DECCAN 101e

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | THURSDAY | 21 JANUARY 2021



Max: 32.2°C Min: 17.2°C RH: 33% Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 30/17ºC

COVID-19

(+143)(+14,366)1,06,10,473 1,52,743

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS (+267)(+2)

TS: 2,92,395 1,583 (+173)(+0)AP: 8,86,418 7.142

CASES AROUND THE WORLD



20,73,167 219

> worldometers.info/ coronavirus

Sarvari; Uttarayana Tithi: Pushya Shuddha Ashtami Star: Ashwini till 3.35 pm Varjyam: 11.06 am to 12.54 pm; 2.24 am to 4.13 am (Friday) Durmuhurtam: 10.36 am to 11.20 am; 3.03 pm to 3.47 pm Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm **HIJRI CALENDAR**

> Jamadi- ul- Akhir 7,1442 AH **PRAYERS** Fajar: 5.47 am **Zohar:** 12.37 pm Asar: 4.29 pm Maghrib: 6.11 pm

Isha: 7.22 pm **SUNSET TODAY 6.05 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.49 AM MOONRISE** TODAY 12.19 PM **MOONSET TOMORROW 12.21 AM**



Welcome to your office, Mr President!

SHORT TAKES

CBI's DSP held for corruption

New Delhi: The CBI has arrested one of its deputy superintendents of police R.K. Rishi and inspector Kapil Dhankad along with an advocate in connection with an alleged bribery ring run by them within the agency to help companies accused of siphoning off bank loan funds worth ₹4,300 crore, officials said.

FIR filed against Tandav makers

Mumbai: Police on Wednesday registered an FIR against the makers and cast of Amazon Prime's web series Tandav, based on a complaint lodged by a BJP MLA in the city, an official said. The case was registered against the actors, including Saif Ali Khan and Mohd Zeeshan Ayyub among others. Full report on Page 4

₹1.76L cr tax

refunds issued

New Delhi: The Income Tax department on Wednesday said it has issued over Rs 1.76 lakh crore worth refunds to over 1.65 crore taxpayers so far this fiscal. Of this, personal income tax refunds of Rs 58,631 crore have been issued in 1,62,39,742 cases.

NATION 4

Gujarat renames dragon fruit Kamalam



WORLD 5

Trump pardons Bannon, 73 others in last minute

SPORTS 8

Rajasthan Royals release captain Smith

Centre offers to

freeze farm laws

Farmer leaders to respond to the offer on

Friday after their internal consultations



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SC won't restrain

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



Joe Biden is sworn in as US President by US Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts during his inauguration on the West Front of the US Capitol on Wednesday in Washington. Biden took the oath of office by placing his left hand on his large 127-year-old family Bible, which was held by his wife Jill. Kamala Harris (who looks on at Biden on the right) was sworn in as Vice-President,

becoming the first woman, the first woman of Indian origin and the first person of colour to occupy the secondmost important position in the USA. Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Biden and Harris and said he was committed to working with them to take the India-US partnership to greater heights.

■ More reports on Page 5

It's a new day in America

Biden to end country cap on H1B visas with his first orders Washington, Jan. 20: In ments, addresses the root green cards for individu-• THE NEW BILL

his first hours as US President, Joe Biden will aim to strike at the heart of President Donald Trump's policy legacy, signing a series of executive actions that will reverse his predecessor's orders on immigration, climate change and handling of the coron-

avirus pandemic. Biden, who began his day by tweeting, "It's a new day in America", will send a comprehensive immigrawhich among other things proposes to eliminate the per country cap for employment-based green cards, a move that would benefit hundreds and thousands of Indian IT professionals in the US.

ASSAM POLLS TO

BE HELD AFTER

BIHU, SAYS CEC

Guwahati, Jan. 20: Giving a clue into the thinking of the poll panel

with regard to state elec-

tion dates, Chief Election

Commissioner Sunil Arora said the Assam

Assembly polls will be

held keeping in mind the

Rongali Bihu festival on

April 13 and the process

will be finished before the CBSE Board exams which begin on May 4

and run till June 10. "The

festivals held in various

states," he said.

is sensitive towards

SPACE | WATCH

provides an immediate pathway to green cards for individuals who meet certain criteria as they were dreamers or have been recipients of the **Temporary Protected** Status and meet certain criteria.

Called the US Citizenship Act of 2021, the legissystem immigration according to an incoming White House official.

It prioritises keeping families together, grows the country's economy, responsibly manages the border with smart invest-

DC CORRESPONDENT

BJP president J.P. Nadda

is likely to launch a *rath*

yatra in poll-bound West Bengal on February 5.

Mr Nadda, who complet-

ed one year as the BJP president on Wednesday,

is likely to launch this

yatra from North Bengal.

The BJP is expected to

launch five such raths

(chariots) from different

regions of the state, with

Union home minister

NEW DELHI, JAN. 20

causes of migration from Central America, and also ensures that the US remains a refuge for those fleeing persecution, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Describing this as a com-

mon-sense approach to solving immigration challenges, focusing on what works, the US Citizenship Act 2021 creates a roadmap to citizenship for a population that lives and works in the United State January 1, 2021 is the cut-

off date for those undocumented workers. Twothirds of undocumented immigrants have been in the US for 10 years or longer. It provides an immediate pathway to

BJP chief may take a rath

for West Bengal elections

Amit Shah scheduled to

launch a similar "parivar-tan rath yatra" on Febr-

uary 10. These raths will

cover all the 294 Assembly

constituencies of the state.

Crucial Assembly polls

in the TMC-ruled state are

scheduled in April and the

BJP has been promising

"Asol Poribortan (real change)" in the state while

highlighting "mis-gover-

Banerjee and how devel-

opment indicators in the

state are on a downward

under Mamata

als who meet certain criteria as they were dreamers or have been recipients of the Tempo-rary Protected Status, or are farm workers and meet certain criteria. They can apply for citizenship three years later For those who don't meet those qualifications, there will be another path to citizenship, where they would be in an interim status for five years. Afterwards they would be eligihle to annly within three years after becoming green card hold-

According to the incoming White House official, the Bill reforms the family-based immigration sys

spiral. Mr Nadda also held

a meeting of the party's

BJP headquarters to revi-

ew various issues, includ-

Meanwhile, exodus from

the TMC continued with

its leader and Santipur

MLA Arindam Bhatta-

charya joining the BJP

fold at the party headquar

He joined the BJP in the

presence of the party's

state in-charge Kailash Vijayvargiya.

ing West Bengal polls.

Narendra Modi recently called a meeting of top already put on hold till further orders all the Man dies after jab, state says no link

SANJAY KAW | DC

NEW DELHI, JAN. 20

The Centre on Wednesday proposed to suspend the

three contentious farm laws for one or one-and-ahalf years and set up a

joint committee to discuss

the laws to end the stale-

mate, but the farmers

leaders did not immediately accept the proposal and said they will respond only after they hold inter-

only after they hold inter-nal consultations, possibly on Thursday. The two sides will meet again on Friday for the eleventh

The government made this offer during the tenth

round of talks with the

representatives of 41 farmers' unions at Vigyan Bhavan here. After the

meeting, agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar said: "During the discussions, we said the government was ready to

put on hold the farm laws

half years. I am happy the

farmers' unions have tak-

en this very seriously and said they would consider

it tomorrow (Thursday)

and convey their decision

Ahead of the meeting

which lasted for over five

hours, Mr Tomar along

with commerce minister

Piyush Goyal met Union

home minister Amit Shah.

Even Prime Minister

on January 22.

or one year or one and a

round of negotiations.

DC CORRESPONDENTS HYDERABAD/NIRMAL, JAN. 20

Telangana state recorded its first death from among the recipients of the Covid-19 vaccine on Wednesday. The government, however, has said that the death was not caused by the vaccine.
A 42-year-old healthcare

worker from Nirmal district, a 108 ambulance driver, died less than 18 hours after receiving the

vaccine.
According to the state health department, the deceased was vaccinated at the Kuntala Primary Health Centre in Nirmal district on January 19 at about 11.30 am. "At about 2.30 am on 20.1.2021, he is said to have developed chest pain and was brought dead to the District Hospital, Nirmal,

PRELIMINARY findings suggest that the death seems to be unrelated to vaccination, said Dr G. Srinivasa Rao, director of public health

around 5.30 am," Director of Public Health Dr G. Srinivasa Rao said in a statement on the death. "Preliminary findings,"

he said, "suggest that the death seems to be unrelated to vaccination."

According to the Nirmal district medical officer Dr Dhanrai, the man died of cardiac arrest and the death was not related to vaccination. He said the cause of death could be determined only after conducting a post-mortem examination of the body.

Page 2: Vaccine panel will submit report

Floodlights, LED lights, construction activity deny a clear sky view for people

ters Wednesday.

Light pollution blanks out Hyd night sky

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC

Rare astronomical events have occurred over the past few weeks, including a particularly close Jupiter-Saturn conjunction, the triple conjunction of Mercury, Jupiter and Saturn, apart from meteor showers and comet Neowise crossing the sky, but astronomy enthusiasts in the city say that it is difficult to witness these because of the city lights. Light pollution is killing the joy of looking up at the night sky, astronomy enthusiasts and scientists

have complained. Praveen Suryavanshi, an amateur astronomer and educator, said that just to

witness a full dark sky one now will have to travel at least 100 km away from the "My friends and I from the astronomers society in the city witnessed the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction from our offices and homes. I was in Hitec City that day, and the shots I managed to get of the event show the kind of pollution from city lights and even the dust that emcompass the sky now," he said. He added that the big floodlights, the neon lights on billboards and malls till the Shamshabad area have

added to the pollution, especially in the last four to five years. "These

unnecessary lights and the

continuous construction

activities have spoiled the

ASTRONOMERS demand that govern-

ment take steps to protect the few spots left in and around the city from where the night sky appears truly dark

city skies so much that even the night sky reflects this light, and on most nights clouds are visible," Praveen said.

Dr B.G. Sidharth, director of the Birla Planeta-rium, said that the first observatory at Rangapur, 65 km from the city, has also been affected by light pollution.

"Unless one is very far away, on a hill or mountain, practising astronomy

in today's time is difficult, occurrences among other which is why the astronoevents, for our 40-50 PG which is why the astronomy community here is growing weaker," he said. Japal-Rangapur The

Observatory under Osmania University, open for research and practical work for postgraduate and PhD students, as well as for the public, has been affected by more lighting coming up in the nearby villages but still has clear night skies, said Dr Shanti Priya, department of astronomy, OU. She agreed that the dark sky experience of a few years ago is something that this gener-

"We have held observation classes in the past few weeks for the conjunction

ation will never be able to

and research students. The LED lights around have had an effect on the observatory, but if the government takes some measures to increase the scientific temper while keeping in view the convenience of people around, installing LED light covers, it will solve the issue to a great extent," said Dr Shanti Priya.

According to the world light pollution map, the location of the Rangapur Observatory falls in a rural/suburban transition sky, where the galaxy M33 in Triangulum, a key indicator of sky conditions visible to the naked eye, is difficult to see. In the city, the

Science Center Observatory is one of the worst light-polluted areas anywhere in the world, making it impossible to locate the M33 galaxy.

Astronomers in the city now demand that government take steps to protect the few spots left in and around the city from where the night sky appears truly dark, like the Kotpally reservoir area Ananthagiri hills, Pocharam dam in Medak, the Pakhal lake near Warangal, Laknavaram lake area.

among others, by making strict policies to restrict urbanisation and declare these spots as Natural Dark Sky Sites.

kisan tractor rally not allowing the rally, Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde, heading a three-judge bench that included

Justices A.S. Bopanna and Ramasubramanian,

asked them to withdraw

the application the seek-

ing restraint order, which

The court also turned

down a plea by the attor-

ney-general and solicitor-

general to keep the appli-

cation pending and consider it on January 25

depending on the situa-

matter for the court to decide. You have the pow-

"No, no. This is not a

they did.

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, JAN. 20

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to entertain the Centre's plea seeking to restrain the agitating farmers from taking out a *kisan* tractor rally on the Republic Day in Delhi and regretted that the "reputation" of the four members of the expert committee set up by it to end the deadlock was being "torn to shreds".

However, it issued notice on the Bharatiya Kisan Union (Lokshakti) plea for reconstitution of the expert committee formed to hear all parties to the dispute and submit a report with its recommendations. Telling attorney-general

K.K. Venugopal and solici-tor-general Tushar Mehta that it was for the police to take a call on allowing or

ers under the law", CJI Bobde said, reiterating: We have told you it is for the police to decide. We won't pass orders. We will allow you to withdraw this application. You are the authority. decide."

agriculture ministry officials and advised them to put the three laws on hold till the matter was sorted out between the two sides. The Supreme Court has

three farm laws. While staying the three farm laws, the Supreme Court appointed a four-member panel to talk to farmers to end the stalemate. But the farmers union objected to the make-up of the panel.

TS RETAINS ITS TOP 4 SLOT FOR INNOVATION

New Delhi, Jan. 20: Telangana retained its fourth place in terms of innovation in Aayog's second Innova-tion Index released here on Wednesday. Karnat-aka topped the list and Maharashtra moved past Tamil Nadu to reach the entered the top 5 by dis-

placing Haryana. Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab completed the top

The index, released by Niti Aayog vice-chair-man Rajiv Kumar and CEO Amitabh Kant, has been developed in the lines of the Global Innovation Index. Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Bihar were ranked at the bot tom. Karnataka topped the

Index for the second year

in a row. "Amongst major states, the average innovation score is 25.35. Karnataka tops at 42.5 which is attributable to its strong number of venture capital deals, registered GIs (geographical indications) and ICT (information and communication technology) Karnataka's high FDI inflow has also enhanced the innovation capabilities of the state," the India Innovation Index 2020 said.

Maharashtra was ranked second with an innovation score of 38, while Bihar finished last at 14.5. "The case for the southern states as the top performers has also become stronger as four of them occupy the top-five spots within the major states," it added.

According to the index, the North-Eastern and hill states achieved an average innovation score of 17.89, with Himachal Pradesh as the best performer with a score of 25, followed by Manipur and Sikkim.

IN BRIEF

State reports 267

new Covid cases

Hyderabad: Wtih 267 new cases, Telangana state's Covid-19 caseload rose to 2,92,395 on Tuesday. The toll from the disease increased to 1,583 with the death of two more patients, the state's health department bulletin said on Wednesday. The fatality rate stands at 0.54 per cent, it said. There were 55 fresh cases in the GHMC area, 20 in Karimnagar, 18 in Medchal-Malkajgiri and in Ranga Reddy district, 16 cases. The bulletin said 351 people had recovered from the infection between Monday and Tuesday, taking the recoveries to 2,86,893 with a recovery rate of 98.11 pc.

