


DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
NELLORE | SUNDAY | 17 JANUARY 2021

WEATHER

 **Max:** 30.5°C
Min: 22.8°C
RH: 73%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: clear.
Max/Min temp. 30/22 °C




COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+15,886)	(+202)
1,05,57,646	1,52,288

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+249)	(+1)
TS: 2,91,367	1,575
(+114)	(+0)
AP: 8,85,824	7,139

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

 **9,46,15,966**
DEATHS
 **20,24,117**
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
 **219**
worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Uttarayana
Tithi: Pushya Shuddha Chavithi till 8.10 am
Star: Purvabhadra full day
Varjyam: 12.58 pm to 2.40 pm
Durmuhurtam: 4.29 pm to 5.14 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
HJRI CALENDAR
Jamadi-ul-Akhir 3, 1442 AH
PRAYERS (SHAHI MASJID)
Fajar: 5.22 am
Zohar: 12.17 pm
Asar: 4.21 pm
Maghrib: 5.58 pm
Isha: 7.12 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.59 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.38 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 7.34 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 8.09 PM

COUNTER POINT



My WhatsApp chats were leaked to my wife!

SHORT TAKES

₹1,000 crore seed fund for startups

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday announced the launch of ₹1,000-crore 'Startup India Seed Fund' to support startups and help budding entrepreneurs pursue innovative ideas. Addressing the 'Prarambh: Startup India International Summit', Modi exuded confidence that the growth of startups will help in generating jobs and improving lives of people in the region.

WhatsApp delays privacy policy

New Delhi: WhatsApp has decided to delay the roll-out of its new policy update to May 15 after massive criticism from users globally, including India, over concerns that data was being shared with its parent company Facebook. The move assumes significance for users in India given that the country is among the biggest markets for WhatsApp with over 400 million users.

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'Pak pushing militants even during winter'

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UN's 1st step to elect next chief by Jan. 31

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Kerala's Azharuddeen is new T20 hitman

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Vaccine will give decisive win: PM

Health minister Vardhan sees 'beginning of end' for Covid after nationwide vaccine launch

VINEETA PANDEY WITH INPUTS FROM AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN. 16

India on Saturday launched the world's biggest vaccination drive in which about three crore healthcare and frontline workers, including security forces, will be the first to get vaccinated against the deadly Covid-19 virus which has infected over 1.05 crore people and claimed 1.52 lakh lives in nine months.

According to initial reports, over 1.91 lakh people were inoculated with Covaxin and Covishield vaccines at 3,351 session sites across India on Day 1. The Union health ministry said there were no cases of post-vaccination hospitalisation so far but reports said that in Maharashtra, where 14,000 people received the first dose of the vaccine, 14 people reported adverse effects.

Officials and doctors are currently studying the cases and it is not known which vaccine they received.

Launching the world's biggest vaccination drive against novel coronavirus, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday that the vaccination campaign of this scale is unprecedented in the history of mankind while Union health minister termed it the "beginning of the end of COVID-19".

"World hasn't seen a vaccination drive of this level ever," Mr Modi said. He said that there are only three countries — India, USA and China — who have the population of more than 30 crore.

"This scale of vaccination campaign has never been attempted in history and this shows India's capability," the Prime Minister said.

"These vaccines will ensure a decisive victory for India against coronavirus," Modi said.

Expressing "tremendous relief, Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said, "We have won the battles against polio and smallpox. Now we have reached the decisive phase of winning the war against coronavirus. This is the beginning of the end of Covid. Vaccine will be remembered like a Sanjeevani for clinching the victory over Covid."

Expressing gratitude to frontline Corona warriors, PM said they are getting priority as those "who need the vaccine the most will get it first."

Frontline workers, were among the first people to get injected with the vaccine.



THIS SCALE of vaccination campaign has never been attempted in history and this shows India's capability.

NARENDRA MODI,
Prime Minister

DETERMINATION OF SELF-RELIANT INDIA, SAYS SHAH

Bhadravathi (Karnataka), Jan. 16: India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has fought the most successful battle against coronavirus in the world, and with the beginning of the vaccination drive, the country has taken the fight against the pandemic to a final stage, Union home minister Amit Shah said on Saturday. "The whole world for about a year has been fighting against Covid, many people have lost lives. This was probably one of the toughest fights that humanity has fought, using knowledge, innovations and mutual cooperation," Shah said.

Speaking after laying the foundation stone of a new battalion campus of the Rapid Action Force (RAF) here, he said he was happy to state that India under Prime Minister Modi's leadership has fought the most successful battle against Covid-19 in the world. — PTI



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy watches as the vaccination drive is in progress at the New Government General Hospital premises in Vijayawada on Saturday. — C. NARAYANA RAO

Female sanitation worker is first to get vaccine in state

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 16

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the Covid-19 vaccination programme at the government hospital around 11.30 am here on Saturday.

A female sanitation worker, B. Pushpa Kumari, was the first to get the dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. Five persons were given the vaccine in the presence of the Chief Minister. Krishna district immunisation officer Dr S. Sermista administered the first dose of vaccine to the

sanitation worker followed by female nursing orderly Ch. Nagajothi, operation theatre assistant P. Jaya Kumar, Dr L. Praneetha and Dr B. Basaveswar. She also administered the vaccine to the Vice-Chancellor of Dr NTR University of Health Sciences, Dr P. Syama Prasad, and director of medical education Dr K. Venkatesh.

The Chief Minister enquired about the programme from health principal secretary Anil Kumar Singhal and health and family welfare com-

missioner K. Bhaskar. He also checked the cold chain and the vaccine veil preserved in it.

Dr Sermista said, "I have taken the initiative with the advice from Krishna Collector Md. Imtiaz, to administer the first dose to avoid any issue with regard to administration of the vaccine after finding the ANM entrusted with the task, feeling nervous to administer the vaccine. In order to avoid bringing disrepute to the vaccine itself, I have administered the vaccine to seven people." Each veil of vaccine

will have five ml quantity and each beneficiary will be given 0.5 ml with auto disable syringe which means it collects only 0.5 ml dose of the vaccine implying that each veil would be used for 10 beneficiaries. State health authorities maintain that they carried the programme out at 332 session sites at the rate of 100 beneficiaries each on the first day. From Sunday, the vaccine will be given at 42,450 session sites.

Page 3: No adverse reaction yet to vaccination

Vaccine drive turns Bharat Bio 'Phase 3' trial

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 16

The administration of 55 lakh doses of Covaxin, the Bharat Biotech vaccine ordered by the Centre as part of the Covid-19 vaccination drive, could well mean that a massive government mandated trial is underway for the vaccine that is yet to officially complete its Phase III trials.

When its "emergency use" was approved by the government, it was done under "clinical trial mode".

What this meant became evident on Saturday when those receiving the vaccine in several states according to media reports, were asked to sign a consent form agreeing to be part of such a clinical trial.

In the consent form, Bharat Biotech says the vaccine is being offered in a clinical trial mode and that in Phase I and II of the trials the vaccine demon-

strated ability to produce antibodies to Covid-19.

"However, the clinical efficacy is yet to be established and it is still being studied in phase 3 clinical trial," the form read.

Telangana state Director of Health Services Dr G. Srinivasa Rao said that Covaxin was not used in the state on Saturday, and Serum Institute of India's Covishield was administered to frontline workers.

He had said on Friday

said that anyone receiving Covaxin will be monitored closely for seven days after vaccination.

