

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | SATURDAY 9 | JANUARY 2021

## WEATHER



**Max:** 28°C  
**Min:** 21°C  
**Rainfall:** 2 mm

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Margazhi 25  
**Tithi:** Ekadashi  
**Star:** Visagam/ Anusham  
**Rahukalam:**  
9 am to 10.30 am  
**Yamagandam:**  
1.30 pm to 3 pm  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 5.18 am  
**Zohar:** 12.20 pm  
**Asar:** 3.31 pm  
**Maghrib:** 5.57 pm  
**Isha:** 7.12 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY** 5.58 PM  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW** 6.34 AM  
**MOONRISE TODAY** 2.28 AM  
**MOONSET TOMORROW** 2.21 PM

## CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+18,245)	(+227)
1,04,32,318	1,50,833

covid19india.org

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+790)  
**TN:** 8,24,776 12,208

### WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

8,88,93,141

**DEATHS**  
19,13,630

**COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES**  
218

worldometers.info

## PM to interact with CMs on Monday over virus situation, vaccine roll-out

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will interact with chief ministers of all states on January 11 to discuss the Covid-19 situation and the vaccination roll-out in the country, his office said on Friday. This will be Modi's first interaction with chief ministers following the recent approval of two coronavirus vaccines for restricted emergency use by India's drug regulator.

## Mamata inaugurates 26th KIFF, allows full occupancy in Bengal theatres

**Kolkata:** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday virtually inaugurated the 26th Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF) and allowed full occupancy of cinema halls in the state with adherence to Covid safety protocols. The inaugural ceremony was also virtually attended by Bollywood superstar and West Bengal's brand ambassador Shah Rukh Khan from Mumbai.

## COUNTER

## POINT



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

# Kangana quizzed for 2 hrs in sedition case

**SHAHAB ANSARI | DC**  
MUMBAI, JAN. 8

Actor Kangana Ranaut and her sister Rangoli Chandell were questioned for two hours on Friday at the Bandra police station in Mumbai in a sedition case that has been filed against them. Earlier in the day, Ranaut had posted a video on Twitter saying she is being unfairly targeted for daring to speak her mind. The sisters appeared before the police, as the Bombay High Court, while

granting them interim protection from arrest had directed them to appear before the police on Friday. The HC is expected to continue hearing their petition on January 11.

Ranaut has been provided with 'Y' category security of CRPF personnel by the Union government. The sisters reached the police station around 1pm along with their lawyer.

According to sources, the questioning is not complete because the police want to question her for her more



Actor Kangana Ranaut at the Bandra police station in Mumbai on Friday. — PTI

than 100 tweets.

The Bandra police regis-

tered a case against them in October last here after receiving complaints that they are trying to create hatred and communal tension through their posts.

Meanwhile, the actress has shared a video on her official Twitter account claiming that she is being tortured emotionally, mentally and physically for speaking in the interest of the nation and recently speaking in favour for farmers.

The video is recorded in Hindi and the actress can be

seen saying, "Why am I being mentally, emotionally and now physically tortured?" She has further stated that she needs answer from the nation. According to her, she stood by the nation and it's time it stands for her.

She has narrated how a case was filed against her even for laughing and in another case her name was dragged even though she was not on Twitter at that point of time. However, the Apex Court rejected these cases.

## NATION | 4

**Bengal Governor to meet Amit Shah in Delhi today**



## WORLD | 5

**Pompeo says US not 'banana republic'**

## SPORT | 8

**Jadeja and Gill star for India despite Smith's ton**



**TN falls in line: To allow only 50% theatre occupancy**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, JAN. 8

The State government reversed its order on allowing cinema theatres to screen movies with 100 per cent occupancy, issued on January 4, and said that only 50 per cent seats can be filled up until further orders.

However, the theatres can have additional shows, an official press release said, adding that Covid-19 prevention protocols like wearing of facemasks and maintaining social distancing should be strictly followed.

The reversal of the earlier order was made taking into account the advisory of the Union Home Ministry and in view of the cases filed against it in the courts, the release said.

**Guv appoints Ombudsman for TN local bodies**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, JAN. 8

Governor Banwarilal Purohit appointed M Malik Feroze Khan as Ombudsman to the Tamil Nadu Local Bodies for a period of three years.

The Governor administered the oath of office to Khan, a retired IAS officer, at a swearing in function held at Raj Bhavan in the presence of Minister for Municipal Administration S P Velumani, a press release said.

**'GHAR WAPSI' ONLY AFTER 'LAW WAPSI'**

# Deadlock on as farmers insist on repeal of laws

**SANJAY KAW | DC**  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 8

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

Holding their ground on the repeal of the three laws, the farmers told the government that their "ghar wapsi" can take place only after "law wapsi". But the Centre told unions that it cannot and will not repeal these laws, asserting the laws have been welcomed by a large section of farmers in other states across the country, and asked the

## NONE WILLING TO CLIMB DOWN

The next meeting has been fixed for January 15, amid indications that any headway will now depend on a Supreme Court hearing scheduled for January 11 on a batch of petitions related to the protest



Tomar said the government is still hopeful that union leaders will come with alternatives to discuss in the next round of talks on January 15.

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Friday said he had made it categorically clear that the ball was in the Centre's court, with the Punjab government having no role to play in the negotiations.



unions to think about the interests of the entire country.

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

Refusing to budge, farmer leader Darshan Pal said the protesters will not leave Delhi borders even if they are directed to do so by the

Supreme Court which is to take up issues related to the new laws on Monday. The protesting farmers have also decided to go ahead with their planned protest on Republic Day.

Lohri and Makar Sankranti — two important north Indian festivals — fall on January 13 and 14 respectively and the next round of discussions with the government is scheduled to take place on January 15.

# India sceptical of 5-year Pak jail term for 26/11 mastermind

**SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC**  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 8

Terming it as a "farcical action", India on Friday dismissed the sentencing of 26/11 Mumbai attack mastermind and terror group Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) operations commander Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi to 5 years in jail on Friday by a Pakistani anti-terrorism court in Lahore in a terror financing case, with New Delhi saying "the timing of these actions clearly suggests the intention of conveying



a sense of compliance ahead of the Asia-Pacific Joint Group (APJG) meeting and next Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

plenary meeting in February 2021". New Delhi said "it has become routine for Pakistan to come up with such farcical actions prior to important meetings".

The MEA added, "UN proscribed entities and designated terrorists act as proxies for Pakistani establishment to fulfill its anti-India agenda. It is for the international community to hold Pakistan to account and ensure that it takes credible action against terror groups, terror infrastructure and individual terrorists."



**A. ARUL PALANI | DC**  
CHENNAI, JAN. 8

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said the Covid-19 Vaccine Intelligence Network will now track details of potential beneficiaries and those who receive the vaccine shot would be given electronic certificates. Addressing a meeting in Chennai he said the government is using eVIN — Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network to identify primary beneficiaries and vaccine distribution networks.

Routine immunisation programmes have been monitored with the help of electronic vaccine intelligence network (eVIN), and now it has been converted into a CoWIN platform to track details of potential beneficiaries for the COVID-19 vaccine, the place where he/she is likely to get

Priority would be given to persons above 50 years of age and less than 50 years of people with comorbidities. The mass vaccination programme will be conducted smoothly.

He appealed to the NGOs, NSS and NCC volunteers to support the government in the programme.

He recollected that in 2011 the last case of polio was noticed in Howrah in West Bengal and that the country had successfully eradicated polio.

However, we have seen incidents of polio in two neighbouring countries. Hence, everyone must take part in the national immunisation programme on January 17 and administer polio drops to children below five years of age.

He said India had done extremely well on the front of development of vaccines in the shortest possible time. ■ P2

## US H-1B visas to prefer skill, wages over lottery

**Washington, Jan. 7:** The United States on Thursday announced that it will modify the selection process for H-1B visa, giving priority to salary and skills instead of the current lottery procedures.

The final rule to be published in the federal register on January 8, officials said, is aimed to protect the economic interests of US workers and better ensure the most highly skilled foreign workers benefit from the temporary employment programme.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China. — PTI

# Democrats plan to impeach Trump

**Washington, Jan. 8:** Congressional Democrats on Friday weighed impeaching President Donald Trump for a second time, two days after his false claims of election fraud helped encourage a mob that stormed the U.S. Capitol. Democratic leaders including House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer called for immediate impeachment proceedings if Vice President Mike Pence and Trump's cabinet refused to take steps to remove Trump from power.

As calls for his ouster mounted, Trump released a video in which he denounced the violence that left five people dead. The Republican president came the closest yet to conceding his loss in the Nov. 3 presidential election, promising to ensure a smooth transition to a "new administration". President-elect Joe Biden, a Democrat, is set to be sworn in on Jan. 20.

Trump's words were in stark contrast to his speech on Wednesday, when he exhorted a crowd of thousands to descend on the Capitol as Congress met to certify Biden's election victory.

Meanwhile, a police officer died from injuries sustained as Trump's



● **US President Trump, who has at last recognised his defeat, announced on Twitter that he would not be attending President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s inauguration on Jan. 20. "To all of those who have asked, I will not be going to the Inauguration on January 20th," he tweeted**

supporters stormed the Capitol, a violent siege that is forcing hard questions about the defeated president's remaining days in office and the ability of the Capitol Police to secure the area.

The U.S. Capitol Police said in a statement that Officer Brian D. Sicknick was injured "while physically engaging with protesters" during the Wednesday riot. He is the fifth person to die because of the violence.

— Agencies

## INSIDE

**Covid leads to steep fall in liver transplantations**

■ REPORT ON PAGE 2

**Hectic parleys on poll tie-ups**

■ REPORT ON PAGE 3

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## SHORT TAKES

**Minister inspects metro extension work**DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 8

Industries Minister M.C. Sampath on Friday inspected the phase-I extension work of Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) in the 9-km line between Washermanpet metro station and Wimco Nagar metro station.

