nicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA VISAKHAPATNAM | SUNDAY | 17 JANUARY 2021



Rainfall: Nil Forecast: Fog.





(+15,886)(+202)

1,52,288 1,05,57,646 STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+249)(+1)TS: 2,91,367 1,575 (+0)(+114)AP: 8,85,824 7,139

CASES AROUND THE WORLD



219

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttarayana Tithi: Pushya Shuddha Chavithi till Star: Purvabhadra full day Varjyam: 12.58 pm to 2.40 pm

Durmuhurtam: 4.29 pm to 5.14 pm Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm **HIJRI CALENDAR** Jamadi- ul- Akhir 3,1442 AH **PRAYERS**

> Fajar: 5.50 am **Zohar:** 1.30 pm **Asar:** 4.45 pm Maghrib: 6.15 pm

> > Isha: 8.15 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.31 AM SUNSET TODAY 5.42 PM **MOONRISE** TODAY 9.00 AM **MOONSET TOMORROW 8.45 PM**

COUNTER POINT



My WhatsApp chats were leaked to my wife!

SHORT TAKES

₹1,000 crore seed fund for startups

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday announced the launch of ₹1,000-crore 'Startup India Seed Fund' to support startups and help budding entrepreneurs pursue innovative ideas. Addressing the 'Prarambh: Startup İndia International Summit' Modi exuded confidence

that the growth of startups will help in generating jobs and improving lives of people in the region.

WhatsApp delays privacy policy

New Delhi: WhatsApp has decided to delay the rollout of its new policy update to May 15 after massive criticism from users globally, including India, over concerns that data was being shared with its parent company Facebook. The move assumes significance for users in India given that the country is among the biggest markets for WhatsApp with over 400

INSIDE

NATION... PAGE 4 **'Pak pushing militants** even during winter

WORLD... PAGE 5 **UN's 1st step to elect** next chief by Jan. 31





WORLD 5

Laschet elected to lead Merkel's party

SPORTS 7

Kerala's Azharuddeen is new T20 hitman



Vol. 36 No. 233 Established 1938 | 16 pages | ₹6.00

Vaccine will give decisive win: PM

Health minister Vardhan sees 'beginning of end' for Covid after nationwide vaccine launch

VINEETA PANDEY WITH inputs from agencies NEW DELHI, JAN, 16

India Saturday on launched the world's biggest vaccination drive in which about three crore healthcare and frontline workers, including security forces, will be the first to get vaccinated against the deadly Covid-19 virus which has infected over 1.05 crore people and claimed 1.52 lakh lives in nine months.

According to reposts, over 1.91 lakh people were inoculated with Covaxin and Covishield vaccines at 3,351 session sites across India on Day 1.

The Union health ministry said there were no cases of post-vaccination hospitalisation so far but reports said that in Maharashtra, where 14,000 people received the first dose of the vaccine, 14 people reported adverse

Officials and doctors are currently studying the cases and it is not known which vaccine received.

Launching the world's biggest vaccination drive against novel coronavirus. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday that the vaccination campaign of this scale is unprecedented in the history of mankind while Union health minister termed it the "beginning of the end of COVID-19".

"World hasn't seen a vac-cination drive of this level Mr Modi said. He said that there are only three countries — India, USA and China — who have the population of more than 30 crore.

"This scale of vaccination campaign has never been attempted in history and this shows India's capability," the Prime Minister said.

'These vaccines will ensure a decisive victory for India against coronavirus," Modi said.

Expressing "tremendous relief. Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said, "We have won the battles against polio and smallpox. Now we have reached the decisive phase of winning the war against coronavirus. This is the beginning of the end of Covid. Vaccine will be remembered like Sanjeevani for clinching

Expressing gratitude to frontline Corona warriors, PM said they are getting priority as those "who

Frontline workers, were among the first people to get injected with the vac-

the victory over Covid." need the vaccine the most will get it first."

THIS SCALE of vaccination campaign has never

sole responsibility

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

been attempted in history and this shows India's capability.

> NARENDRA MODI, Prime Minister

DETERMINATION OF SELF-RELIANT INDIA, SAYS SHAH

Bhadravathi (Karnataka), Jan. 16: India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has fought the most successful battle against coronavirus in the world, and with the beginning of the vaccination drive, the country has taken the fight against the pandemic to a final stage, Union home minister Amit Shah said on Saturday. "The whole world for about a year has been fighting against Covid, many people have lost lives. This was probably one of the toughest fights that humanity has fought, using knowledge, innovations and mutual coopera-

tion," Shah said. Speaking after laying the foundation stone of a new battalion campus of the Rapid Action Force (RAF) here, he said he was happy to state that India under Prime Minister Modi's leadership has fought the most successful battle against Covid-19 in the



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy watches as the vaccination drive is in progress at the New Government General Hospital premises in Vijayawada on Saturday.

Female sanitation worker is first to get vaccine in state

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 16

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the Covid-19 vaccination programme at the government hospital around 11.30

am here on Saturday.

A female sanitation
worker, B. Pushpa
Kumari, was the first get the dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. Five persons were given the vaccine in the presence of the Chief Minister. Krishna district immunisation officer Dr S. Sermista administered the first dose of vaccine to the

sanitation worker followed by female nursing orderly Ch. Nagajothi, operation theatre assistant P. Jaya Kumar, Dr L. Praneetha and Dr B. Basaveswar. She also administered the vaccine to the Vice-Chancellor of Dr NTR University of Health Sciences, Dr P. Syama Prasad, and director of medical education Dr K. Venkatesh.

The Chief Minister enquired about the programme from health principal secretary Anil Kumar Singhal and health and family welfare commissioner K. Bhaskar. He also checked the cold chain and the vaccine veil preserved in it. Dr Sermista said, "I have taken the initiative with

the advice from Krishna Collector Md. Imtiaz, to administer the first dose to avoid any issue with regard to administration of the vaccine after finding the ANM entrusted with the task, feeling nervous to administer the vaccine. In order to avoid bringing disrepute to the vaccine itself. I have administered the vaccine to seven people." Each veil of vaccine

and each beneficiary will be given 0.5 ml with auto disable syringe which means it collects only 0.5 ml dose of the vaccine implying that each veil would be used for 10 beneficiaries. State health authorities maintain that they carried the programme out at 332 session sites at the rate of 100 beneficiaries each on the first day. From Sunday, the vaccine will be given at 42,450 session sites.

will have five ml quantity

■ Page 3: No adverse reaction yet to vaccination

PM CITES TELUGU POET GURAJADA TO DENY VACCINE **FOR POLITICIANS**

BALU PULIPAKA I DC HYDERABAD, JAN. 16

Any vestigial hopes of elected representatives that they could cut the line and get the Covid-19 vaccination on priority effectively ended on Saturday, the first day of the nation wide vaccination drive that Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched.

Modi put paid to even the remotest of hopes that many political leaders harboured of breaking the queue, by declaring that the first priority was and would be vaccinating healthcare workers who were the frontline defence against Covid-19.

For good measure, he quoted from *Desamunu* Preminchumanna, the famous Telugu playwright Gurajada Appa Rao's extremely popular poem, to drive home the message of the importance of putting the interests of others ahead of one's own.

Modi, during his nationally televised address. quoted the verse that goes: Swantha laabhamu kontha manuko, poruguvaani ki thodupadavoi, desamantay matti kadoi, desaman tay manushuloi. Translating it for non-Telugu speaking audiences across the country, Modi said: Yaani, hum doosron kay kaam aayen, yeh niswardh bhaav hamaaray bheetar

rahna chahiyay. Gurajada Apparao, who lived between 1862 and Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh and lived in nearby Vizianagaram. Among his writings. Kanyasulkam, written in 1892 is the most popular.

Vaccine drive turns Bharat Bio 'Phase 3' trial

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JAN. 16

The administration of 55 lakh doses of Covaxin, the Bharat Biotech vaccine ordered by the Centre as part of the Covid-19 vaccination drive, could well mean that a massive government mandated trial is underway for the vaccine that is yet to officially complete its Phase III trials. When its "emergency

use" was approved by the government, it was done

DC CORRESPONDENT

Cashing in on the huge

demand for meat of roost-

ers, locally known as Kosa,

that sustain injuries or die

during the Sankranti cock-

fights, their prices have touched ₹5,000 to ₹7,000 per

kg. Sankranti gamecocks

are nurtured carefully

with heavy diets through-

out the year to help them

gain immunity and power.

Enthusiasts of the 'sport'

compete with one another

to grab the flesh and enjoy

the rooster's meat, which

According to cockfight

competition rules, the

owner of the rooster that

wins a fight also owns the

dead 'competitor'. The owner auctions the dead

has a unique taste.

VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 16

"clinical under trial

mode" What this meant became evident on Saturday when those receiving the vaccine in several states according to media reports, were asked to sign a consent form agreeing to be part of such a clinical

In the consent form, Bharat Biotech says the vaccine is being offered in a clinical trial mode and that in Phase I and II of the trials the vaccine demonstrated ability to produce antibodies to Covid-19.

"However, the clinical efficacy is yet to be established and it is still being studied in phase 3 clinical trial." the form read. Telangana state Director

of Health Services Dr G. Srinivasa Rao said that Covaxin was not used in the state on Saturday, and Serum Institute of India's Covisheild was administered to frontline workers.

He had said on Friday

said that anyone receiving Covaxin will be monitored closely for seven days after vaccination.

When a reporter asked him if Covishield recipients too would be monitored like Covaxin recipients, he said as per the existing protocol, this was not required.

Elsewhere, managing director of Bharat Biotech International Ltd.. Suchitra Ella tweeted: Covaxin Biotech is truly humbled &

honoured to be of service to the nation & the fraternity of all first responders of Covid who have served public health.'

A PTI report from Delhi said health workers who got their first shots of Covaxin at AIIMS were made to sign the consent form that promised compensation in case of a "severe adverse event" related to the vaccine.

"The compensation for a serious adverse event will be paid by sponsor (Bharat Biotech) if the SAE is proven to be causally related to the vaccine, the form

Authorities said in case of any adverse event, the affected person will be promedically-recognised standard of care in the government-designated hospitals, according to PTI. The

recipients were given a factsheet and a form to report adverse effects within seven days.

FARMERS URGE NEW SC PANEL TO REVIEW LAWS

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, JAN. 16

Two days ahead of the Supreme Court's hearing on the ongoing farmers agitation, a farmers' union on Saturday urged the top court to withdraw the three members of the committee set up by it on January 12 to resolve the impasse over the three contentious farm laws and appoint members who are impartial, not aligned with any political party and have the trust and goodwill of the

farmers. The plea by Bhartiya Kisan Union (Lokshakti) also sought the presence of a former top court judge on the reconstituted committee.

COCKFIGHT ORGANISERS TO FACE CONTEMPT OF COURT CASES SOON

TASTY | TREAT | Kosas are free from fat, have tremendous demand

Fighter rooster meat ₹7K/kg

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, JAN. 16

Animal lovers are set to file contempt of court cases against all those involved in organising the banned cockfights during Sankranti and also expose the failure of the government in curbing cock-

rooster instantly. As soon

as a gamecock is dead, all

its feathers are removed.

making the best bid.

fights and other gambling

In order to do this, they are gathering videos and photographs of the cockfights that were organised to substantiate their arguments in court.

■ Page 2: Police did not book cockfight organisers

the bird is grilled and handed over to the one in some quarters, Kosa Kosas are free from fat has tremendous demand

curries are served with pride to the newlywed

with people willing to part with an extra buck to get

the flesh. Incidentally, as a matter of an established tradition

Sankranti. A rooster trainer, R. Venkatraju, said that

roosters are fed with cashew, almonds, mutton and other highpower diets. He said that roosters undergo training in swimming and are made to perform other exercises to boost their stamina. He said that they are priced between ₹50,000 and ₹2 lakh depending on their robustness and fighting skills. He said that Kosa meat is luscious, which is the reason many are willing to pay higher prices and also for the fact that it is available only once in a

■ Page 2: Meat lovers don't mind the cost

Kurnool airport gets DGCA nod

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL, JAN. 16

The Director of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has granted licence to Andhra Pradesh Airports Development Corporation Limited (APDCL) to open Kurnool airport (Orvakal)

for public use. With this development, the last hurdle for commencement of commercial operations has been cleared, said an Airport Authority of India (AAI) official. Indigo Airlines has been selected as private operator under UDAAN-4 scheme and there are plans to operate Chennai, Visakhapatnam Bengaluru from February or March, a source said

The airport is $350~\mathrm{km}$ from Vijayawada and 360 km from Bengaluru. The nearest major international airport is Hyderabad, which is about 200

km away. The Orvakal airport is spread over 970 acres and is at a distance of 20 km

from Kurnool. It has four parking bays The airport can operate the ATR-72/ Q-400 categorv of aircraft. For firefighting and rescue operations, the airport has two Rosenbauer airfield crash fire tenders (ACFTs) and an ambulance besides an Advanced Air Traffic Advisory System

> ■ Page 2: Long lease to build hangar, infra

CAPITAL ISSUE LONG LEASE TO **BUILD HANGAR,**

From page 1

The successful bidder will get a long-term lease for construction of hangar, building, facilities and other infrastructure.

