

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | SUNDAY | 27 DECEMBER 2020



NATION | 4

Ajit sees return of NCP leaders to BJP



WORLD | 5

China hails 'success' in curbing Covid

SPORTS | 8

Bumrah, Ashwin bowl Australia out for 195



deccanchronicle.com, facebook.com/deccannews, twitter.com/deccanchronicle

Vol. 20 No. 211 Established 1938 | 8 PAGES | ₹6.00

PM: Cong. need not lecture BJP

New Delhi, Dec. 26: Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Saturday that free and transparent DDC polls in Jammu and Kashmir coupled with voters' keen participation are a "moment of pride" for India, while hitting back at his rivals for giving him "lessons in democracy".

In a swipe at Rahul Gandhi, who alleged recently that there is no democracy in India, Modi said while his government has completed three-tier panchayat polls in Jammu and Kashmir in over a year of the region becoming a Union Territory, the Congress dispensation in Puducherry has not carried out local body elections despite a Supreme Court order.

Launching the Ayushman Bharat scheme via a video-conference to extend health insurance



benefits to all residents of Jammu and Kashmir, he said the three-tier panchayat system has fully taken shape here, describing it as a realisation of Mahatma Gandhi's dream of 'gram swaraj' (village self-rule).

"Some people in Delhi curse Modi day in and day out and hurl abuses. They regularly offer me lessons in democracy. I want to show them the mirror today," he said, blasting the Congress for not undertaking local polls in Puducherry. "The party of those teaching me democracy is in power in Puducherry," the prime minister said. — PTI

FARMERS SEND DRAFT FOR TALKS ON DECEMBER 29

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 26

As the protests demanding the repeal of the three farm laws entered the 31st day, the protesting farmer unions on Saturday decided to resume talks with the government.

They have proposed December 29 as the date for the next round of negotiations and sent the draft of the issues to be discussed. These include repeal of farm laws, making the MSP a legal guarantee and changes in the draft Electricity Amendment Bill to safeguard the interests of farmers. There is also a demand to exclude farmer from the amendments in Commission for the Air Quality Management in Delhi Region and Adjoining Areas Ordinance, 2020.

■ Report on Page 4

Will stop infiltrators: Shah

Home minister sounds Assam poll bugle, blasts Cong. inertia

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, DEC. 26

Union home minister Amit Shah sounded the poll bugle in Assam on Saturday by saying that the state's two biggest problems — infiltration and floods — could be resolved only by the BJP government.

Asserting that only the BJP government can stop infiltration, which affects our culture and snatches away opportunities from youth, Shah, who is on a three-day visit to Assam and Manipur to oversee poll strategies of BJP in the 2021 elections, accused the Congress of doing nothing to protect the rich culture of the state.

"Congress didn't do anything for the birthplace of Acharya Sankardev whose contributions gave recognition to Assam's history, drama writing, arts and



Union home minister Amit Shah being felicitated by Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and finance minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday. — PTI

poetry. But BJP believes in strengthening of language, culture, arts of the states," he said.

Shah further said, "BJP believes that India cannot achieve greatness until the culture and language of states are strengthened. India's culture and arts are incomplete without Assamese culture and

arts." In an obvious reference to the Congress government, Shah said that there was a period of movements in Assam when many agitations were launched over different issues in which hundreds of youths were killed.

The peace of Assam was disturbed and the develop-

ment was halted, he added. Asserting that the state's two biggest problems are infiltration and floods, Mr Shah said that neither Congress nor any other party cannot stop infiltration. "Infiltration affects our culture, arts and snatches away opportunities from our youth," he said while addressing a public rally at Amingaon.

He said, "All separatist groups have slowly left violence and joined the mainstream. Bodo youth who used to carry guns are now joining the mainstream. Recently conducted polls saw 80 per cent voting without violence. This pair of BJP leaders — Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and minister Himanta Biswa Sharma has crossed several hurdles in the story of Assam's progress. People of Assam will give the mandate to BJP in 2021."

₹4.39 CRORE COLLECTED IN TIRUMALA HUNDI

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, DEC. 26

On the day of Vaikuntha Ekadasi, the Srivari Hundi at the Lord Venkateswara temple at Tirumala received ₹4.39 crore in offerings. This is the highest-ever since Srivari Darshan was resumed by the Tirupati Tirumala Devasthanams on June 8, after the lockdown called for the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to the TTD, a total of 42,825 pilgrims had Vaikuntha Dwara Darshanam in the Tirumala temple on Friday. Supreme Court Justice Indira Banerjee had Vaikuntha Dwara Darshanam on Vaikuntha Dwadasi on Saturday.

TTD Executive Officer Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy received the judge at the main entrance of the temple before she had darshan of Lord Venkateswara.

Later the Supreme Court judge was rendered Vedasirvachanam by a team of Vedic scholars inside Ranganayakula Mandapam.

The TTD EO offered prasadam, a laminated picture of the lord to the judge.

● **THE SRIVARI Hundi** at the Lord Venkateswara temple at Tirumala received ₹4.39 crore in offerings.

● **SC Justice Indira Banerjee** had Vaikuntha Dwara Darshanam on Vaikuntha Dwadasi on Saturday.

Faith matters



On the auspicious occasion of Vaikuntha Dwadasi, Chakrasnanam was performed in Ekantam to Sri Sudarshana Chakratilwar in the sacred waters of Swamy Pushkarini in Tirumala on Saturday. — BY ARRANGEMENT

Political arrests resume in J&K, some under PSA

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, DEC. 26

Jammu and Kashmir police have, once again, gone on an arrest spree.

In the past one week, about 100 political activists have been taken into 'preventive custody' across the Union Territory and, as per official sources, some of them may be formally detained under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA) to 'prevent a breach of peace'.

The police began taking opposition leaders and activists into 'preventive custody' on December 21, a day before the counting of votes in the recently

held District Development Council (DDC) elections in the UT. Among the first to be apprehended were senior People's Democratic Party (PDP) leader Naem Akhtar and two other former lawmakers, Muhammad Sartaj Madni, and Mansoor Hussain.

Though the authorities refused to give out the exact number of detainees, unofficial sources put the number at 75 to 100.

They include second-rung leaders and activists mainly of PDP and National Conference (NC), the two main constituents of opposition parties

al amalgam 'People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) and those of separatist organizations, mainly Jamaat-e-Islami.

The official sources said that "undesirable" political activists, separatist leaders and Over Ground Workers (OGWs) of militants are being taken into preventive detention and some of them are likely to be booked under the PSA to prevent "breach of peace".

But the NC has alleged that the arrest of mainstream political activists is to make horse-trading of elected DDC members easy.

WEATHER

Max: 26.0°C
Min: 15°C
RH: 68%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 26/15°C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+18,549)	(+280)
1,01,88,353	1,47,659
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+317)	(+2)
TS: 2,84,391	1,529
(+282)	(+1)
AP: 8,80,712	7,092

CASES AROUND THE WORLD	
8,04,36,796	
DEATHS	
17,61,278	
COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES	218
worldometers.info/coronavirus	

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Margasira Shuddha Trayodasi till 6.19 am (Monday)
Star: Kritika till 1.16 pm
Variyam: Nil
Durmuhurtam: 4.18 pm to 5.02 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
HUIRI CALENDAR
Jamadi-ul-Awwal 11, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.39 am
Zohar: 12.27 pm
Asar: 4.14 pm
Maghrib: 5.56 pm
Isha: 7.09 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.44 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.49 PM
MOONSET 3.16 AM
MOONRISE 2.59 PM

COUNTER POINT



No need to panic, It's safe!

SHORT TAKES

BJP to push for 1 nation, 1 poll

New Delhi: The BJP will organise nearly 25 webinars over the next few days on the issue of "one nation, one election", as it seeks to build popular support for what has been a strong plank of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Party sources said its senior leaders, besides members of academia and legal fraternity, will be attending these 'webinars', seminars that are held online. "We plan to hold 25 webinars by the end of this month," a party leader said.

MP clears new 'love jihad' Bill

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh Cabinet on Saturday cleared the Dharma Swatantra (Religious Freedom) bill, 2020, known in political parlance as 'Love Jihad' bill. The draft bill, which may see through in the assembly during its 3-day winter session commencing on December 28, provides a maximum of 10 years imprisonment and ₹1 lakh fine to the perpetrators of forced religious conversion of a girl for marriage. The new bill has provision of declaring such a marriage null and void. The Bill puts onus on the accused and those associated with accused including organisations and institutions, to prove their innocence.

■ Report on Page 4

Man hit by MIM leader Farooq's bullet dies

DC CORRESPONDENTS
HYDERABAD / ADILABAD, DEC. 26

One of the three persons who sustained bullet injuries when Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (MIM) leader Farooq Ahmed opened fire with his revolver in Adilabad on December 18 died while undergoing treatment at the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) in Hyderabad on Saturday morning.

The victim, Syed Zameer, was laid to rest at a graveyard attached to the Adilabad Idgah on Saturday night. Zameer was a former councillor of the Adilabad Municipality. Following his death, tension escalated in Thattiguda colony where he stayed, and the Adilabad police has deployed extra personnel to maintain peace.

Ramagundam police commissioner V. Satyanarayana is overseeing the situation to prevent untoward incidents. Adilabad Two Town circle inspector Potharam Srinivas is camping at the Thattiguda colony since the morning.

MIM leader Farooq Ahmed, the former vice chairman of Adilabad municipality, had opened fire with his licensed weapon at a group of people after a scuffle over a cricket match between the children. He is under arrest and the licence of his revolver has been cancelled. The AIMM dissolved the town unit after the incident.

Apart from Zameer, two other persons — Syed Mannan and Mothesham — had suffered bullet injuries. Their condition is said to be stable.

The wives of Farooq and

Zameer had contested from the same ward in the last Adilabad municipal elections. Farooq's wife won the election. This resulted in a rivalry between the two politicians which culminated in the death of Zameer. Farooq fired three shots at his opponents' group and also attacked them with a knife. Adilabad District Congress Committee (DCC) incharge president Sajid Khan demanded that the state government pay compensation of ₹2 crore to the family of Zameer and give one family member a government job.

The leader demanded that AIMM president Asaduddin Owaisi extend ₹2 crore help to Zameer's family.

Relatives and local political leaders met the family members of the deceased and consoled their family members.

NAVEEN: WILL FIGHT FOR WOMEN QUOTA

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, DEC. 26

Odisha chief minister and BJD president Naveen Patnaik on Saturday said his party has been trying to empower women by giving them due share in electoral politics and various institutions. He also made it clear that his party would continue to fight to give women 33 per cent quota in Assemblies and Parliament.

VACCINE | NOD

Bharat Biotech's Covaxin likely to be delayed over Phase 3 trials

Covidshield may get cleared first

New Delhi, Dec. 26: With preparations underway for a possible vaccine-rollout by January, the Indian drug regulator is looking at the UK, which sources believe may give its nod to the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine next week, before deciding on giving emergency use authorisation to the Serum Institute that is manufacturing the shots here.

Once the UK drug regulator gives its approval to the Oxford vaccine, the expert committee on Covid-19 at the CDSCO will hold its meeting and thoroughly review the safety and immunogenicity data from the clinical evaluations

● **ONCE THE UK drug regulator gives its approval to the Oxford vaccine, the expert committee on Covid-19 at the CDSCO will hold its meeting and thoroughly review the safety and immunogenicity data from the clinical evaluations**

conducted abroad and in India before granting any emergency authorisation for the vaccine here, official sources said.

The process of granting emergency use approval for Bharat Biotech's Covid-19 vaccine 'Covaxin' may

take time as its phase 3 trials are still underway, while Pfizer is yet to make a presentation.

"Going by this, Oxford vaccine 'Covidshield' is likely to be the first to be rolled out in India," a source said. Serum Institute of India last week also had submitted some additional data required by the DCGI, the sources said.

Amid fears about the mutated variant of SARS-CoV-2 detected in the UK, government officials recently said that it will have no impact on the potential of emerging vaccines that are being developed in India and other

countries. Bharat Biotech, SII and Pfizer had applied to the DCGI seeking emergency use authorisation for their Covid vaccines early in December.

The Pfizer vaccine has already been approved by several countries including the UK, the US, and Bahrain.

The subject expert committee (SEC) on Covid-19 of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) on December 9 had sought additional safety and efficacy data for COVID-19 vaccines of SII and Bharat Biotech after deliberating upon their applications. The application by the

Indian arm of US pharmaceutical firm Pfizer was not taken up for deliberation as the company had sought more time for making a presentation before the committee.

While considering SII's application, the SEC had recommended that the firm should submit an updated safety data of phase 2 and 3 clinical trials in the country, immunogenicity data from the clinical trial in the UK and India, along with the outcome of the assessment of the UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) for grant of EUA. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

VHR BATS FOR BC LEADER TO HEAD CONG

From Page 1

Jagga Reddy, a proxy for a senior leader, opposed Revanth Reddy as TPCC chief. Hanumanth Rao threatened to quit the party if the high command chose a leader who is facing several cases, without taking the name of Revanth Reddy. Speaking to select mediapersons, he said he would not accept a leader with RSS links. "We know the credentials of the person," he said.

The leader is also facing a money-laundering case apart from indulging in blackmail.

Hanumanth Rao then lent it a caste angle, claiming one community was lobbying for the post and asked if the Congress looked to the backward class communities, who constitute 54 per cent of the population, only for their votes. "Why is the Congress ignoring the BCs when other parties are giving them preference," he asked.

Hanumanth Rao also levelled allegations that Manickam Tagore was biased in giving his report to the high command.

MIM TO CONTEST BHOPAL CIVIC POLLS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC 26

The All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin (AIMIM) has decided to contest the upcoming elections to the Bhopal Municipal Corporation which are likely to be held in February next year.

The party has registered with the MP State Election Commission as the first step.

Sources disclosed that AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi had deputed party leaders including GHMC corporators to devise a strategy to conduct a survey in the Muslim-dominated areas in the Madhya Pradesh capital.

Sources pointed out that contesting the Bhopal corporation elections is the precursor to fielding the AIMIM's candidates in the Assembly election. The party is also exploring the possibility of contesting the next civic elections in Indore, Bhopal, Ujjain, Khadwa, Sagar, Burhanpur, Khar-gone, Ratlam, Jaora, Jabalpur, Balaghat, Mandasaur and some other places.

The elections to these civic bodies are also likely in February. Bhopal is divided into 85 wards and elections were held in February 2015 in which the BJP won 55 seats

VHR GOES TO POLICE OVER THREATS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 26

Senior Congress leader V. Hanumanth Rao approached the Raidurgam police on Saturday, seeking help after allegedly receiving threatening phone calls.

Rao said he began receiving threat calls after he opposed the candidature of some leaders for the post of state Congress president.

He asked the Raidurgam police for protection and action against those who had made threatening calls to him.

A police official said, "We are seeking permission from the court to investigate the case for criminal intimidation," said a Cyberabad police official.

FIRE MISHAP AT BEGUM BAZAAR

Hyderabad: A toy shop in Begum Bazaar was gutted after a fire broke out on the intervening night of Friday and Saturday. Two fire tenders managed to bring the flames under control after battling for two hours. Gowliguda station fire officer Mohammed Mustafa supervised the operations. He said that the fire broke out at about 2.30 am in Jai Matha Traders on the first floor of the building. According to the owner of the shop Vinod Kumar, toys worth 10 lakh were gutted. The shop was not covered by insurance.



Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu delivers the third Atal Behari Vajpayee Memorial lecture to mark the former PM's birth anniversary, in Hyderabad on Saturday. — S. SURENDER REDDY

Venkaiah rues erosion of values in politics

Urges leaders to take inspiration from Vajpayee's ideals

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 26

Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu expressed concern over the erosion of values in politics now, and urged leaders to follow the 'Atal school of politics' to keep the faith of public in the political class intact.

He said that it was former prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's consensual way of approach in his political career that enabled him to successfully lead a large coalition for its full term in an era of

unstable coalition governments. The V-P called Vajpayee the 'father of coalition practices' in India.

