

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
VISAKHAPATNAM | SATURDAY | 9 JANUARY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 30.2°C
Min: 18.8°C
RH: 86%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Mst.
Max/Min temp.
30/18 °C

NATION | 5

Budaun case: Main accused held



WORLD | 5

Trump not to attend Biden inauguration



SPORTS | 6

Smith saves Australia with a century



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COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+17,626)	(+208)
1,04,30,330	1,50,800
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+346)	(+2)
TS: 2,89,135	1,561
(+319)	(+1)
AP: 8,84,490	7,127

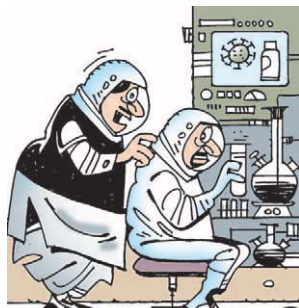
CASES AROUND THE WORLD

8,88,93,141
DEATHS
19,13,630
COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES
218
worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana
Tithi: Margasira Bahula Ekadasi till 7.16 pm
Star: Vishakha till 12.31 pm
Varjyam: 4.14 pm to 5.43 pm
Durmuhurtam: 6.52 am to 8.20 am
Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am
HJRI CALENDAR
Jamadi-ul-Awwal 24, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.50 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 4.45 pm
Maghrib: 6.15 pm
Isha: 8.15 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.30 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.37 PM
MOONRISE TODAY 2.02 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 2.22 AM

COUNTER POINT



Can't we add our party colour to the vaccine?

SHORT TAKES

More than half of Army stressed out

New Delhi: The Indian Army is losing more personnel every year in suicides, fratricides and untoward incidents than in any enemy action and over half of its soldiers seem to be under severe stress, said a study by think tank United Service Institution of India (USI). "Prolonged exposure to CI (counter-insurgency)/CT (counter-terrorism) environment has been one of the contributory factors for increased stress levels," said the research.

PFIZER VACCINE WORKS AGAINST NEW MUTATIONS

Washington, Jan. 8: New research suggests that Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine can protect against a mutation found in two contagious variants of the coronavirus that erupted in Britain and South Africa. Both the variants share a common mutation called N501Y, a slight alteration on one spot of the spike protein that coats the virus. That change is believed to be the reason they can spread so easily. Most of the vaccines being rolled out around the world train the body to recognise that spike protein and fight it. Pfizer teamed with researchers for laboratory tests to see if the mutation affected its vaccine's ability to do so. —PTI



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy performs puja at the foundation stone laying programme for reconstruction of Anjaneya Swamy others 9 temples near Prakasam Barrage in Vijayawada on Friday. Ministers Botsa Satyanarayana, Velampalli Srinivasa Rao, Kodali Srivenkateswara Rao and others are seen. — C. NARAYANA RAO

CM lays foundation to rebuild 9 temples

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 8

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy performed "bhumi puja" before laying the foundation stone for reconstruction of nine temples demolished on banks of Krishna River here on Friday.

The CM started with performing puja for development and expansion of Kanaka Durga Temple at an estimated cost of ₹77 crore. Foundation stones for eight other temples followed, while he unveiled two separate plaques at a place where Saneeswara Swamy temple is to be constructed.

AP FORMS SIT ON TEMPLE ATTACKS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 8

The AP government on Friday formed a Special Investigation Team headed by additional director ACB, G.V.G. Ashok Kumar, to probe attacks on temples, including desecration of idols from September 2020 across AP.

■ Page 2: DGP issues memo to create SIT

Later, Jagan Mohan Reddy reached atop Indrakeeladri hill and

had darshan of Goddess Kanaka Durga amid chanting of Vedas by pandits. The CM was presented a memento and portrait of Goddess Kanaka Durga as well as prasadam by temple priests.

The CM released a Endowments Department calendar with images of all prominent temples and another calendar by Durga Malleswaram Swamy Varla Devasthanam.

Ministers Vellampalli Srinivasa Rao, Botsa Satyanarayana Rao, Perni Nani, Kodali Nani, temple executive officer M.V. Suresh Babu and public representatives and officials were present.

INTER 1ST YEAR CLASSES FROM JANUARY 18

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 8

Intermediate first-year classes will start on January 18 in Andhra Pradesh. Education minister Adimulapu Suresh announced this here on Friday.

The minister said that based on directions from the AP High Court, first-year admissions were done offline and the process would be completed by January 17. Admissions would be taken up online in the next academic year.

The academic year for 2020-21 would continue up to May, 2021. The schedule for examinations will be announced shortly. Some 30 per cent of the intermediate syllabus was reduced due to the prevalence of Covid-19 regulations. Subject-wise details were sent to the respective colleges. Practical examinations for inter students would be held as usual.

■ Page 2: Stern action for classes sans permission

SC wants Centre to arm foresters

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, JAN. 8

The Supreme Court on Friday expressed serious concern over brutal assaults by poachers on unarmed rangers and guards in forests and suggested that the force be equipped with arms and bulletproof jackets as is done in Assam.

Heading a bench, Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde said it was sad and distressing to see forest guards wearing slippers and armed with lathis while on duty to protect huge tracts of forest land. "With little of protective gear in them to meet threats from armed poachers, their plight is sad. Also, they being inside the forest, they cannot even seek urgent help."

"We think the situation is serious. Forest guards would have difficulty protecting vast tracts of uninhabited land. It is difficult to imagine how law can be enforced by

● CHIEF JUSTICE Sharad A. Bobde said it was sad and distressing to see forest guards wearing slippers and armed with lathis while on duty to protect huge tracts of forest land.

● THERE IS little protection for them against armed poachers

unarmed forest staff facing poachers carrying arms with them," CJI Bobde said. Sitting with Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian, the CJI also suggested that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) expand its footprints to deal with the illegal trade in wildlife.

Appearing for the central government, solicitor general Tushar Mehta agreed to look into the proposal for arming the forest guards and expanding the role of ED.

Ghar wapsi after law wapsi: Farmers

SANJAY KAW | DC
NEW DELHI, JAN 8

Thousands of protesting farmers and their supporters will end up celebrating two harvest-related festivals — Lohri and Makar Sankranti — in freezing cold at Delhi borders this year as the eighth round of talks between their 41 union leaders and the Centre on Friday failed to end the deadlock over the new farm laws.

Holding their ground on the repeal of the three laws, the farmers told the government that their "ghar wapsi" can take place only after "law wapsi".

But the Centre told unions that it cannot and will not repeal these laws, asserting the laws have been welcomed by a large



Women family members of a farmer practice driving a tractor on the outskirts of Amritsar on Friday. Women are training to take part in a tractor rally on Republic Day in Delhi against the Centre's farm laws.

— AFP

section of farmers in other states across the country, and asked the unions to think about the interests of the entire country. There was palpable disap-

pointment on the faces of the farmers' leaders returning from the meeting where, many said, the discussion between the two sides was "heated".

My Home name in Bhuma row

D. SIVA
RAMI REDDY | DC
KURNOOL, JAN. 8

The sensational arrest of former AP minister Bhuma Akhila Priya took an interesting turn with her family members alleging the involvement of realty giant My Home group.

Speaking to the media in Hyderabad, Jagat Vikhyat Reddy, brother of Akhila Priya, alleged that the complainants in the case against his sister had entered into an agreement with My Home group headed by Rameshwar Rao over the property in dispute.

The Hyderabad police booked a case against the former minister, charging her with kidnapping three brothers — Praveen Rao, Sunil Rao and Naveen Rao — distant relatives of



Bhuma Naga Mounika defends her sister, former AP minister Bhuma Akhila Priya while speaking to the media in Hyderabad on Friday.

—DC

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao and brothers-in-law of his personal assistant Jagat Reddy.

■ Page 2: Hafeezpet assets belonged to Bhuma kin



Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi

INDIA SCOFFS AT LAKHVI GETTING 5 YEARS IN JAIL

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
LAHORE, DELHI, JAN. 8

Mumbai attack mastermind and Lashkar-e-Taiba operations commander Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi was sentenced to five years in jail on Friday by a Pakistani anti-terrorism court here in a terror-financing case, amidst growing international pressure on Islamabad to bring to justice terrorists roaming free in the country. Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore Judge Ejaz Ahmad Buttar sentenced Lakhvi, a UN proscribed terrorist, on three counts with a fine of PKR 100,000 (\$620).

