

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | THURSDAY | 21 JANUARY 2021

## WEATHER

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

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

## NATION | 4

**Gujarat renames dragon fruit Kamalam**

## WORLD | 5

**Trump pardons Bannon, 73 others in last minute**

## SPORTS | 8

**Rajasthan Royals release captain Smith**

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## COVID-19 COUNT

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

## STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+267) (+2)  
TS: 2,92,395 1,583  
(+173) (+0)  
AP: 8,86,418 7,142

## CASES AROUND THE WORLD

9,68,87,732  
DEATHS 20,73,167

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 219  
worldometers.info/coronavirus

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Uttarayana  
Tithi: Pushya Shuddha Ashtami till 3.50 pm  
Star: Ashwini till 3.35 pm  
Varjyam: 11.06 am to 12.54 pm; 2.24 am to 4.13 am (Friday)  
Durmuhurtam: 10.36 am to 11.20 am; 3.03 pm to 3.47 pm  
Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm  
HIJRI CALENDAR  
Jamadi- ul- Akhri 7, 1442 AH

## PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.47 am  
Zohar: 12.37 pm  
Asar: 4.29 pm  
Maghrib: 6.11 pm  
Isha: 7.22 pm  
SUNSET TODAY 6.05 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.49 AM  
MOONRISE TODAY 12.19 PM  
MOONSET TOMORROW 12.21 AM

## COUNTER POINT



Welcome to your office, Mr President!

## SHORT TAKES

## CBI's DSP held for corruption

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

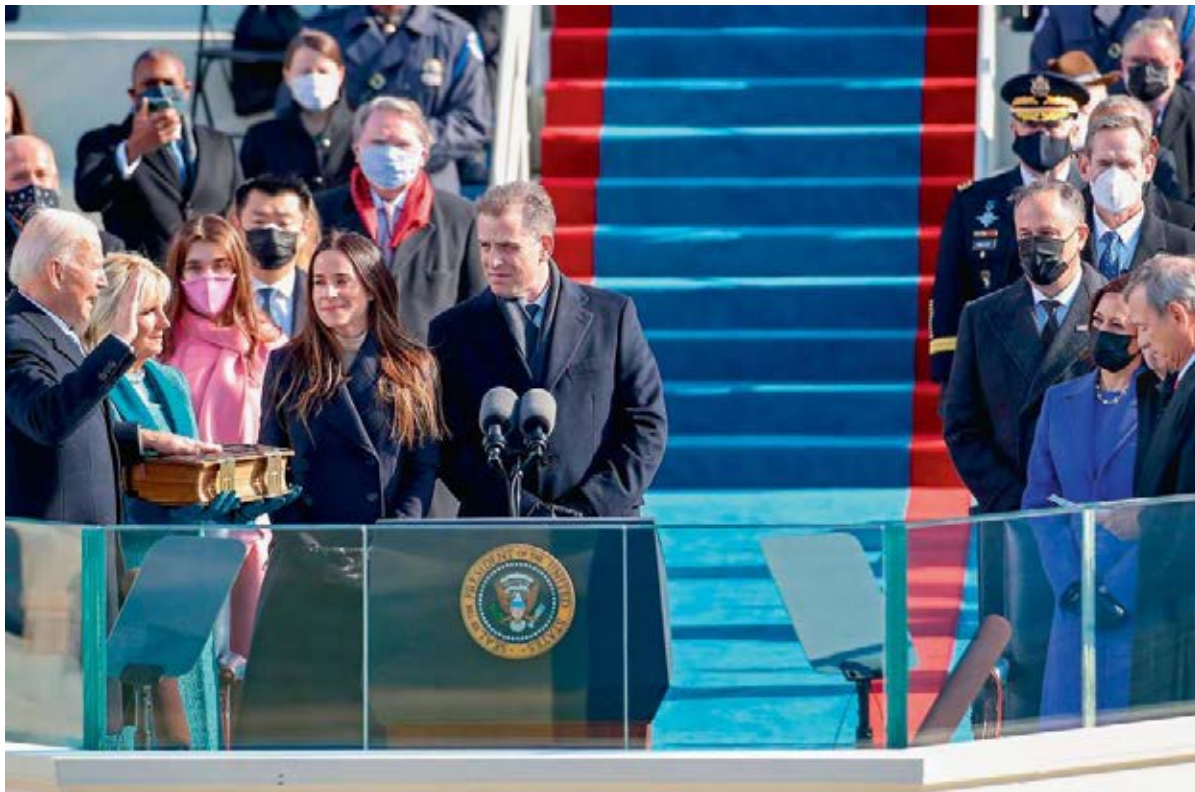
## FIR filed against Tandav makers

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

■ Full report on Page 4

## ₹1.76L cr tax refunds issued

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



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

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

— AFP

■ More reports on Page 5

## It's a new day in America

### Biden to end country cap on H1B visas with his first orders

**Washington, Jan. 20:** In his first hours as US President, Joe Biden will aim to strike at the heart of President Donald Trump's policy legacy, signing a series of executive actions that will reverse his predecessor's orders on immigration, climate change and handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

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

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

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

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

ments, addresses the root causes of migration from Central America, and also ensures that the US remains a refuge for those fleeing persecution, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Describing this as a common-sense approach to solving immigration challenges, focusing on what works, the US Citizenship Act 2021 creates a roadmap to citizenship for a population that lives and works in the United States.

January 1, 2021 is the cut-off date for those undocumented workers. Two-thirds of undocumented immigrants have been in the US for 10 years or longer. It provides an immediate pathway to

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

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

— PTI

## BJP chief may take a rath for West Bengal elections

DC CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, JAN. 20

BJP president J.P. Nadda is likely to launch a *rath yatra* in poll-bound West Bengal on February 5.

Mr Nadda, who completed one year as the BJP president on Wednesday, is likely to launch this *yatra* from North Bengal. The BJP is expected to launch five such *raths* (chariots) from different regions of the state, with Union home minister

Amit Shah scheduled to launch a similar '*parivar rath yatra*' on February 10. These *raths* will cover all the 294 Assembly constituencies of the state.

Crucial Assembly polls in the TMC-ruled state are scheduled in April and the BJP has been promising '*Asol Poribortan* (real change)' in the state while highlighting 'mis-governance' under Mamata Banerjee and how development indicators in the state are on a downward

spiral. Mr Nadda also held a meeting of the party's general secretaries at the BJP headquarters to review various issues, including West Bengal polls.

