





## SHORT TAKES

MAJ GEN (RETD)  
S.N. BHASKAR  
DIES AT 96DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 8

Major General S.N. Bhaskar (retd) from the Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers, and former chairman and managing director of Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML), passed away here on Thursday. He was 96.

Maj. Gen. Bhaskar (retd) was born on November 20, 1924 and was commissioned into the Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers at the age of 24. He was awarded the Ati Vishisth Seva Medal in 1979 and retired with distinguished service in 1980.

After retirement from the Army, he led BEML as its chairman and managing director and improved the company's efficiency and production. He is credited with turning BEML into a success story for which he was awarded the Padma Shri in 1984.

According to a news release, Maj. Gen. Bhaskar (retd) passed away at his residence in Banjara Hills due to old age and the last rites were performed on Friday at Swarg Vatika crematorium.

SHIV SENA  
REDDY IS NEW  
STATE YC CHIEFDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 8

The Indian Youth Congress (YC) announced Shiv Sena Reddy as president of the Telangana Youth Congress on Friday, following an election and an interview.

The elections were conducted in September last year in which Shiv Sena Reddy secured 59,967 votes.

The Congress called the top three contestants and conducted interviews in December last.

On Thursday night, the YC Election Commission announced Shiv Sena Reddy as president of the TS unit. Shiv Sena Reddy thanked YC president B.V. Srinivas, joint secretary Krishna and Manickam Tagore, the state Congress incharge, and other key leaders.

AKHILA PRIYA'S  
BROTHER: WE  
OWN PROPERTY

From Page 1

She alleged that Praveen Rao's agreement with My Home had triggered the arrest of her sister. "We own the property," she claimed. It is learnt that Praveen Rao offered some money to the Bhuma family but the latter did not agree for a compromise as the amount offered was "very meagre". Meanwhile, knowledgeable sources said Akhila Priya had made desperate attempts to reach out to MLC K. Kavitha. When her attempts failed, Akhila Priya drove up to Kavitha's residence but the two could not meet. Sources said Kavitha did not want to intervene in the land dispute. Akhila Priya also tried to reach out to AP ministers M. Sucharita and B. Rajendranath Reddy but failed. TD Telangana president L. Ramana coordinated with her, sources close to the former minister said.

JAPAN KEEN TO  
EXPAND REACH  
IN TELANGANADC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 8

Japan is keen to expand its presence in Telangana and continue its ties that have seen companies like Toshiba invest in the state, as well as the country's collaboration in infrastructure projects such as the Outer Ring Road project in Hyderabad.

Tama Masayuki, Consul General, Consulate General of Japan at Chennai, during a seminar on 'India-Japan Business Promotion, Opportunities & Road Ahead — Post Covid', organised by FTCCI and Asa Bhanu Japan Centre, said the Consulate-General will continue to work with FTCCI and Asa Bhanu Japan Centre to promote economic activities and cultural exchanges between Telangana state and Japan.



Cops detain University of Hyderabad students trying to block earthmovers from clearing ground for the laying of a road on land belonging to the university, in Gachibowli, Hyderabad, on Friday.

— P. SURENDRA

UoH students protest  
against land grabbers

Over 100ft of university compound demolished near ISB

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 8

The University of Hyderabad's Student Union has alleged that some people, ostensibly with the support of local politicians as well as government officials, were making continuous illegal attempts to encroach upon the university land.

In the latest incident on Thursday, over 100 feet of the university compound wall was demolished near the Indian School of Business, an action the students claim was done

● **LAST YEAR**, the student union said, there were two major land encroachment attempts, allegedly supported by the state government officials.

without prior notice or any information to the university authorities.

The issue has been a longstanding one, with several complaints lodged by the university on the matter over a decade. Last year, the student union said, there were two major land encroachment attempts,

allegedly supported by the state government officials. The students now demand support from the university management to find a permanent solution to the issue.

Explaining the issue on an administrative level, Prof. Vinod Pavarala said, "This is not a new issue. It has been going on for years now, between the university management and the district administration. The land practically belongs to the government, leased out to the university for a period of 99

years. But we cannot let it be taken away at any point without negotiations with the university."

He added that even as the university has been in touch with the district administration and both state and central government authorities to resolve the matter, the district administration has suddenly ordered the laying of a road on university property. "This has now forced the University to approach the High Court to intervene in the matter," said Prof. Pavarala.

Dismissal oftainted  
Bommakal village  
sarpanch: LUSDC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, JAN. 8

Even after the illegal land encroachment and fraud committed by Bommakal village sarpanch, Purumalla Srinivas were established by the three-man committee appointed by the district administration to probe into the issue, why is there a delay in dismissing the sarpanch from his post, questioned members of Lokshatta Udyama Samstha (LUS).

In a complaint written to the district collector, K. Shashanka, they alleged that as many as 22 criminal cases were filed against Srinivas, who

misused panchayat funds after colluding with the village secretary.

When LUS made a complaint to Lokayukta against illegal encroachments of government lands, forging signatures of village secretaries, swallowing panchayat funds, illegal layouts, allotment of fake house numbers and frauds committed by the Srinivas, the Lokayukta after conducting inquiry confirmed the charges.

Not removing him from his post is nothing but insulting the Constitution and any further delay would indirectly influence his compatriots into notorious activities.

KTR: Tech growth in  
state will create jobsHARLEEN MINOCHA | DC  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 8

Minister K.T. Rama Rao on Friday launched a science and technology cluster under the Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC) initiative.

The Hyderabad cluster will be led by the Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad (RICH), and aims to bolster nationwide scientific collaboration.

Commenting on the importance of establishing the cluster, Ajit Rangnekar, director general of RICH, said, "We will foster multi-disciplinary research and entrepreneurship to build a more prosperous and equitable future. We will work with MSMEs, start-ups, researchers and industry to rapidly commercialise promising ideas."

The office of the principal scientific adviser (PSA) to the Centre has proposed the establishment of mega S&T clusters in four cities that have strong organisations, institutions and

● **THE HYDERABAD** cluster will be led by the Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad (RICH), and aims to bolster nationwide scientific collaboration.

industries focused on science and technology — Hyderabad, Bengaluru, National Capital Region (NCR)-Delhi and Pune — to develop a futuristic roadmap for science and technology in India.

"We are looking to help launch at least five large impactful companies over the next five to seven years, which will benefit millions, generate wealth, and create over 1,00,000 jobs across the country."

In the longer term, our goal is to make Telangana state the best centre of excellence for life sciences, agriculture and digital technology," Rama Rao said, speaking at the event.

HYD GIRL DUPED  
IN MARRIAGE BY  
OMANI NATIONALATHER MOIN | DC  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 8

The family of a young woman, allegedly cheated by two marriage agents who hid information about the groom being mentally unsound, is now seeking justice and the woman's return from Oman, where she was taken to after her wedding to an Omani national.

The agents also did not give the ₹1 lakh mehr (dower) that was promised to the woman's family.

According to Fatima Begum from Gazibanda, mother of the young woman, two agents, Sayeed Nawabsahab Kunta, and Qadeer of Moghalpura, came to her house and informed that a rich Omani family was in search of a bride for their son and convinced the family to negotiate with one Abdullah who was acted as an agent from the bridegroom side from Muscat. Fatima Begum said, "After consecutive meetings, our family agreed to marry our youngest daughter in her mid-20s, to Saleem bin Nasser Al-Salmi in Hyderabad on November 10, 2019. During the nikah, three relatives of Saleem who were present left for Oman five days later."

She said her daughter went to Muscat on December 25 last year. Once there, her daughter was shocked to see the abnormal behaviour of her husband and later came to know that he was mentally unsound. Her daughter was being forced to do odd jobs and take care of her husband, the mother added. Fatima Begum, mother of six daughters, said when her daughter wanted to return to India she was not allowed as the passport was snatched. She contended that Sayeed and Qadeer deliberately kept them in the dark about the mental condition of Saleem.

TS vaccine dry run  
encounters glitchesDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 8

The state-wide Covid vaccine dry run on Friday confirmed some problems that the health department has been encountering with software and programmes used to register beneficiaries for the actual vaccination drive.

Friday's dry run was the second in the state after a similar but limited exercise that took place on January 2 in Hyderabad and Mahbubnagar. According to Director of Health Services Dr G. Srinivasa Rao, the dry run was conducted as per the directions of the Centre.

The Centre has been getting more active each day with respect to the Covid vaccination drive, holding meetings with all states. These exercises are to be stepped up in the days to come. It is expected that vaccine deliveries will begin soon, most likely in the next few days. The Centre is expected to announce a date, sometime in the second week of this month, when the drive will begin across the country.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called a meeting with the Chief Ministers on Monday to discuss the Covid-19 vaccine roll-out plan.

Dr Srinivasa Rao said during Friday's dry run, which saw 917 'vaccination sessions' covering 21,777 'beneficiaries', it was found that the Co-WIN software has certain pin code issues and it was jumbling up beneficiaries' details between neighbouring health facilities and districts. The programme was seen to be updating slowly and details of not all the beneficiaries were updated.

COVID-19 CASES  
SPIKE IN RANGA  
REDDY DISTRICTDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 8

Ranga Reddy district, that abuts Hyderabad city, and Warangal Urban district, covering the state's second largest city of Warangal, have recorded a slow upward creep in daily cases of Covid-19 since January 5.

According to the daily Covid-19 bulletin issued by the state health department, Ranga Reddy district saw 34 cases on January 5, followed by 36 on January 6, and 41 on January 7. Warangal Urban recorded 13 cases on January 5, 14 on January 6, and 18 on January 7.

The GHMC area over the same period, saw a slight dip in daily cases. The health department said GHMC area recorded 82 cases on January 5, 71 on January 6, and 66 on January 7.

The latest addition to the Covid-19 caseload was 346 for Thursday, along with two more deaths from the disease, the department said. The total cases so far stand at 2,89,135, and 1,561 people have died from the disease. As on Thursday, 2,82,574 people were deemed to have recovered, including 397 on Thursday.

It is expected that such issues will be resolved before the vaccination drive begins. On Friday, some ministers and health department officials fanned out across the state to oversee the dry run and identify issues that need addressing.

## TRS warn Bandi

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 8

TRS MLAs hit out at BJP leaders including state affairs incharge Tarun Chugh and state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar over their comments against Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and the state government.

Government whip Guvvala Balaraju, MLCs Shambirpur Raju and M.S. Prabhakar conducted a press conference at Telangana Bhavan on Friday to speak in defence of the Chief Minister.

Balaraju accused the BJP leaders of obstructing development and alleged that they were spreading false propaganda against TRS government for their political gains.

Balaraju stated that the Centre had not allocated funds to the state, and asked why the BJP leaders including Union minister of state G. Kishan Reddy could not demand that the Centre give importance to the state.

The MLA said that Chugh and Sanjay were dreaming of coming to power in 2023 but they would not be able to do so even in 2048. "There is no scope for the BJP and the people will not give them a chance," Balaraju said. He also said that the TRS was a secular party and does not provoke in the name of religion and caste.

Responding to comments that Telangana state was becoming 'bimaar',

Balaraju said, "Telangana is not bimaar; the BJP and its leaders are bimaar," Balraj said.

Balaraju said that Sanjay had forgotten he was a Parliament member and was using filthy language against the Chief Minister. With regard to Chugh, the TRS MLA said that he should first give a statement on the safety of women in Uttar Pradesh, against the backdrop of the rape and murder of a 50-year-old woman in Badaun.

MLC Prabhakar stated that Sanjay does not have political sense and must first read the GHMC Act and then comment against the state government. He said that the GHMC Council meeting will be arranged as per the norms of the GHMC Act.

Prabhakar said TRS leaders were being patient as they had been instructed by the Chief Minister to maintain restraint. "If over 60 lakh TRS members react, the BJP leaders would think twice about their fate before making statements to burn the state," the MLC said. The BJP could not draw 300 members for its meeting at Bodhan, he claimed.

MLC Shambirpur Raju asked Sanjay and Nizamabad MP D. Arvind where they were when Hyderabad and Warangal were affected by floods. He said that Sanjay should get additional funds for Telangana state before issuing statements.

Schools reopening  
on govt agendaDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 8

Key decisions on Covid control, vaccination and reopening of educational institutions, as also matters relating to land and revenue, are expected from a meeting chaired by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao here on Monday.

Ministers, district collectors and officials from the health, education, revenue, panchayat raj, as also municipal and forest departments will attend the meet.