His punishment will run concurrently. India dismissed it as a farcical action and said that "the timing of these actions clearly suggests the intention of conveying a sense of compliance ahead of the Asia-Pacific Joint Group meeting and next Financial Action Task Force (FATF) plenary meeting in February 2021". "It has become routine for Pakistan to come up with such farcical actions prior to important meetings," said the MEA.

HUNTING | CURE

Rare snake with 'medicinal' properties being increasingly caught over last few years

Illegal trade hastens sand boa extinction

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JAN. 8

Despite a ban on illegal wildlife trade in India, the underground business in rare creatures is continuing unabated in several parts of the country, including Andhra Pradesh, posing one of the gravest threats to biodiversity.

Supposed medicinal properties of sand boa, apart from myths and beliefs surrounding this rare snake,



The sand boa which was seized in AP on Friday.

has led to their illicit hunting and capture over the past few years; not only in

AP but also several parts of the country, putting this species to the risk of

extinction. This non-venomous snake has attracted a lot of attention in recent times. It is one of the costliest creatures in international black market with the price of a single sand boa ranging from lakhs to crores of rupees.

More so, the demand for Indian Sand Boa in the world market, especially in Malaysia, China, and a few south-east Asian countries is high. They are used in making medicines, aphro-

disiacs, cosmetics and black magic. There is also belief among Chinese and Malaysians that owning this reptile can bring immense luck and wealth.

In this backdrop, sand boas are being extensively trafficked from various Indian states, especially AP, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Forest and police officials say smuggling of sand boa is rampant across the southern states, with two

to three incidents of people being caught with the reptiles being reported monthly. There is no estimate of the number of snakes that may have already been smuggled. Last year, three youth from Pudupattu village in Karvetinagar mandal of Chittoor district were nabbed by police when they tried to sell a sand boa.

■ Page 3: Many traps for rare species surface

SHORT TAKES

Prashant Kishor meets Jagan

Vijayawada: Indian political strategist Prashant Kishor met Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy at his Camp Office here on Friday. Sources said that Prashant Kishor is learnt to have discussed several issues with the CM in the wake of AP witnessing a series of attacks on temples while the Opposition parties targeting the state government for failing to protect them. As Tirupati bypoll for Lok Sabha seat is on anvil, the state government learnt to be taking it seriously to win it back as the vacancy arose following the death of its MP Balli Durga Prasada Rao as he succumbed to Coronavirus in September last.

CM TO LAUNCH AMMA VODI 2ND PHASE ON JAN. 11

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JAN. 8

Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy, adviser to the AP government (Public Affairs) said Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will launch the second phase of Amma Vodi programme along with tens of thousands of mothers at Nellore on January 11.

Speaking to the media at Nellore on Friday along with ministers M. Goutham Reddy and P. Anil Kumar Yadav, Sajjala said that elaborate arrangements were being made for the launch of Amma Vodi second phase in Nellore. "For the past one and half year, CM Jagan has been implementing various welfare programmes for the uplift of the poor and they are giving positive results. Despite Covid-19 pandemic creating a lot of hardships in the implementation of various programmes, Jagan, who is very keen on resolving problems of mothers, is launching the second phase of Amma Vodi", he added.

The CM will reach the Police Parade Grounds in the city on January 11 at around 11.30 and further proceed towards the venue at SVGS grounds.

STERN ACTION FOR CLASSES SANS PERMISSION

From page 1

The minister warned of stern action against junior college managements if they conducted classes without government permission. He said recognition would be withdrawn if any junior college failed to follow directions from the government, be it on collection of fees or on compliance with guidelines on Covid-19. He urged parents to alert the government on any irregularity, via WhatsApp number 9391282578 or by email at ourbieap@gmail.com.

In view of the Covid-19 situation, the state government would not enhance Intermediate examination fee. Students can pay the fee as per last year's structure, like ₹500 for the first year and ₹680 for the second year.

The minister also advised the managements against acts like not releasing certificates to students after admission-time verification.

PREPARE ACTION PLAN ON TOURISM, SAYS MINISTER

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JAN. 8

Minister for tourism and culture Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao asked the officials of tourism and APTDC to prepare an action plan within a week on the progress made by their departments to increase the footfall of the tourists in the region. The minister held a meeting with these officials in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

He said tourism was affected in the state due to the Covid-19 pandemic and since the situation was becoming normal, the officials should make special packages to attract the tourists.

The minister suggested the officials make special arrangements which include accommodation for the people coming from Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam rural. He also said a special package to historic temples like Sun temple in Srikakulam town and Srikrumam in Srikakulam district was desirable.

He told the APTDC officials to set up a tourism information centre at RK Beach in coordination with the GVMC officials.

Attacks on temples should not be given political colour: Kona

Deputy Speaker says Opposition parties are trying to gain political mileage out of it

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JAN. 8

Deputy Speaker of AP Legislative Assembly Kona Raghupathi exhorted all on Friday that the incidents of attacks on temples should not be given a political colour. He stated so after taking darshan of Lord Sri Venkateswara Swamy of Dwaraka Tirumala in West Godavari and participating in the Dappu Kalakarula Sangam meeting.

Kona Raghupathi told the media that at a time when the state government was taking up many programmes to uplift the downtrodden sections, it was unfortunate such incidents of attacks on temples took place. He said the Opposition parties were trying to gain political mileage out of it. "They are misleading the people."

Rising above caste, creed and religion, Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy was implementing welfare schemes and providing housing to the homeless poor. "Jagan is doing this with a great sense of commitment to the people. He is doing more than what his father Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy did as CM," the deputy speaker said.

The deputy speaker said governance has been made easier by the setting up of village and ward secretariats. "Now, the administration and the fruits of the welfare schemes are reaching out to the people. Many laws have been enacted for welfare of the people," he said.

Gopalapuram MLA Talari Venkatrao, AP Brahmin Seva Sangham president Satyavada Durga Prasad, chief adviser V.S. Madhubabu and others were present.

Meanwhile, the Andhra Pradesh Archaka Samakhyha hailed the decision of CM Jagan to reconstruct the temples demolished during the Krishna Pushkaralu season. The Samakhyha state organising secretary Peddinti Rambabu and the general secretary A. Atreya Babu said when Chandrababu Naidu was the chief minister, he had demolished 43 temples. The idols of the gods and goddesses were carried in municipal tractors in those times. They said Jagan, in a revival spirit, laid stone for some such important temples in Vijayawada on Friday.



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, minister Velampalli Srinivasa Rao and others release Kanakadurga Temple Calendar after darshan of Goddess Kanakadurga atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Friday. — DC

Communal harmony is priority, assures Botsa

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 8

Minister for municipal administration Botsa Satyanarayana called upon the people to expose the culprits involved in a series of attacks on temples as they were trying to thwart the efforts of the state government to go ahead with implementation of welfare schemes and developmental works in the state.

Addressing the media along with a host of leaders from all faiths and deputy Chief Minister Amjad Basha and ministers Mekathoti Sucharita and Vellampalli Srinivas here on Friday, he alleged that as the culprits were aware of the visit of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to Vizianagaram district to distribute house site pattas to 12,000 beneficiaries, they resorted to desecration of the idol of Lord Ram at Ramathartham as a diversionary tactic. He said that the state government was making all efforts to safeguard the secular fabric of the state and made a fervent appeal to the political parties and others not to instigate religious hatred among people.

The minister said that after holding consultations with leaders from all faiths, the state government had come up with an unanimous resolution to promote religious tolerance by all means.

● Botsa Satyanarayana said that after holding consultations with leaders from all faiths, the state government had come up with an unanimous resolution to promote religious tolerance by all means.

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams chief archaka Venugopala Deekshitulu said, "People from all faiths are leading their lives peacefully and we call upon them not to fall prey to the misinformation campaign on attacks of temples."

Syed Ahmad Peer Shahmiri from Sajjada Nasheed of the Khalkha-E-Shahmiria said, "We appreciate the state government for forming committees to promote communal harmony and religious tolerance. We are deeply hurt as vested interests are attacking temples. I appeal to every citizen in the state to live in harmony."

A Christian leader stated that the state government was treating all the citizens equally without showing any discrimination on the basis of caste and religion.

