



WEATHER

Max: 32.2°C

Min: 16.1°C

RH: 33%

Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy.  
Mist or haze likely.  
Max/Min temp. 32/16 °C

COVID-19

COUNT

CASES

DEATHS

(+30,435)

(+404)

98,26,031

1,42,618

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+612)

(+3)

TS: 2,76,516

1,485

(+520)

(+2)

AP: 8,74,515

7,049

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

7,11,22,215

DEATHS

15,95,564

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

218

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana

Tithi: Kartika Bahula Dwadasi till 7.01 am; then Trayodashi till 3.52am (Sunday)

Star: Vishakha till 4.03 am (Sunday)

Variyam: 11.31 am to 12.57 pm

Durmuhurtam: 6.40 am to 8.08 am

Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am

HUIRI CALENDAR

Rabbi-ul Akhbir 26, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.32 am

Zohar: 12.20 pm

Asar: 4.07 pm

Maghrib: 5.49 pm

Isha: 7.02 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.37 AM

SUNSET TODAY 5.43 PM

MOONSET TODAY 3.52 PM

MOONRISE TOMORROW 3.52 AM

COUNTER POINT

Our stand is very clear... we support farmers in the day and corporates at night!

IN BRIEF

Suit filed against Mastercard in UK

London: Mastercard could have to pay U.K. consumers as much as £14 billion pounds after the country's Supreme Court allowed a class-action lawsuit against the credit-card company to move forward. The Supreme Court on Friday ordered a competition tribunal to reconsider its decision to block a lawsuit alleging that Mastercard overcharged businesses that accepted the company's credit and debit cards. These fees were then passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices, the suit claims. Mastercard does not accept that merchants passed on all or any part of any overcharge to their customers. The Competition Appeal Tribunal must now reconsider its refusal to certify the lawsuit as a "collective proceeding." Certification is needed before mass litigation can proceed.



Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao greets Union home minister Amit Shah during his visit to New Delhi on Friday. Earlier he met Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekawat.

## KCR urges Shah to release flood funds for Hyd

### Demands increase in lifting from Kaleshwaram project

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, DEC. 11

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao took a trip to the corridors of power in New Delhi by calling on Union home minister Amit Shah and Union Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekawat on Friday.

He is also expected to call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday.

Rao is believed to have urged Shah to release Disaster Management Funds for flood-affected Hyderabad during a 40-minute interaction with the home minister apart from discussing other issues pertaining to the state. He reminded Shah that the state government had sought an immediate relief of ₹1,350 crore for the loss incurred by the state due to heavy rains and had submitted a report regarding the same.

Rao left for New Delhi by a special flight from Begumpet airport on Friday afternoon on a three-day visit to the national capital.

Earlier, Rao met Shekawat for an hour and requested him to allow increase in the lifting capacity of Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme from 2 TMC to 3 TMC per day from Godavari River. He also discussed about the irrigation projects in Telangana state.

It may be recalled here that the Centre had recently put conditions through the Krishna River Water Management Board that all projects in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana state must go ahead only after submitting the detailed project

● RAO IS believed to have urged Shah to release Disaster Management Funds for flood-affected Hyderabad during a 40-minute interaction with the home minister apart from discussing other issues

reports and also after clearance from the Apex Council headed by Jal Shakti minister.

Sources pointed out that Rao, after explaining the progress of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project, asked for an early clearance to increase the lifting capacity. Sources revealed that Rao also objected to the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation project of the AP government to divert water from Srisailem Reservoir to Rayalaseema.

Rao is also expected to meet Union ministers Nirmala Sitharaman, Nitin Gadkari and Hardeep Puri on Saturday to discuss long-pending issues pertaining to the state with them.

He is expected to return to Hyderabad on Sunday. Though the TRS claimed that the Chief Minister Rao's visit to Delhi was to discuss issues with the Union ministers and Prime Minister, the Opposition parties including Congress and the BJP alleged that Rao had an hidden agenda in meeting the home minister and Prime Minister.

On his first day, Rao is said to have confined his visits to Union ministers and after meeting the Prime Minister he will likely meet the farmer leaders who are agitating against the Centre's Farm Laws in Delhi.

## Farmers challenge agri laws in SC

Claim laws will lead to commercialisation, put them at corporate's mercy

SANJAY KAW | DC NEW DELHI, DEC. 11

As the deadlock between the Centre and agitating farmers drags on over the repeal of three farm laws, a farmers' union has challenged the new agriculture laws in the Supreme Court. The Bhartiya Kisan Union moved a petition in the apex court on Thursday claiming that the new laws will lead to commercialisation and throw farmers at the mercy of corporates. The petition also said that a "rail roko" agitation would begin soon.

While both sides are adamant on their position, Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Friday asked the farmers to stop their agitation in the "interest of the common people" and take the path of discussion. He said that the Central government has sent their proposal to the farmers' unions, adding that they have not yet responded.

The All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee, however, said that the government is "falsely claiming that the farmers' organisations have gone back on talks and should not have intensified their agitation at a time when talks are on." In a statement, the AIKSSC



Farmers gather in large numbers at Singhu border during their Delhi Chalo protest march against the Centre's new farm laws, in New Delhi on Friday.

said the farmers' organisations are always ready for talks and have responded each time the government has called them. "It is the government which is adamant on not repealing the three Acts," they said.

After rejecting the Centre's draft proposal offering amendments to the three laws, the farmer leaders said on Thursday that they would soon announce a date for blocking railway tracks across the country. The protesting farmers have planned

to intensify their agitation over the next few days by blocking highways leading to Delhi, gheraoing BJP leaders and offices and taking out another "Delhi Chalo" march on Monday.

Farmers leaders have also been requesting more and more supporters to join the protests to increase pressure on the Centre for the withdrawal of the new laws. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has already decided to join the protests. In a statement on Friday, the party said, "In

solidarity with the call given by farmers, AAP would lay siege to district headquarters across Punjab on December 14 against the new agrarian laws introduced by the Modi government at the Centre."

Ahead of the roadblocks planned by the farmer unions to further intensify their agitation, authorities are keeping a close watch on villages along the Rajasthan and Haryana borders. There are reports that members of the Kisan

Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee have begun their journey from Amritsar to join the protesters at Delhi borders. "About 700 tractor trolleys are moving towards Delhi's Kundli border," committee leader S.S. Pandher said.

Support for farmers' has been coming from different quarters. Many villagers along the highways and gurdwaras are serving langar (community kitchen) to the protesting farmers. An Amritsar-based eatery is providing meals at the Ghazipur border. A free medical camp has been set up at the Singhu border due to the prevailing coronavirus pandemic.

Farmers from various states have been camping at Delhi's Singhu, Tikri, Ghazipur and Chilla (Delhi-Noida) border points for over two weeks, demanding a repeal of the farm laws enacted in September. One of the key reasons behind the continuing surge in the number of protesters lies in the fact that sowing of wheat is over and farmers are free for about a month till the first irrigation of the crop is to begin.

After the initial silence, Bollywood is finally beginning to show its support for protesters.

## NON-AGRI LAND REGISTRATIONS GET OFF TO A STEADY START

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, DEC. 11

Resuming registration of non-agricultural properties after 94 days on Friday, the Telangana Stamps and Registration department booked 38 online slots on the first day.

Officials said 43 payments worth ₹97,14,278 lakh had been made till 9.30 pm.

Overall, the online portal had 20,959 visitors, of which 4,542 registered on it. By evening, 4,143 transactions had been initiated.

Officials said that the numbers would increase on the second and third day.

IT and industries principal secretary Jayesh Ranjan claimed that the online slot booking went on smoothly in 141 sub-registrar offices.

He said in order to control the online scramble, the department had allowed only 38 slots on the first day at each office and based on the demand the number of slots would be increased in the coming days.

The registrations will be done as per the old system of online booking of slots and not through the Dharani website.

The High Court had advised the State government to this effect. The HC also allowed entry of property tax details and identification numbers as part of registration.

● IT AND industries principal secretary Jayesh Ranjan claimed that the online slot booking went on smoothly in 141 sub-registrar offices.

● THE REGISTRATIONS will be done as per the old system of online booking of slots and not Dharani website.

## SUSPENDED AP JUDGE HELD FOR CHEATING

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, DEC. 11

Suspended Chittoor-based junior civil judge S. Ramakrishna was on Friday arrested by the Madanapalle sub-division police in connection with a forgery and cheating case filed against him by a bank, police said.

Madanapalle DSP Ravi Manoharachari said that on December 6, Canara Bank manager Kiran Kumar had lodged a complaint with the Two Town police against Ramakrishna for misusing bank cheques that belonged to his deceased aunt Sucharitha.

"In his complaint, the bank manager stated that they have learnt about the issuance of cheques in the name of the deceased recently and enquired into the matter. In their inquiry, they found that the suspended judge Ramakrishna had misused his aunt's signed cheques and gave them to five of his debtors," the DSP said. "Based on the complaint by the bank manager, Two Town police have started a probe," the DSP added.

## Time for Warangalites to show TRS its place: Kishan

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC WARANGAL, DEC. 11

The first step towards ousting TRS from the state was taken by the people of Dubbak, the second by Hyderabadis and now it is the turn of Warangalites to show TRS its place, said Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy at a meeting with party leaders and workers at Hanamkonda on Friday.

"While Prime Minister Narendra Modi is ruling the country without taking a single day-off, Telangana Chief Minister

K. Chandrashekar Rao never goes to the Secretariat. Modi is corruption-free and Rao is involved in crores of rupees of corruption. Modi is offering schemes for all-round development of Warangal city, whereas Rao is neglecting it by not giving a single rupee," he stated. Despite holding GHMC elections hastily, the people favoured the BJP. Without the Majlis, TRS has no strength in Hyderabad. He asked the BJP workers to strive for the party victory in the upcoming elections in Warangal. He said the BJP is sure to win the 2023

elections in the state. "No matter how much KCR, KTR and Owaisi try, the BJP will form the government. The people, employees, youth and women of Telangana want the BJP to come to power for a democratic rule," he said.

Warangal once fought off the Razakars and displayed the fighting spirit during the Telangana movement. Our workers should be prepared for any kind of fight against the TRS. The polling booth level committee in Warangal should work hard. All you activists are the strength of the BJP," he said.

## CRPF cop held for chit fraud

NAVEEN KUMAR | DC HYDERABAD, DEC. 11

A retired CRPF constable and his wife were booked for allegedly defrauding the area locals of Patelnagar, Chandrayangutta, to the tune of about ₹10 crore in the name of chit fund.

A case was booked against them at the CCS on Friday.

According to one of the victims, Raj Kumar, who invested ₹5 lakh, said that the couple, G. Babu Rao and C. Anjali, were running the chit fund business for the last 20 years and earned the goodwill of the localities before absconding with the cash.

"Their house is locked for the last four days and their phones are not

reachable. It was when their social media accounts vanished, we panicked about the money and approached the police to lodge a complaint. The Chandrayangutta police referred us to the CCS police and a case was booked against the couple. We were told that an ACP will be appointed to monitor our case," said Mr Kumar.

## MYSTERY | ILLNESS Different findings by various Central agencies create confusion among people

## NIN finds mercury residue in raw rice in Eluru

DC CORRESPONDENTS VIJAYAWADA/KAKINADA, DEC. 11

Residues of mercury in raw rice and herbicide in raw tomato was found by the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) after analysing samples of food, for the mystery illness at Eluru in West Godavari.

This was revealed during the review held by the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy virtually from his Camp Office here

on Friday. AIIMS and IICT ruled out virus and bacteria in the water collected from suspected sources of contamination.

However, they did not rule out the presence of pesticide in the water as they got dissolved in the course of metabolism in the body.

AIIMS noticed the presence of lead and nickel in the fresh consignment of blood samples of affected persons as it had earlier

observed the same in the blood samples.

Meanwhile, animal husbandry authorities maintained that the blood samples of 10 buffaloes sent for analysis at Veterinary Biological Research Institute, Vijayawada did not have any heavy metals after analysis while five milk samples also did not have any concentration of heavy metals.

Five grass samples collected from grazing lands were found to be phos-

phine negative.

Analysis of fresh water fish samples were sent to JNTU, Kakinada and APPCB, Visakhapatnam, and results are expected to be out by Saturday. Test results of soil samples collected by NEERI are expected to be out by Friday and CCMB will come up with its report on Wednesday.

As several Central agencies were coming up with different findings in independent investigation and

causing confusion about the illness, the CM reportedly asked them to coordinate with one another and arrive at a conclusion.

The Chief Minister directed the setting up a 21-member high power committee headed by Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney to investigate the cause of unknown convulsions at Eluru.