When a reporter asked him if Covishield recipients too would be monitored like Covaxin recipients, he said as per the existing protocol, this was not required.

Elsewhere, managing director of Bharat Biotech International Ltd., Suchitra Ella tweeted: "Covaxin & Bharat Biotech is truly humbled &

honoured to be of service to the nation & the fraternity of all first responders of Covid who have served public health."

A PTI report from Delhi said health workers who got their first shots of Covaxin at AIIMS were made to sign the consent form that promised compensation in case of a "severe adverse event" related to the vaccine.

"The compensation for a serious adverse event will

be paid by sponsor (Bharat Biotech) if the SAE is proven to be causally related to the vaccine, the form read.

Authorities said in case of any adverse event, the affected person will be provided medically-recognised standard of care in the government-designated hospitals, according to PTI.

The recipients were given a factsheet and a form to report adverse effects within seven days.

FARMERS URGE NEW SC PANEL TO REVIEW LAWS

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, JAN. 16

Two days ahead of the Supreme Court's hearing on the ongoing farmers' agitation, a farmers' union on Saturday urged the top court to withdraw the three members of the committee set up by it on January 12 to resolve the impasse over the three contentious farm laws and appoint members who are impartial, not aligned with any political party and have the trust and goodwill of the farmers.

The plea by Bhartiya Kisan Union (Lokshakti) also sought the presence of a former top court judge on the reconstituted committee.

TASTY | TREAT

Kosas are free from fat, have tremendous demand

Fighter rooster meat ₹7K/kg

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 16

Cashing in on the huge demand for meat of roosters, locally known as Kosa, that sustain injuries or die during the Sankranti cockfights, their prices have touched ₹5,000 to ₹7,000 per kg. Sankranti gamecocks are nurtured carefully with heavy diets throughout the year to help them gain immunity and power.

Enthusiasts of the 'sport' compete with one another to grab the flesh and enjoy the rooster's meat, which has a unique taste.

According to cockfight competition rules, the owner of the rooster that wins a fight also owns the dead 'competitor'. The owner auctions the dead

COCKFIGHT ORGANISERS TO FACE CONTEMPT OF COURT CASES SOON

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JAN. 16

Animal lovers are set to file contempt of court cases against all those involved in organising the banned cockfights during Sankranti and also expose the failure of the government in curbing cock-

fights and other gambling games.

In order to do this, they are gathering videos and photographs of the cockfights that were organised to substantiate their arguments in court.

Page 2: Police did not book cockfight organisers

rooster instantly. As soon as a gamecock is dead, all its feathers are removed, the bird is grilled and handed over to the one making the best bid.

Kosas are free from fat has tremendous demand

with people willing to part with an extra buck to get the flesh.

Incidentally, as a matter of an established tradition in some quarters, Kosa curries are served with pride to the newlywed

sons-in-law during Sankranti.

A rooster trainer, R. Venkatraju, said that roosters are fed with cashew, almonds, eggs, mutton and other high-power diets. He said that roosters undergo training in swimming and are made to perform other exercises to boost their stamina. He said that they are priced between ₹50,000 and ₹2 lakh depending on their robustness and fighting skills. He said that Kosa meat is luscious, which is the reason many are willing to pay higher prices and also for the fact that it is available only once in a year.

Page 2: Meat lovers don't mind the cost

Kurnool airport gets DGCA nod

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, JAN. 16

The Director of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has granted licence to Andhra Pradesh Airports Development Corporation Limited (APDCL) to open Kurnool airport (Orvakal) for public use.

With this development, the last hurdle for commencement of commercial operations has been cleared, said an Airport Authority of India (AAI) official. Indigo Airlines has been selected as private operator under UDAAN-4 scheme and there are plans to operate flights to Chennai, Visakhapatnam and Bengaluru from February or March, a source said.

The airport is 350 km from Vijayawada and 360 km from Bengaluru. The nearest major international airport is Hyderabad, which is about 200 km away.

The Orvakal airport is spread over 970 acres and is at a distance of 20 km from Kurnool.

It has four parking bays. The airport can operate the ATR-72/ Q-400 category of aircraft. For fire-fighting and rescue operations, the airport has two Rosenbauer aircraft crash fire tenders (ACFTs) and an ambulance besides an Advanced Air Traffic Advisory System (AATAS).

Page 2: Long lease to build hangar, infra

CAPITAL ISSUE

LONG LEASE TO BUILD HANGAR, INFRA

From page 1

The successful bidder will get a long-term lease for construction of hangar, building, facilities and other infrastructure.

Given the increase in air traffic at Bengaluru and Hyderabad airports, the scope for running flight training operations at these airports is becoming difficult, and given the proximity of Orvakal to both these locations, the possibility of setting up these facilities at Kurnool is advantageous to all sides, aviation sources said.

YSR ARCHITECTURE UNIV INTRODUCES BFA COURSES

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, JAN. 16

YSR University of Architecture and Fine Arts released its notification of the entrance test for Bachelor of Interior Design (B.Des) and BFA fine arts, sculpture, painting, applied arts and photography courses.

Jawaharlal Nehru Architecture and Fine Arts University (JNAFAU), in Hyderabad, was revised and established as a State University in Kadapa as per the 10th Schedule as part of the State Partition Act. Notification of admissions has now been issued for the four-year Bachelor of Fine Arts courses.

Art and Design Common Entrance Test (ADECT) will be conducted for admissions to these courses. A notification to this effect was issued on Saturday. The entrance test will be held on February 10, and the results will be revealed on February 12.

YSR University of Architecture and Fine Arts Vice-Chancellor Professor D. Vijay Kishore said the four-year BFA courses were introduced to provide more employment courses to the youth.

Bachelor of Interior designing and animation course has 60 seats and sculpture, painting, applied arts and photography courses will contain 40 seats each he said. For more details about this he was advised to contact <http://sche.ap.gov.in/ADCET> or www.ysrafu.ac.in/ADCET. The last date for receiving applications for the entrance test is 2 February 2021.

GIVE UP DOUBLE STANDARDS ON DIVIS, SAYS CPM

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JAN. 16

CPM state secretary P. Madhu demanded that the state government give up its double standards on the proposed pharma unit being established by Divis Group in Thondangi mandal of East Godavari district.

He wanted the government to cancel all permissions given to the company for establishing its pharma unit in the area.

The CPM leader told media here on Saturday that during TD regime, YSRC led by then opposition party chief Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had supported left parties and people of the area on not letting Divis establish a pharmaceutical factory at the place.

Madhu pointed out that the area is lush green with hundreds of hatcheries providing direct employment to more than 20,000 people in the area. People of the area are against the pharma unit, as it would pollute the area.

He said police have booked cases against 160 people for agitating against the unit, 36 of whom have been arrested and even jailed. State industries minister M. Gowtham Reddy had promised that all cases will be lifted, but people are still confined to jail, he pointed out.

The CPM leader said while people are agitating against the unit, the government wants to encourage the company in establishing a unit in the area. CPM will not allow such a thing to happen at any cost, he maintained.

Madhu criticised the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Jana Sena for adopting double standards on the issue.

He charged that Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has given permission to the pharma unit as per instructions of BJP leaders at the centre.

He maintained that if BJP or Jana Sena are firm on doing justice to people of the area, they should ask central BJP leaders to clearly state that the unit will not be established in Thondangi mandal.

