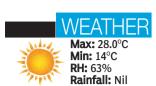
# DECCAN 101e

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

ANANTAPUR | WEDNESDAY | 16 DECEMBER 2020



Forecast: Cloudy sky. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 28/14 ºC

## COVID-19

**CASES** (+365)(+25,901)1,44,110

99,32,364 covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS (+491)(+3)TS: 2,78,215 1,499

AP: 8,76,336 7,064

(+500)

(+5)

CASES AROUND THE WORLD



218

worldometers.info/ coronavirus

#### ASTROGUIDE Sarvari; Dakshinayana

Tithi: Margasira Shuddha Vidiya till Star: Purvashada till 8.08 pm Varjyam: Shesha Varjyam till 8.05 am; 3.51 am to 5.24 am (Thursday) **Durmuhurtam:** 11.49 am to 12.33 pm Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm HIJRI CALENDAR

Rabbi-ul Akhir 30, 1442 AH Fajar: 5.08 am **Zohar:** 12.05 pm **Asar:** 4.11 pm Maghrib: 5.47 pm

**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.17 AM SUNSET TODAY 5.49 PM** MOONSET 6.19 AM **MOONRISE** 6.28 PM

**Isha:** 7.02 pm



We are lucky to be blessed with unadulterated grass!

## **Covid tally rises**

in IIT-Madras

Chennai: Seventy nine more people have tested positive for coronavirus on the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras campus here, taking the tally in the institution to 183, a senior health official said on Tuesday. Out of the 978 samples lifted from the IIT-M since December 1, a total of 183 people have tested positive till date and results for 25 specimens alone were yet to be

#### **North India in**

grip of cold wave

New Delhi: Cold conditions intensified in parts of north India on Tuesday and dense fog engulfed many states as Delhi registered its lowest minimum temperature of the season so far while night temperatures in Kashmir dipped below the freezing

### **SC** suggests docs

be given break

New Delhi: The Supreme Court asked the Centre on Tuesday to consider granting a break to doctors engaged in Covid duty for the last eight months. The top court said that continuous work might be affecting mental health of doctors. A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R.S. Reddy and M.R. Shah, which is hearing a suo motu case.

### NATION 4

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

**Didi dares Centre** to impose Prez rule



#### WORLD 5

Time to turn the page, says Biden after EC win

#### SPORTS 8

Kohli climbs to second in Test rankings



Vol. 22 No. 115 Established 1938 8 PAGES ₹6.00

## **AP** wants Centre notification for relocation of High Court

**DC CORRESPONDENT** VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 15

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesdy met Union home minister Amit Shah and will be meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other ministers on Wednesday

The AP CM is in Delhi to pursue various matters pertaining to the state with different Union ministers and the Prime Minister.

The Chief Minister broached the Polavaram issue and submitted a memorandum to Amit Shah. He requested for approval of ₹55,656 crore for Polavaram project as per Second Revised Cost Estimate and sought direc-

**JAGAN RELEASES** 

₹1,252 CR FOR

9.48 L FARMERS

**DC CORRESPONDENT** 

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday launched 'YSR

Free Crop Insurance' scheme and directly credited an overall amount of ₹1,252 crore

into the bank accounts of

9.48 lakh farmers, who

had lost their crop in

2019. Speaking on the

occasion, he said that

the government has taken up the responsibility of supporting farmers during their hard

■ Page 2: Crop insurance

without paying premium

VICE-ADMIRAL

**CORONAVIRUS** 

died on Tuesday morn-

ing at the base hospital here due to Covid-19, offi-

cials said. The vice admiral, the Navy's senior-

most submariner, was due to retire on December 31. Srikant

was admitted at the hos-

pital after he contracted

the virus, said a junior

Navy officer who had

worked under him.

DC CORRESPONDENT

The Andhra Pradesh gov-

ernment urged the High

Court to issue directions to

Commission to put on hold

its move to conduct gram

panchayat polls in February 2021 to help it,

complete the first phase of

vaccination for Covid-19

by engaging the state

machinery for the pur-

bench comprising justice D.V.S.S. Somayajulu held

hearing on Tuesday on the

additional affidavit filed

by the state government

seeking issue of directions

to stay the implementation

of election proceedings issued by the SEC for hold-

ing gram panchayat polls

Government pleader C.

in February, 2021.

The High Court division

Election

State

VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 15

**DIES DUE TO** 

VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 15



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy calls on Union home minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on Tuesday. -DC

tions to Central water and finance ministries in this regard. He further wanted reimbursement of land acquisition costs and rehabilitation works as per the 2013 Land Acquisition Act for Polavaram project. He stated that the Centre is yet to reimburse ₹1,779 crore spent by the AP in

Jagan stated that bills from December 2018 are pending and any delay in construction of the project will further increase the project cost.

CM Jagan said, "We have planned to decentralise the capital as part of integrated development of AP state. We have enacted legislation in August making Visakhapatnam the executive capital, Amaravati the legislative capital and Kurnool the judicial capi-

The CM thus wanted the centre to start the process of relocating the High Court to Kurnool and issue of notification for

> Page 2: Jagan seeks adequate flood relief

#### Free for all in Karnataka council



BJP and Congress leaders clash over the chairman post during the Karnataka Legislative Council in Bengaluru on Tuesday. Congress MLCs heckled and pushed deputy chairman of the Legislative Council, S.L. Dharme Gowda, from his seat.

## Farmers' leaders to block Delhi-Noida border

## PM sees conspiracy behind farmers' stir

SANJAY KAW | DC NEW DELHI, DEC. 15

deadlock between the agitating farmers and the Centre even after multiple rounds of talks, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday that a "big conspiracy" was going on around Delhi to confuse the protesters and that his government was always committed to farmers' welfare and will keep

addressing their concerns. Attacking the Opposition and other activists protesting against the new agriculture-related laws, Mr Modi said: "They also wanted these reforms but they couldn't (pass them) when they were in power. But now that we have managed to do it, they are misleading the farmers.'

Speaking at the inauguration of mega energy projects in Kutch, Mr Modi said: "A conspiracy is going on around Delhi to confuse the farmers. They are being scared that after the new agricultural reforms, the land of the farmers will be occupied by others. Tell me, if a dairy has a contract of collecting milk from you, do they take away your cattle

At the Singhu border Delhi and between the farmers Haryana, leaders said that the fight over the new farm laws had reached a stage where they are "determined to win it, no matter what". They have also threatened to completely block the Delhi-Noida border crossings on Wednesday. Meanwhile, continuing

his tirade against the Centre for not repealing the new farm laws, Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal said his former ally BJP was the real "tukde tukde gang" which was trying to push patriotic Punjab into communal flames. He



stone laying ceremony of projects in Kutch.

## **Winter Session** of Parl scrapped

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, DEC. 15

The Winter Session of Parliament that usually begins in the last week of November won't take place this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the government will convene the Budget Session in January 2021, parliamentary affairs minister minister Prahlad Joshi said in a letter to Congress' Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

"The winter months are very crucial for managing the pandemic because of a recent spurt in cases dur-

said: "The BJP is the real

Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad wasn't consulted.

ing this period, particularly in Delhi. We are in the

middle of December and a

Covid vaccine is expected

very soon," Mr Joshi said.
Attacking the government over the issue, the
Congress said Tuesday the

'decimation of parliamen-

tary democracy is complete" and asked why, if

election campaigning can be done amid the pandem-

ic, the session could not be

held. Senior party leader and Rajya Sabha chief whip Jairam Ramesh also

said Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya

'tukde tukde gang' in the country. It has smashed national unity to pieces, shamelessly Hindus against Muslims and now desperately set-ting peace-loving Punjabi Hindus against their Sikh brethren, especially farmers. They are pushing patriotic Punjab into communal flames.

who have been protesting for 20 days now — want the three new laws to be scrapped, the government has said it is willing to

flag colours on village sec-

continue talks but won't

While the farmers -

Choudhary said the Centre will soon call the farmers' leaders for the next round of talks to end the deadlock over the farm

take back the laws. Union minister Kailash

laws. The protests against the new laws is likely to intensify further as more farmers are expected to the agitation at Delhi's borders. Over 2,000 women from the families of those protesting at the Singhu border are likely to join the demonstration

in the coming days.

#### **BORIS TO BE CHIEF GUEST ON REPUBLIC DAY**

London, Dec. 15: UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has accepted his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi's invitation to be the chief guest at the Republic Day parade on January 26, Downing Street said here on Tuesday, marking his first major bilateral visit since taking office last year and the first since Britain's exit from the European Union.
"I am delighted to be

visiting India at the start of an exciting year for UK, and look forward to delivering the quantum leap in our bilateral relationship that Prime Minister Modi and I have pledged to achieve," said Johnson. "As a key play er in the Indo-Pacific region, India is an increasingly indispensable partner for the UK as we work to boost jobs," he said.

#### RAJA CHARI TO **LEAD SPACEX TEAM TO ISS**

Washington, Dec. 15: NASA and European Space Agency (ESA) have selected three astronauts, including Indian-American Raja Chari, as crew members for SpaceX mission to the International Space Station, which is expected to launch in the autumn of — Agencies

#### Maheshwari to be shifted, Goswami new CJ removal of YSR Congress

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC VIJAYAWADA. DEC. 15

Andhra Pradesh Chief Justice J.K. Maheshwari is likely to be shifted to Sikkim High Court.

DC CORRESPONDENT

The state government on

Tuesday urged High Court Judge Justice

Rakesh Kumar to recuse

from hearing a batch of petitions filed challenging

its move to sell govern-

ment assets under 'Mission Build AP' stating

that it may not get justice.

Suman informed the court

that the Centre issued

guidelines for taking up

Covid-19 vaccination and

added that as the vaccina-

tion is likely to be taken up

VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 15

Subsequently, he tested The new Chief Justice had negative on Sunday morning, but developed will be appointed by the breathing difficulties by President in a few days. evening, the officer said. According to sources, 'He was shifted to ICU Sikkim High Court Chief and was subsequently Justice Arup Kumar put on a ventilator," the Goswami was actively conofficer mentioned. sidered for the AP High

Pradesh High Court acting Chief Justice Sanjay Yadav's name also cropped

up. The transfer of Justice Maheshwari came a month after Chief after Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy complained to the Centre against the former and a few other judges besides writing a letter to Supreme Court Chief Justice S.A. Bobde and releasing the same to



Justice Arup Kumar Goswam

said Sources Supreme Court Collegium which met on Monday

decided to transfer the incumbent and the top leadership at the Centre informed the Minister of the developments following which he rushed to New Delhi to meet Union home minister Amit Shah.

tive in the state were on a a collision path in the last one year. It all started with a few judgments given by the Chief Justice and other including

retariat buildings and scrapping of state order making English medium mandatory in government schools. The High Court had also set aside the appointment of new State Election

The judiciary and execu-Commissioner in place of N. Ramesh Kumar and reinstated the latter.

Page 2: Tussle reached flashpoint in Amaravati case

Lorry mows down 5 on way to church

**JOY OF SINGING** 

**CAROLS CRUSHED** 

**DC CORRESPONDENT** KURNOOL DEC. 15

In a tragic incident, five people, including four children, were killed and eleven others sustained injuries when a mini lorry mowed them down on National Highway-40 at Yerraguntla village near Sirivelu in Nandyal division.

Around 20 to 30 persons were going to attend a candle service at a church at 5 am on Tuesday.

Police said the deceased were U. Jhansi, 15, Dasari Sushmita, 14, Saigalla Vamsi, 12, Dasari Harsha Vardhan, 8 and Thota Suvarna, 42.

The injured were rushed to the government hospi-Nandyal and

> Page 2: Three people died on the spot

#### BY SUDDEN DEATH D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC **KURNOOL DEC. 15**

The joy of singing carols was short-lived in the macabre mishap in the sleepy Yerraguntla village near Sirivel on Tuesday. The residents of SC Colony have been observing early morning service from 4 am for the past one week for the second coming of the Saviour. The small community of local church were resolutely praying liberation Coronavirus.

Page 2: Advent joy

#### during January-February 2021, the state government is supposed to avail the services of employees on



**LEGAL | REALM Wants administration for Covid vaccination Phase-1** 

AP wants HC not to order polls

STATE URGES APHC JUDGE TO RECUSE

FROM 'MISSION BUILD AP' HEARING



■ Page 2: Second wave palpable, says AP

employees deployed for durty during general elections.

oppose sale can reach forum

Page 2: AP: Those who

The state filed an affi-

davit in the HC express-

ing concern that if Justice

Kumar continues in the

bench hearing the peti-

tions, there was a chance

that the Judge might

behave in a partial man-

ner resulting in depriva-

tion of justice

Explaining the role of employees in the Covid-19 vaccination programme, the government pleader informed the court that in each vaccination session,

He said that the state government would deploy a

ber team of health person-

nel to administer the vac-

huge posse of police for providing security cover for the vaccine during its storage and transport and added that in case the gram panchayat polls are held at the same time, it would affect the vaccination programme. Referring to the guide-

lines from the Centre to accord top priority for taking up vaccination programme, the government pleader informed the court that the state was taking up the vaccination programme on a priority to safeguard the health of the people in the state.

#### **AP POLICE BAGS 2ND RANK**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 15

The Andhra Pradesh Police has been ranked second in the implementation and utilisa-tion of the Interoperable Criminal Justice System Criminal Justice System (ICJS). Maharashtra ranked first in ICJS implementation and usage and Telangana was ranked third in the awards announced by the Central gov-

ernment on Tuesday.

DGP Gautam Sawang received the award in a virtual mode from minister of state for home affairs G. Kishen Reddy.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and AP home minister Mekathoti Sucharita expressed their delight over the AP Police winning the prestigious national award and congratulated the personnel for their services.

In a separate programme, Sawang launched a week-long "Anti-Drug Drive" at the DGP office on Tuesday. The "Anti-Drug Drive" banner was

Speaking on the occasion, the DGP said that various awareness programmes under which rallies and enforcement works will be carried during the week-long drive. He appreciated the Visakhapatnam rural SP and Srikakulam SP who destroyed the banned Ganja tactfully during the recent past. He asked all the other SPs in the state to take measures to curb the ganja

#### THREE DIED ON THE **SPOT, 2 SUCCUMB** IN HOSPITAL

FROM PAGE 1

While three people died on the spot, two others succumbed in the hospital, said Sirivella sub Inspector Chandrababu. A case of death due to negligence

has been registered. Allagadda DSP Rajendra said that an Eicher vehicle was coming from Hyderabad to Mydukuru. The vehicle's headlights were not working and the driver was in a sleepy condition, he said. The vehicle rammed through the people who were waiting on the left side of the road.

Kurnool Kaginelli Fakkeerapa visited the spot and also called on the victims in the hospital.

#### **ADVENT JOY** SHURTLIVED IN YERRAGUNTLA

FROM PAGE 1

The Church of South India Nandyal Diocese President Yesuratnam said that children were enthusiastically taking part in the Advent

"This is Advent, season of promise. The crushing down of four children who were joyfully taking part in Advent service has shaken the faithful," he

A villager of Yerraguntla said, "we go around the village with candles in hand in a predawn service singing Andhra Christava Songs, particularly 228, 229 and 104 during the season. Braving the chill and coldness of December, children joined this service. We are now left in a sea of darkness."

#### **PADAYATRA SEEKS CANCELLATION OF DECISION ON THREE**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 15

Amaravati Praja Padayatra has demanded that the YSR Congress government withdraw its decision of having three capitals for the state and continue Amaravati as the sole

capital of AP. Pro-Amaravati leaders and activists in large numbers joined padayatra conducted in Vijayawada city on Tuesday evening. Addressing the gathering, former minister and TD Umamaheswara Rao said continuation of pro-Amaravati capital movement for the past one year reflects the support of people to Amaravati as the Îone capital of AP. He asserted that agitations in Amaravati will continue till the decision of having three capitals is can-

TD MLA Gadde Rammohan lamented that when nearly 30,000 farmers had given up their farmlands for a world class capital at Amaravati,

## **Farmers in dire straits** as rabi season beckons

Govt urged to incorporate details of all affected farmers in e-Karshak app

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 15

Many farmers are crestfallen having lost their kharif crops because of continuous rainfall and

cyclone 'Nivar'.