The Chief Minister recently reviewed issues related to revenue department and several decisions are pending. The meeting agenda included discussions on pending mutations, regularisation of sada bainamas, setting up of revenue tribunals, and resolution of

issues included in Revenue Part B. It will also determine the action required to expedite resolution of revenue-related matters. The Chief Minister is likely to discuss ways to check the spread of Covid-19 and its new strain in the state. He would finalise a plan of action for the vaccine jab including matters of storage and supply.

The meeting would also discuss the date and modalities for resumption of classes in educational institutions.

The implementation of rural and urban development programmes will also come up for review. Matters of funds distribution will also be discussed. The meeting will review implementation of the Haritha Haram aimed at increasing the greenery in the state, the CMO said.

## PANEL | IN ACTION

Commission to work with govt to make policy recommendations

## Women's panel to work on helpline

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 8

The newly-appointed Telangana State Women's Commission, headed by V. Sunitha Laxma Reddy, a former minister, took charge at the Buddha Bhavan on Friday, in the presence of TRS working president and minister K.T. Rama Rao.

Sunitha Laxma Reddy, who has earlier served as women and child development minister, said that there are challenges that lay ahead due to non-functioning of the commission for two-and-a-half years, and that she will analyse the situation in the next few weeks.

They have prioritised the women's helpline number in the state — 181 — and have kept the She Teams initiative on their priority agenda, saying that the commission will work with the government to implement it effectively, soon.

"The 24x7 helpline number, 181, will be available for women across the state. It will respond immediately and connect them wherever necessary with the police, ambulance, and other emergency services, as well



V. Sunitha Laxma Reddy assumes charge as chairperson of Telangana State Women's Commission at Buddha Bhavan in Hyderabad on Friday.

— R. PAVAN

● **SUNITHA LAXMA REDDY**, who has earlier served as women and child development minister, said that there are challenges that lay ahead due to non-functioning of the commission for two-and-a-half years.

as the nearest Sakhi centre," Sunitha Laxma Reddy said. Among the members of the commission are representatives from different sections of society. The Women's Commission will be working with the government to make policy recommendations in the state.

## Covid-19 norms go for a toss

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 8

In the celebration of a fully functional Women's Commission in Telangana, Covid-19 safety protocols, and social distancing norms were thrown in the winds on Friday.

At a time when the state is witnessing up and down swings in Covid-19 infections, with a 65 per cent rise overnight three days ago, it was not just visitors, even but even

political leaders did not seem concerned.

Hundreds of people gathered in a small room for the ceremony on Friday at the Women's Commission office in Tank Bund.

IT minister K.T. Rama Rao, and women and child welfare minister Satyavathi Rathod attended the event along with several party leaders and activists on Friday. The cadre and well-wishers from across the state were cooped up in a small

space, without Covid-19 safety measures and many of them did not wear masks.

When asked, cops on duty had no answers, whereas authorities from the department present at the event said that such a huge gathering wasn't anticipated.

"Party workers and cadres from various districts came down. We did not know this would happen, and we were caught off-guard," said an official.



Blatantly violating Covid guidelines, TRS workers seen without face masks and no social distancing at Buddha Bhavan in Hyderabad on Friday.



## OTHER STORIES

KTPP EMPLOYEE  
DIES AS LORRY  
HITS BIKEDC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, JAN. 8

An employee of the Kakatiya Thermal Power Plant (KTPP), K. Ram Chander, who was heading home from work after the night shift died when a lorry rammed his bike near Karkapalle village of Ghanpur mandal in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district early on Friday. Chander is a native of Mylaram in Regonda mandal and used to work as a security guard at the KTPP.

According to Ghanpur sub-inspector of police K. Satyanarayan Raj, a sand lorry hit his bike and ran over him resulting in his instantaneous death. The sand lorry was heading towards Bhupalpally from Parkal. Ram Chander was not wearing a helmet at the time of the accident, he noted.

The lorry driver was absconding and the vehicle has been seized. A case is registered against the lorry driver and the body has been shifted to the mortuary of the Government Hospital in Parkal for post-mortem examination, said Raj.

SUDA AREA  
IS DEVELOPING  
FASTER: MINISTERDC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, JAN. 8

TRS government is striving hard to develop villages and towns in an all-round manner, backward classes minister Gangula Kamalakara said on Friday.

Inaugurating the renovated building of Satavahana Urban Development Authority (SUDA) at the ZPP complex here, he said Karimnagar will be developed as per a master plan, along with villages surrounding the town.

He maintained that several regions in Telangana have seen overall development after formation of the separate state and TRS coming to power.

SUDA was established in 2017 to develop Karimnagar town as well as the surrounding villages. Three constituencies, eight mandals and 71 villages fall under SUDA limits.

The minister asserted that after formation of SUDA, several developmental activities have been taking place. Roads of Karimnagar city and surrounding villages are on par with those in Hyderabad city and other municipalities.

SUDA chairman G. V. Ramkrishna Rao, ZP chairperson K. Vijaya, MLC N. Laxman Rao, MLA V. Satish Kumar, mayor Y. Sunil Rao, deputy mayor Ch. Swarupa Rani, district collector K. Shashanka, SUDA vice chairman and municipal commissioner V. Kranthi and SUDA advisory members were among those present.

HAIMENDORF'S 34th  
DEATH ANNIV. TO  
BE HELD ON JAN. 11DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, JAN. 8

The leaders of Thudumdebba have released the pamphlets of 34th death anniversary of Christoph Von Furer Haimendorf and Betti Elizabeth in the Adilabad town on Friday. The event will be held at the historical village at Marlavai in Jainoor mandal on January 11 in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district.

While releasing the pamphlets, Thudumdebba district president Godam Ganesh said Haimendorf, the couple contributed a lot to the empowerment of the Adivasis and one should recognize their services. He called upon the Adivasis to attend the event in large number and pay rich tributes to the Haimendorf couple.

## SAFETY | FIRST

## Penalty on riders for violating traffic rules in Adilabad

## Elders wear helmets, youth neglect

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, JAN. 8

The transport department and traffic police are focusing on riders wearing a helmet by imposing a penalty on the bike riders for violating the rules in the Adilabad town. The transport department is also start camping that 'No Helmet No Petrol' at the petrol pumps.

It is surprising that many uneducated and elderly persons are wearing helmet following the restrictions

imposed by the transport department but many youths and educated are not following the rule. Some people question the rule by saying that was there any need to wear a helmet even in a small town like Adilabad and argue that one should definitely wear a helmet if go outside the town or travelling national highways.

The traffic police slapping the challans as fine by taking the picture of the bike riders without a helmet in the Adilabad town.

Following the police and transport officials insisting on wearing helmets, many roadside helmet shops have come up and selling at cheaper prices but many people complain about the quality of the helmets.

Some other people say that it would be good if the transport and traffic themselves sell helmets with quality and ISI mark to the riders. The helmets should give protection even when the riders met with an accident otherwise there would be no meaning in wearing

the helmet. Some youth are hanging helmets to their bikes but not wearing. There are many incidents where the bike riders had lost their lives without wearing helmet instead of hanging to the bike.

In some other incidents, bike riders wear the helmet but did not lock around the neck. Many riders show negligence in wearing the helmet properly. District Transport Commissioner (DTC) Puppala Srinivas said they have filed 45 cases for violating traffic rules.

Vaccination dry run in  
Warangal successful

The second dose of vaccination will be after 28 days

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, JAN. 8

State medical and health department director Dr G. Srinivas Rao said the dry run for administering the covid-19 vaccine has been held successfully in erstwhile Warangal district.

He said some technical glitches were faced in the software during the dry run which would be reported to the central government and steps to rectify them would be taken.

He inspected the vaccination centres at Urban Primary Health Centres (UPHC) Lashkar Singaram, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial (MGM) hospital and observed how the vaccination officers are discharging their duties.

Following the completion of the dry run held in erstwhile Warangal district, a covid-19 vaccination post dry run observation session was held in Warangal with the district and medical officers and medical officials of six districts.

The dry run was held in 43 centres in Warangal Urban, 20 in Warangal Rural, 20 in Mahabubabad, 16 in Mulugu, 14 in Jayashankar Bhupalpally and 18 in Jangaon district.

Speaking on the occasion, he said the issues faced during the dry run on Friday should be noted and steps to rectify them should be taken during the actual vaccination to be held soon.

"The people who come for vaccination should be motivated to wait for 30 minutes after the completion of vaccination.

They should also be told not to be careless after vaccination and continue wearing mask and washing their hands.

They should be reminded to get the second dose of the vaccine after 28 days," he told officials. Mr Srinivas Rao also made suggestions regarding the arrangements to be made at the vaccination centres.



Rajanna Sircilla district collector D. Krishna Bhaskar accompanied by ZP chairperson N. Aruna, observes the dry run conducted in PHC at P.S.Nagar in Rajanna Sircilla district on Friday.

People told not to believe  
myths surrounding vaccineDC CORRESPONDENT  
SIRCILLA, JAN. 8

As soon as orders are received from the government, Covid-19 vaccination will be administered to all the people in the district, assured District Collector D. Krishna Bhaskar here on Friday.

Accompanied by Zilla Parishad chairperson N. Aruna, the collector observed the dry run of Covid vaccination conducted at Primary Health Centre (PHC) in PS Nagar.

After inspecting the waiting hall, vaccination and observation rooms in the PHC, Krishna Bhaskar gave suggestions to the health staff about the measures be taken while administering the vaccination and explained about the steps needed to prevent ill-effects after taking the vaccination and about

the maintenance of the Bio-medical waste management in the vaccination centres.

He said that a total 16 centres were established for administration of Covid-19 vaccination across the district.

Aruna said that a message will be sent to the cell phone of those who will be given the vaccination with details of date, time and place to come for taking vaccination. There is no need to believe myths about the vaccine, everyone can take the vaccine and must live a healthy life, she said.

Additional Collector B. Satya Prasad, Municipal chairman Jindam Kala, vice-chairman Manche Srinivas, DM&HO Dr. Suman Mohan Rao, program officers Dr. B. Ramulu and Karthim were present along with others.

SIDE EFFECTS ARE  
MISCONCEPTION,  
SAYS COLLECTORDC CORRESPONDENT  
KOTHAGUDEM, JAN. 8

Bhadradri district collector M.V. Reddy said that the reaction and side effects to come after administering Covid-19 vaccine is mere misconception and there is no reality in it. The collector, who monitored the 'dry run' in Chandrugonda, said the immunity of the person will be improved after vaccination. He asked the people to administer the vaccine without fail. The dry run is organised in PHCs of 23 mandals and 25 members were deputed at each centre to look after the programme.

NAGARJUNA  
COMPANY PAYS  
COMPENSATIONDC CORRESPONDENT  
VEMSOOR  
(KHAMMAM), JAN. 8

In a milestone development, the farmers of Vemsoor mandal, whose paddy crops were lost due to Nagarjuna Seeds, tested lack of quality, were given cheques in the presence of Sattupalli MLA Sandra Venkata Veeraiiah on Friday. About 160 farmers did get ₹21.52 lakh as compensation from the company.

The farmers felt happy over getting compensation from a famous seed company. The MLA said that getting compensation is a bench mark and the other companies should be cautious while producing seeds and other products for supply to the farmers.

He said that he pursued a lot and discussed the company officials after the farm scientists proved of inferior quality seeds supplied by the company.

Sattupalli MLA Sandra Venkata Veeraiiah said that the government extended kalyana lakshmi to 7150 beneficiaries in Sattupalli assembly segment so far and they were given ₹19.37 crore.

Vemsoor Tesildar Mujahid and farmer leader P. Venkat Reddy were present at the programme.

● **MLA Sandra Venkata Veeraiiah** said that getting compensation from a seed company is a bench mark and the other companies should be cautious while producing seeds and other products for supply to the farmers.

TURMERIC  
FARMERS GEAR  
UP FOR STIRNARENDER  
PULLOOR | DC  
NIZAMABAD, JAN. 8

As the peak marketing season is approaching, turmeric farmers would intensify their agitation for remunerative price for their produce. Farmers of Nizamabad, Jagtial and Nirmal districts will unitedly fight for better price for turmeric this season.

A meeting will be held in Armoor on January 8 to press the demand, their leaders said.

Turmeric is cultivated on a huge scale in north Telangana districts and the region caters to the needs of national and international markets. The price of the produce is now around ₹6,000 per quintal.