With several Central agencies coming up with their findings declaring concentrations of heavy

metals, pesticide, herbicide, mercury in water, milk and food items, the local people are getting terrified to consuming such items fearing health problems.

On the other hand, with just two fresh cases of mystery illness were reported at Eluru government hospital on Friday.

The total number of patients in government hospitals at Eluru, Vijayawada and Guntur are 14 at present.





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## OTHER STORIES

### NATIONAL TECH FEST BEGINS IN WARANGAL

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, DEC. 11

The Indian Society for Technical Education (ISTE) KITSW student chapter & Technical Club, Student Activity Center (SAC), Kakatiya Institute of Technology & Science, Warangal (KITSW) jointly organised a national-level students technical symposium sumshodhini'20 on Friday.

Mulugu and Jayashankar Bhopalpal district collector S. Krishna Aditya inaugurated the event and asked the students to implant their skill set from the beginning of their BTech course and not in the final stages.

This year's sumshodhini'20 is themed 'Virtualis', a fest like never before.

According to KITSW Principal Prof. K. Ashoka Reddy 1,278 students registered for workshops on Day-1 and 1,228 participants for events on Day-2. "This symposium makes equitable balance for both academics and extracurricular activities. Our institution is trying hard to bridge the gap between academics and industry needs," he said.

## ISB MEET CALLS TO CHECK HEALTHCARE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 11

HealthScape 2020 conference organised by Indian School of Business (ISB) with theme "Healthcare Innovations in the New Normal" concluded on Friday. It brought together three IAS officers, 10 CXOs, apart from scores of academicians to deliberate on disruption and opportunities while facing various facets of healthcare. The deliberations were quite topical due to ongoing Coronavirus pandemic.

The conference saw discussions on learning from disruption of health system by strengthening it, innovatively creating required healthcare business models for the new normal, and opportunities in using artificial and machine learnings as a tool for improving healthcare solutions.

Panel discussions saw participation of top medical experts, industrialists and policy makers, including Suchitra M. Ella, co-founder and joint managing director, Bharat Biotech International, Telangana principal secretary (Industries) Jayesh Ranjan, commissioner (Health and Family Welfare) Bhaskar Katamneni, AP's National Health Mission director Santosh Marathe, COO and unit head, Apollo Hospitals, among others.

HealthScape brought together over 600 professionals from healthcare industry including doctors; representatives of health-tech start-ups, academicians, and pharma professionals. Concluding the discussions, ISB's Prof. Ramabhadran Thirumalai, senior associate dean - PGP and YLP, said, "This conference has aptly focused on taking a pause to assess learnings of the past as well as build on what we popularly call the 'new normal'".

Deliberations included learnings in public health - an area that acquired focus because of the pandemic. "As we look ahead, I call upon you to focus your energies in looking for solutions in healthcare, which is need of the hour," Prof. Thirumalai remarked.

■ **THE CONFERENCE** saw discussions on learning from disruption of health system by strengthening it, innovatively creating required healthcare business models for the new normal, and opportunities in using artificial and machine learnings as medium or tool for improving healthcare.



Union minister G. Kishan Reddy (seated) reviews the Warangal Smart City works with officials on Friday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

## Kishan slams TRS for not cooperating with Centre

State not releasing funds to develop Warangal: Minister

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC  
WARANGAL, DEC. 11

The state government is yet to release funds for several Central government projects, as a result, it is hampering the development works, said Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G. Kishan Reddy.

The Union Minister visited Warangal on Friday. He inspected several development projects and took stock of their progress.

Kishan Reddy inspected the new multi-speciality hospital under construc-

tion on the premises of the Kakatiya Medical College. He said that the TRS government is not cooperating to complete the hospital.

"The Central government gave ₹120 crore, while the state gave just ₹10 crore from its total share of ₹30 crore. Even though the construction of the hospital is completed and equipment is received, it is waiting to begin functioning for the last three years. The state must allocate the remaining funds immediately and dedicate the hospital to the people," he said.

The minister said that

the BJP-led Central government selected Warangal under the Smart Cities Mission, but, the state government is yet to utilise the opportunity.

"Development works at an estimated cost of ₹2,740 crore were approved for Warangal. Of which works amounting to ₹576 crore were undertaken in the first phase. The state government is yet to release ₹83 crore as its share," Reddy said.

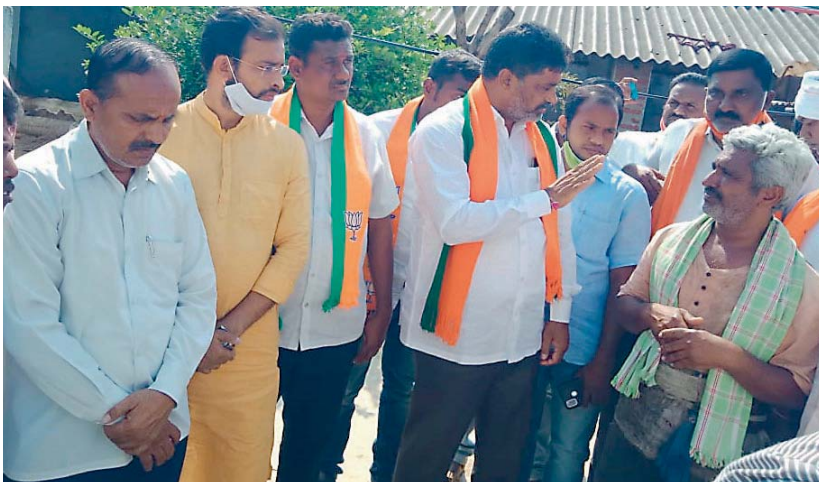
He said that the Centre provided funds under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation

(AMRUT) to mitigate the drinking water problem in Warangal.

"₹31 crore is allocated for the beautification of the Bhadrakali Bund Promenade, ₹1 crore for Kazipet Dargah and ₹1.03 crore for the development of a Jain Mandir," the Union Minister said.

The Central funds cover development works of the 1,000 Pillars Temple, 13 junctions and drainages, he added.

"I will write a letter to the Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao regarding the release of funds for these projects," he said.



BJP district unit president, Gangadi Krishna Reddy consoles farmer Thirupati in Rekonda village of Chigurumamidi mandal in Karimnagar district on Friday.

## TRS has betrayed farmers, won't last long, says BJP

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC  
KARIMNAGAR, DEC. 11

History has proven that a government that creates problems for its farmers has never ruled for many years.

The anti-farmer policies adopted by the TRS government will lead to its downfall in the days to come, said district unit president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Gangadi Krishna Reddy on Friday.

After learning that the police harassed one Thirupati a farmer from Rekonda village in Chigurumamidi mandal, for posting a video, urging the state government to help him, as he faced huge losses by cultivating the fine variety

of rice. BJP district unit leaders, led by Krishna Reddy, visited Rekonda village.

Krishna Reddy alleged that in the name of controlled methods of agriculture, the state government imposed restrictions and told farmers to cultivate a fine variety of rice.

Following the orders, farmers invested large amounts and grew the rice suggested. But they faced huge losses due to attack by insects and pests. Also, the sudden rains damaged the crops over a large area in the district. Instead of bailing out the farmers from their problems, the government is not procuring the rice nor is it fixing the MSP, he said.

The government must fix MSP of ₹2,500 for the fine rice and must open procurement centres to purchase the produce, from the farmers.

If the government behaves stubbornly, then the BJP, along with the farmers, will take up a massive movement to teach the TRS-led government a fitting lesson, he warned.

BJP leaders Shivaramaiah, Saini Malleshwar, Raji Reddy, Kalyan Chandra, Swamy, Sammi Reddy, Venkat Reddy, Bhaskar, Laxminarayana, Manikyam, MP/TC Ravinder Reddy, Srinivas, Kishtaiiah, Chandraliah, Ramesh, Shankar, Thirupati, Sampath Reddy, Mallaiiah and Chiranjeevi were present along with others.

Treatment of cases badly-affected due to IMA's 12-hour strike

## Mixopathy will affect specialisation: IMA

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, DEC. 11

Medical services, barring treatment of emergency and Covid-19, cases were badly-hit in all the hospitals from 6 am, due to the 12-hour strike called by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) in Karimnagar district on Friday.

Members of the IMA and IDA (Indian Dental Association) staged a day-long protest against the orders issued by the

Central Council for Indian Medicine, to allow Ayurveda doctors to perform surgeries.

The IMA district unit president Dr M. Vasantha Rao said that by permitting Ayurveda, Unani, and Homeopathy doctors, to perform complex surgeries, it is going to be difficult, to provide quality medical treatment to the patients.

He said, "We are protesting against mixopathy, not because we fear that the allopathy doctors will be

■ **BY INTRODUCING** mixopathy, it will damage medical tourism in the country and will affect the health of the patients on whom Ayurveda doctors have performed surgeries.

affected, but, mixopathy will affect specialisation of other fields. Even the Supreme Court has objected to the issuing such kind of medical service certi-

icates to the doctors in 1998, and directed them to provide treatment according to their respective fields."

IMA Women's wing president Dr M. Vijaya Lakshmi said that the entire world is looking at India for allopathy treatment. But by introducing mixopathy, it will damage medical tourism in the country and will affect the health of the patients on whom Ayurveda doctors have performed surgeries.

"The purpose of the protest and the strike call

given by the IMA is to save allopathy, scientific medicine, the patient and the society at large," she said.

Telangana IMA past president Dr Edavelli Vijayender Reddy, district secretary P. Ram Kiran, IMA leaders Dr Shailatha Reddy, Dr Sessa Shailaja, Dr Trinath Reddy, Dr B. Srinivas, senior doctors V. Laxman, B. Venkat Reddy, Srinivas, Krishna Rao, Naveen, Naresh, Kishan, Mohan Reddy, Sri Latha and Jhansi were present along with others.

## Drama at Adilabad ZP meet, Congress ZPTC suspended

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC  
ADILABAD, DEC. 11

Pandemonium was witnessed at the Adilabad Zilla Parishad general body meeting, as differences cropped up between members of the ruling and the opposition parties on Friday.

Authorities had to suspend Talamadugu Congress Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency (ZPTC) Goka Ganesh Reddy on charges of insulting Adilabad ZP chairman Rathod Janardhan.

Opposing the suspension of Goka Ganesh Reddy, Adilabad BJP MP Soyam Bapurao, BJP ZPTCs, and Congress ZPTCs walked out of the meeting.

During the meeting, Goka Ganesh had questioned the

Adilabad ZP chairman Rathod Janardhan on the ₹20 lakh Panchayat Raj funds of the Adilabad ZP, that were diverted, towards the construction of the MLA's camp office in Adilabad. Goka Ganesh said that it was nothing but a violation of the ZP norms.

Rathod Janardhan and Goka Ganesh Reddy had a heated exchange of words on the issue. Rathod Janardhan alleged that Goka Ganesh an upper-caste insulted him because he is a Tribal leader.

Goka Ganesh countered Rathod Janardhan's allegations saying that he was elected not just with the Reddy votes, but also by the Tribals in Talamadugu mandal, and was fighting for the welfare and development of the Tribals in his

area. Adilabad MP Soyam Bapurao raised objections on the paintings of the local MLA and Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on the Rythu Vedikalu.

He said, "Though the Central government is funding the Rythu Vedikalu's, they have not put up pictures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The TRS government should respect the PM.

In the afternoon session, the TRS MLAs including the Adilabad ZP chairman and the ZPTCs brought the issue to minister Allola Indrakaran Reddy and sought action against Goka Ganesh.

MLAs Jogu Ramanna and Rathod Bapurao and collector Sikta Patnaik and others were present.

## T-DIAGNOSTIC CENTRE TO OPEN SOON IN KHAMMAM

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, DEC. 11

District collector R.V. Karnan on Friday said that a Telangana Diagnostic Centre will be coming to district headquarters soon.

He said, "The Centre will diagnose as many as 54 ailments, apart from chronic diseases. Blood samples collected from the 24 PHC's in the district will be brought to the centre. Physical reports will be sent to these centres within 24 hours". Most of the equipment is in the centre. The remaining implements will come in a day or two. He asked the officials to open the centre by the end of December, 2020.

tion institutions by providing basic facilities to them.

He said that the SR and the BGNR degree college had good reputations and claimed that he was also a student in one of these college.

He laid the foundation stone for a new college building that will be built at a cost of ₹1.05 crore.

Ajay, inaugurated a rythu vedika in Chimmappudi and Papatapalli, said that he will shape Raghunathapalem mandal as a role mandal in the district.

The minister said that the farming community is happy with the Rythu Bandu, Rythu Bhima, setting up of thrashing floors, Rythu Vedikas, 24x7 power supply and paddy lifting centres.