The minister, who was accompanied by CMRL managing director Pradeep Yadav and CMRL director Rajeev Narayan Dwivedi, took stock of the situation at the work sites in underground and elevated stations.

The extension will pave way for CMRL completing the phase I extension works from Washermanpet to Thiruvottiyur (Wimco Nagar) with 8 stations (two underground and six elevated metro stations). It will connect the northern part of the city to the central business district area and is targeted to be opened for traffic by the end of January.

According to CMRL, the diesel locomotive vehicle completed its maiden trial run successfully both upline and downline. The installation of various systems including ballastless track, overhead electrification, signalling, tunnel ventilation, HVAC, platform screen doors and automatic fare collection gates are under way.

**Burglars decamp with ₹2 lakh and sweets from bakery**DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 8

Unidentified persons gained entry into a bakery in Aminjikarai and decamped with ₹2 lakh cash and sweets.

The bakery manager suspected the burglary when he noticed the shop was open on Friday morning. He soon checked up the locker and found the cash missing. The Police were alerted who rushed to the spot and inspected the bakery. Anna Nagar police registered a case. Police recovered CCTV footage from the shop and launched an investigation. An unidentified man is seen breaking into the shop. He then packed a few sweets and made away with ₹2 lakh in cash kept in the locker. Investigations are underway.

**Man gets 20 years RI for kidnap, rape of girl**

**Erode, Jan 8:** A man was on Thursday sentenced to 20 years RI by the Mahila Court here for kidnapping and raping a minor girl in 2018.

The convict had befriended the 15-year-old girl through a woman running a beauty parlour here and later kidnapped the minor to Chittoor with the help of the woman by saying he wanted to marry the teen.

Later, he raped her. On coming to know of the incident, the girl's parents lodged a complaint and the man was arrested.

The police had registered a case also against the woman running the parlour and she was awarded three years RI for helping the man, known to her, kidnap and rape of the girl.

Mahila Court judge Malathy handed out the sentence. — PTI

Convict had befriended the 15-year-old girl through a woman running a beauty parlour here and later kidnapped the minor to Chittoor with the help of the woman by saying he wanted to marry the teen



Greater Chennai police commissioner Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal inaugurates police family self entrepreneur centre at Pudupet on Friday. — DC

**Corona scare as flight services to and from London resume**DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 8

Amid the new strain of coronavirus scare, passengers flights resumed from the United Kingdom to India in limited numbers from Friday onwards after remaining suspended for 16 days. Though flight services between the UK and Chennai have not begun yet, fear of contraction through transit passengers arriving from other states concerns people in the state.

India had suspended all passenger flights between the UK and India from December 23 to January 7 as a new variant of coron-

avirus emerged in the UK.

The ban on flights to the UK was lifted on January 6. Thirty flights will operate each week, 15 each by Indian and UK carriers and the schedule will continue till January 23, announced the Civil Aviation Ministry. As per the rules, the passengers will also have to take the RT-PCR test up to 72 hours before a flight and on arrival.

Flights to and from the UK began operating from Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru on Friday. Though flight services between Chennai and the UK have not begun yet,

the people in the state are concerned about the possible spread of the virus through transit passengers from the UK arriving at the Airports in Tamil Nadu from the other states through domestic flights.

Sources at the airport said that the domestic passengers are not subjected to RT-PCR test, but thermal scanning on the arrival. This has caused a huge scare among the public.

Several staff at the Chennai airport have also expressed frustration over the government for lifting the ban and exposing them to risk.

**Chennai-Salem project: Plea in SC seeks review of Dec. 8 verdict**

**New Delhi, Jan. 8:** A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking review of its December 8 judgement which upheld the notification for acquisition of land for the ₹10,000-crore Chennai-Salem eight-lane green corridor project.

The petition contended that the top court verdict has "Errors Apparent on the face of the Record" and would result in "gross miscarriage of justice." The plea filed by Salem resident Yuvaraj S stated that the review application is primarily based on the contention that the court did not have the occasion to consider that law laid down for judicial review of purported "Public Policy" when there is violation of a larger policy. The top court, in its December 8 verdict, however, dismissed the appeal of land owners against the acquisition of their land for the project. The apex court's verdict had come on a batch of appeals filed by the Centre and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and few land owners and others including PMK leader Anbumani Ramadoss. — PTI



Employees check Centre's drug cold storage unit for Covid-19 vaccine at Periamet. DC

**Skoda Auto to launch midsize SUV Kushaq**DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 8

Skoda Auto India has said that its latest offering, a midsize SUV, Skoda Kushaq, will be the first in a series of vehicles tailored to meet the needs and demands of customers from the domestic market as well as those in emerging economies the world over.

The roll-out of these vehicles will happen over the next 18 months, the company said in a release.

The Kushaq, Skoda said, is the first vehicle designed and developed under the company's 'India 2.0' project. According to Zac Hollis, brand director, Skoda Auto India, the Kushaq offers a combination of the "brand's timeless design ideals, unmatched performance, superior build quality, exemplary value proposition, and

enhanced safety and security."

It is deemed to be the best seller in its class, setting the benchmark for functionality, practicality, spaciousness, and convenience, Hollis said.

The name of the Skoda's latest entrant into the Indian auto market is derived from Sanskrit: The word 'Kushak' denotes a king or an emperor, the company said.

The powerful vehicle, the company said, not only personifies its moniker, but also reflects upon Skoda's 125 years of history and heritage, a legacy that substantiates the brand's claim, 'Driven by inventiveness and clever ideas — since 1895.'

The name, starting with a K and ending with a Q, "also resonates the virtues of the Skoda SUV family — Kodiak, Karoq, and Kamiq," the automaker said.

**From P1**

"Right now, two of our vaccines have been given emergency use authorisation. We are in the process of ensuring that in the next few days or so, in the near future, we should be able to give these vaccines to our countrymen," he said.

"India has the highest recovery rate and lowest fatality rate. And from one testing laboratory, we now have 2,300 laboratories in the country. We are exporting PPE kits and have the capability to export N95 masks, drugs and ventilators. We started preparations for the impending vaccination drive against COVID-19 almost four to five months ago," he said. He also lauded the State government for its fight against the virus.

Earlier, the Central Minister along with State Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar reviewed the Covid-19 vaccine dry run at Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital and Government Medical College Hospital, Omandurar Estate. Health Secretary J. Radhakrishnan made a presentation on "Tamil Nadu strategy, present status and way forward."

**Covid leads to steep fall in liver transplantations**T. SUDHEESH | DC  
CHENNAI, JAN. 8

There was a steep fall in liver transplantations (LTs) in the state last year compared to the previous year as most of the LT centres remained shut due to Covid-19.

Gleneagles Global Health City (GGHC), one of the 34 LT centres in the state, could perform only 38 Living Donor Liver Transplantations (LDLTs) in 2020 while they had successfully attended 120 cases in 2019.

Dr. Joy Varghese, director - hepatology and transplant hepatology, GGHC, Chennai, told DC that the fall in number of LTs was a reflection of the setbacks caused by the pandemic. In Tamil Nadu there are 34 licensed LT centres. Almost 90 percent of these centres are still

Almost 90 percent of these centres are still shut due to Covid-19 and the strict guidelines issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO)

shut due to Covid-19 and the strict guidelines issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO).

"We managed to perform 38 LTs because all of them were fixed early. In all of these cases, the liver was donated by relatives. So we did not face major challenges including transpiration and identification of donors. Out of the 38 patients, 24 were adults

and the rest children. Twenty six liver transplants were done through the Chief Minister's Health Insurance Scheme," said Dr Varghese.

It may be recalled that the regulatory authorities, considering the high risk of developing Covid-19 infection in organ transplantations, had advised hospitals to perform only emergency or urgent liver transplants.

Sunil Shroff, president-elect, Indian Society of Organ Transplantation and founder of Multi Organ Harvesting Aid Network (MOHAN) Foundation, said there was a fall in LDLTs in the country last year due to the pandemic. 'Nearly 2,000 liver transplants are carried out in the country annually. It is the highest in the world. There is no

India-specific data. We are now collecting and studying data about LDLTs. Performing LDLT during the pandemic was highly challenging as the lives of the patient, donor and the entire team of liver specialists were at risk. Finding out the donors also was a difficult task for hospitals', he said.

According to a 2016 study, the need for liver transplantation in the country is estimated to be around 25,000 or 20 per million. Around 1,200 and 1,400 LDLTs were performed in India in 2013 and 2014, respectively.

The Deceased Donor Liver Transplants in India is largely restricted to its southern part with Tamil Nadu leading the way with 665 LTs until 2015 with a current organ donation rate of 1.3 per million, the study says.

**Master: HC restrains cable, ISPs**DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 8

The Madras high court has restrained 29 internet service providers from infringing the cinematographic Tamil film "Master", starring popular film stars Vijay and Vijay Sethupathi, which is scheduled to be released on January 13, 2021, by blocking 400 websites.

Justice C.V.Karthikeyan also restrained 9 Cable TV operators from illegally broadcasting the film "Master".

According to advocate Vijayan Subramanian, Justice C.V.Karthikeyan granted the interim injunction on a suit filed by Seven Screen Studio, a partnership firm represented by its partner S.S.Lalit Kumar, a co-producer of the film "Master", directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj.

Plaintiff's counsel Vijayan Subramanian submitted that plaintiff holds exploitation and distribution rights including theatrical rights, music rights, other rights including TV, Internet, digital and home video. Various cable and internet services provided by various persons (Defendants 1 to 38) across the world were involved in activities of recording, cam-cording and reproducing the audio songs, audio-visual clips, audio-visual songs and full cinematographic films that were screened in theatres and then copying/reproducing them through various medium including but not limited to CDs, DVDs, VCDs, Blu-ray Discs, computer hard drives, pen

**Court: 50% occupancy in theatres can continue**DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 8

The Madras high court on Friday said the present position of allowing no more than 50 per cent of the seating capacity in cinema theatres and multiplexes shall continue until further orders.