Farmers say the cultivation, thus, is not profitable. Farmers said turmeric will reach Nizamabad agriculture market yard soon. This is one of the biggest markets in the country for turmeric sales.

Other than the BJP and TRS, political parties have in general extended their support to turmeric farmers. Nizamabad MP Dharmapuri Arvind said he is ready for a debate on having a turmeric board set up in Armoor. "I initiated steps for the setting up of a regional spices board centre in Nizamabad, which is greater than the turmeric board," he said.

"I promised to get a turmeric board centre for the region in the last Parliament elections, but the regional spices board in Nizamabad would benefit turmeric farmers more than that," he explained at the Bodhan public meeting.

BJP national general secretary and Telangana state in-charge Tarun Chug also promised that the central government would give assistance to turmeric farmers if the Telangana government offered a market intervention price of ₹10,000 per quintal of turmeric. Farmers are waiting for the decision of state government.

● **I initiated steps for the setting up of a regional spices board centre in Nizamabad, which is greater than the turmeric board.**

VIJAYAWADA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (VMC)			
'E' Procurement Notice No.40/VMC/AE/2020-21, Dt.08-01-2021			
Sl. No.	Name of work	Estimate Amount Rs. in Lakhs	
1	Re-Development of Gandhi Hill, Providing BT Roads, CC Roads, CC Drains, Central Median MG Road, RCC Retaining Wall, Providing illumination and Decorative lighting to Land space vertical gardening from pillar No-A1 to A2 at Benz circle flyover, Indoor stadium Urmila Nagar, UGD Lines, Vinayaka Temple Flyover in Cir-1,2 and 3 areas in Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (Total-22 works)	2402.77	
Contact: Superintending Engineer (Works) & (Projects), VMC, Vijayawada-520 001 Further details can be seen @ 'e' procurement market place @ <a href="http://www.tender.aeprocurement.gov.in">www.tender.aeprocurement.gov.in</a> Download of bid documents starts from - 12-01-2021 @ 04.00 P.M. Last date / time for receipt of tenders from - 27-01-2021 up to 11.30 A.M. Sd/- For COMMISSIONER			

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 16.11.2019 calling upon the borrower Dr. Pulella Pavan Kumar, C/o. Pulella hospital, H.No. 3-6-357/1, Subash Nagar, Karimnagar Town & District, and also owner of the property/surety Dr. Pulella Sunitha, W/o. Dr. Pulella Pavan Kumar, C/o. Pulella Hospital, H.No. 3-6-357/1, Subash Nagar, Karimnagar Town & District, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 42,74,249/- (Rupees Forty Two lakhs Seventy Four Thousand Two Hundred and Forty Nine only) within 60days from the date of receipt 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 5th day of January month 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. 35,18,635/- as on 31.12.2020 with further interest thereon, costs etc.	
Description of the Immovable Property	
Vacant site admeasuring 1423.33 SqYds, covered by Sy.No. 795, situated near H.No. 8-6-316/A, P.N. Das Asramam Road, Nearby NTR Statue, Karimnagar Town & Dist., together with buildings constructed to be constructed thereon and presently bounded by: North: Open land of Dr. K.Sudha Rani, South: Open Land of Smt. K.Shoba Rani followed by Vasara Gardens bearing H.No. 8-6-316/A, East: 100' Wide Old Bridge Road & 30' Road leads to P.N.Das Asramam and West: Open land of Sri Konda Anantha Ramulu (Presently Konda Satya Laxmi Gardens).	
Date: 05.01.2021 Place: Karimnagar	Sd/- AUTHORISED OFFICER A.P. STATE FINANCIAL CORPORATION

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 16.11.2019 calling upon the borrower-cum-surety Dr. Pulella Sunitha, C/o. Pulella Hospital, H.No. 3-6-357/1, Subash Nagar, Karimnagar Town & District., to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 44,77,971/- (Rupees Forty Four Lakhs Seventy Seven Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy One only) within 60days from the date of receipt 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 5th day of January month 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. 36,79,218/- as on 31.12.2020 with further interest thereon, costs etc.	
Description of the Immovable Property	
Vacant site admeasuring 1423.33 SqYds, covered by Sy.No. 795, situated near H.No. 8-6-316/A, P.N. Das Asramam Road, Nearby NTR Statue, Karimnagar Town & Dist., together with buildings constructed to be constructed thereon and presently bounded by: North: Open land of Dr. K.Sudha Rani, South: Open Land of Smt. K.Shoba Rani followed by Vasara Gardens bearing H.No. 8-6-316/A, East: 100' Wide Old Bridge Road & 30' Road leads to P.N.Das Asramam and West: Open land of Sri Konda Anantha Ramulu (Presently Konda Satya Laxmi Gardens).	
Date: 05.01.2021 Place: Karimnagar	Sd/- AUTHORISED OFFICER A.P. STATE FINANCIAL CORPORATION

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## SHORT TAKES

MAJOR MAOIST  
HIDEOUT BUSTED  
IN ODISHAAKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, JAN. 8

Security forces on Friday seized huge haul of arms and ammunition, including hand grenades and other explosives, after busting a major Maoist hideout in Kandhamal district.

Kandhamal superintendent of police Vinit Agarwal said the Maoist camp was busted during a joint combing operation by Special Operation Group (SOG) jawans and district voluntary force.

“Based on reliable Intelligence inputs, an anti-Naxal operation was launched in the region on Thursday by a joint team of SOG and DVF. During the combing exercise, Maoists opened fire at the security forces and the latter also retaliated. We seized a huge cache of ammunition from the spot after the exchange of fire,” said Agarwal. The SP also informed that grenades, detonators, splinters, explosives, batteries and other various literature and camp articles used by the Maoists were seized from the hideout.

Taking advantage of dense forest cover and hilly terrain, the ultras however managed to escape from the spot.

“The exchange of fire lasted for over 30 minutes and 15-20 Maoists suspected to be inside the camp managed to flee and save their lives. We have intensified combing operations in the region and are trying to apprehend the ultras,” Agarwal added. On October 26, a country-made revolver, claymore mine and other explosives were seized from a Maoist dump in Malkangiri district.

BENGAL GOV. TO  
MEET AMIT SHAH  
IN DELHI TODAY

**Kolkata, Jan. 8:** Amid the growing political turbulence in poll-bound West Bengal, Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar will be meeting Union home minister Amit Shah in Delhi on Saturday.

He had last met Shah in October 2020.

“Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar will fly to New Delhi on Friday night. His engagements include calling on the Union home minister Amit Shah on January 9,” Raj Bhavan sources said.

Dhankhar, who had been at loggerheads with the TMC government since taking charge as the Bengal governor, has criticised the Mamata Banerjee dispensation on several occasions over the “worsening” law and order situation in the state.

BJP leaders in Bengal have been demanding imposition of President’s Rule in the state, citing “breakdown of the rule of law” as reason.

Elections to the 294-member Bengal Assembly are likely to be held in April-May.

RAUT DEFENDS  
UDDHAV’S POST ON  
‘SAMBHAJINAGAR’SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC  
MUMBAI, JAN. 8

Even a day after Congress’ protest, the reference to Aurangabad as ‘Sambhajinagar’ on Maharashtra CM’s official Twitter handle remained unchanged. Shiv Sena spokesperson and the Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut defended the Maharashtra CM’s official post, while Congress leader Ashok Chavan reminded the Uddhav Thackeray-led party that it was leading a coalition government.

In Nashik, Raut said that popular demand is above the Common Minimum Programme (CMP). It should not be necessary to run the government only as per what is written in the CMP, which is meant for ensuring food, clothes, and shelters. “It is not mentioned in the CMP to not make a decision over the popular demand,” Raut said.

The Congress has been contending that as it is not a part of the CMP, therefore, such issues should be avoided in order to ensure smooth functioning of the government.

Rebutting to Sena’s popular demand, Chavan, who is also PWD minister in Thackeray led government, said that it is a coalition government. Personal agenda can not be implemented. “This subject (name changing) is not on our priority list. Whenever such controversial issues come before the MVA government, all the constituents of MVA must sit together and resolve the issue,” he added.

## Budaun case: Main accused held

The mahant was arrested in a late-night crackdown that ended his 5-day run

**Budaun (UP), Jan. 8:** A priest, who is the main accused in the alleged gang-rape of an anganwadi worker in this Uttar Pradesh district, was quizzed throughout Friday night after his arrest in a late-night crackdown that ended his five-day run.

The “mahant”, Satya Narayan, was hiding in a forest area near the house of one of his followers in Mewali village under the Ughaiti police station, from where he was picked up, the police said.

The priest, who is in his 50s, was immediately arrested and interrogated by a police team.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Sankalp Sharma said the sub-inspector in-charge of the area, Amarjit Singh, was suspended on Friday.

The station house officer (SHO) of the Ughaiti police station, Raghvendra Pratap, was suspended earlier for a “delay in informing higher authorities, laxity in taking action, dereliction of duty and failure in taking

speedy action” and a case under IPC section 166A (public servant disobeying law) has been registered against the two officers.

They had informed senior officials about the incident after a delay of 17 hours, the SSP said.

He said the priest is being questioned and further action will be taken in accordance with the information provided by him.

Some more people are on police radar and they are also being questioned, the SSP said, adding that all the angles are being looked into and the case will be solved soon.

The priest will be taken for a medical examination and produced before a local court for seeking remand later in the day, the police said.

The 50-year-old woman, who had gone to a temple, was found dead under mysterious circumstances on Sunday. Her family members accused the temple priest and his accomplices of raping and killing her.

A case was registered against the accused and

## HORRENDOUS INCIDENT

● **THE 50-YEAR-OLD WOMAN**, who had gone to a temple, was found dead under mysterious circumstances on Sunday.

● **HER FAMILY members** accused the temple priest and his accomplices of raping and killing her.

● **THE PRIEST** is being questioned and further action will be taken in accordance with the information provided by him.

● **SOME MORE people** are on police radar and they are also being questioned and all the angles are being looked into.

● **CHIEF MINISTER** Yogi Adityanath has ordered ‘strongest possible action’ in the case even as opposition parties have launched an attack on his government, terming the incident ‘horrific’ and ‘shameful’.

two of them — Vedram and Jaspal — were arrested on Tuesday night.

The incident triggered an opposition outcry and a comparison with the 2012 Nirbhaya case in Delhi after the post-mortem report confirmed rape, a broken rib cage, a fractured leg and injuries in the victim’s private parts.

The incident took place on Sunday and the matter came to light that night itself when the priest and his accomplices took the

victim’s body to her house, saying it was found in a dry well on the temple premises.

The FIR was registered on Tuesday after an autopsy confirmed rape and the two accomplices of the priest were nabbed.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has ordered “strongest possible action” in the case even as opposition parties have launched an attack on his government, terming the incident “horrific” and

“shameful”, with the Congress comparing it to the Nirbhaya case.

Following the incident, Bareilly ADG Avinash Chandra had visited the crime spot and announced a reward of ₹50,000 on the priest’s arrest.

“Based on complaints from the family members and the post-mortem report, a case has been registered under sections 376D (gang-rape) and 302 (punishment for murder) of the IPC,” he had said.

The ADG had said a second opinion on the post-mortem report was being sought from medical experts and only after that, any conclusion could be drawn.

Budaun Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Yashpal Singh said the woman died of trauma and excessive bleeding.

Endorsing the CMO’s opinion, District Magistrate Kumar Prashant said, “Whatever help can be given from the department will be given. She was an anganwadi *sahayika* (helper). We are also paying attention to

the security of the family.”

The victim’s son said his mother had gone to offer prayers at the temple on Sunday but did not return home within the expected time.

Around 11 pm, the priest and two of his aides came to their house and handed over the body, he added.

Before the family members could ask them about the cause of her death, the accused left the house saying she had fallen into a dry well and the body was pulled out subsequently.

The victim’s son said the police were informed of the incident on Monday.

Amid the opposition uproar, the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO), in a tweet, said: “The UP CM @myogiadityanath has taken cognisance of the Badaun incident and instructed to take strongest legal action against the accused.”

The CM has also instructed the ADG, Bareilly zone to submit a detailed report on the incident and directed the Special Task Force (STF) to assist in the probe, it said.

— PTI

Kerala oppn stages  
noisy stir; boycott  
Gov’s addressGILVESTER ASSARY | DC  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
JAN. 8

The Opposition Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) on Friday boycotted Governor Arif Mohammad Khan’s address on the opening day of the budget session of Kerala Assembly.