## Oppn misleading farmers on Acts: BJP

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC  
KHAMMAM, DEC. 11

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) commenced a programme to make farmers aware of the three farm Acts and their benefits. They took out a rally, as part of the programme. The BJP will also organise, press conferences, public programmes and round table meetings in Khammam and Bhadrachalam districts.

BJP co-in charge of Tamil Nadu and former Member of the Legislative Council (MLC) P. Sudhakar Reddy said that the opposition parties and farmer unions are trying to tarnish the image of the NDA government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. They are misleading the peasants on the three farm Acts.

"These acts will transform Indian agriculture and farmers will be benefited. Many opposition lead-



BJP and Bharatiya Kisan Morcha activists and leaders take out a motor rally in support of the three farm Acts in Khammam on Friday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

ers, have not read the three Acts and are just opposing them without a valid reasons", he said. The farmers will get the best price for their produce with the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020.

Referring to the fate of farmers selling quality paddy in the market, he said that the TRS-led gov-

ernment left the Telangana farmers in the lurch by not lifting paddy from them. It is now trying to get out of the crisis by criticising the farm Acts. It is time the farmers come out of the false propaganda.

In 'charchagosti' (discussion), Bharatiya Kisan Morcha state president K. Sridhar Reddy said that farmers have confidence in Prime Minister Narendra

■ **THE MARKETING** officials and the state government have failed to check this exploitation, said BJP leader K. Sridhar Reddy.

Modi and will not believe the lies spread by the opposition parties.

"The brokers, opposition parties and their leaders are agitating against the three farm laws in the guise of farmers. Real farmers know the benefits of the new Acts", he said.

He said that he visited the Khammam farm market and noticed how brokers are exploiting the farmers when they take their produce to the market. "There are several middlemen in the farm markets, earning crores of rupees by cheating the farmers. The marketing officials and the state government have failed to check this exploitation", Reddy said.

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## SHORT TAKES

NSG CONDUCTS  
MOCK TERROR  
DRILL IN TS

New Delhi, Dec. 11: Counter-terrorist commando force NSG recently conducted a national crisis-response mock exercise to combat a multi-city and multi-target attack situation in Hyderabad and Goa, the federal agency said on Friday.

The annual exercise, code-named 'Gandiv-II' was undertaken between December 6-8 and was witnessed by Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. Multiple National Security Guard (NSG) commando teams were mobilised from Delhi and the national capital region, Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad "to neutralise multiple terror threats manifested in Left Wing Extremism, counter-terrorist and counter-hijack situations". —PTI

RAILWAYS' NEW  
INITIATIVE FOR  
WELL-BEING

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 11

Indian Railways has launched a new IT initiative towards according priority for the well-being of its work force. The Hospital Management Information System (HMIS) has been launched by Dr. B. P. Nanda, DG, Railway Health services, Railway Board virtually on Friday.

Dr Nanda stated that the dream of providing best health care facilities to the work force with the help of information technology has come true.

FOREST OFFICIAL'S  
HOUSE SEARCHED,  
BRIBERY ALLEGED

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 11

A deputy conservator of forest was found with unaccounted cash of ₹10.15 lakh by the sleuths of Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) during a surprise check carried out in the office premises of the Hyderabad Growth corridor in Nanakramguda on Friday.

The ACB officials, acting on specific inputs, had searched the office of deputy conservator of forest Inapanuri Prakash, serving at the Hyderabad Growth corridor, on Friday afternoon.

The investigation agency was following up on inputs that the accused was demanding and accepting bribes from contractors. Searches held at the Nanakramguda HGC office resulted in seizure of ₹10.15 lakh unaccounted cash.

"The team received inputs that the deputy conservator of the forest was demanding and accepting bribes from contractors who were entitled to the job to maintain the green belt in the urban forestry pocket. Following the trap, the officer was not able to give an account or explain the source of cash found in his chamber," ACB officials said, adding that the cash was seized and an investigation was launched.

TS RECORDS 612  
NEW COVID-19  
CASES, 3 DEATHS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 11

Telangana recorded 612 new cases, taking the total number of Coronavirus instances to 2,76,516, apart from three deaths, which took the overall death toll to 1,485.

Currently, the total active cases are 7,604 while daily testing has been carried out on 56,178 persons. GHMC accounted for the highest 144 cases, which was higher than 109 cases reported the previous day. The cases in the city are seeing a rise also due to increasing number of people moving out on work. Neighbouring Ranga Reddy witnessed 73 and Medchal Malkajgiri 60 cases.

MAN ATTEMPTS  
TO BREAK OPEN  
ATM, ABSCONDS

Hyderabad: An unidentified man attempted to break open an ATM cash machine with the help of a screwdriver on late Thursday night at Abdullahpurmet cross roads.

According to the police, the man, who is yet to be traced, tried to open the ATM at Abdullahpurmet Crossroads in Hyderabad at around 12.30 am.

## Stamp papers see steep hike; notaries worried

Court had asked the state govt to register non-agricultural lands in the old method

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 11

The Telangana High Court's decision to take the manual route for registration of non-agricultural lands has led to new troubles, say notary advocates.

The court on Tuesday had asked the state government to register non-agricultural lands in the old method.

"However, this has opened a can of worms, as there is a shortage of non-judicial stamp papers. This would make it difficult for the general public right now. The papers, if available, are sold at extremely high prices. Currently, a stamp paper which is priced ₹20 is sold for upwards of ₹100," G Yadagiri, president, Telangana Notaries Association, told *Deccan Chronicle*.

Adding insult to injury, he claimed that officials, who were manning Dharani portal, are not technologically sound and do not know the basics.

"When properties are posted in the portal, there is no way for people to correct their details. There must be options. I have given a complaint in the Marredpally police station, about the black-marketing of stamp papers," he added.

It is not just the notaries who are perplexed with the sudden change in the registration process. As it turns out even residents have begun directing their queries towards social media, hoping to find an answer.

"Please release some guidelines on how to book a slot and when can we start doing it for non-agri registrations?," said a worried Bhagyasri Gadde, on social media.

Similarly, one Ramesh Pinapaka said: "Many people are suffering because there is no clarity on Dharani portal software updates and the rights of MROs. For more clarity officials can reach Yerrupalem mandal MRO, Khammam district. God only knows what is going on (sic)."

HC NOTICE TO  
GOVT OVER AID  
TO FARMERS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 11

A division bench of the Telangana High Court comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice B. Vijayen Reddy issued notices to the chief secretary, principal secretaries of revenue, home and agriculture departments and commissioner of agriculture department directing them to respond within three weeks, duly explaining the steps taken by the state government in paying compensation to the farmers whose crops got washed away or destroyed in the recent rains. The bench also asked them to inform it on input subsidy and insurance. The court was hearing a PIL filed by V. Kiran Kumar on government in not taking steps to enumerate the crop damage during September and October 2020 due to incessant torrential rains.



Landowners visit sub-registrar office at Vanasthalipuram to get the slot booked for registration of property as the state government resumed registration of non-agricultural land on Friday.

— P. SURENDRA

Resumption of land registration  
comes bit late for many owners

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 11

Friday's resumption of registrations of non-agricultural property after three months has come late say families who were waiting to dispose land to perform marriages. It has also come in late for real estate dealers who were already hit by the pademic.

Before halting registration, there were at least 7,000 registrations in the Sub-Registrar office. Sandhya Rani (Name

Changed) was all set to perform her daughter's wedding by selling her plot in Moinabad. As registrations were stopped, buyers seized the opportunity and offered to pay amounts way below the current market price. "I though I would sell land later but I had to get money on higher interest rates to perform the wedding. Now I am ending up

paying more interest. Had registrations open earlier it would been better."

Former deputy sarpanch of Kismatpur of Gandipet mandal, Neerudu Shaker, told, "Last month one of the real estate dealers committed suicide. I am also into real estate. Land sales have taken a severe beating. People dependent on this business have suffered a lot for the delay."

## TO REGISTER PROPERTIES

• Slot booking services for registration of non-agricultural properties were launched by Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar at 2pm on Friday.

• Two slots were booked within 15 minutes of the launch

• Till 9:30 pm, 38 slots were booked and about Rs. 97,14,278lakh were remitted towards applicable fees and duties.

• 20,958 persons visited the site; 4,542 users registered on the system and 4,143 transactions were initiated.

• A huge advantage of this facility is that people can book slots online from any place.

• The slots can be booked through Mee-Seva centres also at ₹200 for full transaction.

• There is a provision for generation of deed documents.

• A new window has been provided to builders and real estate developers to upload new properties in bulk. Accordingly, 451 builders and developers uploaded 93,874 properties. Local bodies generated 12,699 t-PINS so far. These properties are likely to come for transactions shortly.

• E- pass books will be issued first and a regular pass book will be issued within 10 days from the date of registration.

• Applicants can call the 24x7 toll free number 18005994788 if they have any grievances.

Winter laces twin cities with  
pollutants, say two studies

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 11

Come winter, air in twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad gets laced with pollutants beyond permissible limits, says a study published earlier this year in Science of Total Environment (SoTE). Not just SoTE, scientists from National Atmospheric Research Laboratory (NARL) too point out that winter changes the way pollutants (read particulate matter (PM) 2.5 microns in thickness) react when climate turns cold.

Major sources of PM<sub>2.5</sub> in India are emissions from power sector, industries, transport, open burning of crop and

waste, households, and dust. Other urban sources include construction dust, industrial exhaust, and domestic cooking and heating sources.

"There is a reason why levels increase during winters. The Planetary Boundary Layer Height (PBLH) at his time is lower and increases the density of emissions. Basically, it is like being trapped in room with smoke, which has a low ceiling," a scientist from NARL told *Deccan Chronicle*.

As it turns out, all cities consistently show pollution during morning hours (8:00 a.m. -10:00 a.m.) when winter peaks. This is due to fumigation effect of peak traffic during morning hours and

household emissions getting trapped within the evolving shallow PBLH.

During summer months, air expands and there is sufficient space for pollutants to disperse, the NARL scientist pointed out. However, during colder months, as air contracts, the amount of pollutants is higher and in closer proximity to human settlements.

The study by NARL collected data from five Indian megacities (Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Delhi and Chennai). "All these cities show the highest and lowest concentrations during winter and monsoon months, respectively. Winter maxima are associated with increased emis-

sions and lower PBLH. Monsoon months are cleanest because of moisture deposition and increased soil moisture, which leads to less dust resuspension," reads the report.

"Moreover, during monsoon season (June, July, August and September), the trajectory of wind follows south-west monsoon wind pattern. Therefore, air masses originate from both Bay of Bengal and Arabia Sea. For south Indian cities of Hyderabad and Chennai, most of air the mass originates from Bay of Bengal. Hyderabad receives 67 per cent of its air mass via the sea route originating from Bay of Bengal," NARL study paper adds.

## ICONIC | STRUCTURE The chimes resemble those of the Big Ben in London

## Clock Tower starts chiming again

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 11

The historic 123-year-old Clock Tower of Secunderabad, a major landmark of twin cities, has started marking the hourly time, with its chimes resembling those of the Big Ben in London.

Replacement of the clock, which is totally automatic with GPS time setting, took two months. The light of the Clock Tower switches on at 6 pm and closes down at 6 am – all by itself.

This is the second clock to be revived after the one at Moazzam Jahi Market in Hyderabad.

The 120-feet-high Clock Tower in Secunderabad had been constructed in the park of about two-and-a-half acres in 1897. The clock was donated by businessman Dewan Bahadur Seth Lakshmi Narayan.

Ramesh Swiss Watch Gallery, which was entrusted the job, replaced the hands of the Secunderabad Clock Tower on all its four sides on Friday.

These clocks are connected to an electronic device, which shows a uniform time on all the four clocks. Principal secretary Arvind Kumar, through his twitter handle said, "After M.J. Market, the clock with chimes (has



Replacement of the clock, which is totally automatic with GPS time setting, took two months.

been) restored at Clock Tower, Secunderabad. We will be also be restoring

the remaining such clock towers". Recalls Rev. Sanjay A.

Paul, pastor at Millennium Church, S.D. Road, "The Secunderabad Clock Tower brings back memories to me. As a student, I had played in this beautiful garden. It had a small zoo with a variety of birds and rabbits. The clock on the tower reminded us about time we have to return home."

Ramesh Swiss Watch Gallery proprietor Laxman Gulabrai Chugani said, "Eight months ago, we fixed the Moazzam Jahi Market's clocks, today the Secunderabad Clock Tower and next week, we will be starting the James Street Police Station's clock."

