

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
VIJAYAWADA | WEDNESDAY | 30 DECEMBER 2020

## WEATHER

Max: 32.0°C  
Min: 17.0°C  
RH: 81%  
Rainfall: Nil  
Forecast: Cloudy.  
Max/Min temp.  
31/17 °C

## STATE | 2

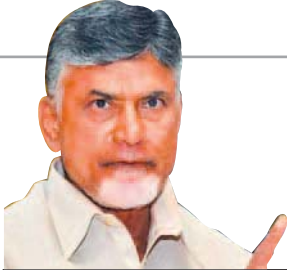
**No law and order in state, says Naidu**

## NATION | 5

**Mufti promises not to give up fight**

## WORLD | 5

**Biden sees danger in transition stalling**



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## COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+18,035)	(+246)
1,02,42,306	1,48,426
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+397)	(+2)
TS: 2,85,465	1,535
(+326)	(+2)
AP: 8,81,599	7,100

## CASES AROUND THE WORLD

8,20,00,970
DEATHS
17,88,015
COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES
218

worldometers.info/coronavirus

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Margasira Shuddha Purnima till 8.55 am  
**Star:** Ardra till 6.51 pm  
**Varjyam:** Nil  
**Durmuhurtam:** 11.55 am to 12.40 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 12 noon to 1.30 pm  
**HILARI CALENDAR**  
**Jamadi-ul-Awwal 14, 1442 AH**  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 6.00 am  
**Zohar:** 1.30 pm  
**Asar:** 4.30 pm  
**Maghrib:** 5.45 pm  
**Isha:** 8.15 pm  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.35 AM**  
**SUNSET TODAY 5.44 PM**  
**MOONRISE TODAY 5.58 PM**  
**MOONSET TOMORROW 7.49 AM**

## COUNTER POINT



**You are lucky! You tested positive for Covid-19, not its variant!**

## SHORT TAKES

### Pierre Cardin passes away at 98

**Paris:** Pierre Cardin, 98, the French designer whose name embossed everything from wristwatches to bed sheets after his iconic Space Age styles shot him into the fashion stratosphere in the 1960s, has died, the French Academy of Fine Arts said.

### Sudha Bharadwaj seeks books

**Mumbai:** Three accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoists links case have moved a court here seeking access to books and newspapers in prison. Activist Sudha Bharadwaj filed separate plea through their lawyer Chandni Chawla in NIA court.

## DEATH | ROW

### BJP, JD(S) slam Congress after note blames party

## K'taka Council Dy Chairman ends life

**VINAY MADHAV | DC BENGALURU, DEC. 29**

A fortnight after creating a controversy by being part of a no-confidence motion against the Karnataka Legislative Council chairman, the Upper House's deputy chairman, S.L. Dharma Gowda, committed suicide by jumping in front of a running train.

His death note, where he

### India strike back, level Test series 1-1 with Oz



Australian captain Tim Paine congratulates his Indian counterpart Ajinkya Rahane, right, on winning the second Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, on Tuesday. India beat Australia by eight wickets to level the series at 1-1. **Page 6** — AP

## Ban on UK flights likely to be extended: Minister

**Passengers from Nov. 23 being monitored**

**VINEETA PANDEY**  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 29

With the samples of six UK returnees to India being found to be positive with the new mutated Covid-19 variant genome by the labs in Nimhans-Bengaluru (three samples), CCMB-Hyderabad (two) and NIV-Pune (one), the ban on incoming flights from the UK is likely to be extended for some more time.

Minister of state for civil aviation Hardeep Singh Puri indicated this on Tuesday, saying: "I foresee a short extension on this temporary suspension. I do not see the extension to be long or indefinite."

All passengers who have travelled to India since November 23 are being monitored and will now be tested in the states. The number of such passengers is about 30,000.

Health ministry officials said "the situation is under careful watch", and regular advice is being given to the states for enhanced surveillance, containment, testing and dispatch of sam-

## AP woman tests +ve to UK mutant strain

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 29

AP health authorities confirmed that the woman from Rajahmundry who returned from London recently tested positive to the UK mutant strain of Coronavirus.

The test was done at the Hyderabad-based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology. Health and family welfare commissioner K. Bhaskar said there, however, was no spread of the UK strain

from the woman. Her son who travelled with her from Delhi to Rajahmundry tested negative. The AP health authorities said that 1,406 out of 1,423 returnees from the UK were traced while the remaining 17 were at large. Among them, 12 tested positive to Covid-19 in RTPCR tests. Similarly, of the 6,364 primary contacts of 1,406 returnees, 12 tested positive.

However, PM's princi-

pals to designated government labs. In addition, five per cent samples of all daily detected Covid-19 positive cases in the states/UTs will be sent for genome sequencing.

Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan said, meanwhile, that the rising Covid-19 cases in the UK was a cause for concern.

However, PM's principal scientific adviser K. Vijay Raghavan said the Covid-19 vaccines would be effective against the new variant of the virus as there is "no evidence so far that they will fail to protect against new variants".

It is learnt that next month's Republic Day parade may also see a limited crowd in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Page 2: Samples of 24 Covid +ve sent to CCMB**

## HC TELLS STATE, SEC TO RESOLVE GP POLL ISSUES

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 29

The AP High Court has directed both the state government and the State Election Commission to hold talks and resolve the issue amicably on the latter's move to conduct gram panchayat polls in February 2021.

A division bench headed by justice A.V. Seshasai held the hearing on Tuesday and issued the order asking both the parties to start consultations in three days from the date of receipt of the order copy. The court said that the SEC would decide the date and venue for taking up consultations and asked the state government to depute officials in the rank of principal secretary to consult the SEC.

The court suggested to the state to submit a series of guidelines issued by the Centre on Covid-19 and its recommendations to contain spread of the virus before the SEC in a written format and advised it to submit all relevant documents also. It may be mentioned that panchayat raj principal secretary Gopala Krishna Dwivedi had filed a petition in the HC earlier challenging the issue of proceedings by the SEC to conduct gram panchayat polls in February 2021 in the state. The Judge asked both the parties to resolve the issue, in an amicable manner through consultations keeping in mind the directions of the SC.

**Page 2: AP raises issue of SEC's month for election**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 29

No New Year celebrations will be allowed in Vijayawada city to contain the spread of Covid-19. Vijayawada city police commissioner Battina Srinivasulu said that the police department has not given permission for the celebrations and appealed to people to ring in the New Year at their homes by following Covid-19 protocol.

## BOTSA REVIEWS HOUSE PATTA DISTRIBUTION

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIZIANAGARAM, DEC. 29

Minister for municipal administration Botsa Satyanarayana along with local MLA Kolagatla Veerabhadra Swamy, S. Kota MLA K. Srinivasa Rao and collector Dr M. Hari Jawaharlal reviewed the arrangements being made at Gunkalam village in the district where Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will distribute house pattas and land and address a public meeting on Wednesday.

The Chief Minister will be participating in the programmes at three places in the state including Gunkalam.

He will arrive in Visakhapatnam in a special aircraft from Vijayawada and fly to Gunkalam by helicopter. After making an aerial survey of the lands being given to the beneficiaries, he will arrive at the venue and interact with the women beneficiaries.

Botsa said 1,07,181 beneficiaries have been identified in Vizianagaram district who would get houses and house site pattas. Of them 71,237 will be new beneficiaries who would be given houses and possession certificates would be given to 24,237 who have built houses on government land and living.

## CM releases third YSR sop tranche

**₹1,766 cr released to benefit 8.34 L farmers**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 29

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday released the third tranche of 'YSR Rythu Bharosa-PM Kisan' funds. The ₹1,120 crore relief is accompanied by a compensation of ₹646 crore for crops damaged during the Nivara cyclone. This will support 8.34 lakh farmers. A total sum of ₹1,766 crore was deposited in the farmers' bank accounts with a single click. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that the state government has spent ₹61,400 crore towards farmers welfare in the last 18 months.

He said that he believes the state would be better off when the farmer is happy and doing well. He stated that his government provided ₹13,101 crore under YSR Rythu Bharosa-PM Kisan by giving ₹13,500 every year to 51.59 lakh farmers, including tenant farmers and those cultivating the forest lands.

The CM slammed TD president and former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for being irresponsible and playing cheap political dramas pretending to have a concern about farmers. He said, "The Opposition leader lives far away from the land and close to the zoom app. Naidu had landed his son (Lokesh) and adopted



**Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy**

● **The Chief Minister said he believes the state will do well when farmers also do well**

son (Pawan Kalyan) in the state but he doesn't have trust either of them as people rejected them both. The cyclone relief was announced on multiple occasions and the state had also purchased the damaged crops even though they are moist and germinated. Under relief measures, 43,000 quintals of seeds were given at 80 per cent subsidy. Despite taking so many measures, the Opposition leaders are still trying to eke out political mileage by levelling false allegations."

The Chief Minister stated, "The previous government that had abandoned the farmers and cheated them by promising to waive off ₹87,612 crore of farm loans, had hardly spent ₹12,000 crore in their five-year rule. The

previous TD government left a huge pile of debts on farmers including the subsidy for crops, seeds, insurance, electricity arrears, and zero-interest loans. The arrears left by the previous government were paid by the YSRC government including providing an ex gratia to 434 farmers families who committed suicide during Telugu Desam rule."

With regard to the input subsidy, the Chief Minister said that the state government had paid ₹1,038.46 crore between June-November compensating the crop loss due to heavy rains and floods. He said, "Also, the government had cleared the unpaid dues of the previous government of ₹960 crore for paddy procurement, arrears of ₹383 crore were also paid under the seed subsidy, ₹17,430 crore on free electricity and aqua farmers, including ₹8,655 crore of debt. To provide 9 hours of free electricity during day time, the state government had initiated to strengthen the feeders at an expenditure of ₹1,700 crore. He said that the government had cleared ₹904 crore of pending arrears for zero-interest loans put by the previous government and credited ₹510 crore towards YSR Zero-interest crop loans and given ₹1,968 crore under YSR Crop insurance."

## No New Year fete in Vijayawada: Cops

Wishing the people, the top cop said that the police will increase patrolling and security arrangements for the protection of law and order in the city on December 31.

Srinivasulu said that in view of the new strain of Covid being identified in a passenger from the UK and fears of a second Covid wave, people should avoid public gatherings.

He said that there was no permission to gather on

roads or cut cakes for New Year on the Bandar Road and all shops in the city should close by 10 pm on December 31.

He stated that there was no special permission for New Year celebrations at hotels, functions or other gatherings.

