

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
ANANTAPUR | SATURDAY | 13 FEBRUARY 2021



**TMC MP Dinesh Trivedi  
quits Rajya Sabha**



**Myanmar protests  
swell amid US curbs**



**India take on England in  
second Test from today**

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**WEATHER**

Max: 33.0°C  
Min: 19°C  
RH: 37%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.  
Misty morning. Max/Min  
temp. 33/19 °C

**COVID-19  
COUNT**

CASES	DEATHS
(+11,636)	(+93)
1,08,91,462	1,55,569

**STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS**

(+143)	(+1)
TS: 2,96,277	1,614
(+68)	(+1)
AP: 8,88,760	7,162

**CASES AROUND THE WORLD**

10,84,74,469	
DEATHS	23,83,558
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES	219

worldometers.info/coronavirus

**ASTROGUIDE**

Sarvari: Uttarayana  
Tithi: Magha Shuddha Vidiya till 12.58 am  
Star: Shatabhisha till 3.14 pm  
Varjyam: 10 pm to 11.41 pm  
Durmuhurtam: 6.47 am to 8.18 am  
Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am

**HJRI CALENDAR**

Jamadi-ul-Akhir 30, 1442 AH

**PRAYERS**

Fajar: 5.08 am  
Zohar: 12.05 pm  
Asar: 4.11 pm  
Maghrib: 5.47 pm  
Isha: 7.02 pm

**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.48 AM**  
**SUNSET TODAY 6.13 PM**  
**MOONSET 01.16 PM**  
**MOONRISE 02.36 AM**

**INSIDE**

■ **STATE... PAGE 2**  
**No Jagan link in POSCO deals: Min.**

■ **STATE... PAGE 3**  
**Naidu misleading on poll results, says Sajjala**

## Quota in pvt varsities: Jagan

**Directs officials to convert colleges into private universities**

**DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12**

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said that the government has decided to amend the AP Private University Act, 2006 by which 35 per cent seats in private universities would be filled by the government quota. The amendment Bill will be introduced in the Budget session.

He said that the govern-

ment had decided to introduce English medium in Intermediate and degree colleges, including professional colleges, to improve the employability of the students.

CM Reddy was speaking at a review meeting on higher education in the CM camp office at Tadepalli on Friday where he enquired about the reopening of colleges and conducting of classes.

He directed the officials to set highest standards for new private universities and convert the existing colleges into private universities. He said there should be joint certification with 200 best educational institutions of the world and it should last for five years and this should be considered as criteria for recognising a college as a private university. Discussing aided col-

leges, it was opined that they should be handed over to the government or private totally if they cannot be run independently.

With regard to introducing English medium at the degree level, the Chief Minister directed the officials to come up with appropriate courses so that students face trouble.

■ **Page 2: CM wants practical knowledge**

## Poll body gags Kodali for lowering its stature

**DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12**

The State Election Commission on Friday imposed a gag order on civil supplies minister Kodali Sri Venkeshwara Rao until the completion of gram panchayat polls on February 21.

State Election Commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar in the order issued stated that the SEC was not satisfied with the explanation given by the minister.

Accordingly, the SEC issued an order restraining the minister from speak to the media, to any group or groups of people or in meetings until the completion of the elections. The SEC said that the order would come into effect immediately and directed the Krishna district collector and the superintendent of police Krishna (Rural) district and the Vijayawada police commissioner to ensure enforcement of the order.

Earlier, the SEC had served a showcase

## Don't talk against SEC, HC tells Jogi

**DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12**

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Friday directed the ruling YSR Congress MLA from Pedana, Jogi Ramesh not to speak against the State Election Commission or about the conduct of gram panchayat polls and also not to speak with the contestants.

As the SEC issued a gag order on the legislator on Thursday on the charges of threatening the voters to influence them until February 17, he moved a

lunch motion petition in the High Court on Friday. Single-judge bench headed by justice D.V.S.S. Somayajulu heard the petition and imposed curbs on the legislator on speaking against the SEC and the ongoing polls. However, the court permitted him to speak to the media persons about government schemes.

The court also directed the SEC to serve notice on the legislator and seek an explanation for making such comments. The case was posted for the next hearing on February 15.

ing of the election commissioner, said, adding that the minister's comments were made with a malicious intent.

■ **Page 2: Minister denies making derogatory remarks**

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## KAKINDA CIVIC REPRESENTATIVE KILLED BY FRIEND

**DC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, FEB. 12**

Kampara Ramesh, corporator of ninth division in Kakinada Municipal Corporation, was brutally killed, allegedly by his friend Gurajana Chinna. It is stated Chinna ran the corporator over with his car multiple times in drunken rage at a car washing centre in Valasapakala village of Kakinada Rural Mandal. The incident occurred at 2 am on Friday.

■ **Page 2: Corporator was brought dead, say doctors**

## BUS PLUNGES INTO ARAKU GORGE, 4 FROM HYD KILLED

**DC CORRESPONDENTS  
VISAKHAPATNAM/  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 12**

Four persons, including a months old baby were killed and 19 others sustained injuries when a mini-bus in which they were travelling plunged into a 100-feet deep gorge in Anantagiri mandal in Visakhapatnam district on Friday evening. All the victims and the injured belonged to the same extended family and were residents Hyderabad.

■ **Full report on Page 2**

## CM okays more polls under SEC

**To complete political activity within 2 months and focus on attracting investments to state**

**N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12**

The state will soon witness a paradigm shift in governance with Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy deciding to prioritise development and attracting investments after successfully launching and stabilising welfare schemes in the first two years of his tenure.

As part of this multi-pronged strategy, the Chief Minister, sources close to him told *Deccan Chronicle*, decided to not object to holding of even mandal, zilla parishad and municipal polls before the end of State Election Commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar's stint in March.

"He wants to finish the political activity by facilitating all polls in the next one or two months and focus fully on propelling growth by taking advantage of the post-Covid economic initiatives of the Centre," sources said.

The government is said to have conveyed its decision to cooperate with the SEC on conduct of elec-

## AP to vote in phase 2 of village polls today

**DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12**

The second phase of gram panchayat elections in the state will be held on Saturday to elect 2,786 sarpanches and 20,817 ward members. There are 7,507 sarpanch candidates and 44,876 ward members in fray, as 539 sarpanches and 12,604 ward members have been elected unanimously.

The State Election Commission has set up 29,304 polling stations for voters to exercise their

franchise. Of them, 5,480 are considered sensitive and 4,181 hyper sensitive. Authorities have arranged 18,387 big, 8,351 medium and 24,034 small ballot boxes at the various polling booths.

As part of anti-Covid-19 measures, authorities have arranged for face masks, hand sanitisers, thermal scanners and hand gloves at all polling stations.

■ **Page 3: Polls will end at 1.30 pm in Maoist areas**

tions in the last two meetings held between the SEC and Chief Secretary Adityanath Das and Director General of Police Gautham Sawang.

Sources said the government had earlier chalked out a plan to attempt to prevent the SEC from going ahead with the polls to zilla parishad and

urban bodies but the Chief Minister negated it.

Overwhelming support from people as reflected in YSR Congress-backed candidates sweeping the gram panchayat polls also came in handy for changing the strategy, sources added.

■ **Page 2: Construction to resume in Amaravati**

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## COUNTER POINT



## SHORT TAKES

## GANTA, AVANTI SHARE DAIS AT HUNGER STRIKE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 12

Tourism minister Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao (Avanti) on Friday shared the same daivs with his political guru Ganta Srinivasa Rao, Telugu Desam MLA, at the relay hunger strike protesting against privatisation of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP).

The hunger strike, started at the main gate of VSP, has been launched by Ukku Parirakshana Committee. The hunger strike camp was inaugurated by Kolla Rajamohan Rao, who had participated for getting the steel plant for Visakhapatnam in 1970s.

Soon after the inauguration, Ganta Srinivasa Rao displayed to people his new resignation letter written as per format required by the assembly speaker for acceptance. Announcing that he was resigning from the assembly in interests of the people, Ganta appealed to Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy that he convene a meeting of his cabinet immediately and pass a resolution against privatisation of the steel plant.

The tourism minister, suggested to Ganta Srinivasa Rao that resignation should be used as the last resort against the central government and not now. "Right now, it is time to unite political parties, trade unions and people to launch a state-wide agitation, till the centre revokes its decision," Muttamsetti remarked.

CPI national general secretary said the state government should enact a new law to prevent PSUs from selling off lands allotted by the state government. He later called on those sitting on hunger strike.

## TWO RETURNING OFFICERS SUSPENDED

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 12

Srikakulam collector and election officer J. Niwas suspended two returning officers of LN Peta in the district for dereliction of duties. One of the officials, L. Govardhana Rao, school assistant of Kuntibhadra Zilla Parishad High School under Kothuru mandal, was appointed returning officer for LN Peta gram panchayat (stage-2). The other was reserve returning officer V. Mallesu, teacher at the Temburu Zilla Parishad High School of Patapatnam mandal.

They were suspended under Section 134 of Peoples Representation Act, 1951 and AP Service Rules. They were asked not to leave the headquarters until further orders.

On February 9, Govardhana Rao was allegedly negligent in securing the ballot papers and handing them over to proper authority, as per a preliminary inquiry. It may be recalled that the students of LN Peta Zilla High School found ballot papers in the school campus which were later burnt by the sweepers.

## CENTRE HAS DECEIVED STATE, SAYS CONG CHIEF

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KADAPA, FEB. 12

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee working president Tulasi Reddy on Friday said the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government at the centre has succeeded in deceiving AP due to incompetence of the present YSR Congress government and the earlier TDP government in the state.

Otherwise, he wondered how the centre could neglect granting special status to Andhra Pradesh when such an assurance had been given at the time of state's bifurcation itself.

## No Jagan link in POSCO deals: Min.

Peddireddi alleges that Chandrababu Naidu was suffering from a "Jagan phobia"

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

Minister for Panchayat Raj Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy said on Friday that no connection existed between Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy and the POSCO steel company. Instead, Reddy urged Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu to comment on the issue of Vizag Steel Plant privatisation.

The minister refuted an allegation of TD leader Chandrababu Naidu that the CM planned to purchase the Vizag Steel. He admitted that POSCO representatives met CM Jagan, but this was a courtesy call. Recalling that Venkaiah Naidu had, as a student leader, agitated for the setting up of the Vizag Steel Plant, he said the VP should now intervene and stop the Centre from privatizing this prestigious entity.

Minister Reddy told the media that Chandrababu Naidu was suffering from a "Jagan phobia".

"Naidu is envious of Jagan," he said and added that Jagan as CM has implemented over 90 per cent of the promises the YSRC made in its election manifesto. "Jagan did this in just 18 months and took his governance to the doorsteps of the people through village and ward secretariats."

He said the YSRC will win the present gram panchayat elections with a thumping majority as the people were largely benefited by the welfare initiatives of the state government.

The minister said Chandrababu was still unable to reconcile to his party's defeat in the assembly polls in 2019. "Thus, the TDP has been raking up issues to create chaos in AP." He slammed the TD leader for his "attempts at misinterpreting the election results" and stated that the public had rejected the TDP, which got less than 10 per cent seats in the assembly.

