

# BJP to expand base in Nepal, Lanka: Oppn slams Tripura CM's statement

'When Home Minister was the BJP's national president, he during a meeting with us in Agartala had said that we have extended our base across India. Party's philosophy enlarged to many Asian and African countries'

AGARTALA

OPPOSITION Left parties and Congress on Monday criticised the BJP leadership after Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb's reported comments to extend the base of the saffron party in Nepal and Sri Lanka.

The opposition parties said that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's plan and target to expand its base in Nepal and Sri Lanka are against India's foreign policies and these cannot be done as the two countries are sovereign nations.

Deb while addressing a party meeting here on Saturday reportedly quoted Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and said: "When Home Minister was the BJP's National President he during a meeting with us in Agartala had said that we have extended our base

across India. Now we have to go to Sri Lanka and Nepal." The Chief Minister said that the BJP would form government in West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the party would remain in power in Tripura for 30 years as the CPI-M would be finished in the next assembly elections in 2023. "The BJP is the largest party in India now. It has maximum numbers of MPs, MLAs and other elected members," Deb said. The BJP, however, also supported the Chief Minister's views. Party spokesman Nabendu Bhattacharjee said that not only Sri Lanka and Nepal, the BJP's philosophy is being extended in many Asian and African countries. "Our targets and plans are not to form governments in those states. Our "Pracharaks" (functionaries)



Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb with Home Minister Amit Shah

are broadening BJP's philosophy and belief in those states. If the people of those countries accept our principles and viewpoints then the future course of action would be shaped," Bhattacharjee told the media on Monday.

Sharply criticising the Chief Minister's announcement, Communist Party of India-Marxist central committee member Jitendra Chowdhury said that Deb's speech is a combination of arrogance and ignorance.

Chowdhury, a former Tripura Minister, said that Deb's speech in a public forum portrayed the approach and method of governance that was prevailing in Tripura after the BJP-IPFT (Indigenous People's Front of Tripura) alliance came to power three years ago. "The BJP-led

governments both at the Center and the states have forcefully muted all kinds of civil liberties, freedom of speech and all pillars of democracy while a total lawlessness has been prevailing in Tripura.

"It has been revealed further from Deb's speech that the top brass in BJP is engaged in the internal affairs of our neighbouring countries, which is contrary to our long cherished foreign policy since independence," the veteran tribal leader and former Lok Sabha member said. He alleged that it is extremely unfortunate that this same BJP and their governments have brought sedition charges against the innocent citizens to silence the dissent voices, and octogenarian Varavara Rao, Gautam Navlakha and teen ager Disha Ravi like people are not spared.

# 96% Covid warriors skip 2<sup>nd</sup> dose

'7,668 beneficiaries received the second jab, which is just 4 per cent of the over 1,91,000 healthcare workers who received their first dose on Jan 16'

NEW DELHI

IN what could eventually become worrisome, 96 per cent of Covid Warriors have not been turning up for the second dose of the Covid-19 vaccine.

On Saturday, 7,668 beneficiaries received the second jab, according to the provisional data released by the Union Health Ministry, which is just 4 per cent of the over 1,91,000 healthcare workers who received their first dose on January 16, according to News18 report.

The two vaccines that have been cleared for use in India - Covishield and Covaxin - require that two doses be given 28 days apart. However, as per the recommendation of the apex drug regulator, the doses can be taken within a window of four to six weeks.

The government has set a deadline of March 1 to complete the vaccination of the frontline workers across the country, with a five-day period for "mop up" activity to vaccinate those who might have been missed out, said joint secretary of the Union health ministry, Mandep Bhandari. For healthcare workers, the deadline is February 20.

India has been recording a steady decline in the number of daily new deaths since October 1, 2020, while the national recovery rates amongst the highest in the



## 'Vaccination for above 50 in 3 weeks'

NEW DELHI The Union government will begin vaccination drive for around 27 crore Indians above the age of 50 three weeks from now, Union Health Minister Harsh vardhan said on Monday.