Given the increase in air traffic at Bengaluru and Hyderabad airports, the scope for running flight training operations at these airports is becoming difficult, and given the proximity of Orvakal to both these locations, the possibility of setting up these facilities at Kurnool is advantageous to all sides, aviation

YSR ARCHITECTURE UNIV INTRODUCES BFA COURSES

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, JAN. 16

University Architecture and Fine Arts released its notification of the entrance test for Bachelor of Interior Design (B.Des) and BFA fine arts, sculpture, painting, applied arts and photography courses.

Jawaharlal Nehru Architecture and Fine Arts University (JNAFAU), in Hyderabad, was revised and established as a State University in Kadapa as per the 10th Schedule as part of the State Partition Act. Notification of admissions has now been issued for the fouryear Bachelor of Fine Arts

Art and Design Common Entrance Test (ADECT) will be conducted for admissions to these courses. A notification to this effect was issued on Saturday. The entrance test will be held on February 10,

and the results will be revealed on February 12.
YSR University of Architecture and Fine Arts Vice-Chancellor Professor D. Vijay Kishore said the fouryear BFA courses were introduced to provide more employment courses to the youth.

Bachelor of Interior designing and animation course has 60 seats and sculpture, painting, applied arts and photography courses will contain 40 seats each he said. For more details about this he was advised to contact http://sche.ap.gov.in/ADCET or www.ysrafu.ac.in websites. The last date for receiving applications for the entrance test is 2 February 2021

GIVE UP DOUBLE STANDARDS ON DIVIS. SAYS CPM

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, JAN. 16

CPM state secretary P. Madhu demanded that the state government give up its double standards on the proposed pharma unit being established by Divis Group in Thondangi mandal of East Godavari dis-

He wanted the government to cancel all permissions given to the company for establishing its pharma unit in the area

The CPM leader told media here on Saturday that during TD regime, YSRC led by then opposition party chief Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had supported left parties and people of the area on not letting Divis establish a pharmaceutical factory at the place.

Madhu pointed out that the area is lush green with hundreds of hatcheries providing direct employment to more than 20,000 people in the area. People of the area are against the pharma unit, as it would pollute the area.

He said police have booked cases against 160 people for agitating against the unit, 36 of whom have been arrested and even jailed. State industries minister M. Gowtham Reddy had promised that all cases will be lifted, but people are still confined to jail, he pointed

The CPM leader said while people are agitating against the unit, the government wants to encourage the company in establishing a unit in the area. CPM will not allow such a thing to happen at any cost, he maintained.

Madhu criticised the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Jana Sena for adopting double standards on the issue.

He charged that Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has given permission to the pharma unit as per instructions of BJP leaders at the centre.

He maintained that if BJP or Jana Sena are firm on doing justice to people of the area, they should ask central BJP leaders to clearly state that the unit will not be established in Thondangi mandal.

Attacks on temples a political conspiracy, claims Rambabu

YSRC spokesperson says Chandrababu Naidu has no respect for any religion

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 16

YSR Congress has alleged attacks on temples in the state are a political con-spiracy to defame YSRC government. YSRC MLA and party state official spokesperson Ambati Rambabu has alleged that having lost hopes of regaining power, Telugu Desam has started a poisonous propaganda against YSRC government to gain political advantage at the cost of harming religious harmony.

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, Rambabu affirmed that YSRC has no religion or caste. It has no need to incite communal disputes across the state. He charged that TD and BJP leaders are trying to create a rift within the state along religious lines to benefit politically.

The YSRC spokesperson said Chandrababu Naidu has no respect for any religion and soon his party's role in temple attacks will be revealed. He questioned why Chandrababu Naidu is not talking about his party member Akhilapriya, who has arrested been Telangana police in a kiď

napping case. Meanwhile, Water resources minister P. Anil Kumar Yadav objected to Telugu Desam's criticism of AP DGP for revealing the truth about cadres of Telugu Desam and BJP being involved in attacks on temples to defame the YSRC government.

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, he pointed out that police investigations have already solved nine cases wherein TD and BJP cadres have been involved in attacks against temples in an attempt to create a religious and caste divide. Anil Kumar asserted

that YSRC government has spent about Rs. 80,000 crore on welfare activities, which have benefitted 4.5 crore people of the state.

Unable to digest the popularity of the state government, TD has started conspiracies to defame the YSRC government, he remarked.

The minister alleged Chandrababu Naidu has a history of performing pooand other traditional rituals wearing shoes, without any devotion or respect for Gods or Hindu religion. He recalled that tantric rituals performed at Kanakadurga temple and Srikalahasti during the TD regime.

Anil Kumar Yadav said tion to nab the real culwhile police are conducting an impartial investigation to nab the real culprits, TD leaders have started making false alle-

DC CORRESPONDENT

The parliamentary com-

mittee from the department of rural develop-

ment visited Chittoor dis-

trict to observe the imple-

mentation of various cen-

tral government welfare schemes in the rural areas

The team headed by Chairperson Prathap Rao

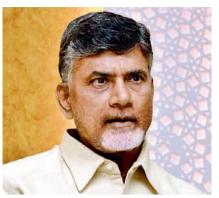
TIRUPATI, JAN. 16

under the region.



P. Anil Kumar Yadav

 WATER RESOURCES minister P. Anil Kumar Yadav alleged that Chandrababu Naidu has a history of performing pujas and other traditional rituals wearing shoes, without any devotion or respect for Gods or Hindu religion.



N. Chandrababu Naidu

 NAIDU SAID the coming Tirupati by-election will be a golden opportunity for people of the state to put an end to non-stop atrocities unleashed on people by the Jagan Mohan Reddy government.

Gorantla finds fault SIT CHIEF INSPECTS with police action

DC CORRESPONDENT

Rajamahendravaram Rural MLA Gorantla Butchaiah Chowdary found fault with police over arrest of Telugu Desam and Bharatiya Janata Party leaders after Lord Vinavaka's idol was disfigured at Venkatagiri-2 colony in Pidimgoyyi panchayat of village ` Rajamahendravaram Rural mandal in East Godavari district.

The TD legislator said as soon as the incident took place, he had contacted Bommuru police, requested them to take immediate action and not give any scope for damaging senti-ments of Hindus. However, on Sankranti day, police arrested his personal assistant Sandeep and TD leader Vallepalli Prasad Chowdary, apart from BJP Adapa and Karuturi Prasad Srinivasa Rao under non-

bailable sections.
Condemning the arrests,
he said the ruling party
government has booked false cases against opposition party leaders and cadre who have only highlighted its wrongdoings.

Buchaiah Chowdary also met Bommuru police hendravaram superintendent police and expressed his resentment against the arrests. He, along with former chairman Godavari Ur Urban

and members T. Rangaiah,

Anantapur MP, Sujith Kumar, Odisha MP,

Smasher, Punjab MP and Nazeer Ahmed, J&K MP

observed the implementa-

tion of schemes in Pulicherla mandal. They

also inspected the water

sheds constructed under PMKSY and NREGS

Diguvapokalavari palle in

Pulicherla mandal.

and NREGS

KAKINADA, JAN. 16

Gorantla Butchaiah

THE TD legislator said as soon as the incident took place, he had contacted Bommuru police, requested them to take immediate action and not give any scope for damaging sentiments of Hindus. However, on the Sankranti day, police arrested his personal assistant Sandeep and TD leader Vallepalli **Prasad Chowdary**

Development Authority Ganni Krishna, BC Corporation former chairman Palika Srinu and others told media on Saturday that Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has been unable to stop the attacks

on temples.

To cover up his failure, he is trying to book cases against opposition party is ready to launch a "Jail Bharo' programme to highlight the inefficiency of the government in dealing with attacks against

gations against police for the fear of getting

Chittoor under lens over welfare plan implementation

Ramachandra Reddy along with MP Mithun

Reddy and others wel-

comed the committee at

Pulicherla mandal. MP

Mithun has explained to

the committee about the

check dam constructed here under NREGS, farm

ponds and various meas-

ures taken up by the dis-

trict administration for

increasing the ground

Constituency

Kamalapuram

Railwaykodur

Mydukur

Proddutur

Pulivendula

Rajampeta

Rayachoti

Jammalamadugu 130

TEMPLE AT RAMATHEERTHAM

DC CORRESPONDENT

Special Investigation Team (SIT) chief and DIG G. V. G. Ashok Kumar, dealing with attacks on temples, inspected the temple where the idol of Lord Rama was desecrate ed at Ramatheertham in Nellimarla mandal Vizianagaram district.

Speaking on the occasion, the SIT chief said they are trying to trace the common features among all incidents. He vowed to unravel the mystery behind the attacks on temples. He said that they were taking support from police and other stakeholders to trace the culbehind attacks.

Ashok Kumar called upon people to share any information related to attacks on temples on

Earlier, the SIT chief reviewed the progress of the case with SP B. Raja Kumari.

The AP government had formed a Special Investigation Team, headed by additional director ACB, G.V.G. Ashok Kumar, to investigate offences relating to temples, including desecration of idols, in a Hurry from September 2020 across the state. The DGP issued a memo

constituting the SIT with 16 members including its chief and superintendent of police, Krishna district, M. Ravindranath Babu, additional SP, SIB, S. Sridhar, additional SP. CID, and L.V. Srinivasa Rao as members.

water level in the region.

Parliamentary team visit-

ed Suvvarapupalle, where they have observed the horticulture plantations

taken up under the NREGS project. The team

later inspected the Rythu Barosa Kendras and vil-lage secretariat buildings

The team also inquired

about the waste manage-

in Mathukuvaripalle.

Further,

DGP ACTING AS PER RULING PARTY ORDERS, **CHARGES NAIDU**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 16

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu has accused AP's Director General of Police of "acting under Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's direction, as per script provided by government advisor Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy".

Naidu said the coming Tirupati by-election will be a golden opportunity for people of the state to put an end to non-stop atrocities unleashed on people by the Jagan Mohan Reddy govern-

Addressing a meeting of party's Tirupati parliament segment leaders, the former chief minister accused AP DGP Goutam Sawang of not acting as per rule book, abiding by laws of the land.

Naidu claimed that on Bhogi day, DGP had said mad men have been responsible for temple attacks but changed his statement on Kanuma day, attributing the attacks to opposition par-

Leader Opposition charged that the state government remained complacent till 150 temples or idols were vandalised.

He alleged that it is YSRC activists who are actually responsible for attacks on temples to divert attention from cases that they are facing. He maintained that no cases had been filed against those who vandalised temples or damaged idols.

Instead, the state government has filed cases against TD leaders for vis-Ramatheertham. while no such thing was done when Rajya Sabha MP Vijaysai Reddy and YSRC leaders did the same and even went on to provoke crowds that had gathered there. Naidu wanted people to

treat Tirupati by-election as a referendum and a verdict against YSRC's misrule. He said people have already started revolting against the Jagan Mohan Reddy gov organised by TDP against the ruling party's misrule are getting a good response, including from the younger generation.

ment plant at Kalluru con-

structed under Solid Wealth Processing Cent-

res (SWPC) Commis-

sioner for Panchayat raj

and Rural Development

Girija Shankar, In-charge

Collector Markandeyulu, NREGS Director Chinna Thathaiah, JC (welfare) Rajasekhar, DRO Murali,

Tirupati RDO Kanaka

Narasa Reddy and others



Youngsters along with elders busy in conducting cockfights at an open land under Kailasagiri Hills at Appugarh

Cops did not book cases, say activists

From page 1

Though Section 144 is in force, the police could not control the crowds. They did not book cases against the organisers or people who participated in the

Animal Rescue Organisation (ARO) secretary Gopal R. Surabathula said that the High Court had clearly directed the collectors and superintendents of police of West Godavari, East Godavari, Krishna and Guntur districts to constitute joint inspection teams for each mandal, consisting of a police officer not below the rank of sub-inspector, tahsildar, and a represen-tative of either the Animal Welfare Board of India or a member of a non-governmental organisation espousing the cause of animals or persons involved in the prevention of cruelty to ani-

He said that the officials on being informed of the places where such playgrounds and cockpits have been formed, shall take immediate action to ensure that such playgrounds are not utilised for conducting cockfights, if needed, by exercising powers under section 144 CrPC. He said that during Sankranti this year, too, torture and cruelty towards birds were unabated and the authorities could not take steps to curb cockfights nor did

MEAT LOVERS DON'T MIND THE COST

From page 1

K. Venkateswara Rao, a fan of Kosa meat, said that a group of people like him went to arenas in Krishna, East and West Godavari districts and brought the flesh fresh off the block. He said that people who taste Kosa dishes would crave for it and do not mind the cost.

bookies and punters.

Despite the rule of establishing a wing of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) in all the districts, not a single SPCA has been constituted in the state, he said. He wondered why no action was taken during the three-day festival, and there was none to stop political leaders from inaugurating cockfights.

