

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
KARIMNAGAR | SUNDAY | 13 DECEMBER 2020

## WEATHER



Max: 29.4°C  
Min: 17.0°C  
RH: 48%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy.  
Mist or haze likely.  
Max/Min temp. 30/16 °C

## NATION | 4

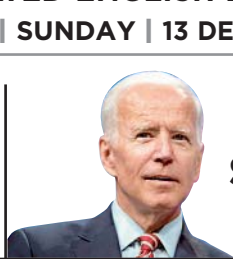
**EC tells parties to set limit on election spending**



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## WORLD | 5

**SCOTUS rejects doubts over Biden victory**



## SPORTS | 7

**Siraj earns praise for sporting gesture**



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## COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+28,144)	(+376)
98,54,175	1,42,994
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+635)	(+4)
TS: 2,77,151	1,489
(+510)	(+3)
AP: 8,75,025	7,052

### CASES AROUND THE WORLD

7,17,80,957
DEATHS
16,07,304
218
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
worldometers.info/coronavirus

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvati:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Kartika Bahula Chaturdasi till 12.45 am (Monday)  
**Star:** Anuradha till 1.40 am (Monday)  
**Varjyam:** 7.39 am to 9.46 am  
**Durmuhurtam:** 4.11 pm to 4.55 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 4.30 pm to 6 pm  
**HILARI CALENDAR**  
**Rabbi-ul Akhri:** 27, 1442 AH  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 5.32 am  
**Zohar:** 12.20 pm  
**Asar:** 4.07 pm  
**Maghrib:** 5.49 pm  
**Isha:** 7.03 pm  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW:** 6.37 AM  
**SUNSET TODAY:** 5.43 PM  
**MOONSET TODAY:** 4.33 PM  
**MOONRISE TOMORROW:** 4.56 AM

## COUNTER POINT



...this time he wants the Indian government to hold talks with Pakistan farmers!

## IN BRIEF

### CBI holds internal probe on gold

**New Delhi:** The CBI has set up an "internal enquiry" after 103 kg gold worth Rs 43 crore, seized and sealed by it eight years ago, went missing, officials said. The Madras High Court has directed the Tamil Nadu Crime Branch-CID police to probe the case of "missing" gold, which left the country's premier investigating agency red-faced. The gold is part of 400.47-kg bullion and ornaments confiscated by the CBI when it carried out searches at the office of Surana Corporation Ltd in Chennai in 2012.

### Tata group sees limitless growth

**New Delhi:** The post-COVID-19 new world order offers limitless opportunity for India but for the country to be ready to participate in it, there is a need to establish regulatory standards on data and taxation in general, Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran said on Saturday. Speaking at the 93rd annual convention of industry Chamber FICCI, he also said that if the idea "that the 2020s belong to India" has to be realised, industry should be bold and start visioning all projects at scale. "I see a collaborative role between the industry and government here...The government should enable this partnership," he said.

## PANELS FORMED TO MONITOR COVID-19 SHOTS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 12

Frontline workers like police, defence, municipal and healthcare workers are on the priority list for Covid-19 vaccine, which the state, district, mandal and task force set-up by the state government will take up.

According to the Union Health ministry, the special panels will enroll, prepare, implement and oversee the vaccination process. Healthcare workers are a priority as they deal directly with Covid patients and are at a higher risk. According to sources, those working in Covid wards will be the first to get the vaccine both in government and private sectors. There is no force on any doctors but they are being encouraged to take it, said sources. This is more so because many doctors exposed to patients were infected. Sources said that some senior doctors are on ECMO treatment since they got infected while performing surgeries.

■ Page 2: Normalcy on street far from reality

## GADKARI CALLS FOR SWADESHI ALTERNATIVES

**New Delhi, Dec. 12:** Asserting that India was importing "a lot of things" from China, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Saturday urged the domestic industry to come up with Swadeshi alternatives to the imports from various nations without compromising with their quality and cost. Addressing the annual meeting of Ficci virtually, the MSME and road transport minister highlighted the need to reduce imports and increase exports. He said this can help enhance economic growth and boost the contribution of domestic manufacturing to the GDP to up to 30 per cent.

Citing the example of magnets used in electric vehicles, he asked industry experts to study which parts are being imported by India. "Now the magnet, there are a lot of things we are importing from China. I am not a businessman or a business expert but I am seeing a huge potential for electric cars, e-bikes, electric autorickshaws and even electric trucks," said the minister. He called upon business experts to deliberate with the domestic automotive industry, especially those engaged in manufacturing of electric vehicles, to find out what products are being imported, like magnets and lithium ion batteries. "We should find out Swadeshi alternatives in the country without compromising with the quality and cost," he added.

— PTI

## CM asks PM for relief, dues

KCR, Modi also discuss politics, Dubbak, GHMC polls

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 12

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Saturday called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the latter's residence in New Delhi, with the two spending around 30 minutes together.

Highly placed sources in the TRS government said that during his meeting, Rao requested Modi for release of assistance from the Centre to state as flood relief.

The Chief Minister submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister on the huge loss incurred by Telangana state, in particular Hyderabad, due to recent heavy rains and floods.

Further, the TRS chief also requested the Prime Minister to implement promises made by the Centre in Parliament to the during passage of the AP Reorganisation Act.

Rao also sought from the PM GST arrears that the Centre is due to the state, sources added.

Rao meeting Modi after one long year is quite sig-



Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao greets Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Saturday.

nificant in the backdrop of the TRS chief announcing that he will play an active role in national politics.

Rao has gone on to assert that he wants to develop an alternative political force against the ruling BJP at the Centre.

The Chief Minister is in the national capital on a three-day official visit. He has already met home

minister Amit Shah, Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, apart from aviation, housing and urban affairs minister Hardeep Singh Puri.

He is expected to meet other Central ministers, including finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, on Sunday.

Sources in the TRS revealed that Rao and

Modi also discussed national politics and elections to the GHMC and Dubbak by-election, wherein BJP has made impressive gains in the former and won the latter.

Incidentally, after the meeting, the PMO went on to tweet, "Telangana CM K. Chandrasekhar Rao has called on PM @narendramodi today".

## INDIA TO EXCEED PARIS CLIMATE TARGETS: MODI

**New Delhi, Dec. 12:** India is not only on track to achieve its Paris Agreement targets, but to exceed them beyond expectations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said during the Climate Ambition Summit 2020 on Saturday, highlighting that the country has reduced its emission intensity by 21 per cent over 2005 levels.

In his message delivered virtually at the summit, Modi said India's solar capacity has grown from 2.63 gigawatts in 2014 to 36 gigawatts in 2020. The Climate Ambition Summit, held virtually, marked the five years of the adoption of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which was signed in December 2015.

The summit was co-hosted by the UN, the UK and France in partnership with Chile and Italy, and brought together global climate leaders — across governments, business and civil society — to ramp up climate ambition and deliver on Paris Agreement. — PTI

## Reforms are for farmers, says PM

### REPEAL AGRI LAWS, WILL TALK: FARMERS

**New Delhi, Dec. 12:** Sticking to their demands, farmer leaders on Saturday said they are ready to hold talks with the government, but will first discuss repealing the three new farm laws, and announced further intensification of their ongoing protest against the legislations.

Addressing a press conference here, farmer leader Kanwalpreet Singh Pannu said that thousands of farmers will start their 'Delhi Chalo' march from Rajasthan's Shahjahanpur through the Jaipur-Delhi Highway at 11 am on Sunday.

■ Report on Page 4

give farmers an additional option outside of the designated mandis to buy or sell their crops, he said. "The idea is to help increase farmer incomes," he reiterated.

— PTI

## Eluru mystery illness comes under control

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, DEC. 12

The mysterious illness, which plagued the people of Eluru for nearly a week, was on Saturday brought under control, with the only two afflicted persons undergoing treatment from the overall 614 cases. The condition of the two persons is out of danger and they could be discharged on Sunday.

Eluru Government Hospital Superintendent Dr A.V.R. Mohan said that the cases may not be reported further and has not contracted others and the symptoms would be diluted. He said that the Central expert teams will submit their medical reports on December 16.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Alla Kalikrishna Srinivas (Nani) visited the houses of patients who were discharged and enquired about their health.

They said that the medical and health teams in the hospital provided quality treatment. Nani

said that they need not be afraid as all steps would be taken by the government to end it completely. He also said that Eluru Municipal Corporation is supplying quality drinking water and no fault was found in the water in sample tests.

Meanwhile, East Godavari District Collector D. Muralidhar Reddy instructed officials from Panchayat, Rural Water Supply, Irrigation and other departments to conduct sample tests from all water sources immediately. RWS superintendent engineer T. Gayatri Devi said that generally the water samples are collected from tanks once in a fortnight. But, now water samples are being collected from 62 CWS schemes and more than 2,300 Panchayat water tanks, including borewells (Panchayat department) in the district. She said that if traces of any contamination are found anywhere, corrective measures will be taken immediately.

## KCR seeks nod for 5 new airports in Telangana

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 12

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Saturday urged Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri to expedite the process of establishing five more airports in Telangana State.

Rao met the Minister in New Delhi and handed over a letter seeking to expedite the process for the establishing the airports. In his letter, he stated "I had requested the Prime Minister immediately after the formation of Telangana in 2014 to establish five more airports in the state, as it has only one in Hyderabad".

Rao brought to the notice of the Union Minister that

the Telangana government has initiated action for creating additional domestic airports and based on discussions with the Chairman, Airport Authority of India (AAI), a formal proposal was sent in 2018 for the AAI to give feasibility reports.

It was indicated that only no-frills airports for small aircrafts will be developed initially, and they could subsequently be expanded for commercial operations based on demand.

The identified areas were Basantnagar in Peddapalli district, Mamnoon in Warangal Urban district, Adilabad district, Jakranpally in Nizamabad district, Devarkadra in

Mahabubnagar district and Bhadradi Kothagudem district.

He informed Puri that though AAI has already taken up Obstacle Limitation Surface Survey (OLS), soil testing and other investigations at the sites and some draft reports have recently come, the final reports are yet to be given.

He sought the Union Minister to ensure hand-holding with the state government in finalising the sites and getting all statutory clearances on a single-window basis so that the state government can commence infrastructure work for starting Non-Scheduled Operator's Permit (NSOP) operations with its own funds.

## SRI LANKA TO RESUME GLOBAL FLIGHT OPERATIONS

**Colombo, Dec. 12:** Sri Lanka will resume international flights operations from December 26, eight months after they were closed in view of the COVID-19 outbreak, officials said on Saturday.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka (CAASL) said it would be soon issuing directives to the travel industry on the opening of Sri Lanka's airspace for commercial and charter

flights operations. Sri Lanka's two international airports were closed in mid-March, as the country went into a lockdown. The lockdown was gradually lifted by mid-May.

— PTI

## High Court points to flaw in RBI circular

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 12

Telangana High Court pointed to a basic element related to Principal of Natural Justice missing in a Reserve Bank of India's Master Circular on declaration of fraud and fraudulent accounts.

The flaw relates to no

person being judged without a fair hearing, with each party given an opportunity for responding to the evidence against them.

A division bench was dealing with a petition by former chairman and managing director of M/s. B. S. Limited

■ Report on Page 2

## Russia N-sub test fires 4 missiles

**Moscow, Dec. 12:** A Russian nuclear submarine on Saturday successfully test-fired four intercontinental ballistic missiles in a show of readiness of Moscow's nuclear forces amid tension with the U.S.

The Defence Ministry said that the Vladimir Monomakh submarine of the Pacific Fleet launched four Bulava missiles in quick succession from an underwater position in the Sea of Okhotsk. Their

dummy warheads hit their designated targets on the Chiza shooting range in the Arkhangelsk region in northwestern Russia, the ministry said in a statement. The Vladimir Monomakh is one of the new Borei-class nuclear submarines that carry 16 Bulava missiles each and are intended to serve as the core of the naval component of the nation's nuclear forces for decades to come. Another submarine of the same

type performed a similar launch of four Bulava missiles in 2018 — a costly demonstration of the efficiency of the country's nuclear deterrent mimicking the conditions of a major nuclear conflict. Saturday's launch followed sweeping drills of Russia's strategic nuclear forces on Wednesday. As part of those maneuvers, a Russian nuclear submarine performed a practice launch of an ICBM from the Barents Sea. — AP

## HAPPY ENDING

### Police detained man on suspicion of ATM robbery

## Mentally-ill man found by cops with help of tattoo on his hand

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC  
KARIMNAGAR, DEC. 12

A tattoo on the hand of a person suffering from a mental illness helped police officials of Gannervaram mandal to reunite him with his family two years after he went missing here in Karimnagar district.