Forest staff to get

cash incentives

Hvderabad: Wtih On Republic Day, a cash incentive certificate will be presented to the forest staff in six categories as part of a plan to encourage personnel through financial and designatory gains. The certificates will be presented at district level ceremonies, according to a decision taken at a video conference among the officials in the city. This selection will be based on

the performance in Haritha Haram, under the slogan Jungle Bachao. Beat, section. deputy range and forest range officers working in the forests would be considered for the incentive. R.M. Dobriyal, principal chief con-

servator of forests (PCCF) (social forestry), said priority should be given to the cultivation of at least 1.5 metre tall plants for avenue plantation in rural areas. He apologised for the sluggishness in

the work under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act (CAMPA), they would now be reviewed by a third party and plans for the release of funds should be prepared accordingly. Also, Lokesh Jaiswal, PCCF (CAMPA), said that the

authorities concerned should be ready for action in case of any lacunae in executing the

EMINENT URDU POET JAMI PASSES AWAY

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JAN. 20

Renowned poet and critic Rahman Jami breathed his last in the early hours of Wednesday. He was 85.

The funeral prayers were performed after Asr prayer at Choti Masjid, Muradnagar in Mehdipatnam. He was laid to rest at the graveyard attached to Masjid-e-Alamgir in Shantinagar. Jami was a prominent writer, poet and critic of Urdu. He authored 12

books of poetry. He was awarded several national and state awards for his contribution to Urdu literature. He guided upcoming poets and trained them. He also translated 12 poems of balladeer Gaddar. According to Rahman's grandson, Ahmed almost a week ago a pencil's nib caused a deep wound on his palm, after which he underwent surgery. His health worsened after that.

 THE FUNERAL prayers were performed after Asr prayer at Choti Masjid, Muradnagar in Mehdipatnam. He was laid to rest at the graveyard attached to Masjid-e-Alamgir in Shantinagar.

VACCINE PANEL WILL SUBMIT

From Page 1

Dr Srinivasa Rao said that as per the guidelines, after the post-mortem post-mortem examination, "the district Adverse Events Immunisation Following (AEFI) committee is examining the matter and will submit its report to the state committee. The state committee will in turn furnish its report to the central AEFI committee for taking a view."

This is the third such death so far following Covid-19 vaccinations in India since the drive to inoculate Indians against the disease was launched on January 16. The first two fatalities, one each in Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka, were declared as not related to the vaccination by the Union

health ministry. In Telangana, till Monday night, a total of 69,625 health care workers were vaccinated. Three persons who reported AEFIs were hospitalised and they are stable, the health department said.



construction of the Ram mandir at Ayodhya, at Sevala Basti, Site 3, Borabanda, in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

Bandi: KCR holds puja to wash away sins

BJP leader begins fund collection drive for Ram Mandir

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JAN. 20

A campaign to raise funds and collect bricks for the construction of the Ram mandir in Ayodhya was launched on Wednesday by the BJP, styled as Jana Jagaran under the Sri Rama Janmabhoomi Tirtha Kshetra Trust. State BJP president Bandi Sanjay Kumar,

the Karimnagar MP, inaugurated the drive at Borabanda in the city. The campaign will continue till February 10, Sanjay said, adding he would be touring the state. He called on every Hindu to give a brick each for the mandir con-Sanjay referred to spec-

ulations about minister K.T. Rama Rao taking over as Chief Minister soon, and said he had also heard that the father and son have begun conducting pujas by way of preparations for this.

Taking a dig at the Chandrashekar Rao for Kaleshwaram project on Tuesday and performing pujas, Sanjay said: "KCR conducted a special puja to wash away the sins of KTR before he's made

the chief minister. He

went to Kaleshwaram the purpose of immersing material in the Triveni Sangamam." Sanjay alleged that the Chief Minister was mis-

leading the people about the Kaleshwaram project. Referring to the Chief Minister's plans of using additional water from the project, Sanjay "What is the use of a third tmc ft of water from Kaleshwaram when the CM has failed to take the construction of the project forward with redesigning."

The project is designed to draw two tmc ft (thousand million cubic feet)

and the government plans to increase it to

The BJP leader alleged that the Chief Minister has plans to "spirit ₹3 lakh crore in away' the remaining three years of his party's governance till the 2023 Assembly elections.
"Why not make Etala
Rajendar the Chief
Minister? He was a real fighter for Telangana, more than K.T. Rama Rao," Sanjay asked.

If Chandrashekar Rao makes a Dalit MLA the Chief Minister, the peo-Telangana state would be happy, he

Govt fixes mutton price at ₹700kg over flu scare

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC HYDERABAD, JAN. 20

With prices of mutton shooting up due to bird flu fears in Telangana, the animal husbandry department has stepped into and will regulate the price structure. Mutton prices have shot up

to ₹1,200 in some areas, especially those in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits. Now the government has decided to fix ₹600 to ₹700 per kg and meat shop owners have to strictly comply with the ruling.

According to highly placed sources in the animal husbandry department, minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav held a high-level meeting with officials to regulate sheep prices with immediate effect. Citing bird flu dangers, meat shop owners and butchers increased the prices according to their

In a few areas, what was ₹650 per kg was being sold for an exorbitant ₹1,200 taking advantage of customers, in a fix over bird flu, thronging meat shops. The minister asked officials to check the availability of sheep and goat in the state. He ordered them to book cases on shop owners and butchers, who sell for higher prices. A senior animal husbandry official said that there has been no shortage of sheep and goats. He said some traders have been deliberately looting con-

'We have around two crore sheep and goats in the state, which would be more than sufficient to meet the needs of consumers. We have advised officials to raid shops selling at prices over and above the fixed rates and book cases against them. In GHMC area alone, we have collected ₹20 lakh as penalty against outlets

• THE STATE government has directed district collectors of Kamareddy, Nizamabad, Nirmal, Adilabad, Asifabad and Mancherial to be on high alert and restrict the entry of birds from Maharashtra.

selling stale meat and at higher prices", he said.

The official said that the minister would meet Telangana State Sheep and Goat Development Co-operative Societies Federation in a couple of days to fix the price of meat.

"A final decision would be taken after discussing it with the federation. The price would be fixed anywhere between ₹600 and

7700", he added.
Meanwhile, the government on Monday issued orders to the collectors to stop chicken supplies from Maharashtra until the bird flu cases are brought under control in the neighbouring

Though there is no case of bird flu in Telangana state so far, confirmed cases of bird flu in poultry have been reported from nine districts of Maharashtra including Latur, Parbhani, Nanded, Pune, Solapur, Yavatmal, Ahmednagar, Beed and Raigad, where affected and suspected birds are being culled.

The state government has directed district collectors of Kamareddy, Nizamabad, Nirmal, Adilabad, Asifabad and Mancherial to be on high alert and restrict the entry of birds from Maharashtra. These dis-tricts share the borders with Maharashtra where bird flu cases have been confirmed. They have also sought check posts on border areas and restrict entry of poultry items from Maharashtra.

OWAISI SETS STONE FOR CREMATORIUM WALL

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JAN. 20

A general manager of TS Warehousing Corporation was nabbed by the offi-cials of the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) for demanding and accepting a bribe of ₹75,000 from pensioner to grant him retirement benefits.

ACB DSP Satyanarayana said that investigation had revealed that general manager Sudhakar Reddy was following the orders of Bhaskarachari, manag-ing director of TS Warehousing Corpora-

"Sunderlal, a retired employee of a warehouse company, had asked the official to grant him retirement benefits. The victim complained to the ACB that he was asked for a bribe. With this, the ACB a bribe. With this, the ACB found out that a total of ₹1 lakh was demanded. Sudhakar Reddy was caught red-handed while taking ₹75,000," ACB officials said.

Following the arrest of Sudhakar Reddy, ACB officials are conducting searches

Bhaskarachari's dence in the city.

RAMA BELONGS TO EVERYONE: PONNALA LAKSHMAIAH

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JAN. 20

Congress senior leader and former PCC chief Ponnala Lakshmaiah has asserted that Lord Rama belongs to everyone and objected to politicising the ideal God.

Addressed a press conference via social media on Wednesday, the senior leader went on to donate ₹1,00,116 from his pension through the President for the Sri Rama Janma Bhoomi Tirtha Trust that is building the Ayodhya

Lakshmaiah recalled that temples had been developed during the times of former prime ministers Rajiv Gandhi and P.V. Narasimha Rao. He expressed happiness that he had also been an endowments minister.

The former PCC chief asked Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao why the latter is not respond ing to the Hafeezpet land scam.

He accused the state government of failing to protect temple, Wakf Board and assigned lands even though they are systematically encroached by

NGT takes up DC impact on KMC issue

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI |

KURNOOL, JAN 20

Tribunal's south zone over by successive spebench in Chennai took up suo motu a news report in *Deccan* Chronicle on December 10 last titled, 'Kurnool shocked by the quality of KMC water', and heard the matter via video conference on Wednesday.

About 22 respondents been arrayed including secretary to the Union environmentforest-climate change ministry (MoEF). ministry Notices will be issued to

the respondents. The failure of Kurnool Municipal Corporation (KMC) in providing safe drinking water to its citizens was highlighted in

DC CORRESPONDENT

Andhra Pradesh regis-

tered 173 fresh cases of

Covid-19 and no death in

state

Covid-19 bulletin here

on Wednesday reporting

that out of 46,852 samples tested, 173 were

found infected with

Coronavirus. Out of a

1,26,90,165 samples test-

ed so far in the state,

number

VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 20

the last 24 hours.

authorities

the *DC* report. KMC primarily depends on the Tungabhadra river which is polluted, but The National Green this has been glossed cial officers, the report

had noted. representa-Elected tives, government officials and prominent citizens of Kurnool city thanked Deccan Chronicle for highlight-

ing civic issues. Pollution in Handri and Tungabhadra, the two rivers that flow across Kurnool city, has been causing health risks to people residing

on the river bank. The river needs to be cleared of plastic waste and other non-degradable material, as also and cadmium.

Regional pollution con-

8,86,418 persons were

found infected with the

virus and of them,

8,77,639 were recovered

while 1,637 are still

Among daily cases of confirmed Coronavirus,

Chittoor registered the

highest 46 followed by 27

in Visakhapatnam, 19

each in Krishna and

Guntur. 12 in East

Godavari, 11 in Kadapa,

eight in Anantapur,

seven each in Kurnool

Vizianagaram, four in

Prakasam

active with the virus.

AP records 173 cases of

Covid-19, no deaths

trol board officials say Tungabhadra waters showed marginally high-Pushkarams.

The RPCB has conducted a test on the quality of water in Tungabhadra at start of December after completion of the Tungabhadra Pushkarams and found that two parameters, namely biochemical demand (BOD) and total coliform bacteria, were exceeding the standard

Citizens of Kurnool hoped that the NGT order would help in sup-ply of safe drinking

"I think Kurnool may get a sewerage treat-ment plant with the latest amenities, said a sen-

Nellore and three each

in Srikakulam and West

Krishna district regis-

tered the highest num-

ber of cumulative active

cases of Coronavirus

with 259 followed by 248

in Guntur, 201 in East

Godavari, 192 in Kadapa,

143 in Chittoor, 137 in

Visakhapatnam, 131 in

Nellore, 74 in Prakasam,

58 each in West Godavari

and Kurnool, 54 in

Anantapur, 45 in Srikakulam and 37 in

OFFICIALS ASKED TO COMPUTERISE **LAND RECORDS**

DC CORRESPONDENT WARANGAL, JAN 20

Jayashankar Bhupalpa-

lly District Collector

Krishna Aditya directed Revenue officials to computerise records immediately. On Wednesday, the District Collector along with the District joint collector Kurakula Swarnalatha held a meeting with the Deputy Tahsildars, Revenue Inspectors and VRAs at the Singareni Illandu Club House to discuss the computerisation of revenue records and issue appropriate directions. On this occasion, the District Collector said that if the revenue records are in order, there will be no future land disputes in the district. Similarly, details of government lands from 1948 onwards, details of government lands currently in government possession, villages, zones, survey number, acreage and year wise details should be collected and computerised, he said.

erised, he said.
Similarly, the details of lands like ceiling, bhudan, WAQF etc. should be thoroughly scrutinised and computerised in the next four days. He said the program should be overseen by the superintendents of the various sections in the Collector's office who are in-charge of each zone. RDO Srinivas, Collector Office Superintendent Srinivasa Rao, Senior Praveen, officials and Section officers were present among others.

Stop anti-KCR blabber, TRS leaders tell Bandi

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JAN. 20

TRS MLC Patolla Mahender with a thumping majority. Reddy cautioned BJP state chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar to stop criticising Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, failing which the people would teach the party a fitting lesson.

Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday, along with MLAs Anand and Rohit Reddy, Mahender Reddy demanded that Sanjay Kumar to prove his party's strength in the Nagarjunasagar bypoll, bypoll, where the BJP was certain to lose its deposit. They said that TRS would win Nagarjunasagar byelection

Asserting that Telangana has been a role-model in terms of overall development, he wanted to know if any one BJP-ruled state could come anywhere close in comparison. He said a party that could not get funds for the state should not talk about develop-ment.He flayed the BJP for still harping on the Ram mandir issue when the Supreme Court had already its verdict and construction work had started.

Protester catches fire



An auto driver Syed Jallel catches fire while burning an effigy of the central government in protest against the hike in petrol and diesel prices at Himayathnagar on Wednesday. Police personnel rushed to the spot and poured water on the victim to douse the fire.

CASE LODGED AGAINST ACTOR YASHWANTH IN ALLEGED CAR DEAL RACKET

issued

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JAN. 20

The Banjara Hills police have booked a case against Telugu actor Yashwanth in connection with an alleged car deal scam on Wednesday.

According to sources, Yashwanth was a mediator between one of his friends and a customer in the sale of a used car. "The car was not deliv According to sources, Yashwanth was a mediator between one of his friends and a customer in the sale of a used car.

ered to the customer after he made the payment. from the aggrieved customer, the Banjara Hills police have booked a case against Yashwanth and his friend," sources said.

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JAN. 20

Senior Congress leader and MLC T. Jeevan Reddy on Wednesday underlined that there is no need for a third component to lift more water for the Kaleshwaram

Explaining his rationale at a press conference, he pointed out that a lifting capacity 450 tmc ft (thousand million cubic feet) of water is already available

within Phase-1, whereas the state needs only 300 tmc ft, whether for cultivation, industries, drinking water or other purposes. This means additional an 150 tmc ft of water is already available for meeting the future requirements of the

Jeevan Reddy charged that the ruling party has already made ₹5,650 crore while establishing pump houses for Kaleshwaram project. He observed that

the third lifting component is part of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's plan to collect huge commissions from contractors.

3rd Kaleshwaram lift component is needless: Jeevan

The senior Congress leader also objected to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy constructing the Pothireddypadu project for lifting 1 lakh cusecs of water from the Krishna basin, though it is against regulations stipulated by the Krishna River

regard, he pointed out that Union Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat written that the Pothireddypadu project was against the AP Reorganisation Act. He wondered why BJP leaders in the state were not protesting against the project, even though it is against the interests of

Management Board. In this

Telangana. Jeevan Reddy demanded the projects that Andhra Pradesh is building illegally. He also accused Chandrashekar Rao of not focusing on the theft of state's waters by Andhra Pradesh and instead harping on the Kaleshwaram third water lifting project.