The First Bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy passed the interim order on a Public Interest Litigation, assailing a notification of the state government dated January 4, 2021, permitting the seating capacity at cinema theatres and multiplexes to be increased from the erstwhile 50 per cent to 100 per cent.

The bench said advocate general submitted that a similar petition has been entertained by the Madurai Bench of this court and a limited order of status quo granted till January 11, 2021.

drives etc., and distribute the same for selling at a meagre sum to the general public without any leave or authorization of the production houses/copy-right holders/right holders such as plaintiff herein.

Such activities result in heavy loss and damage to production houses /copy-right holders/right hold-

ers such as the plaintiff herein, he added.

He said the Plaintiff reasonably apprehends that 400 websites have the potential to upload and/or enable third parties to copy, reproduce, distribute, display through cable or online medium of the plaintiff's copyright protected said film and the said work through the ISPs.

**Pongal gift hampers: Use of banners, pamphlets banned**J. STALIN | DC  
CHENNAI, JAN. 8

Pointing out that it may not be feasible to require the (Pongal gift hamper) bags (bearing the picture of a former Chief Minister of the state and the present Chief Minister) to be replaced at this stage, the Madras high court has said other than what appears on the bags in which the gifts are to be distributed, no other material indicating any political party or the like should be made over to the recipients along with the gift hamper, nor any leaflet or other political advertisement displayed within the ration shops or the precincts thereof.

The First Bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy passed the order while disposing of a petition filed by Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam represented by its organization secretary R.S.Bharathi, which sought a direction to the authorities to immediately remove all types of digital banners, cutouts, flexi board, arches erected by the AIADMK party in the

Accordingly, no further banners, hoardings, cutouts, gates, arches or the like will be put up without obtaining permission from the local administration and any such offending gates, banners, arches, cutouts or the like which have already been put up without permission will be brought down by the appropriate authorities as expeditiously as possible

entire state of Tamil Nadu including within the precincts of the ration shops and government buildings, and also remove the pamphlets, posters, hand bills pasted/distributed by the AIADMK inside the ration shops or in any other government building, relating to or in connection with distribution of "2021 Pongal Free Gift hamper of Rs 2,500" to the family card holders by the government of Tamil Nadu or any other name.

Pointing out that the ration shops were now used to popularize the image of leaders of the AIADMK party and such acts were forbidden by Supreme Court and goes against the dictates of

purity in elections and free and fair elections, which were basic foundations of democracy, senior counsel P.Wilson, appearing for the DMK submitted that when the government was using the taxpayers' money for the welfare of the people, no political party can take undue advantage in it by way of advertising or popularizing or selling itself and such act goes against the dictates of free and fair elections. The state was going to face elections within 4 months and the tenure of the present elected government comes to an end by April 2021. Therefore, the ration shops and distribution of ₹2,500 cannot be taken advantage or an occasion

to violate the undertaking given by the AIADMK party before the court relating to erection of flexi board, digital banners and cutouts nor the authorities can remain silent spectators ignoring the various laws and regulations concerning the same, he added.

The bench said gates, arches, cutouts and the like, indeed, were a cause of concern and have resulted in accidents. Such material cannot be put up at public places without obtaining permission from the local administration in accordance with law. Accordingly, no further banners, hoardings, cutouts, gates, arches or the like will be put up without obtaining permission from the local administration and any such offending gates, banners, arches, cutouts or the like which have already been put up without permission will be brought down by the appropriate authorities as expeditiously as possible.

This will apply to all political parties and their material and the order should be implemented uniformly, the bench made it clear.

**Two of our vaccines given emergency authorisation: Min**

Union health minister Harsh Vardhan along with state health minister Dr C. Vijayabaskar and health secretary Dr J. Radhakrishnan inspecting the dry run for Covid-19 vaccination at a special camp at Government Omandurar Medical College and Hospital. Hospital Dean Dr R. Jayanthi also present.



THE MEN HAD ONLY TRAVELED A SHORT DISTANCE WHEN SUDDENLY A HORDE OF NATIVES SURROUNDED THEM!

Barry raised his rifle but the Ape-man quickly knocked it aside.

"WAIT!" HE WHISPERED. "THEIR INTENTIONS MAY NOT BE DANGEROUS UNLESS WE RESIST. LET US FOLLOW."

JOEL CLEGG



SHORT TAKES

# MAJOR MAOIST HIDEOUT BUSTED IN ODISHA

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, JAN. 8

Security forces on Friday seized huge haul of arms and ammunition, including hand grenades and other explosives, after busting a major Maoist hideout in Kandhamal district.

Kandhamal superintendent of police Vinit Agarwal said the Maoist camp was busted during a joint combing operation by Special Operation Group (SOG) jawans and district voluntary force.

“Based on reliable Intelligence inputs, an anti-Naxal operation was launched in the region on Thursday by a joint team of SOG and DVF. During the combing exercise, Maoists opened fire at the security forces and the latter also retaliated. We seized a huge cache of ammunition from the spot after the exchange of fire,” said Agarwal. The SP also informed that grenades, detonators, splinters, explosives, batteries and other various literature and camp articles used by the Maoists were seized from the hideout.

Taking advantage of dense forest cover and hilly terrain, the ultras however managed to escape from the spot.

“The exchange of fire lasted for over 30 minutes and 15-20 Maoists suspected to be inside the camp managed to flee and save their lives. We have intensified combing operations in the region and are trying to apprehend the ultras,” Agarwal added. On October 26, a country-made revolver, claymore mine and other explosives were seized from a Maoist dump in Malkangiri district.

# BENGAL GOV. TO MEET AMIT SHAH IN DELHI TODAY

Kolkata, Jan. 8: Amid the growing political turbulence in poll-bound West Bengal, Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar will be meeting Union home minister Amit Shah in Delhi on Saturday.

He had last met Shah in October 2020.

“Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar will fly to New Delhi on Friday night. His engagements include calling on the Union home minister Amit Shah on January 9,” Raj Bhavan sources said.

Dhankhar, who had been at loggerheads with the TMC government since taking charge as the Bengal governor, has criticised the Mamata Banerjee dispensation on several occasions over the “worsening” law and order situation in the state.

BJP leaders in Bengal have been demanding imposition of President’s Rule in the state, citing “breakdown of the rule of law” as reason.

Elections to the 294-member Bengal Assembly are likely to be held in April-May.

# RAUT DEFENDS UDDHAV’S POST ON ‘SAMBHAJINAGAR’

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, JAN. 8

Even a day after Congress’ protest, the reference to Aurangabad as ‘Sambhajnagar’ on Maharashtra CM’s official Twitter handle remained unchanged. Shiv Sena spokesperson and the Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut defended the Maharashtra CM’s official post, while Congress leader Ashok Chavan reminded the Uddhav Thackeray-led party that it was leading a coalition government.

In Nashik, Raut said that popular demand is above the Common Minimum Programme (CMP). It should not be necessary to run the government only as per what is written in the CMP, which is meant for ensuring food, clothes, and shelters. “It is not mentioned in the CMP to not make a decision over the popular demand,” Raut said.

The Congress has been contending that as it is not a part of the CMP, therefore, such issues should be avoided in order to ensure smooth functioning of the government.

Rebutting to Sena’s popular demand, Chavan, who is also PWD minister in Thackeray led government, said that it is a coalition government. Personal agenda can not be implemented. “This subject (name changing) is not on our priority list. Whenever such controversial issues come before the MVA government, all the constituents of MVA must sit together and resolve the issue,” he added.

# Budaun case: Main accused held

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

Budaun (UP), Jan. 8: A priest, who is the main accused in the alleged gangrape of an anganwadi worker in this Uttar Pradesh district, was quizzed throughout Friday night after his arrest in a late-night crackdown that ended his five-day run.

The “mahant”, Satya Narayan, was hiding in a forest area near the house of one of his followers in Mewali village under the Ughaiti police station, from where he was picked up, the police said.

The priest, who is in his 50s, was immediately arrested and interrogated by a police team.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Sankalp Sharma said the sub-inspector in-charge of the area, Amarjit Singh, was suspended on Friday.

The station house officer (SHO) of the Ughaiti police station, Raghendra Pratap, was suspended earlier for a “delay in informing higher authorities, laxity in taking action, dereliction of duty and failure in taking

speedy action” and a case under IPC section 166A (public servant disobeying law) has been registered against the two officers.

They had informed senior officials about the incident after a delay of 17 hours, the SSP said.

He said the priest is being questioned and further action will be taken in accordance with the information provided by him.

Some more people are on police radar and they are also being questioned, the SSP said, adding that all the angles are being looked into and the case will be solved soon.

The priest will be taken for a medical examination and produced before a local court for seeking remand later in the day, the police said.

The 50-year-old woman, who had gone to a temple, was found dead under mysterious circumstances on Sunday. Her family members accused the temple priest and his accomplices of raping and killing her.

A case was registered against the accused and

## HORRENDOUS INCIDENT

● **THE 50-YEAR-OLD WOMAN**, who had gone to a temple, was found dead under mysterious circumstances on Sunday.

● **HER FAMILY** members accused the temple priest and his accomplices of raping and killing her.

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

● **SOME MORE** people are on police radar and they are also being questioned and all the angles are being looked into.

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

two of them — Vedram and Jaspal — were arrested on Tuesday night.

The incident triggered an opposition outcry and a comparison with the 2012 Nirbhaya case in Delhi after the post-mortem report confirmed rape, a broken rib cage, a fractured leg and injuries in the victim’s private parts.

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

victim’s body to her house, saying it was found in a dry well on the temple premises.

The FIR was registered on Tuesday after an autopsy confirmed rape and the two accomplices of the priest were nabbed.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has ordered “strongest possible action” in the case even as opposition parties have

launched an attack on his government, terming the incident “horrific” and

“shameful”, with the Congress comparing it to the Nirbhaya case.

