customs duty on imported newsprints.

They also want a fiscal stimulus package for the publishing industry or raising tariffs of government advertisements by 50 per cent.

"If working out a stimulus package for print media is difficult at this juncture, DAVP (Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity) may please consider releasing advertisement for all its departments to all publications with an increased tariff of 50 per cent, which would be highly helpful for the industry as a whole," the INS representation said.

It has also sought extension of the validity of RNI (Registrar of Newspapers for India) circulation certificates to up to March 31, 2022, which will enable

DAVP rates to remain the same till next year.

It is estimated that the print media would take two-three years to recover from the current situation, the INS added.

Adimoolam told PTI, "The government helped a few industries (during the pandemic) with stimulus packages. We are (also) expecting some stimulus."

Several newspapers have responded to the situation by cutting costs that included shutting down editions, reducing the number of pages and laying off staff.

Several small papers have closed down, Adimoolam added.

He said the newspaper distribution has become very costly.

The Indian publishers continue to be dependent on imported newsprint due to insufficient domestic capacity/output and poor quality.

"Prices of newsprint have shot up by 20 per cent in the past three months. Another increase of 10-15 per cent is on the anvil next month which will severely impact the publishers," said the INS. —PTI

LUXURY CAR FIRMS WANT CUT IN TAXES



New Delhi, Jan. 17: Luxury car makers Mercedes-Benz, Audi and Lamborghini expect the government to lower taxes on automobiles in the upcoming Budget, saying the premium segment of the auto industry has not been able to grow due to high taxation besides being hit hard by coronavirus.

Any hike in taxes on luxury cars will hit demand and prevent recovery from the disruptions witnessed last year, according to officials of the companies.

"Anything which is a deterrent to the demand in the sector we should stay away," Mercedes-Benz India MD & CEO Martin Schwenk said.

He was responding to a query on the company's expectations on the tax front from the government in the budget.

Seeking a reduction on taxes on the auto sector, Schwenk said, "Already the auto industry is highly taxed...from the import duties to GST and cess which is 22 per cent (on luxury cars). I think the target should actually be to support the growth of the sector and reduce tax."

Expressing similar sentiments, Audi India head Balbir Singh Dhillon said...the challenges for the luxury car segment in 2021 are "more or less the constants from the past".

"One is, of course, the high taxation on luxury cars, including cess. That remains a challenge because what it has done is that it has not let luxury cars grow beyond 1 per cent (of the total automobile markets in India). It is just hovering around 1 per cent and in last year 2020 it could have dropped probably 0.7-0.8 per cent," he added. —PTI

FUNDING | CRISIS

Survey finds 68% not benefited from specific measures

Limited MSMEs gains from schemes

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JAN. 17

Funding remains the biggest challenge for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) despite the government announcing several measures to address the financial crisis faced by them. The majority of units has not benefitted from the various schemes in the last 12 months, finds a survey.

The government has in 2020 introduced various measures to enhance credit access to startups and MSMEs under schemes like Startup India, MSME Samadhan, no or low interest loans and Aatmanirbhar Bharat. However, in an annual survey of startups and

MSMEs conducted by Local Circles, only 21 per cent said they have benefitted from the government schemes while 68 per cent said they have not. The share of respondents who said they have not received any benefits has gone up from 50 per cent in last year's survey to 68 per cent this time.

Raising funds and loans continues to be the biggest challenge for MSMEs. Finding growth is the second big challenge for almost 25 per cent respondents while it was just 10 per cent in last survey. Survival of the business continues to be the third major challenge. The survey received over 20,000 responses from more than 8,000 startups and MSMEs.



"MSMEs need to be qualified for the schemes. Access to loans has never been easy...But ECLGS (emergency credit line guarantee scheme) has disbursed Rs 2 lakh crore during the pandemic times. More and more buyers are being pushed on TReDS (trade receivables discounting system) platforms helping MSME to finance receivables. So while the market conditions are yet to be fully

conducive for growth, the legacy issues continue to bog MSMEs down. In normal circumstances too barely 15 per cent MSMEs have access to loans from banks," said Anil Bhardwaj, secretary general, Federation of Indian MSMEs (Fisme).

The survey further found that only 31 per cent respondents have more than three months of cash. About 10 per cent said they had cash for more than six months and 18 per cent maintained they were out of funds. This is a vast improvement from the mid-June survey that had indicated only 16 per cent had cash to survive for more than three months while 42 were already out of funds.

Over 1.26 cr join stock market rush in last one yr

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, JAN. 17

The Covid period saw a record number of new investors joining the stock market, with at over 1.26 crore unique client code being added during the last one year, taking the total to over 5.96 crore registered investors as on January 15, 2021.

