

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | WEDNESDAY | 6 JANUARY 2021



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Trinamul Congress minister resigns



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Georgia poll to decide Biden Presidency fate

SPORTS | 8

India have pace problem ahead of Sydney Test



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WEATHER

Max: 30.2°C
Min: 18.9°C
RH: 56%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Misty morning.
Max/Min temp. 29/19 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+16,538)	(+228)
1,03,74,102	1,50,114
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+253)	(+3)
TS: 2,87,993	1,554
(+377)	(+4)
AP: 8,83,587	7,122

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

8,64,19,682
DEATHS
18,67,379
COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES
218
worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Margasira Bahula Ashami till 2.05 am (Thursday)
Star: Hasta till 5.07 pm
Varjyam: 12.39 am to 2.09 am (Thursday)

Durmuhurtam: 11.59 am to 12.44 pm
Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm
HIJRI CALENDAR

Jamadi-ul-Awwal 21, 1442 AH
PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.43 am
Zohar: 12.32 pm
Asar: 4.18 pm
Maghrib: 6.02 pm
Isha: 7.14 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.48 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.56 PM
MOONSET 12.10 AM
MOONRISE ---

COUNTER POINT



He will flag off the vaccination drive, but on one condition. Don't force him to take it first!

SHORT TAKES

Bird flu cases reported in Kerala

Alappuzha/Kottayam: An outbreak of bird flu has been reported from some parts of Kottayam and Alappuzha districts, prompting authorities to order culling of ducks, hens and other domestic birds in and around a one km radius of the affected areas. Tests conducted at the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases in Bhopal have confirmed the bird flu outbreak, officials said. Around 1,700 ducks have died in the farm due to the infection. Officials said 40,000 domestic birds will be culled to check the spread of the H5N8 virus.

TS put on high alert over bird flu

Hyderabad: Telangana state has been placed on a high alert to keep a watch on any possible unnatural deaths of either wild birds or poultry following the reporting of outbreaks of bird flu disease in five other states in India. Tuesday saw state forest and animal husbandry departments instruct their staff across the state to keep their eyes open for potential or suspect bird deaths that could indicate a possible case of bird flu, the avian disease that can kill wild birds in their hundreds and threaten poultry business.

Full report on Page 3

Leaders tell AICC not to name PCC chief now

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JAN. 4

The AICC announcement of a new Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president appears to be delayed in view of the byelection to the Nagarjunasagar constituency in the combined Nalgonda district.

After reports said the AICC was likely to announce the new PCC chief, various leaders have told the AICC to hold back the name for a while as it would ruffle feathers and create a rift in the party ahead of the byelection. The Nagarjunasagar seat fell vacant with the demise of sitting MLA

SOME SENIOR leaders in the state Congress contacted AICC and requested it to put off an official announcement

Nomula Narasimhaiah.

Sources in the party said that during a meeting between AICC in-charge Manickam Tagore and AICC chief Sonia Gandhi on Monday, the new president's name was almost finalised. But some senior leaders in the state Congress contacted AICC leaders and requested for withholding an official announcement. Bhongir MP Komati-

reddy Venkat Reddy was in the race for the post, but the AICC reportedly favoured candidature of senior leader T. Jeevan Reddy. Venkat Reddy and his brother Rajagopal Reddy have a strong grip over politics in the combined Nalgonda district. They are capable of upsetting the Congress applecart.

Senior leaders from Nalgonda district informed the AICC that the Komati-reddy brothers might be upset if Jeevan Reddy is selected, and this resentment could impact the Nagarjuna Sagar bypoll.

Page 2: Jana Reddy likely to contest Nalgonda bypoll

British PM cancels R-Day visit, cites UK Covid crisis

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, JAN. 5

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has cancelled his planned India visit later this month to be chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations due to the grim Covid-19 situation in Britain. The British government said Johnson had already spoken to Prime Minister Narendra Modi "to express his regret". Mr Johnson hopes to visit India by June this year.

India is now expected to invite another foreign leader as chief guest for the January 26 parade.

New Delhi said Tuesday evening that in a phone conversation with Mr Modi, Mr Johnson "regretted his inability to attend ... in view of the changed Covid-19 context prevailing in UK", but said he was keen to "visit India in the near future".

New Delhi said "Prime Minister (Modi) expressed his understanding of the exceptional situation in the UK, and conveyed his best wishes for the quick control of the pandemic spread", adding "he looked forward to receiving Prime Minister Johnson in India at the earliest opportunity after normalisation of the situation".

The invitation to Mr Johnson was announced during British foreign secretary Dominic Raab's visit to New Delhi last month.

PG 5 | BRITAIN TO FACE TOUGHEST LOCKDOWN

Centre ready to roll out jab in 10 days

VINEETA PANDEY | DC NEW DELHI, JAN. 5

Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan said on Tuesday that the ministry is ready to roll out vaccines within 10 days of the Drugs Controller General of India's approval though the final decision is with the government to announce the dates.

BHARAT BIO, SERUM BURY JAB HATCHET

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JAN. 5

Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bharat Biotech have jointly released a pledge on Tuesday for a smooth roll-out of the Covid 19 vaccines for India and the wider world. This after some confusion arose in public mind about the efficacy of their vaccines.

Bharat Biotech chairman Dr Krishna Ella had, in an emotional outburst, created a stir just as the clinical trials of Covaxin were going on. Social media played around with this.

To clear the air, SII CEO Adar Poonawala and Dr Ella have issued a joint statement.

Page 2: SII, Bharat Bio validate their vaccines

"Based on the feedback of the dry-run, the health ministry is ready to introduce Covid-19 vaccine within 10 days from the date of Emergency Use Authorisation," he said. Niti Aayog member Dr V.K. Paul said all scientific and statutory requirements have been met.

More reports on Page 4

TS PLANS TRIAL RUN OF VACCINE ACROSS STATE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JAN. 5

A state-wide Covid-19 vaccination trial and dry run will be held on January 7 and 8 as Telangana gears up to administer the actual vaccine to its health-care and staff from other frontline departments such as police and civic services to be followed by other sections of society.

Unlike the January 2 limited dry run that saw four hospitals in Hyderabad and three in Mahabubnagar district being tested for their readiness, the second dry run of the Covid vaccine will put all the 1,200 identified Covid-19 vaccination centres in the state through their paces.

Page 2: Dry run to test staff's preparedness

₹20,000-cr Central Vista project gets SC's 2:1 nod

Majority judgment says land use change is just and proper

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, JAN. 5

The Supreme Court on Tuesday by a majority judgment of 2:1 gave its nod to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious ₹20,000-crore project for the construction of a new Parliamentary building and the redevelopment of the Central Vista.

In his dissenting verdict, Justice Sanjiv Khanna held the project was "bad in law" in terms of land use for two reasons. "There is no intelligible disclosure of public participation and no prior approval of the heritage conservation committee," the judge said.

In their 432-page majority judgment, Justice A.M. Khanwilkar speaking for himself and also Justice Dinesh Maheshwari said that the government's decision to change the land use for the project and the environment clearance by the ministry of environment and forests (MoEF) was "just, proper and in accordance with law."

A batch of petitions had challenged the plan for demolition of old structures and new construction, including a new Parliamentary building in 86 acres of land in the heart of the national capital.

Apart from the change in land use, and the manner and procedure adopted for making the changes in the Central Vista precincts, the petitioners had argued that there were irregularities in the process that involved the approval of the design, clearance on monetary allocations, and

Centre plans Union Budget on Feb. 1

New Delhi, Jan. 5: The Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs (CCPA) has recommended that the Budget session of Parliament be held in two parts from January 29 to April 8, and all Covid-related protocols including the shift system are likely to be followed as was done during the Monsoon session.

According to the Committee's recommendation, Part 1 of the Budget session would be held from January 29 to February 15, and Part 2 from March 8 to April 8. President Ram Nath Kovind would address

the joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament on January 29, and the Union Budget would be presented on February 1, sources said.

The Economic Survey would be tabled in the Lok Sabha on January 29 after the President's address, the sources said.

All Covid-related protocols would be followed during the session. Like the Monsoon session, the upcoming Budget session is also likely to be held in two shifts — morning and evening — with each House sitting in one shift using both the chambers. — PTI

the tendering processes, other regulatory clearances on environment and from local municipal bodies.

Holding that there was no "infirmity" in the grant of "no objection" by the Central Vista Committee, "approval" by the Delhi Urban Art Commission and the "prior approval" by the Heritage Conservation Committee, the majority judgment said, "We further hold that the exercise of power by the Central government under Section 11A(2) of the DDA Act, 1957, is just and proper and thus the modifications regarding change in land use... vide impugned notification dated 20.3.2020 stands confirmed."

However the court ordered prior permission of the Heritage Conservation Committee before the actual start of the construction work, and not just at the incipient stage of planning and formalisation.

The court that disposed of eight petitions challenging the project, however, ordered setting up of the smog towers of adequate capacity as an integral part of the new Parliamentary building and use of smog guns at the construction site throughout the construction phase.

It also directed the MoEF to install the smog towers in all future major development projects, including

BJP rally



BJP Telangana Chief Bandi Sanjay takes part in a the rally in Warangal on Tuesday.

- DC

JAGAN WARNS OF TOUGH ACTION AGAINST TEMPLE ATTACKERS IN AP

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 5

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy ordered through investigations to expose culprits behind temple attacks and issued directions to take stringent action against those responsible without sparing anyone.

While addressing collectors, SPs and joint collectors during the Spandana programme here on Tuesday, the Chief Minister said that AP was experiencing a new political guerrilla warfare under which temples are being vandalised with a political malice. The Chief Minister said 36,000 CCTVs were installed in temples for surveillance and directed officials to expose the conspiracy.

He told them to be vigilant and fight this conspiracy to hamper religious harmony and expose the perpetrators.

He said that some people under political influence were intentionally vandalising temples with no fear or devotion towards God while a section of media is constantly publicising and propagating them on social media.

He said those who were unable to counter the government directly as it was gaining popularity due to welfare schemes are carrying out these attacks out of jealousy to defame the government and instructed the police to carefully assess the situation. He said even after CCTVs were installed in temples, the incidents were continuing in remote places.

AP village says no to cockfights

VADREVV SRINIVAS | DC KAKINADA, JAN. 5

The cacophony while organising cockfights for Sankranti is missing from I. Bhimavaram village of Akividu mandal in West Godavari district. The organisers decided to keep away due to legal cases. As a result, the village will celebrate Sankranti without cockfights.

According to Kanumuri Abbayi Raju, AP has been organising cockfights for over four centuries in keeping with the tradition and culture of the place.

"This is the only source of entertainment for the people, especially the farmers during Sankranti. Earlier, cockfights were held in the presence of a

huge crowd. Now, it is said to have become a sort of gambling that cannot be compared to cricket or horse racing," he said.

"Many rich people and politicians like former TTD chairmen, ministers, MPs, MLCs and others were involved in playing cockfights. It was a big thing to bet ₹100. Gradually, it became a big source of entertainment and many celebrities, software engineers, NRIs and others got involved," he said.

He said he was protecting Sankranti traditions for decades since his grandfather's generation and pointed out that now the cockfights are being organised with flashlights, tents, chairs and other paraphernalia.

Page 2: Kaloji officials deviated from procedure

SHORT TAKES

4-YEAR-OLD BOY
SLIPS INTO WATER
SUMP, DIESDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 5

A four-year-old boy allegedly slipped into a water sump and drowned while playing in front of his house at RK Nagar in Hayathnagar.

According to the police, the boy, identified as Rizwan, is suspected to have been playing alone when he slipped and fell into the sump in his neighbourhood. "Upon realising his disappearance, his family members started looking for him in the vicinity and found his body in the sump. They fished the body out and tried to revive him but in vain," said the police, who booked a case under section 174 (suspicious death) of the CrPC and began an investigation. The body of the boy was shifted to the Osmania General Hospital morgue for post-mortem.

WEF INVITES
KTR FOR GLOBAL
TECH SUMMITDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 5

IT and industries minister K.T. Rama Rao has received an invitation from the World Economic Forum (WEF) which will be conducting the Global Technology Governance Summit in Japan from April 5 to 7, 2021.