GANESHA IDOL STOLEN FROM TEMPLE IN VEMULA

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, JAN. 8

Unidentified assailants abducted a statue of Lord Ganesha at a temple in Chagaleru village in Vemula mandal of Kadapa district's Pulivendula constituency on Thursday night.

Pulivendula sub-divisional police officer E. Srinivasulu told *Deccan Chronicle* said that they have received a complaint that an idol was missing from the temple. He said two special police teams were immediately deployed to investigate. He revealed that on Friday morning the Clues team and dog squad also came and inspected. Fingerprints were taken for further investigation.

Meanwhile, APCC president Dr. N. Tulasi Reddy speaking to reporters in Vempalle on Friday, criticized that even gods did not have protection in Pulivendula constituency, which is represented by the Chief Minister himself.

It is said that an ancient Ganesha idol has disappeared in Chagaleru in Vemula mandal. He said the hundi was smashed by thugs 20 days ago at the Gangamma temple in the same village. He appealed to the government to respond to the atrocities on temples and catch the thugs and punish them severely.

Farmers condition is bad: Balayya

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, JAN. 8

Actor and Hindupur MLA Nandamuri Balakrishna lashed out at the YSRC government over its "apathetic policies" towards farmers and its "encouragement" to illicit activities. He alleged that there were large scale irregularities in land acquisition for house sites in his assembly segment.

"At least five municipal commissioners were changed in Hindupur municipality within a two-year period," Balakrishna observed while on a three-day visit of his constituency. Among other places, he visited the area of Hudco houses, where work was pending after the YSRC was voted to power.

Speaking to the media,

ing aspersions on serving IPS officers, and this was affecting their professional integrity and sense of probity. He said these officers were appointed under Article 312 of the Constitution to maintain the unity, integrity and stability of the nation and to promote its secular fabric.

Balakrishna alleged that the YSRC government has failed in all fields. The filmstar-turned politician expressed gratitude to the people for showing affection towards his family for the past three decades. He urged the government to consider Hindupur as the new district headquarters.

Balakrishna said farmers in the region were in distress and the government was not of any help to them.

They faced crop loss and there was the lack of input subsidy. Balakrishna visited agriculture fields and interacted with farmers during his tour.

The MLA extended support to the Super Spinning Mill workers who were on a protest against lay off by the management.

HC allows AP Green Energy to go ahead with bidding process

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 8

Andhra Pradesh High Court issued an interim order, allowing AP Green Energy Corporation to go ahead with the bidding process and finalise the successful bidders and asked it not to enter into agreement with them until further hearing in the case is taken up, scheduled to be held on February 15.

Tata Power Renewable Energy challenged the issue of 'Request For Selection' and Power Purchase Agreement by APGEC for taking up 6,400 MW ultra mega solar power project stating that they were against the norms earlier.

High Court judge Justice M. Ganga Rao held the hearing on Friday and issued interim orders allowing the APGEC to go

ahead with the bidding process.

Petitioner's senior counsel Desai Prakash Reddy argued that the APGEC's issue of RFS and PPAs were against the norms of the Central Electricity Act and informed the court that in case of any dispute as per the act, it has to be resolved at the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission. He argued that such norm was removed so that in case of any dispute, the government would resolve it.

Advocate-General S. Sriram informed the court that the issue of RFS and PPA was as per norms and asked as to why Tata Power Renewable Energy was raising objection even though it did not take part in the bid while those who took part in the bid were not raising any objections.

Ganta, aides grabbed land: Vijaya Sai Reddy

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JAN. 8

Rajya Sabha member and north Andhra incharge of YSRC V. Vijaya Sai Reddy alleged that former minister in the TD government and present MLA Ganta Srinivasa Rao and his associate Lalam Bhaskar Rao grabbed huge parcels of government land.

Addressing a public meeting at Yelamanchili during distribution of houses and house pattas, Vijaya Sai Reddy said that only Opposition parties resorted to government land grabbing in Visakhapatnam and there was none in the ruling YSRC government or leaders of the party.

"Some forces are trying to come in the way of distribution of houses and pattas to the poor but the YSRC government had overcome these obstacles with the support from the people," the Rajya Sabha



V. Vijaya Sai Reddy

member said. Minister for tourism Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao, who was also present, said Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had promised 22 social welfare schemes for the poor before the elections and after assuming power, he launched more winning the hearts of the people.

The leaders later addressed another meeting in Anakapalle where they distributed 18,720 pattas.

Hafeezpet assets belonged to Bhuma kin

From page 1

J.V. Reddy said Praveen Rao's father was an advocate and worked for his father, the late Bhuma Nagi Reddy. It was well known that the property in Survey No 80 of Hafeezpet belonged to the Bhuma family.

"After my father and Praveen Rao's father died, the three brothers hatched a conspiracy along with A.V. Subba Reddy to take away all our properties," he alleged.

Jagat Reddy told the media that Praveen Rao had entered into an agreement with MyHome and lent the property.

"There is involvement of big shots including an MP and a business magnate. They want to threaten us and take away our properties," alleged Jagat Reddy.

He appealed to the TS Chief Minister to get the case investigated thoroughly and render justice to the family.

A similar demand was made by Naga Mounika, sister of Akhila Priya, who went a step ahead and urged TS Chief Minister K. Chandrababhanur Rao and minister K.T. Rama Rao to settle

the dispute based on the merits of the case.

She alleged that Praveen Rao's agreement with My Home had triggered the arrest of her sister. "We own the property," she claimed. It is learnt that Praveen Rao offered some money to the Bhuma family but the latter did not agree for a compromise as the amount offered was "very meagre".

Meanwhile, knowledgeable sources said Akhila Priya had made desperate attempts to reach out to MLC K. Kavitha. When her attempts failed, Akhila Priya drove up to Kavitha's residence but the two could not meet. Sources said Kavitha did not want to intervene in the land dispute.

Akhila Priya also tried to reach out to AP ministers M. Sucharita and B. Rajendranath Reddy but failed. TD Telangana president L. Ramana coordinated with her, sources close to the former minister said.

HIGH | CHARGES

Fee structure is 10 times more than other Central Universities for same programmes

CUAP students boycott classes against high fee

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, JAN. 8

Students of all departments at Central University of Andhra Pradesh (CUAP) have started boycotting their online classes protesting over charging of enormous fee by authorities of the institution.

"CUAP is a central university established as per AP Bifurcation Act, 2014 for development of the backward Anantapur district. Though being a public

university, it is charging highly unreasonable fees for social sciences and humanities courses, which do not require any infrastructure like science or computer labs and other sophisticated facilities. High fee will have a negative impact on students as well as university's future, as students will prefer other central universities," pointed out Sai Ram Macha, a final year student of B.A Honours in Political Science.

Student organisations

● For example, they say Hyderabad Central University (HCU); the mentor university for CUAP, has fixed ₹510 as fee for under-graduation courses while CUAP is collecting ₹6,175 for BA Honours and B. SC. Further, the Gujarat Central University collects only ₹500 for these courses while Kerala Central University charges ₹545, the student bodies maintain.

claim fee structure of under-graduation and post-graduation courses at Central University of Andhra Pradesh is 10 times more than the same programmes at other central universities.

For example, they say Hyderabad Central

University (HCU); the mentor university for CUAP, has fixed ₹510 as fee for under-graduation courses while CUAP is collecting ₹6,175 for BA Honours and B. SC.

Further, the Gujarat Central University collects only ₹500 for these courses

while Kerala Central University charges ₹545, the student bodies maintain.

Further, they say the Central University in AP has fixed ₹6,890 as fee for B. Voc programmes. For these programmes, the Rajasthan Central University charges only ₹630, Himachal Pradesh CU ₹500 and Jammu and Kashmir CUs collect only ₹1,500 as tuition fees.

The Anantapur central university students say similar is the case with

post-graduate courses being offered by the university, which are far higher than those charged by other central universities in the country.

Even though students have submitted numerous representations to Prof. Appa Rao, vice-chancellor of University of Hyderabad, who was the chairman of CUAP Society, the issue is still pending.

When contacted, CUAP authorities maintained that the matter will soon be taken up and resolved.

OTHER STORIES

WEST GODAVARI COPS INFORM I-T OFFICIALS

FROM PAGE 1

West Godavari police officials said that they have informed IT teams to conduct raids on participants.