He said that wine shops would be allowed till 8 pm and bar and restaurants till 11 pm on December 31 following the Covid-19 protocol.

He warned of stern action against those selling liquor to people under 21 years and those conducting New Year programmes violating norms at bars, restaurants and hotels.

He warned that vehicles would be seized for violation of norms like drunken driving and not wearing helmets and seat belts. He appealed to people to cooperate with the police by celebrating New Year in at homes.

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## SHORT TAKES

TD LEADER  
MURDERED IN  
PRODDATURDC CORRESPONDENT  
KADAPA, DEC. 29

A Telugu Desam district official spokesperson and advocate Nandam Subbaiah was murdered in Proddatur of Kadapa district on Tuesday morning. His body was found among the newly distributed house sites at Proddatur.

The police have registered a case and are investigating.

TD's Kadapa parliamentary party president Mallela Linga Reddy said that party national general secretary Nara Lokesh will be attending the final rites of Subbaiah at Proddatur on Wednesday.

TD politburo member Reddeppagari Srinivasa Reddy condemned the murder of the party leader. He said that the people were left without protection in the Jagan Mohan Reddy government and an anarchic rule was going on in the state.

NO LAW AND  
ORDER IN STATE,  
SAYS NAIDUDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 29

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday blamed the ruling YSR Congress leaders for the murder of weaker sections leader Nandam Subbaiah at Proddatur in Kadapa district. He alleged that Subbaiah was targeted because he held a press conference where he exposed the local YSRC MLA's corruption and other illegal activities. He shot off separate letters to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and DGP Gautham Sawang expressing concern that the Rule of Law has collapsed in the state.

Mr. Naidu stated that Subbaiah, who belonged to the weaker section community was brutally murdered for questioning the role of the MLA and his brother-in-law in the illegal transportation of sand and cricket bettings. He alleged that the criminal gangs were becoming emboldened and Nandam Subbaiah's murder revealed yet again how the law and order had totally collapsed in Kadapa district in particular and in AP in general. He termed Subbaiah's killing as a 'Government murder' and demanded the Chief Minister take responsibility for the incident.

Mr Naidu addressed separate letters to the Chief Minister and the DGP in which he described the latest attack in Tadipatri as a rarest of rare incident recalling how the ruling YSRC MLA Pedda Reddy along with his gang attacked the house of a former MLA and Opposition leader there. He claimed that this was enough evidence to say that there was no law and order.

YSRC REFUTES  
CLAIMS OF TD IN  
MURDER CASEDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 29

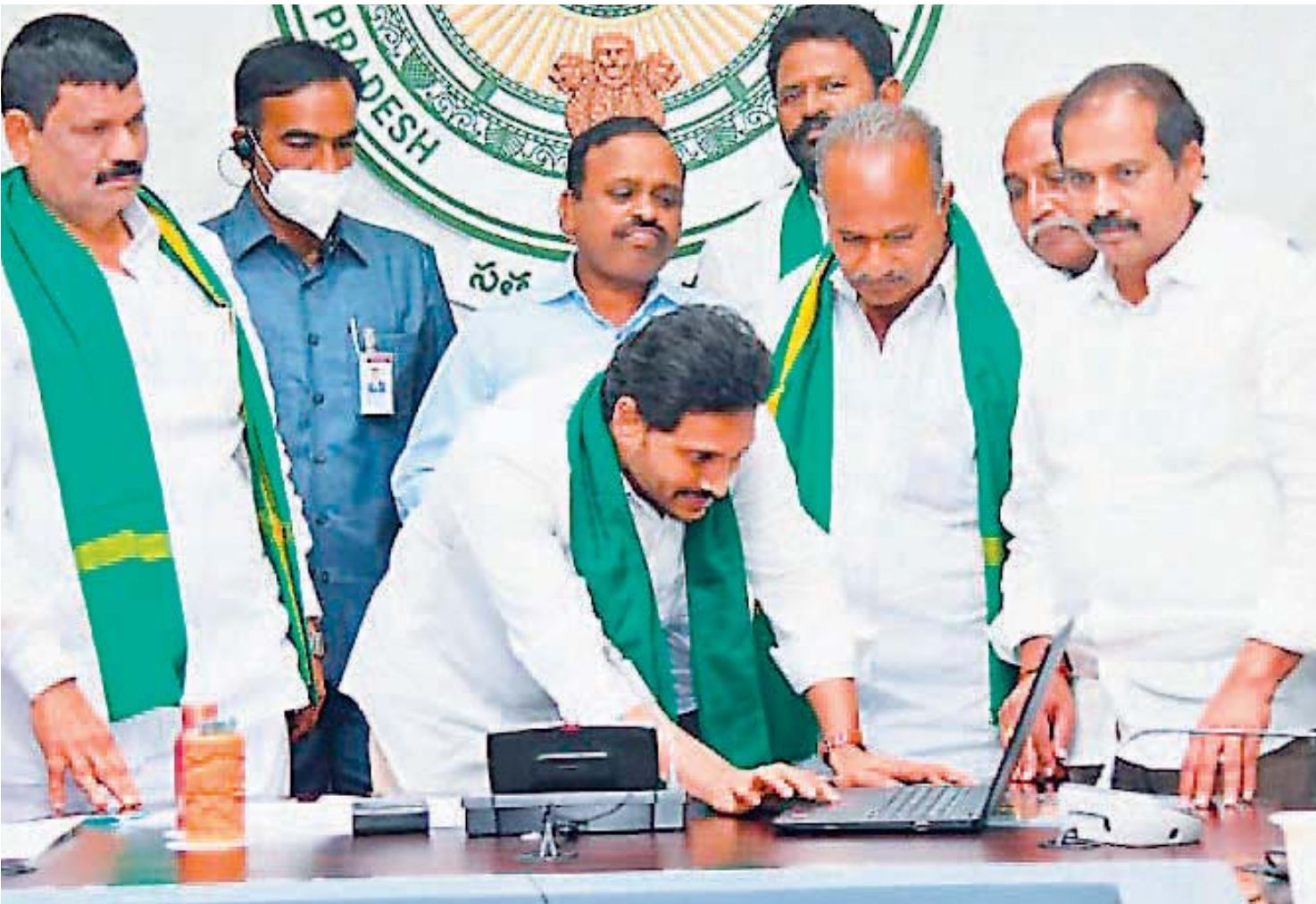
YSR Congress objected to the comments made by Chandrababu Naidu and his son Nara Lokesh in connection with the murder in Proddatur as highly irresponsible. YSRC MLA Jogi Ramesh and YSRC MLC and BC wing president Janga Krishnamurthy refuted the allegations that Telugu Desam is known for encouraging murder politics.

These allegations were amid news that Naidu and K.E. Krishnamurthy's men were behind Narayana Reddy's murder in Pattikonda. They alleged that after facilitating the destruction of peace in Rayalaseema through his murder politics, Naidu is acting innocent. They stated that propagating lies by saying that BCs in the state are under attack is highly irresponsible, and whoever is responsible for this murder should be punished.

Rumours were spread concerning Proddatur MLA Siva Prasad Reddy resorting to murdering Nandam Subbaiah because the victim exposed his corruption, are baseless and false. They alleged that just because the victim belongs to a family in the handloom business, TD is trying to drag political mileage out of the incident by saying that this is an attack on BCs.

The duo YSRC legislators recalled that when the TD was in power from 2014 to 2019, Subbaiah was booked in as many as four criminal cases. It is also important to note that he was also convicted in two of these cases. They said that Subbaiah has a history of being booked in criminal cases.

## Click of a button



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy releases "YSR Rythu Bharosa-PM Kisan" input subsidy to farmers at the camp office on Tuesday, Minister K. Kannababu and others also seen.

AP volunteers provided  
succour in year gone by

3.95 lakh are working in 15,004 Village and Ward Secretariats across the State

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 29

The innovative first of its kind, Ward Village Secretariats and Volunteers turned a boon to the government and people in 2020. The volunteers played a crucial role during Corona for the identification of Covid-19 infected persons, shifting them to hospitals for quarantine and further offered services in the containment zones. Besides this majority other services offered at doorsteps giving people a big relief in 2020. As many as 3.95 lakh are working in 15,004 Village and Ward Secretariats across the State, including the volunteers who are

given the charge of 50 households in rural and 100 in urban areas offering over 500 services.

The State government had brought the village and ward secretariat system to ensure that government services reach people to a maximum extent and make it more accessible.

Village and Ward Secretariats have brought governance closer to the people and shown to the nation a functioning Gram Swaraj and initiative has won wide acclaim. The social delivery system was appreciated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi among others and has been lauded across the country.

● Village and Ward Secretariats have brought governance closer to the people and shown to the nation a functioning Gram Swaraj and initiative has won wide acclaim from far and wide.

Launched on Gandhi Jayanti, the village and ward secretariats stand as a true reflection to Gram Swaraj. The network came in handy during the times of pandemic and distribution of social security schemes in an effective, transparent and corruption-free manner. The village/ward secretariat system has become an effective force in fighting coronavirus, where the volun-

teers have been able to collect data throughout and put the State on high alert.

Locals of Corona containment zones, D. Raghu and J. Syamala Rao said that during curfew days, the volunteers rendered valuable services by providing essential commodities to their houses including milk and praised that they would not forget 2020 mainly the services of volunteers and Corona impact till last in their lives. They said that further volunteers offered priceless services by shifting Covid-19 infected persons without fear.

In 2020 as part of good governance, the State government had launched 'Spandana' according high

priority to resolve the public grievance within a stipulated time frame. The grievances can be registered through Village/ward secretariats, 1902 Call Centre, Spandana web portal, and Collectorate grievance day on Mondays. This year 28,03,766 grievances have been registered across the state of which 27,23,909, have been resolved and 79,857 are under process.

Minister Purni Venkatarajam alias Nani said that the Governance has been visible to everyone in the form of village and ward secretariats, volunteers calling home to deliver social security and informing every detail of government decisions.

NO 'OPEN  
HOUSE' AT RAJ  
BHAVANDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 29

No 'Open House' to be held at Raj Bhavan on the eve of New Year in the wake of prevailing situation of Covid-19 pandemic.

In a statement from AP Raj Bhavan here on Tuesday, the authorities said that the customary practice of meeting the Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan to exchange pleasantries by the general public and the prominent citizens for the New Year, would not be arranged.

However, the Governor appealed to the people to celebrate the New Year in a restrained manner in compliance with Covid-19 guidelines.