According to sub-inspector Avula Thirupati, on Wednesday some unidentified persons tried to break into an ATM centre in Gundlapalli village of Gannervaram mandal which was recorded in the CCTV cameras that were installed in the centre.

On receiving the complaint from the respective bank officials, special teams were deployed on the lookout for persons suspected to be involved in the ATM breaking case. When the police were



The tattoo of a phone number found on the hand of mentally-ill Yasin Ali



The Gannervaram police reunite the mentally-ill Yasin Ali with his family here in Karimnagar on Saturday.

searching for the suspected persons, they saw one person with the same features recorded in the CCTV footage at the Court chowrasta in Karimnagar city and detained him on Friday. During their investigation, the police noticed a tattoo of a cellphone number on the hand of a suspected person. When they contacted that number, the person identified

himself as Mohsin Ali, resident of West Bengal state and informed the police that the suspected person they caught was his brother, Yasin Ali who was mental-ill and went missing from Hyderabad two years back.

Mohsin Ali, the brother of Yasin Ali along with his relatives rushed to Karimnagar and thanked the police for finding Yasin

Ali after two years of his missing after receiving him at an event organised by the police.

Meanwhile, police commissioner V.B. Kamalasan Reddy appreciated the Gannervaram SI, Thirupati, special branch ASI, Anand and Sampath Kumar for reuniting the mentally ill person with his family and announced rewards to them.



## SHORT TAKES

NIRANJAN  
SLAMS BJP FOR  
CRITICISING KCRDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 12

Agriculture minister S. Niranjan Reddy has slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party for criticising Telangana Rashtra Samiti chief and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao over the latter's support to farmers' agitation against the centre's farm laws.

Asserting that the TRS strongly supports farmers and opposes laws enacted by the centre, he underlined that these laws are detrimental to the interests of farmers.

Niranjan Reddy asked BJP leaders whether they would brand whoever opposes or fights against farm laws as anti-social elements.

Pointing out that lakhs of Indian citizens are opposing the central farm laws approved by President Ram Nath Kovind, the state minister asserted that KCR government is the only one in the country, which is implementing the minimum support price for farmers in its true sense.

GOVT AYURVEDIC  
COLLEGES FACE  
VACANCY CRISISATHER MOIN | DC  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 12

There is a major crisis at the two government Ayurvedic colleges in the state with posts of 40 per cent teaching staff remaining vacant. More so, the Telangana government has not yet recruited professors for these colleges since the last 10 years, despite giving an undertaking to central Ayush Ministry that lecturers for these colleges will be recruited.

Dr. Mallu Prasad, former member of Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM), has written to Ayush Department secretary about such lack of teaching staff. "Quality of education is suffering, as there are no permanent professors. During CCIM inspections every three years, government of Telangana has kept giving an undertaking that professors will be appointed. But they have not been recruited at all. They are opting only for lecturers on contract basis," Dr. Prasad pointed out.

In many cases, it is the Ph. D students who are teaching their juniors. Ayurveda doctors say such a practice is harmful for medical education in Ayurvedic medium, which the central government is keen on promoting.

Lack of experience and expertise among lecturers affects skill-building among students.

The state-level Ayush Department maintains recruitment is a long process. A senior government official of AYUSH, on condition of anonymity, stated, "Recruitment processes have got stopped due to queries and court cases."

TOURISM SERVICES  
INTEGRATED WITH  
TS-IPASSDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 12

Tourism minister V. Srinivas Goud inaugurated the services of Department of Tourism through the TS-iPASS web portal at the Tourism Plaza Hotel in Hyderabad. This marks the integration of services being offered by Telangana Tourism with TS-iPASS.

The minister said integration with TS-iPASS website will greatly facilitate the process of single window permits being initiated by the Department of Tourism. Goud also pointed out that this website will be very useful for getting quick approvals for hotels, travel agencies, permits for events and renewals by tourism organisations.

Srinivas Goud asserted that permits have become much easier through TS-iPASS. Most of the companies that have been licensed in the last six years will be deemed to have been approved, he assured, underlining that the state has a lot of potential for tourism development.

Integration of services being offered by Telangana Tourism with TS-iPASS is part of ease of doing business in tourism within the state. The minister pointed out that for many countries, such as Malaysia and Singapore, tourism is the main source of revenue.



Lt. Gen. T.S.A. Narayanan, Commandant, MCEME, presents the Sword of Honour to Cadet Captain R. Rishab Shankar for standing first in the Overall Order of Merit in TES-36 Course during the Passing out parade held at CTW, MCEME in Secunderabad on Saturday.

30 GCs of CTW, MCEME  
get commissioned

Cadets were commissioned into the rank of lieutenant



Lt. Gen. T.S.A. Narayanan presents the GOC-in-C, ARTRAC Banner to Shivaji Platoon for winning the Inter Platoon Championship during the Passing Out Parade held at CTW, MCEME, in Secunderabad on Saturday.

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 12

It was a memorable day at MCEME on Saturday when 30 gentlemen cadets of Technical Entry Scheme (TES-36) course graduated out of the Army Training Command at a Passing out Parade organised at Carriappa Drill Square of the Cadets Training Wing (CTW).

The cadets were commissioned into the rank of lieutenant by senior military officers at the event. The parade was reviewed by Lt. Gen. TSA Narayanan, Commandant, MCEME. He instructed new officers about the importance of professionalism, commitment and sacrifice as part of their journey within the Indian Army.

Lt. Gen. Narayanan appraised them about challenges to national security and the call of duty that awaits them in their new role as officers of the mighty and techno-

logically advanced Indian Army. At the ceremony, platoon cadet captain R. Rishab Shankar was awarded the prestigious Sword of Honour for standing first in Overall Order of Merit, while Shivaji was awarded the coveted, GOC-in-C, ARTRAC Banner, for winning the Inter Platoon Championship.

In keeping with Covid-19 safety protocol, parents and dear ones of general cadets were unable to attend the Passing out Parade.

CHRISTMAS  
FESTIVITES TO  
BE LOW-KEYSANJAY SAMUEL  
PAUL | DC  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 12

It will be a low-key Christmas festivities this year with events like carols and nativity being cancelled in many places and pre-Christmas dinners suspended. Some churches have divided pre-Christmas congregations. Also cancelled by many churches is Carol rounding.

Solomon Prem Kumar, Property secretary, Wesley Church Ramkote, said "This Saturday we had Youth Christmas Service and ensured the attendance was less. Carol rounding will not be happening this year, although we will have carols in church premises."

United Peoples Fellowship Church, with more than 2,000 members, opened church last week, but urged the members to attend virtual services. Its Founder Sis Joy Cherian said, "We have to respect the law of land and we have told all the members to will look forward to delivering the message of God's love through safer mediums of communications."

CSI Medak Cathedral had their pre-Christmas Program last Sunday but this year the nativity play was missing, because of the pandemic as the play requires close proximities, said Rev Andrew Prem Sukumar.

Wesley Church Secunderabad is maintaining physical distances, since the commencement of pre-Christmas services on December 9. There has been area-wise congregation each day," explained Vinod Thallapalli, a member of the church.

Normalcy on street far  
from ground reality

From Page 1

This exposes the fact that the normalcy that is seen on the street is far from what the ground situation is with regard to the prevalence of the pandemic.

A senior doctor from IMA, on condition of anonymity, said, "It is a Catch-22 situation for healthcare workers. There is a risk of infection from patients despite following protocol. There is also a risk of the vaccine's side-effects. The risk factor is high, either way. If treatment must continue then the decision to vaccine those treating Covid patients has to be taken as a priority."

Healthcare workers state they will be the 'unofficial' mass volunteers for vaccine trials and in the present situation their choice

is limited. The only consolation is that there is no force to take the vaccine and it is only an advisory from the government.

Senior anesthetist Dr Kiran M says, "Due to the high-risk nature of the virus and herd immunity taking time, a vaccine is

the only way forward. Yet phase 3 trial results are most important and that will determine the future course of action."

Government doctors stated that they have been asked to give their health details in terms of lifestyle diseases. Government committees are entering relevant data in the app and the details would be sent to them directly. There are no protocol guidelines on those who abstain themselves from vaccination.

Every public health centre will carry out 100 vaccinations in a day. There will also be an adverse-effect surveillance team. The first 30 minutes after vaccination is when the immediate effects are likely to be noted. Any minor or major side-effects have to be notified to the centre from where the vaccine is taken.

## FIGHTING | DEMONS

Anita Peter determined to help people come out of depression

## Dancer pens book on mental health

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 12

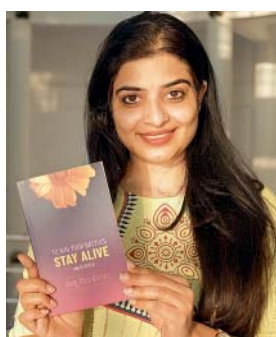
Anita Peter, eminent Mohiniyattam dancer and founder of Lasya Dutha, Centre for Performing and Fine Arts, Hyderabad, a gurukul for Mohiniyattam, Carnatic vocals, veena, violin and other instruments, launched her book recently.

The book, *To Win Your Battles Stay Alive* deals with the importance of understanding mental health. Anita Peter shares her own experiences, having undergone phases of clinical depression, which she overcame by self-learning and taking sup-

port that was required. Sharing the motivation for writing the book, she said, "People often wonder if successful people have also failed in life? I answer that failure is fine but 'deciding' to stay there is not."

Anita's work with students made her realise the value of speaking out about mental health and sharing her own journey in combating depression. "It is like being an exemplar and being able to provide a ray of hope for others."

Her book deals with the reasons why mental health is not given due importance and its



Anita Peter with her book *To Win Your Battles Stay Alive*.

impact. It also provides inputs on handling such issues. "Stay Alive will be a

Court points to flaw in  
RBI's Master CircularDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 12

Telangana High Court pointed to a basic element related to Principal of Natural Justice missing in a Reserve Bank of India's Master Circular on declaration of fraud and fraudulent accounts.

The flaw relates to no person being judged without a fair hearing, with each party given an opportunity for responding to the evidence against them.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice B. Vijayans Reddy made it clear that the principle of audi alteram partem (let the other side be heard as well) is to be read in Clause 8.9.4 and 8.9.5 of the Master Circular of

● **MUKUL ROHATGI**, senior Supreme Court counsel, representing the petitioner, submitted to the Telangana High Court that clauses in the Master Circular of RBI were conspicuously missing the vital requirement of Principle of Natural Justice.

RBI, before any company or person is declared as "fraud".

The bench was dealing with a petition by former chairman and managing director of M/s. B. S. Limited, challenging the decision of Joint Lenders Forum (JLF) and resolution of Fraud Identification Committee (FIC), whereby both these bodies classified the

account of this company as "fraud" and "willful defaulter".

B.S. Limited had taken loans to the extent of ₹1,406 crore between 2006 and 2014 from JLF of lead bank – State Bank of India. However, repayments were not made. So that company was declared as "fraudulent" under the Master Directions on Fraud (Master Circular) issued under Section 35-A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Mukul Rohatgi, senior Supreme Court counsel, representing the petitioner, submitted to the Telangana High Court that clauses in the Master Circular of RBI were conspicuously missing the vital requirement of Principle of Natural Justice.



Union minister of state for home affairs G. Kishan Reddy launches four new medical services and facilities at ESIC Medical College in Hyderabad on Saturday. — R. PAVAN

Kishan praises ESIC  
team for Covid servicesDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 12

Union minister of state for home affairs, G. Kishan Reddy on Saturday launched four new medical services and facilities, including Portable RT-PCR health monitoring system, Covid-safe incubator for newborn babies and round-the-clock in-House dialysis services, in ESIC Medical College.