Brushing aside the allegations of the YSRC using force to effect unanimous polls for grama panchayats, the minister said

Chandrababu was protecting Atchannaidu and Kollu Ravindra, who had "terrorised the contestants".

Minister Reddy said, "There is overwhelming response from the people of Chittoor to the good governance provided by the Chief Minister and me. The government is implementing a lot of welfare schemes. Due to this, Chandrababu's men will be defeated even in his own constituency and in the whole of Chittoor district."

On the Visakhapatnam steel plant, the minister noted that this was a central government institution. If POSCO company wanted to have a deal, they would talk to the Prime Minister of the Union Government. "POSCO is a multinational. Its representatives met the chief minister by way of a courtesy call. The meeting had nothing to do with the Vizag steel plant."

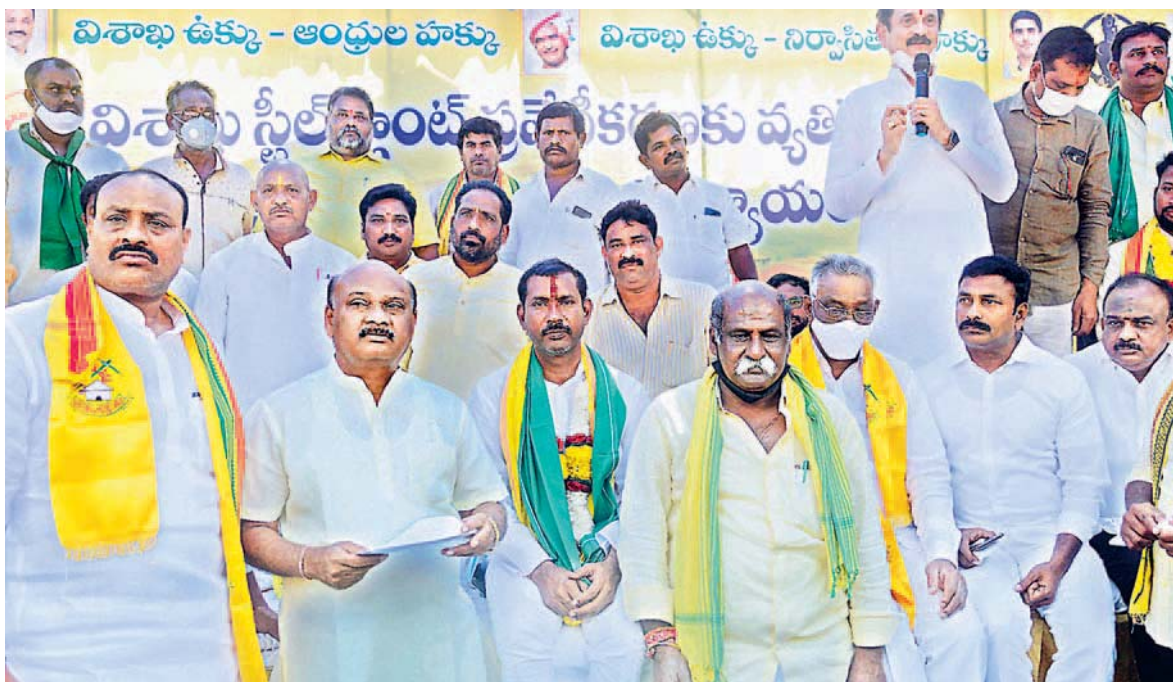
## Properties of VSP valued at over ₹3 lakh cr: Atchannaidu

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 12

AP TD president and former minister and Kinjarapu Atchannaidu asserted that the shifting of the executive capital to the port city was not aimed at the development of the city but was part of a bigger conspiracy to "loot" industries including Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) and public assets.

Addressing the TD hunger strike camp at the party office in Gajuwaka on Friday, Atchannaidu said the properties of the VSP were valued at over ₹3 lakh crore in the open market. The Chief Minister expected that locating the capital in Vizag would further jack up the prices of the lands, after which he could take over the plant after its privatisation.

"Mere writing a letter to the Prime Minister is not



TD State Chief Kinjarapu Atchannaidu joins former Gajuwaka MLA Palla Srinivas, who sat on a hunger strike against the Centre's move to privatise the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, at Gajuwaka in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

— K. MURALI KRISHNA

● **CHIEF MINISTER** expected that locating the capital in Vizag would further jack up the prices of the lands, after which he could take over the plant after its privatisation, he said.

enough. The Chief Minister should clarify to the public whether or not he had met and held discussions with the representatives of POSCO (a South Korean company)," Atchannaidu said.

He reminded that it was then Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy who prevented the allotment of Obulapuram mines to the steel plant in 2004. The mines could have prevented the losses that VSP is facing, he added.

Another former minister and TD politburo member, Ch. Ayyanna Patrudu, alleged that the Chief Minister and Rajya Sabha member V. Vijaysai Reddy were aware of the POSCO

move and it was former chief secretary Neelam Sahney who led a delegation to New Delhi to meet central leaders on the privatisation.

He said the YSRC government has been eying maritime cities and was planning to take over Krishnapatnam and Kakinada ports as well as the Vizag Steel Plant.

Yanamala Ramakrishnudu, Leader of the House in the Legislative Council, said no new industry had come to the state during the last 21 months. He said that the YSRC's failures had made it necessary for the people to start another agitation for protecting the VSP. Other leaders said the people's representatives, employees and the general public should fight a united struggle. The workers should not fall in the trap of the ministers and YSRC MLAs as they were the ones responsible for the present plight of VSP.

## Construction to resume in Amaravati, says CM

From Page 1

The Chief Minister, according to sources, strongly believes that the state would go to the polls only in 2024 as the combined election proposal of the Centre may not materialise in the immediate future.

The CM also directed the officials to relaunch construction activity in Amaravati as per the recommendations of the nine-member committee at the earliest and create civic infrastructure to attract investments into the region. "We will approach the court with a clear plan on

protecting the interests of farmers who gave their lands for the capital and urge it to vacate the status quo on the crucial three capitals Bill that would facilitate the shifting of executive capital to Visakhapatnam," said sources.

Jagan Mohan Reddy is said to have expressed his resolve to focus on attracting investments to the state and make use of the financial assistance promised by the Centre for capital-intensive projects. The government will propose pharma, marine, IT and industrial clusters to attract investors.

## Minister denies making derogatory remarks

From Page 1

Earlier, Venkateshwara Rao on Friday denied making any derogatory remarks against the State Election Commission and

requested it to withdraw the show-cause notice served on him. He said he had high regard for and respect towards constitutional bodies and in particular the SEC.

## Rice exports begin from Kakinada deep water port

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, FEB. 12

In a significant development, rice exports from the deep water port began here on Friday.

The shipment of 32,250 metric tonnes of broken rice, bound for a West African port, was formerly flagged-off by chairman of Agriculture and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) M. Angamuthu.

Present on the occasion were East Godavari district collector D. Muralidhar Reddy, Joint Collector G. Lakshminisha and commerce and industries export department director G.V.S. Subrahmanyam. Angamuthu said that it was a historic moment for Kakinada port and the state. He expressed hope that rice exports from the port would grow by leaps and bounds.

He said that an action plan has been drawn to promote Indian non-basmati rice abroad. He said that the focus should be

on the quality of rice exports in order to earn the confidence of importing nations. He said that APEDA was introducing new measures so that farmers' revenue for their agricultural products would increase up to three times. During an interaction with rice exporters, he said that rice exporters from the district are sending quality rice.

APEDA would bring a global-level brand status to AP rice soon he said.

Lakshminisha said that traditionally rice is being exported through the anchorage port, but the port has a limited capacity and therefore, the state's potential could not be tapped.

But, now, there is a possibility of trebling rice exports annually from the current level of two million tonnes through anchorage and deep water port. He said that steps were being taken to ensure that employment of port workers would not be affected.

SAND | MINING

CM says the SEB should organise regular raids and stop smuggling of liquor

## CM orders babus to take stern action against graft

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy held a review meeting here on Friday on the performance of the Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) and said there should be no scope for corruption in sand and liquor supply and officials must take stringent action against those responsible for illegal sand mining

and liquor trafficking.

During the review meeting held at the camp office, the Chief Minister said no one responsible for the loss of revenue to the state through illegal activities and corruption will not be spared, even at the organisational level. Action must be taken as soon as information is received on such activities.

The CM said the SEB should organise regular raids and stop smuggling

in of liquor in vehicles from neighbouring states. "Depute honest and efficient officers to the Special Enforcement Bureau and ensure better results in the next 15 days."

He directed the SEB officials to conduct reviews regularly and said all the required infrastructure would be provided for the officials to do their job in an effective manner. The CM also promised incen-

tives to SEB staff.

The officials briefed the CM on the performance of the Special Enforcement Bureau ever since its formation on May 16, 2020. After this step was initiated to curb illicit liquor flow, 79,632 cases were registered, 4,85,009 litres of alcohol was seized, 12,766 litres of beer confiscated, 4,54,658 litres of country liquor seized, 1,12,70,123 litters of jag-gery wash destroyed,

2,85,142 kg of black jag-gery impounded, 22,715 vehicles seized and cases registered against 240 government employees are involved in irregularities.

As for sand, 7,244 cases were registered, 4,79,692 tonnes of sand seized, 9,689 vehicles impounded and cases registered against 22 government employees. Cases were registered against 82 policemen in relation to

irregularities about sand and liquor supply. Also, 1,00,979kg of ganja was seized, 90,97,628 packets of ghutka impounded and 1,120 red sander logs seized apart from cash of ₹4.92 crore by way of raids on poker camps.

DGP Goutam Sawang, revenue special chief secretary Rajat Bhargav and SEB commissioner Vineeth Brijlal were among the officials present.

## CORPORATOR WAS BROUGHT DEAD: DOCTORS

From Page 1

The killing of Ramesh has sent shock waves in political circles of Kakinada city. Agriculture minister Kurasala Kannababu, Kakinada city MLA Dwarampudi Chandrasekhara Reddy and Kakinada mayor S. Pavani are among those who have expressed their condolences over the death of Ramesh.

Sarpavaram circle inspector Nunna Raju said Kampara Ramesh came to the car wash centre last night and started drinking there along with his friends. The matter of Gurajana Chinna came up at the time. Following this, Ramesh phoned Chinna, who reached the car wash centre along with his brother Kumar. The duo too started drinking with Ramesh and his friends.

While they were heavily drunk, Ramesh found that his car keys were missing. He then asked everybody at the place not to move until his car keys are found. This led to an altercation between Chinna and Ramesh. Following this, the inspector said, Chinna started his car and hit Ramesh repeatedly before running him over.

Chinna then fled from the spot while other friends rushed Ramesh to a private hospital at Sarpavaram, where doctors declared him brought dead. Soon after receiving information, Kakinada DSP V. Bhima Rao rushed to the spot with Kakinada rural and city inspectors. Sarpavaram police have registered a case. Security has been beefed up to check any untoward incidents in the city. The DSP said Clues and technical teams are gathering evidence and collecting CCTV footage.