MINISTER NANI  
DESCRIBES PK AS  
'BODI LINGAM'DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 29

Minister for civil supplies Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao alias Nani described Pawan Kalyan as a "Bodi Lingam".

The minister said Pawan himself is a Bodi Lingam, not the YSRC MLAs and claimed that people treated YSRC candidates as Shiva Lingams hence got a mammoth majority during the elections.

The minister spoke to the media persons during the house sites distribution programme.

Samples of 24 +ve  
sent to CCMB

FROM PAGE 1

The authorities then sent samples of these 24 Covid-19 positive patients to the CCMB for genome sequencing test to check whether they were infected with the UK strain. Out of them, one sample of the woman from Rajahmundry confirmed the UK strain while the test results of the remaining 23 samples were yet to come from the CCMB.

East Godavari health authorities maintain that the woman, admitted at Rajahmundry district hospital and kept in an isolation ward from the early hours on Dec 24, was asymptomatic. She was being given treatment for Covid-19.

The woman, after arrival from London to Delhi was

subjected to an RTPCR test at Safdarjung Hospital and she tested Covid-19 positive. She was advised 'home isolation'. The doctors there were not aware of her place of residence and the woman also did not disclose this to be Rajahmundry. Unaware of the implications of her travel, she being a Covid-19 positive patient, she travelled from Delhi to Rajahmundry by train in a first class coach accompanied by her son and then stayed at her home in isolation.

At present, her son too is in an isolation ward at the GH in Rajahmundry and will be tested for Covid-19 again. In case, he tests positive, his swab samples may be sent for genome sequencing.

## REALTY | BOOST

CMR group got six most valuable lands in the heart of Visakhapatnam

## Lulu's loss is CMR's gain, concession continues

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC  
VISAKHAPATNAM, DEC 29

A major decision by the YSR government soon after winning power last year was to cancel the MoU signed between the TD government and multinational Lulu group for setting up hyper market at RK Beach in Visakhapatnam. Now, it turns out that Lulu's loss is CMR Group's gain.

The cabinet decision was taken on October 30 last year. As per the MoU, Lulu got 13.4 acres of land, of which the CMR Group had owned 3.4 acres. In lieu of the 3.4 acres, the govern-

ment gave CMR 1.36 acres at Siripuram close to the HSBC complex, 0.91 acres in MVP Colony, 0.33 acres in Kirlampudi, 1.49 acres in MVP Double road, 0.65 acres in Seethammadhar and 0.11 acres in Lawson's Bay Colony - together worth Rs 132.53 crore as per the SRO value.

Minister for tourism and culture Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao said on June 19 last year that the land parcels given to the CMR Group would be revised. "We have objection to the land exchange between the CMR group and the previous government under which the for-

mer got Rs 200 crore worth of land for lands worth less than Rs 100 crore. We will not allow a loss to the government," the minister had said.

After cancellation of the MoU with Lulu for a hyper mart in Visakhapatnam, many thought the YSRC government would take back the lands given to CMR Group.

● Instead, by GO No 219, the government allowed 25 per cent 'setback relaxation' to all sides in the proposed six pieces of land and agreed for extra floors as per the request of CMR Group. This a major gain for the CMR group.

● CMR group got six most valuable lands in the heart of Visakhapatnam city and an extra 1.45 acre, which itself would cost around ₹75 crore

mer got Rs 200 crore worth of land for lands worth less than Rs 100 crore. We will not allow a loss to the government," the minister had said.

After cancellation of the

MoU with Lulu, many thought the YSR government would take back the lands given to CMR Group. Instead, by GO No 219, the government allowed 25 per cent 'setback relaxation' to

400-year-old Lord  
Rama idol defacedDC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, DEC. 29

Unidentified persons sneaked into the Ramateertham hilltop Sri Kodanda Ramaswamy temple in Nellimerla in Vizianagaram district and defaced the 400-year-old idol of Lord Rama. The head part of the idol is missing and the police have launched a search.

District superintendent of police B. Raja Kumari and other officials visited the temple and inspected the site and the debris.

She said some unidentified persons entered the temple and vandalised the statue of Lord Rama and took away the head. Other idols of Sita, Lakshman and Anjaneya were untouched.

The SP said a police team searched for the missing part in the bush-

● Some unidentified persons entered the temple and vandalised the statue of Lord Rama and took away the head. Other idols of Sita, Lakshman and Anjaneya were untouched

es around the hill and the nearby villages but in vain.

Explaining the seriousness of the case, she said a case has been registered in Nellimerla police station and special teams have been formed to locate the culprits and the missing head.

Sniffer dog and CLUES teams were dispatched to the temple to collect fingerprints and other evidences.

"We will catch the culprits very soon," the SP told the local reporters.

New system for  
GST tax returnsDC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, DEC. 29

The government has launched the Quarterly Return Filing and Monthly Payment of Taxes (QRMP) scheme in a bid to ease the return filing experience of the GST taxpayers. The new return filing system will be introduced from January 1, 2021.

Joint commissioner (state tax), Visakhapatnam, N. Srinivasa Rao on Tuesday told reporters that the new scheme is completely optional and applicable to taxpayers having turnover less than ₹5 crore in a financial year.

He said that under this scheme, the taxpayer has to file GSTR 3B and GSTR 1 on a quarterly basis and pay tax on a monthly basis. The taxpayers are

migrated to the new scheme by default subject to some conditions by the GST Network. The taxpayer has the facility to Opt-in or Opt-out from the scheme.

The taxpayer has to pay taxes by the 25th of the succeeding month for the first two months in a quarter. The quarterly return in GSTR 3B shall be filed by 22nd of the succeeding month for the entire quarter. In case of late payment of tax, interest will be levied at 18 per cent and late fee will be charged a maximum ₹5,000 in case of late filing of returns.

E-invoicing is mandatory from January 1, 2021, for taxpayers with a turnover more than ₹100 crore. For any queries and complaints, taxpayer can write to gstcellvsp@gmail.com.

Man pushed to  
death in choultryDC CORRESPONDENT  
KURNOOL, DEC. 29

A man working as the mess in-charge was pushed to death at Kakatiya Kamma Satram, a choultry providing accommodation to pilgrims at Srisailem, on Tuesday following an altercation with four visitors in the dining hall. The deceased was identified as Srinivasulu, a native of the Guntur district.

Atmakur DSP Y. Sruthi said four people including a postmaster, in the age group of 25 to 40 years, came to the choultry for lunch. They were told that they offer self-service.

The four got enraged and pushed Srinivasulu following which he sustained injuries and died while undergoing treatment, the DSP said.

The DSP said Bandarupalli Naresh, a postmaster, and Durgampudi Rama Rao, a farmer were taken into custody while Gunthakalla Venkatesh, Potla Venkata Kotaiah were at large. All the accused belong to Guntur district. They had come to Srisailem to surrender the Siva Mala after observing penance for 42 days, it is learnt. A case has been registered and the investigation is on, the DSP added.

## AP RAISES ISSUE OF SEC'S MONTH FOR POLL

FROM PAGE 1

However, government pleader Ch. Suman asked the court to allow the state government to raise the issue of the month fixed by the State Election Commission to conduct gram panchayat polls and also the

Centre's move to conduct the trial run for Covid-19 vaccination programme in AP.

Responding to it, the court made it clear that the state government could take up all such issues before the SEC during the consultations.



## OTHER STORIES

## Case registered against loan Apps

**Visakhapatnam:** The Vizag city police registered a case following a complaint from one person against the loan Apps. As per the reports, one B. Satyanarayana availed a loan of ₹4 lakh from the 50 to 60 loan Apps. Though he paid 90 per cent of the loan, he had received several phone calls from the loan App call centres and he was harassed to pay the rest of the loan amount. They also called his family members and sent a WhatsApp message citing that if the amount is not paid with in stipulated time the Aadhaar Card and Pan Card will be blocked and also sent a legal notice through WhatsApp. Based on the complaint from the victim, the police registered a case and investigation is on.

● The call centre people called his family members and sent a WhatsApp message citing that if money not paid within stipulated time the Aadhaar Card and Pan Card will be blocked

## Biker hit by lorry dies in Agency

**Visakhapatnam:** One person died in a road accident when his bike hit a lorry near Turabadagedda area under Chintapalle Mandal in Vizag Agency. The deceased was identified as P. Prasad, a native of Balijipeta of G. Madugula mandal. The incident took place when Prasad was travelling towards Narsiatnam on his bike and he hit the lorry which was coming in opposite direction. The police have registered a case and shifted the body to the government hospital for post-mortem.

## 13-year-old drowns in tank

**Visakhapatnam:** In a tragic incident, a 13-year-old boy drowned in a local tank and died at Pedagantyada in Vizag city. The deceased was identified as K. Ramesh. The police have registered a case and investigation is on.

## CCMB finds new variant of Covid highly transmittable

New variant of coronavirus shows 17 mutations in its genetic material

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 29

The new variant of the Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 that causes Covid-19, has been found to be B.1.1.7 and believed to be 71 per cent more transmittable than the other variants.

The Hyderabad based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology is one of the 10 research institutes in India involved in tracing the new variant.

In a statement from CCMB issued on Tuesday, Dr Divya Tej Sowpati, who is leading the Coronavirus genome sequencing efforts at CCMB, said, "We need to expedite the viral genome sequencing efforts and check for the presence of the new variant in India. We have used both the traditional Sanger sequencing method and modern next-gen sequencing tools."

The CCMB authorities

## Swab of 7-year-old UK returnee sent to CCMB

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, DEC. 29

A seven-year-old boy who returned from the UK recently along with his parents tested positive on Monday and his swab has been sent to CCMB, Hyderabad, to check for the new strain.

His parents tested negative. The boy has been sent to institutional quarantine, said Andhra Medical College principal and OSD for Covid-19,

north coastal Andhra Pradesh Dr P.V. Sudhakar. He said in all 1,216 returned from the UK in the last couple of days and tests were conducted on all of them. Only the boy tested positive, he added.

Meanwhile, positive cases have come down in north coastal Andhra during the last few days. On Monday, two cases were reported from Vizianagaram, four in Srikakulam and 41 in Visakhapatnam. Active cases

have also come down proportionately.

Srikakulam has 95 active cases with 32 undergoing treatment in hospital, 45 in Vizianagaram and 251 in Visakhapatnam. Vizianagaram district, which remained green for over two months after the outbreak, reported zero cases on December 27 and 28. "Positive cases came down due to increased awareness and people following the Covid-19 protocol," Dr Sudhakar said.