Following the incident, Bareilly ADG Avinash Chandra had visited the crime spot and announced a reward of ₹50,000 on the priest’s arrest.

“Based on complaints from the family members and the post-mortem report, a case has been registered under sections 376D (gang-rape) and 302 (punishment for murder) of the IPC,” he had said.

The ADG had said a second opinion on the post-mortem report was being sought from medical experts and only after that, any conclusion could be drawn.

Budaun Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Yashpal Singh said the woman died of trauma and excessive bleeding.

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

the security of the family.”

The victim’s son said his mother had gone to offer prayers at the temple on Sunday but did not return home within the expected time.

Around 11 pm, the priest and two of his aides came to their house and handed over the body, he added.

Before the family members could ask them about the cause of her death, the accused left the house saying she had fallen into a dry well and the body was pulled out subsequently.

The victim’s son said the police were informed of the incident on Monday.

Amid the opposition uproar, the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO), in a tweet, said: “The UP CM @myogiadityanath has taken cognisance of the Badaun incident and instructed to take strongest legal action against the accused.”

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

—PTI

# CONG, LEFT TO HOLD MEGA JOINT RALLY IN WEST BENGAL

Kolkata, Jan. 8: The CPM-led Left Front and the Congress, which have entered into an electoral alliance for the coming Assembly elections in West Bengal, will organise a mega joint rally at Kolkata in February or March, LF chairman Biman Bose said here on Thursday.

Leaders of the LF and the Congress, who have been holding parleys regularly on seat-sharing arrangements, met for another round of discussions during the day.

The parties decided to jointly hold a mega rally at the Brigade Parade Ground either in February or in March, Bose said after the day’s meeting.

Bose, Leader of the Opposition in the outgoing Assembly, Abdul Mannan of the Congress and other leaders participated in the discussions.

The Congress High Command and the central leadership of constituent parties of the Left Front have given a go-ahead to their state units for a seat-sharing arrangement for the election to the 294-member Assembly due in April-May.

The LF and the Congress had contested the 2016 Assembly poll in the state in a seat-sharing arrangement, but the alliance had fallen apart after that and the Front and the Congress fought the 2019 Lok Sabha elections on their own.

In the 2016 Assembly elections, the LF-Congress alliance won 76 seats, with the Congress winning 44 seats and the Front emerging victorious in only 32 constituencies.

The Left Front failed to open its account in West Bengal in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, while the Congress could manage to win two seats.

—PTI

● **CONGRESS HIGH command** and the central leadership of constituent parties of the Left Front have given a go-ahead to their state units for a seat-sharing arrangement.

## Scramble for water



Village women collect snow to melt for water, due to non-supply of drinking water in their village, in Bhaderwah of J&K on Friday. The women claimed that the water supply department had not restored the frozen pipes for the last two months.

—PTI

# Culling continues in bird flu affected areas of Kerala

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JAN. 8

Culling of poultry including ducks and chickens continued in Alappuzha and Kottayam districts of Kerala where bird flu cases were reported recently. The animal husbandry department officials said more than 80,000 birds have been culled so far including 62,000 in Alappuzha district. A cen-

tral team visited the affected areas of Alappuzha and Kottayam districts to study the outbreak of avian influenza the other day.

The three-member team of the Union health and family welfare ministry comprising experts from National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and institute of virology visited the hotspots in Alappuzha district.

The experts are examin-

ing the possibility of mutation of the H5N8 virus and whether it posed any risk to the human beings.

Samples collected from the affected areas are being subjected to lab investigations at the central institutes.

The team members held discussions with the district collectors and expressed satisfaction over the preventive steps taken so far.

# Delhi makes quarantine must for UK returnees

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JAN. 8

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called a meeting with the chief ministers of states and union territories on Monday to discuss the Covid-19 vaccine rollout plan.

The meeting will be held through video conferencing. On Friday, another round of dry run for the Covid-19 vaccination programme was conducted across the country to check the delivery system and preparedness of those trained.

Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan visited a few session sites in Tamil Nadu assured people that vaccine roll out will take place soon.

India on Friday had 18,139 fresh cases and 234 new deaths.

It is expected that the vaccine procurement process will be complete in a couple of days and the rollout may take place next week.

# MP honeytrap case: Seized CDs authentic

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JAN. 8

The sensational honey trapping and blackmailing scandal that came to light in September 2019 is set to return to haunt some high-profile people of the state after the Hyderabad-based Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) confirmed the authenticity of the sleaze CDs seized from the accused.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted by Madhya Pradesh police to probe the matter has received forensic test reports of the hard disk and CDs seized from some members of the alleged racket from the CFSL a couple of days ago.

“CFSL reports have confirmed that the hard disk and sleaze CDs and audios seized from some members of the racket

were authentic. We are examining the report. The CFSL report will help strengthen our case against the accused,” a senior police officer in the know of the things told this newspaper on Friday requesting not to be quoted.

Sources said the Central Forensic Science Laboratory report has indicated that no sex videos and sleaze audios examined by the laboratory are tampered with or morphed. All of them have been found to be authentic.

Around 4,000 sleazy videos and audios, sex chats and photographs showing some influential bureaucrats and politicians in compromising positions were recovered from the laptops, pen drives and mobile phones seized from members of the alleged racket following police raids in 2019.

# VISVA-BHARATI SUSPENDS PROF. OVER APPOINTMENT ALLEGATIONS

Kolkata, Jan. 8: Visva-Bharati authorities have suspended a professor who recently alleged irregularities in the appointment of a colleague and also even wrote to President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi about it.

The professor also made derogatory remarks against his colleague in the allegations, the varsity said.

The decision to suspend him was taken at an executive council meeting of the varsity late on Thursday.

“The Visva-Bharati

executive council... decided that disciplinary proceedings is to be initiated following applicable rules against Prof Sudipta Bhattacharya and also decided to place him under suspension with immediate effect,” the notice said.

Bhattacharya, who is also the president of Visva-Bharati University Faculty Association, had shared allegations against the colleague about “irregularities” in his appointment as a ‘*patha bhavana*’ (open-air school) head on a WhatsApp group.

—PTI

## DIGITAL | MOVE

Items like cars also can be now purchased online

# CSD canteens go online

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, JAN. 8

Army, Navy and Air Force personnel and veterans will now be able to purchase cars, motorcycles, and white goods (washing machines, TVs, and refrigerators among others), online from CSD canteens.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Friday launched the online portal for purchase of items against firm demand (AFD) from CSD canteens.

This will benefit 45 lakh CSD beneficiaries includ-

ing serving and retired persons from armed forces and serving civilian defence employees who will now be able to purchase AFD items (cars, motorcycles, washing machines, air conditioner, dishwasher, air purifier, music system, home theater, TVs, and refrigerator among others) from the comfort of their home.

This will facilitate faster and hassle-free experience to all these beneficiaries.

“CSD beneficiaries- Buy your next Car/Scooter and other AFD items from ease

of your home. No multiple trips to CSD or banks,” tweeted defence secretary Ajay Kumar.

The ceremony was held at New Delhi. During the ceremony there was also live streaming of delivery of cars and motorcycles to personnel in Mumbai, New Delhi, Ahmedabad and Jaipur for those who booked them during the trial run of the portal.

The Defence minister said that the project was in line with the vision of Digital India, enunciated by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi.

Mr Singh also conveyed the commitment of the government towards the welfare of all jawans and officers of armed forces and the veterans.

Canteen Stores Department (CSD), was set up in 1948 to provide ‘easy access to quality products of daily use, at prices less than market rates’ to the soldiers, ex-servicemen and their families.

Its portfolio has grown from just a few items of daily use in 1948 to over 4,000 products today.



## SHORT TAKES

POLICE CHIEF  
QUITS AFTER  
MOB INVASION

Washington, Jan. 8: The US Capitol police chief handed in his resignation Thursday, a day after Congress was invaded by a mob egged on by President Donald Trump, a source close to the agency said.

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

POMPEO SAYS  
US NOT ‘BANANA  
REPUBLIC’

Washington, Jan. 8: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Thursday hit back at assertions that a mob attack on the Capitol showed the United States to be a “banana republic.” A number of foreign critics as well as former US president George W. Bush made the analogy after rioters stirred up by President Donald Trump rampaged through a session of Congress that certified his loss to Joe Biden.

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

“In a banana republic, mob violence determines the exercise of power. In the United States, law enforcement officials quash mob violence so that the people’s representatives can exercise power in accordance with the rule of law and constitutional government,” Pompeo wrote on Twitter. Bush in a statement Wednesday made veiled criticism of the “reckless behavior” of members of his Republican Party in fueling the “insurrection.” “This is how election results are disputed in a banana republic — not our democratic republic,” Bush wrote.

STAY ON,  
LAWMAKERS TO  
WH STAFF

Washington, Jan. 8: US lawmakers urged White House staff to stay in their jobs amid a spate of resignations in protest at President Donald Trump’s support for the attack on Congress by his followers.

Senior Republican Senator Lindsey Graham urged top Trump aides to keep working for the final 14 days of the administration, naming chief of staff Mark Meadows, White House Counsel Pat Cipollone, and National Security Advisor Robert O’Brien.

“Most Americans will never know the service that Mark Meadows and Pat Cipollone and those under their charge provided to this country over the last year,” Graham said in a press conference.

“To those who believe you should leave your post now to make a statement, I would urge you not,” he said.

“To Robert O’Brien: you have been a good counsel to the president, you have been a steady hand. I’ve been missing your phone calls; Robert, stay on.” “To those in the national security apparatus, we need you now more than ever.” It was “a traumatic and entirely avoidable event as supporters of the President stormed the Capitol building following a rally he addressed,” said Chao, the wife of Senate majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Earlier Thursday, former chief of staff Mick Mulvaney said he was quitting his diplomatic post.