Congratulating the ESIC team, the minister com-

mended their services during the Covid crisis. He said that he had visited the ESI hospital several times and had inaugurated special wards in the college even during the pandemic. He informed that schemes like Janaushadhi Kendra, which provide medicines at 50% to 90% less cost than the market price, National Digital Health Mission and Mission Indra Danush were a boon to the people.

Reddy added that the

reduction of referrals to outpatient hospitals due to the treatment of IP (Insured) as a VIP and state-of-the-art facilities developed by the ESI, and to have tested about 80,000 samples so far through the first mobile virology lab set up at ESIC was a great achievement for the hospital.

The minister said it was a great opportunity for students of the college to have the opportunity to test and acquire wide-range of knowledge.

TS records 635 new  
virus cases, 4 deathsDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 12

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits saw an increase in the number of Covid-19 cases again with 141 cases recorded on December 11. This is the highest number in December.

While the total cases in the state are 635, maximum numbers are in the GHMC limits.

With social, political and economic activity rising and GHMC limits being the main hub of activity there is a lot of crowding in places. The

Covid-19 protocols of safety in terms of wearing masks are being compromised despite continuous advisory by the health department.

This lapse in the protocol has been predicted as one of the reasons for the rise in cases. Intensifying cold is another reason for the increasing numbers.

The state recorded four deaths in the state taking the total number to 1,489. The total number of cases in the state stand at 2,77,151. The state carried out 52,308 tests carried out so far.

TAGORE TO GIVE  
SONIA LIST OF  
TPCC CHIEF  
CONTENDERSDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 12

AICC Telangana state in-charge Manickam Tagore on Saturday completed consultations with senior leaders of the Congress for the selection of the new Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) chief. Tagore later left for New Delhi to submit a detailed report to Congress president Sonia Gandhi to finalise a senior party leader's name for post.

The AICC in-charge had consulted MLAs, former ministers and MLAs, former parliamentarians, ex-PCC presidents, District Congress Committee (DCC) presidents and party office-bearers in the state, and elicited opinions from them. Tagore met around 160 leaders since Wednesday after taking part in a core committee meeting with senior party leaders at Gandhi Bhavan here.

Sources said the race for the TPCC president was between party working president A. Revanth Reddy, former Minister and MP, Komatreddy Venkata Reddy from Nalgonda, CLP leaders Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Manthani D. Sreedhar Babu.

Sonia Gandhi will take a final call on the appointment soon after Tagore submits his report to the AICC.



## OTHER STORIES

### 3 KG BANNED MEPHEDRONE SEIZED FROM LAB

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 12

Acting on a tip-off that Mephedrone, a banned psychotropic substance under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act), was being handed over, officers of DRI intercepted the manufacturer and receiver and seized 3.156 kg of Mephedrone, valued at ₹63.12 lakh. Two persons, including the mastermind were arrested on Friday.

Searches at the manufacturer's house resulted in seizure of cash of ₹12.40 lakh and 112 grams of Mephedrone samples. Apart from the drugs, raw materials weighing around 219.5 kg, which are sufficient to manufacture 15-20 kg of Mephedrone, were seized from the lab on the outskirts of the city.

The manufacturer, a PhD in Chemistry worked in the Pharma sector. Investigation revealed that a Mumbai-based network was behind the racket. According to preliminary estimates, the person had manufactured and sold more than 100 kgs of Mephedrone in the last one year.

**SEARCHES AT the manufacturer's house resulted in seizure of cash of ₹12.40 lakh and 112 grams of Mephedrone samples.**

# Villagers oppose drainage pipeline, MLA throws 'fit'

Jangaon MLA lay on the ground marking his protest

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC  
WARANGAL, DEC. 11

Jangaon MLA Muthireddy Yadagiri Reddy on Saturday lay on the ground in protest, after villagers of Yashwanthapur brought a court order, to stay the pipeline laying works to divert sewage water from Jangaon town to Yashwanthapur Lake.

Former sarpanch of the village, Susheela, who is also a TRS-leader, went to court and pointed out that the sewage water will pollute the lake and poses a health hazard to the residents of the village.

The decision to divert the sewage water, towards the Yashwanthapur lake, was taken as a new canal will be constructed in place of the existing one. Earlier, the sewage water was carried by the existing canal, into the Nellutla Lake.

Mr Yadagiri Reddy, who visited Yashwanthapur on Saturday to take part in the inaugurating



Jangaon MLA Muthireddy Yadagiri Reddy, lays on the ground in front of the villagers of Yashwanthapur on Saturday.

**FORMER SARPANCH** of the village, Susheela, who is also a TRS-leader, went to court and pointed out that the sewage water will pollute the lake and poses a health hazard to the residents of the village.

development works discussed the issue with the villagers, who strongly opposed the canal from passing close to the village.

The villagers were unrelenting, no matter how much the MLA tried to convince them that he would set up filters to purify the water. The villagers said that the promise would not materialise, and they would be the

ultimate sufferers. "The drinking water system for the village relies on this lake.

The pipeline with drain water would affect the villagers badly in more than one ways. We are not opposed to development works, but the safety of the villagers must also be considered," Susheela said.

After arguing with the villagers, the MLA said

that he protests their behaviour and lay down on the ground. The former sarpanch Susheela and others asked the MLA to get up but to no avail. As a result, Susheela too squatted on the floor in protest of the MLA's behaviour.

The villagers convinced both of them to stop protesting and continue the inauguration of the development works.

Susheela said a meeting would be held again with the villagers regarding the issue and demanded that until then, works of the drain canal, should not be carried out.

# TS begins data drive for Covid vaccine in villages

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC  
ADILABAD, DEC. 12

The Medical and Health and the Panchayat Raj departments are readying to collect 'data', from the villages, so that Covid-19 vaccination can begin on a priority basis.

Enrolment of eligible recipients will be done meticulously soon.

Awareness is being raised, about the vaccine.

Coordination committees will be formed at the mandal and district level

to supervise the vaccination of the people.

The state government issued GO: 57 and 58 on December 11 stating that preparations have begun for the possible introduction of the Covid-19 vaccine.

Initially, the supply of the vaccine will be limited, and the priority is healthcare workers, then frontline workers of local bodies, police personnel etc. Similarly, priority will be accorded, to people with the co-morbidities.

Over a year, the vaccine will be introduced to multiple groups, starting with the healthcare workers. The government will ensure minimal disruption of routine healthcare services, including routine immunisation.

The committees have been entrusted, with the responsibility of deciding based on priority who will receive the vaccination.

Top officials of the district and state-level committees will monitor the situation.



Former Peddapalli MP and BJP core committee member G. Vivek Venkata Swamy interacts with paddy farmers at a cotton purchasing center at Kistampet village in Chennur manhal in Mancherial district on Saturday. He said that Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu has failed to come to the rescue of the farmers who suffered losses from cultivating fine variety of rice. He also added that the state government is not ensuring MSP for the fine variety of rice and is not talking about crop loan waiver. Farmers complained to Mr Vivek about the state government's apathy towards them. Vivek assured them that the BJP will for the welfare of the farmers and resolve their problems. BJP leader and Mancherial district president Raghunand, Chennur incharge Andugula Srinivas and senior BJP leader Venkatesh Goud were present.

## TJS TO FIGHT OPEN CAST MINING IN BHUPALPALLY, SAYS KODANDARAM

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, DEC. 12

The Telangana Jana Samithi (TJS) chief and party candidate for the Warangal-Nalgonda-Khammam graduates constituency Member of Legislative Council (MLC) polls, M. Kodandaram Reddy on Saturday strongly opposed the setting up of more open cast mines in Bhupalpally.

While campaigning in the district, he addressed the media at Telangana Singareni Employees Union Bhavan in Bhupalpally on Saturday.

He claimed that in the last six years, several agitations were launched, against the open cast mines.

Supporting the people who are already opposing the open cast mines in Bhupalpally, he reminded how they are facing difficulties due to the open casts.

"We will report the damage caused by the open cast mines to the government. If necessary, we will not hesitate to approach the National Green Tribunal.

The election is crucial to stop the privatisation of Singareni, to protect Singareni and to increase employment creation in Singareni.

The role of Singareni workers is going to be crucial in the Graduates constituency MLC elections," he said.

Reddy said TJS should be given a chance in the upcoming graduate constituency MLC elections for a strong agenda on the Singareni issue.

## LEFT PARTIES HOLD RASTA ROKO IN SUPPORT OF FARMERS PROTEST

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, DEC. 12

The left party leaders held a rasta roko in support of the farmer's protest in New Delhi, opposing the new agricultural laws at Gundlupalli-Renikunta toll gate in Karimnagar district on Saturday.

Traffic came to a halt on either side of the Gundlupalli-Renikunta toll gate due to the rasta roko staged by the left party leaders. The police intervened and cleared the road by arresting them.

Left party leaders alleged that the BJP-led government is trying to hand over the nation's wealth to corporate biggies by dissolving government institutions.

When the farmers of northern states like Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat are agitating demanding the suspension of the new farm laws, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is ignoring them.

Many farmers have already died by suicide, unable to bear the problems they faced. The government must suspend the newly introduced farm laws. The CPI leaders P. Kedari, K. Srujan Kumar, B. Ashok, K. Surendar Reddy, K. Anji Reddy, N. Laxma Reddy, G. Vasudev, B. Tirupati, Raji Reddy, B. Mahendar, K. Manikanta Reddy, Ugendra, CPM party leaders V. Venkat Reddy, G. Sathyam, Ramesh, Srinivas, Ajay, Rajaiah, Srishailam, Kanakiah and others were present.

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# Blast in chemical factory near Hyd, 8 seriously hurt

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 12

Eight workers were grievously injured in a blast caused by fire at a chemical factory at IDA Bolaram in Sangareddy district on Saturday. The incident took place at 1.20 pm, at Vindhya Organic Industry.

Sangareddy district fire officer V. Srinivas said the reactor exploded due to which a fire broke out. The

fire station got the alert at 1.30 pm and they reached the spot in 15 minutes. "The flames spread along with the temperature because of some highly inflammable chemicals in the reactor. Six fire tenders were used to control the fire, that lasted for nearly nine hours."

Patancheru fire officer N. Janaya said, "People panicked and ran out of the factory after the blast. A few workers were stuck inside while eight people were

grievously injured. Because of the chemical fire, it took more time to douse it. We also suspect more blasts took place while we were trying to stop the fire."

Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundarajan, who is in Chennai, expressed shock over the fire. She conveyed her sympathies to all the affected persons and said that the government would provide all medical help to the injured and needy persons.

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SHORT TAKES

ACTRESS ARYA BANERJEE FOUND DEAD AT HER HOME

Kolkata, Dec. 12: Actress Arya Banerjee who starred in several Bollywood films, including *‘The Dirty Picture’*, was found dead at her south Kolkata residence, police said.

The police broke open the door of her third-floor apartment on Friday and found that the body of the 33-year-old woman was lying in the bedroom.

The daughter of late sitarist Nikhil Bandyopadhyay, Arya had also starred in *‘LSD: Love Sex Aur Dhoka’* (2010) among other films. She had also done some modelling assignments in Mumbai. Her domestic help got suspicious as she did not respond to doorbells and phone calls in the morning and informed the neighbours who called the police.

Arya lived alone and kept to herself mostly, the domestic help said. Police said that the body was sent for post-mortem examination and a forensic team collected samples from her room.

K'TAKA: WORKERS GO ON RAMPAGE AT iPHONE PLANT

Bengaluru, Dec. 12: Violence broke out on Saturday at the Taiwan-headquartered Wistron Corporation's plant near here where iPhones and other IT products are manufactured as large number of workers went on a rampage over issues related to payment of salary, police said.

The Karnataka government condemned the violence at the manufacturing facility in Narasapura Industrial Area in Kolar district, about 50 kilometers from here.

Police said 132 people have been detained in connection with the violence that erupted around 6 AM during the morning shift.