Meanwhile, exodus from the TMC continued with its leader and Santipur MLA Arindam Bhattacharya joining the BJP fold at the party headquarters Wednesday.

He joined the BJP in the presence of the party's state in-charge Kailash Vijayvargiya.

DC CORRESPONDENTS

HYDERABAD/NIRMAL, JAN. 20

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

A 42-year-old healthcare worker from Nirmal district, a 108 ambulance driver, died less than 18 hours after receiving the vaccine.

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

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

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

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

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

■ Page 2: Vaccine panel will submit report

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

## Light pollution blanks out Hyd night sky

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC

HYDERABAD, JAN. 20

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

Light pollution is killing the joy of looking up at the night sky, astronomy enthusiasts and scientists have complained.

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

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

He added that the big floodlights, the neon lights on billboards and malls till the Shamshabad area have added to the pollution, especially in the last four to five years. "These unnecessary lights and the continuous construction activities have spoiled the

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

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

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

in today's time is difficult, which is why the astronomy community here is growing weaker," he said.

The Japal-Rangapur Observatory under Osmania University, open for research and practical work for postgraduate and PhD students, as well as for the public, has been affected by more lighting coming up in the nearby villages but still has clear night skies, said Dr Shanti Priya, head, department of astronomy, OU. She agreed that the dark sky experience of a few years ago is something that this generation will never be able to get.

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

occurrences among other events, for our 40-50 PG and research students. The LED lights around have had an effect on the observatory, but if the government takes some measures to increase the scientific temper while keeping in view the convenience of people around, like installing LED light covers, it will solve the issue to a great extent," said Dr Shanti Priya.

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

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

Astronomers in the city now demand that government take steps to protect the few spots left in and around the city from where the night sky appears truly dark, like the Kotpally reservoir area near Ananthagiri hills, the Pocharam dam in Medak, the Pakhal lake near Warangal, the Laknavaram lake area, among others, by making strict policies to restrict urbanisation and declare these spots as Natural Dark Sky Sites.

## Centre offers to freeze farm laws

### Farmer leaders to respond to the offer on Friday after their internal consultations

SANJAY KAW | DC

NEW DELHI, JAN. 20

The Centre on Wednesday proposed to suspend the three contentious farm laws for one or one-and-a-half years and set up a joint committee to discuss the laws to end the stalemate, but the farmers leaders did not immediately accept the proposal and said they will respond only after they hold internal consultations, possibly on Thursday. The two sides will meet again on Friday for the eleventh round of negotiations.

The government made this offer during the tenth round of talks with the representatives of 41 farmers' unions at Vigyan Bhavan here. After the meeting, agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar said: "During the discussions, we said the government was ready to put on hold the farm laws for one year or one and a half years. I am happy the farmers' unions have taken this very seriously and said they would consider it tomorrow (Thursday) and convey their decision on January 22."

Ahead of the meeting which lasted for over five hours, Mr Tomar along with commerce minister Piyush Goyal met Union home minister Amit Shah.

Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently called a meeting of top

## SC won't restrain kisan tractor rally

PARMOD KUMAR | DC

NEW DELHI, JAN. 20

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

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

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

not allowing the rally, Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde, heading a three-judge bench that included Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian, asked them to withdraw the application the seeking restraint order, which they did.

The court also turned down a plea by the attorney-general and solicitor-general to keep the application pending and consider it on January 25 depending on the situation.

"No, no. This is not a matter for the court to decide. You have the powers under the law", CJI Bobde said, reiterating: "We have told you it is for the police to decide. We won't pass orders. We will allow you to withdraw this application. You are the authority. You decide."

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

The Supreme Court has already put on hold till further orders all the

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

## TS RETAINS ITS TOP 4 SLOT FOR INNOVATION

**New Delhi, Jan. 20:** Telangana retained its fourth place in terms of innovation in Niti Aayog's second Innovation Index released here on Wednesday. Karnataka topped the list and Maharashtra moved past Tamil Nadu to reach the second place. Kerala entered the top 5 by displacing Haryana.

Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab completed the top 10 states.

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

Karnataka topped the Index for the second year in a row. "Amongst major states, the average innovation score is 25.35. Karnataka tops at 42.5, which is attributable to its strong number of venture capital deals, registered GIs (geographical indications) and ICT (information and communication technology) exports.

Karnataka's high FDI inflow has also enhanced the innovation capabilities of the state," the India Innovation Index 2020 said.

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

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

— PTI



## IN BRIEF

## State reports 267 new Covid cases

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

## Forest staff to get cash incentives

**Hyderabad:** With On Republic Day, a cash incentive certificate will be presented to the forest staff in six categories as part of a plan to encourage personnel through financial and designatory gains. The certificates will be presented at district level ceremonies, according to a decision taken at a video conference among the officials in the city. This selection will be based on the performance in Haritha Haram, under the slogan Jungle Bachao. Beat, section, deputy range and forest range officers working in the forests would be considered for the incentive. R.M. Dobriyal, principal chief conservator of forests (PCCF) (social forestry), said priority should be given to the cultivation of at least 1.5 metre tall plants for avenue plantation in rural areas. He apologised for the sluggishness in the work under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act (CAMPA), they would now be reviewed by a third party and plans for the release of funds should be prepared accordingly. Also, Lokesh Jaiswal, PCCF (CAMPA), said that the authorities concerned should be ready for action in case of any lacunae in executing the works.

## EMINENT URDU POET JAMI PASSES AWAY

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 20

Renowned poet and critic Rahman Jami breathed his last in the early hours of Wednesday. He was 85. The funeral prayers were performed after Asr prayer at Choti Masjid, Muradnagar in Mehdiapatnam. He was laid to rest at the graveyard attached to Masjid-e-Alamgir in Shantinagar. Jami was a prominent writer, poet and critic of Urdu. He authored 12 books of poetry. He was awarded several national and state awards for his contribution to Urdu literature. He guided upcoming poets and trained them. He also translated 12 poems of balladeer Gaddar. According to Rahman's grandson, Ahmed almost a week ago a pencil's nib caused a deep wound on his palm, after which he underwent surgery. His health worsened after that.

