


# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | TUESDAY | 15 DECEMBER 2020



**WEATHER**  
Max: 30.2°C  
Min: 17.6°C  
RH: 34%  
Rainfall: Nil  
Forecast: Partly cloudy.  
Mist or haze likely.  
Max/Min temp. 30/17 °C

**COVID-19**  
**COUNT**


CASES	DEATHS
(+22,114)	(+359)
99,06,463	1,43,745

*covid19india.org*

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+573)	(+4)
TS: 2,77,724	1,493
(+506)	(+5)
AP: 8,75,531	7,057

CASES AROUND THE WORLD



7,28,93,236

DEATHS

16,23,425

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES


218

*worldometers.info/coronavirus*

**ASTROGUIDE**

Sarvari: Dakshinayana  
Tithi: Margasira Shuddha Padyami  
till 7.10 pm  
Star: Mula till 9.33 pm  
Varjyam: 8.05 pm to 9.33 pm; then  
from 6.35 am (Wednesday)  
Durmuhurtam: 8.54 am to  
9.37 am; 10.53 pm to 11.45 pm  
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm  
HURRI CALENDAR  
Rabbi-ul Akhri 29, 1442 AH  
PRAYERS  
Fajar: 5.34 am  
Zohar: 12.21 pm  
Asar: 4.08 pm  
Maghrib: 5.50 pm  
Isha: 7.04 pm  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.38 AM  
SUNSET TODAY 5.44 PM  
MOONSET TODAY 6.28 PM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 7.07 AM

**COUNTER POINT**



I don't need a farmer... I am strictly non-vegetarian!

**IN BRIEF**

**Tatas, Interups to bid for Air India**


New Delhi: Salt-to-software conglomerate Tata Group and US-based fund Interups Inc were among "multiple" entities that on Monday put in preliminary bids for buying loss-making carrier Air India. A group of 219 Air India employees submitted an expression of interest (Eoi) for the carrier in partnership with Interups at the close of the deadline on Monday.

**Google suffers global outage**


New Delhi: Gmail and a host of other Google services faced disruptions on Monday evening. The company is yet to specify a reason for the outage. On the G Suite status dashboard, Google said it is "aware of a problem with Gmail affecting a majority of users. The affected users are unable to access Gmail".

**IIT-Madras shut due to Covid**

Chennai: The Indian Institute of Technology-Madras here has been hit by the Coronavirus outbreak with over 100 people, a majority of them students, testing positive for the contagion, a top health official said on Monday. A total of 104 students and others have contracted the disease and all were doing well in a hospital.



**NATION | 4**  
**India ready for any China eventuality**



Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy addresses the media in Hyderabad on Monday.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

## Kishan: TRS going down, BJP will come to power

### Slams rumours of compromise between parties

**IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY | DC**  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 14

The Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) government will collapse and the BJP will form the government in the next elections, said Union minister of state for home affairs G. Kishan Reddy on Monday.

Mr Reddy condemned rumours being spread about Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao having "arrived at a compromise" with BJP during his three-day tour to Delhi where he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, home minister Amit Shah and others, while speaking to the media at BJP party state office.

"Giving an appointment to the chief minister of a state does not mean we have compromised with the TRS party. With regards to what was discussed during these meetings, the media should direct such questions to Chief Minister Chandrasekhara Rao as to what he discussed with Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Shah," Kishan Reddy suggested.

Mr Reddy said that the Bharatiya Janata Party will not take any decision against the interests of the farmers of the country. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already given clarity on the new agri laws, which will help the farmers and country aim for higher production. The Central government is implementing the new farmers bill replacing it with older agri laws, in which farmers did not benefit even not by a single rupee," he said.

The Central government is taking all measures to open new urea industries in coming days under the brand name of Kisan brand at a cost of ₹6,000 crore.

■ Page 2: Centre will get urea for TS, AP: Kishan

## SC to study if Emergency in '75 is unconstitutional

**PARMOD KUMAR**  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 14

The Supreme Court on Monday said that it will consider the "feasibility or desirability" of examining a plea seeking to declare the 19-month-long national Emergency that was declared in June 1975 and had witnessed a large scale preventive arrests and the freezing of the fundamental rights as unconstitutional.

The 19-month long emergency was declared by the then prime minister Indira Gandhi.

Issuing notice to the Centre, a bench comprising Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Justice Hrishikesh Roy and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari after expressing reluctance to embark on examining the validity of the 45-year-old event, agreed to consider whether it was feasible or desirable to examine the plea that the Emergency was unconstitutional and was an abuse of power and a fraud on the Constitution.

"We would not be disinclined to see whether probing such a proclamation after such a long time would be feasible or desirable," said Justice Kaul in the order after two rounds of consultations with Justice Roy and Justice Maheshwari.

The Supreme Court permitted senior counsel Harish Salve to amend the petition and remold the prayers by December 18 as per the course that the court has decided to embark on.

Appearing for a 94-year-old woman petitioner Veera Sarin who has sought the declaration that emergency was unconstitutional and also sought a compensation of ₹25 crore, Salve told the court that such an abuse of power that had taken place in the history had to be corrected so that they don't get repeated in the future.

## Couple drives away tiger attacking calf

**RAVINDRA SESHU | DC**  
KOTHAGUDEM, DEC. 14

A prowling tiger attacking calves in forests abutting Gundlamadugu village under Tekulapalli mandal of Bhadrachalam district early on Monday morning has caused panic among people of various mandals living in and around the forests.

Bhukya Kanya and his wife, who are raising vegetables and chilli, hither-to used to stay in a hut in their field during the night-time for protecting their crops from wild boars. The tiger reached their place and caught the neck of a calf, which started mooing. Kanya and his wife came out thinking that the mooing must be because of the wild boar. Kanya said, "We were shocked to notice the tiger that had caught the calf. We focused our torchlights on to the tiger's eyes and threw granite stones and thick wooden sticks at it, which led to the tiger running away, leaving the calf."

Forest officials led by divisional forest officer Appaiah interacted with the farmer couple.

The seriously injured calf has been shifted to a veterinary hospital for treatment. Four bite marks can clearly be seen on the neck of the calf, which is critical. The calf is unable to graze, a veterinarian said. "It is a new area for the big cat. It may visit any habitats within the forest for its prey. People should be careful and take precaution," he added.

## VIRUS | EFFECT Covid precautions compel Exhibition Society to suspend extravaganza

## Sorry folks! No Numaish this year

**SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC**  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 14

An emotional bond that every Hyderabad feels with the dawn of every New Year will be missing from the first day of 2021. In an unprecedented move, for the first time in 79 years, the 46-day fun and frolic and family get-togethers that add a romantic charm to Numaish will be missing this time around.

Originally called the Annual Industrial Exhibition, but popular by the local dialect Numaish, it is a major revenue earner for the Exhibition Society which organises it from January 1 to mid-February every year. It also provides direct and indirect livelihood to nearly 20,000 people from across the country.

However, the society has decided to suspend the ensuing event due to Covid as social distancing would be a near-improbable aspect during the exhibition, which normally has close to 2,000 stalls and people from all over India bring their wares to cash in on the seasonal earnings.

Sources in the Society told *Deccan Chronicle* said, "This year the Annual Industrial Exhibition is suspended. By the time applications are scrutinised and stall allotments are done it will be a long process. This year no work has started on the stall front."

Exhibition Society vice-president N. Vinay Kumar said, "Each year by this time most of the allotment of stalls would have been over. But as the threat of Coronavirus is still prevalent, it will be difficult to open Numaish."

For Hyderabad, exhibition means a nostalgic trip down the lane and catching up with friends and families rather than just buying the latest products, or enjoying the latest dishes in the eateries.

A unique aspect is that Numaish helps support women's education from the money generated through this event. Approximately, 20 educational institutions are run by the Exhibition Society.

Osmania Graduates Association president Dr Gangadhar Rao said, "It was in 1938 that the Association started Numaish. The money generated from this was spent on women's education. In 1960-61, Kamala Nehru Polytechnic College for Women came into being and in the subsequent years, institutes were set up for offering engineering, pharma, post-graduation, BED and now number 20 overall."

Exhibition Society managing committee member Aditya Margam said, "Numaish provides employment to many right from those putting up stalls to dismantling them."

This will involve 10,000 people. Employment in shops, food stalls, merry-go-rounds, recreation zones, salesmen outside the gates and parking lots will result in employment for 10,000 more. The 46-day exhibition also generates revenue to the government by way of GST."

Exhibition Society vice-president N. Vinay Kumar concluded, "No applications have been invited for participants to set up stalls."

## Farmers intensify stir over Centre's agri laws

### Highways blocked; Centre trying to fix new date for meet

**SANJAY KAW | DC**  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 14

As the protesting farmers intensified their agitation against the Centre's three agricultural "reform" laws and went on a day-long fast on Monday, Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar said Centre was trying to engage with farmers' leaders to decide the next date of talks.

"The meeting will definitely happen. We are engaging with farmers," Mr Tomar said. "The government is ready for discussions anytime. The farmers' leaders have to 'decide and convey' when they are ready for the next meeting," he added.

The contentious farm laws also led to a Twitter spat between Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab CM Capt. Amarinder Singh, with the two accusing each other of "playing politics" over the sensitive issue.


Mr Kejriwal lashed out at Capt. Singh for criticising him for notifying one of the three farm laws passed by the Centre. The Delhi government on November 23 notified the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance 2020.

Mr Kejriwal said: "Punjab CM has made allegations against me that I've passed the black laws in Delhi. How can he do such low-level politics in this fragile situation? It's not up to the state govt to implement it. Had it been so, why would farmers of the country hold talks with the Centre?"

Mr Kejriwal asked Capt. Singh if he was accusing the Delhi CM in a bid to form friendship with the BJP. He said: "So, is it (due to) the pressure of these people that you are putting allegations against me? Are you doing it for friendship with the BJP or are you under pressure as the Enforcement Directorate has filed a case against your family?"

Capt. Singh hit back, saying: "At a time when our farmers are braving the winter cold on the roads outside your city and many of them are dying fighting for their rights, all you can think of is how to make the most of the opportunity to promote your political interests."

While the farmers stayed adamant on continuing their agitation until the three laws were repealed, minister of state for agriculture Parshottam Rupala claimed most farmers in the country were in favour of the new laws and there was no need to bring the MSP under purview of the law as demanded by them. The minister urged



Volunteers serve food for farmers and security personnel at the Ghaziabad border during Delhi Chalo protest against the new farm laws, at Ghaziabad-Delhi Border on Monday.

— PTI

**PUNJAB CM alleged that I have passed black laws in Delhi. If that were so, why are farmers of the country trying to hold talks with the Centre?**

**ARVIND KEJRIWAL**  
*Delhi Chief Minister*

**AT A time when farmers are braving the Delhi winter and dying, all you can think of is to use the opportunity to promote your political interests**

**AMARINDER SINGH**  
*Punjab CM*

## 1.3 lakh flood victims left in lurch

**MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC**  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 14

The state government has left over 1.3 lakh flood victims in the lurch if one were to go by the data made available by Mee Seva centres.

Ironically, neither the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) nor the revenue department is claiming accountability for the lapse.

The civic body in its official release claimed that it had deposited ₹10,000 into the bank accounts of over 2.26 lakh victims while applicants according to Mee Seva data is at 3.52 lakh. Interestingly, the applications pertain to those received from November 16 to 19 3pm. Even more surprising is that no political leader is raising the issue despite it being on top of their election agenda.

As per official data, the GHMC distributed ₹10,000 cash to about 4.13 lakh families and the government deposited money into 1.26 lakh flood-affected families. But according to Mee Seva records it has received as many as 3.52 lakh applications in those four days. The relief distribution was stopped by the SEC in view of the code of conduct for GHMC election, which was held on December 1.

The corporation appealed to the people to apply on December 7, three days after the results were declared. As a result beneficiaries queued up in large numbers to file their application on Monday morning. The GHMC released an official statement by commissioner D.S. Lokesh Kumar saying that officials would visit houses and conduct verification of the affected families, after which the money will be deposited directly into their bank accounts. Mee Seva officials said that they have not received a single application after December 7.

■ Page 2: GHMC claims it deposited ₹17.33 crore



## SHORT TAKES

## YSRC OPENS NEW PARTY OFFICE IN ADILABAD

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, DEC. 14

The Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress (YSRC) opened a new party office in Adilabad town on Monday.

Reports are that the YSRC's top leadership is planning to strengthen the party in Telangana after the completion of the local body elections in Andhra Pradesh.