Venkaiah Naidu was delivering the third Atal Bihari Vajpayee Memorial Lecture here on Saturday, to pay tribute to the former prime minister on his 96th birth anniversary. The theme was, 'Building Democratic Consensus — The Vajpayee Way.'

'Atal ji understood that consensus does not mean complete acceptance or compromise. Consensus is a broader acceptance for a

● **HE RECALLED** how Vajpayee had risen from humble beginnings to become Prime Minister. He recalled his own days as BJP president, calling it an honour to have been able to sit between Advani and Vajpayee.

larger benefit. He could build consensus through persuasion," the Vice President said.

He recalled how Vajpayee had risen from humble beginnings to become Prime Minister. He recalled his own days

as BJP president, calling it an honour to have been able to sit between Advani and Vajpayee.

The Vice President urged the leaders to take inspiration from Vajpayee's political ideals and improve the level of discourse. "We must raise the level of debates and always adhere to 3Ds — discuss, debate and decide — while avoiding the 4th D, 'disrupt'."

He added that political parties should put an end to competitive populism and give priority to long-term development.

Abide by decision of high command: Ravi

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 26

Congress senior leader and former MP Dr Mallu Ravi on Friday said that party leaders should abide by the decision of the high command with regard to the appointment of the new president of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee.

In a statement, he took serious exception to the comments of former MP V. Hanumanth Rao who accused AICC incharge Manickam Tagore of bias and called the leaders who supported party MP A. Revanth Reddy's candidature for the TPCC chief post as "chamchas."

Dr Ravi said that along with 165 leaders who expressed their opinion during the consultations for the selection of the new TPCC president, he too expressed his opinion in favour of Revanth Reddy.

He asked Hanumanth

Rao on what chamchagiri was there in expressing his opinion. Dr Ravi felt that disciplined leaders must act in accordance with the decision of the high command.

In Telangana, there was every need for the Congress to regain its glory and senior leaders should encourage youngsters to take the forward the party.

Meanwhile, the Caongress high command has taken serious note of the remarks made by Hanumanth Rao against TPCC working president A. Revanth Reddy and others who are lobbying for the TPCC chief post.

Sources said the high command was likely to issue a showcause notice to Hanumanth Rao seeking an explanation for his remarks against Revanth Reddy and other leaders who are camping in New Delhi to convince the party national leadership for the coveted post.

BJP increasing its strength in Nizamabad

NARENDER PULLOOR | DC
NIZAMABAD, DEC. 26

BJP has been gaining strength in Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts since last few months, as many Congress, other political party leaders and those of even TRS are either joining or showing keen interest in getting on to bandwagon of the saffron party, hoping for a bright political future.

BJP's growth has simultaneously seen a steep fall in cadre base of Congress and Telugu Desam parties not only in these two districts but also in the entire Telangana state.

Incidentally, BJP candidates have been contesting from the Nizamabad Lok Sabha constituency since 1991. But for the first time, its nominee D. Arvind got elected as MP only in 2019. In addition, the party's recent victory in Dubbak by-election, followed by a great performance in GHMC council polls, has boosted the

morale of party cadre.

Following this, many leaders of other opposition parties are queuing up to switch their loyalties to BJP.

The saffron party has already built up considerable leadership in Nizamabad Urban, Armoor, Balkonda, Bodhan, Kamareddy, Yellareddy and Jukkal assembly constituencies. It is lagging behind only in Nizamabad Rural and Banswada assembly constituencies.

For example, BJP has two strong leaders by way of Endala Laxminarayana and Dhanpal Suryanarayana Gupta in Nizamabad urban assembly constituency. In Armoor segment, BJP leader P. Vinay Kumar Reddy is actively strengthening his base after he received sizeable votes in the last assembly elections. In Balkonda assembly constituency, former MLA A. Annappurna's son Mallikarjun Reddy is a strong contender for next assembly elections.

Appeal to de-reserve Urdu medium posts

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 26

Urdu Struggle Organisation (USO), an association for the protection of minority rights, on Saturday, urged the state government to de-reserve posts related to the appointment of Urdu medium faculty as the candidates of reserved categories are not available.

Addressing a press conference, USO general secretary Mohammed Nazeer Ahmed said that out of 900 teacher posts of Urdu medium schools announced in 2017, only 347 have been filled up while 553 posts are vacant

as posts are reserved for SC, ST, BC (A, C & D) categories under the rooster system.

This is an irreparable loss to Urdu medium schools and its students. No candidate is available from the reserved categories, resulting in these positions remaining vacant.

He said, "We observed that most students going to Urdu medium schools belong to Muslim weaker sections. We have raised the issue at every level, but the problem has not been solved in three years, although Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao had promised to resolve the issue. We urged the

government to allow the vacant posts to be filled by candidates available in the open category."

Nazeer asserted that in the past the government had de-reserved posts reserved for these categories because of non-availability of suitable candidates and filled up the same under open categories for the sake of Urdu medium students.

Syed Miskeen Ahmed, president, All India Dag Foundation, Mohammed Moizuddin, president of Telangana State Urdu Trained Teachers Association (TS UTTA) and Shaik Farooq Ali, general secretary, also spoke.

184 from UK give fake address, can't be traced for tests

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 26

A total of 184 people who have returned from the United Kingdom to Telangana state are difficult to trace as they had provided incorrect addresses and telephone numbers. It is also suspected that some of them have shifted to other states or other districts.

Besides, many others who were living in rented homes have shifted and no one knows their new address. It is said that 1,216 people came to the state from the UK of whom 937 have been traced and RT-PCR tests run on them.

Three contacts of the UK returnees tested positive on Saturday. Besides, two more people who returned from the UK tested positive. The state now has 18 people who returned from the UK diagnosed with Covid-19.

Of these, four are from Hyderabad, six from Medchal Malkajgiri, two from Jagtial, one each from Mancherial, Nalgonda, Ranga Reddy, Sangareddy, Siddipet and Warangal Urban districts. Results are awaited to find out if they are carrying the more infective mutant variety of SARS-CoV-2 that was found in the United Kingdom.

These 18 people have been kept in institutional isolation in different hospitals.

There are 79 contacts of these 18 who have been placed in quarantine and their health is being monitored as they suffered from severe anxiety attacks after they learnt of a new virus strain from the UK.

There are 92 others who came to TS from the UK and went to dif-

● **OFFICIALS ATTEMPTING** to do contact tracing are running into a blank wall with people unable to remember if they came in contact with either the UK returnees or with the infected persons among them.

● **OTHER STATES** have also been alerted about the movement of people and their place of stay and whereabouts during that time are being detailed for tracking and tracing in those states.

ferent states for social gatherings, marriages, celebrations and a good number of them visited Goa. Surveillance officials in the state are on the ground tracing those who came between December 9 and December 15.

Officials attempting to do contact tracing are running into a blank wall with people unable to remember if they came in contact with either the UK returnees or with the infected persons among them. Other states have also been alerted about the movement of people and their place of stay and whereabouts during that time are being detailed for tracking and tracing in those states.

A senior surveillance official said, "It has become a huge task as we are once again reaching out to a large number of people. As they did not have any symptoms of disease, there was no point in them being at home. The people went about their work and social celebrations as was planned. Now they are worried and so are their contacts."

Easy jump from TS to AP

Kendram oka midhya (Centre is a myth)" was a famous slogan of Telugu Desam founder and former chief minister N.T. Rama Rao, who fought relentlessly against the big brother attitude of the Centre. The executive heads of two the Telugu states seem to have taken a leaf out of NTR's book when it came to accommodating the long-pending wish of senior bureaucrat Y. Srilakshmi who is facing many cases. Ever since Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy took over the reins of Andhra Pradesh, the Telangana state cadre officer made Herculean efforts to go on deputation to Andhra Pradesh.

With all efforts failing, she got an order from the Central Administrative Tribunal changing her cadre to AP, six years after bifurcation. What is more shocking is that TS Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar gave her relieving orders and his AP counterpart Nilam Sawhney not only admitted Srilakshmi in the AP cadre but also made her secretary to municipal administration. Neither took the Union department of personnel and training, the deciding authority over all-India services officers, into cognisance.

Jagga joins the gorakshaks

Congress MLA T. Jayaprakash Reddy, better known as Jagga Reddy, is feeling the pain and agony for losing six cows which he said he had bred with utmost love and affection. Jagga Reddy made a request to the DGP through the media that the cows were stolen by some unidentified persons two months ago, in October. He said that thieves had taken away the cows, leaving the behind their calves.

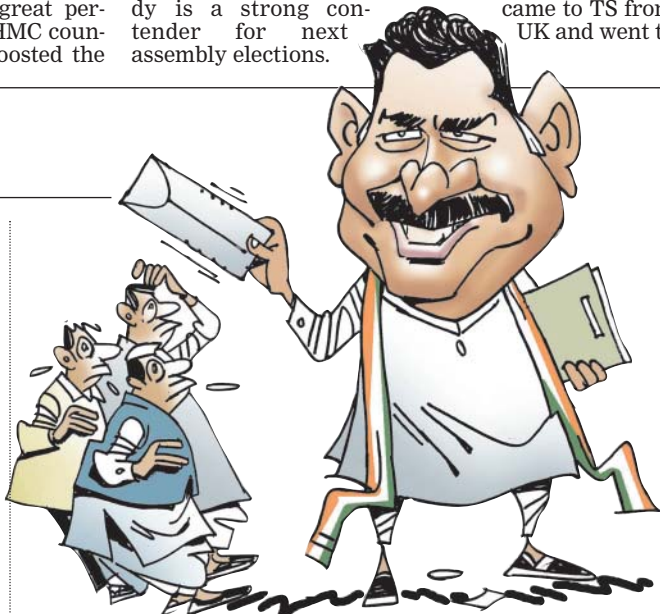
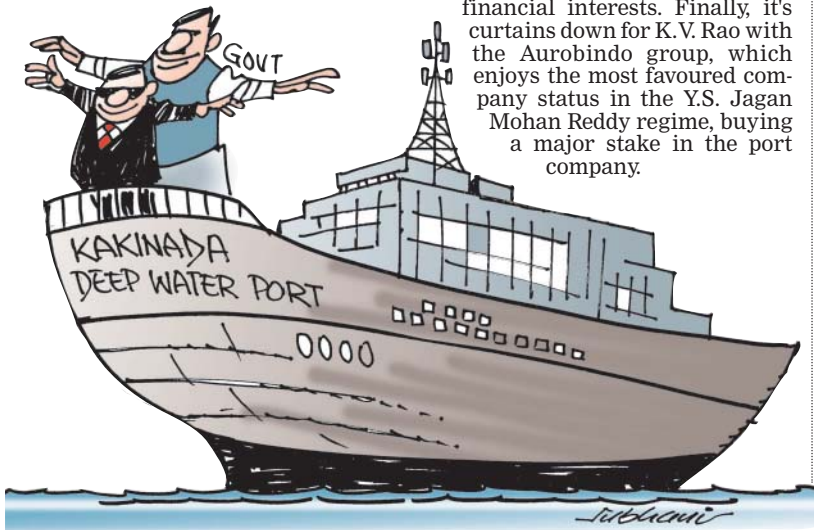
He told the DGP that he had lodged a complaint with the Sangareddy police, but they had failed to either recover his cows or trace the thieves. But then, this is no Uttar Pradesh and he is no Azam Khan for the police to go rushing off to find missing cattle. And, in the style of BJP MLA T. Raja Singh, darkly hinted that cow slaughter gangs may have something to do with it. Is there a message here?

NETA'S NATTER

Deepwater port is ported out again

The Kakinada deepwater port has a unique tradition — it's always operated by people who are close to the party in power of the day. It all started with then chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's initiative to privatise the port and favour the son of then Malaysian ruler Mahatir Mohamad. As domestic problems cropped up for the Malaysian firm, Naidu awarded the port contract to L&T and later got the Malaysian

firm to buy a stake along with a consortium of TD leaders and their relatives. After the change of guard, K.V. Rao, a small-time businessman from Vijayawada, made it big and bought the port from L&T thanks to his proximity to K.V.P. Ramachandra Rao, in a literal sense also for they are neighbours. K.V. Rao managed to get the government to agree to dilute the concession agreement and Chandrababu Naidu never uttered a word against the gross compromise of the state's financial interests. Finally, it's curtains down for K.V. Rao with the Aurobindo group, which enjoys the most favoured company status in the Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy regime, buying a major stake in the port company.



In Congress, secret within a secret

Nothing in the Congress is what it seems. This is being seen again in the long-drawn process of selecting the new chief for the Telangana state Congress. AICC incharge Manickam Tagore met a number of leaders and prepared a report regarding the new chief. In most cases this would have been enough. But then, Tagore, in true Congress style, left it to the high command. He also told state leaders that there was no need for them to visit Delhi as the time for consultations was now over and that he, being the envoy of Congress president

Sonia Gandhi and party leader Rahul Gandhi, had finished the exercise. But then, this is the Congress. Several leaders rushed to Delhi and tried to drum up support. Given the cloak-and-dagger nature of such things, no one knows if the Tagore report will prevail on the AICC or the famous 'sealed cover' will come from the high command, carrying the name of the favoured one. However, one of the aspirants is learnt to have told scribes that he will take charge of the post and launch a padayatra to ensure that the Congress wins in 2023.

OTHER STORIES

MAN SLIPS IN
LAKNAVARAM
LAKE, DIESDC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, DEC. 26

A weekend excursion to Mulugu district turned tragic for a group of friends when one of them died at the Laknavaram lake on Saturday.

A group of 18 members from Hyderabad visited Mulugu district to spend the extended Christmas weekend. While they were exploring the Laknavaram lake on Friday, one of them, Aluri Sudhakar, accidentally slipped and fell into the water near the stair area, and drowned before his friends could seek help to rescue him.

The police were informed but the search operation was unsuccessful. As there was not sufficient light to find Sudhakar as the incident took place in the evening on Friday.

The swimmers continued the search on Saturday and found the body. Sudhakar hails from Bhimavaram in West Godavari district and works for a software company in Hyderabad.

ZP CHEIF SLAMS
MP ARVIND
OVER REMARKSDC CORRESPONDENT
JAGTIAL, DEC. 26

Jagtial Zilla Parishad chairperson Dava Vasantha, of TRS party, on Saturday condemned the comments made by Nizamabad BJP MP D. Arvind against K. Kavitha, Telangana Jagruthi president and MLC, and warned him against making derogatory comments against women. Condemning the comments, Vasantha said: "Is this the way the BJP will treat women in the country? Do the women in Arvind's family do not wear colourful sari? Is this Hindu tradition followed by Arvind who claimed to be a true Hindu," she said.

MUSLIM GROUPS
CLASH AT RUDRUR
POLICE STATIONNARENDER PULLOOR | DC
NIZAMABAD, DEC. 26

Clashes between two Muslim groups at Rudrur police circle inspector office premises led to mild lathi charge on Saturday. Few persons were injured in the melee and police registered cases against 12 persons. Dispute arose between two groups over maintenance of a mosque in Jawaharnagar colony in Rudrur.

To settle the issue, two groups reached CI's office and heated arguments led to fighting. Police resorted mild lathi charge to disperse the two groups and a case was registered against 12 persons.

Oppn parties back farmers
against Centre's farm lawsDC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, DEC. 26

All major opposition political parties have come out openly in support of farmers protesting since last one month against the three farm laws passed by the centre. The support is so overwhelming that farmers themselves are surprised.

Seeing such enormous support, even BJP leaders have been compelled to organise a meeting in an attempt to convince farmers about how the three acts will be beneficial for them.

● **THE PENDING** disbursement of ₹525 crore crop loan insurance has become a main issue in Adilabad district.

The pending disbursement of ₹525 crore crop loan insurance has become a main issue in Adilabad district. All opposition parties are criticising both the ruling parties, TRS at the state and BJP at the central level, for not releasing their premiums towards the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Beema Yojana.