Inviting minister Rama Rao to the summit, WEF president Borge Brende in the letter, said, "Under your forward-looking leadership, Telangana has been at the forefront of using emerging technologies for societal benefits. Thank you for your support of the AI4AI: Artificial Intelligence for Agriculture Innovation and G20 Smart Cities Alliance. It will be a pleasure to work together to further deepen their impact."

"The emerging technologies of the fourth industrial revolution have a vital role to play as countries recover from and rebuild following the Covid pandemic," he added.

The summit aims to help scale up public-private initiatives to nurture the development of fourth industrial revolution technologies while mitigating their risks.



Vennelakanti Rajeswara Prasad

FAMOUS LYRICIST
VENNELAKANTI
PASSES AWAYDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JAN. 5

Famous lyricist and dialogue writer Vennelakanti Rajeswara Prasad, 63, passed away at his residence in Chennai following a massive heart attack on Tuesday afternoon.

A native of Nellore City, he is survived by his wife Prameela and sons Shashank Mouli and Rakendu Mouli.

Popular as Vennelakanti, he had penned dialogues for hundreds of successful Tamil films, which were dubbed into Telugu. He had also contributed to a few Hindi and English movies. The lyricist and dialogue writer began his career as a songwriter for Anna Chellelu and Sri Ramachandrudu, but came to limelight with Murali Krishnu (1988), produced by S. Gopal Reddy.

He has more than 2,000 songs to his credit, including hit numbers, such as Maatarani Mounamidi (Maharshi), Mavayya Anna Pilupu (Muddula Mavayya) and Raasaleela Vela (Aditya 369).

Vennelakanti, however, became more popular as a dialogue writer for superhit films of Kamal Haasan in Tamil, which got dubbed into Telugu, like Dasavataram, Pancha Thanthram, Bhamane Satya Bhamane, apart from Jurassic Park in English and Hum Aap Ke Hai Kaun in Hindi.

CCMB: Sars-Cov2 floats
in hospital Covid wards

Found suspended in air for 2 hours, travel over 2 metres

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, JAN. 5

Sars-Cov-2 virus samples have been found in the hospital air of Covid-19 wards but not in non-Covid-19 wards, according to a CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology study. Three hospitals each from Hyderabad and Chandigarh participated in the study.

In the study, researchers found the virus in infectious aerosols measuring the size of less than 5µm. The smaller sized aerosols could get formed due to evaporation of water from larger respiratory droplets. Scientists from CCMB state that the smaller sized aerosols could stay suspended in air for longer durations of more than 2 hours and were found to travel longer distances of 2 metres.

Dr Rakesh Mishra, director of CCMB says, "Our research from hospitals has raised questions as to whether the distance trav-

elled by the virus of 1 or 2 meters is safe or not. There is emerging evidence indicative of the possibility of air-borne transmission of SARS-Cov2. Although the statistics of air borne transmission of SARS-Cov2 is not clear yet, the virus is detected in the air for prolonged durations in certain circumstances."

At Covid-19 wards where the patients were treated, it was found that more number of patients meant generation of more virus particles. The walking, talking and moving patients left the virus particles in the air. When the patients were seated for testing and evaluation purposes, it was noted that the virus was present to a distance of two metres.

CCMB scientists, while taking the air samples, carried out live human experiments where volunteers were made to sit in personal protection kits to check if there were viruses around them. They found

samples of viruses in the air. The hospitals that have participated in the study were from government and private sector but they do not have the infection control methods of negative air-pressure. The data generated from CCMB is being given to hospitals to understand the manner in which the virus circulated in the hospital air.

Teams of healthcare staff working in Covid-19 wards need to be very cautious. In the walking area and in the changing rooms of patients as also during evaluations and counselling, there is the risk of transmission of virus. The transmission can occur while breathing and talking too.

In Indian environment, within air-conditioned rooms, the virus particles are found to be alive for more than two hours in some cases. In asymptomatic cases, the virus will not travel much until and unless the person is sitting in an air-conditioned

room. In such a room, the breathing, talking and laughing of the person can emit viruses and these can move in the air.

In an open area where there are windows and good ventilation system, the virus cannot live in the air for a longer period of time, it was found.

The samples were collected from air using an air sampler and the data was compiled and researched by the CSIR-Institute of Microbial Technology (IMTech).

Scientists carried out RT-PCR tests on the air samples and they have tested multiple times to confirm presence of the virus.

The decision of hospitals to separate Covid-19 and non-Covid-19 wards has benefited them. Preventive guidelines of hygiene like regular hand-wash and effective use of masks will help in prevention. Detecting and isolating positive cases early is the essential key to stop the spread.

Gov. welcomes decision
to use two vaccinesDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 5

Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan has welcomed the government decision to allow use of two Covid-19 vaccines – Covishield and Covaxin – in the country. This is "one of the proudest moments for all of us and scientists who worked overtime to come up with effective vaccine candidates," she said.

The governor, a doctor herself, said vaccines with a 'Made in India' tag represented a major step from the pharmaceutical sector towards the Atma Nirbhar vision and goal set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Dr Soundararajan slammed critics of the vaccine approval process, saying those who create such controversies "are doing a disservice to the efforts of our proud scientific community."

The governor declared that India, which wit-



Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan

● THE GOVERNOR declared that India, which witnessed the second largest number of Covid-19 cases of the order of 10.03 million till January 3 and "recorded a massive 1.5 lakh deaths" cannot afford to ignore the vaccination.

the field of vaccination not only in India but across the world, producing 16 vaccines for prevention of the different diseases and has been conducting clinical trials in 12 countries including the US and the UK.

Recalling her visit to Bharat Biotech's vaccine research and production facility, Dr Soundararajan said, "Any rumour on the efficacy of the vaccine is likely to impact and intensify vaccine-hesitancy among the people, especially the common man, who may have doubts over any kind of vaccination."

DRY RUN TO
TEST STAFF'S
PREPAREDNESS

From Page 1

The exercise will test the readiness of the staff, materials required and logistics involved in ensuring daily vaccination of up to 10 lakh people. While the number of doses administered may be low initially, once the pace picks up and an adequate number of doses are made available to the state, the department hopes to hit this mark.

The department has so far trained 10,000 of its staff including doctors, nurses, and other support workers to receive and check credentials of vaccine recipients, administer the vaccine, and keep them under observation for a minimum of half an hour before allowing the individuals to leave the hospitals.

"Each of the trained personnel should be able to vaccinate 100 people a day," a senior health department official said.

The official said that the department is also ready to provide any immediate care, in the rare event such assistance may be required by any of the vaccine recipients who may develop a reaction after receiving the jab.

Every health care facility where the vaccinations are to be given will have medicines required to treat commonly occurring reactions post-vaccination.

JANA REDDY MAY
FIGHT NALGONDA
BY-ELECTION

From Page 1

Senior Congress leader K. Jana Reddy is likely to contest from Nagarjunasagar. He was reluctant, but the AICC in-charge, in his recent meeting with Jana Reddy, prevailed on him to contest. Jana Reddy lost the election in 2018 against TRS candidate Nomula Narasimhaiah with around 7,000 votes. The ruling TRS also believes that Jana Reddy might now have an edge if he fought the byelection.

Congress senior leaders who are in touch with the AICC are said to have informed the AICC that, in this backdrop, any rift among Congress leaders in Nalgonda district will impact the winning chances of the party.



Flooded Indiramma colony in Bandla Singaram on Tuesday.

- DC

Breach in Kakatiya
canal of SRSP projectDC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, JAN. 5

The Kakatiya Canal of Sri Ram Sagar Project (SRSP) experienced a leak on the culvert road along the canal near Gundla Singaram village on the city's outskirts on Tuesday. Tension prevailed among the locals as the water inundated the Indiramma Colony and also flooded the houses. Alerted about the incident, officials rushed to the spot and erected barricades and opened the escape regulator channel's gates.

Panchayat Raj Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao and Tribal welfare Minister Satyavathi Rathod directed the irrigation officials to repair

damage on the canal. The Kakatiya Canal carries Godavari water from Lower Manair Dam (LMD) to the north Telangana districts.

According to Indiramma Colony residents, it is not the first time that water flooded into the colony from the canal. They alleged the poor quality of works during the canal modernisation last year had led to the breach. They said that land grabbers encroached and took up illegal constructions near the canal narrowing the escape canal, but the officials have failed to take action against them. Water entered several houses and soaked the belongings of the inmates.

What about EWS
quota: HC to TSDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 5

The Telangana High Court on Tuesday sought the Telangana state government's stand on the implementation of 10 per cent reservations to the economically weaker sections (EWS) in pursuance of the 103 Amendment of the Constitution of 2019.

The amendment provides for 10 per cent reservations of the seats in educational institutions and appointments in public services to the EWS.

The division bench comprising Justice A. Rajashekar Reddy and Justice B. Vijaysen Reddy was dealing with a PIL by the BJP activist Ale Bhasker Raaj, son of Ale Narendra, who

challenged the inaction of the state government in providing the reservations as guaranteed in the Constitution.

Counsel for the petitioner Rajashekar Thallapally brought to the notice of the court that except in the MBBS and BDS Courses, the reservation is not being implemented in other courses like BTech and MBA.

Students who come under this quota had lost opportunities to get the seats in 2019 and 2020, he said and submitted that even in the notifications issued for employment, the government has not mentioned these reservations.

Government Counsel Palle Nageshwar Rao sought four weeks time to submit the stand of the government.

Harish reels out KCR
plan for 50K jobsDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 5

Telangana Finance Minister T. Harish Rao announced here on Tuesday the decision of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao to recruit 50,000 persons for jobs in various state government departments in the coming weeks.

The minister stated this while participating in a function at which New Year diaries of several associations were released at Telangana Bhavan. He said that by the end of this month, the government will complete the promotions of employees and issue notifications for filling the vacancies.

The minister inaugurated the private employees' association's diary and said the government was also trying to create jobs in the private sector for unemployed people. The unem-

ployment rate in Telangana, he said, was lower as compared to the national rate. He recalled that the private employees' association played a key role in the Separate Statehood movement. Now, the organisation is engaged in activities for welfare of employees. Employees had faced police offensives and tear gas shells while participating in the agitation, he noted. Harish Rao praised the vision of the Chief Minister and said several international companies were coming to Hyderabad and investing thousands of crores in projects here.

At Reddy Hostel Abids, the minister inaugurated the Telangana agriculture officers' association dairy along with agriculture minister S. Niranjan Reddy. He said agriculture issue was the main political agenda in elections.

Kaloji officials deviated
from procedure

From Page 1

But, the university allotted seats to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and BCs from among 147 in respective categories and filled the quota with OCs. Had the 93 meritorious reserved category students been allotted seats in the Open Category in accordance with the rules, an equal number of seats would be vacant in the respective categories which have to be exclusively filled with the respective category students drawn

in the order. Now, their dream to pursue medicine was shattered.

"In every phase of counselling, the open category seats should be filled first followed by the reserved categories. This is because several students from the reserved categories get seats by virtue of their merit. The same procedure was followed in Phase 1 but a deviation was made in the subsequent phases of counselling," a senior official of the university admitted.

Walk in the park



Iron pillars are being erected to build a bridge to let pedestrians walk from a park on the lakebed of Hussainsagar towards the Necklace Road.

— R. PAVAN

HEALTH | & YOU

Stress, anxiety have been major causes for heart attacks: Docs
30% physically fit may suffer strokeDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 5

Board of Control for Cricket in India president Sourav Ganguly reporting three tiny blockages in his heart comes as no surprise, as almost 30 per cent of physically fit people are reporting to hospitals with chest pain or heart attack.

Experts state that they have come across many physically fit persons reporting to hospitals with pain in the chest, with their evaluation yielding blockages in their heart. This is being attributed to traditional factors like family history of heart

attacks, genetic disposition, diabetes and hypertension, apart from emerging lifestyle aspects like stress, anxiety, sleep disorders and pollution.

Among most people reporting to hospitals, stress and anxiety have been major causes for heart attacks.