“The information we received is that the employees had problems related to their salary payment,” Inspector General of Police Seemant Kumar Singh told reporters after visiting the Wistron facility, adding investigations were on.

The workers in the morning shift hurled stones, smashed glass windows, damaged vehicles, furniture, computers and laptops, another police officer said.

Video footages showed a violent group overturning vehicles, setting them on fire, breaking glass windows in the office leaving a trail of destruction. Condemning the violence, Deputy Chief Minister C. N. Ashwath Narayan said stringent action would be taken against the perpetrators.

INDO-SINO TALKS ENTER 8TH MONTH WITH NO DEAL

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, DEC. 12

The military stand-off between India and China in Eastern Ladakh has entered in its eighth month with no agreement on disengagement in sight.

The winter season and snow in upper reaches has for time being reduced the possibility of an armed confrontation between the two sides in the region. However, soldiers deployed in front bases in Ladakh are now fighting the elements with temperatures dipping way below sub-zero temperatures.

The altitudes in Ladakh range from high to super high altitude and the area experiences heavy snow fall, after the month of November. This coupled with the wind chill factor, temperatures dips down to minus 3?-40 degrees.

The eighth round of Corps Commanders meeting held on November 6 had given rise to hope that the two sides could reach an agreement on a disengagement plan.

It had seemed that China has agreed to move back from the Finger 4 and take its troops beyond Finger 8 in the Northern bank of Pangong Tso. Even army chief General M.M. Naravane had said that he was hopeful that the Indian and Chinese militaries will be able to reach an agreement on disengagement and de-escalation of tension in eastern Ladakh.

However, since then things have got struck with no forward progress. There has also been no further meeting of the Corps Commanders since then. India's position has been that it was China which had first moved its troops at the LAC and China will have to be first to withdraw from these positions.

All for Rajinikanth



Stage artistes from across Tamil Nadu dress up as Rajinikanth characters from several of his films on the occasion of the superstar's 70th birthday on Saturday.

Farmers: Repeal agri laws first, then talk

Sticking to demands, farmers to intensify their agitation

New Delhi, Dec. 12: Sticking to their demands, farmer leaders Saturday said they are ready to hold talks with the government, but will first discuss repealing the three new farm laws, and announced further intensification of their ongoing protest against the legislations.

Addressing a press conference at Singhu Border here, farmer leader Kanwalpreet Singh Pannu said that thousands of farmers will start their ‘Delhi Chalo’ march from Rajasthan’s Shahjahanpur through the Jaipur-Delhi Highway at 11 am on Sunday.

He said that farmers from other parts of the country are also on their way to join the protesters here and they will take the agitation to the next level in the coming days. “If the government wants to hold talks, we are ready, but our main demand will remain the scrapping of the three laws. We will move onto our other demands only after that,” the farmer leader said.

Farmer union leaders will also sit on a hunger strike between 8 am and 5 pm On December 14

How many more farmers will have to die, asks Congress

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY | DC NEW DELHI, DEC. 12

Claiming that 11 farmers have lost their lives while protesting against the new farm laws over the last 17 days, the Congress on Saturday questioned how many agriculturalists would have to lose their lives to get the legislations repealed.

“How many more sacrifices will the farmers have to make to get the agri laws repealed?” former Congress president Rahul Gandhi tweeted. He tagged a media report which claimed that 11 protesting farmers had lost their lives in the last 17 days due to various reasons such as ill

health or a mishap. Congress’ chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala claimed that despite the death of 11 farmer brothers in the last 17 days, the Modi government was not relenting.

“They (government) are still standing with their ‘money providers’ not with ‘annadaatas’ (food providers),” Mr Surjewala tweeted. “The country wants to know — ‘Is Rajdharm (constitutional responsibility) bigger or Rajhat’ (stubbornness)?” he asked.

Farmers, especially from the three food bowl states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh are protesting the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement

of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020; Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020; and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020.

While the government has projected the three laws as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove middlemen and allow farmers to sell anywhere in the country, the protesting farmers have expressed apprehension that the new laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of Minimum Support Price and do away with the mandis, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

some “antisocial” as well as “Leftist and Maoist” elements were conspiring to spoil the atmosphere of the agitation which has been going on for over two weeks now. — PTI

Puri Jagannath temple likely to reopen on Dec 23

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, DEC. 12

Devotees waiting to have darshan of Lord Jagannath and divine siblings — Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra — will soon have the opportunity as the Jagannath Temple administration on Saturday announced that the temple will reopen ahead of the New Year.

Speaking to media persons in Puri, Sri Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA)

chief administrator Krishan Kumar said that they were planning to reopen the temple for devotees soon with strict adherence to Covid restrictions.

“The recommendation in this regard will be sent to the state government to open the Jagannath Temple on December 23. We will urge them to allow us reopen for residents of Puri till December 31 evening,” Kumar said after chairing a meeting of temple priests.

However, the temple will

remain closed on January 1 and 2 in view of possibility of a huge flow of devotees to the pilgrim town. On January 3 onwards, the temple will be kept open for all devotees.

“We have decided to close the temple on January 1 and 2. An advisory will be issued after getting a nod from the state government,” he said.

Initially, as many as 5,000 devotees will be allowed to enter into the temple in phases after January 3.

TRANSPARENT ELECTIONS

New Delhi, Dec. 12: The Election Commission has sought views of recognised national and state parties on what should be the limit of expenditure for candidates contesting Lok Sabha and assembly polls.

In a letter sent out on December 7, the commission asked parties to send their “views and suggestions” on as to what should be the ceiling limit of election expenditure for candidates for Lok Sabha and assembly elections in the future. The parties

have been asked to send their views to the nodal officer of the committee that was set up in October to revise the expenditure limit.

While there is a limit on candidates to spend on their election campaign, there is no such cap on political parties.

The committee was tasked to examine the issue of revising the expenditure limit for candidates for Lok Sabha and assembly polls in view of the increase in number of electors and rise in the

Cost Inflation Index. Expenditure limit for candidates was last revised in 2014.

For Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, the limit was enhanced in 2018. “In last six years, the limit was not increased despite an increase in electorate from 834 million to 910 million in 2019 to 921 million now. Further, Cost Inflation Index during this period has increased from 220 to 280 in 2019 to 301 now,” the commission had said in October while announcing constitution of the panel.

The committee will assess the change in number of electors across states and union territories, and its bearing on expenditure. It has also been mandated to assess the change in Cost Inflation Index and its bearing on the pattern of expenditure incurred by candidates in recent elections.

The committee is likely to submit its report early next year to the poll panel. Considering the difficulties candidates could face in campaigning amid Covid-19. — PTI

Praful: Pawar couldn’t be PM due to coterie

Mumbai, Dec. 12: Senior NCP leader Praful Patel on Saturday claimed veteran politician and the party chief Sharad Pawar couldn't become prime minister on two occasions in 1990s when he was with Congress due to a “darbar coterie” in that party acting against him.

Speaking on the occasion of Pawar's 80th birthday, Patel said this “unfinished dream can be fulfilled”.

“Pawar strengthened his position as a front-rung leader in the Congress in a very little time. He was surely cut off for a prime ministerial role in 1991 and 1996, but the ‘darbar’ (nepotism) politics of Delhi put a spanner. This was definitely a personal loss to him, but moreover for the party and the country,” Patel wrote in a newspaper article. He stated a “scheming coterie” of the Congress ‘darbar’ in

Delhi used to engineer revolts in state units to weaken strong leaders. When asked about the article, Patel told reporters in Mumbai that “Pawar missed the opportunity to become a Prime Minister on two occasions...” Bante, Bante rah gaye’...Now, if the entire Maharashtra stands by him, our unfinished dream can be fulfilled”.

He was speaking after attending an event organised by the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) to mark Pawar's birthday. “What I said (in the write-up) was we had seen when we (leaders) were with the Congress,” the NCP General Secretary said.

When contacted, a senior Congress leader said Pawar had rejoined the Congress in the year 1986, “and in Delhi his image was that he wasn't a loyal Congressman. In 1978 too, he had revolted against the party”. — PTI

KERALA CM LASHES OUT AT INTEL AGENCIES

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DEC. 12

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday lashed out at the Central intelligence agencies accusing them of targeting political opponents in the state in the name of probe.

At a press conference the Chief Minister said that the Central agencies were working at the behest of the ruling party at the Centre to topple the democratically elected government. Instead of carrying out the responsibility entrusted with them in a fair manner, the Central agencies were acting as if they wanted to ensure electoral benefits for the BJP.

“We are planning to write a detailed letter to PM Narendra Modi explaining the actions of the central agencies in the state as part of the ongoing probe in various cases,” he said. The CM said unfortunately the Congress-led UDF was also walking on the BJP's path.

Centre, Bengal clash over 3 IPS

New Delhi/Kolkata, Dec. 12: The West Bengal government will have the “last word” on releasing three of its IPS officers for central deputation, the state's ruling TMC declared on Saturday, dubbing as “intimidatory” the Union Home Ministry's order for shifting them out following the mob attack on BJP chief J. P. Nadda's convoy.

Days after Nadda's cavalcade came under attack by alleged Trinamool Congress supporters when he was on way to address a public meeting at Diamond Harbour near Kolkata, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) summoned the IPS officers to serve under it for alleged dereliction of duty.

The three officers — Bholanath Pandey (SP, Diamond Harbour), Praveen Tripathi (DIG, Presidency Range) and Rajeev Mishra (ADG, South Bengal) — were responsible for the security of the BJP chief during his December 9-10

● THE MHA'S move came a day after the Mamata Banerjee government defiantly rejected summonses to state chief secretary and police chief to appear before Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla to tender explanation for the attack on Nadda's motorcade that left several BJP leaders and workers injured and their vehicles damaged.

visit to the politically volatile state that will likely have assembly elections in April-May next year.

The MHA's move came a day after the Mamata Banerjee government defiantly rejected summonses to state chief secretary and police chief to appear before Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla to tender explanation for the attack on Nadda's motorcade that left several BJP leaders and workers injured and their vehicles damaged. — PTI

India, Iran, Uzbekistan to hold trilateral meeting on Chabahar

SRIDHAR KUMARSWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, DEC. 12

In a major boost to Indian strategic interests, India on Saturday announced that the “first Trilateral Working Group Meeting between India, Iran and Uzbekistan on joint use of Chabahar Port will be held virtually on December 14”, adding that “besides Uzbekistan, other Central Asian countries have also shown interest in using the port”. The Iranian port of Chabahar provides sea-land connectivity between India and Central Asia through Iran, bypassing Pakistan.

It may be recalled that at the India-Uzbekistan Virtual Summit on Friday, India had cited the successful functioning of the

Chabahar port in Iran — being developed with Indian assistance — that could be a “fulcrum of connectivity to Central Asia” following which New Delhi had “welcomed the Uzbek proposal to hold trilateral dialogue among India, Iran and Uzbekistan to promote connectivity through the Chabahar port”.

In a statement, the MEA said, “The first Trilateral Working Group Meeting between India, Iran and Uzbekistan on joint use of Chabahar Port will be held virtually on December 14, 2020. ...India welcomes the interest of Uzbekistan to use the Chabahar port as a transit port. This would open up economic opportunities for the traders and business community of the region. Besides

Uzbekistan, other Central Asian countries have also shown interest in using the port. India seeks to cooperate closely with regional countries on this issue.”The MEA added, “The Meeting would be jointly chaired at Deputy Minister level by Republic of Uzbekistan and Islamic Republic of Iran and Secretary Level from Republic of India.”

Uzbekistan had also agreed “in-principle” on Friday to India's request to join the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), an important initiative taken by India, Russia and Iran to promote transportation cooperation and to enhance connectivity with central Asian countries, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday.

Expenditure limit for party candidates was last revised in 2014

EC tells parties to fix limit on poll expenditure

ELECTION COMMISSION TOYS WITH IDEA OF DIGITAL VOTER ID CARD

New Delhi, Dec. 12: The Election Commission (EC) is toying with the idea of providing voters with election photo identity card in a digital format for easy accessibility, a senior official said.

