# **DECCAN** nicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

**ANANTAPUR | TUESDAY | 19 JANUARY 2021** 



Forecast: Cloudy sky. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 30/16 °C

Rainfall: Nil

# COVID-19

(+141)(+10,800)1,05,71,658 1,52,588

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS (+206)(+2)

TS: 2,91,872

(+81)(+1)AP: 8,86,066 7,141

1,579

CASES AROUND THE WORLD



219 worldometers.info/

coronavirus

#### STROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttarayana Tithi: Pushya Shuddha Shashti Star: Uttarabhadra till 9.55 am Varjyam: 11.16 pm to Durmuhurtam: 9.06 am to 9.51 am; 11.09 pm to 12.01 am Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

**HIJRI CALENDAR** Jamadi- ul- Akhir 5,1442 AH **PRAYERS** Fajar: 5.08 am

**Zohar:** 12.05 pm **Asar:** 4.11 pm Maghrib: 5.47 pm

**Isha:** 7.02 pm **SUNRISE** TOMORROW 6.17 AM SUNSET TODAY 5.49 PM **MOONSET 8.51 PM** 



Forget Bihar... now our priority is Assam and Bengal!

SHORT

TAKES

#### Man held for fake **GST invoices**

New Delhi: GST officers have arrested one person for operating 46 fake firms and passing on fake input tax credit worth ₹82.23 crore, the Finance Ministry said on Monday. The officers of Central Goods and Services Tax Commissionerate, Delhi East, unearthed a network of fictitious firms being used to generate and

#### 3 killed in J&K encounter: IGP

pass on fake ITC.

Srinagar: The three youths killed in a gunfight with security forces in Lawaypora last month were involved in militancy, Inspector General of Police, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said on Monday and added that police will soon convince their parents of it with concrete

#### **India steps up Arunachal infra**

New Delhi: India, responding to a TV report that China constructed a village in a border area occupied by it since 1959 but which is part of Arunachal Pradesh, said it had "seen recent reports on the construction work" and that it "too has stepped up border infra-

structure, including the

construction of roads,

bridges, etc.

#### NATION 4

**Maharashtra** eyes 'K'taka occupation

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



#### WORLD 5

**Navalny decries** arrest on arrival

#### SPORTS 8

**High five for Siraj in Brisbane Test** 



Vol. 22 No. 148 Established 1938 | 16 pages | ₹6.00

CM: School toilets

#### **Back to school**



Students wait at a bus stop after a long time to attend classes in a school on Bandar Road in Vijayawada on Monday. Classes which stopped due to the pandemic have resumed.

# Vaccination first, polls next: State

#### AP promises HC better poll turnout after vaccination is over

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 18

Advocate general Sriram has informed the AP High Court that the state government is now fully committed to conducting the Covid-19 vaccination programme in a

While this is the first priority, the state would also ensure better turnout of voters in the gram pan-chayat polls if the elections are held after completion of the vaccination

This is why the state gov-

**PALANISWAMI** 

TO MEET MODI

**AHEAD OF POLLS** 

Tamil Nadu Chief Mini-

ster Edappadi K. Palanis-

wami's scheduled visit to

Delhi on Monday, osten-

sibly to invite Prime Mi-

nister Narendra Modi to

inaugurate former Tamil

Nadu chief minister

Jayalalithaa memorial

and to discuss plans for

the state, led to tongues

wagging in the political

The grapevine had it

that he has gone to explain to Modi the

DC CORRESPONDENT

Board of Intermediate

Education (BIE) issued

standard operating proce-

dures (SOP) to be followed

by all junior colleges affil-

iated to it to contain the

BIE secretary V. Rama

Krishna said junior col-

lege premises must be dis-

infected, and fever check

He said two automated

hand wash instruments

must be provided and

washable cloth masks dis-

tributed to students and

He urged that posters be

put up on precautions to be followed and stressed

on ensuring students or

staff stay home if they had

fever, cough, sore throat

or any illness.

done at entry points.

spread of Covid-19.

VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 18

ernment is raising objections against the state election commission (SEC) move to hold the polls in February, he said.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Arup Kumar Goswami and Kumar Goswami and Justice Ch. Praveen Kumar held the hearing on Monday as the SEC challenged the interim order issued by the single judge suspending the election schedule for gram panchayat polls in four phases in February.

Advocate general S. Sriram informed the court that the AP government was duty-bound to follow the guidelines issued by the Centre on the Covid-19 vaccination programme. Under the circumstances, the government was not expected to take any decision that would disrupt vaccination programme.

He said the state government was not in a position to simultaneously take up the Covid-19 vaccination programme and the gram panchayat polls.

If polls are held alongside vaccination programme, the voter turnout would not cross 50 per cent. The people would be afraid of coming out for voting as it involved a risk to their health.

The advocate general said if the polls are held after completion of the ongoing vaccination programme, it would help enhance the voter turnout.

The AG explained to the court as to how the state had carried out a dry run based on the guidelines from the Centre before taking up the vaccination

Page x: 3.7 lakh health staff need to be vaccinated

ment, Mr Adhikari vowed

Ms Banerjee told a TMC

rally, "Nandigram is a lucky place for me. If I con-

test here... how is it? It is

my wish. I was thinking of

place... Our victory in the

Assembly polls will start

because I love the

# Jagan, Shah meet in New Delhi today

To discuss irregularities in Amaravati land

DC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy on Monday directed officials to

accord top priority to clean toilets in schools

and said students would

otherwise be discouraged

to come in for classes.

VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 18

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 18

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will visit New Delhi to meet Union home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday.

The CM will hold discussions with Shah on matters like the Amaravati land scam wherein top names from the judiciary are said to be involved. Sources in the CMO said the AP government had sent a request to Shah for an appointment to discuss on several issues. The CM would be accompanied by Advocate-General

The visit gained significance also as AP is witnessing a series of attacks on temples and desecration of idols, and DGP Gautam Sawang had blamed those from the Opposition Telugu Desam and the BJP for their sus-pected roles to whip up religious sentiments.
Notably, when BJP lead-

ers led by AP party chief Somu Veerraju went to visit the temple at Ramateertham in

Vizianagaram district for a study of the scene where the idol of Lord Rama was must be cleaned CM underlined the importance for hygiene in schools. Officials must oversee all requisite repair works including plumbing and sanitation. Companies with requisite experience and expertise

The CM reviewed this matter as also the Nadu-Nadu and other schemes with education minister Adimulapu Suresh and senior officials here. The

Procedures (SOP) for maintenance of school toilets must be in place. Page 2: App to monitor

in proper maintenance of

toilets must be roped in.

Operating

toilet cleaning

Standard

vandalised, the AP police had blocked their way. The BJP leaders raised a hue and cry over the police action and pointed out that the state government had allowed YSRC MP V. Vijayasai Reddy, some ministers and even TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu to visit the spot.

MPNarasimaha Rao had com-

minister on the issue. The government requires the Centre's support on many matters of importance. It needs Central aid in getting the President's nod for the AP Disha Bill meant to toughly deal with those involved in violence against women and chil-

■ Page 2: Capital relocation may be discussed

## SC lets Delhi cops decide on Jan. 26 farmers' protest

SANJAY KAW | DC NEW DELHI, JAN. 18

The Supreme Court on Monday left it to the Delhi police to decide on the entry of protesting farmers into the national capital on Republic Day, as it heard the government's plea seeking an injunction against the tractor rally planned for January

26. Sticking to their stand, the union leaders said the protesting farmers had a constitutional right to take out their tractor rally peacefully and said thousands of people will par-ticipate in the event. The proposed 50-km "kisan rally" will be led by women-driven tractors on Outer Ring Road and won't disrupt the day's big parade on Rajpath. Farmers have started

organising mock rallies in parts of Punjab and Haryana encourage more people to join the 'kisan tractor march" in large numbers.

There are indications the tractor rally may also figure in the tenth round of negotiations on Tuesday between the farmers and Central ministers. The two sides have failed to reach any understanding in nine rounds of talks over the repeal of three Central farm laws.

In the Supreme Court, a three-judge bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad Arvind Bobde on Monday said the Delhi police was at liberty to invoke its powers under the law and it has the power to deal with law and order situations. "Who should be allowed and the number of people to enter are all matters of law and order, to be decided by the police. We are not the first authority, Chief Justice Bobde said.

The chairman and mem-

bers of the privilege com-

mittee along with the col-

district officials on imple-

mentation of the protocol

lector held a review with

#### **3 VACCINE VIALS BROKEN DURING TRANSPORT**

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, JAN 18

Three vials of Covid vaccine, containing 30 doses, are stated to have broken vnije being carried to village Pithapuram mandal of Godavari Monday.

Sources said a Primary Health Centre supervi sor took six vials of the vaccine from the PHC to the Community Health Centre in Pithapuram on Monday for immunising ASHA and sanitation workers in the area. On reaching Pithapu-

ram, the supervisor found three vials of the vaccine missing. Later, the vials were found broken. Following this, district immunisation offi-cer Dr V. Aruna inquired into the matter. She told Deccan Chronicle that when the vials were being transported, they got broken as they had fallen down. Dr Aruna disclosed that each vial contains 10 doses.

#### **MYSTERY ILLNESS** REPORTED IN W. **GODAVARI VILLAGE**

DC CORRESPONDENT BHIMADOLU, JAN, 18

As many as 10 Pulla villagers suffered from the mysterious disease that was reported in Eluru last month.

According to sources, they collapsed suddenly and became unconscious on Monday. They were admitted to Primary Health Centre (PHC) at Pulla in West Godavari.

PHC medical officer Dr Leela Prasad told this correspondent that five to six persons fainted because of fits and four unconscious However, they recovered within minutes and were sent home after treatment.

He said that water pollution may be one of the causes. Another version is that it could have happened because of food poisoning.

# Mamata challenges rebel Adhikari in his home turf Soon after her announce-

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR and D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, JAN. 18 RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, JAN. 18

> In a move that is being seen as a masterstroke to Shubhendu Adhikari's desertion of her party and joining the BJP, Trinamul Congress chief Mamata Banerjee on Monday announced that she would contest the forthcoming Assembly polls from Nandigram, adding that she will also try to contest from her home constituency, Bhowanipore, which elected her in 2011 and 2016.

> > Use of gloves and masks

is compulsory and college

authorities weer asked to

soaps, sanitisers and dis-

He urged enough run-

ning water be kept for

He directed suspension of morning assembly and

junior colleges having

less than 100 students in

both first and second

years be permitted to con-

If there are 500 students,

classes must be held in

two sessions with the first

session from 8 am to 1 pm

for science stream and second session for arts

stream from 1 pm to 6 pm

■ Page 3: SOP for colleges

with over 500 students

or vice versa.

duct classes from 8 am to 1

washing hand in toilets.

infectants available.

sufficient hand

difficulties in allowing Dhi-nakaran-led AMMK Mr Adhikari is the MLA with of Nandigram in East

SoPs for Inter

colleges to start



In her first visit to Mr Adhikari's home turf after his induction into the BJP, Ms Banerjee said that Nandigram is "lucky" for her since her movement against forcible land acquisition there ousted the Communist regime a

from here. It is a reincarnation of Nandigram. I will field a good candidate in Bhowanipore which is also a place of my affection. It is like my elder sister while Nandigram is the younger one. I will contest polls from both the

constituencies, if I can.'

## PROTOCOL | BREACH | Lodges complaint with privileges committee

ROJA COMPLAINED to

Kakani Govardhan Reddy

stituency were not inviting

that officials in her con-

her for meetings. She

committee chairman

# Roja rues she is ignored

**DC CORRESPONDENT** TIRUPATI, JAN. 18

R.K. Roja, the YSR Congress Nagari legislator Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation chairperson, got emotional before the Andhra Pradesh legislative privileges committee meeting in Tirupati on

She said the district officials were insulting her by not following the protocol guidelines vis-æ-vis their dealings with her as a leg-Roja complained to com-

mittee chairman Kakani Govardhan Reddy that officials in her constituency were not inviting her for She wasn't invited to pro-

grammes and meetings of the Tirumala Tirupati

development works in her constituency For instance, she was not invited to the TTD employ-

Chittoor

Narayan

ees house-site allotment The meeting was held at Padmavati guest house. Govardhan Reddy later told the media that the protocol violation matter was

wasn't invited to programmes and meetings of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams.

"These issues do not

come under the purview of the privileges committee and were referred to the concerned departments.'

Govardhan Reddy said the onus is on the priviimmediately taken up with leges committee to safe collector Dr Bharat Gupta guard the freedom and dignity of the house as also its

Devasthanams, even on and he promised to do the needful. He said Roja raised issues related to development

vis-&-vis MLAs in the district. Speaking to the media, the committee chairman said they haven't received any major complaint from legislators in Chittoor district on the protocols being followed by the district

administration. 'The district administra tion has to provide information to legislators when they take up welfare activities. The privilege com-mittee will take up such complaints from MLAs,

> Page 2: Committee to meet TTD officials

SHORT TAKES

#### **Srilakshmi promoted**

as principal secretary Vijayawada: The state government on Monday promot-ed IAS official Y. Srilakshmi as principal secretary. Srilakshmi who was arrested

by the Central Bureau of Investigation on charges of corruption was retained as Secretary in view of cases though all her batchmates were promoted. Chief Secretary Adityanath Das issued orders promoting Srilakshmi with a rider that the move is subject to the outcome of pending court cases. The Department of Personnel and Training rules permit the conditional promotion. She is retained in her current posting in municipal administration and

#### **Thakur takes charge**

as RTC vice-chairman

Vijayawada: Senior IPS officer R.P. Thakur assumed charge as vice-chairman and managing director of the APSRTC here on Monday. He reviewed the status of its operations and financial position with the senior officials. Speaking on the occasion, he stated that the road transport corporation was one of the best organisations in the state as it is operating 45 lakh km daily with 12,000 buses transport-ing nearly 64 lakh passen-gers daily. He also reviewed the operations and financial status of the RTC in the post-Covid-19 lockdown scenario. He assured efforts to improve the organisation and also the welfare of the employees. Earlier, he thanked Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for giving him the opportunity to serve the government.

#### **Gowtham sworn in as**

**AP FiberNet chairman** 

Vijayawada: P. Gowtham Reddy was sworn-in as chairman of AP FiberNet Corporation Limited at a programme held at Thummalapalli auditorium here on Monday. Addressing the people, he announced that they were aiming to provide Internet, Cable TV and telephone connections to every household in the coming years and added that at present, they were having 10 lakh connections out of a total of 1.25 crore cable TV connections in the state. Referring to the planned expansion of the Internet, cable TV and telephone services to every village in the state, he said that in ₹450 plan, 30 MBPS speed and 300 GB Internet collection to be provided while in ₹599 plan, unlimited 50 MBPS speed Internet

#### **TTD CHAIRMAN BLAMES TD ON HOUSING ISSUES**

connection to be provided.