"Three weeks from now, the government will start giving doses of coronavirus vaccines to 27 crore persons above the age of 50," he said at a press briefing here. An expert group on vaccination will discuss how to pay for the doses for those above 50, he added.

## Maha Minister bats for 3T formula

Aurangabad: The "3T formula" of tracing, testing and treatment will have to be implemented strictly to tackle a rise in COVID-19 cases in some parts of Maharashtra, state health minister Rajesh Tope said. Talking to reporters, Tope said the state government had managed to flatten the curve in the last one month as far as daily addition of cases was concerned, but a recent rise in numbers in Mumbai, Wardha and some other pockets was "alarming".

world, the Union Health Ministry said on Sunday. "Since 1st October 2020, the nation has seen an unabated decline in Case Fatality Rate. The Case Fatality Rate today stands below 1.5 (1.43 percent). India's Case Fatality Rate is one of the lowest in the world," it said. The recoveries have surged to 1,06,11,731 with 11,016 patients getting discharged in a span of 24 hours. "India's Covid-19 recovery rate of 97.31 per cent is amongst the highest in the world. The difference between the recovered and active cases has grown to 1,04,74,164 as on date," the ministry highlighted.

Meanwhile, the night curfew, currently in force in four major Gujarat cities, including Ahmedabad, to stem the COVID-19 spread, was on Monday extended till February 28, officials said. However, in a concession to people, the curfew from now on in Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara and Rajkot will be in force between midnight and 6 am instead of the earlier 11pm to 6am, they added.

The Centre on Monday approved the proposal of the Press Information Bureau's journalist welfare committee to provide a financial relief Rs 5 lakh each to families of 39 journalists who died due to the coronavirus, a panel member said. The government has earmarked an additional fund for this purpose for the Journalist Welfare Committee (JWC), and journalists from across India will be covered under the scheme.



TDP State president K Atchannaidu speaking at the party office in Visakhapatnam on Monday

## Atchannaidu calls for concerted efforts to save VSP

- Says MPs, MLAs should be prepared to resign from their posts for the cause of the steel plant
- If the ruling party MPs resign, the TDP will not contest in the by-elections, he says
- TDP national president N Chandrababu Naidu to visit Vizag today and express solidarity with ex-MLA Palla Srinivasa Rao who is on an indefinite hunger strike opposing the privatisation of VSP

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VISAKHAPATNAM

THE MPs and the MLAs should be prepared to resign from their posts in order to save Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) from privatisation, TDP State president K Atchannaidu said.

Speaking at the party office here on Monday, Atchannaidu called for a concerted effort to protect VSP from privatisation.

Despite the agitation growing intense, Atchannaidu pointed out that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy did not visit Delhi to help address the issue. "TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu is paying a visit to Visakhapatnam on Tuesday and will meet former TDP MLA Palla Srinivasa Rao who is on hunger strike for the past six days," said the TDP State president.

Further, he said, the TDP leaders will extend support to the Chief Minister if he leads the agitation forward. "If the MPs resign for the sake of VSP, the TDP will not contest in the by-elections," he added.

Atchannaidu alleged that the Chief Minister is responsible for the VSP slipping into the private sector. Former Home Minister N Chinirajappa and other TDP leaders were present.

## 15 killed after truck overturns in Jalgaon

JALGAON

Fifteen people were killed and five others injured after a truck carrying labourers overturned and fell into a roadside pit in Maharashtra's Jalgaon district in the wee hours of Monday, police said. The accident took place near a temple in Kingaon village around 1 am when the papaya-laden truck was on its way to Yawal tehsil in Jalgaon from Dhule, an official from Yawal police station said. The deceased included two children, aged 3 and 5 years, and a 15-year-old girl. A 14-year-old boy, who was sleeping on top of the truck, escaped unhurt, the official said.