The opposition members staged a noisy demonstration inside the House before boycotting the Governor’s speech. The UDF MLAs came to the House carrying banners and posters demanding the resignation of Speaker P. Sreeramakrishnan in connection with the allegations related to the gold smuggling case. They also leveled serious charges against the Chief Minister alleging that his office had become the epicenter of gold smuggling case.

The opposition protest against the Speaker took place on a day when his additional private secretary K. Ayyappan was questioned by Customs in connection with the statements given by the accused in the gold smuggling case.

Though the Governor requested the Opposition members to allow him to discharge his constitutional obligation, they continued the protest near his podium. However, undeterred by the opposition protest the Governor continued his address.

Later the opposition members walked out of the house and staged a sit-in outside the hall.

In his address Khan spoke about acute fiscal crisis being faced by the state. He said the state was facing a loss of

● **THE UDF MLAs** demand resignation of Speaker P. Sreeramakrishnan over gold smuggling case

₹80,000 crores on account of pandemic and related issues.

He praised the LDF government’s handling of Covid pandemic.

“My government has taken up this challenge squarely and promised that no one will go hungry during the lockdown. The government had started community kitchens during the lockdown, ensured free treatment for Covid 19 patients and distributed kits to all ration card holders.”

The Governor said almost nine per cent of the state’s population was living abroad and with nearly six lakh immigrants returning due to the impact of Coronavirus, the flow of remittances would be seriously affected causing severe impact on the state’s economy.

Khan said the actions of certain central agencies have overstepped the constitutional contours and are impeding the development activities and flagship programmes undertaken by the state.

His reference was to the cases of gold smuggling and money laundering being investigated by a slew of central agencies. There have been allegations that the central agencies were acting against the government with vengeance.

Meanwhile the last budget of the CPI(M)-led LDF government would be a vote on account, to be presented by finance minister Dr. T.M. Thomas Isaac on January 15.

## Scramble for water



Village women collect snow to melt for water, due to non-supply of drinking water in their village, in Bhaderwah of J&K on Friday. The women claimed that the water supply department had not restored the frozen pipes for the last two months.

— PTI

Culling continues in bird  
flu affected areas of KeralaDC CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
JAN. 8

Culling of poultry including ducks and chickens continued in Alappuzha and Kottayam districts of Kerala where bird flu cases were reported recently.

The animal husbandry department officials said more than 80,000 birds have been culled so far including 62,000 in Alappuzha district. A central team visited the affected areas of Alappuzha and Kottayam

districts to study the outbreak of avian influenza the other day.

The three-member team of the Union health and family welfare ministry comprising experts from National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and institute of virology visited the hotspots in Alappuzha district.

The experts are examining the possibility of mutation of the H5N8 virus and whether it posed any risk to the human beings.

Samples collected from the affected areas are

being subjected to lab investigations at the central institutes.

The team members held discussions with the district collectors and expressed satisfaction over the preventive steps taken so far. A health survey has been undertaken in the bird flu affected areas to find out if people residing in these places have complained of fever, influenza like illnesses or any other symptoms.

The workers engaged in culling operations have been given H1N1 preventive medicine.

MP honeytrap case:  
Seized CDs authenticRABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, JAN. 8

The sensational honey trapping and blackmailing scandal that came to light in September 2019 is set to return to haunt some high-profile people of the state after the Hyderabad-based Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) confirmed the authenticity of the sleaze CDs seized from the accused.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted by Madhya Pradesh police to probe the matter has received forensic test reports of the hard disk and CDs seized from some members of the alleged racket for the CFSL a couple of days ago.

“CFSL reports have confirmed that the hard disk and sleaze CDs and audios seized from some members of the racket

were authentic. We are examining the report. The CFSL report will help strengthen our case against the accused,” a senior police officer in the know of the things told this newspaper on Friday requesting not to be quoted.

Sources said the Central Forensic Science Laboratory report has indicated that no sex videos and sleaze audios examined by the laboratory are tampered with or morphed. All of them have been found to be authentic.

Around 4,000 sleazy videos and audios, sex chats and photographs showing some influential bureaucrats and politicians in compromising positions were recovered from the laptops, pen drives and mobile phones seized from members of the alleged racket following police raids in 2019.

VISVA-BHARATI SUSPENDS PROF.  
OVER APPOINTMENT ALLEGATIONS

**Kolkata, Jan. 8:** Visva-Bharati authorities have suspended a professor who recently alleged irregularities in the appointment of a colleague and even wrote to President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi about it.

The professor also made derogatory remarks against his colleague in the allegations, the varsity said.

The decision to suspend him was taken at an executive council meeting of the varsity late on Thursday.

“The Visva-Bharati

executive council... decided that disciplinary proceedings is to be initiated following applicable rules against Prof Sudipta Bhattacharya and also decided to place him under suspension with immediate effect,” the notice said.

Bhattacharya, who is also the president of Visva-Bharati University Faculty Association, had shared allegations against the colleague about “irregularities” in his appointment as a ‘*patha bhavana*’ (open-air school) head on a WhatsApp group.

— PTI

## HATRED | TWEETS

## Actress claims she is being unfairly targeted for speaking out

## Kangana quizzed for 2hrs in sedition case

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC  
MUMBAI, JAN. 8

Actor Kangana Ranaut and her sister Rangoli Chandel were questioned for two hours on Friday at the Bandra police station in Mumbai in a sedition case that has been filed against them. Earlier in the day, Ranaut had posted a video on Twitter saying she is being unfairly targeted for daring to speak her mind.

The sisters appeared before the police, as the Bombay High Court, while granting them interim protection from arrest had directed them to appear before the police on Friday. The HC is expected to continue hearing their petition on January 11.

Ranaut has been provided with ‘Y’ category security of CRPF personnel by the Union government.



Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut arrives at a police station in Mumbai on Friday, after being summoned in connection with a sedition case.

— AFP

The sisters reached the police station around 1pm along with their lawyer.

According to sources, the questioning is not com-

plete because the police want to question her for her more than 100 tweets.

The Bandra police registered a case against them

● **THE BANDRA police** registered a case against the sisters after receiving complaints that they are trying to create hatred and communal tension.

In October last here after receiving complaints that they are trying to create hatred and communal tension through their posts.

Meanwhile, the actress has shared a video on her official Twitter account claiming that she is being tortured emotionally, mentally and physically for speaking in the interest of the nation and recently speaking in favour for farmers.

The video is recorded in Hindi and the actress can be seen saying, “Why am I being mentally, emotionally and now physically tor-

tured?” She has further stated that she needs answer from the nation. According to her, she stood by the nation and it’s time it stands for her.

She has narrated how a case was filed against her even for laughing and in another case her name was dragged even though she was not on Twitter at that point of time. However, the Apex Court rejected these cases.

“I have even been ordered to give *haajiri* (attendance) at the police station although I don’t know for what reason. I have also been asked not to disclose to anyone or talk about the kind of torture I am facing. I want to ask the honourable Supreme Court, have we returned to the medieval age where women were burnt alive and their voices were silenced?” she said.



## SHORT TAKES

POLICE CHIEF  
QUITS AFTER  
MOB INVASION

Washington, Jan. 8: The US Capitol police chief handed in his resignation Thursday, a day after Congress was invaded by a mob egged on by President Donald Trump, a source close to the agency said.

Steven Sund "is resigning effective January 16, 2021," the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said, hours after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called for his resignation, following sharp rebukes for what many criticised as a lack of preparation.

POMPEO SAYS  
US NOT 'BANANA  
REPUBLIC'

Washington, Jan. 8: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Thursday hit back at assertions that a mob attack on the Capitol showed the United States to be a "banana republic." A number of foreign critics as well as former US president George W. Bush made the analogy after rioters stirred up by President Donald Trump rampaged through a session of Congress that certified his loss to Joe Biden.

"The slander reveals a faulty understanding of banana republics and of democracy in America," said the top US diplomat, a staunch Trump loyalist, as two other members of the cabinet resigned over Wednesday's violence.

"In a banana republic, mob violence determines the exercise of power. In the United States, law enforcement officials quash mob violence so that the people's representatives can exercise power in accordance with the rule of law and constitutional government," Pompeo wrote on Twitter. Bush in a statement Wednesday made veiled criticism of the "reckless behavior" of members of his Republican Party in fueling the "insurrection." "This is how election results are disputed in a banana republic -- not our democratic republic," Bush wrote.

STAY ON,  
LAWMAKERS TO  
WH STAFF

Washington, Jan. 8: US lawmakers urged White House staff to stay in their jobs amid a spate of resignations in protest at President Donald Trump's support for the attack on Congress by his followers.

Senior Republican Senator Lindsey Graham urged top Trump aides to keep working for the final 14 days of the administration, naming chief of staff Mark Meadows, White House Counsel Pat Cipollone, and National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien.

"Most Americans will never know the service that Mark Meadows and Pat Cipollone and those under their charge provided to this country over the last year," Graham said in a press conference.

"To those who believe you should leave your post now to make a statement, I would urge you not," he said.

"To Robert O'Brien: you have been a good counsel to the president, you have been a steady hand. I've been missing your phone calls; Robert, stay on." "To those in the national security apparatus, we need you now more than ever." It was "a traumatic and entirely avoidable event as supporters of the President stormed the Capitol building following a rally he addressed," said Chao, the wife of Senate majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Earlier Thursday, former chief of staff Mick Mulvaney said he was quitting his diplomatic post.

## COPS REJECTED OFFERS FOR HELP

Pentagon asked if National Guard was needed, Justice Dept reached out with FBI

Washington, Jan. 8: Three days before supporters of President Donald Trump rioted at the Capitol, the Pentagon asked the US Capitol Police if it needed National Guard manpower.

And as the mob descended on the building Wednesday, Justice Department leaders reached out to offer up FBI agents. The police turned them down both times, according to senior defence officials and two people familiar with the matter.

Despite plenty of warnings of a possible insurrection and ample resources and time to prepare, the Capitol Police planned only for a free speech demonstration. Still stinging from the uproar over the violent response by law enforcement to protests last June near the White House, officials also were intent on avoiding any appearance that the federal government was deploying active duty or National Guard troops against Americans. The result is the US Capitol was overrun Wednesday and officers in a law enforcement agency with a large operating budget and experience in high-security events protecting lawmakers were overwhelmed for the world to see.

Four protesters died, including one shot inside the building. A Capitol Police officer died Thursday after being injured in the Wednesday melee. The rioting and loss of control has raised serious questions over security at the Capitol for future events. The actions of the day also raise troubling concerns about the treatment of mainly white Trump supporters, who were allowed to roam through the building for hours, while Black and brown protesters who demonstrated last year over police brutality faced more robust and aggressive policing.

"This was a failure of imagination, a failure of leadership," said Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo, whose department responded to several large protests last year following the death of George Floyd. "The Capitol Police must do better and I don't see how we can get around that."

Acevedo said he has attended events on the Capitol grounds to honour slain police officers that had higher fences and a stronger security presence than what he saw on video Wednesday. Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy said that as the rioting was underway, it became clear that the Capitol Police were overrun. But he said there was no contingency planning done in advance for what forces could do in case of a problem at the Capitol because Defence Department help was turned down.

"They've got to ask us, the request has to come to us," said McCarthy. US Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund, under pressure from Schumer, Pelosi and other congressional leaders, was forced to resign.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell asked for and received the resignation of the Sergeant at Arms of the Senate, Michael Stenger, effectively immediately. Paul Irving, the longtime Sergeant at Arms of the House, also resigned. — AFP



Demonstrators hold a banner calling for impeachment of US President Donald Trump during a protest outside the Barclays Centre in Brooklyn, New York on Thursday, a day after pro-Trump mob stormed and trashed the Capitol. — AFP



LIKE ALL Americans, I am outraged by the violence, lawlessness and mayhem. I immediately deployed the national guard and federal law enforcement to secure the building and expel the intruders.

DONALD TRUMP, US Prez



THE STORMING of the US Congress by Donald Trump's supporters is a disgrace that has "shocked humankind".

RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN, Turkish President



THE MOB attack by his supporters on the US Capitol was the "ugly ending" to Trump's time at the White House.

SILVIO BERLUSCONI, Former Italian premier



WE CALL on the president of the United States, to disavow false and dangerous narratives, and encourage their supporters to do so as well.

MICHELLE BACHELET, UN rights chief

THEY WEREN'T protesters. They were a riotous mob, insurrectionists, domestic terrorists. The past four years we have had a Prez who has made his contempt for our democracy, our Constitution, the rule of law, clear in everything he has done.