Y.S. Sharmila, sister of Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is likely to take charge of the party in the Telangana. The party high command has also constituted new committees for two districts in the state.

According to party sources, many Congress leaders and supporters of the late Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy are mounting pressure on Jagan Mohan Reddy to revive the party in Telangana, citing that it is doing well in Andhra Pradesh. Telangana YSRC state secretary and Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Local Advisory Committee (LAC) member Bejjanki Anilkumar from Adilabad said, "Party top leaders in Telangana have asked me regularly organise activities related to public issues to win the sympathy of the people facing problems."

"Many Congress leaders are looking for greener pastures. They will join the YSRC once the party is revived in Telangana," he said.

## BANDARU HAD A NARROW ESCAPE IN ROAD MISHAP

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 14

Himachal Pradesh Governor Bandaru Dattatreya escaped unhurt when his car met with a minor accident on Monday morning near Choutuppal town in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district.

According to the police, the Governor's car ran into mechanical trouble. "However, the driver managed to steer the vehicle off the road, crashing it into a tree. Both the driver of the car and the Governor are safe," police said.

The incident occurred near Katepuram in Choutuppal mandal on Hyderabad-Vijayawada highway.

Bandaru Dattatreya and his convoy were travelling from Hyderabad to Nalgonda when his car developed mechanical problems. "The car had a problem with the steering wheel. The driver managed to navigate to the left side of the road to avoid a major collision and hit a tree instead. Both the Governor and the driver escaped without any injuries," said Bhongir DCP K. Narayana Reddy. "The Governor was then promptly shifted to another vehicle in the convoy and proceeded with his journey," the officer added.

## CENTRE WILL GET UREA FOR TS, AP, SAYS KISHAN

From Page 1

The Central government scheme will bring urea to farmers of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Mr Reddy announced.

He said that the Centre is planning to allot, spend and give ₹1,15,578 crore to farmers in the current year.

Mr Reddy recalled that in the past, before the Modi government came to power, there were huge power cuts for farming. But once the BJP government took reigns of governance, not a single state was suffering from power cuts.

The government achieved it by implementing a 'one nation, one grid' approach, which solved power problems completely across the country, he asserted.

Kishan Reddy said that the BJP-led government has reopened Ramagundam fertiliser industry by allocating ₹6,500 crore. We have opened four fertiliser factories, he said. Harnessing the 'one drop, more crop' program, the Central government encouraged drift irrigation. "The Modi government has deposited ₹6,000 crore directly into bank accounts of farmers," he said.

Mr Reddy alleged that the recent bandh was a TRS-supported sarkari bandh, not a Bharat bandh.

"Why did the Telangana police not arrest minister K.T. Rama Rao and MLC Kavitha for participating in a bandh? DGP Mahender Reddy must answer. Will the police also support protests organised by the BJP?"



Weeks after the city witnessed unprecedented floods, many areas including the Aghapura main road (above) continue to be neglected posing dangers to the citizens in Hyderabad.

— P. SURENDRA

## GHMC claims it deposited ₹17.33 cr for flood victims

From Page 1

However, the corporation claimed that it has deposited ₹17.33 crore to 17,333 victims on December 8 and December 9, ₹11.10 crore to 11,103 victims and ₹9.79 crore to 9,971 victims on December 11. Overall, according to a GHMC release from December 8 to now it has deposited ₹48.23 crore to 48,232 beneficiaries.

According to government data it has only deposited cash into accounts of 1.73 lakh families when it has received 3.52 lakh applications till November 19. Surprisingly, neither the state government officials nor the nodal agencies, including GHMC and revenue department, have conducted field inspections to deposit money into the bank accounts of

flood victims. As a result money is being deposited into fake beneficiaries who live in high-land areas like Borabanda, Erragadda and others.

When *Deccan Chronicle* asked both revenue and GHMC officials they disclosed that money is being released from the government treasury but did not provide any further details like whether it was released from the NDRF fund or the SDRF fund.

"A top official while instructing us to distribute or deposit money to flood victims informed that we will be blessed with good fortune by helping the needy during the crisis," said a GHMC official, requesting anonymity.

But many questions remain unanswered. Why are political parties stay-

## HC SUMMONS JALPALLY MUNICIPAL CHIEF FOR NOT CLEARING INUNDATION

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 14

The Telangana High Court on Monday summoned the Municipal Commissioner of Jalpally in Ranga Reddy district for not clearing the inundation/waterlogging in Osman Nagar locality of Balapur Mandal.

Osman Nagar and Shaheen Nagar have been submerged in flood and drain water following heavy rains in the second

week of the October.

Even after two months, houses in these two colonies remained submerged.

The authorities have also not taken any step to pump out the water. One of the colony residents Syeda Begum brought the issue to the court's notice by way of filing a petition. The High Court directed the municipal commissioner to attend the hearing on Tuesday and explain the situation.

ing calm when justice is not meted out to the victims? Why were GHMC and revenue officials kept in the dark? Why is the government not allowing officials to disclose details

of beneficiaries? Why are the Mee Seva centres not receiving applications from December 7 despite Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's instructions?"

## Nayeem had huge cache of arms, says RTI report

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 14

The RTI document from the in-charge IG of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing gangster Nayeem's death revealed his large collection of weapons that were seized by the police. Three AK-47s, nine pistols, three revolvers, seven country-made guns, one SBBL 12-bore gun, one sten gun and two hand grenades were among the large cache of firearms that were seized following raids on Nayeem's residences after the shootout at Shadnagar on August 8, 2016.

More than four years after gangster Nayeemuddin alias Nayeem fell to a hail of police bullets on the city outskirts, an RTI document has revealed his large collection of weapons that were seized by the police, apart from opening another can of worms over his alleged nexus with officials.

The RTI document was published in reply to an application submitted by Forum for Good

● **MORE THAN** four years after gangster Nayeemuddin alias Nayeem fell to a hail of police bullets on the city outskirts, an RTI document has revealed his large collection of weapons that were seized by the police, apart from opening another can of worms over his alleged nexus with officials.

● **THE RTI** document was published in reply to an application submitted by Forum for Good Governance secretary M. Padmanabha Reddy, who has now written a petition to Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan requesting a detailed enquiry into how Nayeem managed to procure 24 firearms and also into the land documents.

Governance secretary M. Padmanabha Reddy, who has now written a petition to Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan requesting a detailed enquiry into how Nayeem managed to procure 24 firearms and also into the land documents.

Reddy said that since it was near impossible for a common man to get one gun licence, it should be investigated whether Nayeem had licences for his weapons and how he had managed to procure a licence, if any, and how he could amass such a large number of firearms. Though Nayeem was dead, the 752 land documents indicated how the police, politicians and the

Revenue and Registration departments could violate the law at will, Reddy alleged.

His collection of explosives included 10 gelatin sticks, five kilos of ammonium nitrate, around 10 metres of fuse wire and 30 detonators, while his ammunition stock included six magazines and 616 live rounds for various weapons. There was one bulletproof jacket as well. The other seizures included over ₹2 crore in cash, about 2 kg gold, a large quantity of silver, 21 four-wheelers, 26 motorcycles, 602 mobile phones, 752 land documents and 130 diaries. All these have since been in judicial custody.

## Less tests will see fewer cases, make state lazy: Experts

Number of unreported Covid cases high

KANIZA GARARI | DC  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 14

Is India going to witness the second wave of Covid-19? The question has come to fore as, according to the data available from all over the world, India, Argentina and Poland are still experiencing the first wave. Experts see reducing numbers of Coronavirus as only a decline in the graph of the first wave. They anticipate that such reduction will lead to the belief among people that SARS-Cov 2 is no longer around.

They will thus give a farthing to safety protocols that ought to be followed religiously. The reducing numbers may also lead to governments getting lethargic in contact tracing and surveillance. That will make the authorities miss the rising numbers of Covid-19. It may be too late by the time they realise the reality that the second wave of the disease has hit them.

Significantly, experts are quoting the second waves hitting certain European countries including the UK, whose Prime Minister Boris Johnson has gone on to acknowledge the same.

Contact tracing and testing are two important yardsticks for cutting down numbers of the Coronavirus pandemic. Only they indicate the prevalence of the disease existing in the population, not the decreasing statistics of the daily number of positive cases.

Dr K. K. Aggarwal, president of Confederation of Medical Associations of Asia and Oceania, says, "When cases are less, authorities feel there is no need for more testing. This is a fallacy because it actually means the infection is prevalent but not traceable. Only countries that are testing more have been able to understand the pattern of the disease."

In all, there are 12 countries, which have seen more than one wave. In Brazil and Colombia, the second wave has been shorter than the first wave. But whether this will be applicable to the 10 other countries is still not

## Debate rages over vaccination

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 14

With the health ministry gearing up for the vaccine, people are wondering if people can undergo vaccination in the second wave. It is important to look for the vaccine as prevention but can it be administered when cases increase and would it work, is a doubt that many wish to know.

Dr Yadgiri Rao, former secretary and member of TS Indian Medical Association says, "Vaccination protocols are dependent on the status of the cases. If there are more cases the regimen cannot be followed." The vaccination program is to be scaled up on the basis of the pulse polio program by involving non-government organisations to reach out

clear.

Dr Ramana Prasad, senior pulmonologist at KIMS Hospital, says, "The second wave will be noted in January or February, as the movement of people and lapses in following protocols is rampant. It has been noted that maximum cases are asymptomatic and we expect the same pattern in the second wave."

Experts have advised healthcare workers not to let down their guard, as their exposure rate to Covid-19 is high. Further, they maintain that contact tracing all cases and surveillance is very important in stopping or containing the second wave. Importantly, a senior doctor, on condition of anonymity, says, "Reporting of Covid cases is accurate only from corporate, nodal government and accredited laboratories. But these get only 20 per cent of the total labs for testing. The remaining 80 per cent of people go to other institutions, which charge lesser fee but do not bother much about

to all people in the country. The Centre has decided to take up Telangana and Rajasthan as the first two states for the pilot project and the time-line has been set for training, awareness and maximum participation.

According to TS government, district training has to be completed by December 19 and public health centre trainings are to be done by December 22.

In Rajasthan there is a lockdown in containment zones till December 31 and all social, political, religious, sports and cultural activities have been suspended in the state. The moot point is vaccination preparedness has started but during the pandemic the implementation process will differ from normal times, stress experts.

reporting to government agencies. For this reason, the number of missed cases is now very high. While ICMR states that for every reported case, there are 30 missed cases, I believe the missed cases are now 50," the doctor maintains.

The Epidemiology Wing of the Health Department, which collects data, follows up with patients, and gets local municipal and police authorities involved, has completely stopped functioning now. Dr. Santosh Kraleeti, senior public health specialist, warns, "We are seeing lapses all over India. The new cases are either not reported or not followed up properly. When Covid-19 tests are positive, the patient and his or her family do not want to disclose the matter, whether to their neighbours or the government. The disease is turning out to be more like tuberculosis in India, where people are not ready to follow safety protocols and government follow-up is not what it used to be."

## BJP: RECRUITMENT ONLY DRAMA BEFORE MLC POLLS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, DEC. 14

Because of the upcoming MLC elections that will be held soon in the state, the TRS government is playing the drama of recruitment of vacant posts to deceive the educated unemployed youth, alleged district unit president of the Congress, Dr Kavvampalli Satyanarayana on Monday.

He alleged that before going to elections, K. Chandrasekhara Rao had promised unemployed youth that after coming to power, the TRS government would provide 1 lakh job opportunities and a job each for every family in the state. Where are the jobs?

The report submitted to the Governor by the state government states that the TRS government

issued a notification for the recruitment of only 108 posts and has conducted written tests for 115 posts in the seven years of its tenure till date.

By announcing that very soon, the state government is going to issue recruitment notification, to fill vacant posts in various departments, the TRS is once again trying to fool the educated unemployed youth.

The tenure of the TSPSC chairman, Ganta Chakrapani is about to complete. Without making an announcement about the appointment of a new chairman officially, how has the TRS-led government, issued an job notification, he asked. Interviews to fill vacant principal posts in Gurukul Residential schools were held two years back. But yet vacant.

## TS RECORDS 384 NEW COVID CASES, 3 DEATHS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 14

Telangana has recorded 384 new Coronavirus cases throughout the state, apart from three deaths. Their total numbers have thus reached 2,78,108 and 1,496 respectively. GHMC reported the maximum 101 cases, followed by Ranga Reddy 36 and Medchal Malkajgiri 31. The number of active cases in the state has reached 7,380.