They say that the mutations have not worsened the symptoms or the disease outcomes and are also not an impediment to the vaccine development and add that the testing protocol also remains the same except the only problem is that the new variant spreads more easily than the others.

CCMB director Dr Rakesh Mishra said, "The measures to avoid infection including from the new variant still remains the same like using masks when in presence of others, avoiding crowded places and maintaining physical distancing as they are found to be most effective and feasible. It is now very important to launch an extensive genome surveillance of the virus to assess the extent of the spread of the new virus. We should also keep an eye on the other variants that might emerge independently."

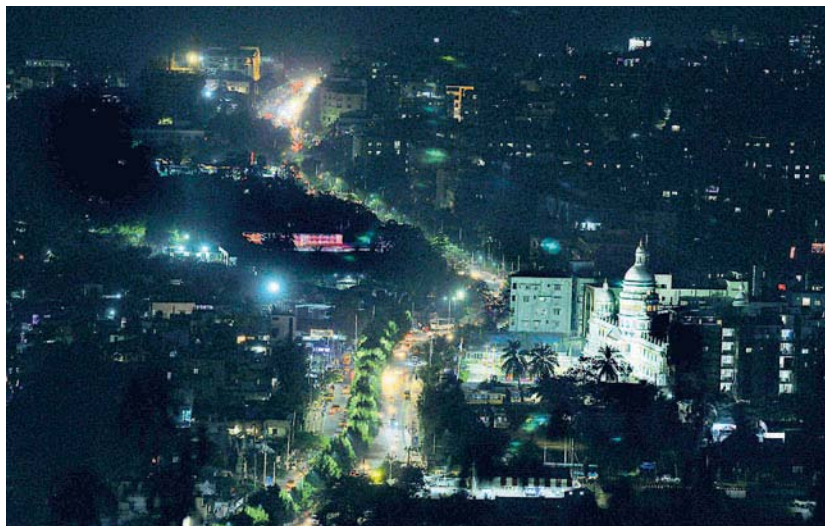
## AP RECORDS 326 COVID CASES, TWO DEATHS

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 29

Andhra Pradesh registered 326 new Covid-19 cases and two deaths in the last 24 hours.

The state health authorities issued Covid-19 bulletin on Tuesday reporting that out of 50,794 samples tested, 326 persons were infected with the Covid-19. Out of a total number of 1,17,08,678 samples tested so far, 8,81,599 persons were found infected with the Covid-19 and of them, 8,71,116 were recovered in the course of treatment while 3,383 are still active with the virus.

Among daily cases of confirmed Covid-19, Krishna registered the highest number of 67, followed by 56 in Guntur; 52 in Chittoor; 41 in Visakhapatnam, 24 in Kadapa, 23 in West Godavari, 21 in East Godavari, 15 in Anantapur, nine in Prakasam, six each in Nellore and Srikakulam, four in Kurnool and two in Vizianagaram.



Beach Road seems to be busy with the vehicles as the people still avoid public transport and prefer their personal vehicles for their travel in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday.

— DC

## Crimes decreased in 2020 in Krishna district

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 29

The all-round crime rate was decreased in Krishna district in the year 2020 compared to 2019. The Krishna district police registered 8877 crime-related cases in 2020 against the 9,767 cases booked in 2019.

The Police Department took the Covid-19-related lockdown and the measures to check the crime helped decrease crime cases.

Krishna district superintendent of police M. Ravindranath Babu addressing the annual press meet at Machilipatnam on Tuesday said the number of crime incidents decreased in the district 2020 compared to 2019.

He said the regular monitoring of policing, use of modern technology for detecting crime, increasing night beats, village protection committees and conducting

● Crime against women also dropped in the district as 1,229 cases were booked in 2020 against the 1,292 cases registered in 2019.

video conference regularly yielded good results in checking the crime in the district. He said the crime rate decreased due to the police's efforts with the cooperation of the people.

A total of 1,340 body offence cases were registered in 2020 against the 1,487 cases in 2019. A total of 121 kidnap cases reported in 2020 against the 145 kidnap cases booked in 2019. Similarly, the rape cases also decreased in the district as 77 rape cases registered in 2020 against 88 rape cases of the past year.

As many as 99 house-breaking cases (night

time) registered in 2020 against 186 cases booked in 2019. The police have increased the night vigil in recent months due to some untoward incidents reported at the temples. Consequently, the police increased vigil in rural areas. Village Protection Committees were formed to protect the temples and other places of worship, which helped prevent crime in the last few months in rural areas.

Theft cases also decreased in the district as 478 theft cases were reported this year against the 720 cases of last year—only five dacoity cases registered in the district in 2020 against nine cases respectively in 2019.

Property related 478 crime cases were booked in 2020 against 668 cases registered in 2019. Murder cases decreased as 28 murder cases reported this year against 49 murder cases last year.

## Shortage of TLE drug hits HIV/AIDS patients in AP

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 29

Shortage of the first line drug regimen called TLE (Tenofovir, Lamivudine and Efavirenz) is causing hardships for the HIV/AIDS infected patients in Andhra Pradesh.

Andhra Pradesh AIDS Control Society supplies TLE tablet for the infected patients to be taken at bedtime every day.

Nearly 2.20 lakh HIV/AIDS infected patients are enrolled for availing antiretroviral therapy in the state as the National Aids Control Society supplies drugs to APSACS which in turn distributes drugs to the Nodal ART and ART centres located in the state. All drugs are being supplied to the patients for lifetime free of cost.

Among those who are on antiretroviral therapy, nearly 35-40 per cent are using TLE. Patients at the

● **THOUGH THE HIV/AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017 specifies appointment of an Ombudsman, lack of such authorities results in deficiency of service.**

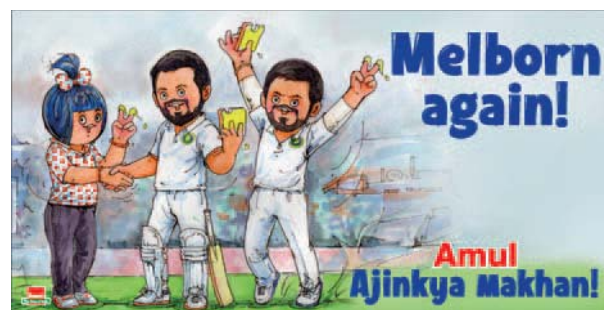
Nodal ART and ART centres are now being told that there is a short supply of the drug, adding that state health authorities have informed them that patients be given a new combination drug called TLD (Tenofovir, Lamivudine and Dolutegravir) as an alternative drug for TLE.

A patient in Rajahmundry said, "We are facing shortage of TLE in the last two months. Though the ART counsellors advise us to take drugs on a regular basis without

fail to help us overcome our health problem, they themselves are expressing helplessness to give us TLE for want of supply to them. As we cannot afford to purchase such drug in the open market, we are unable to consume such drug and it is resulting in aggravating our health problem."

Health authorities maintain that if the patients fail to use such the drug on a regular basis, it will result in rise in their viral load and make them vulnerable to other infections and may also lead to fatality. Some patients are also complaining about side-effects like insomnia, development of rash on skin and other health problems after using TLD as an alternative drug for TLE.

The patients are urging the government to intervene and direct APSACS to ensure regular supply of all drugs.



## PROVIDE UNINTERRUPTED POWER SUPPLY TO CONSUMERS, OFFICIALS TOLD

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, DEC. 29

Secretary of Energy, AP government and CMD of AP Transco, N. Srikanth has asked officials to provide uninterrupted and quality power to the consumers.

At the workshop with officials of APTransco of five districts of APEPDCL at Corporate Office in Vizag city, he spoke on the future development projects in Transco and Discoms.

Superintendent Engineers of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East and West Godavari districts

gave a PowerPoint presentation on their districts' progressive developments.

He instructed the officials to draw future plans for foreseeing capacity and peak demand for further five years period for providing quality and reliable power to consumers.

For this purpose automation plan for sub-stations, automation feeders, and strengthening of the network, new sub-stations, changing of lines, and improving new technology is required. He asked them to prepare new budgetary estimations for implementing above.

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Tender specification can be downloaded from website [www.pspcl.in/tenders/request-for-proposal](http://www.pspcl.in/tenders/request-for-proposal)  
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**Validity of offer :** 63 days from the date of opening of tender.

**Submission of tender document:** Through IREPS website at "www.ireps.gov.in"

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**I, K.JYOTHI, spouse of JC - 311726F, SUB KARUMANCHI VIJAYA BABU, R/O 1(A) ENGRS COY NCC, Syamalanagar, 8th line, GUNTUR-522006, ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA, have changed my name from Jyothi to K. JYOTHI & DOB 25 JUNE 1976 To 15 JUNE 1976 AFFIDAVIT NO 66AA 6689687-88 dated 26-12-2020**





## DECCAN Chronicle

30 DECEMBER 2020

### New strain demands a relook at measures

Reports of six returnees from United Kingdom testing positive for the new coronavirus strain are reason enough for the government and the people to be alert again against the threat of the pandemic Covid-19 marking another deadly wave across the nation. Experts are of the opinion that the new strain spreads at a faster pace than the original variant, and hence the government must put in place stringent measures to stop its spread.

The government has already decided that the guidelines for surveillance, which were to be effective till December 31, will continue to be in force till January 31. This is welcome, but it must consider if this is enough. Schools and colleges across the country, as well as entertainment centres, are in the process of opening, though under strict controls. Mass transport systems, such as railways are also easing the controls, albeit slowly. The government must examine the option of pressing the pause button on the “unlock” process in view of the discovery of the new strain, taking, of course, the nation’s economic interests, also into account. It must ensure that there is an aggressive contact tracing, isolation and treatment for all the affected in all the cases, unlike the way the country handled it when the virus arrived first time earlier this year. It must also consider relaunching the mass awareness programme it kicked off ahead of the festival season as the new strain could find the New Year festivities a perfect medium through which to afflict more people.

**The government must examine the option of pressing the pause button on the ‘unlock’ process in view of the discovery of the new strain, taking, of course, the nation’s economic interests, also into account**

That the reports come at a time when India has been showing a regular decline in the number of new coronavirus cases offers no solace and no reason to us for lowering the guard. There is no case to be careless until scientists and manufacturers are ready with the vaccine and the government has put in place a proper policy and mechanism to inoculate all the susceptible groups of people. It is reassuring that the government is now rolling out a dry run for the vaccination drive. But the real issue will be the availability of the vaccine in the required quantity in time, meeting the logistical challenges such as cold chain and the financial wherewithal to carry out the operation.