Superintendent of police of East Godavari Adnan Nayeem Asmi said that 1,014 persons were arrested, 452 cases registered and 875 cocks, 3,029 knives and ₹4,44,310 cash were seized. He said that all steps were taken to curb cockfights and other gambling games.

Meanwhile, alleged that there were no cases against owners who gave their land for lease to organisers of cockfights and tent-house



Proddatur TD incharge Prayeen Kumar and party leaders hand over financial assistance to Aparajitha, wife of Nandam Subbayya, on Saturday,

₹33 lakh given to TD leader's family

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, JAN. 16

Telugu Desam leaders handed over financial assistance of ₹33 lakh to family of TD leader Nandam Subbayya, who was killed last month in Proddatur, Kadapa district. Proddatur TD in-charge

Praveen Kumar, party state executive secretary Bachala Pullaya and other leaders handed over the money to Subbaiah's wife Aparajitha on Saturday.

On the occasion, Praveen Kumar said the murder of Nandam Subbayya was a deliberate political assassination. He blamed police for

ignoring the information provided by the leader's wife in the murder case. He said of the ₹33 lakh assistance provided to Subbayya's family, party national president Chandrababu Naidu gave ₹20 lakh, TD Proddatur incharge G. V. Praveen Kumar Reddy ₹5 lakh, former TTD chairman Putta Sudhakar Yadav ₹5 lakh, party politburo member Reddeppagari Srinivas Reddy ₹2 lakhs, and party state spokesperson and MLC B. Tech Ravi ₹1 lakh. Proddatur TD town president E. V. Sudhakar

Reddy and other leaders were present on the occa-

dal have received access to

4,418 villages in 807 gram panchayats of the district remain without water taps MISSION PANI Central Jal Jeevan Mission fails to achieve targets

Number amount of taps (in ₹Lakhs)

10,061

8,697

10,406

11,844

1458

9,458

21,576

24,804

346.9

229.61

249.92

385.21

498.12

82.34

352.26

948.03

836.63

WORKS IDENTIFIED UNDER ₹5

LAKH IN JAL JEEVAN MISSION

Number

of works

185

426

294

25

179

776

705

DC CORRESPONDENT KADAPA, JAN. 16

Central government-sponsored Jal Jeevan Mission to provide clean drinking water to all rural people has not progressed in Kadapa district as target-

Under the mission, the district should have installed total 1,05,922 drinking water taps in rural areas by the end of financial year 2020–21. But hardly 14,878 taps have been fixed. As a result, an overwhelming number of 4,418 villages in 807 gram panchayats of the district remain without water

mission has be planned to service 5,04,696 families with a population of 19,53,439. As of April ed to install 1,05,922 taps in

holds (59.56 per cent) have drinking water taps, according to the Rural Drinking Water Supply Another Department. 2,04,118 households (40.44 per cent) have not yet got the drinking water taps.

As per the Centre's action plan, Jal Jeevan Mission must be implemented 100 percent by 2024. An amount of Rs. 521.35 crore is required to complete a total of 3,248 works. Of this, the state authorities have given administrative sanction for Rs. 84.62 crore worth works in first instalment. It directed that works worth less than Rs. 5 lakh be initially completed with

nine constituencies except Kadapa town during 2020-21 at an estimated the sanctioned funds. Accordingly, It was decidcost of Rs. 39.29 crore. However, there has been a

2.932 residential areas in delay in coming up with guidelines for implementing the mission at the field Similarly, commencement of works has

also suffered due to lack of

clarity in procedures to be adopted for implementing the project. Judging by progress of works across the district, only 14,878 taps have been installed in nine months from April to December 2020. For example, while there are 8.120 houses in Vontimitta mandal of the district, only 4,135 households have got taps. Consequently, only

54.41 per cent of people in

the mandal are getting tap water. Further, while there are 9.401 houses

Chakrayapet hardly 1,999 houses have taps, new ones among them being 727. Only 29 percent of people in this mandal have taps. Of 9,201 residents in Sambepalli mandal, 2,449 houses have

drinking water. Rural Water Supply Department officials say Jal Jeevan Mission scheme has been launched to provide drinking water through taps to every household in the district. Owing to funding issues, authorities decided to undertake works costing less than ₹5 lakh in Phase I. Officials say of 1,05,922 taps, more than 14,000 have been installed, while the rest are in various stages of being connected.District collector Chevuru Harikiran has directed authorities to expedite the work as summer is fast approaching. He has been reviewing these works regularly to taps and with the new ones being 460. Thus, only 31.62 complete the Jal Jeeva Mission at a faster pace. complete the Jal Jeevan

CATCHES FIRE

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, JAN. 16

edible oil unit in Mandapeta of East Godavari District caught fire on Saturday. The company was closed for the Sankranti festival. According to District Fire and Disaster Department Officer Mr Ch. Ratna Babu, the company caught fire and the conveyor belt and other tubes connected to the belt were burnt in the fire. Receiving the information, the fire fighting vehicles reached the spot and doused the fire. The cause of the fire is yet to

ONE KILLED, TWO INJURED IN CLASH AT A WINE SHOP

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, JAN. 16

One died and two others suf fered injuries in a clash between two groups over a petty issue at a wine shop near Inamadugu centre in Kovvuru mandal of Nellore district late on Friday.

According to Nellore rural DSP P. Haranath Reddy, the deceased N. Surendra (45), who worked at FCI godowns in Venkatachalam mandal, went to a wine shop at Inamadugu centre along with his close relative G. Vara Prasad on a motorbike and parked it in front of the shop.

Some local residents of including Inamadugu Manohar, Nagaraju, Vishnu and Raja, who visited the same wine shop, kicked the motorbike of Vara Prasad. The incident triggered a verbal clash between the two groups and further turned violent when both groups attacked each

In the clash, Manohar and Nagaraju and two others attacked Surendra and Vara Prasad with sticks. Surendra, who received severe injuries in the incident, has died after reaching his home late on

Friday night. Based on the complaint lodged by Vara Prasad, police registered a murder case against the accused, who were also booked under SC/ST act. The police have started a search operation to nab Manohar and his group members and further investigation

SURPLUS CARGO WILL GO TO DEEP WATER PORT: JC

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, JAN. 16

Joint collector (JC) G. Lakshmisha said surplus cargo at the anchorage port will be handled by deep water port without affecting anchorage port workers. The JC was speaking at a meeting with AP Maritime Board chief executive officer N. P. Ramakrishna Reddy, Rice Exporters Association representatives and leaders of Anchorage Port Workers Union, apart from labour department officials. Lakshmisha said huge quantities of rice are being exported from Kakinada anchorage port to other countries. However, the central govern-

ment has ordered that that the capacity of Kakinada Port be increased by speeding up handling of cargo. As part of it, any additional cargo at the anchorage port will now be handled by Kakinada Deep Water Port. The JC wanted leaders of workers' unions to get back with their opinion on the decision on Monday. Port in-charge Raghavulu, Rice Exporters Association Exporters Association President B. V. Krishna Rao, Cocanada Chamber of Commerce president V. V. Raghavulu, Labour Department assistant commis

sioner M. Bulli Rani, HMS secretary Palika Srinu and others attended the meeting.
AP Maritime Board chief

executive officer Ramakrishna Reddy told Deccan Chronicle that rice exports have increased so much that only the anchorage port cannot handle the same. Therefore, the state government has decided to permit such cargo to be handled by the deep water port. The anchorage port will be given priority for up to seven ships. However, if the number of ships is more than this figure, the cargo will be handled by the deep water port. Ramakrishna Reddy recounted that the anchorage port can handle cargo up to only 4 million tonnes. But the quantity of cargo has reached to 6 million tonnes. Surplus cargo is thus being handled by

the deep water port.

AP administers Covid-19 vaccine to 19,108 people

Nine cases of adverse events following immunisation

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 16

On the first day of the Covid-19 vaccination programme, 19,108 healthcare workers were given the Covishield vaccine by 8.30 pm and nine cases of adverse events following immunisation reported on Saturday.

State health authorities administered the vaccination in 332 session sites and covered 19,108 persons against the target of 31,570. They said the the Centre had given them the target to administer the vaccine at 143 session sites to 14,300 persons and they had crossed it. On the other hand, the

health authorities reported cases of AEFI (adverse event following immunisation), one each Vijayawada and Anantapur, two in Nellore and five in Kurnool. In Anantapur government hospital, a woman health worker identified as Akhila developed giddiness soon after administration of the Covid-19 vaccine and started vomitings. She was immediately given medication and

The authorities admitted her in the hospital and kept her under observation as a precautionary measure. In Nellore district, a woman nurse developed giddiness after administration of Covid-19 vaccine at the community health centre

at Kota. At Kavali, a doctor developed giddiness after getting the vaccine at the area hospital. Both of them returned to normal after some time.

In Kurnool district, five healthcare workers in different cases developed nausea after getting the vaccine at a primary health centre at Nannuru

all through the day. In Vijayawada government hospital, a woman sanitation worker, Radha Krishna, developed giddiness and fainted soon after taking the vaccine. Health authorities treated her and she recovered in about 15 minutes. Sources said that she had not eaten in the morning before taking the vaccine and might have fainted due to weakness. She later had her lunch. Health authorities said she might have vasovagal response to certain trig-

State health authorities administered the vaccination in 332 session sites and covered 19,108 persons against the target of 31,570, given by the Centre government.



Health workers show the victory sign after vaccination at the Urban health centre in Vijayawada on Saturday.

Covid-19 Vaccination programme in INHS

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, JAN. 16

District Collector V. Vinay Chand launched the Covid-19 vaccination programme at an urban primary health centre at Chinna Waltair Saturday.

Later, he told the media persons that the district had received 46,500 doses of the vaccine and added that on the first day, they started vaccination at 32 session sites to administer the vaccine to the healthcare workers.

He stated that they had also identified 221 session sites for administration of the vaccine.

Collector announced that in phase-II, they would be administering the vaccine to frontline warriors including personnel from departments like police, revenue, munici-

panchayat raj. In phase-III, those who crossed 50 years of age and those aged below 50 years and suffering from multiple health complications to be given the vaccine, he added.

In a related development, the Eastern Naval FOC-in-C Command vice-admiral Atul Kumar Jain launched the Covid-19 vaccination pro-gramme for healthcare workers at INHS Kalyani here on Saturday. Forty healthcare work-

ers, including doctors, nurses, para-medical staff and others were administered the Covid-19 vaccine in coordination with district health authorities. The authorities have set up a state-ofthe art vaccination centre at NHS Kalyani, and the vaccination staff were given rigorous training to ensure incipal administration and dent-free vaccination.

NO MAJOR REACTION YET TO VACCINATION

FROM PAGE 1

The State government is administering the Covishield vaccine as it received 4.77 lakh doses and though 20,000 doses of Covaxin have also been received, the gov-ernment wanted to start the programme with Covishield until it receives further doses of Covaxin. The beneficiary has to be given the vaccine of the same company 28 days apart.

Health authorities say that on the first day of vaccination programme, 16,963 persons were given the vaccine at all 332 session sites in the state by 5.50 pm against the targeted 32,739 bene-

ficiaries. Health director Dr T. Geetha Prasadini said, "So far we have not received any single adverse case following immunisation. Sunday onwards, there will be more session sites in order to administer the vaccine to more registered beneficiaries.

targeted to administer a vaccine to 3.87 lakh healthcare workers who registered in Co-WIN app by January 12 in phase-I and registration for the second phase of vaccine for frontline workers from departments like police, municipal administration, panchayat raj up to January 25.

Ferry challenge to enforcement agencies

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL, JAN. 16

Nandikotkur Kolhapur across Krishna for ensuring Sinngotam Jathara is a test for police and revdepartments.

Singotam Jathara starts

from January 18.
The district administration has been strictly warned the people do not travel by boat across the River Krishna to attend the Singotam Jatara to be organized from January 18 to 20. Divided by Krishna River the villagers in Nandikotkur assembly segment of Kurnool district take a very risky journey to attend Singotam Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple for the annual Jathara every year. Singotam is located in Kollapur taluka of Telangana state and the other side of the River. Thousands of families

on the river banks in Kurnool district side

have close relationships and participating in Singotam Jatara is a big event in their life regularly for the past few decades. If villagers go by boat across River Krishna it will just take half an hour with a cost small like below Rs. 100. But now as boat riding is prohibited by the government in view of regular tragedies, it takes at least 4 hours to reach Singotam by bus or private travel via Kurnool city. But very few people are willing to go by bus, Sreeramulu, a Mucchumarri villager said.