He went on to allege that both AP and TS chief ministers are starting new irrigation projects in their respective states with the sole aim of collecting enor-

OTHER STORIES

MLA INSTIGATING CI AGAINST ME, **CLAIMS DCCB CHIEF**

DC CORRESPONDENT KOTHAGUDEM, JAN. 20

director Bethampudi primary agricultural cooperative society chairman Lakkineni Surender on Wednesday alleged that he was being constantly harassed by police, particularly by the circle inspector of Tekulapalli police station.

"There is no democracy in Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS). Government should check and penalize cops who are working as stooges of some ruling party legislators.

The government and superintendent of police of Bhadradri district should take action against all such cops", he said. He said that Yellandu MLA Haripriya's husband harassing him through the circle inspector of Tekulapalli mandal

"I will take a decision on changing party from TRS if the high command does not take any decision. Assembly segments were made power centres of ruling party MLAs and they are dictating terms", he

• "There is no democracy in Telangana Rashtra Samithi"

CHILD WHO WAS ELECTROCUTED FLYING KITE, DIES

DC CORRESPONDENT NIRMAL, JAN.20

Abhilash, 13, of Bhainsa town has died with burns while undergoing treatment in a private hospital in Nizamabad in the wee hours of Wednesday. Abhilash was electrocuted while flying the kite in Rahulnagar colony on Tuesday morning. Abhilash had sustained severe burns on his body when he got electrocuted while trying to remove the kite that was struck on the electric wires near his house.

TRS workers clash in Warangal, 2 hospitalised

MLA Narender is deliberately targeting his followers

DC CORRESPONDENT WARANGAL, JAN. 20

Intra-party fights are continuing to plague ruling the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) in Warangal East. Groups owing allegiance to Warangal East MLA Nannapuneni Narender and panchayat raj minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao's brother E. Pradeep Rao came to blows at a private function in Warangal on Tuesday night.

Two persons, Madhu and Srikanth, had to be hospitalised after the ugly street fight.

Accusing MLA Narender of deliberately MLA targeting his followers, Pradeep Rao asserted that he would not keep quiet if his followers were harmed. The minister's brother had aspired a ticket from



CCTV footage which captured the fight between TRS party workers in Warangal on Tuesday.

Warangal East constituency during the 2018 Assembly elections but the party high command instructed him to compromise and work for Nannapuneni Narender's

After visiting his injured followers at their Pradeep Rao accused the MLA is inciting caste feelings within the party, which had led violence within Warangal that had so far

remained peaceful. "I have had several bitter experiences within the party. But I kept quiet all these days in the larger interests of the TRS. But they are now physically attacking my follow-

I cannot remain silent under the circumstances," the minister's sibling warned. He said a complaint has been registered with police, but they were favouring the

• "I had several bitter experiences within the party. But I kept quiet all these days in the larger interests of the TRS. But they are now physically attacking my followers. I cannot remain silent under the circumstances," the minister's sibling warned.

MLA. He warned that he would be forced to take up a movement against the MLA if the people, who have beaten up his followers, are not punished. Warangal assistant commissioner of police Giri Kumar maintained that the fight had nothing to do with groupism within the TRS. "The people TRS. "The people involved are residents of the same colony. We are

counselling both groups. Investigation is also on and we will act as per

brought to Nizamabad

through railways, whose

goods services are also

SCR to set up 2 goods sheds in Nizamabad

used

TRS MLAs IN **NIZAMABAD WANT** KTR TO BE CM

DC CORRESPONDENT NIZAMABAD, JAN. 20

Two TRS MLAs in Nizamabad district said that municipal minister K. Taraka Rama Rao should be elevated as Chief Minister. Nizamabad rural MLA Bajireddy Govardhan and Bodhan MLA Shakil Amer said that under the leadership of KTR, Telangana state will be developed fast.

Speaking at different meetings, the MLAs supported the leadership of KTR. Comments of MLAs got impor-tance as there were speculations that change of guard in the state soon. Being in young and dynamic leadership of KTR, Telangana will get facelift across the globe, they opined.

 MLAs Bajireddy Govardhan and Shakil Amer said that under the leadership of KTR, Telangana state will be developed fast.

Peddapally-Karimnagar-

Nizamabad railway line has become busy. Coal is

being transported from

Singareni coal mines to

Maharashtra on this

route. It has effectively

reduced distance and

time for coal transporta-

tion.

Vaidyanath

ANDHRA PRADESH STATE FINANCIAL CORPORATION (Incorporated under the State Financial Corporation Act LXIII of 1951 KARIMNAGAR BRANCH MARIMNAGAR BRANCH OPP: Dist Collectorate Complex, KARIMNAGAR - 505 001

POSSESSION NOTICE

(For Immovable Property) (Appendix IV under the Act - Rule-8(1))

WHEREAS, the undersigned, as the Authorized Officer of the Andhra Pradesh Stat Financial Corporation under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financia Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of power conferred under Sec.13 (2) read with rule of the Security Interest (Enforcement, Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice dated 23.12.2019 calling upon the borrower Dr. Chatla Sridhar, C/o. M/s. CVVM Hospital, D.No. 3-3-123, 3-3-124, 3-3-125 Sawaran Street, Civil Hospital Road, Ambedkar Road, Karimnagar Town & District and also owner of the Property/surety Smt. Sunkapaka Lalitha, W/o. Late S.Mallaiah, aged about 49 years, R/o, H.No. 9-6-84, covered by Sy.No. 1064 situated at Near Pragnya Junior College, Ramnagar, Karimnagar Town & District, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 49,64,076/- (Rupees Forty Nine Lakhs Sixty Four Thousand and Seventy Six only) within 60days from the

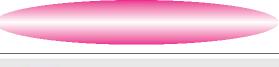
date of receipt the said notice.
The borrower/surety having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/ owner of the property and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred him/her under Sec.13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on this 18th day of January of the year 2021.

The borrower/Surety of the property in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to charge of Andhra pradesh State Financial Corporation, Karimnagar Branch for an amount of Rs. 58,55,125/- as on 31.12.2020 with further interesthereon, costs etc.

Description of the Immovable Property

Description of the Immovable Property
Residential Building bearing No. 9-6-84, along with land admeasuring 363 Sq.Yds
covered by Sy.No.1064, situated at Near Pragnya Junior College, Ramnagar
Karimnagar Town & District and bounded by: East: House with No. 9-6-81, belongs
to P.Rajaiah, West: 9' wide Road, North: House of Sri P.Bhoomaiah bearing H.No 9-6-83 & House of Smt. K.Vimala, W/o. K.Hanumayya and South: Open land of other

Sd/- AUTHORISED OFFICER A.P. STATE FINANCIAL CORPORATION



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PROVIDE ALL NEEDS IN GIRLS SCHOOLS: **COLLECTOR**

DC CORRESPONDENT KOTHAGUDEM, JAN. 20

Bhadradri collector M. V. Reddy said that the officials to provid all facilities in girls' schools including clean toilets. He said that the education department and DRDA should fulfill the task as per the list made by the govern-ment. He said that the officials should visit each and every school and solve the issues there. Officials should extend drinking water from Mission Bhagiratha project to schools.

DC CORRESPONDENT NIZAMABAD, JAN. 20

South Central Railway is planning to set up two new goods sheds in Nizamabad district. In view of the increased demand for freight consignments, officials have decided to set up new goods sheds at Dichpally and Jankampet junction on the Secunderabad-Nizamabad-Manmad

There are three goods in Nizamabad, Kamareddy and Bodhan railway stations in undivided Nizamabad dis-

Reportedly, goods shed at Jankampet will be set

Reportedly, goods shed at Jankampet will be set up by private players and a notification will be issued soon.

MP Dharmapuri Arvind recently visited Dichpally station to see the arrangements for the new goods shed.

up by private players and a notification will be issued soon. Rice is being transport-

ed to Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala states Nizamabad in railway wagons. Maize is also transported to different parts in the coun-Fertilizers

Corporation of India (FCI) and Telangana State Civil Supplies Corporation and private contractors. Earlier, Bodhan railway station was popular as Asia's biggest sugar fac-

town. After the closure of Nizam Sugar Factory, there was a near-zero activity Nizamabad-Bodhan route. Maintenance of Bodhan, Yedapally, Shakkarnagar railway stations in the route also

tory was located in the

became costly. However, the newly laid

Nizamabad MP Dharm apuri Arvind recently visited Dichpally station to see the arrangements for a new goods shed. He brought the issue to

the notice of railway authorities for new goods shed in the district. Traders from the district also discussed the new goods shed proposal with SCR officials.



Traffic police in a bike rally as part awareness campaing on wearing helmet in Khammam on Wednesday.

Cops aim for road mishaps-free 2021

DC CORRESPONDENT KHAMMAM, JAN. 20

Khammam assistant police commissioner S Ramesh said that about 96 motor cyclists were killed in road accidents in the commissionerate limits last year for not wearing helmets. Laying stress on wearing

of helmets, he said that thousands of fatalities can be averted if all two-wheeler drivers wear helmets. He said that from around 732 road mishaps, 232 persons lost their lives in which 96 deaths were for being without helmets.

"The police department wants to make the year 2021 an accident and death-free one. Cooperation of people by way of following road-safety measures will help

Decrying the tendency of people to change vehicle numbers other than the one approved by the road

achieve it", he said/

transport authority, he said stern action will be taken against all such persons. He warned of criminal cases and jail against those moving around without the original RTA allotted numbers.

The police are monitoring such numberless vehicles through CCTV footages. He said that 220 vehicles were found without number plates and the owners were asked to display the numbers.

He said that another 30 vehicles were found to be with false number plates and all those fraudulent numbers have been displayed in all police sta-

As part of awareness, the traffic police are organizing various programmes. A bike rally from Mayuri Centre culminated at the traffic police station after passing through Kinnera Centre, IT Hub, NTR Statue, Sri Sri Circle and Raparthinagar.

VILLAGERS PANICK OVER LEOPARD MOVEMENT IN THE AGRICULTURE FIELDS

DC CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD, JAN. 20

Villagers are panicked over leopard movement in agriculture fields and killing of two calves and a Nilgai on the outskirts of Garkampet Chinnamalkapur areas in Gudihathnoor mandal in the last five days. Villagers said the at the soonest.

leopard was wandering in the area killing cattle and causing panic. Forest officials set up trapping cameras in the agriculture fields. Those who lost cattle pleaded that the forest officials pay them compensa tion. Villagers urged officials to catch the leopard and release it in the forest

ANDHRA PRADESH STATE FINANCIAL CORPORATION (Incorporated under the State Financial Corporation Act, LXIII of 1951) KARIMNAGAR BRANCH D.No. 2-7-373, Opp: Collectrate Complex,

Karimnagar Town & District, Phone: 0878-2243662 PUBLIC NOTICE FOR SALE U/S.29 OF SFC's ACT 1951 Andhra Pradesh State Financial Corporation (APSFC) in exercise of powers conferred under sec.29 of SFC's Act, 1951 initiated recovery action against the

mortgaged / hypothecated properties of the following industrial concerns consequent to the defaults committed.

APSFC is inviting tenders from the Public for purchase of the properties listed below "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" through public auction

ender Cum Bid basis SL Name of the Reserve EMD Line of Assets offered for No. Industrial Concern activity sale

	& Location			(NS. III Idniis)	(Rs. in lak
1.	M/s Nagini Mini Oil Mill & Pulverisers, Propx: Smt. Ramagiri Nagamani, H.No. 2-96, Khazipur Village, Kothapally Mandal, Karimnagar District.	Oil Mill	Land & Building, land admeasuring 303.00 Sq yds situated at H.No. 2-96. Khazipur Village, Gangadhara Mandal, Karimnagar District.	1.76	0.30
2.	M/s Thirumaleshwara Mini Modern Rice Mill, Prop: Sri Muniam	Rice Mill	Land & Building, land admeasuring 127 Sq. yds., covered by	0.86	0.15

Venkataiah, Sy. No, 173, Mallapur Village Mallapur Village Thimmapur Manda Thimmapur Mandal Karimnagar District Karimnagr District. M/s Adithya Nursing Land & Building, (Stilt 178.72 29.80 Children Hospital + G+2) with an built up area in Stilt floor is Prop: Dr. Boorgula Narayana, H.No. 3-4-51, 1775.94 Sq.fts. Ground floor is Civil Hospital Road 1775.94 Sq/fts., First Karimnagar Town & Floor is 1775.94 Sq/fts & Second floor is 1775.94 Sq/fts, constructed in a total extent area of land is 312.00 Sq.yds cov ered by H.No.3-4-249,

PLACE OF AUCTION: A.P.STATE FINANCIAL CORPORATION, 373, Opp: Collectrate Complex, Mukarampura, Karimnagar-505001 TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE

Sai Baba Temple Road

Karimnagar Town &

Street.

Sawaran

District.

Tender Form can be obtained from the undersigned / from any branch office on payment of Rs. 300/- by cash / DD Filled in sealed tenders shall be submitted to the Concerned Branch Manage

Requisite EMD Shall be paid by DD / Pay order drawn in favour of "APSFC", Payable at Karimnagar Branch Office . This Sale Notice is valid for 90 days from the date of advertisement 5. The tenders will be opened and processed for sale on or after 22.02.2021

and continues up to 90 days from the date of advertisement. Tenderers will be invited for bidding / negotiations on every Wednesday or any other suitable day. Bidding will be conducted when more than one tenderer is present and further negotiation will continue. The reasonable offer (at the discretion of the com

will be placed on the notice board for 7 days inviting improved offers. 3. During these 7 days new tenderers may file tenders with requisite EMD and add tional deposit of 15% of the offer displayed. On receipt of improved offers fur ther bidding/ negotiations will be conducted between the existing and new ten derers and further offers will be entertained as per guidelines of the Corporation 9. The Bids quoted below the Reserve Price will be summarily rejected

and the EMD will be refunded. 10. All other terms and conditions enclosed to the tender form are binding and to be compiled with.