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

## VACCINE PANEL WILL SUBMIT REPORT

From Page 1

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

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

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



BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar launches the Jana Jagaran programme to collect donations for the construction of the Ram mandir at Ayodhya, at Sevala Basti, Site 3, Borabanda, in Hyderabad on Wednesday. — R. PAVAN

## Bandi: KCR holds puja to wash away sins

**BJP leader begins fund collection drive for Ram Mandir**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 20

A campaign to raise funds and collect bricks for the construction of the Ram mandir in Ayodhya was launched on Wednesday by the BJP, styled as Jana Jagaran under the Sri Rama Janmabhoomi Tirtha Kshetra Trust. State BJP president Bandi Sanjay Kumar, the Karimnagar MP, inaugurated the drive at Borabanda in the city. The campaign will continue till February 10, Sanjay said, adding he would be touring the state. He called on every

Hindu to give a brick each for the mandir construction. Sanjay referred to speculations about minister K.T. Rama Rao taking over as Chief Minister soon, and said he had also heard that the father and son have begun conducting pujas by way of preparations for this.

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

went to Kaleshwaram for the purpose of immersing the puja material in the Triveni Sangamam."

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

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

and the government plans to increase it to three tmc ft.

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

If Chandrashekar Rao makes a Dalit M.L.A. the Chief Minister, the people of Telangana state would be happy, he added.

## NGT takes up DC impact on KMC issue

**D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC**  
KURNOOL, JAN 20

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

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

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

the DC report. KMC primarily depends on the Tungabhadra river which is polluted, but this has been glossed over by successive special officers, the report had noted.

Elected representatives, government officials and prominent citizens of Kurnool city thanked *Deccan Chronicle* for highlighting civic issues.

Pollution in Handri and Tungabhadra, the two rivers that flow across Kurnool city, has been causing health risks to people residing on the river bank.

The river needs to be cleared of plastic waste and other non-degradable material, as also lead and cadmium. Regional pollution con-

trol board officials say Tungabhadra waters showed marginally higher toxins after Pushkarams.

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

Citizens of Kurnool hoped that the NGT order would help in supply of safe drinking water.

"I think Kurnool may get a sewerage treatment plant with the latest amenities, said a senior citizen.

## OFFICIALS ASKED TO COMPUTERISE LAND RECORDS

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
WARANGAL, JAN 20

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

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

## 3rd Kaleshwaram lift component is needless: Jeevan

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 20

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jeevan Reddy demanded that the BJP fight against

## OWAISI SETS STONE FOR CREMATORIUM WALL

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 20

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

ACB DSP Satyanarayana said that investigation had revealed that general manager Sudhakar Reddy was following the orders of Bhaskarachari, managing director of TS Warehousing Corporation.

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

Following the arrest of Sudhakar Reddy, ACB officials are conducting searches at Bhaskarachari's residence in the city.

## RAMA BELONGS TO EVERYONE: PONNALA LAKSHMAIAH

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 20

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

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

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

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

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

## Stop anti-KCR blabber, TRS leaders tell Bandi

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 20

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

Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday, along with MLAs Anand and Rohit Reddy, Mahender Reddy demanded that Sanjay Kumar to prove his party's strength in the Nagarjunasagar bypoll, where the BJP was certain

to lose its deposit. They said that TRS would win Nagarjunasagar byelection with a thumping majority.

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

## Protester catches fire



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

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE



## OTHER STORIES

MLA INSTIGATING  
CI AGAINST ME,  
CLAIMS DCCB CHIEFDC CORRESPONDENT  
KOTHAGUDEM, JAN. 20

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

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

The government and superintendent of police of Bhadradi district should take action against all such cops", he said.

He said that Yellandu MLA Haripriya's husband is harassing him through the circle inspector of Tekulapalli mandal.

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

● "There is no democracy in Telangana Rashtra Samithi" (TRS).

CHILD WHO WAS  
ELECTROCUTED  
FLYING KITE, DIESDC CORRESPONDENT  
NIRMAL, JAN. 20

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



Traffic police in a bike rally as part awareness campaign on wearing helmet in Khammam on Wednesday. — DC

Cops aim for road  
mishaps-free 2021DC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, JAN. 20

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

VILLAGERS PANICK OVER LEOPARD  
MOVEMENT IN THE AGRICULTURE FIELDSDC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, JAN. 20

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

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

TRS workers clash in  
Warangal, 2 hospitalised

MLA Narendra is deliberately targeting his followers

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, JAN. 20

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

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

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



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

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

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

remained peaceful.

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

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

## SCR to set up 2 goods sheds in Nizamabad

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NIZAMABAD, JAN. 20

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

There are three goods sheds in Nizamabad, Kamareddy and Bodhan railway stations in undivided Nizamabad district.

Reportedly, goods shed at Jankampet will be set

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

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

up by private players and a notification will be issued soon.

Rice is being transported to Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala states Nizamabad in railway wagons. Maize is also transported to different parts in the country. Fertilizers are

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

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

Investigation is also on and we will act as per law," the ACP added.

brought to Nizamabad through railways, whose goods services are also used by Food Corporation of India (FCI) and Telangana State Civil Supplies Corporation and private contractors.

Earlier, Bodhan railway station was popular as Asia's biggest sugar factory was located in the town. After the closure of Nizam Sugar Factory, there was a near-zero activity on the Nizamabad-Bodhan route. Maintenance of Bodhan, Yedapally, Shakkarnagar railway stations in the route also became costly.

However, the newly laid

TRS MLAs IN  
NIZAMABAD WANT  
KTR TO BE CMDC CORRESPONDENT  
NIZAMABAD, JAN. 20

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Description of the Immovable Property**  
Residential Building bearing No. 9-5-84, along with land admeasuring 363 Sq.Yds, covered by Sy.No.1064, situated at Near Pragnya Junior College, Ramnagar, Karimnagar Town & District and bounded by: East: House with No. 9-6-81, belongs to P.Rajiah, West: 9' wide Road, North: House of Sri P.Bhoomaiah bearing H.No. 9-6-83 & House of Smt. K.Vimala, W/o. K.Hanumayya and South: Open land of others.

Date: 18.01.2021  
Place: Karimnagar

Sd/- AUTHORISED OFFICER  
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**ANDHRA PRADESH STATE FINANCIAL CORPORATION**  
(Incorporated under the State Financial Corporation Act, LXIII of 1951)  
**KARIMNAGAR BRANCH D.No. 2-7-373, Opp: Collectrate Complex, Karimnagar Town & District, Phone: 0878-2243662**

**PUBLIC NOTICE FOR SALE U/S.29 OF SFC'S ACT 1951**  
Andhra Pradesh State Financial Corporation (APSC) in exercise of powers conferred under sec.29 of SFC's Act, 1951 initiated recovery action against the mortgaged / hypothecated properties of the following industrial concerns consequent to the defaults committed.

