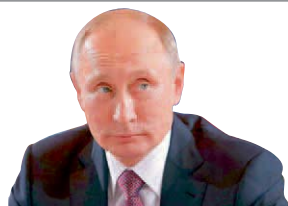


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
VISAKHAPATNAM | WEDNESDAY | 27 JANUARY 2021



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Mamata blames Centre for farm stir



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Russia calls for Iran nuke deal revival



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Rahane happy to play Kohli's deputy

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WEATHER



Max: 30.4°C
Min: 20.8°C
RH: 84%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Mist.
Max/Min temp.
30/20 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+20,936)	(+116)
1,06,89,268	1,53,724

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+189)	(+2)
TS: 2,93,590	1,592
(+146)	(+1)
AP: 8,87,212	7,150

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

10,05,56,969
DEATHS
21,57,787
COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES
219

worldometers.info/
coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Uttarayana
Tithi: Pushya Shuddha Chaturdasi till 1.14 am (Thursday)
Star: Punarvasu till 3.47 am
Variyam: 3.28 pm to 5.06 pm
Durmuhurtam: 12.06 pm to 12.50 pm
Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm
HJRI CALENDAR
Jamadi-ul-Akhir 13,1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.50 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 4.45 pm
Maghrib: 6.15 pm
Isha: 8.15 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.30 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.48 PM
MOONRISE TODAY 04.30 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 05.11 AM

COUNTER POINT



Let's announce a hefty hike...no one will be able to afford fuel to run tractors!

SHORT TAKES

2 COLLECTORS, SP GET RELIEVED AFTER SEC ORDER

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 26

In response to the State Election Commission's order, several officials in AP including district collectors from Chittoor and Guntur have been relieved of their duties and their charges were handed over on Tuesday.

Chittoor collector N. Bharat Gupta handed over charge to joint collector-1 D. Markendeyulu. So did Guntur collector I. Samuel Anand who handed over charge to joint collector-1 A.S. Dinesh Kumar.

Tirupati Urban SP Avula Ramesh Reddy handed over charge to SP, Chittoor, Senthil Kumar. Police officers including DSP Srikalahasthi and four CIs from Macherla, Punganur, Rayadurgam and Tadipatri are also being relieved of their duties. DSP Palamaneru, who got promoted as additional SP, is to be barred from poll-related work.

The SEC named nine officials for their failure in preventing aberrations in the election processes in the past and also for incidents of poll-related violence.

Despite repeated requests to the chief secretary to remove these tainted officers, and as no response was forthcoming, the SEC invoked the plenary powers under Article 243 (K) read with Article 324 to remove them and issued the orders on January 22.

PROTESTING FARMERS BREACH RED FORT

Farmers deviate from rally route; cops fire tear gas shells; one farmer dies and hundreds of protesters injured

SANJAY KAW and BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JAN. 26

India's 72nd Republic Day was scarred by violence that erupted on the streets of Delhi as a large section of the protesting farmers who were participating in the tractor rally deviated from the agreed route, broke barricades, clashed with the police and stormed the historic Red Fort where they hoisted the Sikh flag, "Nishan Sahib".

The national flag, which is a permanent fixture on the 17th century landmark, was not touched.

The police responded with firing teargas shells and lathicharge, resulting in injuries to hundreds of protesters. About 83 police personnel also suffered injuries.

One farmer lost his life after his speeding tractor hit a barricade near ITO in central Delhi. The protesters, however, alleged that the 25-year-old victim was shot dead by the police. They wrapped his body in a tricolour and kept it near the ITO flyover.

After several ho-urs, the body of the victim, identified as a resident of Uttar Pradesh, was sent for autopsy.

Eight buses and 17 private vehicles were also damaged in the clashes.

The large-scale violence, which took place mainly around ITO, Red Fort and Nangloi, forced the government to order temporary suspension of telecom services in border areas of Delhi — Singhu, Ghazipur, Tikri, Mukarba Chowk, Nangloi — from 12 noon to 11:59 pm. About a dozen-odd metro stations were also shut. All the entry points leading to central Delhi were sealed. Even Connaught Place was closed.

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha, an umbrella organization of the protesting farmers' unions, distanced itself from "violent elements" who, it said, had infiltrated the otherwise peaceful movement. The Morcha, however, said that the long struggle seemed to have led to this situation.

■ Page 2: Flower petals welcomed protesters

Gov reiterates three-capital plan

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 26

Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan on Tuesday said the state government is committed to decentralisation under which it will establish Visakhapatnam as the administrative capital, Vijayawada as the legislative capital

and Kurnool the judiciary's capital.

He was speaking at the 72nd Republic Day celebrations at Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium in the presence of Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy.

After unveiling the National Flag, the governor said the state government has a clear agenda for development of the

state and is working for betterment of all sections of the people. "The past examples have shown us that concentration of development at a single place would lead to unrest and regional imbalances. Hence the government is keen on decentralisation.

■ Page 2: Govt will uphold communal harmony: Gov

AP enhances incentives for no-poll panchayats

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 26

The state government on Tuesday enhanced incentives for the unanimous election of sarpanches and ward members in gram panchayats.

With Opposition parties raising a hue and cry against unanimous elections, dubbing them as acts of coercion by the ruling party, the state government sought to clarify that successive governments have been incentivising the display of unity by the villagers by electing their repre-

sentatives unopposed.

Appealing to all stakeholders to strive for unanimous elections as they are being held on non-party basis to preserve peace and harmony in the villages, panchayat raj minister P. Ramachandra Reddy told mediapersons that it would be prudent to encourage unanimous elections so that the political interference would be reduced, chances of violence would be decreased and peace and harmony would exist in the villages.

Ramachandra Reddy said in 2001, villages with

a population up to 5,000 were awarded ₹15,000, villages with a population between 5,000 and 15,000 were given ₹30,000 and ₹50,000 was given for villages with population above 15,000.

In 2008, gram panchayats with population up to 15,000 were rewarded with ₹5 lakh and those having population of above 15,000 were given ₹15 lakh.

In 2013, it was increased to ₹7 lakh and ₹20 lakh respectively.

■ Page 2: Big panchayats to get ₹20 lakh for no polls



Farmers hoist flags at the Red Fort during the Kisan Gantantra Parade amid the 72nd Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi on Tuesday. — PTI

Internet cut off in parts of Delhi

New Delhi, Jan. 26: The government on Tuesday ordered suspension of internet services in parts of Delhi-NCR as a tractor parade by protesting farm-

ers turned violent at several locations in the national capital, officials said.

The internet shutdown will be till midnight Tuesday in Delhi's Singhu,

Ghazipur, Tikri, Mukarba Chowk, Nangloi and their adjoining areas. Haryana also suspended internet in three districts Sonapat, Jhajjar and Palwal. — PTI

More Central forces called in

New Delhi, Jan. 26: In the wake of farmers' tractor rally turning violent, the Centre on Tuesday decided to deploy additional paramilitary troops in Delhi to restore peace and maintain law and order, officials said.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Union home minister Amit Shah and attended by Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla, Delhi police commissioner S.N. Shrivastava among others.

Additional paramilitary troops will be brought in for deployment in sensitive places in Delhi, a home ministry official said.

The exact number of additional troops was not known immediately but officials suggested that it could be around 1,500 to 2,000 personnel (about 15 to 20 companies). Around 4,500 paramilitary personnel were already deployed for law and order duties before the Republic Day.

Rapid Action Force personnel have also been repositioned in the national capital and vigil has been intensified in view of the evolving situation.

The home minister reviewed the situation after hundreds of protesting farmers on tractors barrelled through police barricades to enter central Delhi areas. — PTI

Rafale turns show stopper at Republic Day parade

New Delhi, Jan. 26: The newly inducted Rafale fighter aircraft featured for the first time in Republic Day flypast as it carried out the 'Brahmastra' formation alone and was part of the 'Eklavya' formation with four other fighter jets.

The fighter jet conducted Eklavya formation by flying at a height of around 300 meter along with two Jagaur and two MIG-29 aircraft. The five jets resembled a V-shape with Rafale leading the pack.

The 25,000-strong audience was able to see Rafale fighter jet again when it culminated the flypast by conducting the Brahmastra formation wherein it traversed at a low altitude for some distance, then pulled up vertically at 90 degrees and conducted rolls before stabilising at a higher altitude.

In a major boost to India's air power capability, five French-made multirole Rafale fighter jets were inducted into the IAF on September 10 last year. A total of 38 IAF aircraft and four planes of the



The Indian Air Force's Rafale jet flies over Rajpath during the Republic Day parade in New Delhi. — AFP

Indian Army participated in the Republic Day flypast on Tuesday.

Goel siblings who came all the way from Yamunanagar, Haryana to attend the ceremonial event, were ecstatic to see Rafale take to the sky at the celebrations for the first time.

"That 'Vertical Charlie' by Rafale at the end was a total show-stopper. It was my first time at a Republic Day, and less crowd actu-

ally helped me enjoy the event more. I must admit, Rafale's aerial manoeuvre was just scintillating," said 24-year-old Mayank Goel, an engineer.

His sister Kirti Goel, who attended it for the second time, when asked, what was the most amazing experience from the Republic Day parade this year at Rajpath, she quipped, "Rafale's aerial stunt". — PTI

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SHORT TAKES

GUESTHOUSE SITE DOESN'T BELONG TO FORESTS, HC TOLD

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JAN. 27

The state government in its counter to public interest litigation filed by one Gade Tirupathi Rao of Guntur in the High Court said that the 30 acres of land parcel on which a guesthouse was proposed, does not belong to the forest department.

The petitioner for the government said that Tirupathi Rao belongs to Jana Sena and misled the government that he was an expert in public interest issues. Praveen Prakash, special chief secretary of the AP government's general administration department, who filed the counter, appealed to the court that the PIL be struck down, and Tirupathi Rao be penalised for misleading the High Court.

The government allocated 322 acres in Kapulauppada for Greyhounds, and 30 acres was set aside to construct the government guesthouse. There were no trees as claimed by the petitioner, and only shrubs and bushes spread over the land, and photographs of the same were submitted to the court.