Attacks on temples a political conspiracy, claims Rambabu

YSRC spokesperson says Chandrababu Naidu has no respect for any religion

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 16

YSR Congress has alleged attacks on temples in the state are a political conspiracy to defame YSRC government. YSRC MLA and party state official spokesperson Ambati Rambabu has alleged that having lost hopes of regaining power, Telugu Desam has started a poisonous propaganda against YSRC government to gain political advantage at the cost of harming religious harmony.

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, Rambabu affirmed that YSRC has no religion or caste. It has no need to incite communal disputes across the state. He charged that TD and BJP leaders are trying to create a rift within the state along religious lines to benefit politically.

The YSRC spokesperson said Chandrababu Naidu has no respect for any religion and soon his party's role in temple attacks will be revealed. He questioned why Chandrababu Naidu is not talking about his party member Akhilapriya, who has been arrested by Telangana police in a kidnapping case.

Meanwhile, Water resources minister P. Anil Kumar Yadav objected to Telugu Desam's criticism of AP DGP for revealing the truth about cadres of Telugu Desam and BJP being involved in attacks on temples to defame the YSRC government.

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, he pointed out that police investigations have already solved nine cases wherein TD and BJP cadres have been involved in attacks against temples in an attempt to create a religious and caste divide.

Anil Kumar asserted that YSRC government has spent about Rs. 80,000 crore on welfare activities, which have benefitted 4.5 crore people of the state.

Unable to digest the popularity of the state government, TD has started conspiracies to defame the YSRC government, he remarked.

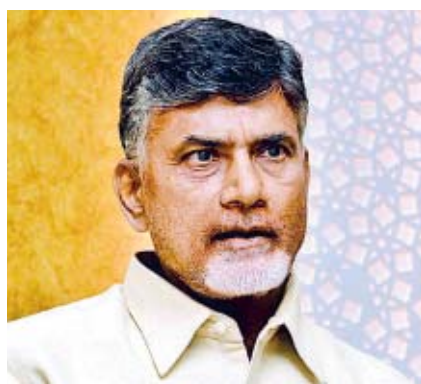
The minister alleged Chandrababu Naidu has a history of performing poojas and other traditional rituals wearing shoes, without any devotion or respect for Gods or Hindu religion. He recalled that tantric rituals performed at Kanakadurga temple and Srikalahasti during the TD regime.

Anil Kumar Yadav said while police are conducting an impartial investigation



P. Anil Kumar Yadav

● **WATER RESOURCES** minister P. Anil Kumar Yadav alleged that Chandrababu Naidu has a history of performing pujas and other traditional rituals wearing shoes, without any devotion or respect for Gods or Hindu religion.



N. Chandrababu Naidu

● **NAIDU SAID** the coming Tirupati by-election will be a golden opportunity for people of the state to put an end to non-stop atrocities unleashed on people by the Jagan Mohan Reddy government.

Gorantla finds fault with police action

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JAN. 16

Rajamahendravaram Rural MLA Gorantla Butchaiah Chowdary found fault with police over arrest of Telugu Desam and Bharatiya Janata Party leaders after Lord Vinayaka's idol was disfigured at Venkatagiri-2 colony in Pidimgoyy village panchayat of Rajamahendravaram Rural mandal in East Godavari district.

The TD legislator said as soon as the incident took place, he had contacted Bommuru police, requested them to take immediate action and not give any scope for damaging sentiments of Hindus. However, on the Sankranti day, police arrested his personal assistant Sandeep and TD leader Vallepalli Prasad Chowdary, apart from BJP leaders Adapa Vara Prasad and Karuturi Srinivasa Rao under non-bailable sections.

Condemning the arrests, he said the ruling party government has booked false cases against opposition party leaders and cadre who have only highlighted its wrongdoings.

Buchaiah Chowdary also met Bommuru police and later Rajamahendravaram superintendent police and expressed his resentment against the arrests. He, along with former chairman of Godavari Urban



Gorantla Butchaiah Chowdary

● **THE TD legislator** said as soon as the incident took place, he had contacted Bommuru police, requested them to take immediate action and not give any scope for damaging sentiments of Hindus. However, on the Sankranti day, police arrested his personal assistant Sandeep and TD leader Vallepalli Prasad Chowdary

Development Authority Ganni Krishna, BC Corporation former chairman Palika Srinu and others told media on Saturday that Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has been unable to stop the attacks on temples.

To cover up his failure, he is trying to book cases against opposition party leaders. He said his party is ready to launch a "Jail Bhara" programme to highlight the inefficiency of the government in dealing with attacks against temples.

tion to nab the real culprits, TD leaders have started making false alle-

gations against police for the fear of getting exposed.

SIT CHIEF INSPECTS TEMPLE AT RAMATHEERTHAM

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JAN. 16

Special Investigation Team (SIT) chief and DIG G. V. G. Ashok Kumar, dealing with attacks on temples, inspected the temple where the idol of Lord Rama was desecrated at Ramatheertham in the Nellimarla mandal of Vizianagaram district.

Speaking on the occasion, the SIT chief said they are trying to trace the common features among all incidents. He vowed to unravel the mystery behind the attacks on temples. He said that they were taking support from police and other stakeholders to trace the culprits behind these attacks.

Ashok Kumar called upon people to share any information related to attacks on temples on 9392903400.

Earlier, the SIT chief reviewed the progress of the case with SP B. Raja Kumari.

The AP government had formed a Special Investigation Team, headed by additional director ACB, G.V.G. Ashok Kumar, to investigate offences relating to temples, including desecration of idols, in a flurry from September 2020 across the state.

The DGP issued a memo constituting the SIT with 16 members including its chief and superintendent of police, Krishna district, M. Ravindranath Babu, additional SP, SIB, S. Sridhar, additional SP, CID, and L.V. Srinivasa Rao as members.

DGP ACTING AS PER RULING PARTY ORDERS, CHARGES NAIDU

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 16

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu has accused AP's Director General of Police of "acting under Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's direction, as per script provided by government advisor Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy".

Naidu said the coming Tirupati by-election will be a golden opportunity for people of the state to put an end to non-stop atrocities unleashed on people by the Jagan Mohan Reddy government.

Addressing a meeting of party's Tirupati parliamentary segment leaders, the former chief minister accused AP DGP Goutam Sawang of not acting as per rule book, abiding by laws of the land.

Naidu claimed that on Bhogi day, DGP had said mad men have been responsible for temple attacks but changed his statement on Kanuma day, attributing the attacks to opposition parties.

The Leader of Opposition charged that the state government remained complacent till 150 temples or idols were vandalised.

He alleged that it is YSRC activists who are actually responsible for attacks on temples to divert attention from cases that they are facing. He maintained that no cases had been filed against those who vandalised temples or damaged idols.

Instead, the state government has filed cases against TD leaders for visiting Ramatheertham, while no such thing was done when Rajya Sabha MP Vijaysai Reddy and YSRC leaders did the same and even went on to provoke crowds that had gathered there.

Naidu wanted people to treat Tirupati by-election as a referendum and give a verdict against YSRC's misrule. He said people have already started revolting against the Jagan Mohan Reddy government and protests organised by TDP against the ruling party's misrule are getting a good response, including from the younger generation.



Youngsters along with elders busy in conducting cock-fights at an open land under Kailasagiri Hills at Appugarh junction in Visakhapatnam on Saturday. — DC

Cops did not book cases, say activists

From page 1

Though Section 144 is in force, the police could not control the crowds. They did not book cases against the organisers or people who participated in the games.