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, JAN. 18

Tirumala Tirupati Devastha nams Board chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy has accused main opposition party Telugu Desam of creating hurdles in Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's proposal to distribute house sites to homeless poor throughout the state. "The CM will overcome all impediments towards doing justice to the poor," he declared.

Subba Reddy was participating in a house sites distribution programme on Monday at Komadolu village in Eluru Assembly constituency. He pointed out that no Chief Minister in the past has taken up such a huge programme for homeless poor. However, for-mer chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu is unable to digest the huge popularity the scheme is attracting for Jagan Mohan Reddy, he maintained.

Presiding over the function, Deputy Chief Minister Alla Kalikrishna Srinivas said under the housing distribution programme, which will go on for one month in the state, 2.56 lakh house sites are being distributed in West Godavari district. Of these, 31,000 sites have been earmarked only for the Eluru Assembly constituency (which is represented by Kalikrishna Srinivas).

Those present at the function included joint collectors G. Lakshmisha, Keerthi Chekuri and G. Rajakumari.

Meanwhile, East Godavari district collector D. Muralid-har Reddy has instructed officials to complete distribution of house site pattas by January 20. Reviewing the progress of distributing house sites and deploying mobile vehicles, he warned that stringent action will be taken against those government personnel who neglect these programmes.

New release



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, association president Venkataramireddy and others release AP Secretariat Association Dairy at the camp office on Monday.

# **Face-tracking cams to** be set up near temples

VDCs set up in various villages to secure places of religious worship

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, JAN. 18

Kadapa district superintendent of police Karur Karunapathi Nagendra Kumar Anburajan on Monday underlined that police are keeping a close watch on temples and places of worship in the district.

He pointed out that Village Defence Committees (VDCs) have been set up in various villages for securing places of religious worship, including temples, chapels and mosques.
The SP stated that dis-

trict superintendents of police and circle inspectors are reviewing security at all temples and places of worship at the field level. Visiting temples and prayer halls during the night time and guiding VDCs will be among their tasks. A vigil has been kept on thugs, suspects and conspirators Kadapa district igh face-tracking through cameras.

He said Endowments Department officials have been asked to take immediate steps for setting up CCTV cameras, disclosing that of total 4,127 places of worship, 1,044 CCTVs have already been installed at churches, mosques and other places of worship in the district. Work is underway to install cameras at the remaining places of wor-

He said patrolling is being carried out by offi-

# 5 more held for spreading rumours on idols damage

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, JAN. 18

Prakasam district police arrested five persons from various places for engaging in false propaganda via social media over damage to the idols of Goddess Lakshmi and Narasimha Swamy placed on an arch near the Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple at Singarayakonda a few days ago.

Singarayakonda police had booked a case against 33 persons (24 persons for false postings on Facebook, five persons on twitter and four on YouTube), charging them with hurting the sentiments of devotees via the social media. Eight persons were arrested on January 5.

Police arrested five more persons from different parts of the state on Monday. They were Thotakura Anil Kumar (36) of Ongole, Mandadapu Srinivasa Rao (42) of Guntur, Chenchennagari Naresh Kumar Reddy (27) of Ananthapur, Budda Devendra Kumar (38) of

cers from the sub-inspector to additional SP level. Anburajan appealed to

TRIDENT AT NOOKALAMMA TEMPLE DC CORRESPONDENT separated from his wife KAKINADA, JAN. 18 for the past few years. He

YOUTH ARRESTED FOR REMOVING

The local police arrested 39-year-old Vanumu Rao Lakshmana Pagadalapeta on Monday on the charge of removing the trident (Trisul) from a

hand of the goddess at Nookalamma Temple in Kondaiahpalem area here. Circle inspector P. inspector Eswarudu Lakshmana Rao worked as daily labourer and was

Visakapatnam

Eswarudu said the accused was identified from CCTV footage. Police registered a case.

came to Kondaiahpalem for work and consumed

liquor in the evening. In a

drunken state, he reached

up to the idol positioned

outside the temple and

removed the trident. In the

process, a part of the hand of the goddess was also

broken.

Nagam-Bodicherla allikarjun (23) of Kadapa district. Prakasam SP Siddharth Kaushal said the rest of

the accused would be identified and arrested using technology and legal action against them would follow. Meanwhile, EO of the

Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple at Singarayakonda has explained that the damage to the idols was due to the blowing off of the cement scales on the arch built 20 years ago.

The arch was to be repaired two years ago. But, the work could not be done last year due to the Covid-19 spread. Police said some media persons others spread and rumours about the damage to idols even after additional SP B. Ravi Chandra explained the reasons for the damage.

concerned police officers or dial 100 or his own

people that they inform mobile number 9440796900 as soon as they realise any

# TD, BJP protest over removal of balipeetham at Kadiri temple

DC CORRESPONDENT ANANTAPUR, JAN. 18

There was tension in Kadiri town when a group of protestors owing allegiance to Telugu Desam, Bharatiya Janata Party, and other organisations mobbed the historic Lord Narasimha Swamy temple on Monday. The protests were against removal of the balipeetham (sacrificial

of temple as part of road widening works.
The issue had been sim-

mering since Sunday after supporters of BJP, TDP and allied organisations expressed opposition to removal of the centuries' old balipeetham.

Even though **Endowment Department** and temple executive officer (EO) announced that balipeetham is not being would removed but remain at the temple,

protests continued unabated on Monday too. Telugu Desam in-charge Venkata BJP leaders also landed

Kandikunta Prasad led a group of his party activists demanded action against temple EO Venkateswar Reddy, who had earlier announced the decision to remove balipeetham for road widening; but retracted his statement on Sunday. "Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple has a centuries-old history. This is where Lord Narasimha saved Prahlada from his demon father Hiranya Kasyap, Venkata Prasad declared.

up at the temple demanding action against authorities for their failure in ensuring continuing of temple traditions. BJP leader G. Devanand demanded tht the state government withdraw the proposal for removing the

#### **APP TO MONITOR TOILET CLEANING** IN SCHOOLS

From page 1

Officials informed the CM that a special mobile app has been designed to monitor maintenance of school toilets. Committees were also set up at state, district, school and college levels

for the purpose.

The CM was informed by officials that a special mobile app has been developed to monitor the attendance of students in schools.

The record would be uploaded on the app every day to enable both teachers and parents have a regular check. The CM asked officials to ensure a system of messaging parents in case the wards failed to case the wards failed to turn up at school. Volunteers may be assigned the task of finding out the health condition of students if they failed to reach school.

Jagan said officials must take a decision on reopening of schools from the first half of February and on conducting the classes. Officials were also told to finalise tenders for Vidya Kanuka to ensure prompt delivery of kits.

THE RECORD would be uploaded on the app every day to enable both teachers and parents have a regular check.

VOLUNTEERS MAY be assigned the task of finding out the health condition of students if they failed to reach

#### **STATE CAPITAL RELOCATION MAY BE DISCUSSED**

From page 1

Central help is also required for abolition of the AP Legislative Council as the Assembly had already passed a resolution to this effect. The state's plans to relocate the administrative capital

Visakhapatnam may also come up for discussion between the CM and Shah, according to

#### **HOUSE PRIVILEGE PANEL TO MEET** TTD OFFICIALS

From page 1

The chairman said the committee conducted its first meeting in Amaravati and followed up on the complaints Speaker. The committee would conduct a meet-ing with TTD officials on Tuesday. He said Chief Minister

Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has released ₹1 crore each for 175 MLAs in the state from the CM's Disaster Relief Fund. Govardhan

Reddy directed district offi-cials to follow protocol and extend privileges to legislative members and resolve the issues raised by the MLAs. Committee members M. Vishnu, Venkata Chinna Appala Naidu, V. Vara Prasad, Shilpa Chakrapani Reddy were among those present.

## Ganta skips NTR death anniversary in party office

**DC CORRESPONDENT** VISAKHAPATNAM, JAN. 18

Visakhapatnam North MLA Ganta Srinivasa Rao skipped the death anniversary meeting organised in TDP urban office on Monday. He, however, was seen at the garlanding function on beach road along with other MLAs Velaga-pudi Ramakrishnababu, P.V.G.R. Naidu

(Ganababu) and former MLA Palla Srinivasa Rao. After garlanding the statue, Ganta Srinivasa Rao straight away went to his constituency where blood donation camp was

organised. We were not surprised at his absence. He has been keeping a distance from all party activities when rumours of his RAO'S CLOSE aides defended his absence stating that he was busy in attending other programmes held in connection with NTR's death anniversary.

joining YSRCP were making rounds in politi-cal circles," said a senior leader of the party about Ganta Srinivasa Rao. But the former minis-

ter's close aides defended his absence stating that Srinivasa Rao was busy in attending other progra mmes in connection with the death anniversary of their founder.

The state observed the death anniversary and attendance of party workers and sympathisers was good, said party vice-president Pasarla Prasad.



Vizag city MLAs Ganta Srinivasa Rao, Velagapudi Ramakrishna Babu and P.V.G.R. Naidu (Ghana Babu) along with TDP activists pay tributes to TDP Chief N.T. Rama Rao on his death anniversary at the beach road in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

## TD cadre pay rich tributes to NTR

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, JAN. 18

A blood donation camp was organised under the auspices of Telugu youth. Party leaders anointed and paid homage to the NTR statue while under the auspices of Balakrishna Family Association's state president Peeraiah, TD leaders distributed clothes to sanitation

Lingareddy, president of the Telugu Desam Kadapa Parliam entary Party, said that NTR gave a new definition to politics while state executive secretary Balishetti Hariprasad

said that NTR lit up millions of houseĥolds. Kadapa constituency incharge V.S. Ameer Babu, former director of fishcorporation Yatagiri Ramprasad and others participated.

Tributes were paid on Road in Pottipadu Pottipadu Road in Proddatur, Kadapa dis-trict. Proddatur con-stituency in-charge Dr. G.V. Praveen Kumar said that soldiers will work tirelessly for realisation of the aspirations of the great leader He was accompanied by

secretary V.S. state Mukhtiar and party town president E.V. Sudhakar

## Bharat Ratna for NTR, urges cadre

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, JAN. 18

Telugu Desam Party leaders and cadre in East and West Godavari districts paid rich tributes to party founder and former chief minister N.T. Rama Rao (NTR) on his death anniversary on Monday.

MLC Chikkala Ramachandra Rao, and senior leaders Jyothula Naveen Kumar, Vanamadi Venkateswara Rao (Kondababu), Datla Buchiraju and others garlanded the statue NTR near Zilla Parishad centre and paid homage.

Ramachandra Rao said

that NTR played an unforgettable role in Indian politics and he himself drafted principles and ideologies to uplift the poor and earned the selfrespect of Telugu people. He urged the Union gov-ernment to confer NTR with a posthumous Bharat Ratna. Kondababu said that NTR pioneered several welfare schemes for the poor.

Meanwhile, Rajamahendravaram, former GUDA chairman Ganni Krishna garlanded the statue of NTR near Arts College gate. He said that NTR took the reputation of Telugus to New

## MLC BTech Ravi released on bail

KADAPA, JAN. 18

MLC BTech Ravi suggested to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy that the time allotted for the oppression of TDP leaders should be put on the

farmers' welfare. He was remanded in Kadapa Central Jail and released on bail on

Speaking to reporters at the Kadapa Central Jail on Monday evening, he said that the CM had not been able to solve the murder case of his own Vivekananda

Reddy so far and urged him to focus on it first. He criticised Jagan Mohan Reddy for being the only person to register SC/ST atrocity cases against TDP leaders in the state. BTech Ravi said that

when he was arrested at the Chennai airport, the police officers said that it was a case of SC and ST atrocities and later said that it was a case of riots. Highly educated police

officers said it was inappropriate to play lies. Earlier, the Pulivendula court had granted bail in three cases registered against BTech Ravi.

## **COVID I JABS** Lots of manpower, machinery required for taking up drive 3.7L health staff need to be vaccinated

gramme.

From page 1

The onerous task involved vaccination of 3.7 lakh healthcare workers, seven lakh frontline workers, 95 lakh ordinary individuals above age 50 and 45 lakh people aged below 50 with multiple health issues, in a phased manner.

Based on the availability of vaccine doses and the response from targeted persons, the government would go ahead with the vaccination programme. He also informed the court that as the two doses of vaccine are to be

of 28 days, it would take time to complete the exer-

The AG referred to SEC Ramesh Kumar's stand that as the election process was already started, there should be no interference with it. The Supreme Court had made it clear as to what the circumstances are under which courts could intervene in such matters, he said, and argued that the state government was according top priority to protecting the lives of the

**BASED ON** the availability of vaccine doses and the response from targeted persons, the government would go ahead with the vaccination programme.

THE SUPREME Court had made it clear as to what the circumstances are under which courts could intervene in such matters, he said, and argued that the state government was according top priority to protecting the lives of the people.

Assistant solicitor generthe lives of the people is al N. Harinath informed more important. SEC senior counsel B. the court that lots of manpower and machinery are required for taking up vaccination

Adinarayana Rao said the SEC was conducting gram panchayat polls as part of its Constitutional respon-Elections could be held sibility and asked as to what personal benefit the any time but safeguarding

ing polls as per present schedule. After all, his kin were not contesting the SEC senior counsel D.V.

SEC could derive by hold-

Sitharama Murthy told the court that the state government made the SEC a respondent in its peti-tion in his individual capacity and asked as to how motives could be attributed to him when he was only discharging his duty.
The court fixed the next

hearing of the case for January 19 and asked SEC counsel to file his reply.

#### Two killed in separate mishaps

**Visakhapatnam:** Two persons were killed on the spot in two separate road accidents in Visakhapatnam on Monday. Reports said 21 year old Ramesh Kumar, pillion riding a motorcycle, suffered severe head injuries and died on the spot when RTC bus going towards Vizianagaram from RTC Complex knocked the motorcycle coming in the opposite direction. A retired ASI identified as K Rama Rao, who was riding the motorcycle, suffered injuries and rushed to hospital. The police said he was saved because of the helmet. In another incident, 65 year old Y. Demudu of Naiduthota died on the spot when a bus knocked him down while he was crossing the road.

#### **Car skids off ghat** road, 3 injured

Visakhapatnam: Three tourists suffered injuries when the car in which they were travelling skidded off the ghat road near Paderu in Visakhapatnam agency in the early hours of Monday. They hail from Vizianagaram and on the way to new tourist spot Vanjangi. The Paderu police registered a case and questioned them for over speeding on the ghat road which led to the accident. Earlier, they were given first aid at the local

#### 10 arrested for betting in cockfights

Visakhapatnam: The Visakhapatnam rural police arrested 10 persons involved in cockfights and betting at Venkatapuram under Munagapaka Mandal and Kaligotla village under Devarapalle Mandal in the district on Monday. The police seized 10 fighting roosters and ₹4,000 cash from the punters. The organisers of the cockfights were charged under AP Gaming Act of 1974. The police also nabbed eight persons for playing the game of cards at Annavaram village under Kotavurata in the district and seized over ₹17,000 cash from

#### **500 litres of** hooch destroyed

Visakhapatnam: The officials of various enforcement wings destroyed over 500 liters of jaggery wash in parts of Ramabhadrapuram in Vizianagaram district. The officials also seized over 100 liters of hooch and nabbed wo persons for transporting the hooch. They said that they will intensify the raids to destroy the hooch brewing centers in the district.