The petitioner in the counter also said an extent of 385 acres was sanctioned for the Greyhounds training centre in Jagannadhapuram in Visakhapatnam and the existing 322 acres land at Kapulauppada would be used as the only operational base. The guesthouse would no way affect the Greyhounds' functioning as claimed by the Jana Sena leader who also pointed out in his PIL that the proposed guesthouse would come in the way of functioning of Greyhounds, counterintelligence and Octopus.

The counter also pleaded that the government had not planned to spend ₹1,000 crore on the guesthouse with partial aid coming from the central government as mentioned by the Jana Sena leader in his petition. The central government sanctioned ₹218 crore in 2018 for construction of the training centre in Jagannadhapuram.

The allegations made by the Jana Sena leader were his imagination and factually wrong, the state government said in its counter.

IN DELHI, FLOWER PETALS WELCOMED PROTESTERS

From Page 1

The violence and chaos in some areas overshadowed the peaceful tractor rally that passed through other parts of Delhi. In some areas there were heartwarming, never-seen-before moments as thousands of people who had gathered by the roads and were perched on rooftops and balconies to watch the tractor parade showered flower petals, offered food and water and greeted farmers with supportive slogans and cheers. Many bystanders termed the farmers as their brothers and guests who were fighting for their rights.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which has been supporting the farmers' agitation, condemned the violence and blamed the Central government for "allowing" Delhi's law and order situation to deteriorate from bad to worse. In a statement, the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP said the violence has weakened the farmers' protest.

Crowds began swelling at Delhi borders at around 8 am. Chants of "Kisan kanoon wapas lo" (Take back the farm laws) rent the air at borders where some tractors were playing patriotic songs such as, Aisa desh hai mera and Sare jahan se achcha.

The protesters were expected to start their tractor rally at noon to avoid interfering with morning Republic Day celebrations in central Delhi. The tricolour and flags of different farmers unions fluttered as marches began from Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur border points, much ahead of the time decided for the tractor parade. Security personnel tried to convince the protesters to stick to the designated route and time and maintain peace.

Things suddenly changed at about 8.35 am when some groups of farmers broke barricades to force their way into the capital. At the Ghazipur border, tractors pushed aside a shipping container placed to block their route while police, outnumbered, stood by helplessly. Elsewhere, thick clouds of tear gas rose over approved march routes as farmers on tractors, on horses and foot forcefully began their rally hours ahead of schedule.

Vijayanagara era grabs attention in Delhi show

AP tableau depicted 5-centuries-old Lepakshi temple in Anantapur

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, JAN. 26

Vijayanagara era attracted limelight during the Republic Day parade in New Delhi as both AP and Karnataka tableaux happened to be on the historic role of the Vijayanagar Empire.

AP government tableau depicted the five centuries old Lepakshi temple at Lepakshi in Anantapur district. The 27-feet long and 15 feet high of Lord Veerabhadra temple displayed the rich sculpture and tradition of Vijayanagara. The temple was carved in a single stone five centuries ago. It also has the world's biggest Nandi statue. The designs carved on stones have been models for designing sarees.

The Dakshayagnam and Lord Veerabhadra story was part of the AP tableau. The tableau, displaying Lord Vinayaka, seven-headed Nagendra and granite Shivalingams, were additional highlights of the concept, Prasad, a resident of Lepakshi observed.

The Karnataka government picked up Hampi for its tableau, which also highlighted the Vijayanagar Empire. Various structures of Hampi, main capital of Vijayanagar Empire, were part of the tableau's concept.

CHIEF JUSTICE LAUDS STATE'S TRADITIONS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 26

High Court Chief Justice Aroop Kumar Goswami lauded the AP's traditions and customs. He also appreciated the fellow judges and lawyers and the staff for extending cooperation in the work.

The Chief Justice unfurled the national flag to mark 72nd Republic Day celebrations at the High Court in Nelapadu on Tuesday. Addressing the legal fraternity, the CJ stated that he was attracted by the AP's traditions and customs and conveyed Republic Day wishes to the people in the state. He said that though India secured Independence in 1947, it got total freedom and self-rule after it got the Constitution.

Advocate-General S. Sriram said the Indian Constitution provided equal rights and duties to all the country's citizens.



N. Ramesh Kumar

SEC TO HOLD VC WITH OFFICERS ON POLLS TODAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 26

State Election Commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar to hold a video conference to review preparedness on conducting the gram panchayat polls and Covid-19 vaccination with district collectors, SPs, chief executive officers of Zilla Parishads and district panchayat officers from his office at 11 am on January 27.

The chief secretary, DGP, principal secretaries of finance, health and panchayat raj and commissioners of health and panchayat raj and other state-level officials will also participate in the video conference.

Chief Secretary Aditya Nath Das has already issued instructions to all the officials concerned to participate in the concerned without fail.



Governor BB Harichandan presenting Memento to Principal Secretaries Ajay Jain and Sri Lakshmi, First place of Housing Tableau on 72nd Republic Day celebrations in Vijayawada on Tuesday, Chief Secretary Adityanath Das, DGP Gautam Sawang is also seen.

Govt will uphold communal harmony, says Governor

FROM PAGE 1

Governor Harichandan said the government has given a stern warning to elements disturbing peace and amity, and perpetrators of such acts will be brought to book.

"Upholding the harmony of the social edifice is the prime responsibility of the government, no matter what it takes to ensure peaceful coexistence. Desecration of idols, vandalism, arson and all such acts of insanity have no place in our society. Those who do so will be dealt with firmly to restore peace and harmony in the state," he said, adding AP has been making rapid strides in terms of both welfare and development.

The governor said the state has passed through testing times with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the government has effectively handled the situation. He said that the state is marching ahead with an emphasis on education, health care, agriculture and welfare. "The beneficiaries are selected in a transparent manner without any scope for discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, religion or political affiliation, by implementing the schemes in a saturation mode by covering all eligi-



A school girl dressed as Bharatamata, Mother India sits among her schoolmates while they wait for their turn to perform the dance at the 72nd Republic Day celebrations organized by the District Administration at Police Barracks Stadium in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. — DC

ble persons."

Governor Harichandan said the government has put in place necessary infrastructure and mechanisms for the storage, transport and administration of the Covid-19 vaccine. Despite the pandemic, Andhra Pradesh did not neglect welfare programmes or stop initiatives such as delivering rations and groceries, or purchase of agriculture produce, export of aqua products and special Kisan Rail services.

He said the state launched the distribution of 31 lakh house sites for the poor on the occasion of Vaikunta Ekadasi and

Christmas. He stated, "The scheme will ensure not only construction of houses but also that the habitations come up in 17,000 well-defined layouts".

The governor said the state government delivered sale agreements pertaining to 2.6 lakh TIDCO houses to eligible women beneficiaries in urban areas, out of which 1.43 lakh units have been handed over for ₹1. The cost of the Polavaram Irrigation Project has been revised to ₹55,549 crore to stabilise the existing ayacut of 23.5 lakh acres and provide irrigation facility to 7.2 lakh acres.

Govt employees decide to join election duties

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 26

The AP Non-Gazetted Officers' Association (APNGOA) decided to cooperate with the State Election Commission to conduct local body elections in the state. Chief Secretary Aditya Nath Das conducted a meeting with the APNGOA leaders on Tuesday and appealed

to them to cooperate for the smooth performance of the Panchayat elections.

The APNGOA president, Mr N. Chandrasekhar Reddy, and the general secretary, Mr Bandi Srinivas Rao, said that they sought Rs 50 lakh compensation to employees like Covid-19 warriors and further sought protection to government emp-

loyees during elections.

They said that they asked to pay special incentives to the employees to attend election duties and protect their lives.

Both the leaders said that the government responded positively to their demands and APNGOA decided to attend election duties and cooperate with the State Election Commission.

U-turn by SEC on 'unanimous' local body elections: Sajjala

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 26

YSR Congress general secretary and government adviser for public affairs, Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy, said on Tuesday that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy has brought about several changes to fulfill the aspirations of the Constitution-framers with the objectives of fair governance and ushering in a better society.

Speaking at the 72nd Republic Day celebrations held in YSRC state headquarters at Tadepalli on Tuesday, he said the government would take stern action against anyone who distributes money or liquor to win votes in the upcoming local body elections.

Addressing a press meet later, Reddy said the State Election Commission leaving out the MP/MLA and ZPTC polls in the middle and going ahead with the gram panchayat elections

was inappropriate. It was strange that the SEC, who accepted a proposal for simultaneous elections last March, has now taken a U-turn.

He said the CM has made changes in the law to make local body elections more transparent and also initiated radical and positive changes in the state.

Reddy has appealed to all stakeholders in the gram panchayat (GP) polls to strive for unanimous elections to avoid friction and expenditure and instead avail incentives announced by government. He said elders must sit together and sort out the issue as the polls are being held on non-party basis. The recently amended legislation has a provision for disqualification and jail term for any irregularities, he said.

He felt that, on the positive side, incentives can be availed for unanimous elections though vested interests are planning oth-

erwise.

Ramakrishna Reddy said that those taking part in these elections should focus full attention on development of their villages, leaving party politics aside. The state government has brought in many fundamental changes to the villages, and is taking the administration to the doorstep through the village secretariat and volunteer system.

He said that a conspiracy to incite communal hatred is being hatched in villages by the opposition leaders and advised the contestants not to fall in their trap.

Ramakrishna Reddy warned that anyone proven guilty of conspiracy and violence would be disqualified under the law. This apart, any attempt to entice the voters with goodies will lead to jail of up to two years and disqualification of candidate for six years.

Big panchayats to get ₹20L for no polls

FROM PAGE 1

Mr Ramchandra Reddy said, under the leadership of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, the Panchayat Raj Act was amended and the incentives were increased. Gram panchayats with a population less than 2,000 will be awarded ₹5 lakh, those with a population between 2,000 and 5,000 will be given ₹10 lakh, gram panchayats with a population between 5,000 and 10,000 will be awarded ₹15 lakh and those with a population above 10,000 will be given ₹20 lakh.

Municipal administration minister Botsa Satyanarayana said the government has increased the incentives to strengthen the administration at village level with an aim to develop the villages. He said some vested interests are trying to create conflicts among people by encouraging factions in the villages while the state gov-

ernment has been delivering governance with welfare and development as a motto.

The state government is of the opinion that if the elections to gram panchayats are held on a party basis, there is a possibility that the political rivalry, enmity and intense animosity may grow among the competing parties resulting in hampering harmony and speedy development of villages.