Animal Rescue Organisation (ARO) secretary Gopal R. Surabathula said that the High Court had clearly directed the collectors and superintendents of police of West Godavari, East Godavari, Krishna and Guntur districts to constitute joint inspection teams for each mandal, consisting of a police officer not below the rank of sub-inspector, tahsildar, and a representative of either the Animal Welfare Board of India or a member of a non-governmental organisation espousing the cause of animals or persons involved in the prevention of cruelty to animals.

He said that the officials on being informed of the places where such playgrounds and cockpits have been formed, shall take immediate action to ensure that such playgrounds are not utilised for conducting cockfights, if needed, by exercising powers under section 144 CrPc. He said that during Sankranti this year, too, torture and cruelty towards birds were unabated and the authorities could not take steps to curb cockfights nor did they take action against

MEAT LOVERS DON'T MIND THE COST

From page 1

K. Venkateswara Rao, a fan of Kosa meat, said that a group of people like him went to arenas in Krishna, East and West Godavari districts and brought the flesh fresh off the block. He said that people who taste Kosa dishes would crave for it and do not mind the cost.

bookies and punters. Despite the rule of establishing a wing of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) in all the districts, not a single SPCA has been constituted in the state, he said. He wondered why no action was taken during the three-day festival, and there was none to stop political leaders from inaugurating cockfights.

Superintendent of police of East Godavari Adnan Nayeem Asmi said that 1,014 persons were arrested, 452 cases registered and 875 cocks, 3,029 knives and ₹4,44,310 cash were seized. He said that all steps were taken to curb cockfights and other gambling games.

Meanwhile, Gopal alleged that there were no cases against owners who gave their land for lease to organisers of cockfights and tent-house owners.



Proddatur TD incharge Praveen Kumar and party leaders hand over financial assistance to Aparajitha, wife of Nandam Subbayya, on Saturday.

₹33 lakh given to TD leader's family

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, JAN. 16

Telugu Desam leaders handed over financial assistance of ₹33 lakh to family of TD leader Nandam Subbayya, who was killed last month in Proddatur, Kadapa district.

Proddatur TD in-charge Praveen Kumar, party state executive secretary Bachala Pullaya and other leaders handed over the money to Subbaiah's wife Aparajitha on Saturday.

On the occasion, Praveen Kumar said the murder of Nandam Subbayya was a deliberate political assassination. He blamed police for

ignoring the information provided by the leader's wife in the murder case. He said of the ₹33 lakh assistance provided to Subbayya's family, party national president Chandrababu Naidu gave ₹20 lakh, TD Proddatur in-charge G. V. Praveen Kumar Reddy ₹5 lakh, former TTD chairman Putta Sudhakar Yadav ₹5 lakh, party politburo member Reddeppagari Srinivas Reddy ₹2 lakhs, and party state spokesperson and MLC B. Tech Ravi ₹1 lakh.

Proddatur TD town president E. V. Sudhakar Reddy and other leaders were present on the occasion.

Chittoor under lens over welfare plan implementation

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JAN. 16

The parliamentary committee from the department of rural development visited Chittoor district to observe the implementation of various central government welfare schemes in the rural areas under the region.

The team headed by Chairperson Prathap Rao

and members T. Rangaiah, Anantapur MP, Sujith Kumar, Odisha MP, Smasher, Punjab MP and Nazeer Ahmed, J&K MP observed the implementation of schemes in Pulicherla mandal. They also inspected the water sheds constructed under PMKSY and NREGS works in Diguvapokalavari palle in Pulicherla mandal.

Minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy along with MP Mithun Reddy and others welcomed the committee at Pulicherla mandal. MP Mithun has explained to the committee about the check dam constructed here under NREGS, farm ponds and various measures taken up by the district administration for increasing the ground

water level in the region.

Further, the Parliamentary team visited Suvvarapupalle, where they have observed the horticulture plantations taken up under the NREGS project. The team later inspected the Rythu Barosa Kendras and village secretariat buildings in Mathukuvavipalle.

The team also inquired about the waste manage-

ment plant at Kalluru constructed under Solid Wealth Processing Centres (SWPC). Commissioner for Panchayat raj and Rural Development Girija Shankar, In-charge Collector Markandeyulu, NREGS Director Chinna Thathaiah, JC (welfare) Rajasekhara, DRO Murali, Tirupati RDO Kanaka Narasa Reddy and others were present.

MISSION | PANI

4,418 villages in 807 gram panchayats of the district remain without water taps

Central Jal Jeevan Mission fails to achieve targets

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, JAN. 16

Central government-sponsored Jal Jeevan Mission to provide clean drinking water to all rural people has not progressed in Kadapa district as targeted.

Under the mission, the district should have installed total 1,05,922 drinking water taps in rural areas by the end of financial year 2020-21. But hardly 14,878 taps have been fixed. As a result, an overwhelming number of 4,418 villages in 807 gram panchayats of the district remain without water taps.

The mission has been planned to service 5,04,696 families with a population of 19,53,439. As of April

2020, only 3,00,578 households (59.56 per cent) have drinking water taps, according to the Rural Drinking Water Supply Department. Another 2,04,118 households (40.44 per cent) have not yet got the drinking water taps.

As per the Centre's action plan, Jal Jeevan Mission must be implemented 100 per cent by 2024. An amount of Rs. 521.35 crore is required to complete a total of 3,248 works. Of this, the state authorities have given administrative sanction for Rs. 84.62 crore worth works in first instalment. It directed that works worth less than Rs. 5 lakh be initially completed with the sanctioned funds.

Accordingly, it was decided to install 1,05,922 taps in

WORKS IDENTIFIED UNDER ₹5 LAKH IN JAL JEEVAN MISSION			
Constituency	Number of works	Number of taps	amount (In ₹Lakhs)
Badvel	212	7,618	346.9
Jammalamadugu	130	10,061	229.61
Kamalapuram	185	8,697	249.92
Railwaykodur	426	10,406	385.21
Mydukur	294	11,844	498.12
Proddutur	25	1458	82.34
Pulivendula	179	9,458	352.26
Rajampeta	776	21,576	948.03
Rayachoti	705	24,804	836.63

2,932 residential areas in nine constituencies except Kadapa town during 2020-21 at an estimated cost of Rs. 39.29 crore. However, there has been a

delay in coming up with guidelines for implementing the mission at the field level. Similarly, commencement of works has also suffered due to lack of



clarity in procedures to be adopted for implementing the project. Judging by progress of works across the district, only 14,878 taps have been installed in nine months from April to December 2020. For example, while there are 8,120 houses in Vontimitta mandal of the district, only 4,135 households have got taps. Consequently, only 54.41 per cent of people in

the mandal are getting tap water.

Further, while there are 9,401 houses in Chakrayapet mandal, hardly 1,999 houses have taps, new ones among them being 727. Only 29 percent of people in this mandal have taps. Of 9,201 residents in Sambepalli mandal, 2,449 houses have taps and with the new ones being 460. Thus, only 31.62

per cent people in the mandal have received access to drinking water. Rural Water Supply Department officials say Jal Jeevan Mission scheme has been launched to provide drinking water through taps to every household in the district. Owing to funding issues, authorities decided to undertake works costing less than ₹5 lakh in Phase I. Officials say of 1,05,922 taps, more than 14,000 have been installed, while the rest are in various stages of being connected. District collector Chevuru Hariikiran has directed authorities to expedite the work as summer is fast approaching. He has been reviewing these works regularly to complete the Jal Jeevan Mission at a faster pace.