He, however, made it clear that no decision has been taken by the EC yet in this regard. “We keep getting suggestions and ideas from officers on field,

through working groups of (state) chief electoral officers and public. This is one such idea we are working on,” the functionary said.

Asked whether the digital voter identity card would mean that a voter can carry it on his or her mobile phone using an application, the official said once the EC takes a decision, such details will be settled. — PTI



## SHORT TAKES

RUSSIA PROBES  
MYSTERY DEATH  
OF 300 SEALS

Moscow, Dec. 12: Russian authorities said on Friday they were investigating the mysterious death of nearly 300 endangered seals that had been discovered washed up on the shores of the Caspian Sea.

Between Sunday and Thursday, 272 dead Caspian seals had been found at a number of locations in the southern region of Dagestan including its regional capital Makhachkala and Derbent, another major city, said the state fisheries agency Rosrybolovstvo.

Some of the seals were pregnant. An agency spokeswoman said that more dead seals could yet be discovered. A team of experts arrived from Moscow to help conduct an investigation.

REVERSE TRUMP'S  
IMMIGRATION  
RULES, BIDEN TOLD

Washington, Dec. 12: Influential American lawmakers, including Indian-American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, have urged President-elect Joe Biden to reverse the immigration policies of Donald Trump, as they introduced a resolution, seeking reform of the immigration system that is just, empathetic and fair.

Jayapal and several of her Congressional colleagues on Friday in a resolution urged Congress to create humane, community-based alternatives to detention, and revamp the current deportation system to include, among other things, guaranteed access to legal representation.

Jayapal along with congressmen Jesús "Chuy" García, Veronica Escobar, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Judy Chu and Yvette Clarke unveiled a Roadmap to Freedom Resolution as a progressive vision to transform the immigration system to one that is focused on dignity and rooted in the needs and lives of impacted people.

The Roadmap to Freedom Resolution will be introduced at the beginning of the 117th Congress.

US EXECUTES  
DRIVER WHO  
KILLED HIS CHILD

Terre Haute (US), Dec. 12: The Trump administration continued its unprecedented series of post-election federal executions by putting to death a Louisiana truck driver who severely abused his 2-year-old daughter for weeks in 2002, then killed her by slamming her head against a truck's windows and dashboard. Alfred Bourgeois, 56, was pronounced dead at 8.21 pm. Eastern time on Friday after receiving a lethal injection at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana.

His lawyers argued Bourgeois had an IQ that puts him in the intellectually disabled category, saying that should have made him ineligible for the death penalty under federal law. Victor J. Abreu, said it was "shameful" to execute his client "without fair consideration of his intellectual disability." In his last words, Bourgeois offered no apology and instead struck a deeply defiant tone, insisting that he neither killed nor sexually abused his baby girl.

LETTER FROM  
'ZODIAC KILLER'  
DECODED

Los Angeles, Dec. 12: A team of cryptography enthusiasts announced on Friday they had successfully cracked one of the coded messages sent over 50 years ago by the "Zodiac Killer," who terrorised northern California in the late 1960s and remains unidentified.

The message was sent in November 1969 to the *San Francisco Chronicle* newspaper by the alleged serial killer, its code consisting of a series of cryptic letters and symbols. Sleuths hoped the coded message contained the identity of the killer, who committed at least five murders in 1968 and 1969 but claimed 37 in total and inspired other serial killers.

According to the trio said to have broken the code, the message includes boasts and defiance of authorities without any real clues on motive or identity.

It includes to message: "I hope you are having lots of fun in trying to catch me... I am not afraid of the gas chamber because it will send me to paradise (sic) all the sooner because I now have enough slaves to work for me."

Trump forces US regulator to  
approve Pfizer vaccine faster

FDA chief told to quit if drug regulator does not clear vaccine by end of day

Washington, Dec. 12: US President Donald Trump on Friday piled pressure on the US drug regulator to quickly approve the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine as America readied to roll out mass immunisations.

The *Washington Post* reported that the White House told the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) chief Stephen Hahn to submit his resignation if the agency does not clear the vaccine by the end of the day.

Hahn later disputed the characterization of the call, but the alleged threat came as Trump tweeted that the agency was a "big, old, slow turtle" and told Hahn to get the "dam" vaccines out immediately.

An expert committee had already voted to grant an emergency use authorisation, which was expected within days, as the FDA worked to iron out last-minute details with Pfizer.

These included a fact sheet for doctors. The FDA has said it wants to warn people with severe allergies to avoid the shots for now. Trump's intervention reinserts politics into the scientific process, which could undermine vaccine confidence in the world's hardest-hit country, where the death toll is nearing 3,00,000.

It was also not clear whether having an EUA a day or two earlier than expected would change when the first Americans — nursing home residents and health care workers — would get their injections, which is expected Monday or Tuesday. The country hopes to have 20 million people inoculated this month.

The government also

Congress averts shutdown,  
buys time for more talks

Washington, Dec. 12: Congress sent a temporary government-wide funding bill to President Donald Trump on Friday that would avert a federal Shutdown at midnight and buy time for on-again, off-again talks on Covid-19 aid.

The bill sets a new deadline of midnight next Friday. The short-term measure passed the Senate by a unanimous voice vote without much drama and sent senators home for the weekend without a clear picture of what awaits next week. The House passed the bill Wednesday.

Trump was expected to sign it before midnight. The talks are stalled but there is universal agree-

said on Friday that it is buying 100 million more doses of the Moderna vaccine candidate, amid reports the government passed on the opportunity to secure more supply of the Pfizer jab.

The purchase brings its total supply of Moderna doses to 200 million, enough to immunize 100 million people with the two-shot regimen, which is yet to be green-lighted by authorities. Two other vaccine candidates stumbled on Friday.

France's Sanofi and Britain's GSK said on Friday their vaccine would not be ready until the end of 2021. — *AFP*

● **THE BILL** sets a new deadline of midnight next Friday. The short-term measure passed the Senate by a unanimous voice vote without much drama and sent senators home for the weekend without a clear picture of what awaits next week. The House passed the bill Wednesday.

ment that Congress won't adjourn for the year without passing a long-delayed round of pandemic relief. An emerging \$900 billion aid package from a bipartisan group of lawmakers hit a rough patch after Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.,

swung against the effort. Still, negotiations are ongoing and pressure remains intense.

The House has recessed for a few days, with leaders warning members to be prepared to return to Washington to vote on the year-end deals. Negotiators on a separate \$1.4 trillion omnibus spending bill appeared to be moving in a positive direction, said the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala. This bill would serve as a vehicle to carry any year-end virus assistance. "I'm hopeful we're going to get there on both the omni and the Covid package," McConnell said. — *AP*

SOUTH KOREA  
SEES STEEP SURGE  
IN COVID CASES

Seoul, Dec. 12: South Korea on Saturday reported its highest daily number of Covid cases so far, with a surge centered in the capital sparking fears the country could lose control of the spread. Officials announced 950 new infections after several days reporting numbers ranging from about 500 to 600.

Some 669 were reported in the greater Seoul area, according to Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, prompting worries about a major outbreak in the densely populated area — home to half the country's 52 million people.

"This is the last hurdle before the roll-out of vaccines and treatments," President Moon Jae-in said, calling the situation "very grave". — *AFP*

Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine,  
Sputnik to be mixed for trial

London, Dec. 12: The Oxford University and AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine, currently awaiting regulatory approvals, is set to be used for a "mix and match" trial with Russia's Sputnik vaccine against the Coronavirus, according to UK media reports.

The two sets of experts are to join forces to explore if a combination of the two jabs, both using a benign virus

called adenovirus, could prove effective in offering people long-term protection against Covid-19.

According to *The Times*, the idea is that by using different vaccines, each shot may prompt a stronger immune response. AstraZeneca, the pharmaceutical major which produces the Oxford University's vaccine, has agreed to collaborate with Sputnik in a

deal apparently sealed after an offer was made on Twitter, the newspaper said.

Early results from the final-stage trial of the Sputnik vaccine showed it was 90 per cent effective and findings that involved more cases with the Oxford vaccine indicated it was 62 per cent effective in one regimen and 90 per cent in another. — *AP*

## French police protest



French police officers gather on the Trocadero square in front of the Eiffel Tower to protest in Paris. About 50 cops gathered with their vehicles and blared their sirens to protest President Emmanuel Macron saying it is "unbearable" that people of color are more likely to be stopped by law enforcement than white people. Two unions threatened to stop carrying out identity checks after Macron's remarks a week ago in an interview with the online outlet Brut, meant to capture the youth audience. "We just want to say to the president and politicians that we are neither racist nor violent," one officer said. — *AP*

SCOTUS dismisses  
Texas election suit

Washington, Dec. 12: The US Supreme Court has rejected a lawsuit filed by Texas, along with 17 other States, and backed by President Donald Trump seeking to overturn the results of the presidential elections in several key battleground States won by Democratic candidate Joe Biden who now is the president-elect.

"Texas has not demonstrated a judicially cognisable interest in the manner in which another State conducts its elections. All other pending motions are dismissed as moot," the Supreme Court said in a brief unsigned order on Thursday, delivering a devastating blow to the efforts of Trump to challenge and overturn the election results decisively won by Biden.

Supreme Court Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas said they believed the court was required to hear the case but expressed no position on Texas' claim. — *AP*

CUOMO AMONG  
CONTENDERS  
FOR ATTORNEY  
GENERAL PICK

Washington, Dec. 12: New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo is one of several contenders under consideration by President-elect Joe Biden for the role of attorney general, a person with knowledge of the search process said on Friday.

The other three contenders at the moment include former Alabama Sen. Doug Jones, federal appeals court judge Merrick Garland and former Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates, said the person, who cautioned that no decision had been reached and no announcement was expected imminently.

The person was not authorised to discuss the search process by name and spoke on condition of anonymity. — *AP*

## Iran executes ex-opppn figure Ruhollah Zam

Tehran, Dec. 12: Iran authorities on Saturday executed Ruhollah Zam, a former opposition figure who had lived in exile in France and was implicated in anti-government protests, days after his sentence was upheld.

State television said the "counter-revolutionary" Zam was hanged in the morning after the supreme court upheld his

sentence due to "the severity of the crimes" committed against the Islamic republic.

Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili had on Tuesday said Zam's sentence was upheld by the supreme court "more than a month ago".

London-based human rights group Amnesty International, in a statement after his verdict was

confirmed, described Zam as a "journalist and dissident". It said the confirmation marked "a shocking escalation in the use of the death penalty as a weapon of repression".

Iran's Revolutionary Guards announced the arrest of Zam in October 2019, claiming he had been "directed by France's intelligence service".

State television said he

was "under the protection of several countries' intelligence services".

The official *IRNA* news agency said he was also convicted of espionage for France and an unnamed country in the region, cooperating with the "hostile government of America", acting against "the country's security", insulting the "sanctity of Islam" and instigating vio-

lence during protests in 2017.

At least 25 people were killed during the unrest in December 2017 and January 2018 that was sparked by economic hardship.

Zam, who was granted political asylum in France and reportedly lived in Paris, ran a channel on the Telegram messaging app called Amadnews. — *AFP*

95-metre *Aurora Australis* was launched in September 1989

## Icebreaker leaves Oz after 150 trips

Hobart, Dec. 12: The giant orange icebreaker *Aurora Australis* left Australia for the final time on Saturday after more than 150 trips to Antarctica. Next stop: a shipyard in Dubai, where it will be refurbished and either leased or sold.

The Australian Antarctic Division announced earlier this year that after 30 years of sailing to the frozen continent for research and to support Australian bases

in Antarctica, the *Aurora Australis* would be replaced by a larger ship.

The 95-metre (312-foot) *Aurora Australis* was built in Newcastle north of Sydney and launched in September 1989. It undertook its maiden voyage to Heard Island, an external Australian territory in Antarctica, in 1990.

It has since ferried researchers, crucial food and fuel supplies and been involved in several rescues. Sean Lawrence, a

seaman for 14 years on the vessel, planned to toast the icebreaker with a beer as he watched it leave the River Derwent. "You form a bond when you're isolated and working in extreme conditions," he said.