According to sources, Kampara Ramesh was once the city Congress president and later became a close associate of YSRC leaders and ministers. He had also been the floor leader of Congress in Kakinada Municipal Corporation. Ramesh was involved in land settlements and reportedly settled a land dispute involving Chinna. The corporator's death is the third murder in Kakinada during the past two decades. Previously, Lorry Transport Owners Association president

Abbu Chowdary and Vegulla Siva Babu, a leader of Truck Operators' Union, had been murdered.

## CM WANTS PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE TAUGHT

From Page 1

Textbooks must be printed in Telugu and English for the convenience of students. He directed officials to draft the curriculum to create employment opportunities for the students. He said awareness on basic financial activities such as stock markets should be created among B Com students which will create scope for self-employment. He said good courses are available online and directed the officials to add those courses in the curriculum.

The CM said the introduction of unlimited internet in every village and providing laptops to all students through schemes like Amma Vodi and Vasati Devana would bring revolutionary changes in the education and skill sectors.

The CM has approved the Wi-Fi protocol project in which Wi-Fi without internet can be provided for up to 500 users simultaneously through a remote device. The range of each remote device is 100 metre. The connection can be made through laptop, tab and TV. Devices can use that facility even after the internet facility is available.

Higher education principal secretary Satish Chandra, AP higher education regulatory and monitoring commission chairperson Justice V. Eshwaraiah, APHERMC Chairman K. Hemachandra Reddy and other officials were present.



## SHORT TAKES

FOUR ARRESTED  
IN CONNECTION  
WITH RAPE CASEDC CORRESPONDENT  
KADAPA, FEB. 12

Kadapa police have arrested four accused in connection with the gang-rape of a 32-year-old woman near Indiranagar in the Kadapa suburb.

Kadapa Disha Police Station DSP Shaukat Ali disclosed this at a press conference on Friday.

Satish, along with three other accused, Sheikh Khader, Thirumala Mahesh Kumar, and Devatala Sushant were arrested at the DTC on Rajampet Road on the 8th of this month for allegedly raping a young woman working in Rims.

The DSP said a knife, a motorbike and three cell-phones were seized from them. DSP Shaukat Ali said cases were registered against the accused under the SC/ST Atrocities, Anti-Rape Act along with kidnapping, rape, and attempted murder. The accused have been remanded in custody.

TIRUPATI'S BIRRD  
HOSPITAL TO  
HAVE BONE BANKDC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, FEB. 12

A national level 'bone bank' is to be set up in the Balaji Institute of Surgery, Research and Rehabilitation for the Disabled (BIRRD) here in order to take up all bone-related treatments, said Dr Madanmohan Reddy, director of BIRRD.

Addressing a media conference on Friday, Dr Madanmohan informed that all works and patient treatment services that were paused due to Covid-19 have since been revived at the BIRRD hospital.

He said that the bone bank was to help provide more specialised services to cancer patients and the hospital would perform the surgery twice a month.

He said that unlike the six to 12 months waiting for a kneecap surgery or replacement, patients can now get them done within 48 hours, he said.

He said because of Covid protocol, the number of surgeries has come down to 20-25 per day, which will now increase.

Workers leaving to  
towns despite polls

Some aspirants offered money and other benefits

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KURNOOL, FEB. 12

Amid the gram panchayat elections, a majority of villages in Adoni and Kurnool divisions are seeing people migrating to the cities. Though poll candidates are requesting them to stay on till the completion of the polls, the workers are not showing any interest.

At least 15,000 families from the district have left to Guntur, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai and other cities. Some of the aspirants even offered money and other benefits to the workers to keep them back but in vain.

Veeramma, a worker from Nelakosigi, said that their livelihood was more important than the elections.

"Even though the entire family goes for work locally, they cannot earn even ₹400 in a day," she stated.

"In cities like Guntur, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and other places, each person gets more than ₹800 per head."

Her family including her husband and two children go to Guntur in every season. If the government provides ample employment, there is no need to go to any other place, Veeramma said. Sai Prasad, a sarpanch candidate at Kowthalam mandal, said that in small villages with less than 1,000 population migrant workers form a big force.

"If they don't stay here, there will be no election atmosphere," he said. "So we are requesting them to stay here still the elections are over but many of them are not listening to us," he added.

The number of people moving out of villages would double in the next

Polls will end at 1.30  
pm in Maoist areas

FROM PAGE 1

PPE kits have also been arranged for voters infected with Coronavirus to wear before exercising their franchise. Virus-affected people will be allowed to vote just one hour before closure of polling for the day.

Police are keeping a close tab for avoiding any untoward incidents during the second phase of polling, which will be held from 6.30 am to 3.30 pm. In agency areas under influence of Maoists, polling will close by 1.30 pm.

Counting of votes will start on the same day from 4 pm and results will be out by late night.

The state government has requested all voters to express their democratic spirit by participating in the second phase of gram panchayat polls in large numbers.

couple of weeks, right when the third and fourth phase of elections in Kurnool and Adoni divisions are held.

Officials said the government has given job cards to 9 lakh wage-seekers in the district but only 2.60 lakh are utilising them regularly. The rest were mostly interested to go to other cities to search for livelihood every season.

The amount was not paid on a daily basis and there are many stipulations. More people have moved out from Kurnool district in the recent

Polling will be held in all 13 districts of the state. In Srikakulam, it will be in 10 mandals of Tekkali and Palakonda revenue divisions, at Vizianagaram, it will be in 15 mandals of Parvathipuram; 10 mandals in Narsipatnam of Visakhapatnam district, 14 mandals in Rajamahendravaram and Ramachandrapuram of East Godavari; 12 mandals in Kovvur of West Godavari, nine mandals in Gudiwada of Krishna; 11 mandals in Narasaraopeta of Guntur; 17 mandals in Markapur and Kandukur of Prakasam, 10 mandals of Atmakur in Nellore, 13 mandals in Nandyal and Kurnool of Kurnool district, 19 mandals of Dharmavaram and Kalya-nidurg in Ananta-pur; 12 mandals of Kadapa, and 17 mandals of Madanapalle in Chittoor district.

past, from Kosigi, Nandavaram, Aspari, Holagunda, Alur, Pathikonda, Devanakonda, Dhone, Yemmiganur, Kodumuru, Adoni, Krishnagiri and Mantralayam mandals.

A total 970 sarpanchs and 9,984 ward members will be elected in the elections which will end on February 21. With the poll dates for the last two phases approaching, aspirants are busy striking deals to ensure that elections are avoided. Some candidates were said to be using political and caste equations and

ADDITIONAL  
FORCES FOR  
SENSITIVE AREASDC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, FEB. 12

Since many villages up for gram panchayat polls are faced with problems of factional feud, additional forces have been posted in such areas.

Only 15 gram panchayat sarpanch posts saw unanimous elections as against a total of 308 gram panchayats in the district.

Candidates backed by the YSRC and the TD are in the fray in hyper sensitive parts of Kanaganipalli, Ramagiri, Rapthadu and CK Palli of Rapthadu assembly segment, where the decades-old faction fights between the Paritala and Maddelacheruvu groups had claimed more than 300 lives - through three generations of big families set against each other.

At least six former MLAs had been killed in faction feud and the assailants had used advanced technologies such as car bombs, ice cream bomb, TV bombs and land mines.

The second phase of polls is being held in 19 mandals where there are 756 candidates for 293 gram panchayat sarpanch posts.

financial clout to get their rivals to withdraw. Polling will be conducted on February 13 for second phase, February 17 for third phase and February 21 for the final phase.

SEC RECEIVES  
347 PLAINTS TO  
ITS CALL CENTREDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

The State Election Commission received 347 complaints pertaining to conduct of gram panchayat polls from all over the state at its newly set up call centre in the last two days.

The state election commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar said in a statement here on Friday that on the first day, they had received 238 complaints followed by 109 on the second day. He said that the district collectors, commissioners of police, SPs and returning officers were directed to initiate necessary action.

The SEC was receiving complaints from the people in real time and was keeping close watch.

## AP RELEASES ₹116 CRORE FOR POLLS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12


State government released an amount of ₹116 crore for making arrangements for

conduct of gram panchayat polls in phase-2 here on Friday. Panchayat raj and rural development commissioner M. Girija Sankar reviewed the arrangements.


**NMDC Limited**  
(A Government of India Enterprise)  
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CIN: L15100TG1958C0001674

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**CONTRACTS DEPARTMENT**  
Tender Enquiry No. : HQ/Contracts/NISP/Ambu-2021      Dated : 13-02-2021  
NMDC Limited, A "NAVARATNA" Public Sector Company under Ministry of Steel, Govt. of India, invites **online bids** from experienced domestic bidders for "Hiring of 2 Nos. Ambulance (1 No. Basic Life Support-Type C & 1 No. Advanced Life Support-Type D) for a period of 2 years for 3.0 MTPA Integrated Steel Plant at Nagarnar near Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh State".  
The detailed NIT and Bid documents can be viewed and / or downloaded from NMDC website <http://www.nmdc.co.in>, Central Public Procurement portal (CPP PORTAL) <http://www.eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app> and MSTC portal <https://www.mstcecommerce.co.in> from **13-02-2021 to 06-03-2021**.  
For accessing the bid document from MSTC portal, bidders to visit MSTC website and search **Tender Event No. NMDC/HO/120/20-21/ET/838**.  
The Bidders, on regular basis are required to visit the NMDC's website / CPP Portal / MSTC websites for corrigendum, if any, at a future date.  
For further clarification, the following can be contacted :  
Chief General Manager (Contracts), NMDC Limited, Hyderabad, Fax No. : +91-040-23534746, Tel No. : +91-040-23532800, Email : [steelcontracts@nmdc.co.in](mailto:steelcontracts@nmdc.co.in)      **Chief General Manager (Contracts)**


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**National Entrance Screening Test 2021**  
**NEST 2021**  
**Admission to 5-year Integrated MSc Programmes in Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics at NISER (Bhubaneswar) and UM-DAE CEBS (Mumbai)**  
**(Autonomous Institutions under the Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India)**

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The National Entrance Screening Test (NEST) is a compulsory test for admission to the 5-year Integrated MSc programme in basic sciences - Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics - at National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER), Bhubaneswar and University of Mumbai - Department of Atomic Energy Centre for Excellence in Basic Sciences (UM-DAE CEBS), Mumbai. NEST 2021 will be conducted in around 90 towns and cities all over India on **Monday, June 14, 2021**.

The candidates admitted to the programme are eligible to receive an annual scholarship of Rs 60,000 through DISHA program of Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India. In addition, the scholarship recipients receive a grant of Rs 20,000 per annum for summer internship. Candidates selected by DST for the INSPIRE-SHE program are endorsed for INSPIRE scholarship by NISER and CEBS.