Of these 5,298 are under home and institutional isolation. Only 28,980 samples had been tested on Sunday, though the state government has increased the target of testing to 65,000 people per day.

Health officials have reiterated their appeal to people that they follow safety protocols like wearing masks, washing their hands with soap or sanitiser regularly, and maintaining social distance for staying safe.

People have also been advised to avoid needless travel.

● **THE NUMBER** of active cases in the state has reached 7,380. Of these 5,298 are under home and institutional isolation.

● **ONLY 28,980** samples had been tested on Sunday, though the state government has increased the target of testing to 65,000 people per day.

## NEW STRATEGY

## Several bodies hold meet to discuss Centre's reforms in agriculture sector

## Pro-farmer 'Million March' mooted in TS

ATHER MOIN | DC  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 14

Various social organisations have extended their support to the ongoing protest of farmers and the Joint Action Committee has decided to constitute a sub-committee to organise 'Kisan Bagh' across Telangana.

A round table conference was held on Monday to discuss the proposed reforms of the Union Government in the agricultural sector

and its impact on the farming community. The conference was organised by Tehreek Muslim Shabban.

President of Telangana Jana Samithi, Prof. Kodanda Ram said the movement started by the farmers will give a new direction to the nation. It is the duty of every citizen to strengthen this movement as it is not confined to farmers or the agriculture sector.

He said there was a need

● **PRESIDENT** OF Telangana Jana Samithi, Prof. Kodanda Ram said the movement started by the farmers will give a new direction to the nation. It is the duty of every citizen to strengthen this movement as it is not confined to farmers or the agriculture sector. He said there was a need to organise a 'Million March' in Telangana to support the farmers.

Interacting with the media, president Tehreek Muslim Shabban Mushtaq Malik said the Centre has

been introducing new laws to exploit certain sections and exploring opportunities that can benefit the rich and corporate sector. "The purpose of new ideas is to benefit a hand-

ful of rich Indians and create Ambanistan and Admanistan", he said.

The activists termed the laws as not only being against farmers but also against every household. They said the farmers' protest is a people's movement. They urged religious leaders to create awareness about the need for solidarity on the farm bills.

Rafeeq Rashadi, Sardar Inder Singh and Sardar Jogender Singh from Gowliguda Gurudwara

Committee, Sardar Darshan Singh, Amjadullah Khan Khaleel (MBT), Dr Aleem Khan Falki, Rasheed Rashadi, Kamal Athar, Prof. Anwar Khan, Justice Chandra Kumar, Samad Nawab, Khalil Khan (Zaheerabad), Shakeel Ahmed, Tahreek Muslim Shabban, Dr Asif Umri, Jamiate (Ahle Hadees), Mufti Abrar, Jaswant Singh Kaur and Sheela Sara Mathews participated in the discussion.



## OTHER STORIES

### PICNIC TURNS TRAGIC, TWO YOUTH DROWN

DC CORRESPONDENT  
MANCHERIAL, DEC. 14

Two youth of the six who went for a picnic near the Godavari river are feared to have drowned when they ventured into the deep waters for a swim on Monday afternoon.

The incident took place near Errayipet village in Kotapalli mandal. All the six youth are from Chennai town.

After the two youth went missing, the other four returned home. One of the youth informed his parents about the incident, who in turn told the local police.

Police found three pairs of clothes on the banks of river Godavari and search operations till night were on.

## RIMS SERVICES HIT DUE TO FEW ANAESTHETISTS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, DEC. 14

State committee member Suhasini Reddy said that medi- cal services at RIMS, Adilabad have been badly affected in the last one month as there were very few anaesthetists.

The BJP leader demanded the state government to immediately recruit anaesthetists on Monday. A team of BJP leaders led by Suhasini Reddy met the collector Sikata Patnaik and submitted a memorandum.

Suhasini Reddy told the collector that patients are being put to inconvenience as operations are not being performed since there is only one anaes- thesiologist working at RIMS.

Suhasini Reddy said the poor come to RIMS for medical treat- ment since they can't afford medical charges at private hos- pitals.

## RMP BOOKED FOR MISBEHAVING WITH MINOR GIRL

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, DEC. 14

Police booked a Rural Medical Practioner (RMP), Sheik Musthaq, 52, of Thadihathnoor under Poeso and the SC and ST Atrocity (Prevention) and Criminal law (Amendment) Act and remanded him to the court on Monday.

Police received a complaint from the parents of a minor girl from Gunjala village wherein they stated that Sheik Musthaq misbehaved with their daughter when she went to his clinic in Thadihathnoor on December 11.

The girl was suffering from fever and had gone with her brother to the clinic for treatment. The girl returned home and told her parents about the incident, who in turn went to the clinic the next day and assaulted Sheik Musthaq. Utnoor DSP Uday Kumar Reddy briefed the media about the incident .

■ THE GIRL was suffering from fever and had gone with her brother to the clinic for treatment.

## SARPANCH, UPA SARPANCH SUSPENDED

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KAREPALLI (KHAMMAM), DEC. 14

Karepalli gram panchayat sarpanch, Adlera Sravanthi, and Upa Sarpanch, Manikonda Nageswara Rao, were suspended on Monday, for misusing ₹22.65 lakhs sanctioned to the panchayat.

Also, panchayat junior secretary, Murali, was removed from his service and another secretary Siddique, was suspended for their role in it.

Collector R.V. Karnan, who received a complaint, asked district panchayat officer Srinivas Reddy to conduct an enquiry on the misuse of funds. The officials enquired with the ward members and others and found that the panchayat funds were misused.

The DPO issued orders suspending the sarpanch, Upa sarpanch and secretary and removed another secretary.

■ COLLECTOR R.V. Karnan, who received a complaint, asked district panchayat officer Srinivas Reddy to conduct an enquiry on the misuse of funds.

■ THE OFFICIALS enquired with the ward members and others and found that the panchayat funds were mis-used.

# Politics over farmers' benefit uncalled for: TRS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, DEC. 14

The Union government is obstructing development projects that benefit farmers, alleged Narasampet MLA Peddi Sudarshan Reddy.

“The Ramappa - Pakala and Ramappa - Rangaya cheruvu projects are a long time dream of Narsampet farmers and are almost complete. However, the Central government has asked the projects to be halted. Putting politics aside, for the development of Telangana and for the benefit of the farmers, Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao asked the Union Jal Shakti Minister not to obstruct these projects. But what is the intent behind the Center writing a letter to stop six projects in the state?” he asked.

He asked to what extent is it reasonable to interfere when a project is providing water to the farmers. “Never before in history have we faced a government that is not cooperating with projects that provide water to the farmers. The BJP government is harming the interests of the farmers.”

“Providing water to the Pakhal Lake has been a



Narasampet MLA Peddi Sudharshan Reddy inspecting Ramappa - Pakhal project.

demand since the days of agitation for separate Telangana state.

When the dream is about to come true, the Central government is obstructing it. Ramappa - Pakala, Ramappa - Rangai cheruvu projects have all the required permits,” he said.

Reddy pointed out that the Central Government is considering the complaints of the AP government on the Pakala project and not that of Telangana.

“Local BJP leaders previously complained that the projects are illegal.

The AP government sent false information to the government.

Such conspiracies are being hatched so out of fear that the BJP will be overlooked if the TRS government provides water,” he said.

Reddy said that the farmers in the state are preparing to fight for water, under the leadership of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao. “Telangana is not new to movements. We will mobilise an agitation in Delhi if the interests of our region are damaged,” he threatened.



The BJP district unit leaders led by G. Krishna Reddy staged a dharna in front of the Collectorate in Karimnagar on Monday, demanding the government resolve the issues of teachers, employees and pensioners.

# Govt has failed to resolve the issues of teachers: BJP

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, DEC. 14

The TRS government has utterly failed in resolving the issues of teachers, pensioners and government employees, alleged district unit president of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Gangidi Krishna Reddy on Monday.

Joining the call given by the BJP state committee, BJP district unit leaders along with the members of the 'Retired employees and teachers association' staged a dharna in front of the Collectorate in Karimnagar district, demanding the government resolve the issues of the employees and pensioners.

Mr. Krishna Reddy alleged that the TRS party came to power explaining to the people that the funds and recruitment, along with employees' problems, will be resolved with the perfect implementation of 610 G.O, but did not keep its promise till date.

■ HE DEMANDED that the state government resolve the teachers, employees and pensioners issues immediately and announce PRC which is pending since 2018, along with two D.As and internal transfers. He also sought the suspension of the Contributory Pension Scheme and to allot Quantum of pensions to pensioners who have crossed 70 years of age.

The TRS-led government allotted the MLA and MLC seat along with a few other government posts to some union leaders so that they do not oppose the KCR-led government or ask any questions, he alleged.

The TRS government did not take any steps to resolve the issues of the government employees till date after the formation of a separate Telangana statehood. The situation of the pensioners is pitiful. They are facing a lot of problems with the minimum amount of pension they receive and are living a pathetic life.

Mr. Krishna Reddy alleged that the TRS gov-

ernment has not declared D.A. till date and cut the time in announcing the PRC in the name of appointing committees. The employee's unions remained silent, and the second-grade employees are facing a huge loss.

He demanded that the state government resolve the teachers, employees and pensioners issues immediately and announce PRC which is pending since 2018, along with two D.As and internal transfers. He also sought the suspension of the Contributory Pension Scheme and to allot Quantum of pensions to pensioners who have crossed 70 years of age.

TECH | BOON

Telangana cops used face recognition tool to match photos

# Missing boy united with family after 10 yrs

NAVEEN KUMAR | DC  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 14

“I had lost all hopes and was only counting on prayers until I got the call from my local police that my son was found,” said Rahul Srivastava's father, who lost his only son about 10 years ago in Jabalpur.

Their reunion was possible due Darpan, a facial recognition tool of Telangana state police, who informed the Madhya Pradesh police where the missing case was booked in October 2010.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Ravi Srivastava, the father of the boy, said that he was rushing to attend his

brother's funeral in Gwalior when he lost the boy. “When I realised my son was missing, I informed the Jabalpur police and they started a search but in vain. 10 years is a long time and we have given up on the investigation. When I got a call that he was found, I thanked god and shared the news with my wife and other relatives,” shared the father.

Ravi was a rickshaw puller and had a leg injury which made him get a job as a worker at a shop, where he now earns ₹3,000 per month and his wife works as a cook at wedding ceremonies, earning ₹7,000 per month.

● IN VIEW of Covid-19 lockdown, the child has been handed over to his father only on December 12 by the West Bengal police.

“He was not able to recognise us when he sent our latest photo and we had to send a 10-year-old photo instead,” added the father.

“The boy was found at a children's home in Howrah, West Bengal. He went missing on October 7, 2010, from Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh and was spotted by Hooghly police, who admitted him to the home on October 21, 2010,” police said.

Telangana state police

# Gang busted for printing fake currency, four held

7 escape; they were circulating the fake notes in the villages

ANUDEEP  
CEREMILLA | DC  
WARANGAL, DEC. 14

Mahbubabad Town and Task Force police on Monday nabbed a four of a gang that was allegedly printing fake currency in the denominations of ₹100, ₹200, ₹500, and ₹2,000 for circulation in the surrounding villages in the district.

Officials seized fake currency worth ₹3.50 lakh and two motorcycles.

The accused were identified as, G. Rama Krishna, 45, a resident of Maripeda, O. Mahesh, 28, a resident of Mahbubabad Town, A. Venkanna, 40, a resident of Giriprasad Thanda in Mahbubabad and D. Ramdas, 46, a resident of Damaracherla mandal in Nalgonda district.

## WOMAN, MINOR SON ARRESTED FOR BURGLARY

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 14

A woman and her minor son were apprehended by the Rajendranagar police on Monday for their involvement in a burglary at their employer's house at Upparpally. Police recovered ₹47,000 and 15 tolas of gold, all together worth ₹7.5 lakh from them.

According to the police, the accused, Parveen alias Parveen Begum, 33, was working as a domestic help from Upparpally in Rajendranagar. “As per their plan, the minor boy broke into their employer's house in their absence and decamped with valuables. The owner found the place burgled when he returned on Saturday,” said the police. Parveen and the minor were questioned based on suspicion, and confessed to the burglary.

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, DEC. 14

A ten-day Faculty Development programme was conducted under CCE (Centre for Continuing Education) on ‘Machine learning for data science using Python.’

