

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VISAKHAPATNAM | SATURDAY | 13 FEBRUARY 2021

WEATHER

Max: 30.4°C
Min: 18.2°C
RH: 88%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Fog.
Max/Min temp.
30/18.0°C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+11,636)	(+93)
1,08,91,462	1,55,569
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+143)	(+1)
TS: 2,96,277	1,614
(+68)	(+1)
AP: 8,88,760	7,162
CASES AROUND THE WORLD	
10,84,74,469	
DEATHS	23,83,558
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES	219
worlometers.info/coronavirus	



NATION | 4

TMC MP Dinesh Trivedi quits Rajya Sabha



WORLD | 5

Myanmar protests swell amid US curbs

SPORTS | 7

India take on England in second Test from today



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Quota in pvt varsities: Jagan

Directs officials to convert colleges into private universities

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

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

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

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

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

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Discussing aided col-

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

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

■ Page 2: CM wants practical knowledge

CM okays more polls under SEC

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

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

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

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

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

The Supreme Court's two-judge bench directed the listing of the matter for further hearing on February 19.

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

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

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

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

urban bodies but the Chief Minister negated it.

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

■ Page 2: Construction to resume in Amaravati

Poll body gags Kodali for lowering its stature

Don't talk against SEC, HC tells Jogi

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

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

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

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

Earlier, the SEC had served a showcase

lunch motion petition in the High Court on Friday.

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

The court also directed the SEC to serve notice on the legislator and seek an explanation for making such comments. The case was posted for the next hearing on February 17, he moved a

notice on the minister for making allegedly derogatory remarks against Kumar during his press meet earlier in the day. The utterances were lowering the stature of the SEC and the public stand-

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

■ Page 2: Minister denies making derogatory remarks



KAKINDA CIVIC REPRESENTATIVE KILLED BY FRIEND

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, FEB. 12

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

■ Page 2: Corporator was brought dead, say doctors

BUS PLUNGES INTO ARAKU GORGE, 4 FROM HYD KILLED

DC CORRESPONDENTS
VISAKHAPATNAM/
HYDERABAD, FEB. 12

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

■ Full report on Page 2

■ Creative visualization
*MRP inclusive of taxes. Fresh Tomato ketchup - They're only a great taste. Undercooked and does not represent the true nature.

■ Page 2: Corporator was brought dead, say doctors

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COUNTER POINT



SHORT TAKES

GANTA, AVANTI SHARE DAIS AT HUNGER STRIKE

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 12

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

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

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

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

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

TWO RETURNING OFFICERS SUSPENDED

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 12

Srikakulam collector and election officer J. Niwas suspended two returning officers of LN Peta in the district for dereliction of duties. One of the officials, L. Govardhana Rao, school assistant of Kuntibhadra Zilla Parishad High School under Kothuru mandal, was appointed returning officer for LN Peta gram panchayat (stage-2). The other was reserve returning officer V. Mallesu, teacher at the Temburu Zilla Parishad High School of Patapatnam mandal. They were suspended under Section 134 of Peoples Representation Act, 1951 and AP Service Rules. They were asked not to leave the headquarters until further orders.

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

CENTRE HAS DECEIVED STATE, SAYS CONG CHIEF

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, FEB. 12

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

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

No Jagan link in POSCO deals: Min.

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

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

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

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

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

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

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

The minister said Chandrababu was still unable to reconcile to his party's defeat in the assembly polls in 2019.

"Thus, the TDP has been raking up issues to create chaos in AP." He slammed the TD leader for his "attempts at misinterpreting the election results" and stated that the public had rejected the TDP, which got less than 10 per cent seats in the assembly.

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

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

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

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

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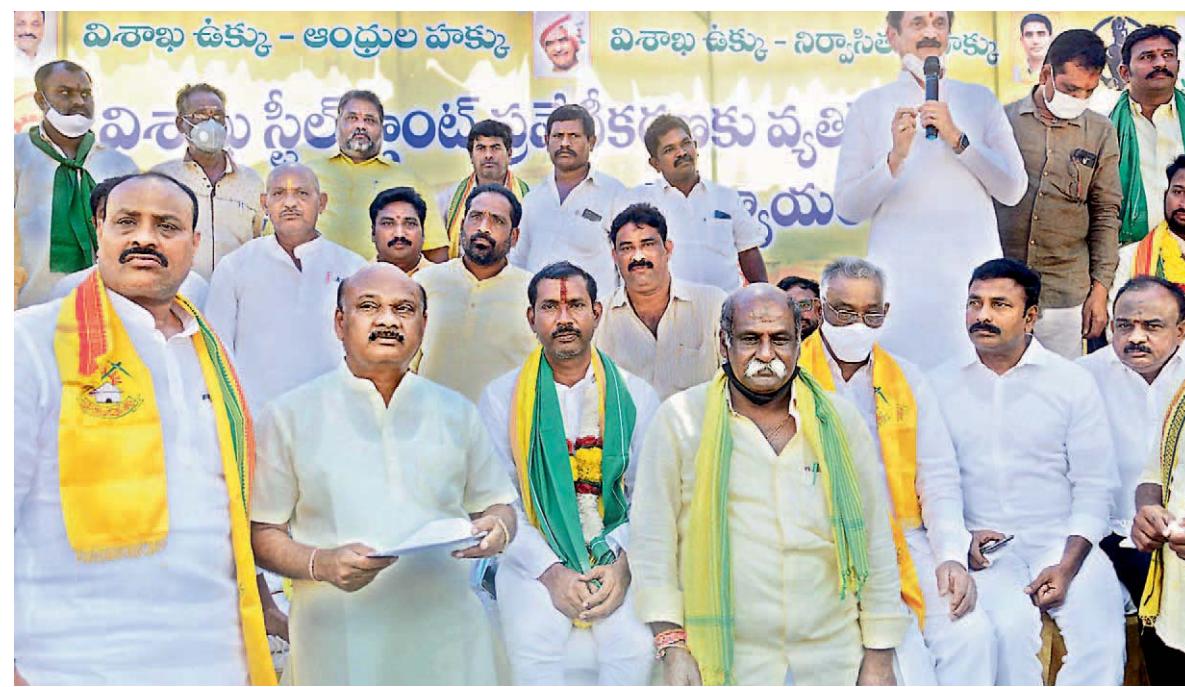
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Addressing the TD hunger strike camp at the party office in Gajuwaka on Friday, Atchannaidu said the properties of the VSP were valued at over ₹3 lakh crore in the open market. The Chief Minister expected that locating the capital in Vizag would further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