For detailed information on NEST 2021 application procedure and previous years' question papers please visit NEST 2021 website: [www.nestexam.in](http://www.nestexam.in)

Application:	Examination:
Through ONLINE portal ONLY.	ONLINE/computer based ONLY.
Visit <a href="http://www.nestexam.in">www.nestexam.in</a> to apply.	Date of examination: <b>June 14, 2021 (Monday)</b>
Online portal opens on <b>Feb. 24, 2021</b> , & closes on <b>Apr. 30, 2021</b>	Time: <b>9:00 AM - 12:30 PM</b> (1 <sup>st</sup> session) <b>2:30 PM - 6:00 PM</b> (2 <sup>nd</sup> session)
	Results announcement : <b>June 30, 2021</b>
<b>Address for correspondence :</b> The Chief Coordinator, NEST 2021 NISER Bhubaneswar, P.O. Jatni Jatni, Khurda 752050, Odisha, India E-mail: <a href="mailto:nest-exam@niser.ac.in">nest-exam@niser.ac.in</a> Website: <a href="http://www.nestexam.in">www.nestexam.in</a>	<b>Fees structure and mode of payment :</b> Male (General and OBC categories) : Rs 1200/- Male (SC and ST categories) : Rs 600/- Female (all categories) : Rs 600/- Divyangjan candidates : Rs 600/- Pay ONLY via Net banking/ Credit card/ Debit card

## PROTEST OVER CEMENT, STEEL PRICE RISE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

The Builders Association of India (BAD), Confederation of Real

Estate Developers Association of India (CREDAI), National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO), SABCA and workers

association Joint Action Committee staged a mega protest at Vijayawada on Friday on the spiralling cement and steel prices.

## SEC SURRENDERED TO YSRC, SAYS TD

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

Telugu Desam on Friday accused the State Election Commission (SEC) of surrendering to YSRC in the first phase of gram panchayat elections held in Andhra Pradesh. Making the accusation, TD politburo member Varla Ramaiah asked SEC

to act independently and take stringent measures to conduct the remaining three phases of panchayat polls in a free and fair manner.


Mr Ramaiah explained that in the first phase the SEC had succumbed to psychological blackmail and mind games being played by YSR Congress leaders.

NAIDU MISLEADING  
ON POLL RESULTS,  
SAYS SAJJALADC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

Government adviser and YSR Congress general secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy said on Friday that Telugu Desam chief Chandrababu Naidu is misinterpreting the results of the panchayat elections. The TD has won only 510 seats while the YSRC-supported candidates won over 2,640 seats, he said.

Addressing the media here, Ramakrishna Reddy said Naidu was habituated to putting the blame for his flaws on others and "there is nothing new in his recent allegations against SEC Nimmagadda Ramesh in the conduct of the gram panchayat elections."

"Chandrababu claims TD supporters won over 38 per cent of the seats in the first phase and also says the SEC had failed to conduct the elections in a fair manner. He has even written a letter seeking central observers to conduct the polls," Sajjala said and questioned Naidu as to what he would gain from making such baseless allegations. Ramakrishna Reddy said the YSRC proved its claim by displaying the candidates' pictures on 'ysrcpolls.in' website.


**VIJAYAWADA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (VMC)**

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- 23<sup>rd</sup> February : Chennai, Tamilnadu area**
- 26<sup>th</sup> February : Andhra Pradesh, Kerala area**
- 2<sup>nd</sup> March : Hyderabad, Telangana area**
- 5<sup>th</sup> March : Chennai, Tamilnadu area**
- 9<sup>th</sup> March : Andhra Pradesh, Kerala area**
- 12<sup>th</sup> March : Bengaluru Karnataka area**

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SHORT TAKES

MP COPS PROVIDE SECURITY TO KANGANA

**Bhopal, Feb. 12:** Madhya Pradesh police have put in place thick security cover around Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut in the wake of a threat by some state Congress leaders that they would not allow her shoot for a film if she did not apologise to farmers over her tweets, an official said on Friday.

Shooting for *Dhaakad*, Ranaut's new film, is going on in Sarni area of Betul district. Sarni City Superintendent of Police (CSP) Abhay Ram Choudhary said, "Security has been tightened for the actress after MP home minister Narottam Mishra directed Betul Superintendent of Police Simala Prasad to do so."

Police personnel equipped with batons and firearms are deployed around the coal handling plant (CHL) near a power project, where the shooting is on, he added.

"Police will man gate numbers two and four of the CHL, from where actors usually enter the shooting venue," Choudhary said.

An inspector has been assigned to oversee Ranaut's safety at the resort, located around 45 kms from Sarni town, where she is during for the shoot, he said.

"We will ensure that she does not face any disturbance during the shoot," the CSP added.

ASSAM CUTS FUEL PRICES BY ₹5, DUTY ON LIQUOR BY 25%

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, FEB. 12

Assam government on Friday announced to cut petrol and diesel prices by ₹5 and reduced the duty on liquor by 25 per cent. The new rates will come into effect from Friday midnight.

The announcement has come months before the Assembly election and especially at a time when fuel prices have been touching new highs across the country.

While presenting a vote-on-account for six months, finance minister Himanta Biswa Sarma told the Assembly that the move will result in losses of nearly ₹80 crore revenue per month.

"When the Covid-19 was at its peak, we had increased taxes on petrol and diesel. With the Covid-19 situation improving and the additional burden on the health sector reducing, the state cabinet has decided to withdraw the additional taxes on these fuels," Sarma said.

"Effective from Friday midnight, prices of petrol and diesel will decrease by ₹5 per litre. As a result, Assam will have the record of providing cheapest petrol in the country after Gujarat. Even prices of diesel would be the lowest after Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh," he stated.

Sarma further announced that additional taxes of 25 per cent imposed on liquor products at the peak of Covid-19 has also been withdrawn.

INDIA RECORDS STEEP DECLINE IN COVID-19 CASES

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 12

India on Friday recorded 9,309 fresh cases and 87 deaths due to Covid-19 as the country's total active caseload saw a sharp decline, falling to 1.35 lakh.

The positive cases now comprise only 1.25% of the total cases and the day to day change of active cases in the last few weeks is showing a consistent decline, said Union health ministry officials.

The distribution of new cases in India in the last 24 hours shows a positive picture with only one state reporting over 1,000 cases while the rest of the states and UTs reporting less than 1,000 new cases. Four states and union territories have not reported any new cases in the last 24 hours. These are Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Ladakh, Tripura and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

A significant decline in the daily deaths too has been noticed as 18 states/UTs have not reported any new deaths in the last 24 hours while 13 states/UTs have reported between 1-5 new deaths.

National Recovery Rate is 97.32 per cent, which is one of the highest globally. Officials said the continued high rise in the recoveries has led to progressively improving national Recovery Rate.



TMC Rajya Sabha MP Dinesh Trivedi pays tribute to Mahatma Gandhi after resigning as MP during the ongoing Budget Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Friday. — PTI

TMC MP Trivedi resigns, says party no longer in Didi's hands

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 12

In yet another major blow to West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamul Congress supreme Mamata Banerjee, TMC Rajya Sabha MP Dinesh Trivedi dramatically announced his resignation on the floor of the House on Friday, saying he felt "helpless" over the political violence in his state. He added, "The kind of violence that is happening in Bengal, it is a threat to democracy. I feel very strange sitting here. I think of what I should do. I think of Rabindranath Tagore. Obey party discipline? Of course, but I feel stifled. My soul is saying I sit here and say nothing, what is the point? I resign."

KHARGE ALL SET TO BE LEADER OF OPPOSITION IN RAJYA SABHA

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 12

Senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge is all set to replace retiring member Ghulam Nabi Azad as the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha. There were several frontrunners to the post of LOP but the scales were loaded in favour of Kharge as he is a loyalist and has the experience of leading the Congress from 2014-2019 in Lok Sabha.

He was sent to Rajya Sabha after he lost the 2019 Lok Sabha election. He was also handling the affairs of Maharashtra till recently as the General Secretary of the AICC. Others who were in reckoning included Anand Sharma, P. Chidambaram and Digvijaya Singh. In the end it was loyalty and seniority of Kharge that ensured his selection.

He is a nine-time Karnataka MLA and two-time Lok Sabha MP. He has also held the important portfolios at the center of Railways and Labour.

Ghulam Nabi Azad was given an emotional farewell by the House and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who broke into tears while heaping praises on the Congress leader.

In his speech, Prime Minister said it would be difficult for anyone to fill the shoes of Ghulam Nabi Azad as he cared not only about his political affiliation but also about the country and Rajya Sabha.

Azad was a member of the Upper House from Jammu and Kashmir, which does not have an Assembly currently after it was made a Union Territory with the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution.

Hence, it was difficult to repeat him and at present there is no vacancy. He officially retires on February 15.

He said he was feeling "suffocated" in the TMC which he said was "no longer in the hands" of Mamata Banerjee. Trivedi's resignation came two days after he endorsed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech in the Lok Sabha in which he had called for a key role for the private sector.

Trivedi, a former railway minister, announced his resignation in the Upper House during a debate on the Budget, saying he can't speak about the violence in his state. He handed over his resignation to Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu and it has been accepted. He explained to Naidu that he had resigned of his own will and there was no pressure on him to quit.

Minutes after his resignation, BJP general secretary and West Bengal in-charge Kailash Vijayvargiya said Trivedi was welcome in the party.

Trivedi said, "If you sit here quietly and cannot do anything, then it is better that you resign from here and go to the land of Bengal and be with the people. The way violence is taking place in our state, sitting here, I am feeling perplexed as to what I should do."

Talking to reporters after submitting his resignation, he said, the TMC is no longer in Mamata Banerjee's hands. It has been taken over by a corporate professional who doesn't understand politics. And there is no forum within the party to air our views."

Trivedi had endorsed

Modi's Lok Sabha speech on Twitter, saying, "I am personally in agreement with this. The way forward is to let our young talented minds innovate, create and distribute wealth. Pay Govt levies, create jobs. For that, our Govt officers (babus) too, need to encourage the youth." He was trolled for his tweet with many saying he may switch from the party.

TMC Rajya Sabha deputy leader Sukhendu Sekhar Ray said that Trivedi was "ungrateful" and had betrayed the trust of the masses. "For the last so many years he (Trivedi) did not say anything. Now all of a sudden, just months before the Assembly polls, he has complaints. This shows his true colours," Ray said.

12 workers killed, 36 hurt in fire mishap in TN factory

DC CORRESPONDENT VIRUDHUNAGAR, FEB. 12

As many as 12 workers were killed and around 36 injured in a fire accident in a cracker manufacturing unit near Sivakasi in Virudhunagar district on Friday.

The accident occurred at around 11 am when more than 120 persons were working in Mariammal Fire Works at Achankulam village near Satur. The accident is suspected to have been caused by mishandling of the chemical mixture in the process of manufacturing fancy type crackers. It damaged 20 work sheds fully, killing five persons including a woman on the spot while seven more succumbed to burns at the hospital.

Around 36 injured persons were undergoing treatment at the government hospitals in Virudhunagar, Sivakasi, Satur, Kovilpatti.

Fire and rescue personnel from the fire stations at Sivakasi, Virudhuagar



Police personnel inspect after an explosion ripped through a fireworks factory near Satur in Virudhunagar district of Tamil Nadu on Friday. — PTI

and Satur had to struggle for four hours to contain the spread of the fire further and to put it out by 3 pm, according to the district fire officer Ganesan.