Adding to their woes is their rabi season is hit due to shortage of farm labourers. The only saving armae has been in the form grace has been in the form of input subsidy and supply of subsidised seed by the state government.

As per a preliminary report about crop Nivar destroyed 6.62 lakh hectares causing production a loss of 12.99 lakh metric tonnes worth of ₹2,831.68

The biggest worry the farmers are facing at present is shortage of farm

**SECOND COVID** 

**SAYS AP** 

FROM PAGE 1

**WAVE PALPABLE**,

In the additional affi-davit, the state govern-ment also mentioned

that though the number

of Covid-19 cases was

showing a dip due to a series of measures taken up by the govern-

ment to curb its spread

and to provide medical

treatment to the affected persons in the state, a second wave of Covid-19 was palpable in several

It further said that as

the prevalence of Covid-

19 was intense in the

first wave in the state, it could be the same in the

second wave from December 2020 to March

2021 and underlined the

importance on the part

of state government to take all requisite meas-

ures to contain the sec-

tion the state govern-ment's plea, the judge directed the State Election Commission to

file a counter-affidavit

and adjourned the case

for next hearing on December 18.

**AP: THOSE WHO** 

**REACH FORUM** 

FROM PAGE 1

**OPPOSE SALE CAN** 

Referring to the adverse

remarks made by the

Judge, the state govern-

ment said that the Judge

was coming up with a

predetermined decision

even before completion

of the hearing in the case and added that it

was the responsibility of

whether the state gov-

ernment was having the authority to sell away its

assets which were not in

use and also encroached

The government fur-

ther said that once the

High Court could take

up hearing in the case

and pronounce its ver-

dict on it, those who

were having objection to

such verdict could approach a constitution-

al forum. Referring to

the Justice Kumar's

remarks about break-

down of Constitution in

the state, the state gov-

ernment stated that

such remarks were

opined that the Judge

crossed the 'Lakshman

Rekha". The state gov-

ernment in its affidavit

mentioned that several

within the ambit of the

Constitution, were to maintain self-control

and cautioned that if

they intended to tread

into the jurisdiction of

others, it could lead to a

AP Mission Build pro-

gramme director Prave-

en Kumar filed the affi-

davit on behalf of the

state government in the

High Court.Earlier, divi-

sion bench comprising

Justice Kumar and jus-

tice D. Ramesh held a

hearing on a batch of

petitions on December

11. The next hearing in

the case is posted to

December 17.

constitutional crisis.

unwarranted

institutions

through auction.

Taking into considera-

states in the country.

Total area sown is 36.49 lakh hectares as against normal area of 37.42 lakh hectares during kharif 2020.

Total area sown during rabi 2020-21 is 7.38 lakh hectares so far as against normal area of 22.75 lakh hectares.

Crops have been damaged in 5.05 lakh hectares due to Nivar affecting 7.5 lakh farmers with input subsidy estimated at ₹657 cr.

Horticulture crops damaged in 24,833 hectares affecting 47,932 farmers with input subsidy estimated at ₹4,196 cr.

labourers, who have returned to their native have villages following Covid-19. Farmers complain that the available workers, taking advantage of the situation, are demanding ₹600

to ₹800 per day. Moreover, harvesting machines are also unable to harvest the lodged crops, forcing a section of farmers to plough the land even with the saved crop, to be prepared for rabi season. Farmers complain that owners of harvesting machines are charging ₹8,000 to ₹11,000 per acre against the earlier price of ₹2,500-3,500.

A farmer from Veliveru village of Tsundur mandal in Guntur district P. Subba Rao said framing has ceased to be productive.

AP Farmers Federation president Y. Nagendra Nath said, "seeing the pathetic situation, we appeal to the state government to help farmers raise

crops again."
Farmers urged the state government to incorporate details of all affected farmers in e-Karshak app by taking up extensive survey as benefits are reaching select few farmers



Minister for endowments Velampalli Srinivasa Rao garlands the statue of Potti Sriramulu during a programme held on his death anniversary at One Town in

## Jagan pays rich tributes to Sriramulu, Vallabhbhai

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 15

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy paid rich tributes to Amarajeevi Potti Sreeramulu and first deputy prime minister Sardar Vallabhai Patel on their death anniversary at the camp office here on

Tuesday.
The Chief Minister The Chief Minister offered floral tributes to the portraits of Potti Sreeramulu and Sardar Vallabhai Patel. Ministers Kurasala Kannababu, Chellaboina Venugopala Krihsna, AP Agri Mission Vice-Chairman M.V.S. Nagi Reddy and others were present.

In a separate programme at Vijayawada, minister for endowments Velampalli Srinivas paid floral tributes to the statue to Potti Sreeramulu at Samarangam Chowk. The minister alleged that Chandrababu Naidu insulted Amarajeevi Sriramulu by conducting Nava Nirmana Deekshas ignoring the great leader who sacrificed his life for AP formation. He said that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy honouring the sacrifice of Amarajeevi and appealed to the youth to remember the sacrifice of the great leader which led to the formation of separate AP.

## Naidu asks people for sacrifices in agitations against YSRC regime

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 15

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu called upon all sections of AP people to follow the footsteps of Potti Sriramulu and prepare to make any sacrifice in the agitation against the atrocious and lawless Jagan Mohan Reddy regime in the state.

He paid rich tributes to Sriramulu and recalled how Amarajeevi courageously against injustice and dis-respect meted out to the Telugu people prior to the formation of separate Andhra state. While Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel united the whole of India, it was Potti Sriramulu who laid down his life for uniting all the Teluguspeaking people, Naidu

Addressing a meeting held to mark the death anniversary of Sriramulu, the TD chief asserted that the Amaravati Capital City project was taken to connect the entire AP and create huge potential for future economic growth of all the 13 districts in the state. He claimed that it was with the inspiraprovided tion Sriramulu Amaravati was visualised

as an effective incomegenerating growth engine for all the people of the state. He alleged that Jagan Mohan Reddy was following a mad Tughlaq policy to ruin the capital and the future opportunities for the people.
Alleging that the oppres-

sive Pulivendula settlethe state, Naidu said that the top YSRC leaders were indulging in wholesale corruption while their party lower-level leaders were resorting to retail corruption. Unfortunately, even the police force became sycophants, Naidu said.

He alleged that the police stations turned into venues for birthday parties and Christmas



CM Jagan also sought adequate flood relief for families affected by

Cyclone Nivar.
Explaining the manner in which poor people are being assisted through various schemes during the most critical period of Covid-19, CM Jagan underlined that the state government is ready in all respects for distributing Corona vaccine in order of priority as soon as it became available. The state is ready for setting up and maintaining the most crucial cold chains in supply of the vaccine.

The Chief Minister reiterated AP's demand for granting it a special category status, which will enable the state in achieving self-sufficiency. He also sought immediate release of GST arrears amounting to Rs. 4308.46 crore to the state from April to September 2020.

CM Jagan wanted release of the 14th Finance Commission grants of Rs. 1,111.53 crore with immediate effect and further release 15th Commission Finance grants of Rs. 1.954.5 crore due to local bodies. He asked for release Rs. 3,801.98 crore pending

He explained to the cenment has decided to set up

16 new medical colleges to strengthen healthcare system in AP and sought immediate approval of the new medical colleges. The Chief Minister also asked the Union home minister to complete the process for immediate approval of Disha bill. He sought completion of the process for getting the President's approval for the AP Land Titling Authority Bill, which would enable comprehensive land survey from

## Crop insurance without paying premium

FROM PAGE 1

The CM said he had introduced a free crop insurance scheme without levying any burden of premium on farmers.

Reddy said, "Earlier for availing insurance

availing insurance scheme, farmers had to pay his share, while both State and Central governments would pay an even share of premium amount. However, neither the State nor the Centre used to pursue the insurance claims resulting in the farmers either receivup losing the insurance. In order to resolve this. the government has taken up the issue to benefit farmers and process the claims in a fast-track mode, besides paying the entire premium on behalf of farmers.

The Chief Minister stated that between 2016 and 2019, the previous government had spent an average of ₹393 crore per annum towards insurance premium, while the farmers had paid about ₹290 crore. He further stated that while "only about 20 lakh farmers were enrolled for insurance cover during the Telugu Desam regime, now about 49.80 lakh farmers have been brought under insurance cover, where the State government is paying ₹971 crore towards premium during 2019-20. He elaborated "In 2016-

17, only 17.79 lakh farmers had insurance cover. In 2017-18, 18.22 lakh farmers and in 2018-19, around 24.83 lakh farmers were brought under it. During our tenure,

about 49.80 lakh farmers brought under insurance cover, under which 45.96 lakh hectares of land was covered with insurance. Following the Nivar Cyclone, crop loss enumeration was done and the details will be displayed at Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) along with village secretariats and compensation would

be paid by December 31. The Chief Minister said that the government has been working to safe-guard the interests of the farmers and thus established 10641 RBKs interetariats to benefit the farmers. Taking transparency in governance to the next level, the state government brought ecropping, where all details of the crops will be uploaded to the e-crop database, including the crop loss data. All these details, compensation for the crop loss will be displayed at RBKs for social audit and those missing out from the list can get enrolled at RBK itself. Not just from seeds to

said. "Crop loss during 2020 will be paid in Aprilafter the Planning Department submits the report. The government is also purchasing germinated and decoloured crops at a graded MSP to ensure that no farmer suffers financially." Ministers

marketing but RBKs also

addresses crop loss, he

K a n n a b a b u , Chelluboyina Venugopala Krishna, AP Agri Mission Vice-Chairman MVS Nagi Reddy and officials participated in the

#### **TUSSLE REACHED FLASHPOINT IN AMARAVATI CASE**

FROM PAGE 1

December 21.

The government took exception to the Chief Justice making certain comments on shifting of capital and stalling the process besides ordering CBI probe in a case involving Dr Sudhakar, who created a ruckus in Visakhapatnam in an inebriated condition after he was suspended

from service. The tussle reached a flashpoint with Justice Maheshwari suspending probe into Amaravati land scam and issuing gag order on media to not report case details involving former Advocate-General

#### **ARRANGEMENTS UNDER PROGRESS** FOR CM'S VISIT

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 15

Arrangements under progress for the launch of YSR Jagananna Saswatha Bhu Hakku-Bhu Raksha Scheme at Takkellapadu in Jaggayyapeta mandal to conduct resurvey of lands in Andhra Pradesh state. Minister for transport Perni Venkataramaiah alias Nani has reviewed arrangements of the programme with various officials and legislators on Tuesday.

Nani said that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will launch the programme on December 21 under which resurvey of lands will be commenced and said that this resurvey is going to be conducted after a gap of 100 years.

**COUNTER** ATTACK

#### Govt chief whip says Jagan Mohan Reddy is keen to develop all the three regions

benefits as the compact ge-

ography offers, said Gang-

ula Prathap Reddy, former

## Naidu is anti-Seema, North Andhra, says Srikanth

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 15

In a vitriolic attack on Chandrababu Naidu for encouraging Amaravati agitations, government chief whip Gadikota Srika-nth Reddy said that the Opposition leader is indeed taking up anti-Rayala-seema, anti-North Andhra and anti-Amaravati devel-

opment agitations. Speaking to the media here on Tuesday, Srikanth Reddy said that Naidu had spent ₹2,000 crore for building a temporary Assembly during his govern-ment while Parliament is

now being constructed at a cost of ₹850 crore. Recalling the statement

of Naidu about his Amaravati design was copied by Union government for Parliament new buildings, he challenged Naidu to write a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying that Parliament design is being copied from his Amaravati designs.

Srikanth Reddy said that Naidu has been crying foul to safeguard his ill-gotten properties through Amaravati farmers' protest.

He said that Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy government is farmer-friendly but

#### **GREATER RAYALASEEMA MOVEMENT PICKS UP** Prakasam districts in Ra-

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL, DEC. 15

Disillusioned with Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy government, a sub-regional group is front loading the aspirations of Rayalaseema with the promise of a 'Greater Rayalaseema" state. It now conceptualises

never cheat on them. He

further said that Naidu,

who announced to take

part in padayatra for Ama-

ravati protests, is actually

protesting against the

MP and BJP leader. The leader sought blessings Ahobila of Narasimha Swamy to realise their dream and addressed first meet at by including Nellore and Kambam in Prakasam.

development of North Andhra, Rayalaseema and even Amaravati regions. He said that Naidu who hails from Ravalaseema

has abandoned his nativi-

ty and is going against the Amaravati region. development. Srikanth Reddy stated

Srikanth Reddy said that

yalaseema to reap richer the Chief Minister on Tuesday had directly credited ₹1,252 crore into the accounts of farmers under crop insurance for 2019 and proved again that his government is biased towards farmers.

While the government has mooted to distribute 54,000 house site pattas in Amaravati, Naidu has turned jealous and has instigated litigants to file a PIL in the High Court, further stating that the distribution leads to demographic imbalance in the state as a tourist.

that the effort of the Chief Minister is to develop all the three regions equally and to include all sections of people. He claimed that it was Naidu who has treated the Dalits very badly by burning their crops and attacking them. He stated that unlike the TD government, Dalits, SC, ST, BC and minorities are extremely happy in the current government. He stated that Naidu has been staying in an illegal structure even as an Opposition leader and mostly visiting

#### JAN. TO OCT.: AP **AIR QUALITY FOUND GOOD**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 15

Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board (APPCB) stated that the ambient air quality in 20 cities and towns from January to October, 2020, was found to be between good and satisfactory.

The APPCB monitored the ambient air quality at Pydibheemavaram, Srika-kulam, Bobbili, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Rajahm-undry, Eluru, Vijayawada, Guntur, Ongole, Nellore, Kurnool, Anantapur, Chittoor, Yerraguntla, Kadapa, Kaki-nada, Tirupathi, Thirumala and Amaravati. Accordingly, the air quality index values were found to be in satisfactory range during January, February and March while from April to September, the AQI values found to be in a good category in majority number of locations following the promulgation of lockdown to curb the spread of Covid-19 and also due to heavy mon-

However, the AQI values were found to be in a satisfactory category in most of the locations in the state during October as the monsoon season started to recede.

The state's average AQI values were found to be 68 indicating satisfactory in January, 64-satisfactory in February, 59satisfactory in March, 38-good in April, 48-good in May, 45-good in June, 45-good in July, 44-good in August, 48-good in September and 53-satisfactory in October.

#### RESEARCH **ASSERTED IN FLUID DYNAMICS**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 15

The students were told to conduct research fluid dynamics which has a wide range of applications giving a lot of opportunities for exploration.

The VIT-AP University

Amaravati conducted a threeday online international conference in the area of Applications of Fluid Dynamics ICAFD-2020, which concluded on Tuesday.

The conference is the result of a long collaborative efforts between the School of Mechanical Engineering, VIT-AP University and the AP University and the Department of Mechanical Engineering University of Johannesburg,

South Africa. Vice-Chancellor Dr S.V. Kota Reddy stated that this type of conference would play an tual growth of an individual followed by the importance of applications and aspects of fluid dynamics influencing

our daily life. The conference inaugural address was given by Dr R. Paneer Selvam, University of Arkansas, USA. He highlighted the important challenges a fluid dynamics researcher has to work in the near future for the advancement of this area. Explaining lots of chances for exploration in fluid dynamics, he asked the students to give priority for research and new applications to serve the needy

#### **BODY OF MINOR GIRL FOUND IN SWARNAMUKHI**

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, DEC. 15

body of 9-year-old Pravallika was traced in Swarnamuki River close to Tummuru village Naidupeta mandal on Tuesday.

It may be recalled that the girl was fallen in the river following a road accident on the causeway near Naidupeta on December 12 night.

The mishap took place when the family was returning home after offering prayers at Sri Vinayaka temple in Thimmaraju Kandriga village.

The child along with her parents fell in the river from their bike when another speeding bike hit their vehicle from behind on the causeway leading to Venkatagiri from Naidupeta.

Some bystanders saved Murali and Sujatha but they could not find the girl, who washed away in the river by then. Two riders of the other bike were killed on the spot

Police and fire departments have been searching for the body since Sunday and it was spotted on Tuesday. Locals had a tough time in consoling the parents.