Mere writing a letter to the Prime Minister is not



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

— K. MURALI KRISHNA

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

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

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

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

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

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

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Rice exports begin from Kakinada deep water port

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, FEB. 12

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

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

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

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

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

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

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

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

Officials said that the family left Borra Caves around 5.30 pm on Friday.

The driver, as he was not familiar with the road, or possibly because of brake failure, overshot a sharp bend and the bus went

down the gorge. Among the injured, along with several adults, were children.

As per Swamy Goud, who responded to a phone call to Dinesh Travels, three persons had booked the vehicle for a family trip to Araku. There were 26 persons in all in the bus, he said.

Meanwhile, the Hyderbad district collector was instructed to visit Shaikpet and inquire and assist in relief operations.

According to the Anantagiri district police, the bus fell into the gorge

while negotiating a hairpin bend on the hilly road between Dumukku and Tyda villages. The bus was on its way to Visakhapatnam from Araku valley and was about 100 km from its immediate destination.

Anantagiri sub-inspector K. Sudhakar said the bodies of the victims were being shifted to S. Kota community health centre, where the injured persons were taken for immediate care and treatment.

Some of those who received serious injuries were to be taken to

Visakhapatnam for better treatment.

As the police scrambled to mount relief efforts, officials reached out to any available vehicle and roped in taxi cabs to rush to the accident spot and to carry the injured to hospitals.

"The incident might have taken place around 7.30 pm and we got a call 10 minutes later. We mobilised all available vehicles including 108 ambulances and rushed to the accident spot 30 km away," said taxi driver Ramesh, from Borra Caves.

CORPORATOR WAS BROUGHT DEAD: DOCTORS

From Page 1

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

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

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

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

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

CM WANTS PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE TAUGHT

From Page 1

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

He said good courses are available online and directed the officials to add those courses in the curriculum.

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

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

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

4 die as bus falls in Araku gorge



Accident victims being taken to hospital on Friday.

down the gorge. Among the injured, along with several adults, were children.

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

CM orders babus to take stern action against graft

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

and liquor trafficking.

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

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

tives to SEB staff.

The officials briefed the CM on the performance of the Special Enforcement Bureau ever since its formation on May 16, 2020. After this step was initiated to curb illicit liquor flow, 79,632 cases

SHORT TAKES

NANI CONFIDENT OF GOOD SHOW IN GP POLLS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

YSR Congress will win 11,000 sarpanch seats in the ongoing gram panchayat elections, claimed minister for civil supplies Kodali Venkateswara Rao (Nani) here on Friday.

Exuding confidence, he said that this was despite the false propaganda being carried by Telugu Desam to divert public attention for their political gains. He said that N. Chandrababu Naidu was never concerned about villages or public welfare, which was reflected in the first phase results.

Addressing a press conference, he said that it is Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's governance that is driving the YSRC win-spree in all local body elections. He said that the TD cadre will abandon Naidu after the results.

On the door-delivery of ration supplies, Nani stated that Andhra Pradesh is the only state to have achieved that distinction besides being the only one to distribute sorghum rice.

The minister pointed out that although the Chief Minister had brought the initiative with 9,260 vehicles and had created employment for thousands of people from backward communities, TD leaders were deliberately politicising it by holding back its implementation in villages.

PROTEST OVER CEMENT, STEEL PRICE RISE

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

The Builders Association of India (BAI), Confederation of Real Estate Developers Association of India (CREDAI), National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO), SABC and workers association Joint Action Committee staged a mega protest at Vijayawada on Friday on the spiralling cement and steel prices by the companies and demanded the to appoint Regulatory Authority to control prices.



Former minister and TD MLA Ganta Srinivas Rao, CPI National Secretary K. Narayana and minister for tourism M. Srinivasa Rao at the Visakha Ukku Parikshana committee hunger strike camp near Steel Plant in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

— DC

SEC SURRENDERED TO YSRC, SAYS TD

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

Telugu Desam on Friday accused the State Election Commission (SEC) of surrendering to YSRC in the first phase of gram panchayat elections held in Andhra Pradesh.