#### **Top Army official** visits ENC

Visakhapatnam: Lieutenant General C.P. Mohanty, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOCin-C), Southern Command arrived Visakhapatnam on a two-day visit to Eastern Naval Command (ENC) on Monday. The GOC-in-C interacted with Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command and discussed the complete spectrum of security issues. The visit assumes significance as the Indian Armed Forces shift towards integrating all components

into theatre specific

commands.

### For road safety



Tourism minister Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao flags off the bike rally by officials and staff from RTO office to mark the Road Safety Awareness programmer at district collectorate in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

# Intermediate classes begin for 1st year

#### All class 10 students were promoted due to pandemic

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, JAN. 18

Classes for first year Intermediate students started in the two Godavari districts on Monday. This included 324 colleges in East Godavari and 211 in West Godavari, inclusive of both government and pri-

It must be noted that students of Class X were all promoted due to Covid-19.

Intermediate regional inspecting officer of East Godavari I. Sarada said that the second phase of admissions would be held from January 18 to 25 while summer holi-Saturdays have been can-celled up to May 31. She said that private and unaided colleges should run from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm and collect fees as prescribed by the govern-

Sarada said that college managements which accepted admissions

**CPI SECY ASKS** 

**JOIN TRACTOR** 

**RALLY IN DELHI** 

DC CORRESPONDENT

secretary

Ramakrishna has called

upon farmers in the state to participate in the tractor rally in

Delhi on Republic Day,

January 26, to express solidarity with farmers

agitating against the

controversial agricul-

ture bills in northern

He was addressing a

round-table meeting here on Monday under the auspices of the Communist Party of

India to demand that the

Union government repeal the three new and

controversial agricul-

ture laws. Ramakrishna

underlined the need to

extend support to the

farmers waging a war

braving adverse winter

weather conditions in

India.

NELLORE, JAN. 18

**FARMERS TO** 

SOP for colleges with over 500 pupil

From Page 1

The junior colleges having more than 500 stuto conduct classes in two sessions from 8 am to 1 pm and from 1 pm to 6 pm and science and arts streams in alternate on Wednesday and Friday for one batch and on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday for another Health check up must

offline should upload details of the students through Jnanabhoomi She said that as many as 45,000 students were admitted in first year Intermediate in the first demic year 2020-21. Accordingly, commencement of admission will start from Jan. 18 and will be completed by Meanwhile, Godavari

be done fortnightly dur-

ing Saturday and exami-nation protocols like

checking of temperature

and others must be fol-

In a separate development, the BIE announced

the second and final

phase of schedule of

admissions for the aca-

West regional Intermediate officer B. Prabhakar said that the admission details are in the uploading process and all instructions have been issued to private

Meanwhile, the government fixed tuition fees in ment fixed tultion lees in aided and cooperative junior colleges for the academic year 2019-20. Aided colleges should only collect Rs. 1, 560 for first year and Rs. 1,716 for record year Private and second year. Private and cooperative junior colleges should collect only ₹3,119 for first year and

₹3, 432 for second year. However, no private junior college is following these instructions and thousands of rupees are being collected as tuition fees. In fact, private junior colleges started the first year Intermediate classes two months back and are collecting fees without considering the holidays.

According to a parent, although they were closed up to October, the institutions were collecting fees even for months when they were closed. He said that the government should directly collect the fees from parents and guardians and remit

# Women activists take out bike rally against farm laws

**DC CORRESPONDENT** VISAKHAPATNAM, JAN. 18

Activists representing several women organisations took out a bike rally from Gandhi statue at RTC Complex to the collectorate Visakhapatnam

Monday demanding repeal of the farm laws. The rally was flagged off by former AU Law College professor S Nirmala. Later, a meeting was held at the collectorate.

M Lakshmi said the new laws would lead to corporatization of the agriculture sector, depriving the livelihood of the farm labourers. In the process, this would hit the food security system of the country.

State president of POW

She said women in the agriculture sector comprised 60 per cent of the workforce but only 12



Women from various organisations take part in a bike rally in support of farmers who are protesting against the central government, during the Women Farmers' Day near GVMC Gandhi Statue Junction in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

per cent was recognised work and no food. as farmers and the rest have no rights on the lands. She said farmers fear the new laws would the country and many would be left with no

president of AIDWA B Prabhavathi, Mahila Chaitanva secretary D. Lalitha and destroy agriculture in Mahila Samakhya executive president

#### them at the 2,830th step. "The devotees alleged that some four to five thieves had followed them in the

alleges robbery in Tirupati

**Kurnool-based devotee group** 

group, who were on a pil-grimage to Lord dark for a while and flashed torch lights on their faces grimage to Lord Venkateswara's abode in Tirumala, alleged that thieves tried to rob them when they had reached a pitch-dark point on the pedestrian route. They said, one among the thieves when they were trekking up along the Alipiri pedeshas tried to snatch away a gold chain from a 13-yeartrian route leading to the hill town, late on Sunday old boy in their group, but According to the police, a devotee identified as Sunil they managed to run to safety and dialled 100 for help", Tirumala II-town CI Mr Chandra Sekhar told from Kurnool was trekking up to Tirumala via Alipiri pedestrian route and his this newspaper.

On receiving information, tives late on Sunday night the II-town police led by the when a group of unknown CI reached Sunil's family

collecting details from the devotees, we combed the vicinity but found nothing. As the place was located near the link road, we sus-pect that thieves might have escaped on that route. However, we have intensified the patrolling on the pedestrian route", the CI

said. Meanwhile, the devotee family requested the TTD and Tirumala police to enhance the pedestrian routes' security. It may be mentioned here that the temple body has recently taken up works to rejuvenate the shelter along the trekking route from Alipiri

#### 14,606 HEALTH **STAFF GET COVID VACCINE**

wife, two children and rela-

A Kurnool-based devotee-

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 18

Covid-19 vaccine was administered to 14,606 healthcare workers at 315 session sites out of 316 in AP on Monday.

The state health authorities issued Covid-19 vaccination coverage report stating that no case of adverse effect following immunisation was reported

#### **2 ASHA WORKERS ADMITTED TO GGH AFTER JAB**

DC CORRESPONDENT ELURU, JAN. 18

Two ASHA workers, Sharone Rani and Suseela, of Agadala Lanka village in Bhimadole mandal of West Godavari District, were admitted in Government Hospital, after getting the Covid-19 vaccine. According to sources, these two ASHA workers were administered Covid-19 vaccine on January 16 at Bhimadolu PHC.

In the evening, Sharone Rani came to the PHC with severe headache and Suseela with vomiting.
The PHC Medical

Officer Dr Ravi Paul said that Suseela was administered the vaccine with an empty stomach without even taking break-

#### **414 TURTLES RESCUED, LET OUT** INTO GODAVARI

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, JAN. 18

The forest department officials rescued 414 Indian Soft Shelled turtles, packed in 16 gunny bags and arrested two persons — Chayan Dhali and Bhiswajit mandal belonging to Odisha state

According to Forest Range Officer V.Durga Kumar Babu, the turtles were being carried to Odisha from Samalkot by

He said by taking permission from the Fourth First Class Judicial Magistrate Court, the turtles were released into River Godavari.

## AP records 81 new Covid cases, 1 death

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 18

Andhra Pradesh registered 81 fresh cases of Covid-19 and a death in the last 24 hours.

The state health authorities issued Covid-19 bulletin here on Monday reporting that out of 27,861 samples tested, 81 persons were found infected with Coronavirus. Out of a total number of 1,26,04,214 samples tested so far in the state, 8,86,066 persons were found infected with confirmed Coronavirus and of them, 8,77,212 were recovered during treatment while 1,713 are still active with the virus. Among daily cases of Coronavirus, Kadapa regis-

tered the highest number of 19 followed by 15 in Chittoor, 13 in Guntur, seven in Visakhapatnam, six each in Krishna and Prakasam, four each in Kurnool and Srikakulam, three in East Godavari, two in West God avari and one each in Nellore

and Vizianagaram. Guntur found to be having the highest number of cumulative Coronavirus active cases with 284 followed by 271 in Krishna, 193 in East Godavari, 175 in Kadapa, 151 in Nellore, 146 in in Nellore, 146 in Visakhapatnam, 128 in Chittoor, 94 in West Godavari, 69 in Kurnool, 68 in Prakasam, 54 in Anantapur, 45 in Srikakulam and 35 in Vizianagaram.

## Centre seeks proposals from AP for Central Reserve Park

**DC CORRESPONDENT** ANANTAPUR, JAN. 18

Union ministry of environment, forests and climate change has sought proposals from special secretary (Forests), Government of Andhra Pradesh, for construction of a central reserve park between Penukonda and Somandepalli adjacent to National Highway 44 pass-

There is feasibility for the park to come up over 1,000 forest land abutting the highway Anantapur district. The park proposal was taken up by the union ministry after local organisations sent a representation to it in

ing through the district.

The ministry has since establishing the reserve.

asked the special secretary to submit a detailed report on the issue.

Penukonda Pravataka Porata Samithi president J. Prathap Reddy has pointed out that more than 2,000 acres of forest lands, including hillocks, are available between Penukonda and Somandepalli mandals located along the National Highway 44, closer to Bengaluru city.

Prathap Reddy maintained that there are various types of wild animals in the forest area including at leopards, 10,000 bears and 30,000 black Adequate water is also avail able close to the proposed forest lands for the central reserve, he stated, asking the state government to speed up the process for

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scare among the devotees trekking up to the hill town along the Alipiri pedestrian route. The captured cobra was later released in the dense Seshachalam forests away from Tirumala.

# **APERC** conducts two-day public hearing on power tariff

'Delayed

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, JAN. 18

Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (APERC) conducted two-day public hearing on aggregate revenue requirement and tariff filing for the financial year 2020-21 on Monday, at the corporate office of APEPDCL,

Commission would take its balancing decision viewing of DISCOMs financial position and consumers priorities. He

year 2019-20 as per the aim of the consumers' long-time priorities. He further said that in power purchase plan for the financial year 2020-21, power plants, without PPAs (Power Purchase Agreements) were excluded. Only on the Commission's exclusive orders power purchased from Visakhapatnam. those PPAs. Thus, ₹200
APERC Chairman
Justice C.V. Nagarjuna
Reddy, in his inaugural
Reddy, in his inaugural

taken in the financial

last date for payment of electricity consumption

charges for March and April 2020, was extended to June, 2020.

Thus consumers have got

exemption

Surcharge (DPS)' on charges. He added that to get transparency in the quality of power and uninter-

rupted power supply, the achievements got in Standard Performance (SoPs) was uploaded in commission

website in last week. Power Tariffs financial years 2014-15, 2016-17,2017-18 &2018-19

submitted by DISCOMs got approved with less consumers than the actual power purchase expenditure. The amount collected from the farmers for transformers expenditure, against as

Payment per regulation 4 of 2013, was returned to the farm ers as per Commission's orders. The long awaiting com-

pensation cases

farmers, pending at some

district collectors, were

resolved by efforts. The farmers were thereby paid compensation due to loss of power lines and its towers in their lands. To save the sick industries, the collections of minimum charges were nalised. Commission orders immediate action had been taken to compensate the victims in electricity accidents as per Regulation 2 of 2017.

#### IN BRIEF

#### **Digvijay donates** for Ram temple

**Bhopal:** Senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha member Digvijay Singh on Monday donated ₹1,11,111 for the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya through Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Singh sent a letter to the Prime Minister, with the cheque to Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Khetra Trust, appealing him to ensure that inflammatory speeches were not made by the volunteers during collection of funds for construction of Ram temple from the people. The former chief minister said he was sending the cheque through the Prime Minister for deposition at the proper place since he was not aware of the right address to send the cheque. He also demanded for public audit of the funds raised earlier by Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) for construction of

#### **ODISHA CONG** CHIEF ATTACKED. **BJP BLAMED**

Ram temple in Ayodhya.

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, JAN, 18

Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Niranjan Patnaik on Monday said he was attacked by some miscreants with BJP affiliations attacked his vehicle on

Sunday night at Keonjhar. "The attack on me, my secu rity personnel late on Sunday night was a handiwork of the BJP. Members of the saffron party's youth wing carried out the attack. This is a clear case of political vendetta and desperation of Odisha BJP," Patnaik alleged.

He said that the miscreants thrashed his driver and per-sonal security officer (PSO) and damaged his car.

I have lodged a police complaint. I was shocked to know that the miscreants were members of BJP's state youth wing. This is a clear case of political vendetta and desperation of Odisha state BJP. Congress is raising relevant issues in the state and speaking out against the policies of BJP, which is desperately trying to get a foothold in Odisha. Congress is the biggest hurdle for them," he tweeted.

#### **MEDIA TRIAL HINDERS JUSTICE: HC ON SSR PROBE**

SHAHAB ANSARI I DC MUMBAI, JAN. 18

The Bombay High Court on Monday held that a media trial during the investigation of any case violates programme code under the Cable TV Network Regulation Act and does have an impact on the

While passing order on a bunch of petitions filed by former police officers, activists, lawyers and NGOs, seeking restrain order for electronic media in actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death case, also observed that Press Council of India (PCI) guidelines will apply to electronic media along with print media till the time electronic media frame their own guidelines.

The court had asked the Centre on October 29 last year as to why it should not frame guidelines on media coverage of sensitive criminal matters and ongoing investigations and whether "excessive reporting by the press amounted to interference in the administration of justice under the Contempt of Courts

# 580 persons report adverse effects after vaccination

Two people were reported dead; Govts deny deaths connected to jabs

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, JAN. 18

As India intensified its vaccination drive against Covid-19, 580 persons were found to have Adverse Effect Following Immunisation (AEFI) with seven needing hospitalisation in the last three days. Two people were reported to be dead following the Covid-19 shots — a 52-year-old ward boy working in a Moradabad (UP) hospital, and a 43-year-old man in (Karnataka). However, both central and state governments denied that the death in Moradabad had any connection to the vaccination while the post-mortem of the second person is yet to be conducted.

Since Saturday, a little over 3.81 lakh health, sanitation and frontline workers have been vaccinated out of which over 1.48 lakh were immunised on Monday.

"Post-mortem by board of three doctors revealed death due to cardiopulmonary disease (pockets of pus in lungs, enlarged heart) and is not related to vaccination,' Union health ministry official said about the death of the 52-year-old ward boy Mahipal Singh. However, the family of Mahipal Singh man alleged that his condition deteriorated efforths is deteriorated after the jab.

Mahipal Singh was given a vaccine shot on Saturday. His family said he had minor pneumonia, cold, cough and fever before the vaccine, but his condition deteriorated after the jab and he was breathless. He died

was breaumenthe next day.

However, the Uttar Pradesh government said the man died due to septicemic shock and car-diac arrest and the death was not related to the Covid-19 vaccination.