## COPS REJECTED OFFERS FOR HELP

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

Washington, Jan. 8: Three days before supporters of President Donald Trump rioted at the Capitol, the Pentagon asked the US Capitol Police if it needed National Guard manpower.

And as the mob descended on the building Wednesday, Justice Department leaders reached out to offer up FBI agents. The police turned them down both times, according to senior defence officials and two people familiar with the matter.

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

Four protesters died, including one shot inside the building. A Capitol Police officer died Thursday after being injured in the Wednesday melee. The rioting and loss of control has raised serious questions over security at the Capitol for future events. The actions of the day also raise troubling concerns about the treatment of mainly white Trump supporters, who were allowed to roam through the building for hours, while Black and brown protesters who demonstrated last year over police brutality faced more robust and aggressive policing.

“This was a failure of imagination, a failure of leadership,” said Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo, whose department responded to several large protests last year following the death of George Floyd. “The Capitol Police must do better and I don’t see how we can get around that.”

Acevedo said he has attended events on the Capitol grounds to honour slain police officers that had higher fences and a stronger security presence than what he saw on video Wednesday. Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy said that as the rioting was underway, it became clear that the Capitol Police were overrun. But he said there was no contingency planning done in advance for what forces could do in case of a problem at the Capitol because Defence Department help was turned down.

“They’ve got to ask us, the request has to come to us,” said McCarthy. US Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund, under pressure from Schumer, Pelosi and other congressional leaders, was forced to resign.

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



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



**LIKE ALL Americans, I am outraged by the violence, lawlessness and mayhem. I immediately deployed the national guard and federal law enforcement to secure the building and expel the intruders.**

**DONALD TRUMP, US Prez**



**THE STORMING of the US Congress by Donald Trump’s supporters is a disgrace that has “shocked humankind”.**

**RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN, Turkish President**



**THE MOB attack by his supporters on the US Capitol was the “ugly ending” to Trump’s time at the White House.**

**SILVIO BERLUSCONI, Former Italian premier**



**WE CALL on the president of the United States, to disavow false and dangerous narratives, and encourage their supporters to do so as well.**

**MICHELLE BACHELET, UN rights chief**

**THEY WEREN’T protesters. They were a riotous mob, insurrectionists, domestic terrorists. The past four years we have had a Prez who has made his contempt for our democracy, our Constitution, the rule of law, clear in everything he has done.**

**JOE BIDEN, President-elect**



## VP: No radical move to oust Don

Washington, Jan. 8: US Vice President Mike Pence is opposed to using the constitution’s 25th Amendment to force President Donald Trump from office, despite pressure from Democrats and some Republicans, the *New York Times* reported Thursday.

While Pence has not spoken publicly about invoking the mechanism, never used before in US history, the newspaper

cited a person close to the vice president saying he is against the radical move.

The calls to remove Trump came after supporters who he had encouraged invaded and shut down the US Congress Wednesday as it was poised to certify the election victory of Trump’s rival, Democrat Joe Biden.

Democrats demanded action even though Trump only has 13 days left in office.

“This is an emergency of the highest magnitude,” said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

“By inciting sedition, as he did yesterday, he must be removed from office.” The Times said Pence’s stance is supported by several cabinet members, whose backing would be necessary to carry out a 25th Amendment removal.

Democrats in the US House of Representatives said that if the

25th Amendment is not invoked they will move quickly to impeach Trump.

“We have a limited period of time in which to act,” said House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerry Nadler, who led the successful impeachment of Trump a year ago, before the president was ultimately acquitted by the Republican-led Senate.

— AFP

Cop’s death  
takes unrest  
toll to five

Washington, Jan. 8: Flags over the US Capitol were lowered to half-staff Friday after the death of a police officer took to five the number of people who died after President Donald Trump’s supporters stormed the legislature.

US Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick was reportedly struck in the head with a fire extinguisher on Wednesday while struggling with the rioters who swarmed through the halls of Congress.

The 42-year-old member of the force that protects the ground of the Congress returned to his division office where he collapsed and was taken to the hospital, according to the Capitol Police.

He died of his injuries late Thursday, they said. According to reports, the FBI will open a murder investigation into his death.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ordered flags over the Capitol lowered in his honour.

“The violent and deadly act of insurrection targeting the Capitol, our temple of American Democracy, and its workers was a profound tragedy and stain on our nation’s history,” she said. — AFP

Cops lenient with mob,  
severe with anti-racists

Los Angeles, Jan. 8: Like many Americans, President-elect Joe Biden on Thursday accused US authorities of treating a pro-Trump mob that stormed the Capitol more leniently than last year’s anti-racism demonstrators.

“No one can tell me that if it had been a group of Black Lives Matter protesting yesterday... they wouldn’t have been treated very, very differently than the mob of thugs that stormed the Capitol,” Biden said in an address from his hometown in Delaware.

“We all know that’s true, and it is unacceptable,” said Biden, who will take over the White House on January 20, after winning November’s election in part due to strong support

from Black voters.

On Wednesday thousands of protesters — spurred on by a speech given by President Donald Trump — marched to the seat of the US legislature, where some broke down barriers and doors to invade the building in an unprecedented act that played out on live television.

But police officers in charge of security held off using tear gas until intruders had reached the heart of the building, where they roamed freely, ransacking offices.

US media reported that some law enforcement officials even opened doors for them.

The scene stood in stark contrast to last year’s anti-racism protests in the nation’s capital and beyond. — AFP

Capitol storming: Two  
Cabinet members quit

Washington, Jan. 8: Two members of Donald Trump’s Cabinet resigned Thursday with days left in the administration in protest over the storming of the Capitol by a mob of the president’s supporters.

The education secretary and transportation secretary — the only two women in Trump’s inner Cabinet — both said they could no longer remain in office after the violent rampage on a ceremonial session of Congress that certified President-elect Joe Biden’s victory.

“That behaviour was unconscionable for our country. There is no mistaking the impact your rhetoric had on the situation, and it is the inflection point for me,” said Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, a conserva-

tive stalwart who had served throughout the administration.

“Impressionable children are watching all this, and they are learning from us,” she said in a letter to Trump.

“They must know from us that America is greater than what transpired yesterday.” Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, who is married to Republican Senate majority Leader Mitch McConnell, earlier said it was “a traumatic and entirely avoidable event as supporters of the president stormed the Capitol building following a rally he addressed.” “It has deeply troubled me in a way I simply cannot set aside,” she added.

— AFP

Sedition charge  
likely for rioters

Washington, Jan. 8: The top federal prosecutor for the District of Columbia has said that “all options are on the table” for charging members of the violent pro-Trump mob that stormed the US Capitol — including sedition charges.

Michael Sherwin, acting US attorney for DC, said prosecutors plan to file 15 federal cases on Thursday for crimes including unauthorised access and theft of property, and investigators are combing through reams of evidence to bring additional charges. “All of those charges are on the table. ... We will bring the most maximum charges we can,” he said. — AP

Trump considering  
self-pardon: US media

Washington, Jan. 8: Embattled President Donald Trump has discussed with his close aides the possibility of pardoning himself before leaving the office on January 20, US media reports have said, amid growing calls for his removal from the White House. According to CNN, some of those conversations happened in recent weeks, and Trump has asked about the legal and political consequences of a self-pardon.

The news comes as Democratic and Republican lawmakers alike rebuked Trump’s conduct as thousands of his supporters stormed the US Capitol building on Wednesday and clashed with police, resulting in four deaths and interrupting a constitutional process by Congress to affirm the

victories of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris in the November 3 election.

It is not clear if the issue has come up since Wednesday’s mayhem at the Capitol building fomented by the President’s rhetoric or after his recent controversial call with the Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, the report said, citing multiple sources.

The president has also asked for legal opinions on whether he has the authority to issue a self-pardon and has been advised on the potential political fallout, it said. The *New York Times* reported on Thursday that Trump has suggested in conversations since Election Day that he wants to pardon himself. — AFP



DECCAN  
Chronicle

9 JANUARY 2021

True picture of economy  
emerges in official data

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

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

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

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

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

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

FB, Twitter: Action too late

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

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

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

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Subhani



Reassert 'core' values &  
halt democracy's decay

Ashwani Kumar

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

This disquieting conclusion flows from a distressing institutional response to the egregious infraction of human rights, raising a profoundly important question on the functioning of our democratic institutions. Repeated abuse of several stringent laws with punitive consequences has resulted from a reversal of the presumption of innocence in favour of the accused, declared by the Supreme Court as a human right. (Bhramajeet Singh Sharma, 2005)

Demonstrated arbitrariness in investigative processes and the failure of the Indian State to enact a comprehensive anti-custodial torture law question our willingness to civilise ourselves in the use of State power. Denial of basic human rights to undertrials, poignantly exemplified in the refusal of a sipper to an 80-year-old undertrial priest suffering from Parkinson's disease and the refusal of jail guards to allow an incarcerated public intellectual access to a pair of spectacles must shame the nation. This, despite Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer's binding edict in the Sunil Batra case as early as 1978, that fundamental rights "do not part company with the prisoner at the prison gates..." Indiscriminate arrests of citizens on charges of sedition are etched in public memory as a repressive act of State power intended to crimi-

nalise dissent.

Unconscionable arrests for inter-faith marriages mischievously labelled as "love jihad" have scarred the constitutional conscience. Heart rending sights of a dog nibbling at a dead woman's body inside a hospital, and the reported beating to death of a dalit worker just because he had served himself a mouthful of food while clearing the leftovers, condemn us irretrievably as a heartless society. Are we then really a people who can claim that they live in the shelter of each other? Despite the Supreme Court's repeated directives, trials by the media continue to infract the citizens' right to liberty, fair trial and reputation.