ATHER MOIN | DC  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 11

Property owners who are only having notarised documents to prove their possession are in state of indecisiveness as ion the one hand value of their property has skyrocketed while on the other they have to shell down registration fee as per the present value of the property. In Old City areas, thousands of people do not have legal documents of their properties and they are scared that in future they will be in trouble in the absence of title ownership documents.

Many unauthorised layouts and settlements have come up along and near the rim of the Old City and most of the purchasers are enjoying the possession based on notarised documents. Poor and illiterate people think that content showing the name of vendor and vendee on a stamp paper duly notarized enclosed with a map on blue cloth-paper is adequate to prove their title as the vendors convince them that registration was nothing but an additional financial burden.

Many people have built houses without obtaining permits from authorities like municipalities and gram panchayats. Such people realize their fault

when they have to mortgage property for obtaining loans from banks.

Realtor M.K. Hasan said that many settlements about Old City and a majority of them did not register their plots but built the houses on them. They have to face several problems as the vendor is either dead or remains elusive.

He said if anyone wants to register property that was purchased long back, the individual has to first validate his property if it is an agricultural land in nature or assess it in case it is non-agricultural land and then approach the district registrar for registration.

The registrar after verifying the purchase documents and valuing the validation or assessment imposes a penalty up to 10 times higher than the then value of the property.

Nawaz Khan, a resident of Vattepally, said he wanted to purchase a plot at a low budget but he deferred his plan as he realized that ownership of a property in unauthorized layouts is an unworthy proposition.

"We will face trouble as the government has brought many reforms which do not recognize the property located in unauthorized layouts," he said.

Man dies, head  
gets stuck in  
Metro railing

NAVEEN KUMAR | DC  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 11

A 24-year-old was killed and his friend sustained injuries in a freak mishap on early Friday morning as the scooter they were travelling in crashed into the roadside railing. The impact of the collision was such that the rider's head got stuck between the railings of the Ameerpet Metro Station parking area.

According to the police, Girish Gupta, 24, a badminton coach from Srikulam district, and his friend Macha Ravi Teja, 22, from Rajahmundry in Andhra Pradesh, were heading towards Kukatpally from Panjagutta when the mishap occurred around 4 am on Friday.

"Girish Gupta, who was riding the scooter, bearing number AP 39 CZ 0797, was going at a high speed as there was no

traffic on the road at that time. However, he was unable to control the vehicle near Ameerpet metro station and crashed it into the railing, sustaining fatal injuries with his head getting stuck between the iron grills," said the Panjagutta police, adding that they had to detach the iron railing and remove Gupta's stuck head.

"Ravi Teja, who also suffered serious head injuries, was shifted to the hospital where his condition was said to be critical," added the police. They did not have any protective head gear when the mishap took place.

Gupta's scooter had 14 unpaid challans amounting to ₹5,460 since May 2020, with most of them being for helmetless riding. Police said they were examining footage from surveillance cameras to get a clearer picture of what happened.

'Can't give nod of  
Covaxin, Covishield'

KANIZA GARARI | DC  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 11

Adverse effects of drugs are important components in the development of medicine and vaccines. It is only after those details are given that scientists and regulators authorise them.

The need for data on Indian patients for both Covaxin and Covishield, by Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute of India, respectively, is very important as it will decide on the effectiveness and safety of the vaccine, stated medical experts.

Dr Sai Kumar Katam, national president of Doctor of Pharmacy Association, says, "Whenever a new medicine or drug is administered one notices mild or major side-effects. They range from headaches, fever, rashes in the case of mild effects and major effects can be disability or a new disease, altogether. Hence, it is important for the regulators to know what hap-

pened in the human body after the dose was given. This data is a major part of developing evidence and plays a huge role in the acceptance or rejection of medicines, drugs and vaccines."

The development of vaccines has an important component of anti-body half-life. Assessment of this is very important to understand the protection schedule from the virus. In the case of tetanus and diphtheria, the vaccine anti-body half-life is 11 and 19 years. In the case of swine flu and influenza viruses it is only 126 days.

A senior pharmacologist and researcher, on condition of anonymity, said, "Human trials in Indian populations have started from November. How can data be generated within a month? It is not possible to give any analysis till Day 56 and post this period too assessments will be required for the volunteers of the trials."



## IN BRIEF

## Gold worth ₹4.5 cr seized mid-sea

**Chennai:** In a joint mid-sea operation on Friday, the Coast Guard and the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) foiled a bid to smuggle into the country gold bars worth ₹4.50 crore from Sri Lanka. Acting on a tip-off, the Coast Guard and DRI officials intercepted a fishing boat 'Sailor' with five fishermen off the Tamil Nadu coast and seized the gold concealed in a bag, a press release said. Initial investigations revealed that the boat with the contraband was proceeding from Gulf of Mannar to Marakkayar Pattinam near Mandapam in Ramanathapuram district, the release said. The gold weighed nine kgs and worth ₹4.50 crore, it said. The fishermen were apprehended and further investigations on, the release said.

## ASSAM RESUMES ANTI-CAA AGITATIONS

**MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, DEC. 11**

A group of 18-organisation led by Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) here on Friday organised a massive protest at Sivasagar in Upper Assam and threatened to intensify agitation against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) all over the state.

All Assam Students' Union (AASU) has also decided to revive the anti-CAA protests from Saturday by starting 'Gono Hoonkar', meaning public outcry, the agitation aims to press for repealing of the act.

AASU general secretary Shankar Jyoti Baruah said, "The government has to repeal the CAA—an anti-Assam law that has already taken the lives of five Assamese citizens including innocent students during the agitation last year. The families of the five martyrs and AASU will continue to seek justice." The students' unions in Assam had launched a protest against the CAA after it was passed by Rajya Sabha, the Upper House of the Parliament.

## UZBEKISTAN TO JOIN TRANSPORT CORRIDOR (INSTC)

**SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, DEC. 11**

In a major development, Uzbekistan has agreed "in-principle" to India's request to join the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), an important initiative taken by India, Russia and Iran to promote transportation cooperation and to enhance connectivity with central Asian countries, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday.

The INSTC is the "shortest multimodal transportation route linking the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf via Iran to Russia and North Europe". The "in-principle concurrence" of Uzbekistan was conveyed by the Central Asian country at a Virtual Summit between the two nations on Friday co-chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. India had maintained that Uzbekistan's participation in the project would add to the "overall improvement of connectivity in the larger Eurasian space".

## VIGILANCE PROBE AGAINST SACKED BJD LEGISLATOR

**AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, DEC. 11**

Odisha Lokayukta on Friday directed the state Vigilance Directorate to investigate the corruption allegation levelled against expelled BJD leader and Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Panigrahi. The Lokayukta asked the Vigilance to submit a report within two months after preliminary investigation.

On December 7, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had recommended the Lokayukta for a probe into the corruption charges against Panigrahi, who is currently lodged at Jharpada jail after his bail plea was rejected by Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate (SDJM) Court on December 3. This was the first case of corruption allegation that has been referred to Odisha Lokayukta by the state government after its formation.

## Centre, WB engage in power play

West Bengal refuses to let its chief secretary, DGP go to Delhi after MHA summons them

## Dhankhar asks Mamata PM talks to Nadda, to apologise to Nadda Vijayvargiya

**RAJNISH SHARMA & RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, DEC. 11**

A day after Trinamul Congress workers' violent attack on BJP president J.P. Nadda's convoy at Diamond Harbour in West Bengal, the Union home ministry on Friday morning summoned top two bureaucrats of the Mamata Banerjee government to New Delhi on December 14. The MHA's move, however, infuriated the Trinamul supremo and the state government has decided not to allow the two bureaucrats to go to Delhi, saying that the issue is being dealt with.

Nadda's convoy had come under attack in the Lok Sabha constituency of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew, Abhishek Banerjee.

State chief secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay and director general of police Virendra were directed to meet Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla at 12.15 pm on Monday to "discuss the law and order situation, including the incidents regarding certain Z-category protectees" in the poll-bound state.

On Friday afternoon, Bandyopadhyay wrote a letter to Bhalla, assuring him of the state government's "elaborate arrangements for security coverage" which included a pilot and a bullet proof car for Nadda in his convoy and a large deployment of

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, DEC. 11**

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday advised Trinamul Congress supremo and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee "not to play with fire" and "apologise" for mocking BJP president J.P. Nadda as "Chaddha, Nadda, Fadda, Bhaddha" after her party workers' alleged brazen attack on his convoy at Diamond Harbour, also her nephew Abhishek Banerjee's Lok Sabha constituency, in South 24 Parganas a day before.

"It is dangerous that she is using the word 'outsider.' India is one nation. We all are Indians. We believe in one Constitution. The CM is not above the

● **THE GOVERNOR** says it is dangerous that she is using the word 'outsider.' India is one nation. We all are Indians. We believe in one Constitution. The CM is not above the Constitution. She must not call who is an outsider or an insider. Such a comment from her side is unwarranted, shameful and painful. Madam Chief Minister, please don't play with the fire.

Constitution. She must not call who is an outsider or an insider. Such a comment from her side is unwarranted, shameful and painful. Madam Chief Minister, please don't play with the fire," he said at the Raj Bhavan.

She added, "What happened was most unfortu-

nate. I once again make an appeal to her to withdraw her video with an apology."

On Thursday afternoon Banerjee had told a rally, "They (BJP) have no other work. Sometimes the Union home minister comes here. Otherwise its Chaddha, Nadda, Fadda, Bhaddha who are here. And when they do not have an audience, they call their workers for doing Nautanki."

Senior TMC MP Sougata Roy, however, rejected Dhankhar's demand of an apology from the CM.

The question of Banerjee's apology does not arise. Why does the Governor feel so much anguish over a comment against the BJP chief? Is he a BJP representative?" he asked.

**DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, DEC. 11**

After senior BJP leaders' convoy in West Bengal came under attack allegedly from the ruling TMC cadre, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to party president J.P. Nadda and national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya, who were also in the convoy.

Many senior BJP leaders from the state, including Mukul Roy, Anupam Hazra and many MPs were in the convoy when it came under attack on Thursday.

The convoy of BJP leaders was pelted with stones when they were on their way to attend a party event in Diamond Harbour, which is the Lok Sabha constituency of

● **MANY SENIOR BJP** leaders from the state, including Mukul Roy, Anupam Hazra and many MPs were also in the convoy when it came under attack allegedly from the ruling TMC cadre on Thursday.

Abhishek Banerjee, chief minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee's nephew.

While Banerjee termed the incident as "nautanki," the BJP claimed that the state has "descended into an era of tyranny, anarchy and darkness" under the TMC rule. Crucial assembly polls in the state are lined up early next year and the BJP has launched an aggressive campaign in an effort to oust the TMC.

police force led by the deputy inspector general of the range.

He, however, argued, "The tagging of many vehicles to the protectee convoys made the situation unwieldy, because typically, security authorities are to handle a protectee convoy of a few vehicles only, and not with/in the presence of so many other vehicles which got

tagged to the convoy travelling together."

Pleading for relief from appearance, Bandyopadhyay told Bhalla, "Further, three cases have already been registered in this connection, while two of them are specifically for vandalism, one each at Usthi PS and Falta PS, both under the Diamond Harbour Police District. Seven persons have been

arrested in these two cases. While further reports are being obtained and compiled, in the circumstances, I am directed to request you kindly dispense with the presence of the state officials in the meeting, considering that the state government is already addressing this issue with utmost seriousness."

But, Sreerampore TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee

blamed BJP leader Rakesh Singh for provoking the attack on his party chief.

"Singh was in the convoy in front of Nadda. He has 55 criminal cases against him and he made provocative gestures at the crowd. An FIR has been registered against him," he alleged.

The Union home affairs' step to summon the two officials came after it

received an adverse report from Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on "serious security lapses" on part of the state police which led to the brazen attack on Thursday leaving two senior BJP leaders, Kailash Vijayvargiya and Mukul Roy, who were in Nadda's convoy, injured.

Sources said that Shah may visit the state on December 19-20.

## NK: MUST REVISIT 7TH SCHEDULE OF CONSTITUTION

New Delhi, Dec. 11: Finance Commission Chairman N.K. Singh on Friday underlined the need for revisiting the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, which specifies allocation of powers between the Centre and states, in view of changes in technology and national priorities.

The Seventh Schedule has three lists — Union, state and concurrent. While the Centre can make laws on subjects specified in the Union list, the state governments have jurisdiction over items in the state list. Both the Centre and states can make laws for subjects in the concurrent list, but the Union's law will prevail in case of conflict.

"We need to revisit Schedule VII of the Constitution in a more fundamental way," Singh said while speaking at FICCI's Annual Convention and 93rd AGM.