APSC is inviting tenders from the Public for purchase of the properties listed below on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" through public auction on Tender Cum Bid basis:

SL. No.	Name of the Industrial Concern & Location	Line of activity	Assets offered for sale	Reserve Price (Rs. in lakhs)	EMD a) Total Assets b) Mach. Only (Rs. in lakhs)
1.	M/s Nagini Mini Oil Mill & Pulverisers, Propx: Smt. Ramagiri Nagamani, H.No. 2-96, Khazipur Village, Kothapally Mandal, Karimnagar District.	Oil Mill	Land & Building, land admeasuring 303.00 Sq yds situated at H.No. 2-96, Khazipur Village, Gangadhara Mandal, Karimnagar District.	1.76	0.30
2.	M/s Thirumaleshwara Mini Modern Rice Mill, Prop: Sri Munjam Venkataiah, Mallapur Village, Thimmapur Mandal, Karimnagar District.	Rice Mill	Land & Building, land admeasuring 127 Sq. yds., covered by Sy. No. 173, Mallapur Village, Thimmapur Mandal, Karimnagar District.	0.86	0.15
3.	M/s Adithya Childrens Hospital, Prop: Dr. Boorgula Narayana, H.No. 3-4-51, Civil Hospital Road, Karimnagar Town & District.	Nursing Home	Land & Building, (Still + G+2) with an built up area in Still floor is 1775.94 Sq.ft., Ground floor is 1775.94 Sq.ft., First Floor is 1775.94 Sq/fts & Second floor is 1775.94 Sq/fts, constructed in a total extent area of land is 312.00 Sq.yds covered by H.No.3-4-249, Sai Baba Temple Road, Sawaran Street, Karimnagar Town & District.	178.72	29.80

**PLACE OF AUCTION: A.P.STATE FINANCIAL CORPORATION, D.NO.2-7-373, Opp: Collectrate Complex, Mukarampura, Karimnagar-505001**

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE**

1. Tender Form can be obtained from the undersigned / from any branch office on payment of Rs. 300/- by cash / DD
2. Filled in sealed tenders shall be submitted to the Concerned Branch Manager.
3. Requisite EMD Shall be paid by DD / Pay order drawn in favour of "APSC", Payable at Karimnagar Branch Office.
4. This Sale Notice is valid for 90 days from the date of advertisement.
5. The tenders will be opened and processed for sale on or after 22.02.2021 and continues up to 90 days from the date of advertisement.
6. Tenderers will be invited for bidding / negotiations on every Wednesday or any other suitable day.
7. Bidding will be conducted when more than one tenderer is present and further negotiation will continue. The reasonable offer (at the discretion of the committee) will be placed on the notice board for 7 days inviting improved offers.
8. During these 7 days new tenderers may file tenders with requisite EMD and additional deposit of 15% of the offer displayed. On receipt of improved offers further bidding/ negotiations will be conducted between the existing and new tenderers and further offers will be entertained as per guidelines of the Corporation
9. The Bids quoted below the Reserve Price will be summarily rejected and the EMD will be refunded.
10. All other terms and conditions enclosed to the tender form are binding and to be complied with.
11. Corporation reserves the right to accept / reject the tenders / bids of vary the terms and conditions and to cancel it at its sole discretion without assigning any reasons.
12. The bidders desired to inspect the assets put for sale may directly contact the concerned Branch Manager.
13. The Assets will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS" and "AS IS WHAT IS" basis, including encumbrance if any. (There are no encumbrances to the knowledge of the Corporation).
14. When the tenderer is submitting the sealed tender, it is deemed that he is full aware / conversant with the general terms and conditions annexed to the tender form and shall be binding. However, any further clarifications may be sought before submitting the tender from the concerned officers of the Corporation.

Station: Karimnagar  
Date: 20.01.2021

Sd/- SENIOR BRANCH MANAGER

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SHORT TAKES

MUMBAI POLICE  
FILE FIR AGAINST  
'TANDAV' TEAM

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC  
MUMBAI, JAN. 20

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

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

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

The UP police team, which has already reached the city, will first approach the Mumbai police for local assistance.

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

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

OVER 7 LAKH  
BENEFICIARIES  
GET VACCINATED

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 20

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

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

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

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

NAME | CHANGE

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

Guj to rename dragon fruit as 'Kamalam'

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

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

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

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



Vijay Rupani

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

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

● **THE FRUIT** is found in arid areas of the state and it is known for its nutritional value, like it also helps in increasing the hemoglobin, Rupani said in reply to question on the need to rename it.

behind renaming of the fruit, Rupani said.

The fruit is found in arid areas of the state and it is known for its nutritional value, like it also helps in

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

The CM also said it is the most expensive fruit available in the market at this time. The change in nomenclature of the fruit is yet to find its way among the masses and farmers.

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

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

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

Kutch have largely taken up farming of this fruit.

The NCP on Wednesday targeted the BJP over the Gujarat government's decision to rename dragon fruit as 'Kamalam', saying the time may not be far when the saffron party would start calling the country as "Kamalaistan".

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

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

Final checks



Indian Air Force Rafale jet and Jaguar aircraft fly past Rajpath during the rehearsals for Republic Day Parade 2021 in New Delhi on Monday.

— PTI

MP rocked by 4  
rapes in 10 days

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

RABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, JAN. 20

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

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

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

In another incident, a 13-year-old girl, resident of Umariya, had been raped for three days by nine people.

On January 11, the girl

● **IN A SHOCKING** incident, a 13-year-old girl, resident of Umariya, had been raped for three days by nine people.

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

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

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

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

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

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

others were absconding, police said.

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

She was battling for life in a hospital in Rewa. Two accused, Lalu Kol and Bhailal Patel were arrested, while another accused was absconding, police said.

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

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

She managed to free herself and called her friend who took her to the hospital. The girl has identified one of the accused as Akshaya. All the five accused were absconding, police said.

Senior Congress leader and former chief minister Kamal Nath slammed the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government for having failed to check growing incidents of rape in the state.

Leaking secrets  
of military ops  
is treason: Cong

New Delhi, Jan. 20: Leaking of official secrets of military operations is treason and those involved in it must be punished, the Congress said on Wednesday on the purported WhatsApp chats of *Republic TV* editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami and demanded that the Prime Minister must come clean.

The party said those involved in the "anti-national act" deserve no mercy and the government should immediately order an inquiry into the "information leak" about the 2019 air strikes.

The Congress fielded its top leaders — former defence minister A.K. Antony, leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, former home minister Sushilkumar Shinde and former law and external affairs minister Salman Khurshid to launch a scathing attack on the government at a joint press conference.