As the highest forum of democracy, Parliament too cannot escape its share of responsibility for our faltering record on human rights. The three controversial agricultural reforms laws affecting the economic condition and dignity of millions of India's farmers, passed in both Houses of Parliament without any discussion by a voice vote, is a recent illustration. The enactment of often abused "broad" laws without thoughtful deliberation have had grave consequences for the liberty and dignity of citizens.

The offices of the Lokpal, the Central Information Commission and the National Human Rights Commission have remained largely dormant in practice, except for the occasional and unenforced interventions. Our national leaders, captive to personal animosities and dwarfed by timidity in the face of power, remain obsessed with a "manipulative conversation about our future", with little time to address themselves to the defining challenges of our times. Thus politics,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LETTERS

DEMOCRACY BLACKENED

The ugly incidents in the Capitol Hill, USA were perhaps induced by the adamant stand taken by the outgoing President Mr Trump. There was a time when American Presidents were held in high esteem all over the world for their graceful conduct and etiquette. American democracy was indeed considered as a role model for those having belief in democratic practices. That belief and faith had been shattered in a few minutes of violence and unruly conduct of the supporters of Mr Trump. The disgrace can be erased at least a bit only when Mr Trump seeks public apology. Gentlemanship also requires him to attend the oath/pledge taking ceremony of the new President with a smiling face with a friendly embrace. None at this moment knows how Mr Trump will conduct himself then.

S. Nagarajan Iyer,  
Coimbatore

TRUMP TANTRUMS

WHAT A megalomaniac will do in the next 12 days is a million dollar conjecture (*Trump's 'insurrection' was the final straw...*, Jan. 8). With his goading, vandals had a field day in the prestigious Capitol Hill in Washington and made America look like a barbaric third world nation. All this was possible due to the gap between declaring election results and assumption of office by a new president after a complicated voting process. Black Lives Matter, the ban on eligible immigrants into USA and a record number of deaths due to Covid and now desecration of the Capitol by hooligans are some of many dark spots on Trump's four-year misrule. Without much delay, mad hatter Trump should be chained in a mental asylum and, as rightly concluded in the editorial, he has earned his place in the dustbin of history.

Parthasarathy Mandadi, Tirupati

MAKE AMENDS PANT

THE BUTTER-FINGERED Indian wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant spilled two catches of the Aussie opener Pucovski in ball numbers 26 and 32 that he faced, allowing him to score 62 runs. The point blank critical analysis of the ex-Aussie captain Ricky Ponting reveals Pant has the dubious record of flooring most catches among current wicket keepers. Pant must make amends with the bat when he gets a chance.

S. Vaithianathan, Madurai

Farukh  
Dhondy  
Cabbages  
& Kings



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

— From Rubaiyat of Bachchoo Ka Adda

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The phrases "British variant", "British mutant virus" and other such descriptions are spreading through the world media and, of course, occasioning a backlash in Britain, even though the fact stands that the mutant strain and its effects were first noticed in this country. Nevertheless, there is a sense of shrill protests of victimisation from those who challenge the description.

One of the shrillest protesters is a character called Roger Helmer, who used to be a British Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and is a supporter of the jingoistic United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	48,782.51	1.43
Nifty 50	14,347.25	1.48
S&P 500*	3,811.72	0.21
Dollar (₹)	73.24	0.10
Pound Sterling (₹)	99.61	0.06
Euro (₹)	89.64	0.36
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	49,763*614	1.23
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	55.52	2.10
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.892	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.088	0.017

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

### Gold bond issue price fixed at ₹5,104 per gm

The issue price for the Sovereign Gold Bond has been fixed at Rs 5,104 per gram of gold, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said. The Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2020-21-Series X will be open for subscription from January 11 to January 15. "The nominal value of the bond...works out to Rs 5,104 per gram of gold," the RBI said. Investors applying and paying online will get a discount of Rs 50 per gramme.

### Forex reserves swell \$4.48 bn to record \$585.32 bn



The country's foreign exchange reserves surged by \$4.483 billion to touch a record high of \$585.324 billion in the week ended January 1, RBI data showed. In the previous week ended Dec. 25, the reserves had declined by \$290 million to \$580.841 bn. Foreign currency assets climbed by \$4.168 bn to \$541.642 bn. Gold reserves rose by \$315 million to \$37,026 bn. The special drawing rights with the IMF stood at \$1,510 bn.

### Manipal buy of Columbia Asia gets CCI nod

The Competition Commission of India approved acquisition of Columbia Asia Hospitals by Manipal Health Enterprises. The approval came after Manipal Hospitals in November 2020 said it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire Columbia Asia Hospitals in India. The acquisition will be for Rs 2,100 crore, sources had earlier said. The combined entity will have a presence of 27 hospitals across 15 cities.

### MG Hector SUV facelift launched at ₹12.89 lakh

MG Motor, the British iconic car brand now owned by Chinese giant SAIC Motor, has rolled out the all-new seven-seater version of the Hector Plus SUV and the MG Hector SUV facelift with prices starting at Rs 13.34 lakh and Rs 12.89 lakh, respectively. The facelift for the Hector-introduced about 18 months after the mid size SUV's launch in India-and updated Hector Plus get a few cosmetic and equipment upgrades.



## ■ Lower margins, higher loan growth seen Q3 to be a mixed bag for lenders

FALAKNAAZ SYED  
MUMBAI, JAN. 8

Third quarter (Q3FY21) earnings for banks are expected to be a mixed bag this season. While credit flow and collection efficiency could slightly improve quarter-on-quarter (QoQ), driven by a bounce back in the retail sector and sustained momentum in agriculture, the asset quality recognition could be delayed again by a quarter due to the Supreme Court's impending decision on loan recast. Hence, gross non-performing asset (GNPA) ratios might be a tad better QoQ, with lenders reporting asset quality adjusted for the SC verdict. Other income may dip sequentially due to lower treasury gains and fee income.

The Supreme Court in its order last year had banned banks from marking defaulted loans as non-performing assets (NPAs). The apex court had earlier directed banks not to recognise fresh NPAs, till further orders in the interest on interest case. A public interest litigation (PIL) was earlier filed in the Supreme Court to waive off interest on interest for borrowers during the March to August moratorium period.

Provisional data released by private banks showed slight improvement in loan growth sequentially during the December quarter compared to the September quarter. According to analysts,



large banks are likely to report better credit growth. The country's largest private sector lender, HDFC Bank, reported a loan growth of 16 per cent for the quarter ended December 2020. In a BSE filing, HDFC Bank said, its advances aggregated to about Rs 10.82 lakh crore as of December 31, a growth of around 16 per cent. The total loans and advances for Yes Bank grew by 1.8 per cent to Rs 1.69 lakh crore.

"For our banks, we see better QoQ loan growth of 2 per cent versus one per cent in the last quarter, although net interest margin (NIM) may contract by 10 basis points to 3.4 per cent due to the flow through impact of lower deposit rates. Provisioning could remain elevated as banks might be conservative on future recognition. Consequently, net profit may decline by 17 per cent QoQ to Rs 9,280 crore," said Gaurav Jani, analyst, Centrum Broking. Motilal Oswal Institu-

tional Equities said, "higher credit costs, coupled with suppressed credit growth, are likely to put pressure on near-term earnings. Although slippages are likely to increase in 2HFY21, we expect heavyweights like Kotak Mahindra Bank/HDFC Bank to post a PAT growth of 20 per cent/11 per cent year on year. We expect net profit for IndusInd Bank/Federal Bank/Axis Bank/ICICI Bank to decline by 56 per cent/20 per cent/15 per cent/14 per cent year on year."

"PSU Banks are expected to deliver NI/PAT growth of 2.8 per cent/around 18 per cent year on year, led by Bank of Baroda, which is expected to report a profit in 3Q," it added.

Sharekhan said, "even though overall credit growth has been weak on system levels, at 5 per cent over the previous year, larger and well placed banks such as HDFC Bank, ICICI, SBI are expected to report better advances growth."

### SBI RAISES DISCOUNTS ON HOME LOANS BY 30 BPS

FALAKNAAZ SYED  
MUMBAI, JAN. 8

The country's largest lender, State Bank of India (SBI), on Friday announced further interest concession of upto 30 basis points (bps) on home loans and full waiver on processing fees. One basis point is one hundredth of a percentage point.

The higher interest concession would be based on the loan amount, the creditworthiness of the borrower and the location of the property and would be available till March 2021. "The largest home loan lender has sweetened its past offers and now provides higher interest concession based on loan amount, the creditworthiness of the borrowers and the location of the property. SBI believes that it is important to offer better rates to customers displaying good repayment history. SBI home loan interest rates are linked to Cibil score and start from 6.80 per cent for loans up to Rs 30 lakh and 6.95 per cent for loans above Rs 30 lakhs. Interest concessions up to 30 bps is also available in eight metro cities for loans up to Rs 5 crore," the lender said in a statement.

Customers can also apply via Yono app or from [homeloans.sbi/www.sbi/loans/in59min-utes.com](http://homeloans.sbi/www.sbi/loans/in59min-utes.com) and get additional interest concession of 5 bps, the bank said in a statement.

## TCS beats estimates after Covid drives digital boom

SARITHA RAI  
JAN. 8

Tata Consultancy Services Ltd beat expectations after record deal wins underscored a global shift toward digitalization during the pandemic.

Asia's largest software outsourcing provider reported profit rose to Rs 8,700 crore (\$1.2 billion) in the quarter ended December, compared with the average estimate of Rs 8,590 crore. Sales climbed to Rs 42,020 crore.

India's top software companies like TCS and rival Infosys Ltd were expected to deliver their best December-quarter performance in a decade, defying a global downturn. Despite struggling with lockdowns that



forced hundreds of thousands of their employees to work from home, the IT services industry has largely experienced healthy order pipelines, steady revenues and expanding margins.