DSP Atmakur Shruthi said that police in coordination with revenue are on alert to prevent the boat journey across the River because it is unsafe for the people to travel with unfit boats. RTC authorities have been asked to provide more buses to travel during the three-day Singotam However this time tough measures are taken to

ensure no boat riding on

Krishna River, she added. Recalling the earlier tragedy, the nightmare Singotam Jatara during 2007 is still hunting the people of two Telugu speaking states. The tragedy occurred on 19th January, 2007 due to capsizing of a boat in Krishna River that claimed 61 lives, who were returning to their native place in Andhra Pradesh after enjoying the Singotam Jatara at Kollapur constituency in Telangana State. The incident took place due to heavy boarding of people into the boat. In place of 20 around 70 people were said to have boarded the boat. Despite having no other alternative transportation, people have to shelter the boats to cross the river by baiting their lives. The people demand construction of Siddeswaram Bridge to avoid boat tragedies in Krishna River which would connect Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

IMA AP UNIT TO PROMOTE COVID VACCINE

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 16

The Indian Medical Association Andhra Pradesh to promote the Covid vaccine by dispelling many myths and fears and bad propaganda regarding the safety and efficacy of the government-approved Covid vaccine in the country.

In a statement on Saturday, the members of IMA AP said that they have about 3.5 lakh modern medicine doctors spread along 1,800 branches across the country. IMAAP president. Subramanyam, president-elect Dr Srinivasa Raju and secretary Dr G Nanda Kishore said that the IMA being a professional body of modern medicine accepts the challenge of putting Covid vaccination on the track. They said that IMA is already on the move to promote Covid vaccines namely the Covishield and Covaxin

developed in India.

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AP RECORDS 114 FRESH CASES OF COVID-19

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 16

Andhra Pradesh registered 114 fresh cases of Covid-19 and no death in the last 24 hours. health

State authorities issued Covid-19 bulletin on Saturday reporting that out of 25,542 samples tested, 114 persons were found infected with Covid-19. Out of a total number of 1,25,40,181 samples tested so far, 8,85,824 persons were found infected with Covid-19 and of them, 8,76,698 were recovered in the course of treat-ment while 1,987 are still active with the virus. Among the daily cases

of Covid-19, Chittoor registered the highest number of 24 followed by 22 in Visakhapatnam, 13 in East Godavari, 12 in Krishna, 10 in Nellore, eight in Kurnool, six each in Guntur and Srikakulam, four in West Godavari, three each in Anantapur

Anantapur and Vizianagaram, two in Kadapa and one in Prakasam. The state health authorities discharged 326 Covid-19 infected patients after recovery.

INDIAN VACCINE IS SAFE, SAYS **MEKAPATI**

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, JAN. 16

Minister for Industries and IT Mekapati Gautam Reddy informed that the vaccination process has started in Nellore district at 26 centres, where 100 health staff members would be vaccinated on each day at each centre. The Minister along

with Nellore rural MLA Sridhar Reddy and Collector Chakradhar Babu observed the vaccination process in Nellore on Saturday. Speaking to media persons here, Mekapati Gautam Reddy felt happy that India has developed the vaccine for the Covid-19 and is able to supply it to other

Speed up process for aluminium unit

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, JAN. 16:

Industries Minister Mekapati Gautam Reddy directed the officials concerned to speed up the land acquisition process meant for Utkarsha Aluminium Dhatu Nigam Limited factory, proposed in Kodavalur Mandal of Nellore district.

The Minister, on Saturday, reviewed with the officials and the company representatives at his camp office in Nellore. Addressing the meeting, Mr Reddy told the officials to pay a good compensation to the farmers, who handed over lands for the project. He also asked the officials to take necessary measures for acquiring additional land, if necessary, for the project.

He directed the officials to promote allied industries in the region, attached to the main unit. He asked the offi-

cials to discuss with APIIC for providing basic amenities like water and electricity to the project and also instructed the District Collector Chakradhar Babu to resolve court cases with the help of Attorney General services.
The Minister further

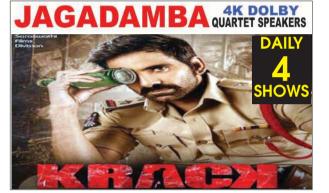
interacted with the representatives of Utkarsha Aluminium and enquired about the special purpose vehicle created for setting up the Midhani unit. He also sought details related to the investment of the unit, direct and indirect employment to be generated with government sector industry owned by the Department of Defence.

DRDO Chairman Mr G Satish Reddy told the officials to discuss with various departments including electricity and others for the quick establishment of the

3-YEAR-OLD DIES AS AUTO OVERTURNS

TIRUPATI: A three-year-old boy died and three others injured after the auto-rick shaw, in which they were travelling overturned near Balijapalli under Thamballapalle mandal in Chittoor district. According to the

identified as Harsha Vardhan, hailing from Chowdeswari nagar in Madanapalle town. His mother was taking him to their relatives' house in Balijapalli on Saturday, when the incident



Municipal Administration Department Mangalagiri Municipality e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

Roc.No:1187/2020/E1 Dt:12-01-2021 Online Tenders are invited through e-Platform from the eligib

contractors for following work. NIT No:40/JTO/2020-21 Estimate Cost: Rs.580.00 Lakhs No.of Works: 7 Works

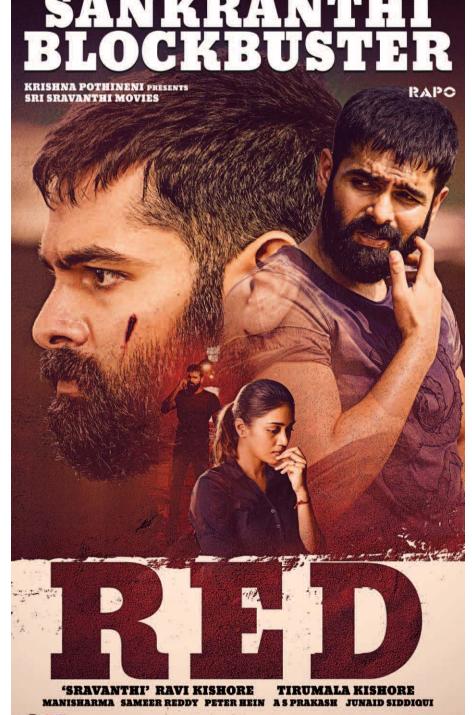
Name of the Work: Mangalagiri Municipality - Construction and Renovation of YSR Urban Health Clinic Buildings under Special Grant Funds.

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IN BRIEF

BIHAR ROPES IN 'BICYCLE GIRL' AS AMBASSADOR

Patna, Jan. 16: The Bihar government has chosen 'bicy cle girl' Jyoti Kumari, who had pedalled 1,200 km from Gurugram to Darbhanga tak-ing her injured father on the rear carrier during the nationwide lockdown, as the Brand Ambassador for an anti-drug abuse programme, an official

The state government has selected the 15-year-old "real life hero" to sharpen its campaign against the use of narcotic drugs and intoxicants by youths, Dayanidhan Pandey, Director of Social Security Directorate said on Saturday.

"We could not have got any better choice than the girl who displayed exemplary courage to fight the adversity. Youths are falling prey to drugs and

she will inspire them against the practice," he said.

The official visited the girl's village in Darbhanga on Friday to appoint her as the brand ambassador of the programme and also gave as gramme and also gave a cheque of ₹50,000 to her.

Kumari will be propagating the central government's National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction for 2018-2025 in Bihar. The programme formulated by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment aims at reduction of adverse consequences of drug abuse through a multi-

BJP NAMES SHAHNAWAZ ITS MLC CANDIDATE

New Delhi/Patna, Jan. 16: Former Union minister and BJP's national spokesperson Syed Shahnawaz Hussain was named by the party on Saturday its MLC candidate from Bihar.

The announcement marks Hussain's return to electoral politics, albeit to the state level, for the first time since 2014 when he lost the Lok Sabha election from Bhagalpur. He was not given ticket in the 2019 polls. In the Atal Bihari Vajpayee

government, he had held the civil aviation portfolio among

other charges.

The party also named six more candidates for the legislative council polls in Uttar

Kunwar Manvendra Singh, Govind Narayan Shukla, Salil Bishnoi, Ashwini Tyagi, Dharmveer Prajapati and

Surendra Chaudhary. Polling for 12 legislative council seats in Uttar Pradesh and two in Bihar will be held on January 28

The win of BJP candidates in these seats is all but certain owing to the party's strength in respective state assemblies.

Two MLC seats in Bihar have been vacated after the elections of former state minister Vinod Narayan Jha to the assembly from Benipatti seat in Madhubani district and of former deputy chief minister Sushil Kumar Modi to Rajya

PLEA SEEKS FIR AGAINST MUNDE

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, JAN. 16

A petition has been filed in Bombay High Court against the Maharashtra social justice minister and NCP leader Dhananjay Munde claiming he hid facts in affidavits before the election commission of

The petitioner has sought registration of an FIR against Mr Munde, who has been embroiled in controversy over allegations of rape of a woman.

In his petition, social activist and president of Rashtriya Bhrashtachar Virodhi Janshakti Hemant Patil sought an FIR should be registered under Section 420 (cheating) of the Indian Penal Code against Mr Munde alleging that Munde suppressed mate rial facts pertaining to his family in the election affidavit submitted along with his nomination paper for 2019 State Assembly Election.

The petition claimed that the minister has hid information pertaining to his two children in an affidavit filed during the assembly elections. Therefore, it should be directed to file an FIR against Munde.

Mr. Patil has also claimed that in the affidavit in the year 2019, Mr Munde had mentioned that he has only two daughters. But he has hidden it from the Commission in an affidavit that he also has a son and a daughter from a live-in relationship partner.

THERE SHOULD **BE NO POLITICS OVER VACCINE, SAYS UDDHAV**

Differences within the MVA government in Maharashtra came to fore over the Covid vaccination drive in the state. While state health minister Rajesh Tope said the Centre has pro-vided inadequate supply vaccines

Maharashtra, chief minister Uddhav Thackeray said there should not be any politics over the vac-

Thackeray kickstarted the Covid vaccination drive at the BKC centre on Saturday. While speaking on the occasion, he allayed the talks of Maharashtra receiving step-motherly treatment from the Centre in the supply of Covid vaccine.

The quota of Covid vaccine has been fived

vaccine has been fixed by the central health department, so it is not right to doubt their intention. Just as all people in Maharashtra are equal to me as a Chief Minister, it should be the same for the Prime Minister, he quipped. Mr

Thackeray expressed confidence that the supply of vac-cines will increase after the rise in its produc-tion. The vaccines of couple of other compa-nies are in the final stage. Once they are approved, the supply

will increase, he added. However, Mr Tope reit-erated that Maharashtra has received less number of vaccines from the He "Maharashtra needs nearly 17.5 lakh doses of vaccines including the buffer stock. Of them, we have received only 9.72 lakh doses. It means the Centre has supplies only 55 per cent of stock."

On the first day of the vaccination drive, 28,500 people were inoculated

in Maharashtra.

In the state, the vaccine will be given on a priority basis with the first group having health care workers.

NO. OF DOLPHINS **IN CHILIKA LAKE INCREASES**

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, JAN, 16

Asia's largest brackish water lagoon Chilika has emerged one of the best suitable places for rare Irrawaddy dol-phins. The population of dolphins in the lake has increased to 156 in 2020 against 150 in 2019, Chilika Development Authority authorities informed on Saturday.

The increase in the

number of the dolphins came to the light after the CDA recently conducted the annual survey on the biodiversity of the lagoon, which is the largest lake along the east-coast of India.

The CDA authorities said that the present distribution range of Irrawaddy dolphins is only in Asia, from Chilika to Indonesia.



BHAGWAN PARAB | DC



A medic administers the first dose of Covishield vaccine to 87-year-old Dr. Asha Singhal, after the virtual launch of Covid-19 vaccination drive by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at South Mumbai Nair Hospital in Mumbai, on Saturday.

Delhi docs say no to Bharat Biotech shot, want Covishield

RML docs say Bharat Biotech vaccine is still undergoing stage III trials

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JAN 16

Dissent and controversies have started erupting with the first shot of the Covid-

19 vaccines in India.
In Delhi, the resident doctors of government-run Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital (RML), demanded they be administered Covishield (by Oxford-AstraZeneca-SII) and not the Covaxin (by Bharat Biotech) saying the Oxford vaccine has completed all three stages of trials as required under protocol while by the Bharat Biotech vaccine is undergoing stage-III trials.

emergency use authoriza-tion in the United Kingdom, Argentina and

The union government, however, tried to underplay apprehensions saying a lot of work had gone into the development of both products and both vac-The Prime Minister

asked people stay away from rumours and propaganda as these made-in-India vaccines have been approved for emergency use only after the scientists and experts were fully convinced about their safety and efficacy.

"Indian vaccine scien-Apart from India, tists, medical system, Covishield has also got Indian process and institu-

tional mechanism in this regard is trusted globally and this trust is earned with a consistent track record," the PM said as he pointed out that 60 per cent of children world over receive life-saving vaccines which are madein-India and pass through stringent Indian scientific

tests.
"We have come to know that the Covid vaccination drive is being conducted by the hospital today. Covaxin manufactured by Bharat Biotech is being preferred over Covishield manufactured by Serum Institute in our hospital. We would like to bring to your notice that the resi-

its roll out," the Residents Doctors' Association of RML said in a letter to the Medical Superintendent of the hospital, Dr AK Singh Rana, who himself took the Covaxin shot on Saturday.
At the RML hospital, a security guard was the first one to receive the

sive about the lack of com-

plete trial in case of Covaxin and might not

participate in huge num-

bers, thus, defeating the

purpose of vaccination.