West Godavari Superintendent of Police K.N. Naick gave strict instructions to the police to take preventive steps against organizing cockfights. The police got bind-over cases on 3,000 persons recently and are conducting raids on cockfight-knife manufacturers and arresting them. They have considered the previous history of organizers and participants and counselling them.

They gathered the phone numbers of the visitors who have already booked rooms in hotels and lodges. Meanwhile, joint teams have been formed with police and revenue officials in villages to trace those promoting gambling in the name of traditional sports.

East Godavari Superintendent of Police Adnan Nayeem Asmi told this reporter that Sections 144 and 30 are in force. He said that bind-over cases are being booked on organizers. He said that a plan of action has been prepared to curb such gambling events during Sankranti and those found violating the orders would be sternly dealt with.

319 Covid cases, one death in AP

Virus still active in 2,832 patients in state

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 8:

Andhra Pradesh registered 319 new Covid-19 cases scaling up tally to 8,84,490 and one death taking toll to 7,127 in the last 24 hours.

The state health authorities released Covid-19 bulletin here on Friday reporting that out of 59,671 samples tested, 319 persons were found infected with Coronavirus. Out of a total number of 1,22,24,202 samples tested so far, 8,74,531 infected patients were recovered while 2,832 infected patients were still active with the virus.

151 MORE LHB COACHES FOR VIZAG: RAILWAY BOARD

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, JANUARY 8

The Railway Board has decided to sanction 151 Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) coaches for the year 2020-21 which will be deployed shortly, thus raising the holding to 291 LHB coaches at Visakhapatnam base. A release issued by Waltair Division said plans were

TECHNICAL GLITCHES FOUND IN COVID-19 VACCINE DRY RUN

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL JANUARY 8

Technical snags continue as the Covid vaccine administration dry run in Kurnool struggles to resolve the issues. Internet connectivity, lack of mobile signals had delayed receipt of One-time password (OTP) to enter the details of patients was observed on Friday when 85 of the 87 Primary Health Centers were checked their preparedness for vaccine administration said.

DMHO Dr. Rama Giddaiah.

He said most of the PHCs depend on BSNL towers for mobile connectivity and the Friday experience shows that glitches were found at multiple locations. Particularly in Nallamala forest fringe areas, hilly areas, Mahanandi Mandal villages abutting the forest faced problems, Giddaiah said. Enhanced signal strength is required across the district to make seamless vaccine administration, he pointed.

NSTL IS A VIBRATING LAB: DRDO CHIEF

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, JANUARY 8

Chairman of DRDO Dr G. Satish Reddy described the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory, a vibrating lab while addressing a gathering through video conference to mark the occasion of NSTL 51st Foundation Day held in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

He appreciated the team members who went to Ulan and succeeded in heavy weight torpedo trials.

He expressed his faith that NSTL will become one of the best naval labs in the world and the world will certainly follow NSTL in the nearby future. NSTL was established on August 20, 1969.

The guest of honour Vice Admiral Kalidoss Srinivas appreciated NSTL for giving importance to user requirements and congratulated NSTL for becoming a one-stop solution in research.

Outstanding scientist and director of NSTL Dr OR Nandagopalan and DR Rajeswari Devi, Scientist-G and chairperson of the Raising Day Celebrations spoke on the occasion.



Bulls at the Race in National wide competitions at Siddhartha Engineering College in Vijayawada on Friday.

— DC

NRI TO DONATE SALE PROCEEDS HIS FIRST BOOK

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, JAN. 8

Venkata Vinod Parimi, an NRI from Singapore, who wrote his first book titled "Daivam tho Naa Anubhavalu", which reads in Telugu - My experiences with the God, has announced that he will donate the entire sales proceeds of the book to TTD's Go Samrakshana trust.

Speaking to the Deccan Chronicle over the phone, Vinod, who works as the regional director (Asia Pacific) at Miele Pvt. limited in Singapore, said that he had travelled across the length and the breadth of India over the last thirty years, chasing his passion to visit sacred Hindu temples across the country.

He quotes his book as a compilation of his mystic experiences with the god in the form of a set of 35 short stories. "I'm an ardent devotee of Lord Venkateswara and I used to visit the Tirumala temple at least once every single month, no matter where I'm. The outbreak of Covid-19, coupled with lockdown and closure of international borders, however, obstructed me from visiting the Tirumala temple since January last year. And that is when I have decided to write a book on all my mystic experiences with God at the age of 48", he said. "During my journeys I have met many sages, who have walked into my life to get to the bottom of my life.

Fishermen clash at sea over use of ring nets

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, JAN 8

Rival groups of fishermen clashed over use of ring nets in the sea close to Peda Jalaripeta here on Friday. Last week, fisheries minister Sidiri Appalaraju and tourism minister Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao had held a meeting with their associations in the presence of officials and announced a ban on use of ring nets.

Minister Raju had said a committee was appointed to issue guidelines on the use of banned nets. He stressed that use of ring nets was banned within a range of 8km from the shore.

Friday morning, the fishermen in Peda Jalaripeta found 10 boats from Endada, Uppada and Mangamaripeta fishing with ring nets in the banned 8km range.

Hundreds of fishermen along with their families rushed to the shore. Of them, some 50 fishermen went into the sea on their

boats and seized the nets. Heated arguments ensued, which resulted in minor clashes.

A police team led by ACP of Dwaraka Zone AVVS Murty rushed to the spot and restored peace. The ACP said the issue would be taken up with higher officials.

Peda Jalaripeta fisherman Paredsi said that while fishermen from 14 villages in Visakhapatnam were following the ban orders, the fishermen from only three villages -- Endada, Uppada and Mangamaripeta -- were defying the ban.

"These three villages come under Bhimili constituency and enjoy the support of state minister Avanti Srinivasa Rao," Paredsi said.

Paredsi and his associates said if these fishermen used ring nets, a majority of the region's fisherfolk with traditional nets would be left with no catch. This is the third time the fishermen clashed over this issue in the last one month.

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Divisional Railway Manager(Engg.) Waltair

PR-474/L/20-21

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Sand boa racket busted in Nellore, reptile rescued

Many traps for rare species surface

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, JAN. 8

The Nellore District Forest wing in a joint operation with South India Region Central Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has busted an interstate gang involved in the illegal trade of Red sand boas. They have arrested seven members of the gang and rescued one reptile.

According to the DFO Shanmukha Kumar, the arrested accused were identified as D. Ashok Reddy, 22, B. Ravindra Reddy, 24, V. Vamsi Sekhar, 23, R. Jeevan Kumar, 22, G. Govardhan Reddy, 24, N. Munikrishnamachari, 38 and K. Bhaskar, 28. "A team led by B.

FROM PAGE 1

Many cases of trapping, smuggling or trading in this rare species have come to light in the recent past. The latest is arrest of an inter-state gang involved in this trade at Naidupeta in Nellore district on Friday. "Sand boa is

endemic to three countries - India, Pakistan and Iran.

This non-venomous snake is widely trafficked in the international black market because of the myths and beliefs surrounding them. The price of the snake is decided by its weight.

Rajendra Prasad, Forest Range officer of Venkatagiri and Sk Rangaswaran, CI, Wildlife Crime Bureau, Chennai has conducted a sting operation. The team and

nabbed a gang of seven red handed at Naidupeta on Friday.

The cost of the snake is around ₹70 lakh in the open market.", the DFO said.

THIEVES BREAK OPEN COTTAGE AT TIRUMALA, STEAL DEVOTEES' CASH

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, JAN. 8

Thieves have struck the hill town of Tirumala again, this time breaking into a cottage and decamping with cash and gold belonging to a devotee family, hailing from Raichur in Karnataka.

According to sources, the incident was reported from cottage number 527F in TTD's Garudadri Nagar Cottage (GNC) area at Tirumala, where a family of devotees hailing from Raichur in Karnataka took a rental accommodation.

The devotees, who locked up their room and

went for darshan, were shocked to see their room broke open and belongings were in a complete mess when they returned from the temple. The devotees immediately informed the police and TTD vigilance wing staff, who reached the cottage and collected clues and fingerprints.

The devotees in their complaint stated that the thieves who managed to break into their cottage were decamped away with Rs.22000 cash and one mobile phone. The police have registered a case and launched an operation to nab the thieves.

MAN WHO MURDERED AND RAPED 75-YEAR-OLD WOMAN NABBED

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, JAN. 8

Chittoor Police on Friday arrested an accused, who murdered and raped a 75-year-old woman on 5th of this month at Kothapalli village under Thanavampalle mandal of Chittoor district.