#### **Faith floats**



Devotees release Diyas in River Krishna during the conclusion of Karthika Masam in Vijayawada on Tuesday.

## **State reduces Covid** test rate in pvt labs

Referred by state reduced to ₹475 per each sample

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 15

AP records 500 Covid cases, 5 deaths

The state government revised the rates for conducting the Covid-19 tests in private NABL and ICMR approved labs by issuing an order on

Tuesday.
Accordingly, the total cost of the Covid-19 test, for the samples referred by the state government, has been reduced to ₹475 per each sample from ₹800. Similarly, the cost of the Covid-19 test for individuals approaching the ICMR approved NABL labs has

been reduced to ₹499 per sample (Test cost, VTM and PPE) from ₹1,000.

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 15 Andhra Pradesh registered 500 new Covid-19

cases and five deaths in the last 24 hours. health state authorities released Covid-19 bulletin on Tuesday reporting that out of 61,452 samples tested, 500 were found to be Covid-19 positive. Out

The state government

Among the daily cases of Covid-19, Chittoor registered the highest number of 88 followed by 77 in Krishna, 63 in West Godavari, 55 in Guntur, of a total number of

virus.

47 in East Godavari, 34 in increased availability of has reduced the testing kits in the market and rates due to the also due to more firms

also due to more firms

1,09,37,377 samples tested so far, 8,76,336 persons

were found to be Covid-19

positive, 8,64,612 patients

were recovered while

4,660 patients were found

to be active with the

Krishna topped the state for having the highest number of cumulative active cases of 857

Kadapa, 26 in Prakasam, 22 in Nellore, 21 in Srikakulam, 20 in Visakhapatnam, 19 each

in Vizianagaram and Anantapur and nine in

Kurnool.

followed by 784 in Guntur, 604 in Nellore, 533 in East Godavari, 474 in Chittoor.

involved in manufacturing RNA extraction kits.

#### **FARMERS TAKE TO STREETS IN STATE**

DC CORRESPONDENT ANANTAPUR, DEC.15

AP Sikh Rythu Sangahm leaders Palwinder Singh and Puneeth Singh were part of the protest by CPI and other farmer associagainst Centre's apathetic polion farmers through the Acts. The farmers associations called for a protest and blocked main roads in the district on

Punjab farmers who were doing agriculture in the district were part the protest at Lepakshi in the district. Punjabi farmers Palwinder Singh and Puneeth Singh were doing agriculture in Hindupur area and set-tled in farming. The Punjabi farmers extended support to the ongoing protests at New Delhi against inhuman Acts by the Centre.

'We are extending support to farmers protest at New Delhi. The Centre should cancel recent policies," Mr Palwinder Singh said and added the agriculture was incurring losses due to consecutive drought. The new policies would incur more losses for the farmers of Rayalaseema, he said.

Police arrested farmers and association leaders at Anantapur, Hindupur, Kadiri and other parts of the district.

#### **ELEPHANT FEAR GRIPS VILLAGES IN CHITTOOR**

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, DEC. 15

A herd of over 10 wild elephants strayed in the agriculture fields and close to the human habitations at Polikimakulapalli vil-

lage of Somala mandal in Chittoor district, causing panic among the farmers and the villagers.

For the last few days people from several villages situated close to the forest area on the westhave lost their sleep.

## 1 more day for teachers for web options: Suresh

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, DEC. 15

Education minister Dr Adimulapu Suresh criticised Telugu Desam for instigating the teachers in the ongoing transfers process while pointing TD outcry on blocking the vacancies.

He claimed that there is nothing new about blocking some vacancies but the entire exercise is transparent during YSRC regime unlike during TD rule where there were apprehensions over the transfers. "Our intention in

blocking some vacancies especially in 4th category is to ensure full strength of teachers in rural areas," Mr Suresh Speaking to media per-

Yarragondapalem in Prakasam district on Tuesday, the minister said 16,008 vacancies in 4 categories have been blocked and there are 32,889 vacan-

Referring to 44,561 web options received from the teachers till 12 noon on Tuesday, the last day for transfer applications, Mr Suresh offered time till Wednesday evening to the teachers to change their web options.

He said web counselling is very useful in view of problems faced in manual counselling. He hinted that they

round of transfers to fill the 16,000 blocked vacancies whenever they go for fresh recruitment of teachers. He maintained that

would conduct one more

they had discussions with teachers associaions several times the transfers subject and they are ready to take their suggestions even

Meanwhile Mr Suresh along with home minister Mekathoti Sucharita inaugurated a new fire station at Yarragondapalem on Tuesday evening apart from an Anganwadi Centre at Endrapalli village. The ministers will also take part in Christmas celebrations later.

#### TTD PERFORMS YAGAM TO OVERCOME FINANCIAL PLIGHT

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, DEC. 15

To overcome the financial plight caused to the entire humanity across the globe due to Covid-19 pandemic, Dhanaprada Sri Maha Vishnu Yagam was held by TTD in the yagashala of S.V. Vedic nearly three months and added.

Varsity here on Tuesday. TTD EO Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy, who took part in the special yagam along with additional EO A.V. Dharma Reddy said, due to Covidimpact, even Tirumala temple remained closed for

faced financial issues on par with the state and the country in its capacity. To overcome this financial crisis, existing at present in TTD. state and across the nation, we have observed the Dhanaprada Sri Maha Vishnu Yagam,

#### Tourism and culture minister Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao reviewed ciaries were not included the distribution of houses in the list, they could contact tahisldars of their and house sites along areas. In the rural areas, the layouts would have all the basic infrastructure like with local MLAs at the Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. Collector V. Vinay Chand and other drainage system, electricsenior revenue officials ity and drinking water facilities. The collector said 900

completed by January 7.

Beneficiaries would be

from all the Assembly

constituencies. He said if

names of genuine benefi-

were also present.

The minister said in the first phase 1,16, 357 pattas would be distributed in layouts have been created for the distribution of house sites. He said in the and 50,000 houses under first phase 1,16,357 pattas and 26,438 Tidco houses the the Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority would be given. He said in the GVMC limits due to the court cases filed against land pooling schemes, houses would be

given in place of sites.

The distribution will begin from December 25 and the process will be

DC CORRESPONDENT

VISAKHAPATNAM, DEC. 15

(VMRDA) limits.

the rural district sector

DC CORRESPONDENT

collector

VISAKHAPATNAM, DEC. 15

office

**UAPA CASE AGAINST WOMAN ACTIVIST** aiding

The rural police picked woman activist and lawyer A. Annapurna from her residence in Arilova\_in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. A case under UAPA has

50,000 to get houses in Vizag

been filed against her in Munchingput police station in Visakhapatnam agency. The police alleged that Annapurna has been Maoists. Her husband Srinivasa

Rao said the police came to his house in the early hours and took away Annapurna when she was giving milk to the chil-

Sources said after picking her up from her home, she was immediately taken to Munchingput police station for ques-

#### **SEB BUSTS INTER-STATE GANG**

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, DEC. 15

officials of Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) carried out a raid at Sai Residency. Sampath Allipuram in Vizag city, seized 60 kgs of dry ganja and nabbed three persons on Tuesday.

The arrested have been identified as Sufal Jha, 21, Ansu Jha, 19, both natives of West Bengal and one juvenile. The officials have launched a manhunt for two more persons— Pankaj Kumar and Rajendra— in connection with the case.

Sufal Jha, Ansu Jha and Pankaj Kumar and the juvenile visited Sileru of Vizag Agency and purchased the weed from Rajendra at low prices. Pankaj Kumar entrusted Sufal Jha, Ansu Jha and the juvenile to return home in West Bengal to sell the ganja at a higher price.

When the trio was making arrangements to travel West Bengal by the train route, the SEB officials conducted a raid and seized the weed and arrested them. The SEB officials also seized the banned tobacco products worth over ₹1.15 lakh.

 The arrested have been identified as Sufal Jha, 21, Ansu Jha, 19, both natives of West Bengal and one juvenile. The officials have launched a manhunt for two more persons— Pankaj Kumar and Rajendra- in connection with the case.

#### **LAST DATE FOR HEALTH VARSITY APPLICATION**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 15

NTR university of health sciences has extended the last date for submission of online application forms for admission into MBBS/BDS courses management quota seats by two more days from 8 am on Dec. 16

to 8 am on Dec. 18.
In a release from Dr
NTR university of health sciences here on Tuesday, the registrar said that last date for submission of online application forms under management quota seats in private, unaided, nonminority/minority medical and dental colleges affiliated to Dr NTR university of health sciences and also for NRI seats in Sri Padmavathi Medical College.

#### MAN MURDERED **FOR OVERTURES** WITH WOMAN

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, DEC. 15

In a bizarre incident, a resident of Ongole Pasumarti Thomas, 26, was brutally murdered during broad daylight allegedly because of his overtures with a married woman at Gandhi Park in Ongole on Tuesday morning.
The accused identified

as Tella Joseph has been nursing a grudge against Thomas for his overtures with his wife Madhuri.

He stabbed Thomas repeatedly until he breathed his last and reportedly surrendered to the police after the incident.

#### Majority of areas, main roads covered with fog DC CORRESPONDENT Tirupati for about 260 kms

ANANTAPUR, DEC.15

Majority of areas and main roads in the region are covered with fog similar to New Delhi roads.

Main roads including National Highways wit-nessed no access even at 8 am during present winter. In view of fog spreading widely and covering roads, the traffic being disrupted for the past two days in the Highway region. road Anantapurbetween

witnessed fog covered even at 8 am. No visibility of road even at 8 am while the situation is worse during early hours. Rajasekhar, a tea shop owner from Kadiri area observed he couldn't drive a motorcycle due to poor visibility because of

Nagarj, a tourist from Anantapur said the situation appears similar to New Delhi as there was no access even for main roads in the

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited Rend, Office: PSEB, Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001

**GURU HARGOBIND THERMAL PLANT, LEHRA MOHABBAT** DISTT. BATHINDA (PUNJAB) - 151 111 e-tendering website- http://eproc.punjab.gov.in. NOTICE INVITING TENDER

(Through E-tendering)

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Last Date & Time for bid submission Date & Time of opening of Fee stage bid

: 19/01/2021 upto 11:30 hrs Detailed NIT and tender specification can be downloaded from PSPCL website

http://eproc.punjab.gov.in. from dated 15-12-2020 onwards. 1. The prospective bidders can obtain clarification regarding tende specifications from this office. For registration of digital signatures and uploading of tender information may be sought from

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

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## **NEW | FIND All statues were perfect and without any damage** Statues found near river bank

DC CORRESPONDENT ANANTAPUR, DEC. 15

Three rare statues were found on Chitravati bank near Chilamakur village in Yellanur mandal. According to archaeology experts the statues of Lord were Chennakesava Swamy, Goddess Mahala-kshmi and Lord Hanuman of

Vijayanagar Empire.

The water was flowing

in the river enroute to

Chitravati Balancing

Reservoir when the vil-

lagers from Chilamakur

spotted them. Historian

and former top official

of archaeology Dr Vijay

Kumar told DC that the

Chenna Kesava Swamy

carved on granite stone while the other two are

Hanuman was about five feet and belonged to the Vijayanagar Empire. Archaeology depart-ment officials visited the spot following information about the discovery. The Hanuman statue is

and Goddess Mahala-

kshmi statues were

around 3 feet in height

while that of Lord

on black stone. "All statues were perfect and without any damage' Vijayakumar said and added the statues might have been in a Lord Vishnu temple.

A large crowd rushed to the spot to see the three statues.



of Chitravati river near Chilamakur village

#### **UK FOREIGN SECY HOLDS TALKS WITH JAISHANKAR**

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, DEC. 15

Dominic Raab held discussions with his Indian counterpart External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on five broad - connecting people, trade, defence and security, climate and health including the cooperation on the Covid-19 vaccines while both nations "agreed on key elements of a 10 year India-UK roadmap".

Raab mentioned Britain's "Indo-Pacific tilt" while Jaishankar said, "It is a matter of satisfaction that there is a growing recognition and acceptance of the idea of an Indo-Pacific. We welcome greater interest and attention which the UK is devoting to the Indo-Pacific." Both countries also focused on taking ties to a new level. Observers look at Britain's focus on the Indo-Pacific region as significant, given the growing differences between Britain and China on the Hong Kong issue. Apart from this, the situation in Afghanistan was also discussed between the two foreign ministers. In a veiled reference to Pakistan without naming it, EAM Jaishankar said both ministers felt the challenges posed by terrorism and radicalism

are a "shared concern". Raab spoke about the need to "deepen the economic relationship" and said Britain is "committed to build a stronger defence and security partnership with our Indian friends' including on shared issues like combating terrorism and maritime security including the menace of piracy.

#### **ACTRESS CHITRA'S HUSBAND HELD FOR ABETTING SUICIDE**

Chennai, Dec. 15: The husband of television actress Chitra has been arrested and remanded to judicial custody for 'abetting' her suicide,

police said on Tuesday. Investigation by a police team revealed that 32-year-old Hemnath 'abetted' her suicide and hence he was arrested on Monday night, they said.

An enquiry was also held by the Revenue Divisonal Officer. An argument ensued between Chitra and Hemnath and it was followed by her suicide in the early hours of December 9, police said in an official

Hemnath was produced before a court here, which remanded him to judicial cus-

While police had days ago said Hemnath was her 'fiance,' they clarified that 'they registered their marriage' two months ago and the duo had plans for a traditional wedding ceremony in January 2021.

The 29-year-old actress, well known among television audience in Tamil Nadu was found dead in a suburban hotel room and it was confirmed later that she died by suicide.

#### **VARAVARA RAO FIT TO GO BACK TO JAIL: NIA TO HC**

Mumbai, Dec. 15: Poetactivist Varavara Rao, an accused in the Elgar Parishadenough to be sent back to Taloja jail in Navi Mumbai from a private hospital in Mumbai where he is currently admitted, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) told the Bombay High Court on Tuesday.

Rao, however, will continue to stay in Nanavati Hospital at least till Monday, the next date of hearing on his bail plea on the medical grounds and the plea filed by his wife Hemlatha alleging breach of Rao's fundamental rights due to "continued incarceration without adequate healthcare'

The submission was made by Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Anil Singh, who appeared for the NIA, before a bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and M.S. Karnik.

During the day's hearing, senior counsels Indira Jaising and Anand Grover urged the high court to grant bail to Rao. Grover said the 81-year-old poet was suffering from inherent medical issues since the

time of his arrest in 2018. He said authorities at Taloja prison in Navi Mumbai, where Rao was lodged as an undertrial, did not have the expertise or medical infrastructure to treat him. Grover further said it would be most suitable for Rao's health if he was granted bail and permitted to go back to his home in Hyderabad. Rao would not flee if granted bail, Grover added.

#### HC restrains nurses from continuing strike



Members of AIIMS Nurses Union raise slogans in New Delhi on Tuesday during their indefinite strike over their long-pending demands, including those concerning the Sixth Central Pay Commission and against contractual appointments. The Delhi High Court on Tuesday restrained the nurses union from continuing with their indefinite strike. Justice Navin Chawla passed the order on a plea moved by AIIMS against the strike by the

## **Mamata dares Centre** to impose Prez's rule

Alleges Centre interfering in her govt by summoning officials

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, DEC. 15

Bengal Minister and Trinamul Congress supremo
Mamata Banerjee on
Tuesday dared the
Narendra Modi government to impose
Precident's Pulo in the President's Rule in the poll-bound state after accusing the Centre of interfering in her government by summoning its bureaucrats over her party workers' alleged vio-lent attack on BJP president J.P. Nadda's convoy

in South 24 Parganas.

Banerjee also claimed her party had "no intention" to target Nadda, while warning the BJP that she would "retaliate heavily" if she was "hit". Speaking at a TMC rally in Jalpaiguri, North Bengal, she said: "They think they can bring the Central forces here and transfer the state government's officers to scare them. The state police is under the state government. Still, were summoned. None of us had any intention to hit him (Nadda). When a VIP travels, he has his own convoy according

to protocol." She wondered: "But why did 50 cars trail his convoy? Why did 50 goons trail those cars? Why did a convict, out of jail, be among them? Why were those who vandalised Ishwar Chandra Vidyasag-

## BJP urges ECI to impose MCC, deploy Central forces

DC CORRESPONDENT

Days after BJP president J.P. Nadda and other senior leaders' convoy in West Bengal came under attack allegedly by ruling TMC cadre, the BJP on Tuesday urged the Election Commission for early deployment of central forces and imposition of Mo-del Code of Conduct for the coming crucial Assembly polls in the state.