Moreover, states like Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Telangana and Punjab are having an election to gram panchayats on a non-political party basis while some states even adopted innovative methods to encourage party-less and unanimous election to gram panchayats similar on lines of AP. By doing so, the state government intends to facilitate concentrating the energies of the gram panchayats to take up development works in the villages for the benefit of the people.

Farmers hold rallies with tractors

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, Jan. 26

The Communist parties and their allies held a protest rally with tractors here demanding cancellation of the three new agriculture laws. Farmers drove tractors and raised slogans against the three new laws as they held the protest on the BRTS Road.

CPI state secretary K Ramakrishna said a majority of people lived in villages and are dependent on agriculture but the BJP government needlessly brought forward three new agriculture laws that would benefit corporate companies and snatch away farmers' livelihood. "Farmers are role models to the country as is proven through their rally in Delhi on Republic Day."

Ramakrishna claimed that the assets of the top

hundred wealthy in India are beyond one's imagination, while the life's struggle for the poor and the middle classes is worsening day-by-day, reflecting the growing economic disparities. The BJP government's anti-farmer policies would add to this, he said.

Former MLC Jalli Wilson stressed on the need for continuing the fight against the new agriculture laws till their repeal. He hailed the farmers of AP coming forward to support the farmers' protest in Delhi.

All India Kisan Sabha vice president Ravula Venkaiah alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi tried to weaken the farmers' movement in the name of phase-wise talks but the farmers did not fall in that trap. He termed the three agriculture laws as 'black laws'.

CBIC | PROJECT Modalities for EPC bids decided at first meeting of SPV governing body a few days back

Stage set for allotment of works under Krishnapatnam node

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JAN. 25

The stage is set for calling EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) bids for first phase works of Krishnapatnam Node under Chennai Bangalore Industrial Corridor at an estimated cost of ₹1,200 crore.

The Industrial Corridor Programme of the central government is aimed at creation of greenfield industrial cities with sustainable, 'plug-n-play', ICT enabled utilities to facilitate investments into the manufacturing sector by providing quality, reliable,

sustainable and resilient infrastructure to industries.

The government has formed a special purpose vehicle (SPV) – the NIKD-IT Krishnapatnam Industrial City Development Ltd (NIKIDL) between DMIDC (Delhi Mumbai Industrial Development Corporation) and APIIC (AP Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation) to establish, promote and facilitate development of Krishnapatnam Industrial Node under CBIC.

The modalities for EPC bids were decided at the first meeting of the governing body of the SPV a

■ THE ESTIMATED projection of employment after completion of the first phase of the Krishnapatnam Node is around 98,000 persons; of these, about 58,000 persons are likely to be employed at the site.

few days back.

"The time-frame has been fixed for every activity and one per cent bonus is also being offered to successful bidder if works are completed before schedule," said the ex-officio director of the SPV and Nellore district collector KVN Chakradhar Babu.

He told DC that NIKIDL would develop the Krishnapatnam Node in three phases.

According to the collector, the Phase-1 Activation

Area of Krishnapatnam Industrial North Node covers about 2500 acres of land and the Master Plan is ready for the same.

The scope for work includes survey, investigations, designing, supplying, erection, testing and commissioning of infrastructure works for roads, drains, culverts, bridges, water supply, sewerage & power systems including Water, sewage and common effluent treatment plants including testing

and commissioning.

The governing body had decided to offer a one per cent bonus to the successful bidder if the works are completed within the scheduled three years. The project would transform the region into a major industrial hub and generate thousands of jobs.

Chakradhar Babu said, "We are looking for major firms, which executed projects of around Rs200 crore in a year, with a minimum net worth of Rs400 crore at close of the preceding financial year."

"We would provide 90 per cent of the project site. Environmental clearances will be given within 90

days to the successful bidder after the signing of the agreement."

"We have already handed over 1450 acres to APIIC and efforts are on to transfer another 900 acres by February second week.

"If the project completion date occurs prior to the scheduled completion date, the contractor shall be entitled to receive a bonus equivalent to 0.2 per cent of total contract price calculated on a monthly basis. By this, the project completion date precedes the scheduled completion date; and this payment is subject to a maximum of 1 per cent of contract price", he noted.

IN BRIEF

NO INTERNET IN SOME VIZAG AGENCY PHCs

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC VISAKHAPATNAM, JAN. 26

According to the health officials, the lack of Internet facility and poor connectivity has affected the vaccine administration in the Visakhapatnam agency.

"As many as 18 PHCs of the total 36 PHCs have an internet connection, and the quality of the network is very poor in some PHCs located in remote parts of the agency. This is becoming difficult to track the enlisted health workers for the vaccine shots," said additional district medical health officer and in-charge of agency area under ITDA Dr K. Leela Prasad said.

Talking to DC, the ADMHO said from January 16 to 19 the vaccination was administered only in five places: District Hospital, Paderu, Area Hospital Araku Valley, Community Health Centre Pedabayulu, Community Health Centre at Chintapalle and Primary Health Centre at R.J. Palem. Each centre was given 500 doses each, and eligible persons stood at 500 in all five centres.

According to health advisory from the state, six more PHCs at GK Veedhi, Lothugedda, G Madugula, Hulumpetta, Ananthagiri and Munchingput were added from January 20.

"We have received orders to cover all the 36 PHCs in phases and but we cannot cover half of them due to lack of internet facility. The issue was taken to the notice of the project officer of ITDA, Paderu and district collector and awaiting orders," Dr Leela Prasad said.

While the administration has been struggling to overcome the internet crisis, the health officials were relieved that no positive case has been reported from the agency since three weeks except for one day when four cases were reported.

Dr Leela Prasad said so far 84,180 people were tested, and of them around 2,000 persons tested positive. Only 12 people died. The agency having 11 mandals has a population of 5.6 lakh.

There are no reports of home isolation or hospitalisation anywhere in the agency, he said.

● So far 84,180 people were tested, and of them around 2,000 persons tested positive. Only 12 people died.

FARM LANDS FOR SALE

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Patriotic fervour



Children from various schools perform a dance during the 72nd Republic Day celebrations organised by the District Administration at Police Barracks Stadium in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday.

— K. MURALIKRISHNA

AP celebrates R-Day with fervour

Thakur asked staff to express patriotism by discharging duties

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 26

The 72nd Republic Day was celebrated at various government offices on Tuesday with patriotic fervour and unfurling the national flag.

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation commissioner V. Prasanna Venkatesh hoisted the tricolour at the VMC premises.

Addressing officials and staff, the commissioner underlined the sacrifice of frontline soldiers, who have laid down their lives fighting. He

highlighted the steps taken by the state government to provide security to women of the state by introducing laws against child marriages, domestic violence, harassment, child begging and crimes against women.

The 72nd Republic Day celebrations were also held at the district headquarters of Machilipatnam in which Krishna district collector A. Md. Imtiaz unveiled the national flag. The collector, along with the superintendent of police Ravindranath Babu,

● The commissioner underlined the sacrifice of frontline soldiers, who have laid down their lives fighting. He highlighted the steps taken by the state government to provide security to women of the state by introducing laws against child marriages, domestic violence, harassment

inspected the police parade and received the guard of honour.

Speaking on the occasion, the collector said,

"We have been fighting against Corona epidemic for nearly one year now. With determination, we have been able to contain the pandemic."

Joint collectors Madhavilatha and Shivashankar, additional SP Malika Garg, SEB ASP Vakul Jindal, district officials and staff were present on the occasion.

In another programme, APSRTC vice chairman and managing director R.P. Thakur unveiled the tri-colour flag at the RTC complex in Vijayawada.

Speaking on the occasion, Thakur asked employees to express their patriotism by discharging their duties efficiently.

Vijayawada city police commissioner B. Srinivasulu unveiled the tri-colour at the commissioner's office. The commissioner greeted all police personnel on the occasion. Additional DCP Mary Prashanti, city special branch ACP Venkateswara Rao, Inspectors, SIs and others were present on the occasion.

AP GOVERNOR CONGRATULATES PADMA WINNERS

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 26

Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan congratulated the Padma award winners. As the Centre announced Padma Vibhushan, the country's second-highest civilian award, to the well-known playback singer S.P. Balasubrahmanyam.

Blasting damages centuries' old Yaganti temple in AP

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC KURNOOL, JAN. 26

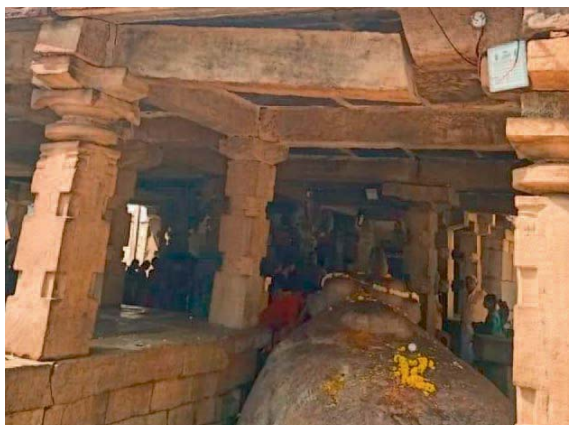
The centuries' old stone beam of Yaganti Temple has developed cracks due to blasts being carried by those undertaking mining operations in the area. Yaganti is a unique temple, where crows do not caw.

Archaeology Department officials say they have put in temporarily supports for the beam. They would examine the damage and send a detailed report to state authorities.

Yaganti Umamaheswara Swamy temple in Kurnool district draws pilgrims from across the country. The stone beam at the top of the temple developed cracks due to mining blasts going on in the surrounding areas. Archeology conservation assistant Y. Dhaka Reddy said mining for marble stones has been going on in the vicinity in an area of 1.5 kilometres from the temple site. Some corporate companies like JiyoJyothi (now Maha Cement), apart from local YSRC leaders, have taken up mining despite the fact that 12 leases have been suspended in the area a few years back.

He pointed out that last year, 12 mining leases in the area had been cancelled.

When asked if there was any unauthorised mining going on, he said he would check and initiate action through the Mines



A beam of Yaganti temple develops crack under the impact of blasting conducted for mining. The Nandi which was referred to Veerabrahmendra Swamy's prophecy centuries ago sits under the cracked the beam.