SHORT TAKES

INDIAN VACCINE IS SAFE, SAYS MEKAPATI

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JAN. 16

Minister for Industries and IT Mekapati Gautam Reddy informed that the Covid-19 vaccination process has started in Nellore district at 26 centres, where 100 health staff members would be vaccinated on each day at each centre. The Minister along with Nellore rural MLA K. Sridhar Reddy and Collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu observed the vaccination process in Nellore on Saturday. Speaking to media persons here, Minister felt happy that India has developed the vaccine for the Covid-19.

ONE KILLED, TWO INJURED IN CLASH AT A WINE SHOP

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JAN. 16

One died and two others suffered injuries in a clash between two groups over a petty issue at a wine shop near Inamadugu centre in Kovvuru mandal of Nellore district late on Friday.

According to Nellore rural DSP P. Haranath Reddy, the deceased N. Surendra (45), who worked at FCI godowns in Venkatachalam mandal, went to a wine shop at Inamadugu centre along with his close relative G. Vara Prasad on a motorbike and parked it in front of the shop. Some local residents of Inamadugu including Manohar, Nagaraju, Vishnu and Raja, who visited the same wine shop, kicked the motorbike of Vara Prasad. The incident triggered a verbal clash between the two groups and further turned violent when both groups attacked each other.

In the clash, Manohar and Nagaraju and two others attacked Surendra and Vara Prasad with sticks. Surendra, who received severe injuries in the incident, has died after reaching his home late on Friday night. Police registered a murder case against the accused, who were also booked under SC/ST act.

AP administers Covid-19 vaccine to 19,108 people

9 cases of adverse events following immunisation

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 16

On the first day of the Covid-19 vaccination programme, 19,108 healthcare workers were given the Covishield vaccine by 8.30 pm and nine cases of adverse events following immunisation were reported on Saturday.

State health authorities administered the vaccination in 332 session sites and covered 19,108 persons against the target of 31,570. They said the Centre had given them the target to administer the vaccine at 143 session sites to 14,300 persons and they had crossed it.

On the other hand, the health authorities reported cases of AEFI (adverse event following immunisation), one each at Vijayawada and Anantapur, two in Nellore and five in Kurnool. In Anantapur government hospital, a woman health worker identified as Akhila developed giddiness soon after administration of the Covid-19 vaccine and started vomitings. She was immediately given medication and she recovered.

The authorities admit-

NO MAJOR REACTION YET TO VACCINATION

FROM PAGE 1

The State government is administering the Covishield vaccine as it received 4.77 lakh doses and though 20,000 doses of Covaxin have also been received, the government wanted to start the programme with Covishield until it receives further doses of Covaxin. The beneficiary has to be given the vaccine of the same company 28 days apart.

Health authorities say that on the first day of vaccination programme, 16,963 persons were given the vaccine at all 332 session sites in the state by 5.50 pm against the targeted 32,739 beneficiaries. Health director

ted her in the hospital and kept her under observation as a precautionary measure. In Nellore district, a woman nurse developed giddiness after administration of Covid-19 vaccine at the community health centre at Kota.

At Kavali, a doctor developed giddiness after getting the vaccine at the area hospital. Both of them returned

Dr T. Geetha Prasadini said, "So far we have not received any single adverse case following immunisation. From Sunday onwards, there will be more session sites in order to administer the vaccine to more registered beneficiaries."

The government has targeted to administer a vaccine to 3.87 lakh healthcare workers who registered in Co-WIN app by January 12 in phase-I and registration for the second phase of vaccine for frontline workers from departments like police, municipal administration, panchayat raj and others will be open up to January 25.

to normal after some time. In Kurnool district, five healthcare workers in different cases developed nausea after getting the vaccine at a primary health centre at Nannuru all through the day. In Vijayawada government hospital, a woman sanitation worker, Radha Krishna, developed giddiness and fainted soon after taking the vaccine.

AP RECORDS 114 FRESH CASES OF COVID-19

VIJAYAWADA: Andhra Pradesh registered 114 fresh cases of Covid-19 and no death in the last 24 hours. The State health authorities issued Covid-19 bulletin on Saturday reporting that out of 25,542 samples tested, 114 persons were found infected with Covid-19. Out of a total number of 1,25,40,181 samples tested so far, 8,85,824 persons were found infected with Covid-19 and of them, 8,76,698 were recovered in the course of treatment while 1,987 are still active with the virus.

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Speed up process for aluminium unit

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JAN. 16

AP Industries Minister Mekapati Gautam Reddy directed the officials concerned to speed up the land acquisition process meant for Utkarsha Aluminium

Dhatu Nigam Limited factory, proposed in Kodavalur Mandal of Nellore district. The Minister, on Saturday, reviewed with the officials and the company representatives at his camp office in Nellore. Addressing the meeting, Mr Reddy told the

officials to pay a good compensation to the farmers, who handed over lands for the project.

He also asked the officials to take necessary measures for acquiring additional land, if necessary, for the project.

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IN BRIEF

BIHAR ROPES IN ‘BICYCLE GIRL’ AS AMBASSADOR

Patna, Jan. 16: The Bihar government has chosen ‘bicycle girl’ Jyoti Kumari, who had pedalled 1,200 km from Gurugram to Darbhanga taking her injured father on the rear carrier during the nationwide lockdown, as the Brand Ambassador for an anti-drug abuse programme, an official said.

The state government has selected the 15-year-old “real life hero” to sharpen its campaign against the use of narcotic drugs and intoxicants by youths, Dayanidhan Pandey, Director of Social Security Directorate said on Saturday.

“We could not have got any better choice than the girl who displayed exemplary courage to fight the adversity. Youths are falling prey to drugs and she will inspire them against the practice,” he said.

The official visited the girl’s village in Darbhanga on Friday to appoint her as the brand ambassador of the programme and also gave a cheque of ₹50,000 to her.

Kumari will be propagating the central government’s National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction for 2018-2025 in Bihar. The programme formulated by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment aims at reduction of adverse consequences of drug abuse through a multi-pronged strategy.

BJP NAMES SHAHNAWAZ ITS MLC CANDIDATE

New Delhi/Patna, Jan. 16: Former Union minister and BJP’s national spokesperson Syed Shahnawaz Hussain was named by the party on Saturday its MLC candidate from Bihar.

The announcement marks Hussain’s return to electoral politics, albeit to the state level, for the first time since 2014 when he lost the Lok Sabha election from Bhagalpur. He was not given ticket in the 2019 polls.

In the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, he had held the civil aviation portfolio among other charges.

The party also named six more candidates for the legislative council polls in Uttar Pradesh.

They are Kunwar Manvendra Singh, Govind Narayan Shukla, Salil Bishnoi, Ashwini Tyagi, Dharmveer Prajapati and Surendra Chaudhary.

Polling for 12 legislative council seats in Uttar Pradesh and two in Bihar will be held on January 28.

The win of BJP candidates in these seats is all but certain owing to the party’s strength in respective state assemblies.

Two MLC seats in Bihar have been vacated after the elections of former state minister Vinod Narayan Jha to the assembly from Benipatti seat in Madhubani district and of former deputy chief minister Sushil Kumar Modi to Rajya Sabha.

PLEA SEEKS FIR AGAINST MUNDE

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, JAN. 16

A petition has been filed in Bombay High Court against the Maharashtra social justice minister and NCP leader Dhananjay Munde claiming he hid facts in affidavits before the election commission of India.