"An adverse event following immunisation (AEFI) committee probed the death of the man in Moradabad. The cause of

Rafale for R-day



Relatives mourn the death of a family member, Mahipal Singh, at their residence in Moradabad district on

# Assam Cong questions efficiency of Covaxin, tells govt to instil confidence

MANOJ ANAND | DC

Amidst the report of a temporary side effects after the vaccination and poor turn out of recipients, the Assam unit of the Congress party has questioned the efficacy of Covaxin and asked the government to instil confidence among people before inoculating

The reaction of the

shock and cardiac arrest

and it has nothing to do

with the vaccination,'

chief secretary (Health)

Amit Mohan Prasad told

reporters in Lucknow.

State officials said no

major side effects have

state's additional

Opposition came after two medical colleges in the state witnessed a poor 40 per cent turnout on the first day and the officials feel that the use of the "contentious" Covaxin is one of the reasons for many health workers not

In Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Medical College and Hospital in lower Assam's Barpeta, only 27 of the 100 listed beneficiaries came for vaccina-

been reported among oth-

said that the cause of

death was a cardiac prob-

lem. He added that some

employees were suffering

from fever after taking

Chief medical officer

Chandra Garg

ers vaccinated.

Medical College and Hospital, only 52 of the 100 listed beneficiaries turned up.

Leader of Opposition in the Assam Assembly, Debabrata Saikia told reporters that the doctors in Delhi and Tamil Nadu are reluctant to take the vaccines as Covaxin has been given the nod for political gains as elections for the five states are due in

the shots. "They were fac-

ing general problems but

not like Mahipal," he

died on Monday too was vaccinated on Saturday.

The cause of his death, as

per Union health min-

said Saikia. istry, was anterior wall infarction with car-

Of the seven people The second person who needing hospitalisation, three are from Delhi, two in Karnataka, and one each in Uttarakhand and

diopulmonary failure.

### tion, while at Tezpur

spring.
"The vaccine rollout has been done hurriedly without complete trial. The Centre has done it to reap benefit in polls. It is sad that the vaccination has become a political game as the inoculation drive kicked off without efficacy data and other considerations. Human life can't be compromised in pursuit of private profit and political gains,

#### RESOLUTION **DEMANDS STATEHOOD FOR PUDUCHERRY**

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, JAN. 18

The open assertion of the DMK's Puducherry unit on Monday to field candidates in all the 30 constituencies Territorial for the Assembly elections is seen as harbinger to the splintering of the Congress-DMK alliance not just in the Union Territory but also in Tamil Nadu.

Though all is seemingly well with the DMK-Congress alliance in Tamil Nadu with even Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and DMK's Youth Wing secre-tary Udhayanidhi Stalin sharing the stage at a jallikattu event at Avaniyapuram in Madurai on Pongal Day, that relationship between the two allies has been going south for quite some time in Puducherry.
On Monday, DMK mem-

bers boycotted the cru-cial Assembly session called to pass a resolution against the Centre's farm laws and also to demand Statehood for the Union Territory on the pretext of attending a meeting called by Jagathrakshan, DMK's newly appointed in-charge for Puducherry. Jagathrakshan, DMK

representing Arakkonam, vowed to lay down his life in the event of the DMK failing to win all the 30 constituencies in the elections. Though it is not clear whether he aspires to become the next CM, as it is rumoured in some circles, or not, he had made it clear that the alliance with Congress was over.

Solanki and actors Saif Ali

# Will incorporate 'K'taka-occupied areas': Uddhav

Maharashtra Minister Uddhav Thackeray said his government is committed towards incorporating into the state the areas of Karnataka where Marathi-speaking people are in majority.
This will be the "true trib-

ute" to martyrs of the cause, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said in a

Maharashtra claims Belgaum and some other areas, part of the erstwhile Bombay Presidency but currently in Karnataka, on linguistic grounds. Maharashtra Ekikaran

Samiti, a regional organisation fighting for the merger of Belgaum and some other border areas Maharashtra, observes January 17 as the 'martyrs' day' for those who laid down their lives for the cause in 1956.

"Bringing Karnataka-occupied Marathi-speaking Karnatakaand cultural areas in Maharashtra will be the true tribute to those who accepted martyrdom in the boundary battle. We are united and committed towards it. Respects to the martyrs with this promise,'

the CMO tweeted.
Maharashtra claims certain areas, including Belgaum, Karwar and Nippani which are part of Karnataka, contending that the majority of population in these areas is Marathispeaking.

The dispute between the two states over Belgaum and other border areas is pending before the Supreme

Court for many years. Thackeray last Thackeray Maharashtra appointed ministers Eknath Shinde and Chhagan Bhujbal as cocoordinators to oversee the state government's efforts to expedite the case related

to the boundary dispute. Protests erupted in parts Karnataka on Monday including in the district headquarters city of Belagavi on Monday in a strong condemnation of Maharashtra Chief Minister's statement on the

sensitive border issue. Political leaders cutting across party lines came down heavily on Thackeray. There is no question of giving even an inch of land from Karnataka to Maharashtra. He should give up issuing statements just for political reasons, Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa told reporters on Monday.

pained

**GOVT NAMEBOARDS** IN TAMIL ON K'TAKA **BORDER VANDALISED** 

Erode (TN), Jan. 18: Sign and name boards of the Tamil Nadu government in Tamil and English on the border state's Karnataka were allegedly damaged by a fringe group from the neighbouring state for the second time in ten days, police said here on Monday. The group claimed that Thalavadi in Tamil Nadu's Erode district 'belonged' to Karnataka.

The incidents come against the backdrop of a row between Maharashtra and Karnataka over some border areas where Marathi speaking people

live predominantly.
Following the back to back incidents and a call for protest against it by Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi, armed police personnel have been deployed at (Thalavadi taluk, Erode district) Tamil Nadu's borwith Karnataka (Chamarajanagar district), they said. Such incidents have been brought to the notice of police Karnataka, they added.

On Sunday, sign and name boards, including one by Erode District Panchayat, were damaged by unknown miscreants, Thalavadi police said, adding they inspected the spot and post-ed adequate number of armed policemen to avert such incidents in future.

Such boards inform people about the beginning of the limits of Tamil Nadu

Maharashtra Ministers remarks that can disturb the prevailing harmonious atmosphere. I expect Uddhav Thackeray, as a true Indian, to show his commitment and respect to the principles of federalism in letter and spirit," Yediyurappa said in a tweet.

On Monday, pro-Kannada organisations held demonstrations and burnt Thackeray's effigy in parts of the state.

activists led by local units of Shiv Sena and Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti had organised the 'Martyrs Day' in Belagavi on Sunday.

They demanded merger of Belagavi, Karwar, Nippani, Bidar and Bhalki with Maharashtra.

# 'Tanday' makers issue apology

New Delhi/Lucknow, Jan. 18: Faced with an FIR, the fear of arrest and loud calls for a boycott for its alleged depiction of Hindu deities, the cast and crew of Amazon Prime Video's starry political saga *Tandav* on Monday issued an unconditional apology if their fictional show had unintentionally hurt sentiments.

A day Information after Broadcasting Ministry sought an explanation from Amazon Prime Video and BJP MP Manoj Kotak wrote to minister Prakash Javadekar, trouble escalated for the Ali Abbas Zafar directed thriller with an FIR against its makers in Lucknow and several politicians and others adding their voice to the 'ban Tandav' chorus.

As security was stepped up outside the offices of its star Saif Ali Khan and Amazon Prime in Mumbai, a four-member team of the Uttar Pradesh police left for the city and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's media advisor Shalabhmani Tripathi said the makers will have to "pay a price for hurting religious sentiments" by depicting Hindu gods in an objectionable gods in an objectionable manner.

UP Police has left for Mumbai, that too in a car. There are strong sections in the FIR. Remain prepared,(you) will have to pay a price for hurting religious sentiments," Tripathi said in his tweet in which he tagged director Zafar, producer Himanshu Krishna Mehra, writer Gaurav

#### **AMID STIR, SHIVRAJ DEMANDS BAN ON WEB SERIES**

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JAN. 18

Amid protests by Hindu bodies against Saif Ali Khan-starrer '*Tandav*' released by OTT giant Amazon Prime, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday demanded a ban on the web series for hurting religious

sentiments of Hindus. Chouhan met Union information and broadcasting minister Prakash Javadekar in New Delhi to place his demand, saying that the web series sought to deni-

grate Hindu deities. Meanwhile, state medical education minister Viswas Sarang wrote a letter to Javadekar demanding to frame laws for censorship of films released on OTT platform to deny misuse of the platform by 'vested interests'.

Khan and Zeeshan Ayyub. At the end of a tense day that saw debate escalate around the show, which balances intrigue in Delhi's corridors of power and touches on current issues such as student unrest and farmer protests, the cast and crew' of Tanday, which literally translates to 'dance destruction', issued a statement in a bid to defuse the situation.

## **BORDER | ROW | India says it takes necessary measures to safeguard its sovereignty**

Indian Air Force (IAF) soldiers march during the rehearsals for the upcoming Republic Day parade at the

Raisina hills in New Delhi on Monday. The newly inducted Rafale fighter aircraft will feature in the parade on

January 26 and culminate the flypast by carrying out the 'Vertical Charlie' formation, the IAF said on Monday.

### Report: China has built village in Arunachal constructed a new village

cautious reaction to a report that China has built a village in Arunachal Pradesh, India on Monday said it keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on the country's security, and takes necessary measures to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The ministry of external affairs said India has stepped up the construction border infrastructure, including roads and bridges for the improvement of livelihood of its citizens.

The response from the ministry came when asked about a report by NDTV channel, saying China has

in the disputed region of Arunachal Pradesh and it consisted of about 101 homes. The news channel said the report is based on satellite images accessed

exclusively by it.

"We have seen recent reports on China undertaking construction work along the border areas with India. China has undertaken such infrastructure construction activity in the past several years," the

"In response, our govern-ment too has stepped up border infrastructure including the construction of roads, bridges etc, which has provided much needed

MEA said.

connectivity to the local population along the border," it added. The ministry also assert-

ed that the government remains committed to the objective of creating infrastructure along the border areas for the improvement of livelihood of its citizens, including in Arunachal Pradesh. "Government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's security and takes all the necessary measures to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial

integrity," it said. In its report, NDTV showed two images of the area where it said the village has been set up. the first image dated August 26, 2019 did not show any human habitation but the second one of November 2020 shows a row of structures.

The India-China border dispute covers the 3,488-kmlong Line of Actual Control. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of south-ern Tibet, while India contests it. India and China are locked in a bitter border row in eastern Ladakh for over eight months.

The army as well as the Indian Air Force have been maintaining a high state of operational readiness along the entire stretch of the LAC with China including

in the Arunachal sector in view of the eastern Ladakh standoff. India and China have held several rounds of military and diplomatic talks in order to resolve the eastern Ladakh row, but no significant headway has been made for its resolution. Earlier this month, Chief

of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat visited various forward posts near the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh and reviewed India's operational preparedness.

installations including "forward most air maintained" posts in Dibang Valley, valley, according to the

He also visited several key Lohit sector and Subansiri

In fact, the DMK has not been participating in any of the programmes of

SHORT TAKES

#### **SAMSUNG CHIEF JAILED OVER FRAUD CHARGES**

Seoul, Jan. 18: Billionaire Samsung scion Lee Jae-yong was sent back to prison on Monday after a South Korean court handed him a two and a half-year sentence for his involvement in a 2016 corruption scandal that spurred massive protests and ousted South Korea's then-president.

In a much-anticipated retri-al, the Seoul High Court found Lee guilty of bribing then-President Park Geun-hye and her close confidante to win government support for a 2015 merger between two Samsung affiliates. The deal helped strengthen his control over the country's largest business group. Lee's lawyers had portrayed him as a victim of presidential power abuse and described the 2015 deal as part of "normal business activity."

Wearing a mask and black suit and tie, Lee was taken into custody following the ruling. He didn't answer questions by reporters upon his arrival at

#### FRENCH MUSLIM **COUNCIL ACCEPTS RULES BY MACRON**

Paris, Jan. 18: France's Muslim federations agreed on Sunday on a "charter of principles" requested by President Emmanuel Macron in his bid to eradicate sectarianism and extremism.

Macron urged the French Council of the Muslim Faith (CFCM) to devise the charter in November, after the jihadist killing of a schoolteacher who showed cartoons of the Prophet Mohamed to students.

The charter rejects "instrumentalising" Islam for political ends and affirms equality between men and women, while denouncing practices such as female circumcisions, forced marriages or "virginity certificates" for brides.

It also explicitly rejects racism and anti-Semitism, and warns that mosques "are not created for the spreading of nationalist speech defending foreign regimes"

"This charter reaffirms the compatibility of the Muslim faith with the principles of the Republic, including secularism, and the commitment of French Muslims to their complete citizenship," CFCM president Mohammed Moussaoui

#### **ITALY PM TO LAUNCH BID TO SAVE GOVT**

Rome, Jan. 18: Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte was due to address parliament's lower house on Monday at the start of a make-or-break week in a crisis that could bring down his government.

Against the backdrop of Coronavirus pandemic that sparked fresh restrictions at the weekend, Conte will seek a show of support with lawmakers ahead of a crucial vote in the upper Senate the following

His coalition government, in power since September 2019, was plunged into turmoil by the withdrawal last week of former premier Matteo Renzi's Italia Viva party.

Conte was to speak at midday to the Chamber of Deputies, where his coalition partners including the Democratic Party (PD) and Five Star Movement (M5S) have a majority of support.

The real test will come on Tuesday, however, when he addresses the Senate and faces what will effectively be a vote

#### **JAPAN SLAMS KOREA ON BROTHEL RULING**

Tokyo, Jan. 18: Toshimitsu Motegi, in a diplomatic policy speech in Parliament, said a recent South Korean court ruling ordering Japan to compensate 12 South Korean women who were sexually abused in Japanese military brothels during the war was "an abnormal development absolutely unthinkable under international law and bilateral rela-

strongly South Korea to correct the violation of international law as soon as possible" and restore healthy relations, Motegi said.

The Seoul Central District Court ruled on Jan. 8 that the give 100 million won (\$91,360) to each of 12 elderly women who filed lawsuits in 2013 over their wartime suffering as "comfort women.

#### Chilly slide



Young men slide on a snow covered street in the Balat District of Istanbul on Monday. Extreme cold and snow have hit large parts of Europe, with freezing temperatures causing causing railroad tracks in Poland to crack and snow blanketing most of the Turkish city of Istanbul.