— DC

Mining assistant director Rama Siva Reddy said the issue of mining in and around the

Umamaheswara Swamy temple had also developed cracks due to mining but no action has been taken so far against anyone, said Mallikar-junaiah, a member of the Temple Protection Committee.

It is said the latest incident finds mention in Sidda Yogi Pothuluri Veerabrahmam forecast that Basavanna at Yaganti will grow and scream at the end of Kaliyuga.

Department at Banaganapalle.

It may be recalled that even Pothuluri Veerabrahmendra Swamy temple had also developed cracks due to mining but no action has been taken so far against anyone, said Mallikar-junaiah, a member of the Temple Protection Committee.

It is said the latest incident finds mention in Sidda Yogi Pothuluri Veerabrahmam forecast that Basavanna at Yaganti will grow and scream at the end of Kaliyuga.

SHANKAR READY TO INTRODUCE FILM COURSE

DC CORRESPONDENT RAJAMAHEN- DRAVARAM, JAN. 26

The film director N. Shankar will introduce film courses in Adikavi Nannayya University if the university permits him. He visited the University on Tuesday and met the Vice-Chancellor Mokka Jagannadha Rao.

The V-C said that the film courses would benefit the poor and middle-class students in both East and West Godavari Districts.

The people of these districts are having good experience and contacts with the cine industry. He suggested that the cine director Mr Sankar encourage film study courses by bringing many cine elders to the university to train them.

He also requested Mr Sankar to prepare a picture for the University song.

Superstition beliefs prevail in some educated people

AVINASH P. SUBRAMAYNAM | DC TIRUPATI, JAN. 26

The double murders in Madanapalli have once again thrown a spotlight on superstitious beliefs and occult practices that continue to kill people. Although modernisation and access to better health facilities and infra have changed the face of the world and people's beliefs in ancient practices, superstition still prevails not only in the underprivileged communities but also in well-educated people.

The police investigation into the Madanapalli deaths has thrown up some material evidence pointing to an educated family's deep faith in superstitious beliefs. Probing the double murder case showed evidence of strange salvation rituals practised by the family members, objects of tantric worship, strange books and photos of Gods and Swamijis hanging on walls in the house.

The primary accused in this case V. Padmaja, who is a gold medalist in M.Sc (Maths) and running a private coaching institute for IIT aspirants, has allegedly bludgeoned her daughters to death, while her husband V. Purushotham Naidu, an associate professor of chemistry at government degree college, remained a mute spectator.

According to the police, they did so with the belief that their daughters would come back to life the next morning. They claimed that kali yuga would end on Sunday night and Monday would see the rise of 'Satya yuga', with their daughters born again in a purer form. This shows how much the educated couple have transcended into the peaks of spiritualism.

Psychologists who investigated what role superstitions play have found that the believers derive from the assumption that a connection exists between co-

occurring, non-related events. For many who engage in superstitious beliefs, they provide a sense of control and reduce anxiety, indicating why superstition levels increase at times of stress and angst, particularly during economic crises and social uncertainty.

"Generally, research on superstition has focused on people's cognitive disorders. Superstitious beliefs are not limited to individuals with cognitive deficits; many smart, educated, emotionally stable adults have superstitions. It depends on upbringing and culture. The deep-rooted superstitions are hard to dispel in common people and even harder in educated people, however irrational they may be," said Dr Bharathi Sibbala, a psychiatrist.

If the Madanapalli double murder case turns is linked with the superstitious beliefs and occult practices, it would not be a singular case but rather an extension of dangerous practices and trends that appears to have picked up in recent years. Such a trend was particularly observed in underprivileged communities but is now witnessed among the educated communities.

According to the NCRB, over 45 people were reported to have been sacrificed in the country to appease gods – 12 in 2016, 19 in 2017, two in 2018 and 10 in 2019. The most worrying factor is that over 371 people were killed due to witchcraft between 2016-19, with a break up of 134 in 2016, 73 in 2017, 62 in 2018 and 102 in 2019. A close analysis of the crime reports shows that Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand contribute more to the number of human sacrifice and witchcraft cases every year. AP is, however, not better placed despite having laws stringent against such cases. Over 21 cases of murders related to witchcraft and one human sacrifice case were reported between 2016-19.

Police arrest couple in Madanapalli case

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, 26TPT2

The Madanapalli sub-division police on Tuesday arrested the mother and father duo, who killed their two daughters, two days ago, did so hoping that they will come back to life within 24 hours due to spiritual powers.

Almost 48 hours of the incident, the police finally moved the couple to the government general hospital in the Madanapalli town on Tuesday morning for medical examinations. A case was also registered under relevant sections against Dr V. Purushotham Naidu and V. Padmaja on charges of murdering both their daughters Alekhya, 27, and Sai Divya, 22.

According to police, they are facing a hard time with Padmaja continuing to be in a state of spiritual trance

and did not appear to be stable. Even while being arrested she was seen singing and dancing before the police jeep.

The police said that she also did not cooperate with the government hospital staff and refused to undergo the mandatory Covid-19 tests. She claimed that Covid-19 couldn't harm her because a piece broke out from Lord Shiva's hair and not from China.

Speaking to DC, DSP Mr A. Ravi Manoharachari said, medical examination formalities for Padmaja and her husband had been completed on Tuesday morning. The police had a tough time with Padmaja behaving strangely and refused to undergo the Covid-19 test. However, he said the police will complete all the formalities and produce the couple before the magistrate by the end of the day.

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SHORT TAKES

TRACTOR MARCH HELD PEACEFULLY IN AURANGABAD

Aurangabad, Jan. 26: A tractor march organised here in Maharashtra on Tuesday to extend support to the protesting farmers in New Delhi passed off peacefully.

Around 150 to 200 people, five tractors, cars, and two-wheelers participated in the morcha, which started from Delhi Gate and culminated at Bhadkal gate, separated by a distance of about 2.2 kms.

The march was organised by the Maharashtra Rajya Kisan Sabha and the Maharashtra Rajya Lal Bawta Shetmajur Union.

Some workers of the Congress also joined the procession.

Ram Baheti, one of the organisers of the march, told reporters that around 4,000 volunteers from Aurangabad had recently visited Delhi and participated in the agitations being held at borders of the national capital.

He said the three agri laws were anti-constitutional since the government didn't send the draft bills to a joint parliamentary committee.

On eruption of violence during the tractor parade in New Delhi earlier in the day, Baheti said the lathicharge by police on farmers is condemnable. "The clashes occurred because of the stubborn stand of the Central government," he added.

PROTESTER UNFURLS TRICOLOUR

Mumbai, Jan. 26: Thousands of cultivators, who had arrived here from parts of Maharashtra to protest against the Centre's farm laws, left for their homes on Tuesday after an elderly woman agitator hoisted the national flag at the Azad Maidan in Mumbai.

To mark the Republic Day, the flag hoisting was held at the ground in south Mumbai at around 9.30 am following which the protesters headed towards their native places, the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) said.

The farmers held a rally at the Azad Maidan on Monday to express solidarity with peasants agitating near Delhi borders against the Centre's three new farm laws.

NCP president Sharad Pawar, Maharashtra Congress chief Balasaheb Thorat, Peasants and Workers Party leader Jayant Patil and various farmers' representatives had attended the rally on Monday.

Around 15,000 farmers had arrived in the state capital for the rally, the Maharashtra unit of the AIKS earlier said.

"The flag hoisting ceremony was held at the Azad Maidan on Tuesday morning. After that, farmers headed towards their homes. The movement is in line with what we had decided earlier," AIKS president Ashok Dhawale said.

PATEL CONDEMNS ACTION OF FARMERS

New Delhi, Jan. 26: Union minister of tourism and culture Prahlad Patel on Tuesday condemned the actions of a section of farmers who entered the Red Fort as part of their tractor rally and said it violated the symbol of dignity of India's democracy.

Deviating from the designated route for the proposed tractor parade, a section of protesting farmers who were pushed back by the police form the ITO in Central Delhi drove their tractors to Red Fort complex.

The crowd swelled at the monument as some protesting farmers and 'Nihangs' (traditional Sikh warriors) were seen entering the Red Fort and hoisting a flag from the staff from which Prime Minister unfurls the tricolour on Independence Day.

"The Red Fort is a symbol of the dignity of our democracy. The farmers should have stayed away from it. I condemn the violation of this dignity. It is sad and unfortunate," Patel said in a tweet.

Earlier, a clash broke out between police and protesting farmers after the latter reached ITO and tried to push towards Lutyen's Delhi, prompting the force to resort to lathicharge and use tear gas shells against them.

The farmers who began their march from different border points, much before the time permitted to them for their tractor rally, reached ITO in Central Delhi despite the force denying them permission for it.

Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan chants fill the air Shouting slogans farmers poured into Delhi on tractors, horses, cranes and motorbikes

New Delhi, Jan. 26: Chanting *rang de basanti* and *jai jawan jai kisan* numerous farmers rode tractors, motorbikes, horses and even cranes to cross the national capital's borders into the city for their proposed parade against the three contentious farm laws.

Locals stood on both sides of the roads at various locations showering flower petals on the farmers amid drum beats.

Standing atop vehicles decked up with flags, the protesters danced to the tune of patriotic songs such as *Aisa desh hai mera* and *Sare jahan se aachha*.

"People think farmers are only meant to plough their fields. But there is much more to a farmer's life. We also ride motorbikes and horses though we worship our tractors as it helps in earning our bread and butter.

"Today, everything is on display in this historical rally," said Gagan Singh, a protestor riding a horse to the parade.

Parmajeet Bibi, a woman in her late 40s, who was riding a tractor said, "Women are not just cooking at community kitchens. We help men in fields and we are riding tractors in this rally to send out a strong message".

Aditya Pajetta, a farmer from Haryana's Yamuna Nagar, carried a 15-kg plough on his shoulder while marching from Singhu border.