The petitioner has sought registration of an FIR against Mr Munde, who has been embroiled in controversy over allegations of rape of a woman.

In his petition, social activist and president of Rashtriya Bhraashatchar Virodhi Janshakti Hemant Patil sought an FIR should be registered under Section 420 (cheating) of the Indian Penal Code against Mr Munde alleging that Munde suppressed material facts pertaining to his family in the election affidavit submitted along with his nomination paper for 2019 State Assembly Election.

The petition claimed that the minister has hid information pertaining to his two children in an affidavit filed during the assembly elections. Therefore, it should be directed to file an FIR against Munde.

Mr. Patil has also claimed that in the affidavit in the year 2019, Mr Munde had mentioned that he has only two daughters. But he has hidden it from the Commission in an affidavit that he also has a son and a daughter from a live-in relationship partner.

THERE SHOULD BE NO POLITICS OVER VACCINE, SAYS UDDHAV

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, JAN. 16

Differences within the MVA government in Maharashtra came to fore over the Covid vaccination drive in the state. While state health minister Rajesh Tope said the Centre has provided inadequate supply of vaccines to Maharashtra, chief minister Uddhav Thackeray said there should not be any politics over the vaccine.

Mr Thackeray kick-started the Covid vaccination drive at the BKC centre on Saturday. While speaking on the occasion, he allayed the talks of Maharashtra receiving step-motherly treatment from the Centre in the supply of Covid vaccine.

The quota of Covid vaccine has been fixed by the central health department, so it is not right to doubt their intention. Just as all people in Maharashtra are equal to me as a Chief Minister, it should be the same for the Prime Minister, he quipped.

Mr Thackeray expressed confidence that the supply of vaccines will increase after the rise in its production. The vaccines of couple of other companies are in the final stage. Once they are approved, the supply will increase, he added.

However, Mr Tope reiterated that Maharashtra has received less number of vaccines from the Centre. He said, “Maharashtra needs nearly 17.5 lakh doses of vaccines including the buffer stock. Of them, we have received only 9.72 lakh doses. It means the Centre has supplies only 55 per cent of stock.”

On the first day of the vaccination drive, 28,500 people were inoculated in Maharashtra.

In the state, the vaccine will be given on a priority basis with the first group having health care workers.

NO. OF DOLPHINS IN CHILIKA LAKE INCREASES

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, JAN. 16

Asia’s largest brackish water lagoon Chilika has emerged one of the best suitable places for rare Irrawaddy dolphins. The population of dolphins in the lake has increased to 156 in 2020 against 150 in 2019, Chilika Development Authority authorities informed on Saturday.

The increase in the number of the dolphins came to the light after the CDA recently conducted the annual survey on the biodiversity of the lagoon, which is the largest lake along the east-coast of India.

The CDA authorities said that the present distribution range of Irrawaddy dolphins is only in Asia, from Chilika to Indonesia.



A medic administers the first dose of Covishield vaccine to 87-year-old Dr. Asha Singhal, after the virtual launch of Covid-19 vaccination drive by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at South Mumbai Nair Hospital in Mumbai, on Saturday.

Delhi docs say no to Bharat Biotech shot, want Covishield

RML docs say Bharat Biotech vaccine is still undergoing stage III trials

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JAN 16

Dissent and controversies have started erupting with the first shot of the Covid-19 vaccines in India.

In Delhi, the resident doctors of government-run Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital (RML), demanded they be administered Covishield (by Oxford-AstraZeneca-SII) and not the Covaxin (by Bharat Biotech) saying the Oxford vaccine has completed all three stages of trials as required under protocol while by the Bharat Biotech vaccine is undergoing stage-III trials.

Apart from India, Covishield has also got emergency use authorization in the United Kingdom, Argentina and Mexico. The union government, however, tried to underplay apprehensions saying a lot of work had gone into the development of both products and both vaccines are safe. The Prime Minister asked people stay away from rumours and propaganda as these made-in-India vaccines have been approved for emergency use only after the scientists and experts were fully convinced about their safety and efficacy. “Indian vaccine scientists, medical system, Indian process and institu-

tional mechanism in this regard is trusted globally and this trust is earned with a consistent track record,” the PM said as he pointed out that 60 per cent of children world over receive life-saving vaccines which are made-in-India and pass through stringent Indian scientific tests.

“We have come to know that the Covid vaccination drive is being conducted by the hospital today. Covaxin manufactured by Bharat Biotech is being preferred over Covishield manufactured by Serum Institute in our hospital. We would like to bring to your notice that the residents are a bit apprehen-

sive about the lack of complete trial in case of Covaxin and might not participate in huge numbers, thus, defeating the purpose of vaccination. We request you to vaccinate us with Covishield, which has completed all stages of the trial before its roll out,” the Residents Doctors’ Association of RML said in a letter to the Medical Superintendent of the hospital, Dr AK Singh Rana, who himself took the Covaxin shot on Saturday.

At the RML hospital, a security guard was the first one to receive the shot. Senior Congress leader Manish Tewari too raised

questions over the emergency use approval granted to Covaxin alleging it was done without due process. “As vaccine roll out begins, it is all a bit puzzling. India has no policy framework for authorising emergency use. Yet, two vaccines have been approved for restricted use in emergency situation,” Mr Tewari tweeted. “COVAXIN is another story -- Approvals sans Due Process,” he added. (sic)

Covaxin was also used in AIIMS, Delhi where its Director Dr Randeep Guleria and NITI Aayog member (health) Dr VK Paul took the shots.

BIRD FLU CONFIRMED IN 9 MAHA DISTRICTS

New Delhi, Jan. 16: The Centre on Saturday said bird flu in poultry has been confirmed in nine districts of Maharashtra, while culling operation in poultry is underway in one district each in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

The viral disease has been confirmed in crow in Uttarakhand, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, while in pigeon, brown fish owl and Heron in Delhi. However, the Centre requested state governments to “rethink” their decisions to impose ban sale of poultry products and allow sale of poultry items sourced from the non-infected areas/states. In India, bird flu is spread mainly by migratory birds coming into India during winter months. -PTI

‘Pak pushing militants even during winter’

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JAN. 16

Intelligence agencies have cautioned security forces that Pakistan was trying to push militants from across the border even during the winter season.

According to intelligence reports, China was providing winter clothing and other heavy duty equipment to Pak Army which in turn was giving the same to militant groups to facilitate their infiltration into India even during winter.

According to the intelligence report, “it was extremely surprising that militants were trying hard for infiltration during the winter season also. This is unusual since during the winter season due to the heavy snow it becomes very difficult to move through mountain passes. But it seems this time the militants are well-equipped in terms of high altitude clothing, good quality equipment like glasses and other snow gadgets which is suspected to have been provided by the Chinese Army to Pak security agencies.”

In view of the sustained operations launched by the Indian Army in the Kashmir Valley, militants are facing an acute shortage of both men and material.

With more than 250 militants killed last year terror outfit are in desperate need for further reinforcements.

Further due to harsh winter and heavy snow it becomes extremely difficult for security agencies to conduct patrolling in high altitude regions along the Indo-Pak border due to which more mili-

MP: SECURITY GUARD FIRST TO GET VACCINE

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JAN. 16

Hari Deb, a security guard of J P Hospital in Bhopal, on Saturday got the first shot of Covid-19 vaccine in Madhya Pradesh.