District collector R. Kannan said after inspecting the accident spot that those workers who suffered more than 50 per cent burns were referred to Madurai Rajaji government hospital for further treatment. A detailed enquiry would be conducted, which will help

identify the exact cause of the fire that sparked the explosion.

The local villagers, who first rushed to the rescue of the workers on hearing the deafening sound of the blast, however, complained that eight workers were made to work in a shed against the permitted four.

This caused congestion that prevented workers from running out when the accident occurred, said a villager.

ITBP command unit in Leh likely

Spl unit will operate independently, will focus exclusively on Ladakh sector

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 12

In view of the increasing incidents of border disputes with China in the Ladakh region, the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), which is the Indo-China border guarding force is likely to set up a special command unit in Leh.

The move is significant as this unit will operate independently of the ITBP's western command based at Chandigarh and will focus exclusively on the security situation in the entire Ladakh sector.

At present the ITBP's Western Command based at Chandigarh, is largely responsible for border areas of Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

But following recent incidents of incursions by Chinese Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) in some parts of the Ladakh sector there is a growing view within the home ministry that a separate specula command unit should be set up exclusively for the Ladakh region for ITBP as this had now become an "extremely sensitive sector."

"The special command unit based in Leh will ensure quick and timely action as a team of senior officers will be permanent stationed who can take decisions seeing the ground situation. They will not have to wait for decisions from the Chandigarh based Western command. Since the security situation in Ladakh is constantly evolving we need to take decisions according to the increasing Chinese activities in the region," a senior home ministry official said.

The 90,000 strong ITBP, with 56 service battalions and several other technical and specialised units, is responsible for the peacetime management of the 3,488-km-long Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China, with some of its posts being located at heights of 20,000 feet. During the ongoing stand-off with China, the forces bolstered its presence along the LAC, particularly in the Ladakh sector where the deployment of ITBP has been substantial enhanced.

In addition, latest surveillance equipments and weapons have also been provided to the ITBP unit deployed in the entire Ladakh region.

US welcomes India, China move

**Washington, Feb. 12:** The US has welcomed the ongoing efforts by India and China to de-escalate the situation in eastern Ladakh and said it would continue to monitor the situation closely as both sides work toward a peaceful resolution.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday announced in Parliament that India and China have reached an agreement on disengagement in the North and South banks of Pangong lake in eastern Ladakh that mandates both

WAR OF WORDS



**Why has he asked the Defence Minister to make the statement, the Prime Minister should say – I have given Indian land to China, this is the truth. Finger-4 is our territory, that is where our post used to be. So, now we have moved from finger-4 to finger-3. Why has the Prime Minister Modi given up Indian Territory to the Chinese? This is the question that needs to be answered by him and by the Defence Minister**

— Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader

**A new edition of Congress circus today, again due to @ Rahul Gandhi. Why is he bent upon falsely claiming that disengagement is a loss for India? Is it a part of INC-China MoU? With the armed forces leading the disengagement strategy, isn't this an insult of our brave forces? No Indian land has been given up by the government as part of the current disengagement process. If anyone committed the sin of giving up thousands of sq km, it is one corrupt, cowardly dynasty that has broken the country to keep their power intact**

— J. P. NADDA, BJP president



Army chief: China's move led to distrust

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, FEB. 12

Indian army chief General M.M. Naravane said on Friday that the rising footprints of China in India's neighbourhood and its attempts to unilaterally alter the status-quo along "our disputed borders" have created an environment of "confrontation and mutual distrust."

"The Regional Security Environment is characterised by Chinese belligerence in the Indo-Pacific, its hostility towards weaker nations and relentless drive to create regional dependencies through initiatives like the BRI," said Army chief during a seminar on 'Evolving Security Challenges in the North East and Way Forward.' Gen Naravane said that the resultant Sino-US rivalry has created regional imbalances and instability.

Army Chief noted that Nepal, India's traditional long term partner, which has witnessed heavy

Chinese investment, is going through a period of political volatility.

"While Bhutan has been cautious in its approach, we have seen an upswing in our relations with Bangladesh. India is celebrating Swarnim Vijay Varsh to commemorate its splendid victory over Pakistan in the 1971 War for Liberation of Bangladesh. The sight of the Tri-Service Contingent from Bangladesh marching down Rajpath on Republic Day bodes well for our future relations, although growing radicalisation in society remains a serious concern," said the Army chief.

He pointed out that the ongoing dynamics in these neighbouring countries directly impacts the security environment in India's North East.

"A large number of initiatives are already underway to leverage military diplomacy with our Eastern Command playing the spring-board for fostering stronger bilateral relations," he said.

HARMFUL | CONTENT

On Feb 4, Twitter was asked to take down 1,178 a/cs with links to Pak

Twitter: Won't block a/cs of journalists, leaders

**New Delhi, Feb. 12:** Twitter has blocked over 97 per cent of the accounts and posts flagged by the IT ministry for provocative content and misinformation around farmers' protest, sources said.

This followed a meeting between Twitter representatives and the information technology secretary on Wednesday evening where the US-based microblogging platform was issued a stern warning to comply with local laws or be prepared for action.

The ministry had questioned Twitter's delay in taking action on its order to block provocative content that could impact public law and order, whereas the American company

had been quick to crack down when a similar instance occurred at US Capitol Hill.

According to the sources, Twitter has now complied with the orders and over 97 per cent of the accounts flagged have been blocked.

Twitter did not respond to queries on the matter.

On February 4, Twitter was asked to take down 1,178 accounts with links to Pakistan and Khalistan supporters that were spreading misinformation and provocative content related to farmers' protest.

Prior to that, the government had sought blocking of 257 tweets and handles in connection with the agitation by farmers over the new agricultural laws. Twitter had complied with

● **THE MINISTRY** had questioned Twitter's delay in taking action on its order to block provocative content that could impact public law and order, whereas the American company had been quick to crack down when a similar instance occurred at US Capitol Hill.

● **THE GOVERNMENT** had made it clear that it will not negotiate with the platforms while insisting on compliance with its orders.

the orders only to restore the accounts hours later.

Twitter on Wednesday morning had said it has suspended over 500 accounts and blocked access to several others within India, but maintained that it would not block accounts of "news media entities, journalists, activists and politicians" as doing so "would violate their fundamental right to free expression" guaranteed under the

country's law.

It, however, yielded to the orders later after the crucial meeting on Wednesday evening.

In a statement after the meeting, IT ministry had stated that the microblogging platform had been asked to take strong action against "well-coordinated" campaigns "designed to create disharmony and unrest" in the country.

Monique Meche, Twitter Vice President Global

Public Policy and Jim Baker, Deputy General Counsel and Vice President Legal, had affirmed Twitter's commitment towards following Indian laws and rules.

The executives had also requested for better engagement between the Indian government and the company's global team. Sources said Twitter's latest move to block the flagged accounts is itself a validation that the government's orders were backed by sound reasoning and logic.

The government had made it clear that it will not negotiate with the platforms while insisting on compliance with its orders as it believed that a private commercial entity in India

cannot unilaterally decide on public law and order, ignoring the democratic values of the country.

IT ministry was of the view that Twitter, being an intermediary, was required to take immediate action after receiving the government's notice to block handles, but did not move with haste to take down "atrocious" hashtags and "incendiary" content even amid a volatile situation.

IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had recently emphasised that the government is all for freedom of speech and expression and that it remains investor-friendly, but disrespecting democratic values is not acceptable. — PTI







## DECCAN Chronicle

13 FEBRUARY 2021

### Go slow on peace thrust, up the ante during talks

Once the breakthrough was achieved after several rounds of talks at various levels, the India-China agreement on disengagement at Pangong Tso in Ladakh is only a promising start towards peace. Surprisingly speedy the process of China moving back its armour from the shores of the lake may seem, but India would have to be most cautious on how the de-escalation exercise works out because it will be sur-rendering a lot of leverage in giving up the Kailash range heights for securing just the Pangong Tso disengagement in the north and south banks.

Given the history of fraught relations exacerbated by border tensions over the last few years since China's intrusion in 2017, it should be considered fortunate if this initial pullback leads to lasting peace. India would do well to remember how disadvantageous the narrow agreement seems right now because armed Chinese soldiers can be present at Finger 8 while India will be confined to its Finger 3 base and will be unable to patrol up to the Chinese perception of LAC, which used to be east of Finger 8 prior to April 2020.

The disengagement is indubitably positive but India must monitor the progress closely and also press for the resolution of all remaining issues, which are many considering the number of hotspots in Ladakh and further east, including the Depsang plateau where China has held Indian territory of around 1,000 sq km and the PLA has also been stopping the Indian troops from patrolling traditional points. Obviously there is far more to do in terms of tough negotiating in military commander level talks that are to be held within two days and in higher-level negotiations afterwards.

The border situation cannot be dealt with in isolation as China seemed to demand in its call to set right ties, including trade even as talks went on about de-escalation. The point to ponder is whether China is aiming for a larger resetting of ties in a global sense in view of the change in the White House, which Joe Biden signalled with a tough sounding phone call to Chinese President Xi Jinping. It would be a great development for world peace if indeed China is willing to negotiate even from its stronger position post-Covid vis-a-vis economic recovery from worldwide lows imposed by the pandemic.

The trust deficit, including between China and its largest trading partner, the United States, has been enlarged by suspicions over the origin of the coronavirus being Wuhan. A sliver of hope is to be spotted in China seeking peace while agreeing to try and resolve the border issue, even if it did so only on facing India's strong position on its capturing of the Kailash range heights. Doubts will remain over whether China will remobilise quickly as it has the advantage over India in terms of infrastructure capabilities, which is why abundant caution is advised as well as the highest vigil on friction points beyond Eastern Ladakh. Negotiations over easing punitive economic actions taken by India can wait until it is established that the push for peace is real.

### Kamal's black humour

There is never a dull moment in Tamil Nadu's political scene, particularly when the state gears up for an Assembly election. But when a celebrated actor like Kamal Haasan tickles the funny bone, the entire realm turns a theatre of the absurd. When the general council of Mr Haasan's party, named differently as the Makkal Needhi Maiam (People's Justice Centre), made him the "permanent president" by passing a resolution, his detractors, who never miss an opportunity to pick holes in whatever he does or says, raised serious questions, quite out of sync with the prevailing mirth.

What's that general council? How were those members elected? By whom? So wondered the dirty disparagers without realising that it's an internal matter of the party that others should not poke their noses into. They also asked if someone could remain permanently on a high pedestal in a domain where there are no permanent friends or enemies. But Mr Haasan, who hails from a world of make-belief, perhaps believes in the juxtaposition of surrealism with harsh political realities, hoping that it would provide relief from the ennui caused by the ubiquitous harangue and pageantry.

Whatever it was, he made the people laugh though they had heard of even "permanent chief ministers", as hailed in the rhetoric of fawning sycophants, in the past. Displaying a similar sentiment, those who inherited the mantle of running the government from the late J. Jayalalithaa accorded her the exalted status of "permanent general secretary" of the AIADMK posthumously and kept the post vacant "permanently" after throwing out V.K. Sasikala, who had succeeded her. Perhaps it was the spectacular return of Ms Sasikala to reclaim the post that inspired Mr Haasan to look for permanency in the party president's job. Anyway, the same general council's resolution to make Mr Haasan the chief minister of the state did not evoke any laughter.