JOE BIDEN, President-elect



## VP: No radical move to oust Don

Washington, Jan. 8: US Vice President Mike Pence is opposed to using the constitution's 25th Amendment to force President Donald Trump from office, despite pressure from Democrats and some Republicans, the *New York Times* reported Thursday.

While Pence has not spoken publicly about invoking the mechanism, never used before in US history, the newspaper

cited a person close to the vice president saying he is against the radical move.

The calls to remove Trump came after supporters who he had encouraged invaded and shut down the US Congress Wednesday as it was poised to certify the election victory of Trump's rival, Democrat Joe Biden. Democrats demanded action even though Trump only has 13 days left in office.

"This is an emergency of the highest magnitude," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

"By inciting sedition, as he did yesterday, he must be removed from office." The Times said Pence's stance is supported by several cabinet members, whose backing would be necessary to carry out a 25th Amendment removal.

Democrats in the US House of Representatives said that if the

25th Amendment is not invoked they will move quickly to impeach Trump.

"We have a limited period of time in which to act," said House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerry Nadler, who led the successful impeachment of Trump a year ago, before the president was ultimately acquitted by the Republican-led Senate.

— AFP

Cop's death  
takes unrest  
toll to five

Washington, Jan. 8: Flags over the US Capitol were lowered to half-staff Friday after the death of a police officer took to five the number of people who died after President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the legislature.

US Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick was reportedly struck in the head with a fire extinguisher on Wednesday while struggling with the rioters who swarmed through the halls of Congress.

The 42-year-old member of the force that protects the ground of the Congress returned to his division office where he collapsed and was taken to the hospital, according to the Capitol Police.

He died of his injuries late Thursday, they said. According to reports, the FBI will open a murder investigation into his death.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ordered flags over the Capitol lowered in his honour.

"The violent and deadly act of insurrection targeting the Capitol, our temple of American Democracy, and its workers was a profound tragedy and stain on our nation's history," she said. — AFP

Cops lenient with mob,  
severe with anti-racists

Los Angeles, Jan. 8: Like many Americans, President-elect Joe Biden on Thursday accused US authorities of treating a pro-Trump mob that stormed the Capitol more leniently than last year's anti-racism demonstrators.

"No one can tell me that if it had been a group of Black Lives Matter protesting yesterday... they wouldn't have been treated very, very differently than the mob of thugs that stormed the Capitol," Biden said in an address from his hometown in Delaware.

"We all know that's true, and it is unacceptable," said Biden, who will take over the White House on January 20, after winning November's election in part due to strong support

from Black voters.

On Wednesday thousands of protesters — spurred on by a speech given by President Donald Trump — marched to the seat of the US legislature, where some broke down barriers and doors to invade the building in an unprecedented act that played out on live television.

But police officers in charge of security held off using tear gas until intruders had reached the heart of the building, where they roamed freely, ransacking offices.

US media reported that some law enforcement officials even opened doors for them.

The scene stood in stark contrast to last year's anti-racism protests in the nation's capital and beyond. — AFP

Capitol storming: Two  
Cabinet members quit

Washington, Jan. 8: Two members of Donald Trump's Cabinet resigned Thursday with days left in the administration in protest over the storming of the Capitol by a mob of the president's supporters.

The education secretary and transportation secretary — the only two women in Trump's inner Cabinet — both said they could no longer remain in office after the violent rampage on a ceremonial session of Congress that certified President-elect Joe Biden's victory.

"That behaviour was unconscionable for our country. There is no mistaking the impact your rhetoric had on the situation, and it is the inflection point for me," said Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, a conserva-

tive stalwart who had served throughout the administration.

"Impressionable children are watching all this, and they are learning from us," she said in a letter to Trump.

"They must know from us that America is greater than what transpired yesterday." Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, who is married to Republican Senate majority Leader Mitch McConnell, earlier said it was "a traumatic and entirely avoidable event as supporters of the president stormed the Capitol building following a rally he addressed." "It has deeply troubled me in a way I simply cannot set aside," she added.

— AFP

Sedition charge  
likely for rioters

Washington, Jan. 8: The top federal prosecutor for the District of Columbia has said that "all options are on the table" for charging members of the violent pro-Trump mob that stormed the US Capitol — including sedition charges.

Michael Sherwin, acting US attorney for DC, said prosecutors plan to file 15 federal cases on Thursday for crimes including unauthorised access and theft of property, and investigators are combing through reams of evidence to bring additional charges. "All of those charges are on the table. ... We will bring the most maximum charges we can," he said.

— AP

Trump considering  
self-pardon: US media

Washington, Jan. 8: Embattled President Donald Trump has discussed with his close aides the possibility of pardoning himself before leaving the office on January 20, US media reports have said, amid growing calls for his removal from the White House. According to CNN, some of those conversations happened in recent weeks, and Trump has asked about the legal and political consequences of a self-pardon.

The news comes as Democratic and Republican lawmakers alike rebuked Trump's conduct as thousands of his supporters stormed the US Capitol building on Wednesday and clashed with police, resulting in four deaths and interrupting a constitutional process by Congress to affirm the

victories of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris in the November 3 election.

It is not clear if the issue has come up since Wednesday's mayhem at the Capitol building fomented by the President's rhetoric or after his recent controversial call with the Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, the report said, citing multiple sources.

The president has also asked for legal opinions on whether he has the authority to issue a self-pardon and has been advised on the potential political fallout, it said. The *New York Times* reported on Thursday that Trump has suggested in conversations since Election Day that he wants to pardon himself. — AFP



DECCAN  
Chronicle

9 JANUARY 2021

True picture of economy  
emerges in official data

In the wake of the information revolution, governments, too, are becoming savvy in the art of sophisticated media management that enables them to have their say in direct interaction with the people beyond the traditional print and TV media. However, such management also leads to the sowing of doubts in the minds of people as they struggle to sift real facts from managed news. Something similar may have happened in the case of the official Indian narrative about the economy.

The lockdown — the toughest in the world — had wiped out nearly 25 per cent of the country's productivity, but there was no official admission. Government officials did not directly comment on the sorry state of economic affairs even though several agencies, including the Reserve Bank of India, had painted a grim economic scenario. The moment of truth may have come when the National Statistical Office (NSO), a statistical body under the Union ministry of statistics and programme implementation, released its report on the economic outlook.

On Thursday, NSO projected a 7.7 per cent contraction for the Indian economy in 2020-21, highlighting the damage that the coronavirus has inflicted on the Indian economy. Though the contraction has become slightly milder after September 2020, making many analysts suggest a V-shaped recovery, the real picture has not become any better.

According to NSO data, the business of services like trade, hotels, transport, communication and broadcast is expected to shrink by 21.4 per cent, construction sector which has a multiplier effect on other industries is expected to shrink by 12.6 per cent, mining and quarrying are projected to witness a degrowth of 12.4 per cent, and manufacturing is projected to lose productivity by 9.4 per cent. When such key segments of the economy are witnessing a degrowth, the economy can never be said to be in pink of its health. The impact of such widespread deceleration in the economy is evident in unemployment that has been left undressed for a long time.

In a recent report, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) said the unemployment rate in the country rose sharply to 9.1 per cent in December 2020, which is the highest since the beginning of India's recovery from the lockdown in June. The jobless rate stood at 10.99 per cent in June 2020. Unemployment in urban India rose from 7.1 per cent to 8.8 per cent.

While there is an improvement in hiring intentions in some sectors, a survey conducted by Manpower Group claims that it would take at least nine months for the country to reach pre-Covid levels. This scenario presents a tightrope walk for the government, as jobs will not increase unless economic output rises. Higher economic output and consumer confidence, however, are mutually dependent. People will not splurge unless they are confident about their financial future, which once again depends on the country's economic growth. Therefore, the role of the government and rich corporations assumes greater significance to spur economic growth of the country.

## FB, Twitter: Action too late

Facebook and Instagram have banned Donald Trump "indefinitely", or at least until the end of his term. He will be denied access to his 35 million followers on Facebook but retains the key to addressing 88 million followers on Twitter because that platform has not taken as bold a stand and had locked him out only for 12 hours on the fateful day. Of course, social media, often criticised for being the publicity megaphone for the likes of the obstreperous US President, had acted belatedly and only after all that distressing violence had taken place on Capitol Hill. They were clearly guilty of bolting the doors after the horses had fled.

The action against Mr Trump is a warning shot that should have come long ago when he was blatantly misusing the social media after having built up his influence on them and misused the platforms to challenge the election results. The influence that the likes of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube wield as a platform linking people in the US, Europe, India and many other countries is huge. It is on record that the social media have been used as a vehicle for hate and not only in the obvious case of Trump and his acolytes. However, the conspiracy theorist QAnon also used other sites like Gab and Parler to gather members for the attack on democracy.

The point is social media has been guilty of allowing extremism to grow. Its lackadaisical attitude to curbing toxic content while chasing advertisement revenue based on number of users has led us to such a pass. It was never in the public interest to allow hate to come to a boil and let violence result from people operating in closed social media networks. By his perverse actions Mr Trump has become a stark warning to those who use the social media for nefarious purposes. In India, Facebook and others have been as reluctant to shut down unacceptable use to whip up communal passions and outright hate based on religion despite warnings from the government and civil rights groups. Will they reform at least now?

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**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  
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**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, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph : 0422 2231255  
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Subhani

Reassert 'core' values &  
halt democracy's decay

Ashwani Kumar

In his book *The Age Rights (1990)*, Prof. Louis Henkin, a celebrated scholar of international law, had claimed "human rights is the idea of our time, the only political-moral idea that has received universal acceptance". However, an objective analysis of the situation throughout the world, including India, belies that claim.

This disquieting conclusion flows from a distressing institutional response to the egregious infraction of human rights, raising a profoundly important question on the functioning of our democratic institutions. Repeated abuse of several stringent laws with punitive consequences has resulted from a reversal of the presumption of innocence in favour of the accused, declared by the Supreme Court as a human right. (Bhramajeet Singh Sharma, 2005) Demonstrated arbitrariness in investigative processes and the failure of the Indian State to enact a comprehensive anti-custodial torture law question our willingness to civilise ourselves in the use of State power. Denial of basic human rights to undertrials, poignantly exemplified in the refusal of a sipper to an 80-year-old undertrial priest suffering from Parkinson's disease and the refusal of jail guards to allow an incarcerated public intellectual access to a pair of spectacles must shame the nation. This, despite Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer's binding edict in the Sunil Batra case as early as 1978, that fundamental rights "do not part company with the prisoner at the prison gates..." Indiscriminate arrests of citizens on charges of sedition are etched in public memory as a repressive act of State power intended to crimi-

nalise dissent. Unconscionable arrests for inter-faith marriages mischievously labelled as "love jihad" have scarred the constitutional conscience. Heart rending sights of a dog nibbling at a dead woman's body inside a hospital, and the reported beating to death of a dalit worker just because he had served himself a mouthful of food while clearing the leftovers, condemn us irrevocably as a heartless society. Are we then really a people who can claim that they live in the shelter of each other? Despite the Supreme Court's repeated directives, trials by the media continue to infract the citizens' right to liberty, fair trial and reputation. As the highest forum of democracy, Parliament too cannot escape its share of responsibility for our faltering record on human rights. The three controversial agricultural reforms laws affecting the economic condition and dignity of millions of India's farmers, passed in both Houses of Parliament without any discussion by a voice vote, is a recent illustration. The enactment of often abused "broad" laws without thoughtful deliberation have had grave consequences for the liberty and dignity of citizens.

The offices of the Lokpal, the Central Information Commission and the National Human Rights Commission have remained largely dormant in practice, except for the occasional and unenforced interventions. Our national leaders, captive to personal animosities and dwarfed by timidity in the face of power, remain obsessed with a "manipulative conversation about our future", with little time to address themselves to the defining challenges of our times. Thus politics,

denuded of its larger purpose, thrives on the tyranny of the strong over the weak and is bereft of any inspiring moral appeal.

However, the nation's greatest regret is that having declared human dignity anchored in deference to human rights as a core constitutional value (Common Cause, 2018), the Supreme Court has failed to lean consistently in favour of individual rights against the State. Given the national context, Chief Justice S.A. Bobde's recent suggestion of a restricted recourse to Article 32 in bail matters is rather unfortunate and in some ways is a denial of its *raison d'être*. Citing with approval Ronald Dworkin's assertion of a right to individual dignity against the government in Puttaswamy (2017), the court's recent record in enforcing this right is, at best, mixed.