It was inaugurated by Prof. N. V. Ramana Rao, Director National Institute of Technology,

## HYDERABAD TO HAVE 34 NEW URBAN FOREST PARKS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 14

Twin cities and its environs will soon have 34 new urban forest parks, announced special principal secretary (Forests) Shanti Kumari. Speaking at a review meeting on Monday, she said establishment of these new parks will be in phases. They are part of the Urban Forestry Project delayed due to



Mahbubabad police showing the four members of the gang that were arrested on Monday.

Seven others escaped and were identified as, G. Rajeev Nai, 44, a resident of Maripeda village, Y. Veeranna, 40, a resident of Mahbubabad Town, B. Sariya, 50, G. Srinivas, 42,

a resident of Dharmaram Thanda in Maripeda mandal, O. Narsimha, 35, a resident of Mahbubabad Town and G. Lakshmaiah, 50, a resident of Redya Naik Thanda in

# SR, BGBR colleges hold webinars on literary genres

RAVINDRA SESHUJ DC  
KHAMMAM, DEC. 14

The Telugu Department and Internal Quality Assurance Cell of SR & BGNR Degree College have been jointly conducting webinars on different genres and concepts in Telugu literature other than mainstream literature such as story, drama, novel and criticism.

The focus is on genres used by different Telugu poets, as there is not much exposure to them due to some reasons. The college has decided to involve upcoming poets and literature lovers to use these genres and concepts through webinars.

Webinar coordinator Sitaram said, “There are nearly 25 genres and concepts adopted from the other languages including Japanese and Urdu. *Haiku* poem, which is a Japanese literary genre, is followed

● THE FOCUS is on genres used by different Telugu poets, as there is not much exposure to them due to some reasons.

by many Telugu poets like Ismail, Gali Nasara Reddy and B.V.V Prasad”.

The other genres are including *Rubailu*, *Naneelu*, street playlets, a autobiography, *Kunalamma Padalu*, *gajal*, writings on science, *lekha sahityam* and radio *natikalu*. Sri Sri used the style called limariks and *Rubailu*, *Duvvuri*

Ramireddy, Dasarathi and C. Narayana Reddy and Enugu Narasimha Reddy used Urdu literary genre.

Sitaram said that sensitising the language department faculty in different colleges is the need of the hour. “We have held two webinars on Telangana Rubailu and

Haiku. The third will be on December 28, 2020, on Kannada Vachanamulu-Prakriya-Thatvam (sentence-genre-concept). The main discussion will be held on Basava Rachanalu, a revolutionary poet in the 11th century. Telangana poet Palkuri Somanathudu followed his ideology and wrote *Basava Puranam*, he said.

Tirumala Srinivasacharya, the grandson of Anna-

macharya, wrote vachanam on Lord Venkateswara.”

Anjani, coordinator and English department faculty said that the students are showing interest in new genres of literature. They have promised to try to use the genres in their poems. K.S.S Ratna Prasad, principal of the college, said that the webinars are useful for the language department faculty. They will teach them to the students.

complex data to deliver faster, more accurate results to process even on a very large scale, he said. “Building precise models in an organisation has a better chance of identifying profitable opportunities and avoiding unknown risks with the help of the machine learning technologies.

Financial industry uses machine learning technol-

ogy to identify important insights in data, and prevent fraud.

Machine learning can identify investment opportunities, or help investors to know when to trade.

It can also help medical experts analyse data to identify trends or red flags that may lead to improved diagnosis and treatment,” he explained.

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This is to notify that the admission in to the following courses under category "B" seats (NRI/Management Quota) will be filled in the college as per schedule and details given below for 2020-21.			
MBA (In take 180)	Seats in Category B	54	
MBA Finance Management (In take 120)	Seats in Category B	36	
Application Form	Free of Cost	-	
Last date for Submitting filled in Application form	29-12-2020	-	
Date of Publication of Merit list	30-12-2020	-	
Last date for joining and reporting for admissions	31-12-2020	-	
Candidates can download application form from the website or get personally immediately and should apply in Physical format in the office and follow admission procedure and schedule mentioned above. Selected candidates must report with original certificates and necessary fee in the college. Admissions will be held As per the Government rules.			
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SHORT TAKES

MODI, HASINA TO HOLD VIRTUAL SUMMIT ON DEC. 17

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 14

India and Bangladesh will hold a crucial virtual summit on Thursday (December 17) that will be co-chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina during which the “two leaders will hold comprehensive discussions on the entire spectrum of the bilateral relationship, including further strengthening cooperation in the post-Covid era”, New Delhi announced on Monday. This is likely to include the progress of development projects, sharing of river waters including the Teesta issue, the Rohingya migrants issue, border security, Covid-19 vaccines as well as the forthcoming golden jubilee celebrations of the 1971 war of liberation.

The summit will take place at a time when India is making a renewed bid to reach out to its immediate neighbourhood and also when Pakistan is trying its best to improve relations with Bangladesh.

On Monday, New Delhi said, “India and Bangladesh have continued to maintain regular exchanges at the highest level. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid an official visit to India in October 2019. Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a video message on the historic occasion of Mujib Borsho in March 2020. Both leaders have remained in regular touch during the Covid pandemic.”

“Mujib Barsho” refers to birth centenary celebrations of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman — popularly known as Bangabandhu — who had led the Bangladesh freedom struggle in 1971.

GMAIL, OTHER GOOGLE SERVICES FACE OUTAGE

New Delhi, Dec. 14: Gmail and a host of other Google services faced disruptions on Monday evening and the tech major is in the process of fully restoring the services. The company, which faced a similar outage in August this year, is yet to specify areas on for the outage.

In an update on the Google work space status dashboard at 18:17 hours, Google said Gmail service has already been restored for some users, and “we expect a resolution for all users in the near future. Please note this time frame is an estimate and may change”.

At around 17:25 hours, Google had said it was “aware of a problem with Gmail affecting a majority of users” and that the affected users are unable to access Gmail.

As per the dashboard, other Google services like Google Calendar, Google Drive, Google Docs and Google Meet have also been affected. Down detector, which detects outages and interruptions on networks, also showed that services like YouTube (Google's video platform) and Gmail were facing disruption. Netizens turned to Twitter to express their emotions.

MAHA GOVT OFFERS HELP TO PRESERVE INS VIRAAT

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC  
MUMBAI, DEC. 14

Claiming that the Maharashtra government is willing to help restore and preserve “the historical ship” *INS Viraat*, Shiv Sena MP Priyanka Chaturvedi on Monday said she has written a letter to the defence ministry seeking a no-objection certificate to preserve the decommissioned aircraft carrier.

The Shiv Sena leader in her letter addressed to defence minister Rajnath Singh has stated that the government of Maharashtra was happy to cooperate in restoring and preserving the historical ship. She has also requested Singh's immediate intervention to grant No Objection Certificate (NOC) to preserve the aircraft carrier. *INS Viraat* is being dismantled at the Alang ship-breaking yard in Gujarat.

According to Mukesh Patel, chairman of the Shree Ram Group which bought *INS Viraat* as scrap, “About 5 per cent of the ship has already been broken.”

In her social media post she has stated that *INS Viraat* served as India's aircraft carrier for nearly 30 years. “It has been the pride of our seas and our Indian Navy. To see it sold as scrap and dismembered will be a huge disservice to our naval legacy. With RM's NOC, a memorial on *INS Viraat* will be a reality,” she said.



People witness the launch of GRSE-built first Project 17A stealth frigate Himgiri in Kolkata on Monday.

— PTI

India geared up for any China build-up: Rawat

CDS says armed forces can counter PLA's constant moves

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, DEC. 14

In a veiled warning to China amid a prolong stand-off, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat on Monday affirmed that the Indian armed forces, undertaking steps on this side of the Line of Actual Control to counter the People Liberation Army's military build-up on the other side, would leave no stone unturned to protect the nation's interests from land to air to sea.

“We are in a stand-off situation in Ladakh and based on that there is some development activity which has been ongoing in Tibet Autonomous Region of China. Every nation will continue to prepare for ensuring it's security based on its strategic interests. I do not

think there should be much concern in that because we, on our side, are also carrying out similar activity. China's attempt to change the status quo on the LAC along the northern border amidst the Coronavirus pandemic necessitates high-level preparation on land, in air and at sea. I am fully confident that Indian armed forces will leave no stone unturned to safeguard our frontiers be it on land, in air or at ocean. We are fully prepared for any eventuality we may be faced with,” Gen Rawat said at the launch of *INS Himgiri*, the first GRSE-built P17A stealth frigate in Kolkata.

Referring to the Doklam stand-off between the two sides, Rawat elaborated, “A situation had evolved in Doklam in 2017. Ever since we have taken meas-

ures to ensure that the situation does not escalate. The PLA on the other side has been carrying out certain activity. We, on our side, have also been watching this activity very carefully. We have also taken necessary action to counter anything that could be a cause of concern to our national security.”

Underlining the importance of technology in military, he added, “What we are looking at is getting technology. Time has come to look at the future of warfighting imbibing technology into systems. We have adequate force and reserves available to counter any threat or challenge that we may face on the northern border.”

On the Navy's push for a third aircraft carrier vis-a-vis submarines, Gen

Rawat observed, “Both have their advantages and disadvantages. Submarines have their separate place in naval warfare in domination of the sea. So does an aircraft carrier. I am no way saying the navy does not need it's air wing. Yes it does. But how to manage air wing and how to ensure the security and sanctity of the sealine of our communication is something we are thinking about. I think we also need to look at our Island territories that we have in large numbers. We can leverage the island territory to our advantage. Then we can balance whether these can be used for launching our naval aircraft or do we need an aircraft carrier. Once we study all that and we understood in detail, we will take a call on that.”

Heavy voter turnout in last phase of Kerala polls

DC CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DEC. 14

Heavy polling was recorded in the third and final phase of local body polls in Kerala.

More than 78.62 per cent polling was recorded till 8 pm in four northern districts Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasargod which went to polls on Monday.

Malappuram recorded 78.86 per cent, Kozhikode 78.98, Kannur 77.54 and Kasargod 77.14 per cent.

A total of 89,74,993 voters were eligible to vote in the third phase in 6,867 wards across 354 local bodies. The polling was held strictly complying with Covid safety protocol. Voters turned out in masks, maintained social distancing while waiting in the queues and used sanitisers before and after casting their votes. Barring minor incidents of scuffle between the supporters of rival parties, no major violence was reported from any of the northern districts.

The state had witnessed heavy turnout of voters in all three phases which



Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan casts his vote during the last stage of Kerala local body elections at Cherikkal in Kannur on Monday.

— PTI

clearly indicated the enthusiasm of the electorate. Leaders of LDF, UDF and BJP are keeping their fingers crossed over the heavy polling with each party trying to interpret the trend according to their respective calculations.

It may be recalled that 72.67 per cent polling was recorded in the first

phase on December 8 southern districts Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha and Idukki.

A higher voter turnout of 76.38 per cent was witnessed in the second phase when central districts of Kottayam, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Palakkad and Wayanad went to polls on December 10.

Rajnath lauds valour of forces deployed at LAC

PAWAN BALI | DC  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 14

Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said that unprovoked aggression on India's Himalayan frontiers by China is a reminder of how world is changing and how power is being asserted across Indo-Pacific. He lauded the valour of Indian armed forces deployed along the LAC for standing up to aggression by Chinese troops and said our troops fought the Chinese military with “utmost bravery,” forcing it to go back. On farmer's issues Singh said there is no question of taking “retrograde steps against our agricultural sector ever”.

“Unprovoked aggression on our Himalayan frontiers is a reminder of how the world is changing, how existing agreements are being challenged, how power is being asserted not just in Himalayas but across Indo-Pacific. How

uncertain the future of the region and world could be in this backdrop,” said Singh while virtually addressing the annual general meeting of apex industry chamber FICCI. Defence minister said that there is a big build up of armed forces at LAC in Ladakh. “In these testing times, our forces have shown exemplary courage and remarkable fortitude. They fought the PLA with utmost bravery and forced them to go back,” said Singh. He said that the coming generations will be proud of what our forces have managed to achieve this year.

Defence minister pointed out that whenever there is a situation at LAC there is most obvious outcome is comparison between India and China's military strength.

“There can be a serious debate on who owns more military might but when it comes to soft power there is no scope of ambiguity

India is far ahead of China when it comes to leading the world with ideas,” said Singh. “If one looks at East-Asia from Burma to Thailand to Indonesia and Malaysia and even Japan “there is a huge Indian cultural impact on these countries,” he added “Buddhism had a monumental impact on China to the extent that before the 1949 revolution almost 80 per cent of China population followed Buddhism,” said Singh.