1. Corporation reserves the right to accept / reject the tenders / bids of vary the terms and conditions and to cancel it at its sole discretion without 12. The bidders desired to inspect the assets put for sale may directly con

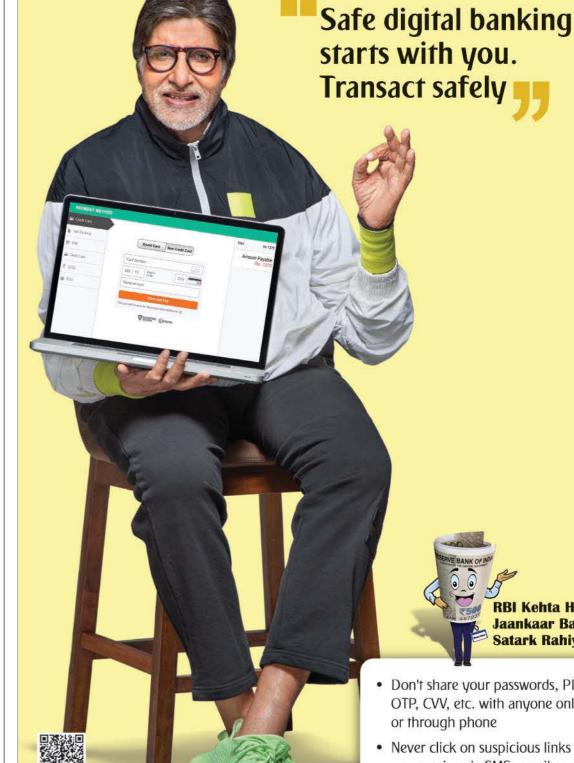
tact the concerned Branch Manager.

13. The Assets will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS" and "AS IS WHAT IS" basis, including encumbrance if any. (There are no encumbrances to the knowledge of the Corporation).

14. When the renderer is submitting the sealed tender, it is deemed that he is full aware / conversant with the general terms and conditions annexed to the ten der form and shall be binding. However, any further clarifications may be sought before submitting the tender from the concerned officers of the

Station: Karimnagar

Sd/- SENIOR BRANCH MANAGER



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India, EU hold

online talks on

DC CORRESPONDENT

India and the European Union (EU) held their first-

ever maritime security dialogue in a virtual format on Wednesday during which

"developments in maritime

security environment, regional cooperation activi-

NEW DELHI, JAN. 20

maritime security

SHORT TAKES

MUMBAI POLICE FILE FIR AGAINST 'TANDAV' TEAM

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, JAN. 20

Mumbai police on Wednesday registered an FIR based on a complaint filed by BJP MLA Ram Kadam about web series Tandav. Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh said that action will be taken in the case as per law. Meanwhile, a four-member team of Uttar Pradesh Police arrived in Mumbai to conduct a probe into a case registered in Luck-now against the web series.

In a related development, the Bombay high court granted transit anticipatory bail for three weeks to Ali Abbas Zafar, the director of *Tandav*. He has been granted bail in connection with the FIR registered in the UP. The transit pre-arrest bail has been granted to enable him to approach the appropriate court for regular anticipa-

tory bail.

The said FIR was registered at Hazratganj Police Station in Lucknow. Several people are named in the FIR and the team of cops from Lucknow intend to interrogate all those who were named in the FIR, before taking any action.

The UP police team, which has already reached the city, will first approach the Mum-bai police for local assistance. While several FIRs were filed

across the country against the makers, Amazon Prime Video and the actors, the makers had also issued an unconditional apology on Tuesday for unintentionally hurting anyone's religious sentiments.

Despite that, a group of BJP supporters led by BJP MLA Ram Kadam held protests in Mumbai's BKC against

OVER 7 LAKH BENEFICIARIES GET VACCINATED

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JAN. 20

In a significant achievement in India's Covid-19 trajectory, the active caseload slipped below two lakhs (1.97 lakh) after six months and 24 days. On Wednesday, India also registered one of the lowest daily new confirmed Covid-19 cases per million population in the last seven days. There were 13,823 new positive cases and 162 deaths in the last one day. This decline in daily new cases has also contributed to the shrinkage in active caseload.

On the other hand, 7,86,842 beneficiaries have been vaccinated for Covid-19 in the last five days, out of which 1,12,007 persons were vaccinated on Wednesday. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra are the few states were high number of vaccinations took place. On Wednesday, 82 cases of Adverse Effect From immunization (AEFI) were reported following the vaccination.

Ten people were hospitalised due to AEFI out of which three are under observation — one each in Delhi, Murshidabad Bengal) Chitradurga (Karnataka) while others were discharged. So far four deaths of beneficiaries who took the jab have taken place ever since the vaccination drive began on Saturday. While the post mortem of a healthcare worker from Telangana is going on. officials said three others died due to other reasons not related to vaccination

The 42-year-old Telangana healthcare worker was inoculated on Tuesday. He later complained of chest pain and died early on Wednesday. Out of the four deaths, three have suffered cardiac arrest while one died due to cardio-pulmonary

NAME CHANGE

Final checks



Indian Air Force Rafale jet and Jaguar aircraft fly past Rajpath during the rehearsals for Republic Day Parade

NCP IN MUMBAI SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, JAN. 20

SP TO HOLD JOINT

RALLY WITH SENA,

In a bid to stop the BJP from coming to power in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), the Samajwadi Party (SP) is planning to organise a grand public rally of north Indians in alliance with the Shiv Sena and NCP. SP leader Ram Charitra Nishad met Shiv Sena president and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray in

this regard.

lakhs voters are north Indian in Mumbai.

Leaking secrets

of military ops

ets of military operations is treason and those involved in it must be punished, the Congress

said on Wednesday on

the purported WhatsApp

must come clean.

out the 2019 air strikes.

The Congress fielded its top leaders — former

defence minister A.K. Antony, leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha

Ghulam Nabi Azad, for-

mer home minister Sushilkumar Shinde and

former law and external

affairs minister Salman

Khurshid to launch a

scathing attack on the

government at a joint press conference.

The Congress said it

would raise the issue in a

big way in Parliament

during the budget ses-

sion starting January 29

and garner support of

other parties for a joint

offensive against the gov-

ernment including a

joint parliamentary com-

ties, developments of mutual interest and opportunities for cooperation between The proposed meeting will be addressed by NCP chief Sharad Pawar, Thackeray and SP national president Akhilesh Yadav. Nishad said that India and the EU" were dis-It may be recalled that India and the EU had — during their 15th bilateral Summit in July last year — agreed to strengthen military-to-military relations the mega rally is likely to be held in Mumbai after Holi in March. The BMC polls will be held along with UP Assembly elections in and naval cooperation and establish a maritime security dialogue to preserve safety and stability in the Indian Ocean, in what was seen as a veiled but clear early 2022. Around 24

signal to China. In a statement on Wednesday, the ministry of external affairs said, "India and the EU held their first maritime security dialogue in a virtual format on 20 January 2021. The consultations involved exchanges on developments in maritime environment,

regional cooperation activities, developments of mutu-al interest and opportunities for cooperation between India and the EU."

The ministry of external affairs added, "The EU-

India Maritime Dialogue was chaired by Director Joanneke Balfoort on the EEAS side and Joint Secretary Sandeep Arya on the Indian side. The dia-logue seeks to develop mutual understanding and cooperation opportunities between India and the EU in the maritime security domain as another factor of the strategic partnership between the two sides consistent with the India-EU

Roadmap to 2025."

It may be recalled that India, along with the United States, Japan and Australia, is a member of the four nation Quad, an arrangement that aims to preserve a "rules-based order" in the Indo-Pacific region. In a major move, EU-member nation France had on Tuesday announced that there would be a "strategic triangle" along with India and Japan "committed to a rules-based Indo-Pacific"

BARC ex-CEO's bail rejected in TRP scam

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, JAN. 20

A Sessions court in Mumbai on Wednesday dismissed a bail application filed by Parto Dasgupta, former CEO of Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC), who has been arrested in connection with the alleged Television Rating Points (TRP) scam case in December last year.

A graduate from IIM Calcutta, Partho Dasgupta was the CEO of Broadcast Audience Research Council ("BARC") between June 2013 and November 2019. He had moved the bail application after he was remanded to judicial custody. The Crime Branch has charged him under sections 409 (criminal breach of trust by a public servant), 420 (cheating) of the Indian Penal

He had filed the bail application through advocate Shardul Singh and Arjun Singh on the grounds that there was nothing more left to be recovered from him. The chats were not authenticated by a 65B certificate under the Indian Evidence Act hence it could not be considered as evidence. Moreover, an Oversight Committee has certified by their own report that TRPs cannot be tampered with

manually.
Special public prosecutor Shishir Hire had vehemently opposed the bail application filed by Dasgupta on behalf of police.

He had read out several WhasApp chats between Republic TV editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami and the applicant to show their proximity. He had also contended that as an ex-BARC CEO the accused has good resources and if released on bail he could influence witnesses in the case. He had pointed out that in one of the chats, which are part of the supplementary charge sheet, Goswami allegedly offered to mediate with the PMO's office on behalf of Dasgupta, while in another chat they speak about manipulating the TRPs of Republic to surpass Times

Now. Advocate Hirey argued that Dasgupta, in his capacity as the CEO of BARC, was supposed to be a neutral party and that the rise in TRPs of a channel was directly proportional to its ad-revenue.

Dasgupta's lawyer Singh had also sought bail on the ground of parity. He had argued that the co-accused who was allegedly directly involved in manipulation. according to the report, is

MP rocked by 4 rapes in 10 days

Cong slams Shivraj govt for having failed to check growing incidents of rape in state

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JAN. 20

Madhya Pradesh has witnessed barbaric rape of four girls in the last 10 days, triggering public outcry.

In a shocking incident, a 13-year-old girl was raped in her family's farmland in Jangda village under Ghodadangar police limits in Betul district by a local villager late on Monday evening. The victim had gone to the farm to switch off the motor

On finding her alone, accused Sushil Verma (45) raped her and then buried her under a heap of stones, Betul district superintendent of police Shimla Prasad said on Wednesday. The victim's sisters who came to the farm while searching her late on Monday night, had found her buried in a pit and alerted their father, who Ghodadangar hospital. She was later referred to

hospital. The accused has been arrested. In another incident, a 13-year-old girl, resident of Umaria, had been raped for three days by nine people.

Nagpur Medical College

IN A SHOCKING incident, a 13-year-old girl, resident of Umaria, had been raped for three

days by nine people.

was abducted and taken to Chhatan jungle in Umaria district by two youths, identified as Rahul Kushwaha and Akash Singh, where they allegedly raped her.

She was later taken to a nearby eatery where she was allegedly raped by the 'dhaba' owner Paras Soni and four of his associates, according to a complaint lodged by the victim in the local police

station. She was later taken to Chhatan jungle by them where she was gangraped, she alleged.

According to her complaint, she was then bundled in a Katni-bound truck on January 12 by the accused.

The truck driver had raped her and then dropped her at Kala Badbara check gate. Later, she got a lift in a Umaria-bound truck in which she was raped by the truck driver.

The victim along with her family members filed FIR in the Umaria station police on January 15. While 7 On January 11, the girl accused were arrested, 2

others were absconding, police said.

On January 10, a widow was raped by three youths in the village of Ùmilia in Sidhi district. The three accused had then inserted an iron rod in her private parts. She was battling for life

in a hospital in Rewa. Two accused, Lalu kol and Bhailal Patel were arrested, while another accused was absconding, police said.

On Tuesday night, a girl was waylaid by two motorcycle-borne youths in Indore and then taken to nearby railway track where she was allegedly raped by them. Three other people who were waiting there also waiting there allegedly raped her.

They then bundled her in a jute sack and threw her on the railway track, police said.

She managed to free herself and called her friend who took her to the hospital. The girl has identified one of the accused as Akshyaya. All the five accused were absconding, police said. Senior Congress leader and former chief minister Kamal Nath slammed

Shivraj

Chouhan government for having failed to check

growing incidents of

mittee probe. It also accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and top ministers who

is treason: Cong New Delhi, Jan. 20: are members of the Leaking of official secr- Cabinet Committee on Security of violating the Official Secrets Act and demanded that action be taken against them and ascertain who leaked the sensitive information.

chats of *Republic TV* editor-in-chief Arnab "Leaking of official secrets is a criminal act. Leaking official secrets tor-in-chief Arnab Goswami and demanded that the Prime Minister about military operation, national security The party said those involved in the "anti-natmatters, sensitive military operations especialional act" deserve no mercy and the government should immediately ordly military strike is treason, anti-national. They have to be punished for er an inquiry into the "information leak" abanti-national activities, for treason. They deserve

no mercy," Antony said.
Referring to the
WhatsApp chats between
Goswami and ex-BARC
CEO Partho Dasgupta, he said India's national security has never been compromised in such a way and never have the high offices of the prime minister, home minister and others been "brazenly compromised".

"Does the PM, Union home minister, in fact the entire government have any moral, political, Constitutional right to continue in office after such damning revelations? We demand that the PM should come clean on these accusations immediately in order to restore the severely damaged credibility of the highest office of the country," a joint statement by the

India to despatch 20L vaccine doses to B'desh

KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, JAN. 20

After delivering one lakh doses of the

Indian-manufactured Covishield (Oxford-AstraZeneca) vaccine to the Maldives and 1.5 lakh Covishield doses to Bhutan on Wednesday, India will step up its powerful display of neighbourhood vaccine diplomacy by despatching a massive 20 lakh doses of Covishield vaccine to Bangladesh and 10 lakh doses of the Covishield vaccine to Nepal on Thursday. The vaccines supplied have been manufactured by the Serum Institute of India at Pune. All four nations lie in India's immediate neighbourhood

and the consignments are being seen as India's "gift" to these nations. A consignment containing 20 lakh doses of the Covishield vaccine will reach Bangladesh's Capital Dhaka on Thursday. The vaccine delivery fulfils the assurance

by Primare Narendra

Modi to Bangladesh

 10 LAKH doses of the Covishield vaccine will be despatched to Nepal. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during the bilateral Virtual Summit last month

when ready.

THE VACCINE delivery fulfils the assurance given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina dur-

ing the bilateral Virtual Summit last month that

India would facilitate supply of vaccines as and

tate supply of vaccines as and when ready. It is also being seen as reflective of India's strong commitment to Neighbourhood First" Policy and Bangladesh's special

that India would facili-

place in it. A consignment of 10 lakh doses of the Covishield vaccine will also reach Nepalese Capital Kathmandu Thursday.

Nepalese Government had earlier requested for supply of Indian manufactured Covid vaccines and the request was reiterated during the recent visit India bv the Nepalese

Foreign Minister. Meanwhile, a consignment containing

1.5 lakh doses of the Covishield reached Bhutan's Thimphu on Wednesday. "#VaccineMaitri begins. Consignment arrives in Bhutan. Another example #NeighbourhoodFirst

," External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar tweeted. Also, a consignment containing one lakh doses of the Covishield vaccine reached the Maldivian Capital Male Wednesday.

"Indian reach Maldives reflects our special friendship," External friendship," Affairs Minister Jaishankar tweeted Bhutan and the Maldives were the first two foreign countries to receive the Covishield vaccines, highlighting close strategic proxim-

ity to India.

6 parties form 'alliance' in Assam United Democratic Front for the Assam elections made Khan, leader of the state

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, JAN. 20

In what is set to give a formidable challenge to the ruling BJP-led alliance in forthcoming Assembly polls, six opposition political parties, led by the Congress, have formally announced the formation of a 'grand alliance' to take on the BJP-led NDA government in Assam.