Singh said the Commission on Centre-state relations, headed by Justice M.M. Punchhi, had in 2010 recommended that there should be a consultation process between the Union and states via an Interstate Council for legislation on concurrent subjects. It was of the opinion that the Union should only transfer those subjects into the concurrent list which were central to achieving demonstrable national interest, he said. — PTI



Doctors hold banners in Thane on Friday, during their strike, demanding the withdrawal of CCIM notification.

— PTI

## Doctors sport black armbands, ribbons

**DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, DEC. 11**

Doctors at several hospitals in the national capital, including AIIMS, on Friday sported black ribbons in support of the protest call of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) against the Centre's move allowing post graduate practitioners of Ayurveda to be trained in performing surgical procedures.

The IMA, which had given the nation-wide call on December 1, has

demanding withdrawal of the notification. Doctors at AIIMS, and various Delhi government-run facilities, including LNJP Hospital, Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital, DDU Hospital, GTB Hospital, BSA Hospital, Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital, and civic-run Hindu Rao Hospital performed duties while wearing black armbands and ribbons.

The Resident Doctors Association of AIIMS-Delhi, in a statement said, "This step will not

only encourage already rampant quackery, but also undermine the safety of the public. We request the government of India to retract this notification immediately. We stand with our medical fraternity in this regard and support the strike called by Indian Medical Association."

President of FORDA, an apex bodies of various RDAs in the city, Shivaji Deb Barman said, "Doctors in Delhi observe black ribbon protest, but will not withdraw any

services".

The IMA has given a call for withdrawal of non-essential and non-Covid services between 6 am and 6 pm on Friday to protest against the notification.

"The notification by the Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM) to allow legal practice of surgeries by Ayurveda practitioners and the formation of four committees by NITI Aayog for integration of all systems of medicine will only lead to "mixopathy", said the IMA.

## BJP TO HOLD AWARENESS DRIVE ON FARM BILLS

**DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, DEC. 11**

With the Modi government unwilling to buckle under farmer unions pressure to repeal the recently passed three farm sector legislations, the ruling BJP has decided to take the three laws to the farmers across the country by organising 'chaupals' and press conferences.

Despite the deadlock between the Centre and the farmers unions, mainly from Punjab, continuing even after series of talks between representatives from both sides, the government is hopeful that to "find a solution to the issues raised by the agitating farmers." But, with the farmer unions showing no sign of relenting, the BJP has decided to hold atleast 700 press conferences & 700 'chaupals' till the district levels to "dispel the myth and propaganda" against the three laws.

The party has also activated its social media team and supporters to explain why the three laws were enacted, why the reforms were needed in the agri sector and how its political opponents are "trying to mislead the farmers for their political interest."

The party has also asked its social media teams and cadre to highlight how opposition parties, including the Congress, had proposed the same reforms regarding AP-FCs, contract farming and some other issues.

## Expansion of ministry is Shivraj's jurisdiction: Scindia

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, DEC. 11**

Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha member Jyotiraditya Scindia on Friday arrived in a 40-car convoy carrying his supporters to hold discussions with Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and top leaders of the state party to accommodate his loyalists in the state ministry and party organisational posts.

Neither side disclosed what transpired at the meeting, but sources said that it's been a month since bypoll results were announced in Madhya Pradesh that firmly placed the Shivraj Chouhan-led BJP government in power. And yet the MLAs who had quit the Congress along with Scindia are yet to be accommodated in Chouhan's Cabinet.

There has been a delay in the reconstitution of state executive body and district units of the party owing to some "hitches" between Scindia and the state party leadership over accommodating the former's loyalists in various organisational posts.

State party president V.D. Sharma and state organisational secretary Sulash Bhagat were also present at

the meeting.

The Chief Minister is also under pressure to re-induct two former ministers, Govind Singh Rajput and Tulsi Silawat, following their victory in the November 3 Assembly by-elections. The two former ministers are considered staunch loyalists of Scindia.

Scindia refused to divulge what was discussed at the meeting but said, "Expansion of ministry is Chief Minister's sole jurisdiction. The Chief Minister as well as the Central leadership of the party will take a call on it".

Sources said the meeting discussed reconstitution of the state executive body and district units of the party apparently to accommodate Scindia's loyalists who had resigned from Congress and joined BJP recently.

"The meeting discussed accommodation of particularly the former MLAs and ministers who lost the November 3 Assembly by-elections in the organisations and state-owned corporations. The former MLAs had resigned from Congress and joined BJP recently. Majority of them are followers of Scindia," a senior BJP leader told this newspaper on the condition of anonymity.

## No leniency for rape accused: HC

**SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, DEC. 11**

Observing that the quantum of sentence to be imposed upon the accused convicted for rape cannot be viewed with leniency unless there are special reasons, the Bombay High Court enhanced imprisonment of a convict to 10 years from 3 years and fine amount to ₹1,10,000 from ₹10,000. The court has ordered that ₹1 lakh from the fine amount be given to the victim. The incident had happened around 28-years-ago.

A division bench of Justice Sadhna Jadhav and Justice N.J. Jambard observed that the trial court has shown undue leniency to the aunt of the accused and acquitted her and the state has failed in discharging its duty of prosecuting the case diligently.

According to the judges, "Passage of time will not be a justifiable reason to take a lenient view."

The bench further said, "Courts cannot be oblivious of the impact of such a heinous offence. The object of deterrence in commission of such heinous offence cannot be lost sight of while sentencing."

"Once the accused is convicted, the victim also deserves justice. Dishonour of a woman needs to be eliminated and judicial pronouncement, which imposes a disproportionately lenient sentence, needs to be set aside. The sexual harassment of a woman at a place, where she is working to earn her livelihood, is a disgrace meted out to her at the hands of the abuser, which needs to be deprecated and set right," the court further said.



CRPF, BSF and other forces will be using them in their Glock pistols.

The CornerShot weapon system consists of two joined sections.

The front portion holds the pistol along with the camera and other features including tactical LED light, laser device besides other attachments. The rear section houses the operating features, monitor, controls and has a foldable butt.

Among other countries, Israel has been a leading manufacturer of CornerShot systems that are used by military special forces and counter-terrorism units across the world.

They mostly use it for their Beretta and Glock pistols.

"CornerShots that are being purchased will



# DECCAN Chronicle

12 DECEMBER 2020

## Nadda stoning: All parties guilty of decorum breach

The attack on the motorcade of BJP president J.P. Nadda in the Diamond Harbour area near Kolkata on Thursday is disquieting. We know the culture of violence appears deeply embedded in West Bengal, ironic as this is for a part of the country to which the uplifting description “renaissance” is ascribed for the all-round effervescence seen here in the nineteenth century in conditions of colonial modernity. No political party operating in the state can claim to be free of guilt in this regard.

Even so, when politically mobilised hooligans, even at a symbolic level — as seems the case in the attack on Mr Nadda’s entourage — target the highest functionary of a political party, in this case the organisational head of the ruling party of the country, it is time for all concerned to reflect and get back to the drawing-board — for the sake of West Bengal and India. If not, political misfortune is apt to overtake us, no matter which party is in the saddle.

The BJP veteran Rajnath Singh, the defence minister and a former BJP chief, put the matter in a very sober way when he noted after the sorry incident, “Attack on political leaders is highly condemnable. The incident should be thoroughly probed and accountability should be fixed.”

**Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee can hardly be said to have covered herself with glory when she rhymed disparagingly on Mr Nadda’s name**

This is the right way, but “nothing happened” to Mr Nadda’s convoy, tweeted the state police. It noted, “A few bystanders threw stones at vehicles trailing his convoy. Everyone is safe and the situation is peaceful,” adding that a probe was on. What are they probing if nothing happened and all is tranquil? At any rate, the police are charged with investigating a crime in neutral fashion, not pass judgments.

When the force has already passed a judgment, it is likely the probe will be designed to be a formality. The head of police ought to be asked questions about his organisation taking such a cavalier view of things in its social media interactions — and frankly, in its actions. It should have been proactive in clearing the route the BJP leader’s convoy was taking. If it pleads that it had not been told about it in advance, it is even worse. The local police ought to know. This is no one else’s business, Mr Nadda’s ‘Z plus’ security status notwithstanding.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee can hardly be said to have covered herself with glory when she rhymed disparagingly on Mr Nadda’s name. This is not “bhadralok” at all, and sits even worse on a CM’s tongue. “I have asked the police to find out all this,” she said in public remarks. But she ought to be ordering a magisterial inquiry.

The state is to have Assembly elections in a few months. If events of recent weeks are an indication, political violence may possibly rise. BJP is desperate to unseat Ms Banerjee’s Trinamul Congress. In the circumstances, it is necessary not to fan political passions. Union home minister Amit Shah tweeted soon after the tawdry incident, “The West Bengal government will have to answer for the state-sponsored violence.”

This is an observation laden with political partisanship, and because state polls are due soon it gives off the sense of President’s rule being imposed. The home minister ought to sound more sober and act with due responsibility.

## A lone ranger departs

In the culture wars of yesteryear, his dance was totally lost on critics. Not considered Indian enough in the West, and Western enough in India, his zany moves failed to satisfy either the “diversity” or the “fashionableness” criteria. Then there were the traditionalists. Whenever he approached potential sponsors for money for his performances or projects, they invariably asked him, “What is modern dance?”

Astad Deboo kept on dancing, for 50 years, not just in India, but all over the world. His dance education was grounded in kathak, taken up at age six. His inspiration, on the other hand, had been a show by the American Murray Louis Dance Company, which he chanced to attend while pursuing a commerce degree in erstwhile Bombay. The adventurous Parsi boy left Mumbai in 1969 onboard a cargo boat and hitchhiked his way through Europe to reach New York in 1974.

In New York, Deboo enrolled at the famous Martha Graham dance academy, but dropped out. He then trained with Pina Bausch in Germany and, in 1977, returned to India and learned kathakali under E. Krishna Panicker, eventually evolving his own style that was minimalist and eloquent in equal measure. But it was not until 1986 that his breakthrough came in terms of peer recognition when Deboo was commissioned to choreograph for Maya Plisetskaya, the prima ballerina of Bolshoi Theatre. The versatile Deboo would go on to collaborate with Bausch herself, theatre artiste Alison Becker Chase, rock band Pink Floyd, dhruwad singers the Gundecha brothers, even Manipur’s Thang-Ta martial artistes and Pung cholom dancers. Accolades arrived late, in the form of a Sangeet Natak Akademi award in 1995 and a Padma Shri in 2007, and when they came were too little given his contributions. It would not be incorrect to comment that Deboo was among the few who changed Indians’ puritanical approach to music and dance. For a long time, he was the only one in his field of contemporary dance, a genre he single-handedly, or rather single-footedly, pioneered in India. He leaves behind a transforming legacy, and unreserved admiration in the hearts of his now-sizeable tribe of students, dance aficionados and followers.