Farmers in large numbers staged a rasta roko at

Sunkidi in Talamadugu mandal on Saturday demanding payment of crop insurance for the years 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Talamadugu ZPTC Goka Ganesh Reddy, Sanjeev Reddy, Yasam Narsing Rao, Ambakanti Ashok, Youth Congress parliamentary constituency president Charan Goud and others were present at rasta roko.

The rasta roko comes in the wake of opposition parties, apart from TRS cadre too openly extending their support to the Bharath Bandh opposing the three farm acts.



ZPTC Goka Ganesh Reddy, along with farmers staged rasta roko in Talamadugu on Saturday. —DC

Errabelli reviews arrangements
for Mallikarjuna Swamy jatara

RTC to run an additional 25 buses from various destinations for devotees

ANUDEEP
CEREMILLA | DC
WARANGAL, DEC. 26

Ahead of the popular event Inavolu Mallikarjuna Swamy jatara scheduled to be held from January 13 to 15, Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Water Supply Errabelli Dayakar Rao on Saturday held a review meeting inside the temple premises and directed officials from all relevant departments and priests to make safe arrangements for devotees.

On the agenda were putting in place foolproof security, toilets, tents, accommodation, bathrooms, changing rooms, separate facilities for women, queues, electricity supply and installation of CC cameras.

The minister appreciated Kakatiya Urban Development Authority (KUDA) chairman Marri Yadava Reddy for coming forward to the construction of permanent bathrooms at Inavolu at a cost of one crore rupees.

Greater Warangal mayor Gunda Prakash Rao agreed to spray sodium



Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao addressing officials at a review meeting in Inavolu on Saturday. —DC

hypo-chlorite solution and take up continuous sanitation during the three-day fair. In addition to the medical department, Aururi Gattumallu Trust has agreed to distribute masks on the occasion.

Errabelli said that following corona protocol is mandatory for everyone, including temple staff and the devotees.

Prakash Rao pointed out that VIPs should be issued special passes and be allowed to visit at scheduled times. He directed officials to ensure that no overcrowding at any place. The RTC has decided to run an additional 25 buses

to Inavolu from various destinations for the convenience of the devotees. The minister also asked officials to take up road repairs, ensure uninterrupted power supply, availability of fire engines and medical facilities.

He appealed people's representatives, officials and staff to work in coordination with each other and make jatara success.

MLA Aroori Ramesh, DCCB Chairman Marineni Ravinder Rao, District collector Rajiv Gandhi Hanumanth, local public representatives, and officials from various departments were present.

TS POLICE SET UP SPECIAL SYSTEM
FOR PROTECTION OF GIRL CHILDRENDC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, DEC. 26

Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao and Child Welfare Committee chairperson Mandala Parashuramulu along with National Youth Award recipient Akalappally Madhulatha unveiled the anti-child trafficking wall poster at Hanamkonda on Saturday under the auspices of Abhyudaya Seva Samithi and Girls Advocacy.

Speaking on the occasion, minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao said that the Telangana state government has paid special attention of curbing child trafficking.

Telangana police had set up a special system for the protection and care of girls and women, police are working with full commitment towards their interests Minister said.

"If unidentified persons appear to be wandering around us, the concerned police station should be informed immediately. He



Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao with CWC Chairperson M. Parashuramulu unveiling the anti-child trafficking posters. —DC

said NGOs and youth groups should work with dedication in curbing child trafficking. If the children are in danger, they should contact the Child Helpline 1098," he said.

Dayakar Rao also appealed parents to enroll their wards in SC, ST, BC and Minority Ashram schools set up by the Telangana state government rather than private institutions.



Warangal police commissioner P. Promod Kumar along with DCPs Pushpa and Venkatalakshmi inaugurate a video message warning against the threat caused by instant loan apps on Saturday. —DC

COMMISSIONER ADVISES PEOPLE TO BE
VIGILANT WITH ONLINE LOAN APPSDC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, DEC. 26

Warangal police commissioner P. Promod Kumar on Saturday advised people to be vigilant with regard to online instant loan apps. Individuals and merchants are attracted to these loan apps because of the ease of processing. However, the app operators are withholding large sums of money in the name of interest and invisible charges, he said. App managers have been known to mislead people into repaying loans, and they are also misusing the personal information from the borrowers' phones and thereby violating pre-arranged agreements, Promod Kumar said.

The commissioner warned that people would get into trouble if they took loans from such unlicensed apps and people

should take loans only from banks and non-banking financial companies recognised by the Reserve Bank of India.

In particular, the commissioner said that under no circumstances should people share their personal information, like bank and Aadhaar card information. Kumar said people can immediately report any harassment to the local police, call 100 or the Warangal police commissionerate WhatsApp number 9491089257, he said.

Promod Kumar was speaking after unveiling a promotional video message designed to create awareness among the people on online instant loan apps, together with DCPs incharge Pushpa (Central Zone) and Venkatalakshmi (East Zone) along with cybercrime inspector Janardhan Reddy on Saturday.

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE
AUTOMOTIVE

FOUR WHEELERS

HONDA CITY 2016 VX, Diesel, sunroof red pearl color, fancy number, full insurances, 75000 kms drive, neatly maintained. P h : 9 8 4 9 4 4 7 0 0 3 . (HYCL/2021/C02143)

FOR SALE.... Innova 2008 model... done 2.65 lakhs km... single owner. Excellent condition, full insurance. Contact 9100381790 (R/2021/C00012)

MACHINERY

BUY & Sell: Excavators, Loaders, Tipplers, Dozers, Single & Double Drum Rollers, Boom Placers, Graders, Concrete Pumps, Transit Mixers, Crushers, Hot Mix, Wet Mix & RMC Plants, Piling Rigs, Pavers, Gensets & Cranes. Ph:9848124242. (VJ/2021-00130) (S/2021/C01630)

FOR SALE

PROPERTY

AGRICULTURE

KARIMNAGAR, CHERLALUTKUR Agricultural land for sale 1,2,3, Guntas, per Gunta 2 Lakhs only. Clear titled. New Pass Book. Ph:8331962689/ 8919964963. (S/2021/C01699)

COMMERCIAL

6 FLOORS Plus 2 Cellars parking, each floor 10,000 Sft Commercial Complex under construction on Main Road, Aramghar Cross, opp P.V.N.R Express Way for Sale. P h : 9 0 0 0 8 7 6 5 2 . (B/2021/C00078)

BANJARAHILLS ROAD No.1 615 yards, MasabTank 3,000 JubileeHills Road No.92 300 yards, Road no.45 1,000, Road No.36 1200 & 8200 sft, Road No.10 1400, Madhapur 720 yards Building N/E corner 16,000 sft, Kondapur 1400 & Rental income properties 5Cr to 50Cr 9966991449, 9394022449. (W/2021/AT000734)

✓ **SALE HYDERABAD** near Cherlappalli Railway station 2km from Infosys . 5-storeyed 36,000sft building 1200 says Modern construction 2 lifts, interiors , plug play for Software, BPO, Educational, Pharma, R&D, Electronics. Contact 9581942180 or 8978074107 (HYMM/2021/C04984)

FLATS

KEYES HIGH School opposite, near Secunderabad Railway Station, main road facing, beautiful Metro view, two minutes walk from Metro Station. Newly Renovated, 1100 Sft. Contact: 9121421689/ 8106408689 (S/2021/C01736)

BANJARAHILLS MLA colony Duplex flat 4600sft-4bhk, 2300sft-3bhk, Road no.5 3100sft-3bhk, Road no.10 1800sft-3bhk Road no.2 2000sft-3bhk, JubileeHills MP mla col 1600sft, Madhapur DSR Fortune prime 3240sft E/I-4Bhk, Kakatiyahills 1425sft-3bhk, 1600sft-3bhk, For more flats and villas

8884872389, 9985888511. (W/2021/AT000736)

INDEPENDENT HOUSE

INDEPENDENT HOUSE for sale @ Baghdad Colony, Langer House, 80 Sq.yds., G+1 @ 65 Lakhs. Contact:- 9030397364 (HYCL/2021/C02143)

4 FLOOR Building with 14 Flats for Sale at A.C.Guard Advocate Colony, Lakdikapool. 10 years Old with all permissions. Each floor 3 Flats, Ground floor 2 Flat Office use, Total Land 480 Sq.yds, 100% clear title, 2 side road with all amenities. Rental income property 7 Cr Neg. Ph:9246588336, 9292053786. (B/2021/C00081)

✓ **EAST FACING, 320 Sq.Yds, Perfect Vasthu, Independent House, ICRISAT Colony, Phase-II Bowenpally, 6th House from Mainroad, Prime Location, Secured Community, Clear Title, Single Owner, Drinking Water, Two Borewells, Car Parking, Rental income 40k/-pm. Close to Schools, Hospitals, Banks. Ph:9704678123, 9966031746. (A/2021/C00090)**

JUBILEEHILLS INDEPENDENT house sale, east facing 717 sq.yds, 5 bedroom 10,000 sft, 6 car parking, home theatre, 3 servant rooms, Gym room with Lawn & Society membership. Interested buyers contact: 7995125559. (A/2021/C00086)

KOMPALLY, HYDERABAD, SRC Luxury Villas, beside Nuziveed seeds, in Gated community Project. 2130 Sft to 4130 Sft 4BHK, all Modern Amenities. attractive offer till 31st January 2021. Ph: 9550155023/ 9481260314. (S/2021/C00127)

LAND

MOINABAD, AZIZNAGAR, 14Acres Prime Land, Square Bit, Prime Location For Outrate or Development, Only Genuine Buyers and Developers Should Call. Clear Title. Ph:8374399578/ 6 3 0 3 1 0 7 4 2 1 . (HYMM/2021/C05241)

MOKILA SHANKARAPALLY Farmlands & Weekend homes for sale @2999/- sqyard at Nawabpet Village R1Zone Call 08047486188 or 900117452 (W/2021/AT000861)

PLOTS

VIJAYAWADA HIGH Way, Warangal, Srisailem, Bangalore, Bombay High Way All Developments Very Low Price Open Plots For Sale. Ph:9391813678, 7095380765. (HYCL/2021/C02154)

BANJARAHILLS 350, 500 North 600 West jubileeHills 200 South 400North 500East 600East 717 East 1200East 1500West Filmnagar 1110yards Journalist Colony 300 NandagiriHills 600North Madhapur kavuriHills 500East Gachibowli Jayabheri HUDA 934 N/E JubileeHills and Banjarahills independent houses 10Cr to 50Cr, All commercial plots with tenant properties 9966991449, 9394022449. (W/2021/AT000735)

KADTHAL- SEMI Commercial

North & South 50' Road facing, 350 & 455 Sq.Yds Plots, DTCPC Approved with 24/7 Security & all Developments, Near Pharma City, RRR & 4 Roads Junction. Spot Registration, Genuine Buyers only Contact: 81794-58669. (L/2021/C00005)

REAL ESTATE

LAND REQUIRED

LAND REQUIRED, Immediate Payment, 5Acres To 100 Acres, R1, Agriculture, Industrial, or 111. in And Around Hyderabad. For Development or Outrate. Clear Title Ph: 8374399578/ 6 3 0 3 1 0 7 4 2 1 . (HYMM/2021/C05242)

RENTALS

COMMERCIAL

NEWLY CONSTRUCTED of 1 lakh sft (50+ 50) Godown available for lease. 5 km distance from Guntur NH- 16 & also 5 km distance from Mirchayard. CWC: FCI norms godown. For details contact: cell: 9949596999. (VJ/20-21-00149) (S/2021/C01741)

JUBILEEHILLS ROAD no 36 commercial space1000 sq ft for long Lease suitable for office/ boutique/ accountant. etc Interested parties pls contact 9396534776 (W/2021/AT000788)

VIJAYAWADA MG Road, backside of Manorama Hotel, 2500 sq.ft, 1st, 2nd, 3rd floors commercial building with lift, parking, Toilet for Corporate Offices, Hospitals, Banks, Function Hall. Ph:9440579150. (VJ/20-21-00148) (S/2021/C01740)

FLATS

LAKDIPAPOL 1800 Sft Semi Furnished 3 Bedrooms, dining hall, modular kitchen, 3 baths, car parking, lift, power backup, 24 hrs water. (2) Banjarahills, Road No.13, Newly constructed semi furnished 2400 Sft 3 Bedrooms, drawing, dining hall, modular kitchen, 3 attached baths, 2 car parking, swimming pool, gym, banquet hall. P h : 9 3 4 6 3 8 4 9 0 4 . (B/2021/C00076)

HIMAYATHNAGAR/ ASHOK Nagar, 2800 Sft, 3600 Sft, 3 BHK. (2) 4 BHK Semi Furnished Flats for Rent with lift, car parking, power backup. (3) Basheerbagh Semi furnished, 1850 Sft 3 bedroom, drawing, dining hall, modular kitchen, car parking, lift, power backup, 24 hrs water. Ph:9346384904. (B/2021/C00077)

INDEPENDENT HOUSE

GATED COMMUNITY High-end new villas Kondapur w/4 Bedroom + Home theatre, Hitech City E/I 4 Bedroom, Kokapet E/I, Gandipet Aditya Casa Grande E/I, Tallapur E/I & Apartment flats Banjarahills, JubileeHills, Madhapur, & kondapur For Rent. 8884872389, 9985888511. (W/2021/AT000845)

SITUATION VACANT

ACCOUNTS & FINANCE

REQUIRED SENIOR Finance Controller with 15+ years of experience

rience to head Finance dept of mid-sized company at Hyderabad. Contact: 9010252680, Email: hrdept262@gmail.com (W/2021/AT000805)

MEDICAL

URGENT REQUIRED MBBS Doctor with MCI certificate Location: Uttara Pradesh District Salary 60,000.00+Bonus 20,000.00 Age below 65-years, Doctor Should be fluency in Hindi & English Contact: 9005144477, 8 5 0 0 0 7 4 7 0 . (HYCL/2021/C01924)

MULTIPLE VACANCIES

REPUTATED FIRE Fighting Company Requirement Staff For Telangana Andhra Two Years Experience Marketing Executives Four, Marketing Managers Two, Fire System Engineers With Execution Designs Electrical/Mechanical Four Administrative Officer One, Accounts Officer One, Required Technicians, Welders, Fitters, Electricians Contact: 9885166673, 9908348452 Mail: agnidassociates@gmail.com (HYMM/2021/C05248)

BRIDE WANTED

CASTE NO BAR

BOTH PARENTS Doctors Property Mds Dentist Having 2 Clinics At Hyderabad Earning More Than 1 Lakh P.M. Kapu Boy Fair 32/168, Language Caste No Bar, Seeks Suitable Alliance Contact yrajeshwer@yahoo.com or rajeshwerdiesel2009@gmail.com (HYMM/2021/C04872)

WELL EDUCATED pvt job age 50, ht 5'5", OC, looking for single independent friendly bride professional widow, age divorcee no bar. Ph:7989426490. (S/2021/C01749)

HINDU

WWW.EASYVIVAH.COM, Rs.365/- for 365 Days. For All Religions, First, Second & Late Marriages, Lakhs of people are seeing from India & Abroad, No Settlement Fees. Phone/ Whatsapp: 9440506441. (HYMM/2021/C04992)

KAPU BOY 37 years, B.Tech MBA, born & brought-up in Hyderabad, Well Settled, Affluent Family looks after own Manufacturing Unit, First Marriage Annulled, Caste No Bar seeks suitable Educated Girl from Telugu, Tamil Family. Contact: 9440048236, 7816027077. (S/2021/C01638)

GROOM WANTED

MUSLIM

ASM PARENTS settled in Hyderabad, invite proposal for their youngest Daughter MBA, fair, 5'3", 34yrs never married. looking for minimum Graduate working anywhere in India. Contact number 7780747964, 9866312847 (what's app) (HYMM/2021/C05203)

ASM PARENTS settled in Hyderabad invite alliance for their daughter 30/5.4, MCA seeks suitable boy well settled, educated family background. W.A 9 3 9 8 8 0 5 4 2 9 (HYMM/2021/C05225)

FINANCE

LOAN FOR High Level Projects & Properties from 10Cr to

1000Cr R.O.I @ 3.5% to 8% with feasible tenure No prepayment Ct:09884327792. Email: hiriseventures@gmail.com (CHSD/2021/C00007)

BUSINESS

✓ **INVESTORS REQUIRED** for Development of Prime Properties in Hyderabad. Pls Contact Engr. Baig at 7337457025 / 8790528280 (W/2021/AT000826)

BUSINESS OFFER

CONCEPT ORIENTED, Fast Growing Construction company is looking for HNIs for long term investments, minimum 10cr. Contact: 8885688856. (HYMM/2021/C05179)

CONSTRUCTION/FABRICATION

BUILDERS & DEVELOPERS

MS CONSTRUCTION & Interiors.... We undertake independent House, villas apartment, all constructions & renovation works along with materials. Architect planning, interior designing with vastu. P H : 9 1 2 1 3 5 2 3 7 6 . (HYMM/2021/C04779)

EDUCATIONAL

DISTANCE EDUCATION

✓ **ONLY FOR Educational Consultants/ Academies. No Advance Fee. Students please no call. Contact for Verifiable + Fast Track: Graduation(15,000)/ B.Ed.-M.Ed.-NCTE Recognised (30000)/ BBA-MBA-BCA-MCA(20-25,000) from Government University.WES Documentation & Attestation Support Available.47-years Educational Experience. Shiksha Bharti.Varanasi.Moblie: 9519759663, 9915103781.Email: shikshabharti88@yahoo.com (HYMM/2021/C05127)**

FILM

URGENTLY REQUIRED Hero, Heroines, Friends, Character and Dubbing artists, children, villains, singers. All age group character required immediately: 9391154732. (S/2021/C00124)

NOTICE

Readers are advised to make appropriate enquiries while responding to advertisements in these columns. Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. does not vouch for any claims made by the Advertisers. The Printer, Publisher, Editor and Owner of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. shall not be held responsible / liable for any consequences, in case such claims are found to be false.