Besides the principal opposition Congress, the All India

(AIUDF), the Communist Party of India (CPI), the CPI(M), the Communist Party of India (Marxist Leninist) Liberation, and the Anchalik Gana Morcha (AGM) led by Rajya Sabha MP Ajit Kumar Bhuyan are the part of the grand alliance.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, who is the senior observer of the All India Congress Committee

this announcement after several rounds of consultation with all the partners. Among others present on

the occasion were Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Ripun Bora, AICC general secretary in-charge for Assam Jitendra Singh, AICC general secretary and former Union minister Mukul Wasnik, senior Congress leader and AICC observer Shakeel Ahmed

Congress Legislature Party (CLP) Debabrata Saikia, APCC vice-presidents Prody-

ut Bordoloi and Rakibul Hussain, AIUDF leaders Aminul Islam and Hafiz Bashir Ahmed Kasimi, AGM president Ajit Kumar Bhuyan, CPI state secretary Munin Mahanta, CPI(M) state secretary Deben Bhattacharya, and CPI(ML) Liberation State secretary Rubul Sarma,

Gujarat govt applies for a patent to change nomenclature of dragon fruit

Guj to rename dragon fruit as 'Kamalam'

Gandhinagar, Jan. 20: The Gujarat government has decided to rename dragon fruit as 'Kamalam', Chief Minister Vijay Rupani has said.

The state government has applied for a patent to change the nomenclature of dragon fruit, which is largely grown in Kutch, Navsari and different parts of Saurashtra, to 'Kamalam', Rupani told reporters on Tuesday.

The name dragon fruit is not proper, and due to its name one thinks of China. So we have given it the name 'Kamalam'," he said.

Asked why the name 'Kamalam' has been given to fruit, Rupani said, "Farmers say it looks like lotus and that is the reason we



have named it 'Kamalam'." Notably, 'Kamal', or lotus, is the poll symbol of the BJP and Gujarat party unit headquarters is named Shri Kamalam. There is nothing political

CHIEF MINISTER Vijay Rupani said, "the name dragon fruit is not proper, and due to its name one thinks of China. So we have given it the name 'Kamalam'.'

• THE FRUIT is found in arid areas of the state and it is known for its nutritional value, like it also helps in increasing the hemoglobin,

behind renaming of the fruit, Rupani said.

The fruit is found in arid

areas of the state and it is

known for its nutritional

value, like it also helps in

Rupani said in reply to question on the need to rename it.

increasing the hemoglobin, Rupani said in reply to question on the need to rename it. The CM also said it is the most expensive fruit available

in the market at this time. The change in nomenclature of the fruit is yet to find its way among the masses and farm-

Ahmedabad-based housewife Gayatri Vyas, who regularly eats the fruit for its nutritional value, said she is not aware that it has been changed as it is available as 'dragon fruit' only in markets.

The fruit comes from several different cactus species and is recommended to be eaten as it can boost immunity.

Lately, cultivators from some of the state's arid regions like

Kutch have largely taken up farming of this fruit. The NCP on Wednesday tar-

geted the BJP over the Gujarat government's decision to rename dragon fruit as 'Kamalam', saying the time may not be far when the my the country as "Kamalastan". saffron party would start call-

The BJP has now started "branding itself on fruits also," NCP chief spokesperson Mahesh Tapase said in a state-

Tapase said, "The BJP has now started branding itself on fruits also. We fear that the time may be not far when they addressing start Hindustan as Kamalastan."









SHORT TAKES

2 SECURITY MEN KILLED IN PAK TERROR ATTACK

Peshawar, Jan. 20: At least two security personnel were killed and one injured when unknown terrorists riding a bike opened fire at a Security Forces Road Protection team in northwest Pakistan late on Tuesday night, local police

The incident occurred in the jurisdiction of Gomal police station in Tank district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering the South Waziristan tribal district. The policemen who died in the firing were identified as Sepoy Khalid and Sepoy Ayaz. The injured cop was identified as Sepoy Muhammad Ramazan.

Security forces rushed to the site, cordoned off the entire area and started a search oper ation to nab the fleeing culprits. No group claimed responsibility for the attack till the filing of this report.

LIBYA AMMO WAREHOUSE **BLAST KILLS 3**

Cairo, Jan. 20: A fire, followed by an explosion at an ammunition warehouse at a naval academy in western Liby a killed three people, including two officers, a Libyan spokesman said Wednesday.

It was not clear what caused the overnight blaze at the academy in the town of Janzur, about 24 kilometres (14 miles) west of the capital of Tripoli, said Masoud Abdal Samad, the spokesman of the Libyan navy.

Four people were also wounded in the incident. Samad said the dead included Brig. Gen. Ahmed Ayoub, the head of the academy, and Brig. Gen. Salem Abu Salah, who ran the naval college.

The third person who died was not identified. Video footage that circulated online following the incident shows firefighters and ambulances rushing to the site where a building is engulfed in a huge fire.

2 BRITISH SIKHS CHARGED FOR STREET FIGHT

London, Jan. 20: Two British Sikh men have been charged following what Scotland Yard described as a large altercation involving swords and knives in Southall, west London. Sukwir Singh, 22, and Lakha Singh, 29, both residents of Southall here, appeared at the Willesden Magistrates' Court on Monday charged with affray and threatening a person with a blade/sharply pointed article in a public place.

"Police were called at around 00:20hrs on Sunday, 17 January, to reports of a large group around 30 men fighting with various weapons, including knives and swords, in the area of King Street," the Metropolitan Police said in a state ment. "Officers attended and arrested two males, both aged in their 20s, on suspicion of violent disorder and affray. were no reported injuries," the statement added.

INDIAN JAILED FOR MOLESTING S'PORE WOMAN

Singapore, Jan. 20: A 26year-old Indian painter in Singapore was sentenced to nine months in prison on Wednesday for molesting a pregnant woman after following her to a lift lobby, according to a media report.

Kota Durga Prasad molested the three-month pregnant woman who was visiting her husband in Singapore on the night of September 5 last year, reported the Channel News

DEMOCRACY HAS PREVAILED: BIDEN

Newly inaugurated US Prez, in maiden speech, calls on Americans 'to defend the truth and defeat the lies'

Washington, Jan. 20: "Democracy has pre-vailed," newly inaugurated US President Joe Biden said on Wednesday in his maiden speech as he called on Americans "to defend the truth and defeat the lies". Speaking shortly after taking oath as the 46th President of the United States, 78-yearold Biden also pledged to repair America's global allies, which suffered during his predecessor Donald Trump's four-year regime. "This is America's day..democracy has prevailed," Biden said, apparently referring to his Trump's efforts to deny him victory in the November 3 election won

by him.

"With unity we can do great things," he said referring to the challenges ahead of him from fighting the Coronavirus to addressing racial injustice. "Unity is the path forward," he asserted, laying out his vision to defeat the pandemic, build back better, and unify and heal the nation. Biden asserted that he will be the president for all Americans, all those who voted for him and those who did not vote for him. In his speech that lasted for 21 minutes, Biden praised Americans for rising to the challenge and reclaiming democra-He mentioned the attempt to undo it at that exact location two weeks ago, and renewed his campaign goals of overcoming the pandemic, bringing racial justice and fighting climate change.

Biden also criticised those who have stoked anger and division, and asked those who opposed him to "hear me out." He called out those who lie for political power and profit. "There is truth, and there are lies," he added. In a message to the international community, Biden said that he would rebuild the alliances frayed over the past four years. "We can make America once again the leading force of good in the world." "We will repair our "We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again, not to meet vesterday's challenges but today's and tomorrow's challenges," he said. "We will lead by the power of our example," he said in his message to the international community.

The 78-year-old veteran Democratic leader said: 'We'll be a strong and trusted partner for peace, progress and security' "America has been tested, and we have come out stronger for it. We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again. "We'll lead, not merely by the exam-

READY TO SERVE, SAYS KAMALA IN 1ST TWEET AFTER TAKING OATH

Washington, Jan. 20: Kamala Harris was on Wednesday sworn in as America's first woman Vice President during a historic inauguration at the West Front of the Capitol. Harris, 56, the 49th US Vice President, will serve as the deputy of President Joe Biden, 78, who also took the oath of office, becoming the 46th US President.

Harris took over the office of the US Vice President from 61-yearold Mike Pence. Biden succeeded President Donald Trump, 74. In her first tweet as Vice President from her official Twitter handle, she said: "Ready to serve.

Harris, the daughter of an Indian immigrant from Chennai, scripted history by becoming the first-ever woman Vice President of the United States. She is also the first female, first Black and first South Asian American vice president. Her hu-sband Douglas Emhoff, 56, is the first 'Second Gentleman' — the first male spouse of a vice president in the US. Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the first Latina member of the Supreme Court, administered the oath of office to Harris. She was sworn in on two Bibles one that belonged to a close family friend named Regina Shelton and another that belonged to Thurgood Marshall — the country's first African American Supreme Court justice. -PTI

ple of our power, but by the power of our example. We'll be a strong and trusted partner for peace, progress and security, Biden said. Many world leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, have tweeted their congratulations to the new administration expressed their optimism at working together. "My warmest congratulations to Joe Biden on his assumption of office as President of the United States of America. I look forward to working with him to strengthen India US strategic partnership," Modi said. "My best wishes for a successful term in leading USA as we stand united and resilient in addressing common challenges and advancing global peace and security," he said.



Vice President-elect Kamala Harris greets former US President Barack Obama ahead of Joe Biden's inauguration as the 46th President of the United States on the West Front of the US Capitol in Washington, on Wednesday.

12 Guard troops pulled out

Washington, Jan. 20: Twelve US National Guard troops have been pulled from duty protecting the presidential inauguration of Joe Biden, partly due to an investigation of extre-mist sympathies in the ranks, the Pentagon said Tuesday. Two of the 12 were removed from duty for making "inappropriate comments or texts," said National Guard Comma-General Daniel Hokanson.

The two were sent home, he said, declining to explain what was said in the comments.

They were pulled from

BIDEN HOMELAND SECURITY PICK TO REOPEN ASYLUM FOR MIGRANTS

duran

US border.

bound for the US.

Mayorkas told a Senate

committee vetting his

nomination that the gov-

ernment would roll back departing President Dona-

ld Trump's tough meas-

ures to seal the southern

Washington, Jan. 20: President-elect Joe Biden's Homeland Security secretary nominee Alejandro Mayorkas promised Tuesday to apply US asylum laws to undocument-ed immigrants but did not say how he would deal with a caravan of Hon-

the force "out of an abundance of caution," he said.
The removal of the other 10 troops was also unexpl-

ained, but was "unrelated to the events taking place at the Capitol or to the cohave noted on extremism," said Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman. The actions against the

12 came amid concerns that the far-right extremists who took a part in the assault on the US Capitol on January 6 have associates or sympathisers in

the US military. Concerned about a possible threat to Biden or others, the FBI has investigated whether there were extremists among the up 25,000 National Guard troops being deployed in Washington to keep security for the inauguration.

FROM GAGA TO GARTH, MIRANDA TO MORENO: CELEBS JOIN

Washington, Jan. 20: Like so much this past year, the inaugural celebration will be like no other: pared down, dis-tanced, much of it virtual. But for actor Christopher Jackson — the original George Washington in Broadway's "Hamilton" — performing in a virtual "ball" is a way of participating in an essential rite of American

democracy.
"I'm glad to play a part in it," says Jackson, who will perform at the quadrennial ball for the Creative Coalition, a fundamental control of the draiser for arts education and one of the more prominent unofficial events surrounding Joe Biden's inauguration. "It's a great honour, and I'm very grateful that we have allowed our system to con-tinue to work in the way it was intended." Jackson - not to mention former co-star and "Hamilton"

creator, Lin-Manuel Miranda — joins a slew of celebrities descending on Washington, virtually or in person, for entertainment surrounding the inauguration of Biden

and Kamala Harris.
Although the festivities have been radically scaled down due to the raging Coronavirus pandemic and security threats, a steady stream of A-list names have signed on, headlined by Lady Gaga singing the national anthem on the West Front of the Capitol, with Jennifer Lopez and Garth Brooks contributing musical performances.

Spy chief: 'Aggressive stance' to deal with China challenges

confirmation hearing for

Washington, Jan. 20: Asserting that China is a "challenge" to the security and prosperity of the US, spy chief nominee Avril Haines has said she supports an "aggressive stance" to deal with the challenges that the counis now facing from Beijing. America's approach to

China has to evolve and essentially meet the reality of the particularly assertive and aggressive China that is being experienced now, Haines told lawmakers during her

the post of Director of National Intelligence on Tuesday. US Presidentelect Joe Biden has nominated Haines, who had served as White House Deputy National Security Advisor in the Obama administration, as his next spymaster. If confirmed by the Sen-

ate, 51-year-old Haines would be the first woman to occupy this position. In this capacity she would oversee as many as 18 American intelligence agencies, including CIA

our prosperity, to our values across a range of issues, and I do support an aggressive stance, in a sense, to deal with the challenge that we're facing. So I think that's the place that we are now and one that is more assertive than where we had been in the Obama/Biden administration. And if I'm confirmed I think frankly the intelligence community can do a lot to help in that respect," she said. — PTI

and FBI. "China is a chal-

lenge to our security, to

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OFFICER

Kamala brings in new dressing style pants, pearls and Converse Kamala Harris on Rouge, and lives in New

Vice President-elect Kamala Harris' understated and elegant signature style of blazers combined with sneakers signals a new way of power dressing. Harris, 56, made history as the first female, first Person of Colour and first South Asian American president

Emerging as a woman of conviction and dedicated towards her work. Harris makes sure her approachable personality is reflected through her attire, several US media outlets reported. Her no-nonsense wardrobe often features sharp blazers, skinny

sneakers. Her style is understated, tailored, elegant, businesslike, with a touch of whimsy, said Susan E. Kelley, who runs the blog What Kamala Wore, in a report in the New York Post. The clothes don't wear her; she wears the clothes, Kelley said.

That professional polish mixed with West Coast nonchalance signals a new way of dressing for the cor ridors of power, it said.

Harris opted to wear a dress designed by two Black designers for her historic inauguration as the US Vice-president. In opting to wear the dress designed by Christopher Wednesday opted to wear a dress designed by two Black designers for her inauguration. In opting to wear the dress designed by Christopher John Rogers and Sergio Hudson, Harris has sent her own message to the country that Black designers have arrived on the scene.

John Rogers and Sergio Hudson, Harris has sent her own message to the country that Black designers have arrived on the scene. Rogers is a young Black designer, from Baton

York City. Hudson is a Black designer from South Carolina. Rogers has sold made-to-order designs from his Brooklyn studio since 2016, according to Forbes.

Harris' fashion sense dates back to the days when she was a lawyer in San Francisco. She had a big collection of sharp blazers in neutral tones along with accessories like boldly patterned scarves. colourful Converse or the jangly bangles she wears alongside a Cartier watch, the report said.