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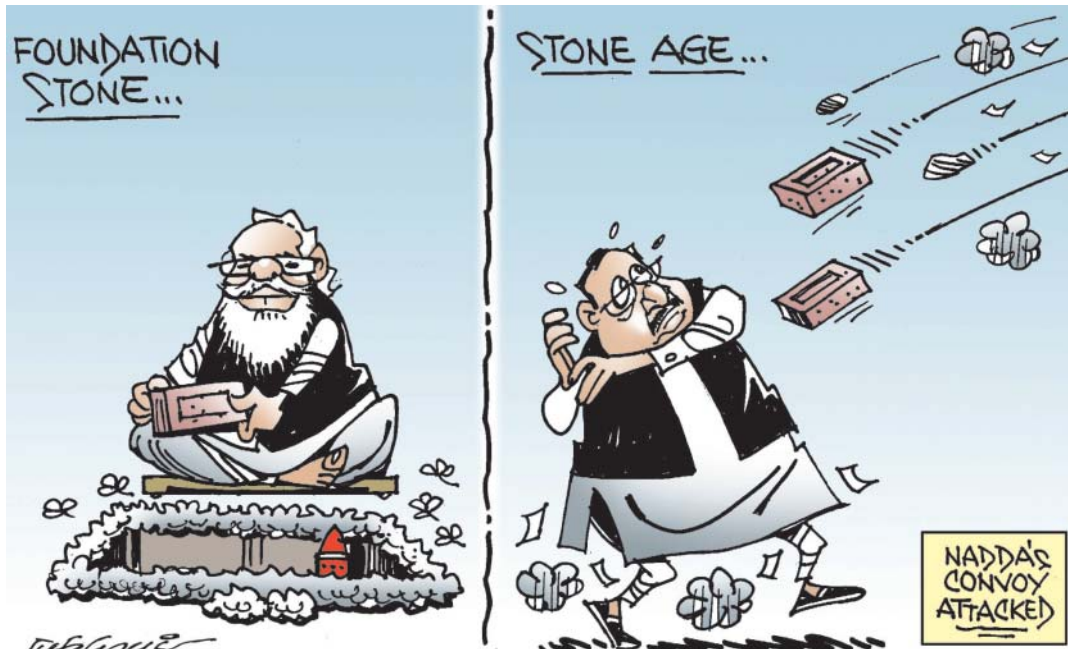
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Subhani



## V is for valour, victory... But V is also for vaccine!



Shobhaa De

There is a joke doing the rounds on the social media which goes something like this: “Meanwhile, in Ulhasnagar, everybody is waiting impatiently for the original Covid vaccine to be launched... They say that their duplicate has been ready for two months!” That joke says it all, and is such an accurate reflection of collective angst as one hears the “latest” vaccine-ualey breakthroughs, with sombre experts weighing in with their considered opinion on the V-word. In Mumbai, it is as if Covid never happened, or at any rate, even if it did, the virus has miraculously vanished, and the party can begin. In drawing room discussions, the conversation flits from, “Are you going to take it?” to “I hear SRK went to Pune and has already taken it”. I am asked if I plan to take it, and I hesitate before replying... truth be told, I am still sitting on the fence. When I saw pictures of 90-year-olds getting jabbed, I turned cynical because I found it hard to understand why they would risk it at this stage of their lives. The Covid updates in the national dailies remain unread by me, and I switch off when prime time panel discussions breathlessly focus on “Who will win the vaccine race?” The point is, whichever pharmaceutical company wins that Covid Cup, it still won’t solve our problems here in India. But sure... shareholders who have invested in any of the big pharma players will be in a jocular mood over Christmas and New Year.

The off-site narratives of the vaccine story are most engaging. Kids and senior citizens, frontline workers and others in privileged categories, are busy boasting about being one up on the rest. Getting a shot will soon become a social test — if you aren’t amongst the first to extend an arm for the jab — hey — poor you! The usual “janata class” jamboree will kick in, with folks who will try to jump the queue, bribe their way to “qualify”, forge certificates and documents, call up influential “contacts”, fake illness, do whatever it takes to stake a claim and brag about it. “I have taken the shot — and you haven’t? Arrey! You should have called me, na? I know somebody who would have arranged it for you — that too, at home. Why go and stand in a line like all the others?” Funny... our “line complex”! We hate being seen standing in an orderly line anywhere. If you have to line up, it means you are a nobody — that’s the thinking. I remember one of our most dazzling billionaire wives cribbing that she hated flying “commercial” because it involved lining up with the hoi polloi! She used to frequently berate her husband publicly for not getting her a private jet. “It is so humiliating to be seen at an airport standing with the public!” she would moan and groan. It didn’t matter that personalities in the league of Ratan Tata and Azim Premji not only fly commercial, but carry their own bags on board, with

Azim preferring to fly economy class whenever possible — but that is his special brand of eccentricity. I suspect we will see a similar scramble for the vaccine, with India’s swish set flying off to get their shots in London rather than wait it out for their turn back home. “Apna Time Aayega” holds no appeal for most self-styled VIPs, who consider it infra dig to be told they need to line up like everybody else. My own state of denial has made me push Covid and the vaccine into the background. I am not convinced it is THE answer, no matter what the docs say. Neither have I understood the booster shot logic or the reactions to it — headaches, body aches and other symptoms. It’s being described as ‘The Post-Vax effect’.

**My own state of denial has made me push Covid and the vaccine into the background. I am not convinced it is THE answer, no matter what the docs say.**

Neither have I understood the booster shot logic or the reactions to it — headaches, body aches and other symptoms. It’s being described as ‘The Post-Vax effect’.

driven by commerce than humanitarian compulsions. To think such a swathe of people across the globe will be at the mercy of agencies and governments! If your government decides — “This is the one” — then, that is the one! We will never know why this one was picked over that one. Who lobbied for it — who had the most to gain... Today, this one magic vaccine is going to determine the future of the world — and it will instantly become the single most potent factor when it comes to votes and elections. Its availability and efficacy will determine the fate of governments and political parties across the world. Citizens may never know why a certain pharma company was picked over rivals. Questions about decisions that will affect the health and well-being of our planet will be decided by politicians! The almost unlimited power of the virus over our lives has been established. Now comes the challenge of how we can tame the microbe, save ourselves and keep the faith. What if we discover a few years down the line that our governments have shortchanged us by withholding vital information. Or that our leaders sold our safety in order to stay in power. That the wrong pharma horse was backed? That a corrupt system bought a vaccine it knew full well would not work as promised and made guinea pigs out of us? We have given the mandate a bit too easily. Was there ever a choice?

Readers can send feedback to [www.shobhaade.blogspot.com](mailto:www.shobhaade.blogspot.com)

**What if we discover a few years down the line that our governments have shortchanged us by withholding vital information? That the wrong pharma horse was backed?**

### LETTERS

#### FARMERS’ STRIKE

Farming cannot survive under businessmen. They only know how to fleece. Farmers live a hand-to-mouth existence and never prosper and are mostly unable to raise their voice. Farming cannot sustain without subsidies. In the absence of subsidies, cheap chemicals that poison our food will be used. Sustainable farming needs side income. Even if government gives subsidies, leaders will pocket their share and farmer gets only a part of it.

**Bindhu Madhav Rao**  
Hyderabad

Since the government has agreed to give a written assurance on MSP and APMC mandi system, the farm laws have almost become null and void. Therefore, either the farmers should have no objections to call off the strike or for the government to repeal the farm laws

**Dr O. Prasada Rao**  
Hyderabad

#### OLD CITY RACKET

The sale of women in Old City of Hyderabad seems to have surfaced again. Unless police take strict action against middlemen, these incidents will continue. State must also check how these women could afford to travel abroad on a visitor visa. There is nexus.

**Dr G.V. Kumar**  
Hyderabad

#### PRESIDENT MISSING

According to Article 79 of Constitution, Parliament consists of President and the two Houses. While this is so, it is not known why the President has not been invited to the Bhumi-pujan (ground breaking) ceremony for the new Parliament building in New Delhi (*New Parliament to be sign of self reliant India: Modi, DC, Dec. 11*).

**P.H. Hema Sagar**  
Secunderabad

#### IA pilots refuse to fly HS 748 aircraft

NEW DELHI, Dec. 11  
Pilots of the Indian Airlines today stood firm in their resolve not to fly HS 748 aircraft.

After a secret meeting of Delhi-based pilots, one of their spokesman told UNI: “We will have no compromise with the safety of passengers. We have a conscience and cannot risk the lives of passengers.”

Farrukh Dhondy  
Of Cabbages & Kings



“What use the scorching summer  
That burns the buds of spring?  
And these intense obsessions  
That with them despair bring?”

What good the freezing winter  
In which viruses survive?  
Oh! take the seasons as they come  
It’s good to be alive!”

— From *Great Expectations* by  
Bachchoo

Why we need to ‘tolerate’ all those who have contrary views

Philosophy quibbles over words? If language is the avatar of thought, then ideas, propositions and proofs are the recipes in the avatar’s cookbook. No, not cardamom pods, but cinnamon sticks? Not “ambiguity” but “ambivalence”. “Generalisation” is the foundation of science, “generality” the enemy of it. And thus, we philosophers (*Kabh sey? Pack it in your!* — *Ed. Arrey kuchh tho pretension karney do sethji — fd*) purify the dialect of the tribe.

Long years ago, in my teenage in Pune, there was an establishment at one end of the cantonment’s Mahatma Gandhi Road called the Punjab Book Service. It had a display window in which were arranged books such as Bertrand Russell’s *History of Western*

Philosophy, Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, several literary hard-covered tomes and titles which made the Punjab Book Service (PBS) look like it was in any street in Oxford or Cambridge.

But those titles were not what the clientele wanted and were not the titles stocked in the body of this lending library. The front room had packed shelves of detective stories, Perry Mason courtroom sort of stuff and “Westerns”. There was a back room which you entered through a heavily beaded curtain, with shelves full of brown-paper-covered pamphlet-like books with titles such as *Confessions of a Russian Princess*, *Forget the Hocus Enjoy the Pokus* and *The Nun’s Delight*. All to be borrowed overnight or so for a few annas.

Gentle reader, I beg you to believe that I only became aware of these titles when my friend Dara Cama borrowed them. I never crossed the beaded curtain.

Then a fateful day Dara went to the showcase and brought Will Durant’s *Story of Philosophy* to “Punjabi”, as we called the proprietor, at the book-borrowing counter.

Punjabi stared at the hard-covered volume as though he had never seen it

before. There was a long pause because he couldn’t believe that anyone wanted to read the stuff that he used as decoy material for his chaaloo lending library. He looked up.

“Arrey vah Kyemah! Thoo flaaafy pudthai?”

And yes, it was the moment when I converted from addiction to Earl Stanley Gardner to “flaafy”. And then it was I came to appreciate, as perhaps Socrates did, that substituting one word for another changes the world.

This memory of such realisation came to me when in September of this plague year Cambridge University’s vice-chancellor issued a sort of fatwa on free speech demanding of the university staff and students that they “respect” all opinions. His bulletin was widely interpreted as the outlawing of any arguments or contentions which would offend any group. The fatwa was probably issued as a caveat to opponents or those who would argue against the “reality” or achievability of gender transformation. The call to “respect” the insistences of “trans” people and their supporters was interpreted in some quarters as a ban on expressing any opposition to them. This could, if extended, apply to a ban on countering the arguments of anti-

vaccers, people who oppose vaccination.

A professor of philosophy at the university, Arif Ahmed, saw this fatwa as a mandated opposition to free speech. He proposed a simple amendment: substitute the word “tolerate” instead of the word “respect”. That would recognise the right to live with, but not agree with, opinions which seemed to you either ridiculous, contrary to scientific fact or unacceptable for some reason of faith, or otherwise.

Prof. Ahmed calls the vice-chancellor’s directive a policy and labels it as “academic McCarthyism”. The injunction to “respect” an opinion could merely mean to support the fact that it exists. But it could also mean to refrain from publicly contradicting it.

Prof. Ahmed began alone but soon signed up a fair number of academics and students to his amendment to the directive. He is certainly motivated by the acute opposition to the recent practice in British universities of banning (they call it “no-platforming”) people whose views they feel will offend one or another minority.

Prof. Ahmed sees that as an infringement of free speech within institutions which should be the champions of it and of vociferous arguments against

offending ones. He told London’s *Times* that there is the risk of “self-censorship”, that there are now views and opinions in British academia that dare not speak their name.

He goes controversially further, saying that it’s right for academics to engage with white nationalists or even Islamic fundamentalists and that people should be able to hear their, possibly toxic, reasoning, and “make up their own minds and criticise as disrespectfully as they want”.

Myself? If I was president of the Cambridge Union and Osama bin Laden (Fish be Upon Him) was still alive, I’d send him an email asking him to speak about why Donald Trump — sorry, I mean America — is in his opinion The Great Satan. I’d perhaps invite Richard Dawkins or someone more militant to speak against him and let a thousand flowers (followers?) fight it out.

I shall not cease from mental strife... etc.

P.S. — As we go to press, Cambridge announces that the Arif amendment and others were passed with a huge majority.

Should tolerators and repliers, supporters of all free speech, now be termed “Arifists”?



SHORT TAKES

BIDEN, HARRIS TIME  
'2020' PERSON  
OF THE YEAR

New York: US President-elect Joe Biden and Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris have been named by the prestigious *Time* magazine as '2020 Person of the Year' for changing the American story, showing that the forces of empathy are greater than the furies of division and sharing a vision of healing in a grieving world.

It named the Democratic leaders for its annual prestigious honour, choosing them over other finalists — frontline health care workers, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Dr Anthony Fauci, the Movement for Racial Justice and US President Donald Trump.

INDIAN AMONG 3  
HELD IN \$3MN  
FRAUD CASE IN US

Washington, Dec. 11: An Indian-American from Michigan has been arrested along with two others on charges of conspiring to defraud at least 43 victims of more than \$3 million through the sale of phony business opportunities, a US attorney has said. David Weinstein, 61, Vijay Vanam Reddy, 45, and Kevin Brown, 61, have been charged with one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud.

Reddy on Thursday made an appearance in a Detroit federal court. Brown and Weinstein were arrested on December 8. Brown was released on \$50,000 bond and Weinstein a day later. From September 2015 through August 2018, the three advertised business opportunities for sale on various websites. They purported to sell "blocks" of contracts with medical providers who allegedly wanted to outsource their medical billing, collections, appeals, answering, credentialing or transcription functions.