# Navalny decries 'mockery of justice' in airport detention

Moscow, Jan. 18: Russian Opposition leader Alexei Navalny said on Monday his treatment was beyond a "mockery of justice" as he was brought before a hastily organised court a day after his dramatic airport arrest

With calls growing in the West for Navalny's release, he was brought into a courtroom set up at a police station in Khimki on the outskirts of Moscow where he was taken following his detention on Sunday

Police seized Navalny, President Vladimir Putin's most prominent opponent, at a border control post at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport less than an hour after he returned to Russia from Germany for the first time since he was poisoned with a nerve agent in

In a video posted by his

team from inside the hearing, an incredulous Navalny said he did not understand how a court session could take place at a police station and why no one had been notified until the last minute. "I've seen a lot of mockery of justice, but the old man in the bunker (Putin) is so afraid that they have blatantly torn up and thrown away' Russia's criminal code, Navalny said.

"This is ultimate lawless-

another video, Navalny called for the hearing to be open to all journalists, after only pro-Kremlin media were allowed to attend.

"I demand that this procedure be as open as possible, so that all media have the opportunity to observe amazing absurdity of what is happening here," he said.

# EU chief demands Navalny's release

Brussels, Jan. 18: EU chief Ursula von der Leyen on Monday joined the international chorus of condemnation against Russia's arrest of opposition figure Alexei Navalny and demanded his release. "I condemn the detention of Alexei Navalny," she said in a statement.

"The Russian authorities must immediately release him and ensure his safety." Von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, also repeated Brussels' call for an independent investigation an attempt on Navalny's life.

The 44-year-old returned to Russia on Sunday from

Germany, where he received treatment after being poisoned with what experts say was the Novichok nerve agent.

There have been calls for more Western sanctions against Russian President Vladimir Putin's govern-ment following the latest

But von der Leyen did not address what would be a decision for the EU member states, saying simply: "We will monitor

the situation closely.

"We also continue to expect a thorough and independent investigation on the attack on Alexei Navalny's life," she said.

# **Biden all set for** busy 1st week

Washington buzzes with increased security

Washington, Jan. 18: President-elect Joe Biden's top advisors on Sunday outlined his plans to tackle the nation's multiple crises while balancing the impeachment trial of Donald Trump, as an his-toric inauguration week opens in the United States.

Washington was under the watch of thousands of National Guard troops and ringed with security barriers ahead of Biden's swearing in on Wednesday, in a nation still rattled by the January 6 attack on the Capitol.

Pro-Trump protests planned at state capitols nationwide got off to a quiet start with only small groups of armed demonstrators gathering in states including Ohio, Texas, Oregon and Michigan.

Michigan.

"The events of the past few weeks have proven just how damaged the soul of America has been and how important is to restore it. That work starts on Wednesday," Biden's incoming chief of staff Ron Klain said.

"We're inheriting a huge mess here, but we have a plan to fix it." As the president-elect prepares to

ident-elect prepares to take power in a city where only two weeks earlier Trump supporters launched a violent attempt to overturn the election, Biden faces overlapping crises: not only the pandemic but a struggling economy, climate change and racial tensions.

Biden wants the Congress to act quickly on a massive, \$1.9-trillion stimulus package to revive the economy, and he plans a blitz to accelerate stumbling America's Covid vaccine rollout.

His target of seeing 100 million doses of Coronavirus vaccine million Coronavirus injected within his first 100 days in office is "absolutely" achievable, top US scientist Anthony Fauci said on Sunday. "The feasibility of his goal is absolutely clear,

there's no doubt about it," said Fauci, who will be Biden's chief advisor on the virus, as he was

## FBI screens troops ahead of function

Washington, Jan. 18: US arrived in Washington. law enforcement agencies are screening National Guard members to make sure they do not pose a security risk during President-elect Biden's inauguration, a four-star general said in comments broadcast on Sunday.

Following the January 6 riots at the Capitol building in support of outgoing President Donald Trump, it emerged that some of those involved had current or former ties to the military.

General Hokanson, who heads the National Guard Bureau, was asked by *CBS News* on Sunday if troops were being checked as they

PRO-TRUMP protests planned at state capitols nationwide got off to a quiet start with only small groups of armed demonstrators gathering in states including Ohio, Texas, Oregon and Michigan.

• BIDEN WANTS the Congress to act quickly on a massive, \$1.9-trillion stimulus package to revive the economy.

Trump's.
But the coming Senate impeachment trial — an unprecedented second for Trump — casts a shadow over Biden's path forward. Democratic congressional leaders Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer have yet to say when the trial

impeachment," Durbin, a Democratic leader in the Senate, said.

— AFP

"In coordination with the Secret Service and the FBI, they're screening all the personnel that are coming in," Hokanson said.

Much of Washington

resembles a fortified compound in a war zone, with most of the downtown area blocked off, security fences topped by razor wire and about 25,000 National Guard troops deployed to the capital.

In a recent letter to all US troops, the Joint Chiefs of Staff told serv-ice members the January 6 riots were "inconsistent

with the rule of law" and said troops "must embody the values and ideals of the nation" nation.'

#### **VP-ELECT HARRIS TO RESIGN FROM HER SENATE SEAT**

W i l i m i n g t o n (Delaware), Jan. 18: Vice president-elect Kamala Harris will resign her Senate seat on Monday, two days before she and president-elect Joe Biden are inaugurated. Aides to the California Democrat confirmed the timing and said Gov. Gavin Newsom was aware of her decision, clearing the way for him to appoint fellow Democrat Alex Padilla, now California's secretary of state, to serve the final two years of Harris' term.

Padilla will be the first Latino senator from ruon t think there's any promised date when Speaker Pelosi is going to present the articles of impeachment"

California, where about 40 per cent of residents are Hispanic. Newsom announced his choice in December California, where about intense lobbying for the rare Senate vacancy from

## Another 3 million in lockdown as Covid-19 cases increase in China

Beijing, Jan. 18: Nearly three million people were put under lockdown in China Monday after a surge in coronavirus cases linked to a travelling salesman in the country's

northeast. While China has largely brought the virus under control, a sharp rise in cases in the past few weeks has prompted fresh lockdowns, travel restric-tions and multiple rounds of mass testing. Monday saw three million residents of two cities in northeastern Jilin province placed under new measures, as China reported 109 new infections.

More than 19 million people across China's northeast are now barred from leaving their homes.

## France, UK boost vaccine campaign

Paris, Jan. 18: France and Britain on Monday joined a growing list of nations starting mass vaccinations for all elderly citizens as the UK began demanding all quarantine to arrivals try and halt the spread new Covid-19 variant.

The French drive aims to cover all people over 75 and comes after Brazil and India, which figure among the worst-affected countries, administered their first jabs over the

Health Minister Olivier Veran said more than one being targeted by January and between 2.4 and 4 million by February.

earlier France had offered vaccinations to residents of retirement homes and health workers on the frontline.

on its Monday Britain extended vaccination campaign to people over the age of 70, after first attending to over-80s, and frontline health workers and care givers. -AFP

#### W.H.O DEMANDS **FAIR ACCESS TO COVID VACCINE**

**Geneva, Jan. 18:** The world is on the brink of a "catastrophic moral failure" if rich countries hog Covid-19 vaccine doses while the poorest suffer, the head of the WHO said on Monday. World Health Organisation director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus denounced the "me-first" attitude of wealthy nations and also blasted vaccine manufacturers for chasing regulatory approval in rich countries rather than submitting their data to the WHO to green-light vaccine use globally. -AFP

# Fearing Biden, Erdogan tries to mend ties with EU

Ankara, Jan. 18: Facing a potentially hostile US administration, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is trying to break his isolation by mending EU relations, torn by what the bloc views as his bellicose foreign policy. Ties between Ankara

Brussels plunged to a nadir not seen since Turkey formally opened talks to join the bloc in 2005, a process which is now frozen.

And while Erdogan speaks of turning "a new page", the list of European grievances is

Most recently, Brussels began drawing up a list of sanctions over Turkey's hunt for natural gas in the eastern Mediterranean, which triggered a naval

ERDOGAN'S DIRECT military interventions in the Syrian and Libyan conflicts raised hackles in Europe, while his

vocal backing of Azerbaijan in the sixweek Nagorno-Karabakh war upset Armenia's allies across the West.

standoff with Greece last

But older suspicions simmer.

Erdogan's direct military interventions in the Syrian and Libyan conflicts raised hackles in Europe, while his vocal backing of Azerbaijan in the six-week Nagorno-Karabakh war upset

the West. Erdogan's threats to

send millions of Syrian and other refugees Turkey is hosting to Europe if the bloc fails to provide more funding are a constant menace.

And he has made the animosity personal by attacking Emmanuel President Macron's treatment of Muslims, which Europe counters by pointing to Turkey's grim record on human rights.

Some believe this standoff is unsustainable for Erdogan.

"Ankara cannot afford an escalation with both the US and Europe, especially with an economy this fragile," a European diplomat said. — AFP

DISASTER I RUINS At least 84 got killed and thousands left homeless after 6.2-magnitude of earthquake

### Indonesian medics exhausted by quake casualties **Trapped Chinese miners** West Sulawesi General

(Indonesia), 18: Medics battled exhaustion and the risk of Covid-19 as they raced on Monday to treat scores of people injured by a devastating earthquake on Indonesia's Sulawesi

At least 84 were killed and thousands left homeless by the 6.2-magnitude quake that struck early on Friday, reducing buildings to a tangled mass of twisted metal and chunks of concrete in the seaside

city of Mamuju. Doctors in hazard suits treated patients with broken limbs and other injuries at a makeshift medical centre set up outside the only one of the city's hospitals that survived relatively intact one was flattened by the violent tremor.



Rescuers lead a sniffer dog during a search operation at the ruins of a building collapsed in earthquake in Mamuju, in Indonesia on Friday.

A handful of doctors and nurses worked "non-stop" in the first couple of days after the quake until reinforcements arrived, but it was still barely enough

amid shortages of medicine and other supplies. "We were completely overwhelmed point," said Indahwati Nursyamsi, director of

Hospital. "My nurses were also

quake victims and had to families."Medics scrambled to quarantine Covid-19 positive patients in a bid to prevent an outbreak at the crowded open-air triage centre.

Some with coronavirus have been put in a prayer room — common in the Muslim majority nation — at the back of the hospital.

The hospital was trying to open up more rooms for surgery and erect additional tents outside to treat the injured. But fears that another quake could bring down

the building added to the challenges as patients, and some staff, refused to stay

#### send SOS after a week Beijing, Jan. 18: At least Sunday afternoon as they

12 gold miners trapped hundreds of metres under-ground in China for more than a week have sent up a note warning that they are injured, surrounded by water and urgently need medicine. workers Twenty-two

were trapped more than 600 metres from the mine's entrance after a blast eight days ago near Qixia city in Shandong province.

After days without any signs of life, rescuers heard knocking sounds on drilled through the mine's

A note was sent up on a line from the depths below saying that at least a dozen of the miners are still alive, but that they urgently needed help as their health deteriorates.

"We are in urgent need of medicine, painkillers, medical tape, external antiinflammatory drugs, and three people have high blood pressure," the note

read. The condition of the ten workers is other

were injured, according to the note, which was crumpled, water-stained and scrawled in pencil on pages ripped out of a note-"We wish the rescuers

won't stop so that we can still have hope. Thank you," the note read. The writer of the note

asked rescuers to send down some medication from his car, and warned that there was a large amount of underground water where the miners are trapped.

# **Chronicle**

**19 JANUARY 2021** 

## Tejas decision a good one, but much more left to do

approved the country's largest-ever indigenous defence deal when it cleared the procurement of 83 Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas Mk 1-A — ten of which are to be trainers — for the Indian armed forces from Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd at an approximate cost of ₹47,000 crore, closing the circle that began with the commissioning of the LCA project in the 1980s.

The first rollout is expected in 2023-24, and then on 16 aircraft are to be manufactured every year on present reckoning. To start with, the indigenous content is to be 50 per cent, to be stepped up to 60 per cent within a short time-

frame. HAL would be outsourcing the job to more than 550 domestic vendors. This gives us an idea of the technological and economic spinoffs of the LCA programme for the Indian economy as a whole, going beyond the military aspect of acquiring a fighter jet at home which is billed as the workhorse of the future for the Indian Air Force, filling the gap left by the hoary MiG-21s of

The good news is that the LCA Mk-2 version with a bigger engine is in its design stage and is expected to be ready for trials next

Soviet manufacture, which have been phased out. If high-level efficiency is ensured in the production of the Tejas Mk 1-A by HAL, the country will make valuable savings of foreign exchange spent on importing costly fighter jets from Western sources. What's more, in time, the Tejas will be ready for export too. Some countries are said to have evinced an interest. The realisation of sale will, of course, depend on a host of political, strategic and economic considerations, and the prospect of readying the fighter for export will potentially add to India's strategic muscle and offer a certain latitude in dealing with the world.

The Tejas Mk1-A — a fourth-generation fighter — is a single-engine, light-weight, highly agile, all-weather, multi-role fighter aircraft capable of air-to-air refuelling. It has Beyond Visual Range (BVR) missile capability, and updated avionics and flight control software. The good news is that the LCA Mk-2 version with a bigger engine is in its design stage and is expected to be ready for trials next year. As of 2019, the IAF is committed to procuring 324 Tejas MK1-A fighters of different variants. That signifies the workhorse role visualised for this sophisticated fighter.

The domestic manufacture of the Tejas Mk 1-A is a signpost of enormous value, although it has been more than three decades in the making, starting from the conception stage when the Aircraft Development Agency (ADA) was

set up in 1984. The ADA designed Tejas in collaboration with Aircraft Research and Design Centre (ARDC) of HAL.

To find true liberation from imports in the strategic sphere of fighter aircraft manufacture, it is now crucial to look at the propulsion aspect for upgrade. India's LCA is fitted with the GEF-404 engine. In the wake of the 1998 nuclear test, the United States had held up the supply of these engines. It is therefore important to return special focus to the development of the indigenous Kaveri engine, which has been in the works for decades. To achieve cent per cent indigenous content, radars and avionics will also need to be manufactured domestically. Only a country that can grow its own food and has the ability to defend itself can ultimately avoid being at anyone's beck and call.