The continuing incarceration of public intellectuals, political leaders, academics and dissenters, even where the weight of evidence against them is prima facie weak, has regrettably blemished the court's otherwise sterling record as the sentinel of our fundamental rights. The Supreme Court's profound pronouncements in Shreya Singhal (2015), Shabnam (2015), Puttaswamy (Supra), Nambi Narayan (2018), Navtej Johar (2018), Anuradha Bhasin (2020) and several earlier decisions notwithstanding, its inability to enforce its own judgments has dented its standing as a designated guardian of constitutional principles. Deference of its hearing on the Rohingya petitions, the challenge to the Citizenship

**Clearly, this is our moment of reckoning. We must acknowledge the truth of a diminished Indian democracy and our collective failures. Hopefully, the process of democratic erosion can be arrested...**

Amendment Act's validity and on the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A of the Constitution, the petitions concerning the plight of the elderly and their right to dignity, a hesitant intervention in aid of the coronavirus migrants and misplaced priorities in the hearing and disposal of cases have added to the blemish.

The need to reclaim a consistent vocabulary of constitutional discourse rooted in intellectual integrity is self-evident. The highest court has itself reminded us that the majesty of courts lies in the objectivity, consistency and wisdom of its judgments, not in the "coercive power of judges, but the deference and respect which is paid to them and their acts from an opinion of their justice and integrity" (Baradakanta Misra, 1974). Clearly, this is our moment of reckoning. We must acknowledge the truth of a diminished Indian democracy and our collective failures. Hopefully, the process of democratic erosion can be arrested with the citizens' collective assertion of our core constitutional values. Despite the disappointments, we can take comfort in history's abiding lesson — that the ideals of freedom, equality and justice are best secured in the consciousness of an enlightened people and that no one can diminish the appeal of dignity or extinguish the flame of liberty as long as it burns brightly in our hearts. We know that "the history of the world is none other than the progress of consciousness of freedom" and "the arc of the moral universe bends towards justice". In these testing times, when the centre have ceased to hold, a relentless pursuit of human dignity admits of no bystanders. To recall Thomas Paine's felicity: "When my country... was on fire about my ears, it was time to stir. It was time for every man to stir."

*The writer is a former Union law minister. The views expressed here are personal.*

## LETTERS

## WOMAN CJ

As a woman, I feel very proud that Hima Kohli is the new Telangana High Court Chief Justice (*Hima Kohli takes oath as state CJ, DC, Jan. 8*). Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao also appreciated her. I am very glad to see this happening in Telangana.

K. Priyanka  
Suryapet

## TRACTOR RALLY

Over 3,500 tractors moved into Delhi (*Are protesting farmers safe from Covid, asks SC, DC, Jan. 7*). The farmers unions said this is just a "rehearsal". A farmer is akin to a magician producing money from the mud. However, we must fear if the hands feeding us are getting buried in the mud.

Sneha Yadav Mallela  
Hyderabad

It is unfortunate that striking farmers are forced to spend nights in Delhi's chill winter amid the deadly Covid-19. Hence, the SC may kindly direct the Centre to suspend the farm laws.

P.H. Hema Sagar  
Secunderabad

## RSS CHIEF'S CLAIMS

Kudos to Karan Thapar for reasoning out the credibility of RSS chief Mohan Bhagat's claim of infallibility of patriotism of people belonging from one religion (*Hindus and Patriotism: Why RSS chief is wrong, DC, Jan. 8*). Exceptions apart, people adopt the religion of their parents. To say that Hindus cannot be unpatriotic is tantamount to claiming the patriotic gene exists in them. Views of racial superiority are unacceptable in a civilized world.

M. Saleemuddin  
Hyderabad50 YEARS AGO IN  
DECCAN  
ChronicleRam to open Dundigal  
Air Force Academy

HYDERABAD, JANUARY. 8 The ₹35-crore Air Force Academy at Dundigal, about 30 km from here will be formally inaugurated on January 16 by Union Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram.

The Academy is intended to centralise the training facilities to Air Force personnel at one integrated establishment. At present the training centres are situated at Jodhpur, Bidar, Bangalore and Madras.

Farrukh  
Dhondy  
Cabbages  
& Kings

"Now the new year reviving old desires  
The thoughtful soul with his bottles retires  
With good wishes for friend and foe alike  
And for saints and even for consummate liars."

— From Rubaiyat of Bachchoo  
Ka Adda

The soon-to-be ex-President Donald Trump insists on calling the Covid-19 plague the "Chinese virus". Very many viruses have been given adjectival and territorial names. The least antagonistic is "common cold". It blames no nation, continent or species as do the descriptions like "Spanish flu", "Asian flu", "swine flu" and "bird flu".

The last two are comparatively innocuous but Mr Trump's insistence on calling this worldwide pandemic "Chinese" is part of his nastiness and his attempt to deepen the antagonism between Americans and all things Chinese.

I don't know if there was any malignant intention on the part of Britons who christened that infliction "Spanish". Just part of British xeno-

phobic contempt. I have no doubt that if Mr Trump is challenged, he will produce evidence that the Covid-19 pandemic originated in Wuhan. He might even say that it was deliberately set free from a laboratory there in accordance with some devilish Chinese world domination strategy.

Incidentally, there is now an invitation from Wuhan scientists for objective observers to re-examine the common claim that the epidemic originated in that city. What the result of this challenge will be is yet to be seen.

Britain is, as I write, gentle reader, under a severe lockdown. The last two weeks have seen an exponential rise in the number of cases of infection and the number of deaths as a result. I use the word exponential literally, as the graphs of the spread that are plastered on the TV screen each day and night are the shape of the ones that we studied for our Pune University maths degrees.

The increase in person-to-person transmission of the pandemic, scientists say, is owing to the virus having mutated. The mutation is, the epidemiology and science tell us, is much more easily transmitted through the air. And now this mutat-

ed organism, is with some justification, known in Spain as the "British virus".

Referring to it as such is possibly motivated by Spanish revenge.

The phrases "British variant", "British mutant virus" and other such descriptions are spreading through the world media and, of course, occasioning a backlash in Britain, even though the fact stands that the mutant strain and its effects were first noticed in this country. Nevertheless, there is a sense of shrill protests of victimisation from those who challenge the description. One of the shrillest protesters is a character called Roger Helmer, who used to be a British Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and is a supporter of the jingoistic United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP).

His tweet, reported in *Private Eye*, says "it was FIRST IDENTIFIED in the UK" and that is not tantamount to it originating in the UK. Earlier last year, Mr Helmer had objected to the characterisation of Mr Trump's contention that this pandemic was a "Chinese virus" as racist.

"So, is it racist to mention 'Chinese food' or 'Indian curry' or 'Korean Kimchee' or 'German Sauerkraut'?

So why not 'Chinese virus'?" he tweeted to his followers.

One may wonder how many of his followers have now noticed a flaw, dissension or even hypocrisy in his statements.

I don't tweet (though I can whistle inefficiently), but if I did, I might point out to poor Roger that if a virus first identified in China can be called the "Chinese virus", then a variant of it which was first identified in Britain... "Geddit Roj, me ole fruitcake?"

And then there is the question of what characterises a flu as Spanish.

Does it say, "tonight we drink, tomorrow we kill the gringos!" as it threatens to infect another human, or "hasta la vista" as it is expelled or killed by a vaccine?

The gaping flaw in poor Roger's argument is that "Indian curry" carries in its flavour everything that characterises Indian cuisine. If I want, which I frequently do, a "Goa sausage", I want it not just because it originates in Goa, but because it contains the ingredients and flavours particular to that region — a bratwurst or a Polish-garlic sausage won't do just as well. Whereas Covid-19 doesn't carry the characteristics of anything Chinese and its variant,

apart from infesting places where the sun never sets, has nothing British about it.

Of course, viruses, just like us Parsis, are sometimes named after the things we do and sometimes after the places from which we come. So, a Parsi called Batliwalla must have ancestors who dealt in bottles — and it should be quite clear what my distant relatives Russi Immoralearningswalla and Imoji Feromonereplacementwalla do for their living.

And moving on to places, Satarawalla and Poonawalla come from the places with those names. What has always been a dilemma for my family is the origin of our surname "Dhondy". It certainly doesn't derive from the town of Dhond in Maharashtra, so eliminating geographical origins, we come to professions. Now in some Gujarati dialects the word might mean stonebreaker, which points to the option that my ancestors could have been stone masons.

The other possibility, which we pointedly disregard, was that they were perhaps put to breaking stones in an institution as guests in the colonial era of His Imperial Majesty, the King Emperor.



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	48,782.51	1.43
Nifty 50	14,347.25	1.48
S&P 500*	3,811.72	0.21
Dollar (₹)	73.24	0.10
Pound Sterling (₹)	99.61	0.06
Euro (₹)	89.64	0.36
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	49,763*614	1.23
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	55.52	2.10
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.892	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.088	0.017

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

Gold bond issue price fixed at ₹5,104 per gm

The issue price for the Sovereign Gold Bond has been fixed at Rs 5,104 per gram of gold, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said. The Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2020-21-Series X will be open for subscription from January 11 to January 15. "The nominal value of the bond...works out to Rs 5,104 per gram of gold," the RBI said. Investors applying and paying online will get a discount of Rs 50 per gramme.

Forex reserves swell \$4.48 bn to record \$585.32 bn



The country's foreign exchange reserves surged by \$4.483 billion to touch a record high of \$585.324 billion in the week ended January 1, RBI data showed. In the previous week ended Dec. 25, the reserves had declined by \$290 million to \$580.841 bn. Foreign currency assets climbed by \$4.168 bn to \$541.642 bn. Gold reserves rose by \$315 million to \$37,026 bn. The special drawing rights with the IMF stood at \$1,510 bn.

Manipal buy of Columbia Asia gets CCI nod

The Competition Commission of India approved acquisition of Columbia Asia Hospitals by Manipal Health Enterprises. The approval came after Manipal Hospitals in November 2020 said it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire Columbia Asia Hospitals in India. The acquisition will be for Rs 2,100 crore, sources had earlier said. The combined entity will have a presence of 27 hospitals across 15 cities.

MG Hector SUV facelift launched at ₹12.89 lakh

MG Motor, the British iconic car brand now owned by Chinese giant SAIC Motor, has rolled out the all-new seven-seater version of the Hector Plus SUV and the MG Hector SUV facelift with prices starting at Rs 13.34 lakh and Rs 12.89 lakh, respectively. The facelift for the Hector-introduced about 18 months after the mid size SUV's launch in India-and updated Hector Plus get a few cosmetic and equipment upgrades.



Lower margins, higher loan growth seen Q3 to be a mixed bag for lenders

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, JAN. 8

Third quarter (Q3FY21) earnings for banks are expected to be a mixed bag this season. While credit flow and collection efficiency could slightly improve quarter-on-quarter (QoQ), driven by a bounce back in the retail sector and sustained momentum in agriculture, the asset quality recognition could be delayed again by a quarter due to the Supreme Court's impending decision on loan recast. Hence, gross non-performing asset (GNPA) ratios might be a tad better QoQ, with lenders reporting asset quality adjusted for the SC verdict. Other income may dip sequentially due to lower treasury gains and fee income.

The Supreme Court in its order last year had banned banks from marking defaulted loans as non-performing assets (NPAs). The apex court had earlier directed banks not to recognise fresh NPAs, till further orders in the interest on interest case. A public interest litigation (PIL) was earlier filed in the Supreme Court to waive off interest on interest for borrowers during the March to August moratorium period.

Provisional data released by private banks showed slight improvement in loan growth sequentially during the December quarter compared to the September quarter. According to analysts,



large banks are likely to report better credit growth. The country's largest private sector lender, HDFC Bank, reported a loan growth of 16 per cent for the quarter ended December 2020. In a BSE filing, HDFC Bank said, its advances aggregated to about Rs 10.82 lakh crore as of December 31, a growth of around 16 per cent. The total loans and advances for Yes Bank grew by 1.8 per cent to Rs 1.69 lakh crore.