"To suddenly have that leaving your life, it leaves a bit of a hole." Lawrence was aboard the *Aurora Australis* when it ran aground near Mawson Station in Antarctica during a blizzard in 2016. — *AP*



Australian icebreaker the *Aurora Australis* docked at Franklin Wharf in Hobart, Australia. The giant orange icebreaker *Aurora Australis* left Australia for the final time on Saturday. — *AP*

Britain promises  
to stop funding  
fossil fuel projects

London, Dec. 12: Britain is to end government funding for fossil fuel projects overseas, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Friday, on the eve of an international climate change summit.

Johnson announced a halt to funding of new crude oil, gas and coal projects before opening the Climate Ambition Summit co-hosted by Britain, the United Nations and France on Saturday.

"I'm pleased to say today that the UK will end taxpayer support for fossil fuel projects overseas as soon as possible," Johnson said in a statement released by his office.

Britain has been criticised for sending billions of pounds abroad to help extract and refine fossil fuels and build power stations.

It has promised to end this soon, while saying there will be "very limited exceptions".

"Calling time on financing overseas fossil fuel projects really is a welcome move," said the policy director at Greenpeace UK, Doug Parr.

Christian Aid's head of campaigns and UK advocacy Pete Moorey said to tackle the climate crisis, 80 percent of known fossil fuels needed to be left in the ground.

"The UK government is right to heed this warning and end support for fossil fuels overseas," he added.

"Developing countries need investment to leapfrog the dirty energy that has led us into this crisis and access the clean renewable that can both accelerate their development and tackle the climate emergency."

UN CHIEF URGES  
'CLIMATE CRISIS'  
DECLARATION

London, Dec. 12: UN chief Antonio Guterres on Saturday urged world leaders to declare a "state of climate emergency" and shape greener growth after the Coronavirus pandemic, as he opened a summit marking five years since the landmark Paris Agreement.

The Climate Ambition Summit, being held online, comes as the United Nations warns current commitments to tackle rises in global temperatures are inadequate.

The commitments made in Paris in 2015 were "far from enough" to limit temperature rises to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the UN secretary-general said in his opening address to the summit, which is co-hosted by Britain and France. — *AFP*

Downing Street said it intends to implement the policy by November next year, when Britain will host the UN summit on climate change COP26, in Glasgow.

Over the last four years, the British government "supported 21 billion (\$28 billion, 23 billion euros) of UK oil and gas exports through trade promotion and export finance", it added.

Britain has been criticised by watchdogs and activists including Swedish campaigner Greta Thunberg for financing dirty energy projects abroad. — *AFP*

Relatives seek info on Hong  
Kong detainees in China

Hong Kong, Dec. 12:

Relatives of a dozen Hong Kong residents who have been detained in mainland China for more than 3 1/2 months made a plea on Saturday to be informed of the timing of any trials and whether they can attend.

The request underscored the sharp contrast between the relatively open legal system in Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous Chinese territory, and that of the mainland, where often little information is divulged until a trial is over.

"I miss my son so much," the mother of Wong Wai-yin, one of the detainees, said, choking up. "I want to visit him so badly. I haven't seen my son in a very long time — it's almost four months. Please tell me (about the trial). I'm just an

ordinary mother."

The 12 were arrested at sea in August while they were apparently making a bid to flee to Taiwan after a tough national security law took effect in Hong Kong earlier this year.

They were picked up after entering mainland waters for crossing the maritime border without permission. At least some took part in anti-government protests in 2019 and were facing charges in Hong Kong.

Though Hong Kong is a part of China, travelers must still pass through immigration when going to and from the mainland. Two are being held on suspicion of organising an illegal border crossing. The group has been locked up in Shenzhen, a southern Chinese city that borders Hong Kong.

— *AP*

PRO-CHINA  
NEWS CHANNEL  
TAKEN OFF AIR

Taipei, Dec. 12: Employees and supporters rallied for a Taiwanese pro-China cable news channel as it was taken off air on Saturday, after the government refused to renew its license, citing accuracy issues.

CTiTV's channel 52 broadcast a countdown and then went black after midnight. The cable network, whose non-news channels were not affected, plans to continue putting news on YouTube and other digital platforms. A large crowd chanted "Hang on, CTiTV" and held up signs reading "Thank you CTiTV, we will see you again." — *AP*



## DECCAN Chronicle

13 DECEMBER 2020



Ranjona Banerji

Off the beaten track

### Confessions of an old feminist

It was when I hit 40 that it started to bother me. Now this is true: born in the 1960s, my sister and I were sure that we would never live to see the change of the century, the fin de siècle. We would be so old! Almost 40. Life would surely be over. In our youth, we did the usual thing: asked our parents what life was like in the “olden days”.

Well, karma. It's now my turn. And the millennium happened, I turned 40. Getting my reading glasses almost on the date was exciting. I had always wanted to wear glasses and decided that I had “lost” my eyesight at 7 I wanted them so bad but that's another story. Anyway. With my new reading glasses, I was instantly outraged by such newspaper headlines: “Elderly woman of 45 run over”.

The lifestyle pages might have been full of rubbish about 60 being the new 40 and 70 the new 30 or whatever. But as far as the general public was concerned, 45 was elderly. Yes, my joints had started creaking. My hair was greying. And all the rest of the accoutrements of ageing but you know, big deal. I didn't feel “elderly”. And at best, I had moved up a notch from being “Didi” to “Bhabhi” or “Madam” as far as the general public were concerned. Respect at last! What respect? Ephemeral, as you will discover soon.

That 40 bridge was crossed almost two decades ago. I'm looking forward to some senior citizen benefits in a couple of years, if Modi government hasn't done away with them by then of course: 1/4 per cent interest rate increase on FDs and such. But before I even get there, I have to get around the fact that I have in less than 20 years progressed from “elderly” to my death bed.

All day I get advice from the yooofs of India. Do not say this. Do not think like that. When you eat, lift your hand to your mouth. You don't know this, but the Earth rotates on its axis. Why did you say this when you meant that? Did you know that the tomato is not indigenous to India? Or even better, how dare you say the tomato is not indigenous to India you traitorous old coot. Go home Auntie and all the rest of it. Not that I mind being called Auntie. I've been an Auntie since I was in my 20s.

And then, there are the men. Earlier they explained menstruation to me. Now they explain menopause. In between they explain everything else. To be fair, it's not my age so much that forces them to be so generous with their little knowledge. It's my femaleness. The thing is, it doesn't stop.

I'm not unsympathetic to ageists, don't get me wrong. I understand. Between the ages of 12 to 39, I also thought I knew everything and this self-delusional omniscience peaked in my 30s. I do think my Mother conked me on the head a few times and I still didn't get it. Thick and a know-it-all. Imagine how annoying that was.

As is the manner of all things, I learnt. That I am elderly, aged, stupid, ignorant, in dire need of schooling, that my own words need to be explained back to me and especially all my jokes (they may be terrible but they're mine!), maybe I even need cancelling. Because as I have learnt (I can still pick up one or two things) that it's mainly older people who get “cancelled”.

I genuinely thought I would be philosophical about the whole thing. End on the last resort poetry like TS Eliot: “I grow old, I grow old...” Or WB Yeats and “arise and go now”.

But then I thought, what the what. There's still some life in the old dog. So here are the last two verses of Lewis Carroll's satirical version of Robert Southey's poem. Hah! I beat you to your “did you know”. And don't worry about the last line. I'm not that violent. Yet.

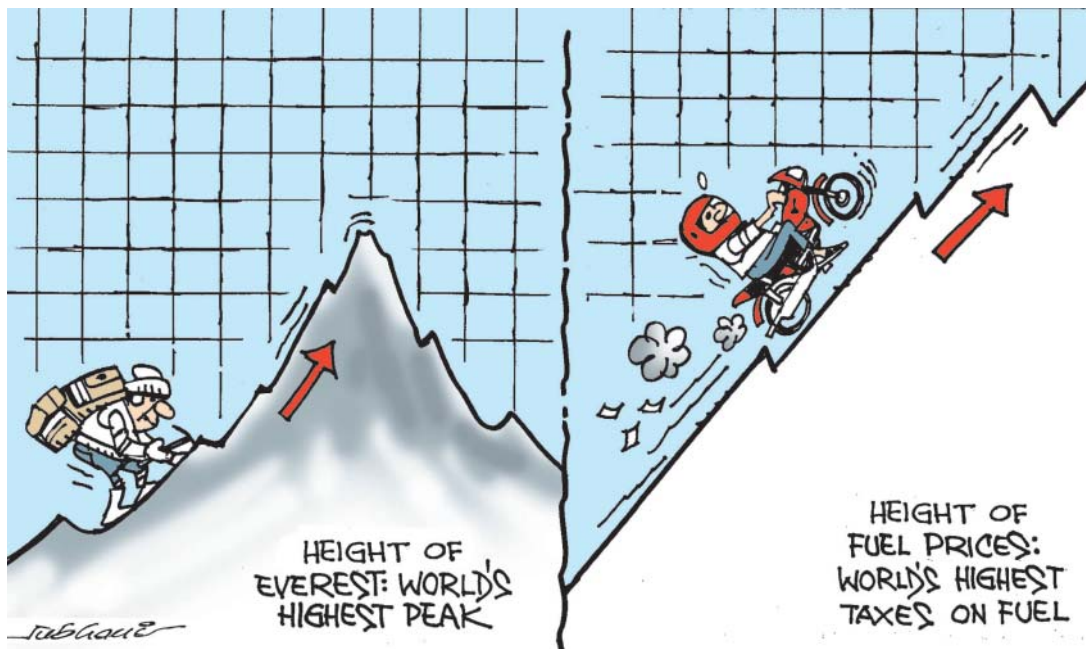
*“You are old,” said the youth, “one would hardly suppose That your eye was so steady as ever; Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose— What made you so awfully clever?”*  
*“I have answered three questions, and that is enough,” Said his father; “don't give yourself airs! Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff? Be off, or I'll kick you down stairs!”*

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



**And the millennium happened, I turned 40. Getting my reading glasses almost on the date was exciting. I had always wanted to wear glasses and decided that I had ‘lost’ my eyesight at seven I wanted them so bad but that’s another story. Anyway. With my new reading glasses, I was instantly outraged by such newspaper headlines: ‘Elderly woman of 45 run over.’**

Subhani



## Ground reality darkens PM ‘vista’ of democracy



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

At the *bhoomipoojan* of the proposed new Parliament building it was heartening to hear Prime Minister Narendra Modi speak about the ancient democratic traditions in India, and modern India's belief in the theory and practice of democracy. It is, indeed, a matter of pride that defying the Cassandras who predicted the early demise of democracy in independent India, our Republic continues to be the world's largest democracy.

However, the PM's espousal of democracy sits in rather strong contrast to the actual practice of the government he heads, where more and more decisions appear to be in the nature of *farmans*. Demonetisation, which caused immense economic dislocation, and from which the country has still not fully recovered, was announced by the PM himself like a bolt from the blue one evening. Similarly, the decision to impose the lockdown at the onset of the Covid pandemic was done at four hours' notice without adequate advance preparation causing unprecedented suffering for millions of migrant labour.

The categorical statements by home minister Amit Shah that the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAA) will be explicitly linked to the patently discriminatory NRC exercise, was unprecedented by consultation and deliberation, thereby leading to nationwide protests. Most recently, the three farmer's bills were rammed through Parliament through a voice vote, without sufficient discussion, and without referring them to

a select committee of Parliament for wide-spread consultations with legitimate stakeholders. Consequently, the farmer's agitation is there for all to see.

In a democracy there is a tangible dialectic between intent and process. In dictatorships the process can be overlooked, and the ruling dispensation can proceed unchallenged in implementing its intent. That is why, undemocratic policies may give the illusion of taking decisions faster, but their foundations are brittle and their decisions, precisely because of the lack of democratic debate, questionable and unsustainable. When the intent, even if laudable, is unaccompanied by democratic processes, the result causes unease, apprehension, and social instability.