According to Chittoor DSP N. Sudhakar Reddy, the accused M. Sudhakar, 30, hailing from Kothapalli village under Thanavampalle has been addicted to bad vices and roams in the village without doing any work.

On 5th of this month, the accused attacked and killed the 75-year-old woman in the early hours while she was sleeping in her cattle shed. The accused later raped the old woman and looted her ear rings, before escaping from the scene.

Based on a complaint,

the Thanavampalle police registered a case and formed a special team to nab the accused. During the investigation process, the police have found that the accused fled to Tirupati after the crime and roamed several places to escape from the police.

Acting on a tip-off, the Thanavampalle police arrested the accused at Bangarupalyam when he was waiting for an autorickshaw. He was sent to remand and was booked u/s 302, 380, 376 IPC. Chittoor west police station CI C. Lakshmikanth Reddy led the team, which nabbed the accused.

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DECCAN Chronicle

9 JANUARY 2021

True picture of economy emerges in official data

In the wake of the information revolution, governments, too, are becoming savvy in the art of sophisticated media management that enables them to have their say in direct interaction with the people beyond the traditional print and TV media. However, such management also leads to the sowing of doubts in the minds of people as they struggle to sift real facts from managed news. Something similar may have happened in the case of the official Indian narrative about the economy.

The lockdown — the toughest in the world — had wiped out nearly 25 per cent of the country's productivity, but there was no official admission. Government officials did not directly comment on the sorry state of economic affairs even though several agencies, including the Reserve Bank of India, had painted a grim economic scenario. The moment of truth may have come when the National Statistical Office (NSO), a statistical body under the Union ministry of statistics and programme implementation, released its report on the economic outlook.

On Thursday, NSO projected a 7.7 per cent contraction for the Indian economy in 2020-21, highlighting the damage that the coronavirus has inflicted on the Indian economy. Though the contraction has become slightly milder after September 2020, making many analysts suggest a V-shaped recovery, the real picture has not become any better.

According to NSO data, the business of services like trade, hotels, transport, communication and broadcast is expected to shrink by 21.4 per cent, construction sector which has a multiplier effect on other industries is expected to shrink by 12.6 per cent, mining and quarrying are projected to witness a degrowth of 12.4 per cent, and manufacturing is projected to lose productivity by 9.4 per cent. When such key segments of the economy are witnessing a degrowth, the economy can never be said to be in pink of its health. The impact of such widespread deceleration in the economy is evident in unemployment that has been left undressed for a long time.

In a recent report, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) said the unemployment rate in the country rose sharply to 9.1 per cent in December 2020, which is the highest since the beginning of India's recovery from the lockdown in June. The jobless rate stood at 10.99 per cent in June 2020. Unemployment in urban India rose from 7.1 per cent to 8.8 per cent.

While there is an improvement in hiring intentions in some sectors, a survey conducted by Manpower Group claims that it would take at least nine months for the country to reach pre-Covid levels. This scenario presents a tightrope walk for the government, as jobs will not increase unless economic output rises. Higher economic output and consumer confidence, however, are mutually dependent. People will not splurge unless they are confident about their financial future, which once again depends on the country's economic growth. Therefore, the role of the government and rich corporations assumes greater significance to spur economic growth of the country.

FB, Twitter: Action too late

Facebook and Instagram have banned Donald Trump "indefinitely", or at least until the end of his term. He will be denied access to his 35 million followers on Facebook but retains the key to addressing 88 million followers on Twitter because that platform has not taken as bold a stand and had locked him out only for 12 hours on the fateful day. Of course, social media, often criticised for being the publicity megaphone for the likes of the obstreperous US President, had acted belatedly and only after all that distressing violence had taken place on Capitol Hill. They were clearly guilty of bolting the doors after the horses had fled.

The action against Mr Trump is a warning shot that should have come long ago when he was blatantly misusing the social media after having built up his influence on them and misused the platforms to challenge the election results. The influence that the likes of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube wield as a platform linking people in the US, Europe, India and many other countries is huge. It is on record that the social media have been used as a vehicle for hate and not only in the obvious case of Trump and his acolytes. However, the conspiracy theorist QAnon also used other sites like Gab and Parler to gather members for the attack on democracy.

The point is social media has been guilty of allowing extremism to grow. Its lackadaisical attitude to curbing toxic content while chasing advertisement revenue based on number of users has led us to such a pass. It was never in the public interest to allow hate to come to a boil and let violence result from people operating in closed social media networks. By his perverse actions Mr Trump has become a stark warning to those who use the social media for nefarious purposes. In India, Facebook and others have been as reluctant to shut down unacceptable use to whip up communal passions and outright hate based on religion despite warnings from the government and civil rights groups. Will they reform at least now?

DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER
Editor

K. SUDHAKAR
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Subhani



Reassert 'core' values & halt democracy's decay

Ashwani Kumar

In his book *The Age Rights (1990)*, Prof. Louis Henkin, a celebrated scholar of international law, had claimed "human rights is the idea of our time, the only political-moral idea that has received universal acceptance". However, an objective analysis of the situation throughout the world, including India, belies that claim.

This disquieting conclusion flows from a distressing institutional response to the egregious infraction of human rights, raising a profoundly important question on the functioning of our democratic institutions. Repeated abuse of several stringent laws with punitive consequences has resulted from a reversal of the presumption of innocence in favour of the accused, favoured by the Supreme Court as a human right. (Bhramajeet Singh Sharma, 2005) Demonstrated arbitrariness in investigative processes and the failure of the Indian State to enact a comprehensive anti-custodial torture law question our willingness to civilise ourselves in the use of State power. Denial of basic human rights to undertrials, poignantly exemplified in the refusal of a sipper to an 80-year-old undertrial priest suffering from Parkinson's disease and the refusal of jail guards to allow an incarcerated public intellectual access to a pair of spectacles must shame the nation. This, despite Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer's binding edict in the Sunil Batra case as early as 1978, that fundamental rights "do not part company with the prisoner at the prison gates..." Indiscriminate arrests of citizens on charges of sedition are etched in public memory as a repressive act of State power intended to crimi-

nalise dissent. Unconscionable arrests for inter-faith marriages mischievously labelled as "love jihad" have scarred the constitutional conscience. Heart rending sights of a dog nibbling at a dead woman's body inside a hospital, and the reported beating to death of a dalit worker just because he had served himself a mouthful of food while clearing the leftovers, condemn us irretrievably as a heartless society. Are we then really a people who can claim that they live in the shelter of each other? Despite the Supreme Court's repeated directives, trials by the media continue to infract the citizens' right to liberty, fair trial and reputation. As the highest forum of democracy, Parliament too cannot escape its share of responsibility for our faltering record on human rights. The three controversial agricultural reforms laws affecting the economic condition and dignity of millions of India's farmers, passed in both Houses of Parliament without any discussion by a voice vote, is a recent illustration. The enactment of often abused "broad" laws without thoughtful deliberation have had grave consequences for the liberty and dignity of citizens. The offices of the Lokpal, the Central Information Commission and the National Human Rights Commission have remained largely dormant in practice, except for the occasional and unenforced interventions. Our national leaders, captive to personal animosities and dwarfed by timidity in the face of power, remain obsessed with a "manipulative conversation about our future", with little time to address themselves to the defining challenges of our times. Thus politics,

denuded of its larger purpose, thrives on the tyranny of the strong over the weak and is bereft of any inspiring moral appeal.

However, the nation's greatest regret is that having declared human dignity anchored in deference to human rights as a core constitutional value (Common Cause, 2018), the Supreme Court has failed to lean consistently in favour of individual rights against the State. Given the national context, Chief Justice S.A. Bobde's recent suggestion of a restricted recourse to Article 32 in bail matters is rather unfortunate and in some ways is a denial of its *raison d'être*. Citing with approval Ronald Dworkin's assertion of a right to individual dignity against the government in Puttaswamy (2017), the court's recent record in enforcing this right is, at best, mixed.