Chief Secretary Aditya Nath Das reviewing arrangements for Southern Zone Council meet to be held at Tirupati on March 4, with officials on Monday

# CS reviews Southern Zonal Council meet arrangements

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AMARAVATI

CHIEF secretary Aditya Nath Das on Monday conducted a review meeting on arrangements for Southern Zonal Council meeting scheduled to be held in Tirupati on March 4.

Union home minister Amit Shah will chair the 29th Southern Zonal Council meet in which over 100 representatives from Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Andaman Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands will participate.

The chief secretary directed the Chittoor district collector, superintendent of police and protocol officials to finalise the

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah to chair the meet on March 4, to be attended by representatives from Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Andaman Nicobar and Lakshadweep
- District Collector and SP told to finalise the venue and inform the guests

venue for the meeting at Tirupati and inform the guests. He asked the officials to make necessary arrangements for Tirumala darshan for the guests. The chief secretary said the

officials should take necessary Covid precautions and make arrangements to supply masks and safety kits to the participants of the meeting. He said necessary arrangements should be made including Wi-fi and internet facility for the media persons covering the programme. He said a liaison officer should be appointed to coordinate with various departments for the success of the programme.

State reorganisation committee secretary L Premachandra Reddy, Addl DGP Ravisankar Ayyannar, principal secretaries T Krishnababu, Kumar Viswajit, Assembly secretary Balakrishnamacharyulu and IT officials were present.

## CM stresses on affordable plots to middle class

- Officials propose construction of ring roads around towns
- Smart town layouts will come up around ring roads
- Govt to start Clean Andhra Pradesh programme with a100-day action plan to keep the state clean

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy suggested changes in the proposals made for providing infrastructure facilities in smart townships.

In a review on solid waste management and urban housing at his camp office in Tadepalli on Monday, the Chief Minister said the goal was to provide high living standards to middle class people and directed the officials to provide undisputed and clear-titled plots with all the required permissions at affordable prices on non-profit basis to them.

The officials discussed with the Chief Minister several town plans already being implemented in various states and also how to create land bank for the scheme and develop infrastructure.

The Chief Minister said providing plots at affordable prices to middle class people is a continuous process and plans should be made to provide plots to eligible beneficiaries as and when they apply. The officials laid proposals for building ring roads around the

towns. The designs of roads should be such that both the government and people who give land for the construction should be benefited and smart towns' layouts should come up around the ring roads. It was decided initially to develop 18 layouts in 12 towns. The proposals are made for designing smart towns of at least 25 acre to 200 acre, depending on the population of cities and towns. The plan is to prepare the layout within 18 months after works start.

The government will start Clean Andhra Pradesh (CLAP) programme with a100-day action plan to keep the state clean. Plans are afoot for NGOs and public participation in the programme which will have 3,825 garbage collection vehicles, more auto tipplers, and over 6,000 bins and waste management systems in municipalities. The Chief Minister said to start bio-mining and there should be change in cleanliness in the state with these programmes.

Municipal and urban development minister Botcha Satyanarayana, Solid and Liquid Waste Management Task Force chairman Alla Ayodhya Ramireddy, municipal and urban development principal secretary Y Srilakshmi, municipal administration commissioner M M Nayak, CCLA special commissioner Narayana Bharat Gupta, finance secretary Gulzar, TIDCO MD Ch Sridhar and other senior officials were present.

## 'Focus on improving edu standards in govt schools'

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
TIRUPATI

PRINCIPAL Secretary for School Education B Rajasekhara has directed the officials to focus on increasing the educational standards as the government has been providing modern infrastructure on par with corporate schools. The academic performance of each school will be reviewed and rankings will be given.

He reviewed the progress of works under 'Mana Badi - Nadu Nedu' held at SV University Senate hall here on Monday along with State Project Director (SamagraSiksha) K Vetriselvi, Advisor (Infra) A Murali, APEWIDC State Project Director Rajeswar and Joint Collector (Development) V Veerabrahmam.