"For our banks, we see better QoQ loan growth of 2 per cent versus one per cent in the last quarter, although net interest margin (NIM) may contract by 10 basis points to 3.4 per cent due to the flow through impact of lower deposit rates. Provisioning could remain elevated as banks might be conservative on future recognition. Consequently, net profit may decline by 17 per cent QoQ to Rs 9,280 crore," said Gaurav Jani, analyst, Centrum Broking. Motilal Oswal Institu-

tional Equities said, "higher credit costs, coupled with suppressed credit growth, are likely to put pressure on near-term earnings. Although slippages are likely to increase in 2H FY21, we expect heavyweights like Kotak Mahindra Bank/HDFC Bank to post a PAT growth of 20 per cent/11 per cent year on year. We expect net profit for IndusInd Bank/Federal Bank/Axis Bank/ICICI Bank to decline by 56 per cent/20 per cent/15 per cent/14 per cent year on year."

"PSU Banks are expected to deliver NI/PAT growth of 2.8 per cent/around 18 per cent year on year, led by Bank of Baroda, which is expected to report a profit in 3Q," it added.

Sharekhan said, "even though overall credit growth has been weak on system levels, at 5 per cent over the previous year, larger and well placed banks such as HDFC Bank, ICICI, SBI are expected to report better advances growth."

Retail investors book profit in equity, hybrid MFs for sixth month

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, JAN. 8

Equity and hybrid mutual fund schemes saw continued outflows worth over Rs 16,000 crore in December 2020 due to ongoing redemptions for the sixth month in a row, as per monthly data released by Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi). However, the rally in the equity market and inflows of over Rs 13,862 crore in the debt schemes helped the industry's total asset under management to top Rs 31 lakh crore in December, a new all-time high, at Rs 31,02,475 crore, as on December 31. In November, the total mutual industry AUM stood at Rs 30,00,904 crore.

N. S. Venkatesh, chief executive, Amfi, said, "while net-inflows in equity funds and hybrid are indeed negative, on the back of profit-led redemptions, the gross inflows are a healthy Rs 36,000 crore in these two categories."

Equity-oriented schemes saw outflow of equity

assets worth Rs 10,147 crore while hybrid schemes saw outflows worth Rs 5,932 crore. Barring sectoral/thematic fund (Rs 3,412 crore) and dividend yield fund (Rs 1,490 crore) all other equity-oriented schemes saw outflows.

Himanshu Srivastava, associate director-manager research, Morningstar India, said, "Outflows were witnessed across equity fund categories except for dividend yield and sectoral/thematic funds categories, given both these categories saw the launch of new funds, which managed to garner investor interest. These NFOs collected assets worth Rs 6,312 crore. Large-cap and multi-cap categories were the worst hit during the month. These two categories together witnessed a net outflow of Rs 7,417.16 crore in December."

In debt schemes, corporate bond fund (Rs 8,609 crore), short duration fund (Rs 3,953 crore), overnight fund (Rs 7,410 crore) and liquid fund (Rs 5,102 crore) saw inflows.

FPOs NO LONGER NEED MINIMUM CONTRIBUTION FROM PROMOTER

New Delhi, Jan. 8: Capital markets watchdog Sebi on Friday relaxed the framework for follow-on public offers (FPOs), a move that will help promoters of companies to raise funds more easily through this route.

The applicability of minimum promoters' contribution norm and the subsequent lock-in requirements for the issuers making FPO have been done away with by the regulator, as per a notification.

Earlier, promoters had to contribute 20 per cent towards a company's FPO. Besides, in case of any issue of capital to the public, the minimum promoters' contribution was required to be locked-in for three years.

The regulator said the relaxation would be available for companies which are frequently traded on a stock exchange for at least three years. Also, such firms should have redressed 95 per cent of investor complaints.

The issuer company needs to be in compliance with the LODR (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations for at least three years, according to Sebi. —PTI

SBI RAISES DISCOUNTS ON HOME LOANS BY 30 BPS

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, JAN. 8

The country's largest lender, State Bank of India (SBI), on Friday announced further interest concession of upto 30 basis points (bps) on home loans and full waiver on processing fees. One basis point is one hundredth of a percentage point.

The higher interest concession would be based on the loan amount, the creditworthiness of the borrower and the location of the property and would be available till March 2021.

"The largest home loan lender has sweetened its past offers and now provides higher interest concession based on loan amount, the creditworthiness of the borrowers and the location of the property. SBI believes that it is important to offer better rates to customers displaying good repayment history. SBI home loan interest rates are linked to Cibil score and start from 6.80 per cent for loans up to Rs 30 lakh and 6.95 per cent for loans above Rs 30 lakhs. Interest concessions up to 30 bps is also available in eight metro cities for loans up to Rs 5 crore," the lender said in a statement.

Customers can also apply via Yono app or from homeloans.sbi/www.sbiiloansin59min-utes.com and get additional interest concession of 5 bps, the bank said in a statement.

TCS beats estimates after Covid drives digital boom

SARITHA RAI JAN. 8

Tata Consultancy Services Ltd beat expectations after record deal wins underscored a global shift toward digitization during the pandemic.

Asia's largest software outsourcing provider reported profit rose to Rs 8,700 crore (\$1.2 billion) in the quarter ended December, compared with the average estimate of Rs 8,590 crore. Sales climbed to Rs 42,020 crore.

India's top software companies like TCS and rival Infosys Ltd were expected to deliver their best December-quarter performance in a decade, defying a global downturn. Despite struggling with lockdowns that



forced hundreds of thousands of their employees to work from home, the IT services industry has largely experienced healthy order pipelines, steady revenues and expanding margins.

India's \$181 billion tech outsourcing industry is riding a wave of digital transformation that's expected to underpin deal signings and outlook revisions from its top players. Technology

emerged as the second-best performing sector in India's equity market last year, behind only healthcare, as the pandemic hastened a push toward digitalization and work-from-home activities spurred demand for video-conferencing, cloud services and e-commerce. Global banks and insurers are accelerating efforts to shed non-core assets, like in-house tech support, as they navigate through the economic uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bloomberg Intelligence said, a boost in spending on digital transformations and a need for deeper IT savings will be the main drivers that accelerate sales growth over the next "two-three quarters."

—Bloomberg

Indices inch up on rotational buying

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, JAN. 8

The market closed at a new record high, led by buying in IT & auto stocks, with third quarter earnings expectations and global cues boosting investor sentiments.

The Sensex gained 689 points or 1.43 per cent to close at 48,782 while the Nifty-50 closed at 14,347.25, gaining 209.90 points, or 1.48 per cent.

Foreign portfolio investors were net buyers of equities worth Rs 6,029.83 crore while the domestic institutions were net sellers by Rs 2,372.54 crore.

"Global cues were positive as investors expected that a new Democratic-controlled US government would lead to heavy spending and borrowing to support the country's economic recovery," said Siddhartha Khemka, head-retail research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

"The rally was led by the IT stocks, BSE IT index was up by 3.55 per cent, on high expectation from TCS result, which was to be announced by the company after the market hours," he said.

"TCS soared to a new life time high of Rs 3,127.55 on the BSE and finally closed

at Rs 3,120.35. Other gainers included Infosys (3.95 per cent), Wipro (5.75 per cent), Tech Mahindra (5.64 per cent) and HCL Tech (3.13 per cent).

"At present, the rotational buying across the sectors is helping the index to inch higher," said Ajit Mishra, vice president-research, Religare Broking.

BSE Auto Index also gained 3.37 per cent, led by gains for Maruti Suzuki (5.94 per cent), Eicher Motors (4.23 per cent), Mahindra & Mahindra (3.51 per cent) and Hero MotoCorp (3.31 per cent) and Bajaj Auto (2.75 per cent).

BOEING WILL PAY \$2.5 BN & CONFESS ITS STAFF MISLED REGULATORS

DAVID KOENIG WASHINGTON, JAN. 8

Boeing will pay \$2.5 billion to settle a Justice Department investigation and admit that employees misled regulators about the safety of its 737 Max aircraft, which suffered two deadly crashes shortly after entering airline service. The government and the company said on Thursday that the settlement includes money for the crash victims' families, airline customers and a fine.

Prosecutors said Boeing employees gave misleading statements and half-truths about safety issues with the plane to the Federal Aviation Administration, then covered up their actions. "Boeing's employees chose the path of profit over candor," said David Burns, acting assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's criminal division.

Boeing blamed two ex-pilots who helped determine how much training was needed for the Max. CEO David Calhoun said their conduct doesn't reflect Boeing employees as a whole or the character of Boeing. —AP

Hyundai stock turns red hot on reports of tie-up for Apple car

YOOJUNG LEE JAN. 8

A reported potential tie-up with Apple Inc is making South Korea's second-richest family even richer. Shares of Hyundai Motor Company jumped as much as 25 per cent in Seoul on Friday—the most since 1988—after the company said it's been receiving requests to cooperate on developing self-driving electric vehicles. An earlier report in local media named the US tech giant.

That boosted the combined fortune of Hyundai Motor Group chairman Euisun Chung and his father, Mong-Koo, by some \$2 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

Euisun, who succeed his



Euisun Chung

father as the group's chairman in October, has been pushing for technologies, including electric and driverless vehicles to turn the carmaker into one of the world's leaders.

Hyundai Motor will spend more than 60 trillion won (\$55 billion) in those areas over the next five years and in 2019 set up a \$4 billion autonomous-driving joint venture with a General Motors Co. spin-off. It plans to release its first electric vehicle this year.

Any collaboration with a big tech company could boost that push. Apple has said it will take at least five years to introduce an autonomous, electric vehicle, according to people familiar with the plans, meaning that it's in no hurry to decide on potential auto-industry partners.

With Friday's stock surge, Euisun Chung is now worth \$5 billion and his father's wealth has jumped to \$7.4 billion. The two directly hold about 8 per cent of Hyundai Motor.

—Bloomberg

CHINA ORDERS MEDIA TO CENSOR ALIBABA COVERAGE

SHIYIN CHEN & COCO LIU JAN. 8

China has ordered its domestic media to censor reports about an antitrust probe into Alibaba Group Holding Ltd, signalling how the issue has become a matter of national political sensitivity, the Financial Times reported.

A directive issued by the

government's propaganda arm toward the end of last year ordered news outlets to strictly invoke the official line on the investigation into the tech giant and prohibited them from engaging in extended analysis without permission, the FT said, citing two sources.

Jack Ma's empire has become the most promi-

nent target of China's campaign against the technology industry, which as so far torpedoed affiliate Ant Group Co's \$35 billion initial public offering and led to an antitrust investigation at the e-commerce giant. Ma, who hasn't been seen in public for months, has been advised by the government to stay in the country. —Bloomberg

GREEN | CONUNDRUM Vessel owners don't know which alternative technology to be adopted

Ship orders dip 50% over fuel use uncertainty

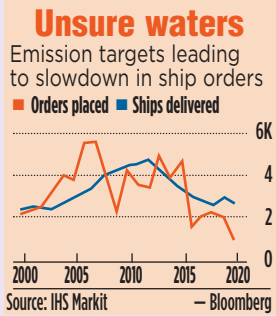
ELIZABETH LOW & JACK WITTELS JAN. 8

Ship owners facing looming deadlines to use less-polluting fuels have slashed the number of new vessels on order because they don't know which alternative technology to switch to.

Ammonia, hydrogen, biofuels and electrification are some of the many contenders to power the world's future merchant fleet, but most are only in the trial stage and won't be scalable for

at least a decade. With the life of a commercial ship averaging around 20 years, opting for a technology that doesn't take off could be very costly.

But owners are running out of time to make the choice. In 2018 the International Maritime Organization set a target to cut shipping's greenhouse-gas emissions in half by 2050 from 2008 levels. The deadline prompted some ship owners to hold off on new orders until it became clearer which new fuels would be the best option—a decline



that has turned into a slump with the subsequent global trade disputes and the pandemic. Orders fell almost 10 per

cent in 2019 and then more than 50 per cent in 2020 to the lowest in at least two decades, IHS Markit data show. If activity doesn't pick up, that could lead to a dearth of vessels and a spike in freight rates in a few years.

"People aren't ordering ships because we don't know what to fuel them with," said Morten Aarup, head of market research at Danish vessel owner D/S Norden A/S. "Engineers, ship designers need to come together" urgently to find the

best solution, he said in a recent panel discussion on shipping trends.

Ship owners who fail to switch to new, cleaner vessels could find themselves at a competitive disadvantage as more customers demand environmentally-friendly transport. About 12.3 per cent of vessels on order have alternative-fuel propulsion, compared with just 0.6 per cent of the current global fleet, according to data from Drewry Maritime Services.