The Congress said it would raise the issue in a big way in Parliament during the budget session starting January 29 and garner support of other parties for a joint offensive against the government including a joint parliamentary committee probe.

It also accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and top ministers who

India, EU hold  
online talks on  
maritime security

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 20

India and the European Union (EU) held their first-ever maritime security dialogue in a virtual format on Wednesday during which "developments in maritime security environment, regional cooperation activities, developments of mutual interest and opportunities for cooperation between India and the EU" were discussed.

It may be recalled that India and the EU had — during their 15th bilateral Summit in July last year — agreed to strengthen military-to-military relations and naval cooperation and establish a maritime security dialogue to preserve safety and stability in the Indian Ocean, in what was seen as a veiled but clear signal to China.

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

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

The ministry of external affairs added, "The EU-India Maritime Dialogue was chaired by Director Joanneke Balfourt on the EEAS side and Joint Secretary Sandeep Arya on the Indian side. The dialogue seeks to develop mutual understanding and cooperation opportunities between India and the EU in the maritime security domain as another factor of the strategic partnership between the two sides consistent with the India-EU Roadmap to 2025."

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

BARC ex-CEO's bail  
rejected in TRP scam

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC  
MUMBAI, JAN. 20

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

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

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

manually.

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

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

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

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

India to despatch 20L  
vaccine doses to B'desh

SRIDHAR  
KUMARASWAMI | DC  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 20

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

A consignment containing 20 lakh doses of the Covishield vaccine will reach Bangladesh's Capital Dhaka on Thursday. The vaccine delivery fulfils the assurance given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh

● **THE VACCINE** delivery fulfils the assurance given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during the bilateral Virtual Summit last month that India would facilitate supply of vaccines as and when ready.

● **10 LAKH** doses of the Covishield vaccine will be despatched to Nepal.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during the bilateral Virtual Summit last month that India would facilitate supply of vaccines as and when ready.

It is also being seen as reflective of India's strong commitment to "Neighbourhood First" Policy and Bangladesh's special place in it. A consignment of 10 lakh doses of the Covishield vaccine will also reach Nepalese Capital Kathmandu on Thursday.

The Nepalese Government had earlier requested for supply of Indian manufactured Covid vaccines and the request was reiterated during the recent visit to India by the Nepalese Foreign Minister.

Meanwhile, a consignment containing

1.5 lakh doses of the Covishield vaccine reached Bhutan's Thimphu on Wednesday. "VaccineMaitri" begins. Consignment arrives in Bhutan. Another example of #NeighbourhoodFirst," External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar tweeted. Also, a consignment containing one lakh doses of the Covishield vaccine reached the Maldivian Capital Male on Wednesday.

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







## DECCAN Chronicle

21 JANUARY 2021

# When Team India staged mother of all comebacks

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

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

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

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

pace bowlers could be taken on even in their Gabba.

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

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

# Vaccine aid for neighbours

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

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

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

The only exception as of now is Pakistan. The Drugs Regulatory Authority of Pakistan has cleared the use of Covishield, manufactured by Serum Institute of India, and the government there is reportedly exploring ways to get it through Covax, an alliance set up by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations and World Health Organisation or directly. Both the routes are fine but India should positively decide should a request come from the western neighbour. It will have no dramatic consequences but will be the stating of the obvious — the real challenges the two now-estranged nations face are similar, and the ways to overcome them will be more successful if they are adopted together. Should it happen, the vaccine could produce some antibodies against ultra-nationalism and religious bigotry, too. The government should seize this chance.

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**KAUSHIK MITTER**  
Editor

**K. SUDHAKAR**  
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

**Hyderabad:** 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax : 040-27805256  
**Vijayawada:** No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234  
**Visakhapatnam:** Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285  
**Rajahmundry:** Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208  
**Anantapur:** Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904  
**Karimnagar:** Survey No.1341, Vavilapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433  
**Nellore:** Survey No.527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chennumudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580  
**Chennai:** SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/ 48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325  
**Coimbatore:** 77, Vivekananda Road, Rammagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph : 0422 2231255  
Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08

**Dilip Cherian**  
**Dilli Ka Babu**



# Free to air views, ex-babus square up in 'letters war' on 'love jihad' law

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

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

Earlier, a group of 104 retired bureaucrats wrote to Yogi Adityanath, expressing "deep disapproval" and concern at the use of the "love jihad" law. Noted signatories included retired bureaucrats

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

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

cies of the world.

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

## CADRE MERGER

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

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

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

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

## MAMATA'S BIG PROMOTION PUSH IN BENGAL

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

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

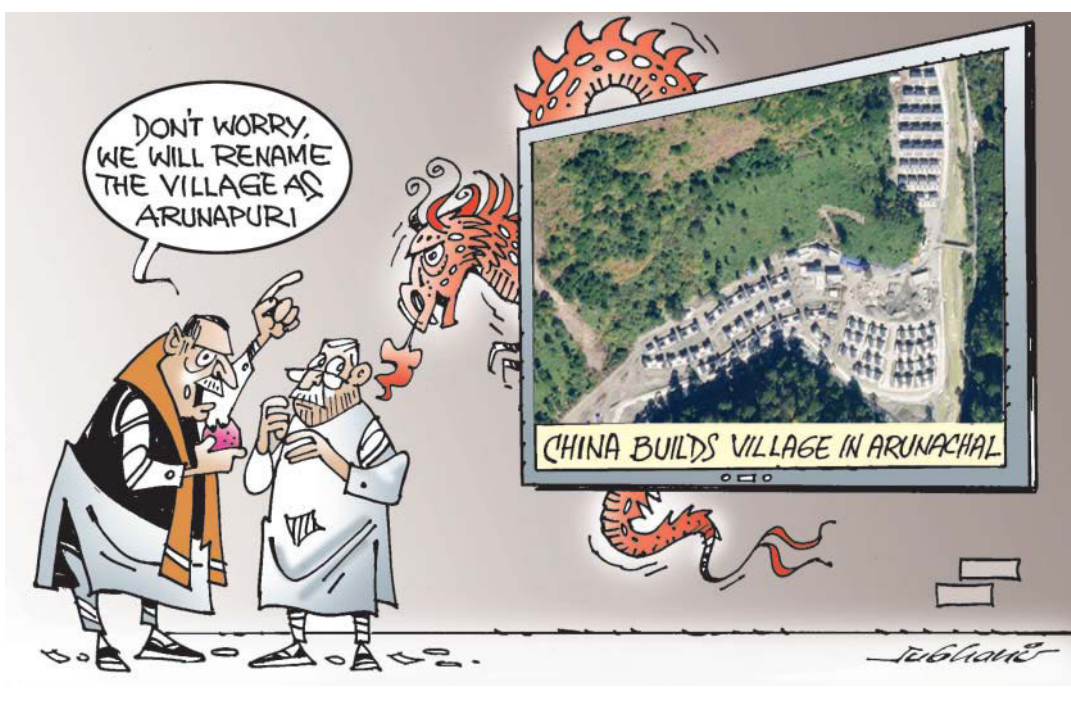
tive machinery, which has come under fire from various quarters. Among the 19 officers promoted as secretaries Smita Pandey, Vijay Bharti, Shubhanjan Das, Samir Kumar Bhattacharya, C.C. Guha, Rajat Bose, Kaushik Halder, N.C. Sarar and T.K. Rudra.