Speaking on the occasion, Rajasekhara said the state government has taken up various measures to upgrade the school infrastructure through the implementation of Mana Badi - Nadu Nedu programme. As part of providing basic infrastructure works various works were taken up including toilets with running water, drinking water supply, fans and tube lights, furniture for students and staff, paintings, major and minor repairs, black boards, English labs, compound walls and kitchen sheds.

## SC slaps notice on WhatsApp, Fb

Continued from P1

In Europe, it is different because they have a special law," he argued. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, said the right to privacy was a fundamental right and they cannot compromise with the privacy of people.

Divan cited that WhatsApp had already delayed the implementation of its new privacy policy till May 15 this year and sought a notice which is returnable before this date. The bench said it is impressed with Divan's submission that while the Data Protection Bill is about to be brought into force, WhatsApp is framing a policy to share data. Datar also said that the messages were encrypted end to end.

The top court directed WhatsApp and Facebook to file their statement contesting the contentions in the present application. The Chief Justice told the WhatsApp counsel that people thought if a message was sent from a person to another and then to a third person, the whole thing was disclosed to Facebook.

As counsel contended that this is not happening, Chief Justice Bobde disagreed, saying that they are telling information heard and read through news reports, and if WhatsApp disagrees, it should clarify this on oath.

## PM to address experts for effective implementation of budget

Continued from P1

During the webinar, the panelists will share their ideas on improving pace and quality of infrastructure development, with focus on advanced technology, and attracting more investments in the sector. This will be followed by two parallel breakout sessions involving discussions between senior officials of groups of ministries and cross-sectional experts to compile a list of implementable projects to fast-track implementation of the budget vision and draft an implementation roadmap. Ongoing consultations have also been planned with stakeholders on implementation of the finalised strategy, the statement said.

## Nanosatellite to carry Bhagavad Gita, PM Modi's photograph into space

Continued from P1

SpaceKidz reportedly asked the individuals who are interested to send their names to the space and received 25,000 entries, from which 1,000 names are of people from outside India. "We decided to do this because it will spark interest of the people in the mission and space science," Dr Kesan said. The people who have send in their names will be given boarding passes, she added. Satish Dhawan Satellite, that is scheduled to be launched on February 28 by the polar satellite launch vehicle (PSLV-C51), will also carry three scientific payloads, including one to study space radiation, another for studying the magnetosphere, and one that will demonstrate a low-power wide-area communication network. A Brazil's earth observation satellite Amazonia-1, 20 co-passenger satellite and a demonstration satellite by Pixxel will also be carried in the same mission.

## Govt eases curbs on geospatial data for map-making

Continued from P1

Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan in a press conference said the easing of norms will greatly help in several sectors that were suffering because of non-availability of high-quality maps. "Availability of comprehensive, highly accurate, granular and constantly updated representation of geospatial data will significantly benefit diverse sectors of the economy, significantly boost innovation in the country and greatly enhance its preparedness for emergency re-

sponse," Vardhan said.

He said earlier even the Survey of India, the organisation entrusted with making maps, had to seek permission for mapping from different agencies, thus delaying its work by at least three-to-six months.

In a series of tweets, Modi said, "Our government has taken a decision that will provide a huge impetus to Digital India. Liberalising policies governing the acquisition and production of geospatial data is a massive step in our vision for an Aatmanir-

har Bharat," he said.

The move will unlock tremendous opportunities for the country's start-ups, private sector, public sector and research institutions to drive innovations and build scalable solutions. This will also generate employment and accelerate economic growth, he stressed. "India's farmers will also be benefited by leveraging the potential of geospatial and remote sensing data.

Democratising data will enable the rise of new technologies and platforms that will drive efficiencies in agriculture and allied sectors. "These reforms demonstrate our commitment to improving ease of doing business in India by deregulation," he said.