Dr Ravi Shankar, senior cardiologist at Continental Hospitals explains, "We have found that a section of people with no family history of heart attacks are neglecting their mental health. However physically fit one may be, it is important to be stress and anxiety free. Neglect in this

● EXPERTS STATE that they have come across many physically fit persons reporting to hospitals with pain in the chest, with their evaluation yielding blockages in their heart. This is being attributed to traditional factors like family history of heart attacks, genetic disposition, diabetes and hypertension, apart from emerging lifestyle aspects like stress, anxiety, sleep disorders and pollution. Environmental pollution has also been found to be an emerging causative factor for heart attacks.

regard is one of the reasons for heart attack."

Stress is a well-known factor for cardiac problems. Dr Daljeet Kaur, senior psychiatrist elaborates, "Stress does not have to be always external. The manner in which a person handles stress is also important. If the body is con-

stantly exposed to stress hormones, it affects the blood pressure, leading to formation of clots, which increases the risk of heart attack," Dr Daljeet underlined.

Still, though physically fit people may take good care in choosing their diet and having healthy habits,

they may fail to understand that sleep is also an important factor in ensuring cardiac health.

Most of such fit people suffering heart attacks have been found to sleep less than six hours, which affects their biological clock.

Environmental pollution has also been found to be an emerging causative factor for heart attacks.

It is thus a combination of factors that are leading to physically fit category of people and younger-age groups facing cardiac issues. Experts say these emerging factors require a more closer look.

OTHER STORIES

INQUIRY ON
SKULL AND BONE
SEEN IN HOSPITALDC CORRESPONDENT
PALONCHA
(KOTHAGUDEM), JAN. 5

The presence of a skull and a bone in a mortuary room in Paloncha government hospital has become a mystery.

As per the details, the hospital staff noticed the skull and bone and informed the hospital officials. The issue was taken to the notice of the police, who started the investigation. The mortuary room was first used as a post-mortem room, and later it was changed as a mortuary after completing a separate post-mortem room.

There are doubts about the presence of skull and bone in the hospital, including some hospital staff supplying the parts of dead bodies to any sorcerers, who used to practice tantric pooja.

Circle inspector Satyanarayana said that they were informed about the skull and bone by the hospital officials and started an investigation on it. He said that the hospital officials did not have any clue on it.

DEADLINE FOR
SCHOLARSHIPS
SCHEME EXTENDEDDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 5

The Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE) on Tuesday announced the extension of the deadline for both fresh and renewal applications of all National Scholarship Schemes of the MHRD, up to January 20, and the last date for institutional verification up to February 5. Interested students can apply online at scholarships.gov.in. The list of all provisionally selected candidates is available on tsbie.cgg.gov.in.



A. Sridhar

RTC TO RUN 900
BUSES FOR
SANKRANTIDC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, JAN. 5

The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) regional manager, Mr. A. Sridhar, informed that RTC will run as many as 900 buses from Hyderabad to Karimnagar and vice versa on the occasion of Sankranti festival from January 8 to 25.

Sridhar said that 400 buses will run from Hyderabad JBS Bus station to Karimnagar. Earlier the bus services were run from MGBS bus station of Hyderabad, but for the convenience of the passengers this festival, the bus services are going to run from JBS bus station.

He informed that 50 bus services are provided on January 8 and January 9 to 11 and on January 13, around 30 bus services are provided every day whereas on January 12 around 80 and on January 13 around 150 bus services are provided.

He also said that around 500 bus services are provided from Karimnagar to Hyderabad JBS bus station after the festival from January 15 to 25. On January 15, around 50 bus services were provided and from 16 to 18 January around 100 bus services will run each day, whereas from January 20 to 25 around 30 bus services are provided every day.

Other than these 900 special bus services extra 45 buses will run to various regions of neighbouring state Andhra Pradesh from twin cities of Hyderabad. Reservation facilities are also provided in special buses and the passengers who are interested can log on to www.tsrtcsonline.in and can reserve their tickets beforehand, he informed. Mr. Sridhar appealed to the people to utilise the special bus services provided by RTC keeping in view of festive season and to travel safely.

Govt. attempts to
convince ITC fail

Quarrel between leaders raised tension in ZP hall

A. RAVINDRA SESHU
KHAMMAM, JAN. 5

The meeting organised by the government with the ITC officials and farmers over solving the problems in lifting sub-abul wood turned out to be a commotion as the company officials run away from the meeting after some time on Tuesday.

BJP district president G. Satyanarayana said that the BJP state president Bandi Sanjay wrote a letter to the state horticulture department to settle the subabul farmers' issues on lifting and paying minimum support price to their produce. The officials of horticulture tried to settle by approaching the ITC officials of B h a d r a c h a l a m. Surprisingly, the ITC bosses had never responded to the horticulture officials, who wrote the same to the State government.

The attitude of the ITC



BJP Khammam district president G. Satyanarayana quarrel with the Rythu Samanvaya Samithi district president N. Venkateswara Rao over the attitude of ITC officials in ZP hall on Tuesday.

- DC

antagonised the State government and asked the district collector to intervene and settle the issue of subabul farmers. Khammam MP Nama Nageswara Rao too showed interest on the issue and attended the meeting on Tuesday. The ITC officials did not come to the meeting till 2 pm when it is started at 11 am. BJP district presi-

dent G. Satyanarayana, CPI leader Bagam Hemanth Rao and CPI-M leader Ponnamm Venkateswarly demanded the officials to call ITC to the meeting.

At one stage, tension prevailed in the Zilla Parishad hall where the meeting took place. Rythu Samavaya Samithi district president Nalamala Venkateswara

Rao tried to convince the leaders but in vain.

The ITC officials came to the meeting at 2 pm. They did not promise the officials on subabul farmers' issues like paying of ₹4500 per tonne wood, setting up of more lifting centres, and not demanding the farmers to bring debarking wood to the centres. The farmer leaders explained the problems of the farmers with the attitude of ITC in lifting the wood.

MP Nama Nageswara Rao tried to convince the ITC officials to agree with the farmers' demands as per the earlier agreement done between the company and farmers. The ITC official said that they would not honour the agreement in the light of the Covid-19 situation. The company officials left the meeting place without giving any assurance on it. BJP activists surrounded the ITC officials and raised slogans against them.

TELANGANA TO
BE A 'EDIBLE OIL
HUB': TUMMALADC CORRESPONDENT
DAMMAPET
(BHADRADRI), JAN. 5

Former minister Tummalam Nageswara Rao said that Telangana is being shaped as an edible oil hub with the efforts of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao.

He said that the government evolved a plan to raise the palm oil in eight lakh acres in Telangana and the government had permitted to set up 14 oil palm units in the state.

He said that palm brunches' price is ₹14,416 per tonne at present and it is the highest one so far. He said that the government should fix MSP to the palm brunches at leader ₹12,000 per ton for the sake of the farmers. He said that the palm cultivation is growing in the state with the initiatives taken by former chief minister NTR and present CM KCR.

He said that the country is producing only 7 million tons of edible oil against the requirement of 22 million tonnes. "Pertaining to palm oil, nearly 90 per cent palm oil is being imported and spending ₹40,000 crore foreign exchange every year," he said. Forming a separate corporation for oil palm will benefit more the oil palm farmers.

He said that the state and central government are trying to make the country self-reliant about palm oil. He said that there is plenty of water available for irrigation, and the farmers of Telangana can utilise the source to raise palm oil in their fields.

He said that the Apparaopet and Aswaraopet palm oil units are helping the



The Congress leaders convey birthday wishes to party senior leader and MLC, T. Jeevan Reddy in Jagtial on Tuesday.

-DC

Ready for any responsibility
given to me: Jeevan ReddyPULI SHARATH KUMAR
JAGTIAL, JAN. 5

"For the past four decades I have been in public life and have been serving the people, whatever the responsibility will be handed over to me by the party leadership will handle it successfully," said the Congress party senior leader and MLC, T. Jeevan Reddy.

With news circulating in the political circles that All India Congress Committee decided to announce the name of the Mr Jeevan Reddy as a new president of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) on the occasion of his 70th birth anniversary, senior leaders along with party cadre and his well-wishers thronged to Jeevan Reddy's house in Jagtial on Tuesday.

When the party circles were expecting one among the MPs Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, A.Revanth Reddy, CLP leader Mallu Bhathi Vikramarka and Manthani MLA, D. Sridhar Babu who were

■ **AICC president Sonia Gandhi and in-charge for TS, Manickam Tagore called on T. Jeevan Reddy to New Delhi, a few days ago**

in the race will be announced as party chief for TPCC post, surprisingly Mr Jeevan Reddy emerged as a strong contender for the post and sources in the party disclosed that the name of Jeevan Reddy was almost finalised for the post.

Mr Jeevan Reddy entered into politics four decades back in 1981. He was elected as a president for Malayala village panchayat Samiti and later was elected as MLA for six times and served as a minister for two times.

He never shifted his loyalty and has been with the party in ups and downs. When there was a wave of TRS party in the state, he contested in graduate MLC elections from Congress and registered a thumping victory over it and stood as a ray of hope for the

Congress party in the state.

It is also learnt that the AICC president Sonia Gandhi and in-charge for Telangana state, Manickam Tagore called on T. Jeevan Reddy to New Delhi, a few days ago, recognising his efforts to the party and considering him as non-controversial leader who could coordinate senior and junior leaders and can inject new blood into the party.

The official announcement from the party high command yet to come out.

Speaking to the Deccan Chronicle, Mr Jeevan Reddy said that he has not yet received any information from the party high command but is ready to take up any party leadership responsibility.

"Being loyal and a committed worker to the party since four decades I always strove hard for the strengthening of the party in the state and will continue it in days to come with the coordination with the senior and junior leaders," he said.

MAN VS WILD Adivasis themselves can tackle the issue of tiger attacks
MP gives 'Legal twist' in man-animal conflictPILLAMARRI SRINIVAS
KOMARAM BHEEM
ASIFABAD, JAN. 5

Adilabad MP Soyam Bapurao has given a 'Legal twist' to man-animal conflict and tiger attacks that are going on for some time in the agency and rural areas in erstwhile Adilabad district.

After consoling the family members of the two tiger victims Vignesh in Diga village in Bejjur mandal and Nirmala in Kondapalli village in Panchikalpet mandal during his tour in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district, Soyam Bapurao called upon Adivasis to lodge complaints with the local police and forest officials

in all the areas asking them to catch the tigers in order to save their lives from tiger attacks otherwise, Adivasis themselves tackle the issue of tiger attacks.

He said, Adivasis will have a chance to justify their action even if they killed the tiger in self-defense when the officials have failed to catch them to save their lives from the tiger attacks even after submitting the representations.

Soyam Bapurao said Adivasis should follow the Indian constitution and rule of law and added that Adivasis can resolve the tiger menace with the strong agitation only.

He said Adivasis can try to resolve the tiger problem on their own if the

■ **Adivasis will have a chance to justify their action even if they killed the tiger in self-defense when the officials have failed to catch them to save their lives from the tiger attacks even after submitting the representations.**

■ **Adivasis should follow the Indian constitution and rule of law and added that Adivasis can resolve the tiger menace with the strong agitation only.**

police and forest departments failed to resolve the problem within a period of time.

Soyam Bapurao questioned why more number of tigers have suddenly surfaced in the forest area and that too in the area where Adivasis are living for a long time and tigers movement was increased around the podu lands only when

Adivasis agitating demanding the state government to issue pattaas to podu lands that they have been cultivating for a long time. He also requested the Adivasis to unanimously pass the resolutions in the gram panchayats under PESA Act appealing the officials concerned to catch the tigers to save the lives of the Adivasis from the



Newly-elected BJP corporators protest at the Chief Minister's camp office in Begumpet on Tuesday demanding no further delay in the swearing-in ceremony and elections for the post of Mayor.

- S. SURENDER REDDY

Bandi dares Warangal
legislators to debate fundsANUDEEP CEREMILLA
WARANGAL, JAN. 5

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay took part in a day-long rally covering the tricity Kazi, Hanamkonda and Warangal. Later in the evening, he took part in a meeting where several TRS and Congress party leaders joined the BJP in his presence.