## WhatsApp: A lot to explain

he Mark Zuckerberg-acquired WhatsApp is throwing up as many headaches as its parent Facebook these days because netizens are getting ■ smarter about their data privacy. In an intemperate push to monetise data out of WhatsApp, the popular messaging platform, Facebook got into a tangle that saw millions of individual users and groups sign off and download apps like Signal and Telegram that are less intrusive of personal territory like online data. It may have come as a shock to most Internet users that an app promising end-to-end encryption, and which routinely declines law enforce ment enquiries with the excuse that it has no access to user chats, should talk of sharing user data with Facebook

It is largely true that netizens sign off much of their rights over prized personal information when they sign on to social media platforms and the like. Big Tech has never been averse to building up their businesses and making money out of a large number of users running into millions. The leaks of personal data from breaches by hackers or emanating from sheer carelessness of the machinery that is supposed to ensure security of data have not stopped people from their modern-day existence in an inter-connected world. The advantage is very much with those who keep data as citizens seem to have no rights in the absence of a regulatory framework to govern the interne

A parliamentary committee has summoned Facebook and Twitter officials to question them on the misuse of social media and online news platforms, but it is a long-drawn process that might not lead to foolproof measures to safeguard citizens' rights. Big Tech may have done signal service to the world in cutting off the communication of hate propaganda by maverick users like Donald Trump, but it must do a lot more to earn people's trust that it will not recklessly monetise their online presence by compromising their privacy. No algorithm has been invented yet that exposes the cavalier ways of the giants of the new economy. It is up to Internet users to be most discerning in signing on.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER K. Sudhakar

**DECCAN CHRONICLE** offices are located at

Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256 Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234

Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285

Rajahmundry: Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph. 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-

Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax:

Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilalapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908: Telefax: 0878-2220433

Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chemmudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580

Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/ 48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325

Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255 Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08

what he wanted. Before Independence, Nehru wrote a series of works through which he aligned himself to India as a civilisational entity of the sort that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh also approves of. He traces the modern nation to its origins in the Indus Valley Civilisation (discovered only a few years before he wrote Glimpses of World History and only 15 or so years before he wrote *The Discovery* 

But having acknowledged that India was ancient, Nehru sought also to align it to the modern world and the era he was a part of and the future that he saw for all mankind. To that end he used the State as an instrument to modernise the country. Nehru based his strategy on two education. India had limited resources but these two would get

You could argue about whether the strategy was good, bad or indifferent, but it would be difficult to say that he did not execute what he sought out to do. Having determined that he was going to modernise this civilisational entity he set about doing it because Nehru was not only a man of vision (you could argue with him about whether your vision

He began building institutions, including some which are today called "navratnas", but were then nothing and needed to be built. Some such examples are Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (1964), Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (1956), Steel Authority of India (1954), Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (1964), Indian Oil Corporation (1959), Isro INCOSPAR) Department of Atomic Energy (1954), Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (1954). And then Nehru set up the Indian Institutes of Technology (1951), the Indian Institutes of Management (1961), the National

Sahitya Akademi (1954).

The list goes on and on. Why were all these set up? They were set up because they were the means through which Nehru determined India would be modernised. He inherited a pre-modern economy, where the vast majority of production lay in agriculture and that agriculture was being largely managed by farmers whose means of farming had changed very little for over a

lar economy. He had to figure out

how to get India there. The problem is that nobody in the compared to Nehru, and that includes our Prime Minister. He can offer us statements like "\$5 trillion so prolific is because Mr Modi does

journalist, columnist

and author

point. Nehru had said: Heavy industry and higher education! What does Narendra Modi say? If the answer to that is difficult for you to come up with, it is because there is no answer. This is the first reason that the BJP and Hindutva adherents hates Nehru: Jealousy.

The second reason is that Nehru was not a fraud nationalist. He was a real one. He did not only name China, he fought against it. Nehru lost because Nehru fought. And he fought because he could not bear the thought of surrendering any land of

External affairs minister S. Jaishankar said at the Ramnath Goenka Lecture on November 14, ed Zhou Enlai's offer on the border dispute during Zhou's 1960 visit to India. What was that offer? That India should accept the Karakoram This is where the Line of Actual Control exists today. But this was

# Thoughts on democracy as Trump exits, finally...



Subhani

ot long before Donald Trubecame the first-ever American President to be impeached for a second time this time with a real possibility of convictionhis daughter Ivanka national enemies. to remind the There is footage availworld of the close ties able of the rioters beating between her father and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The opening and closure in record

of Mohandas Kara-mchand Gandhi, also occurred almost simultafrom neously. It is the legal action against Mr Trump by America's senators and congressmen that grips the world's attention. The impeachment proceedings threaten to overwhelm President-elect Joe Biden's \$1.9 tril-lion plan to end "a crisis of deep human suffering' by speeding up the suppry of coronavirus cines and financially helping Americans who are still struggling with the economic disaster caused by the grim pandemic. It even distracts notice from the contradictions, if not crisis, of democracy that Mr Trump's rantings and ravings have unwittingly highlighted. For it should

time of a study centre in

Gwalior that exalted Nat-

huram Godse, the killer

the edifice on which he While he is believed to have broken many constitutional norms during his four years in the White House — including trying desperately hard to thwart the peaceful transition of power to his legitimately elected successor — millions of Americans had endorsed excesses. January 6 rioters who stormed the US Capitol

never be forgotten that 74

million Americans voted

for the man who now

seems bent on destroying

building in Washington chanting "Hang Mike Pence" and "Where's Nancy?" clearly saw both the Republican vice-president and the Speaker of the House — the first and second in the line of presidential succession — as

a police officer with a ic process. flagpole as the crowd chanted "USA" and and crushing another officer repeatedly in a door. The violence resulted in five deaths; more might have perished if the police had-n't distracted the mob breaching the debating chambers long enough to whisk every legislator away to safety. The outrage to civilised governance was infinitely worse. Some Republicans, after encouraging or standing by mute as the President attacked the democratic process for months, have shaken consciences. Ten of them joined all 222 Democrats ing Mr Trump of "incite-Mao famously used the ment of insurrection' that was passed on January 13, a week after the attack.

Even those who concede that Mr Biden obtained more votes can ask if that invalidates the views of 74 million Americans

A similar question arose in 2000 when George W. Bush defeated Al Gore by winning 271 electoral votes, one more than a majority, despite Gore receiving 543,895 more votes nationally. Many did not Americans regard it as a satisfactory outcome, but they accepted it without protest.

However, not all democracies are The flaw goes back to 507 BC when the killed by Army when the Athenian Cleisthenes coups or declaraintroduced demokratia, tions of emeror "rule by the people" gency. Many are from demos, "the people," and kratos, or destroyed from within. "power". Setting aside

devices like Gen. Ayub Khan's "basic democra-Athens was the first democracy for the Western world. But it (Pakistan), King Mahendra's "panchayati democracy" (Nepal) or "guided democracy" was a far cry from the universal adult suffrage (Indonesia). Mr Trump's which we identify with democracy today, and 'America First" slogan is which can be indistinstrongly echoed in the guishable from mob rule. implicit argument that In the middle of the 4th India's majority feels discentury, for instance, Athens boasted about enfranchised unless it enjoys special privileges. 100,000 citizens (sons and Hence Mahasabha's attempt to daughters of citizens), some 10,000 metoikoi, or propagate the nationalism which Godse stood for" through an "resident foreigners", and 150,000 slaves. Only eponymous library. male citizens above 18 were a part of the demos, Three years ago, the meaning only about 40,000 people could par-Mahasabha installed a

the

Hindu

WE CAN TALK ABOUT ANYTHING .. POLITICS, BUSINESS, SPORTS CINEMA ... EXCEPT

FARM LAWS

statue of Godse and was ticipate in the democratabout to organise prayer meetings there, but the Around 460 BC, under the rule of the general Pericles (generals were statue was removed. This second try has to be seen in the context of the constitutional dismember-ment and demotion of Jammu and Kashmir, among the only public officials who were elected, not appointed), Athenian democracy began to motivated tinkering with evolve into an autocracy academic curriculums, (Herodotus' "the one man, the best") which triumphalism over the new Ram temple in Ayodhya, eventually led to Mao Hindutva trolls, opposition to interfaith marriages and Zedong's concept of "people's democratic dictatorship". The premise was attacks on Muslims in the name of cow protecthat the party and the tion. WhatsApp and Twitter are said to be the State represented the people and acted on their behalf to preserve the "dictatorship of the promain instruments for hounding the communiletariat", and save the ty. In view of such similar government from collapsing into a "dictatorpopulist moves, it was liberal democracy. year-old Ivanka Trump, a senior adviser to her

father, should choose this term on June 30, 1949, moment to recall her 2017 commemorating the 28th anniversary of the foundvisit when she led a highing of the Communist powered delegation to Party of China. the Global Entrepreneur However, not all democ-Summit in Hyderabad. racies are killed by Army "As the world continues coups or declarations of to battle Covid-19, our emergency. Many are countries' strong friendship in promoting global destroyed from within. security, stability, and economic prosperity is The urge to perpetuate a particular group's stranmore important than ever," she tweeted, payglehold on power or the plea that a mere head count does not adequateing particular tribute to ly reflect the mood and Mr Modi by name. Given the association

temper of the people explains opportunistic with a man who is widely accused of desperate attempts to subvert democracy, it's a compliment the Prime Minister of an India that is still proud of being the world's largest democracy could have done without. The writer is a senior

## LETTERS

#### **HYDERABAD'S PRIDE**

Hyderabad not only has the distinction of making vaccines to fight Covid like Covaxin by Bharat Biotech, the cure for another deadly scourge on humanity was found by the Anglo-Indian Ronald Ross in Hyderabad. Arguably the first Indian to be awarded the Nobel for medicine, the Sir Ronald Ross Institute is still functioning in Hyderabad.

P.A.S. Prasad Visakhapatnam

#### **TEMPLE ATTACKS**

The data since 2015 till date is replete with incidents of idol dese-cration, theft of ornaments, digging temple premises without let up. Only difference is the 'reaction of Opposition parties like the BJP, TDP and JS ever since YSRC was voted to power. This clearly expos-es the sinister designs of the Opposition to discredit the ruling party. More importantly, the main Opposition TD needs a plank to refurbish its own image and therefore is investing all its energies in making a hue and cry over the

Govardhana Myneedu

#### TRANSPARENCY

Isn't it a transparency concern when an undertaking is taken from participants over the Covaxin inoculation prior to the jab? The government clarified that Covaxin, being in phase 3 trials, the clearance was accorded based on data submitted so far by Bharat Biotech and it is for emergency use only The distribution of the two vaccines was also done by following set norms. The controversy should be set at rest.

K. Nehru Patnaik Visakhapatnam

### 50 YEARS AGO IN hronicle

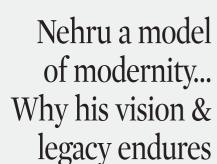
#### PM to begin election campaign in State

HYDERABAD, January. 18

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, will inaugurate tomorrow the election campaign of the Ruling Congress in Andhra Pradesh at Rajahmundry in the rice-rich district of East Godavari.

Minister Chief Brahmananda Reddy left by air this morning fot Vijawada en route to Rajahmundry to receive

Aakar Patel



was being interviewed for my book and was asked a question unrelated to it — Why does Hindutva hate Jawaharlal Nehru so much? It is an interesting question and has two parts to the answer. To know it, we must first understand what Nehru was and

of India) to the periods of the first and second millennia after Jesus

things — heavy industry and higher

was better) but also a man of action

Institute of Design (1961), and the

thousand years.

Nehru did not inherit a trillion-dol-

world of Hindutva has any vision – good, bad or indifferent - when economy" but he does not say, because he does not himself know, what needs to be done to get us there. More important, he does not know what the State needs to do differently to get there. You can only build institutions if you can think of what to do with them. The reason that Narendra Modi has not built institutions while Jawaharlal Nehru was not have even Nehru's starting

his precious India. 2019 that Nehru should have acceptrange as the Sino-Indian boundary. not acceptable to Nehru. He wanted the border much further into Tibet.

And he was willing to fight for it. He may have lost, yes, but he did not

give up India's claim. This is unlike Mr Modi, who has not only given up the claim, but is also unwilling even to name the opponent for fear of what China might do. This is the second reason that the BJP and Hindutva hate Nehru. He was a nationalist who exposed thoroughly their own fraud-

ulent nationalist credentials. The name Nehru is used far too loosely in today's times without much understanding of what he really stood for because we have not explained his thinking in simplified

He is not only much superior to whatever came after him, particularly as we see now in a period of economic collapse and national security failures, but he is a model for modernity. He died more than 55 years ago but is still spoken about and his legacy is all around us today. Of how many Prime Ministers, and that includes this current one, will we be able to say that?

> The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author

# FINANCIAL Chronicle

ANANTAPUR | TUESDAY | 19 JANUARY 2021

# quick BITES

<b>INDICATORS</b>		%
Sensex	48,564.27	-0.96
Nifty 50	14,281.30	-1.06
S&P 500*	3,768.25	-0.72
Dollar (₹)	73.28	-0.31
Pound Sterling (₹)	99.18	0.49
Euro (₹)	88.47	0.27
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,332▲117	0.24
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	54.87	-0.42
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.957	-0.52
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.087	-0.92
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

#### Maruti Suzuki increases prices of most vehicles

Maruti Suzuki India said it has increased the price for select models by up to Rs 34,000 to offset adverse impact of rising input costs. The new prices are effective from January 18. While the company did not specify the models, according to dealer sources the price hike impacts most of its models, but select variants of certain models have been left untouched in price hike. Last month, Maruti said it would hike prices from January.

## **Cure.fit acquires** US-based digital fitness firm Onyx



Health-tech startup Cure.fit said it has acquired California based fitness company Onyx. The company, however, did not disclose the value of the deal. Cure.fit's acquisition of Onyx is a step towards improving its computer vision technology for its at-home fitness product and expanding its international business, a statement said. Onyx specialises in body tracking technology and personalisation of workout feedback.

#### Skootr leases over 3.25-L sq ft space in H'bad

Managed office space operator Skootr has inked the largest office space leasing in this segment in Hyderabad for catering to large multinational clients wanting customised office space. Rajat Johar, country head, Skootr said, "With the Covid-19 outbreak, employees priorities have changed to health, safety and hygiene. This has led to occupiers shifting their base from Grade B assets to Grade A office space." He added that Skootr provides 'space as a service.

#### **IRFC IPO: Retail** portion oversubscribed

The initial public offering of the Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) was subscribed 65 per cent on the first day of subscription on Monday. The offer received bids for 80,89,30,700 shares against 1,24,75,05,993 shares on offer, as per data available with the NSE. The category reserved for non-institutional investors was subscribed 9 per cent and retail individual investors, 1.25 times



■ Import of appliances, furniture, EV parts to get costlier

# **Budget may raise duties** by 5-10% to aid local mfg

AFTAB AHMED & MANOJ KUMAR NEW DELHI, JAN. 18

The government is considering hiking import duties by 5-10 per cent on more than 50 items, including smartphones, electronic components and appliances in the upcoming budget, three government sources privy

to the discussions told

Reuters on Monday. The move to increase import duties is part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's self-reliant India campaign that aims to promote and support domestic manufacturing, said the sources, who asked not to be named as the discussions are not public.

One of the sources said

**FOCUS ON SELF-RELIANCE** 

- Customs duty hikes part of revenue raising and Atmanirbhar Bharat plan
- Govt seeking additional revenue of about ₹120,000 crore-₹21,000 crore from duties
- Duty hikes could hurt Swedish furniture maker Ikea and electric vehicle maker Tesla

the government was seeking to target additional revenue of about Rs 20,000 crore-21,000 crore from the moves, as it looks to shore up revenue amidst the pandemic-driven slowdown .

Two of the government sources also said the duty hikes could impact furniture and electric vehicles. potentially hurting the likes of Swedish furniture maker Ikea and Tesla,

which is planning to launch its cars in India this year. Both Ikea and Tesla executives have pre-viously expressed concerns about the steep duty structure their products

already face in India.