We request you to vaccinate us with Covishield,

which has completed all stages of the trial before

Senior Congress leader Manish Tewari too raised questions over the emergency use approval grant-ed to Covaxin alleging it was done without due

"As vaccine roll out begins, it is all a bit puz-zling. India has no policy framework for authorising emergency use. Yet, two have approved for restricted use in emergency situa-tion," Mr Tewari tweeted. "COVAXIN is another story -- Approvals sans Due Process," he added.

Covaxin was also used in AIIMS, Delhi where its Director Dr Randeep Guleria and NITI Aayog member (health) Dr VK Paul took the shots.

MP: SECURITY GUARD FIRST TO GET VACCINE

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC

Hari Deb, a security guard of J P Hospital in Bhopal, on Saturday got the first shot of Covid-19 in Madhya

42-year-old old Deb was administered the vaccine in the J P Hospital Centre here immediately after Prime Minister Narendra Modi ended his vaccine address.

Mr Deb was presented a bouquet by senior officials of the state health department on the occa-

"I feel good. I feel elated that I have been chosen to get the first shot in the state", Mr Deb told reporters.

Similarly, in Chhattisgarh, sanitary worker of Dr B R Ambedkar hospital in Raipur, Tulsi Tandi became the first recipitate of Cavid 10 vaccine ent of Covid-19 vaccine

ODISHA: DRIVE STARTS WITH CLASS 4 STAFF

DC CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR, JAN. 16

Biranchi Nayak, a 51-year-old Class 4 employee of Capital Hospital, Bhubaneswar, received the first shot of Covid-19 vaccine. After Biranchi the director of the Capital Hospital, Dr Laxmidhar Sahoo, was administered the vaccine. Odisha's Covid-19 vac-

cination drive was formally launched from Capital Hospital in the presence of senior officials of the state govern-

ment. "I'm feeling quite well now. I did not experience any adverse effects or uneasiness. This vaccine has given me newfound confidence to serve the patients coming to this hospital with more dedication," said

Ex-CEO of BARC held in TRP scam, hospitalised

of TV ratings agency BARC who was arrested in the Television Rating Points (TRP) rigging case, has been admitted to the ICU of a hospital here after his sugar level shot up, officials said on Saturday.

His daughter took to Twitter to allege that he was tortured in prison, and appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and others to 'save his

Dasgupta, a diabetic, was rushed to the staterun J J Hospital here from the Taloja Central Prison in Navi Mumbai around mid-night after his blood sugar levels shot up, a prison official said.

He was admitted to the ICU and was on oxygen private hospital. support, the official said.

Mumbai, Jan. 16: Partho of Broadcast Audience Dasgupta, a former CEO Research Council (BARC) was arrested in the alleged TRP rigging scam by crime branch of the December 24 last year.

A Mumbai court had earlier this month rejected his bail plea, stating that he appeared to have played a vital role in the scam to rig TRP as per the police's case.

The Mumbai Police had earlier told the court that Republic TV Editor-in-Chief Arnab Goswami had allegedly bribed Dasgupta with "lakhs of rupees" to ramp up the news channel's viewership numbers fradulently. On Saturday, Pratyusha Dasgupta, Dasgupta's daughter, demanded that he be shifted to a reputed

She tweeted a message Dasgupta, former CEO titled "A helpless daughtagging PM Modi, Union home minister Amit Shah, the PMO as well as Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray.

Her mother received a call around 3 am on Saturday informing that father her been brought to the hospital in unconscious state around 1 pm on Friday,

she said. For 14 hours nobody from the family was informed about condition Dasgupta's because the authorities allegedly did not have their contact numbers, Pratvusha said.

When they reached the hospital, they found he was unable to speak, she said.

It was apparent that he had been "physically and mentally tortured inside the jail", she alleged. - PTI

BIRD FLU CONFIRMED IN 9 MAHA DISTRICTS

New Delhi, Jan. 16: The Centre on Saturday said bird flu in poultry has been confirmed in nine districts of Maharashtra, while Maharashtra, while culling operation in poultry is underway in one district each in Madhya Pradesh and Chesticanh Chhattisgarh.

The viral disease has

been confirmed in crow in Uttarakhand, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, while in pigeon, brown fish owl and Heron in Delhi. However, Centre requested state governments to "rethink" their decisions to impose ban sale of poultry products and allow sale of poultry items sourced from the non-infected areas/states. In India, bird flu is spread mainly by migratory birds coming into India during winter months.

'Pak pushing militants even during winter'

NEW DELHI, JAN. 16

Intelligence agencies have cautioned security forces that Pakistan was trying to push militants from across the border even during the winter season.

According to intelligence reports, China was providing winter clothing and other heavy duty equipment to Pak Army which in turn was giving the same to militant groups to facilitate their infiltration into India even during winter.

According to the intelli-gence report, "it was extremely surprising that militants were trying hard for infiltration during the winter season also. This is unusual since during the winter season due to the heavy snow it becomes very difficult to move through mountain passes. But it seems this time the militants are well-equipped in terms of high altitude clothing, good quality equipment like glasses and other snow gadgets which is suspected to have been provided by the Chinese Army to Pak security agencies."

In view of the sustained operations launched by the Indian Army in the Kashmir Valley, militants are facing an acute shortage of both men and material.

With more than 250 militants killed last year terror outfit are in desperate need for further reinforcements.

Further due to harsh winter and heavy snow it becomes extremely difficult for security agencies to conduct patrolling in high altitude regions along the Indo-Pak border due to which more mili- official added.

TWO J&K **COPS RECEIVE AWARDS** Jammu, Jan. 16: Two

policemen received 'Jeevan Raksha Padak' awards on Saturday for saving the lives of civilians during ceasefire violations by Pakistan along the Line of Control in Poonch district Jammu and Kashmir in March 2018.

Selection Constable Maqsood Ahmad in Poonch district police and Follower Zakin Hussain of sixth battalion J&K Armed Police (JKAP) were awarded Jeevan Raksha Padak 2019' by the Union Home Ministry last year.

Poonch Commissioner Rahul and Senior Superintendent of Police Ramesh Kumar Angral handed over the awards to the policemen in a function at Dak Bungalow, Poonch, the police official said.

tants close to the border areas are trying to infiltrate into India.

"It is clear that China is now assisting and sup-porting both Pak Army an ISI by providing them resources in terms of arms, ammunition and equipment which in turn are being supplied to the militants. But we are extremely cautious in the border areas and even our security personnel are well equipped to ensure that no one takes advantage of the harsh weather to infiltrate across the border," a senior security

ANNUAL | EVENT | The 51st edition of IFFI kickstarts, it will run till January 24 IFFI not just govt's responsibility: Centre

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar on Saturday urged the film industry and other sectors to collaborate with the government organising the Film International Festival of India (IFFI).

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the annual extravaganza, Javadekar said there is a requirement of active participation from non-government sectors in such

"Every year, IFFI is organised by the central government and Goa government. Why? There should be participation from the film industry." from the film industry and

government's responsibility to ensure thriving atmosphere and promotion of arts and culture, doesn't mean the govern-ment should do every-thing," Javadekar said in his address.

He also extended an invitation to private players, hoping for their participation in the future editions of the festival.

The 51st edition of IFFI kickstarted here on Saturday after it was postponed in November 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. It will run till January 24. The ceremony was held at Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium here.

The festival is being

SPEAKING AT THE opening ceremony of the annual film extravaganza, the I&B minister said that there is a requirement of active times of evolving technolparticipation from ogy which we are benefit-

organised in a "hybrid mode", where delegates can participate and watch films and events virtually. Javadekar said the hybrid edition, which will also have physical screenings, is a testimony to the

non-government sectors

in such events.

festival's ability to adapt to changing times. "Films will be screened across seven theatres, but the online access will be

Newspaper circulation was affected due to Covid, but their digital engagement grew massively. "So these are changing

ing from," he added. Javadekar also announced that the Indian Personality of the Year Award will be conferred to veteran actor- filmmaker

Biswajit Chatterjee. The honour aims to celebrate film personalities for their exemplary contribution to cinema.

The 84-year-old actor, known for featuring in films like Bees Saal Baad, Night In London and April Fool, would be presented the award at the National

are strictly following the state guidelines to ensure safety of the guests. "We assure you that your health, hygiene and well being has been of utmost

Goa

Film Awards in March

Pramod Sawant, who was

also present at the ceremo-

ny, said though the festival

is taking place amid the

pandemic, the organisers

Minister

Chief

importance. We are following all the health protocols for the film festival," he added. The annual film festival, held in Goa, is conducted

jointly by the Directorate of Film Festivals (under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) and

SHORT TAKES **UN'S 1ST STEP** TO ELECT NEXT **CHIEF BY JAN. 31**

United Nations, Jan. 16: The UN General Assembly and Security Council are expected to take the first step toward electing the next head of the global organisation this month. Assembly President Volkan Bozkir said Friday that he and Tunisia's UN Ambassador Ta rek Ladeb, the current council president, hope to send a letter before January 31 asking the UN's 193 member nations to submit any candidates to challenge Secretary-General Anto nio Guterres.

The former Portuguese prime minister and UN refugee chief, whose five-year term at the helm of the United Nations ends on December 31, said in letters to Bozkir and Ladeb on Monday that he will seek a second term. The General Assembly elects the secretary-general on the recommendation of the 15-member Security Council where the five permanent members have veto power, so their support is crucial. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson immediately announced his support for Guterres, but there has been no word yet from The United States, Russia, China and France.

PALESTINIAN POLLS: FIRST IN 15 YEARS

Gaza City, Jan. 16: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas issued a decree Friday, setting parliamentary and presidential elections for later this year in what would be the first vote of its kind since 2006, when the Islamic militant group Hamas won a landslide

Elections would pose a major risk for Abbas' Fatah party and also for Hamas as both faced protests in recent years over their inability to reconcile with one another, advance Palestinian aspirations for statehood or meet the basic needs of those in the territo-

ries they govern. Fatah and Hamas have been publicly calling for elections for more than a decade but have never been able to mend their rift or agree on a process for holding them, and despite Friday's decree, it remained far from clear whether the voting would actually be held.

Elections could also complicate President-elect Joe Biden's plans to restore aid to the Palestinians and to revive the peace process with Israel. The 2006 election victory by Hamas, which is considered a terrorist group by Israel and Western countries, led to heavy international pressure praced Palestinian Authority.

LASCHET WILL LEAD MERKEL'S

Berlin, Jan. 16: Chancellor Angela Merkel's center-right on Saturday chose Armin Laschet, the pragmatic governor of Germany's most populous state, as its new leader — sending a signal of continuity months before an election in which voters will decide who becomes the new chancellor.

Laschet defeated Friedrich Merz, a conservative and onetime Merkel rival, at an online convention of the Christian Democratic Union. Laschet won 521 votes to Merz's 466; a third candidate, prominent lawmaker Norbert Roettgen was eliminated in a first round of voting. Saturday's vote isn't the final word on who will run as the center-right candidate for chancellor in Germany's Sept. 26 election, but Laschet will either run for chancellor or will have a big say in who does. Merkel, who has been chancellor since 2005, announced in late 2018 that she wouldn't seek a fifth term. She also stepped down from the CDU leadership.

The decision ends an 11month leadership limbo in Germany's strongest party after outgoing leader Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, who had failed to impose her authority on the party, announced her resignation. A vote on her successor was delayed twice because of the Coronavirus pandemic. There had been no clear favorite going into Saturday's convention, but the election of Merz would have marked at least a symbolic break with the Merkel era.

Laschet will have to work to strengthen party unity - something Kramp-Karrenbauer struggled with. Laschet, 59, was elected in 2017 as governor of North Rhine-Westphalia state, a traditionally centreleft stronghold. He governs the region in a coalition with the pro-business Free Democrats.



against virus restrictions at the Maria Theresien Platz in Vienna, on Saturday. - AFP

After vaccine, 23 die in Norway, 10 in Germany

Probe finds fever, nausea, diarrhoea caused fatalities

London, Jan. 16: Norway has launched a probe after 23 elderly patients died following their immuniza-tion with the Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA vaccine against Covid-19.

'It may be a coincidence, but we aren't sure,' Steinar Madsen, medical director of the Norwegian Medicines Agency (NOMA), told the British Medical Journal (BMJ).

"There is no certain connection between these deaths and the vaccine.' Two Covid-19 vaccines Comirnaty, from BioNTech/Pfizer and Moderna, are being used in Norway.

The agency has investigated 13 of the deaths so far and concluded that common adverse reactions of mRNA vaccines, such as fever, nausea, and diarrhoea, may have contributed to fatal outcomes in some of the patients.