He said the people of Warangal received him immensely and it is a good sign for the BJP which is heading into the GWMC elections after beating the ruling TRS in both Dubbaka by-elections and GHMC elections.

"Chief Minister K.

Chandrashekar Rao has failed on many fronts including promises made and schemes on which he had to make U-turns. The people already started losing faith in the party.

Even the TRS MLAs are worried about the uncertainty in the party leadership that they are having second thoughts about continuing in the party," he said.

Sanjay alleged that while the centre is allocating funds for the development of Telangana, KCR is siphoning off money in the name of commissions and later spending on elections to buy votes.

He said even though the

TRS party spent Rs 10 crore on each division during the GHMC elections, the people took the money and rightfully voted for the BJP. Criticising CM KCR for not standing by the people of Warangal during the Covid-19 pandemic and the floods, he ridiculed him saying KCR comes only to make fools of the people with fake promises.

"KCR knows he already lost his face with the people of the state. That is why he did not take part in the campaign in Dubbaka by-election or GHMC elections. Similarly, he will not come to campaign for the upcoming GWMC elections," he stated.

TELANGANA
UNDER BIRD
FLU ALERTDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 5

Telangana state has been placed on a high alert to keep a watch on any possible unnatural deaths of either wild birds or poultry following the reporting of outbreaks of bird flu disease in five other states in India.

Tuesday saw state forest and animal husbandry departments instruct their staff across the state to keep their eyes open for potential or suspect bird deaths that could indicate a possible case of bird flu, the avian disease that can kill wild birds in their hundreds or thousands, and can pose a serious threat to the poultry industry.

"We are in a safe zone and there are no incidents of bird flu anywhere in Telangana state," animal husbandry department director Dr V. Laxma Reddy, told *Deccan Chronicle* on Tuesday. However, as a matter of abundant precaution, all the assistant directors of the department and veterinary officers have been placed on an alert and instructed to inspect all poultry farms and report any incidents of bird deaths, whether wild or domestic. With the migratory season of wild birds well and truly underway, the state forest department on Tuesday evening placed all its field staff right from its beat officers to conservators in charge of various forest circles on an immediate high alert.



Minister for forest Allola Indrakaran Reddy inaugurates Adivasi legend Komaram Bheem's statue in Yellapalli village in Nirmal district on Tuesday.

-DC

Komaram Bheem
museum soon: MinisterDC CORRESPONDENT
NIRMAL, JAN. 5:

Minister for the forest, Allola Indrakaran Reddy, inaugurated Adivasi legend Komaram Bheem's statue in Yellapalli village in Nirmal. Yellapalli is Indrakaran Reddy's native village. Minister Indra-karan

Reddy said people would remember Komaram Bheem forever for his fight for the Adivasis rights on Jal, Jangal and Jameen.

Minister said the state government has set up a Komaram Bheem museum and other development works with ₹25 crore in Jodeghat.

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Making it clear that the constitutional courts can't cross the boundaries set by the constitution, Justice Khanwilkar in note of caution said, "In light of the settled law, we should be loath to venture into these areas."

SHORT TAKES

20 migrants sink en route Panama

Bogota: Rescue workers in Colombia are trying to locate more than 20 migrants whose boat sank as it tried to reach Panama. The sinking was reported on Monday by officials in Acandí, a municipality along the Gulf of Urabá, an inlet of the Caribbean sea that is lined by dense jungle. Thousands of undocumented migrants cross the gulf each year on small boats. Migrants traveling through the Urabá region are mostly trying to make it to the United States. Many come from Cuba and Haiti. But it is also common to see migrants from Africa and Asia along this route. Colombia's navy confirmed the shipwreck and says it is still trying to determine how many migrants were on the boat, and how many survived the accident.

Indian-American is Ohio senator

Washington: Niraj Antani has been sworn-in as Ohio's senator, making him the first Indian-American to serve in the state's Senate. Antani, 29, who was elected to the Ohio state Senate from the 6th District, was sworn-in on Monday. "I am so grateful to be able to represent the community in which I was born and raised as a State Senator," Antani said soon after being sworn-in. Antani will serve a full four-year term. "I will continue to work hard every day for each Ohioan so that they can have the opportunity to achieve their American dream. In this uncertain economic and health time, we must diligently strive to enact policies for the benefit of all Ohioans," Antani said. Antani formerly served as State Representative for the 42nd Ohio House District since 2014.

Don-appointed US attorney resigns

Atlanta: The top federal prosecutor in Atlanta left his position Monday, a day after an audio recording was made public in which President Donald Trump called him a "never-Trumper." Byung J. "BJay" Pak, who was appointed by Trump, announced his resignation as US attorney for the Northern District of Georgia in a news release. The statement did not say why Pak was leaving or what he plans to do next. "It has been the greatest honour of my professional career to have been able to serve my fellow citizens as the US Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia," Pak said in the release. "I have done my best to be thoughtful and consistent, and to provide justice for my fellow citizens in a fair, effective and efficient manner. I am grateful to President Trump and the United States Senate for the opportunity to serve, and to former Attorneys General Sessions and Barr for their leadership of the Department."

JIHADISTS KILL OVER 100 IN NIGER VIOLENCE

Dakar (Senegal), Jan. 5: More than 100 civilians were killed in Niger over the weekend by extremists who attacked two villages, as insurgent violence mounts in the West African nation.

The attacks on the western villages of Tchombangou and Zaroumdareye took place on the same day that Niger announced that presidential elections would go to a second round on February 21.

Niger's Prime Minister Brigi Rafini visited the two villages on Sunday. "We came to provide moral support and present the condolences of the president of the republic, the government and the entire Niger nation," he said. The villages in the insecure Tillabéri region were attacked on Saturday after residents killed two rebel fighters, local officials said.

The attacks are among the deadliest in Niger and come on the heels of several others, including one by the Islamic State West Africa Province in the Diffa region a few weeks ago in which dozens of people were killed. Niger and neighboring Burkina Faso and Mali are battling the spread of deadly extremist violence which is displacing large numbers of people, despite the presence of thousands of regional and international troops. A year ago, extremists staged mass attacks on Niger's military in the Tillabéri region, killing more than 70 in December 2019 and more than 89 in January 2020.

UK enters tough lockdown

New rules to stay in place till mid-Feb with review based on infection rates

London, Jan. 5: The UK entered a tough new stay-at-home lockdown on Tuesday after Prime Minister Boris Johnson said it has been "both frustrating and alarming" to see the speed with which the new variant of the Coronavirus is spreading and declared that hospitals in the country are under more pressure from the deadly virus than at any time in the pandemic.

While Scotland's new rules, which involve school and business closures become legal from Tuesday, England's rules — akin to the stringent measures of the first wave of the pandemic in March 2020 — become law in the early hours of Wednesday. However, Johnson has urged the public to begin following the strict work from home rules right away.

The new rules are expected to stay in place until mid-February with a review planned based on vaccine rollout data and infection rates. "Our scientists have confirmed this new variant is between 50 and 70 per cent more transmissible — that means you are much, much more likely to catch the virus and to pass it on," Johnson said in his televised address to the nation on Monday night. "We must therefore go into a national lockdown which is tough enough to contain this variant. That means the government is once again instructing you to stay at home. You may only leave home for limited reasons permitted in law, such as to shop for essentials, to work if you absolutely cannot work from home, to exercise, to seek medical assistance such as getting a Covid test, or to escape domestic abuse," he said.

The devolved regions of Wales and Northern Ireland were already



The Trafalgar square is empty as Britain enters a national lockdown in London on Tuesday. England's six-week lockdown, which began at midnight, emulates the first national Coronavirus curbs in place from March to June — but goes further than another instituted in November when schools remained open.

— AFP

● **ACCORDING TO** the latest data, in England alone, the number of Covid-19 patients in hospitals has increased by nearly a third in the last week, to almost 27,000.

under strict lockdown measures since the middle of last month.

According to the latest data, in England alone, the number of Covid-19 patients in hospitals has increased by nearly a third in the last week, to almost 27,000. That number is 40 per cent higher than the first peak of the pandemic in April. On December 29, more than 80,000 people tested positive for Covid across the UK — a new record — and the number of deaths is up by 20 per cent over the last week. — PTI

France promises speedy virus vaccination process

Paris, Jan. 5: Amid public outcry, France's health minister has promised an "exponential" acceleration of his country's slow Coronavirus vaccination process.

After barely 500 people in France were vaccinated in the first six days, Health Minister Olivier Veran defended the government's strategy of giving the vaccines first to residents of nursing homes. But he vowed on Tuesday to simplify a bureaucratic consent process blamed in part for France's lagging

vaccinations. Veran said the government will expand the number of vaccination centres and categories of people eligible for early vaccines, and allow people to sign up for vaccinations on an app or by phone. The growth of vaccinations in the coming days "will be exponential, rest assured," he said on RTL radio. But he insisted that the government would not forego safety guidelines in a country facing broad vaccine scepticism. While neighbouring countries are imposing

strict new lockdowns amid surging infections, Veran said France is weighing its options and "cannot relax," but announced no new measures. Education Minister Jean-Michel Blanquer said on radio that he doesn't want to "deprive children of school." Veran said France has confirmed 10 or 15 cases of the new, more contagious virus variant identified in Britain, and that overall French infections and hospital rates are currently at a plateau. — AP

Pak orders rebuilding of temple

Islamabad, Jan. 5: Pakistan's Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered the Evacuee Property Trust Board (EPTB) to start reconstruction of a century-old Hindu temple that was vandalised and set on fire by a mob in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province last week, saying the attack has caused "international embarrassment" to the country.

The apex court, which took notice of the attack and ordered the local authorities to appear before the court on January 5, also directed the board to submit in court details of all func-

tional and non-functional temples and gurdwaras across Pakistan, *Dawn* newspaper reported. The attack on the temple in Terri village in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) Karak district on Wednesday by members of radical Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam party (Fazal ur Rehman group) drew strong condemnation from human rights activists and the minority Hindu community leaders.

During the hearing on Tuesday, a three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed also directed the EPTB to clear encroachments from

temples across the country and take action against officials involved in the encroachments. Justice Ahmed said that the Karak incident had caused "international embarrassment" to Pakistan. The EPTB is a statutory board that manages religious properties and shrines of Hindus and Sikhs who had migrated to India following the partition. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief secretary, police chief, and Dr Shoaib Suddle, the head of a commission on minorities' rights, were also present during the hearing.

Suddle, who visited the temple in Karak district and presented a comprehensive report in the case to the Supreme Court on Monday after it asked the one-man commission on the rights of minorities to probe the attack, told the court that the provincial EPTB "did not protect the shrine", the paper said. Justice Ijazul Ahsan then questioned the police chief on how the attack could have happened when there was a police check post next to the temple. "Where were your intelligence agencies?" the judge asked. — PTI

HK judge warns on law reforms

Hong Kong, Jan. 5: Hong Kong's outgoing top judge said on Tuesday that calls for reform of the city's judiciary cannot be based on dissatisfaction with court rulings, as pro-Beijing figures and state-owned media step up criticism of the city's legal system.

"(The) judiciary's position has all along been the same. If there's any room for improvement, we will pursue it. We will consid-

er it," Chief Justice Geoffrey Ma said at a news conference ahead of his retirement on Sunday.

"But it's not particularly satisfactory if there's a call for reforms simply on the basis of a result one doesn't like," he said. "It is certainly not a good starting point or acceptable to say 'I want reforms to ensure that I will always get the result which I want.'" — AP

FINANCIAL | SCAM

Lai Xiaomin found guilty of bigamy after living with a woman outside his marriage

China's ex-banker gets death for \$260 mn bribery

Beijing, Jan. 5: The former chairman of one of China's largest state-controlled asset management firms was sentenced to death on Tuesday for soliciting \$260 million in bribes, corruption, and also bigamy.

Lai Xiaomin, a former Communist Party member, gave a detailed televised confession on state broadcaster CCTV last January, which showed footage of safes and cabinets stuffed with cash in a Beijing apartment allegedly belonging to him.