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Subhani



## Why China 'disengaged': Always carry a big stick

Syed Ata Hasnain

After nine rounds of talks at the military theatre level, which appeared to be tapering off without any results, we find a positive development announced by the Raksha Mantri in Parliament on Thursday: a decision to disengage between the Indian Army and China's People's Liberation Army in the over nine-month-long standoff in eastern Ladakh. The issues worth examining are the triggers which created a positive sentiment, the modalities involved in the disengagement and the strategic dynamics for the future.

Why has China accepted a mutual disengagement? There is speculation that its strategic objectives having been met, it was willing to disengage; but this many not entirely be true. The objectives have been analysed to a great extent. My belief veers on the coercion theory; that India's soaring strategic confidence through the past five years deeply worried China. The feasibility of India actually becoming a part of military equations and alliances and thus upsetting the strategic balance in Asia was not too appealing for China. India's talk about regaining all territories of J&K was perceived as becoming a national obsession, emboldening beyond acceptable limits. Limited military coercion to force India back to the starting line was felt necessary. However, China was surprised by India's push-back and deep sense of resolve to stick it out. A border conflict or even general war was not the intent as it was unwinnable for China without a major redeployment. It couldn't afford creation of near permanent voids elsewhere. A continuing standoff gave

no real advantage to China except the projection of threat of a two-front war for India, which too sounded hollow given Pakistan's precarious internal economic, political and social health.

With the world slowly recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic, shaking into a reset and a potential new order emerging, China cannot miss the opportunity to draw favourably from it. Remaining in confrontation mode with committed troops paid no real dividends. By agreeing to disengage it is attempting to project a sense of reason and political maturity; in reality it is an exit that is giving it face. No one should expect that the agreement to disengage will be achieved overnight or that conflict resolution is on the cards. There are likely to be many revisits, especially because India just cannot trust China to implement what it has agreed upon.

The Indian government invested in a new strategy of trusting its military leadership to undertake negotiations which were really in the political-diplomatic-military domain. In nine rounds, the military stood its ground well, reflecting an intellectual and pragmatic approach. Of course, it runs the risk of coming up against obstacles in implementation. The last time it tried implementing what was agreed upon in theatre level border meetings, it led to the Galwan incident. The Indian Army is not one which will simply move back to implement an agreement with a country with whom there is virtually zero trust. It will verify and verify, just like its officers and soldiers did in June 2020, which led to Galwan. With caution and the lessons learnt, that procedure has to be implemented all over again.

It is unlikely we have

seen anything close to a final agreement. I do perceive it is incomplete at present as it primarily relates only to the northern and southern banks of Pangong Tso. While the actions in north Pangong Tso have been spelt out more specifically, the same is absent in relation to the south. The details of this will need to be probably thrashed out when the stage for the pullback of forward deployed infantry comes up. Limits have been put on patrolling north of the lake to avoid physical contact between the troops of both sides. The theatre-level military-diplomatic talks will at some stage have to come down to border meetings at lower levels to restore trust and confidence.

What India should be insisting upon is the physical delineation of the LAC without prejudice to anything permanent. It will get rid of the one issue which is the bone of the LAC's management: that is, the perception about where ours or the Chinese claim line exists. This is unlikely, of course, but must remain the pressure point on the Chinese side as a terminal objective of the current talks, the tenth round of which is likely to come up soon. The Raksha Mantri in his Rajya Sabha statement laid it out clearly: "The House should also know that there are still some outstanding issues with regard to deployment and patrolling at some other points along the LAC in eastern Ladakh. These will be the focus of further discussions with the Chinese side". The reference was to other areas in contention, especially Depsang, where a much greater threat exists to our defences, as also an

opportunity for us to threaten the main Chinese highway to Xinjiang. Without an operational-tactical advantage, if this is vacated at the Kailash heights, it is difficult to foresee any further concessions by the Chinese. Perhaps there is more to it and will emerge in due course as understandably full transparency on military operational issues is not currently possible.

Progress on the agreement and subsequent moves towards more positive signs is not contingent upon only the events in eastern Ladakh. Everything here is linked to geopolitical issues relating to Chinese and Indian interests elsewhere in South Asia; relations with countries such as Bangladesh and Sri Lanka being an example. It would be helpful if India can detach the developments in eastern Ladakh from the dynamics of Sino-Indian relations elsewhere. India will find itself under increasing pressure from China regarding its strategic equations with the Quad nations. Having come thus far and also having received fair importance from the United States in its perception of India's role in the Indo Pacific region, New Delhi may feel it's in a dilemma. However, its interests clearly lie where it has established greater trust and identified commonality of interests. It cannot afford to be seen to be submitting unreasonably to Chinese demands. The inevitability in India's approach towards the emerging situation should be to waste little time in enhancing its conventional military capability through the self-reliance route towards modernisation. As far as its northern borders are concerned, all disengagements and de-escalation will always be a temporary phenomenon. While remaining positive in its stance, India will always need to carry a big stick, as big or bigger than all its adversaries.

*The writer, a retired lieutenant-general, is a former GOC of the Srinagar-based 15 Corps*

#### LETTERS

##### RESTORE TRAINS

Most express trains and passenger trains have not been restored. In the absence of passenger trains, the college going students and others are suffering. The bus journey is expensive and uncomfortable. It may be noted that roads in AP are bad beyond description. May we request the railways to come to the rescue of common man.

P. Ramakrishna  
Rajahmundry

##### NAIDU'S TANTRUMS

N. Chandrababu Naidu, who claimed victory in 38 per cent sarpanch candidates supported by his party in the first phase of GP polls, is now demanding fresh polls alleging electoral malpractices by the ruling party apart from 'criticising' AP SEC for its failure to control YSRC from committing electoral offences. *Ulta chor ko thulwa ko daante* is the Hindi proverb that fits aptly in this regard.

Govardhana Myneedu  
Vijayawada

##### VIZAG STEEL PLANT

The idea of selling the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant is nothing but vengeance against Andhra people for not giving the BJP any space in the state. It must be remembered that the plant is the soul of the people and thousands of people are employed and thousands indirectly eke out a living. In fact a township has sprouted in the vicinity. If the plant is privatised, the lives of the dependants directly or indirectly will turn topsy-turvy. Hence a rethink is needed.

D.S.P. Rao  
Kakinada

#### 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

##### India is on the threshold of change: Indira

NEW DELHI, February. 12

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi opined that in India today "there is a conflict between the forces of change and of the 'status quo'". Mrs Gandhi, in an interview to the French national radio, also affirmed her party's belief in democracy and said, "we are trying to give it greater meaning". "We believe the interests of the people are best safeguarded in a democracy, because a democracy is perhaps the only system which strengthens people themselves".

Farrukh Dhondy  
Cabbages & Kings



*"Oh Bachchoo let's have due regard For the story-telling genius of Scheherazade Who over a thousand and one nights Scaled creation's narrative heights"*

*She held a king under her spell Assuring him there was more to tell And so, with each inventive breath Do story-tellers stave off death."*

— From **Lambey Laments** by Bachchoo

To: UK Home Office, 2 Marsham Street, London SW

*My dear Priti Patelji,*  
I am writing to apply for the post of Chief Speechwriter for which you advertised this week.

Your advertisement specifies that "the successful candidate will be someone who can imitate the Home Secretary's personal style".

Let me start by saying, Pritiji, that I have closely followed your career, from the time you were thrown out of your job by the then PM Theresa May, for attempting unofficial deals and private contact with Israeli officials and businesswallas, to when you favoured

hanging and capital punishment, to your generous policies regarding police pay, illegal entrants to Britain and your speeches attacking anti-terrorism and the Covid crisis.

I am sure that, being a Parsi with a knowledge of fluent Gujarati, I am best qualified for the job. Please tear up and bin any applications from Goras, Punjabis, Pakistanis, Bengalis, etc. None of them will understand the prejudices you have imbued as a child of immigrant shopkeepers from Uganda. I must confess never having been to Uganda or kept a shop, but as a writer of stage plays, etc, I constantly think myself into the mentality, prejudices, and styles of thought and speech of different characters. I am sure you will consider this my Trump card (I know you got the joke. Ha ha!).

Of course, I don't expect you to call me instantly and offer me the job without testing my abilities to deliver superb text in your voice, so I am setting out some samples below:

The first is a sample address to the Tory Conference.

"Comrades, Lords and Ladies, I stand before you as your new Home Secretary appointed by our brilliant

elected Prime Minister Doris Bronson who has very perceptively recognised my fantastic talents for this job. I am fully aware of the heavy responsibility that this places on my head such as keeping the wogs out of the country (loud cheers and standing ovation), making the police more effective by cutting their numbers and pay (shuffling in the audience), zero tolerance for criminals with a lock-up-and-throw-away-the-key approach, with the building of five thousand more jails and bringing back hanging (second standing ovation)—er um... I didn't mean by ropes, I meant hanging as in suspending people, like my Chief Civil Servants if they express any opinions..."

I guarantee Pritiji, these thoughts of yours which I have humbly attempted to put into words will get you to be PM after this fellow—whose name you characteristically forget.

Secondly, here is a sample address to the Police Federation as you are now in charge of all PC Plods.

"My brave and dedicated servants of the law, let me start by announcing that I intend to immediately boost police pay (huge applause and cat

calls). I have instructed my office to see that every police officer gets paid at least £3 and 12 shillings per week (total silence). This is in recognition of the fantastic work your forces are doing in fighting and combatting anti-terrorism, which must be wiped off the face of this planet. (Huge cheers from Islamicist policemen) ....

And next, Pritiji, your address to the House of Commons on immigration.

"Mr Speaker, the gravest crisis facing this country is not the shortage of grave-diggers caused by the Covid virus, but the illegal entry of immigrants and so-called asylum seekers across our land-borders with Europe. The previous Labour government under Terrestrial May lived up to its Prime Minister's name by declaring that these criminals *May* use the *Terrestrial* tunnels to enter our country (Here you pause for the laughter that will certainly follow this joke!). I propose, Mr Speaker, to build a wall across these borders with barbed wire on top to stop people coming in. We shall have a Ugandan and Cayman Island style immigration policy by which all Asians will have to leave the country and only tax-

dodgers and drug lords will be admitted to the free ports declared by our hedgey-boy chancellor Wishy Anorak. Doris has already told me that he will get the Norwegians to pay for this wall..."

And then perhaps Pritiji, the PM may ask you to take to the TV lectern to address the nation on the Covid crisis and the government's efforts to combat it in accordance to the science. So, here's what you might say:

"It is with great sadness that the statistics today reveal that Britain has suffered 66 million deaths in the last 24 hours. My thoughts and condolences go out to all these deaths' families. Now despite some mother lovers opposing lockdown, what the epicologists, etc tell us that not only is lockdown a good thing, we should also have lock-up—which means anyone who tests positive for Covid should be locked up and the key thrown away. And if any scientist or civil servant opposes my sane policies they can bloody-well F-off and die—effing wankers—I know where you live..."