There is a possibility that these common adverse reactions, that are not dangerous in fitter, younger patients and are not unusual with vaccines may aggravate underlying disease in the elderly," Madsen was quoted as saying. 'We are now asking for doctors to continue with the vaccination, but to carry out extra evaluation of very sick people whose underlying condition mig-

Travel corridors CHINA COVERING closed in the UK CLAIMS POMPEO

London, Jan. 16: All in locator forms, with the travel corridors in place between the UK and some regions will be temporarily closed from Monday as part of efforts to curb the spread of new Coronavirus variants from countries such as Brazil and South America. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced on Friday evening that passengers coming to the UK from anywhere must now have proof of a mandatory predeparture Covid-19 test taken at least 72 hours earlier and self-isolate for at least 10 days on arrival. All passengers will continue to be required to fill

fines in place for a breach in any of the lockdown conditions starting at 200 pounds. "To protect us against the risk of as yet unidentified new strains, we will also temporarily close all travel corridors from 0400 hrs on Monday. Following conversations with the devolved administrations, we will act together so that this applies across the whole of UK," said Johnson.

"This means that if you come to this country, you must have proof of a negative Covid test that you have taken in the 72 hours before leaving. — *PTI* before leaving.

UP COVID ORIGIN,

Washington, Jan. 16: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo alleged Friday there were Covid-like illnesses among staff at a Chinese virology institute in autumn 2019, casting further blame on Beijing as health experts arrived in the country to probe the pandemic's origins.

"The United States gov ernment has reason to believe that several researchers inside the (Wuhan Institute of Virology) became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both Covid-19 and common seasonal illnesses,"
Pomneo said. — AFP

The Paul Ehrlich Institute in Germany is also investigating 10 deaths shortly after vaccination. In a statement, Pfizer said: "Pfizer and BioNTech are aware of reported deaths following administration of BNT162b2. We are working with NOMA to gather all the relevant information. "All reported deaths will be thoroughly

evaluated by NOMA to determine if these incidents are related to the vaccine. The Norwegian government will also consider adjusting their vaccination instructions to take the patients' health into more consideration ' More than 20,000 doses of

the vaccine have been administered over the past few weeks in Norway

and around 400 deaths normally occur among care home residents every week, reports the BMJ.

Chinese publication Global Times first broke the story, saying that health experts in the country have called on Norway and other countries to suspend the use of Pfizer's

Defamation suit: Nix Don

New York, Jan. 16: Justice Department law-yers asked a federal appeals court Friday to President Donald Trump with the United States as the defendant in a defamation lawsuit brought by a woman who says he raped her in the 1990s.

The lawyers filed papers in an appeal of a lower-court Manhattan judge's ruling denying the substitution in a lawsuit brought by E. Jean Carroll, a columnist who in a June 2019 book described her encounter with Trump at an upscale Manhattan department store. The book excerpt prompted Trump to deny the allegations and question Carroll's credibility and motivations in a statement from his White House press office, comments in an Oval Office interview and state-

ments to the media as he

Washington, Jan. 16:

US President-elect Joe

Biden has appointed

Indian-American com-

munity and economic

development expert Sa-

meera Fazili to a key

White House position.

Fazili has been named

as Deputy Director. Nat-

ional Economic Council

at the White House, the

Biden-Harris Transition

The National Econom-

ic Council coordinates

the economic policy ma-

king process and provi-

de economic policy ad-

vice to the US president.

Fazili is currently the

Economic Agency lead on the Biden-Harris

Transition. She was ear-

lier posted at the Federal

Reserve Bank of Atlanta

Washington, Jan. 16: Outgoing US Vice President Mike Pence has

called his soon-to-be suc-

cessor Kamala Harris to

congratulate her and

offer his full co-opera-

tion in the transition of

power, according to mul-

tiple media reports said.

However, there has been

Trump and president-

elect Joe Biden, which is

unprecedented in recent

between

President

communication

outgoing

Donald

PENCE CONGRATULATES HARRIS,

OFFERS FULL CO-OPERATION

announced on Friday.

key WH post

Biden names PIO to

boarded a helicopter for Camp David, lawyers said. Carroll subsequently

sued Trump, alleging defamation. They said the statements fell within the scope of his employment as president because Carroll was, in effect, questioning his fitness to hold public office and thus statement had to be made, even if they were later deemed to be defamatory. If the substitution was

allowed, US taxpayers would be responsible for any payout that might result in the litigation. Carroll's attorney did

not immediately comment on the government filing. Carroll has alleged that she and Trump recognized one another when they randomly spotted other at the luxury store.

where she served as the

Director of Engagement

for Community and

Economic Development

Fazili is the second

Kashmiri-origin Indian-

American appointed to a

key position in the in-

coming Biden adminis-

tration. In December.

Aisha Shah was named

Manager at the White

House Office of Digital

Strategy. In the Obama-

Biden administration.

Fazili served as a senior

policy advisor on the

White House's National

Economic Council and

as a senior advisor at the

Department in both Domestic Finance and

'Vice President Mike

Pence telephoned Vice

President-elect Kamala

Harris Thursday to con-

gratulate her and offer

his belated assistance filling a leadership role

all but abdicated by

President Trump, who is

planning to fly out of the

capital shortly before

Joseph R Biden Jr is sworn in next week,"

The New York Times

--PTI

reported.

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6303107421. (HYMM/2021/C05406)

LAND

U.S. reviews, retains LeT's ultra designation transition of power, the US Foreign Department of State said that it has amended the ter-Organisation (FTO) designations of LJ, ISIL-SP, LeT,

rorist designations of LJ and ISIL Sinai Peninsula (ISIL-SP) to include additional aliases.

Additionally, the Department of State has rev-

Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al Naqshabandi, Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis-Sudan (Ansaru), al-Nusrah Front, Continuity Irish Republican Army, and National Liberation Army, a media note said. "Based upon a review of the Administrative Records

... I conclude that the circumstances that were the bases for the designations of the aforementioned organisations as Foreign Terrorist Organisations have not

as to warrant revocation of the designations and that the national security of the US does not warrant a revocation of the designations,' Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a federal register notification published on January 14.

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Washington, Jan. 16: The

United States has reviewed and maintained the terror-

ist designations of Pakistan-

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SP) and several other organ-

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Chronicle 17 JANUARY 2021



How life got in the way of my one true calling

n autorickshaw driver in Jaipur a couple of years ago asked me, "Hope you don't mind my asking but are you a writer?" A shop salesperson looked at my execrable handwriting and commented, "You must either be a writer or a doctor".

So, clearly, something gives me away.

The problem is that I'm not THAT sort of a writer. Not the sort that everyone around me wants me to be. I'm not the sort of writer who spent the Pandemic lockdown carefully crafting my creative skills and honing my "talent" so I could write that exemplar novel, that series of high philosophy essays to understand humanity, that definitive book on the state

Maybe I do want to be that writer. As an adolescent, like most others, I wrote those poems. Emotions crystallized in show-off nonsense from studying literature. The ones you really should find and burn before you burn so no unsuspecting young relative clearing your remains gets traumatised. I do confess then that I did have those dreams (have? had?), that so many have of being a "writer". Of giving voice to that mandatory (what do you mean you don!! have one) book inside me. But is that real. (what do you mean you don't have one) book inside me. But is that real ly me, babe?

Okay I lie and exaggerate. I do have one book to my name. A definitive experience of researching and exploring India's contemporary history, a labour of love for this country of ours and our journey as a nation. But that was in 1997. It was a co-authored and coedited experience with Ayaz Memon, plus some 50 illustrious contributors. And today, it

is out of print.
Also, at the turn of this century, I did sit down to write that novel. I made a space that was my own, surrounded by other people's books. I rejigged my computer to give it more juice, I bought lots of A4 paper. Whatever the equivalent of lots of sharpened pencils in this digital age. Or as digital as it was then.

And I wrote, some 80,000 words. I greatly enjoyed myself. I laughed uproariously at my own jokes in case no one else would. I made up some characters and I based others on real-life people with I hoped enough tweaks just to make them unrecognisable. In some cases, I was quite happy to be vindictive assuming people I had forgotten to stay in touch with had also forgotten me. I did not follow all those pub-lisher's rules about flow charts and Autocad drawings to make an architectural model for my novel with as much work in

the fake structure as in the real thing just to satisfy some management-brained "editor". Did Jane Austen do that? Pah! Who on earth was anyone to tell me what to do?

Aah, arrogance. Because by

then my characters got lives

known writer had warned me

off in their own directions, far

would happen. They just hared

of their own and became

uncooperative, as a well-

deliberately free-flowing

away from even my

structure.

Aah, arrogance. Because by then my characters got lives of their own and became uncooperative, as a well-known writer had warned me would happen. They just hared off in their own directions, far away from even my deliberately free-flowing structure. I contemplated murder of a few as my only option. I asked for advice from writer friends and writer critics and got plenty, both good and bad. The whole thing was on the verge when it was no longer fun...

And just then, life dropped a massive distraction into my life. Boy did

I still have the files, Manuscript 1, 2, 3 et cetera. I last looked through them 10 years ago. They seemed increasingly childish every time I took a re-look. Frankly, homicide of all the characters seemed like the only option. To spare myself the guilt, I did nothing. Which maybe is the same

So that's my career as a "writer". I mean I am a writer. But not that kind of a writer. My admiration and respect for real writers has grown manifold. For their dedication and doggedness. For talent and their deep reserves. I salute them, the writers and their books, those I have read for ages, those I still do. Isn't the human imagination fascinating? I read some. I review some. I collect some.

And then I stick to my type of writing. Short commentaries where 1,000words seem like an imposition and 500 are about perfect. That's me. The

I take solace in this T.S. Eliot story.

'Don't you think most critics are failed writers?" asked a fan-friend. Yes, said Eliot: "And so are most writers"

The writer is a senior journalist who writes on media affairs, politics and social trends. She tweets at @ranjona.

Subhani



Why Akali Dal's voice is missing in farmers' stir



Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr

t was on the day the farm bills were passed in the Lok that the Dal's Sabha Akali Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Union minister for food processing, announced her resignation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Cabinet in September 2020. She said her party was opposed to the bills, and that the government went ahead without heeding the protest of her party. But the Akali Dal then, and in the past three months since, did not state the specific reasons for their opposition to the farm legislation. The resignation of Ms Badal seemed to be an expression of despair rather than defiance. After leaving the government and the ruling National Democratic Alliance, neither the BJP nor the Akalis have attacked each other.

The BJP had attacked the Congress, and the Congress government of Amarinder Singh in Punjab, for opposing the farm laws as an act of hypocrisy. Home minister Amit Shah initially blamed the "Khalistanis" for fomenting the agita-tion, but later both Mr Shah and his party have refrained from targeting "Khalistanis" fearing the trouble it may unleash.

But television news channels supporting the Narendra Modi government have tried to build a counter-narrative that the Congress was using the "Khalistanis" to subvert the farmers' agitation as it once did in the late 1970s and early 1980s to outflank the Akalis in Punjab's politics. It is a line of argument that the Modi government and the BJP would still be wary of using because of the uncertain fallout and the stance of the Sikh diaspora's political leadership in places like Britain and Canada.

The information and broadcasting ministry had recently issued a 188-page booklet, enumerating the many things that Prime Minister Modi and his government have done for the Sikhs, indicating as it were that the gov-ernment sees the ongoing agitation as that of Punjabi Sikhs and not as that of farmers per se. But is appears the Sikh outreach through the booklet did not evoke any positive response.

The Akalis, who have been the major political voice of the Sikhe have

voice of the Sikhs, have not been in the forefront of the agitation now that they walked out of the government and the NDA on the very same issue. It is not clear what the equation is between the Akalis and the leaders of the farmers' unions.

The farmers' spokespersons told a Hindi television news channel that the farmers were not opposed to Mr Modi nor to the BJP, and that as a matter of fact they (farmers) had voted for the BJP. So, it has been made clear that if the Centre repeals the laws, the farmers will remain with the government.

It is this stand of the farmers that might be

That even ostensibly farmers' parties like the RLD and Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh, and INLD and the Jannayak **Janta Party in** Haryana, can't take the farmers for granted is evident in their unflattering electoral performance in the past few years

The Akalis, who have been the major political voice of the Sikhs, have not been in the forefront of the agitation now that they walked out of the government and the NDA. It is not clear what the equation is between the Akalis and the leaders of the farmers' unions.

holding the Akalis back from entering the fray and declaring their opposition to the Modi government. They may still be looking to return to the NDA and to the government once the standoff between it and the farmers ends.

It is of course standard practice that political parties do not usually spearhead the agitation of a section of society though they would sup-port it from the outside.