Vaccination is going to be a massive process given that the government is considering vaccinating about 30 crores of the population. There are reports that a sizeable section of the global population is resisting the idea. That must be true for India, too, and it will necessitate another major public awareness campaign. There are already exaggerated reports about the after-effects of the vaccination flying thick and fast in mainstream, alternate and social media. The government must take early steps to ensure that such propagandists face the legal music. All its actions must be guided by the fact that the virus has not gone away and that it is making an attempt to make a virulent return. A stitch in time can save nine, so goes the saying.

### Just not cricket

Naming a cricket stadium after a politician-administrator is not new to India. But to have his statue erected as well as to name the historic Feroz Shah Kotla after him appears a bit of a stretch even if the personality honoured thus was Arun Jaitley, who was a leading BJP figure in his lifetime. In a country known to relish the celebration of death and birth anniversaries, it may have been par for the course to perpetuate the memory of a leader. In this case, encomiums for a departed soul comes at the cost of the traditions of the great game of cricket, which has principally recognised sporting talent on the field.

Sports lovers grow up worshipping their heroes and, as they age they learn to respect athletes for their skills and for sweat and blood they shed to perform in a competitive environment. The administrator is a different breed. In India, most of them are attracted to the so-called honorary posts in sports admin because of perquisites and privileges. Furthermore, cricket is not only a social entree but also a key to the powerful inhabiting spaces in the corridors of politics and bureaucracy.

Politicians have been drawn to Indian cricket admin like moths to a flame. Many made sport their fiefdom, ruling like martinet while basking in reflected glory as champions have to interact with them. This is one reason why Bishan Bedi, a cricketer famous for calling a spade a shovel, found his hackles rising with the decision to erect a 800-kg statue for Jaitley who made himself a fixture at the Delhi & Districts Cricket Association.

An incensed Bedi has threatened to sue if his name is not removed from the stand honouring him and feting his achievements in the game as a bowler of spin in a seductive arc with a graceful action that was poetry in motion. Jaitley, for all his intellectual attainments as a forceful lawyer with a gifted gab and the country’s finance minister, had no claim to mastery of an art form. So why should his name adorn a sporting arena?

#### DECCAN CHRONICLE

**KAUSHIK MITTER**  
Editor

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Subhani



## After DDC: Will Centre further alienate J&K?

Anand K. Sahay

Far & Near

Propaganda apart, the result of the recent District Development Council elections in Jammu and Kashmir cannot have pleased the Narendra Modi government. This was the first proper test of popular endorsement in J&K after the willful destruction by the Centre of the erstwhile state’s constitutional autonomy in August 2019, imbuing the elections with more than ordinary significance.

While the Hindutva party won three stray seats (with no linking thread, or political meaning) in the Kashmir Valley, it lost quite heavily even in Hindu-dominant parts of the Jammu division. In these, the Valley-centric parties picked up seats.

Indeed, the BJP fared a lot worse here than it had in the Assembly election of 2014, which is a kind of comment on its all-round militaristic control of J&K since it scuttled its coalition government with Mehbooba Mufti’s People’s Democratic Party in 2018, possibly with the ulterior motive of playing games to install a Hindu chief minister, if feasible, for the first time in Muslim-majority J&K, or at least a BJP CM by roping in a Muslim.

Since the end of the rule of Maharaja Hari Singh — a Hindu ruler of mostly Muslim subjects — after he signed the Instrument of Accession in October 1947, the Hindu Right has been at odds with all CMs of Kashmir on account of their religion. There was a sense of loss of a “Hindu kingdom” in their narrative.

Breaking up the erstwhile state and making it a Union territory under “Hindu nationalist” control from the Centre might produce a

sense of catharsis. But that’s as far as it goes. Much sought success in the BJP’s bid to seek to stamp its political authority in J&K through the DDC polls failed to materialise. How the Modi government negotiates the terrain here on will therefore be keenly watched. Hindu nationalists are dealing with Muslim citizens in a sensitive region.

The BJP’s outsize celebration of the three Valley seats appears misplaced and pointless in the circumstances. Its chief purpose would appear to be to shore up the morale of the faithful when the picture is one of setback. Although the BJP government held a tight grip over Kashmir from the Centre, the electoral submission of Kashmir has not come to pass.

Obstacles were placed in the way of campaigning of the Kashmir parties. Kashmir’s best-known leaders were maligning as corrupt and their properties sought to be confiscated. Their key cadres were detained. To prevent voting in South Kashmir, cordon and search operations were mounted on polling day in certain constituencies to assist candidates of the BJP or the Apni Party — the quistling party. The BJP’s opponents were detained yet again before the counting of ballots and after the counting. Does this look like democracy to anyone except the Prime Minister? And yet, it was BJP’s opponents who made themselves heard through the ballot box.

Even in the Hindu-majority area of Jammu, the saffron party could win only about half the seats, facing defeat in the constituencies of some of its key leaders. A below par showing in the Jammu division should be a matter of strategic

concern for the saffron party.

At first glance it suggests that the Hindu populace is no longer gung-ho about the abrogation of Article 370, as appeared to be the case initially. As in some other hill states and remote regions, in J&K too special constitutional protection was given to land rights and government employment for the local population. That has now gone in J&K and the Jammu Hindu is as aggrieved as the Kashmir valley Muslim (or the Pandit).

The story was the reverse in the Valley. The BJP’s bête noire, the People’s Alliance for the Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), a conglomerate of regional parties — National Conference, PDP, People’s Conference and some smaller parties, although traditional rivals, have banded together. Their larger aim is to work for the restoration of J&K’s autonomy. They practically swept the polls in the Valley and made inroads in Jammu.

The formation of the PAGD is the result of a lesson learned. The mainline parties of Kashmir had boycotted the panchayat election two years ago to protest against the Centre’s overbearing attitude after it had imposed Governor’s Rule. The result was that the BJP’s candidates or Independents backed by it won everywhere since there was no contest — in some places by as few as six votes. The Narendra Modi government’s publicised aim was to put the mainstream parties out of business, accusing their leaders of corruption and dynastic rule, and to grow a fresh crop

of politicians in the Valley.

To prevent a repeat of the farce of the panchayat polls, the mainstream parties came together as the PAGD. They decided to contest the DDC polls as well as to prevent a division of the anti-BJP vote. But more, it is the people of Kashmir, including those who have no love lost for the mainstream parties, who expressed their determination to keep the BJP and its proxies out of the reckoning.

The reason was straightforward. The saffron party’s government in New Delhi had snatched away Kashmir’s even largely technical autonomy, with which was linked its people’s identity and sense of dignity. The Centre was also impervious to Kashmir’s every need as a society. The Narendra Modi government had reversed the approach of late PM Atal Behari Vajpayee for whom showing respect to Kashmir’s sentiments was bound with India’s strategic imperatives.

In the DDC election it might have served the BJP’s cause best if the Hurriyat Conference (which doesn’t take part in elections) had given a boycott call, as it usually does. Then the BJP would have had a field day. But the Hurriyat did not oblige. The militants too stayed quiet. All of Kashmir appeared determined to show that it was not pleased with what had happened on August 5 last year.

However, the Centre can take revenge if better sense does not prevail. Fifty Independent candidates have been elected to the DDCs. Through the misuse of the official machinery, an effort could be mounted to ensure their defection, a process that has already begun in Shopian district with the defection of a National Conference member. The method honed in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and the Northeast could well make an entry in J&K. But the more that New Delhi alienates Kashmir, the harder it would be to deal with the Pakistan-China axis.

**The method honed in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and the Northeast could well make an entry in J&K. But the more New Delhi alienates Kashmir, the harder it would be to deal with the Pakistan-China axis.**

#### LETTERS

##### STYLISH RETURN

Kudos to Team India for their emphatic win in the second Test against Australia. Coming as it did soon after an ignominious defeat in the first Test, this victory is a double delight as Team India’s star players Virat, Shami and Umesh were out of the team. The stand-in Captain Ajinkya Rahane led the team with gusto while Siraj and Gill exhibited their skills rather eloquently.

**Govardhana Myneedu**  
Vijayawada

##### RAJINI’S U-TURN

Superstar Rajinikanth’s U-Turn from politics is disappointing. Citing the Covid-19 pandemic for his change of mind is not convincing enough. Though he is right in being concerned about his health and those of his cadre, the situation which he fears now is not a bolt from the blue.

**Dr D.V.G. Sankararao**  
Vizianagaram

##### CONGRESS’ LOSS

It is most unfortunate day that Congress president Sonia Gandhi and former party chief Rahul Gandhi skipped the party’s 136th Foundation Day.

**P. Govardhana Rao**  
Kankipadu, Krishna district

#### 50 YEARS AGO IN

### DECCAN Chronicle

#### School of automation in Bangalore

MADRAS, Dec. 29

A school of automation is being set up at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore, in accordance with Soviet-Indian inter-governmental agreement on economic and technical cooperation. The Moscow Power Institute is taking part in this work.

The school will enroll Bachelors of Engineering. It is planned to train them within two years, as Masters of Science in the specialities of automation, computer engineering and electronics. Staff members of the laboratory of automation and computer engineering of the Moscow Power Institute have evolved a detailed curriculum, taking into account the latest achievements of science and technology. A list of laboratory and research equipment have been complied. Twentyfive Soviet scientists and engineers (led by Igor Gratsinsky and Guram Chkhartashvili) are to go to Bangalore in time for the beginning of the academic year.

Raj Mohan Tella



### In 2020, did smart words keep you company?

Words have an awesome power. We all know that words can help us express our thoughts, emotions, attitudes, likes and dislikes. Words also help us describe situations — how about *slightly touchy* or *demographically explosive*? Arm them and you can spread both positive or negative energy — *You mean the world to me; I hate you*. The same word can take on a completely different meaning given the context. Some examples are “fire”, “sound”, “kill it”. What do you think this sentence means? “*Dude, Raja killed the biryani!*” A favourite word grouping of millennials, but if you are unaware, to “kill” actually means “to do something exceedingly well”. Words have many ways of actually reflecting our current preoccupations and trends. I believe that words are also lessons about humankind.

So what have we learnt about ourselves from words in 2020? “*Lockdown*” is the Collins Dictionary’s word of the year. For

Merriam Webster it is “*pandemic*”. The lexicographers at Oxford University Press could not find a winner for 2020. A report explained, “*Given the phenomenal breadth of language change and development in 2020, Oxford Languages concluded that this is a year which cannot be neatly accommodated in one single word.*” Some of the words they found ubiquitous were “bushfire”, “impeachment”, “acquittal”, “coronavirus”, “Covid-19”, “lockdown”, “social distancing” and “reopening”.