Lai had abused his position in attempting to

obtain the vast sum, a court in the northern city of Tianjin said, describing the bribes as "extremely large" and labelling the circumstances "particularly serious".

He had shown "extreme malicious intent," the court ruling added.

The former chairman of the Hong Kong-listed China Huarong Asset Management Co. — a distressed debt group — was also found guilty of bigamy after living with a woman "as man and wife for long periods" outside of his marriage and fathering illegitimate children.



Lai Xiaomin

Huarong is one of four companies set up in 1999 to help clean up bad debt piles choking China's banking system, and the company later expanded into investment, loan and property businesses.

Lai's downfall began in April 2018 as investigators removed him from his job and stripped him of his party position.

He was also alleged to have used his position to embezzle over 25 million yuan (\$3.8 million) in public funds between 2009 and 2018.

During his TV confession, Lai said he "did not spend a single penny, and just kept it there... I did not dare to spend it." He had referred to the apartment where he kept the money as the "supermarket", given his regular visits there to deposit cash.

Georgia election to decide fate of Biden presidency

Atlanta, Jan. 5: Polls opened in the US state of Georgia on Tuesday in two runoff elections that will determine control of the US Senate and shape the first years of the new Democratic presidency — after a hard-fought campaign that pulled in Donald Trump and president-elect Joe Biden.

For nearly 20 years Georgia has voted reliably Republican in the presidential election and Senate contests.

But Biden pulled out a shock victory in Georgia in November, one of several states that he flipped to win the White House, and the races for the Senate have come down to the wire in the biggest, most expensive congressional runoffs in US history.

Polls opened at 7:00 am (1200 GMT) in the southern state. A record three million-plus people have voted early, election officials say, and final results may not be known for several days.

A staggering \$832 million has been spent on the two contests, including spending in the primary and general elections, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

"The future of the country is on the line here," one of the Republican

candidates seeking reelection in Georgia, David Perdue, said on Tuesday morning. "This is the last line of defense for our way of life, really." The Republican and Democratic parties have made Georgia their political ground zero, with thousands of volunteers leaving no door unknocked and current and future presidents and vice presidents barnstorming the state for every last vote.

If Democrats flip both seats they win back the Senate, effectively handing Biden all levers of political power in Washington and helping him enact his ambitious legislative agenda.

"One state — one state! — can chart the course, not just for the next four years but for the next generation," Biden told a rally in Atlanta where he campaigned Monday with the races' two Democrats. Republicans argue that keeping Senate control would serve as a check on the incoming Biden administration.

"The stakes in this election could not be higher," Trump told a raucous rally in Dalton, Georgia hours after Biden's Atlanta showing. "Make sure your vote is counted." — AFP

Xi asks military to stay on high alert

Beijing, Jan. 5: Chinese President Xi Jinping has asked the military to strengthen training to hone its combat skills and remain on high alert as the new revised defence law expanding the powers of the armed forces came into force from this year.

The 67-year-old leader, who also heads the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) besides the Central Military Commission (CMC) — the overall high command of the two million strong military — signed the commission's first order for 2021, which listed priorities in the training of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the People's Armed Police Force (PLAF), official media here reported on Tuesday.

The order instructed the armed forces to stick to Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era as their guiding principle and uphold Xi

Jinping Thought on Strengthening the Military as well as military strategies in the new era.

It said the CCP will enhance its guidance over the military's training, urging the armed forces to focus on improving their combat readiness and continuing to reform their training system. The first such order was issued in January 2018, when Xi addressed a massive training and commencement ceremony at a shooting range in northern China.

Xi has repeatedly stressed the importance of combat readiness training and joint operations to the armed forces since he became commander-in-chief in late 2012. In his order this year, he said the military must train their officers and soldiers in realistic combat scenarios, place more attention on research about war and military operations. — PTI

Saudi to lift Qatar embargo

Dubai, Jan. 5: Saudi Arabia will open its airspace and land border to Qatar in the first step toward ending a years-long diplomatic crisis that deeply divided US defense partners, frayed societal ties and tore apart a traditionally clubby alliance of Gulf states, officials said late on Monday.

Qatar's only land border since mid-2017, when Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain launched a blockade against the tiny Gulf state, accusing it of sup-

porting Islamist extremist groups and of having warm ties with Iran. The Saudi border, which Qatar relied on for the import of dairy products, construction materials and other goods, opened briefly during the past three years to allow Qataris into Saudi Arabia to perform the Islamic hajj pilgrimage. It was unclear what concessions Qatar had made or is promising to make regarding a shift in its policies.

Kuwait, which had been mediating throughout the dispute, was first to announce the diplomatic

breakthrough through its foreign minister. Earlier on Monday, the foreign minister had reportedly traveled to Doha to deliver a message to Qatar's ruling emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. While the Saudi decision marks a major milestone toward resolving the Gulf spat, the path toward full reconciliation is far from guaranteed.

The rift between Abu Dhabi and Doha has been deepest, with the UAE and Qatar at sharp ideological odds. Following Kuwait's announcement, the UAE's Minister of State for

Foreign Affairs, Anwar Gargash, tweeted that his country was keen to restore Gulf unity. However, he cautioned: "We have more work to do and we are in the right direction."

The lifting of the embargo by Saudi Arabia paves the way for Qatar's ruler to attend an annual summit of Gulf leaders on Tuesday that will be held in the kingdom's ancient desert site of Al-Ula. The summit would be chaired by Saudi King Salman, though his son and heir, the crown prince, may instead lead the meeting. — AP

DECCAN Chronicle

6 JANUARY 2021

Nod for Central Vista: SC gives govt latitude

In a 2-1 judgment, the Supreme Court on Tuesday approved the Modi government's deeply controversial Central Vista project, which is an egregious example of executive excess. This paves the way for the spending of ₹20,000 crore to build a new Parliament House, a new residence as well as a new office complex for the Prime Minister, a new residence for the vice-president, the demolition of some half-a-dozen fine standing buildings along the Rajpath lawns which house ministries, and their replacement along this majestic boulevard with new structures. The government has not offered cogent reasons for a new house for the PM and the vice-president, but if news reports are anything to go by, then the explanation for a fancy home for the PM may be thought to be embedded in the notion of vanity, like the idea of a special aircraft for the exclusive use of the PM (on the lines of Air Force One of the US President).

Why a new Parliament House? The government's answer is that the present structure is old, it is not spacious enough, and the building also has problems to do with age (it is less than a hundred years old). Were extensions, renovations, not possible as are routinely done with the centuries-old British Parliament?

The Supreme Court was only too willing to see reason in the government's justifications, actions, and possible motives which have been ripped apart by the country's top experts in architecture, design, city planning, heritage professionals, environmentalists, besides retired top civil servants

Why new government buildings? The official answer is that many departments of a ministry are scattered in the city and their being together will improve efficiency. No treatise of public administration or political science cites this as a reason for red tape and in-built deep inefficiencies in the Indian bureaucratic structure.

Either the top court did not sufficiently grill the government on these and related matters or the Supreme Court was too willing to see reason in the government's justifications, actions, and possible motives which have been ripped apart by the country's top experts in architecture, architectural design, city planning, conservationists, heritage professionals, environmentalists, besides retired top civil servants.

There is another important issue. Do we need to spend the officially estimated ₹20,000 crore on this blatantly futile venture when the economy is hovering around the negative growth territory? In the time of pandemic, is this the best use for the country's dwindling resources? Or, is this a foolish luxury the nation can ill afford? The Central Vista in New Delhi leads the gaze down from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate and is regarded as among the most majestic views among the world's principal cities, with green lawns on either side for public use. It is crowded with grand heritage buildings, including the Houses of Parliament. If there is a no-go area for urban destruction, redesign of spaces and change of land use in New Delhi, it is this. Major changes here are akin to changing the land use of the Taj Mahal complex in Agra or the Vatican in Rome.

From start to finish, the technically required official permissions — pertaining to change in land use, and heritage and environmental clearances — have been rushed through in record time, cutting corners, as if magically. Opaqueness of procedure was rampant. To deliberate over such a venture, which strikes at the root of history and heritage, the Parliament was never summoned. But the Supreme Court is unseeing. Maximum government, minimum judiciary, is a sorry maxim.

Trump must leave gracefully

The US President Donald Trump's never-ending effort to overturn the result of an election that he has lost has become much more than an embarrassment to sane elements in his Republican Party. Mr Trump may seem like a drowning man flailing when his fate has been sealed but such antics are posing a serious threat to the very foundational principles that have governed the world's oldest working democracy tracing its election history 200-plus years. The President's phone call to Georgia's Secretary of State, Brad Raffensburger, asking him to change the result by somehow finding close to 12,000 votes for him is the most brazen abuse of power by a White House occupant, which warrants criminal prosecution. There has also been a fleeting thought in Mr Trump's growing bank of critics that he should be impeached before January 20, which is the date Joe Biden should be taking over.

The US presidential election was long over with all 50 states certifying their results. Mr Trump's legal challenges aimed at sowing doubts over an election that drew a record number of voters have been summarily dismissed by judges right across the country. Under the circumstances, what the country's elected representatives must do in Congress on Wednesday is to formally declare Mr Biden as the winner and ask Mr Trump to go home. He can leave his task of disrupting future elections to young and eager mavericks, who are taking after him in mocking the system and trying to subvert the will of the voters.

Such events as witnessed after the poll on November 3 are more in keeping with authoritarian parts of the planet and banana republics than in the citadel of freedom that the Capitol Hill housing the Senate, the Houses of Representatives and the Supreme Court represents. It is important for every part of the free world that the clownish Donald Trump depart the White House and allow the likes of his Vice-President Mike Pence to retain his dignity while preserving democracy in its very fount.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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Subhani



Challenges for Modi as world faces Biden era



K.C. Singh

The new year brought some cheer for a Covid-infested world with several vaccines — Pfizer, Oxford-AstraZeneca and Moderna — cleared to join battle to counter the pandemic, which cost the planet a year of social freedom, economic growth and mental peace. However, a second spike across Europe and the United States, a bitter American presidential election and clever repositioning by China have left international relations in an uncertain flux. Meanwhile, global stock markets have soared, reflecting more a sanguine assessment of the future than the troubled present. The lone black swan is Donald Trump and Iran settling scores in the dying moments of Mr Trump's presidency, with unforeseen consequences.

Otherwise, three developments will condition global geopolitics hereafter. One, the swearing-in of Joe Biden as the next US President on January 20. Two, China quickly spearheading two major agreements; the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a trade agreement centred around the 10 Asean nations plus Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and China; and a Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) between the European Union and China. Both were under negotiation for almost a decade. While the former was finalised in mid-November 2020, days after the US election, the latter followed a month later. India was part of the negotiating process of the former, but chose in 2019 to walk out, dissatisfied with the guarantees available in a playing field that appeared to be tilted towards the better positioned producers of goods in China, South Korea and Japan. Three, the suc-

cess of the vaccination programme in pushing back the pandemic in developed Western countries, especially the US, and reviving jobs, demand and growth.

Normally, outgoing US Presidents lower their profile after their successor is elected and the two administrations create policy and implementation coordination through their transition teams. Mr Trump, who keeps repeating on the social media and whenever he's in front of a microphone that his win has been stolen, has undermined that seamless process, which undermines trust in the United States. Mr Biden's national security adviser (designate) Jake Sullivan tweeted on December 21 that they would "welcome early consultations with our European partners on our common concerns on China's practices". Despite that, the EU under the half-yearly presidency of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, 10 days later signed the CAI with China. This reflected both European concern that Mr Trump may have lost but Trumpism survives and can return the loser having polled 74 million votes, as indeed the European dependence on the Chinese market. While Chinese investment in Europe is 120 billion euros, European return investment in China is 140 billion euros. All but Ireland already had investment agreements with China, but these were to protect investments, whereas the CAI assures market access in goods and services and provides one set of rules for all 27 EU members. China has also promised to enter the International Labour Organisation (ILO) accords on labour protection and thus satisfy the common complaint about forced labour.