But the use of alterna-

tive fuels in shipping is still in its infancy, with many of the big ship owners pursuing different alternatives. Trafigura Group, one of the world's biggest energy traders, has a stake in a company selling marine biofuels, vessel classification society Lloyd's Register has given approval in principle to several ammonia-fuelled ship projects and Swedish tanker line Stena Bulk AB is planning to run some of its vessels on used cooking oil.

—Bloomberg

KYC NOT MUST FOR JEWELLERY BUYING

New Delhi, Jan. 8: No new KYC disclosures have been mandated for cash purchase of gold, silver or precious gems and stones and only high-value cash transactions continue to require the filing of documents such as income tax PAN or biometric ID Aadhaar, finance ministry sources said on Friday.

Clarifying a December 28, 2020 notification, the Department of Revenue in the ministry said "cash purchase" of jewellery, bullion and precious gems and stones of value more than Rs 2 lakh is not allowed without KYC in the country for the past few years.

This continues, the official said. —PTI



## SHORT TAKES

## IOC member not sure of Olympics

**Tokyo:** A senior member of the International Olympic Committee has said he can't be certain the postponed Tokyo Olympics will open in just over six months because of the surging pandemic in Japan and elsewhere. The comments by Canadian IOC member Richard Pound to British broadcaster the BBC came as Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga declared a state of emergency on Thursday for Tokyo and surrounding prefectures. I can't be certain because the ongoing elephant in the room would be the surges in the virus, Pound said speaking about the future of the Tokyo Games. Japan's emergency order, which is largely voluntary, will be in force until the first week of February. It's crunch time for Tokyo. Organizers say the Olympics will take place, but they are not expected to reveal concrete plans until spring. — AP

## Fifa ex-president Blatter in hospital

**Geneva:** Former FIFA president Sepp Blatter has been taken to hospital, a Swiss newspaper said on Thursday, but media insisted the disgraced official's life was not in danger. "My father is in hospital. He's getting better every day. But he needs time and rest," his daughter Corinne Blatter Andenmatten was quoted as saying by Blick, which said the he was in a serious but non-life-threatening condition. "On behalf of my family, I ask for privacy," his daughter said. Blatter was removed from office in 2015 after 17 years at the head of world football's governing body. He was suspended from football for six years over a two million Swiss franc payment to then UEFA boss Michel Platini in 2011. Blatter and Platini are now being investigated for alleged "fraud" and "breach of trust" in Switzerland. — AFP

## Colaco goals earn win for Hyderabad

**Vasco:** Hyderabad FC piled further misery on NorthEast United, extending the Highlanders' winless run to six games with a thumping 4-2 victory in the Indian Super League here on Friday. Hyderabad took the lead through goals from Aridane Santana (3rd minute) and Joel Chianese (36th) before a penalty from Federico Gallego (45th) and Benjamin Lambot's strike (45th) helped NEUFC draw parity before the break. Hyderabad settled the tie in their favour in the second half through late goals from substitute Liston Colaco, who scored in the 85th and 90th minutes. The first half was a dramatic and open-ended contest with both sides creating ample chances. The North East side fashioned more opportunities and despite a two-goal deficit, fought their way back with two goals late in the opening half. — PTI

## Three shuttlers banned for 'fixing'

**New Delhi:** The Badminton World Federation (BWF) on Friday handed life bans to three Indonesian shuttlers for involvement in match-fixing, match manipulation and betting. The sport's governing body said, "eight Indonesian players who knew each other, and competed in lower-level international competitions mostly in Asia up until 2019, breached BWF Integrity Regulations related to match fixing, match manipulation and/or betting on badminton." "Three of them were found to have coordinated and organised others into being complicit in the behaviour and have been suspended from all badminton related activities for life," BWF said in a statement. — PTI

## Live on TV

**CRICKET**  
Australia vs India: Third Test — Day Four from 5 am (Sunday) on Sony Six, Ten 1, HD

**FOOTBALL**  
FA Cup: Arsenal vs Newcastle United from 11 pm; Manchester United vs Watford from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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## STEVE RUNSMITH

## Smith scores century but Jadeja, Gill star for India

**Sydney, Jan. 8:** Steve Smith's typically gutsy hundred was neutralised by Ravindra Jadeja's four-wicket haul and rookie Shubman Gill's fluent half-century as a resolute India reached 96/2 after dismissing Australia for 338 on the second day of the third Test here on Friday.

The Indian bowlers, especially Jadeja (18-3-62-4) and the ever-dependable Jasprit Bumrah (25.4-7-66-2), were brilliant with their length on a flat SCG deck where Smith (131 off 226 balls) along with Marnus Labuschagne (91 off 196 balls) raised visions of a 450-plus total by taking the side to 206 for 2 at one stage.

But in the end, 338 was all they managed in a little less than 106 overs with none of the other batsmen making any telling contribution.

It was only fitting that Jadeja's split second brilliance from the deep found Smith short of his crease.

Then it was the calm and collected Gill (50, 101 balls), who was assured during those cover drives off Nathan Lyon and equally breathtaking while presenting his forward defence to Pat Cummins.

The 21-year-old and Rohit Sharma (26 off 77 balls) added 70 in 27 overs but more importantly set the stage for skipper Ajinkya Rahane (5 batting off 40 balls) and Cheteshwar Pujara (9 batting off 53 balls) to cash in on the batting-friendly conditions on the third day.

It was Gill's maiden Test half century in just his second match.

The Australian attack looked more insipid than ever and Rohit, playing his first game in nearly two months, did all the hard work for nearly two hours before failing to check an uppish drive that was pouched by the bowler. But it was a day when India had two openers, who were both ready to pull the fast bowlers during their opening spells and dominate Nathan Lyon with precise footwork. — PTI



Australia's Steve Smith celebrates after scoring a century against India on the second day of their third Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday. — AP

## SCORECARD

**Australia first innings (overnight 166 for 2):** M. Labuschagne c Rahane b Jadeja 91, Steve Smith run out 131, M. Wade c Bumrah b Jadeja 13, C. Green lbw b Bumrah 0, T. Paine b Bumrah 1, P. Cummins b Jadeja 0, M. Starc c Gill b Saini 24, N. Lyon lbw b Jadeja 0, J. Hazlewood not out 1. Extras (b4, w1, nb5) 10. **Total (all out in 105.4 overs) 338** FoW: 1-6, 2-106, 3-206, 4-232, 5-249, 6-255, 7-278, 8-310, 9-315.

**Bowling:** Bumrah 25.4-7-66-2, Siraj 25-4-67-1, Ashwin 24-1-74-0, Saini 13-0-65-2, Jadeja 18-3-62-4. **India first innings:** Rohit Sharma c&b Hazlewood 26, Shubman Gill c Green b Pat Cummins 50, C. Pujara not out 9, A. Rahane not out 5. Extras (w5, nb1) 6. **Total (two wickets, 45 overs) 96.** FoW: 1-70, 2-85. **Bowling:** Starc 7-4-19-0, Hazlewood 10-5-23-1, Cummins 12-6-19-1, Lyon 16-7-35-0.

## Smith laughs off form slump

**Sydney, Jan. 8:** Former Australia skipper Steve Smith dismissed talk of a form slump but credited a more positive attitude after his battling century against India in Sydney on Friday.

He reached three figures in a Test for the first time since 2019, smacking 131 for his 27th ton to help steer Australia to a first innings 338.

He bounced back after failing to reach double figures in the opening two Tests, which sparked a flurry of concern about his form among pundits

and the media.

But Smith said he was never worried, pointing out that he hit pulsating back-to-back centuries in the limited-overs series against India late last year. "I read a lot of things and plenty of people said I was out of form so it was nice to come back into form, if that's what you want to call it," he said.

"I mean, it was only about three or four weeks ago that I scored two hundreds at the Sydney Cricket Ground. So yeah, it kind of just makes me

laugh sometimes when people say that kind of thing.

"I missed out in the first two Tests obviously and came back today and scored some runs and helped I guess put us in a decent position," the Australian star batsman further added.

Smith struggled against the spin of Ravi Ashwin in Adelaide and Melbourne and admitted he made some adjustments to his game, which helped him build his near-flawless score. — AFP

## On-top Jaddu relishes field day

**Sydney, Jan. 8:** An exceptional all-rounder, India's Ravindra Jadeja was pretty chuffed about running Steve Smith out with a direct hit in the ongoing third Test against Australia and called it his "best ever" fielding effort which he can watch any number of times.

Smith, who was batting on 130 and was in a mood to slog every ball in company of No.11 batsman Josh Hazlewood, couldn't beat a direct throw from Jadeja, who sprinted from his deep square leg position and effected a direct hit with throw reminiscent of the great Kapil Dev during his heydays.

Asked what will he like to watch, the four wickets he got or the run-out, the senior all-rounder replied: "I will rewind and play this run-out as this is my best effort. A direct hit from outside the circle and that's like a moment that gives you that satisfaction."



India's Ravindra Jadeja (left) celebrates after taking the wicket of Australia's Nathan Lyon during Day Two of the third Test match at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday. — AFP

"Three or four wicket hauls are fine but this run-out will stay with me," said the Saurashtra all-rounder.

Jadeja has been a live wire on the field during this tour with some fantastic catches like the one

he took running backwards at the MCG to dismiss Matthew Wade or this run-out at a crucial juncture when Smith could have added an extra 25 to 30 runs.

Jadeja also said that the plan was to vary pace of

his deliveries and create angles since there was not much turn on offer.

Jadeja returned with figures of four for 62 in 18 overs besides getting rid of centurion Steve Smith with a brilliant direct hit.

"The idea was to create pressure as this wasn't a wicket where you would get chance in every over. You can't bowl all deliveries at same pace on this wicket as there was no turn on offer. You had to mix and match and create angles," said Jadeja.

For India's top multi-skilled cricketer, the focus has also been on producing all-round performances.

"Not just last 12-18 months, from the time I started playing, that's what has been my role. Whenever I am playing, I try to contribute in both departments of the game.

"And whenever I have been given opportunities, more often than not, I have delivered," Jadeja further added. — PTI

## Quarantine cloud over 4th Test

**Sydney, Jan. 8:** A new three-day lockdown in Brisbane has put Cricket Australia in a spot of bother as it makes desperate efforts to hold the fourth and final Test against India in the Queensland state capital from January 15.

The Lockdown was announced less than 24 hours after top cricket board officials from India and Australia were engaged in a discussion on relaxation of hard quarantine measures for the visitors.

"Cricket Australia executives are urgently trying to determine the impact of a three-day lockdown in Brisbane on next week's fourth Test at the Gabba, which was already under a cloud because of India's hesitation to fly north and be subjected to tighter bio-security restrictions," the Sydney Morning Herald reported.

"A hotel quarantine worker's positive test to the more contagious UK strain of Covid-19 is the latest spanner in the

works for CA's hopes to close out the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series at the Gabba," it added.

On Thursday, The BCCI wrote to CA seeking relaxation in hard quarantine protocol of Brisbane, reminding the host board that the visitors are done with the strict isolation that was agreed upon at the beginning of the tour.

## SUNNY BATS FOR BCCI

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar on Friday said that BCCI is only

"protecting its players" by seeking a quarantine relaxation ahead of the fourth Test, just like Queensland health authorities are entitled to shield their people in the wake of fresh Coronavirus cases in Brisbane. "The Queensland government is fully entitled to protect its people. Similarly I believe the BCCI is fully entitled to protect its team. I think that's something we should never forget," Gavaskar said. — PTI

## NUMBERS GAME

● Steven Smith equalled the record of most Test hundreds against India by making 131 in Australia's first innings on the second day of the third Test match against India at Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday (January 8).

● It was his eighth hundred in 30th innings of 18 Test matches against India. West Indian Garry Sobers (30 innings of 18 Tests) and Viv Richards (41 innings of 28 Tests) and Australian Ricky Ponting (51 innings of 29 Tests) also scored the same number of hundreds against India in Tests.

● The former Australian skipper also became the fifth Australian after Ricky Ponting (2,555 runs), Michael Clarke (2,049 runs), Matthew Hayden (1,888 runs) and Allan Border (1,567 runs) and the 19th batsman overall to score over 1,500 runs against India in Tests. Steven Smith has scored 1,570 runs till the end of Australian first innings.

● Ravindra Jadeja recorded his best bowling in Australia by taking 4 for 62. It was his third best performance in away Tests after 6 for 138 against South Africa at Durban in 2013-14 and 5 for 152 against Sri Lanka at Colombo in 2017. Ravindra Jadeja's previous best in Australia was 3 for 82 at Melbourne in 2018-19.

— S. PERVEZ KAISER

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