Deccan Chronicle
BOOK YOUR CLASSIFIED / DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENTS at
EDITION CENTRE :
KARIMNAGAR
H.No. 1-21/12/1, Cherlabhatur Road, Mugdumpur Village, Karimnagar - 505 186
9000650508
e-mail: krmadv@deccanmail.com
9121183123

SHORT TAKES

CONGMEN HELD FOR PROTECT COW, FARMERS STIR

Lalitpur/Jhansi (UP), Dec. 26: Uttar Pradesh Congress president Ajay Kumar Lallu and over 50 party workers were arrested in Lalitpur on Saturday after they tried to take out the 'Gai Bachao, Kisan Bachao' march without permission, but were released hours later, police said.

However, district Congress president Balwant Singh Rajput, who was among those arrested, claimed around 200 party workers were held. He also alleged that about two dozen party workers were injured as the police used force against them.

"About 50 to 60 workers, including state Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu and district unit chief Balwant Singh Rajput, were arrested from Dailwara township while trying to take out the march without permission. They have all been taken to police lines," Additional Superintendent of Police Brijesh Kumar Singh said. Later in the evening, the Congress leaders, including Lallu, were released from police lines on furnishing personal bonds and the UPCC president was allowed to leave for Lucknow, the ASP said.

The Congress had announced that it will take out the 'Gai Bachao, Kisan Bachao' march in different districts of Bundelkhand to highlight the alleged mismanagement in cow shelters under the state government.

PM TO INAUGURATE INDIA'S FIRST-EVER DRIVERLESS TRAIN

New Delhi, Dec. 26: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate India's first-ever driverless train operations on Delhi Metro's Magenta Line along with the fully operational National Common Mobility Card service on the Airport Express Line on December 28 via video conferencing.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said on Saturday that these innovations will herald a new era of travelling comfort and enhanced mobility. The driverless trains will be fully automated, which will eliminate the possibility of human error, it said, adding that after the start of driverless services on the Magenta Line (Janakpuri West-Botanical Garden), the Pink Line (Majlis Park-Shiv Vihar) of Delhi Metro is expected to have driverless operations by mid-2021.

The National Common Mobility Card, which will be fully operationalised on the Airport Express Line, will enable anyone carrying a RuPay-Debit Card issued from any part of the country to travel on the route using it. This facility will become available on the entire Delhi Metro network by 2022, the PMO said.

I-T DEPT DETECTS BLACK INCOME OF ₹100 CR IN ASSAM

New Delhi, Dec. 26: Unaccounted income of ₹100 crore has been detected after the income tax department raided three "leading" contractors of Northeast India based in Assam early this week, the CBDT said on Saturday.

The search and survey action was initiated on December 22 at fourteen locations in Guwahati, Silapathar and Pathala in Assam and in Delhi. "Cash of ₹2.95 crore has been seized."

Overall, undisclosed income to the tune of approximately ₹100 crore has been unearthed so far during the search and survey operation," the Board said in a statement without sharing the identities of those raided.

It added that "jewellery of ₹9.79 lakh has been seized and the sources of acquisition of some other jewellery worth ₹2 crore is under verification." The Central Board of Direct Taxes frames policy for the I-T department.

The entities covered are "leading contractors of Northeast and one group is also involved in the hospitality business," it said.

"The main allegation against the three groups is that they have taken accommodation (dubious) entries in the form of non-genuine unsecured loans and also securities premium from dubious Kolkata-based shell (dummy) companies." "The three groups have suppressed their net profits across the years and routed back into business the unaccounted income through entry operators based out of Guwahati and Kolkata," the CBDT said.

J&K residents get free treatment



Jammu and Kashmir Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha hands over the golden cards to beneficiaries of the Ayushman Bharat PM-Jay Sehat scheme, after it was rolled out by Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually, in Jammu, on Saturday. — PTI

India, Vietnam begin SCS drills

Sea exercises to be closely watched by an already furious China

PAWAN BALI I DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 26

The Indian and Vietnamese navies on Saturday started an exercise in the South China Sea, something which will be closely watched by China. The exercise comes when China is becoming increasingly assertive in the South China Sea and has been conducting aggressive military manoeuvres in the region to warn other nations.

"Indian Navy conducted Passage Exercise today with the Vietnam People's Navy in the South China Sea," said a senior official. The relations between India and China has deteriorated this year after the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) violated the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh and the military stand-off between two armies in the sector has continued for the last eight months. India is now putting

pressure on China at many fronts.

China was already furious over India-Vietnam virtual summit this week, where India had stressed that negotiations for a Code of Conduct (CoC) in the disputed South China Sea (SCS) waters should not undermine the interests of other countries or third parties in the region. Reacting to the summit, China's state mouthpiece *Global Times* had said, "This is not the first time

(nor will it be the last) that India has poked its nose in the South China Sea."

Earlier this week defence minister Rajnath Singh and his Japanese counterpart Nobuo Kishi had also discussed regional situation in the South China Sea. Both had asserted to oppose any activities that escalate tension.

The US Navy has started patrolling in the South China Sea to challenge China. In past few months US aircraft carriers USS

Ronald Reagan and USS Nimitz along with their escorting cruisers and destroyers have conducted exercises in South China Sea.

After clash between Indian Army and teh PLA in Galwan Valley in June, India had sent its frontline warship to the South China Sea much to the displeasure of the Chinese who raised objections over the move during diplomatic talks between the two countries.

MP Cabinet clears 'Love Jihad' Bill

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY I DC
BHOPAL, DEC. 26

The Madhya Pradesh Cabinet on Saturday cleared the Dharma Swatantra (Religious Freedom) Bill, 2020, known in political parlance as 'Love Jihad' bill.

The draft bill, which may sail through in the Assembly during its three-day winter session commencing on December 28, provides a maximum of 10 years imprisonment and ₹one lakh fine to the perpetrators of forced religious conversion of a girl for marriage.

The new bill has the provision of declaring such a marriage null and void.

The bill puts the onus on the accused and those associated with the accused, including organisations and institutions, to prove their innocence.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who chaired the cabinet meeting, justified the bill saying that instances of religious conversion of a girl for political purpose has come to the fore.

If someone is looking to capture a panchayat, he gets married to a girl and fields her in elections, Chouhan explained.

"We have rescued many minor girls from various places recently. We will not allow this to happen to innocent girls from Madhya Pradesh", he added.

Later, briefing reporters, Home minister Narottam Mishra said that the new bill provides

● **THE DRAFT bill, which may sail through in the Assembly during its three-day winter session commencing on December 28, provides a maximum of 10 years imprisonment and ₹one lakh fine to the perpetrators of forced religious conversion of a girl for marriage.**

imprisonment of 1-5 years and a fine of ₹25,000 for forced conversion. If the victim of forced religious conversion belongs to Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe or is under-aged, the offence would attract a jail term of 2-10 years with a maximum penalty of Rs one lakh.

Under the new bill, it is mandatory for both the bride and groom sides, to notify local district magistrate on change of religion two months in advance, failing which the marriage would be declared illegal.

Religious leaders and priests associated with such marriages would attract five-year jail terms and organisations and institutions involved in such marriages would be deregistered.

The new bill has also made provision of maintenance for the victim and her children. The Uttar Pradesh government passed a similar law on November 28.

However, cases of abuse of law in Uttar Pradesh have come to the fore.

NTF: No need to change protocol for new strain

SHASHI BHUSHAN I DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 26

The National Task Force (NTF) on Covid-19 has concluded that there is no need to change the existing treatment protocol in view of SARS-CoV-2 mutations emerging in the United Kingdom and spreading to some countries. The NTF on Saturday discussed evidence-based modifications in testing, treatment and surveillance strategies for Covid-19 in view of the new virus strain.

The NTF deliberated on aspects related to the treatment protocol, testing strategy and surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 vis-a-vis the UK variant. It emphasised that since the UK strain is implicated to cause increased transmissibility of the virus, it is critical to identify individuals infected with this strain and adequately contain them to prevent its transmission in India.

The NTF recommended that in addition to the existing surveillance strategies, it is critical to conduct enhanced genomic surveillance for SARS-CoV-2 specially in incoming passengers from the UK. Besides, it will also be critical to conduct genome sequencing in samples where there is dropout of the S gene in lab diagnosis, proven cases of re-infections etc. Routine genomic surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 from representative samples all across the samples needs to be a continuous and well planned activity.

8 UK returnees to Kerala test +ve

Thiruvananthapuram, Dec. 26: Eight people who recently returned from the UK to Kerala, have tested positive for Coronavirus and their samples have been sent to the National Institute of Virology, Pune for genomic analysis.

Health Minister K. K. Shailaja said on Saturday that samples of eight returnees were found positive for Covid-19 and their samples have been sent to NIV for further tests. Following this development, it has been

decided to subject the returnees to more tests, she added.

Surveillance at the four international airports in the state have been further strengthened. After the recently held local body polls, it was feared that there would be a massive surge in cases. However, that did not occur.

The death rate did not go up in the state as the government had taken precautionary steps in this regard, she said.

— PTI

According to the Union health ministry, the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) informed that the Centre has taken cognizance of the reports of mutant variants of SARS-CoV-2 reported from the UK and the response of other countries to these reports. The situation is being monitored proactively. A strategy has been put under place to detect and contain the mutant variant.

"The NTF concluded that there is no need to change the existing treatment protocol in view of mutations emerging in the strain. Further, since ICMR has always advocated use of two or more gene assays for testing

SARS-CoV-2, it is unlikely to miss infected cases using the current testing strategy," said the Union health ministry.

A total of 251 new deaths and 22,273 infections of Covid-19 were, meanwhile, reported in the country. The number of people who have recovered from the disease climbed to 97,40,108, pushing the national recovery rate to 95.78 per cent, while the fatality rate stands at 1.45 per cent. The active caseload remained below three lakh for the fifth consecutive day. There are 2,81,667 active cases of Covid-19 in the country, constituting 2.77 per cent of the total caseload.

Farmers ready for talks with Centre on Dec. 29

ASHHAR KHAN | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 26

As the protests demanding the repeal of the three farm laws entered the 31st day, the protesting farmer unions on Saturday decided to resume talks with the government. They have proposed December 29 as the date for the next round of negotiations and sent the draft of the issues to be discussed.

These include repeal of the farm laws, making the minimum support price (MSP) a legal guarantee and changes in the draft Electricity Amendment Bill to safeguard the interests of the farmers. There is also a demand to exclude farmer from the amendments to be the Commission for the Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Ordinance, 2020.

The decision to resume talks was taken at a meeting of Sanyukt Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of 40 farmer unions protesting at various Delhi border points against three farm laws.

Rakesh Tikait, a senior leader of the Bharatiya Kisan Union, said the modalities for the repeal of farm laws and guarantee for MSP should be part of the agenda for talks with the government. "We have decided to hold talks with the government on December 29," he said.

The announcement for fresh discussions came a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi lashed out at the Opposition for the first time since the beginning of the protests. On Friday he stressed that farmers' lands won't be taken away, adding, "Some people are spreading lies".

The Prime Minister also released a financial aid of ₹18,000 crore under the PM-Kisan cash transfer scheme.

Five rounds of talks between the government and farmers have failed in the last couple of weeks.

The government has been repeating its stand that the farm laws will benefit the farmers. Several senior ministers have said that farmers

should have faith in the government and that if at any stage the laws cause hindrance to the farmers the government will not hesitate to rethink these.

Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan said that during Dr Manmohan Singh's government in 2013-14, the farmers were paid ₹1,310 for a quintal of paddy but now they are being paid ₹1,815.

Carrying ration and other essential items with them, several batches of farmers from Punjab headed towards Delhi borders to join the peasants protesting against the Centre's new agriculture-related laws.

According to farmer union leaders, farmers from various places including Sangrur, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Gurdaspur and Bathinda districts were headed towards Singhu and Tikri borders. They began their journey despite fog and biting cold wave conditions in many parts of Punjab.

Tractor trolleys, cars and other vehicles carrying farmers, including the elderly and women, were seen on the Amritsar-Delhi national highway. The road from Delhi to Ghaziabad near the Ghazipur border was also closed as the farmer protest split over to the other carriageway.

Kisan Union leader Dr Darshanpal said on Saturday that the farmers will celebrate the martyrdom of Guru Govind Singh's son on December 27 and December 28. The protesters will then meet the Centre for the next round of talks on December 29.

On December 30, farmers will march from Singhu to Tikri and Shahjahanpur alongside their tractors on the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) highway. "We request people from Delhi and other parts of country to come and celebrate New Year with protesting farmers," he said.

Dr Darshanpal added. He went on to say that the farmers are inviting everyone to have langar with them on December 31 and January 1 at Singhu border.

BJP leaders will join NCP: Pawar

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, DEC. 26

Deputy chief minister of Maharashtra and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Ajit Pawar on Saturday said that leaders who had joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will return to NCP in the next three-four months. Mr Pawar said that he will refrain from commenting on who will be joining the party as election code of conduct for the gram panchayat elections is in effect as of now.

Few days ago 18 Congress corporators shifted their loyalty to NCP. Mr Pawar indicated that BJP leaders are next in line.

Mr. Pawar said that those joining the NCP were earlier in the same party before defecting to the BJP. These leaders

are not being heard by the BJP.

The NCP leader's statement would assume a political significance as elections of the several local bodies and gram panchayats are round the corner.

"The leaders who joined the BJP thought that they would be heard when the BJP would come to power. Now, they want to leave BJP because their works weren't done. Some leaders from Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad have wished to return. They will soon be welcomed," Mr Pawar said.

Reacting to Pawar's statement, the BJP state president Chandrakant Patil said, "When Ajit Pawar failed to keep his 28 MLAs, whom he thought were with him when tried to form the government with the BJP, how would he get any other MLA now?"

MEDICAL | RECORD Hemant had developed Lukoskin for leucoderma; several other herbal medicines

DRDO man bags Scientist of the Year Award

New Delhi, Dec. 26: Senior scientist Hemant Kumar Pandey has been honoured with DRDO's 'Scientist of the Year Award' for his contribution in developing several herbal medicines, including the popular drug Lukoskin meant for treatment of leucoderma.