Harris has always maintained a simple yet graceful look, whether it is her

tial candidate or her victory speech when the Democrats won the November 3 presidential election.

"She dressed in her usual work style of dark neutrals and simple lines. In the pictures, she doesn't look stiffly styled or glamorously made-over for her debut as a vice-presidential candidate. Her clothes do not look like they've been pulled fresh from a shopping bag," a report in the Washington Post said. She largely eschews the usual red, white and blue accents politicians generally employ to drive home their patriotism, the New York Post report said.

Besides Bannon, other

pardon recipients included

Elliott Broidy, a former top

fundraiser for Trump's

campaign who pleaded

guilty to one count of con-

spiracy relating to a secret

lobbying campaign to influ-

tration on behalf of a for-

billionaire

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GRANTING | CLEMENCY | The commutations came in addition to actions Trump took after losing polls

Trump's pardons include Bannon, 73 others

Outgoing President Donald Trump has pardoned his former political strategist Steve Bannon, one of the key architects of his 2016 electoral victory, as he issued a wave of pardons using the final hours of his presidency grant clemency to 143 people.

The record 73 pardons and 70 commutations came in addition to the dozens of similar actions that Trump November 3 presidential Democratic Party.

Biden, 78, will be sworn in as the 46th President of the United

Wednesday. The White House in a statement issued that Wednesday said Trump granted a full pardon to Bannon, who was in charge of the final months of his 2016 presidential

campaign. Bannon was indicted in August when New York federal prosecutors charged him and three others with defrauding donors of more elections to Joe Biden of than a million dollars as

part of an online fundrais-

FAREWELL ADDRESS: TRUMP'S 'BEST WISHES' TO NEW ADMIN Washington,

Extending his "best wishes" and praying for the success of the new administration in keeping America safe and prosperous, outgoing US President Donald Trump in his farewell has said that address Americans must unify

around their shared values

ing campaign purportedly

aimed at supporting Trump's border wall.

Jan. 20: and rise above partisan rancour to forge their common destiny.

Trump has still not fully accepted the result of last November's election, which he lost to Democrat Joe Biden. Trump, Republican, made no mention of Biden in his prerecorded video address, but

statement said Bannon has

been an important leader

did allude to the violence at the Capitol earlier this month. In the video farewell mes-

sage released by the White House on Tuesday, Trump, ence the Trump adminis-74, said he embarked on a mission to make America great again for all Americans.

The White House in its in the conservative movepolitical acumen.

ment and is known for his a heated divorce.

exchange for millions of dollars, and Ken Kurson, a friend of Trump's son-inlaw Jared Kushner who was charged last October with cyberstalking during

Chronicle

When Team India staged mother of all comebacks

eam India staged the mother of all comebacks to win an away Test series in one of the most difficult terrains to conquer while overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds. This win in Australia will go down in Indian cricket history as the greatest achievement, perhaps outranking the 1971 twin series wins in the West Indies and England and the 2001 win at home against Ricky Ponting's Australians in which too they had come back from a Test down to win the series. The team had similarly beaten Australia in the 2018-19 series Down Under but the home team then were without Steve Smith and David Warner.

This is indeed the dawn of a new era as the touring India squad laid to rest many conservative theories about experienced players and a settled XI being the key to success. The remarkable story of this triumph was shaped by fringe players who were pushed on to centrestage and who flourished beyond imagination in the limelight. Only Ajinkya Rahane and Cheteshwar Pujara played all four Tests. And when India went into the decider at the Woolloongabba arena in Brisbane, India's combined bowling attack had fewer Test wickets in their bag than Australia's

occasional leg spinner Marnus Labuschagne. It is the deeds of such unlikely heroes that makes folklore of sport.

Rahane at the helm was as if Buddha were put in charge of a cricket team as opposed to the demonstrative Kohli, which just goes to show there are many ways to play the great game

Vaccine, all said and

product: it calls for

done, is a knowledge

the use of the knowl-

edge humankind has

created and every

successful rollout.

India's soft move.

peppered with diplo-

matic quotients, will

earn a lot of goodwill

for the country.

single tool it has

The saga of raw physical courage starring Pujara at the Gabba and before him that of Hanuma Vihari and Ashwin who salvaged the draw in Sydney will be spoken of for a long time to come. But nothing made all this seem like a fairytale than the transfor mation of young Rishabh Pant who went from impulsive striker to matchwinner in the space of two Tests, his 97 in Sydney turning the series on its head as it gave a glimpse of victory from counterattacking cricket before his decisive 89 not out in Brisbane which cemented the balletic 91 of opener Shubman Gill who had shown that the Australian

pace bowlers could be taken on even in their Gabba. Who would have imagined that the mother of all turnarounds would come from the very depths of despair of 36 all out in Adelaide and that the matchwinners would come from diverse backgrounds as the son of autorickshaw driver, Siraj being the only Indian bowler with a five-for in the series, the son of street vendor, Natarajan who went from net bowler to Test performer and Test benchwarmers Washington Sundar and Shardul Thakur would star with bat and ball. It was cheeky of netizens to suggest that the series verdict means Virat Kohli is free to seek more paternal leave because he as the skipper had assiduously built not only

this team but also instilled in it this positive attitude. It is time then for Indian cricket to bury old shibboleths and reshape the future with an open and all-inclusive approach recognising the fact that today's youngsters, exposed to big team atmosphere and subject to expert international coach ing and conditioning in the IPL, are equally adept at playing to win. Rahane at the helm was as if Buddha were put in charge of a cricket team as opposed to the demonstrative Kohli, which just goes to show there are many ways to play the

Vaccine aid for neighbours

ndia has long called itself the pharmacy of the world and has now decided to live up to the claim. By the time these lines are printed, lakhs of doses of made-in-India vaccines against the novel coronavirus would have landed in our neighbouring countries, and more will do so in the coming days. While six nations — Bhutan, the Maldives, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and Seychelles — will get the Indian vaccines in the first tranche, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Mauritius will get them once "necessary regulatory clearances" are given. It is noteworthy that the Indian vaccines would be the first to arrive in most of

Vaccine, all said and done, is a knowledge product: it calls for the use of the knowledge humankind has created and every single tool it has made till now for its successful rollout. India's soft move, peppered with diplomatic quotients, will earn a lot of goodwill for the country. It will also prove to the neighbours, and the world at large, that India becoming a

made till now for its superpower will benefit all. The only exception as of now is Pakistan. The Drugs Regulatory Authority of Pakistan has cleared the use of Covishield, manufactured by Serum Institute of India, and the government there is reportedly exploring ways to get it through Covax, an alliance set up by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations and World Health Organisation or

directly. Both the routes are fine but India should positively decide should a request come from the western neighbour. It will have no dramatic consequences but will be the stating of the obvious — the real challenges the two now-estranged nations face are similar, and the ways to overcome them will be more successful if they are adopted together. Should it happen, the vaccine could produce some antibodies against ultra-nationalism and religious bigotry, too. The government should seize this chance.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER

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Subhani



India, world must gear up as Biden era begins



K.C. Singh

3iden takes over America's presidency under unprecedented circumstances. It is only the fourth time in US history that the outgoing leader refused to attend his successor's inauguration, all earlier examples being from the nineteenth century. The transition has been disorderly, to say the least, despite the US facing a serious spike in Covid-19 cases, with over 400,000 dead and the economy slowing down. Domestic challenges are rivalled by those abroad as the Trumpian foreign policy equally

While Mr Biden's nominees to head the state and defence departments and the CIA are all wellknown individuals, their depositions before Senate committees a day before the inauguration give an insight into the new administration's thinkng. Antony Biinken, the incoming secretary of state, began with his personal story as the descendant of those who either fled Soviet pogroms or concentration camps. He ended with the touching tale about his late stepfather, hiding in a bush as disarray descended with Allied troops advancing into Germany in 1945, stepped out on seeing a tank with a five-pointed white star and told the African-American GI emerging from its turret the only three English words his mother taught him: "God bless America'

These anecdotes bolstered Mr Blinken's argument that the US must lead the world "not only by the example of our power, but by the power of our example". He listed the most pressing challenges as rising nationalism, receding democracy, growing rivalry from "China, and Russia and other authoritarian states, mounting a threat to a stable and open international system". He also noted "a technological revolution" was reshaping our lives. If the US doesn't lead, he said, "there can be only two outcomes: another nation will step in or none will, and chaos shall ensue"

On specifics, Mr Blinken argued the US must defeat Covid-19, outcompete China and take the lead in tackling climate change. President Biden is likely to take action on all three fronts the very first day. The US will rejoin the Paris climate agreement, return to the World Health Organisation, reverse travel bans on select Muslim nations and reach out to alienated allies. But he singled out China as the most signifi-

challenge. cant Therefore, President Trump was right in the direction of his China policy, but wrong in the means he chose.

The defence secretarydesignate, Gen. Lloyd Austin (Retd), talked about India's near westneignbournood While he reiterated the US resolve to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, he qualified it, as Mr Trump avoided doing, by saying safeguarding the gains in women's rights, etc, must be a precondition to a final settlement. On Pakistan, he seemed to regress to old formulations like underscoring its importance to Afghan peace and regional stability Mr Blinken also singled

democracy and out human rights as central to the Biden administration's global outreach. Thus overall, while India would be happy with the tone and tenor on China, though what the new China containment strategy will be is still unclear, it would be cautious about Pakistan again getting more wriggle room. But New Delhi can't take the talk about human rights lightly. It was speculated whether the sudden early retirement of a bureaucrat close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his induction into Uttar Pradesh politics is

the zeal of UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath in pursuing a majoritarian agenda and intolerance towards anyone criticis-ing him. A comedian's being detained for perceived insult raises questions about freedom of speech being curbed. The four-year free pass the government got on this count is now over. This is happening as the BJP prepares for a no-holdsparred electoral fight in West Bengal, and when the farmers' protests at Delhi's main entry points

is nearing two months. In Britain, the farmers protests led to 100 MPs, across party lines, raising concern. A similar move can't be ruled out in Washington, with Democrats now controlling both Houses. External affairs minister S. Jaishankar had earlier drawn the ire of a congressional committee by illogically seeking the exclusion of Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal from a meeting he was to attend as she had been critical of the governactions

including Kashmir, including Article 370's abrogation. She has been re-elected and may revisit that issue and now new ones like President Donald

Trump's administration poisoned US foreign policy well before departure by ramping up sanctions against Iran, raising the level of ties with Taiwan, declaring China's actions against Uighurs as genocide, etc. The aim was possibly to reduce Mr Biden's strategic space to re-balance ties with those nations, or if he did so make him vulnerable to attacks over being soft on perceived antagonists. Interestingly, like the debate over Mr Modi having gone overboard with his Houston rally with

The key question is whether Mr Biden can return the US and the world to its pre-pandemic, pre-Trump order. That seems unlikely because of China's rise and also as Mr Biden has a domestic right-wing insurgency on his hands.

seeds of distrust amongst Democrats, Australian PM Scott Morrison is being similarly excoriated. He attended a rally with Mr Trump in Ohio and Opposition leader Anthony Albanese is calling it a foolish alignment with a losing candidate. But the key question is whether Mr Biden, with

eight years as President

Barack Obama's deputy and decades in the US Senate, can return the US and the world to its pre-pandemic, pre-Trump order. That seems unlikely both because China's rise, if anything, has been accelerated by the current global crises and also as Mr Biden has a domestic right-wing insurgency on his hands, which Mr Trump may continue to pour fuel on from his perch in Florida. Liberal internationalism needs re-invention. A post-Brexit and weakened PMBritish Johnson has proposed a "D-10", a grouping of the G-7 plus three other democracies: Korea Australia. The US must reassess how to counter China's success in getting two groups off the ground after Mr Trump's defeat:

Regional Comprehensive and the Europe-China investment agreement. Will Mr Biden re-engage with the new version of Trans-Pacific Partnership, which Mr Trump walked out of. India just joined the UN Security Council for a two-year term. Will the Biden administration's revived interest in international institutions enable India to use its membership to push for UNSC reforms and curb the rising penetration of China in UN bodies.

None of this is possible unless the BJP takes a hard look at its domestic politics since Mr Modi's 2019 re-election. Peace at home, constitutionalism, rule of law and respect for human rights is a precondition to any genuine partnership abroad with major democracies recovering from the right-wing onslaught on institutions.

> The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.

FREE WATER

Living in an apartment with 8 flats, we had paid ₹4.5 lakh for getting a single water connection (Tenants won't get free water, DC, Jan. 19). Now, the government has come up with free water supply to each house, but only if each flat owner instals a separate meter. It is a Tughlagian rule. The government must be open to give 20,000 litres to each flat owner amd issue a water bill every month. Installing individual water connection with separate meters in an apartment is not practical

> K.V. Mukunda Rao Hyderabad

Why is the free drinking water scheme extended to house and apartment owners? They are generally middle or upper middle class who stand to benefit around ₹300 under the scheme which they can pay. The money spent on supplying the water free can be used to improve drainage system.
S. Nageswara Rao

Hyderabad

SCHOOL TIMINGS

With the state government deciding to reopen schools for Classes IX and X, the prolonged stay at schools is a risky proposition for students and teachers. They will be using common washrooms and eating food together. Hence, the High Court must change its order to have shorter school timings till 12.30 pm so that students return nome soon and stay safe at home.

Ather Roushanara

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN •

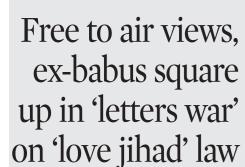
Mrs. Gandhi inaugurates Vizag **Steel Plant work**

VISAKHAPATNAM JANUARY. 20

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi today said that it was not only important to have development but also to see that it was diversified and spread all over the country. Unless this happened, she warned there would only be social tension.

Prime Minister who was inaugurating work on two million tonnes capacity Visakhapatnam Steel Plant at Balacheruvu, 27 km from here pointed out that special efforts had to be made to pay special attention to backward areas and those sections of people who are so far underprivileged like Harijans and Girijans and minorities.

Dilip Cherian Dilli Ka Babu



erhaps service rules stopped them from airing their views but after retirement bureaucrats are not bound anymore and can voice their thoughts freely. This has led to the formation of proand anti-government groups among retired babus who jump into the fray at the behest of their conscience (or political leaning).

In the most recent instance, the "love jihad" law legislated by the Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has triggered a "letter war" between former bureaucrats, those who criticise the law and those who have rallied behind the state government. The ranks of the ex-babus have been joined by retired Army officers, members of the judiciary and others.
Earlier, a group of 104 retired

bureaucrats wrote to Yogi Adityanath, expressing "deep disapproval" and concern at the use of the "love jihad" law. Noted signatories included retired bureaucrats

like former NSA Shiv Shankar Menon, former chief of R&AW A.S. Dulat, former Chief Information Commissioner Wajahat Habibullah, former principal secretary in PMO. Nair and former Union health secretary K. Sujatha Rao

among other notables. Now, a Forum of Concerned Citizens, comprising of over 250 retired officers has written to the chief minister endorsing the 'Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance 2020' and the motive behind it. In their letter, the group of former babus and ex-Army officers said that the legislation rightly provides that marriages done for sole purpose of unlawful conversion can be declared unlawful by family courts. They termed the letter by anti-love jihad babus a "politically motivated pressure group" and said that they don't represent thousands of civil servants who believe in New India emerging as the greatest democracies of the world.