Making the accusation,

TD politburo member Varla Ramaiah asked SEC to act independently and take stringent measures to conduct the remaining three phases of panchayat polls in a free and fair manner.

Mr. Ramaiah explained that in the first phase the SEC had succumbed.

Polls will end at 1.30 pm in Maoist areas

FROM PAGE 1

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

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

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

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

Kotiya peoples' heart is with AP: Saluru MLA

All 21 schools have Odiya and Telugu medium schools

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, FEB. 12

The dispute over 21 Kotiya villages between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh has once again come to national focus after Odisha government filed a contempt petition in Supreme Court against officials of Andhra Pradesh for issuing a notification on holding gram panchayat elections in three of the Kotiya panchayats.

There is a six-decade-old dispute wherein both AP and Odisha are claiming jurisdiction over the villages. Fortunately, for the poor Adivasis of these villages, they have been able to reap benefits from both the states. They have two ration cards and draw commodities from both governments. They also participate in elections held by both the states. But when it comes to health services and post school education, people of these vil-

Our welfare schemes like Ammavodi, Cheyutha, Rythu Bharosa and others have attracted the villagers. This has caused heartburn within the Odisha government

— PEEDIKA RAJANNA DORA
Saluru MLA

lagers look up only to AP government.

All 21 schools have Odiya and Telugu medium schools. Adivasis have the option of choosing a school of their choice. Except for villagers of Buridi, Kotiya and Eguvagangepadara, most others opt for Telugu medium.

"Our welfare schemes like Ammavodi, Cheyutha, Rythu Bharosa and others have attracted the villagers. This has caused heartburn within the Odisha government," Saluru MLA Peediaka Rajanna Dora said.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle* on Friday, he said Odisha government seems to be under the impression that gram panchayat elections are being held for the first time in these disputed Kotiya villages. They have missed out the fact that panchayat elections have been held by AP in these villages since decades.

Rajanna Dora maintained that though the Supreme Court has posted the case to next Friday, panchayat polls will be held as per schedule on Saturday. Talaganjipadar and Phagunaseri have already had unanimous elections. They would thus be held only in Phatuseneri.

The MLA maintained that except for three or four villages, rest of them are in favour of merging their villages with Andhra Pradesh. The reason is that three public health centres are located in Tonam and

Mokkam and one in Saluru. Even villages seeking merger with Odisha because of closeness to their border still depend on Similiguda PHC, which is closest to them.

Similarly, two Ekalavya Schools and two junior residential colleges have been set up by Andhra Pradesh government in addition to one in Saluru. Rajanna Dora, however, said when it comes to infrastructure development, AP is lagging behind Odisha in these areas. The neighbouring state has laid roads in the region while a road project from Kotiya to Saluru sanctioned by Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy government in 2008 could be completed only in 2018.

"The Forest Department of Odisha objects to AP government laying roads, though the neighbouring state has laid roads without approval," the MLA remarked.

SEC RECEIVES 347 PLAINTS TO ITS CALL CENTRE

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

The State Election Commission received 347 complaints pertaining to conduct of gram panchayat polls in phase-2 here on Friday.

Panchayat raj and rural development commissioner M. Girija Sankar reviewed the arrangements made for conduct of polls with the

AP RELEASES ₹116 CRORE FOR POLLS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 12

State government released an amount of ₹116 crore for making arrangements for conduct of gram panchayat polls in phase-2 here on Friday.

Panchayat raj and rural development commissioner M. Girija Sankar reviewed the released funds properly and ruled out any chance to release additional funds.

VIJAYAWADA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (VMC)			
'e' Procurement Notice No.CE-14/VMC/AE/2020-21, Dt.12-02-2021			
S. No.	Name of the work	No.of call	Estimate Amount Rs. in Lakhs
1	Providing Greenery and Beautification of Ryves Canal BUND for 3 Km stretch. With Reverse Tendering Process.	3rd call	300.00

Contact:
Superintendent Engineer (P), VMC, Vijayawada - 99639 95283.
Further details can be seen @ 'e' procurement market place @ www.apeprocurement.gov.in.
Download of bid documents starts from - 15-02-2021 from 03:30 P.M.
Last date / time for receipt of tenders - 01-03-2021 upto 4:00 P.M.
Sd/- xxxxx
CHIEF ENGINEER



National Entrance Screening Test 2021

NEST 2021

Admission to 5-year Integrated MSc Programmes in Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics

at NISER (Bhubaneswar) and UM-DAE CEBS (Mumbai)

(Autonomous Institutions under the Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India)

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

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

For detailed information on NEST 2021 application procedure and previous years' question papers please visit NEST 2021 website: www.nestexam.in

Application:

Through ONLINE portal ONLY.

Visit www.nestexam.in to apply.

Online portal opens on Feb. 24, 2021,

& closes on Apr. 30, 2021

Examination:

ONLINE/computer based ONLY.