Britain, EU gear up as  
'no-deal' Brexit looms

British Prime Minister admits Sunday deadline for next discussion does not hold out great promise

EU leaders agree climate  
deal, budget after wrangles

London, Dec. 11: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has issued the starkest warning yet that the UK could be out of the EU on January 1, 2021, without a trade agreement in place as the two sides remain divided on key areas amidst last-ditch talks between the chief Brexit negotiators.

After Johnson's urgent talks with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in Brussels failed to break the logjam over the European Union (EU) fishing rights in UK territorial waters as a non-member and competition rules for businesses, the Prime Minister admitted that a Sunday deadline for their next discussion does not hold out great promise.

"At the moment, I have to tell you in all candour, the treaty is not there yet and that was the strong view of our Cabinet," Johnson said on Thursday night. "There's a strong possibility that we will have a solution much more like Australian relationship with the EU than a Canadian relationship with the EU," he said.

An Australia-style agreement effectively means no trade agreement and the two sides would then be trading on World Trade Organisation (WTO) norms, with considerable barriers to movement of goods as well as people. With the UK no longer signed up to the EU rules, it would also mean travel restrictions for Britons travelling to and from the EU at the end of the Brexit transition period on December 31, given the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown rules. — PTI

Brussels, Dec. 11: EU leaders on Friday agreed an ambitious target for cutting greenhouse gas emissions after unlocking the bloc's landmark budget and Coronavirus recovery fund at a marathon summit.

The 27 member states struck a deal on a binding target to slash emissions by at least 55 percent by 2030 following an entire night of intense wrangling in Brussels.

The fight was over how the cost of the effort should be shared across the countries: highly dependent on coal, Poland — allied with several

● **TURKEY ON Friday called on the European Union to act as an 'honest mediator' in its dispute with EU members Greece and Cyprus over the exploration of gas reserves in the Mediterranean, after European leaders approved expanding sanctions against Ankara.**

Eastern European countries — fears serious economic consequences and demanded details on the aid it would receive.

"Europe is the leader in the fight against climate change," European Council president and summit host Charles Michel declared on Twitter.

French President Emmanuel Macron tweeted an appeal for action now the target was agreed, insisting: "Let's do everything to succeed. Now. All together. Because there is no plan B!" As part of its commitments to the Paris Climate Agreement, the EU has pledged to become climate-neutral by 2050, the date when it would offset or capture more greenhouse gas than it emits. — AFP

UK businesses want Brexit  
deal as trade remains stuck

London, Dec. 11: British trucking firms, supermarkets and other businesses on Friday implored the government to strike a last-minute trade deal with the European Union, as the two sides' leaders told their citizens to brace for New Year upheaval in the UK-EU trading relationship.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said there is a "strong possibility" that negotiations on a

new economic relationship to take effect Jan. 1 will fail. Johnson and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen have set a Sunday deadline to decide whether to keep talking or prepare for a no-deal break.

"We have not yet found the solutions to bridge our differences," von der Leyen said Friday at an EU summit in Brussels. "We will decide on Sunday whether we have the con-

ditions for an agreement or not." Either way, she said, "in less than three weeks, it will be new beginnings for old friends."

Britain left the EU on January 31 but has continued to follow the bloc's rules during a transition period that lasts until the end of the year. Months of talks on a future trade deal have failed to bridge the gaps on three issues — fishing rights. — AP

Carbon emission  
down 7% in Covid

Paris, Dec. 11: Carbon emissions fell a record seven percent in 2020 as countries imposed lockdowns and restrictions on movement during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Global Carbon Project said Friday in its annual assessment.

The fall of an estimated 2.4 billion tonnes is considerably larger than previous annual record declines, such as 0.9 billion tonnes at the end of World War II or 0.5 billion tonnes in 2009 at the height of the financial crisis.

The international team

of researchers behind the report said emissions from fossil fuels and industry would be around 34 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent this year — still a significant chunk of Earth's remaining "carbon budget".

Emissions reductions were most pronounced in the United States (down 12 percent) and the European Union (down 11 percent), the Global Carbon Project said.

In China, however, it said emissions would likely fall in 2020 just 1.7 percent as Beijing superpowered its

economic recovery.

By sector, emissions from transport accounted for the largest share of the global decrease, with emissions from car journeys falling by roughly half at the peak of the first Covid-19 wave in April.

By December emissions from road transport had fallen 10 percent year-on-year and emissions from aviation were down 40 percent. Emissions from industry — 22 percent of the global total — were down 30 percent in some countries with the strongest lockdown measures. — AFP

Germany plans for  
tougher lockdown

● **THE ROBERT Koch Institute said the country's 16 states reported 29,875 new cases of Covid-19, breaking the previous daily record of 23,679 cases reported the day before.**

Berlin, Dec. 11: Calls grew on Friday for tougher lockdown measures in Germany as the country's disease control center reported record daily increases in both Coronavirus cases and deaths.

The Robert Koch Institute said the country's 16 states reported 29,875 new cases of Covid-19, breaking the previous daily record of 23,679 cases reported the day before.

The number of deaths from the virus rose by 598, to a total of 20,970. The previous daily record of deaths was 590, set on Wednesday. "The only chance we have to get in control of the situation is a lockdown, but it needs to be immediate," Interior Minister Horst Seehofer told Der Spiegel magazine. "If we wait until Christmas, we'll have to continue fighting these numbers for months."

Under current restrictions implemented at the

beginning of November as numbers were growing exponentially, restaurants, bars, leisure and sports facilities have been closed and hotels are closed to tourists, but schools and nonessential shops have remained open.

The numbers had plateaued — but at high daily levels — and have again been rising in recent days. That prompted Chancellor Angela Merkel this week to call on state governments, which are responsible for imposing and lifting restrictions, to consider closing schools early before Christmas and other measures. — AP

BIDEN'S CABINET  
GIVES DISTINCT  
OBAMA FEEL

Washington, Dec. 11: President-elect Joe Biden is getting the old gang back together. Increasingly deep into the process of selecting Cabinet members and other senior staff, the incoming Biden administration has a distinctly Obama feel.

There's Denis McDonough, former President Barack Obama's chief of staff who Biden announced on Thursday would be nominated as the secretary of veterans affairs. Susan Rice, Obama's former national security adviser, was named the director of Biden's White House Domestic Policy Council.

That's on top of Biden already tapping Obama's agriculture secretary, Tom Vilsack, to head the department once again, former Secretary of State John Kerry to serve as special envoy on climate and Kerry's Obama-era deputy Antony Blinken to lead the State Department. — PTI

FINANCIAL  
Chronicle

quick  
BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	46,099.01 0.30
Nifty 50	13,513.85 0.26
S&P 500*	3,639.00 -0.79
Dollar (₹)	73.64 0.03
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.75 0.35
Euro (₹)	89.31 -0.17
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,594*102 0.20
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	50.03 -0.22
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.956 0.040
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.883 -0.025

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

Gems & jewellery  
sector pares debt  
by 26% to \$7.7 bn



The gems & jewellery sector has cut its outstanding debt by 26 per cent to \$7.75 bn in 18 months. The industry has faced difficulties in securing credit in the wake of a few bank fraud cases, Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council chairman Colin Shah said. "The gross bank debt of India's gems and jewellery industry has reduced by a healthy rate of 26 per cent from \$10.44 bn in March 2019 to \$7.75 bn in October 2020."

■ Carlsberg, SABMiller, UB in the dock  
Beer cartel faces  
hefty CCI penalty

ADITYA KALRA  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 11

Top executives of Carlsberg, SABMiller and United Breweries (UB) exchanged commercially sensitive information and colluded to fix beer prices in India for over 11 years, according to a government antitrust investigation report seen by Reuters.

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) in 2018 raided the offices of the three brewers and started an inquiry. The investigation's findings—which are not a final judgment of wrongdoing—cast a shadow on the brewers, which account for 88 per cent of the country's \$7 billion beer market.

Senior CCI members will consider the report, drafted in March, as they decide on fines, which could exceed \$250 million, two sources familiar with the case said. The CCI members could agree with or dispute the findings of its investigation team.

Executives' conversations, WhatsApp messages and e-mails contained in the report show the companies regularly and collectively strategised in seeking price increases in "several states", forging a cartel the CCI said gave them more bargaining power with state authorities.

The companies also used the All-India Brewers Association (Aiba) as a "common platform" to decide collectively on prices; and the local group then lobbied on the compa-



nies' behalf for price increases, the CCI report found.

At least thrice executives exchanged messages urging one another to keep their plans quiet, the report showed.

"We should avoid getting caught," Aiba's director general wrote in an e-mail in 2016 to executives of the three companies.

The brewers coordinated to "manipulate the government machinery" and "were well-aware that their collective approach through the association (Aiba) was violating" competition law, the 248-page CCI report said. The report concluded the cartel existed between 2007 and October 2018.

The CCI did not respond to Reuters queries. Aiba and Carlsberg declined to comment, citing ongoing CCI proceedings.

United Breweries, part-owned by Heineken, said it had cooperated with authorities and would make submissions to the CCI. Heineken didn't comment.

The world's largest brew-

er, Anheuser-Busch InBev, which acquired SABMiller in 2016, said it takes "antitrust compliance very seriously".

The CCI raids in 2018 seized hundreds of files and more than 2 terabytes of data from laptops, pen drives and smartphones.

The case was triggered when AB InBev used CCI's "leniency programme" to disclose that it had detected a cartel while integrating SABMiller's operations in India. Later in 2018, UB and Carlsberg also filed leniency applications.

Under the programme, the CCI can reduce the penalties it imposes on companies depending on the cooperation they provide. In this case, 19 beer executives engaged in anti-competitive practices, the report says.

"The collusion... has been mostly through the highest level of management in these companies," the report said, including managing directors, vice presidents, and sales and marketing heads.

— Reuters

UAE's Lulu  
Group to  
set up food  
unit in J&K

Dubai, Dec. 11: The UAE-based Lulu Group International plans to set up a food processing centre in Sri-nagar for sourcing agri products from Jammu and Kashmir.

The plan was revealed by Lulu Group chairman Yusufali M.A. on Thursday to a Jammu and Kashmir delegation led by principal secretary (agriculture production & horticulture) Navin Kumar Choudhary.

"As per the commitment made during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the UAE in 2019, Lulu Group is fully focused on sourcing a wide range of agri products from J&K," Yusufali said.

Currently, Lulu imports apples and saffron from Kashmir and imports will significantly increase in the coming years. The group imported more than 400 tonne of Kashmiri apples till date, according to an official statement.

Yusufali said the Lulu group is one of the leading importers of food and non-food products from India and setting up a new food processing and logistics centre will further boost export of Kashmiri products to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and other countries.

Choudhary welcomed the Lulu Group initiative to host a J&K special fortnight at its super markets across the Gulf region on the occasion of Republic Day-2021. —PTI

Industrial output rises  
3.6% in October

FC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 11

With an upward growth in most sectors, especially manufacturing, electricity and consumer durables, the industrial output, or the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), for October registered 3.6 per cent growth, according to government data released on Friday.

This is the second consecutive month when IIP data remained in positive territory after six months of contraction. The IIP was up 0.5 per cent in September.

The manufacturing sector, which has a weightage of 77.6 per cent in the IIP, recorded a growth of 3.5 per cent in October.

In line with the Reserve



Bank of India's expectation, the October IIP number showed a sign of healing the economy. However, for the April-October period, industrial production contracted 17.5 per cent against 0.1 per cent growth in the year-ago period.

The October IIP growth was mostly driven by the electricity and manufac-

turing sector. The electricity sector grew 11.2 per cent, while the manufacturing sector jumped by 3.5 per cent year-on-year.

The output of capital goods—a barometer of investment—grew 3.3 per cent in October. There was a contraction of 22.4 per cent in the year-ago month.

Home prices fall 2.4% in India

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, DEC. 11

Home have become more affordable in the Indian market in the last one year, with prices dropping by 2.4 per cent. The demand for housing units have also gone up during the period.

Property consultants Knight Frank India says India has come down seven places in the Global House Price Index, as residential prices have dropped 2.4 per cent for the 12-month period and six-month period to September end. Prices were down 0.5 per cent for

the September quarter compared to June quarter. This led to India moving down to 54th place on the index in Q3 2020 against 47th rank in Q3 2019.

The demand for housing units jumped in India as well. Home sales volume jumped in top eight cities by 2.5 times to 33,403 units in Q3 2020 compared to 9,632 in Q2 2020. New residential unit launches increased by 4.5 times to 31,106 units in Q3 2020, compared to 5,584 units in the previous quarter.