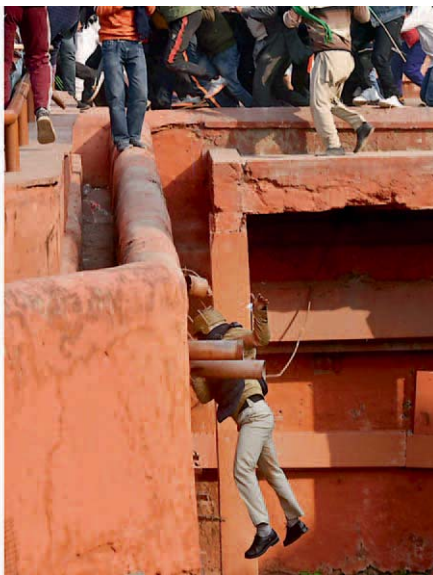
"Our fight is to save this plough. Generations have been involved in farming and it will be a pity if we cannot save their legacy. I have started marching from Singhu border and will carry it to the spot where the rally will conclude," he said.

The cranes which were part of the rally had a makeshift podium on the top with a mattress at the front for people to sit.

The Tricolour and flags of different farmer unions fluttered as marches began from Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur border points, much ahead of the time decided for the tractor parade. Security personnel tried to convince the protesters to stick to the designated route and time and maintain peace.

"We support the demands of farmers. We survive on what they produce and it is time we stand up for them. We salute their spirit," said Rani Devi, whose family was applying tilak to forehead of the participants.

Thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, have been camping at several Delhi border points since November 28, demanding



1. Security personnel baton charge a protestor during clashes after the farmers tractor rally turned violent on Republic Day in New Delhi on Tuesday.
2. Protesting farmers corner two policemen during clashes at Red Fort.
3. Combo picture shows a policeman falling from a ramp of the Red Fort during clashes with protesting farmers who had gathered there after their tractor parade.
4. Farmers participate in a tractor rally after breaking police barricades at Singhu border near Bhalswa landfill site in New Delhi on Tuesday.

Sikh religious flag 'Nishan Sahib' hoisted by protesters at Red Fort

Chandigarh, Jan. 26: The saffron flag hoisted by protesters from a staff at the iconic Red Fort during their tractor parade against the farm laws on Tuesday was the 'Nishan Sahib', a symbol of Sikh religion seen at all Gurdwara complexes.

The 'Nishan Sahib' is a triangular flag that is sacred to Sikhs. The emblem on the flag com-

prises of 'Khanda', a two-edged sword, Chakra, a disc, and two Kirpans that cross each other at the handles. The other flag appeared to be of a farmer union.

Describing as "most unfortunate" the incident of a protesting farmer hoisting a flag at the Red Fort, senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said he supported the

farmers' protests from the start but cannot condone "lawlessness". He asserted that on Republic Day no flag but the sacred Tiranga should fly aloft the Red Fort. "Most unfortunate. I have supported the farmers' protests from the start but I cannot condone lawlessness. And on #RepublicDay no flag but the sacred tiranga should fly aloft the Red Fort," the

former Union minister said on Twitter, tagging a tweet which carried a video of the incident.

Wielding sticks and clubs and holding the Tricolour and union flags, tens of thousands of farmers atop tractors broke barriers, clashed with police and entered the city from various points to lay siege to the Red Fort and climb the flagpole on

Republic Day. Actor Deep Sidhu, who was among those present during the incident, on Tuesday sought to defend their action, saying it was a symbolic protest and they did not remove the national flag.

He said that they should not be given any communal colour or dubbed as fundamentalists or hardliners.

Samyukta Morcha condemns violence

New Delhi, Jan. 26: Farmers' union body Samyukta Kisan Morcha on Tuesday disassociated itself from those who indulged in violence during the tractor parade, and alleged some "antisocial elements" infiltrated the otherwise peaceful movement.

The union also condemned and regretted the "undesirable" and "unacceptable" events as the parade turned violent after several groups of farmers deviated from the pre-decided route for the march.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of 41 farmer unions, is leading the protest against the three central farm

laws at several border points of Delhi.

"We thank farmers for the unprecedented participation in Tuesday's farmers' Republic Day Parade. We also condemn and regret the undesirable and unacceptable events that have taken place today and dissociate ourselves from those indulging in such acts.

"Despite all our efforts, some organisations and individuals have violated the route and indulged in condemnable acts. Antisocial elements had infiltrated the otherwise peaceful movement. We have always held that peace is our biggest strength, and that any violation would hurt the

movement," the farmers' body said in a statement. Its statement comes as farmers clashed with police at several places in the national capital. A protesting farmer died at Delhi's ITO after his tractor overturned.

Police also had to use lathicharge and teargas shells to control unruly protesters at multiple locations in the city.

"We dissociate ourselves from all such elements that have violated our discipline. We appeal strongly to everyone to stick to the route and norms of the parade, and not indulge in any violent action or anything that taints national symbols and dignity. We appeal to everyone to desist from any such acts.

"We are trying to get a full picture of all the events with regard to the several parades that were planned on Tuesday and will share a full statement soon. Our information is that apart from some regrettable violations, the parades are underway peacefully as per plan," it said.

Wielding sticks and clubs and holding the tricolour and union flags, tens of thousands of farmers atop tractors broke barriers, clashed with police and entered the city from various points to lay siege to the Red Fort and climb the flagpole on Republic Day on Tuesday.

Farmers, mostly from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, have been camping at several Delhi border points, including Tikri, Singhu and Ghazipur, since November 28, demanding a complete repeal of three farm laws and a legal guarantee on minimum support price for their crops.

Violence is no solution: Rahul

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JAN. 26

As the unprecedented violent protests broke out in the national capital on the Republic Day, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said that violence is no solution to any problem. Taking to Twitter, Gandhi said, "Violence is not the solution to any problem. If anyone gets hurt, the damage will happen to our country. Take back the anti-farmer law for the benefit of the country."

While he was against the violence he once again reiterated his party's stand that the Center should take back the controversial farm laws.

The Congress has been supportive of the concerns of farmers. It was the first political outfit to take out a tractor rally in Punjab after the laws were passed in parliament. The party has also given its full support to the protesting farmers. In the recently held meeting of the Congress working committee CWC the party passed a resolution demanding the farm laws be taken back.

In her remarks the Congress president Sonia Gandhi had said, "It is abundantly clear that the three laws were prepared in haste and Parliament

DIDI SLAMS CENTRE FOR FARMERS' STIR

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, JAN. 26

West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamul Congress supreme Mamata Banerjee, who has been vehemently opposing the three farm laws, blamed the Centre for the farmers' siege at the Red Fort on Tuesday. In the afternoon she tweeted, "Deeply disturbed by worrying & painful developments that have unfolded on the streets of Delhi. Centre's insensitive attitude and indifference towards our farmer brothers & sisters has to be blamed for this situation."

was consciously denied an opportunity for examining in any meaningful details their implications and impacts. Our position has been very clear from the very beginning, we reject them categorically because they will destroy the foundations of food security that are based on the three pillars of MSP, public procurement and PDS."

SHORT TAKES

MYANMAR ARMY
RAISES COUP
PROSPECT

Naypyidaw, Jan. 26: Myanmar's powerful military on Tuesday raised the spectre of staging a coup as it ramped up demands for an investigation into alleged voter fraud during last year's election, swept by Aung San Suu Kyi's ruling party. The National League for Democracy (NLD) won November's poll in a landslide, but has been much criticised by rights groups for its disenfranchisement of voters in conflict-racked regions.

The military-aligned opposition disputed the results, while the army has for weeks alleged widespread voter irregularities, claiming to have found 8.6 million cases of fraud.

Military spokesman Major General Zaw Min Tun on Tuesday renewed calls for the country's embattled election commission to provide final voter lists for cross-checking — a demand that so far has not been met. "Not resolving this in line with the law means this is a political crisis," he told reporters in Myanmar's capital Naypyidaw.

Zaw Min Tun added that military chief Min Aung Hlaing has already pointed out "dishonesty and unfairness" during the election. When pressed on the possibility of a coup, the spokesman refused to be drawn, but did not rule it out.

ITALY PM QUILTS
TO FORM NEW
GOVERNMENT

Rome, Jan. 26: Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte resigned Tuesday in the hope of forming a new government after weeks of turmoil in his ruling coalition, leaving Italy rudderless as it battles the deadly coronavirus pandemic.

He tendered his resignation to President Sergio Mattarella, the ultimate arbiter of Italian political crises, who invited him to stay on in a caretaker capacity pending discussions on what happens next.

The uneasy coalition that has led Italy since September 2019 was fatally weakened earlier this month by the withdrawal of former premier Matteo Renzi's small but crucial Italia Viva party.

Ahead of a key vote in parliament this week that he looked set to lose, Conte informed his cabinet on Tuesday that he would quit in what supporters said was a move to form a new government.

After the meeting with Mattarella, a spokesman for the president said he "reserves the right to decide (what to do next) and invited the government to stay in office in a caretaker capacity".

Mattarella will open discussions with party leaders on Wednesday afternoon which are likely to lead into Thursday — leaving a vacuum at the top of the eurozone's third largest economy at a crucial time.

DISMISS CASE,
SAYS EPSTEIN
EX-GIRLFRIEND

New York, Jan. 26: A British socialite charged with recruiting teenage girls for financier Jeffrey Epstein to sexually abuse in the 1990s asked a judge Monday to dismiss the case on multiple grounds, including that a deal years ago not to prosecute Epstein and others should shield her from prosecution. Lawyers for Ghislaine Maxwell said the indictment against their client was obtained unjustly and doesn't allege crimes specific enough to bring before a jury.

But they listed first among 12 separate arguments attacking the indictment that a non-prosecution deal Epstein reached with the federal government a dozen years ago should shield Maxwell from prosecution too. The deal sought to protect Epstein and those around him, but Maxwell was not identified by name in the document that was signed as Epstein agreed to plead guilty to state charges in Florida that forced him to register as a sex offender afterward. Lawyers for Epstein had planned to argue that the deal with prosecutors in Florida in 2008 protected him against sex trafficking charges lodged against him in July 2019 in New York City.

Manhattan federal prosecutors maintained they could proceed against Epstein or those who worked for him regardless. Epstein killed himself at a Manhattan federal lockup a month after his arrest. Maxwell, 59, was arrested last July and has remained jailed on grounds she might flee. She has pleaded not guilty to charges that she recruited teen girls for Epstein to sexually abuse.

Tornado hits Alabama hotel



A Hampton Inn hotel is severely damaged after a tornado tore through Fultondale, Alabama. One person has died and at least five people have been hospitalised with critical injuries. The storm caused "significant damage," the National Weather Service tweeted.