The list of items likely to attract steeper duties is set to include appliances such as refrigerators and airconditioners too, three of the sources said.

posals may still be tweaked further before they are finalised.

India has in recent years taken a series of measures that industry executives say discriminate against foreign companies. Government officials say such taxes are essential to promote India as a destina-

ing and to support domestic businesses "This is part of revenue raising and Atmanirbhar Bharat plan," said one of

tion for local manufactur-

the government sources. Last year, India raised import taxes on a wide range of products such as footwear, furniture, toys, electrical and electronics items by up to 20 per cent.

# Beware of tricky January, budget moves of mkt

**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD** MUMBAI, JAN. 18

Sensex and Nifty-50 fell close to 1 per cent for the second session in a row on profit taking amid negative global cues, though foreign portfolio investors were still buy-

ing shares.

The Sensex closed 470 points down at 48,564 while the Nifty-50 closed 152.40 points lower at 14,281.30. The broader market fall was even sharper with the BSE Mid-cap Index down 2.01



per cent and BSE Smallcap Index, 1.89 per cent.
"The news of fresh
Covid cases in China has

spooked the markets across the globe, including India, as participants are worried about global economic recovery," said

Aiit Mishra, VP-research, Religare Broking.

It's time to remain cautious as the January-February period has seen big market falls in the past—the biggest fall after a sharp rise took place on January 21, 2008—and later between 2015 and 2018 the market saw sharp falls post-Union Budget

With little headroom for the government to present a popular budget, profit taking before budget day cannot be ruled

"Unusual strength in the dollar index and sustained run up in the commodities have battered the sentiment of the equity market. It has trig-gered selling in commodities and the Nifty Metal Index closed 4.57 per cent lower," said Shrikant Chouhan, analyst-equity technical rese-arch

Kotak Securities. Foreign portfolio investors were net buyers of equities worth Rs 650.60 crore while the domestic institutions were net sellers by Rs 42.51 crore.

# Chip shortage forces Ford to advance plant shut down

New Delhi, Jan. 18: The global shortage of semi-conductors will impact production of US auto major Ford's plants in India in the coming months, even as the company advances a scheduled week-long shutdown to this week at its Chennai factory, according to a company official.

Ford India, which has two factories at Chennai in Tamil Nadu and Sanand in Gujarat, expects the issue, which is affecting the entire automotive sector, to continue for at least through the first half of 2021.

"The global semiconductor shortage will impact vehicle production at Ford's Chennai and Sanand plant in the com-ing months," a Ford India spokesperson said in a

statement. The spokesperson further said, "In Chennai, we have pulled ahead a down week to this week due to a supplier part shortage connected to the global semiconductor shortage."

The company is working closely with suppliers to address production con-straints tied to the global semiconductor shortage and working to prioritise key vehicle lines for production, making the most of its semiconductor allocation.

"This issue is affecting the entire automotive sector and expected to continue for at least the first half of 2021," the spokesperson added.

Ford India exports a significant portion of vehicles produced from its two plants. In December 2020 its pro-duction was down 42.96



#### AUDI DELAYS OUTPUT, IDLES 10,000 STAFF

YUEQI YANG JAN. 18

A global semiconductor shortage is forcing Audi to delay the production of some high-end cars and furlough workers, its chief executive officer told the Financial Times. The Volkswagen AG brand has put more than

10,000 workers on furas production lough slowed, but overall output for 2021 shouldn't be affected because the company expects to make up for lost time in the second half, Markus Duesmann said in the

VW, the world's biggest carmaker, had said last month that it's bracing for a major production

disruption in first-quarmanufacturing around the globe because of the bottleneck. Other carmakers, including Daimler AG, Nissan Motor Co. Honda Motor Co, Ford Motor Co and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV, have also said they face impact from the chip

shortage. In the FT interview, Duesmann said Audi will "do everything we can to keep it below 10,000 [fewer models produced for the first quarter." The supply challenge came as Audi saw unexpected rise in demand for cars, largely due to a rebound in China, he said.

-Bloomberg

per cent at 6,943 units.

The company's domestic sales were at 1,662 units, down 45.06 per cent from the year-ago month, whereas its exports were at 6,992 units, a decline of 53.83 per cent from December 2019.

Last month, due to the shortage of semiconductor supplied by Bosch Ltd, Mahindra & Mahindra had also stated it was expecting reduction in production and sales vol-

**LEXUS DRIVES** 

**IN SEDAN LS** 

**500H NISHIJIN** 

**AT ₹2.22 CR** 

## **RBI** forex intervention to touch \$93 bn by Mar.

Mumbai, Jan. 18: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to spend at least \$20 billion more to support the rupee and increase the forex kitty through the reminder of the financial year, taking its overall forex intervention to \$93 billion, according to a report.

The report by the Wall Street brokerage Bank of America Securities also expects the central bank to raise banks' HTM (held-tomaturity) limits of excess government securities by 2 per cent of their books to fund the fiscal deficit if high forex intervention limits its open market operations (OMOs).

So far this fiscal, the RBI's forex intervention has touched \$73.7 billion, according to the assessment by brokerage's India economists Indranil Sen Gupta and Aastha Gudwani. They also feel the RBI to intervene with \$45 billion in 2021-22 if the current account deficit (CAD) stays 0.5 per cent of the GDP.

After eight years, the RBI under the current governor Shaktikanta Das has been building up the forex reserves, which as of

billion, a lifetime high. While delivering the Nani Palkhivala lecture

last Saturday, Das repeated his resolve to not let the 2008 or 2013 run on the rupee to be repeated again. "Our BoP (balance of

payment) forecasts place RBI forex intervention at \$93 billion (\$73.7 billion so far) in 2020-21 and \$45 billion in 2021-22 if the the CAD remains at 0.5 per cent of GDP, which is dependent on the crude oil averaging at \$50 a barrel," the report said.

It said since high forex intervention is limiting OMOs, the RBI is expected to raise banks' HTM limits by 2 per cent of their books to fund the fiscal deficit.

The report further said it is sure the RBI will continue to buy forex when the dollar is weakening and let the rupee depreciate when it strengthens.

On Saturday, Das had "To mitigate global spillovers, EMs (emerging markets) like India have no recourse but to build their own forex reserve buffers, even though at the cost of being included in the currency manipula-

# Total to buy 20% in Adani Green for \$2.5 bn

BAIJU KALESH, MANUEL BAIGORRI, FRANCOIS DE BEAUPUY & P. R. SANJAI

Total SE has agreed to a \$2.5-billion deal that includes a minority stake in India's renewables major Adani Green Energy Ltd, as it expands

its efforts to diversify

beyond oil. Paris-based Total will acquire 20 per cent of Adani Green, take a board



seat and add a 50 per cent stake in a portfolio of operating solar assets with capacity to transmit 2.35 gigawatts of power to consumers, the company said on Monday in a state-

"India is the right place to put into action our energy transition strategy based on two pillars: renewables and natural gas," Total CEO Patrick

Pouyanne said in the

statement.

week for Total in the renewable area, following the acquisition of a French biogas producer and of a stake in a large US solar portfolio. The French oil and gas giant and its European peers are increasingly investing in clean power and renewable fuels amid mounting pressure from investors, governments and consumers to reduce carbon dioxide emissions

Bloomberg PUNE, JAN. 18

#### MICHAEL GONSALVES

Japanese luxury car maker Lexus, the arm of Toyota, on Monday introduced a new variant of its flagship sedan LS. called the Lexus LS 500H Nishijin priced at Rs 2.22 crore at New Delhi showroom while the entry level variant the LS 500h costs Rs 31 lakh less at Rs 1.91 crore.

The brand has given the LS 500h a few crucial updates across the range. Although priced higher, it rivals the Mercedes-Benz S-Class, Audi A8L, and the BMW

7 Series.
The new LS 500h
Nishijin variant has interiors crafted with an expression of style and comfort, featuring a unique collaboration involving traditional Japanese crafts.

It is inspired by the path of the moonlight on the sea, a rare phenomenon witnessed for a few days before and after a full moon.

Lexus India president P. B. Venugopal said the new Nishijin variant and improvements to the flagship model have been introduced following positive response of the LS 500h in India.

"These upgrades keep in line with the sophistication and craftsman-ship of the Lexus LS 500h flagship luxury model," he pointed out.

These will deliver opti mum performance with cutting-edge technologies, while keeping in mind the environmental benefits and the comfort, Venugopal said.

the engine. It continues to pair a 3.5-litre petrol engine with an electric motor, generating an output of 358PS.

There is no change to

# WhatsApp rival Hike goes off the air in India

**SARITHA RAI** 

Hike, the messaging app backed by SoftBank Group Corp. that aimed to compete against WhatsApp in the world's second-most populous country, shut down and vanished from app stores on Monday.

The startup valued at \$1.4 billion in a 2016 funding round announced its app was going off the air earlier this month without explanation. The app started by billionaire-family scion Kavin Bharti Mittal has failed over several



years to displace Facebook Inc's rival app as India's go-to venue for social media and mobile communica-WhatsApp's remains largest market globally. Hike, backed also by

in recent years ventured into adjacent areas such as phones expanded even spheres such as mobile entertainment. January 6, Mittal-son of Sunil Bharti Mittal, chairman of Bharti Airtel Ltdannounced the closure of Hike StickerChat. Its demise coincides with

Chinese WeChat-operator Tencent Holdings Ltd, has

a growing global backlash among technology experts, privacy advocates, billionaire entrepreneurs and government organisations against WhatsApp's new

policy of reserving the right to share user data with the broader Facebook network. Over the past year or more, Mittal has steadily diversified Hike into social and virtual-mobile products. His company

Vibe social media app and work on a new gaming product called Rush, he wrote on Twitter. "India won't have its own

will continue to develop its

messenger," Mittal wrote. "Global network effects are too strong (unless India bans Western companies.)' —Bloomberg

reforms in the pipeline

tell you that the downside

Foreigners continue to

pile into Indian stocks,

having bought a net \$2.2

billion in two weeks in the

new year, after pumping in \$23.4 billion in 2020.

That was the most since

"Vaccines and the low

risk isn't very high.

#### **BULL** | CASE | 'Looking at a single metric of value or P/E is not a fair way to judge the market'

# Unfazed by high prices, MF stays bullish on stocks

**NUPUR ACHARYA** 

A record price-to-earnings valuation for Indian shares shouldn't act as a deterrent for stock investors, according to Radhika Gupta, the head Edelweiss Asset

Management Ltd. Gupta, the only female chief executive officer of a major asset manager in India, savs it's "risky to be underweight equities" at a time when local stocks remain "heavily" driven by liquidity. Her firm, which oversees Rs 46,500 (\$6.3 billion) in assets, is putting its money to work: an Edelweiss balanced fund that invests in both

boosted its equity allocation to about 75 per cent, from just 30 per cent in "Looking at a single met-

ric of value or P/E is not a fair way to judge the market at a point when domestic economic activity is bottoming out, and you have such high liquidity," she said. "We are buyers of businesses. We are looking at corporate earnings, the domestic econoflows and risk appetite."

The benchmark S&P BSE Sensex has rallied around 90 per cent from

its low during the March

swoon in 2020, hitting

fresh records on the way.

stocks and bonds has The rally fuelled by cen-boosted its equity alloca-tral bank liquidity and incessant foreign inflows has the gauge trading at 23 times its 12-month forward earnings. That's versus a five-year average multiple of 19 times.

Gupta's optimism is at odds with rising concern among many market watchers that stock prices in India have run ahead of themselves as the economy braces for its biggest annual contraction in records going back to

Last week, the Reserve Bank Bank of India also warned about the rally, citing a widening "disconnect" between certain sections of the financial mar-



Radhika Gupta

kets and the real economy. The RBI will also start draining cash from the banking system as it seeks to revert to normal liquidity operations from pandemic-imposed emergency measures.

Gupta, on the other hand, points to improving



corporate earnings and

ebbed," she said. "The second quarter was good for company earnings led by margin expansion, the tail risk for banks has been contained and a cougovernment

"A lot of the uncertainty surrounding markets has

interest environment that we are in could be a very good thing for emerging markets" like India, said Gupta. "We are hoping to see a scenario of betterthan-expected performance for the corporate sector. With lockdowns opening up, we expect rev-

Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

#### Chandrasekhar suffers stroke

Bengaluru: Former India cricketer B.S. Chandrasekhar has been hospitalised after suffering a stroke but is recovering well and is set to be discharged in the next couple of days, his family said on Monday. The 75-year old legendary former leg-spinner complained of "tiredness and fatigue" on

Friday evening and his speech became a "little bit cluttered" his wife Sandhya Chandrsekhar Bhagwath said, describing the health scare as a "very, very

minutest stroke" "Chandra is recovering very well, and he will be back home on Wednesday or Thursday,

she said On advice of doctors, the Mysuru-born Chandrasekhai was admitted to the Aster RV Hospital, where he was kept in the emergency care unit for observation. — PT

#### **Eng win opening Test in Lanka**

Galle, Sri Lanka: Jonny Bairstow and Dan Lawrence held their nerve in a 62-run unbroken stand to guide England to a seven-wicket win over Sri Lanka on Monday on the fifth and final morning of the series-opening

England ensured they didn't have any more hiccups in erasing the remaining 36 required on the last day after Sri Lanka had set up a tricky 74-run target on a turning wicket. England had slumped to 14/3 late on the fourth evening, included a crucial run-out of their captain Joe Root for just 1, before Bairstow and Lawrence combined to usher the tourists to 76/3. Bairstow remained unbeaten on 35 and Lawrence finished 21 not out. — AP Brief scores: Sri Lanka 135 & 359 vs England 421 & 76/3

#### **Dungdung stars in**

hockey girls win

Santiago, Chile: Striker Beauty Dungdung scored a hat-trick as the Indian junior women's hockev team thrashed their Chilean counterparts 5-3 in a high-scoring match to make a successful return to competition following a year-long break due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The striker from Jharkhand scored in the 29th, 38th and 52nd minutes, while Lalrindik (14th) and Sangita Kumari (30th) also registered their names on the scoresheet for Chile's goals were scored by

Simone Avelli (10th), Paula Sanz (25th) and Fernanda Arrieta (49th). The match started with the Chile iunior team retaining most of the possession, and scoring in the 10th minute as

Avelli was on the end of a perfect pass to score the hosts' opening goal. — PT

#### 72 players in 0z **Open quarantine**

Melbourne: The number of players in hard quarantine swelled to 72 ahead of the Australian Open after a fifth positive coro navirus test was returned from the charter flights bringing players, coaches, officials and media to Melbourne for the season-opening tennis major. That means they won't be allowed to leave their hotel rooms or practice for 14 days, creating a two-speed preparation period for the tournament. Other players in less rigorous quarantine will be allowed to practice for five hours daily. Australian Open organizers confirmed late Sunday that the latest case involved a passenger on the flight from Doha, Qatar to Melbourne who was not a member of the playing contingent, But all 58 passengers, including the 25 players now cannot leave their hote rooms for 14 days. - AF

### Live on

**BADMINTON** 

Thailand Open: Round of 32 matches from 7.30 am on Star Sports 2 HD, 3

**Sved Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20** Tournament: Haryana vs Kerala from 11.55 am: Mumbai vs Andhra Pradesh from 6.55 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

Printed and published from Anantapur by K.Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Deccan Chronicle Press, Bye-Pass Road, Tapovanam, Anantapur - 515004 RNI Registration No. APENG/1999/401 Editorial: 276068 Phones: 276904, 276905 Editor: Kaushik Mitter

# NEWBIES STING

## Siraj's five-for and Shardul's 4/61 keep India in contention

Indian pacers Mohammed Siraj and Shardul Thakur produced another inspirational effort in adverse circumstances but India were set a a challenging target of 328 by Australia as the Border-Gavaskar Trophy headed towards an exhilarating finale in the fourth Test here.