So we were largely a worried, panic-stricken lot. Coping with the virus and our lives. Searching for light at the end of the tunnel in the form of a vaccine!

But if you were a brand or a business that was interacting on a daily basis with audiences, would you not worry about the words that are getting associated with your activities and presence? Especially during the pandemic where the messaging load and anxieties are already high. The difference

between being noticed, staying relevant and getting lost was a matter of choice. So if food brands did not talk about safety, hygiene and the extra care in the manufacturing process and the supply chain, they have lost an opportunity. If a bank hasn’t emotionally packaged its digital banking services, then it, too, was on the wrong side. Another example is salon care where proximity is a given and the tensions of touch are high. So we had F&B brands talking about that *taste you could trust and serving happiness with extra care*. A salon chain stated its range of safety measures and its “*Touchology*” principle that would be at play when customers walked in with prior appointments.

Words, narratives and the meanings associated with them — all are important to brand messaging. Words to describe your brand. Words that express the sense of loyalty and belonging. The key for a business is how well the audience is grasping the intent of the brand.

Because beyond semantics lie emotions, feelings and attitudes. You ought to possess a way of keeping track of the words and the associated sentiment around them. Certainly, you could take the aid of search words and keywords to reflect your brand and business but these have the limitation of not bringing out the concepts associated with the words. To me, it makes business sense to chart out a plan of getting the most appropriate and relevant set of words associated with your business and brand narratives.

Three quick examples here: 1. For a producer of organic brown rice, the words that need to get linked up as concepts could be *has all parts of the grain, healthy nutrients, keeps you fuelled and fit*. 2. For a cloud migration company, the words could be *technology that grows with your business, pay as you use, unifying the data, securing the cloud with automated cloud anti-virus checks* and more. 3. For a chocolate company the words

could be *happy moments and memories*.

So, if you would like to build relevant narratives here’s a short framework: first thoroughly understand the needs of your audience; then brainstorm for the word concepts associated with them; don’t try to create big words, keep them simple and sometimes an uncommon combination works well too (examples: “*mobilise your data*” or the famous “*I love you Rasna*”); lastly test the word concepts out.

Remember, getting to the right words is a creative process and not a mechanical one. You need to connect with the audience. With your words. And don’t forget what Antoine de Saint-Exupéry said, “*The meaning of things lies not in the things themselves, but in our attitude towards them.*” This applies to words, too...

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SHORT TAKES

COURT GRANTS BAIL TO MAN IN DELHI RIOTS CASE

New Delhi, Dec. 29: A Delhi court has granted bail to a man in a north east Delhi riots case, saying there was no CCTV footage of the incident and the victim did not identify the accused when his statement was recorded the first time.

Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat granted relief to Osama on furnishing a bail bond of ₹25,000 with one surety of like amount in the case related to gunshot injuries received by one Rohit Shukla during the riots at Maujpur Chowk.

The court said the victim did not identify Osama when his statement was recorded in March but in another statement recorded in April, he identified the accused as allegedly being a part of the unlawful assembly.

“Rohit had given a statement on March 9, 2020 but had not disclosed about the identification of the applicant. However, he had given another statement on April 1, 2020 whereby he stated that on February 24, 2020 at about 1.30 pm there were two groups of people, who were shouting slogan and protesting against CAA and NRC. In the crowd, one Sonu Chikna and his brother Aatir and Osama and were shouting slogans,” the court said.

“The crowd got violent and started stone pelting. Out of this crowd, one boy aged 24-25 years having red color hair wearing red color T-shirt and blue color pyjama and his mouth was tied with handkerchief, came out with pistol and tried to kill him. He also fired at the witness who received injuries in his left thigh and blood started oozing out. Thereafter, the boy ran away. There is also no CCTV footage of the present incident,” the court noted in its order passed on December 19.

“We have learnt from the experience of the Diwali festival season when people had become extremely careless which led to a sharp increase in Coronavirus cases. Now we have asked states and those cities which record high footfall during New Year’s to strictly follow all health and Covid protocols,” a senior home ministry official said.

Earlier in its advisory issued to states on late

Control room set up to watch NY celebrations

Centre to coordinate with states to ensure norms are followed

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 29

Following the sharp increase in Corona cases during the Diwali festival, home ministry is clearly not taking any chances for the New Year celebrations. The Ministry has set up a centralised control room to co-ordinate with major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore among others to ensure that all safety and health protocols are strictly followed. Earlier on Monday, home ministry had extended the earlier issued Covid-19 containment guidelines till January 31.

Home ministry officials admitted that during the Diwali celebrations it was observed that people had become careless and it did not follow the health protocols which led to a sharp increase in number of cases particularly in big cities. Centre now clearly wants to avoid a repeat of the same and is thus closely co-ordinating with all metro cities and states to ensure all necessary “safety and health protocols are in place.”

“We have learnt from the experience of the Diwali festival season when people had become extremely careless which led to a sharp increase in Coronavirus cases. Now we have asked states and those cities which record high footfall during New Year’s to strictly follow all health and Covid protocols,” a senior home ministry official said.

Earlier in its advisory issued to states on late



A medic demonstrates administration of Covaxin, an Indian government-backed experimental Covid-19 vaccine, to a health worker during its trials, at the Urban Primary Health Centre at Tezpur in Sonitpur district of Assam on Tuesday.

Monday evening, the ministry had said that, “while there has been a continuous decline in active cases in India, there is a need for surveillance, containment and caution due to a surge globally and the emergence of a new variant of the virus in the UK”

The ministry also asked the states and union territories to keep a strict vigil to prevent any rise in cases during the New Year celebrations and the winter season.

It also asked the states and UTs to actively sup-

port central authorities in the preparations for an expected vaccination drive.

“Accordingly, containment zones continue to be demarcated carefully; prescribed containment measures strictly followed within these zones; Covid-appropriate behaviour promoted and strictly enforced, and the standard operating procedures (SOPs) prescribed in respect of various permitted activities followed scrupulously,” the MHA said.

MUMBAI AIRPORT INTRODUCES EXPRESS TESTING

Mumbai, Dec. 29: The city’s Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) on Tuesday said it has introduced a new 24X7 Covid-19 testing facility, which gives test results in flat 13 minutes at a cost of ₹4,500.

Since its launch on December 15, CSMIA has witnessed an average of 30-35 such tests per day, CSMIA said in a release.

A total of 400 express tests have been carried out at the airport till December 28, which include passengers who had connecting flights to destinations outside Maharashtra, it said.

In compliance with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) standards, CSMIA is the first airport to adopt the express test method by Abbott ‘ID Now, which is aimed at providing arriving passengers with quick and accurate diagnosis, CSMIA said in the release.

The round-the-clock testing facility option is available for all international arriving passengers at the airport at a cost of ₹4,500, CSMIA said. The rapid molecular testing technology by Abbott is a tool to help fight the pandemic by allowing fast, highly sensitive and accurate diagnosis, the private airport operator said.

Rajini does a U-turn; says not going to join politics

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, DEC. 29

With just a couple of days left for the scheduled announcement on his new political party, actor Rajinikanth, citing health reasons, called off his entry into electoral politics on Tuesday through a statement issued on Twitter.

In a three-page statement, Rajinikanth said that he would do whatever good he could to people without contesting for the elections and that he considered his taking ill at the shooting of the film ‘Annaatthe’ in Hyderabad as a warning from God.

Narrating the sequence of events, he said he went for the shooting despite the advice of doctors. Though the around 250

members of the film unit underwent tests for Covid-19 infection daily, maintained social distancing and wore face masks and shields, four of them tested positive, leading to the immediate cancellation of shooting.

“My test results were negative, but my blood pressure was not stable and constantly fluctuating. As per my medical conditions, I should not have constant fluctuations in blood pressure, as it would severely affect my transplanted kidney,” Rajinikanth said.

If he were to start the party he would not be able to create the sort of revival he wanted only through media and social media campaigns, he said, adding, “I will have to meet people, attend meetings and go on campaigns

that would hamper my health”.

In view of an expected second wave of Coronavirus infection, even though vaccines might be available soon, if he, who had been on immunosuppressants, took ill, it would put those accompanying him in his political journey into trouble, both economically and emotionally, he said.

“If I enter politics just because people would talk ill of me for going back on my promise, I would be making a scapegoat of the fellow travellers, reposing faith in me,” he said.

He sought forgiveness from members of Rajini Makkal Mandram and his fans, who have been expecting him to start a political party, for disappointing them.

I won’t raise white flag, give up fight, says Mufti

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC  
SRINAGAR, DEC. 29

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister and People’s Democratic Party (PDP) president, Mehbooba Mufti, said on Tuesday that she won’t raise a white flag but continue to fight against “injustice” meted out to the people of the erstwhile state and BJP’s “gunda raj” over the country.

While speaking at a function held here to felicitate the PDP’s newly elected District Development Councils

(DDCs) members, she said that their “resounding success” has come as a shock to those who had sought to write political obituaries of the party. “In their arrogance they thought by not allowing me to campaign, intimidating us and arresting our leaders, the PDP will not perform. Ours is not just a party but a movement which will never compromise on its ideals and core political philosophy of dialogue and reconciliation,” she said.

Emphasising that for the restoration of lasting

peace in J&K dialogue was pivotal, she said, “We will not allow Kashmir to be a battle ground but work relentlessly so that J&K acts as a bridge of peace between India and Pakistan”.

She renewed her and the party’s “pledge” to fight for the rights and dignity of the people of J&K and asserted “No amount of coercion can force the people into submission. We will fight for our rights. We are not the ones who will raise white flags despite fatal blows being dealt to our identity, economy and livelihoods”.

WORLD

SHORT TAKES

EXPLOSIVE KILLED 3 FRENCH ARMY IN MALI

Paris, Dec. 29: The French presidency said three soldiers were killed in Mali when an improvised explosive device hit their armoured vehicle.

The soldiers were participating in a military operation in the Hombori area of Mali’s central Mopti province, part of a larger mission aiming at fighting Islamist extremists in Africa’s Sahel region, the French presidency said in a statement on Monday.

Defense Minister Florence Parly said the soldiers were working “in an area where terrorist groups are attacking civilians and threatening the regional stability”.

Parly said they were involved in a mission aiming at helping Mali to gradually be able to ensure its own security.