The farmers too need to keep political parties out to keep the legitimacy of their cause and avoid being accused of being pawns in the hands of the Opposition political

It is indeed the case that both Akalis and the Congress in Punjab would like to support the farmers' agitation and expect in return the vote of the farmers at election

If the impasse is over, and the Modi government manages to reach an agreement with the farmers, the Akalis might stand to gain. If, however, the impasse continues, there is the possibility that the Akalis might want to join hands with the Congress, as the Shiv Sena and the Congress did in Maharashtra, to oppose the BJP. At the moment, despite the silence and invisibility of the Akalis, there might be an active back channel between the

Akalis and the BJP. There is also the danger, as far as the Akalis are concerned, that if the BJP makes a peace deal

with the Punjab Sikh farmers, Mr Modi and Mr Shah, who are forever on the lookout to expand the BJP's footprint, may absorb the Sikh con-stituency and the Akalis may be left high and dry. This was this strategy that backfired for the BJP in Maharashtra when it tried to undermine the Shiv Sena. It looks like the farmers are confident that they

can argue their own case, fight their own cause, and don't need to depend on political parties. It is the parties who need to woo the farmers. That even ostensibly farmers' parties like the Rashtriya Lok Dal and Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh, and Indian National Lok Dal and the Jannayak Janta Party in Haryana, can't take the farmers for granted is evident in their unflattering electoral performance in the past few years. It is then reasonable to infer that the BJP would want to carve out its own farmers' constituency.

Akali Dal leaders have held on to their belief that they represent the Punjabi constituency, taking advantage of the Sikh identity of Punjab's farmers. The Sikh element in Punjab's politics simply cannot be wished away. The BJP, on its part, will have a problem in balancing its Hindutva politics with that of the Sikh minorityism of the

The farmers themselves have kept the protest as a farmers' issue, pure and simple. They kept the ideologues of all stripes at bay. They are pressing on the simple issue of seeking repeal of the three farm laws. Economic experts explain the protest as anti-rational. The farmers, however, believe that their demand is rational too. The Akalis' obligation at this point is to argue the case of the farmers so that the entire country knows that the farmers are not being obtuse and obdurate.

> The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst

LETTERS

FUEL PRICES

Even when the crude oil prices are low in the international market, a litre of petrol costs ₹90 in India (Tulasi pulls auto with rope over fuel price hike, DC, Jan. 16). Diesel price is also close to petrol. After demonetisation. GST and the pandemic, citizens are made to suffer yet again with high fuel prices. Increased diesel prices will lead to commodities getting expensive. If prices continue to escalate, common man will also start pushing his own vehicle.

Teja Deenamsetty Visakhapatnam

AP TEMPLE ATTACKS

The involvement of political par-ties in desecration of idols and temples and spreading false news is quite unfortunate to create differences among public (TD, BJP cadres behind temple attacks, says DGP, DC, Jan. 16). The culprits should be punished severely.

K.L.Rao

Visakhapatnam

PORTS 'SNATCH'

As if India did not have enough problems, the Centre has introduced a draconian Indian Ports Bill, 2021 . All the maritime States should oppose the Bill as it infringes on their powers. The Maritime Board of a BJP ruled Gujarat State is also opposing the proposal and Karnataka should follow suit. The Union government is unnecessarily stirring a Hornet's nest. The Centre must drop the idea.

Govardhana Myneedu Vijayawada

VACCINE DRIVE

After several dry runs, India has joined a select group of nations today with the rollout of the world's largest vaccination drive against covid pandemic (PM to start biggest battle on Covid-19, DC, Jan. 16). It has, indeed, been a gigantic task and calls for appreciation. Further, vaccines are not a panacea and we still need to adhere to the Covid-19 protocols. We must continue to counter mis information and reinforce the channels of communication in this drive.

Dr C Ghanshyam Visakhapatnam

Email your letters to info@deccanmail.com, editor@deccanmail.com. You can also send them to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad-500 003.



with Nagarjunasagar HYDERABAD, JANUARY, 16

City to be airlinked

Linking of Hyderabad with Nagarjunasagar and a service Hyderabad Aurangabad were accepted in principle by the Indian Airlines and Civil Aviation Department.

Disclosing this, the Minister for Tourism, Mrs. Roda Mistry, said the service between Hyderabad and Aurangabad, attracting vast tourist traffic, could materialise in six months. Lighting of Aurangabad airport to facilitate night landing around that town would be done by the Civil Aviation Department.

Mohan Guruswamy

An important lesson from India's history for PM Modi

he fortunes of India had irrevocably changed on May 29, 1658, when two Indian armies clashed on the dusty fields of Samugarh, near Agra. India's history changed forever. Aurangzeb's victory over his brother Dara Shikoh marked the beginning of Islamic bigotry in India that not only alienated the Hindus but also the much more moderate Sufis and Shias as well. Aurangzeb's narrow Sunni beliefs were to make India the hotbed of Muslim fundamentalists, long before the Wahabis of Saudi Arabia sponsored the fanatics of the Taliban and the Islamic State. It was not only a battle for the Mughal throne, but also

a battle for the very soul of India.

Aurangzeb's victory here and other successful campaigns resulted in the creation of the greatest and biggest imperial India till then. But the seeds

of India's collapse were sowed. In 1620, India had the world's greatest national income, over a third of it, and was its greatest military power as well. It was the envy of Europe. The European traders came to seek Indian

goods for their markets. But no sooner was the iron hand of Aurangzeb no more that his imperial India began to disintegrate. The iron hand that ruled by dividing rather than uniting and that sought to impose a hierarchy by theological preferences gave rise to much discordance. But for Aurangzeb, Shivaji Bhonsle might have remained a minor western Indian feudatory? There are important lessons to be learnt from all this for those who rule and seek to rule India.

The weakening central rule and profit seeking peripheral kingdoms allowed European trading posts to be established. Weakening regimes led to the trading posts raising armed guards. Soon the overseas trading companies began warring each other and with so many minor states now free to make their destinies joining hands with one or the other it was the Europeans who got gradually got established. The Anglo-French wars of the Carnatic were fought by Indian armies beefed up by trading company levies. The East India Company of the British ultimately prevailed and the French, Dutch, Portuguese and Danish got reduced to pockets.

A hundred years later, in 1757, the era of total foreign supremacy over India began when the East India Company's troops drawn from South India and officered by English company executives defeated the army of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah at Plassey (Palashi) in Bengal, with the now usual mix of superior drilling, resolute leadership and a bit of treachery. At a crucial time, Mir Jaffar and his troops crossed over. India lay prostrate before Robert Clive.

Within a decade, on August 12, 1765, Clive obtained a firman from the then Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam, granting the dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Odisha to the Company. A Muslim contemporary indignantly exclaims that so great a "transaction was done and finished in less time than would have been taken up in the sale of a jackass". By this deed the Company became the real sovereign ruler of 30 million people, yielding a revenue of four million sterling. The John Company grew from strength to strength, and by 1857 the Grand Mughal was reduced to his fort conducting poetry soirees. It was the golden age of Urdu poetry.

The events of 1857 led to the formal establishment of India as a directly ruled colony of the British empire. It was vet another epochal event. India changed, for the better and for the worse. Once again India absorbed from outsiders, as it absorbed from the Dravidians, Aryans, Greeks, Persians Kushans, Afghans, Uzbeks and all those who came to seek their fortunes here. The British were the only ones who came to take away its vast wealth in a systematic manner. The wealth taken from India to a great extent financed the Industrial Revolution in England.

From then to another epochal year ending with seven took ninety years. In 1947, India became independent. Its GDP is now the world's third biggest. In a few decades it could conceivably become its biggest. But have we learned any lessons from history?

Given its abject failures on the economic front, the BJP/RSS regime in New Delhi is now pushing India towards a Hindutva nationhood, by seeking to victimise a minority for the perceived wrongs and slights of the past. An intolerant religion can never be the basis of nationhood and national unity in India. The legacy of Aurangzeb tells us that. Aurangzeb had created the greatest empire that India had seen since Ashoka the Great. But it didn't take very long for it to dissipate. In the hundred years that followed, a foreign mercantile company gained control over all of India.

The BJP under Narendra Modi might keep gaining electoral dominion over all or most of India. But has he learned any lessons from history? Does he want to become the Hindu Aurangzeb? What is worrisome is that we know well that history is not Narendra Modi's forte.

The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.

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Covid clouds over Oz Open

Melbourne: Three coronavirus cases have been detected among charter flights carrying tennis players, coaches and officials to Melbourne ahead of the Australian Open, health authorities and tournament organizers said on Saturday. A total of 47 players from the two affected flights arriving from Los Angeles and Abu Dhabi are now in a strictly enforced 14-day quarantine without the ability to leave their hotel rooms even to practice. The Australian Open is scheduled to start February 8. Health authorities said two positive Covid-19 cases emerged from a charter flight from Los Angeles and Tennis Australia said there was a third positive case from a flight from Abu Dhabi. The cases from Los

Pandya brothers' father no more

Angeles involved an aircrew

was not a player. - AP

member and a passenger who

Vadodara: India cricketers Hardik and Krunal Pandya lost their father Himanshu, who died on Saturday after suffering a heart attack. He was 71. "Krunal, who was leading Baroda in the Syed Mushtaq Ali trophy, left the bio-bubble created for the tournament to be with his family," association secretary Ajit Lele said. Hardik is not playing the national T20 tournament as he is preparing for the white-ball series against England. He has also left Mumbai, where he was training, for Vadodara. Himanshu had played a key role in the success of his cricketer

India skipper Virat Kohli and legendary Sachin Tendulkar, led the cricketing fraternity in condoling Himanshu's demise.

Lanka dig in after Root double ton

Galle, Sri Lanka: Joe Root completed his fourth double century for England on Saturday but insisted it will mean nothing if his side cannot overcome a defiant Sri Lanka in the first

The England captain made 228 of his team's 421 all out - 26 runs short of his brilliant 254 career best against Pakistan at Old Trafford in 2016. But Lahiru Thirimanne led Sri

Lanka's stubborn resistance, hitting an unbeaten 75 while Kusal Perera made 62 as the home team reached 156-2 in their second innings. After their disappointing 135 in

the first innings, they need ther 130 to reach England's total. Root's 321 ball innings with a six and 18 fours dominated the day. - AFP Brief scores: Sri Lanka 135 & 156/2 in 61 overs (Thirimanne 76*. Perera 62) vs England 421 in 117.1 overs

Adilabad to play Warangal for title

Hyderabad: Adilabad Rural and Warangal Urban entered the finals of the TCA Telangana North East Cup U-14 T20 cricket tournament.

In the semifinals played at the Indira Priya Darshini Stadium in Adilabad, Adilabad Rural defeated Adilabad Urban by five wickets while Warangal Urban beat Warangal Rural by

Sathwik Rathod hit 67 not out but in a losing cause for Adilabad Urban while Yuvaraj Singh's 4 for 27 turned the game for Warangal Urban. **BRIEF SCORES**

Adilabad Urban 169/2 in 20 overs (Sathwik Rathod 67 n.o. Hiranva Dokwl 31) lost to Adilabad Rural 170/5 in 15.5 overs (Anas Syed 48, Bhavesh

■ Warangal Urban 158/5 in 17 overs (Rithwik 60. P. Pradvum 37 n.o) bt Warangal Rural 91 in 16.2 overs (Yuvaraj Singh 4/27).

Live on TV



Thailand Open: Finals from 7.30 am on Star Sports 2 HD, 3

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Sheffield United vs Tottenham Hotspur from 7.30 pm; Liverpool vs Manchester 10 pm: Manchester City vs Crystal Palace from 1.30 am (Monday) on Star Sports Select 1, HD

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OPENING WOES All eyes are on Kerala's Azhar

Rohit, Shubman fail to give India strong start on Day Two

Brisbane, Jan. 16: Rohit Sharma's indiscreet shot selection pegged India back after rookie bowling attack restricted Australia to 369 on a raincurtailed second day of the fourth Test on Saturday.

With heavy thundershowers preventing any play in the post tea session, India ended the day at 62 for 2.

Rohit was elegant as ever in his 44 off 74 balls before Nathan Lyon in his 100th Test enticed him to come down the track but the half-chip-half-loft was safely pouched by Mitchell Starc in the deep.

India also lost Shubman Gill (7) who edged one off Pat Cummins to Steve Smith. Cheteshwar Pujara (8) and Ajinkya Rahane (2) added only two runs in the 6.1 overs

before the break. There were six boundaries from Rohit but he did not fiddle at deliveries in and around the offstump channel even as Cummins and Josh Hazlewood bowled a testing spell under overcast conditions.

The shot of the session was an on-drive off Cummins which came after a streaky boundary through the slips in the same over. Another delightful stroke was an off-drive off Cameron Green as 49 runs were added for the second wicket.

There wasn't much swing on offer but the pace off the track has increased compared to the first day and it only helped that the Australian pace attack is a more well built one with average speed being at least 6-7 kmph more than their Indian counter-

Pujara, at the other end was playing his usual 'grinding out' game but it didn't look too arduous till Rohit kept the scoreboard ticking at the other end. It wouldn't be an over statement to say that among all top order bats-man across both sides, Rohit looked the most comfortable and till his dismissal never looked like being troubled by the four-pronged attack.



Washington Sundar (centre) is congratulated by teammates after taking the wicket of Australia's Nathan Lyon on the second day of the fourth Test at the Gabba in Brisbane on Saturday.

playing eleven on Friday.