One may be tempted to believe that this is an instance of political battles being fought by proxy!

CADRE MERGER

More than a year after the Centre abrogated Jammu & Kashmir's special status under Article 370 and bifurcated the state into Union territories, the J&K cadre of IAS, IPS and IFoS has been merged with the Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT) cadre. This allows officers posted in these states and UTs to work in J&K and vice-versa.

Necessary modifications may be made in the corresponding cadre allocation rules by the Centre. The notification issued by the government states that officers allocated to AGMUT cadre shall function following the rules framed by the Centre.

Observers see in the move a message of total integration of J&K with the Centre. It also solves the

Centre's problem of the reluctance of J&K cadre officers to serve in Ladakh, as it now creates a larger pool of UT cadre officers. Ladakh, they say, suffers from a paucity of officers. Due to its harsh climate officers are reluctant to serve there. But with the Chinese threat looming, the Centre wishes to focus on Ladakh's development. So, clearly, it is as much a political move as an administrative one.

MAMATA'S BIG PROMOTION PUSH IN BENGAL

Political or administrative compulsion? West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee has promoted 31 IAS officers as secretary and additional secretary in one big push to bolster the state government's administration ahead of the Assembly elections.

With the BJP making a determined effort to breach her stronghold, the Trinamul leader is taking steps to strengthen the administra

tive machinery, which has come under fire from various quarters. Among the 19 officers promoted as secretaries are additional secre-Secretaries are auditional secretaries Smita Pandey, Vijay Bharti, Shubhanjan Das, Samir Kumar Bhattacharya, C.C. Guha, Rajat Bose, Kaushik Halder, N.C. Sarar and T.K. Rudra. The new additional secretaries

include V. Lalithalakshmi, Sourav Pahari, Mukta Arya, Devi Prasad Karanam, Shakeel Ahmed, Uttam Patra, Santanu Saha, Nirmalya Ghosh, Anindya Narayan Biswas and Dipankar Chowdhury.

But this is early in the poll campaigning and chances of further changes in the state administration cannot be ruled out as the CM seeks to stave off the BJP's onslaught to dislodge her party from power. Watch this space for updates.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilip the cherian @Twitter.com.Let's multiply the effect.











E FINANCIAL

KARIMNAGAR | THURSDAY | 21 JANUARY 2021

quick BITES

INDICATO	%	
Sensex	49,792.12	0.80
Nifty 50	14,644.70	0.85
S&P 500*	3,840.12	1.08
Dollar (₹)	73.02	0.20
Pound Sterling (₹)	99.92	-0.36
Euro (₹)	88.74	-0.07
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,758▼ 347	0.00
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	56.42	0.93
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.942	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.101	0.009

Laurus acquires majority stake in Richcore Life

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Laurus Labs said it has acquired majority stake in Bengaluru-based biotech company Richcore Lifesciences, marking its entry into the biotechnology segment. In a regulatory filing in November, Laurus Labs had said that it signed definitive agreements with Eight Roads Ventures and VenturEast Proactive Fund and VenturEast Life Fund III, to acquire 72.55 per cent take in Richcore Lifesciences Pvt Ltd for Rs 246.67 crore. The firm has now completed the transaction.

Dumping duty on newsprint for 5 yrs recommended



The DGTR has recommended the imposition of antidumping duty on newsprint-used in printing newspapers—from Australia, Canada, EU, Russia, Singapore and the UAE, for five years. Its probe concluded that 'newsprint in rolls or sheets. excluding glazed newsprint from these countries have been exported at dumped prices into India. The duty suggested is \$5.15-\$98.6 per tonne. FinMIn takes the final call on duties.

PayPal's Xoom lets PIOs remit money real time

Xoom, PayPal's international digital money transfer service, announced its integration with NPCI's UPI, a real-time payment system facilitating interbank transactions. NRIs and PIOs living in the US, Canada and Europe can now remit money to their family and friends in India. Overseas senders only need to know Indian receivers' UPI identity (ID) to send remittances instantly, 24x7.

IRFC's ₹4,600-cr **IPO** subscribed 3.49% times

The Indian Railway Finance Corporation's Rs 4,600-rore IPO got subscribed 3.49 times as per last update on the final day of the bidding process. The qualified institutional buyers portion was subscribed 3.78 times, high networth investors category was subscribed 2.67 times and retail individual investors portion was subscribed 3.66 times. Shares reserved for employees were subscribed 43.76 times.



■ Hiring may surge in new academic year

Education sector sheds 6 mn jobs

CHENNAI, JAN. 20

While most services sectors have been recovering in the past two quarters, the education sector has been witnessing a different trend. The sector has rather lost 5.4 million jobs by the end of the December quarter. Inter-estingly, the job losses had started even before the lockdown.

However, a silver lining is that once the schools reopen, Covid-19 restrictions may mandate schools to have fewer students in a classroom and this might raise the need for teachers.

The education sector, which had employed 15 million people in 2018 and 2019, had started showing weakness towards the end of 2019, according to a study by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy. Employment fell to 14.5 million in the March quarter of 2020, even before lockdown hit all sectors. It further fell to 9.7 million in the June-September 2020 quarters. In the December 2020 quarter employment in education was down to 9.1 million.

From the 2019 levels, the sector has lost close to 6 million jobs.

"In 2019-20, the industry has been witnessing a dis-ruption with the adoption of technology. While new edtech start-ups have been emerging on the one hand, regular institutions have been increasingly embracing technology on the other, which led to lesser demand for manpower. Even the job forecasts for the sector had predicted



Sector bucks the recovery trend in services sector

Education sector had employed 15 million in 2018 and 2019

This came down to 9.1 million in the

lesser hiring," said Shantanu Rooj, founder & CEO, Schoolguru Eduserve

According to him, it was perceived that person-alised care would increase the requirement of teachers by edtech start-ups. But artificial intelligence tools took care of this requirement. Further, AI-based assessments too reduced the need for manpower. "The lock-down further

legitimised online learning, as a shift in mindsets in favour of online happened among the student community. Educational institutions went online during the lockdown and most of them have not started functioning physically yet. Online reduced the requirement of teachers, leading to the decline in jobs." he said.

According to Rituparna Chakraborty, co-founder and executive vice president, Teamlease Services,

also ramp up hiring in new academic year several institutions in smaller cities have not been operating as earlier

since the lockdown. This

has impacted jobs of both

Smaller-sized classes

▶ Tech platforms could

may raise demand for

December 2020

teachers in 2021

quarter

teachers and support staff. "Even the contract staff in government institutions were out of job," said Aditya Narayan Mishra, director and CEO of CIEL **HR Services**

The situation is expected to continue in the March quarter. The ongoing vaccination drive may help education institutions reopen in the next academic year.

"Then we would probably see a surge in hiring. When institutions reopen, they will have to split students into smaller-sized groups. This will increase the requirement of teachers. Hence we expect the jobs in the sector to bounce back to 2019-20 levels by next academic year. Tech platforms also would be ramping up hiring," said Rooj.

SUNDARAM FINANCE TO GET NEW MD FROM APRIL

Chennai, Jan. 20: Non-banking finance compa-ny Sundaram Finance Wednesday announced that it has made key changes in its manage-

The changes include the appointment of Rajiv Lochan as managing director, succeeding T. T. Srinivasaraghavan with effect from April 1, 2021, the company said. T. T. Srinivasaragh-

avan, fondly called as "TT" among close circles, would retire after serving the organisation for over 38 years as of March 31, 2021.

It was during his tenure the balance-sheet of the city-based company grew from Rs 800 crore to over Rs 30,000 crore today.

Srinivasaraghavan, during the last two decades, also led the group's diversification into a multi-product financial services provider, a company statement said.

Lochan, who is the current director (strategy), has over 25 years of experience in financial services and was a partner in the consulting firm McKinsey and Company. Recently, he served Kasturi and Sons as its managing director. Commenting on the tenure of Srinivasa-Sundaram raghavan, Finance chairman S. Viji said, "Under his leaderthe company demonstrated its traditional focus on asset quality and most importantly its adherence to values of prudence and

customer focus.'

Southern states top Niti Innovation Index

New Delhi, Jan. 20: Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Kerala have been ranked as top five states in innovation in the Niti Aayog's second Innovation Index released Wednesday.

The index, released by Aayog's vice-chairman Rajiv Kumar and CEO Amitabh Kant, has been developed on the lines of the Global Innovation

Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Bihar were ranked at the bottom of the index.

Karnataka topped the index for the second year. Among Union territories Delhi topped the chart, while in the North-Eastern and Hill States category Himachal Pradesh occupied the top spot. "Amongst major states,

the average innovation score is 25.35. Karnataka tops at 42.5, which is attributable to its strong number of venture capital



deals, registered GIs (geographical indications) and (information and communication technology) exports. Karnataka's high FDI inflow has also enhanced the innovation capabilities of the state,"

Maharashtra ranked second with an innovation score of 38, while Bihar finished last

the India Innovation Index

Tamil Nadu has a score of 37.91, followed by Telengana at 33.23 and Kerala at 30.58. "The case for the southern states as the top performers has

four of them occupy the top-five spots within the major states," the release

According to the index the North-Eastern and Hill states achieved an average innovation score of 17.89, with Himachal Pradesh as the best performer with a score of 25, followed by Manipur (22.77) and Sikkim (22.28), respectively.

"Ŵith 31.9 per cent of its total employment generated being knowledge-intensive, Himachal Pradesh benefits from a high number of knowledge workers," it said.

The index noted that the innovation score of UTs and city states averages at 26.01. Delhi was the best performer among all groups.

The India Innovation Index 2020, ranks the states and UTs based on their relative performance of supporting innovation.

Schneider asked to list or give exit option

New Delhi, Jan. 20: Markets regulator Sebi has asked Schneider Electric President Systems to either list on a stock exchange within six months or provide exit to its investors under the delisting norms.

If the company opts for de-listing, the reference date for computing the floor price would be the date on which the company made the public announcement for the exit offer, the regulator said. Further, the shareholders

who had tendered their

shares in exit offer would be given an opportunity by the company for buying back the shares at the exit price, the Sebi said in an order passed on Tuesday. Schneider Electric Presi-

dent Systems, a designer, manufacturer and supplier of standard and customised enclosure systems in India, was earlier listed on the Banga-lore Stock Exchange (BgSE) and Pune Stock Exchange (PSE). Following the de-recogni-

tion of BgSE and PSE in 2014 and 2015, respectively,

dissemination board (DB) of the NSE in July 2016.

Prior to being moved to the DB, the 2012 and 2014 circulars issued by Sebi had cast an obligation on the company to migrate to a nationwide exchange or provide an exit option to the shareholders in terms of the delisting norms.

Also, exclusively listed companies (ELCs) of derecognised bourse were required to exercise one of the options prior to the exit of the stock exchanges where they were listed.

MKT MOMENTUM

TANLA DEVELOPS **SECURED COMMUNICATION PLATFORM**

HYDERABAD, JAN. 20

FC BUREAU

City-based Tanla Platforms Ltd on wednesday said it has partnered Microsoft to launch 'Wisely', a blockchain-enabled communications platform-as-a-service (CPaaS) that allows private and secure communication between enterprise and customers.

"Billions of conversations occur between customers and enterprises over multiple channels. We have seen incidents like data breaches man-inthe-middle attacks, where users are subjected to unauthorised profiling and phishing. Compro mise of data security and data privacy is a clear and present danger," Tanla Platforms chairman and CEO Uday Reddy said in a virtual briefing.

Edge-to-edge encryption ensures data security and data privacy for end-users. network built on blockchain provides complete data visibility, while the artificial intelligence and machine learning powered insights help enterprises improve quality of service and reduce The platform ensures compliance with local regulatory practices and data protection laws as well as best-in-class service frameworks.

MERC'S NEW GLC COMES AT ₹57.4 L

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, JAN. 20

Mercedes-Benz, India's biggest luxury car maker, on Wednesday launched the updated 2021 GLC SUV priced from Rs 57.40 lakh up to Rs 63.15 lakh at pan

India showroom. The new SUV has been introduced with Mercedes Me Connect (MMC) technology with voice recognition and Alexa Home, Google Home along with Parking location on the navigation system and smartphone app. The car also features front massage seats.

Don't ignore comorbidities in life or business: Birla "However, how much

New Delhi, Jan. 20: There is an open question over how much 'froth' is there in the euphoria seen in the financial markets and it will need another quarter or so to confirm that this booming trajectory is here to last, said Aditva Birla Group chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla.

Reflecting on the year gone by, he said the coronavirus pandemic has brought devastation and asked people and companies not to "ignore the comorbidities—whether in life or business", while asking them to build reserves of knowledge, ideas, collaboration and goodwill to emerge stronger from a

He also presented a contrarian view to the notion that work from home will be the 'mega trend' of the decade, saying office is not just a place where people come to work but is a melting pot of people, ideas, and conversations. Terming volatility as a

'froth', Birla said it along with uncertainty have been an underlying phe-



Kumar Mangalam Birla

nomenon for almost two decades now and financial variables have become even more volatile in these unusual times.

Stating that after the outbreak there were prophets of doom predicting irreversible shifts in consumer demand and the evisceration of sectors but there has been recovery across

In India too, he said, the the initial prognosis and narrative of experts proved to be excessively pessimistic but the country has witnessed strong recovery across manufacturing sectors, cement to paints, and automotive to aluminium.

froth there is in the euphoric financial markets is still an open question. Perhaps, we still need another quarter or so to confirm that this booming trajectory is here to last. The economists, I am told, are now searching for alphabets that will adequately describe this trend of cautious optimism," he

Correlating the challenges brought by the pandemic to both individuals and companies, Birla said,"Don't ignore the comorbidities whether in life or business.

Stressing that the comorbidities are self-inflicted for businesses, Birla said, "The excessive financial leverage that provides sugar highs while weakening fundamentals in the long term, lax processes that lead to inventory build-ups clogging supply chain arteries like some pernicious cholesterol, or most devastating, a lack of focus on building consumer and human relationships.'

'Insurers to weather growth slowdown'

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, JAN. 20

Indian insurers look set to withstand the economic aownturn, as non-me insurance growth will remain in positive territory and life premiums will remain broadly flat despite the weakening economy, global rating agency Moody's Investor Services said Wednesday.