The defense minister did not provide further details.

France has more than 5,000 troops deployed in West Africa to help fight extremist groups as part of Operation Barkhane.

GAZA MILITANTS FIRE ROCKETS OUT TO SEA

Gaza City, Dec. 29: Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired a salvo of rockets into the Mediterranean Sea on Tuesday as part of a self-styled military drill aimed at preparing for a possible war with Israel.

The Islamic militant group Hamas has ruled Gaza since seizing power from rival Palestinian forces in 2007. It has fought three wars and numerous smaller skirmishes with Israel since then. A fragile, informal truce has mostly held in recent years, with only occasional exchanges of fire.

Authorities in Gaza restricted movement along the main coastal road and barred fishing for the duration of the exercises, which were to continue for a period of 24 hours and included the use of aerial drones.

The drill was held by the Joint Command Room, which brings together a dozen militant factions but is dominated by Hamas.

VP-elect takes the jab



Registered nurse Patricia Cummings administers the Covid-19 vaccine to Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris December 29, 2020 at the United Medical Center in Washington, DC.

More people hospitalised in UK than peak of first virus outbreak

London, Dec. 29: Official figures show more people are currently hospitalised with Covid in England than at the first peak of the outbreak in the spring. There were 20,426 patients in hospitals as of Monday morning — the last day for which figures are available — compared to the previous high of 18,974 on April 12.

However, case figures do not include Scotland and Northern Ireland, which did not report over the Christmas period.

“Many of us have lost family, friends, colleagues and — at a time of year when we would normally be celebrating — a lot of people are understandably feeling anxious, frustrated and tired,” said NHS England chief executive Simon Stevens.

“And now again we are back in the eye of the storm with a second wave of coronavirus sweeping Europe and, indeed, this

country.”

Health trusts have been told to begin planning for the use of Nightingale field hospitals, the temporary facilities created during the first wave that have largely gone unused. London and southeast England are currently bearing the brunt of the outbreak, with paramedics in the capital saying they are receiving up to 8,000 emergency calls each day.

London Ambulance Service said Boxing Day — December 26 — was one of its “busiest ever days”. A further 357 people testing positive for the virus were announced on Monday to have died, bringing the UK total to 71,109, the second worst toll in Europe.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has been under fire for his government’s handling of the pandemic.

— AFP

WHO: Be ready for worse pandemics

Johannesburg, Dec. 29: The Coronavirus has devastated lives and economies across the globe, but the World Health Organization (WHO) warned that worse pandemics could lie ahead, urging the world to get serious about preparedness.

“This is a wakeup call,” WHO emergencies chief Michael Ryan told reporters at a briefing marking a year since the UN agency first learned of the new virus spreading in China. “This pandemic... has spread around the world extremely quickly and it has affected every corner of this planet, but this is not necessarily the big one,” Ryan added.

“We need to get ready for

something that may even be more severe in the future.” While huge scientific progress was made to study the virus and develop vaccines at record speed, WHO senior adviser Bruce Aylward cautioned that the world was far from ready for the next pandemic. “We are into the second and third waves of this virus and we are still not prepared to deal with and manage those,” he said. “While we are better prepared... we are not fully prepared for this one, let alone the next one.”

“Good riddance, 2020!” Meanwhile, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa banned alcohol sales and made masks mandatory in public.

— AFP

Biden sees risk in transition stalling

Trump’s Pentagon appointees giving hard time

Wilmington, Dec. 29: President-elect Joe Biden said that Donald Trump’s appointees at the Pentagon were stalling on the transition and warned that the US faces security risks as a result.

After he and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris were briefed by their transition teams on national security, Biden said that political appointees at the Pentagon as well as the Office of Management and Budget had put up “roadblocks.” “Right now, we just aren’t getting all the information that we need from the outgoing administration in key national security area(s),” Biden said after the briefing.

“It is nothing short, in my view, of irresponsibility,” Biden said he was seeking a “clear picture” from the outgoing administration on the force posture of US troops around the world.

“We need full visibility into the budget planning underway at the Defense Department and other agencies in order to avoid any window of confusion or catch-up that our adversaries may try to exploit,” Biden said.

Trump has refused to concede the November 3 election, which Biden won by some seven million votes and by 306-232 in the state-by-state Electoral College. The president has made unsubstantiated claims of widespread fraud.

The Trump administration has drawn concern

Mike Pence sued to overturn Biden win

received 232.

The lawsuit focuses on Pence’s role in the January 6 meeting of Congress to count states’ electoral votes and finalise Biden’s victory over President Trump.

The lawsuit challenges the 1887 Electoral Count Act, which dictates the vice president’s role in announcing the results as a ceremonial one, The Dallas Morning News reported. The Republican lawsuit, which was filed against Pence in his official capacity as vice president, asks a federal judge in Texas to strike down the law as unconstitutional. The Republican plaintiffs go further: They ask the court to grant Pence the authority on January 6 to effectively overturn Trump’s defeat in key battleground states.

Election law experts have dismissed the lawsuit’s prospects for success.

— PTI

Trump’s new acting defence secretary, Chris Miller, has said that the outgoing administration had agreed with Biden’s people to pause briefings for the holiday season, an assertion that the incoming team called untrue.

— AFP

PAK FIGHTS FOR BASMATI IN EU WITHOUT LOCUS STANDI

Islamabad, Dec. 29: While Pakistan is fighting a case in the European Union against the Indian move to get Basmati rice registered as its product, the commodity is still not registered as a local product in the country, according to a media report.

Laws require that before applying for registration of any product in the international market it has to be protected under the

geographical indication (GI) laws of that country.

The Dawn reported that there are no rules of the Geographical Indications (Registration and Protection) Act, 2020 enacted in March this year and as a result, Basmati is not yet a protected product in Pakistan.

A rice exporter told the Dawn that exporters, particularly the Rice Exporters Association of Pakist-

an, had been urging the government since early 2020 to formulate the GI laws.

“The laws were finally made in March this year, but the authorities have not yet framed the rules of GI law. As a result many local exportable products cannot be registered anywhere in the world with Pakistani GI tagging,” the exporter said.

— PTI



## SHORT TAKES

## Former NZ Test player Reid dead

**Wellington:** John F. Reid, who scored six centuries in 19 Tests for New Zealand including 108 in a famous win over Australia, has died. He was 64. His death after a long illness was confirmed on Tuesday by New Zealand Cricket.

Reid's century against Australia at Brisbane's Gabba ground in November, 1985 was instrumental in New Zealand's win by an innings of 41 runs.

He shared a then-record 225-run partnership with Martin Crowe (188) for the third wicket which helped New Zealand to 553-7 in their only innings.

Richard Hadlee took 9-52 in Australia's first innings and 6-71 in the second to secure the win. Reid was an elegant left-hander known for his skill against spin bowling and the Brisbane innings, on a fast, bouncy pitch, proved his ability against pace.

John Reid



## Sydney confirmed as third Test host

**Sydney:** Cricket Australia on Tuesday decided to retain Sydney as the venue for the third Test against India, ending speculation that the game could move to Melbourne because of stringent Covid-19 border restrictions that would have affected the players' movement for the fourth match in Brisbane.

The third Test is to be held from January 7. The series is currently locked 1-1 after India won the second Test in Melbourne, which was placed on standby in the wake of the Covid-19 outbreak in Sydney's northern beaches before Christmas.

"Despite the many challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, I am delighted to say Cricket Australia remains on track to deliver the men's international series as scheduled," Cricket Australia's Interim CEO Nick Hockley was quoted as saying by 'cricket.com.au'.

— AP

## Australia fined 40% of match fee

**Melbourne:** The Australian cricket team was fined 40 per cent of their match fee and penalised four ICC World Test Championship points for maintaining a slow over-rate against India in the second Test, which concluded here on Tuesday. ICC match referee David Boon imposed the sanction after Tim Paine's side was ruled to be two overs short of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration during the second Test, which the hosts lost by eight wickets. "In accordance with Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to minimum over-rate offences, players are fined 20 per cent of their match fees for every over their side fails to bowl in the allotted time," the ICC said in a statement.

— AP

## S. Africa hammer injury-hit Lanka

**Centurion, South Africa:** South Africa wrapped up victory by an innings and 45 runs shortly after lunch on the fourth day of the first Test against Sri Lanka at SuperSport Park in Centurion on Tuesday. Sri Lanka, needing 225 runs to avoid an innings defeat, were bowled out for 180. Kusal Perera hit a spirited 64 off 87 balls for the tourists and debutant Wanindu Hasaranga slammed 59 off 53 balls. — AFP

**Brief scores: Sri Lanka 396 and 180 (K. Perera 64, W. Hasaranga 59 L. Ngidi 2-38) vs South Africa 621.**

## Live on TV

**CRICKET**  
**Big Bash League:** Hobart Hurricanes vs Brisbane Heat from 1.45 pm on Sony Six

**FOOTBALL**  
**Indian Super League:** Hyderabad vs Goa from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

**English Premier League:** Tottenham Hotspur vs Fulham from 11.30 pm; Newcastle United vs Liverpool from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Star Sports Select 1

**WWE**  
**NXT:** Bouts from 6.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

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## IT'S A KNOCKOUT!

## India floor Aussies on Day Four of Boxing Day Test

**Melbourne, Dec. 29:** Hungry for redemption, India recorded a win for the ages under an inspirational Ajinkya Rahane, beating Australia by eight wickets in the second Test to level the four-match series 1-1 here on Tuesday. The target of 70 was never a big one but for a team that was bowled out for its all-time lowest score of 36 only 10 days back, one can't fault them if that played at the back of their minds.

Shubman Gill (35 not out) and skipper Rahane (27 not out) knocked off the runs in 15.5 overs to complete the victory.

This was after the quartet comprising Jasprit Bumrah (2/54 in 27 overs), debutant Mohammed Siraj (3/37 in 21.3 overs), Ravichandran Ashwin (2/71 in 37.1 overs) and Ravindra Jadeja (2/28 in 14 overs) showed maniacal consistency over a period of 100 overs on the flattest of decks, where extra bounce became their go-to weapon.

"The talk was all about showing attitude, intent and character. One hour took the game away from us in Adelaide, but we still have a lot to learn," Rahane said in the post-match presentation.

Indian teams, since the turn of the new millennium, have had some memorable overseas victories but when the backdrop and context of this Test at the iconic MCG is recorded for posterity, Rahane and his magnificent bowling unit will find more than an honourable mention in the pages of history.