Date of examination: June 14, 2021 (Monday)

Time: 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM (1st session)

2:30 PM - 6:00 PM (2nd session)

Results announcement: June 30, 2021

Address for correspondence:

The Chief Coordinator, NEST 2021

NISER Bhubaneswar, P.O. Jatni

Jatni, Khurda 752050, Odisha, India

E-mail: nest-exam@niser.ac.in

Website: www.nestexam.in

RDSO INVITES INDIAN INDUSTRIES TO REGISTER AS RDSO APPROVED SUPPLIER

INDIAN RAILWAYS PURCHASE SAFETY & CRITICAL ITEMS FROM INDUSTRIES APPROVED BY RDSO, LUCKNOW



Online Vendor Interaction being organized Nationwide every week focusing on various industrial hubs in various regions of country.

Following upcoming virtual Vendor meets are planned

16th February : Bangalore, Karnataka area

19th February : Hyderabad, Telangana area

23rd February : Chennai, Tamilnadu area

26th February : Andhra Pradesh, Kerala area

2nd March : Hyderabad, Telangana area

5th March : Chennai, Tamilnadu area

9th March : Andhra Pradesh, Kerala area

12th March : Bengaluru Karnataka area

Tentative time : 11:00-13:00 Hrs.

Interested vendors to please register through link provided on the RDSO website rdsd.indianrailways.gov.in

The weblink to join virtual meeting alongwith change in date and time if any, shall be provided through E-mail.

Schedule of further virtual vendor meets shall also be available on RDSO Website.

Click "Vendor Interface" on RDSO website or Vendor Helpline No:

Civil Items: 0522-2451188, Electrical Items: 7376646861,

Mechanical Items: 0522-2465743, Signal Items: 7376646862,

Sri M. Laxminarayana (SIO/HYB): 9700315245, Field Officer (Mumbai): 022-22032867

INDIAN RAILWAYS

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Manaknagar, Lucknow-226011 Website: <https://rdsd.indianrailways.gov.in>

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CIN: L1310TG1958GO001674

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



रेल अग्रदृश
Transforming Railways

SHORT TAKES

MP COPS PROVIDE SECURITY TO KANGANA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, FEB. 12

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

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

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

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

"Effective from Friday midnight, prices of petrol and diesel will decrease by ₹5 per litre. As a result, Assam will have the record of providing cheapest petrol in the country after Gujarat. Even prices of diesel would be the lowest after Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh," he stated. Sarma further announced that additional taxes of 25 per cent imposed on liquor products at the peak of Covid-19 has also been withdrawn.

INDIA RECORDS STEEP DECLINE IN COVID-19 CASES

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 12

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 12

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

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

Minutes after his resig-

nation, BJP general secretary and West Bengal in-charge Kailash Vijayvargiya said Trivedi was welcome in the party. Trivedi said, "If you sit here quietly and cannot do anything, then it is better that you resign from here and go to the land of Bengal and be with the people. The way violence is taking place in our state, sitting here, I am feeling perplexed as to what I should do."

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

Trivedi had endorsed

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

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIRUDHUNAGAR, FEB. 12

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

The accident occurred at around 11 am when more than 120 persons were working in Mariammal Fire Works at Achanakulam village near Satur. The accident is suspected to have been caused by mishandling of the chemical mixture in the process of manufacturing fancy type crackers.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

District collector R. Kannan said after inspecting the accident spot that those workers who suffered more than 50 per cent burns were referred to Madurai Rajaji government hospital for further treatment. Around 36 injured persons were undergoing treatment at the government hospitals in Virudhunagar, Sivakasi, Satur, Kovilpatti.

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

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

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

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

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

According to the sources, Twitter has now complied with the orders and over 97 per cent of the accounts flagged have been blocked. Twitter did not respond to queries on the matter.

On February 4, Twitter was asked to take down 1,178 accounts with links to Pakistan and Khalistan supporters that were spreading misinformation and provocative content related to farmers' protest. Prior to that, the government had sought Twitter's delay in taking action on its order to block provocative content that could impact public law and order, whereas the American company had complied with

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

country's law. It, however, yielded to the orders later after the crucial meeting on Wednesday evening.

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

ITBP command unit in Leh likely

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

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 12

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

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

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

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

"The special command unit based in Leh will ensure quick and timely action as a team of senior officers will be permanent stationed who can take decisions seeing the ground situation. They will not have to wait for decisions from the Chandigarh based Western command.

Since the security situation in Ladakh is constantly evolving we need to take decisions according to the increasing Chinese activities in the region," a senior home ministry official said.

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

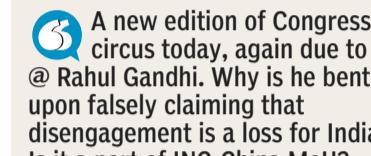
In addition, latest surveillance equipments and weapons have also been provided to the ITBP unit deployed in the entire Ladakh region.

WAR OF WORDS



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

— Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader



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

— J. P. NADDHA, BJP president

Army chief: China's move led to distrust

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, FEB. 12

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

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

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

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

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

troops from eastern Ladakh," spokesman added.

Congressman Michael McCaul, lead Republican in the House Foreign Affairs Committee, also welcomed the disengagement of troops. It's heartening to see India stand strong in defending its sovereignty, he said in a tweet.

The Chinese Communist Party's constant territorial aggression, from the East and South China Seas to the waters of the Mekong, to the Himalayas, has no place in the 21st century, he said. — PTI

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

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

sides to cease forward deployment of troops in a "phased, coordinated and verifiable" manner.