The target is a tricky one and the Indian batsmen would get a fair idea whether to go for it by lunch on the final day, which is Tuesday. This was after Siraj and Thakur combined to share nine wickets while dismissing Australia for 294 in their second

Siraj (19.5-5-73-5) punched way above his weight with his maiden five-wicket haul but couldn't prevent hosts from posting an imposing target for his team in only 75.5 overs of the second innings batting.

At stumps, India were 4 for no loss with Rohit

Sharma and Shubman Gill at the crease.

The highest target chased at Brisbane is 236 and that was seven decades ago which is an indicator why this Australian ground can be equated with Fort Knox. The home team hasn't lost a game here since 1988.

Thakur's dream Test match also got better with figures of 4/61 and a match haul of seven wickets. The most poignant moment was his apparent joy when he took the catch to help Siraj pip him to the coveted five-for landmark.

As Siraj showed that scuffed red kookaburra acknowledging the 957 people in the stands on the first working day of the week, the most gener-ous applause came from his partner in crime, who walked a foot behind him clapping with gusto.

The possibility of rain adds to the excitement and the changing weather did affect the contours of Australia skipper Tim Paine's facial expressions which exhibited relief and despair in equal measures. Among the two captains, Paine is supposed to be the enforcer but this Indian team hasn't stopped surprising their detractors with a spirit, which has made this series one of the finest played in recent

batsman

Steve Smith reckons that

with the Gabba track

starting to play a few

tricks, staying patient

would be imperative for

his team's bowlers when

they defend an imposing

328 against a determined

India on the last day of

"I think the game is in

a nice place for us. I

think the wicket has

started to play a few

tricks today, couple of balls shot up," Smith

the and final Test here.



Paceman Mohammed Siraj (right) points to the sky to pay tribute to his father who passed away in India while the bowler was on national duty in Australia, as he celebrates his fifth wicket with teammate Mayank Agarwal on the fourth day of the fourth Test against Australia at the Gabba in Brisbane on Monday.

# Mum's call did wonders for Siraj

Brisbane, Jan. 18: Mohammed Siraj revealed how a phone call with his mother and the memory of his late father spurred him on to a fivewicket haul in the final Test against Australia on

Monday.
Siraj, playing only his third Test, ably deputised for the injured Jasprit Bumrah in Brisbane, where India need a draw to retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy with the series locked at 1-1.

It has been an emotional series for the 26-year-old, who lost his father in November and welled up with tears during the national anthems in

Sydney. "I am very thankful that I got five wickets. It was a very tough situation for me because I lost my dad recently," said Siraj.

"I called up home and I felt strong after talking to them and to my mother. She motivated me to feel strong. So I was mentally strong and my focus was to make sure my dad's

Smith says patience will be

key for Aussies on fifth day

going to be about bowl-

ing (in) good areas and

letting the natural varia-

tion of the day five wick-

et sort of do its work and

hopefully we can hold on

The rain factor is also

going to be a crucial one

on the final day but Smith would rather

"Who knows? That is a

He said the Australian

bowlers should remain

patient and not go

searching for too much.

focus on controllables.

to all the chances.

tough question.

aid. "The Indian players "So, tomorrow it is just have obviously batted

#### **SIRAJ'S MAIDEN 5-WICKET HAUL IN TESTS**

Mohammed Siraj recorded the best bowling in Tests by taking 5/73 against Australian in the fourth Test.

The right-arm medium pacer from Hyderabad also became the 18th Indian to take five wickets in an

innings in Australia.

Kapil Dev holds the Indian record of taking the highest number of five-wicket hauls in Australia. He claimed five five-wicket hauls in 21 innings of 11 Test Down

Siraj's previous best bowling was 3/37 on debut in the second Test of the series at Melbourne.

Shardul Thakur also recorded his best bowling after taking 4/61 on Monday. His previous best was 3/94 in the first innings of the fourth Test.

– S. PERVEZ QAISER

Siraj's father, an auto rickshaw driver from Hyderabad, died on November 20 as India prepared for the start of

**'CRACKS ON GABBA** 

An emotional Siraj struggled to describe his maiden five-wicket haul in words but sounded a word of caution about the cracks on the Gabba surface creating confusion in the Indian batsmen's

Sydney, it was 130 (overs)

or something, obviously

it is a different wicket to

that. But for us it is just

being patient, not searching too much,

bowling good areas and

just letting it happen,

the prolific player said.

"I think the more vou

sort of go searching for

on these kind of tracks,

then you probably don't

get the reward. So, it is

just about hitting good

areas consistently and

letting the natural varia-

tion of the wicket take

being

He believed that there are a few spots on the surface, from where the ball might rear up awkwardly when his team sets out to chase a record target of 328 on Tuesday to win the

series against Australia.
"When they bowl, obviously there will be some confusion, it will play in the mind of the batsmen that there are cracks on the pitch but our batsmen are prepared for this. We will come to know only tomorrow," Siraj said.

#### **SCORECARD**

Australia 1st innings: 369 Australia 2nd Innings (overnight 21/0): Marcus Harris c Pant b Thakur 38, David Warner Washington Sundar David Marnus Labuschagne c Rohit b Siraj 25, Steven Smith c Rahane b Siraj 55, Matthew Wade c Pant b Siraj 0, Cameron Green c Rohit b Thakur 27, Pat Cummins not out 28, Mitchell Starc c Navdeep Saini b Siraj 1, Nathan Lyon c Mayank Agarwal b Thakur 13, Josh Hazlewood c Thakur b Siraj 9. Extras (b-5, bl-2, w-2, nb-4) 13. Total (all out in 75.5 overs) 294.

FoW: 1-89, 2-91,3-123, 4-123, 196-5, 227-6, 242-7, 247-8, 274-9, 294-10. **Bowling:** Mohammed Siraj 19.5-5-73-5, T Natarajan 14-4-41-0, Washington Sundar 18-1-80-1, Shardul Thakur 19-2-61-4, Navdeep Saini 5-1-32-

India 2nd Innings: Rohit Sharma batting 4, Shubman Gill batting 0. **Total (for no** loss in 1.5 overs) 4. **Bowling:** Mitchell Starc 1-0-4-0, Josh Hazlewood 0.5-0-

#### **WORSE FOR HOSTS: PONTING**

Ponting feels a drawn Test series against a severely depleted India will be a worse result for the hosts than the loss they suffered at home in the Border Gavaskar Trophy two years ago.

The injury-ravaged Indian team has shown great resilience and grit throughout the current tour of Australia. In the ongoing fourth and final Test, the tourists are without their premier fast bowlers, skipper Virat Kohli and a few specialist batsmen.

couple of years ago," Ponting told cricket.com.au. India have found it going through 20 players in a series, (Australia) having (David) Warner back for the last couple of games, (Steve) Smith back for all them

a worse result than last series," he added.

# **DRAWN TEST SERIES WILL BE**

Brisbane, Jan. 18: Former Australian captain Ricky

"I think a drawn series will be worse than the loss a That's the way I look at it, considering how hard

that they didn't have last time around. "A draw would not only feel like a loss to them but be

The 46-year-old batting great backed Australia to eke out a win, saying the Indian resilience is bound to

# Messi sees red as Bilbao lift Super Cup advantage over Liverpool at the top of the Premier League but were denied a

Madrid, Jan. 18: Lionel Messi lost his cool after another Barcelona collapse, hitting an opponent away from the ball and being sent off for the first time while playing with the Catalan club in the team's 2-3 loss to Athletic Bilbao in the final of the

Spanish Super Cup. Inaki Williams' goal in extra time gave Athletic the lead and a come-frombehind win. Barcelona had little chance of recovering when Messi swung his right arm toward the head of an Athletic player while trying to free himself. Messi was shown the red card following a video

After Athletic scored in the 90th minute to seal a 2-2 draw and force extra time, Williams netted the

title-clinching goal with a neat curling shot from just inside the area, with the ball hitting the far post before going into the top

The goal three minutes into extra time secured Athletic their third Super Cup title, and first since they beat Barcelona in the 2015 final. The Basque Country club also won the title in 1984.

Barcelona were seeking their 15th Super Cup title, and third in the last five seasons. It was also looking to end their title drought after going with out a trophy last season, something that hadn't

happened since 2007-08. It was an even match at the La Cartuja Stadium in Seville, with neither team creating many significant



Athletic Bilbao players celebrate after winning the Spanish Supercopa final against FC Barcelona.

MAN UTD STAY TOP

scoring opportunities. equalized two minutes Barcelona opened the later. scoring with a shot from the middle of the area by Antoine Griezmann in the Manchester United main-40th minute but Athletic tained their three-point

Liverpool remain third after failing to score for a third straight league game, but were grateful to their goalkeeper to extend a 68-game unbeaten home run in the League as he denied Bruno Fernandes and Paul Pogba late on. United are now unbeat-

famous win at Anfield by

Alisson Becker's heroics

in a 0-0 draw on Sunday.

en in 12 league games as they bolstered their claim to be title contenders for the first time since former manager Alex Ferguson retired eight years ago.

Rut Ole Gunnar

Solskjaer's men may rue the chance to open up a six-point gap against the champions.

SYED MUSHTAQ | ALI TROPHY

# Jharkhand defeat Hyd in super over

Jharkhand saw off the challenge of Hyderabad via a super over in an Elite Group B match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament here

Jharkhand restricted Hyderabad to 139/8 in 20 overs, with Vikash Singh and Vivekanand Tiwary picking up three wickets

B. Sandeep (37) was the top-scorer while Himalay Agarwal and Buddhi Rahul contributed 26 each as Hyderabad posted a modest score.
In reply, Jharkhand start-

ed in earnest with skipper Ishan Kishan (27) and Utkarsh Singh (29) going on the attack. The dismissal of Kishan by T Ravi Teja did not seem to deter Utkarsh and Virat Singh, who went for their shots.

In the super over, Kishan smacked two sixes off C. Rakshann Reddy while Roy hoisted one over the boundary as Jharkhand ended up with 23 runs. Hyderabad could only muster 14 for one. Jharkhand are in third

place with 12 points after completing their engagements in the group while Hyderabad are fifth with 4 points. Odisha beat Assam by four wickets to finish at the bottom with one win.

Tamil Nadu, who have so far won all their four games, meet hosts Bengal (three wins from four games) in the final Group B match. **BARODA GO INTO** 

Unbeaten Baroda qualified for the knockout stage as they finished on top in Group C following a 12-run win over Gujarat in Vadodar on Monday.

Baroda had come into the final Elite Group C match, after winning their first four games.

Baroda rode on an unbeaten 59 by Vishnu Solanki and a whirlwind 17-ball 34 by Abhimanyusingh Rajput to post a competitive 176/4 and then restricted Gujarat to 164/9 to eke out

In Alur, Mandeep Singh led from the front with an unbeaten 99 to help Punjab trounce Tripura by five wickets and storm into the quarterfinals as table-top-

pers from Group A.

Defending champions
Karnataka also remained in the hunt for the lasteight berth, securing a fivewicket win over Uttar Pradesh that took their net run-rate to 0.292.

BRIEF SCORES
■ Hyderabad 139/9 in 20 overs
(B. Sandeep 37, Himalay Agarwal
26, Rahul Buddhi 26, Vivekanand Tiwari 3/25, Vikash Singh 3/36) tied Jharkhand 139/9 in 20 overs (Utkarsh Singh 29, Anukul Roy 28, Ishan Kishan 27, Ajay Dev Goud 4/22). **Super over:** Jharkhand 23/0 beat Hyderabad

Uttar Pradesh 132/8 in 20 overs (Abhishek Goswami 47, Karan Sharma 41, J. Suchith 3/21, Praveen Dubey 3/15) lost to Karnataka 136/5 in 19.3 overs (Shreyas Gopal 47 n.o., Sharma 2/23) by five wickets.



# Sindhu & Co. eye improved results

Bangkok, Jan. 18: Indian shuttlers, including Olympic hopefuls P.V. Sindhu and Saina Nehwal, will hope to give a better account of themselves at Toyota Thailand Open Super 1000 tournament, starting here on Tuesday, after a lacklustre show last week. The Indian

seemed to struggle with their fitness as none of them could cross the second round at the Yonex Thailand Open, the first event of the Asia leg here. Barring

Srikanth, it was the first tournament for the whole Indian contingent in nearly 10 months. If Olympic silver medal-

list Sindhu struggled to keep pace with her firstround opponent Denmark's Mia Blichfeldt, London Games bronze winner Saina simply ran out of steam in the second round. Among others, world No. 13 B. Sai Praneeth looked a against Kantaphon mismatch Thailand's

Wangcharoen, while for mer world No. 1 Srikanth and 2014 Commonwealth Games Parupalli Kashyap were either forced to withdraw or retire after suffering calf muscle pulls.

Sindhu, a medal contender at Tokyo Games, has been training at London for last two months and she will be itching to go deep in the draw when she opens against world no 12 Busanan O., who had outlasted Saina last week.

Saina, who recently recovered from Covid-19 and had to go through the ordeal of a false positive test last week, will however have an imposing task as she faces fourth seed and home favourite Ratchanok Intanon in the first round.

In the men's singles, Praneeth will need to find his rhythm when he takes on Daren Liew of Malaysia, while Srikanth, faces Thailand's Sitthikom Thammasin, an opponent he has beaten twice in the

#### JAPAN'S PM VOWS OLYMPICS WILL **BE PROOF OF VICTORY OVER VIRUS**

Tokyo, Jan. 18: Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga vowed on Monday to get the pandemic under control and hold the already postponed Olympics this summer with ample coronavirus protection.

In a speech opening a new Parliament session, Suga said his government would revise laws to make antivirus measures enforceable with penalties and compen-

Early in the pandemic, Japan was able to keep its virus caseload manageable with non-binding requests for businesses to close or operate with social distancing and for people to stay home. But recent weeks have seen several highs in new cases per day, in part blamed on eased attitudes toward the anti-virus measures, and doubts are growing as more contagious variants spread while people wait for vaccines and the Olympics draw closer.

Suga pledged to achieve the Olympics as a proof of human victory against the coronavirus.

"We will have full anti-infection measures in place and proceed with preparation with a determination to achieve the Games that can deliver hope and courage throughout the world," he said. -AP