At the *bhoomipoojan*, the PM's eloquence on India's democratic credentials, and the importance of civilised discourse, could not hide the fact that the plan for the massive restructuring of New Delhi has suffered from an overwhelming opacity and lack of transparency. Once again, it is evidence of the current government deciding unilaterally what is good for the people, and then proceeding to imple-

**Why was an open design competition not held? This was the methodology followed for rebuilding the World Trading Centre in New York, the Notre Dame revamp in Paris, and the Indira Gandhi Centre for the National Arts in New Delhi.**

**Lutyens, who built New Delhi along with Herbert Baker, was a racist, and what he left us with is not sacrosanct. But, in terms of the process for change, the government has been opaque to the point of being undemocratic.**

ment that decision without fully consulting the people.

The facts speak for themselves. The building of a new Parliament is only one piece of a larger decision to almost rebuild the key heritage areas of New Delhi. As per the plan, the existing Parliament will be junked and made into a museum; the North and South Blocks of the central secretariat will also be junked and made into museums; the iconic Central Vista will be jettisoned, and make way for a new residence for the PM and the Vice President. A new Central Secretariat to house all the babus of the government will be constructed. Several key buildings in these areas will be demolished. In other words, the existing Master Plan for New Delhi will be more or less thrown into the dustbin.

Cities cannot be fossilised and should change with changing times and needs. We can, therefore, give the government the benefit of doubt in terms of its intent. Lutyens, who built New Delhi along with Herbert Baker, was an incorrigible racist, and what he left us with is not sacrosanct. But, in terms of the process for change, the government has been opaque to the point of being undemocratic.

The original brief for a project of this magnitude simply said that New Delhi must represent “the values of a new India” and be “rooted in the Indian culture and social milieu”. Should not what this should entail be a matter of democratic discussion,

among experts and in Parliament? Then, why was an open design competition not held? This was the methodology followed for the rebuilding of the World Trading Centre in New York, the renovation of the Notre Dame in Paris, and the Indira Gandhi Centre for the National Arts in New Delhi. Again, the selection was based on tenders for which 80 per cent was allocated for quality, and 20 per cent for price. But who decided what constituted the best quality? The government itself. The result was that a Gujarat based company got the contract even when its price bid was reportedly the highest.

Nor were the technical scores for the winning company disclosed. No convincing study was presented to show that the existing Parliament building is falling apart, and cannot be repurposed for future needs. No public jury of eminent architects, environmentalists, landscapers and town planners was appointed to judge the proposals. Why was the meeting of the Central Vista Committee held without the presence of non-government members? Why were environmental clearances sought to be obtained piecemeal, rather than for the project as a whole? Why has the approval of the Heritage Conservation Committee not yet been obtained? The only thing we see is a tearing hurry to complete this architectural megalomania by March 2022, and to start construction even when petitions against it are pending before the Supreme Court.

In a democracy, the democratic bona fides of a government depend on its willingness to follow the democratic process of discussion and debate. In the absence of this, eloquence with regard to our democratic past appears less than convincing.

The writer, an author and a former diplomat, is in politics

### LETTERS

#### GHMC TOILETS

The GHMC is really doing commendable work to make basic necessities available to the public (6,000 public toilets in city by Jan-end, DC, Jan. 12). They are working to make Hyderabad a cleaner city. It is definitely a great task to maintain the standards of the Nawabi city. However, keeping toilets clean will be a bigger challenge than constructing them at every nook and corner.

Azeeza Sayeed  
Hyderabad

#### NOT UNDER DICTATOR

Lakhs of farmers are protesting to get farm laws repealed. Doctors are on strike against mixopathy and Assam resumed anti-CAA agitation bringing unrest in the country. Why can't the Centre understand that these controversial laws brought in without talking to stakeholders need to be addressed by keeping their ego aside? We are not under dictatorship.

P.J. David  
Hyderabad

#### BENGAL GOVERNOR

Ever since the BJP got second place in GHMC election, the party's Central leadership is going overboard to attack West Bengal CM and her party. The Governor has cautioned the CM not to play with fire without realising the fire can be lit and spread with a matchbox and stick. If the Governor is serious about not letting the fire to spread and turn ordinary people into victims, he should have called both TMC and BJP leadership not to play with fire (*Dhankar asks Mamata to apologise to Nadda, DC, Dec. 12*). If Constitutional heads start ordering politicians to apologise, he or she won't have time to function like a constitutional head.

N. Nagarajan  
Hyderabad

#### SHREWD POLITICIAN

A few days back (during GHMC elections) KCR abused the BJP top brass and now he greets them with bouquets (*KCR urges Shah to release flood funds, DC, Dec. 12*). Shrewd politicians like KCR can change stance unmindful of public abhorrence to such attitude.

B. RaghunadhaRao  
Hyderabad

## 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

### First IA Boeing lands in Delhi

NEW DELHI, Dec. 12. Garuda, the first of the seven Boeing 737 aircraft ordered by the Indian Airlines at a total cost of Rs. 30.34 crores flew into Delhi (Palam) this afternoon and will do the inaugural flight on the new year day.

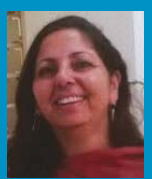
Dr Karan Singh, Minister of Civil Aviation was at Palam to greet the aircraft as Capt. N. Pareira and Capt. D. Chakravarty landed it smoothly after showing it off circling over the airport for a few minutes.

Dr Karan Singh hailed its addition to the IA fleet as “a historic event” in the airlines operation and an “auspicious beginning” for the decades domestic traffic.

The inaugural flight of this 119 passenger capacity aircraft on January 1 next will be operated on the “golden triangle” Delhi-Bombay-Calcutta route.

Anita Katyal

Political Gup-Shup



### Madhav image irks BJP top brass, he may be repatriated

Once a favourite of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the BJP and the media, Ram Madhav is clearly in the wilderness today. When he was dropped as BJP general secretary some months ago, it was expected that the high-profile leader would be rewarded with a Rajya Sabha seat as a precursor to his induction as a minister in the Narendra Modi government. His cheerleaders, especially those in the media, were convinced that it was only a matter of time before Mr Madhav was rehabilitated. But, so far, there is nothing on the horizon. A Rajya Sabha seat that did fall vacant recently was awarded to Sushil Modi, former deputy chief minister of Bihar. Apparently, the BJP leadership is not happy with the larger-than-life image Mr Madhav has cultivated for himself. It feels he is far too individualistic to be contained by a system. It is now up to the RSS to take a call on Mr Madhav's future as he was loaned to the party by the Sangh. It is speculated that he will go back to the RSS

but there are many in the Sangh who are not happy about his return.

Finding itself on the back foot when the farmers began their agitation against the farm bills, the Modi government was busy defending itself and hard selling the agriculture reforms. The media, too, kept the focus on the protesters and pushed the government to respond to their demands. However, this narrative underwent a dramatic change when Opposition parties extended their support to the December 8 Bharat bandh called by the farmers. The government cleverly shifted the spotlight to what it described as the Opposition's “hypocritical” stand on the farm bills. The government first fielded Union law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad to attack the Congress which, he said, had proposed the introduction of similar reforms in its election manifesto. On the day of the bandh, the BJP unleashed a galaxy of senior ministers and chief ministers to repeat the same accusations. Television news channels promptly

fell into the trap. As a result, most news bulletins were replete with interviews of BJP ministers with an occasional concession being made to an Opposition leader. The bandh and the farmers were last on the priority list.

For three years, the West Bengal police was on the hunt for Bimal Gurung, the founder of the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha, who had been charged under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for his role in the 104-day shutdown in Darjeeling. Mr Gurung suddenly emerged from hiding in October and declared he was snapping ties with the BJP and pledged support to West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee. As a result, fortune is now smiling on Mr Gurung. From being a hunted man and constantly on the run, he has now been provided security by the same police that was on the lookout for him. Not just that but the grapevine says Mr Gurung has also been given sufficient funds to enable him to campaign for the Trinamul

Congress as Ms Banerjee faces a tough Assembly election next year. In this process, the demand for a separate state of Gorkhaland has been put on the backburner as the Trinamul chief has said a firm no to a division of the state.

The Capital is rife with speculation that it was not Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh who had sought a meeting with home minister Amit Shah. Instead, it is said, Mr Singh was summoned to Delhi by Mr Shah for a discussion on the farmers' stir. The home minister is not happy with Mr Singh's open support to the protesters and his laxity in dealing with them. Mr Shah wants the chief minister to initiate moves to end the blockade of the highways. Apparently, Mr Singh's attention was also drawn to the pending cases of financial impropriety against his son Raninder Singh. The Punjab chief minister, however, stuck to his guns and has instead put the onus of ending the agitation on the Centre.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist



SHORT TAKES

Harris added to Australia squad

**Sydney:** Victoria's Marcus Harris was on Saturday added to an injury-plagued Australia squad for next week's first Test against India after Will Pucovski was ruled out of the series opener alongside David Warner. The four-match series begins with the day-night Test at Adelaide from December 17. Harris was drafted into the squad for the seasoned Warner, who suffered a groin injury during the second one-day international against India, while Pucovski sustained a concussion while batting for Australia A in a tour match against the visitors at Drummoyne Oval in Sydney. Cricket Australia (CA) said both batsmen will target a return ahead of the Boxing Day Test, scheduled to be held in Melbourne from December 26-30. — PTI

Windies struggle against Kiwis

**Wellington:** Kyle Jamieson has made a reputation in his short Test cricket career for New Zealand as a man who makes things happen. He enhanced that reputation on the second day of the second Test, taking 5-34 as NZ had the West Indies 124-8 at stumps in reply to its first innings of 460. The tourists need 136 to avoid the follow on. It was Jamieson's second fiver in only five tests in which he has increased his claim to the designation allrounder with a half a century and two innings of 40 or more. — AP

Angulo on target as Goa post win

**Goa:** A second successive win helped FC Goa climb to fourth on the ISL Season 7 table as they beat a gritty Odisha FC 1-0 at the GMC Stadium on Saturday. Igor Angulo (45+1') netted the winner to help Juan Ferrando's side register another victory. Arshdeep Singh shone for Odisha between the sticks but their inefficiency upfront meant Stuart Baxter's side remained winless in the competition. Vinit Rai was handed his first start of the season as Odisha made four changes to their line-up. Ferrando rang in just one change as Alberto Noguera replaced Edu Bedia. Goa outplayed their opponents in the first half and headed into the break with a one-goal lead. — Agencies

Ashwin, Amir steal the show

**Coimbatore:** The season's opening round of the 23rd JK Tyre — FMSCI National Racing Championship (JKNRC) witnessed lots of excitement, with Ashwin Datta and Amir Sayed stealing the show on Day 2 here on Saturday. The 16-year-old Sayed from Kottayam proved his class winning every other race, four in all, with ease in the JK Tyre Novice Cup. It was his first visit to this circuit but he mesmerised one and all with his magic on the wheel. Even as the others struggled to tackle the tricky and slow first corner, Sayed, despite limited track time, handled it with ease. In fact, he turned it to his advantage winning both the races on Friday in a commanding manner. He further shifted top gear to win two more races on Saturday.

Live on TV

CRICKET

**Australia 'A' vs India:** Day 3 from 9 am on Sony Six, HD

**Big Bash League:** Sydney Sixers vs Melbourne Renegades from 1.45 pm on Sony Ten 1, HD

**Lanka Premier League:** Semifinal-1 from 7.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

FOOTBALL

**English Premier League:** Southampton vs Sheffield United from 5.30 pm; Crystal Palace vs Tottenham Hotspur from 7.45 pm; Fulham vs Liverpool from 10 pm; Arsenal vs Burnley from 12.45 am (Monday) on Star Sports Select 1, Leicester vs Brighton from 12.45 am (Monday) on Star Sports Select 2

FORMULA ONE

**Abu Dhabi Grand Prix:** Main race from 6.35 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

UFC

**Fight Night:** Junior Dos Santos vs Cyril Gane and other bouts from 8.30 am on Sony Ten 2, HD

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ROHIT OR MISS?

Sharma 'clinically fit', to be reassessed in Oz

**New Delhi, Dec. 12:** The BCCI on Saturday declared senior batsman Rohit Sharma "clinically fit" to join the Indian team in Australia but said a call on his participation in the last two matches of the Test series there will be taken after a reassessment by the squad's medical team.