Union home minister Amit Shah is also scheduled to visit the state later this week. Citing deterio-

ar's bust there? The entire

country cannot speak up

(due to) fear. There is a bid

to scare us too. What else

President's Rule? Let them

impose it if they can. Let's

see. It will be great (sic)!

At least my workload will

reduce to a great extent. I

will then address rallies

everywhere and take away

Tearing into the BJP ov-

your (BJP) votes also.

tion, political bias of the state government employees and discrepancies in the draft voters list, the party said unless the election body deploys central forces and imposes MCC early, campaigning in the state will be "very diffi-cult, resulting in wide-spread violence." A BJP delegation met

the EC officials and submitted a letter in this regard and said they were assured that their complaint will be looked into and that free and fair elections take place.

you hit me, I will retaliate so heavily that you will not be able to tackle my retaliation even after bringing crores of goons." BJPSubramanian Swamy's

call for a change in the national anthem, the TMC alleged: object is to change Jana Gana Mana penned by Rabindranath Tagore. We also know very well how to revert a change later."

er its frequent threats of violence, she added: "I am To get back the Gorkha very good and a 100 per cevote bank from the BJP in North Bengal, she said: nt peaceful person. (But) if

others while they were travelling in Diamond Harbour to attend a party event and claimed that the attack was "carried out in full glare of a big contin-gent of police, including RAF, who simply rema ined silent spectators. This was under the supervision of local AITC MLAs, who openly gave instructions from platforms erected on the road."

the party cited the attack

on the convoy of Nadda

and other senior leaders, including Kailash Vijayv-argiya, Mukul Roy and

"After getting Bimal Gurung (GJM top gun) on its side six years ago, they promised a 'Gorkhaland'. Whenever an election is there, they talk about it. How many Gorkhaland(s) have happened so far? They won in the 2014 polls and another later with the same promise each time. I did not win because I did not talk about it. But it does not matter to me. I thank my brothers and sisters of Darjeeling for realising the BJP's drama and nail-

#### **ADHIKARI TO DEFECT TO BJP** THIS WEEK

DC CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA, DEC. 15

Giving a call on his birthday for the restoration of democracy in West Bengal, rebel Trin-amul Congress MLA of Nandigram Shubhendu Adhikari is all set to defect to the BJP later this week as the Centre has decided to provide it's Z-plus category secu-rity cover by the central reserve police force jawans including com-mandos and a bullet proof car to him due to a

threat on his life.
The former state minister will fly to New Delhi on December 17 and is likely to meet Union home minister Amit Shah before changing his colour from green to saffron officially. On December 19 when Shah will arrive in the state on a two-day visit, Adhikari is expected to be with him. On Tuesday BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya called up the TMC MLA and spoke to

him for four minutes.
Asked of any political discussion with Adhikari, Vijayvargiya said, "There was no political talk between us. I only greeted him on his birthday and conveyed my best wishes to him for his good health and pros-

Attacking the TMC, Adhikari told a rally "The mass movement of Nandigram belonged to neither any individual nor any party. It was a people's movement."

## High drama ensues during K'taka Council

Karnataka Legislative Council witnessed high drama on Tuesday with BJP-JD(S) and Congress members hurling abuses and pushing each other and the deputy chairman being pulled down from the Chairman's seat over the Chairman's seat, over a row pertaining to the no-confidence motion.

Amid the pandemonium and chaos which many senior members termed as a "black mark" and "unprecedented" in the Council's over a century old history, it was adjourned sine die within minutes after it met for the day. The ball now seems to be in the Governor Vajubhai Vala's court with both BJP and JD(S) jointly petitioning him and seeking his intervention to enable taking up of the no- confidence motion.

After it was adjourned sine die on December 10, the House was convened for a day on Tuesday by the government which had even petitioned the Governor accusing the

Chairman Chairman K.
Pratapachandra Shetty of
"abruptly" adjourning
the session, without taking up the no-confidence motion against him. The motion moved by BJP members did not find mention in the Council's agenda for Tuesday, as Shetty had rejected it citing procedural lapses and pointing out that no specific charges were made

party members had been insisting that it be taken up. The BJP with the sup-port of JD(S) had planned to remove Shetty as the chairman through the noconfidence motion. The ugly scenes began to unfold as deputy chair-man Dharme Gowda occupied the Chairman's seat, even arrived, and the quorum bell was still ringing. This angered the Congress MLCs who rushed to the chair demanding that Dharme Gowda vacate the seat as he would have allowed the

motion against Shetty. Following this, BJP and

JD(S) members too rush-

ed towards the Chair in his defence. This resulted in heated exchange, and pushing and pulling between members from both sides. Even as this was happening, a few Congress members including Naseer Ahmed were seen trying to forcefully open the door through which the Chairman enters the house, accusing the ruling side of shutting it with an intention not to allow Chairman Shetty inside. Congress members accused the government of trying to start the proceedings with the help of the deputy chairman, even before the Chairman could arrive, with an intention to take up the motion against Shetty, which had been rejected by him. -PTI

## Counting of votes in Kerala today

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,

votes in local body polls in Kerala on Wednesday which in many ways would chart the future course of politics in the state in the run up to Assembly elections in

State election commissioner V. Bhaskaran said counting of votes will take place in 244 centers complying strictly with Covid-19 safety guide-lines. The postal ballots will be counted right in the beginning followed by

He said the results of all local bodies are expected to be declared by noon. The people would be able to obtain information on through

swearing in of the newly elected office bearers of local bodies will take

All is set for counting of polls are crucial as the

counting the "Trends" website.

Bhaskaran said the

place on December 21. The results of local body

people's verdict would give a hint about what is in store for the mainstream parties — ruling CPM, opposition Congress and BJP. The leaders of the three fronts are keeping their fingers crossed on the outcome of

the polls in view of the high voter turnout witnessed in all the three phases While Chief Minister

Pinarayi Vijayan claimed that the ruling LDF was poised for a historic win, opposition leader and Congress veteran Ramesh Chennithala said the massive turnout of voters indicated a clear mandate against gold smuggling involving a senior official of the CM's office.

## Mahatma Gandhi's assassination delayed Hindutva supremacy by two generations, says Vinay Sitapati

SRIRAM KARRI | DC

t took the Hindutva ideology nearly a century to create the electionwinning argument personified by Narendra Modi, argues political scientist and author Vinay Sitapati in this exclusive interview with *Deccan Chronicle*. historical

Analysing historical insights, debating counterfactuals, refuting possible misinterpretations, young political scientist and professor with chubby cheeks and curly hair, round spectacles and an impish smile, is bustling with energy as he discusses his work, which promises to become a watermark in understanding Hindutva. It is a biography of a relationship, chronicling and analysing the entangled lives of BJP's founding duo, the *jugalbandi* of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani.

There is no definitive book on Hinduism, but hopefully this is the definitive work on Hindutva, he says teasingly. It might well be. A worthy succesto his bestselling debut, a biography on former prime minister P.V.



Vinay Sitapati

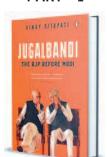
Narasimha Rao, Half Lion, this book too has his trademark traits, all boxes checked. It consolidates his image as a new superstar in India's non-fiction genre combining recent and contemporary history and politics – diligent and excruciating research, intrepid in making a set of speculative counterfactuals, combining a vast narrative argument befitting his academic vocation and inclination. Sitapati teaches at Ashoka Ūniversity, has a PhD from Princeton University and other degrees from Harvard University and National Law School, Bengaluru. He combines this with racy writing and a nearly storytelling, sometimes bordering on sharing off-the-record gossips and anecdotes to match his former journal-

The book though is neither a tale of a historical plot to create Modi nor a century-old history of the Sangh Parivar. Though both are ingredients on this cruentured course. this structured canvas, it is focussed on something more ambitious - telling the story of two fascinating men, whose relationship shaped Hindutva, the BJP and India.

Excerpts and part 1 of a three-part story.

Before discussing the jugalbandi Bihari Vajpayee and L.K. Advani, I wish to have you throw light on another jugalbandi before them, between two atheists — M.A. Jinnah and Veer Damodar Savarkar. In a way, have they perhaps influenced political outcome and future of the Indian sub-continent more successfully, with greater

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW** PART - 1



Title: Jugalbandi: The BJP Before Modi **Author:** Vinay Sitapati Category: Non-fiction narrative, Indian politics **Publisher:** Penguin Viking
Pages: Hardback / 424

**Price:** ₹799

influence and a higher impact than Gandhi, Nehru and Ambedkar? In 2047, would we end up being closer, after a century after Independence, to Jinnah and Savarkar's ideas of nationhood?

I must strongly push back on this suggestion; there was no jugalbandi between them. The Hindu nationalist project of

Savarkar, which is now a century old, is at its heart democratic in the sense of being founded on the acceptance of universal adult franchise and 'one person, one vote'. As the British rule in India was making way for elections in the early 20th century, Savarkar and other Hindu nationalists welcomed elections, because their Hindu community was a social majority in India... Equal voting suited them because they were a majority.
On the other hand, the

Muslim leadership, represented then by the land-Province, were sensing a loss of power and privi-lege. They realised that elections would doom a perpetual 'minority'. So, their entire politics was against oneperson-one-vote. By the time Jinnah joins the Muslim League, he is firmly anti-democratic, in the sense he is anti one-person-one-vote. And he also opportunistically uses Islamic metaphors of a

Savarkar's Hindu rashunlike Jinnah's Pakistan, was not a theoc-

caliphate when pushing

based on religion at all. It was not about Hindu religion for him. The extremely logical Savarkar argued, in a radical breakaway from conventional political thought, that Indian nationhood was built on race, not culture or religion. This is a deeply modern idea. Savarkar was never a liberal; he was a majoritarian. But unlike Jinnah, he was always a democrat. He was even broadly in

agreement on most issues with the Congress, except for his pet grouse that Gandhi was appeasing the Muslim League.

Both Savarkar and Jinnah were, however, similar in the sense that both advocated and modelled their politics based on the sole interest of their own community.

Why did the project of creating Narendra Modi take nearly a century to fructify? Why not earli-

The RSS had lost two generations of a chance at power because they were operating under the shadow of suspicion for being responsible for the assassi-

. Gandhi was greatest Hindu Gandhi. leader. Even though the RSS as an institution did not play any role in Gandhi's murder, the taint has proved very costly to

Are you saying a Hindu rashtra is politically, intellectually, and even arithmetically, inevitable in future? The mistake in this line

of thinking is to somehow think that a Hindu rashtra lies ahead of us. It is actually already here. The India we live in is in many ways already the Hindu rashtra Savarkar or Golwalkar dreamt of. This is because a Hindu rashtra is not a Hindu 'state'. It is a Hindu national community or Hindu 'vote-bank' that is able to control the state through one-person-one-vote. The Hindu rashtra is not a theocracy or a dictatorship, but a unified Hindu society flexing its majority muscle within a democratic structure.

Tomorrow: Part 2 Ambedkar was opposed to both Islamic and Hindu









lated more than 2,500 hours of flight time in his

career. Chari was selected

earlier this month as a

member of the Artemis Team and is now eligible

for assignment to a future

Carolina, native who

became an astronaut in

2004. Prior to serving in the astronaut corps, the

medical doctor served as

flight surgeon at NASA's

Johnson Space Center in

Houston and later became medical operations lead for the International Space Station.

'The Crew-3 mission

will be his third visit to

the space station and his second long-duration mission. Marshburn previ-

ously served as a crew

member of STS-127 in

2009 and Expedition 34/35,

which concluded in 2013,'

Maurer comes from Sankt Wendel, in the Ger-

man state of Saarland.

Like Chari, Maurer will

be making his first trip to

space with the Crew-3 mission. — Agencies

the NASA said.

North

lunar mission.

Marshburn

Statesville,

Raja Chari to lead SpaceX

mission to ISS

Space

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration

(NASA) and European

Space Agency (ESA) have

selected three astronauts

to serve as crew members

for Nasa's SpaceX Crew-3

Station, which is expected to launch in the fall of

According to the Nasa, the trio will consist astro-nauts Raja Chari, an

Indian-American US Air

Force colonel, and Tom

Marshburn, who will

serve as commander and

pilot, respectively, and ESA astronaut Matthias

Maurer, who will serve as

a mission specialist. A

fourth crew member will

be added at a later date, following a review by

NASA and its internation-

This will be the first

spaceflight for Chari, who

became a NASA astronaut in 2017. He was born in

Milwaukee, but considers Cedar Falls, Iowa, his hometown. He is a colonel

in the US Air Force and

joins the mission with extensive experience as a

al partners.

mission

International

Washington, Dec. 15: test pilot. He has accumu-

#### **FIRE AT RUSSIAN** RETIREMENT

**HOME KILLS 11** 

Moscow, Dec. 15: A fire in a retirement home in Russia's southern Urals killed 11 people while three more were hospitalised with injuries, local officials said on Tuesday.

The fire broke out in the early hours in a wooden, onestory building of a private retirement home in a village

in the Bashkiria region.

A total of 16 people were in the building. It wasn't immediately clear what caused the fire. Emergency officials said seven men and four women were killed in the incident. According to Russian media reports, they were bed-ridden residents of the retirement home. A criminal probe into the incident has been launched and the head of the facility has been detained.

#### **'TWITTER KILLER' SENTENCED TO DEATH IN JAPAN**

Tokyo, Dec. 15: A Japanese court on Tuesday sentenced a man to death for killing and dismembering nine people, most of whom had posted suicidal thoughts on social media, in a case that shocked the coun-

try.
The Tachikawa branch of the Tokyo District Court found Takahiro Shiraishi, known as the "Twitter killer," guilty of killing, dismembering and storing the bodies of the victims in his apartment in Zama, near Tokvo.

Shiraishi, 30, pleaded guilty and said he would not appeal his death sentence. Police arrested Shiraishi in 2017 after finding the bodies of eight females and one male in coldstorage cases in his apartment.

Investigators said Shiraishi approached the victims via Twitter, offering to assist them with their suicidal wishes. He killed the women, including teenagers, after raping them, and also killed a boyfriend of one of the women to silence him, investigators said.

#### **OFFICIALS: BOMBS, SHOOTING ATTACK KILLS 4 IN KABUL**

Kabul, Dec. 15: A bombing and a shooting attack in Kabul killed at least three people, including a deputy provincial governor, while a deputy provincial council chief was killed in western Afghanistan on Tuesday, officials said.

The attacks are the latest in relentless violence the Afghanistan even as Taliban and Afghan govern-ment negotiators hold talks in Qatar, trying to hammer out a peace deal that could put an end to decades of war. According to Tariq Arian, an Afghan interior ministry spoke sman, a sticky bomb attached to the armored vehicle belonging to Kabul's deputy provincial governor killed two people,

and wounded two others.

The deputy provincial governor and the apparent target of the attack, Mahbobullah Mohibi, was killed alongside his secretary while two of his bodyguards were wounded,

#### **NIGERIA: BOKO HARAM CLAIMS** MASS ABDUCTION

Lagos (Nigeria), Dec. 15: Nigeria's Boko Haram jihadist rebels have claimed responsibility for the abduction of hundreds of students in an attack on a boys school in northern Katsina State, a Nigerian

online newspaper says.

More than 330 students are missing from the Government Science Secondary School in Kankara after gunmen with assault rifles attacked their school on Friday night. The Daily Nigerian said it received an audio message from Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau saying that his group abducted the schoolboys because Western education is

against the tenets of Islam.
"What happened in Katsina was done to promote Islam and discourage un-Islamic practices as Western education is not the type of education permitted by Allah and his Holy Prophet," the paper quoted

Shekau as saying. There has been no independent verification of the audio message but Shekau has in the past released video and audio messages on Boko Haram's behalf. Nigerian presidential spokesman Garba Shehu said in a statement on Monday that "the kidnappers had made contact and discussions were already on, pertaining to the safety and return" of the chil-

dren to their homes.