— AP

‘Threat’: Guard to stay
in Washington till Mar.

Violence a concern ahead of Trump's impeachment trial

Washington, Jan. 26: Thousands of US National Guard troops mobilised in Washington for the presidential inauguration will remain in place through mid-March due to ongoing threats, Pentagon officials said Monday.

The officials did not offer specific information on the threats, saying the information came from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

But Washington remained concerned about more possible violence after the January 6 attack on Congress by supporters of president Donald Trump, and ahead of the impeachment trial of Trump beginning the week of February 8.

Acting Army Secretary John Whitley said they had been briefed on possible risks with "several" upcoming events in Washington over the coming several weeks.

Security officials are concerned that protests "could either be used by malicious actors or other problems that could emerge," he said.

"We are posturing our forces to be able to respond to those threats if they emerge," he said.

The attack on the US Capitol on January 6, which left five people dead and has been labelled an insurrection, led the army to increase the number of National Guard troops deployed in Washington from a few hundred to 25,000 for the January 20 inauguration of President Joe Biden.

Much of the centre of the city was locked down and the normal hundreds of thousands of attendees told to stay home due to the high level of security.

On Monday about 13,000 of the reservists remained.

About 7,000 would stay through the end of January, and then fall slowly to about 5,000 in mid-March, according to Whitley.

Asked about the specific threats, Whitley referred reporters to the FBI, which did not respond to requests for comment.

— AFP

Ahead of Putin call, Biden
walks high wire with Russia

Some sanctions on
Yemen rebels end

Washington, Jan. 26: President Joe Biden has been quickly thrown into a high-wire balancing act with Russia as he seeks to toughen his administration's stance against Vladimir Putin while preserving room for diplomacy in a post-Donald Trump era.

The relationship is sure to be different than the one Putin enjoyed with Trump, who was enamored of the Russian leader and sought his approval, casting doubt on Russian interference in the 2016 elections and involvement in a massive hack last year.

Despite this conciliatory approach, his administration toed a tough line against Moscow, imposing sanctions on the country, Russian companies and business leaders for issues ranging from Ukraine to

energy supplies and attacks on dissidents. Unlike his immediate predecessors, Biden has not held out hope for a "reset" in relations with Russia but

all transactions with the group will be authorized through February 26 at 12:01 am (0401 GMT).

The order signed by Bradley Smith, acting director of the Office of Foreign Assets Control, said the United States was not unblocking any funds that have already been targeted.

— AFP

He instead indicated he wants to manage differences with the former Cold War foe without necessarily resolving them or improving ties.

— AP

YELLEN CONFIRMED
AS 1ST FEMALE
TREASURY SECY

Washington, Jan. 26: The US Senate on Monday voted by a wide margin to confirm Janet Yellen as the first woman to lead the Treasury Department, giving her a key role in Congress negotiations over a huge Covid-19 economic relief package.

Yellen was the first woman to lead the Federal Reserve, from 2014 to 2018, and previously the White House Council of Economic Advisors. Her immediate job will be to help win Congress approval for President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion rescue package to secure US economic recovery from the Covid-19 crisis. That will entail convincing skeptical lawmakers that the benefit of more spending outweighs concerns about the country's soaring debt level.

— AFP

PETS ARE BACK:
BIDEN'S 2 DOGS
SETTLE IN AT WH

Washington, Jan. 26: The patter of paws is being heard in the White House again following the arrival of President Joe Biden's dogs Champ and Major. The two German shepherds are the first pets to live at the executive mansion since the Obama administration.

Major burst onto the national scene late last year after Biden, then president-elect, broke his right foot while playing with the dog at their home in Wilmington, Delaware. The Bidens adopted Major in 2018 from the Delaware Humane Association. Champ joined the family after the 2008 presidential election that made Joe Biden vice president. The dogs moved into the White House on Sunday, following Biden's inauguration last week.

— AP

‘MADE IN U.S.’:
BIDEN PREFERS
SWISS ROLEX

Washington, Jan. 26: Americans tend to notice everything about an incoming president at their inauguration, and thus Joe Biden's choice to wear a \$7,000 Rolex watch on the day he was sworn in.

Nor did the fact that the timepiece was made in Switzerland escape attention, as it marked one of the new president's first breaks with his predecessors, who chose watches a bit more quotidian and even manufactured domestically — the type of industry Biden says he wants to promote.

Biden's stainless steel Rolex Datejust "is a far cry from the Everyman timepieces that every president not named Trump has worn conspicuously in recent decades," *The New York Times* wrote.

— AFP

Moscow, Tehran call for
‘rescue’ of Iran nuke deal

Moscow, Jan. 26: Moscow and Tehran called for the rescue of the Iran nuclear deal Tuesday, as their top diplomats held their first talks since Joe Biden's election raised hopes of Washington returning to the agreement.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said ahead of the talks in Moscow that "one of the most pressing topics is the task of rescuing the Joint Comprehensive Action Plan (JCPOA)".

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif thanked Moscow for its efforts to repair the JCPOA after the US exit in 2018 and for Russia's "constructive and principled" position on the deal.

Zarif urged unity between Moscow and Tehran "in order to save the JCPOA from the risks and fears that arose after the United States left this plan." The talks in Moscow come days after Zarif urged the United States to make the "fundamental choice" to lift sanctions and reverse the "failed policies" of the previous administration, which took a hard line on Tehran.

He cautioned that any efforts from Washington to extract additional concessions would ultimately end in failure.

"Iran wants the nuclear deal it made," Zarif wrote

● THE AGREEMENT was largely left in tatters after former US president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew and ordered officials to reimpose tough penalties against Tehran as part of his administration's "maximum pressure" policy.

in an op-ed in the Foreign Affairs magazine.

The agreement was largely left in tatters after former US president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew and ordered officials to reimpose tough penalties against Tehran as part of his administration's "maximum pressure" policy.

The deal was agreed in 2015 between Iran, the United States, China, Russia, Britain, France and Germany. It offered sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on Tehran's nuclear ambitions and guarantees it would not seek an atomic bomb. Iran maintains it has only pursued a civilian nuclear energy programme.

A new wave of US sanctions have hit hard Iran's vital oil sector and its international banking ties, plunging the economy into a recession.

But Tehran has signalled it could be willing to engage the new White House administration while rhetoric from officials in Moscow has suggested a change in tack in Washington from the Trump administration.

Joe Biden's pick for secretary of state, Anthony Blinken, said at a Senate confirmation hearing this month that Trump's policies had made Iran "more dangerous". While Blinken confirmed Biden's desire for Washington to return to the nuclear agreement, both sides have said the other must return to full compliance before the accord is implemented again.

Since the deal began unravelling with the US exit, Russia and European signatories have advocated efforts to salvage the accord and cautioned Iran against bolstering its nuclear enrichment.

Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov in December urged Iran to take "maximum responsibility" after Tehran announced plans to install advanced centrifuges in its main nuclear enrichment plant.

The ministry earlier this month blamed Iran's departure from norms of the nuclear deal on "systematic crude violations" by the United States.

— AFP

Covid may take 4-5 yrs
to end: S'pore minister

Minnesota case 1st
Brazil variant in US

Singapore, Jan. 26: It may take four to five years for the Covid-19 pandemic to end and the world to look to a post-Covid normal, a senior Singaporean minister has warned. Speaking at the Singapore Perspectives 2021 conference hosted by Singapore's Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) on Monday, Singapore's Education Minister Lawrence Wong, who co-chairs the Covid-19 multi-ministry task force, said there are still many uncertainties to contend with in the next few years, while sharing his hopes about how the future can be "reset" once the pandemic is over, the *Channel News Asia* reported.

"At some point of time the pandemic will pass, but it may take four to five years before we finally see the end of the pandemic and the start of a post-Covid normal. What will this new post-Covid world look like? No one can tell," Wong said. He said there was still a great uncertainty about how the coronavirus will shape society in the coming years.

He said adhering to safe management measures like mask-wearing and avoiding crowds will continue for this year and "maybe a good part of next year". Beyond that, the availability of Covid-19 vaccinations will progressively restart global travel, but getting the world vaccinated won't be quick or easy, he said during the conference.

The Government has planned for everyone in Singapore to be vaccinated by the third quarter of this year, but Wong conceded that there could still be "bumps along the way". He noted that the current vaccines may not be so effective against new mutant strains of the virus, and will have to be modified to counter them.

— PTI

Minneapolis, Jan. 26: A new Brazilian variant of the Coronavirus has made its first known appearance in the United States in a person who recently returned to Minnesota after travelling to Brazil, state health officials announced Monday.

The Brazil P1 variant was found in a specimen from a patient who lives in the Minneapolis-St Paul area who became ill in the first week of January, the Minnesota Department of Health said in a statement. Epidemiologists are interviewing the person to obtain more details about their illness, travel and contacts. There was no immediate indication

that the variant was spreading in Minnesota.

Viruses are constantly mutating, and new versions — called variants — often emerge. Health officials are also worried about variants that were first reported in the United Kingdom and South Africa. Researchers believe they may spread more easily than the virus that has already sickened millions in the United States and caused nearly 420,000 deaths. The Brazilian variant was first identified in four travellers who were tested at an airport outside Tokyo. It contains a set of mutations that may affect its ability to be recognised by antibodies.

— AP

Denmark to pay for
shut mink industry

Copenhagen, Jan. 26: Denmark has said it could pay out more than 19 billion Danish kroner (\$3.1 billion, 2.6 billion euros) to its mink farmers after it closed down the industry over Coronavirus fears. Denmark was the world's largest exporter of mink fur but culled all 15 million of its mink population last year after some were found to be carrying a mutated virus variant, and later banned mink breeding until 1 January 2022.

The support scheme announced late on Monday includes reimbursements to the country's roughly 1,000 mink farmers for the cull, as well as support for them to change their busi-

nesses. Mink breeders and related businesses now have "a good opportunity to move on", said agriculture minister Rasmus Prehn after a cross-party deal was sealed.

"Mink breeders have made a great sacrifice for public health and the common good." In November last year, Denmark said the "Cluster 5" mutation carried by mink had been wiped out, and they were the only animal confirmed to be able to contract it and pass it to humans.

The process, however, was mired in scandal from the start.