42-year-old old Deb was administered the vaccine in the J P Hospital Centre here immediately after Prime Minister Narendra Modi ended his vaccine address.

Mr Deb was presented a bouquet by senior officials of the state health department on the occasion.

“I feel good. I feel elated that I have been chosen to get the first shot in the state”, Mr Deb told reporters.

Similarly, in Chhattisgarh, sanitary worker of Dr B R Ambedkar hospital in Raipur, Tulsi Tandi became the first recipient of Covid-19 vaccine in the state.

ODISHA: DRIVE STARTS WITH CLASS 4 STAFF

DC CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR, JAN. 16

Biranchi Nayak, a 51-year-old Class 4 employee of Capital Hospital, Bhubaneswar, received the first shot of Covid-19 vaccine. After Biranchi, the director of the Capital Hospital, Dr Laxmidhar Sahoo, was administered the vaccine.

Odisha’s Covid-19 vaccination drive was formally launched from Capital Hospital in the presence of senior officials of the state government.

“I’m feeling quite well now. I did not experience any adverse effects or uneasiness. This vaccine has given me newfound confidence to serve the patients coming to this hospital with more dedication,” said Biranchi.

TWO J&K COPS RECEIVE AWARDS

Jammu, Jan. 16: Two policemen received ‘Jeevan Raksha Padak’ awards on Saturday for saving the lives of civilians during ceasefire violations by Pakistan along the Line of Control in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir in March 2018.

Selection Grade Constable Maqsood Ahmad in Poonch district police and Follower Zakir Hussain of sixth battalion J&K Armed Police (JKAP) were awarded ‘Jeevan Raksha Padak 2019’ by the Union Home Ministry last year.

Poonch Deputy Commissioner Rahul Yadav and Senior Superintendent of Police Ramesh Kumar Angral handed over the awards to the policemen in a function at Dak Bungalow, Poonch, the police official said.

tants close to the border areas are trying to infiltrate into India.

“It is clear that China is now assisting and supporting both Pak Army an ISI by providing them resources in terms of arms, ammunition and equipment which in turn are being supplied to the militants. But we are extremely cautious in the border areas and even our security personnel are well equipped to ensure that no one takes advantage of the harsh weather to infiltrate across the border,” a senior security official added.

ANNUAL | EVENT The 51st edition of IFFI kickstarts, it will run till January 24

IFFI not just govt’s responsibility: Centre

Panaji, Jan. 16: Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar on Saturday urged the film industry and other sectors to collaborate with the government in organising the International Film Festival of India (IFFI).

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the annual film extravaganza, Javadekar said there is a requirement of active participation from non-government sectors in such events.

“Every year, IFFI is organised by the central government and Goa government. Why? There should be participation from the film industry and other industries as well.

“Just because it’s the government’s responsibility to ensure thriving atmosphere and promotion of arts and culture, doesn’t mean the government should do everything,” Javadekar said in his address.

He also extended an invitation to private players, hoping for their participation in the future editions of the festival.

The 51st edition of IFFI kickstarted here on Saturday after it was postponed in November 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. It will run till January 24. The ceremony was held at Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium here.

The festival is being

● **SPEAKING AT THE opening ceremony of the annual film extravaganza, the I&B minister said that there is a requirement of active participation from non-government sectors in such events.**

organised in a “hybrid mode”, where delegates can participate and watch films and events virtually. Javadekar said the hybrid edition, which will also have physical screenings, is a testimony to the festival’s ability to adapt to changing times.

“Films will be screened across seven theatres, but the online access will be

there for all the delegates. Newspaper circulation was affected due to Covid, but their digital engagement grew massively.

“So these are changing times of evolving technology which we are benefiting from,” he added.

Javadekar also announced that the Indian Personality of the Year Award will be conferred to veteran actor-filmmaker Biswajit Chatterjee.

The honour aims to celebrate film personalities for their exemplary contribution to cinema.

The 84-year-old actor, known for featuring in films like *Bees Saal Baad*, *Night In London* and *April Fool*, would be presented the award at the National

Film Awards in March 2021.

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, who was also present at the ceremony, said though the festival is taking place amid the pandemic, the organisers are strictly following the state guidelines to ensure safety of the guests. “We assure you that your health, hygiene and well being has been of utmost importance. We are following all the health protocols for the film festival,” he added.

The annual film festival, held in Goa, is conducted jointly by the Directorate of Film Festivals (under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) and Goa government.

SHORT TAKES

UN'S 1ST STEP
TO ELECT NEXT
CHIEF BY JAN. 31

United Nations, Jan. 16: The UN General Assembly and Security Council are expected to take the first step toward electing the next head of the global organisation this month. Assembly President Volkan Bozkir said Friday that he and Tunisia's UN Ambassador Tarek Ladeb, the current council president, hope to send a letter before January 31 asking the UN's 193 member nations to submit any candidates to challenge Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

The former Portuguese prime minister and UN refugee chief, whose five-year term at the helm of the United Nations ends on December 31, said in letters to Bozkir and Ladeb on Monday that he will seek a second term. The General Assembly elects the secretary-general on the recommendation of the 15-member Security Council where the five permanent members have veto power, so their support is crucial. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson immediately announced his support for Guterres, but there has been no word yet from The United States, Russia, China and France.

PALESTINIAN
POLLS: FIRST IN
15 YEARS

Gaza City, Jan. 16: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas issued a decree Friday, setting parliamentary and presidential elections for later this year in what would be the first vote of its kind since 2006, when the Islamic militant group Hamas won a landslide victory.

Elections would pose a major risk for Abbas' Fatah party and also for Hamas as both faced protests in recent years over their inability to reconcile with one another, advance Palestinian aspirations for statehood or meet the basic needs of those in the territories they govern.

Fatah and Hamas have been publicly calling for elections for more than a decade but have never been able to mend their rift or agree on a process for holding them, and despite Friday's decree, it remained far from clear whether the voting would actually be held.

Elections could also complicate President-elect Joe Biden's plans to restore aid to the Palestinians and to revive the peace process with Israel. The 2006 election victory by Hamas, which is considered a terrorist group by Israel and Western countries, led to heavy international pressure being placed on the Palestinian Authority.

LASCHET WILL
LEAD MERKEL'S
PARTY

Berlin, Jan. 16: Chancellor Angela Merkel's center-right party on Saturday chose Armin Laschet, the pragmatic governor of Germany's most populous state, as its new leader — sending a signal of continuity months before an election in which voters will decide who becomes the new chancellor.

Laschet defeated Friedrich Merz, a conservative and one-time Merkel rival, at an online convention of the Christian Democratic Union. Laschet won 521 votes to Merz's 466; a third candidate, prominent lawmaker Norbert Roettgen, was eliminated in a first round of voting. Saturday's vote isn't the final word on who will run as the center-right candidate for chancellor in Germany's Sept. 26 election, but Laschet will either run for chancellor or will have a big say in who does. Merkel, who has been chancellor since 2005, announced in late 2018 that she wouldn't seek a fifth term. She also stepped down from the CDU leadership.

The decision ends an 11-month leadership limbo in Germany's strongest party after outgoing leader Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, who had failed to impose her authority on the party, announced her resignation. A vote on her successor was delayed twice because of the Coronavirus pandemic. There had been no clear favorite going into Saturday's convention, but the election of Merz would have marked at least a symbolic break with the Merkel era.