## 'Time to turn the page', says **Biden after EC confirms win**

Joe lashes out at Trump saying he refused to respect the will of people

**Washington, Dec. 15:** US President-elect Joe Biden has told election-weary Americans that it is time to "turn the page", after the Electoral College affirmed his triumph over President Donald Trump, who has refused to concede and filed a litany of legal challenges to overturn the poll results.

The 538-member Electoral College on Monday pushed Biden past the 270-vote threshold to win the bitterly-contested race for the White House. It was one of the crucial steps required for the 78-year-old Democrat to take office on January 20 as the 46th US

President.
Under the US system, voters actually cast their ballots for electors, who in turn, formally vote for candidates weeks after the presidential election. Biden won the November 3 election with 306 electoral college votes to incumbent Republican President Trump's 232.

The Electoral College votes will now be sent to Congress to be counted formally next month. Though some Republicans have indicated they will object to the results in key states, they can do little more than delay the process during a joint session of Congress on January 6.

In a speech from his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware after the announcement of his victory in the election, Biden said the US democracy had been "pushed, tested and threatened" and "proved to be resilient, true and strong'

He criticised President Trump's attempts to overturn the result and said the "will of the people prevailed". "The rule of law, our Constitution and the will of the people prevailed" over Trump's efforts to undo the results of the election, the former US vice president said.

'The flame of democracy was lit in this nation a long time ago. And we now know nothing, not even a pandemic or an abuse of power, can extinguish that flame," Biden said.

"In this battle for the soul of America, democracy prevailed. We the people voted. Faith in our institutions held. The integrity of our elections remains intact. And so, now it is time to turn the page. To unite. To heal,"

Biden said the election outcome should be celebrated, not attacked, that more than 81 million votes were cast for him and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. This too is a record



George K. Gresham who fell while voting for President and Vice President in the Assembly Chamber at the state

## **GOP leader McConnell wishes Biden**

Washington, Dec. 15: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell congratulated Democrat Joe Biden as president-elect on Tuesday, saying the Electoral College "has spoken."

The Republican leader's statement, delivered in a speech on the Senate floor, ends weeks of silence over President Donald Trump's defeat. It came a day after electors met and officially affirmed Biden's election win. "I want to congratu-late President-elect Joe Biden," McConnell said.

"Many of us had hoped the presidential election would yield a different

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

congratulated Joe Biden

on winning the US presi-

weeks of holding out. The

that the Russian president

would hold off on congrat-

Kremlin had said earlier

dential election after

ulating Biden until the

winner was officially con

number. More votes than

any ticket has received in

the history of America. It represented a winning

margin of more than 7

million votes over the

number of votes cast for

President Trump and Vice

President Mike Pence, he said. — PTI

**Vladimir Putin on Tuesday** 

system of government has the processes to determine who will be sworn in on January 20. The Electoral College has spoken.' McConnell called Biden

someone "who has devoted himself to public service for many years." He also congratulated Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, saying "all Americans can take pride that our nation has a female vice president-elect for the very first time." McConnell prefaced his remarks with sweeping praise for what he characterised as Trump's "end-

**Washington, Dec. 15:** US Attorney General William

Barr, who of late had pub-

on allegations of voter

presidential elections, has

deputy Jeff Rosen as the

Acting Attorney General.

"Just had a very nice meeting with Attorney

General Bill Barr at the

White House. Our rela-

tionship has been a very

good one, he has done an

outstanding job! As per letter, Bill will be leaving

Trump has appointed his

resigned.

licly differed with announced or President Donald Trump Monday night.

fraud in the November 3 General Jeff Rosen, an

during four years in office. He said Trump and Vice President Mike Pence "deserve our thanks." For the first time, a

groundswell of leading Republicans have said that Democrat Joe Biden is the winner of the presidential election, essentially abandoning President Donald Trump's assault on the outcome as the Electoral College certified the vote.

With states affirming the results, the Republicans faced a pivotal choice — to declare Biden the president-elect, as the tally showed, or keep standing

his family...," Trump announced on twitter

outstanding person, will become Acting Attorney

General. Highly respected

Richard Donoghue will be

taking over the duties of

Deputy Attorney General. Thank you to all!" Trump

said as he tweeted the two-

page resignation letter of

Barr. Barr, in his letter,

said, "As discussed, I will

spend the next week wrap-

ping up a few remaining

"Deputy

wages a potentially damag-

the time has come to move on. "At some point you have to face the music, said Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the second-ranking GOP leader. "Once the Electoral College settles the issue today, it's time for everybody to move on." Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri, the chairman of the inaugural committee, said the panel will now "deal with Vice President Biden as the president-

Attorney

US attorney general Barr resigns

just before Christmas to spend the holidays with his family...," Trump depart on December 23." depart on December 23. "I am greatly honored that you called on me to serve your administration and the American people once again as Attorney General. I am proud to have played a role in the many successes and unprecedented achievements you have delivered for the American

Your record is all the more historic because you accomplished it in the face of relentless implacable resistance," he added.

US federal agency homing in on

social media firms' data collection

ing campaign to overturn the election.

Number of senators said

Top US infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci says President-elect Joe Biden and Vice Presidentelect Kamala Harris should be vaccinated for Covid-19 as soon as possi-Speaking to ABC's "Good Morning America"

on Tuesday, Fauci said, "For security reasons, I really feel strongly that we should get them vaccinated as soon as we possibly can." He adds he'd like to see Biden "fully protected as he enters into

Washington, Dec. 15: the presidency in Janu-Fauci says that while President Donald Trump probably still has antibodies to the virus that will protect him for at least several months, he should get the vaccine as well to be "doubly sure."

Trump was hospitalised with Covid-19 in early October. Fauci says Vice President Mike Pence should get vaccinated, too. He says, "You still want to protect people who are very important to our country right now.'

#### **LONDON ON HIGHEST ALERT AFTER NEW COVID-19 VARIANT IDENTIFIED**

Vaccinate Joe, Harris,

Trump, Pence: Fauci

**Geneva, Dec. 15:** The World Health Organisation is aware of reports that a new variant of Covid-19 has been identified in the United Kingdom, although there is no evidence to suggest that the mutation will impact the effectiveness of vaccines against the disease, WHO Health Emergencies Programme executive director Mike Ryan said on Monday.

UK health secretary Matt Hancock earlier in the day announced that a new variant of Covid-19 had been identified in the south of England, and roughly 1,000 cases. "We are aware of this

genetic variant I think reported in about 1,000 individuals in England, and the authorities in the UK under Matt Hancock's leadership are obviously looking at the signifi-cance of this," Ryan said at a WHO virtual press briefing.

According to the WHO official, there was no evidence to suggest that the new variant of the disease would transmit more easily or undermine vaccines against Covid-19 that are being rolled out. — Agencies

## PDM leaders booked as they ask PM Khan to quit

**Lahore, Dec. 15:** Pakistan Democratic Movement's top leaders, including PML-N vice president Maryam Nawaz, were booked on Tuesday for causing irreparable damage to a national asset after its Minar-e-Pakistan rally here, as the 11-party opposition alliance set January 31 deadline for Prime Minister Imran Khan to step down or face long march on Islamabad.

held its final anti-govern-ment rally in Lahore on Sunday despite a ban on the gathering of more than 300 people owing to an increase in Covid-19 cases across the country. The PDM has been hold-

ing massive rallies since inception September to seek Khan's ouster and press the powerful military to stop interfering in politics. Lahore police booked Lahore police booked Pakistan Muslim League-

Nawaz (PML-N) vice president Maryam Nawaz, former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, former National Assembly speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, former railways minister Saad Rafique and 125 others under different sections of the Pakistan Penal Code for breaking the locks of Minare-Pakistan gates, damag-ing the official property and violating the Covid-19 guidelines.

Washington, Dec. 15: Federal regulators are ord-ering Facebook, Twitter, Amazon, TikTok's parent

and five other social media companies to provide detailed information on how they collect and use consumers' personal data and how their practices affect children and teens.

The Federal Trade Commission's action announced on Monday goes to the heart of the tech industry's lucrative busi-

ness model: harvesting data from platform users and making it available to advertisers so they can pinpoint specific consumers to target. The agency plans to use the information, due in 45 days, for a comprehensive study.

The other five companies are Reddit, Snap, Discord, WhatsApp, which is owned hv Facebook, and Google's YouTube. Regulators and lawmakers are increasingly weaving into their investigations of market dominance by Big Tech companies concerns over data power and privacy.

The FTC wants to know how social media and video streaming services collect, use and track consumers' personal and demographic information, how they decide which ads and other content are shown to consumers, whether they apply algorithms or data analytics to personal information, how

they measure and promote user engagement and how their practices affect children and teens. "Never before has there been an industry capable of surveilling and monetising so much of our personal lives," three of the five FTC commissioners said.

They said the planned study "will lift the hood on the social media and video streaming firms to carefully study their engines.'

**LEGAL** ORDER

The opposition alliance

\$100mn case was filed on September 19, 2019, challenging the Indian Parliament's decision on J&K

## US Court terminates lawsuit against Modi, Shah

US court has dismissed a \$100-million lawsuit filed against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah after the litigants - a separatist Kashmir Khalistan outfit and two associates failed to appear before it at

two scheduled hearings. The suit was filed on September 19, 2019, days before Modi's historic "Howdy, Modi!" event in Houston, Texas. It chalthe Indian Parliament's decision on

Washington, Dec. 15: A abrogated the special privileges of the state and carved out two union territories and sought a compensation of \$100 million from Modi, Shah and Lt. Gen. Kanwal Jeet Singh

Dhillon is currently serving as the Director-General Defence Intelligence Agency and Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff under the Chief of Defence Staff.

that "Other than attempted service, Khalistan Kashmir Jammu and Kashmir that Referendum Front "have



Narendra Modi

done nothing to prosecute this case", and have now failed to appear at two Scheduling



Conferences, US District Court Southern District of Texas Judge Frances H. Stacy said in his order

dated October 6 and recommended that the case be dismissed. The case was terminated

by Judge Andrew S Hanen of the US District Court in Texas on October 22. Apart from the Kashmir Khalistan Referendum Front, the other two complainants have not been identified, other than the acronyms 'TFK'

The suing party was represented by separatist lawyer Gurpatwant Singh Pannun. The Indian Parliament passed legisla-

tion last year changing the status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, modifying provisions that have been an obstacle to economic development and promoted a sense of separatism. Minister Modi, accompa-nied by US President Donald Trump, had addressed a crowd of over

50,000 Indian-Americans at the "Howdy, Modi!" event in Houston on September 22, 2019. As per court records,

Khalistan Kashmir Referendum Front was to Modi, Shah and Dhillon at the Indian Consulate in Houston on February 18, A conference was set by

the court for August 2. A second conference was scheduled on October 6. Judge Stacy said that representatives Khalistan Kashmir Referendum Front failed to appear for the conference as such he recommended that the lawsuit be dismissed. Two weeks later, Judge Hanen terminated the case.

## Chronicle

16 DECEMBER 2020

## Biden affirmation is a win for US democracy

he Electoral College's formal affirmation of Joe Biden's victory was only a ritual. If it assumes the contours of a milestone in US election history, the blame should go to the outgoing President Donald Trump's attempts to subvert the democratic process. "It is the rule of law, the Constitution and the will of the people" that prevails, as the victor, Mr Biden, put it in a gracious speech in which he said realistically, "Now it is time to turn the page."

The proof of the durability of the US political system, which is an important template for democracies, represents a significant moment for all of the free world. In the six weeks since November 3 in which Mr Trump and his supporters tried every bizarre trick in their subversive playbook to overturn a clear popular verdict in which Mr Biden not only got 306 of 538 Electoral College votes but also trounced Mr Trump — one of five Presidents to win the

clear popular verdict in which Mr Biden not only got 306 of 538 Electoral College votes but also trounced Mr Trump — one of five Presidents to win the White House without a popular mandate — by over seven million votes.

The members of the Electoral College were only upholding the brief given to them in a democratic process but what the Supreme Court did in throwing out every challenge to the placeties in thruly beginning to the process.

The proof of the durability of the US political system, which is an important template for democracies, represents a significant moment for all of the free world

oral College were only upholding the brief given to them in a democratic process but what the Supreme Court did in throwing out every challenge to the election is truly heroic. As many as 86 judges, many of them either nominees of Mr Trump or the Republican Party, displayed scorn or contempt for lawsuits that were part of legal manoeuvres backed by as many as 17 attorneysgeneral of states and 126 members of Congress.

The court made legal history in its unanimity after having seen through the subterfuge of trying to throw out 20 million legitimately cast ballots. This is a grand lesson in how the integrity of a justice system can be preserved only by the honesty of judges who resist the temptation to reflect any gratitude they may feel towards those who nomical leaving. Their firm rulings who nomical control leaving the firm rulings who nomical services.

nated them, or their own ideological leanings. Their firm rulings helped sustain the reputation of a great institution.

The catastrophic Trump presidency may not have fulfilled the worst scenarios of a crazed authoritarian let loose in the White House but the visible damage it has caused to a precious democratic process like free and fair elections will take a long time to mend. What Mr Trump did in repeatedly questioning the legitimacy of the presidential polls, considered the fairest in many quadrennials, is to corrode social trust in a vibrant democracy. In exploiting political divisions, Mr Trump had split a nation with his web of lies whose reach became phenomenal in the age of social media that can be so easily manipulated.

The strength of institutions was sorely tested in four years but so many of them came through with flying colours. Mr Trump's animus against migrants as reflected in his stopping the DACA programme was stayed by the courts, so too his manipulation of visas and green cards. The media exposed his cruel separation of children from their parents. His own administration poohpoohed his disinformation campaign on the coronavirus which, ironically, did not spare him either. The top court ridiculed his skewed election petitions and, finally, the people rejected his presidency. His legacy, apart from damage to public trust in government, is bits and pieces of a Mexican Wall. A divided nation must pick up the pieces now.

## 'Reckless' Kamal Haasan

In the electoral marketplace, do good intentions alone sell? This is a mind boggling question that crops up when actor Kamal Haasan, launching his campaign for the Tamil Nadu state Assembly elections of 2021, reels out a list of public inconveniences that governments hardly bother to address. He also raises serious questions. Like, what's the need for a new Parliament building?

But he also seems to get carried away by the crowds that turn up for his meetings. 'Gangs come together for money but it's a revolution when people congregate for an ideal,' he exulted on Twitter presuming that the throngs at Madurai and Usilampatti were there to join him in his mission to eliminate corruption. Of course, it is not just from Central rulers that he demands answers but also from those holding the reins in the state. Aptly underlining the hypocrisy of a ruling party top honcho's suggestion for alternating power between a man and a woman in a single term, he pointed out that the party does not have even a single woman as a district secretary. He even pledges to make ministers out of at least 20 women when the mantle falls on him. Things that sound really nice. Haasan even boasts of growing up on the lap of M.G. Ramachandran, the former chief minister popularly known as MGR who remained invincible in politics during his time. But does that privilege make him the inheritor of MGR's political legacy or do people see in him a modern MGR? Whatever people see in him, when Mr Haasan cocks a snook at popular sentiments, he diminishes his prospects.

By promising to hand over TASMAC shops to private retailers or plump-

By promising to hand over TASMAC shops to private retailers or plumping for the commonly contentious NEET or openly supporting the vice-chancellor of Anna University, who is seen as most parties in the state as an intruder imposed on them, one cannot garner votes in Tamil Nadu, even if as MGR himself.