— AFP

SIGNIFICANTLY | DELAYED

Project back after demonstrations denouncing racism, police violence against PoC

US renews plans to put abolitionist Tubman on \$20 bill

Washington, Jan. 26: The White House said Monday it was expediting plans to put Harriet Tubman, a PoC woman who escaped slavery and became a leader of the pre-Civil War abolitionist movement, on the \$20 bill, a project that had been significantly delayed under Donald Trump.

The move means Tubman would become the first African American to feature on a US bill.

The project, launched by former president Barack Obama, has come back to

the forefront after historic demonstrations denouncing racism and police violence against people of colour. "The Treasury Department is taking steps to resume efforts to put Harriet Tubman on the front of the new \$20 notes," said presidential spokeswoman Jen Psaki.

"It's important that our notes, our money... reflect the history and diversity of our country and Harriet Tubman's image gracing the new \$20 note would certainly reflect that," she said. Tubman was born

It's important that our notes, our money... reflect the history and diversity of our country and Harriet Tubman's image gracing the new \$20 note would certainly reflect that.

— JEN PSAKI
Presidential spokeswoman

into slavery in 1822 but escaped before going back to the slave-owning southern states to help dozens of others flee bondage, either to the northern US or in Canada, both before and



Harriet Tubman

during the Civil War of 1861-65.

After the war, she became a champion of wom-

en's rights before her death in 1913.

Her life, and in particular her work helping enslaved people escape as a conductor on the "Underground Railroad," were featured in a 2019 Hollywood biopic. Her image was set to replace the portrait of Andrew Jackson, the US president behind the "Trail of Tears" that drove dispossessed Native American tribes from the southeast of the expanding country, and who was much admired by Trump.

Trump's treasury secre-

tary Steve Mnuchin announced in 2019 that the revamp of the \$20 bill was being put off until 2028, citing "security issues" around counterfeiting one of the most popular bills in circulation.

During his 2016 presidential campaign, Trump criticized the plans to replace Jackson with Tubman, calling the move "pure political correctness."

He suggested putting Tubman's picture on the two-dollar bill, which is no longer printed.

Jackson, who occupied

the White House from 1829 to 1837, was seen by Trump as the first "populist" president of the country, and hung his portrait in the Oval Office during his tenure.

The fiery general rose to fame for his historic victory against British forces in New Orleans in 1815. But he is also remembered for the mass deportation of tens of thousands of Native Americans from their ancestral lands in the southeast that left thousands dead.

— AFP

SHORT TAKES

Two UAE players banned for fixing

Dubai: United Arab Emirates players Mohammad Naveed and Shaiman Anwar Butt were on Tuesday suspended by the ICC after they were found guilty of trying to fix matches during the T20 World Cup qualifier in 2019.

Former UAE captain Naveed and top-order batsman Shaiman were found guilty of two offences each under the ICC Anti-Corruption Code after they exercised their right to a hearing before a tribunal. The two players were “party to an agreement or effort to fix or contrive or otherwise influence improperly the result, progress, conduct or other aspect(s) of a match or matches at the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup Qualifier 2019,” the ICC said in a statement. — *PTI*

Nadal takes veiled swipe at Djokovic

Melbourne: Rafael Nadal has taken an apparent swipe at Novak Djokovic over his requests for quarantined players preparing for the Australian Open, saying not everyone felt the need to “advertise” how they were trying to help. The Serbian world number one issued a list of suggestions to Tennis Australia last week on behalf of 72 players unable to leave their Melbourne hotel rooms after Covid-19 cases were detected on their planes to Australia. “We all try to help each other,” Spanish great Nadal told *ESPN* from Adelaide, where he and Djokovic are quarantining ahead of the Grand Slam. “Some need to make public everything they do to help others,” he added, in remarks widely seen as referring to Djokovic. — *AFP*

Ex-India goalie Prasanta dies

Kolkata: Former India goalkeeper Prasanta Dora, who made a name for himself while playing for big three clubs of Kolkata Maidan, died on Tuesday. He was 44 and is survived by 12-year old son Adi and wife Soumi. According to his elder brother Hemanta, who also played as a goalkeeper for India and Mohun Bagan, Prasanta was diagnosed with Hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis in December after he developed unremitting fever. “His platelet count reduced drastically and doctors took a long time to diagnose the disease. We were giving him blood regularly but he could not survive and died at 1.40pm today,” the elder brother said. — *PTI*

Govt decree saves Italy from Oly ban

Rome: The Italian government pushed through a last-minute decree Tuesday providing more autonomy for the country’s Olympic committee in an effort to prevent the team from being suspended for the Tokyo Games. It was one of the final acts of Giuseppe Conte’s government before the premier headed to the presidential palace to offer his resignation. The IOC’s executive board had on its agenda Wednesday whether to impose a humiliating probation on Italy because of a two-year domestic dispute that it said amounted to government interference. After the decree was approved, Italian Olympic Committee president Giovanni Malag immediately called IOC president Thomas Bach and both parties expressed their “satisfaction” over the development. — *AP*

Live on TV

BADMINTON

BWF World Tour Finals: Group matches from 9.30 am on Star Sports 2 HD, 3

CRICKET

Pakistan vs South Africa: First Test, Day 2 from 10.30 am on Sony Ten 2

Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 Tournament: Quarterfinals — Haryana vs Baroda from 11.55 am; Rajasthan vs Bihar from 6.55 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Chelsea vs Wolverhampton Wanderers from 11.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1; Manchester United vs Sheffield United from 1.45 am (Thursday) on Star Sports Select 1

WWE

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

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STATUS KOHLI

Nothing changes between me and Virat, he is my captain and I am his deputy: Rahane



Ajinkya Rahane

New Delhi, Jan. 26: Ajinkya Rahane has won many a fans with his astute captaincy during the Indian team’s epic triumph in Australia but he would like to make it very clear that the undisputed leader of this side is Virat Kohli and he is happy filling in when required.

Come February 5, Rahane will again be the vice-captain of the Test team against England with Kohli back in the saddle. So will things be different now when he once again dons the vice captain’s hat?

“Nothing changes. Virat was and will always be the captain of the Test team and I am his deputy. When he was absent it was my duty to lead the side and my responsibility to give my best for Team India’s success,” Rahane, who was on his way to Chennai, said.

For the vice-captain, it was not about being on the hot seat but having the ability to perform the role to perfection that mattered the most.

“It’s not the matter of merely being a captain. How you perform the captain’s role is what’s more important. So far I have been successful. Hopefully, in future also, I will try to give these kind of results for my team,” said the man, who has led his country to four wins in five Tests.

Reflecting on his relationship with Kohli, Rahane said it has always been smooth.

“Me and Virat have always shared a good bonding with each other. He has time and again praised my batting. Both of us played memorable knocks for our team in India and overseas conditions. It only helped that Virat comes at No.4 and myself at No.5. We have had a lot of partnerships,” the 32-year-old said.

Theirs is a relationship based on mutual respect. “We have always backed each other’s game. When we are at the crease, we discuss threadbare about opposition’s bowling. We caution each other whenever one of us plays a rash shot,” he said.

— *PTI*

PUNJAB KNOCK CHAMPS KARNATAKA OUT

Ahmedabad, Jan. 26: Punjab knocked defending champions Karnataka out from the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 cricket tournament as their bowlers set up a comfortable nine-wicket win in the first quarterfinal on Tuesday.

In the other quarterfinal, Tamil Nadu defeated Himachal Pradesh comfortably by five wickets.

After restricting Himachal to a lowly 135 for 9, thanks to Sonu Yadav’s 3 for 14, Tamil

Nadu rode on fine knocks from Baba Aparajith (52 not out) and Shahrulkhan (40 not out) to romp home with 2.1 overs to spare.

Punjab first dismissed Karnataka for meagre 87 and then overhauled the target in 12.4 overs in what turned out to be a lopsided contest at the Sardar Patel stadium.

Pacers Siddharth Kaul (3/15) and Sandeep Sharma (2/17) ran through the Karnataka top-order after they were

sent in to bat. Karnataka were reeling at 26 for three, after openers Karun Nair (12) and Devdutt Padikkal (11) fell cheaply. Pavan Deshpande (0) was dismissed off his second ball, as Mayank Markande took a diving catch. Kaul dismissed both Padikkal and Deshpande in the fourth over. It soon became 26 for 4 as young left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh (2/16) dismissed B. R. Sharath (2), who was caught in the slip cordon.

BRIEF SCORES

■ Karnataka 87 in 17.2 overs (Aniruddha Joshi 27, Siddharth Kaul 3/15, Arshdeep Singh 2/16) lost to Punjab 89/1 in 12.4 overs (Prabhsimran Singh 49 n.o., Mandeep Singh 35 n.o.).
■ Himachal Pradesh 135 for 9 in 20 overs (Abhimanyu Rana 28, Nitin Sharma 26, Rishi Dhawan 35 n.o., Sandeep Warrier 2/32, Sonu Yadav 3/14) lost to Tamil Nadu 141/5 in 17.5 overs (Baba Aparajith 52 n.o., Shahrulkhan 40 n.o., Vaibhav Arora 3/30).

PAK IN TROUBLE AS RABADA LEADS SA FIGHTBACK

Karachi, Jan. 26: Fast bowler Kagiso Rabada took two wickets for just eight runs as he led a South African fightback against Pakistan in their first Test here Tuesday.

Pakistan were in trouble at 33/4 at the close of play, having bowled out the visitors for 220 — their second-lowest total in the country.

Fourteen wickets fell on the National Stadium pitch, which had been expected to take spin from day one. But then Rabada paid back the hosts with interest, bowling Abid Ali (four) in his third over and then getting debutant Imran Butt (nine) caught at leg-slip off a rising delivery. — *AFP*

Brief scores: South Africa 220 (Elgar 58, Linde 35, Yasir 3/54, Nauman 2/38) vs Pakistan 33/4 (Rabada 2/8).

Khaleel, Krishna belt double tons

Tanu, Naman, Abid, Kranthi, Shiva, Varun, Avik too shine



Naman Agarwal



Varun Vinod



Shiva Srikanth

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 26

Shaik Khaleel and N. Jyothi Sai Krishna slammed a double century each to hog the limelight on Tuesday at the Hyderabad Cricket Association’s A-2 Division two-day league matches.