A recipient of several prestigious awards for his contribution in the field of herbal medicine, Pandey has been undertaking

research at the Defence Research and Development Organisation's (DRDO) lab Defence Institute of Bio-Energy Research (DIBER) at Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand for the past 25 years.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had recently facilitated the scientist at an event here with the prestigious award that comprises a certificate and cash prize of ₹2 lakh.

● **DEFENCE MINISTER** Rajnath Singh had recently facilitated the scientist at an event here with the prestigious award that comprises a certificate and cash prize of ₹2 lakh.

● **APART FROM** Lukoskin, Pandey has developed drugs for treatment of eczema and toothache as well as an anti-radiation cream.

"Dr Hemant Kumar Pandey, Scientist 'E', Defence Institute of Bio-Energy Research (DIBER), Haldwani has significantly contributed

in the development of five herbal products and filed seven patents.

ToT of three products has been done with Aimal Pharmaceuticals, New

Delhi, which has launched anti-leucoderma product into the market by trade name Lukoskin.

"In recognition of his invaluable contribution, the Scientist of the Year Award-2018 is conferred on Dr Hemant Kumar Pandey," the citation accompanying the award stated.

Though the scientist has developed six herbal drugs so far, Lukoskin used for treating leucoder-

ma or Vitiligo, a condition in which white patches get developed on the skin, has been most widely appreciated and found huge acceptance in the market.

A formulation of around eight herbs found in Himalayan region, Lukoskin helps in treating white patches and is marketed by Delhi-based Aimal Pharmaceuticals.

Leucoderma is an autoimmune disorder and

over 5 crore people are under its grip in India. It is neither contagious nor life-threatening.

"The incidence of leucoderma is 1-2 per cent of the population worldwide. Apart from Lukoskin, Pandey has developed drugs for treatment of eczema and toothache as well as an anti-radiation cream, most of which are already being sold in the market following transfer of technology (ToT). — PTI

SHORT TAKES

JUDGE DELAYS
EXECUTION OF
U.S. WOMAN

Washington, Dec. 26: A federal judge said the Justice Department unlawfully rescheduled the execution of the only woman on federal death row, potentially setting up the Trump administration to schedule the execution after president-elect Joe Biden takes office.

US District Court Judge Randolph Moss also vacated an order from the director of the Bureau of Prisons that had set Lisa Montgomery's execution date for January 12.

Montgomery had previously been scheduled to be put to death at the Federal Correctional Complex in Terre Haute, Indiana, this month, but Moss delayed the execution after her attorneys contracted Coronavirus visiting their client.

TURKISH OPPN
TV STATION
SHUTS DOWN

Istanbul, Dec. 26: A private Turkish TV station that aired pro-Kurdish opposition views has shut down less than a month after launch, raising press freedom concerns in a country often chastised by rights groups.

Olay TV, owned by businessman and former minister Cavit Caglar, began broadcasting on November 30 and was pulled off the air on Friday.

Its staff announced its closure live on air.

Caglar said he pulled out of the venture because the station's editorial line veered too close to the pro-Kurdish opposition, while the editor claimed he had bowed to government pressure.

Executive editor Suleyman Sarilar said on air that the network had aimed to maintain equal distance from every segment in Turkey's polarised society. "But we have seen that we can no longer keep up with this kind of broadcasting ... Cavit (Caglar) said he was under intense pressure from the government and that he cannot move forward," he claimed.

BUTCHERING
LOVER: RUSSIAN
GETS 12.5 YRS

Saint Petersburg, Dec. 26: A Russian historian and Napoleophile enthusiast was sentenced to 12-and-a-half-years in prison for murdering and dismembering his young lover last year.

The Saint Petersburg trial, which spurred activists to voice growing anger over domestic abuse in Russia, began in June after delays due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Oleg Sokolov, 64, had admitted murdering 24-year-old Anastasia Yeshchenko but said he committed the crime against his former student and lover in the heat of the moment during an argument.

He was arrested in November last year after he was found drunk and carrying a backpack containing a woman's arms. Judge Yulia Maximenko sentenced Sokolov on Friday to "12 years and six months in a strict regime penal colony" on charges of murder and the illegal possession of firearms.

"He was aware of his actions at the time of the crime," Maximenko said as she read out the verdict.

BRITISH DOUBLE
AGENT GEORGE
BLAKE DIES

Moscow, Dec. 26: George Blake, a former British intelligence officer who worked as a double agent for the Soviet Union, has died in Russia. He was 98.

Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service, known as SVR, announced his death Saturday in a statement, which didn't give any circumstances of his death. Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed condolences, hailing Blake as a "brilliant professional" and a man of "remarkable courage." Blake has lived in Russia since his daring escape from a British prison in 1966 and was given the rank of Russian intelligence colonel.

Born in the Netherlands, Blake joined British intelligence during World War II. He was posted to Korea when the war there erupted in 1950 and was detained by the Communist north. He said he volunteered to work for the Soviet Union after witnessing relentless US bombing of North Korea. In a statement issued in 2017 through SVR, Blake emphasised that he decided to switch sides after seeing civilians massacred by the "American military machine."

UK variant strikes Spain, France

New virus strain has prompted more than 50 countries to impose travel restrictions on the UK

Madrid, Dec. 26: Spain has registered its first cases of a Coronavirus variant believed to be particularly infectious that emerged in Britain, Madrid's regional government said on Saturday.

The first case of a particularly infectious coronavirus variant that recently emerged in Britain has been confirmed in France, the health ministry said on Friday.

The person — a French citizen living in Britain — is asymptomatic and self-isolating at home in Tours in central France, the ministry said.

The person arrived from London on December 19 and was tested in hospital on December 21 and found to be positive for the strain of the virus known as VOC 202012/01.

"The health authorities have carried out contact-tracing for the health professionals taking care of the patient," the ministry said in a statement.

Any of their contacts that were seen as vulnerable would similarly be isolated, the statement said.

In addition to this first case, "to date, several positive samples that may suggest the VOC 202012/01 variant are being sequenced" by the specialist laboratories of the national Pasteur Institute, the statement added.

The region said four cases had been detected involving people who had recently arrived from the UK or had close contact with someone who had.

The father, mother and sister of a young man who arrived in Madrid by plane last week have tested positive for the coronavirus variant, it added.

The young man is suspected to have the new variant as well but Spanish authorities are waiting for the results of a polymerase chain reaction PCR test to confirm this.

The fourth confirmed case of the new variant involves a man who arrived in Madrid on December 20 on another flight.

"The patients are not seriously ill, we know that this strain is more transmissible, but it does not cause more serious illness," Madrid regional deputy health chief Antonio Zapatero told a news conference.

"There is no need for alarm." There are another three suspected cases of the coronavirus variant but the results of tests will only be available on Tuesday or Wednesday, Zapatero said.

The new strain of the virus has prompted more than 50 countries including Spain to impose travel restrictions on the UK.

Madrid has banned all entries from the United Kingdom except for Spanish nationals and residents.

France and Italy have also already confirmed cases of the new variant, while the World Health Organisation reported that nine cases have been detected in Denmark and one each in the Netherlands and Australia.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said the new viral strain "may be up to 70 percent more transmissible than the original version of the disease". — *AFP*

Instant immunity
antibody drug
trials start in UK

London, Dec. 26: Scientists in the UK have begun trials of innovative antibody drug treatments that they hope could provide instant protection against Covid-19.

The University College London Hospitals NHS Trust (UCLH) said that the researchers in the Storm Chase study believe a Long Acting AntiBody (LAAB) known as AZD7442, developed by AstraZeneca, may offer immediate and long-term protection to people who have been recently exposed to the SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus and prevent them from developing



A near-deserted Old Bond Street in London is pictured on Saturday, as Londoners continue to live under Tier 4 lockdown restrictions. Fears over new strains and surging Covid-19 infections in general across Europe have severely dampened the mood over the holiday season.

UK millions face tough
post-Christmas curbs

London, Dec. 26: Millions more people across different parts of the UK entered tougher lockdown restrictions from December 26, the day after Christmas marked annually as Boxing Day, as part of plans announced earlier this week to contain the rapid spread of a highly transmissible variant of Coronavirus.

Around six million people in east and south-east England have joined many others into Tier 4, England's highest Covid level which includes a "stay at home" order. Lockdowns have also started in Scotland and

● **LOCKDOWNS HAVE** also started in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and measures have been reimposed in Wales after being eased for Christmas Day, when the UK crossed another grim milestone of 70,000 virus deaths.

Northern Ireland, and measures have been reimposed in Wales after being eased for Christmas Day, when the UK crossed another grim milestone of 70,000 Coronavirus deaths.

Under the toughest Tier 4 restrictions, all non-essential shops, bars and

restaurants are closed and people are not allowed to meet other households, except in a support bubble or in an outdoor public space with one other person. Large parts of England were already in this tier pre-Christmas, including London, after the new mutation was found to be spreading fastest in those regions. With the devolved administrations setting their own strategies, Northern Ireland goes into a six-week lockdown from Saturday with non-essential shops shut and hospitality open only for takeaway services. — *PTI*

NO COMMERCIAL
FLIGHTS IN LANKA
AS OF NOW

Colombo, Dec. 26: Sri Lanka has postponed the reopening of its airspace for commercial flights, scheduled for Saturday, to prevent the spread of a new variant of the Coronavirus, officials said.

The next date for resumption of flights will be announced later. The Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka (CAASL) had announced last week that it will resume international flights operations from December 26, eight months after they were closed in view of the Covid-19 outbreak. The decision was taken in the wake of the new Coronavirus strain. — *PTI*

TOKYO CONFIRMS
RECORD HIGH OF
949 NEW CASES

Tokyo, Dec. 26: Tokyo has confirmed 949 new cases of the deadly novel Coronavirus, a new high for the Japanese capital, as the country struggles with an upsurge that is spreading nationwide.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government said on Saturday that the additional cases bring the prefectural total to 55,851. Japan had 3,823 new cases on Friday for a national total of 213,547, with 3,155 deaths, the health ministry said.

Japan has not been able to slow the infections despite government requests for the people to avoid going out for dinner and parties before and during the holiday season. Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike has ordered bars to close early and urged residents to avoid nonessential outings.

But many people have continued commuting on crowded trains and going out for dinner and drinks. And now with a new virus variant from the United Kingdom reaching, there's danger. — *AP*

Beijing residents
face restrictions

● **TWO DOMESTIC** cases were reported on Friday, a convenience store worker and a Hewlett Packard Enterprise employee. Another two asymptomatic cases were discovered in Beijing earlier in the week.

● **BEIJING IS** conducting testing on a limited scale in the neighbourhoods and workplaces where the cases were found.

● **AUTHORITIES HAVE** shut schools and all public spaces in five divisions in Dalian, and only essential workers can leave their compounds.

ern port city of Dalian said Friday that they had tested over 4.75 million people for the Coronavirus after 24 confirmed infections this month.

Authorities have shut schools and all public spaces in five neighbourhood divisions in Dalian, and only essential workers can leave their compounds. — *AP*

LOW-KEY | EVENT

Families that reunite for Christmas celebrated apart this yr
Services move online, people stay home

Rome, Dec. 26: Families that usually reunite on Christmas over a hearty, lingering meal celebrated apart Friday, services shifted online, and gift exchanges were low-key in one of the most unusual and subdued holiday seasons in decades.

The Coronavirus left almost no one unaffected. Patricia Hager, 60, delivered homemade caramel rolls for breakfast to family and friends in Bismarck, North Dakota, a state that didn't get hit until later in the pandemic but was struck hard.

It seemed every time she opened her door this holiday season, someone had left smoked salmon, baskets of nuts or cookies.

"This year Christmas love is expressed at the door," she said.

"I'm glad that people will probably be with us next year with the vaccines. I can give up anything for that." With a child due in February, Song Ju-hyeon of Paju, South Korea, near Seoul, said home is the only place she feels safe.

The government reported 1,241 new cases Friday, a new daily record for the country. "It doesn't feel like Christmas anyway, there's no carols being played on the streets," she said. "It's Christmusk," the *Daily Nation* newspaper declared in Kenya, where a surge in cases led to doctors ending a brief strike Christmas Eve.

● **POPE FRANCIS** delivered his Christmas blessing from inside the Vatican, breaking with his traditional speech from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica to tens of thousands in St. Peter's Square.

Celebrations were muted in the East African hub as a curfew prevented overnight church vigils.

Pope Francis delivered his Christmas blessing from inside the Vatican, breaking with his traditional speech from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica to tens of thousands in St. Peter's Square. Tourism in Italy has virtually vanished and the government's

EU starts vaccine
rollout: Doses reach
Italy, Spain, France

Paris, Dec. 26: The European Union teed up a vaccine rollout Saturday, even as countries in the bloc were forced back into lockdown by a new strain of the virus, believed to be more infectious, that has spread from Britain to France and Spain and even as far as Japan.

The pandemic has claimed more than 1.7 million lives and is still running rampant in much of the world, but the recent launching of inoculation campaigns has boosted hopes that 2021 could bring a respite.

First doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine arrived in hard-hit Italy, Spain and France on Saturday morning ready for distribution to elderly care facilities and hospital staff.

"We'll get our freedom back, we'll be able to embrace again," Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio said as he urged Italians to get the shot.

Vaccinations in all 27 European Union countries will begin on Sunday, after regulators approved the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine on December 21.

Several countries including France, Spain, Japan, Denmark, Lebanon, Germany, Australia and the Netherlands have reported ca-

POC DOCTOR DIES
OF COVID AFTER
RACIST PLAINTS

Indianapolis, Dec. 26: A Black doctor who died battling Covid-19 complained of racist medical care in widely shared social media posts days before her death, prompting an Indiana hospital system to promise a "full external review" into her treatment.

Dr. Susan Moore, 52, tested positive for Covid-19 late last month and was admitted to IU Health North Hospital in Carmel, Indiana, according to a Facebook post. Acutely aware of her condition and medical procedures, the physician said had to repeatedly ask for medication, scans and routine checks while admitted at a hospital in Carmel. — *AP*

ses of the new strain, which has sent jitters through already overstretched health services. More than 25 million total infections have been recorded in Europe on Friday, and Russia on Saturday said it had topped three million. — *AFP*

Ahead of WHO
probe, China hails
handling of virus

Beijing, Dec. 26: China's ruling Communist Party leaders have congratulated themselves on their "extremely extraordinary" success in handling the Covid-19 outbreak domestically, ahead of a World Health Organisation probe into the disease's origins.

China faced a barrage of criticism at home and abroad over its initial handling of the virus, which emerged in the central city of Wuhan last December.

China's Politburo, the top decision-making body of the Communist Party, said late Friday that the party leadership "played a decisive role in leading ... China in prevailing over the rare risks and challenges this year." At the critical moment ... the Party Central Committee took a long-term view ... achieving an extremely extraordinary glory in this extremely unusual year," state news agency *Xinhua* reported, citing a statement issued after the two-day meeting.

China has largely curbed the spread of the virus, and was one of the only major economies to report growth this year. But it has been accused of covering up the initial outbreak, and so contributing to the virus' spread internationally. At home, Beijing has attempted to stifle criticism by punishing at least eight whistleblowers. A Chinese citizen journalist who reported on Wuhan's outbreak, Zhang Zhan, has been detained since May and is expected to go on trial on Monday. — *AP*

TURKMENISTAN
PREZ: LICORICE
CAN CURE COVID

Ashgabat, Dec. 26: Well-known for his baffling botanical pronouncements, Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov claimed Saturday that licorice could cure Coronavirus, the latest supposed miracle cure in a country still claiming zero cases.

"Scientists from every country are looking for effective cures, running various studies, and one of them could be licorice root," the leader of the authoritarian ex-Soviet country told ministers.