Of these, the maximum, of over 27 lakh investors, were added in Maharashtra (7.46 lakh), Rajasthan (7.28 lakh) and Andhra Pradesh (6.77 lakh) were the states from where maximum number of retail investors was added. Northeastern states also added retail investors at high rate due to their low base.

clients in the last one-year period, taking the total registered investors tally in the state to over 15.70 lakh. Andhra Pradesh added over 6.77 lakh new investors at an annual growth rate of 27.46 per cent.

The largest number of retail investors is based out of Maharashtra, at over 1.30 crore.

Gujarat (11.77 lakh), UP (10.51 lakh), Karnataka (7.46 lakh), Rajasthan (7.28 lakh) and Andhra Pradesh (6.77 lakh) were the states from where maximum number of retail investors was added. Northeastern states also added retail investors at high rate due to their low base.



Washington Sundar (right) is congratulated by Shardul Thakur after reaching his half century against Australia on the third day of the fourth Test at the Gabba in Brisbane on Sunday. — AFP

INDIA'S FOURTH HIGHEST SEVENTH WICKET STAND AGAINST AUSTRALIA

- Shardul Thakur and Washington Sundar added 123 runs for the seventh wicket in India's first innings on the third day.
- It was India's fourth best stand for this wicket position against Australia. Ravindra Jadeja and Rishabh Pant are the only Indian pair to add more than 200 runs for the seventh wicket against Australia. They added 204 at Sydney in 2018-19.
- Overall, it was eighth century stand for the seventh wicket for India against Australia.
- Washington Sundar became only the sixth Indian batsman to score a fifty on debut against Australia.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

WINNING OVER OZ CROWD WAS SHARDUL INSPIRATION

Brisbane, Jan. 17: When Shardul Thakur stepped out to bat on Sunday, rescuing India from a precarious 186/6 was not the only target on his mind as he was also keen to impress the Australian crowd after being told how “rewarding” it would feel by coach Ravi Shastri.

“When I walked in, the situation was difficult I would not deny that. The crowd was cheering for Australians bowlers. But I remembered our coach Ravi Shastri saying right at the start of the One-day series that ‘if you perform in this country, you will be rewarded.’” Thakur talked about the inspiration behind the unfazed manner with which he batted.

“People will love you for your performances and that one thing was also on my

mind that people are going love me.”

Batting at number eight, Thakur impressed with his stroke-play, his drives coming straight out of coaching manuals. At stumps, Australia were 54 ahead after reaching 21 for no loss in their second innings following India's dismissal for 336.

“Eventually at the end of the day it would help my team, that was the biggest positive. These two things were on my mind. Crowd would make noise, but If I bat well, the same crowd will cheer for me,” Thakur said after the day's play.

Cheered, he definitely was by not just the crowd but also his teammates, who gave him a standing ovation on his way back to the dressing room.

— PTI

ENGLISH SMELL VICTORY AGAINST SRI LANKANS

Galle (Sri Lanka), Jan. 17: Sri Lanka rattled England with three quick wickets late on the fourth day of the first Test in Galle on Sunday, but the visitors remained favourites to win the match with just 36 more runs needed and seven wickets in hand.

England were expected to comfortably close in on a victory after Jack Leach took 5/122 with Sri Lanka all out for 359 in their second innings, leaving the visitors needing only 74 to win. But Sri Lanka struck early, with Dom Sibley (2) and Zak Crawley (8) falling to left-arm spinner Lasith Embuldeniya. Captain Joe Root was run-out for one after a mix-up with Jonny Bairstow. Bairstow and Dan Lawrence took a nervous England to 38-3 as bad light brought an early end to proceedings.

— AFP
Brief scores: Sri Lanka 135 & 359 (Perera 62, Thirimanne 111, Mathews 71, Leach 5/122, Bess 3/100) vs England 421 & 38/3 (Embuldeniya 2/13).



Members of the Warangal Urban team are all smiles after winning the TCA Telangana North East Cup U-14 T20 cricket tournament in Adilabad on Sunday.

Warangal Urban win T20 trophy

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 17

Warangal Urban defeated Adilabad Rural by five wickets to win the TCA Telangana North East Cup U-14 T20 cricket tournament at the Indira Priya Darshini Stadium in Adilabad on Sunday.

Batting first, Adilabad Rural managed a mere 113 for the loss of nine wickets in the stipulated overs. Their total was built on an unbeaten 71 by Mohammed Asfan even as Ramu took 3 wickets

while conceding 14 runs. Warangal Urban replied with 114 for 5 in 18.3 overs, with Rithwik (24) being the top scorer.

Ramu was adjudged Man of the Match, Rithwik Best Batsman as well as Man of the Series while Bhavesh of Adilabad was voted Best Bowler of the tournament.