This undermines President-elect Biden's hope for a united front of democra-

cies and like-minded nations against China. All may not have been lost yet as the agreement will take time to be implemented. Similarly, by finessing the RCEP, China negated Mr Trump's attempt to isolate and decouple trade and investment from it. If the CAI sends a signal to the Nato allies of the US abandoning it on economic and trade issues, the RCEP has showed that even in its immediate Asian neighbourhood, and despite its expansionist and aggressive conduct, China has managed to use the carrot to offset the stick.

After four years of being Trump *bhakt*s, where does it leave the Indian government? The disruption caused by Mr Trump even in the Islamic world, by exacerbating the Shia-Sunni and intra-Sunni divisions, has immediate implications for India on multiple counts, due to India having ridden the American wave rather than eke out an independent course. For instance, the excessive chumminess with the UAE and Saudi Arabia, built on existing excellent relations, begot increased counter-terror cooperation and their distancing from Pakistan. But the cost has been India damaging its bridges with Iran, Qatar and Turkey. Thus, like the rest of the world, India is now running to cover the exposed ground as the sun sets on the Trump administration. India's external affairs minister S. Jaishankar surfaced in Doha, Qatar, on December 27-28. This was not surprising as the last high-level visit was in 2016 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi went to Qatar. Since 2017, when Mr Trump began his foreign travel as President

by his visit to Riyadh, and the Saudis and Emiratis aligned against Qatar, India just followed their lead and ignored Qatar.

Nearer home, without Iran, any independent Afghan policy becomes a non-starter as India lacks any land connectivity. That will start becoming more apparent as the Taliban, gradually consolidating their hold over more areas in Afghanistan, take their fight-and-talk to the next level. They are waiting for the exit of US troops and financial aid and air cover to diminish before moving to finish the game.

Therefore, as the Indian government repositions to counter the new reality, it has some advantages and two major domestic drawbacks. The advantage is that the US also has less space remaining for manoeuvre, increasing India's value as a quasi-ally. NSA designate Jake Sullivan had on Fareed Zakaria's CNN programme articulated the Biden administration's worldview, debunking notions of a US decline, as they have the capacity for correction, renewal and improvement. The notion of "foreign policy for the middle class" is hearkening to core values and obtaining positive results for the people and the world. Foreign and domestic policies are intertwined.

All this could also be valid advice for the Modi government, that is nearing its two-year mark in its second term. The drawbacks are mainly two. It must win the trust of farmers and stop minority baiting by its various state governments and using bigotry as ballast for its electoral machine. Otherwise, while the Chinese have redeployed geopolitically, keeping one foot on India's neck in Ladakh, the US should not show Trumpian indulgence for its majoritarianism. Meanwhile, more and more Indians are beginning to ask whether the Modi government is all theatre or really a defender of the people and national interests.

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

LETTERS

FARMERS' PLIGHT

The plight of farmers is pitiable (*No repeal of law, move SC: Centre tells farmers, DC, Jan. 5*). The adamant attitude of the government has not only watered down their hopes, but also disappointed one and all.

Syed Amjad Ali
Hyderabad

BIBLE PARTY IN AP

The Election Commission is yet to register any Bible party in Andhra Pradesh (*AP people must pick Bible party or Gita party: Bandi, DC, Jan. 5*). BJP leaders who make such statements need to get their mental health examined.

Devanad
Hyderabad

Temples being vandalised and idols getting desecrated in Andhra Pradesh must be condemned. It is a pity that elected governments who must correct the situation have maintained a studied silence and are fishing in troubled waters to gain politically.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao
Hyderabad

GREAT ACHIEVERS

The reports of a circle inspector father saluting his DSP daughter and the tribal boy reaching a top post from the depths of poverty is a whiff of fresh air in an age of hate crimes, shameless defections by politicians and the pandemic. Hats off to the achievers.

Abdul Hakeem
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

Statehood for Himachal from January 26

NEW DELHI, Jan. 5
Himachal Pradesh will be ushered in as the eighteenth State of India on the eve of the Republic Day, it is learnt. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, is likely to inaugurate the State on January 25.

Parliament has already approved the elevation of the status of Himachal Pradesh, now a Union territory. The Act provides for a separate Governor for the State and also a separate High Court. The Union Government in the next few days will announce the appointments of the Governor and the Chief Justice. Himachal Pradesh has four seats in the new Lok Sabha. Delimitation work is already in hand and is expected to be completed well in time. —PTI.

Sanjiwan Sahni



India requires key structural changes in way it is governed

A view is gaining wider acceptability that the precondition for sustainable, all-round progress in India is structural change in our governance model.

To understand this better and more simply, let's listen to what three eminent thinkers, who have vast experience in governance, in the government and in the private sector, in think tanks and more, have to say:

Arun Maira, who among multiple achievements was mandated when in the Planning Commission to catalyse fresh thinking on solving this problem, says: "What is the solution then? Going back to the basics, to the ground, and to the people. There are some good ideas emerging and being applied in many parts of the world. The essence is, realising that solutions at the top are not working — and cannot work with the present framework, they are built on a different frame."

Wajahat Habibullah, who was part of former PM Rajiv Gandhi's team in developing the panchayati raj concept, states: "The answer lies in more closely ensuring people's participation in governance as conceived by the Mahatma who identified the panchayat as an instrument of self-governance. That is still in my view the only viable alterna-

tive, but not in the form as it exists even after the 73rd and 74th Amendment."

Kiran Karnik brings a technology edge to the discussion: "To me a long-term solution is structural: we need to decentralise in a serious and substantial way. The framework exists in the constitutional amendments (73rd and 74th) that create a formal third layer of government by devolving powers to panchayats and urban bodies. If this can actually be implemented, by ensuring the 3 Fs needed (finance, functions and functionaries), we will have more accountable, transparent and effective governance and be substantially liberated from the whims and tyrannies of the Centre (or even states). Such decentralisation may not be sufficient by itself, but it is a necessary condition."

As a solution, he also refers to the influence of technology: "What is exciting is that new technologies make such decentralisation of politics and manufacturing possible. Dispersal of factories and offices, jobs close to home, decongestion of cities, less pollution, lower crime: these and many other consequences make this almost utopia. The vector is important; while a slower speed will mean that we may not get there for long, the direction is clear."

Recent economic thought is also from

a different route coming to a similar broad viewpoint. Arun Maira said productivity, particularly labour productivity, increases encouraged by policy initiatives, similar to what Japan did in the 1970s. Dr Rathin Roy emphasised that economic growth will arise from meeting the needs of the currently poorer, deprived sections of society in contrast to the limited higher net worth segment. These include: Low-cost housing; Food — a balanced basket of nutrition; Affordable clothing; Education; Healthcare. All these for the masses.

This emphasis, changed from catering to middle class needs, is also in the direction of meeting the needs of "the bottom of the pyramid".

"Small is beautiful" and profit at the bottom of the pyramid are thought processes which converge with such proposed structural changes.

There is enormous management literature and practice which highlights the need of decentralisation for success, rather than control and giving directions from the top. In other words, even in the corporate world, there is recognition of the desirability of decentralised structures. Therefore, there is underlying congruence in this thought process at multiple levels but is cur-

rently most deficient in government and most required in that domain.

While on all of the above, there can be little disagreement, the ground reality still requires some additional steps to help get there.

Assume there is merit in recognising that decentralisation is a central theme relevant and necessary for most (not all) forms of governance. The effort should be to see how this thought can be mainstreamed. Approaches are required from multiple directions which not only encourage it in their respective domains but also string it together as a national theme. This is a challenge which needs working upon.

Since this is a long-term challenge, the catalyst to get there must focus on young people. At one level, potential young leaders need to be won over.

In practice, as potential champions of the cause, think of Sachin Pilot, Raghav Chadha, Mahua Moitra, Kanhaiya Kumar and others from politics.

In the corporate world, talent is plentiful. The young have become unicorns — Vijay Shekhar Sharma, Paytm; the Bansals of Flipkart fame; Ritesh Aggarwal, Oyo. Young Indians are heading leading global corporations — Satya Narayana Nadella at Microsoft;

Sundar Pichai at Alphabet and Google; besides many others. They are already champions but need to be persuaded and inducted to champion this cause.

Even in established business houses, control is going to the next generation — Roshni Nadar, HCL Technologies, Rishad Premji, Wipro. Several similar examples are available from the world of sports and entertainment. Some prominent names in the last category include Swara Bhaskar and Anurag Kashyap.

Diversified champions from amongst these need to be won over, who will highlight the underlying thought process in multiple domains and encourage its deployment. Their collective voice will have a better chance of making an impact. Therefore, there is a vital need for avenues and forums through which this can be exercised.

The key next steps, apart from the changes in the governing setup, without which nothing will happen, are winning over the younger generation, making champions from amongst them, and providing a collective forum to help make decentralisation a central artery.

The writer is a management and economic adviser

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	48,437.78	0.54
Nifty 50	14,199.50	0.47
S&P 500*	3,712.92	0.33
Dollar (₹)	73.18	-0.22
Pound Sterling (₹)	99.34	0.49
Euro (₹)	89.81	-0.04
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,969.335	0.65
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	53.12	2.03
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.850	-0.008
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.942	0.025

* As of 8:30 PM IST

RBI imposes ₹2.5 cr penalty on Bajaj Finance

The RBI has imposed a penalty of Rs 2.5 crore on Bajaj Finance, for violation of directions, including on recovery and collection practices. "This penalty has been imposed... taking into account the failure of the company to ensure that its recovery agents did not resort to harassment or intimidation of customers as part of its debt collection efforts and thereby failing to adhere to the ...directions issued by RBI," the RBI said.

Google Cloud appoints Bajwa as Apac leader



Google Cloud announced the elevation of Karan Bajwa as its new leader for Asia Pacific. He currently leads Google Cloud in India. Bajwa will lead all regional revenue and go-to-market operations for Google Cloud, including on Google Cloud Platform and Google Workspace from Jan. 5, a statement said. He succeeds Rick Harshman. Bajwa is currently based in Gurgaon, but will relocate to Singapore in 2021.

Practically raises ₹28 crore from Series B funding

Hyderabad-based edutech firm Practically on Tuesday announced to have raised around ₹28 crore in pre-Series B funding round led by Siana Capital. Existing investors YourNest Venture Capital and Exfinity Ventures also participated in the funding round. Practically co-founder Charu Noheria said revenue generation for its platform has begun in AP and TS markets, which is in the run rate of upto ₹28 crore a year.

Renault to unveil compact SUV Kiger on Jan. 28

French automaker Renault said it will unveil its upcoming compact SUV Kiger in India later this month. Renault will be globally premiering the eagerly awaited Kiger in India on January 28, the automaker said. The company plans to launch the model in India first and then follow the same in other markets. Renault said Kiger will come loaded with several smart attributes and features.



■US treasury+145 bps bonds lapped up Exim Bank sells \$ bonds at 2.25%

Mumbai, Jan. 5: The Exim Bank has started the new year on a high note raising \$1 billion through a dollar-bond sale to international investors, offering just 2.25 per cent for the ten-year money, setting a new low in pricing. The issue was oversubscribed four times or worth \$4 billion as against \$1 billion on offer, managing director David Rasquinha said, adding that in Asia the issue was oversold within three hours of the launch with the order book hitting \$1.75 billion on Monday morning.

"At 2.25 per cent (US treasury+145 bps), the coupon is a record low for any 10-year bond issuance out of the country," he said.

The issue has many a firsts, Rasquinha said, pointing to the lowest coupon (2.25 per cent per annum) ever for a large USD bond offering by a domestic issuer and is also the first investment-grade dollar bond sale from Asia ex-Japan in 2021. Besides, this is the first EMBI (Emerging Market Bond Index) eligible 144a/RegS bond from Asia ex-Japan in 2021.

Regulation S/144a bonds are issued by foreign issuers in the US debt market and are denominated in US dollars.

I-bankers are expecting higher debt money to come to domestic shores this year given the record low interest rates. Companies will also be raising money



to meet the likely capex need or repayment demands as the economy returns to normalcy after the year-long pandemic.