Without citing any scientific evidence, former dentist Berdimukhamedov claimed that "licorice stops the Coronavirus from developing" and "even a weak concentration of a water-based extract has a neutralising effect." — *AFP*

cism by punishing at least eight whistleblowers. A Chinese citizen journalist who reported on Wuhan's outbreak, Zhang Zhan, has been detained since May and is expected to go on trial on Monday. — *AP*

DECCAN
Chronicle

27 DECEMBER 2020



Shreya Sen-Handley

Off the beaten track

2020, the year I learn
I am neurodivergent

The year-end roundup is a festive favourite; a December convention. What is there to celebrate this pandemic year you wonder. But if, instead of asking ourselves how the year shaped up, we asked how it shaped us, would it seem such a wasted year? This solitary annum, without even stepping outside, we've learnt more lessons than in a score of uneventful years.

We've learnt that our sons-of-the-soil leaders care nothing for the true sons of the soil: the farmers, labourers, and key workers. We've unexpectedly found anti-vaxxers amongst friends and neighbours, who, in ignoring science and the common good, will ensure the world remains vulnerable not only to Covid, but a hundred vanquished diseases making a comeback. Most of all, we've discovered important facets of ourselves; a love for baking, an allergy to webinars, or quite simply, who we really are.

What I learned changed my life. I discovered I am, and have always been, autistic. One of the many definitions of autism offered up by the Internet calls it 'a complex, lifelong developmental disability that typically appears during early childhood and can impact a person's social skills, communication, and relationships. It is a "spectrum condition" that affects people differently and to varying degrees. I have what used to be called Asperger's Syndrome. Modern medicine however doesn't see it as a syndrome, but another way of being; atypical, but by no means "abnormal". No more "wrong" than being brown in a white country or a woman in a man's world, but subjected to the same marginalisation as any group outside the mainstream.

Did I know I was different? Yes; having been insistently told all my life. Whilst watching the Rain Mans and The Big Bangs had I suspected I might be one of "them"? No, they never felt true to life. Did it knock me for a six? OMG yes. Was I distraught and crestfallen? Confused at first but then, it brought me peace. My life seen in this new light suddenly made sense.

They say you can't change your past, but this mindboggling new knowledge did just that. It transformed my view of the life I've led, which is the next best thing. Mistakes, misunderstandings, the mistreatment I've borne — much of which I've never forgiven myself for, I now could. We all blame ourselves for so much, but the failure of the neurodivergent to conform and resultant societal exclusion, leads to anxiety, stress, heart disease, and often early death. A recent study of people who had discovered their autism in middle-age revealed how life-changing this is. All of them attested to how they had internalised a lifetime of being told they were "wrong" and "bad". Routine censure and rejection for their unconventional responses had taken a terrible toll on their physical and mental health.

Over the last nine months of reading, analysing and embracing it, I knew I wanted to help prevent this eviscerating future generations of the neurodivergent. Related to the unearthing of my own "condition" was the stressful process of autistic assessment someone I loved dearly had embarked upon. My discovery had been a blessing for me, but what would it mean for this young person?

Mercilessly bullied at school, they were already aware of the dangers of atypicality, so I endeavored to present them with the positives. To tell them all I knew, which was the merest slither on a spectrum of neural states so vast that one in 66 people in the world inhabit it. But when I told him it was as much a gift as a curse I was not dissembling ("Auties/Aspies" can't). Gifts this young man was already displaying in abundance; topping nationwide exams and mathematical challenges. Atypicality not only gave them an approach to life that was original and creative, it equipped them with application not always found in the mainstream.

Putting my arms around him ("Aspies" develop a defensive bubble they allow few into), I reassured that being different wasn't bad. But for the men and women who lived, loved, ideated and worked differently, for reasons of sexuality, belief, neurodiversity, and more, there would have been no advances in science, art, or ways of living. Without the likes of Einstein, Newton, Emily Dickinson, and Bach, this planet would have been a much poorer place (long before 2020). They are the atypical to keep in mind, not Sheldon or Rain Man. Young neurodivergents like you, I encouraged, are the real X-Men. Mutants with a mission to change the world for the better, you are superheroes, not villains. You forge ahead to accomplish so much, surmounting the peer understanding and support you lack.

Besides which, minds can be changed, I emphasised, even if it's one person at a time, and feels like it's taking forever. Providing information is the first step towards dispelling the misconceptions that drive the prejudice you face. There are so many things people don't know. For example, the autistic are often very bright, sometimes exceptionally so, but with some there is a few-seconds lapse before verbal information registers. This doesn't make them stupid, or deaf, or even vague (I always thought I was that). Their brains just work differently. The penny drops infinitesimally slower. But drops with the power of a bomb. Because what they then do with that information has often changed the world.

Ironically, in a year in which I completed writing my third book *The Accidental Tourist*, I found out just how much of an accidental tourist I was on this earth. In beginning to understand myself, I learned to forgive too, not just myself but those I'd felt had let me down and/or misbehaved. We're all bad at "getting" those we perceive as different, and the only thing that makes the neurotypical more culpable is that they are the norm: the muscular majority, with the power to change how society works. How it perceives difference and treats it. Differences frighten people, and scared folk will lash out. For my young superhero, and millions of young 'uns like him, a standing back to consider, a little thinking over, and even a tentative welcoming in, is a large part of what they need from society.

My resolution for 2021 is to convince, if not the typical into seeing the worth of the A, then the atypical themselves of their own value. To exhort them to continue charting their individual course, because neurodivergence, instead of a stigma, is a strength and should be a joy. But it isn't yet. Let this column in which I "out" myself be my first salvo towards this end.

Shreya Sen-Handley is the author of the recently published *Strange: Stories, the award-winning Memoirs of My Body*, and a forthcoming book of travel misadventures. Her Twitter and Insta handle is @shreyasenhana.

Subhani

Politics didn't limit the
enigma that was Atalji

Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

There is a new nostalgia for Atal Behari Vajpayee, whose birthday

fell two days ago, coinciding with Christmas. Shakti Sinha's book on Atalji is out. Vinay Sitapati has written another one on the "jugalbandi" between Atalji and Shri L.K. Advani. Sagarika Ghosh is finishing a book on him. What explains this renewed spurt of interest in the former Prime Minister?

Not everybody has to agree with everything he believed in, or support him politically, but there will be very few who will disagree with the assessment that Atal Behari Vajpayee was a very likeable human being. Although a product of the RSS, and, therefore, supportive of its wider worldview, he somehow managed to retain an individuality that refused to be straitjacketed in mindless ideological terms. That is why, his relationship with the RSS was often strained.

The thing about Atalji was that he was in politics but not — as with the current crop of BJP leaders — entirely limited by it. In that sense, he was both a participant in the paraphernalia of power, and transcendent of it. There was not a whiff of bigotry in his thinking. His spirit was eclectic, his patriotism transparent, and his worldview suffused with a rare idealism. But, in all of this, there was always that irrepressible humour.

Once his foster daughter, Namita, told me that *Baapji* — as Atalji was fondly called — told her that it would be nice if I could write some of his written speeches. "But, perhaps, Pavanji is annoyed with my party,"

This disarming humour was reflective of a person who carried the burdens and pageantry of office lightly. The poet in him told him that all this was passing, a shadow play, a fleeting moment in the grand canvas of time.

asked me if I would translate his poems into English. However, I put a condition, which was an audacious thing for a junior joint secretary in the MEA to do, for the request was from no one less than the PM. But, the greatness of Atalji was that he was talking to me then not as the PM of India, but as a poet, and I was responding not as a bureaucrat, but as a writer. I said that I would like to translate his personal poetry, those that he had written not from the pedestal of a politician but from his heart, as one aware of the mortality of life, and not his political poetry. It was his humility, as always accompanied by that remarkable twinkle in his eyes, that he readily agreed.

Atalji was not an insecure person. He was willing to respond to criticism, but was not afraid of it, or did not wish to suppress it. A leading TV anchor once told me that, after Atalji had recorded a show with him, he said — as he was leaving: "I am not happy with you. Come and see me at the PM's residence." The anchor was apprehensive, afraid that, perhaps, he had been too aggressive, and had asked the wrong question. When he went to see the PM, this is what Atalji said: "I said I am unhappy with you because you gave me much too easy a time. You did not ask the tough questions." Contrast this with how sensitive the BJP has become today to all questions that are

remotely critical, dubbing all those who ask them as "anti-national". Our PM today does not even meet the press in a direct interaction, leave alone feeling unhappy that he was not asked an uncomfortable question. The absence of insecurity facilitates honesty. Nothing brings this out more vividly than Atalji's poetry. For instance, a man who led the BJP campaign in 2004 on the slogan of "India Shining", was the same man who had the honesty to write:

*Dharmaraj has not overcome
His addiction to dice.
In every panchayat
Draupadi is robbed of her honour.
Without Krishna
Today
The Mahabharata will be fought,
No matter who claims the throne,
The poor will continue to suffer.*

Those in power would do well to remember afresh what makes leaders like Atalji so resiliently popular. When leaders become humourless, unsmiling, insular and inaccessible, and governments become hyper sensitive to criticism, arrogant, perpetually aggressive, and obsessed solely with power, they would do well to remember what Atalji wrote:

*My Lord!
Never place me so high
That I cannot embrace
Those who are not my own.*

The writer, an author and former diplomat, is in politics

Atalji was not an insecure person. He was willing to respond to criticism, but was not afraid of it, or did not wish to suppress it... The absence of insecurity facilitates honesty. His poetry brings this out vividly.

LETTERS

TS VACCINATION

How is the state going to manage the fair distribution of vaccines for the public without bias? What's the guarantee it wouldn't go the flood relief way? And, again, logistics and storage have are big hurdles for secure and speedy vaccination. What's the situation in the villages? Even, if the public manages to get the first dose, taking the second dose at the right time i.e. after 28 days, is again a big challenge.

Dheeraj Reddy
Hyderabad

FARMERS' AGITATION

The Prime Minister, instead of addressing a select group of farmers, should have spoken to the agitating farmers and convinced them to end their protest. However, as usual he preferred to blame the Opposition (PM: *Rivals behind farmers' protests*, DC, Dec. 26). In a democracy, the ruling party must be able to get the support of people and all political parties to accept the laws passed by them.

Dr O. Prasada Rao
Hyderabad

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are hell-bent on giving political colour to the farmers' agitation. The CM linked (particular) caste to the agitation. Earlier, he blamed insider trading for Amaravati farmers' agitation. Similarly, the PM is blaming the Opposition for farmers' agitation.

B. Raghunadha Rao
Hyderabad

RAJNATH'S ADVICE

Defence minister Rajnath Singh's suggestion that the new farmers' laws be implemented for two years may not cut ice with any farmer as the latter would not take such risks even for a day. In that case, the Centre while introducing the Bills should have taken upon itself to implement the reforms on a pilot basis in a couple of BJP and non-BJP governed states and then extended it to the rest of the country..

D. Nagarjuna
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN
ChronicleExploration of
diamonds in state
worthwhile

HYDERABAD, DEC. 26. Preliminary investigation carried out by experts of Geological Survey of India beats out that further detailed exploration of diamonds is worth-while both in Banganapalli conglomerates and gravel area in Andhra Pradesh. The investigation report state: "As the study of the incidence of diamonds is the only method of exploration for locating promising areas for mining."

The following programme of work is recommended by the investigator:— Drawing of bulk samples of conglomerates at favourable spots in Banganapalli, Munimadugu and Ramalaketa areas, followed by crushing screening and treatment to recover diamonds. If the tests yield positive and encouraging results, further work can be commenced to block out areas, showing the incidence of diamonds, and to recommend the most prospective blocks for exploitation.

Anita Katyal

Political
Gup-ShupWait for RSS'
pungent take
on a Turkish
drama series

The Turkish television drama series *Dirili: Ertugrul* has been a runaway hit not just in Turkey but across the world with Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan suggesting that everyone in the country should watch it as it promotes an understanding of Islam. The show, which chronicles the life of Ertugrul, the father of Osman I, founder of the Ottoman empire, has also proved to be extremely popular in Kashmir. But guess who else is watching the series being aired on Netflix? None other than some members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Not just that but they are also recommending the drama series to others. The Sangh members apparently evinced interest in the show after they learned about its popularity in Kashmir. They felt it will help the RSS to understand the psyche of the Kashmiri Muslim and also provide vital inputs in furthering its agenda of Hindu nationalism by fuelling Islamophobia. The RSS is helped by the fact that the Turkish series portrays Islam as a militant religion,

which has been decried by moderate Muslims.

When Congress president Sonia Gandhi called a meeting of senior party leaders, including the core group of dissenters last week, it was expected that Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal would be among them as he has been a leading member of the G-23 as this group is called. But surprisingly, he was not present at the long-awaited interaction. Different reasons have been cited for his absence. It is said that Sibal was not in Delhi on the day of the meeting as he had made prior plans to go on holiday to Dubai for the festive season. Though he was urged to change his flight plans by other members of the G-23 but he declined to delay his departure. However, the other side of the story is that perhaps Sibal was kept out of the list of invitees by Sonia Gandhi's office. The names of the G-23 representatives were sent in advance and were apparently vetted by Priyanka Gandhi who was in constant touch with former Mad-

hya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath who was mediating between the dissenters and Sonia Gandhi's office. As the most visible and vocal member of the G-23, Sibal would have done some plain speaking at the meeting unlike his colleagues who were at their diplomatic best.

While on the subject of Sonia Gandhi's much-talked-about meeting, the development has catapulted former Maharashtra chief minister to the political centre stage once again. Chavan has been sidelined ever since he demitted office as chief minister. As an MLA from Karad, he has been confined to Maharashtra for the past six years now. There was some talk that he would be included in the Congress Working Committee, the party's highest decision-making body, or given some other responsibility at the Congress headquarters in Delhi since he has the seniority and the experience for such a slot — he was a minister in the Manmohan Singh government and also served as party general secretary. But unfor-

tunately for him, he was not considered by the Congress leadership for any important slot in Delhi. After his inclusion in the group of dissenters invited by Sonia Gandhi, Chavan is back in the limelight. Later, he was also asked to brief the media about the deliberations.

If reports from Jaipur are anything to go by then the Ashok Gehlot government in Rajasthan is set to face serious trouble in the coming months. Apparently, the BJP has renewed its efforts to topple the Congress government. It is obviously undeterred by its earlier efforts when it was let down by Congress rebel leader and former deputy chief minister of Rajasthan Sachin Pilot who could not muster the requisite numbers to oust his bete noire Gehlot. The BJP has since sidelined former chief minister Vasundhara Raje who had played spoiler last time and ensured that her party's plans did not fructify. The saffron party is reasonably confident that it will succeed this time as home minister Amit Shah has placed his loyalists

in key positions in the desert state.

At a meeting convened recently, BJP MPs from Uttar Pradesh were specifically told that they should only display photographs of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the banners and hoardings they put up for programmes in their constituencies. This has obviously not gone down well with the lawmakers but they have little option but to abide by this direction. Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh are due only in 2022 but these instructions are obviously aimed at sending out a clear message that the electorate is voting for Modi who is synonymous with the BJP. Interestingly, even photographs of Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath are not to be displayed. Maybe, this has something to do with the fact that Yogi has acquired a larger-than-life image and is even being talked about as the BJP's future prime ministerial candidate.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

OUR CRITIC'S RATING ▶ Outstanding ★★★★★ | Great ★★★★★ | Good ★★★ | Okay ★★ | Poor ★ | Truly Terrible TT

The burden of proof is hers alone

Criminal Justice: Behind Closed Doors

CAST: Kirti Kulhari, Pankaj Tripathi, Jisshu Sengupta, Adrija Sinha, Anupriya Goenka, Mita Vashisht, Ashish Vidyarthi, Deepti Naval, Khushboo Atre, Kalyanee Mulay, Shilpa Shukla
DIRECTOR: Rohan Sippy and Arjun Mukherjee
STREAMING ON: Disney+ Hotstar
RATING: ★★★★★

SUPARNA SHARMA

Murder is a crime against the Union of India and it is designed to rise to defend itself.

Marital sexual abuse is not a crime. Not in the eyes of the Union of India. It is trained not to react.

Criminal Justice: Behind Closed Doors is an eight-part series that conducts the forensic examination of our *purush-pradhan samaaj* and some of its institutions while it investigates a murder.