Khaleel hit 212 with the help of 34 fours and six sixes to help Sri Shyam to 385 against Vijay Hanuman on the first day.

In another match, N. Jyothi Sai Krishna’s 207 that was decorated with 18 fours and eight sixes propelled Postal to 452 against Medak District.

Abid Hussain (106) of Mahbubnagar District, S. M. Tanu (115) of Young Master, Naman Agarwal (113) of Oxford Blues, Shiva Srikanth Naidu (5/38) of Deccan Blues, Varun Vinod (112) of Hyderabad Wanderers, Galaxy’s Kranthi Kiran (5/22) and Avik (5/55) of Hyderabad Titans were the other performers.

Insisting that England will head into the assignment with plenty of confidence after the series sweep in Sri Lanka. — *PTI*

Brief scores:
A-2 DIVISION (TWO-DAY)

Day-1:
■ Sri Shyam 385 in 89.4 overs (Shaik Khaleel 212 — 187b, 34x4, 6x6, Syed 54, Bharath 3/75) vs Vijay Hanuman 13 for no loss in 3 overs.
■ Postal 452 in 88.5 overs (Md Shaker Ahmed 77, N. Jyothi Sai Krishna 207 — 229b, 18x4, 8x6, V. Bhargav Anand Goud 50, M. Suresh 32, Md Azam Raza 2/88, B. H. Prem Charan 3/68) vs Medak District.

■ Lords CC 225 in 54.5 overs (Md Azheruddin 72, Sohail Ali Khan 37) lost to Young Master 228/2 in 36.2 overs (Aaron George 73, S. M. Tanu 115 — 105b, 15x4). **Points:** Young Master 5, Lords 0.

■ Oxford Blues 269 in 89.4 overs (Naman Agarwal 113 — 198b, 15x4, Yashaswi 56, Shiva Srikanth Naidu 5/38 — 18-3-38-5) vs Deccan Blues.

■ Marredpally CC 192 in 48.4 overs (K. Arjun Reddy 46, Shafi Ali 72, Ghazi Abbas 4/71, Karthikeyan 4/23) lost to Hyderabad Wanderers 196 for no loss in 33.3 overs (Varun Vinod 112 — 97b, 17x4, Ghazi Abbas 77 n.o.). **Points:** Wanderers 5, Marredpally 0.

■ Mahbubnagar District 292 in 64.2 overs (Abid Hussain 106 — 123b, 19x4, 1x6, Sai Kumar Yadav 79, Sachit Kaundinya 4/42) vs Green Turf 109/9 in 45 overs (Syed Afzal 53).

■ Galaxy 134 in 47.1 overs (Amit Kulkarni 34, Kranthi Kiran 5/22 — 13-1-8-2-5) vs Deccan Wanderers 72/1 in 28 overs (Jawad Khan 46).

■ Saleemnagar 218 in 58 overs (Ibrahim 57, Hemanth 41, Avik 5/55 — 16-2-55-5) vs Hyderabad Titans 76/1 in 25 overs (Jainath 41 batting).

■ Telangana 69 in 22.4 overs (Kamal Yadav 46, Sai 3/77) lost to Sai Satya 72/2 in 21.5 overs (Jai Nag 42 n.o.). **Points:** Sai Satya 5, Telangana 0.

■ Pasha Beedi 213 in 79.5 overs (K. Shreyas Goud 32, Md Zakaria 41, C. Aadithya Reddy 41, K. Sundesh 50, Vansh Sharma 3/19, Aarya Udupa 3/32) vs Balaji Reddy 47/1 in 12 overs.
■ Visaka 214 in 85.3 overs (Md Farees Shareef 52, M. Kshiti Reddy 39, P. Jagadish 38, K. Sri Harsha 3/44, B. Jeevan 3/11) vs Classic 75 for no loss in 13 overs (S. Harshit 44 batting, S. Raghavendra 30 batting).

■ Osmania 274 in 69.4 overs (Ashrit 35, Vishu 40, Vinay 31, Anish Rao 84, Manikanth 34, Rachit 3/36, Ramna 3/38) vs Yadav Dairy 61/3 in 18.1 overs.

■ RJLCC 260 in 64 overs (Hussain Liakhath 85, K. Raghavendra 63, C. Tarun Kumar 3/31, Sathish Pujith 3/55, Tibrewal Nandesh 3/57) vs Future Star 10/3 in 9 overs.

■ Agarwal Sr 126 in 50.1 overs (Noman Ahmed 44, Shaik Azhar 4/25, Appa Rao 3/21) vs Khammam District 127/2 in 24.1 overs (Jai Prakash 76 n.o.). **Points:** Khammam 5, Agarwal Sr 0.

Vaishnavi heads R-Day main fleet

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 26

The extremely light winds saw a total mix-up in the results and more than 80 per cent of the Sub Junior Main Fleet retiring from the race as they were compelled to break the rules and paddle towards the finish line in a hurry to finish on the second day of the Republic Day Regatta on Tuesday.

India No.2 Vaishnavi Veeravamsam made a protest and the entire fleet had to retire en masse leaving her at the top and all those at the top languishing below her due to penalties. Mohammad Moutameen

of Udbhav School topped the ranks with consistent performances and a win in the first race. Ganesh Peerkatta and Shyam Bellapally of Eureka Model School are placed at second and third overall. Monday’s winner Chiranjeev Deep dropped to sixth position overall after a lacklustre performance in the fourth race.

TOP RESULTS

■ **Sub Junior Main Fleet (Optimist):** 1. Vaishnavi Veeravamsam 17 points, 2. Tanuja Kameshwar 33 pts, 3. Teja Kethavath 46 pts.
■ **Sub Junior Green Fleet (Optimist):** 1. Mohammad Moutameen 22 points, 2. Ganesh Peerkatta 25pts, 3. Shyam Ballapally 30 pts.



A trainee at the high performance Republic Day tennis camp conducted by Academia Sports Village at their courts at Hyderabad Polo and Riding Club in Aziz Nagar, receives her certificate from Ms Khursheed Begum (centre), chief patron of RR Foundation, on Tuesday.

RITHIKA, MIHIR IN THIRD ROUND OF U-16 TENNIS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 26

Rithika Kakarlamudi and Mihir Parcha were the best players on show as they sailed into the third round of the girls and boys categories respectively at the AITA C7 Under-16 tournament being held at Sania Mirza Tennis Academy in Murtuzaguda, Hyderabad.

Rithika blanked G. Hansika Reddy 6-0, 6-0 while Mihir thumped Thakur Arman Singh 6-2, 6-0.

Boys singles: Mihir Parcha bt Thakur Arman Singh 6-2, 6-0; Tarun Korwar bt Arnav Bishoyi 6-1, 6-2; Parth Malik bt Rohan Siram 6-4, 4-6, 6-4; P. Sandilya bt Yeswanth G. 6-3, 6-1; Nikhil D'souza bt Sarayjith Sunil Nair 6-4, 7-6 (9-7); Vishal Vasudev bt S. V. Pranav Kumar Reddy 4-6, 6-2, 6-2; Venkat Rishi Bhatkani bt Dandu Trishant Reddy 7-6, 6-2; Dreek Saha bt Murali Koushal 7-6 (7-5), 7-5.

Girls singles: Rithika Kakarlamudi bt G. Hansika Reddy 6-0, 6-0; Sama Chevika Reddy bt P. V. Veshasri 6-4, 6-3; S. Kaavya bt G. Harshitha Chevika, 6-1; Pushti Ladda bt Dandu Laxmi Rishi 7-6 (7-4), 6-2; T. Sai Janvi bt Gaganika Moana Kumar 6-3, 6-0; Monisha Devakonda bt M. Sri Vidya 6-2, 6-2; Divija Maneni bt G. Sowkhyas 6-4, 6-4; Rishitha Basi Reddy bt Sameeksha Anem 6-3, 6-2.

Nambiar cherishes ‘late’ Padma award

New Delhi, Jan. 26: It was a long time coming, over three decades to be precise.

For 88-year-old O. M. Nambiar, the man who nurtured one of India’s greatest athletes in P T Usha, the announcement of his name in the list of this year’s Padma Shri awardees is a case of “better late than never.”

“I feel very happy for this award though it could have been many years back. Still I am happy. Better late than never,” Nambiar, who is battling the Parkinson’s disease, said in an interaction from his home in Kozhikode.

Usha was conferred the Padma Shri in 1985 while

Nambiar, presented the Dronacharya that year, had to wait for another 36 years before the nation’s fourth highest civilian honour came his way.

His affliction will, however, not allow him to receive the honour in person when the President gives it away at the Rashtrapati Bhawan later. But that’s not lessened his joy.

“Every medal won by my trainees gives me immense satisfaction. I consider my Dronacharya Award, Best Asian Coach award and now Padma Shri as recognition of my hard work and dedication,” said the legendary hailing from Kerala.

Looking back in time, an

I feel very happy for this award though it could have been many years back. Still I am happy. Better late than never.

— **O.M. NAMBIAR**
P. T. Usha’s coach

Olympic medal for his most famous ward — Usha — was Nambiar’s “lifetime dream” and he recalled being devastated when she missed the bronze in the 1984 Los Angeles Games by a whisker.

The man, who moulded Usha into one of India’s finest athletes during his mentorship from 1977 to 1990, said he couldn’t stop weeping once Usha was

done with that race.

“It is absolutely true that I wept when we knew that Usha missed the bronze by one-hundredth of a second in 400m hurdles in 1984 Olympics. I was inconsolable,” Nambiar said.

“I cannot forget that moment. An Olympic medal for Usha was my biggest lifetime dream,” he added.

Usha was beaten by Romanian Cristeana Cojocaru for the bronze medal in a photo-finish, denying India what could have been its first Olympic medal in athletics. The Romanian clocked 55.41 seconds while Usha recorded 55.42 seconds.

Nambiar’s son Suresh said that someone from the family will collect the award for him when the ceremony is officially held.

“My father will not be able to collect the Padma Shri. His movement is restricted. Somebody from the family will receive the award,” he said.

Nambiar was with Indian Air Force for 15 years and retired as a Sergeant in 1970.

He got a coaching diploma from the NIS-Patiala in 1968 and joined the Kerala Sports Council in 1971.

He was tasked with finding talented athletes in the state. — *PTI*