The continuing incarceration of public intellectuals, political leaders, academics and dissenters, even where the weight of evidence against them is prima facie weak, has regrettably blemished the court's otherwise sterling record as the sentinel of our fundamental rights. The Supreme Court's profound pronouncements in Shreya Singhal (2015), Shabnam (2015), Puttaswamy (Supra), Nambi Narayan (2018), Navtej Johar (2018), Anuradha Bhasin (2020) and several earlier decisions notwithstanding, its inability to enforce its own judgments has dented its standing as a designated guardian of constitutional principles. Deferment of its hearing on the Rohingya petitions, the Challenge to Citizenship

Amendment Act's validity and on the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A of the Constitution, the petitions concerning the plight of the elderly and their right to dignity, a hesitant intervention in aid of the coronavirus migrants and misplaced priorities in the hearing and disposal of cases have added to the blemish.

The need to reclaim a consistent vocabulary of constitutional discourse rooted in intellectual integrity is self-evident. The highest court has itself reminded us that the majesty of courts lies in the objectivity, consistency and wisdom of its judgments, not in the "coercive power of judges, but the deference and respect which is paid to them and their acts from an opinion of their justice and integrity" (Baradakanta Misra, 1974).

Clearly, this is our moment of reckoning. We must acknowledge the truth of a diminished Indian democracy and our collective failures. Hopefully, the process of democratic erosion can be arrested with the citizens' collective assertion of our core constitutional values. Despite the disappointments, we can take comfort in history's abiding lesson — that the ideals of freedom, equality and justice are best secured in the consciousness of an enlightened people and that no one can diminish the appeal of dignity or extinguish the flame of liberty as long as it burns brightly in our hearts. We know that "the history of the world is none other than the progress of consciousness of freedom" and "the arc of the moral universe bends towards justice". In these testing times, when the centre have ceased to hold, a relentless pursuit of human dignity admits of no bystanders. To recall Thomas Paine's felicity: "When my country... was on fire about my ears, it was time to stir. It was time for every man to stir."

The writer is a former Union law minister. The views expressed here are personal.

LETTERS

BLACK DAY FOR US

January 6th will be remembered as a black day for American democracy. That Trump's supporters went to attack Capitol Hill is the height of absurdity. Trump has never shied away to foster and use divisions and prejudices to pursue his own interests. His tenure is not known for respecting democratic norms. Now the emboldened mob attack shows the deep-rooted malaise and divisions along party lines in American society.

Dr D.V.G. Sankararao
Vizianagaram

Trump should be impeached and tried for criminal instigation leading to attempted seizure of Capitol Hill and arson by his hired goons. Narendra Modi should also publicly apologise for his unsavoury shenanigans with Trump during 'Howdy Modi in the US and 'Kem Chho?' in Ahmedabad.

K. Nehru Patnaik
Visakhapatnam

BJP'S FAILURE

It is surprising that in spite of AP BJP leaders best efforts to cash in on Sri Kodandarama Swamy temple issue, they couldn't (BJP leaders detained over attempt to visit Ram temple, DC, Jan. 8). BJP state president Somu Veeraju who fainted, failed to make an impact on general public as they might have thought that these protests of BJP leaders are fake. It is very clear that BJP cannot succeed in AP until unless they change their attitude and political policies.

P. Govardhana Rao
Kankipadu, Krishna

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

Ram to open Dundigal Air Force Academy

HYDERABAD, JANUARY. 8 The ₹35-crore Air Force Academy at Dundigal, about 30 km from here will be formally inaugurated on January 16 by Union Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram.

The Academy is intended to centralise the training facilities to Air Force personnel at one integrated establishment. At present the training centres are situated at Jodhpur, Bidar, Bangalore and Madras.

Farrukh Dhondy
Cabbages & Kings



"Now the new year reviving old desires
The thoughtful soul with his bottles retires
With good wishes for friend and foe alike
And for saints and even for consummate liars."

— From Rubaiyat of Bachchoo Ka Adda

The soon-to-be ex-President Donald Trump insists on calling the Covid-19 plague the "Chinese virus". Very many viruses have been given adjectival and territorial names. The least antagonistic is "common cold". It blames no nation, continent or species as do the descriptions like "Spanish flu", "Asian flu", "swine flu" and "bird flu".

The last two are comparatively innocuous but Mr Trump's insistence on calling this worldwide pandemic "Chinese" is part of his nastiness and his attempt to deepen the antagonism between Americans and all things Chinese.

I don't know if there was any malignant intention on the part of Britons who christened that infliction "Spanish". Just part of British xeno-

phobic contempt. I have no doubt that if Mr Trump is challenged, he will produce evidence that the Covid-19 pandemic originated in Wuhan. He might even say that it was deliberately set free from a laboratory there in accordance with some devilish Chinese world domination strategy.

Incidentally, there is now an invitation from Wuhan scientists for objective observers to re-examine the common claim that the epidemic originated in that city. What the result of this challenge will be is yet to be seen.

Britain is, as I write, gentle reader, under a severe lockdown. The last two weeks have seen an exponential rise in the number of cases of infection and the number of deaths as a result. I use the word exponential literally, as the graphs of the spread that are plastered on the TV screen each day and night are the shape of the ones that we studied for our Pune University maths degrees.

The increase in person-to-person transmission of the pandemic, scientists say, is owing to the virus having mutated. The mutation is, the epidemiology and science tell us, is much more easily transmitted through the air. And now this mutat-

ed organism, is with some justification, known in Spain as the "British virus".

Referring to it as such is possibly motivated by Spanish revenge.

The phrases "British variant", "British mutant virus" and other such descriptions are spreading through the world media and, of course, occasioning a backlash in Britain, even though the fact stands that the mutant strain and its effects were first noticed in this country. Nevertheless, there is a sense of shrill protests of victimisation from those who challenge the description. One of the shrillest protesters is a character called Roger Helmer, who used to be a British Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and is a supporter of the jingoistic United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP).

His tweet, reported in *Private Eye*, says "it was FIRST IDENTIFIED in the UK" and that is not tantamount to it originating in the UK. Earlier last year, Mr Helmer had objected to the characterisation of Mr Trump's contention that this pandemic was a "Chinese virus" as racist.

"So, is it racist to mention 'Chinese food' or 'Indian curry' or 'Korean Kimchee' or 'German Sauerkraut'?

So why not 'Chinese virus'?" he tweeted to his followers.

One may wonder how many of his followers have now noticed a flaw, dissension or even hypocrisy in his statements.

I don't tweet (though I can whistle inefficiently), but if I did, I might point out to poor Roger that if a virus first identified in China can be called the "Chinese virus", then a variant of it which was first identified in Britain... "Geddit Roj, me ole fruit-cake?"

And then there is the question of what characterises a flu as Spanish. Does it say, "tonight we drink, tomorrow we kill the gringos!" as it threatens to infect another human, or "hasta la vista?" as it is expelled or killed by a vaccine?

The gaping flaw in poor Roger's argument is that "Indian curry" carries in its flavour everything that characterises Indian cuisine. If I want, which I frequently do, a "Goa sausage", I want it not just because it originates in Goa, but because it contains the ingredients and flavours particular to that region — a bratwurst or a Polish-garlic sausage won't do just as well. Whereas Covid-19 doesn't carry the characteristics of anything Chinese and its variant,

apart from infesting places where the sun never sets, has nothing British about it.

Of course, viruses, just like us Parsis, are sometimes named after the things we do and sometimes after the places from which we come. So, a Parsi called Batliwalla must have ancestors who dealt in bottles -- and it should be quite clear what my distant relatives Russi Immoralearningswalla and Imoji Feromonereplacementwalla do for their living.

And moving on to places, Satarawalla and Poonawalla come from the places with those names. What has always been a dilemma for my family is the origin of our surname "Dhondy". It certainly doesn't derive from the town of Dhond in Maharashtra, so eliminating geographical origins, we come to professions. Now in some Gujarati dialects the word might mean stonebreaker, which points to the option that my ancestors could have been stone masons.

The other possibility, which we pointedly disregard, was that they were perhaps put to breaking stones in an institution as guests in the colonial era of His Imperial Majesty, the King Emperor.

Of Chinese virus,
Spanish flu, UK
strain: Do points
of origin matter?

Kandhamal superintendent of police Vinit Agarwal said the Maoist camp was busted during a joint combing operation by Special Operation Group (SOG) jawans and district voluntary force. "Based on reliable Intelligence inputs, an anti-Naxal operation was launched in the region on Thursday by a joint team of SOG and DVF. During the combing exercise, Maoists opened fire at the security forces and the latter also retaliated. We seized a huge cache of ammunition from the spot after the exchange of fire," said Agarwal.