"Although the economic slowdown has had an adverse impact on Indian insurers, with general insurance growth slowing to 2.5 per cent and life insurers' new business premiums falling by 1.7 per cent in the nine months to December 2020, we expect general insurance premium growth to remain in positive territory thanks to persistently strong demand for health and protection coverage,' said Mohammed Ali Londe, a Moody's vice president and senior ana-

Health premiums rose 13.7 per cent in the nine months to December 2020, because of rising con-

sumer awareness of these products during the coronavirus pandemic and regulatory actions that enabled insurers to offer protection

Indian insurers have also responded to the crisis by rapidly developing appropriate products and improving their digital offerings.
This has led to an

increase in sales of health and protection policies, which, Moody's expects, will drive further growth in the future. At the same time, some

solvency inadequate, insurers' remains prompting government plans to inject capital into three government-owned insurers. In the private sector, solvency concerns are driving M&A, while other players are planning public listings to raise

capital.

"Over the long term, these steps will reinforce Indian insurers' credit strengths, adding transparency and improve their risk management and governance standards," concludes Londe.

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RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, JAN. 20

The Sensex is now

poised to hit the 50000 landmark any time given the market momentum and Wednesday's 393 points gain on positive global and domestic cues. The 30-stock index closed at 49792 points after hitting an all-time high of 49874 in intra-day trade, as it gained further after Tuesday's big up-move by 834 points. The Nifty-50 also

closed at a new all-time high of 14644.70 up 123.55 points, or 0.85 per cent, after hitting a new peak of 14666.45. Foreign portfolio investors were net buy-

ers of equities worth Rs 2,289.05 crore, marking a big jump from the last few sessions' trend of subdued buying.
Analysts expect the Sensex to breach the

50,000 mark given the upward momentum seen in the past two sessions and the earnings season trend. "Even if the market does not hold at a high

level, we can expect a rally in the best case scenario up to 14750/50000 and up to 14850/50500," said Shri-kant Chouhan, executive VP, equity technical research, Kotak Securities. "Global cues were pos-

itive ahead of Joe Biden's inauguration as President Wednesday. Further comments from US Treasury Secretary backing for more stimudemic-driven buoyed global markets,

BREAKING UP | GIANTS | Firms with dominant market share could face anti-trust action

China to rein in online payment players

duopoly market in China

Ant, Tencent dominate

mobile payments

Jan. 20: China proposed measures to curb market concentration in its online payment market, potentially dealing another blow to financial technology giant Ant Group Co and its biggest rival Tencent

Holdings Ltd.

The central bank said on Wednesday that any nonbank payment company with half of the market in online transactions or two entities with a combined two-thirds share could be subject to anti-trust probes, according to draft rules released by the People's Bank of China.

If a monopoly is con-

firmed, the central bank

can suggest the cabinet

impose restrictive meas-

ures, including breaking

up the entity by its busi-

ness type.

Firms already with payment licences would have a one-year grace period to comply with the new rules, the PBOC said.

The rules present the strongest and most detailed message yet of regulators' plans to curb monopolistic practices in online payments industry. Ubiquitous in China, Ant and Tencent have transformed how consumers shop through their mobile apps that are used by a combined one billion people.

regulator also The "comprehensive" vowed oversight of companies in the space, and their transactions with affiliated par-

It will step up supervi-

sion of any changes to shareholders or benefici-

aries at payments firms, it

Figures in %

"This shows there's no let-up in regulatory tightening on the sprawling fintech businesses," said Dong Ximiao, a researcher at Zhongguancun Internet Finance Institute.

Source: iResearch data as of June 30 — Bloomberg

Regulators shocked markets in November by suspending billionaire Jack Ma's record initial public offering of Ant as they stepped up oversight. Ant has since been ordered to overhaul its business and an antitrust investigation was laun-

Group Holding Ltd. While they've stopped short of directly asking for a breakup of Ant, the central bank has stressed that the company needs to "understand the necessity of overhauling" and come up with a timetable as

ched into affiliate Alibaba

soon as possible. Global investors are still seeking clarity on what the future holds for the world's largest fintech firm.

Mobile payments are only part of what contribute to online transactions, but they have become the most impor-

tant platform in the country. Alipay, the app operated by Ant, held 55.6 per cent of the mobile payments market as of the second quarter last year, according to internet consultant iResearch. Tencent had a 38.8 per cent share.
Room for growth in

online payments is limited after years of a head-to-head rivalry between Ant and Tencent's Wechat Pay. Total transactions were 59.8 trillion yuan as of June 30 last year, up 8.8 per cent from a year earlier, according to data from iResearch.

That's sharply down from increases of 23 per cent and 65 per cent during the same period in 2019 and 2018, respectively. — Bloomberg

nominee Janet Yellen lus to ride out a pansaid Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

SHORT TAKES

Nadella, Pichai, **MSK** hail team

Washington: Top Indian American CEOs Sundar Pichai and Satya Nadella on Tuesday congratulated the Indian cricket team on their historic Test series win in Australia in Brisbane on Tuesday. "One of the greatest test series wins ever. Congrats India and well played Australia, what a series #INDvsAUS, tweeted Pichai, chief executive officer of Google and Alphabet. "Last hour of the last day of the last test. Test series for the ages. Congrats to Team India!", Microsoft CEO Nadella wrote on the microblogging site. Nadella is a former cricketer himself, having played for the Hyderabad Public School (Begumpet) team while growing up in Hyderabad before he moved to the US. Former Test cricketer and BCCI chief selector MSK Prasad too was effusive in his praise for Team India. "It's been an outstanding victory, especially after the humiliating defeat in Adelaide. Added to that the team has played the major part of the series without stars. This shows the mental strength of this new generation of players like Siraj, Vihari, Gill, Sharadhul, Washington etc. I am extremely happy and proud to say that me and my colleagues played our part in unearthing this new talent and groomed them to

More Covid cases linked to Oz Open

this level," Prasad said

Melbourne: Three more people linked to the Australian Open have tested positive for Covid-19 in Melbourne, increasing to 10 those associated with the **Grand Slam tennis tournament** which begins on February 8. Victoria state Emergency Services Minister Lisa Neville confirmed the new cases had been detected on Wednesday, adding that authorities are "very confident" one of the cases is a tennis player who is shedding the virus and is not infectious. The player is already in hard lockdown as they were on board a flight into Melbourne with another positive case. The other two cases are a player and their support person. – AP

HEAT'S ON KOHLI Smith axed, Sanju to lead IPL Royals

Victory under Rahane puts Virat in focus

New Delhi, Jan. 20: First things first. There is no imminent threat to Virat Kohli's captaincy in any format and neither is BCCI even remotely thinking on those lines.

But that's the news part of the story. When it comes to views, there are many — some are quite open about the theory of split captaincy and some are speaking about it in

hushed tones.

Ajinkya Rahane's calm demeanour in India's biggest overseas series win has opened up a debate but to disappoint the fans of the Test vicecaptain, there is little chance of a permanent anointment for him in the immediate future.

However, there could be a paradigm shift in how the leadership group in the Indian cricket team works when Kohli reenters that dressing room after a month-long paternity break. When Kohli left, it was a

team that was down in the dumps — dismissed for its lowest Test score of 36. But a lot has changed since that fateful afternoon in Adelaide.

While head coach Ravi Shastri is absolutely right in saying that this team bears Kohli's "stamp and character" but from December 19 in Adelaide to January 19 in Brisbane, a few senior cricketers will be perceived a bit differently.

Rohit Sharma, Ravich-andran Ashwin, Cheteshwar Pujara and certainly Rahane, in their own little way, have created a legacy but post Brisbane, that legacy will need proper acknowledgement. So when Kohli enters

that Indian dressing room, he will remain the "first" but "among equals" in a leadership "among group that possibly will be more inclusive.



after India beat Australia to clinch the Border-Gavaskar Test series 2-1 at the Gabba in Brisbane on Tuesday.

Pant is best keeper-batsman

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Dubai, Jan. 20: India's Rishabh Pant became the top-ranked wicket-keeper batsman in the world after his sensational serieswinning 89-run knock in the Brisbane match pushed him to a careerbest 13th spot in the ICC Test batting rankings, issued on Wednesday.

Pant, who won many admirers for his fearless and mature batting, has 691 points in his kitty. South Africa's Quinton de Kock (677) is the next best wicket-keeper batsman in the list in the 15th posi-

batsman Cheteshwar Pujara moved Australia Marnus Labuschagne's first-innings century in Brisbane took him past India skipper Virat Kohli (862 points) to third position with a career-best 878 rating points. Kohli missed the action as he was on paternity leave. Young India opener

Shubman Gill continued his upward trajectory. moving up from 68th to 47th spot after a crucial 91 in the second innings of the fourth Test, which India won by three wickets on Tuesday.

Sundar and Shardul Thakur too gained in rankings following their useful contributions with both bat and ball. Washington entered the

rankings in 82nd (batting) and 97th (bowling) positions, while Thakur re-Middle-order mainstay entered the batting list in

while Mohammad Siraj

jumped 32 places to 45th

after taking six wickets in the match, including a

five-wicket haul in the sec-

ond innings.
Debutant Washington

113th position and bowling list in 65th position.

Australia captain Tim up one place to seventh after his dogged effort,

Paine moved up three spots to 42nd after scores of 50 and 27 while fast bowler Josh Hazlewood leapfrogged Zealand's Tim Southee to the fourth spot.

England's Joe Root has returned to the top five with his highest rating points tally (738) in two years after scoring a firstinnings 228 to help his team win the first Test against Sri Lanka by seven wickets in Galle.

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New Delhi, Jan. 20: Sanju Samson replaced Steve Smith as Rajasthan Royals captain after Australian batsman and some other under-performing stars were released by their respective IPL fran-chises even as Chennai Super Kings retained veteran Suresh Raina for the upcoming 14th edition of

The deadline for the eight franchises to submit the lists of retained and released players for the next season ended on Wednesday.

Samson was appointed to the top job after RR decided against renewing former skipper Steve Smith's con-

The Australians took a hit as the likes of the explosive Glenn Maxwell and opener Aaron Finch too were released by Kings XI Punjab and Royal Challengers Bangalore respectively. Also released by KXIP were West Indies allrounder Sheldon Cottrell, Afghanistan's Mujeeb-ur-Rahman and New Zealand's Jimmy Neesham, who underwent a surgery recently to treat

an injured finger. CSK's Harbhajan Singh and Mumbai Indians' Lasith Malinga were among the other big names to be released by their respective sides ahead of next month's auction.

WHO'S IN, WHO'S OUT

■ Chennal Super Kings — Players retained: MS Dhoni, Ravindra Jadeja, Narayan Jagadeesan, Ruturaj Gaikwad, KM Asif, Josh Hazlewood, Karn Sharma, Ambati Rayudu, Suresh Raina, Imran Tahir, Deepak Chahar, Faf du Plessis, Shardul Thakur, Mitchell Santner, Dwayne Bravo, Lungi Ngidi, Sam Curran, Sai Kishore. Released (6): Harbhajan Singh, Shane Watson, Piyush Chawla, Kedar Jadhav, M. Vijay, Monu Kumar Singh.

■ Delhi Capitals — Players retained: Aiinkya Rahane, Rishabh Pant, Kagiso Rabada, Anrich Nortje, Marcus Stoinis, Daniel Sams, Shimron Hetmyer, Chris Woakes, Shikhar Dhawan, Prithvi Shaw, Shreyas Iyer, Axar Patel, Amit Mishra, Ishant Sharma, Ravichandran Ashwin, Harshal Patel, Lalit Yadav, Pravin Dubey, Avesh Khan. Released (6): Mohit Sharma, Tushar Deshpande, Keemo Paul, Sandeep Lamichhane, Alex Carey, Jason Roy.

Kings XI Punjab — Players retained: K. L. Rahul, Chris Gayle, Mayank Agarwal, Nicholas Pooran, Mandeep Singh, Sarfaraz Khan, Deepak Hooda, Prabhsimran Singh, Mohammed Shami, Chris Jordan, Darshan Nalkande, Ravi Bishnoi, Murugan Ashwin, Arshdeep Singh, Harpreet Brar, Ishan Porel. Released (9): Glenn Maxwell, Karun Nair, Hardus Viljoen, Jagadeesha Suchith, Mujeeb ur Rahman, Sheldon Cottrell, Jimmy Neesham, Krishnappa Gowtham, Talinder, Singh.

■ Kolkata Knight Riders — Players retained: Eoin Morgan, Dinesh Karthik, Nitish Rana, Shubman Gill, Rinku Singh, Rahul Tripathi, Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Kuldeep Yadav, Lockie Ferguson, Pat Cumminis, Prasidh Krishna, Sandeep Warrier, Shivam Mavi, Varun Chakaravarthy, Andre Russell, Sunil Narine, Tim Seifert. Released (6): Nikhil Naik, Siddhesh Lad, M. Siddharth, Tom Banton, Chris Green, Harry Gurney.

■ Mumbal Indians — Players retained: Rohit Sharma, Quinton de Kock Suryakumar Yadav, Ishan Kishan, Chris Lynn, Anmolpreet Singh, Saurabh Tiwary, Aditya Tare, Kieron Pollard, Hardik Pandya, Krunal Pandya, Anukul Roy, Jasprit Bumrah, Trent Boult, Rahul Chahar, Jayant Yadav, Dhawal Kulkarni, Mohsin Khan. Released (7): Lasith Malinga, Mitch McClenaghan, James Pattinson, Nathan Coulter-Nile, Sherfane Rutherford, Prince Balwant

■ Rajasthan Royals — Players retained: Sanju Samson, Ben Stokes, Jofra Archer, Jos Buttler, Riyan Parag, Shreyas Gopal, Rahul Tewatia, Mahipal Lomror, Kartik Tyagi, Andrew Tye, Jaydev Unadkat, Mayank Markande, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Anuj Rawat, David Miller, Manan Vohra, Robin Uthappa. Released (8): Steve Smith, Ankit Rajpoot, Oshane Thomas, Akash Singh, Varun Aaron, Tom Curran, Anirudha Joshi, Shashank Singh.

Royal Challengers Bangalore — Players retained: Virat Kohli, AB de Villiers, Yuzvendra Chahal, Devdutt Padikkal, Navdeep Saini, Washington Sundar, Mohammed Siraj, Kane Richardson, Adam Zampa, Josh Philippe, Shahbaz Ahmed and Pavan Deshpande. Released (10): Aaron Finch, Chris Morris, Isuru Udana, Moeen Ali, Pawan Negi, Gurkeerat Singh Mann, Shivam Dube, Dale Steyn, Parthiv Patel, Umesh Yadav.

Sunrisers Hyderabad — Players retained: David Warner, Kane Williamson, Rashid Khan, T. Natarajan, Abhishek Sharma, Basil Thampi, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Jonny Bairstow, Manish Pandey, Mohammad Nabi, Sandeep Sharma, Shahbaz Nadeem, Shreevats Goswami, Siddarth Kaul, Khaleel Ahmed, Vijay Shankar, Wriddhiman Saha, Abdul Samad, Mitchell Marsh, Jason Holder, Priyam Garg, Virat Singh. Released (5): Sanjay Yadav, B. Sandeep, Billy Stanlake, Fabian Allen, Yarra Prithviraj.

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