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

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

Share a babu experience! Follow [@dilipthecherian](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian) on Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

Subhani



# India, world must gear up as Biden era begins



K.C. Singh

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

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

These anecdotes bolstered Mr Blinken's argument that the US must lead the world "not only by the example of our power, but by the power of our example". He listed the most pressing challenges as rising nationalism, receding democracy, growing rivalry from "China, and Russia and other authoritarian states, mounting a threat to a stable and open international system". He also noted "a technological

revolution" was reshaping our lives. If the US doesn't lead, he said, "there can be only two outcomes: another nation will step in or none will, and chaos shall ensue".

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

Therefore, President Trump was right in the direction of his China policy, but wrong in the means he chose. The defence secretary-designate, Gen. Lloyd Austin (Retd), talked about India's near western neighbourhood. While he reiterated the US resolve to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, he qualified it, as Mr Trump avoided doing, by saying safeguarding the gains in women's rights, etc, must be a precondition to a final settlement. On Pakistan, he seemed to regress to old formulations like underscoring its importance to Afghan peace and regional stability.

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

not a first step in curbing the zeal of UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath in pursuing a majoritarian agenda and intolerance towards anyone criticising him. A comedian's being detained for perceived insult raises questions about freedom of speech being curbed. The four-year free pass the government got on this count is now over. This is happening as the BJP prepares for a no-holds-barred electoral fight in West Bengal, and when the farmers' protests at Delhi's main entry points is nearing two months.

In Britain, the farmers' protests led to 100 MPs, across party lines, raising concern. A similar move can't be ruled out in Washington, with Democrats now controlling both Houses. External affairs minister S. Jaishankar had earlier drawn the ire of a congressional committee by illogically seeking the exclusion of Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal from a meeting he was to attend as she had been critical of the government's actions in Kashmir, including Article 370's abrogation. She has been re-elected and may revisit that issue and now new ones like the farmers' protests.

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

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

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

But the key question is whether Mr Biden, with eight years as President Barack Obama's deputy and decades in the US Senate, can return the US and the world to its pre-pandemic, pre-Trump order. That seems unlikely both because China's rise, if anything, has been accelerated by the current global crises and also as Mr Biden has a domestic right-wing insurgency on his hands, which Mr Trump may continue to pour fuel on from his perch in Florida. Liberal internationalism needs re-invention. A post-Brexit and weakened British PM Boris Johnson has proposed a "D-10", a grouping of the G-7 plus three other democracies: India, South Korea and Australia. The US must reassess how to counter China's success in getting two groups off the ground after Mr Trump's defeat: Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and the Europe-China investment agreement. Will Mr Biden re-engage with the new version of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which Mr Trump walked out of. India just joined the UN Security Council for a two-year term. Will the Biden administration's revived interest in international institutions enable India to use its membership to push for UNSC reforms and curb the rising penetration of China in UN bodies.

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

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

## LETTERS

### FREE WATER

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

**K.V. Mukunda Rao**  
*Hyderabad*

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

**S. Nageswara Rao**  
*Hyderabad*

### SCHOOL TIMINGS

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

**Ather Roushanara**  
*Hyderabad*

## 50 YEARS AGO IN

## DECCAN Chronicle

### Mrs. Gandhi inaugurates Vizag Steel Plant work

VISAKHAPATNAM, JANUARY. 20

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

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



quick BITES

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

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

Laurus acquires majority stake in Richcore Life

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

Dumping duty on newsprint for 5 yrs recommended



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

PayPal's Xoom lets PIOs remit money real time

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

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

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



Hiring may surge in new academic year Education sector sheds 6 mn jobs

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JAN. 20

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

However, a silver lining is that once the schools reopen, Covid-19 restrictions may mandate schools to have fewer students in a classroom and this might raise the need for teachers. The education sector, which had employed 15 million people in 2018 and 2019, had started showing weakness towards the end of 2019, according to a study by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy. Employment fell to 14.5 million in the March quarter of 2020, even before lockdown hit all sectors. It further fell to 9.7 million in the June-September 2020 quarters. In the December 2020 quarter employment in education was down to 9.1 million.

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

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



PANDEMIC TAKES IT ALL

- Sector bucks the recovery trend in services sector
- Education sector had employed 15 million in 2018 and 2019
- This came down to 9.1 million in the

- December 2020 quarter
- Smaller-sized classes may raise demand for teachers in 2021
- Tech platforms could also ramp up hiring in new academic year

lesser hiring," said Shantanu Roj, founder & CEO, Schoolguru Eduserve.

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

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

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

several institutions in smaller cities have not been operating as earlier since the lockdown. This has impacted jobs of both teachers and support staff.

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

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

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

Don't ignore comorbidities in life or business: Birla

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

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

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

Terming volatility as a 'froth', Birla said it along with uncertainty have been an underlying phe-



Kumar Mangalam Birla

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

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

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

SUNDARAM FINANCE TO GET NEW MD FROM APRIL

Chennai, Jan. 20: Non-banking finance company Sundaram Finance on Wednesday announced that it has made key changes in its management.

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

T. T. Srinivasaraghavan, fondly called as 'TT' among close circles, would retire after serving the organisation for over 38 years as of March 31, 2021.

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

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

Lochan, who is the current director (strategy), has over 25 years of experience in financial services and was a partner in the consulting firm McKinsey and Company. Recently, he served Kasturi and Sons as its managing director.

Commenting on the tenure of Srinivasaraghavan, Sundaram Finance chairman S. Viji said, "Under his leadership, the company demonstrated its traditional focus on asset quality and most importantly its adherence to values of prudence and customer focus."