In January 2020, the Exim Bank had raised \$1 billion in 10-year dollar money offering US treasury plus 1.70 bps. Normally, the bank issues 5, 7 and 10-year debt to meet its project export needs.

For Exim Bank, the current issue saw the largest order book and over-subscription (four times) for a RegS issuance.

The Exim Bank, with a substantially dollarised balance sheet, is one of the largest domestic issuers of long-term debt in international debt capital markets and its paper is treated as quasi-sovereign as the bank is fully owned by the government.

The funds from the sale will be used to support project exports, overseas investment by way of long-term credit and its export lines of credit portfolio, the bank said.

Taking a cue from the massive over subscription in Hong Kong and

Singapore, the bank tightened the initial price guidance by 40 bps from T+185 bps. At close, with US investors chipping in, the issue was oversubscribed by over four times, the bank said.

As much as 55 per cent of demand came in from Asia, 29 per cent from the US and 16 per cent from the EMEA (Eastern & Middle-eastern Africa) region and 68 per cent of the issue was snapped by fund managers, 17 per cent by sovereign wealth funds, central banks and insurers, 14 per cent by banks and the remaining 1 per cent by private banks, others.

The issue is rated BBB- by Fitch and Moody's. Harsha Bangari, deputy managing director of the bank said this is the only 10-year sale by a domestic financial institution in the last one year.

"The EMBIG index eligibility of the bonds has helped in price tightening by 40 bps, demonstrating strong confidence of investors in the India story and in Exim Bank," she said.

—PTI

BEAUTY STARTUP NYKAA PLANS MEGA IPO THIS YEAR

BAIJU KALESH & ANTO ANTONY JAN. 5

Nykaa E-Retail is planning an initial public offering this year that could value the online cosmetic retailer at a minimum \$3 billion, according to people familiar with the matter. The startup founded by Falguni Nayar, a former investment banker, is working with advisers to prepare for the share sale in Mumbai, the people said. Nykaa is leaning toward a domestic listing, though an overseas share sale is also under consideration, said the people.

Deliberations are ongoing and details of the offering, including the size and timeline could change, the people said. A representative for Nykaa declined to comment.

Founded in 2012, Nykaa's platform lists more than 1,200 brands ranging from makeup, skincare to health supplements and hair dryers, according to its website, which logs 55 million monthly visits. It has six warehouses across India and receives over 13 million orders each month.

The company was preparing for an IPO in two years, its founder and chief executive officer Nayar said in 2018.

Nykaa counts TPG and tycoon Sunil Munjal's family office Hero Enterprise among its backers.

—Bloomberg

Anjan Dey chosen to head Oriental Insurance

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, JAN. 5

Public sector general insurer Oriental Insurance Company (OIC) will get a new chief as the Banks Board Bureau (BBB) has recommended Anjan Dey, director and general manager (GM) of GIC Re, for the position of chairman-cum-managing director of OIC. Besides, the BBB has also kept Suchita Gupta, GM, GIC Re, as a standby candidate for the vacancy.

The CMD post has been lying vacant since November after the then CMD S.N. Rajeswari was appointed as the member (distribution) of Irda. BBB, the official head-

hunting body for selecting CEOs of state-owned banks and insurance firms, conducted virtual interviews of five candidates on Monday to pick a CMD for the insurer.

"The members of Banks Board Bureau interfaced with 5 candidates on January 04, 2021 for the forthcoming vacancy of CMD in OICL. Keeping in view their performance in the interface and their overall experience, the Bureau recommends Anjan Dey for the position of OIC CMD and Suchita Gupta as the candidate on the reserve list for the said vacancy," the BBB announced soon after the interview on Monday.

Though Rajeswari has been appointed as the member, Irda in November, she is yet to join the Hyderabad-based insurance regulatory body as the Ministry of Finance wants a new CMD to take charge of the company before she moves to the Irda, said a ministry source.

The year 2021 is expected to witness large-scale top-notch vacancies in the PSU insurance companies, including Life Insurance Company and the Irda where Subhas Khuntia, chairman, will be completing his three-year tenure in May. There will also new CMDs in all the four PSU general insurers this year.

Brand ambassador penalised

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JAN. 5

Celebrities who endorse consumer goods as brand ambassadors will have to be cautious hereon. A consumer redressal forum in Kerala has asked a film actor to pay compensation for promoting a hair cream brand.

Malayalam actor Anoop Menon and Dhatthri Ayurveda, a Kerala-based manufacturer of personal care products, have been asked to pay Rs 10,000 each to a consumer for making "false promises" in an advertisement.

Anoop Menon had featured in an advertisement of Dhatthri Hair Cream, which claimed "lush hair

growth within six weeks".

The consumer, Francis Vadakkan, who had bought the product in January 2012 after watching Menon's advertisement, approached the District Consumer Redressal Forum in Thrissur seeking compensation of Rs 5 lakh.

He alleged that there was no improvement despite using the cream and was humiliated after being ridiculed by family and friends for buying the product.

Menon said he "never used the product". On this, the forum commented: "It is clear that the brand ambassador appeared in the advertisement without even using the product".

The Consumer Protect-

ion Act, 2019 makes the endorser of a brand liable for a misleading ads.

In another development involving brand ambassador, Adani Wilmar has paused all advertisements featuring former Indian skipper Sourav Ganguly, who has been endorsing Fortune Rice Bran Cooking Oil as a 'heart healthy oil'.

Ganguly was recently diagnosed with heart ailments. Following criticism on social media, the company said Ganguly will continue as the brand ambassador. "We have only taken a temporary break in our TV commercial till we again sit with him and take things forward," a company official said.

Job postings up in select sectors

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JAN. 5

Though some sectors like textiles, telecom and IT and software services have indicated positive growth in new job postings on a month-on-month basis, only retail has seen a growth against last year, according to employment websites.

Textiles and garments, telecom, paper, fertilisers and pesticides, IT and software services, tyres and healthcare reported positive growth in new job postings in November against the previous month, according to Naukri JobSpeak.

As per the Monster Employment Index, a few more sectors, including FMCG, food and packaged products, retail, BFSI and



home appliances too have seen positive growth. Among them, tyres, paper and banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) indicated good growth over the previous month.

However, a majority sectors continued to de-grow in terms of new job postings on a month-on-month basis. None of the sectors reported a year-

on-year growth, as per Naukri JobSpeak. However, Monster.com found retail to have seen some positive growth over the previous year.

Defence & government was the worst affected in terms of job postings both in terms of yearly and monthly performance as this sector de-grew by over 30 per cent. The hospitality, airlines, restaurants and travel sector was down by 60 per cent on a yearly basis. However, compared to October, the November postings were less negative. Travel and tourism was the worst-hit in both the surveys. Industrial products and heavy machinery too was down over 30 per cent year-on-year.

The unemployment rate,

meanwhile, rose sharply to 9.1 per cent in December 2020, the highest since the beginning of the recovery from the lockdown in June, according to CMIE, a private think-tank.

The unemployment rate stood at 10.99 per cent in June 2020. It has been coming down in the subsequent months and had touched 6.5 per cent in November.

"The influx of people looking for work swelled. The labour force increased from an estimated 421 million in November to 427 million in December. But, labour markets were not ready for this surge of six million people in the labour market. It thus left them largely unemployed," the report said.

JEEP TO LAUNCH FOUR NEW SUVs IN TWO YEARS; COMPACT SUV TO FOLLOW

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, JAN. 5

Jeep, the iconic American sports utility vehicle maker, is investing Rs 1,850 crore or \$250 million to produce four new SUVs over the next two years.

This investment is in addition to about Rs 3,289 crore or \$450 million that it has put in its India operations in five years.

"Our new investment of \$250 million will give us a competitive edge in multiple segments with our new

Jeep SUVs rolling out of Ranjangaon factory near Pune," Partha Datta, MD at FCA India, said.

He said the four new cars would be launched in India by the end of 2022. While the new Jeep Compass would be introduced on

January 7, the first ever mid-size three-row 7-seat Jeep, codenamed the H6, the iconic Jeep Wrangler and the nextgen Grand Cherokee SUVs would be assembled in Ranjangaon which would drastically reduce the prices.

Audi launches A4 sedan at ₹42.34 L

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, JAN. 5

Audi, India's third biggest luxury car maker, has lined up a raft of product launches for this year, as part of its product offensive strategy to boost sales, with models such as the A3, Q3, Q5, Q7, in the Indian market.

The German brand, which ruled the roost as numero uno, has its strategy in place for this year to take on rivals

Mercedes-Benz and BMW. Audi is set to launch a new car every other month, but will stick to a petrol-only line-up.

On Tuesday it launched the new version of its popular sedan Audi A4 with prices starting at Rs 42.34 lakh. "The fifth generation new Audi A4 is a perfect blend of class, elegance and sporty appeal. The car is equipped with the latest technology," Balbir Singh Dhillon, head of Audi India, said.



GIVING BACK | TO PLANET

Amazon founder launched his Bezos Earth Fund last year

Bezos \$10-bn gift tops 2020 charity list

Silver Spring (US), Jan. 5: The world's richest person made the single-largest charitable contribution in 2020, according to *The Chronicle of Philanthropy's* annual list of top donations—a \$10 billion gift that is intended to help fight climate change.

Amazon's founder and CEO, Jeff Bezos, whose real-time worth *Forbes* magazine estimates at roughly \$188 billion, used the contribution to launch his Bezos Earth Fund. The fund, which supports non-profits involved in the climate crisis, has paid out \$790 million to 16 groups so far, according to the *Chronicle*.

Setting aside Bezos' whopping gift, the sum

total of the top 10 donations last year, at \$2.6 billion, was the lowest since 2011, even as many billionaires vastly increased their wealth in the stock market rally that catapulted technology shares in particular last year.

According to the left-leaning Americans for Tax Fairness and the Institute for Policy Studies, from March 18 through Dec. 7, Bezos' wealth surged by 63 per cent from \$113 billion to \$184 billion.

Phil Knight, who with his wife, Penny, made the second- and third-largest donations last year, increased his wealth by about 77 per cent over the same March-to-December period. Knight and his



Jeff Bezos

wife gave more than \$900 million to the Knight Foundation and \$300 million to the University of Oregon.

Fred Kummer, founder of construction company HBE Corporation, and his wife, June, gave \$300 million to establish a foundation to support programmes at the Missouri University of Science and

Technology. Facebook's founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan, delivered the fourth-largest donation on the *Chronicle's* list: A \$250 million gift to the Center for Tech and Civic Life, which worked on voting security issues in the 2020 election.

Zuckerberg, whose wealth nearly doubled to \$105 billion in the March-to-December period, according to Americans for Tax Fairness and the Institute for Policy Studies, has been widely criticised and been called to testify before Congress for his company's handling of disinformation in the runup to the 2020 presidential election.

In the fifth spot was

Arthur Blank, co-founder of Home Depot, who gave \$200 million through his foundation to Children's healthcare of Atlanta to build a new hospital.

Bezos and the Zuckerbergs made up the next spots on last year's top 10 list, with \$100 million donations Bezos for Feeding America to aid food banks across the country and the Zuckerbergs to the same election security group.

They were followed by Stephen Ross, founder of real estate firm Related Companies; David Roux, co-founder of Silver Lake Partners, a private-equity firm, and his wife, Barbara and George and Renee Karfunkel, real-estate investors. —AP

SHORT TAKES

Saina lambasts badminton body

Bangkok: India's Saina Nehwal on Tuesday lashed out at Badminton World Federation for denying the athletes, among other things, access to trainers and physios ahead of the upcoming tournaments in Thailand and urged BWF to address the issues at the earliest.

In a series of tweets, Olympic bronze-medallist Saina expressed her displeasure at the restrictions imposed by BWF as part of its Covid-19 protocols for the bio-security bubble.

"The physios and trainers cannot meet us during the entire tour after all (al) of us have tested negative? @bwfmedia @bwf_ac. 4 weeks of this how is it possible to maintain ourselves. We want to play the tournament in good condition. Please sort this @bwfmedia," Saina tweeted.