As the series goes about interrogating the accused, digs into the actions and personality of the victim, it lays bare the most horrific abuse that goes on in the privacy of homes, behind bedroom doors, where nightly assaults leave no scars.

Bikram Chandra (Jisshu Sengupta) is a well-regarded, well-heeled lawyer who fights the cases of the dispossessed. He is also a devoted husband to Anu Chandra (Kirti Kulhari) who is a quiet, even strange sort. She's forgetful, nervous, in constant need of reminders and calming pills. Outwardly it seems like a straight-

forward crime involving a husband, a wife and an eyewitness.

But the series, sharply tuned to catch overt misogyny and micro sexism of the police force, the legal system and the family, takes us into confidence right at the beginning. It shows us the obsessive, controlling actions of one and the fear-stricken jitters of another, thus casting us in the role of an anxious juror who is the keeper of a secret. But things are kept suitably ambiguous, everything is not made clear — his actions and hers, their motivations. This adds an element of desperate urgency for us to get to the truth.

Like us, Bikram and Anu's 13-year-old daughter Rhea (Adrija Sinha), an eyewitness to what happened that night and on several other nights, knows some things for sure but is confused about others.

Criminal Justice: Behind Closed Doors is in slow-burn mode. While it keeps its main focus on unravelling what happened, it spends a considerable amount of time on the tangents that spring from this one crime, and the tributaries that join it.

After the murder is reported and the wheels of the criminal justice system start to move, an ecosystem begins to take shape for several to feed off and benefit from.

Lawyers are either out to earn some money or to bolster their reputation while restoring the balance of patriarchy and earn kudos from brother lawyers.

Cops want to earn brownie points or make money.

Jail inmates need a friend or a foe. Family members and friends pick sides.

This entire ecosystem of criminal justice is pivoted on one inherent belief — of man's innate goodness. Running parallel to this is the belief that

women are evil. And

if they prove that they are not, then they are either wrong, misguided or mad.

Thus, the

system i s

designed to give the man the benefit of the doubt and make the woman carry the burden of proof, even when she is the victim.

Thankfully, *Criminal Justice* is not simple minded. Everything is layered here, everyone carries patches of grey. There is no innocent, blemish-free victim here.

There's the accused who doesn't speak, not even in her own defence, and like her lawyers — Madhav Mishra (Pankaj Tripathi), Nikhat Hussain (Anupriya Goenka) — her silence hassles us, especially because we know what happened. And then we are told that she is flawed.

Criminal Justice challenges us, makes us struggle to decide which side we are on even as we watch active misogyny at play that taints everything, from evidence collection and interrogation to what gets asked and how it gets presented in the media. We see whose character the system is interested in "exposing" and whose character it would rather not discuss.

The show ventures behind several closed doors, including those of several bedrooms, the jail and the chambers of powerful lawyers. Through three couples — cops Gauri (Kalyanee Mulay) and Pradhan (Ajeet Singh Palawat), and advocate Madhav and his adorable wife Ratna (Khushboo Atre), Nikhat's ammi and abbu — we see varying degrees of sexism.

But it's the marriage of the Chandras that shows us, in disturbing detail, how marital abuse works. How the perfect son, brother, lawyer, husband exorcises all his demons and complexes when bedroom doors are shut. How fine that crack between words and actions is.

"I love you, I will take care of you." Criminal Justice show how these sweet, simple words get weaponised, disappointment, disapproval and

anger is used to cover abuse, and a woman's belief in herself, her abilities is shaken to the core, so much so that till the very end she thinks she deserved it.

The second season of *Criminal Justice*, which is based almost verbatim on the 2009 BBC series, carries along a few worthies from the first season — advocates Madhav Mishra, Nikhat Hussain (Anupriya Goenka), and Mandira Mathur (Mita Vashisht), the high-powered corporate lawyer.

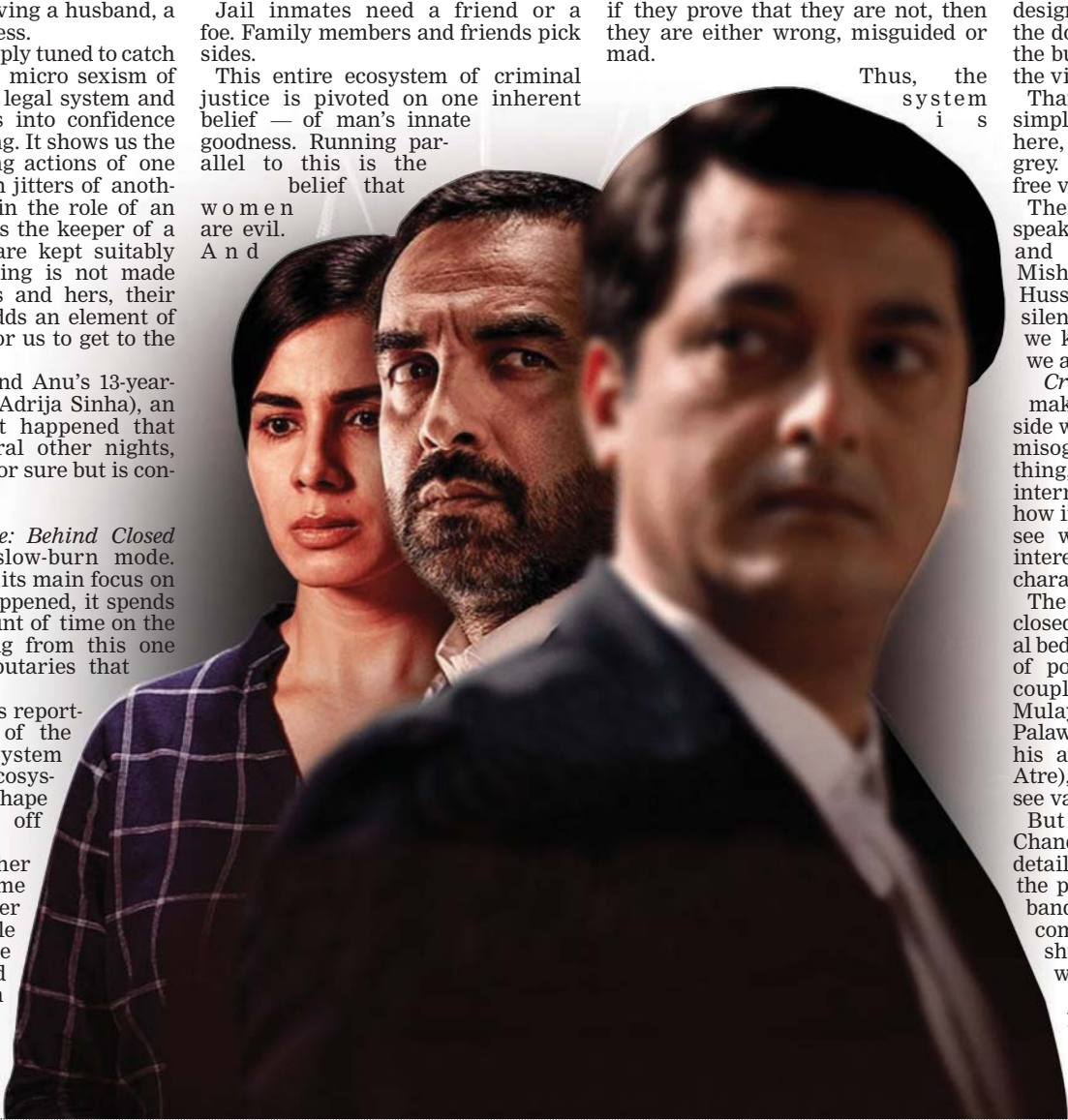
That is partly because that's how it was in the BBC series but also because Pankaj Tripathi now has the power to make us smile everytime he is on screen. Here, however, he takes a courteous step back, letting the women around him shine.

Anupriya Goenka is efficient but Khushboo Atre, who plays his adorable wife, is insistent on initiating conjugal ties, is very good. Kirti Kulhari's silent, stoic but also quaking and crying performance is the series' centrepiece. She deserves awards just for the litres of tears she has shed here.

Mita Vashisht has always had a powerful presence on screen. Though here she sometimes projects more than is required, as if she can't do light touch, she makes her presence felt as the mover-shaker. Matching her heavy footprint is the male lawyer she recruits, played by Ashish Vidyarthi.

Ajeet Singh Palawat, who plays the cop Pradhan, is excellent. Deepti Naval brings a lot of class and manages to anchor this gritty crime-court room-jail drama.

Jisshu Sengupta has very few scenes and yet his presence lingers throughout. Much like the insidiousness of sexual abuse, long after a controlling partner is gone, his noose-like, suffocating grip remains.



An entertaining meta experience

AK vs AK

CAST: Anil Kapoor, Anurag Kashyap, Yogita Bihani, Sonam Kapoor, Harshvardhan Kapoor
DIRECTOR: Vikramaditya Motwane
STREAMING ON: Netflix
RATING: ★★★★★

SUPARNA SHARMA

I have always worried, rather needlessly up until now, at having to use the word "meta". I have always sensed a distinctive pretentiousness to it and despite looking up its meaning a hundred times, it has never sat well with me.

Meta means being self-referential, having and showing explicit awareness of oneself. And there really is no other way to describe *AK vs AK* except as a major meta experience and experiment.

Thankfully, unlike the word, the film is not just hugely entertaining but is also a sharp commentary on our current voyeuristic state of being.

In *AK vs AK*, actor Anil Kapoor and director Anurag Kashyap are playing themselves, their "characters" generously and

wickedly embellished by their real-life professional glories and glitches, as well as their personal traits and reputations.

Kashyap is a director who is riding a high after some critically acclaimed films and moves around with a camera constantly filming him.

One Yogita is shooting a film school documentary on the best of Indian cinema and the first episode is on him. "*Mere baad sab gobbar hai*," he tells Anil Kapoor who is telling him that he is keen to work with him.

But Kashyap still cradles a 17-year-old grouse and reminds Kapoor how her turned down his dream project. And now, he tells Kapoor, "I have now moved on. And in any case, you are no longer hero material. You are playing grandfather in *Dil Dhadakne Do*." He says all this while texting. He's probably in the midst of another Twitter spat.

This being the mood before the two appear before an audience for a panel discussion, it takes just a few more insults and a glass of water to bring the two to a head-on collision.

A full-blown fight ensues and the industry takes sides. Anil Kapoor the star emerges as the winner and Kashyap sinks. And then he plots.

Kashyap barges into Anil Kapoor's set one day and then into his vanity van with the camera



lady in tow saying he is shooting a hostage thriller and Kapoor now has to look for his daughter, Sonam, who has been kidnapped.

He Facetimes a hooded man who has Sonam Kapoor bound, gagged and weeping.

Kashyap insists that Kapoor adhere to his rules if he wants to see his daughter alive, and that he has to find her by sunrise.

No cops, no outsiders, camera won't be switched off, all calls have to be on speaker mode and it's 14 hours to sunrise.

What follows are sequences that showcase how powerful and insidious reel life is — even when an actor wants to shed it, it won't

leave them.

Some of these scenes, like the one in a police station, are funny, while others, where Kapoor is asked to dance for a bit of information, are scathing.

The idea for *AK vs AK* and to pull off its script required both — megalomania and humility. So, perhaps, it is appropriate that it's written by Anurag Kashyap. The writing is sharp, political, funny, and the jokes are often on Kashyap himself.

While the dizzy, hand-held camera gives a reality *waali* feeling to *AK vs AK*, two interesting things happen simultaneously in the film — one

is entertainment that draws all its power, jokes and insults from the real lives of these two Bollywood personalities, and the other is us, the viewer, cringing at the gleeful voyeurism of people who don't see the reality and trauma of Kapoor, but treat it as an act, a performance.

The film recruits most of Anil Kapoor's family members and some of Kashyap's, but sometimes it is too made-up. This is because while the characters are real, Kapoor and Kashyap's silly fight, rivalry is not. It is not like, say, watching Rekha and Jaya fight over Amitabh Bachchan in *Silsila*.

There is a fakeness to it. And that is why, for a while in the middle, the film, which is mostly *faltu* fun, becomes a bit tedious and dull. But then a chase is thrown in, followed by a twist.

AK vs AK is a clever plot executed very well by director Vikramaditya Motwane and can be put down as a fun milestone of lockdown creativity.

Both Anurag and Anil Kapoor are very good and convincing.

While Kashyap exudes a certain creepy vibe laced with arrogance, Kapoor again reminds us of how good he is. While he is obviously acting, he has to swing between "acting" and "reality", or be meta within meta. That requires swag. And he still has it.

In 'Copperfield,' Iannucci brings Dickens to life

JAKE COYLE

It's not hard to draw a straight line from Charles Dickens to Armando Iannucci. In each there's a passion for human frailty and absurdity, and, above all, a richness of people. Nobody filled pages with a vivid cast of characters like Dickens, so who better to take a shot at "David Copperfield" than the man behind the teeming ensembles of "*Veep*," "*In the Loop*" and "*The Death of Stalin*"?

In his third film as director, following his farce of bumbling and bloody Kremlin power struggles, Iannucci has turned to Dickens' most quintessential and autobiographical novel with the same zeal he previously reserved for political parody. "*The Personal History of David Copperfield*" is one of the more lively, colorful and whimsical Victorian costume dramas you're likely to see. It's a movie flowing with fresh air, which isn't something normally said of adaptations of 700-something-page books.

Iannucci, famed for his improvisational style and expletive-laden barrages, clearly finds in Dickens a writer simpatico in fondness for language and taste for multitudes. In many ways, they make a good match, with Iannucci's more anarchic, free-wheeling style animating the wit and idiosyncrasies of Dickens' tome.

And just as in the absurdly deep bench of "*Veep*," casting has made a difference. Dev Patel winningly plays Copperfield, once out of childhood (as a boy, he's played by compelling youngsters Jairaj Varsani and Ranveer Jaiswal), with wide-eyed wonder, always alive to the world around him, if generally

The Personal History of David Copperfield

CAST: Dev Patel, Aneurin Barnard, Peter Capaldi, Morfydd Clark, Daisy Mary Cooper, Rosalind Eleazar, Hugh Laurie, Tilda Swinton
DIRECTOR: Armando Iannucci
Playing in theatres
RATING: ★★★★★

rather mystified by it. Still, the film belongs largely to the overall cast, including Tilda Swinton, as David's aunt Betsey Trotwood; Hugh Laurie as the mentally ill, King Charles I-obsessed Mr. Dick; Peter Capaldi as the creditor-evading Wilkins Micawber; Rosalind Eleazar as the romantic interest Agnes Wickfield; Benedict Wong as the wine-swilling Mr. Wickfield; Ben Whishaw as the plotting Uriah Heep.

The performers, a distinctly multicultural cast, add considerably to the vibrancy of the film, collectively making a fairly irrefutable argument for colorblind casting, for anyone who needs one.

But while "*The Personal History of David Copperfield*" keeps a restless, brisk pace as it rushes through Copperfield's life, Iannucci and his co-writer Simon Blackwell arrange the film in such distinct chapters that the movie feels more like a litany of scenes than the dramatic evolution of a young man. Some sections are better than others. The episode with Laurie and Swinton at their country home, flying kites and chasing away donkeys, is so good that you want a whole film of them. —AP



Wonder Woman combats a huckster's rise in 1984

JAKE COYLE

If you're going to make a movie about wish fulfillment, 1980s America is about as good as you can do for a setting outside the Arabian Desert.

"*Wonder Woman 1984*," Patty Jenkins' time-traveling sequel to 2017's record-setting "*Wonder Woman*," shuttles Gal Gadot's warrior to the era of Regan economics, parachute pants and "Rio." All have their cameos in "*Wonder Woman 1984*," a superhero parable of greed and fanny packs with pointed references to today.