—PTI

Southern states top Niti Innovation Index

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

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

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

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

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



deals, registered GIs (geographical indications) and ICT (information and communication technology) exports. Karnataka's high FDI inflow has also enhanced the innovation capabilities of the state," the India Innovation Index 2020 said.

Maharashtra was ranked second with an innovation score of 38, while Bihar finished last at 14.5.

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

also become stronger as four of them occupy the top-five spots within the major states," the release said.

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

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

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

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

—PTI

Schneider asked to list or give exit option

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

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

Further, the shareholders who had tendered their

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

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

Following the de-recognition of BgSE and PSE in 2014 and 2015, respectively, the company moved to the

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

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

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

—PTI

'Insurers to weather growth slowdown'

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, JAN. 20

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

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

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

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

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

This has led to an increase in sales of health and protection policies, which, Moody's expects, will drive further growth in the future.

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

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

MKT MOMENTUM MAY TAKE SENSEX TO 50000 ZONE



RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, JAN. 20

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

The Nifty-50 also closed at a new all-time high of 14644.70 up 123.55 points, or 0.85 per cent, after hitting a new peak of 14666.45.

Foreign portfolio investors were net buyers of equities worth Rs 2,289.05 crore, marking a big jump from the last few sessions' trend of subdued buying.

Analysts expect the Sensex to breach the 50,000 mark given the upward momentum seen in the past two sessions and the earnings season trend.

"Even if the market does not hold at a high level, we can expect a rally in the best case scenario up to 14750/50000 and up to 14850/50500," said Shrikant Chouhan, executive VP, equity technical research, Kotak Securities.

"Global cues were positive ahead of Joe Biden's inauguration as US President on Wednesday. Further comments from US Treasury Secretary nominee Janet Yellen backing for more stimulus to ride out a pandemic-driven slump buoyed global markets," said Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

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

China to rein in online payment players

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

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

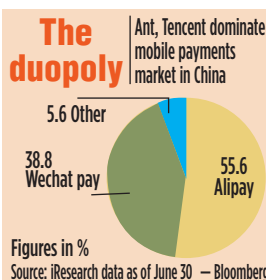
If a monopoly is confirmed, the central bank can suggest the cabinet impose restrictive measures, including breaking up the entity by its business type.

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

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

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

It will step up supervision of any changes to shareholders or benefi-



Figures in % Source: iResearch data as of June 30 — Bloomberg

aries at payments firms, it said.

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

Regulators shocked markets in November by suspending billionaire Jack Ma's record initial public

offering of Ant as they stepped up oversight.

Ant has since been ordered to overhaul its business and an antitrust investigation was launched into affiliate Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.

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

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

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

tant platform in the country. Alipay, the app operated by Ant, held 55.6 per cent of the mobile payments market as of the second quarter last year, according to internet consultant iResearch.

Tencent had a 38.8 per cent share. Room for growth in online payments is limited after years of a head-to-head rivalry between Ant and Tencent's Wechat Pay. Total transactions were 59.8 trillion yuan as of June 30 last year, up 8.8 per cent from a year earlier, according to data from iResearch.

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

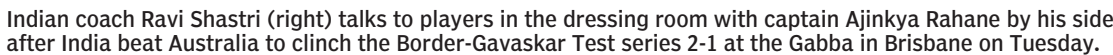


**Washington:** Top Indian American CEOs Sundar Pichai and Satya Nadella on Tuesday congratulated the Indian cricket team on their historic Test series win in Australia in Brisbane on Tuesday. “One of the greatest test series wins ever. Congrats India and well played Australia, what a series #INDvSAUS,”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

**Melbourne:** Three more people linked to the Australian Open have tested positive for Covid-19 in Melbourne, increasing to 10 those associated with the Grand Slam tennis tournament which begins on February 8.

Victoria state Emergency Services Minister Lisa Neville confirmed the new cases had been detected on Wednesday, adding that authorities are “very confident” one of the cases is a tennis player who is shedding the virus and is not infectious. The player is already in hard lockdown as they were on board a flight into Melbourne with another positive case. The other two cases are a player and their support person. — AP

## Victory under Rahane puts Virat in focus



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Middle-order mainstay  
Karimnagar by **K.Sudhakar** on behalf of  
H.No. 1-21/12/1, Cherlabhuthi,  
Karimnagar - 505 101

Cheteswar Pujara moved up one place to seventh after his dogged effort, while Mohammad Siraj jumped 32 places to 45th after taking six wickets in the match, including a five-wicket haul in the second innings.

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

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

113th position and bowling list in 65th position.

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

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

—PTI

# Smith axed, Sanju to lead IPL Royals

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

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

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

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

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

— *PTI*

**Chennai Super Kings – Players retained:** MS Dhoni, Ravindra Jadeja, Virat Kohli, Chinnabai, Ruturaj Gaikwad, KM Asif, Josy Hazlewood, Karn Sharma, Ambati Rayudu, Suresh Raina, Imran Thar, Deepak Chahar, Faf du Plessis, Shubani Thakur, Mitchell Santner, Dwayne Bravo, Lungi Ngidi, Sam Curran, Sal Rokee. **Released (6):** Harbhajan Singh, Shane Watson, Piyush Chawla, Kedra Jadhav, M. Vijay, Monu Kumar Singh.

**Delhi Capitals – Players retained:** Akinsha Rahane, Rishabh Pant, Kagiso Rabada, Anant Nortje, Marcus Stoinis, Daniel Sans, Shimron Hetmyer, Chris Woakes, Shikhar Dhawan, Prithvi Shaw, Shreyas Iyer, Axar Patel, Amit Mishra, Ishant Sharma, Ravichandran Ashwin, Harshal Patel, Lalit Yadav, Pravin Dube, Avesh Khan. **Released (6):** Mohit Sharma, Tusshar Deshpande, Kemo Paul, Sandeep Lamichane, Alex Carey, Jason Roy.

**Kings XI Punjab – Players retained:** K. L. Rahul, Chris Gayle, Mayank Agarwal, Nicholas Pooran, Shikhar Dhawan, Sarfaraz Khan, Deepak Hooda, Prabhmanish Singh, Mohammed Shami, Chris Jordan, Darshan Nalkande, Ravi Bishnoi, Murgan Ashwin, Arshdeep Singh, Harpreet Brar, Ishan Porel. **Released (9):** Glenn Maxwell, Karun Nair, Hardus Viljoen, Jagadeesha Suchith, Muejib ur Rahman, Sheldon Cottrell, Jimmy Neesham, Krishnappa Gowtham, Tajinder Singh.