India's \$181 billion tech outsourcing industry is riding a wave of digital transformation that's expected to underpin deal signings and outlook revisions from its top players. Technology

emerged as the second-best performing sector in India's equity market last year, behind only healthcare, as the pandemic hastened a push toward digitalization and work-from-home activities spurred demand for video-conferencing, cloud services and e-commerce. Global banks and insurers are accelerating efforts to shed non-core assets, like in-house tech support, as they navigate through the economic uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bloomberg Intelligence said, a boost in spending on digital transformations and a need for deeper IT savings will be the main drivers that accelerate sales growth over the next "two-three quarters."

— Bloomberg

## Indices inch up on rotational buying

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, JAN. 8

The market closed at a new record high, led by buying in IT & auto stocks, with third quarter earnings expectations and global cues boosting investor sentiments.

The Sensex gained 689 points or 1.43 per cent to close at 48,782 while the Nifty-50 closed at 14,347.25, gaining 209.90 points, or 1.48 per cent.

Foreign portfolio investors were net buyers of equities worth Rs 6,029.83 crore while the domestic institutions were net sellers by Rs 2,372.54 crore.

"Global cues were positive as investors expected that a new Democratic-controlled US government would lead to heavy spending and borrowing to support the country's economic recovery," said Siddhartha Khemka, head-retail research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

"The rally was led by the IT stocks, BSE IT index was up by 3.55 per cent, on high expectation from TCS result, which was to be announced by the company after the market hours," he said.

TCS soared to a new life time high of Rs 3,127.55 on the BSE and finally closed

at Rs 3,120.35. Other gainers included Infosys (3.95 per cent), Wipro (5.75 per cent), Tech Mahindra (5.64 per cent) and HCL Tech (3.13 per cent).

"At present, the rotational buying across the sectors is helping the index to inch higher," said Ajit Mishra, vice president research, Religare Broking.

BSE Auto Index also gained 3.37 per cent, led by gains for Maruti Suzuki (5.94 per cent), Eicher Motors (4.23 per cent), Mahindra & Mahindra (3.51 per cent) and Hero MotoCorp (3.31 per cent) and Bajaj Auto (2.75 per cent).

## Retail investors book profit in equity, hybrid MFs for sixth month

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, JAN. 8

Equity and hybrid mutual fund schemes saw continued outflows worth over Rs 16,000 crore in December 2020 due to ongoing redemptions for the sixth month in a row, as per monthly data released by Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi).

However, the rally in the equity market and inflows of over Rs 13,862 crore in the debt schemes helped the industry's total asset under management to top Rs 31 lakh crore in December, a new all-time high, at Rs 31,02,475 crore, as on December 31. In November, the total mutual industry AUM stood at Rs 30,00,904 crore.

N. S. Venkatesh, chief executive, Amfi, said, "while net-inflows in equity funds and hybrid are indeed negative, on the back of profit-led redemptions, the gross inflows are a healthy Rs 36,000 crore in these two categories."

Equity-oriented schemes saw outflow of equity

assets worth Rs 10,147 crore while hybrid schemes saw outflows worth Rs 5,932 crore. Barring sectoral/thematic fund (Rs 3,412 crore) and dividend yield fund (Rs 1,490 crore) all other equity-oriented schemes saw outflows.

Himanshu Srivastava, associate director-manager research, Morningstar India, said, "Outflows were witnessed across equity fund categories except for dividend yield and sectoral/thematic funds categories, given both these categories saw the launch of new funds, which managed to garner investor interest. These NFOs collected assets worth Rs 6,312 crore. Large-cap and multi-cap categories were the worst hit during the month. These two categories together witnessed a net outflow of Rs 7,417.16 crore in December."

In debt schemes, corporate bond fund (Rs 8,609 crore), short duration fund (Rs 3,953 crore), overnight fund (Rs 7,410 crore) and liquid fund (Rs 5,102 crore) saw inflows.

### FPOs NO LONGER NEED MINIMUM CONTRIBUTION FROM PROMOTER

New Delhi, Jan. 8: Capital markets watchdog Sebi on Friday relaxed the framework for follow-on public offers (FPOs), a move that will help promoters of companies to raise funds more easily through this route.

The applicability of minimum promoters' contribution norm and the subsequent lock-in requirements for the issuers making FPO have been done away with by the regulator, as per a notification.

Earlier, promoters had to contribute 20 per cent towards a company's FPO. Besides, in case of any issue of capital to the public, the minimum promoters' contribution was required to be locked-in for three years.

The regulator said the relaxation would be available for companies which are frequently traded on a stock exchange for at least three years. Also, such firms should have redressed 95 per cent of investor complaints.

The issuer company needs to be in compliance with the LODR (Listing Obligations and Disclosures Requirements) Regulations for at least three years, according to Sebi. —PTI

## Hyundai stock turns red hot on reports of tie-up for Apple car

YOOJUNG LEE  
JAN. 8

A reported potential tie-up with Apple Inc is making South Korea's second-richest family even richer:

Shares of Hyundai Motor Company jumped as much as 25 per cent in Seoul on Friday --the most since 1988--after the company said it's been receiving requests to cooperate on developing self-driving electric vehicles. An earlier report in local media named the US tech giant.

That boosted the combined fortune of Hyundai Motor Group chairman Euisun Chung and his father, Mong-Koo, by some \$2 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

Euisun, who succeed his



Euisun Chung

father as the group's chairman in October, has been pushing for technologies, including electric and driverless vehicles to turn the carmaker into one of the world's leaders. Hyundai Motor will spend more than 60 trillion won (\$55 billion) in those areas over the next five years and in 2019 set up a \$4 bil-

lion autonomous-driving joint venture with a General Motors Co. spin-off. It plans to release its first electric vehicle this year.

Any collaboration with a big tech company could boost that push. Apple has said it will take at least five years to introduce an autonomous, electric vehicle, according to people familiar with the plans, meaning that it's in no hurry to decide on potential auto-industry partners.

With Friday's stock surge, Euisun Chung is now worth \$5 billion and his father's wealth has jumped to \$7.4 billion. The two directly hold about 8 per cent of Hyundai Motor.

— Bloomberg

### CHINA ORDERS MEDIA TO CENSOR ALIBABA COVERAGE

SHIYIN CHEN & COCO LIU  
JAN. 8

China has ordered its domestic media to censor reports about an antitrust probe into Alibaba Group Holding Ltd, signalling how the issue has become a matter of national political sensitivity, the *Financial Times* reported.

A directive issued by the

government's propaganda arm toward the end of last year ordered news outlets to strictly invoke the official line on the investigation into the tech giant and prohibited them from engaging in extended analysis without permission, the *FT* said, citing two sources.

Jack Ma's empire has become the most promi-

nent target of China's campaign against the technology industry, which as so far torpedoed affiliate Ant Group Co's \$35 billion initial public offering and led to an antitrust investigation at the e-commerce giant. Ma, who hasn't been seen in public for months, has been advised by the government to stay in the country. — Bloomberg

### GREEN | CONUNDRUM Vessel owners don't know which alternative technology to be adopted

## Ship orders dip 50% over fuel use uncertainty

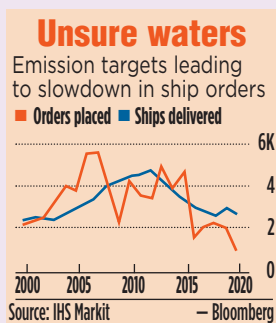
ELIZABETH LOW & JACK WITTELS  
JAN. 8

Ship owners facing looming deadlines to use less-polluting fuels have slashed the number of new vessels on order because they don't know which alternative technology to switch to.

Ammonia, hydrogen, biofuels and electrification are some of the many contenders to power the world's future merchant fleet, but most are only in the trial stage and won't be scalable for

at least a decade. With the life of a commercial ship averaging around 20 years, opting for a technology that doesn't take off could be very costly.

But owners are running out of time to make the choice. In 2018 the International Maritime Organization set a target to cut shipping's greenhouse-gas emissions in half by 2050 from 2008 levels. The deadline prompted some ship owners to hold off on new orders until it became clearer which new fuels would be the best option—a decline



that has turned into a slump with the subsequent global trade disputes and the pandemic. Orders fell almost 10 per

cent in 2019 and then more than 50 per cent in 2020 to the lowest in at least two decades, IHS Markit data show. If activity doesn't pick up, that could lead to a dearth of vessels and a spike in freight rates in a few years.

"People aren't ordering ships because we don't know what to fuel them with," said Morten Aarup, head of market research at Danish vessel owner D/S Norden A/S. "Engineers, ship designers need to come together" urgently to find the

best solution, he said in a recent panel discussion on shipping trends.

Ship owners who fail to switch to new, cleaner vessels could find themselves at a competitive disadvantage as more customers demand environmentally-friendly transport. About 12.3 per cent of vessels on order have alternative-fuel propulsion, compared with just 0.6 per cent of the current global fleet, according to data from Drewry Maritime Services.

But the use of alterna-

tive fuels in shipping is still in its infancy, with many of the big ship owners pursuing different alternatives. Trafigura Group, one of the world's biggest energy traders, has a stake in a company selling marine biofuels, vessel classification society Lloyd's Register has given approval in principle to several ammonia-fuelled ship projects and Swedish tanker line Stena Bulk AB is planning to run some of its vessels on used cooking oil.

— Bloomberg

### KYC NOT MUST FOR JEWELLERY BUYING

New Delhi, Jan. 8: No new KYC disclosures have been mandated for cash purchase of gold, silver or precious gems and stones and only high-value cash transactions continue to require the filing of documents such as income tax PAN or biometric ID Aadhaar, finance ministry sources said on Friday. Clarifying a December 28, 2020 notification, the Department of Revenue in the ministry said "cash purchase" of jewellery, bullion and precious gems and stones of value more than Rs 2 lakh is not allowed without KYC in the country for the past few years.