He added that famous Chinese thinker Hu Shih, who was also the vice-chancellor of Peking University had said that: “India has culturally dominated and controlled China for more than 2,000 years without sending a single soldier.” “This statement by Hu Shih underlines the fact that India as a civilisation state has been inspiring and influencing the world through its cultural and soft power for centuries,” he said.

Kamal Nath hints at political retirement

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOVAL, DEC. 14

Former chief minister and Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath has created a ripple in the political circle here when he hinted at retirement from politics.

Nath who is facing growing resentment in the party following the poor show by Congress in the November 3 by-elections to 28 Assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh, said, “I am ready to take some rest. I have no ambition or greed for any position or power. I have served in various posts at Centre. I have already achieved a lot. I am ready to stay at home”.

He was addressing a rally in his Assembly constituency of Sasaur in Chhindwara on Sunday evening.

Nath's statement comes in the wake of reports of his running feud with veteran Congress leader and former chief minister Digvijay Singh.

“Nath is responsible for the drubbing of Congress in November 3 Assembly by-elections. The party suffered a setback in the

by-polls because Nath sidelined Singh in the Assembly by-elections”, Congress MLA Baburam Jandela said.

Jandela is considered close to Singh. Congress spokesman Narendra Singh Saluja, however, sought to underplay the development, saying, “Nath has several times in the past said he has achieved a lot and has no greed for power or position”.

Nath who holds dual posts of Madhya Pradesh PCC president and Congress Legislature Party chief is under pressure by a strong section of the party to leave one of the posts in the wake of party's poor show in the November 3 Assembly by-elections.

Congress could win only nine out of 28 Assembly constituencies which had gone to by-elections on November 3.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan took a jibe at Kamal Nath for reportedly weighing the option of retiring from politics, saying, “It is up to him to decide whether to retire or sit at home. It is his affairs. If charges and counter-charges are made, he should come up with clarifications”.

Centre upgrades Vijayvargiya's security with bullet resistant car

New Delhi/Kolkata, Dec. 14: BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya's VIP security has been upgraded with the addition of a “bullet resistant” car in his convoy during his West Bengal tour, official sources said on Monday.

The Union home ministry has issued an order directing the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) to include an armoured vehicle in the convoy of the 64-year-old national general secretary of the BJP and ensure he only travels in that SUV, they said.

“The security of Vijayvargiya has been upgraded with the inclusion of a bullet resistant

four-wheeler in the convoy. This has been done keeping in mind the security requirements of the protectee in the wake of the recent attack on his vehicle that was part of a convoy of BJP president J.P. Nadda,” an official source said.

The CISF has been providing ‘Z’ category VIP security cover to Vijayvargiya since February last year. The protection includes a mobile team of about seven armed CISF commandos as well as a pilot and an escort vehicle. Vijayvargiya's vehicle was attacked with stones during a visit to Diamond Harbour area in the state's South 24 Parganas

district on December 10 when he was accompanying the BJP president.

Vijayvargiya confirmed his security upgrade to reporters after he arrived in Kolkata on Monday afternoon to take part in a programme at Mathurapur in South 24 Parganas.

“As per the order of the Union home ministry, I have been provided with a bulletproof vehicle,” he told the media at the airport. On December 10, several vehicles in Nadda's cavalcade were damaged in the attack. Sources in the BJP said its leaders, including Vijayvargiya and vice president Mukul Roy, sustained injuries in the melee.

— PTI

Bill gives death penalty, ₹10 lakh fine for crimes on women, modelled after AP

WOMEN | SAFETY

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC  
MUMBAI, DEC. 14

In a historical move, the Maharashtra government on Monday tabled the Shakti Bill in the Vidhan Sabha that provides a death penalty and a fine up to ₹10 lakh for crimes against women and children in the state.

State home minister Anil Deshmukh tabled the Maharashtra Shakti Criminal Law (Maharashtra Amendment) Act, 2020, as well as Maharashtra Exclusive Special Court (for certain

offences against Women and Children under Shakti Law) on the first day of the two-day winter session of the state legislature.

Based on the Disha Act in Andhra Pradesh, the bill has proposed strict punishments for crimes such as rape, acid attack and derogatory material on social media against women and children.

It has also proposed special courts ensuring speedy trial in cases of crimes against women and children, amendments in sections of Indian Penal

● BASED ON the Disha Act in Andhra Pradesh, the bill has proposed strict punishments for crimes such as rape, acid attack and derogatory material on social media against women and children.

Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) to sternly deal with such crimes.

The bills have assured to bring down the investigation period from two months to 15 days, the trial period from two months to 30 days, and appeal period to 45 days from the present

six months. It is expected to be cleared by the House on Tuesday.

The new law will have a separate judicial system to fast-track the cases that come under the Act's purview with at least one special court in each of the districts. It has the provision for special public prosecutors and special police teams, which will have at least one woman

officer. It also aims to establish institutions for providing services to victims, including medical or psychiatric support and care, counselling, facilitating legal and financial aid, and rehabilitation.

Deshmukh said the legislation proposes to complete investigation, trial and sentencing within a stipulated time frame. “The offences against women and children, especially heinous and sexual offences have increased many fold in the state. The proposed law will also

have provisions to tackle threats and messages on social media platforms. It is an important legislation and provisions have been made to ensure that the accused are booked and sentenced at the earliest,” he added.

Several women's groups had earlier urged Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to not table the Shakti bill, calling it draconian legislation that is fundamentally anti-women with the potential to negate the very offence of rape.



—AFP



# DECCAN Chronicle

15 DECEMBER 2020

## Vaccines only way out of Covid; shun politics

The vaccine against Coronavirus is the silver bullet. A world caught in the throes of the deadly Covid-19 pandemic has no alternative but to trust the apolitical integrity of science, which has brought humanity to the point that it can hope to inoculate large sections of the population in order to spread immunity. There is no knowing how long the vaccines will continue to trigger the production of antibodies in the human body to stave off the virus. It isn't clear yet if two shots will be sufficient for life. Will the vaccine be a seasonal jab? The fact that it has found its way into 70 million people causing 1.6 million deaths globally — the figures for India is close to one crore persons infected and 1.43 lakh deaths — is proof enough of its insidious ways. Indian drug regulators are yet to permit even emergency use of vaccines that have received approvals in Britain, the United States, Russia and China. The need for thoroughness in studying the trial data is a priority right now, considering how even minor ill-effects or side effects of the vaccine can prove inhibiting and erode people's confidence in taking the jab. Dedicated scientists

**While spreading awareness to build confidence in the vaccine should be a priority, the offer of free vaccines for entire populations as Kerala and Delhi have done is a political move.**

largest manufacturing hub, has a pivotal role to play in this as vaccines are the most effective route out of the pandemic as the production of monoclonal antibodies, which President Donald Trump might have been given, is painfully slow and mitigation of the disease is a complicated process that can overwhelm the health infrastructure.

The biggest stumbling block, as seen in the attitude of people, are the anti-vaccination sentiments. A recent survey reveals only 60 per cent of Americans are saying they will "definitely or probably" get a vaccine, while 21 per cent, constituting members of the "anti-vaxxer" movement, are dead against it. While spreading awareness to build confidence in the vaccine should be a priority, the offer of free vaccines for entire populations as Kerala and Delhi have done is a political move.

The idea of a free vaccine should, however, be welcomed if it were to become possible to inoculate all vulnerable people who must take it, even if it were to cost at least ₹2,000 per person to cover the vaccine, logistics and inoculation costs, and the total number in India is close to 100 crore people. Above all, we must disavow the politics and embrace the idea that a vaccine which promises to work, be it of any type or from any nation, is the only viable route out of the pandemic.

## The greatest spy writer ever

The great English novelist John Le Carre — whose real name was David Cornwell — who died on Saturday at the age of 89 will probably be known as the greatest spy writer of any era, anywhere. But he showed through his nearly two dozen novels that he had transcended the genre of spy-writing from the moment his first book came out in 1961.

His third book, *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*, published in 1963, established beyond doubt that it is human condition, and its frailties and moral ambiguities, that Le Carre depicted with delicate nuance and exquisite detail, using the field of spy-work as the medium for his message.

Before him, it was Ian Fleming and his flamboyant spy character James Bond who ruled the roost in the spy genre. Le Carre was a wholly different story. His books had no bang-bang stuff and they provoked reflection. Graham Greene, the famous English writer who was once an ordained priest, has called Le Carre the greatest English writer of the second half of the twentieth century.

John Le Carre's intricate plots came from the Cold War, in which, for a time, he was himself a participant as a junior British spy. But in his writings, men and women who fought from the Soviet side in the great ideological divide were not, as individuals, moral inferiors of their British (or Western) counterparts. It is not so well known that this writer of studied detail had once visited New Delhi, meeting people on the security circuit, with a view to writing a novel on Kashmir, though nothing came of it.

Le Carre shunned literary awards and state honours. When the Cold War ended, he wrote grippingly, fluently, and with understated eloquence — following on deep on-location research — about the drug trade, big pharma, and torture, in the wake of America's questionable interventions in Iraq and its "war on terror". He even began to take part in street demonstrations in Britain on such issues. The writer whose characters teetered on the fine line between right and wrong, good and bad, had begun to cast off ambiguity.

### DECCAN CHRONICLE

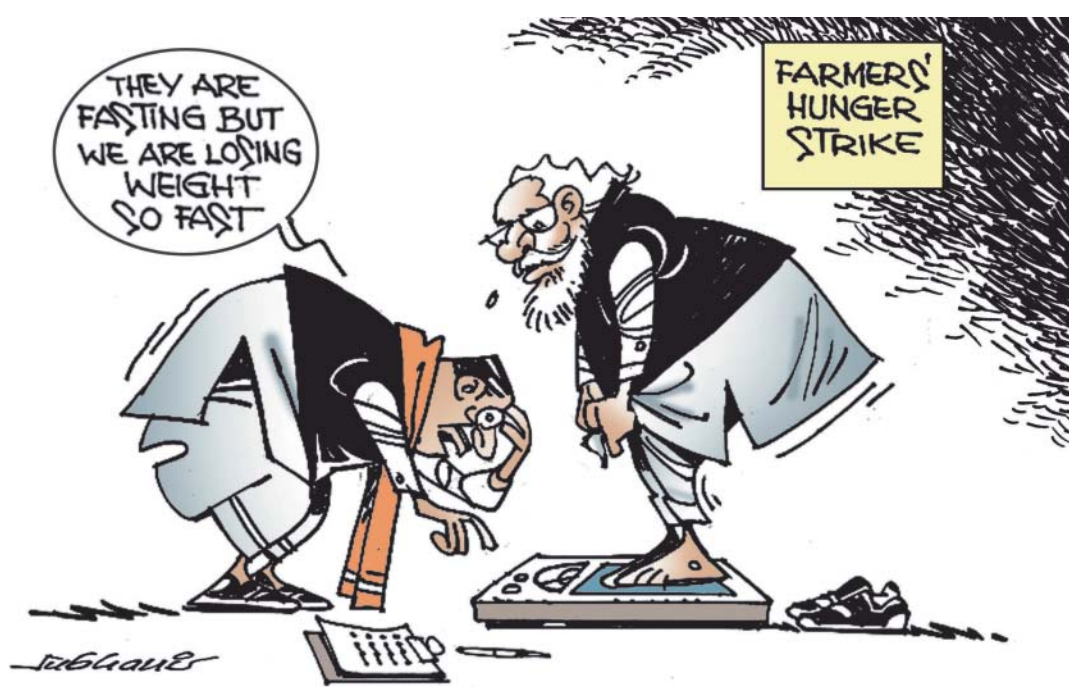
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DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

**Hyderabad:** 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256  
**Vijayawada:** No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234  
**Visakhapatnam:** Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285  
**Rajahmundry:** Vemagiri, Dhawaleswarani Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208  
**Anantapur:** Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904  
**Karimnagar:** Survey No.1341, Vavilapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433  
**Nellore:** Survey No.527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chennumudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580  
**Chennai:** SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/ 48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325  
**Coimbatore:** 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255  
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Subhani



## BJP in Bengal: Bruised, battered... still upbeat?



Shikha Mukerjee

Bullets, bombs, bricks; broken glass, bruises, broken bones, blood and death. The BJP's offensive in West Bengal has not been a peaceful, orderly and rapid occupation. It has been a laborious endeavour, with the party's popularity waxing and waning.

To sustain the 40 per cent votes it polled in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP will have to deal with the physicality of the political space it so ardently wants to capture. And West Bengal's political culture, its history and traditions require the BJP to do much more than verbally assault the Trinamul Congress bastion. It will have to find the resources and the skills to match the confrontational capability of the state's ruling party.