**Kolkata Knight Riders – Players retained:** Eoin Morgan, Denesh Karthik, Nitish Rana, Shubman Gill, Rinku Singh, Rahul Tripathi, Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Kuldeep Yadav, Nicholas Pooran, Pradeep Singh, Sandeep Warrier, Shivam Dube, Mayi Varun Chakravarty, Andre Russell, Sunil Narine, Tim Seifert. **Released (6):** Nikhil Nali, Siddesh Lad, M. Siddharth, Tom Banton, Chris Green, Harry Gurney.

**Mumbai Indians – Players retained:** Rohit Sharma, Quinton de Kock, Suryakumar Yadav, Ishan Kishan, Chris Lynn, Anmolpreet Singh, Saurabh Tiwary, Aditya Tare, Kieron Pollard, Hardik Pandya, Krunal Pandya, Anukul Roy, Jasprit Bumrah, Trent Boult, Rahul Chahar, Jayant Yadav, Dhawal Kulkarni, Mohsin Khan. **Released (7):** Lasith Malinga, Mitchell McClenaghan, Anurag Thakur, Michael Coulter-Nile, Sherfane Rutherford, Prince Balwant Rai, Digvijay Deshmukh.

**Rajasthan Royals – Players retained:** Sanju Samson, Ben Stokes, Jofa Archer, Jos Buttler, Rryan Parag, Shreyas Gopal, Rahul Tewatia, Mahipal Lomror, Kartik Tyagi, Andrew Tye, Jaydev Unadkat, Mayank Markande, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Anur Rawat, David Miller, Manan Vohra, Robin Uthappa. **Released (8):** Steve Smith, Nikhil Rajput, Oshane Thomas, Akash Singh, Varun Aaron, Tom Curran, Anirudha Joshi, Shashank Singh.

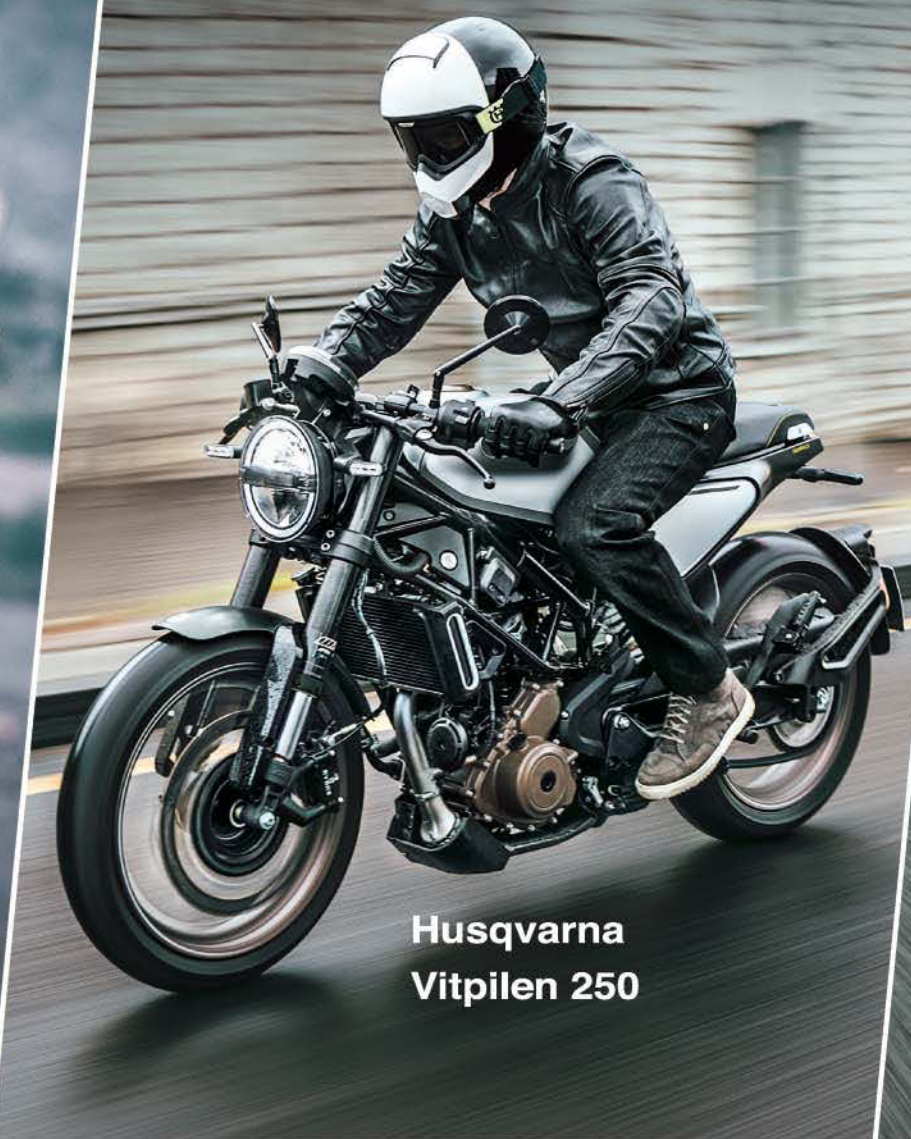
**Royal Challengers Bangalore – Players retained:** Virat Kohli, AB de Villiers, Faf du Plessis, Glenn Maxwell, Ravindra Jadeja, Mitchell Santner, Dinesh Karthi, Mohammed Siraj, Kane Richardson, Adam Zampa, Josy Phillips, Shazba Ahmed and Pawan Deshpande. **Released (10):** Aroin Finch, Chris Morris, Ishaan Dey, Moen Ali, Pawan Negi, Gurkeerat Singh Mann, Shivam Dube, Dale Steyn, Parthiv Patel, Umesh Yadav.

**Sunrisers Hyderabad – Players retained:** David Warner, Kane Williamson, Rashid Khan, T. Natarajan, Abhishek Sharma, Basil Thampi, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Jonny Bairstow, Manish Pandey, Mohammad Nabi, Sandeep Sharma, Mayank Agarwal, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mayank Agarwal, Mayank Agarwal, Shankar, Wriddhiman Saha, Abdul Samad, Mitchell Marsh, Jason Holder, Priyam Garg, Virat Singh. **Released (5):** Sanjay Yadav, B. Sandeep, Billy Stanlake, Fabian Allen, Yerra Pritviraj.

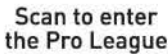
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