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# Language row led to a new nation 49 yrs ago



Abhijit Bhattacharyya

e world knows that Bangladesh is South Asia's youngest nation state, but few peoand particularly those born well after the cataclysmic events surrounding its birth, who are 40s — are fully aware of the torturous processes over a long period of time that led to the creation of arguably one of the few linguistic nation states through blood, sweat, toil and tears? The experience of living through the tumultuous 24 years (1947-1971), between when India attained freedom from British rule and the December day 49 years ago when Dhaka (then Dacca) became "the free capital of a free country" in Indira Gandhi's ringing phrase in the Lok Sabha are hard to fathom for those who didn't personalexperience those momentous times. East Bengal, of course, had the agony and humiliation of separation even before 1947 when undivided Bengal was partitioned into two halves, but nothing quite prepared it for the experience of those 24 years as the eastern enclave of the nation called Pakistan — and being treated as a vassal

province. The beauty and reality of history is that it is usually written, rewritten or unwritten by the victors, or deliberately distorted for the sake of the polity. When British India was split into two with the independence of two nations in 1947, it also created a geopolitical impossibility: two wings of the new nation of Pakistan separated by the mother state with a 1,000-mile crater. It was an unbridgeable disconnect making a mockery of a unified Pakistan, ostensibly founded on a common religious identity. Its two wings were a political reality, but remained a geographical and cultural disconnect since birth.

Just ask any 74-year-old (or older) Bangladeshi (born in 1946 or earlier) about his or her life journey. One is likely to hear the agonising experience he/she underwent, changing his/her nationality. Ceasing to be Indian in August 1947. Being a Pakistani for 24 years, being treated as an inferior and a second-class citizen, discriminated against, till December 1971, and then attaining his/her present identity as a free, independent Bengali-speaking

Bangladeshi.

The worst humiliation for the Bengali-speaking citizens of what became East Pakistan was the insensitive linguistic policy forcibly imposed by an insolent, dictatorial governor-general, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the country's founding father, who contemptuously treated them as inferior creatures in contrast to the full-fledged citizens of West Pakistan.

citizens of West Pakistan.

Jinnah's toxic temper, mixed with arrogance, sowed the seeds of irreversible Bengali nationalism in the world's most fertile soil, and ploughing their mind with confrontational ideas. Bengalis sullenly, but silently, bore this up to a point. Till Jinnah left Dhaka, on his sole (and last) visit to East Pakistan, which helped to create a "distinct Bengali nation within an indistinct and intolerant Pakistani state".

intolerant Pakistani state". On March 21, 1948, Jinnah met a delegation of the Scheduled Castes: and on March 22 received another delegation of upper-caste Hindu members of the East Bengal Legislative Assembly. However, what happened on March 21 at a public gathering, addressed by Jinnah, was a bombshell. "Let me make it clear to you that the state language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other lan-guage," he declared. "Anyone who tries to misenemy of Pakistan... Every Mussalman should come under the banner of the Muslim League, which is the true custodian of Pakistan". It was a warning-cum-threat to the Bengali language of "united" Pakistan. Jinnah misread the mood on the ground – and the fact that Bengali-speaking people across the world usually define themselves by their language, despite the significant role that religion may play in their lives.

Thus, while already nur-

turing a genuine feeling of

deprivation, discrimination and humiliation, it didn't take long for East Bengalis to fall back upon their linguistic pride. Rabindranath Tagore and Nazrul Islam were always dearer to the Bengali head and heart than the divisive, hate-filled politics of violence and murder of the rest of South Asia. Little wonder Rabindranath Tagore's eternal rhythmic words and sonorous lyrics wholeheartedly were embraced and adopted as Bangladesh's anthem in 1971. It spontaneously took to the 1905 composed lines of arguably the greatest philosopher poet to have blossomed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries east of Suez.

"Amar shonar Bangla, ami tomay bhalobashi; Chirodin tomar akash, tomar batash, amar prane bajay bashi" (My golden Bengal, I love you. Forever thy skies, thy air set my heart in tune as if it were a

Jinnah was to face some of his worst moments in Dhaka before he returned to Karachi, which was then Pakistan's capital. His

What, however, remains an abiding mystery is how Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger in Washington and Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai in Beijing so misread the signs on the ground and tried their best – unsuccessfully – to abort the birth of an independent Bangladesh

University's convocation March 24, 1948 had a kinetic effect. "There can be only one state language... and that language in my opinion can only be Urdu" Dhaka was instantly rocked by student agita-tions: the pent-up feelings and suppressed grievances of Bengalis didn't take long to crystallise and burst. People fell back on the facts to disprove Jinnah's views as absurd and unacceptable to Bengali-speaking East Pakistanis, who were a majority of the popula-

Jinnah had ignored the fact that Urdu was the mother tongue of only four per cent of Pakistanis, while 55 per cent considered Bengali their mother tongue. Only the Muslims of northern and northwestern India, from where most of the Muslim League's leadership came from, would benefit from Urdu as the state language, along with some Punjabis and Pashtuns working for the state. The choice of Urdu as state language also meant a total absence of Bengali-speaking Pakistanis from state affairs. What happened later, in

1971, is of course part of the

folklore of the proud new

nation. History will surely judge Prime Minister Indira Gandhi as an outstanding leader of geopolitical vision who, ably supported by the Indian armed forces under General (later Field-Marshal) Manekshaw, managed the shatter the myth of invincibility around Jinnah's creation - and ensured the surrender of Pakistan's entire military in the eastern sector to the Indian Army at Dhaka's Ramna Maidan on December 16, 1971. What, however, remains an abiding mystery is how Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger in Washington and Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai in Beijing so misread the signs on the ground and

The writer is an alumnus of the National Defence College. The views expressed are personal.

tried their best — unsuccessfully — to abort the birth of an independent

#### LETTERS

#### CMs' SPAT

At a time when farmers have escalated their agitation, the spat and blame game between the CMs of Delhi and Punjab is unfortunate (Farmers intensify stir over Centre's agrilaws, DC, Dec. 15). Since agriculture is also a state subject, they must pay attention to resolve the crisis than promote politi-

Dr C. Ghanshyam Visakhapatnam

#### **BJP IN BENGAL**

cal interests

Mamata's adversary now in West Bengal is a behemoth, unassailable with a gigantic wherewithal and resources (BJP in Bengal: Bruised, battered... still upbeat?, DC, Dec. 15). She needs a gargantuan strategy that seems to be sapping due to dwindling cadre and comrades.

K. Nehru Patnaik Visakhapatnam

#### **COWS FOR TEMPLES**

I congratulate M. Venu Gopala Rao, the Darsi legislator for donating 108 cows to different temples under the one cow for one temple scheme launched by the TTD. It shows his religious feelings, respect and devotion to cows... Voore Prasada Rao

Ongol

#### **VACCINATION**

None of us know when the vaccine will reach hospitals for mass use. Governments are vying with one another to supply them for free to all. Even the outgoing US president assured that all Americans will get vaccine shots freely. The priority for vaccination has already been spelt out

Parthasarathy Mandadi Tirupati



MOSCOW, Dec. 15.
The Soviet Union's unmanned Venus-7 space vehicle reached Venus today after a flight of 120 days, the Soviet news agency Tass reported. The spacecraft started sending messages back for 35 minutes from the planet's atmosphere, it added. Nothing about any landing on the blazing hot surface of the planet was said. When the spacecraft entered the atmosphere of Venus, the descent craft was separated, and parachute opened.

#### Douglas Murray



The world has to make China pay for what it did in 2020

T's time we started to talk about reparations. The Chinese need to pay the world's citizens for what it did to us all this year. In Britain, the economy is due to

contract by more than 11 per cent this year. In the best-case scenario, the UK will not go back to pre-Covid economic output until the fourth quarter of next year. Anyone tempted to say that this is only because of the actions of the British government should look almost anywhere else. In America, the country's GDP has suffered its worst ever fall-off while government debt has soared to over \$27 trillion. In Australia, the state of Queensland alone is expected to rack up debt of more than \$130 billion in the next couple of years. Everywhere, the world's economies are experiencing an unprecedented slump in GDP and a rocketing of government borrow-

ing.
Happily, there is one major economy where this is not the case. Guess which one it is? China is expected to see growth of 1.8 per cent this year. The only country where that is the case. As as one

financial journal put it earlier this week: "China driving global recovery"

ery". I suppose you could put it that way. Personally, I feel (and perhaps this is just the spirit of Christmas arriving early) a certain amount of vengeance when I read such stories. A vengeance which is always in too short a supply at this time of the year. But speaking personally, I resent the prospect of China walking away from 2020 spinning headlines about the positive economic message its economic boom sends to the rest of the world.

First, it is worth getting the historical record right. We still do not know whether the Wuhan lab was the source of the virus or whether the bat-eating story is true. Both are plausible. And both leave the question of whether the Communist Party of China allowed the virus to come out deliberately or accidentally.

If this sounds vague, then it is by CPC design. Because the CPC spent much of 2019-20 ensuring that we do not, and cannot, know. When Australia called for an independent international inquiry into the

sources of the virus earlier this year, the CPC responded by threatening sanctions against Australia. This week Chinese government accounts posted doctored photos of an Australian soldier "murdering" an Afghan child. Funnily enough, the Communists don't seem to play

by the same rules as everyone else. What is clear is that the CPC will do anything in order to ensure we do not linger on the WMD it released this year. It wants the rest of the world not to know and has done everything it can to keep us ignorant or distracted. It has disappeared the experts and scientists who might have informed us of what happened, and the chances of getting to the bottom of these facts while the CPC remains in power are remote. What we do know is that the Chinese knew about the virus and the dangers of it while keeping the rest of the world in the dark. They allowed people to continue to leave China and fly abroad long after the authorities locked down flights within their own country. Perhaps the CPC did just let off a global pandemic for the third time in a decade. Or perhaps the CPC knew how lethal and infectious the virus was but allowed it to go out and spread across the globe anyway

Is it a conspiracy theory to believe this could have been deliberate? I wouldn't have said so, and nor do many people in the intelligence world. In 2020 China achieved one of the greatest coups in financial history. The effects of the Trump administration's trade against China were beginning to be felt, and by accident or design the CPC found itself in the lucky position of their main competitor's economy (like the rest of the world) having to shut down completely. As a bonus, President Donald Trump, who appeared to be the only person in the world willing to take on the CPC, was taken out in the election which followed. Now, as the American public survey a political and financial mess of gigantic proportions, China is happily sailing into 2021 with increased growth.

The kick is that China now finds itself in a buyer's market. The rest of the globe is going to have to find a way out of this financial slump and possible depression. From

Africa, to central Europe, to Brexit Britain there is one obvious way out: Chinese investment. So long as China is the country "driving global recovery", the temptation will be there. Long ago the CPC bought up our universities very cheaply indeed. Not to mention a nuclear power station and more. Currently they are able to act like a property developer who has destroyed the area all around your house and now offers to buy your undesirable property at a dirt-cheap price. With certain strings attached. Even if one country resists the temptation to use Chinese investment to get out of this problem, it is unlikely that everyone will show the same restraint.

So I have a different suggestion. Countries of the world, unite. The CPC destroyed the world's economies in 2020. And we would like reparations. I am open to suggestions on how we do this — sanctions, gunboats — nothing should be off the table. China gave us 2020. We need to make them pay for it.

By arrangement with the **Spectator** 

ANANTAPUR | WEDNESDAY | 16 DECEMBER 2020

# quick

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	46,263.17	0.02
Nifty 50	13,567.85	0.07
S&P 500*	3,673.03	0.70
Dollar (₹)	73.64	-0.09
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.08	0.57
Euro (₹)	89.53	-0.13
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,847 <b>▼</b> 514	1.05
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	50.69	0.40
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.941	-0.005
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.906	0.015
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

## Exports dip 8.7%, imports 13% in November

Exports contracted for the second consecutive month in November after recording positive growth for a month in September, as the second wave of the pandemic hit consumer demand in some of the largest markets. Exports fell 8.7 per cent while imports contracted 13.3 per cent, resulting in a trade deficit of \$9.9 billion. Exports of petroleum products were down 59.7 per cent while pharma were up 11.1 per cent.

#### DakPay app for India Post, payments bank



Customers of the Department of Post (India Post) and the India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) can now operate their banking service through an app DakPay, which was unveiled by communications and IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, DakPav will facilitate services such as sending money, scanning QR code and making payment for services and merchants digitally. It will also provide interoperable banking services.

#### MSN gets USFDA nod for asenapine sublingual tablets

MSN Group said its marketing partner, Breckenridge Pharma-ceutical, has received final approval for its ANDA for asenapine sublingual tablets, in 2.5 mg and 10 mg strengths, a generic for Saphris, with the US FDA. Additionally, the 5mg strength received tentative approval. This product, for schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, was developed with **Breckenridge Pharmaceutical** for the US market.

#### **EeVe India rolls** out Atreo, Ahava e-scooters

EeVe India, the Odisha-based electric two-wheeler startup, introduced two new electric scooters called Ahava and Atreo priced at Rs 55,900 and Rs 64,900 at Delhi showroom, respectively. With this, the brand now sells six models in India. The Ahava electric scooter is claimed to have a range of 60-70km while the Atreo claims 90-100km. The two electric scooters have a running cost of 15 paise per km.



#### **■** Delinquencies spike post-moratorium

## **Loan disbursals** by MFIs up in Q2

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, DEC. 15

Though micro-loan disbursals have witnessed a five-fold growth in the September quarter over the previous quarter, delinquencies have spiked after the moratorium on loan repayments ended on August 31.

Micro-loan disbursals have, after a steep fall in the June quarter, made considerable recovery in the September quarter. In the September quarter loan disbursals by micro-lenders went up to Rs 31,261 crore against Rs 6,186 crore in the June quarter-a steep five-times increase in a quarter.

However, on the flip side, the disbursals have not even recovered to half of the March quarter levels. In the March quarter, the lenders had disbursed Rs 71,090 crore. In fact, in the lockdown-hit June quarter, disbursals had fallen 91 per cent.

The number of loans disbursed had fallen from 192lakh in the March quarter to 21 lakh in the June quarter but has recovered lakh in the September quarter. A four-fold quarterly growth in the number of loan accounts in the September quarter has only helped a 45 per cent recovery to the March quarter levels.

However, the average loan size has made a smarter recovery. It has returned to Rs 35,652 in the September quarter from Rs 29.480 and Rs



36,940 in the previous two quarters.

However, delinquencies have soared post-morato-rium. Portfolio at Risk (PAR) for 30 days-or the outstanding balance of loans in arrears--has shown a sharp increase once the moratorium ended. PAR-30 stood around 1.5 per cent till the PAR-30 June quarter but has sharply moved up to 4.39 per cent in the September quarter, as per the data from MFIN India, a microfinanciers association.

Banks have seen the highest increase in delinquencies; from a sub-1 per cent level in the June quarter, PAR-30 went up to 5.97 per cent. NBFC-MFIs saw it moving up from 1 per cent to 4.17 per cent and small finance banks witnessed a rise from near 1 per cent levels to 2.75 per cent. However, NBFCs saw the PAR-30 days' delinquency coming down.

According to Manoj Nambiar, chairperson of MFIN India, the livelihood of all the borrowers has not come back to normal. Some are making part payments and some full payments. "Collection efficiencies are improving month-on-month. Earlier, we had thought that efficiencies would return to pre-Covid levels by December. But, it would probably take one or two months more," he said.

The total loan outstanding of all the micro lenders recovered to Rs 2,31,778 crore--closer to the March quarter gross loan portfolio (GLP) of Rs 2,31,788 crore--after coming down to Rs 2,27,727 crore in the June quarter. However, the September quarter saw 14.89 per cent growth in GLP against the same quarter in the previ-

## Personal loan-book growth flat this year

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, DEC. 15

The pandemic has halted the growth of the personal loan-book and the delinquencies are grow-ing. After growing 26 per cent in FY20 and 40 per cent in the previous two years, personal loanflat remained between April and this August year. However, delinquencies have risen in the fivemonth period.

As of August 2020, the personal loan-book stood at Rs 5,07,684 crore, having grown by only 0.57 per cent over Rs 5,04,792 crore in March 2020 due to Covid-19 disruptions. In the year-ended March 2020, the loan-book had grown by 26.4 per cent, but was lower than the 40 per cent rate of growth in the previous two years, as per data from CRIF High Mark, a Mumbaibased credit bureau.

As of March 2020 active loans had grown by



faster compared to previous years. However, Covid-19 has impacted the originations in the five months of this fiscal year, with a minor degrowth of 1.5 per cent in the active loans.