Claiming that it is the victim of the Trinamul Congress' aggression may not be enough for the saffron party. The bricks that were hurled at the party's president J.P. Nadda on his way to a meeting in Diamond Harbour may have shocked the BJP and shaken Mr Nadda who, incidentally, was not injured because he was travelling in a bullet-proof car, but the response to the obviously pre-planned attack is sadly feeble.

Bricks hurled at VIP convoys are par for the course in Indian politics. In August 2017, Rahul Gandhi's convoy was attacked with bricks in BJP-ruled Gujarat when he was vice-president of the Congress. The BJP did not apologise for the incident; it was dismissed as "unfortunate" and Mr Gandhi was verbally attacked for making the visit. Warning that the

Union home ministry would hear of it, orchestrating a media offensive on the "anarchy, lawlessness and intolerance" prevailing in West Bengal, declaring that orderly democratic politics was no longer possible, by the 2017 incident measure, is a serious overreaction. It falls short of a politically savvy response. Even with the state governor, Jagdeep Dhankar, weighing in and declaring that Mamata Banerjee was "playing with fire", that there was a "deterioration" in the law and order situation in the state, that he had written a special report and sent it to the Government of India because it was an attack on the "leader of the national party," the BJP missed its chance of using the situation to deliver a political punch. Having taunted both the "bhaipo" or nephew, Trinamul MP Abhishek Banerjee, and the "pishi" or paternal aunt, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, for an unholy nexus, accusing her of fostering "dynasty" by cutting out senior leaders of the Trinamul Congress who in their disenchantment were waiting to defect to the BJP, the visit to Diamond Harbour was a red rag that Mr Nadda waved. If the reaction shook up the "leader of a national party," it ought not to have surprised him. The BJP leadership needs to get it — that West Bengal is, like many other places, a mass of contradictions. Its people write and recite poetry even as they make bombs, perhaps plan to attack the convoys of VIPs and create chaos. In West Bengal, politics, peaceful demonstrations that are always edgy with the possibility of violence,

**The BJP needs to reread the history of Mamata's hard labour before she became Chief Minister. She fought the CPM on the streets for decades.**

poetry and piety coexist in perfect harmony. A familiarity with Rabindranath Tagore and Swami Vivekananda is not enough. The BJP needs to delve into Sri Aurobindo's evolution to begin getting a glimmer of an understanding of what is a Bengali. For that matter, the BJP needs to know that Swami Vivekananda had a brother, Bhupendranath Dutta, who was a member of the "Jugantar", an organisation that believed in armed opposition to British imperialism, and who joined the Ghadar Party, toyed with the Comintern, met Vladimir Lenin, and then joined the Congress on his return from travels in the US, Germany and the Soviet Union.

The BJP in West Bengal needs to create a playbook that is in sync with the political culture of the state. Using the Government of India as a bogeyman or a shield can be effective only in very limited ways. Having imported many workers from the Left Front and Trinamul Congress, it has to know how to deploy these resources most effectively.

And the BJP has to work out how politically useful it is to constantly trash Mamata Banerjee. She is a grassroots leader. If the BJP really thinks that encouraging the governor to publicly reprimand the bureaucracy and the police in West Bengal for being an extension of the ruling party and then amplifying the message is savvy politics, it does badly need to have a rethink. However deplorable and however cynical it may be, voters are unlikely to be scandalised about

non-specific accusations of the police-politician nexus in Bengal, or even across India. It is passé.

Taking on Mamata by publicly discrediting her shortcomings as Chief Minister or making personal attacks about her probity can be the frills on something much more substantial. By itself, accusing the TMC of corruption does not work.

The BJP needs to reread the history of Mamata's hard labour before she became Chief Minister. She fought the CPM on the streets for decades. She was relentless in her criticism of the Left. In 2001, Mamata Banerjee thought that she would win. In 2006, she again thought she would win. She finally won in 2011 and what a spectacular victory it was — chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya lost the elections as did droves of his Cabinet colleagues and of course sundry CPM and other Left party candidates. It was a bloody, pitched battle that Mamata fought to oust the CPM-led Left Front. And she did not have the limitless resources that the BJP seems to as a party and the resources it has as the ruling party of the country.

The signs of disenchantment with the Trinamul Congress and disappointment in Mamata are growing stronger.

But that does not make West Bengal any easier for a BJP takeover. The BJP's baggage is its performance as the ruling party at the Centre. The farmers' protest, now into its third week and just as robust, spontaneous and united as it was on the first day, November 27, is a challenge that the BJP has to be able to win with laurels. What happens in New Delhi will certainly have an impact in West Bengal, which is as politically conscious as it is culturally proud.

*Shikha Mukerjee is a senior journalist based in Kolkata*

### LETTERS

#### HEAR FARMERS

The question confronting every Indian is how to look at protests and their relevance in a democratic nation. Whether it is students protests, anti-CAA-NRC protests or the recent farmer protests, they all have been dealt with a very wrong attitude. It will only increase divisions among Indians. Britishers lost their hold over India due to suppressing the common man's voice. There is nothing like an ideal democracy. It's only attitude of a government in dealing with diverse opinions and giving them a space to express.

**Ratnaraj Jain**  
*Rajahmundry*

#### SHUN TURNCOATS

If we look at people changing parties just as they change, robes, it has become clear that they do not believe in party policies but power which is not visible in the near future. Can parties and democracy survive this type of people in their home? It is a moot question and for sure, the fact remains that ethics and morals are given a go by and thrown overboard.

**D.S.P. Rao**  
*Kakinada*

### 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

#### State check on chit funds

BY A STAFF REPORTER

HYDERABAD, Dec. 14

A Bill to enable the Government to have proper control over the transactions of the chit funds in the State and to regulate the business thereof, was adopted by the Legislative Assembly today.

A Government motion reducing the security deposit from twice the chit amount to 50 per cent of the chit amount was voted by the House, while Opposition amendments for referring the Bill to Select Committee were rejected.

Replying to the debate, Home Minister, Mr. J. Vengal Rao, said that the Bill was brought to check the chit fund organisations from cheating people. He said that similar legislations are there in neighbour- ing states.

Aakar Patel



## Modi govt's real eco strategy: To let Big Biz grow & forget the rest

The head of the Niti Aayog had said something the other day that upset many people and so he had to explain himself. This was, of course, his statement, repeated twice, that India had "too much democracy". However, something else was said in the same speech that did not get as much attention though, in my opinion, it was far more important and concerning. The fact checking website alt-news.in analysed the video recording of his speech and confirmed that he had indeed used the word that he had denied using. It reported: "In India we are too much of a democracy, so we keep supporting everybody". He went on to elaborate: "For the first time in India a government has thought big in terms of size and scale and said we want to produce global champions. Nobody had the political will and the courage to say that we want to support five companies who want to be global champions. Everyone used to say ... I want to support everyone in India, I want to get votes from everyone."

That second bit is the thing that got ignored. The head of the Niti Aayog, which is the Prime Minister's think tank, was explaining the strategy of the Narendra Modi government on the economy. It has not been articulated as clearly as it was in this statement but has been expressed in policy quite clearly.

In brief, the theory is that India has too many small companies and this is inefficient. It should instead have only a handful of very large players running its economy, and these giants can then compete with the world. So, what will the government do to make this possible? It will try and make it difficult for the small and medium sized industrialists to compete. This is also called "formalisation".

It assumes that the small and medium sized entities in business are all tax thieves. They cheat the government by operating in cash. To make their existence difficult, if not impossible, the first step is to remove cash from the economy. This was done on Tuesday, November 8, 2016. Businesses that

depended on cash transactions, even if they were legitimate ones, were not able to operate for weeks and were hampered for months. The large businesses were not affected because they could do with electronic transfers just as the upper class in the metropolitan areas managed with their credit cards.

The second stroke against the small and medium sector was the Goods and Services Tax, which was made so complicated as to require large teams of people in-house for compliance. The repeated and frequent filing of returns and the managing of the digital system meant that once again a large number of people exited from businesses that became unviable because of the added cost or simply because people could not cope with the complications and chose to do something else. Who benefited from the exit of the small and medium businesses was again the large ones.

The third stroke was the lockdown of this year, which broke the back of the small and medium sector, who had neither the cash

reserves to be able to deal with such a blow or the ability to get their staff to "work from home".

*The Economist*, the most respected global magazine, reported that the net worth of Mukesh Ambani had gone up by 350 per cent since November 2016. The net worth of Gautam Adani has gone up by 750 per cent in the same period. And all this happened in an economy that has been in decline. This month, December, is the 36th straight month that India's economic growth has been slowing down.

The collapse began in January 2018, according to the government's data, and has continued for three years. The finance ministry's chief economic adviser last week urged that a survey the Narendra Modi government had refused to release be finally released. What did it show? It showed that Indians were spending less money in 2018 than they had been in 2012. Meaning that they were earning less as well. Not all Indians, of course — some were making much more precisely because of the fact that the others were making less.

Everything that appears to be puzzling to many people about the Modi government's economic policy makes sense after we consider what it is deliberately doing to this nation. Mr Modi's former adviser and enthusiast Arvind Panagariya had complained about the "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" programme, saying that it was merely import substitution and had failed before. What does that mean? It means that Mr Modi has applied tariffs on imported things that Indians buy, like television sets and mobile phones, so that local industrialists can sell their goods at a higher price than the imported ones.

"Atma Nirbhar" privileges the industrialist over the consumer, but that is not the way that it is advertised. Who does the policy seek to make "Atma Nirbhar"? It is not the consumer or the citizen. It is those selected favourites of the government who have been tasked with winning, while the rest of us are made deliberately to fail.

*The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist*



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	46,253.46	0.34
Nifty 50	13,558.15	0.33
S&P 500*	3,676.49	0.36
Dollar (₹)	73.56	0.12
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.65	1.32
Euro (₹)	89.41	-0.19
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,371▼460	0.95
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	49.72	-0.25
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.946	-0.010
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.921	0.030

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

IIM-B achieves 100% summer placements

All 525 eligible students of IIM Bangalore were recruited for summer placements by over 130 companies, which made 529 offers. Roles offered included in the domains of PE/VC, business analytics, consulting, finance, general management, IT/product management, operations, sales and marketing", IIMB said. Accenture, Amazon, Bain, BCG, Kearney and McKinsey were the top recruiters, it said.

Hyundai gets 30,000 bookings for i20 in 40 days



Hyundai Motor India said it has received around 30,000 bookings for the all-new version of its premium hatchback i20 in last 40 days. It has already delivered 10,000 units of the model, the firm said. "We are witnessing a truly superlative customer response," director (sales, marketing & service) Tarun Garg said. He said 85 per cent of the bookings are for higher trims. Hyundai launched the new i20 on Nov. 5.

UP plans medical colleges in every distt., woos PIOs

The Uttar Pradesh government plans to have a medical college in each of the 75 districts in the state, chief minister Yogi Adityanath has told potential US investors, adding that 30 are being constructed. Addressing an investment and tourism event organised by the Uttar Pradesh Association of North America, Adityanath assured every facility to those who planned to invest in the state.

Godrej Properties tops global sustainability list

Godrej Properties said it has been ranked first among listed global residential developers by Global Real Estate Sustainability Benchmark (GRESB). In a regulatory filing, the firm said GRESB, which provides environmental, social and governance (ESG) benchmarks for real estate organisations globally, has recognised the company as a real estate development sector leader both globally and in Asia for listed residential real estate.



Seek 51% stake with each staff putting in ₹1 L Employees bid for Air India

RAGINI SAXENA DEC. 14

A group of 219 Air India Ltd employees submitted a bid to purchase 51 per cent of the loss-making state-owned carrier.

The remaining 49 per cent will be held by a financial partner, said Meenakshi Malik, Air India's commercial director. Each employee will have to contribute at least Rs 100,000 toward the bid, she said.

Air India has been on sale since 2017 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cabinet signed off on a plan to sell all or part of the debt-ridden carrier. The government sweetened the deal earlier this year when it extended the bid deadline to December 14 from October 30, saying potential suitors will be allowed to decide how much of the flag carrier's debt they want to take on as part of the transaction. The rules before that required bidders to take over the carrier's \$3.3 billion of aircraft debt, deterring buyers.

"We always believed Air India can be a profitable set up," said Malik. "The government has removed a huge part of the debt, so we thought who better than us? We know the airline inside out, we know where the problems are. We're not bidding to win or lose, we're doing it because we believe we can run the airline well."