The mahant was arrested in a late-night crackdown that ended his 5-day run

● **THE PRIEST** is being questioned and further action will be taken in accordance with the information provided by him.

The incident took place on Sunday and the matter came to light that night itself when the priest and his accomplices took the

● **CHIEF MINISTER** Yogi Adityanath has ordered 'strongest possible action' in the case even as opposition parties have launched an attack on his government, terming the incident 'horrific' and 'shameful'.

action" in the case even as opposition parties have launched an attack on his government, terming the incident "horrific" and

Endorsing the CMO's opinion, District Magistrate Kumar Prashant said, "Whatever help can be given from the department will be given. She was an *anganwadi sahayika* (helper). We are also paying attention to

The CM has also instructed the ADG, Bareilly zone to submit a detailed report on the incident and directed the Special Task Force (STF) to assist in the probe, it said. —PTI

CONG, LEFT TO HOLD MEGA JOINT RALLY IN WEST BENGAL

The LF and the Congress had contested the 2016 Assembly poll in the state in a seat-sharing arrangement, but the alliance had fallen apart after that and the Front and the Congress fought the 2019 Lok Sabha elections on their own. In the 2016 Assembly elections, the LF-Congress alliance won 76 seats, with the Congress winning 44 seats and the Front emerging victorious in only 32 constituencies.

Kangana, sister quizzed for 2hrs in sedition case

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, JAN. 8

The sisters appeared before the police, as the

According to sources, the questioning is not complete because the police

speaking in the interest of
the nation and recently
speaking in favour for

She has narrated how a case was filed against her even for laughing and in another case her name was dragged even though she was not on Twitter and

"I have even been ordered to give *haajira* (attendance) at the police station although I don't know for what reason. I have also been asked not to disclose to anyone or talk about the kind of torture I am facing. I want to ask the honourable Supreme Court, have we returned to the medieval age where women were burnt alive and their voices were silenced?" she said.



Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut arrives at a police station in Mumbai on Friday. — AFP

SHORT TAKES
**POLICE CHIEF
QUITS AFTER
MOB INVASION**

Steven Sund “is resigning effective January 16, 2021,” the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said, hours after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called for his resignation, following sharp rebukes for what many criticised as a lack of preparation.

POMPEO SAYS US NOT 'BANANA REPUBLIC'

“The slander reveals a faulty understanding of banana republics and of democracy in America,” said the top US diplomat, a staunch Trump loyalist, as two other members of the cabinet resigned over Wednesday’s violence.

STAY ON, LAWMAKERS TO WH STAFF

Senior Republican Senator Lindsey Graham urged top Trump aides to keep working for the final 14 days of the administration, naming chief of staff Mark Meadows, White House Counsel Pat Cipollone, and National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien. "To those who believe you should leave your post I would urge you not,"

COPS REJECTED OFFERS FOR HELP

Pentagon asked if National Guard was needed, Justice Dept reached out with FBI

Despite plenty of warnings of a possible insurrection and ample resources and time to prepare, the Capitol Police planned only for a free speech demonstration. Still stinging from the uproar over the violent response by law enforcement to protests last June near the White House, officials also were intent on avoiding any appearance that the federal government was deploying active duty or National Guard troops against Americans. The result is the US Capitol was overrun Wednesday and officers in a law enforcement agency with a large operating budget and experience in high-security events protecting lawmakers were overwhelmed for the world to see.

“This was a failure of imagination, a failure of leadership,” said Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo, whose department responded to several large protests last year following the death of George Floyd.



Demonstrators hold a banner calling for impeachment of US President Donald Trump during a protest outside the Barclays Centre in Brooklyn, New York on Thursday, a day after pro-Trump mob stormed and trashed the Capitol. — *AFP*

Acevedo said he has attended events on the Capitol grounds to honour slain police officers that had higher fences and a stronger security presence than what he saw on video Wednesday. Army

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell asked for and received the resignation of the Sergeant at Arms of the Senate, Michael Stenger, effective immediately. Paul Irving, the longtime Sergeant at Arms of the House, also resigned. —AP

Cops lenient with mob but severe with anti-racists

Delaware. "We all know that's true, and it is unacceptable," said Biden, who will take over the White House on January 20, after winning November's election in part due to strong support from Black voters.

US media reported that some law enforcement officials even opened doors for them. The scene stood in stark contrast to last year's anti-racism protests in the nation's capital and beyond.

—AFP

Capitol storming: Two Cabinet members quit

Joe Biden's victory. "That behaviour was unconscionable for our country. There is no mistaking the impact your rhetoric had on the situation, and it is the inflection point for me," said Education Secretary DeVos. "It has deeply troubled me in a way I simply cannot set aside," she added.

US MEDIA: DON CONSIDERING SELF-PARDON

The president has also asked for legal opinions on whether he has the authority to issue a self-pardon and has been advised on the potential political fallout, it said.

The *New York Times* reported on Thursday that Trump has suggested in conversations since Election Day that he wants to pardon himself.

SHORT TAKES

IOC member not sure of Olympics

Tokyo: A senior member of the International Olympic Committee has said he can't be certain the postponed Tokyo Olympics will open in just over six months because of the surging pandemic in Japan and elsewhere. The comments by Canadian IOC member Richard Pound to British broadcaster the BBC came as Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga declared a state of emergency on Thursday for Tokyo and surrounding prefectures. I can't be certain because the ongoing elephant in the room would be the surges in the virus, Pound said speaking about the future of the Tokyo Games. Japan's emergency order, which is largely voluntary, will be in force until the first week of February. It's crunch time for Tokyo. Organizers say the Olympics will take place, but they are not expected to reveal concrete plans until spring. — AP

Fifa ex-president Blatter in hospital

Geneva: Former FIFA president Sepp Blatter has been taken to hospital, a Swiss newspaper said on Thursday, but media insisted the disgraced official's life was not in danger. "My father is in hospital. He's getting better every day. But he needs time and rest," his daughter Corinne Blatter Andenmatten was quoted as saying by Blick, which said the he was in a serious but non-life-threatening condition. "On behalf of my family, I ask for privacy," his daughter said. Blatter was removed from office in 2015 after 17 years at the head of world football's governing body. He was suspended from football for six years over a two million Swiss franc payment to then UEFA boss Michel Platini in 2011. Blatter and Platini are now being investigated for alleged "fraud" and "breach of trust" in Switzerland. — AFP

Colaco goals earn win for Hyderabad

Vasco: Hyderabad FC piled further misery on NorthEast United, extending the Highlanders' winless run to six games with a thumping 4-2 victory in the Indian Super League here on Friday. Hyderabad took the lead through goals from Aridane Santana (3rd minute) and Joel Chianese (36th) before a penalty from Federico Gallego (45th) and Benjamin Lambot's strike (45th) helped NEUFC draw parity before the break. Hyderabad settled the tie in their favour in the second half through late goals from substitute Liston Colaco, who scored in the 85th and 90th minutes. The first half was a dramatic and open-ended contest with both sides creating ample chances. The North East side fashioned more opportunities and despite a two-goal deficit, fought their way back with two goals late in the opening half. — PTI

Three shuttlers banned for 'fixing'

New Delhi: The Badminton World Federation (BWF) on Friday handed life bans to three Indonesian shuttlers for involvement in match-fixing, match manipulation and betting. The sport's governing body said, "eight Indonesian players who knew each other, and competed in lower-level international competitions mostly in Asia up until 2019, breached BWF Integrity Regulations related to match fixing, match manipulation and/or betting on badminton." "Three of them were found to have coordinated and organised others into being complicit in the behaviour and have been suspended from all badminton related activities for life," BWF said in a statement. — PTI

Live on TV

CRICKET

Australia vs India: Third Test — Day Four from 5 am (Sunday) on Sony Six, Ten 1, HD

FOOTBALL

FA Cup: Arsenal vs Newcastle United from 11 pm; Manchester United vs Watford from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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STEVE RUNSMITH

Smith scores century but Jadeja, Gill star for India

Sydney, Jan. 8: Steve Smith's typically gutsy hundred was neutralised by Ravindra Jadeja's four-wicket haul and rookie Shubman Gill's fluent half-century as a resolute India reached 96/2 after dismissing Australia for 338 on the second day of the third Test here on Friday.