With March being the cut-off date for Tokyo Olympics qualification, Saina is worried that the lack of proper training might have an impact on her performance. Saina said she tried contacting the BWF, but to no avail. "Practice only for an hour everyday for the entire team? Gym timings the same ... considering March being the important Olympic qualification period this is not good enough to be in good shape."

In another tweet, Saina wrote, "No Time for warm ups / taping / cool downs / stretches. we are talking about the best players in the world competing isn't it?"

"We've spent a lot of money getting the physios and trainers along with us. If they can't help us then why was this not told before?" she added. — PTI

Djokovic, Nadal to return for ATP Cup

Sydney: ATP Cup champion Novak Djokovic and runner-up Rafael Nadal are set to return for the season-opening men's team tennis event starting February 1, but the United States will be missing because of a change in format that has halved the field.

The inaugural event last year featured 24 teams and was played in three Australian cities, with Djokovic's Serbia team beating Nadal and Spain in the final at Sydney's Ken Rosewall Arena. The second edition will involve 12 teams and be played entirely at Melbourne Park amid Covid-19 restrictions, along with WTA and ATP tournaments, in the week leading into the Australian Open.

The draw will be held January 20, with teams divided into four groups. The winner of each round-robin group will advance to the semifinals. — AP

Bajrang's camp in US gets extension

New Delhi: Olympic-bound wrestler Bajrang Punia's training stint in the USA has been granted a one-month extension and will now go on till the first week of February, the Sports Authority of India said on Tuesday. Punia, who qualified for the Tokyo Games in the men's freestyle 65kg category, has been training at Cliff Kegan Wrestling Club in Michigan since December 4.

The additional one month training will cost ₹1.65 Lakhs and will be borne by the SAI. "This decision was taken at the Mission Olympic Cell meeting that took place last week," a press release from SAI said. "All facilities here are available, there is a gym, moreover I am getting very good sparring partners. The college boys who train here are good as well. I am getting access to everything I need to improve my level," Punia said. — PTI

Live on TV

CRICKET

Australia vs India: Third Test — Day One from 5 am (Thursday) on Sony Six, Ten 1, HD

Big Bash League: Perth Scorchers vs Sydney Sixers from 1.45 pm on Sony Six

FOOTBALL

Italian League: Napoli vs Spezia from 10.30 pm; AC Milan vs Juventus from 1.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

WWE

NXT: Bouts from 6.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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PACERS' PUZZLE

Shardul, Saini up for 3rd seamer's slot, Rohit replaces Mayank

Sydney, Jan. 5: The Indian team management is weighing its options for the third pacer's slot with Shardul Thakur and Navdeep Saini in contention but Rohit Sharma is certain to replace Mayank Agarwal at the top of the order against Australia in the third Test starting here on Thursday.

While Agarwal's axing was only a matter of time after seven failures in last eight Test innings, the choice for the third pacer's slot has got a bit tricky with divergent opinions emerging on who could fit the role best in absence of an injured Umesh Yadav.

A few days back, Mumbai seamer and useful lower-order batsman Shardul Thakur was considered a favourite but it is learnt that there are some senior players, who feel that Saini, India's fastest bowler by a distance, could be used to unsettle the wobbly Australian batting line-up with his raw pace.

The Indian team had a net session at the overcast Sydney Cricket Ground on the day and all eyes were on Rohit Sharma, who looked pretty comfortable against both pace and spin.

The decision on the third pacer has been primarily delayed because on Tuesday, the SCG centre strip was covered due to overcast conditions.

On Wednesday, a look at the strip and the conditions will probably help them make a decisive choice.

If the conditions are overcast and there is bit more moisture on the strip, then Thakur is expected to be preferred.

If the track is on the flatter side, Saini, with his pace and ability to reverse the old ball, could prove to be a handful against a batting order that is struggling to put up even 200 runs on the board.

If Saini plays, it will be his debut in the longest format while for Thakur, it would be like a debut as he couldn't even finish his first over when it was officially his debut two years back.

There is a third angle to



Indian pacer Mohammed Siraj (left) talks to teammate Navdeep Saini during a training session at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Tuesday, ahead of their third Test against Australia. — AFP

the pacer's debate and that is T. Natarajan, who has had a meteoric rise in the past four months.

— PTI

India expected squad (from 12 in batting order): Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane (captain), Hanuma Vihari, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin, Mohammed Siraj, Jasprit Bumrah, Shardul Thakur/Navdeep Saini.

RAHUL OUT OF SERIES WITH SPRAINED WRIST

Sydney, Jan. 5: India batsman K.L. Rahul was on Tuesday ruled out of the remaining two Tests against Australia after sustaining a wrist injury during training in Melbourne, the BCCI said.

Rahul had not played any match of the ongoing series in which the third Test starts on Thursday here. "KL Rahul sprained his left wrist while batting in the nets at the MCG during Team India's practice session on Saturday," the BCCI said in a statement.

"The wicketkeeper-batsman will not be available for the remaining two Tests of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy as he will need about three weeks time to recover completely and regain full strength," it added.

It has been learnt that the stylish right-hander suffered a sprain while facing one of the three throw-down specialists at the nets and had to call off his training session. — PTI

Langer hopeful of Warner return, Pucovski to debut

Sydney, Jan. 5: A 'warrior' that he is, David Warner has done everything to be ready and is likely to compete in the third Test against India, Australia head coach Justin Langer said on Tuesday and assured that lack of four-day cricket for the opener in the last few months is not a concern.

Langer also announced that young batsman Will Pucovski will make his Test debut on Thursday.

Both Warner and Pucovski, who was primed for Test debut in Adelaide, missed the first two Tests of the series due to a groin injury and concussion-related issues respectively.

"Very hopeful that David will be ready to go (for the third Test), he is a bit of a warrior, isn't he? I have said this since



Australia's David Warner (left) and Will Pucovski jog at a training session in Sydney on Tuesday. — AFP

day one that he is doing everything possible to be ready," Langer said at a virtual conference.

"He is moving pretty well. He is very determined to play. He loves the competition and he loves playing Test cricket.

We will get some final eyes on him at training this afternoon and we will make a discussion on that. But I would say, he (Warner) is looking very likely to play the Test match," he added. — PTI

Aussie coach lauds 'disciplined' India

Sydney, Jan. 5: The series is level for now but Australia coach Justin Langer on Tuesday said India have been distinctly well-planned and disciplined, especially in bowling, so far even as his side races to address their batting woes ahead of the third Test.

Asked about Australia's low-scoring in the current series and if that is a concern, Langer cited various factors, the biggest being India's lethal accuracy with the ball.

"...their greatest strength over the last couple of series has been their discipline. They (India) have been so well disciplined...I have loved the last two Tests because the wickets have been a contest between bat and ball and you have got to work a bit harder and that is what Test cricket is all about," Langer said.

According to Langer, a former opening batsman, India have taken a straighter line to couple of their batters and have accordingly placed their fields.

"So, I think, there is the factor of the wickets that we have played on, there is certainly some seam movement, there was a little bit of swing in both those wickets. India have (has) taken a straighter line to a couple of our batters and set the fields accordingly."

He also praised India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin for his performance so far saying it is difficult to score quickly against great bowlers.

"The great bowlers are the ones who are hard to score against and (Jasprit) Bumrah is certainly up there at the moment, Ashwin is up there at the moment, we are aware of it," he said. — PTI

Kane's double ton puts Pak in shade

Christchurch (New Zealand), Jan. 5: Kane Williamson underscored his ranking as the world's premier batsman with a masterful double century as New Zealand took control of the second Test against Pakistan on Tuesday.

In between the showers at Hagley Oval in Christchurch, Williamson was in classic form, batting for nine hours 33 minutes for his 238 and leading New Zealand to an imposing 659 for six declared to lead Pakistan by 362.

At stumps on day three, the tourists were already in trouble at eight for one, with Kyle Jamieson adding to his five-wicket haul in the first innings by removing Shan Masood for a duck.

It was a relentless performance from Williamson, who became only the second New Zealander after Brendon McCullum to score four double centuries.

Daryl Mitchell, who wondered if he would ever get a bat while Williamson was at the crease, described his skipper as "a freak who's set us up with a chance to win".

Williamson delayed the declaration until Mitchell completed his maiden century and the all-rounder said despite his unbeaten 102 off 112 balls it remained a good pitch for the bowlers and should produce a result.

"If we put it in the right areas and bang those hard

● **It was a relentless performance from Kane Williamson, who became only the second New Zealander after Brendon McCullum to score four double centuries.**

lengths, there is a lot of pace there and hopefully we can put Pakistan under some pressure and see what happens," he said.

Williamson should have been out for 177 on the first ball after the first of two rain stoppages, but as has happened several times in the Test the chance was put down, this time by Azhar Ali, who earlier in the day had dropped Henry Nicholls short of his century.

Pakistan spinner Zafar Gohar, who went for an expensive 159 off 32 overs on debut, said the fielding errors hurt.

"The dropped catches cost us. There is no reason to drop catches but it happens in cricket," he said.

"Dropping Kane Williamson cost us a lot of big runs."

Williamson and Nicholls had rebuilt the innings after New Zealand were reduced to 71 for three on Monday's second day.

— AFP

Brief scores: Pakistan 297 & 8/1 (Abid 7 batting, Abbas 1 batting, Jamieson 1/1) trail New Zealand 659/6 decl. (Williamson 237, Nicholls 157, Mitchell 102 not out).



New Zealand's Kane Williamson en route to his 237 against Pakistan on Day Three of their second Test at Hagley Oval in Christchurch on Tuesday. — AP

SA clinch series as Lankans fade

Johannesburg, Jan. 5: South Africa beat Sri Lanka by 10 wickets inside three days in the second and final Test on Tuesday to clinch the series 2-0 and gain some revenge for a surprise loss to the Sri Lankans the last time they toured.

South Africa bowled Sri Lanka out for 211 in their second innings at the start of the day at the Wanderers, leaving the Proteas with a simple target of 67 to win.

South Africa got there without losing a wicket. Aiden Markram was 36 not out and Dean Elgar 31 not out.

Sri Lanka's hopes faded when captain Dimuth Karunaratne was out soon after making a century. Karunaratne led their resistance in the second innings with his 103 but he went less than five overs into the day, and with his exit Sri Lanka lost their last six wickets for 35 runs.

Pace bowler Lungi Ngidi finished with 4/44 for South Africa.

Sri Lanka started the day 150-4, with Karunaratne on 91, and had hopes of set-

ting South Africa a reasonably challenging target on a difficult Johannesburg pitch for batsmen.

The tourists weren't able to do that as Karunaratne fell early trying a pull shot off fast bowler Anrich Nortje. He succeeded only in looping a catch to Wiaan Mulder. His overnight partner Niroshan Dickwella was out four balls later and Lanka's resistance faded.

South Africa's run chase was relatively untroubled. Markram was given out in the over before lunch to a catch in the slips by Kusal Mendis but that decision was overturned when video replays showed the ball touched the ground as Mendis took it low down.

South Africa completed a first Test series win in two years and since beating Pakistan in early 2019. A month later, they were shocked to lose 2-0 at home to Sri Lanka, who became the first Asian team to win a Test series in South Africa.

— AP

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 157 & 211 (Karunaratne 103, Ngidi 4/44) lost to South Africa 302 & 67/0 (Markram 36 not out).



Southampton's Danny Ings (right) celebrates after scoring against Liverpool in an EPL match on Monday. — AP

Prowse's angled free-kick into the box and Ings perfectly hooked his shot over Alisson Becker into the far corner. Southampton had key

absentees themselves with goalkeeper Alex McCarthy missing due to a positive test for coronavirus, while Oriol Romeu, Jannik

Vestergaard and Che Adams were out injured.

Fraser Forster was making his first Saints appearance since May 2019, but the former England international was rarely tested to earn his clean sheet.

The visitors could easily have found themselves 2-0 down before the break when Southampton substitute Nathan Tella was inches away from his first senior goal with a curling effort from the edge of the area that flew just wide.

If Reds were too passive in the first-half, they started the second-half with the intensity they have made their trademark in recent seasons as Saints were pinned inside their own half. — AFP