Air India has been unprofitable since its 2007



merger with state-owned domestic operator Indian Airlines Ltd, and has relied on taxpayer money to keep flying, with the bailouts adding to the pressure on already strained government finances.

The airline, which began operations in 1932 as a mail carrier before winning commercial popularity, saw its fortunes fade with the emergence of cut-throat low-cost competition. The state-run carrier's entire debt totals more than \$8 billion. The government didn't find a single bidder when it tried to sell the company before.

That said, the airline does have some lucrative assets, including prized slots at London's Heathrow airport, a fleet of more than 100 planes and thousands of trained pilots and crew.

Malik said a financial partner had already been found, without disclosing

that entity's name. Employee participation has come from "the most junior employees to the most senior board members," she said, without elaborating.

A local media report on Monday said that US-based Interups Inc plans to bid with the employees. Interups chairman Laxmi Prasad confirmed the development, telling Moneycontrol that we "will be submitting a bid." Tata Group is also said to have submitted an expression of interest for Air India over the weekend. Its interest was submitted via AirAsia India, in which Tata Sons Pvt Ltd has a significant majority stake. Singapore Airlines Ltd, with which Tata Sons operates full-service airline Vistara, won't be part of the bid in the initial stages, according to a news report.

— Bloomberg

Burger King more than doubles on debut



RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, DEC. 14

Burger King India shareholders made a bumper listing gain of 130.67 per cent on the stock's debut on the bourses.

Burger King's shares closed at Rs 138.40 per share against the public issue price of Rs 60 for each share of Rs 10 face value.

The public issue of Burger King, a subsidiary of US-based fast food chain, received overwhelming response from investors, with the Rs 810-crore issue getting subscribed 156.65 times.

The shares listed at Rs 115.35 on the BSE, a premium of 92.25 per cent over the public issue price of Rs 60, and at Rs 112.50 on the NSE. The stock moved up till the market close, indicating more upside as the shares closed at the day's high of Rs 138.40 on the BSE and Rs 135 on the NSE.

The market capitalisation of Burger King stood at Rs 5,282.10 crore, close to Rs 6,624.15 crore m-cap of Westlife Development, McDonald's India franchise.

Torrent to invest ₹5,000 cr in Chennai city gas project

New Delhi, Dec. 14: Torrent Gas Ltd on Monday pledged Rs 5,000 crore investment to develop infrastructure to retail CNG to automobiles and piped gas to households and industries in Chennai, the biggest city gas licence in its portfolio.

Torrent Gas, part of the pharma-to-energy Torrent Group, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Government of Tamil Nadu for development of city gas infrastructure at an event in Chennai, the company said.

The firm will lay pipelines and other infra-



structure in Chennai and Tiruvallur districts, covering an area of 3,569 sq. km, to provide piped natural gas (PNG) connections to homes, industries and commercial establishments. It will also set up the infrastructure to dispense compressed nat-

ural gas to automobiles. Torrent Gas holds city gas licence for 16 geographical areas spread across 32 districts covering seven states—UP, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana—and the Union territory of Puducherry.

Jinal Mehta, director, Torrent Gas, said, "This investment of Rs 5,000 crore by Torrent Gas in development of CGD infrastructure is expected to have a major impact on the socio-economic development of the region by attracting fresh investment in the state." —PTI

GST shortfall: States, UTs get ₹42,000 cr

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, DEC. 14

The central government has so far borrowed and released Rs.42,000 crore to states and union territories to meet the GST compensation shortfall of Rs 1.10 lakh crore.

The amount under seven installments was borrowed through the special borrowing window at an average interest rate of 4.7 per cent. Of the 7th weekly instalment of Rs 6,000 crore released on Monday, Rs 5,516.60 crore has gone to 23 states and Rs 483.40 crore to the three union territories. The interest rate on the amount borrowed this week is 5.13 per cent.

The Centre had set up the special borrowing window in October to meet the estimated shortfall of Rs 1.10 Lakh crore in revenue arising on account of implementation of GST. The borrowings are being done via this window on behalf of the states and UTs.

Karnataka has received the highest amount of Rs 5,668.31 crore, followed by Maharashtra at Rs 5,472.11 crore. North-eastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur have nil GST compensation gap.

The Centre has also granted additional borrowing permission equivalent to 0.50 per cent of GDP to the states choosing Option-I to meet the GST shortfall.

OLA TO INVEST ₹2,400 CRORE IN E-SCOOTER PLANT

New Delhi, Dec. 14: Ride-hailing firm Ola, backed by Japan's SoftBank Group, said on Monday it planned to invest Rs 2,400 crore (\$326 million) to set up a factory in Tamil Nadu to produce electric scooters.

The plant will have an initial annual capacity to produce two million scooters and will create nearly 10,000 jobs, Ola said, as it gears up to launch electric scooters in the coming months.

India needs an investment of over \$180 billion in vehicle production and charging infrastructure until 2030 to meet its EV ambition, says the CEEW Centre for Energy Finance. —Reuters

Pharma funds outshine rest in YTD return

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, DEC. 14

Pharmaceuticals and healthcare funds have outperformed all other equity mutual fund schemes in Covid-hit 2020 with year-to-date (YTD) returns averaging over 60 per cent, far ahead of equity benchmarks Nifty and Sensex.

Moreover, the funds have more upside left as they had languished for many years before their outper-

formance in 2020, when healthcare has become prime focus area for governments and individuals.

DSP Healthcare Fund has given a YTD return of 73.69 per cent, outperforming the BSE Healthcare Index's return of 57.1 per cent. Sensex and Nifty's YTD return, in comparison, are over 12 per cent.

The Mirae Healthcare Fund has given a YTD return of 69.64 per cent while the UTI Healthcare

Fund has given a return of 62.19 per cent. The Nippon India Pharma Fund has given a return of 61 per cent and the Tata India Pharma and Healthcare Fund, 59.97 per cent.

Analysts say more upside is likely for pharma and healthcare funds unlike Sensex and Nifty which are trading at their record highs.

"Besides, there was no lockdown effect on the pharma sector in 2020.

After a long period of revenue degrowth seen in the US market, the trend is reversing, pharma companies are expecting revenue pick up in the main export market," said Meeta Shetty, fund manager-Tata India Pharma Healthcare Fund.

"Also there is a healthy pipeline of launches for the US market that can boost revenue growth in the next two years," Shetty said.

Small-cap rally may run through 2021

NUPUR ACHARYA DEC. 14

The smaller stocks are beating their larger peers for the first time in three years, and some strategists say that outperformance will likely continue at least through next year.

The Nifty Midcap 100 Index has climbed 20 per cent this year, and the Nifty Smallcap 100 Index has advanced 17 per cent, outpacing the 11 per cent gain in the large-cap NSE Nifty 50 Index. While the

Nifty has set a series of new records this year, the smaller gauges remain below their peaks after two years of losses.

Broadly strong corporate earnings, efforts by the government and central bank to bolster the economy, and a surge in retail trading have helped smaller shares start to outperform since summer. And while the Nifty's price-to-earnings multiple has reached an all-time high, the small- and mid-cap gauges are trading at

similar valuations to late 2017, the last year they outperformed the larger index.

"Such turn in performance does not fizzle out so fast, especially when the valuation gap is still there," said Vinod Karki, head of strategy at ICICI Securities Ltd, the largest listed broker. "High liquidity and prospects of economic recovery are perfect recipes for relatively riskier assets such as smaller-sized companies." Small- and mid-caps fell

over the last two years as concerns over slowing economic growth drove investors to the safety of their larger peers. Now there are hopes for a rebound.

"We believe that the lead current indicators on earnings and sentiment are supportive of a significantly new high over the next 18 to 24 months for the mid-cap and small-cap indexes," said Amit Khurana, head of equities for Dolat Capital Market Pvt Ltd. — Bloomberg

India aims to surpass China in mobile mfg

New Delhi, Dec. 14: India is now aiming to surpass China in the field of mobile manufacturing with the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme attracting global majors in this segment to the country, telecom and IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said on Monday.

He said the government is looking to make India a hub of other electronic products as well with the expansion of the PLI scheme to other sectors. "We wanted India to become the second largest mobile manufacturer in the world. Now I am pushing India to surpass China. That's my goal and I am very clearly defining it," Prasad said at a Ficci event.

India became the second largest mobile manufacturing country in 2017.

The National Policy on Electronics 2019 (NPE) envisages electronic manufacturing turnover of more than Rs 26 lakh

crore by 2025, out of which Rs 13 lakh crore is expected to come from the mobile phone segment. PLI is designed to propel India's stature and ease of doing business under the leadership of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to showcase India as an alternate manufacturing destination, Prasad said.

"PLI is designed to enable global champion companies to come to India and make Indian companies national champion," he noted. The government has started a PLI scheme under which eligible companies can get sops of around Rs 48,000 crore.

The government has cleared 16 proposals from domestic and international companies entailing investment of Rs 11,000 crore under the PLI scheme to manufacture mobile phones. — PTI

Boeing ex-CEO hits ground, to head e-tractor firm



Dennis Muilenburg

JULIE JOHNSON DEC. 14

Former Boeing Co CEO Dennis Muilenburg is joining Monarch Tractor, a Silicon Valley startup that's angling to be the Tesla Inc of the agriculture world with an all-electric tractor that is "driver optional."

While Monarch isn't a household name, it combines longstanding interests for Muilenburg, an engineer by training who grew up on an Iowa farm and served on Caterpillar Inc's board for nine years. He is an investor and adviser as the Livermore, California-based company prepares to deliver the first of its \$50,000 tractors late next year.

"They have all the elements to be a strong, robust, growing business," Muilenburg said in an interview.

The former Boeing chief has largely flown under the radar since being ousted a year ago after fumbling the plane-maker's response to two deadly 737 Max accidents and their aftermath. Since then, Muilenburg has pursued passions such as cycling—he's logged 17,000 miles this year—and advising companies with promising technology.

Monarch is one of about a dozen firms working with Muilenburg, who started a consulting business after a 35-year career at Boeing. He's embracing his new role with characteristic intensity, providing pointers to an executive team at Monarch. —Bloomberg

APP | RIDE

Firm plans to launch app-based ride-hailing service in select cities

Amazon's Zoox unveils driverless robotaxi

ED LUDLOW DEC. 14

Zoox Inc, the self-driving startup owned by Amazon.com Inc, unveiled a fully autonomous electric vehicle with no steering wheel that can drive day and night on a single charge.

The vehicle, which Zoox describes as a driverless carriage or robotaxi, can carry as many as four passengers. With a motor at each end, it travels in either direction and maxes out at 75 miles per hour. Two battery packs, one under each row of seats, generate enough juice for 16 hours of run time before recharging, the company said. To commercialise the technology, Zoox plans to launch an app-based ride-

hailing service in cities like San Francisco and Las Vegas.

"This is really about reimagining transportation," Zoox chief executive officer Aicha Evans said in a television interview. "Not only do we have the capital required, we have the long-term vision."

The company also plans to launch ride-hailing services in other countries, Evans said. Executives didn't say how much rides would cost but that they would be "affordable" and competitive with services operated by Uber Technologies Inc and Lyft Inc. Nor did they say when the service would launch but confirmed it wouldn't happen in 2021. In a video released on Monday,



Evans used Zoox's app to hail the vehicle outside San Francisco's Fairmont hotel and took a spin around the block.

Acquired by Amazon in June for an undisclosed sum, Zoox is one of several companies racing to put fully autonomous vehicles on the road, an effort that's taking longer than anticipated. Most are testing retrofitted conventional cars on public roads, and few are commercially deployed.

In October, Alphabet Inc's self-driving unit Waymo started a fully driverless taxi service in suburban Phoenix. General Motors Co-backed Cruise LLC is also testing autonomous cars—recently without safety drivers—in San Francisco, using a fleet of electric vehicles based on the Chevy Bolt.

Despite being years from deployment, several of Zoox's quirky-looking mint-green vehicles are already being built at a facility in Fremont, California. The factory has the capacity to eventually produce 10,000 to 15,000 units annually, executives said. Suppliers send the major components -- the drive unit, body, battery pack and so on-- pre-assembled, and Zoox then does final

assembly in stages, a process it likens to building a Lego set. Executives declined to reveal the battery supplier.

The unveiling of a production car marks a significant step for a company that has been working on an autonomous passenger vehicle since its founding in 2014. At times Zoox was "ridiculed" for what it was trying to do, chief technology officer Jesse Levinson said.