Rohit had sustained a hamstring injury during the IPL, which led to him missing the white-ball leg of the ongoing Australia tour. He is out of reckoning for the first two Tests of the four-match series. The opening Test starts at Adelaide on December 17.

"He has been given a detailed programme to follow for the duration of the two weeks he will be quarantined for. He will be reassessed by the Team India medical team post his quarantine to establish his fitness status and a call on his participation in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy will be taken accordingly," the BCCI said in a statement.

Rohit on Friday cleared an eagerly-watched fitness test at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru and will leave for Australia on December 14, three days before the start of the marquee Test series against the world's number one team.

"... Rohit Sharma has completed his rehabilitation process at the NCA in Bengaluru and is now clinically fit. He has been rehabilitating and training at NCA since 19th November following a high-grade left hamstring injury suffered during the Indian Premier League (IPL)," the statement said. The BCCI said the NCA medical team is satisfied with Rohit's fitness but added that he will need to work on his endurance.

Rohit's fitness test took place under the supervision of NCA director Rahul Dravid, who was entrusted with the responsibility of giving him his fitness certificate. — PTI



Rohit Sharma



Hanuma Vihari of India 'A' in action against Australia 'A' during their tour match at Sydney on Saturday. — BCCI

VIHARI SLAMS CENTURY, STAKES CLAIM

**Sydney, Dec. 12:** Rishabh Pant and Hanuma Vihari put themselves in the reckoning for next week's first Test with contrasting hundreds as India thoroughly dominated Australia A in the pink ball warm-up match here on Saturday.

Needing 19 runs to reach his century when Jack Wildermuth commenced the second evening's final over, Pant clobbered him for 4, 4, 6, 4, 4, to remain unbeaten on a blistering 103 off

only 73 balls. Overall, he hit nine fours and six sixes. At the other end, Vihari laboured his way to a fine 104-run knock off 194 balls.

Also staking a claim for selection is young Shubman Gill, with an elegant 65 off 78 balls and 10 sweetly-timed boundaries. In the final session of play, Pant's aggressive approach paid dividends as he smashed the Australia A bowlers to all corners of the Sydney Cricket Ground, the southpaw making a

strong case for himself for the wicketkeeper's job in Adelaide ahead of Test specialist Wriddhiman Saha.

To cite an example of his power-hitting, Pant swept one over the cow corner for a six, leaving Nic Maddinson to search for the ball among the rows of chairs at the SCG.

At the close of play, India were strongly placed at 386 for four for an overall lead by 472 runs, having bundled out the home team out for a

paltry 108 in their first innings on Friday.

In their first innings, India were all out for 194, which would have been far less if not for pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah's maiden first-class fifty, but the visitors staged a strong comeback with both bat and ball. — PTI

BRIEF SCORES

**India 194 and 386/4 in 90 overs (Hanuma Vihari 104\*, Rishabh Pant 103\*, Shubman Gill 65; Steketee 2/54) vs Australia 'A' 108.**

Siraj earns praise for sporting gesture

**Sydney, Dec. 12:** India fast bowler Mohammed Siraj's fine gesture of rushing in and attending to rival Cameron Green after he was hit on the head during the opening day of the warm-up game here has got praised from the Australian media.

Green attempted a catch off a straight drive from Jasprit Bumrah off his own bowling but the ball flew through his fingers and hit on the right side of his head.

Siraj immediately dropped his bat and rushed to check on Green. Bumrah also did the same following his teammate.

Green, who suffered concussion, was later ruled



Mohammed Siraj (right) rushes to check on Cameron Green, who got hit on the head by a Jasprit Bumrah straight drive. — BCCI

out of the remainder of the three-day pink warm-up game between the Indians and Australia 'A' side. "Indian cricketer Mohd Siraj has been praised for his sportsmanship in helping young all-rounder Cameron Green after he suffered a blow to the head during the match," tweeted 9News Australia.

"Non-striker Mohammed Siraj and umpire Gerard Abood rushed to check on the star all-rounder, who patted Bumrah on the leg to assure him he was OK," said abc.net.au.

"Mohammed Siraj, at the non-striker's end, dropped his bat and immediately rushed to check on the injured bowler," wrote cricket.com.au.

Siraj's gesture has also taken the internet by storm with netizens lauding him for his sportsman spirit. "Absolutely brilliant from Mohammed Siraj ... did not care about the run and straightaway dropped his bat and checked on Green. Top spirit by him," wrote a Twitter user.

The Indian Board also shared a picture in which Green can be seen on his knees after the blow on his head and Siraj standing next to him and checking on the Australian bowler. — PTI

Wolves outfoxed by 10-man Villa

**London, Dec. 12:** Aston Villa snatched a 1-0 win at Wolverhampton Wanderers in the Premier League on Saturday after substitute Anwar El Ghazi drilled in a stoppage-time penalty as both sides finished the game with 10 men.

Villa had Douglas Luiz sent off in the 85th minute and Wolves midfielder Joao Moutinho was dismissed shortly after the visitors scored against the run of play to register their fourth away win of the season.

The result lifted Villa up to eighth on 18 points from 10 games while Wolves, again sorely missing injured striker Raul Jimenez, stayed 11th on 17 points from 12 games.

El Ghazi said he felt relaxed about taking the penalty.

"I practise penalties a lot, even if I am not playing," the Dutch midfielder told the BBC.

"I did not feel a lot of pressure to be honest. I appreciate Jack Grealish gave it to me, but he knows my capabilities."

The home side looked more likely to grab the winner in a dour clash, with their 18-year old striker Fabio Silva hitting the post midway through the second half as he made his first start for the club.

Villa keeper Emiliano Martinez pulled off several fine saves, taming a stinging low shot from Daniel Podence before he somehow kept out a fierce Leander Dendoncker volley 10 minutes from time.

When the match seemed to be heading for a draw, Nelson Semedo hauled down John McGinn in the penalty area and El Ghazi made no mistake with the spot-kick as he blasted the

THE RESULTS

<b>Wolves</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Aston Villa</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>(Anwar El Ghazi 90+4 p)</i>	
<b>Leeds United</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>(Mateusz Klich 6 p)</b>	
<b>West Ham</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>(Tomas Soucek 25, Angelo Ogbonna 80)</i>	

ball past keeper Rui Patrício.

Wolves manager Nuno Espirito Santo said he wanted his team to be more ruthless.

"In the first half it was an intense game and both teams were tight," he said.

Moyes fumes

West Ham United manager David Moyes has taken aim at the video assistant referee (VAR) after a decision went against his side in the 2-1 win at Leeds United on Saturday and called on the Premier League's more influential managers to protest.

West Ham goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski conceded a penalty in the second minute when he brought down Patrick Bamford but seemed to have redeemed himself by saving Mateusz Klich's spot kick.

But after a review by VAR, a retake was ordered due to Fabianski leaving his line, and Klich scored at the second attempt.

"Until we get the rules sorted out I don't think I'm going to be too happy," said Moyes, whose side fought back to clinch victory with headed goals by midfielder Tomas Soucek and defender Angelo Ogbonna.

"There are some terrible decisions that are happening. Whoever saw it must have had (Fabianski's foot) X-rayed. The decision was rubbish." — Reuters



Anwar El Ghazi (centre) celebrates after converting a penalty for Aston Villa. — TWITTER

VERSTAPPEN SNATCHES FINAL POLE OF SEASON

**Abu Dhabi, Dec. 12:** Red Bull's Max Verstappen snatched the final pole position of the year, denying rivals Mercedes a front-row lock out in Saturday's qualifying for the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

The Dutchman, who had led a one-two for Red Bull ahead of team mate Alexander Albon in final practice, produced a stunning one minute, 35.246-second lap under the floodlights at the Yas Marina track.

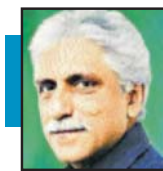
Verstappen's time was 0.025 seconds quicker than Valtteri Bottas, who urged on by team boss Toto Wolff over the team radio, still put his Mercedes on the front row. World champion Lewis Hamilton, back in the car after his COVID-19-enforced absence in Sakhir, was third and 0.086 seconds off the pace.

Verstappen's display around the 5.5km long lap earned him only the third pole of his career and his first since last year's Brazilian Grand Prix.

It was only the second time Mercedes had been denied pole this season and the first time all year that a non-Mercedes powered car will start from the front, with Lance Stroll having started on pole for Mercedes-engineered Racing Point in Turkey.

It ended the Brackley-based team's streak of six straight pole positions in Abu Dhabi. — Reuters

India's batting needs to deliver in Test series



Ayaz Memon Over The Top

**B**y the time you read this, Rohit Sharma will hopefully have joined the Indian team in Australia. A 14-day quarantine period is mandatory Down Under so Rohit will force have to miss the first two Tests. Considering his experience and caliber, this is a setback for India.

There has been so much debate on the Rohit issue that I have nothing further to add save that this unsavoury episode need never have been had key

members in the Indian cricket establishment shown better co-ordination and communication. There's a serious lesson to be learnt.

Of immediate importance, however, is how the Indian team in Australia can make the Test rubber, which starts on December 17, rewarding too after having shared honours in the white ball series.

In ODIs, India evaded a whitewash with a fine performance in the third match. Likewise, Australia

prevented a clean sweep by India in the T20s, winning the last match. Both teams missed key players in one or the other series, so there was no advantage for either.

Keen competition in the ODIs and T20s has set the tone for the marquee show on this tour, the Test matches. White ball cricket can't be compared to the longest format, but seeing the intensity of players from both side, my appetite is whetted for a stirring contest.

In 2018, India had created history winning a rubber for the first time ever Down Under. That this had taken 70 years (Independent India's first assignment was against Don Bradman's team in 1947-48) shows what a massive psychological hurdle

beating Australia in Australia had been.

Doubtless the Australians will be revenge hungry this time. Of the two major domos missing in 2018, David Warner has unfortunately injured himself and will not play at Adelaide. But Steve Smith has looked in ominous touch this season, and young Marnus Labuschagne has taken the cricket world by storm since the 2019 Ashes.

The big challenge for India, however, is not so much in keeping the Aussie batsmen quiet, but for their own batsmen to come good on pacy, bouncy pitches and give their bowlers enough runs to defend.

In 2018, Bumrah, Shami and Ishant performed magnificently, but without

the dogged and determined batting of Pujara — ably supported by Kohli — the best efforts of the bowlers would have been in vain. As a ball park figure, India's batting needs to delivery 380-400 runs first up to be competitive.

With Rohit not available for the first two Tests and Kohli returning home after Adelaide, India's batting has a vulnerability about it that the formidable Aussie attack of Cummins, Hazlewood, Pattinson/Starc and Lyons will want to exploit.

In the two warm up games, the team has shown spirit, skill and ambition. Both in batting and bowling there have been some fine performances, though it must be said that most of the front-line Aussie players were

not involved.

The second match at Sydney, which finishes today, was the more important being a day-night affair played with a pink ball, in preparation for the first Test.

Several Indian players (Shaw, Gill, Vihari, Pant, Saha, Saini, Siraj) are on trial, some key ones (Bumrah, Shami, Rahane, Agarwal) were looking to get into rhythm before the first Test. In the two days play as yet, India have been quite impressive.

Bundled out for a paltry 194 on a spicy pitch — largely through a spunky 71-run partnership between Bumrah and Siraj — India's pace bowlers struck back marvelously to bowl out the opponents for 108. The hostility with which Bumrah, Shami,

Saini and Siraj bowled wouldn't have been lost on the Aussies.

In the second innings, with the pitch having eased considerably, India (barring Shaw who threw his wicket away) batted consistently down the order to swell the lead past 325 and put themselves in a potentially winning position.

But this success has also created a vexing situation for the think tank: there are multiple claimants for the second opener's spot, the number 6 slot, the wicket-keeper, the spin all-rounder, and who the 3rd/4th seamer should be.

Skipper Kohli and chief coach Shastri have a head scratching dilemma of getting the right combination for Adelaide over the next few days.





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