BRIEF SCORES

■ Adilabad Rural 113/9 in 20 overs (Mohd Asfan 71 n.o., Ramu 3/14) lost to Warangal Urban 114/5 in 18.3 overs (Rithwik 24, Hiranya Dowki 2/17)

FAIRYTAIL!

Tailenders Shardul, Sundar put on a magical stand

SCORECARD

Australia 1st Innings: 369
India 1st Innings (overnight 62/2): Rohit Sharma c Starc b N. Lyon 44, Shubham Gill c Smith b P. Cummins 7, Cheteshwar Pujara c Paine b J. Hazlewood 25, Ajinkya Rahane c Wade b M. Starc 37, Mayank Agarwal c Smith b J. Hazlewood 38, Rishabh Pant c Green b J. Hazlewood 23, Washington Sundar c Green b M. Starc 62, Shardul Thakur b P Cummins 67, Navdeep Saini c Smith b J. Hazlewood 5, Mohammed Siraj b J. Hazlewood 13, T. Natarajan not

out 1. Extras (b-5, lb-7 nb-2) 14. **Total (all out in 111.4 overs) 336.**
ForW: 1-11, 2-60, 3-105, 4-144, 5-161, 6-186, 7-309, 8-320, 9-328.
Bowling: Mitchell Starc 23-3-88-2, Josh Hazlewood 24.4-6-57-5, Pat Cummins 27-5-94-2, Cameron Green 8-1-20-0, Nathan Lyon 28-9-65-1, Marnus Labuschagne 1-1-0-0.
Australia 2nd Innings: Marcus Harris batting 1, David Warner batting 20. **Total (for no loss in 6 overs) 21.**
Bowling: Mohammed Siraj 2-1-12-0, T Natarajan 3-0-6-0, Washington Sundar 1-0-3-0.

knew we probably would be on top if we hung in,” said Shardul at the post-play press conference.

Pacer Josh Hazlewood finished with a well-deserved 5/57 for Australia, a reward for consistently bowling with an impeccable line and length at a brisk pace.

Symbolising the courage shown by the visitors, now

rendered almost second-string owing to a plethora of injuries suffered by their top players through the four-match series, Washington and Shardul mixed caution with aggression to bail their team out of a precarious 186 for six.

First, they turned unlikely saviours after three soft dismissals pushed India on the back foot, and in the

final session, the two opened up and went after the world-class Australian attack.

If his nine fours were not enough, Shardul bludgeoned off-spinner Nathan Lyon for a maximum over long-on to reach his maiden Test fifty in style in only his second match.

In fact, Shardul opened his account with a hooked six off the world's number one bowler, Pat Cummins.

Playing in his first Test, Washington too soon got to his maiden fifty in the traditional format while finding the fence seven times and clearing it once.

He became the first visiting cricketer in Australia in 74 years to grab three wickets and smash a half-century on debut. The one before him was also an Indian, Dattu Phadkar, who made 51 while batting at No.8 and took three wickets during a 1947/48 tour. — PTI

Allround Andhra hammer Kerala

Mumbai, Jan. 17: Andhra Pradesh dished out an all-round show to beat an inform Kerala by six wickets in an Elite Group E match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament.

Kerala, who had won their first three matches in the group, managed to score 112/4 after being asked to bat first.

Andhra overhauled the target in 17.1 overs, with opener Ashwin Hebbbar top-scoring with 48.

Kerala lost both openers, Robin Uthappa (8) and Mohammed Azharuddeen (12) cheaply and were in a spot of bother at 28/2. It soon became 30/3 after skipper Sanju Samson (7) also perished early.

Andhra's chase was anchored by right-handed opener Hebbbar, who hammered six boundaries and

a six, despite losing partners at the other end.

In Chennai, Bihar thrashed Manipur by nine wickets in a Plate Group match to register their fourth straight win.

Bihar opted to field first and restrict Manipur to 105 for 8 in 20 overs. Chasing, opener Shasheem Rathour hammered an unbeaten 60 and shared a 61-run second-wicket stand with Babul Kumar to take Bihar home in 17.1 overs. — PTI

BRIEF SCORES

■ Kerala 112/4 in 20 overs (Sachin Baby 51 not out; Manish Golamaru 2/19) lost to Andhra Pradesh 113/4 in 17.1 overs (Ashwin Hebbbar 48, Ambati Rayudu 38 not out).
■ Mumbai 94 all out in 19 overs (Shivam Dube 28; Santha Moorthy 5/20, A. Aravinddharaj 2/20) lost to Puducherry 95/4 in 19 overs (S. Karthik 26; Shivam Dube 2/8).

Printed and Published from Karimnagar by K.Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Deccan Chronicle Press, H.No. 1-21/12/1, Cherlabhutkur Road, Mugdumpur Village, Karimnagar - 505 186 - Telangana State
Regd. No. H/SD-2/2K RNI Registration No. APENG/2001/04766
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