Zoox isn't the first to unveil a fully autonomous passenger vehicle. GM's Cruise showed off a battery-powered shuttle in January. Called the Origin, it also does away with many of the controls present in conventional cars: pedals, rearview mirrors, steering wheel. — Bloomberg



SHORT TAKES

Ex-Reds coach Houllier dies

**Paris:** Gerard Houllier, a Frenchman who won three titles in one season as coach of English club Liverpool, has died. He was 73. Liverpool announced the death on Twitter on Monday. French sports daily *L'Equipe* said Houllier died following heart surgery in France. "We are mourning the passing of our treble-winning manager, Gerard Houllier," Liverpool wrote on Twitter. Houllier had a mediocre stint as coach of France's national team in the early 1990s, his short-lived journey ending with an embarrassing failure to qualify for the 1994 World Cup. His tenure at Liverpool was far more successful, leading the Reds to the FA Cup, League Cup and UEFA Cup treble in 2001. He is one of only three managers along with Alex Ferguson and Pep Guardiola to have won three trophies with an English club in the same season. — AP

Shuttlers alerted about fake events

**New Delhi:** The Badminton Association of India on Monday again cautioned its players, coaches and technical staff and asked them to stay away from unauthorised tournaments after it came to light that a Goa-based organisation is conducting such an event next month. According to a release issued by BAI, Goa-based organisation Youth & Sports Development Association of India is conducting the third National Federation Cup next month in Madgaon, Goa with the organisers claiming that it will be a selection trial for upcoming international championships. "Neither BAI nor its affiliated unit Goa Badminton Association is aware about such tournaments and organisation," BAI General Secretary Ajay Singhania said in the release. — PTI

Hockey side for foreign tour soon

**Bengaluru:** His side's Olympic preparation hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic, Indian men's hockey team chief coach Graham Reid is hoping to resume international action from early next year. The Australian said the sooner India gets to play international matches, the better will be their preparations for the Tokyo Games, which has been shifted to next year due to the global pandemic. "With the support of Hockey India, we have planned for matches from early next year. These matches will ideally show us the level we are truly at and the areas that will require work on leading into the Olympic Games," Reid said in a statement issued by Hockey India. — PTI

Injured Neymar stretchered off

**Rio de Janeiro:** Brazilian star Neymar gave fans a reassuring message on Monday after undergoing tests on the ankle he injured in Paris Saint-Germain's 1-0 Ligue 1 defeat to Lyon at the weekend. Neymar left the field on a stretcher in apparent agony on Sunday but on Instagram he said: "It could have been worse." "These tears, it's the pain, the fear, the worry, the surgeries, the crutches and other bad memories," Neymar wrote on his Instagram story alongside a picture of him in tears clutching his ankle. It was a reference to previous injuries he has suffered — notably twice breaking his foot — since joining the French champions in 2017.— AFP

Live on TV

CRICKET

Big Bash League: Hobart Hurricanes vs. Adelaide Strikers from 1.45 pm on Sony Six, HD

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: Hyderabad FC vs East Bengal from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

English Premier League: Wolves vs Chelsea from 11.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

Italian League: Udinese vs Crotone from 11 pm, Benevento vs Lazio from 1.15 am (Wednesday) on on Sony Ten 2, HD

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Finch wary of Virat

Aaron warns Aussies about ‘ruthless’ Kohli

**Melbourne, Dec. 14:** Australia limited-overs captain Aaron Finch wants the home team players to strike a "fine balance" when they confront Virat Kohli in the opening Test as he believes, if provoked too much, the India skipper can be "ruthless" against his opponents. India and Australia have always shared an intense rivalry on the field, filled with verbal volleys, banter and controversies over the years. The last time the two teams faced off in 2018-19, the Test series saw some heated exchanges between the two captains — Kohli and Tim Paine.

"I think there will be times when things boil over and when you have got strong characters on either team that's going to come to a head at some point," Finch was quoted as saying by *'Sydney Morning Herald'*.

"(But) there is a fine balance there, isn't there? You don't want him (Kohli) to get up and about in the contest. When he does, he can be ruthless on an opposition."

The first Test of the four-game series, a day-night contest, begins on Thursday in Adelaide and it gains prominence since Kohli will be returning home after the match for the birth of his first child.

Finch, who was part of the last home Test series between the two teams, said the India skipper looks much calmer the way he goes about his job now.

"I think the change is in the way he goes about it now. I think as a person he is probably a bit more relaxed out on the field and understands the tempo of the game."

Finch, who had played under Kohli in



A file photo of India captain Virat Kohli (left) and Australia's Aaron Finch.

— AFP

Royal Challengers Bangalore, said he was "surprised" to see the Indian's confidence in this year's IPL.

"What really surprised me was how, he obviously does a lot of planning and preparation himself, and into the opposition, but he never focused more on the opposition than his own team," he said.

"At Bangalore, he was always confident in the XI players that were picked and knew that if you played well, you had every chance of winning.

As someone who had many on-field duels with Kohli, Finch said it was good to learn about his relaxed side.

— PTI

HENRIQUES REPLACES INJURED ABBOTT

**Sydney, Dec. 14:** All-rounder Moises Henriques was on Monday added to Australia's injury-hit squad for the opening Test against India while pacer Sean Abbott was ruled out of the match due to a calf strain.

Henriques, who had missed the three-day second practice game due to a hamstring strain, cleared the fitness Test on Monday to return to the Test squad after a gap of four years. The opening game, a day-nighter, begins on December 17 in Adelaide.

"All-rounder Moises Henriques has been added to Australia's squad for the first Test against India

after the hosts' camp continues to be hit with injury," a report in *cricket.com.au*, said.

Abbott became the latest Australian player to join the injury list after being picked up the strain during the second warm-up game here. He is, however, expected to be available for the second Test in Melbourne, which begins on December 26.

Abbott, who had taken three wickets in India's first innings, will not travel with the team to Adelaide.

"Fast bowler Sean Abbott will not travel to Adelaide with Henriques and the remaining Australia squad members from Sydney

today after picking up a calf strain in the day-night tour match at the SCG on Saturday."

Henriques last played a Test more than four years ago in Sri Lanka. He made a comeback to the national set-up after three years by featuring in the limited-overs series against India. He is the second player after Marcus Harris to be added late to the Test squad.

Harris was included in the squad for the opening Test following a spate of injuries, including David Warner and opener Will Pucovski being ruled out of the first game due to a groin injury. — PTI

NZ BEAT INDIES IN SECOND TEST TO SWEEP SERIES

**Wellington, Dec. 14:** New Zealand joined Australia atop world cricket's Test rankings on Monday when they beat the West Indies by an innings and 12 runs in the second Test to sweep the two-match series.

The West Indies resumed their second innings at 244/6 on the fourth day, trailing New Zealand by 85 runs after following on 329 behind.

The tourists were eventually out for 317, their highest innings total of the series.

New Zealand made a positive start on Monday after a short rain delay, dismissing West Indies captain Jason Holder for 61 in the fourth over of the day and ending his 82-run partnership with Joshua Da Silva.

Holder was bowled by Tim Southee with a fuller ball which straightened and beat the outside edge of the bat. — AP

**Brief scores: New Zealand 460 bt West Indies 131 & 317** (Jason Holder 61, da Silva 57, Wagner 3-54, Boult 3-96).

INDIAN | SUPER LEAGUE

Mumbai fail to crack open JFC

**Goa, Dec. 14:** A flurry of missed chances saw table-toppers Mumbai City FC settle for only a 1-1 draw against Jamshedpur FC in the Indian Super League at the GMC Stadium, here on Monday.

Owen Coyle's men took the lead through Nerijus Valskis (9') before Mumbai hit back through Bartholomew Ogbeche (15'). A red card for Aitor Monroy around the half-hour mark saw Jamshedpur reduced to ten-men but some dogged defending and a number of missed chances for Mumbai, saw the former get away with a draw.

Mumbai dominated the early exchanges as Monroy had to dive to block Ogbeche's shot as early as the first minute. But it was Jamshedpur who drew first blood. Just nine minutes had passed when Jackichand Singh found Valskis in the penalty box. The Lithuanian's first-time shot was unerring. Barely three minutes later, Monroy could only find the side netting from a free-kick.

Monroy was in the thick of things a couple of minutes later, hacking Cy Goddard down and getting himself in the referee's book.

Then, Mumbai found their equaliser. Adam Le Fondre made a run down the right before squaring the ball to Bipin Singh. The

HYDERABAD FACE EB IN TRICKY TIE

**Vasco, Dec. 14:** Hyderabad FC will be keen to continue their unbeaten run when they take on a struggling SC East Bengal in an Indian Super League fixture at the Tilak Maidan here on Tuesday.

Four games into the season, Hyderabad FC are one of just three teams that are yet to lose a game a win and three draws) and they will be eager to convert their efforts into a victory, against the ISL debutants.

SC East Bengal have not had the best of starts to the season. They are yet to score a goal, but logged first point in the league table in a feisty clash against Jamshedpur last Thursday. They remain bottom of the table but could prove to be one of the biggest tests for Hyderabad so far this season. — PTI

latter found Ogbeche and the Nigerian unleashed a powerful drive past Jamshedpur keeper T.P. Rehenesh. — Agencies



Barcelona's Lionel Messi (centre) vies for the ball with Levante players during their La Liga match at the Camp Nou in Barcelona on Sunday.

— AP

Messi comes to Catalans' rescue

**Madrid, Dec. 14:** Lionel Messi saved Barcelona from another embarrassing result by scoring the decisive goal in a 1-0 win over lowly Levante, while Real Sociedad returned top of La Liga on Sunday.

Messi struck with 14 minutes remaining of a lacklustre display from Barca at the Camp Nou which will do little to ease fan fears following their 3-0 hammering at the hands of Juventus midweek.

Ronald Koeman's side are still way off the pace in the title race, nine points behind Real Sociedad who reclaimed first place despite only drawing 1-1 with Eibar.

Barcelona do however have two games in hand on the Basque outfit.

Atletico are level on 26 points with Sociedad and also have two games in hand while Real Madrid

are now just three points behind the leaders having played one less after beating their local rivals 2-0 on Saturday.

Villarreal are four points off the lead in fourth after drawing 1-1 at Real Betis, who are one point behind Barca in ninth.

Barca managed to force several saves from Aitor Fernandez, with the Levante goalkeeper doing particularly well to push away a stinging shot from Martin Braithwaite in the 16th minute and Antoine Griezmann's header five minutes later.

However the best chance of the opening period fell to Jorge de Frutos in the 12th minute, the Spaniard somehow shooting straight at Marc-Andre ter Stegen after the ball broke kindly for him right in front of goal. — AFP

Leaders Spurs, Liverpool held

**London, Dec. 14:** Tottenham and Liverpool remain tied at the top of the Premier League after both were held to 1-1 draws at Crystal Palace and Fulham respectively, while Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's own goal condemned Arsenal to another shocking home defeat, going down 1-0 to Burnley on Sunday.

Leicester took advantage of slip ups by the top two to close to within one point of the leaders as James Maddison scored twice in a 3-0 rout over Brighton and Southampton are up to fourth as they also comfortably saw off Sheffield United 3-0.

Liverpool and Tottenham

THE RESULTS		
Crystal Palace (Schlupp 81)	1	Fulham (De Cordova-Reid 25)
Tottenham (Kane 23)	1	Liverpool (Salah 79-pen)
Southampton (Adams 34, Armstrong 62, Redmond 83)	3	Arsenal Burnley (Aubameyang 73-og)
Sheffield United	0	Leicester (Maddison 27, 44, Vardy 41)
		Brighton

face each other at Anfield on Wednesday and, after Chelsea, Manchester City and Manchester United failed to win on Saturday, they both missed the chance to open up a gap at the top in the title race.

The champions needed a Mohamed Salah penalty 11

minutes from time to avoid an embarrassing defeat at Fulham after a dreadful first-half performance left Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp seething on the touchline.

"We needed half an hour to get our feet in the game, that's why I shouted a bit at

them," said Klopp.

"I think in the first half an hour we could have lost the game, in the last 60 minutes we should have won it. In the end we get a point and that's it."

Bobby DeCordova-Reid's thunderous finish into the far corner to take the lead was no more than Scott Parker's side deserved as the returning Alisson Becker kept Liverpool in the game before the break.

Liverpool dominated the second-half to pin Fulham back, but needed a penalty to salvage a point when Aoubakar Kamara was penalised for handling Georginio Wijnaldum's free-kick. — AFP



Leicester's James Maddison (right) celebrates his goal against Brighton in their Premier League match at the King Power Stadium in Leicester on Sunday. — AP