



A needy child touches volunteer Fatima Sanson, dressed up as Mrs. Claus, in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais state, Brazil.— AFP photos



Volunteer Fatima Sanson, dressed up as Mrs. Claus, embraces a needy child.

## Covid, cancer can't stop Mrs Santa Claus in Brazil



A needy child kisses volunteer Fatima Sanson.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic and her recent battle with cancer, Fatima Sanson was determined to keep her Christmas tradition of dressing up as Mrs. Claus and giving out toys and hugs to impoverished kids. So the 61-year-old made herself a plastic “hug curtain,” found an assistant to disinfect it between embraces, dressed up in her bright red suit, and set up her annual toy and food giveaway in a poor neighborhood in Belo Horizonte, in southeastern Brazil. “It felt so good to be able to give hugs again during the pandemic,” said Sanson, who has spent nearly five decades doing charitable work in impoverished areas. She was all too aware of the risk involved this year.

Not only does her age put her in the high-risk group for Covid-19, but the pandemic began just as she was coming off a fight with breast cancer. Brazil has the second-highest Covid-19 death toll worldwide, after the United

States, with more than 178,000 people killed. But neither the virus nor the protective layer of plastic got in the way as Sanson spread her Christmas cheer to her young public. “I really liked getting a nice, warm hug from Mrs. Claus,” said one of the children, Daphne Victoria. Parents for their part took home baskets full of food—especially welcome this year, given that low-income workers have been hit hard by the economic fallout of the pandemic.

“I hope better days are coming and that next year we’ll be able to give real hugs, be able to feel that human warmth that everyone’s been missing,” said one mother at the charitable event, house cleaner Valmira Pereira. Sanson was happy to be able to give hugs at all. “It’s so good to hug and be hugged. We’re ‘infecting’ each other with our hugs, our affection, our love,” she said. — AFP

## Sony to buy US anime giant Crunchyroll for \$1.17 billion

Japan’s Sony said yesterday it has agreed to buy US anime streaming giant Crunchyroll, which has more than three million paying subscribers, in a deal worth \$1.17 billion. By purchasing the anime, games and manga distributor from AT&T, Sony’s entertainment division is hoping to strengthen its position in the global video streaming market and compete with the likes of Netflix and Hulu, which also offer anime titles. Crunchyroll, founded in 2006, is the world’s largest on-

line library of Japanese animation.

Tony Vinciguerra, CEO of Sony Pictures Entertainment, said the firm had already developed “a deep understanding of this global artform” through its own anime streaming service Funimation, which it will combine with Crunchyroll. “Together with Crunchyroll, we will create the best possible experience for fans and greater opportunity for creators, producers and publishers in Japan and elsewhere,” he said. “We look forward to continuing to leverage the power of creativity and technology to succeed in this rapidly growing segment of entertainment.” Sony has recently seen massive success in Japan with the popular “Demon Slayer” anime series made by its Aniplex studio. A film based on the series has been a huge hit during the pandemic, becoming Japan’s second-highest-grossing film of all time and taking 27.5 billion yen (\$265 million) at the box office. — AFP



The logo of Japan’s Sony is displayed on the wall of the company’s headquarters building in Tokyo. — AFP