The Indian bowlers, especially Jadeja (18-3-62-4) and the ever-dependable Jasprit Bumrah (25.4-7-66-2), were brilliant with their length on a flat SCG deck where Smith (131 off 226 balls) along with Marnus Labuschagne (91 off 196 balls) raised visions of a 450-plus total by taking the side to 206 for 2 at one stage.

But in the end, 338 was all they managed in a little less than 106 overs with none of the other batsmen making any telling contribution.

It was only fitting that Jadeja's split second brilliance from the deep found Smith short of his crease.

Then it was the calm and collected Gill (50, 101 balls), who was assured during those cover drives off Nathan Lyon and equally breathtaking while presenting his forward defence to Pat Cummins.

The 21-year-old and Rohit Sharma (26 off 77 balls) added 70 in 27 overs but more importantly set the stage for skipper Ajinkya Rahane (5 batting off 40 balls) and Cheteshwar Pujara (9 batting off 53 balls) to cash in on the batting-friendly conditions on the third day.

It was Gill's maiden Test half century in just his second match.

The Australian attack looked more insipid than ever and Rohit, playing his first game in nearly two months, did all the hard work for nearly two hours before failing to check an uppish drive that was pounced by the bowler. But it was a day when India had two openers, who were both ready to pull the fast bowlers during their opening spells and dominate Nathan Lyon with precise footwork. — PTI



Australia's Steve Smith celebrates after scoring a century against India on the second day of their third Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday. — AP

SCORECARD

Australia first Innings (overnight 166 for 2): M. Labuschagne c Rahane b Jadeja 91, Steve Smith run out 131, M. Wade c Bumrah b Jadeja 13, C. Green lbw b Bumrah 0, T. Paine b Bumrah 1, P. Cummins b Jadeja 0, M. Starc c Gill b Saini 24, N. Lyon lbw b Jadeja 0, J. Hazlewood not out 1. Extras (b4, w1, nb5) 10. **Total (all out in 105.4 overs) 338**
FoW: 1-6, 2-106, 3-206, 4-232, 5-249, 6-255, 7-278, 8-310, 9-315.

Bowling: Bumrah 25.4-7-66-2, Siraj 25-4-67-1, Ashwin 24-1-74-0, Saini 13-0-65-2, Jadeja 18-3-62-4.
India first Innings: Rohit Sharma c&b Hazlewood 26, Shubman Gill c Green b Pat Cummins 50, C. Pujara not out 9, A. Rahane not out 5. Extras (w5, nb1) 6. **Total (two wickets, 45 overs) 96.**
FoW: 1-70, 2-85.
Bowling: Starc 7-4-19-0, Hazlewood 10-5-23-1, Cummins 12-6-19-1, Lyon 16-7-35-0.

Smith laughs off form slump

Sydney, Jan. 8: Former Australia skipper Steve Smith dismissed talk of a form slump but credited a more positive attitude after his battling century against India in Sydney on Friday.

He reached three figures in a Test for the first time since 2019, smacking 131 for his 27th ton to help steer Australia to a first innings 338.

He bounced back after failing to reach double figures in the opening two Tests, which sparked a flurry of concern about his form among pundits

and the media.

But Smith said he was never worried, pointing out that he hit pulsating back-to-back centuries in the limited-overs series against India late last year. "I read a lot of things and plenty of people said I was out of form so it was nice to come back into form, if that's what you want to call it," he said.

"I mean, it was only about three or four weeks ago that I scored two hundreds at the Sydney Cricket Ground. So yeah, it kind of just makes me

laugh sometimes when people say that kind of thing.

"I missed out in the first two Tests obviously and came back today and scored some runs and helped I guess put us in a decent position," the Australian star batsman further added.

Smith struggled against the spin of Ravi Ashwin in Adelaide and Melbourne and admitted he made some adjustments to his game, which helped him build his near-flawless score. — AFP

On-top Jaddu relishes field day

Sydney, Jan. 8: An exceptional all-rounder, India's Ravindra Jadeja was pretty chuffed about running Steve Smith out with a direct hit in the ongoing third Test against Australia and called it his "best ever" fielding effort which he can watch any number of times.

Smith, who was batting on 130 and was in a mood to slog every ball in company of No.11 batsman Josh Hazlewood, couldn't beat a direct throw from Jadeja, who sprinted from his deep square leg position and effected a direct hit with throw reminiscent of the great Kapil Dev during his heydays.

Asked what will he like to watch, the four wickets he got or the run-out, the senior all-rounder replied: "I will rewind and play this run-out as this is my best effort. A direct hit from outside the circle and that's like a moment that gives you that satisfaction."



India's Ravindra Jadeja (left) celebrates after taking the wicket of Australia's Nathan Lyon during Day Two of the third Test match at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday. — AFP

"Three or four wicket hauls are fine but this run-out will stay with me," said the Saurashtra all-rounder.

Jadeja has been a live wire on the field during this tour with some fantastic catches like the one

he took running backwards at the MCG to dismiss Matthew Wade or this run-out at a crucial juncture when Smith could have added an extra 25 to 30 runs.

Jadeja also said that the plan was to vary pace of

his deliveries and create angles since there was not much turn on offer.

Jadeja returned with figures of four for 62 in 18 overs besides getting rid of centurion Steve Smith with a brilliant direct hit. "The idea was to create pressure as this wasn't a wicket where you would get chance in every over. You can't bowl all deliveries at same pace on this wicket as there was no turn on offer. You had to mix and match and create angles," said Jadeja.

For India's top multi-skilled cricketer, the focus has also been on producing all-round performances.

"Not just last 12-18 months, from the time I started playing, that's what has been my role. Whenever I am playing, I try to contribute in both departments of the game. "And whenever I have been given opportunities, more often than not, I have delivered," Jadeja further added. — PTI

Quarantine cloud over 4th Test

Sydney, Jan. 8: A new three-day lockdown in Brisbane has put Cricket Australia in a spot of bother as it makes desperate efforts to hold the fourth and final Test against India in the Queensland state capital from January 15.

The Lockdown was announced less than 24 hours after top cricket board officials from India and Australia were engaged in a discussion on relaxation of hard quarantine measures for the visitors.

"Cricket Australia executives are urgently trying to determine the impact of a three-day lockdown in Brisbane on next week's fourth Test at the Gabba, which was already under a cloud because of India's hesitation to fly north and be subjected to tighter bio-security restrictions," the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported.

"A hotel quarantine worker's positive test to the more contagious UK strain of Covid-19 is the latest spanner in the

works for CA's hopes to close out the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series at the Gabba," it added..

On Thursday, The BCCI wrote to CA seeking relaxation in hard quarantine protocol of Brisbane, reminding the host board that the visitors are done with the strict isolation that was agreed upon at the beginning of the tour.

SUNNY BATS FOR BCCI

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar on Friday said that BCCI is only

"protecting its players" by seeking a quarantine relaxation ahead of the fourth Test, just like Queensland health authorities are entitled to shield their people in the wake of fresh Coronavirus cases in Brisbane.

"The Queensland government is fully entitled to protect its people. Similarly I believe the BCCI is fully entitled to protect its team. I think that's something we should never forget," Gavaskar said. — PTI

NUMBERS GAME

● Steven Smith equalled the record of most Test hundreds against India by making 131 in Australia's first innings on the second day of the third Test match against India at Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday (January 8).

● It was his eighth hundred in 30th innings of 18 Test matches against India. West Indian Garry Sobers (30 innings of 18 Tests) and Viv Richards (41 innings of 28 Tests) and Australian Ricky Ponting (51 innings of 29 Tests) also scored the same number of hundreds against India in Tests.

● The former Australian skipper also became the fifth Australian after Ricky Ponting (2,555 runs), Michael Clarke (2,049 runs), Matthew Hayden (1,888 runs) and Allan Border (1,567 runs) and the 19th batsman overall to score over 1,500 runs against India in Tests. Steven Smith has scored 1,570 runs till the end of Australian first innings.

● Ravindra Jadeja recorded his best bowling in Australia by taking 4 for 62. It was his third best performance in away Tests after 6 for 138 against South Africa at Durban in 2013-14 and 5 for 152 against Sri Lanka at Colombo in 2017, Ravindra Jadeja's previous best in Australia was 3 for 82 at Melbourne in 2018-19.

— S. PERVEZ KAISER

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