*Your future ventriloquist, Obsequiously, Farrukh Dhondy*



## SHORT TAKES



Amritha (left) and Srihitha Mandava pose with their trophies at the Boulder Hills Golf and Country Club in Hyderabad.

## Mandava sisters bag golf titles

**Hyderabad:** Hyderabad girls Srihitha and Amritha Mandava won the age group titles at the Young Master Southern India Classic golf tournament played at the Boulder Hills Golf and Country Club in Hyderabad. Srihitha tallied 231 over 36 holes with round scores of 78, 73 and 80 to take the top spot in the Girls 12-13 years category ahead of Anvithi Gangisetty (271) and Riya Jadon (281). Amritha got a total score of 242 over 36 holes in three rounds (79, 81, 82) to emerge winner in the Girls 14-15 section.

Lavanya Jadon (249) and Amishi Jain (300) were second and third respectively. Drishti Karumbaya was the best in Girls 16+ with a score of 220 (73, 72, 75) ahead of Jasmine Sachdev (234 — 77, 78, 79) and Vidushi Keni (236 — 77, 78, 81). Aarya Goyal and Sanjana took the first and second spots in the Girls 7-9 category.

## State cue sports from Feb. 22

**Hyderabad:** The Telangana Cue Sports Association is organising the Telangana State Ranking Snooker & Billiards Championship (junior and senior) from February 22 to March 7. The top five players in senior snooker and finalists in junior snooker, senior and junior billiards will represent Telangana at the Nationals. Himanshu Jain, Nabil Lakdawala, Md Ghouse, Khizar Rafoof, D. Arvind Kumar (senior snooker); Mushtaq Hussain, Vishwanath and Vibhas (junior snooker & billiards) are among the top players participating in the championship.

## Rashmikaa in singles final

**Hyderabad:** Hyderabad girl Shrivalli Rashmikaa entered the final of the singles event at the MPTA AITA Open Women's Tennis tournament being played at Chennai. In the semifinals played on Friday, Rashmikaa defeated Pooja Ingle of Maharashtra in straight sets at 6-4, 6-1.

## Hyderabad FC hold East Bengal 1-1

**Vasco:** Aridane Santana scored a last-gasp equaliser to help Hyderabad FC hold SC East Bengal to a 1-1 draw and dent the Kolkata side's hopes of making it to the playoffs of the Indian Super League here on Friday. Bright Enobakhare scored in the 59th minute for SC East Bengal, who seemed to be cruising towards the win until the stoppage-time leveller from Santana. The result extended the Nizams' unbeaten run to nine games. With the draw, Hyderabad are at third spot with 24 points from 17 matches. — PTI

## Live on TV

## TENNIS

**Australian Open:** First round matches from 5.30 am to Sony Six, from 1.30 pm on Sony Ten 2, HD

## CRICKET

**India vs England:** Second Test, Day One, from 9.20 am on Star Sports 1

**Pakistan vs South Africa:** Second T20 from 6.30 pm on Sony Ten 1

## FOOTBALL

**English Premier League:** Leicester City vs Liverpool from 6 pm; Crystal Palace vs Burnley from 8.30 pm; Manchester City vs Tottenham Hotspur from 11 pm; Brighton vs Aston Villa from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Star Sports Select 1, HD

**Italian League:** Napoli vs Juventus from 10.30 pm; Spezia vs AC Milan from 1.15 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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Indian captain Virat Kohli during a practice session at the Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Thursday.

— BCCI

## PITCHED BATTLE

## Chepauk surface in focus again as India look to hit back

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, FEB. 12

The wound hasn't healed. And the dust is yet to settle. Four days after being battered by the visiting England team in their own den, India have the unenviable task of lifting themselves for yet another 'pitched' battle at the same venue. Round two starting here at the M.A. Chidambaram stadium on Saturday will be a test of character for Virat Kohli & Co.

India find themselves in an unexpected situation. It's only the second time this decade that India have started a bilateral series (minimum three Tests) at home on a disappointing note. When it happened last time, against Australia in February 2017, they roared back with vengeance to clinch the series 2-1 eventually.

Much like in the opening game, the focus will once again be on the pitch. A different strip with black clay on the top layer will be used this time around. With just a three-day gap, the groundsmen didn't have much time. Both teams know what to expect — the track will turn from day one.

England skipper Joe Root has already shown the ideal way for counter-spin in subcontinental conditions. But this pitch is expected to pose a bigger challenge to Root.

Annoyed with the flat surface, Kohli had blamed his supporting spinners Shahbaz Nadeem and Washington Sundar for leaking runs. But he backed Ajinkya Rahane despite his poor run of form. Rohit Sharma, who has just one half-century



Rohit Sharma plays a shot during a practice session at the Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Thursday.

— BCCI

in his last eight innings, hasn't faced much scrutiny either. Kohli still felt "all was well" in his batting unit. If not for the brilliant first innings knocks from Rishabh Pant and Washington, India would have slumped to further embarrassment.

With allrounder Axar Patel deemed fit and set for his Test debut, Shahbaz is back in the standby players' pool. If the team management decides to retain Washington for his batting ability, Kuldeep Yadav will continue cooling his heels. He hasn't played a Test since he took

a five-for at Sydney in January 2019.

England, on the other hand, have made four changes in their team. James Anderson who used reverse swing to rattle the Indian top-order has been rested. With Jofra Archer too being ruled out with an elbow injury and off-spinner Dom Bess to be replaced by Moeen Ali, England's bowling attack will sport a new look. In Anderson's absence, another experienced campaigner, Stuart Broad, will spearhead the attack. Fast bowlers Olly Stone and Chris Woakes will fight for the final spot.

## It will turn from Day One: Rahane

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 12

"I am sure it will turn from day one," India vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane said it loud and clear. The flat pitch that offered no assistance to bowlers was one of the talking points after India's eight-match winning streak at home came to a halt in the opening Test against England earlier this week.

As India prepare to bounce back in the series, it's no surprise that "the wicket looks completely different."

"However, we have to wait and see how it behaves in the first session. We have to forget what happened in the first Test and focus on the job at hand. We know these conditions really well, so we have to put our best foot forward and move on," said Rahane.

Rahane's average of 37.35 in 28 Tests at home is not as impressive as his away numbers — 44.44 in 42 Tests. His last two innings of 1 and 0 have put him under the scanner. However, the Mumbai batsman doesn't want to read too much into the stats.

"We are playing at home after two years. The last big home Test series was against South Africa. If you take the records out, I'm sure you will find something there. And, it's not about individuals, it's always about the team. My focus is always on con-

tributing to the team's success. If you take out the last 10-15 Tests, you will see my performance. I don't worry about what happened in the first Test. I only worry about what the team wants from me," said Rahane.

England batsmen not only looked comfortable, but also played efficiently by employing sweep shots against the Indian spinners, but the same cannot be said of the hosts.

"It (shots that we play) depends on how they bowl. We play according to their line and length. England have come up with a plan to play sweep and reverse sweep. It's not necessary we have to copy them," further added Rahane.

When queried about the team's negative body language in the first Test, Rahane said: "There are moments when you don't have that energy but that doesn't mean it has happened because of a change in captaincy. As I have said earlier, Virat is our captain and will remain our captain. If you are trying to dig and find some masala, unfortunately you will not get it."

The second Test will allow 50 per cent spectators in the 45,000 capacity stadium. Rahane is excited to have the crowds back.

"We know how much that means for us. I hope people will come enjoy the cricket," added the seasoned Test batsman.

## Hazare selection turns hazardous

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 12

Muck at the Hyderabad Cricket Association continues to fly after the flawed selection of State squad for the upcoming Vijay Hazare Trophy triggered tempers that have boiled over beyond cricket corridors.

After a memorandum was submitted to the Telangana State Human Rights Commission on Thursday, urging chairman Justice Gunda Chandraiah to look into the 'Murder of talent and grave violations of human rights by HCA' the secretaries of affiliated clubs whose players have been ignored despite consistent performances, are organising a protest at the Gymkhana grounds — Hyderabad's cricket cradle — at 11.30 am on Saturday.

The protest is "against the illegalities and autocratic decisions of select office bearers in selecting the team by violating all norms and constitutional obligations and in utter violation of Supreme Court approved registered Constitution," a note being circulated, read.

For the record, only one batsman from the Top 10 scorers in the League matches that were conduct-

ed to select State sides, has made Hyderabad's Vijay Hazare squad.

Mir Jaweed Ali of Budding Star, No.6 on the list, is the odd man out.

The bowling selection is even more baffling. Leg-spinner G. Arjun of Balaaji Colts leads the list with 45 wickets in 5 matches but has been surpassed by No.2 Ashish Srivastava who has 36 wickets against his name in 6 matches. Both are leg-spinners.

Arjun has also conceded fewer runs, has a better strike rate and has been more economical... he didn't see a googly coming.

All this leaves a bad taste in the mouth and drags the Gentleman's Game through muddled streets. It's time the HCA administrators played with a straight bat.

Aspiring players had risked contracting Covid to turn up for the local league matches after they, along with their parents, had to sign declarations stating they would not hold the HCA responsible should they catch the dreaded virus.

Turns out that there were no first aid facilities at the grounds to treat players who got injured during the course of play.

Now, this selection snub has hurt them even more.

## HYDERABAD'S TOP 10 BATSMEN

Player	M	Inn	Runs	Best	Ave
1. A. Varun Goud	7	11	788	227	87.56
2. Rohit Rayudu	8	13	741	165	61.75
3. P. Akshath Reddy	7	13	726	176	60.50
4. Yash Kapadia	7	12	706	194	70.60
5. Md Junaid Ali	7	12	704	170	58.67
6. Mir Jaweed Ali	6	10	697	237	77.44
7. M. Abhirath Reddy	5	8	694	222	115.67
8. M. Pratyush Kumar	8	16	673	119	44.87
9. A. Takshit Rao	6	11	631	151	63.10
10. Sarthak Bharadwaj	5	9	625	159	78.13

(Tabulated as matches played, innings batted, total runs scored, highest score, average)

## Hurt Djoker hints at exit from Open

**Melbourne, Feb. 12:** Defending champion Novak Djokovic admitted his Australian Open might be over after an injury-hit win on Friday as fans were kicked out ahead of a state-wide Coronavirus lockdown.

In the now-empty stadium, a grimacing Djokovic, who needed repeated treatment on an abdominal injury, recovered from losing the third and fourth sets to beat Fritz 7-6 (7/1), 6-4, 3-6, 4-6, 6-2. "I know it's a tear, definitely, of the muscle so I don't know if I'll manage to recover from that in less than two days. I don't know if I'm going to step out on the court or not, I'm just very proud of this achievement tonight," said the Serb.

Meanwhile, Russian qualifier Aslan Karatsev pulled

off the biggest shock when the world number 114 blitzed eighth seed Diego Schwartzmann into submission 6-3, 6-3, 6-3.

Karatsev is making his Grand Slam debut at Melbourne Park and is incredibly yet to drop a set.