"Really proud of all the players, credit to our debutants Gill and Siraj. The way they showed character was amazing," Rahane said.

Australia captain Tim Paine had nothing to offer as an explanation for why his side could not capitalise on the big absences.

— PTI

## Shastri lauds India's 'comeback' victory

**Melbourne, Dec. 29:** India's head coach Ravi Shastri termed his team's eight-wicket win against Australia on Tuesday as "one of the greatest comebacks" in the history of the game after the visitors were "blown away" in the series-opener in Adelaide.

Shastri lauded the entire team with special praise for resilient debutants Shubman Gill and Mohammed Siraj after the 36 all out nightmare in the opening Test in Adelaide.

"I think it will go down in the annals of not only Indian cricket but world cricket as one of the greatest comebacks in the history of the game," Shastri replied when asked to rate the win taking his four decades of association with country's cricket establishment into account.

"To be rolled over for 36 in three days and then get up and ready to punch back was outstanding. Boys deserve all credit for the character they showed. It's real character," said the former all-rounder, who is never short of words when it comes to praising his team.

In a year marred by the COVID-19 pandemic, a victory like this would certainly bring smiles on the faces of Indian fans, feels Shastri.

"I think it's a great pres-



Captain Ajinkya Rahane (right) and opener Shubman Gill embrace to celebrate India's victory in the second Test against Australia at the MCG in Melbourne.

— AP

## SCORECARD

**Australia 1st Innings 195**  
**India 1st Innings 326**

**Australia 2nd Innings (overnight 133 for 6):** Matthew Wade lbw b Ravindra Jadeja 40, Joe Burns c Pant b Umesh 4, Marnus Labuschagne c Rahane b Ashwin 28, Steven Smith b Bumrah 8, Travis Head c Mayank Agarwal b Siraj 17, Cameron Green c Jadeja b Siraj 45, Tim Paine c Pant b Ravindra Jadeja 1, Pat Cummins c Agarwal b Bumrah 22, Mitchell Starc not out 14, Nathan Lyon c Pant b Siraj 3, Josh Hazlewood b Ashwin 10. Extras (lb-5, nb-3) 8. **Total (all out in 103.1 overs) 200.**

**FoW:** 1-4, 2-42, 3-71, 4-98, 5-98, 6-99, 7-156, 8-177, 9-185.

**Bowling:** Jasprit Bumrah 27-6-54-2, Umesh Yadav 3.3-0-5-1, Mohammed Siraj 21.3-4-37-3, Ravichandran Ashwin 37.1-6-71-2, Ravindra Jadeja 14-5-28-2.

**India 2nd Innings:** Mayank Agarwal c Paine b Starc 5, Shubman Gill (not out) 35, Cheteshwar Pujara c Green b Cummins 3, Ajinkya Rahane (not out) 27. **Total (For 2 wks, in 15.5 overs) 70.**

**FoW:** 1-16, 2-19. **Bowling:** Mitchell Starc 4-0-20-1, Pat Cummins 5-0-22-1, Josh Hazlewood 3-1-14-0, Nathan Lyon 2.5-0-5-0, Marnus Labuschagne 1-0-9-0.

## PRAISE APLENTY

**To win a Test match without Virat, Rohit, Ishant & Shami is a terrific achievement. Loved the resilience and character shown by the team to put behind the loss in the 1st Test and level the series. Brilliant win. Well done TEAM INDIA.**

— **SACHIN TENDULKAR**  
India great

**What a win this is, absolutely amazing effort by the whole team. Couldn't be happier for the boys and specially Jinks who led the team to victory amazingly. Onwards and upwards from here.**

— **VIRAT KOHLI**  
India captain

**Hats off to Indian cricket team, what a fantastic game after playing poor cricket in Adelaide, you made us proud. Ajinkya Rahane, you and your team, proud of you, you didn't have your captain but you showed the way... carry on doing that, well done.**

— **KAPIL DEV**  
Ex-India captain

**Stunning response from India after the 1st Test, Australia's top order have been horribly exposed, some tough decisions required.**

— **TOM MOODY**  
Former Australia player

## Cricket fraternity hail Rahane &amp; Co

**New Delhi, Dec. 29:** The Indian cricket fraternity on Tuesday hailed the national team for the "resilience and character" it showed to redeem itself after the Adelaide debacle to win the second Test in Melbourne.

India, led by Ajinkya Rahane, levelled the four-match Test series 1-1 after defeating Australia by eight wickets in the second match at the MCG. Rahane led from the front with a match-winning 112 in India's first innings.

Star batsman Rohit Sharma, who will join the side in Melbourne on Wednesday after completing his mandatory quarantine, praised the team for showing composure in difficult times.

"Fantastic win for the Team India at the MCG. Character and composure shown throughout the game was excellent to watch @bcci," Rohit tweeted.

However, former India captain Bishan Singh Bedi had a word of caution for the 'Men in Blue' and advised them to stay calm.

"(The) 36 all out was terribly 'freakish' but an 8wkt

win is not ... I hope Indns can forget both ... one as a nightmare & the other as nothing to float on cloud nine ... still 2 more Tests to go.& plenty of work to do..stay calm Fellas as yur Capt @ajinkyarahane88 & 'think' how to outwit OZ!" tweeted Bedi.

Former India batsman V.V.S. Laxman singled out debutants Shubman Gill and Mohammed Siraj for special praise.

"Lot of positives from this win. Rahane led the side brilliantly, bowlers were relentless but the biggest positive is the performance of two debutants. Both of them were confident and not over-awed by the big occasion. Strength of Indian cricket is their strong bench strength," he tweeted.

Former India opener Virender Sehwag also took to Twitter to praise the performance of Rahane and his team.

"A really special win at the MCG. Great Determination and great character. Rahane led from the front, the bowlers were terrific and Gill is chill," tweeted Sehwag.

— PTI



Mohammed Siraj (second from left) is congratulated by teammates after dismissing Nathan Lyon on the fourth day of the second Test at the MCG on Tuesday.

— AP

## Newbies Gill, Siraj impress Ajinkya

**Melbourne, Dec. 29:** India skipper Ajinkya Rahane on Tuesday singled out the debutant duo of Shubman Gill and Mohammed Siraj while commending the tremendous character shown by his side to turn it around in the second Test here for a series-leveling triumph.

Gill scored 45 and 35 not out in the game here while Siraj returned with five wickets, including three in Australia's second innings.

"I am really proud of all the players. I want to give credit to the debutants Siraj and Gill, the character they showed after the Adelaide loss was great to see," Rahane said after the match.

"Character was important for us, especially after losing Umesh in the second innings," he added, referring to the mid-match injury suffered by pacer Umesh Yadav.

Rahane said it is never easy for debutants to be consistently disciplined in their game but Gill and Siraj showed how it is done.

"Shubman, we all know his First-class career and in this game, he has shown the intent to play shots at this level, has shown composure.

"Siraj has shown that he can bowl with discipline. It's really difficult for debutants to bowl with disci-

pline but that's where I think the First-class experience comes in handy," he said.

Asked what the team discussed before the match, Rahane said, "The talk was all about showing the attitude and intent on the field. As I said, character. Adelaide was about one hour that took the game away from us. Lots to learn for even now."

Rahane also acknowledged his own role as a leader, citing the five-bowler plan that yielded results.

"That worked well for us nicely. We were thinking of having an all-rounder and (Ravindra) Jadeja has been brilliant for us."

He also talked about the arrival of swashbuckling regular opener Rohit Sharma for the third Test beginning January 7.

"We're excited about Rohit coming back. Spoke to him yesterday, he's waiting to join the team," he said.

— PTI



Ravichandran Ashwin (right) celebrates after bowling out Josh Hazlewood during the fourth day of the second Test at the MCG in Melbourne on Tuesday.

— AP

## Ashwin says Rahane brought calmness in dressing room

**Melbourne, Dec. 29:** Ajinkya Rahane brought calmness in the dressing room in the absence of regular captain Virat Kohli, spinner Ravichandran Ashwin said on Tuesday after India recorded an epic series-leveling win in the second Test, here.

Shot out for a record low score of 36 in their second innings in the lost pink-ball Test at Adelaide, India came into the blockbuster MCG Test with Kohli who is on paternity leave.

But the team under Rahane showed resilience to bounce back, effecting an extraordinary turnaround to level the four-match series 1-1.

"Getting bowled out for 36 was never going to be easy. We are quite a proud cricketing country and losing Virat was a bit of a setback," the star-off-spinner told 7 cricket.

"...but we stuck on really well. Jinks' calmness in the dressing room really provided us that stability to go out there

and express ourselves in this game."

Down 0-1, India received further setback after fiery pacer Mohammed Shami was ruled out because of a fracture to his bowling arm.

But Rahane's bold captaincy stood out from day one itself when he pressed in Ashwin in the 11th over with the ball still new, possibly to use the off-spinner's psychological upper hand over the Aussies batters in the pink ball Test.

— PTI

## MELBOURNE, INDIA'S MOST SUCCESSFUL VENUE AWAY FROM HOME

■ With fourth victory in 14 Tests at Melbourne Cricket Ground. It became India's most successful venue away from home.

■ Previously they had won three Tests each at Queens Park Oval (Trinidad), Sabina Park (Jamaica) and at the Sinhalese Sports Club Ground in Colombo. No other team apart from England has won more than three matches at the MCG.

■ It was only third instance of teams coming back from 0-1

down to win the second Test in Australia in the last 50 years. The West Indies came back from 0-1 to win at the WACA, Perth in 1975-76. After that, it was New Zealand in 2011 in Hobart.

■ The last team that won back-to-back Tests at the MCG were Pakistan in 1979 and 1981, and before that India in 1977 and 1980.

■ No Australian batsmen scored fifty in this match. It is first time in 32 years when no Australian

batsman scored a fifty in a Test match at home. Incidentally, that was also at the MCG against the West Indies.

■ In the last thirty years, away from home, this has happened to Australia only three times.

■ Mohammed Siraj took 5/77 runs in the match. It was second best match figures for overseas debutants in Australia.

■ Sri Lanka's Lasith Malinga (6/92) is the only bowler to have taken more than Siraj's five wick-

ets in such a scenario. Only four Indian pacers have taken more wickets on debut away from home than Siraj.

■ Marcus Harris' 70 in Sydney last year was the highest score for an Australian batsmen in last six Test matches between India and Australia in Australia. Since the start of 2016 there have been just two batsmen who have scored Test centuries for Australia against India — Steven Smith (three) and Glenn Maxwell (one).

— S. PERVEZ KAISER