"We're closely following reports of initial troop disengagement. We welcome the ongoing efforts to de-escalate the situation," a state department spokesperson said. "We will, of course, continue to monitor the situation closely as both sides work toward a peaceful resolution," he said.

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

troops from eastern Ladakh," spokesman added.

Congressman Michael McCaul, lead Republican in the House Foreign Affairs Committee, also welcomed the disengagement of troops. It's heartening to see India stand strong in defending its sovereignty, he said in a tweet.

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

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

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

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

Prior to that, the government had sought Twitter's delay in taking action on its order to block provocative content that could impact public law and order, whereas the American company had complied with

the orders only to restore the accounts hours later.

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

country's law. It, however, yielded to the orders later after the crucial meeting on Wednesday evening.

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

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

IT ministry was of the view that Twitter, being an intermediary, was required to take immediate action after receiving the government's notice to block handles, but did not move with haste to take down "atrocious" hashtags

SHORT TAKES
DANISH INTEL ARRESTS 14 FOR TERROR PLOT

Copenhagen, Feb. 12: Fourteen people arrested in Denmark and Germany suspected of planning an attack with explosives had "militant Islamist" motives, Danish intelligence services said on Friday.

Fourteen people were arrested at the weekend in a suburb outside Copenhagen, Denmark's PET intelligence service said Thursday, confirming another arrest had been made in Germany.

"The operation took place due to suspicions that a terror attack motivated by militant Islamism was being prepared," PET said in a statement.

The 13 arrested in Denmark were remanded in custody suspected of "planning one or more terrorist attacks or being accessory to attempted terrorism," PET said.

TIANWEN-1 PROBE SENDS VIDEO OF MARS

Beijing, Feb. 12: China's space agency released video footage from its spacecraft circling Mars on Friday, two days after it successfully entered the planet's orbit in Beijing's latest ambitious space mission.

In the video, published by state broadcaster CCTV, the surface of the planet is seen coming into view out of a pitch black sky against the outside of the Tianwen-1, which entered the orbit of the Red Planet on Wednesday.

White craters are visible on the planet's surface, which fades from white to black through the video as the probe flies over the course of one Martian day, said official news agency Xinhua.

The five-tonne Tianwen-1 — which translates as "Questions to Heaven" — includes a Mars orbiter, a lander and a solar-powered rover and launched from southern China last July.

UK DEVELOPS TEST TO DETECT WOMB CANCER

London, Feb. 12: British scientists announced on Friday they had developed a test to detect womb cancer using urine samples, explaining the method could replace a painful and invasive procedure currently in use.

At present, clinicians diagnose the cancer by taking a biopsy, a process which requires a narrow telescope called a hysteroscope, to examine inside of the uterus and remove cells. Nearly a third of women who undergo the procedure have the process repeated because of technical difficulties or intolerable pain, the research showed.

Thousands of women in Britain who do not have womb cancer also undergo the procedure, with huge financial implications for the country's state-run National Health Service (NHS).

The study from Manchester University has developed a new detection tool which examines urine or vaginal samples that can be collected by women on their own at home.

The findings, published in the journal Nature Communications, showed analysis of the samples correctly diagnosed 91.7 percent of women with womb cancer.

18 BAGS OF HACKED-UP BODY PARTS FOUND

Mexico City, Feb. 12: Prosecutors in the western Mexico state of Jalisco say that police have found 18 plastic bags full of hacked-up body parts on the outskirts of the city of Guadalajara. Police found one human limb near a highway overpass, which led them to the heap of taped-up bags in a gully nearby, the agency said late Thursday. The severed limbs are being examined to determine how many corpses the parts belonged to.

In November, authorities recovered 113 bodies and additional human remains from a secret grave in the town of El Salto, just outside Guadalajara. A total of 189 corpses were discovered in the town throughout 2020.

The state is home to the Jalisco New Generation Cartel, one of Mexico's most violent and powerful. More bodies have been found in secret graves there than in any other state in recent years. The cartel has been fighting a breakaway faction in and around Guadalajara for years.

OZ ORDERS CITY WITH 6 MILLION INTO EMERGENCY LOCKDOWN

Melbourne, Feb. 12: Australia ordered more than six million people into an emergency coronavirus lockdown on Friday, throwing a showpiece tennis tournament into disarray as the pandemic's economic cost was laid bare in badly hit Britain.

The move comes as the Covid-19 death toll heads towards 2.4 million, with 107 million people sickened since the virus emerged in China a little over a year ago. — AFP

Myanmar protests swell as US sanctions coup leaders

Over 23,000 prisoners released as part of prison amnesty, no word on Suu Kyi



Protesters holding signs with the image of detained Myanmar civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi take part in a demonstration against the military coup in front of the Chinese embassy in Yangon on Friday. — AFP

announced his administration was cutting off the military's access to \$1 billion in funds.

Ahead of another day of mass rallies, state media announced the release of more than 23,000 inmates as part of a prison amnesty. Friday was a public holiday in Yangon and mass pardons to empty the coun-

try's overcrowded prison system are common on significant local dates.

More than 260 people have been detained in the days since the coup and about 20 released, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners monitoring group.

But there was no indication that Suu Kyi or any

of her allies were among those set to be freed.

"There is a serious concern that the sudden release... is to clear space for the detention of political prisoners," the AAPP said.