Meanwhile, ice-cool Dominic Thiem rallied from two sets down to tame flamboyant Nick Kyrgios 4-6, 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.

In women's singles, Naomi Osaka had to deal with a butterfly landing on her nose but was otherwise little bothered as she breezed into the last 16.

The third seed clinched an easy 6-3, 6-2 victory over Tunisian 27th seed Ons Jabeur in 1hr 18min.

In another match, Serena Williams she wore down Anastasia Potapova 7-6 (7/5), 6-2. — Agencies

## Tanay, Mickil, Karthikeya, Ritwik, Vamshi on top

## Mujaheed, Raheem, Gunawith, Haji, Ayub and Sachith lead performers in A-2 division league

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 12

Tanay Thyagarajan scored his second successive century to lift Budding Star to a four-wicket victory over R. Dayanand in the Hyderabad Cricket Association's A-1 Division one-day knockout tournament.

Tanay scored 118 in 101 balls with the help of 12 fours and four sixes as Star replied to Dayanand's 209 with 213 for 6 in 38.1 overs.

Mickil Jaiswal also continued his run scoring spree. The MP Colts batsman cracked 170 in 151 balls smashing a dozen boundaries and an equal number of sixes to set up his side's 29-run win over Sporting XI, for whom speedster Karthikeya Kak took 5 for 49. Tanmay Agarwal was unfortunate to miss the century mark by two runs — the Sporting batsman fell on 98.

In the A-2 Division, G. Ritwik and Vamshi Ramavath topped the performers' list. Ritwik took 8 for 42 as SK Blues beat Saint Sai while Vamshi's



Mickil



Karthikeya



G. Ritwik



Vamshi



Mujaheed



Raheem



Ayub Khan



Rahman



Khalid



Varun Tej



Vasistha

238 boosted Noble to 551 for 8, a total Mayura found just too hard to overcome.

Mujaheed Khan (7 for 32) of Azad CC, Md Abdul Raheem (7/75) of Team Speed, Hyderabad Cricket Academy's Gaddam

Gunawith (6/17), Syed Haji (6/38) of Sri Shyam, Md Ayub Khan (166) of Vijaypuri Willowmen and Sachith Naidu (145) of Abhinav Colts were the other top performers in the two-day league matches.

## Brief scores:

## A-1 DIVISION ONE-DAY KNOCK-OUT TOURNAMENT

■ MP Colts 279 in 50 overs (Mickil Jaiswal 170 — 151b, 12x4, 12x6, G Rahul Radesh 55, Karthikeya Kak 5/49 — 10-1-49-5) bt Sporting XI 250 in 48.3 overs (Tanmay Agarwal 98, G. Sadhan 53, Karthikeya Kak 34, G Gireesh God 4/45).

■ R Dayanand 209 in 47.3 overs (K. Nitesh Reddy 68, Nishanth Yadav

42, Manish Rai 3/29) lost to Budding Star 213/6 in 38.1 overs (Tanay Thyagarajan 118 — 101b, 12x4, 4x6, Bhavesh Seth 57, C. Hitesh Yadav 4/53).

■ Gemini Friends 265 in 49.3 overs (M. Abhirath Reddy 46, Tilak Varma 66, Maruthi Reddy 58, Yash Gupta 63) bt SCRSA 222 in 45.5 overs (Shyam Sunder 37, Suresh M 46, Sudhakar 35 n.o., Tilak Varma 4/50).

## A-2 DIVISION (TWO-DAY) LEAGUE

■ Saint Sai 160 in 55.2 overs (Arjun 50, G Ritwik 8/42 — 17.2-3-42-8) lost to SK Blues 164/5 in 39 overs (Ibrahim Khan 84). Points: SK Blues 5, Saint Sai 0.

■ Noble 551/8 in 90 overs (Vamshi Ramavath 238 — 142b, 35x4, 8x6, Y Akash 57, Krishna Kant T 53 n.o., B. Ambarish 52, Shabaz 3/109) bt Mayura 90/7 (all out) 36.5 overs (Aadeeb 53, Rahul Reddy 4/77). Points: Noble 5, Mayura 0.

■ Anu CC 87 in 31.5 overs (Mujaheed Khan 7/32 — 14-52-72) lost to Azad CC 90/3 in 25.1 overs (K. Ganesh Kumar 44 n.o.). Points: Azad CC 5, Anu CC 0.

■ Team Speed 340 in 62.2 overs (M. A. Jayanth 91, Deepanshu Chowhan 85, Md Abdul Raheem

7/75) bt Elegant 187 in 66.5 overs (Shaik Abdul Razzaq 86 n.o., Rohan Prem 5/54). Points: Team Speed 5, Elegant 0.

■ Hyderabad Cricket Academy 295 in 77.4 overs (K. Pranav 77, Sahil Parikh 57, Shaik Zaheer Abbas 39, Ch Anvit Reddy 37) bt Shanti XI 182 in 54.2 overs (S. Venkatesh 39, Prateek Raj 44, Gaddam Gunawith 6/17 — 8-2-37-6). Points: Hyderabad CA 5, Shanti 0.

■ Sri Shyam 145 in 63 overs (Mujeeb Ur Rehman 35, Thakur Utkarsh Singh 4/77, Md Babillal 3/41) lost to Deccan Wanderers 146/9 in 40.2 overs (Jawad Khan 42, Syed Haji 6/38 — 16-2-38-6). Points: Deccan Wanderers 5, Sri Shyam 0.

■ Vijaypuri Willowmen 559 in 88 overs (Karun Yadav 64, B Balaji 73, Md Ayub Khan 166 — 126b, 27x4, 2x6, Saketh Reddy 32, Md Nayeemuddin 42, Williams 55, Dhanush 48, Abhinav Kumar 3/112) bt Hyderabad Panthers 173 in 49.5 overs (M. Wilson 54, C. B. Suresh 56, M. M. Williams 4/45). Points: Willowmen 5, Panthers 0.

■ Abhinav Colts 424 in 67.1 overs (Varun Tej 52, Harish Reddy 48, Sachith Naidu 145 — 131b, 21x4, 4x6, Varun Reddy 53, Sunder Nara

59, Preetham Reddy 3/105, Satya Narayana 3/29) bt Bharath CC 289 in 67.1 overs (Preetham Reddy 35, Sai Ravanth Rahul 102 — 122b, 16x4, Varun Tej 5/36 — 18-3-36-5, Harish Reddy 3/49). Points: Abhinav Colts 5, Bharat 0.

■ Kishorens CC 124 in 39.1 overs (Surya Prakash 36, Mihir Dange 5/32 — 11.1-32-5) lost to Rushiraj CC 127/4 in 42.5 overs (P. Sunil 5 n.o., A. Nikshit 30, B. Sai Chandra 35 n.o.). Points: Kishorens 0, Rushiraj 0.

■ Secunderabad Gymkhana 285 in 89 overs (Md Adil 103 — 161b, 14x4, 1x6, A. Sai Prachatan 30, Anuj Singh 55, N. Saketh Reddy 3/60) bt Warangal District 213 in 49.2 overs (Banoth Kumar 115 — 116b, 17x4, 2x6, Bandari Suresh 36, P. Ravi 5/27 — 8-0-27-5). Points: Gymkhana 5, Warangal 0.

■ Ours 310 in 87.3 overs (Kaushik Chevendra 58, B. Pranav Reddy 123 — 181b, 12x4, 1x6, K. R. Dhanush 40, P. Sai Karthik 4/44) bt National 226 in 82.5 overs (G. Karthik 42, Ram Pranav 91, D. Manish 3/36, Koushik 3/33 ). Points: Ours 5, National 0.

■ Lords 183 in 52.2 overs (Md Azheruddin 62, Jasper 42, Shrunilth Reddy 5/52 — 15.2-0-52-5) lost to RJCC 185/5 in 43.1

overs (Akshay E 121 — 124b, 18x4, 2x6). Points: RJCC 5, Lords 0.

■ HBCC CC 178 in 59.2 overs (Syed Ali 51, Vasistha Karthikeya 5/41 — 16-3-41-5) lost to International CC 182/1 in 39.4 overs (Vashist Karthikeya 69 n.o., Ankil Kumar 91 n.o.). Points: International 5, Sunshine 0.

■ Vijayanand 360/9 in 90 overs (Abhinav 69, Ravi Tej 117 — 109b, 17x4, 1x6, Akshar 41, Chakravarthi 39 n.o., Praveen 4/61) bt Manikumar 91 in 35.5 overs (Charan 4/20). Points: Vijayanand 5, Manikuma 0.

■ HBCC 295 in 58.5 overs (Md Khalid 110 — 90b, 13x4, 6x6, Kaushik 46, Aparatim Tiwari 32 n.o., B. Sujay 3/53) bt PKMCC 268 in 73.2 overs (S. Raj Navaneeth 39, Aditya Singhal 94, K. Harsha Vardhan 38, N. Shashank Yadav 33). Points: HBCC 5, PKMCC 0.

■ CCOB 316 in (Abdul Rahman 109 — 181b, 16x4, Sai Kiran 41, Arham Kothari 3/41, P. T. Sai Krishna Murthy 3/30) bt Crown 268/7 in 90 overs (P. T. Sai Krishna Murthy 65, Siddharth Jain 62 n.o., Arham Kothari 54). Points: CCOB 5, Crown 0.

■ Adams XI 145 in 36.1 overs (Shashank Reddy 40, Imam Shareef 44, S. Prajwal Rao 4/48,

Gautam 3/4) lost to XI Masters 149/2 in 15.3 overs (S. Prajwal Rao 106 n.o. — 53b, 21x4, 2x6. Points: XI Master 5, Adams 0.

■ WMCC 196 in 38.5 overs (SV Aditya Varma 58, Vilash Reddy 37, Karthik Kumar 3/44, Vikranth Reddy 3/43) lost to Hucc 199/5 in 39.3 overs (Laxmi Sree Madhan 102 n.o. — 113b, 16x4, 1x6, Nikunj Patel 40, Anish Reddy 4/27). Points: Hucc 5, WMCC 0.

■ Shalimar CC 135 in 36.2 overs (Abhid Ali 4/40) lost to Adilabad District 138/2 in 19.1 overs (L. Mahesh 62, D. Venkatesh 56 n.o.). Points: Adilabad 5, Shalimar 0.

■ Mega City 101/9 (all out) in 37 overs (Jai Kiran 35 n.o.) lost to Nizamabad District 105/3 in 28.3 overs (Dama Ajith 56 n.o.). Points: Nizamabad 5, Mega City 0.

■ Venus Cybertech 147 in 57.5 overs (Divesh Bajaj 45) lost to Rakesh XI 148/6 in 56.2 overs. Points: Rakesh XI 5, Venus Cybertech 0.

■ Pasha Beedi 198 in 72.2 overs (Kush Jog 37, Faiz Ahmed 34 n.o., Raghava Pattapu 4/48) vs Deccan Wanderers 200/3 in 46.5 overs (Jawad Khan 68, Aawez Ahmed 40, Raghava Pattapu 55 n.o.). Points: Deccan Wanderers





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