The personal loan-book in metro cities felt a greater impact of the pandemic, stricter lockdown rules

and near nil economic activity through most of the five-month period in FY21. Originations in metros have witnessed a
42 per cent de-growth
compared to the same
period in the previous
year, as against 27 per
cent in tier III and
hovend eities

beyond cities.

The average ticket size has been reducing continuously over the last two years. In March 2020, it had shrunk by 18 per cent to 2,22,000. However, the average ticket size increased by 5 per cent to Rs 230,000 by August over

The amount of delinquencies for 31-180 days past due and 91-180 days past due have increased by 44 basis points and 26 bps, respectively. Loan delinquencies for 91-180 dpd have increased by 2X in the last two years from 0.91 per cent in March 2018 to 2.59 per cent March 2020. It further moved up to 2.64 per cent

## NPS, Atal Pension assets grow 35%

**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD** MUMBAI, DEC.15

Asset under management (AUM) of the National Pension System and Atal Pension Yojana grew over 35 per cent year-on-year at the end of November to more than Rs 5.32 lakh

The total number of subscribers grew 21.35 per cent year-on-year to over 3.88 lakh crore, said Pension Fund Regulatory Development Authority.

As on November 30, 2020, total pension assets under management stood at Rs 5,32,378 crore showing a year-on-year growth of 35.76 per cent from Rs 3,92,467

The number of subscribers in various under schemes National Pension System

ing 12 months, according

"Given the multiple chal-

lenges from excess liquidi-ty due to capital flows and

inflation, the RBI may be

forced to reduce the inter-

vention and allow appreci

ation," said Arvind Chari,

head of fixed income and

alternatives at Quantum

Advisors.

to estimates
Deutsche Bank AG.

November 2019.

crore by end-November 2020 from over 3.20 crore in November 2019, showing a year-on-year increase of 21.35 per cent.

Growing awareness about the tax saving benefits of the NPS led to maximum subscriber growth in all citizen sector by 33.38 per cent and assets under management for this category subscribers also grew by maximum 51.11

#### **BPCL MAY BUY OMAN OIL STAKE IN BINA REFINERY**

New Delhi, Dec. 15: Privatisation-bound Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) has said its board will on Thursday consider buy-ing out Oman Oil Company in the Bina refinery project in

Madhya Pradesh.

The BPCL board will also consider merging Bharat Gas Resources Ltd(BGRL) with itself, the company said in a filing to the stock exchanges on Tuesday. BPCL holds 63.68 per

cent stake in Bharat Oman Refineries Ltd (BORL), which operates a 7.8 million tonne oil

refinery in Bina.
The company board will on December 17 "consider a proposal for according 'in-principle' approval" for "acquisition of 36.62 per cent of equity shares in BORL from OQ S.A.O.C. (formerly known as Oman oil Company S.A.O.C.),"
it said. This would
amount to the acquisition of 88.8 crore equity shares from OQ.

The board would also consider a proposal to approach the Madhya Pradesh government for acquiring 2.69 crore warrants held by it in

The meeting would also consider "merger of Bharat Gas Resour-ces Ltd (a wholly owned subsidiary) with BPCL, the filing said. BGRI won licence to retail CNG to automobiles and PNG to households and industries Geographical Areas.

## High inflows threaten RBI's tight grip on rupee

**SUBHADIP SIRCAR & ANIRBAN NAG** 

A relentless torrent of funds rushing into India's markets may tip the central bank's delicate balancing act in 2021.

For most of this year, the Reserve Bank of India has capped currency gains as global investors poured around \$50 billion into stocks and stakes in companies. This has boosted rupee liquidity in a banking system that's already flush with cash from the RBI's stimulus measures.

There's growing consensus among traders and fund managers that the mounting pressures--par-ticularly the liquidity glut distorting money markets--may spur the central bank to consider a range of changes, from relaxing its grip on Asia's worst-per-forming currency to curtailing bond purchases.

A modest gain in the rupee over the past month could mean that policy makers are already dialling intervention down a touch, or that inflows are starting to get the better of

"We believe that the RBI is facing a tough task of

management liquidity while juggling FX inflows, secondary bond market purchases to keep longterm borrowing costs low and ensuring money-market rates are aligned to the policy rate," said Kanika Pasricha, an economist at Standard Chartered Plc in Mumbai. Steps must be taken to realign moneymarket rates with policy rates, she said.

While most currencies in Asia have benefited from a weaker dollar, the rupee is down 3 per cent this year.

**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD** 

It's another fortnight of

foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) pumping

money in the Indian

equity market, encour-

macro economic data,

sharp fall in fresh daily

Covid cases and weaker

dollar. Till December 15,

in the first half of the

month, Rs 41,898 crore

have been invested in

equities by the FPIs after

over Rs 60,000 crore net

favourable

MUMBAI, DEC.15

aged

RBI has bought \$58 billion of dollars in the first nine months of the year as signs of its intervention.

Traders point to how the

Governor Shaktikanta Das has only commented very broadly on the matter, writing in the most recent policy statement that the central bank acts to damp forex volatility and keep the rupee in sync with underlying domestic fundamentals

Inflows into India's equity markets have grown to more than \$19 billion this

inflows in November, according to national depository NSDL's data.

So far in the calendar

year 2020 FPIs invest-

ment in equities stands

at Rs 1,50,144 crore, of which close to Rs 1 lakh

crore has come after the

US Presidential elec-

On Tuesday, too, FPIs

were net investors in Indian equities by Rs

2,484.09 crore, as per the

provisional exchange

ARI RABINOVITCH

JERUSALEM, DEC. 15

"Value erosion in dollar

vear, on course for the most on an annual basis 2013.Foreign investors have also completed about \$30 billion of acquisitions in cash, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Declines in the dollar, which is forecast to keep falling in 2021, are fuelling fund flows into emerging markets globally.

may reach \$82 billion by the end of the fiscal year, then continue at much the same pace for the follow-

and excessive liquidity is

driving foreign portfolio investors to load up on

emerging markets equi-

equities in a big way,

pushing them to a record high. We are also wit-

nessing a strong recov-

ery in demand in the

economy, which is lead-

ing to strength in the

rupee as the year draws

to a close," Sugandha

Sachdeva, vP-metals, energy & currency

Religare

energy & research at

Broking, said.

specially Indian

In India, capital inflows

The median of estimates compiled by Bloomberg is for the rupee to appreciate to 72 per dollar by the end of 2021. Analysts at Gold-FPIs invest nearly ₹42K crore this month

man Sachs forecast the currency as strong as 70 by March 2022. It ended trading at 73.63 on Tuesday. To be sure, some including B. Prasanna, ICICI Bank's head of global markets, sales, trading and research, argue that when you look at the rupee relative to a basket of its trading partners, the currency is overvalued and the RBI

will have little tolerance for it to strengthen sharply. With excess cash in the banking system estimated at Rs 7 lakh crore (\$95 bn), key overnight rates have plunged below the reverse repo rate that marks the lower bound of the central bank's policy corridor.

—Bloomberg

SAVING MOTHER EARTH Rice cultivation uses 30-40% of the world's freshwater

## **Automotive industry lost** ₹2,300 cr per day during lockdown: House panel

New Delhi, Dec. 15: In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns, the automotive industry suffered a loss of Rs 2,300 crore per day and the estimated job loss in the sector was about 3.45 lakh, according to a parliamentary panel report submitted to Rajya Japha chairman Venkaiah Naidu Tuesday. The Naidu on

parliamentary standing committee on commerce, chaired by Telan-gana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) MP Keshav Rao, has suggested a slew of measures for attracting investment in the automotive sector, including overhauling of prevalent land and labour laws.

'The committee was informed by the auto industry associations that all the major original equipment manufacturers (OEM) have cut down their production by 18-20 per cent due to low demand and decline in sales of vehicles. As a result, the employment scenario in the automo-bile sector has been affected and the an estimated job loss in the auto sector at 3.45 lakh," the panel said in its report.

Hiring of manpower has been stopped in the auto industry sector. Besides that, 286 auto dealers have been closed. Further, production cuts in the automobile sector have a percolating negative impact on the component indus-try adver-sely affecting the micro, small and medium enterprises engaged in the automobile spare parts manufacturing, the report said.

"As informed by the automobile industry associations, the production stoppage at the automotive OEM and component supplier due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns led to a loss of approximately Rs 2,300 crore per day to the

automotive sector," it said. The standing committee further said the actual magnitude of the impact depends on the duration of lockdown period, the intensity and extent of spread of the Covid-19 outbreak.

## Flexible wedding jewellery purchase plan from Tanishq

Mumbai, Dec. 15: In a move to assist consumers in buying jewellery for weddings and related occasions, Titan's jewellery arm Tanishq has introduced a new pur-chase plan—Rivaah Aashirwaad. Through this plan, consumers can plan their wedding jewellery pur-

chase in a structured NOTE and systematic manner and yield great discounts on the making charges towards the end of the plan.

As the name signifies, Aashirwaad is the blessing in gold that is gifted to the bride on her wedding. Towards this, customers can enrol for a monthly purchase plan.

Apart from offering better value for money compared to spot purchase, Rivaah Aashirwaad gives customers the flexibility to plan their purchase in terms of the quantum, duration and benefits. Tanishq Rivaah—its introduced

dedicated wedding jewellery sub-brand—in 2017, catering to the diverse and varied jewellery needs across communi-

ties and regions.

Ajoy Chawla, chief executive officer, jewellery division, Titan Company Ltd, said: "With Rivaah Aashirwaad, we aim to offer the best opportunity to brides and their families to build their wedding trousseau with the finest Tanishq designs, assurance of purity and at competitive prices.

Drip irrigation to make rice eco-friendly

the production without increasing water use or lowering quality," said Michele Conte, whose family has managed La

An Israeli company has developed a drip irrigation system for growing rice to replace the flooded paddies that have supplied the world with rice for generations but cause a surprising level of dam-

age to the environment. Rice is the staple food for more than half the global population, but its cultivation uses 30-40 per cent of the world's freshwater and is responsible for 10 per cent of man-made emissions of greenhouse gas methane, according to the UNbacked Sustainable Rice

Netafim, a company that pioneered drip irri-



gation decades ago to grow produce like potatoes and melons across Israel's challenging arid landscape, has just finished a pilot scheme using its technology on 1,000 hectares (2,470 acres) of rice fields in locations from Europe to southern Asia.

At one such location, at La Fagiana farm in north-east Italy, two fields, side-



by up to 15 cm of water to maintain temperatures and keep away weeds. The other is criss-crossed with perforated

pipes delivering to the roots precise amounts of water amounting to less than half the quantity used on the flooded field. "We want to increase

Fagiana for decades and who has adopted the Netafim system on some of his land. For three years the drip irrigation has yielded

rice on par and at times even better quality than the flooded paddies, he said. It also allows them to rotate crops throughout the year.

Netafim said it had to learn from scratch how to achieve the same yield as flooding and it took a decade to create a new protocol for watering, fertilizing and planting rice

with drip irrigation. The growing conditions switch to aerobic from anaerobic, which means methane emission "goes to zero," said CEO Gaby

Miodownik. Conte said the schedule for treating the rice still needs some fine tuning but that it has become a selling point for environmentally concerned cus-

The initial investment in pipes, pumps and filters could be expensive for farmers whose profit margins are, for the most part, already thin.

tomers.

But the shift away from flooding is expected to gain traction and companies like India's Jain Irrigation are developing drip irrigation packages for rice as well.

— Reuters

#### Yuvraj named in **Punjab probables**

**New Delhi:** World Cup winning former India all-rounder Yuvra Singh is set to come out of retirement and play domestic cricket again after being named in Punjab's 30-strong list of probables for next month's Syed Mushtag Ali T20 tourna ment. Yuvraj had announced his retirement last June but he decided to resume playing for his home state after being approached by Punjab Cricket Association secretary.
The 39-year-old left-handed

batsman, who has played 304 ODIs, 40 Tests and 58 T20Is for India, has been training at the PCA stadium in Mohali and also posted a video of his preparations on social media

**RAINA ALL SET FOR UP** 

Former India batsman Suresh Raina is all set to represent his home state of Uttar Pradesh Raina announced his retirement from international cricket in August this year, but will continue to play domestic cricket for his native state and in the Indian Premier League

#### **SREESANTH IN KERALA LIST**

Former India fast bowler S. Sreesanth on Tuesday moved closer to a return to competitive cricket after being named in a 26-strong probables list. The 37-year-old was banned by the BCCI over his alleged involvement in spot-fixing in the IPL. - Agencies

#### **Hyderabad ride**

on Santana brace

Vasco: Aridane Santana struck twice in less than a minute to script Hyderabad FC's thrilling 3-2 win over SC East Bengal in an Indian Super League match here on Tuesday.

Santana's twin burst came in the 56th minute after SC East Bengal scored their first ever ISL goal through Jacques Maghoma in the 26th minute There was no looking back for Hyderabad after that as they struck a third goal in the 68th minute with Liston Colaco mak-

Halicharan Narzary to find the back of the net. But there was more drama in store as Maghoma too completed a brace from Anthony Pilkington's freekick to reduce the margin in the 81st minute East Bengal thus suffered their

ing a terrific run to set it up for

fourth defeat from five matches to remain at the bottom of the table with one point. Hyderabad FC, on the other hand, remained unbeaten from five matches (nine points) to be placed at fifth place in the 11team standings. - PTI

#### **Grealish banned** from driving

London: Aston Villa captain Jack Grealish was given a ninemonth driving ban on Tuesday after crashing his Range Rover during the coronavirus lockdown in March

Grealish was sentenced at Birmingham Magistrates' Court after previously pleading guilty to two charges The 25-year-old's vehicle hit

two parked vehicles in Dickens

Heath, Solihull, West Midlands. As well as the driving ban, England midfielder Grealish was also fined £82,499 (\$110,271) A judge was told that a witness said Grealish smelled of "intoxicating liquor" and was slurring his words immediately after the

crash on March 29. Grealish was involved in the incident less than 24 hours after issuing a Twitter video message urging people to stay at home to save lives and protect the NHS. - AFP

#### Live on TV

**CRICKET** 

Big Bash League: Perth Scorchers

on Sony Six, HD Lanka Premier League: Final from

7.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

Indian Super League: Mohun Bagan vs FC Goa from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

English Premier League: Arsenal vs Southampton from 11.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1: Leicester vs Everton from 11.30 pm on Star Sports Select 2: Leeds United vs Newcastle from 11.30 pm; Fulham vs Brighton from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Star Sports 3; Liverpool vs Tottenham Hotspur from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Star Sports Select 1; West Ham vs Crystal Palace from 1.30 am

(Thursday) on Star Sports Select 2 Italian League: Juventus vs Atalanta from 11 pm on Sony Ten 2; Genoa vs AC Milan from 1.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1; Inter Milan vs Napoli from 1.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2

NXT: Bouts from 6.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

# BATTLE READY Virat second best in Test rankings

## Australia have plans in place for Kohli & Co.

Adelaide, Dec. 15: Australia coach Justin Langer on Tuesday asserted that his team will "have plans in place" for Indian talisman Virat Kohli as cricket's heavyweights renew one of the sport's greatest rivalries with the opening day-night Test here from Thursday.

The four-match series opener at Adelaide Oval will be the only time India captain Kohli will play Test cricket Down Under this summer as he will return home after the game to attend the birth of his first child.

Langer, however, is determined to stop Kohli from setting the tope for

from setting the tone for the series.

"He is a great player and an equally great leader. I have got so much respect for him but we are going to be really well planned for him because we know how important he is for India as a leader and as a batsman. So, we will have our plans in place.

The next trick is to exe cute them, hopefully, keep him out of the game with his runs. At the end of the day, that's where he is going to have the biggest impact. We've seen a lot of him now, and he has seen a lot of us too," Langer said during a virtual media interaction.

Langer also made it clear that his team will focus more on the skill part and look for ways to get Kohli out instead of needlessly engaging with

"What we talk about is how to get Virat out. He is such a great player, we don't talk about whether we taunt him or not. That's rubbish... We play on the skill, not on emo tions, at least we try to."

"There is obviously emotion in the game, no doubt about that, we are going to control our emo-

Australia may have played more day-night Tests compared to India's one but according to Langer, his team would have no advantage heading into the opening pink ball match.