Two movies in, it's clear that Jenkins and DC Comics have a thankfully different concept for *Wonder Woman* as a film franchise. Like its predecessor, "*Wonder Woman 1984*" is spirited, purposeful and blessedly lacking in grandiosity. And both films place *Wonder Woman* not under the burdensome heft of world building or even universe saving — or at least Gadot comes across as too resplendently regal to ever seem weighed down. She's more a moral and muscular counterweight to ego-driven male misdirections, steering history through the repeating pitfalls of megalomaniacs intoxicated by power.

Last time, it was German and British military leaders under the sway of Ares, the god of war. This time, it's a struggling entre-

Wonder Woman 1984

CAST: Gal Gadot, Chris Pine, Kristen Wiig, Pedro Pascal, Robin Wright, Connie Nielsen
DIRECTOR: Patty Jenkins
Playing in theatres
RATING: ★★★★★

preneur/TV personality who, in stealing an ancient gem — the "dream stone" — from the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. (where Gadot's Diana now works), gains the power to grant wishes. Max Lord (Pedro Pascal) goes from deadbeat dad to despot, turning into a conman of mythical dimensions. He's a diabolical genie without a bottle, or to paraphrase Robin Williams's Aladdin, he's got phenomenal cosmic powers sans the itty, bitty living space.

A snake oil salesman who placates cravings while stealing everything else is, you might say, a touch timely. "*Wonder Woman 1984*" plays up its Trump critique about as much as it does its '80s style. In one scene, Steve Trevor (Chris Pine), summoned from the grave by Diana's own wish while holding the gem, giddily tries on all the period-appropriate clothing like Ken's fashion show in "*Toy Story 3*." Best in the first "*Wonder Woman*" were the screwball fish-out-of-water scenes of Diana experiencing

London with Trevor; this time the roles are reversed, and the charm a little less.

What does Max's rise have to do with *Wonder Woman*? A huckster is a kind of perfect foil to Diana, conceived from the start as a force for truth. (Her lasso of truth was modeled after the polygraph, an invention of *Wonder Woman* creator William Moulton Marston.) Jenkins opens the film with an Amazonian flashback to an obstacle course race on the island of Themyscira where a young Diana learns the value of truth. "No true hero is born from lies," says Antiope (Robin Wright).

The dream stone transforms another, too: Barbara Minerva, a meek archeologist played by Kristen Wiig. Awkward in heels and most everything else, she mutters that she'd like to be more like Diana when holding the stone, setting off a metamorphosis that playfully remakes Wiig's typical screen presence, and creates another foe for *Wonder Woman*.

Just as in "*Wonder Woman*," I think Jenkins has left some opportunities on the table. The first film, despite being set in 1918 during WWI, omitted any real interaction with the era's then-flourishing women's rights movement — a vital source of inspiration to Marston. Likewise, "*Wonder Woman 1984*" — more focused on "greed is good" decade and its contemporary resonances — doesn't much pause to interro-

gate the 1980s' gender imbalances. Like the last movie, "*Wonder Woman 1984*" becomes consumed by its (admittedly quite good) antagonist. It drags in the third act in a messy White House battle and a prolonged finale.

But I still like these movies more than most superhero films. They feel both campier and more real than Marvel movies — more like the page-turning thrill of a comic book. The ambitions of "*Wonder Woman 1984*" may be just outside its grasp, but it seldom feels predestined or predictable — a preciously rare commodity in the genre.

As its characters awaken to their powers, turning from recognizable people to monsters, the film keeps changing shape, enlarging as it goes. Jenkins' pop cinema craft is limber and lucid. Pascal's performance, more sweet than sinister, is scintillatingly over the top.

Premiering in theaters and on HBO Max in North America, "*Wonder Woman 1984*" will close out a year largely absent of superheroes in a release plan that has upended the film industry. It's a very big film heading primarily to the small screen, at a time when the pandemic has made the escapist, popcorn-eating moviegoing that superhero movies are made for impossible, or nearly so. That makes "*Wonder Woman 1984*" a nostalgia act in more ways than one.

—AP



SHORT TAKES

Dean remembered during MCG Test

Melbourne: More than three months after his death, Dean Jones was paid another tribute at his home ground here by Indian and Australian players, who were joined by his wife, daughters and the legendary Allan Border in remembering the effervescent former player on Saturday.

Jones' family and former Australia captain Border participated in the farewell during the tea break of the ongoing second Test here. Border, Jones' wife Jane, and daughters — Augusta and Phoebe — took a long walk from the boundary of the Melbourne Cricket Ground to the centre, carrying his baggy green, sunglasses and Kookaburra bat and laid the items to rest on the stumps at the Great Southern Stand end of the ground. Later, 12th men from both sides — K.L. Rahul (India) and James Pattinson (Australia) — collected the items and rested them on a seat by the boundary. — PTI

Ex-Eng cricketer Jackman no more

London: Former England cricketer Robin Jackman, who played four Test matches and 15 one-day internationals, has died, the International Cricket Council said. He was 75. Jackman took 1,402 wickets in a 399-game first-class career between 1966 and 1982. Following his retirement he became a commentator in South Africa, where he lived with his wife Yvonne. A statement on Friday from the ICC read: "We are saddened to learn about the death of legendary commentator and former England bowler Robin Jackman, who has passed away aged 75."

Former New Zealand bowler and fellow commentator Danny Morrison tweeted: "Awoken to the sad news of dear buddy & comms colleague Robin Jackman passing... Blessed to have had wonderful times shared 'Jackers'. RIP Rob". — AP

De Silva hurt after leading SL revival

Centurion, South Africa: Dhananjaya de Silva and Dinesh Chandimal put Sri Lanka in a strong position on the first day of the first Test against South Africa in Centurion on Saturday. De Silva made 79 before retiring hurt and former captain Chandimal hit 85 as Sri Lanka reached 340 for six at the close. De Silva suffered what appeared to be a left hip injury while running between wickets and was taken off the field on a motorised stretcher. It was not clear whether he would be able to take any further part in the match. His injury ended a partnership of 131 with Chandimal. — AFP
Brief scores: Sri Lanka 340/6 (D. Chandimal 85 batting, D. De Silva 79 retired hurt, W. Mulder 3-68) vs South Africa

BOWLERS' DAY OUT

Bumrah, Ashwin skittle Aussies out for 195 as India dominate

Melbourne, Dec. 26: Jasprit Bumrah's menace was matched by Ravichandran Ashwin's guile as an inspired India led by Ajinkya Rahane shot out Australia for a sub-par 195 to dominate the opening day of the second Test here on Saturday. India then lost an out-of-form Mayank Agarwal (0) to Mitchell Starc but debutant Shubman Gill (28 batting) survived a hostile spell to hit some delectable boundaries in the day end score of 36 for 1 in 11 overs.

Giving him company was the seasoned Cheteshwar Pujara (7 batting). The line-up would look to exorcise the ghosts of the opening Adelaide game last week when India were shot out for their lowest ever Test score of 36.

"Not being reckless but playing with confidence will be the motive going forward," said Bumrah at the end of day's play, spelling out the team's plan.

As much as the day belonged to the Indian bowling unit for another fired-up show, new captain Rahane deserved equal credit for marshalling his resources to perfection during the 72.3 overs that Australia batted.

Bumrah (4/56 in 16 overs) and Ashwin (3/35 in 24 overs) were the stars but debutant Mohammed Siraj (2/40 in 15 overs) also did his bit repaying the faith shown in him with wickets of Marnus Labuschagne (48) and Cameron Green (12) with the old ball. However, the Test series is increasingly looking like Ashwin's paradise as he once again made the opposition's best batsman Steve Smith (0) look ordinary, exploiting the turn and bounce that the first day of the MCG track offered. The Indian team looked way more galvanised despite being without regular skipper Virat Kohli, who is on paternity leave.

SIRAJ FULFILLED FATHER'S DREAM

Mohammed Siraj could not perform the last rites of his late father last month as he was in Australia with the national team but he made him proud by making India Test debut in Melbourne. His brother Ismail said it was his late father's dream to see Siraj play for the country in Tests and finally the dream was fulfilled on Saturday at the MCG. "It was my (late) father's dream that Siraj should represent India in Tests ... He always wanted to see him in blue and white jersey to represent the nation, so our dream got fulfilled," Ismail said. — PTI



India's Ravichandran Ashwin (left) celebrates with captain Ajinkya Rahane after dismissing Australia's Tim Paine on Day One of the Boxing Day Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Saturday. — AP

SCORECARD

Australia 1st Innings: Joe Burns c Pant b Bumrah 0, Matthew Wade c Jadeja b Ashwin 30, Marnus Labuschagne c Shubman Gill b Mohammed Siraj 48, Steven Smith c Pujara b Ashwin 0, Travis Head c Rahane b Bumrah 38, Cameron Green lbw b Mohammed Siraj 12, Tim Paine c Vihari b Ashwin 13, Pat Cummins c Mohammed Siraj b Jadeja 9, Mitchell Starc c Mohammed Siraj b Bumrah 7, Nathan Lyon lbw b Bumrah 20, Josh Hazlewood not out 4. Extras (b-10, nb-3, w-1) 14. **Total (In 72.3 overs) 195.**
FoW: 1-10, 2-35, 3-38, 4-124, 5-134, 6-155, 7-155, 8-164, 9-191, 10-195.

Bowling: Jasprit Bumrah 16-4-56-4, Umesh Yadav 12-2-39-0, Ravichandran Ashwin 24-7-35-3, Ravindra Jadeja 5.3-1-15-1, Mohammed Siraj 15-4-40-2.

India 1st Innings: Mayank Agarwal lbw b Starc 0, Shubman Gill (batting) 28, Cheteshwar Pujara (batting) 7, Extras (nb-1) 1. **Total (For 1 wkt, in 11 overs) 36.**

FoW: 1-0.
Bowling: Mitchell Starc 4-2-14-1, Pat Cummins 4-1-14-0, Josh Hazlewood 2-0-2-0, Nathan Lyon 1-0-6-0.

Gavaskar refrains from praising leader Rahane

Melbourne, Dec. 26: Former India skipper Sunil Gavaskar is impressed by Ajinkya Rahane's field placements but said he will refrain from praising his captaincy as it is still "early days" and he does not want to be accused of backing a fellow Mumbaikar. Taking charge of the team in the absence of regular skipper Virat Kohli, Rahane marshalled his resources well as India dismissed

Australia for a sub-par 195 in 72.3 overs on the opening day of the second Test here.

Asked for his comments on Rahane's leadership, Gavaskar said: "... let's not jump into conclusions too quickly. If I say that his captaincy is outstanding, then again, I will be accused of backing a Mumbai boy and all kinds of things will happen. "So I don't want to get into that because these are early days," the leg-

endary batsman said.

Gavaskar was impressed with Rahane's field placements as three Australian batsmen — Marnus Labuschagne, Steve Smith, and Travis Head — were all caught by fielders deployed at different positions.

"From what I have seen in the last 2 Tests he captained and the one-day matches he captained, he has got a great sense of where the fielders should be kept," Gavaskar said. — PTI

FORMER STARS HAIL RAHANE'S LEADERSHIP

Melbourne, Dec. 26: India's stand-in skipper Ajinkya Rahane drew praise for his tactical acumen with former stars hailing his effective bowling changes that put the visitors in a dominating position in the second Test against Australia here on Saturday.

"Outstanding bowling changes and really smart fielding placements from Rahane. And the bowlers delivered. Ashwin, Bumrah, Siraj were absolutely brilliant. Great effort to get Australia all out for 195 on the first day. Now for the batters to get a good first innings lead," Virinder Sehwag tweeted.

"(Rahane's captaincy) has been brilliant so far. We were all a bit worried about how they were going to pick themselves up after Adelaide. I think they looked potentially better today," Ponting said.

"The Indian bowlers were outstanding too & very well lead (sic) by @ajinkyarahane88! Can India bat all day?," Warner tweeted. — PTI

Tanmay to lead Hyd T20 team

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 26

Tanmay Agarwal will lead the Hyderabad cricket team in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy — the BCCI's domestic Twenty20 tournament — to be held from January 10 to 31 next year. B. Sandeep has been named vice-captain of the 20-member squad picked by selectors J. Shivaji Yadav, Ahmed Quadri and Abhinav Kumar in the Senior Selection Committee held on Saturday.

Hyderabad is in Elite 'B' group along with Assam, Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand and Odisha in the tournament. They will open their campaign against Assam on January 10 in Kolkata.

The team: Tanmay Agarwal (captain), B. Sandeep (vice-captain), Thakur Tilak Varma, Abhirath Reddy, Himalay

Agarwal, Buddhi Rahul, Sai Pragnay Reddy, Kolla Sumanth, C. V. Milind, T. Ravi Teja, Ajay Dev Goud, Yudhveer Singh, Tanay Thyagarajan, Mickil Jaiswal, Hitesh Yadav, Rakesh Yadav, Prateek Reddy, Rakshann Read, Kartikeya Kak, MSR Charan.

Standbys: Ashish Srivastav, Akash Bhandari, Shreyas Vala, Samhith Reddy.

Support staff: Zakir Hussain (coach), Shashank Nag (assistant coach), Bheesham Pratap Singh (physio), Rajamani (trainer), Sailesh Kumar (video analyst), Sajid Hussain (massuer), Chitti Sridhar (manager).

The players should report to manager Chitti Sridhar at Hotel Green Park on Sunday, December 27, at 10 am, according to a press release from the Hyderabad Cricket Association.



Leicester City's Jamie Vardy (left) celebrates with James Maddison after scoring against Manchester United in their EPL match in Leicester on Saturday. — AFP

Late Foxes strike frustrate United

Leicester, Dec. 26: Leicester and Manchester United missed the chance to put pressure on Liverpool at the top of the Premier League as the battle between second and third ended 2-2 at the King Power on Saturday.

Slow starts had been a feature for United on the road this season as they had won their previous six away league games despite conceding first.

However, this time it was the Red Devils who twice failed to hold onto the lead given to them by Marcus Rashford and Bruno

Fernandes. Harvey Barnes's thunderous strike levelled before half-time and Jamie Vardy's predatory instincts kept Leicester one point and one place above United in the table as his shot deflected in off Tuanzebe five minutes from time. Solskjaer has been keen to put an end to his side's sluggish starts and should have been celebrating inside 90 seconds when Rashford headed over Fernandes's inch-perfect cross with only Kasper Schmeichel to beat. — AFP

Davis, James pair to dump Dallas

Los Angeles, Dec. 26: Anthony Davis scored 28 points while LeBron James added 22 as the defending NBA champion Los Angeles Lakers routed Dallas 138-115 in Friday's feature game of a record-setting Christmas slate.

James had a game-high 10 assists and seven rebounds in 31 minutes, while Davis contributed eight rebounds, five assists and two steals and reserve Montrezl Harrell had 22 points for the Lakers, who played on the holiday for a 22nd consecutive year.

James, who turns 36 on Wednesday, rose to second on the NBA's all-time Christmas points list with 383, passing Oscar Robertson by six to pull within 12 of matching the late Kobe Bryant's career record.

It was the 10th Christmas victory in 15 holiday appearances by James, who equaled former Miami teammate Dwyane Wade for the

● **LeBron James scored 22 as Anthony Davis garnered 28 points to propel LA Lakers to a comfortable 138-115 victory over Dallas Mavericks.**

most career Christmas NBA wins.

Slovakian star guard Luka Doncic scored 27 points for Dallas, but the Mavericks were outscored in every quarter and outrebounded 53-27.

Brooklyn's Kyrie Irving and Miami's Duncan Robinson each matched an NBA Christmas record with seven 3-pointers, the Heat stretching their holiday win streak to eight games.

Irving scored 37 points, hitting 7-of-10 3-point attempts in his return to Boston, as the Nets ripped his former Celtics teammates 123-95. — AFP

BAPINEEDU.B PRESENTS

SVCC

SRI VENKATESWARA CINE CHITRA LLP

SAI TEJ

సరిక బిచ్చుక సా వెంకట్

BVSN PRASAD SUBBU

THAMAN S. VENKAT C DILIP

NAVIN NOOLI SATISH BKR AVINASH KOLLA

PEOPLE'S BLOCK BUSTER

ZEESTUDIOS

SONY MUSIC