Knight Frank said mainstream residential prices across 56 countries and territories worldwide saw

an average 4.5 per cent price correction in the September quarter. Around 16 per cent of the surveyed global countries and territories registered a decline in yearly price growth.

In Q3 2020, India, Ireland, Spain and Hong Kong witnessed the weakest price growth year-on-year.

Turkey led the index for the third consecutive quarter with annual price growth of 27 per cent. New Zealand with 15 per cent price rise jumped from 11th to second place between Q2 and Q3 as the country saw demand increase post-lockdown.



## SHORT TAKES

## Verstappen is at maximum speed

**Yas Island (Abu Dhabi):** Max Verstappen posted the fastest time Friday in the first practice for the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. The Red Bull driver was 0.34 seconds ahead of Mercedes rival Valtteri Bottas and 1.14 seconds quicker than Renault driver Esteban Ocon. Formula one champion Lewis Hamilton returned for Mercedes after recovering from the Coronavirus and had the fifth fastest time. He struggled early in the session with a brake sensor issue which needed fixing in the team garage. A second practice will be held later Friday at the Yas Marina circuit. — AP

## Joshua, Pulev on the boil at weigh-in

**London:** Anthony Joshua warned Kubrat Pulev he faces “the real one” in Saturday’s world heavyweight title bout in London as the pair almost came to blows at the weigh-in. Former Olympic champion Joshua defends his IBF, WBA and WBO belts at Wembley Arena against the veteran Bulgarian in front of 1,000 fans due to Coronavirus restrictions. The two men have been scheduled to fight twice before but both times the bout was postponed — in 2017 Pulev was injured and Covid-19 put paid to a planned fight in June. But the 39-year-old, nicknamed “The Cobra”, boasts an impressive 28-1 record — his only defeat came in a world title fight against Wladimir Klitschko in 2014. “Many years I’ve been in boxing and seen a lot of fighters talk a lot of rubbish, then they get smacked up,” Joshua told *Sky Sports*. — AFP

## Tennis great Alex dies at 84

**Santa Monica, USA:** Alex Olmedo, who won the Wimbledon and Australian Championships singles titles in 1959 and was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 1987, has died. He was 84. Citing Olmedo’s son, Alejandro Jr., the Hall of Fame said Thursday that Olmedo died of brain cancer on Wednesday. Alejandro Alex Olmedo was born in Peru in 1936 and moved to the United States as a teenager. He went to the University of Southern California, where he won NCAA tennis championships in singles and doubles in both 1956 and 1958. Olmedo played in the Davis Cup for the United States and led the team to the trophy in 1958, when he also paired with Ham Richardson to win the doubles title at the U.S. National Championships, the tournament now known as the U.S. Open. — AP

## Hyderabad hold Mohun Bagan 1-1

**Margao:** Hyderabad FC rode on Joao Victor’s second half penalty to hold ATK Mohun Bagan to a 1-1 draw, maintaining their unbeaten run in the Indian Super League, here on Friday. The duo of Roy Krishna and Manvir Singh looked threatening up front but missed a flurry of chances, while veteran Subrata Pal pulled off some fine saves under the Hyderabad post to keep a clean score-sheet in the first-half. Manvir finally broke the deadlock in the 54th minute capitalising on a defensive lapse by Odei Onandia. But the Mariners’ joy lasted just over 10 minutes as they conceded a soft penalty after Nikhil Poojary was brought down by Manvir with a faint touch. — PTI

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

**Australia ‘A’ vs India:** Day 2 from 9 am on Sony Six, HD

**Big Bash League:** Melbourne Stars vs Sydney Thunder from 10.35 am; Melbourne Renegades vs Perth Scorchers from 1.45 pm on Sony Ten 2, HD

## FOOTBALL

**English Premier League:** Wolverhampton vs Aston Villa from 6 pm; Newcastle vs West Brom from 8.30 pm; Manchester United vs Manchester City from 11 pm; Everton vs Chelsea from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Star Sports Select 1, HD

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## Hitman is fit, set for Tests

## Rohit clears fitness test at NCA, to leave for Australia on Dec. 14

**New Delhi, Dec. 11:** Senior India batsman Rohit Sharma on Friday cleared an eagerly-watched fitness test at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru and will leave for Australia on December 14, three days before the start of the marquee Test series against the world’s number one team.

Rohit had sustained a hamstring injury during the IPL, which led to him missing the white-ball leg of the ongoing tour. He is also out of reckoning for the first two Tests but can now be there for the last two games. “Rohit has cleared the

fitness Test and will soon be flying out to Australia,” a senior BCCI official said on conditions of anonymity.

Rohit’s fitness test took place under the supervision of NCA director Rahul Dravid, who is entrusted with the responsibility of giving him his fitness certificate.

As per the Australian government’s rules, the star batsman will have to undergo a mandatory 14 days of hard quarantine before being able to train for the last two Tests in Sydney (January 7 to 11) and Brisbane (January 15 to 19). He is flying straight to



Rohit Sharma

Sydney and will get a week’s training there.

There had been confusion around Rohit’s status over the past few weeks. Captain Virat Kohli spoke about a lack of clarity on

the issue that has been full of intrigue ever since he injured his left hamstring during a league match while playing for Mumbai Indians in the IPL.

The injury, which forced him out of four IPL games, prompted the national selectors to not consider him for the Australian tour.

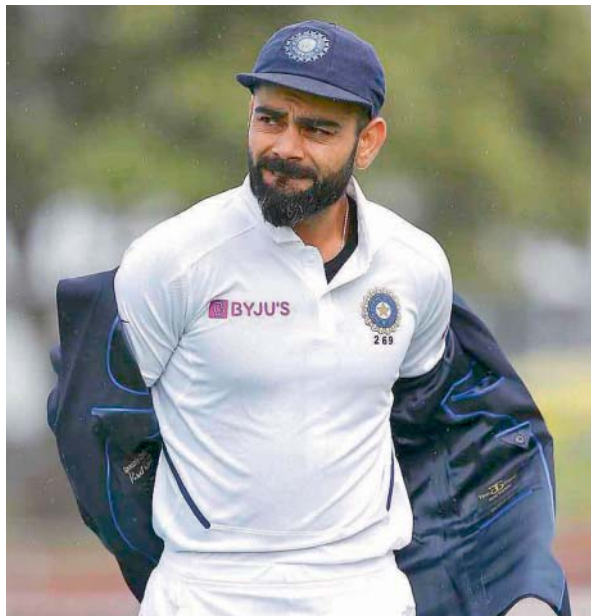
Omitted from the squad for the much-anticipated tour, he soon returned to lead his franchise in the remainder of the lucrative league, adding to the curiosity.

On November 9, the BCCI provided an update on his status, saying the

selectors had kept Rohit out of only the limited-overs leg for him to “regain full fitness” for the Test series.

But the white-ball vice-captain came to Mumbai instead of travelling straight to Australia with his national teammates after leading Indians to IPL title triumph in the UAE.

The BCCI then issued another press release on November 26, a day after Kohli claimed he did not know why Rohit had not done his rehab in Australia, stating that the reason behind the opener coming back to India was his father’s illness. — PTI



Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli in this file photo.

## Virat, Indian with Aussie trait: Greg

**Adelaide, Dec. 11:** Batting great and former India coach Greg Chappell has called Virat Kohli the “most Australian non-Australian” cricketer of all time and thanked the sport’s “most important” figure for championing the cause of the Test format with his “all-out aggression”.

Chappell invoked Mahatma Gandhi before crediting Kohli’s intensity for bringing about a paradigm shift in Indian cricket. “Many previous Indian cricket teams tended to play with undue deference to their opponents, as if in accord with the Gandhian principle. Sourav Ganguly was the first Indian captain to try to change that approach. It worked to a degree in India, but usually hit a hurdle overseas,” Chappell wrote in *Sydney Morning Herald*.

“Virat Kohli does not believe in passive resistance. He is a proponent of all-out aggression. His idea is to dominate the opposition. Kohli is the most Australian non-Australian

cricketer of all time. He embodies the new India. As the premier player and captain of the world’s pre-eminent cricket power, he feels an abiding responsibility to the wider game,” he added.

“The fact that Kohli champions Test cricket is a huge plus for a format under pressure for time and space in a crowded schedule,” Chappell said.

“Test cricket has always been the pinnacle for him and it has driven him to be fitter and stronger to cope with its demands. It is why he drives his team in these areas because he wants India to be respected in the most demanding format.”

“If the captain of India is ambivalent towards Test cricket, some administrators would be happy for it to slide into ignominy, as they are seduced by the newer, shinier models,” he said.

On Kohli’s standing in world cricket, Chappell said the batting maestro is aware of that but not obsessed with it.

— PTI

## CODED MESSAGES ARE SMART: ALLAN

BY BIPIN DANI

Former South African pace bowler Allan Donald believes that England computer analyst’s idea of sending coded messages to the team captain Eoin Morgan on the field of play during the 3rd ODI against South Africa was “harmless” to the game.

England analyst Nathan Leamon was seen hanging a series of coded messages from the team balcony — in combinations of letters and numbers — for the players out in the middle.

Speaking to this correspondent, he said, “the idea has come from the game of rugby and I don’t see anything wrong in it. I don’t think these coded messages had anything to do with the referrals.

Two decorative gentlemen (Donald was referring to Sunil Gavaskar and VVS Laxman) have criticised the innovation but I am sure these coded messages had no influence on the referrals.”

“In the 1999 World Cup in the UK, our coach (Bob Woolmer) was in contact with our captain (Hansie Cronje) and myself in certain scenarios and was highlighting certain threats posed by one or two batsmen. It was not two-way communication but we were just listening to him,” he said.

“Honestly I see it (sending coded messages) harmless. In my opinion it is just good thinking from the box. I wonder why people think it is sinister. It is smart thinking on the contrary,” the South African added.



A shot of the Diego Armando Maradona Stadium in Naples, Italy, before the start of Napoli’s Europa League match against Real Sociedad on Thursday. — AP

## Napoli play 1st match at Maradona stadium

**Naples (Italy), Dec. 11:** Napoli kicked off a new era, playing the first game in their stadium since it was renamed in honour of club legend Diego Maradona.

The match at the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona was a Europa League clash against Spanish club Real Sociedad which ended in a 1-1 draw.

Argentina football great and former Napoli star Maradona died two weeks ago aged 60. He led the club to their only league titles in 1987 and 1990 and the UEFA Cup in 1989.

“Being here, inside the Diego Armando Maradona stadium, is a great honour,” Napoli sporting director Cristiano Giuntoli said before kick-off.

A minute’s silence was also held before the game in memory of Italy 1982 World Cup winner Paolo Rossi who died early Thursday aged 64 years. Rossi inspired Italy in the 1982 tournament in Spain where he was the top scorer with six goals, including a hat-trick in the 3-2 defeat of Brazil. He also scored twice against Poland in the semifinals and the opening goal in the 3-1

win over West Germany in the final.

“Paolo Rossi was a great point of reference for me,” said Giuntoli.

City authorities and the club’s president had proposed renaming the San Paolo Stadium within hours of Maradona’s death. Napoli have already paid homage to Maradona, who played for the club from 1984 to 1991, in two home games.

The players wore his number ten for a minute’s silence in a Europa League game the day after the legendary Maradona’s death.

— AFP

## Leaps and bounds



A Croatian player goes for goal during the match against Romania at the European Women’s Handball Championship played at the Sydbank Arena in Kolding, Denmark. Croatia came from behind to beat Romania 25-20 in the first match of the second phase to confirm their place at the top of Group II with 6 points. In the second half, Croatia managed to hold their lead and win by five goals to record their fourth win in a row. Valentina Blazevic was Croatia’s top scorer with 7 goals. In other matches, Russia defeated Montenegro 24-23; France sneaked past Spain 26-25 and Norway nailed Netherlands 32-25.

## NICHOLLS PEPS UP KIWIS WITH FINE CENTURY

**Wellington, Dec. 11:** New Zealand’s Henry Nicholls rode his luck to post a crucial century as the hosts, weakened by the loss of Kane Williamson, survived a shaky start to reach 294 for six on day one of the second Test against the West Indies on Friday.

Nicholls snapped a 21-month string of low scores with his sixth Test century. At stumps, he was 117 not out. From being on the ropes at 78 for 3, Nicholls said New Zealand now considered 400 would be “a good result.” — AFP

**Brief scores (Day 1):** New Zealand 294/6 in 84 overs (Henry Nicholls not out 117, Shannon Gabriel 3/57) vs West Indies.

## GLITTER OF INDIA

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