"I have always said that the best players and best teams adapt regardless of the big game or the colour of the ball, so whether it is the red ball or the white ball or the pink ball, the best players and teams adapt to it.

So, what has happened in the past, it is nice to replay. India have just come off a day-night practice game, we have done a bit of practice under

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, DEC. 15

ture the trophies.

her B Tech final year from

Keshav Memorial College

was all guns blazing. She

first defeated Varuni Jaiswal of GSM 4-11, 18-16,

11-9, 11-8; then blocked

Bhavitha (GSM) 11-9, 9-11,

11-2, 8-11, 11-7; rallied past

Ragha Nivedita (MLR) 4-

11, 11-6, 11-8, 11-9; laid low

V. Laasya (AWA) 11-5, 11-8, 8-11, 11-9; vanquished

Vinichitra Yadav (MLR) 4-

11, 11-7, 11-5, 11-7; hemmed

in Hanifa Khatoon (VPG)

11-6, 11-8, 11-6 and silenced

V. Saasya (AWA) 11-8, 11-7,

8-11, 11-6 to emerge cham-

Snehit, a final year stu-

dent of St Joseph's Degree and PG College, Koti, was

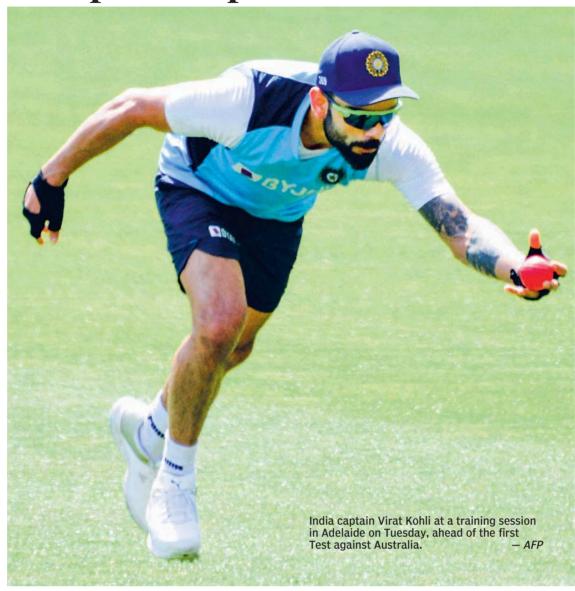
equally good on the table.

He first beat B. Vatsin 11-

8, 11-8, 11-2; made light

work of Mohd Ali 11-9, 9-

11, 11-6, 11-2; walloped B. Vrishin 11-8, 11-5, 11-6;



## Gavaskar bats for Pant, Gill

New Delhi, Dec. 15: The legendary Sunil Gavaskar feels the Indian team management should prefer an aggres-sive Rishabh Pant over a technically sound Wriddhiman Saha for the wicket-keeper's role in the four-match Test series against Australia, starting Thursday.

Gavaskar, the fastest to reach 10,000 Test runs, said that with a blistering 73-ball 103-run knock in the second warm-up game under his belt, Pant will give India more flexibility in the first Test, the only day-night game, to be played in Adelaide.

"It is going to be a tough one for the tour selection committee because Rishabh played in all the 4 Test matches four years ago. He also got a hundred and seemed he got under the skin of the Australian players with his chirping behind the

#### **RAHANE KEEPS CARDS CLOSE TO HIS CHEST**

Adelaide, Dec. 15: 50 minutes of the twivice-captain Ajinkya Rahane on Tuesday conceded that pacer İshant Sharma's absence is a "big miss" but side-stepped queries on his team's possible first XI combination for the opening Day/Night Test against Australia starting on Thursday.

Rahane, who is expected to lead in the last three Tests after regular skipper Virat Kohli goes on paternity leave, also spoke about how pink ball's increased pace off the pitch during the 40-

stumps.
"...When you just came off a hundred few days

Pranitha, Snehit are TT champions

light session, will be the biggest challenge for any batsman. "I think, we do really have a strong attack but yes we definitely miss Ishant, being the senior fast bowler," he said.

Ishant is recovering from a rib injury sustained during the IPL. Rahane, however,

confident that despite Ishant's absence, the pace attack comprising Jasprit Bumrah and Moĥammed Shami will step it up for the Australians.

choice of the management I think," Gavaskar said. Gavaskar said he pre-

accomplished keeper in Saha, as Australian pitches are not so demanding when it demanding when it comes to keeping wick-Both Gavaskar and

Border batted Shubman Gill over Prithvi Shaw to open along side Mayank Agarwal in the series.

..India is a little bit shaky at the top of the order. They don't know who they are going to go with. Mayank Agarwal is of course a certainty. But who's the other opener — Shubman Gill or Prithvi Shaw?" said Gavaskar.

"So with uncertainty at the top, they would like to strengthen their batting and so Pant will play. I am hoping he (Rishabh) plays at 6 because then that will allow you to pick 5 bowlers to try and get 20 Australian wickets.'

(GSM) 7-11, 11-5, 11-9, 16-14. R. Niveditha (MLR) bt Varuni Jaiswal (GSM) 8-11, 11-7, 11-6, 11-8;

bt Hanifa Khatoon (VPG) 12-10, 11

2. 11-7: bt Vinichita Yaday (MLR)

11-7, 11-13, 13-14, 11-8; bt V. Saasya (AWA) 11-8, 7-11, 12-10, 11-9.

V Saasya (AWA) bt Vinichitra (MLR) 12-10, 6-11, 11-7, 10-12, 11-7;

bt Hanifa Khatoon (VPG) 11-9,

Vinichitra (MLR) bt Hanifa Khatoon (VPG) 8-11, 11-3, 11-6,

**Youth Boys Superleague** 

SFR Snehit (MLR) bt B. Vatsin

11-8, 11-8, 11-2; bt Mohammed Ali

11-9, 9-11, 11-6, 11-2; bt B. Vrishin 11-8, 11-5, 11-6; bt Saroj Siril (AWA) 11-4, 11-7, 11-8; bt Sainath

Reddy (MLR) 11-9, 11-8, 11-8; bt

Kesavan Kannan (MLR) 11-4, 11-

(MLR) 11-6, 11-3, 12-10.

Mohammed Ali (LBS) bt B. Vrishin 11-5, 11-8, 12-10; bt Sainath Reddy (MLR) 11-7, 11-4,

12-10; bt B. Varun Shanke

(MLR) 11-6, 4-11, 15-13, 11-8; bt B. Vatsin 11-2, 11-6, 11-6; bt Saroj Siril (AWA) 11-6, 11-3, 11-7; bt

Kesavan Kannan (MLR) 11-1, 11-9

B. Varun Shanker (MLR) bt

Saroj Siril (AWA) 11-5, 11-7, 13-11;

bt Kesavan Kannan (MLR) 11-9 11-4, 7-11, 12-10; bt B.Vrishin 11-3

9-11, 11-7, 11-7; bt Sainath Reddy (MLR) 11-5, 11-9, 11-5; bt B. Vatsin 11-8, 11-3, 11-8.

Sainath Reddy (MLR) bt

Kesavan Kannan (MLR) 11-8, 11-7, 11-9; bt B.Vrishin 5-11, 14-12, 11-9,

11-8: bt B. Vatsin 11-4, 9-11, 11-9

7-11, 11-6; bt Saroj Siril (AWA) 9

Saroj Siril (AWA) bt B. Vatsin

11-7; bt B. Varun Shanker

11-4, 11-4,

**Dubai, Dec. 15:** India captain Virat Kohli on Tuesday jumped one place to second in the ICC Test ranking for batsmen, which also features Chesteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane at the seventh and 10th positions respectively.
Kohli is the leading

Indian batsman in the chart with 886 rating points behind Australia's Steve Smith (911 points). New Zealand skipper

Kane Williamson dropped a rung to the third spot. He is followed by young Australian batting sensation Marnus Labuschagne, Pakistan's Babar Azam and injured David Warner.

Pujara is seventh in the chart with 766 points, followed by Ben Stokes (760), Joe Root (738) and India Test vice-captain Rahane (726) to complete the top-10

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah (779) and veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin (756) are the two Indians to find a place in the ICC Test rankings for bowlers at eighth and 10th spots respectively.

The list is being headed Australia's Cummins (904), followed by England's Stuart Broad and New Zealand's Neil Wagner.

Two other Indians Ravindra Jadeja and Ashwin — also feature in the top-10 list for ICC Test rankings for all-rounders, which is being topped by Stokes.

While Jadeja is placed third in the chart with 397

leading Indian batsman in the chart with 886 rating points behind . Australia's Steve Smith (911 points). Chesteshwar Pujara is seventh on the list with 766 points, followed by Ben Stokes (760), Joe Root (738) and India Test vice-captain Aiinkya Rahane (726) to complete the top-10 list.

rating points behind West Indies' Jason Holder, Ashwin is at sixth with 281 points.

In the ICC Test rankings for teams, India are currently placed third after New Zealand jumped to the second spot following their recent 2-0 series win over the West Indies. India have 114 rating

points, two points behind New Zealand and table-top-pers Australia, who both have 116 points but the Aussies are ahead on decimal points.

England are placed fourth ahead of Sri Lanka, South Africa, Pakistan, West Indies, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe. But India have a chance

to move up the ranking ladder as they take on Australia in the four-match Test series, star Thursday in Adelaide.



Members of the Valluvar Nagar Football Club pose with the trophy after defeating CFA in the final.

## VN Nagar grab football trophy

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, DEC. 15

Valluvar Nagar Football Club defeated Champions Football Academy (CFA, Yousufguda) to win the Inaugural Cup hosted by Hyderabad Association and coordinated by Sports Village, at the Eagles Arena in Tarnaka, Hyderabad.

Samuel scored the allimportant goal for the winners in the championship match. He got able support from teammates Pavan, Samson, Mahaveer, Issac,

Yogesh, Aaron and Venu, much to the delight of coaches Emmanuel and Shiva Kumar. Earlier in the semifinals,

VN Nagar defeated Hyderabad Clusters 1-0 with Justin scoring the In the group stages, VN Nagar beat Abbas Union 1-0 via Yogesh's strike before

blasting past Bewin FC 3-0 as Akash, Yogesh and Venu got on to the scoresheet. Justin and Akash were

adjudged Best Defenders, Likith grabbed the prize for the Best Goalkeeper.

## Vrashank, Kartavya emerge chess kings

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, DEC. 15

Vrashank Chouhan and Kartavya Anadkat bagged the top honours at the 175th Brilliant Trophy chess tournament that was conducted online due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Vrashank of Vidya Bhavan Public School in Udaipur, Rajasthan, won the Juniors category by scoring 11.5 points out of 12 rounds. Nihal Swarna secured the second place with 10.5 points while Neev Dange was third aggregating 9.5 points.

In the Open category, Kartavya of Ahmedabad, Gujarat, won the event by scoring 10.5 points leaving Ayush Jain (10 points) in second place. Shreyas Sheshadri finished third with 9.5 points to his cred-





Open category: 1. Kartavya Anadkat, 2. Ayush Jain, 3. Shreyas Seshadri Nalluri, 4. Mathiyazhagan, 5. Shaik Sumer Arsh. 6. VSN Murthy, 7. Ritobroto Sen, 8. D. Lakshmana Rao, 9. V. U. Diwakar,

U-15 boys: 1. Pradyumn Avadhan

10. Pavan Karthikeya Varma.

Indraneel Reddy. Girls: 1. Swaralakshmi S. Nair, 2. Naannya.

U-13 boys: 1. Neev Dange, 2. Hemanth. Girls: 1. Hyma Kumari, 2. Hemanth. Girls: 1. Hyma Kumari, 2. Shybi Binoj.

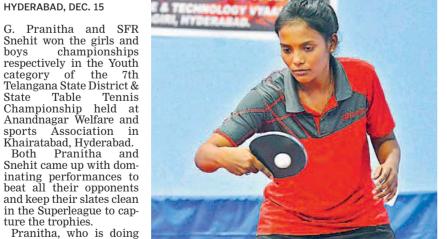
U-11 boys: 1. Nihal Swarna, 2. Y. V. Avinash Reddy. Girls: 1. Harshitha Agarwal, 2. Shriya Mahesh.

U-9 boys: 1. Shreyan Bag, 2. Vihaan Sai Krishna. Girls: 1. L. Laasya, 2. Tummapudi Lasya.

U-7 boys: 1. Balanandan Ayvanpan, 2. Havish Kovidh. Girls: 1.

Ayyappan, 2. Havish Kovidh. Girls: 1. Aaditri Abhishek, 2. M. Pranavi. Printed and published from Anantapur by K.Sudhakar on behalf of

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G. Pranitha (above) won the Youth Girls Superleague. SFR Snehit (right) poses with his trophy and certificate at the TSTTA championship at AWA in Hyderabad.

slammed Saroj Siril (AWA) 11-4, 11-7, 11-8; stumped Sainath Reddy (MLR) 11-9, 11-8, 11-8; crushed Kesavan Kannan (MLR) 11-4, 11-6, 11-7; and was victorious against B. Varun Shanker (MLR) 11-6, 11-3, 12-10 for the title.

Varuni Jaiswal (GSM), V. Laasya (AWA) and N. Bhavitha (GSM) finished second, third and fourth among girls while Mohammed Ali (LBS), B. Varun Shanker (MLR) and Sainath Reddy (MLR) took the second, third and fourth spots in the boys

section.

THE RESULTS **Youth Girls Superleague** 

G. Pranitha (HVS) bt Varuni Jaiswal (GSM) 4-11, 18-16, 11-9, 11-8; bt Bhavitha (GSM) 11-9, 9-11, 11-2, 8-11, 11-7; bt Ragha Nivedita (MLR) 4-11, 11-6, 11-8, 11-9; bt V. Laasya (AWA) 11-5, 11-8. 8-11. 11-9: bt Vinichitra Yaday (MLR) 4-11, 11-7, 11-5, 11-7; bt Hanifa Khatoon (VPG) 11-6, 11-8 11-6; bt V. Saasya (AWA) 11-8, 11-7, 8-11, 11-6

G. Pranitha (HVS) bt Varuni Jaiswal (GSM) 6-11, 18-16, 11-9, 11-8; bt V. Saasya (AWA) 11-7, 11-3, 7-11, 11-5; bt Vinichitra Yadav (MLR) 11-9, 11-9, 5-11, 11-4; bt R. Niveditha (MLR) 6-11, 11-9, 11-8,



11-6, 11-7, 11-9; bt V. Laasya (AWA) 11-7, 11-6, 8-11, 11-7. Varuni Jaiswal (GSM) bt V. Laasya (AWA) 7-11, 11-4, 11-4, 11-11-4, 11-6; bt Vinichitra Yadav (MLR) 11-4, 9-11, 11-8, 14-16, 11-6. V. Laasya (AWA) bt Hanifa Khatoon (VPG) 11-3, 11-3, 11-9; V (AWA) bt N. Bhavitha (GSM) 8-11, 11-9, 11-5, 11-7; bt V. Saasya (AWA) 11-6, 11-8, 11-9; bt Vinichitra Yadav (MLR) 12-10, 11-3, 11-6; bt R. Niveditha (MLR) 7-11, 11-4, 11-9, 11-7.

N. Bhavitha (GSM) bt Vinichitra Yadav (MLR) 11-8, 11-

8, 3-1; bt V. Saasya (AWA) 9-11, 11-5, 11-6, 11-9; bt Hanifa Khatoon (VPG) 11-4, 7-11, 11-6, 13-11; bt N. Bhavitha (GSM) 11-5,

8, 11-7; bt R. Niveditha (MLR) 5-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-9; bt N. Bhavitha

11-5, 8-11, 11-9, 11-8; bt Kesavan Kannan (MLR) 12-10, 11-4, 11-7; bt B.Vrishin 11-4, 11-5, 11-4. Kesavan Kannan (MLR) bt B. Vatsin 6-11, 7-11, 11-7, 11-6, 11-8; bt

11, 13-11, 11-7, 4-11, 11-7.

B. Vatsin bt B. Vrishin 11-7, 11-

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