Massive rallies were back underway in the commercial hub of Yangon on Friday, including a contingent of Premier League fans who

put aside their club rivalries to protest the coup.

"I hate the military coup more than Manchester United," read one sign.

But further east in the port city of Mawlamyine, police moved quickly to clear a sit-in protest by university students, and footage showed officers hauling away several demonstrators. — AFP

The new US sanctions target Min Aung Hlaing and other top generals, after President Joe Biden

announced his adminis-

tration was cutting off the military's access to \$1 billion in funds.

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of her allies were among those set to be freed.

"There is a serious concern that the sudden release... is to clear space for the detention of political prisoners," the AAPP said.

Massive rallies were back underway in the commercial hub of Yangon on Friday, including a contingent of Premier League fans who

put aside their club rivalries to protest the coup.

"I hate the military coup more than Manchester United," read one sign.

But further east in the port city of Mawlamyine, police moved quickly to clear a sit-in protest by university students, and footage showed officers hauling away several demonstrators. — AFP

The new US leader has ordered a review of the deal Washington cut with the Taliban last year, which promised the withdrawal of all foreign forces by May 1 in return for security guarantees from the militants and a commitment to peace talks with the Afghan government.

The talks are progressing painfully slowly, but scarcely a day goes by without a bomb blast, attack on government forces, or a targeted assassination somewhere in the country.

"Violence level remains very, very high... which is shocking and deeply disappointing," a senior US State Department official said this week on condition of anonymity.

"It is unquestionably damaging the atmosphere for any kind of a settlement of Afghanistan's conflict." The Taliban

entered the final straight in his bid to form a new government to lead Italy through the Coronavirus pandemic.

The former European Central Bank chief, called in after the outgoing centre-left coalition collapsed, could visit President Sergio Mattarella as early as Friday evening to be officially named prime minister.

Draghi has spent the last nine days assembling a government of national unity to manage the deadly pandemic that hit Italy almost exactly one year ago, triggering a deep recession.

After securing the support late Thursday of the final key player, the populist Five Star Movement (M5S), Draghi has almost all the main parties on board, from leftists to the far-right League. — AFP

"In our view, the Taliban are responsible for the vast majority of the targeted killings that we have seen," the official said, adding they had created "an ecosystem of violence". — AFP

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DECCAN Chronicle

13 FEBRUARY 2021

Go slow on peace thrust, up the ante during talks

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

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

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

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

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

Kamal's black humour

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

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

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

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Farrukh
Dhondy



Cabbages &
Kings

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

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

— From Lambey Laments by
Bachchoo

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The first is a sample address to the Tory Conference.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

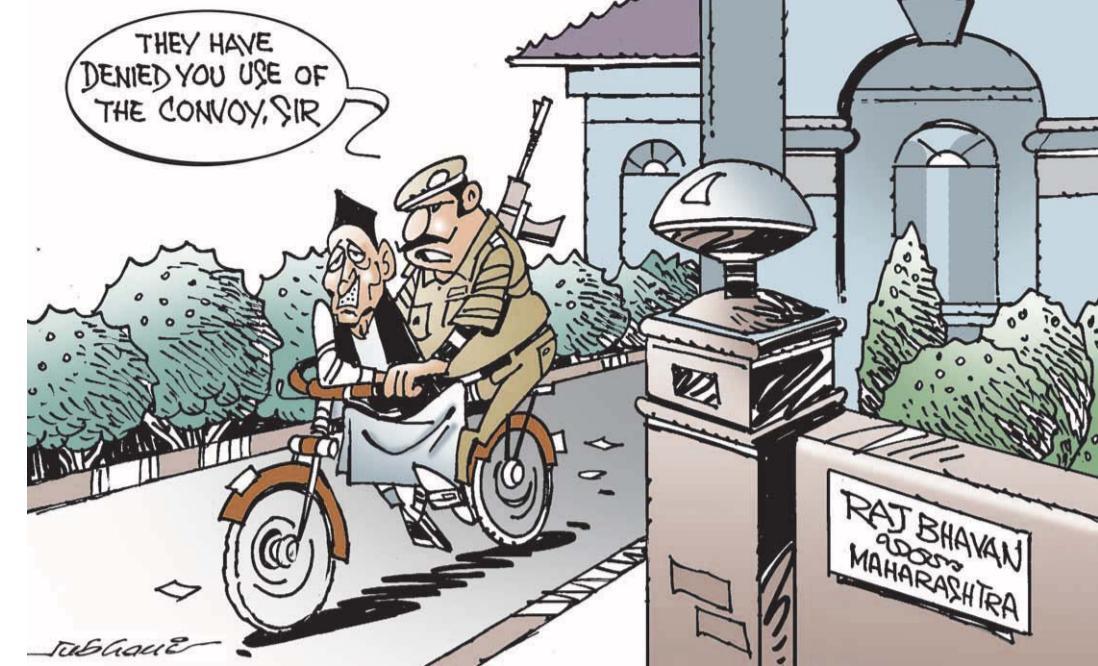
dodgers and drug lords will be admitted to the free ports declared by our hedge-hog chancellor Wishy Anarki. Boris Johnson has already told me that he will get the Norwegians to pay for this wall...."