The duo was travelling

with the squad as net

bowlers.
"I thought they (the Indian bowlers) were very consistent. I thought

Washington Sundar in particular was disciplined and fill that role of

Ravi Ashwin quite well and kept it tight and was

SCORECARD

Australia first innings (overnight 274/5): David Warner c Rohit Sharma b Mohammed Siraj 1, Marcus Harris c W. Sundar b Shardul Thakur 5, Marnus Labuschagne c R. Pant b T. Natarajan 108, Steven Smith c R. Sharma b W. Sundar 36, Matthew Wade c S. Thakur b T. Natarajan 45, Cameron Green b W. Sundar 47, Tim Paine c R. Sharma b S. Thakur 50, Pat Cummins Ibw b S. Thakur 2, Mitchell Starc not out 20, Nathan Lyon b W. Sundar 24, Josh Hazlewood b T. Natarajan 11. Extras (b-4, lb-5, nb-6, wd-5) 20. Total (all out in 115.2 overs) 369. FoW: 1-4, 2-17, 3-87, 4-200, 5-213, 6-311, 7-313, 8-315, 9-354.

Bowlers: Mohammed Siraj 25-10-66-1, T Natarajan Shardul 24-6-93-3, 24.2-3-78-3, Thakur Navdeep Saini 7.5-2-21-0, Washington Sundar 31-6-89-3, Rohit Sharma 0.1-0-

India 1st innings: Rohit Sharma c M. Starc b N. Lyon 44, Shubhman Gill c Smith b Cummins 7, Cheteshwar Pujara batting 8, Ajinkya Rahane batting 2. Extras (nb-1) 1. Total (For 2 wkts, in 26 overs) 62.

FoW: 1-11, 2-60. Bowling: Mitchell Starc 3-1-8-0, Josh Hazlewood 8-4-11-0, Pat Cummins 6-1-22-1, Cameron Green 3-0-11-0, Nathan Lyon 6-2-10-1.

own," the 39-year-old said.

overs leg of the tour after

making the Indian team at the back of a stellar IPL. "They (Indian bowlers) applied pressure

throughout the innings

and they made (it) diffi-cult for ourselves. Times when we felt we would get

The left-arm pacer had

Chennai, Kerala's Azharuddeen have set out on the arduous journey to emulate the Mohammed Azharuddin of Hyderabad, if not for a cricket-crazy elder brother and a die-hard fan of the former India captain.

From his name to his career option, everything to do with Azharuddeen was decided by Kamaruddeen. The jour-

ney continues, though.
While the first step towards fulfilling his family's dream was taken when he was chosen to represent Kerala in 2015, he shot into the national limelight recently with his 37-ball 100 in the domestic T20 Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy

match against Mumbai.
"I have met him like twice or thrice. Once in my hometown and once in Hyderabad when we were there to play Benji Typeky. there to play Ranji Trophy and he was the head coach of Hyderabad. I shared the story of how I was named after him with Mohd Azharuddin

Azharuddeen said.
"To be frank, like my elder brother, I did not follow Azharuddin sir. I have just watched a few videos of his on Youtube," the Kerala stumper added.

The 26-year-old from Thalangara in north Kerala's Kasaragod town, known for its love for cricket rather than football, said the blistering knock would have surely pleased his brother Kamaruddeen, who had changed his youngest brother's name from Ajmal to Azharuddeen after his

Azharuddeen has seven brothers and all are big-time cricket fans. "My family is a cricket family. I have seven elder brothers. Everyone has played cricket. Obviously they follow the game when I play. Even if they don't watch, they



Mohammed Azharuddeen

knock against Mumbai which was the third fastest T20 ton by an Indian batsman, Azharuddeen said he had not made any special preparation prior to that.

The player's game was affected after he was dropped down in the batting order by former coach Day Whatmore.

"I am an opener. After Day Whatmore came as coach he made me a middle-order player. I came down the order due to team requirements. It was not a good slot for me. I just requested the coach (Tinu Yohannan) to allow me to bat in the right slot, which

"I like to hit straight. One of my strengths is hitting straight. I am good at hitting straight, against fast bowling and spin bowling. It was a true wicket (in the game against Mumbai) and I batted with confidence," he added.

Asked if he was looking forward to the IPL auction scheduled next month, Azharuddeen said he was not too worried about it. "I am in a good zone. I am not worried about the IPL auction or something. I am just concentrating on our fourth match against Andhra," he said.

When asked about his goals, Azharuddeen menused to follow the scorecard," he says. About his memorable tioned playing in the IPL and scoring hundreds in Ranji Trophy. -PTI

ball early, there is lot (to like) about him, left-arm swing bowler, no doubt he is inexperienced but has Hit by a barrage of injuries through the series, India picked debuable to take some key on the top, they were able wickets on the way," McDonald said at the virenough played first-class to bounce back and get games to be play his first key wickets at crucial times. It was great arm-wrestle, so full credit to Test on this tour, (that) is tants Washington (3/89) tual post-day press conferand medium pacer T. Natarajan (3/78) in the ence after Day Two. a great achievement, so I wrestle, so f "So, for me I suppose, he think they held their their attack." ence after Day Two.

Indian bowlers impress McDonald

trolled well the tempo of

the game and I think it

stood out for me."

McDonald, who also coaches in the IPL, was also impressed by

..Natarajan shaped the

Natarajan.

Sharath sets tune-up camp for paddlers

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JAN. 16

Achanta Sharath Kamal.

World No-32, took an initiative for the benefit of a group of budding table tennis players to beat Corona pandemic blues. The nine-time national champion organised a 15day camp in Chennai to maintain the rhythm of the players as doors are getting opened for national and international tournaments.

The camp, from January 3 to 18, is going on under the director supervision of Sharath and it is effectively supported by Rajath Kamal and also Muralidhara Rao (national coach) and Srinivasa

awardee), at the SDAT AKG academy in Chennai. Well-known fitness trainer Ramji Srinivasan too has been a great help for players.

Australia's

coach Andrew McDonald

on Saturday praised the

highly inexperienced Indian bowling attack for the final Test and singled

out Washington Sundar,

saying the young off-spin-

ner filled the shoes of

Ravichandran Ashwin "quite well".

assistant

Hyderabad's S. Fidel R. Snehit, current youth (U-21) national champion. Gujarat's Manay Thakkar (World No.1 in Youth), Manush Shah of Gujarat (India No.3 in the youth category) and Bengal's Arjun Ghosh (India No.6 in the men's section) and three budding players from Tamil Nadu got a chance to take part in the

"As far as I remember, this is the first camp which was mentored by the current world top ranking Indian player for (Dronacharya the benefit of the prospec-



Achanta Sharath Kamal (left), SFR Snehit (right) and other table tennis players pose after a session at the SDAT AKG-academy in Chennai.

tive champions. It is going really well," Achanta Srinivasa Rao said.

"Following a national

TTFI in Sonepat in November-December last year, the players were eager to have another full-

help us get into a match mode keeping in mind National Championships are scheduled in February and Olympic qualifiers are in March in Qatar," Sharath said adding that the training sessions helped all the players improve their skill set, agility, strength and technique in preparation for the tough tournaments that are coming up on the circuit.

Snehit on his part was thrilled. "It is a wonderful camp. I thank Sharath anna for giving us an opportunity to spend time with him. He shared a lot of knowledge. Such mentoring plays a vital role in our progress. It is a memocamp organised by the fledged session. The main rable experience," he said.

Hyderabad lose 4th round to TN

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JAN. 16

Nadu by seven wickets in their Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament fourth round match played in Kolkata on Saturday.

Electing Hyderabad made 152 for 7 in the stipulated overs thanks to useful knocks by B. Sandeep (41) and Sai Pragnay Reddy (30). However, Tamil Nadu rode on the brilliance of N. Jagdeeshan (78) and Dinesh Karthik (40 n.o) to finish the match with three balls to spare.

In another match, Assam pulled off an upset 13-run win over Bengal in a Elite Group 'B.' Bengal opted to field and saw the talented Riyan Parag (77) help Assam put up a fighting 157 for 5 in 20 overs. The visiting team restricted Bengal to 144 for 8.

In Vadodara, Baroda continued their winning run by claiming a 60-run victory over Maharashtra.

This is Baroda's fourth win on the trot in the league stage after having Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in their first three outings. Put in to bat, Baroda rode

on stand-in skipper Kedar Devdhar's unbeaten 99 off 71 balls to post a competitive 158 for four. Medium pacer Atit Sheth (4/17) then wreaked havoc to scuttle out Maharashtra for a meagre 98 and give his team four full points.

BRIEF SCORES

■ Hyderabad 152/7 in 20 overs (Sai Pragnay Reddy 30, B. Sandeep 41, B. Aparajith 2/22, Warrier 2/24, M. Ashwin 2/40) lost to Tamil Nadu 155/3 in 19.3 overs (N. Jagdeeshan 78, Dinesh Karthik 40 n.o). Points: Tamil Nadu 4, Hyderabad 0.

■ Baroda 158/4 in 20 overs (Kedar Devdhar 99 not out. 28; Taranjitsingh Dhillon 2/30) lost to Maharashtra 98 in 16.5 overs (Naushad Shaikh 32; Atit Sheth 4/17, Ninad Rathwa 3/21).

Board should look into India's alarming rate of injuries



Ayaz Memon **Over The Top**

hat an extraordinary Test series this is turning out to be! After India lost the first match from a potentially winning position in a 'freak' hour's batting that saw them being bowled out for an abysmal 36, a whitewash by Australia looked the likely outcome, more so with Virat Kohli and Mohamed Shami (for different reasons) no longer

available. What's transpired since has been straight out of Ripley's Believe It Or Not. Shrugging off the trauma of the sensational col-

lapse at Adelaide, India went on to win the second Test in a remarkable turnaround. Perhaps even more amazing was the manner in which the third was saved, Cheteshwar Pujara, Rishabh Pant, and Hanuma Vihari Ravichandran Ashwin batting out the last day

against all odds. By the time the fourth match started, India's squad was severely depleted, resembling a battalion

of the 'walking wounded' in a war zone. Eight key players were

Shami, and K.L. Rahul too were already back in India because of injury. Ashwin, Jasprit Bumrah, Vihari, Ravindra Jadeja and Umesh Yadav were still in Australia, but all hors de combat.

This made picking the playing XI excruciating easy at one level, excruciating at another: few players to choose from, yet how to assemble the best combination to fight the Aussies?

The batting, despite Kohli not being there, was not as badly dented as the bowling. Having rightly decided be on the attack rather than defend (difficult, given the players available), the big question was whether to play two spinners and three pacers, or four pacers and a spin-

ner.
The history of matches out of commission, Kohli was on paternity leave. The history of matches at the Gabba, where fast

bowlers have been more successful, swung the mandate in favour of Thakur and Natarajan to join Siraj and Saini. For the spin-ner's slot, Washington Sundar was preferred over Kuldeep Yadav to shore up the batting.

This meant India's bowling attack had a collective experience of four Tests (Siraj 2, Saini 1, Thakur 1) and two debutants (Sundar and Natarajan) when they took the field at Brisbane! I can't think of a less experienced bowling attack since representing independent

India's performance so far at Brisbane has been admirable. The rookie bowling attack has handled the pressure well, shown fine skill and restricted Australia to 369. It's not a small score, but nowhere near 450 that Tim Paine was expecting after

Had Rohit Sharma, after

a sparkling 44, not been seduced into indiscretion by a delivery that Lyon held back cleverly seeing the batsman jump out of the crease, India would have been on equal terms with Australia going into the third day. Now Australia are a nudge ahead.

However, with Pujara and Rahane at the crease, Pant, Agarwal and Sundar to follow, there is quite a lot of batting to come. If India survive the first session without too much damage, this Test could be heading for a tantalising finish too.

Where grit, tenacity, commitment and character are concerned, India's performance in this tour has been outstanding. Nevertheless, the number of players that have been

injured is aalarming. It is abnormal, and in many ways have hurt the team's prospects.

Kohli's unavailability after the first Test was known in advance, as was Rohit's unavailability for the first two Tests. There is not much that could be done with Shami and Jadeja suffering fractures either. But what of the oth-

Umesh and Vihari have done in their hamstrings, Bumrah has an abdominal strain. Ashwin a sore back, and Saini limped off the field on the first day at Brisbane with an ankle problem that may see him not take any further part in the match.

Remember, Ishant Sharma and Kumar,

Bhuvaneshwar two seasoned fast bowlers, could not make the cut after getting similarly

injured during the IPL. What are the factors causing so many Indian players compared to those from any other country — to suffer such injuries?

Is it work overload, training regimens that don't players not physique, being attentive about their own fitness, poor assessment and treatment of niggles (by sports medicine experts attached to the Board) which then flare up into serious problems? Or are there other reasons?

This situation needs to be inquired into. The BCCI would do well to have a committee of experts study the issue and come out with a white paper on how to lick it. There are long term implications of the problem which must not be lost in the acclaim over the heroic performances in Australia.







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