This continues, the official said. —PTI



## SHORT TAKES

## IOC member not sure of Olympics

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

## Fifa ex-president Blatter in hospital

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

## City owner buys FA Cup trophy

**London:** Manchester City owner Sheikh Mansour has bought the first piece of silverware won the club — the Football Association Challenge Cup used from 1896 to 1910. The trophy, a forerunner of the FA Cup in use today, was won by the club in 1904, when they beat Bolton Wanderers 1-0 in the final. "City are delighted to announce we are now the proud custodian of the 1896-1910 Football Association Challenge Cup (FA Cup) following the recent purchase of the trophy at auction by club owner, His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed," read a statement.

## Honda riders in third 1-2 at Dakar

**Al Qaisumah, Saudi Arabia:** With the opening third of the Dakar Rally completed, Monster Energy Honda Team riders now aim to consolidate positions which will allow them to attack in the second half of the race. Thursday saw another one-two for the Honda CRF450 RALLY, with Kevin Benavides and Jose Ignacio Cornejo occupying the top two places in fifth stage. Kevin Benavides claimed the day's victory spoils after a ferocious performance from start to finish.

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

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

**Big Bash League:** Perth Scorchers vs Sydney Thunder from 1.45 pm on Sony Six, HD

## FOOTBALL

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

**FA Cup:** Everton vs Rotherham United from 5.30 pm; Stoke City vs Leicester City from 8.30 pm; Arsenal vs Newcastle United from 11 pm; Manchester United vs Watford from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD; Southampton vs Shrewsbury Town from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

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## STEVE RUNSMITH

## Jadeja and Gill star for India despite Smith's century

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Australian attack looked more insipid than ever and Rohit, playing his first game in nearly two months, did all the hard work for nearly two hours before failing to check an uppish drive that was pounced by the bowler.

But it was a day when India had two openers, who were both ready to pull the fast bowlers during their opening spells and dominate Lyon with precise footwork. — *PTI*

## BCCI ALL SET TO DUMP I.M.G AS IPL ORGANISER

**New Delhi, Jan. 8:** The BCCI has decided to part ways with International Management Group (IMG), which has held the events rights of the IPL since its inception, a top Board official revealed on Friday.

"Yes, we have sent them a termination notice," the official said.

It has been learnt the notice was sent earlier this week and the board plans to run its premier tournament with its own set of professionals from this year. The UK-based company had retained the event rights for the IPL in 2017 for a five-year period till 2022.

The 2021 edition is expected to be held in its usual window of March-April but it is not yet decided whether it will take place in India or overseas like the 2020 one.

A mini auction before the IPL is expected to be held in February. — *PTI*

## Brisbane Test is under Covid cloud

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

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

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



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

## Smith laughs off form slump

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

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

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

But Smith said he was never worried, pointing out that he hit pulsating back-to-back centuries in the limited-overs series against India late last year.

"I read a lot of things and plenty of people said I was out of form so it was nice to come back into form, if that's what you want to call it," he said. "I mean, it was only about three or four weeks ago that I scored two hundreds at the Sydney Cricket Ground. So yeah, it kind of just makes me laugh sometimes when people say that kind of thing."

"I missed out in the first two Tests obviously and came back today and scored some runs and helped I guess put us in a decent position." Smith struggled against the spin of Ravi Ashwin in Adelaide and Melbourne and admitted he made some adjustments to his game, which helped him build his near-flawless score.

— *AFP*

run-out will stay with me," said the Saurashtra all-rounder. Jadeja has been a live wire on the field during this tour with some fantastic catches like the one he took running back-

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

Jadeja also said that the plan was to vary pace of

that was agreed upon at the beginning of the tour. The quarantine rules in Brisbane will restrict the players to just their hotel rooms after day's play.

**GAVASKAR BATS FOR THE BCCI**

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar on Friday said that BCCI is only "protecting its players" by seeking a quarantine relaxation ahead of the fourth Test, just like Queensland health authorities are entitled to shield their people in the wake of fresh Corona-

virus cases in Brisbane. "The Queensland government is fully entitled to protect its people. Similarly I believe the BCCI is fully entitled to protect its team. I think that's something we should never forget," Gavaskar said during commentary on Channel 7.

Gavaskar said that Indian team is not unjustified in demanding that if the players are together at the ground for 10 hours, they should be at least allowed to mingle in the hotel. — *PTI*

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## SCORECARD

**Australia first innings (overnight 166 for 2):** M. Labuschagne c Rahane b Jadeja 91, Steve Smith run out 131, M. Wade c Bumrah b Jadeja 13, C. Green lbw b Bumrah 0, T. Paine b Bumrah 1, P. Cummins b Jadeja 0, M. Starc c Gill b Saini 24, N. Lyon lbw b Jadeja 0, J. Hazlewood not out 1, Extras (b4, w1, nb5) 10. **Total (all out in 105.4 overs) 338**

**FoW:** 1-6, 2-106, 3-206, 4-232, 5-249, 6-255, 7-278, 8-310, 9-315. **Bowling:** Bumrah 25.4-7-66-2, Siraj 25-4-67-1, Ashwin 24-1-74-0, Saini 13-0-65-2, Jadeja 18-3-62-4.

**India first innings:** R. Sharma c&b Hazlewood 26, S. Gill c Green b Cummins 50, C. Pujara not out 9, A. Rahane not out 5. Extras (w5, nb1) 6. **Total (two wickets, 45 overs) 96**

**FoW:** 1-70, 2-85. **Bowling:** Starc 7-4-19-0, Hazlewood 10-5-23-1, Cummins 12-6-19-1, Lyon 16-7-35-0.

## NUMBERS GAME

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

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

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

● Steven Smith has scored 1,570 runs till the end of Australian first innings. ● Ravindra Jadeja recorded his best bowling in Australia by taking 4 for 62. It was his third best performance in away Tests after 6 for 138 against South Africa at Durban in 2013-14 and 5 for 152 against Sri Lanka at Colombo in 2017. Ravindra Jadeja's previous best in Australia was 3 for 82 at Melbourne in 2018-19.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

## Non-compliance warning to NSFs

**New Delhi, Jan. 8:** National Sports Code is the law and the federations which are not complying with it cannot be granted recognition, the Delhi High Court on Friday made it clear while granting a last opportunity to the Centre to show that the 41 NSFs granted recognition were complying with the requirements of the code.

The high court said in case of failure of the Centre in complying with its direction, the secretary of sports, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports will have to be present before in the hearing.

"We grant one last opportunity to the Respondent (Centre) to comply with the order of November 6, 2020 failing which we direct the secretary (sports), Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to remain present during the next hearing. The affidavit shall be filed within 10 days," a bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Najmi Waziri said.

The court listed the matter for further hearing on January 22.

The special bench was hearing a plea challenging the recognition granted to

● **The Delhi High Court granted a last opportunity to the Centre to show that the 41 National Sports Federations which were granted recognition were complying with the requirements of the national sports code.**

the 41 National Sports Federations (NSFs).

During the hearing, senior advocate Sachin Dutta and central government standing counsel Anil Soni, representing the Centre, sought some more time to file a reply in the matter.

This was opposed by petitioner lawyer and sports activist Rahul Mehra who said enough time has already been granted to the authorities who have filed an affidavit earlier and washed off their hands.

The bench said, "You need to change the game you are playing. You are playing soft ball, now you have to play hard ball. There is no compliance of the sports code. What is this happening?" — *PTI*

## Ban on 3 shuttlers for match-fixing

**New Delhi, Jan. 8:** The Badminton World Federation (BWF) on Friday handed life bans to three Indonesian shuttlers for involvement in match-fixing, match manipulation and betting.

The sport's governing body said, "eight Indonesian players who knew each other, and competed in lower-level international competitions mostly in Asia up until 2019, breached BWF Integrity Regulations related to match fixing, match manipulation and/or betting on badminton."

"Three of them were

found to have coordinated and organised others into being complicit in the behaviour and have been suspended from all badminton related activities for life," BWF said in a statement.

"Five others were suspended for between six to 12 years and fined between \$3,000 and \$12,000 each."

The BWF said it was a report by a whistleblower which allowed its integrity unit to start a probe and interview a number of players about the matter, following which all eight players were provisionally suspended in January last year. — *PTI*



Jarrett Allen (left) of Brooklyn Nets reaches for a rebound above Joel Embiid of Philadelphia 76ers during their NBA game in New York on Thursday. Nets won 122-109. — *AP*

## Harris scores as Nets snare 76ers

**Los Angeles, Jan. 8:** Joe Harris scored a team high 28 points as the Brooklyn Nets shook off the absence of two stars to snap the Philadelphia 76ers' five-game winning streak with a 122-109 victory on Thursday.

Caris LeVert scored 22 points and had 10 assists as the Nets cooled off the NBA's hottest team despite missing their two top players Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving.

Harris got the job done, finishing two points shy of his career high as the Nets posted their second straight double-digit win after dropping four of five.

LeVert, who started in place of Irving, made the most of his opportunity. He scored 18 points by halftime as the Nets shot 45.4 percent and scored 35 points off 20 Philadelphia turnovers.

Stars Joel Embiid and Ben Simmons had quiet nights for the 76ers. Embiid scored 20 points on seven-of-14 shooting while

Simmons had just 11 points.

Shake Milton started in place of injured Seth Curry and led the Sixers with 24 points and seven assists.

**PORTLAND HUNT WOLVES**

Elsewhere, Damian Lillard delivered 39 points, seven rebounds and seven assists as the Portland Trail Blazers breezed past the slumping Minnesota Timberwolves 135-117.

C.J. McCollum tallied 20 points and Jusuf Nurkic finished with 17 points and seven rebounds for Portland, who snapped a two-game skid and posted its highest-scoring effort of the season.

D'Angelo Russell and Anthony Edwards scored 26 points apiece for the Timberwolves.

Naz Reid chipped in 13 points in 16 minutes as Minnesota dropped its sixth straight game.

Also, Cleveland Cavaliers defeated the host Memphis Grizzlies 94-90. — *AFP*