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

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

Your future ventriloquist,
Obsequiously,
Farrukh Dhondy

Subhani



Why China 'disengaged': Always carry a big stick



Syed Ata Hasnain

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

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

The inevitability in India's approach should be to waste little time in enhancing its conventional military capability through the self-reliance route towards modernisation

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

LETTERS

RESTORE TRAINS

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

P. Ramakrishna
Rajahmundry

NAIDU'S TANTRUMS

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

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

VIZAG STEEL PLANT

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

D.S.P. Rao
Kakinada

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

India is on the threshold of change: Indira

NEW DELHI, February 12

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi opined that in India today "there is a conflict between the forces of change and of the 'status quo'".

Mrs Gandhi, in an interview to the French national radio, also affirmed her party's belief in democracy and said, "we are trying to give it greater meaning". "We believe the interests of the people are best safeguarded in a democracy, because a democracy is perhaps the only system which strengthens people themselves".

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

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

Your future ventriloquist,
Obsequiously,
Farrukh Dhondy

SHORT TAKES



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

Mandava sisters bag golf titles

Hyderabad: Hyderabad girls Sriitha and Amritha Mandava won the age group titles at the Young Master Southern India Classic golf tournament played at the Boulder Hills Golf and Country Club in Hyderabad.

Sriitha tallied 231 over 36 holes with round scores of 78, 73 and 80 to take the top spot in the Girls 12-13 years category ahead of Anvithi Gangisetty (271) and Riya Jadon (281). Amritha got a total score of 242 over 36 holes in three rounds (79, 81, 82) to emerge winner in the Girls 14-15 section.

Lavanya Jadon (249) and Amishi Jain (300) were second and third respectively.

Drishiti Karumbaya was the best in Girls 16+ with a score of 220 (72, 72, 75) ahead of Jasmine Sachdev (234 – 77, 78, 79) and Vidushi Keni (236 – 77, 78, 81).

Aarya Goyal and Sanjana took the first and second spots in the Girls 7-9 category.

State cue sports from Feb. 22

Hyderabad: The Telangana Cue Sports Association is organising the Telangana State Ranking Snooker & Billiards

Championship (junior and senior) from February 22 to March 7. The top five players in senior snooker and finalists in junior snooker, senior and junior billiards will represent Telangana at the Nationals.

Himanshu Jain, Nabil Lakdawala, Md Ghous, Khizar Raoof, D. Arvind Kumar (senior snooker); Mushtaq Hussain, Vishwanath and Vibhas (junior snooker & billiards) are among the top players participating in the championship.

Rashmikaa in singles final

Hyderabad: Hyderabad girl Shrivali Rashmikaa entered the final of the singles event at the MPTA AITA Open Women's Tennis tournament being played at Chennai.

In the semifinals played on Friday, Rashmikaa defeated Pooja Ingole of Maharashtra in straight sets at 6-4, 6-1.

Hyderabad FC hold East Bengal 1-1

Vasco: Aridano Santana scored a last-gasp equaliser to help Hyderabad FC hold SC East Bengal to a 1-1 draw and dent the Kolkata side's hopes of making it to the playoffs of the Indian Super League here on

Friday. Bright Enobakhare scored in the 59th minute for SC East Bengal, who seemed to be cruising towards the win until the stoppage-time leveller from Santana. The result extended the Nizams' unbeaten run to nine games. With the draw, Hyderabad are at third spot with 24 points from 17 matches. — PTI

Live on TV

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

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

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

FOOTBALL

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

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

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

— BCCI

PITCHED BATTLE

Chepauk surface in focus again as India look to hit back

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, FEB. 12

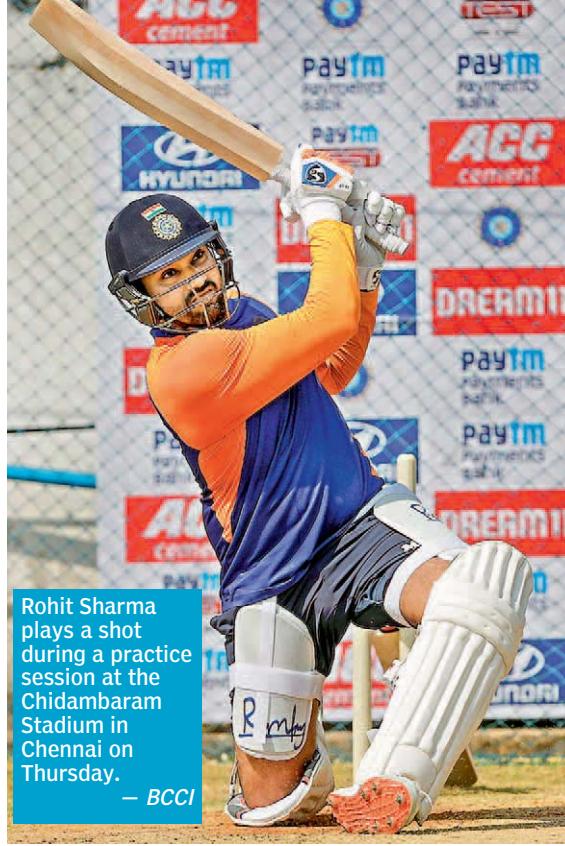
The wound hasn't healed. And the dust is yet to settle. Four days after being battered by the visiting England team in their own den, India have the unenviable task of lifting themselves for yet another 'pitched' battle at the same venue. Round two starting here at the M.A. Chidambaram stadium on Saturday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

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

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

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

Annoyed with the flat surface, Kohli had blamed his supporting spinners Shahbaz Nadeem and Washington Sundar for leaking runs. But he backed Ajinkya Rahane despite his poor run of form. Rohit Sharma, who hasn't played a Test since he took



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

— BCCI

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

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

a five-for at Sydney in January 2019.

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

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

It will turn from Day One: Rahane

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 12

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"It (shots that we play) depends on how they bowl. We play according to their line and length.

England have come up with a plan to play sweep and reverse sweep. It's not necessary we have to copy them," further added Rahane.

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

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

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

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

Hazare selection turns hazardous

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 12

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

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

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

TURNS OUT THAT THERE WERE NO FIRST AID FACILITIES AT THE GROUNDS TO TREAT PLAYERS WHO GOT INJURED DURING THE COURSE OF PLAY.

NOW, THIS SELECTION SNUB HAS HURT THEM EVEN MORE.

HYDERABAD'S TOP 10 BATSMEN

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

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

Hurt Djoker hints at exit from Open

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tanay, Mickil, Karthikeya, Ritwik, Vamshi on top

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

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, FEB. 12



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

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

Shalimar CC 135 in 36.2 overs (Abhid Ali 4/40) lost to Adilabad 106 n.o — 53b, 21x4, 2x6. Points: XI Master 5, Adams 0.

Sunrise 178 in 59.2 overs (Syed Ali 51, Vasitha Karthikeya 5/41 — 16-3-41-5) lost to Intercolonial CC 182/1 in 39.4 overs (Vasitha Karthikeya 69 n.o. Ankit Kumar 91 n.o). Points: Intercolonial 5, Sunshine 0.

Vijayanand 360/9 in 90 overs (Abid Ali 69, Ravi Teja 117 — 10b, 17x4, 4x6, Akshar 41, Chakravarthy 38, A. Nikhil 30, B. Sandra 35 n.o). Points: Vijayanand 0, Secunderabad Gymkhana 285 in 89 overs (Md Adil 103 — 161b, 14x4, 1x6, A. Sal Prachatan 30, Anil Singh 55, N. Sakeeth Reddy 3/60) lost to Deccan Wanderers 146/9 in 40.2 overs (Jawad Khan 42, Syed Haji 6/38 — 16-2-38-6). Points: Deccan Wanderers 5, Sri Shyam 0.

Sri Shyam 145 in 63 overs (Mujeed Ur Rehman 35, Thakur Uttarak Singh 4/17, Md Babillai 34/41) lost to Deccan Wanderers 146/9 in 40.2 overs (Jawad Khan 42, Syed Haji 6/38 — 16-2-38-6). Points: Deccan Wanderers 5, Sri Shyam 0.

Vijayanand Willowmen 559 in 88 overs (Karan Yadav 64, B. Balaji 73, Md Ayub Khan

MARUTI SUZUKI

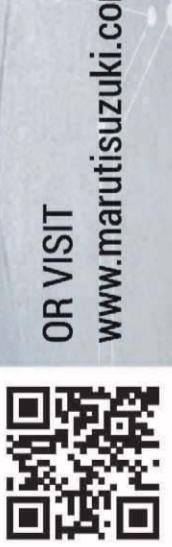
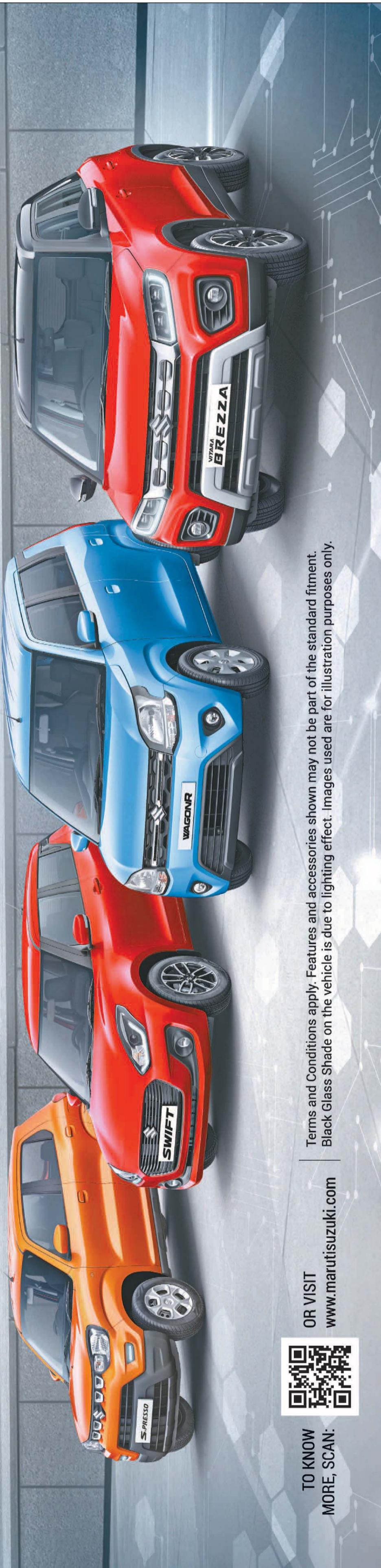


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