Laschet will have to work to strengthen party unity — something Kramp-Karrenbauer struggled with. Laschet, 59, was elected in 2017 as governor of North Rhine-Westphalia state, a traditionally centre-left stronghold. He governs the region in a coalition with the pro-business Free Democrats.



A demonstrator holds a QAnon flag and a poster reading Freedom during a protest against virus restrictions at the Maria Theresien Platz in Vienna, on Saturday. — AFP

Defamation suit: Nix
Trump, court told

New York, Jan. 16: Justice Department lawyers asked a federal appeals court Friday to replace President Donald Trump with the United States as the defendant in a defamation lawsuit brought by a woman who says he raped her in the 1990s.

The lawyers filed papers in an appeal of a lower-court Manhattan judge's ruling denying the substitution in a lawsuit brought by E. Jean Carroll, a columnist who in a June 2019 book described her encounter with Trump at an upscale Manhattan department store. The book excerpt prompted Trump to deny the allegations and question Carroll's credibility and motivations in a statement from his White House press office, comments in an Oval Office interview and statements to the media as he boarded a helicopter for Camp David, the lawyers said.

Carroll subsequently sued Trump, alleging defamation. They said the statements fell within the scope of his employment as president because Carroll was, in effect, questioning his fitness to hold public office and thus statement had to be made, even if they were later deemed to be defamatory.

If the substitution was allowed, US taxpayers would be responsible for any payout that might result in the litigation.

Carroll's attorney did not immediately comment on the government filing. Carroll has alleged that she and Trump recognized one another when they randomly spotted each other at the luxury store.

— AP

Biden names PIO
to key WH post

Washington, Jan. 16: US President-elect Joe Biden has appointed Indian-American community and economic development expert Sameera Fazili to a key White House position. Fazili has been named as Deputy Director, National Economic Council at the White House, the Biden-Harris Transition announced on Friday.

The National Economic Council coordinates the economic policy making process and provide economic policy advice to the US president. Fazili is currently the Economic Agency lead on the Biden-Harris Transition.

She was earlier posted at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta where she served as the Director of

Engagement for Community and Economic Development. Fazili is the second Kashmiri-origin Indian-American appointed to a key position in the incoming Biden administration. In December, Aisha Shah was named as Partnerships Manager at the White House Office of Digital Strategy. In the Obama-Biden administration, Fazili served as a senior policy advisor on the White House's National Economic Council and as a senior advisor at the US Treasury Department in both Domestic Finance and International Affairs.

Prior to that, she was a clinical lecturer of law at Yale Law School. Originally from Buffalo, she now lives in Georgia. — PTI

PENCE CONGRATULATES HARRIS,
OFFERS FULL CO-OPERATION

Washington, Jan. 16: Outgoing US Vice President Mike Pence has called his soon-to-be successor Kamala Harris to congratulate her and offer his full co-operation in the transition of power, according to multiple media reports said. However, there has been no communication between outgoing President Donald Trump and president-elect Joe Biden, which is unprecedented in recent memory.

"Vice President Mike Pence telephoned Vice

President-elect Kamala Harris Thursday to congratulate her and offer his belated assistance — filling a leadership role all but abdicated by President Trump, who is planning to fly out of the capital shortly before Joseph R Biden Jr is sworn in next week," *The New York Times* reported. Friday's call was the first time Pence, 61, and Harris, 56, had an one-to-one conversation since their vice presidential debate in October last year. — PTI

LIVING | OUTSIDE

The UAE, the US and Saudi Arabia host the largest numbers of Indian migrants

At 18 mn, India has world's largest diaspora

United Nations, Jan. 16: The Indian diaspora, one of the most "vibrant and dynamic", is the largest in the world, with 18 million people from the country living outside their homeland in 2020, the UN has said. The United Arab Emirates, the US and Saudi Arabia host the largest numbers of migrants from India, it said.

"India has the largest transnational population in the world. It has the most migrants abroad — 18 million, which is a significant number and another

feature which is very interesting about the Indian migrant population is that they're really distributed all over the globe," Population Affairs Officer in the Population Division at UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) Clare Menozzi said.

Menozzi said while some transnational populations are really clustered in one country or region, the Indian diaspora is present in all continents and regions — from the Gulf to Northern America to

Others with a large diaspora included Mexico and Russia (11 million each), China (10 million) and Syria (8 million).

Other countries hosting large numbers of migrants from India included Australia, Canada, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar and the UK.

Australia, UK. "It's a very vibrant" and dynamic diaspora in the world, she said. The report, 'International Migration 2020

After vaccine, 23 die in
Norway, 10 in Germany

Probe finds fever, nausea, diarrhoea caused fatalities

London, Jan. 16: Norway has launched a probe after 23 elderly patients died following their immunization with the Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA vaccine against Covid-19.

"It may be a coincidence, but we aren't sure," Steinar Madsen, medical director of the Norwegian Medicines Agency (NOMA), told the British Medical Journal (BMJ).

"There is no certain connection between these deaths and the vaccine."

Two Covid-19 vaccines, Comirnaty, from BioNTech/Pfizer and Moderna, are being used in Norway.

The agency has investigated 13 of the deaths so far and concluded that common adverse reactions of mRNA vaccines, such as fever, nausea, and diarrhoea, may have contributed to fatal outcomes in some of the patients.

"There is a possibility that these common adverse reactions, that are not dangerous in fitter, younger patients and are not unusual with vaccines, may aggravate underlying disease in the elderly," Madsen was quoted as saying.

"We are now asking for doctors to continue with the vaccination, but to carry out extra evaluation of very sick people whose underlying condition might be aggravated by it."

The Paul Ehrlich Institute in Germany is also investigating 10 deaths shortly after Covid-19 vaccination in that country.

In a statement, Pfizer said: "Pfizer and BioNTech are aware of reported deaths following administration of BNT162b2. We are working with NOMA to gather all the relevant information."

"All reported deaths will be thoroughly evaluated by NOMA to determine if these incidents are related to the vaccine. The Norwegian government will also consider adjusting their vaccination instructions to take the patients' health into more

Travel corridors
closed in the UK

London, Jan. 16: All travel corridors in place between the UK and some regions will be temporarily closed from Monday as part of efforts to curb the spread of new Coronavirus variants from countries such as Brazil and South America. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced on Friday evening that passengers coming to the UK from anywhere must now have proof of a mandatory pre-departure Covid-19 test taken at least 72 hours earlier and self-isolate for at least 10 days on arrival.

All passengers will continue to be required to fill in locator forms, with the fines in place for a breach in any of the lockdown conditions starting at 200 pounds. "To protect us against the risk of as yet unidentified new strains, we will also temporarily close all travel corridors from 0400 hrs on Monday. Following conversations with the devolved administrations, we will act together so that this applies across the whole of UK," said Johnson.

"This means that if you come to this country, you must have proof of a negative Covid test that you have taken in the 72 hours before leaving and you must have filled in your Passenger Locator Form,

consideration."

More than 20,000 doses of the vaccine have been administered over the past few weeks in Norway and around 400 deaths normally occur among care home residents every week, reports the BMJ. Chinese publication Global Times first broke the story, saying that health experts in the country have called on Norway

10 days of self-isolation on arrival
72 hours earlier: Time when passengers coming to the UK must have taken the Covid test.
15 of Feb., the date till when the measures will be in place until being reviewed

and your airline will ask for proof of both before you take off. You may also be checked when you land and face substantial fines for refusing to comply," he said. "And, upon arrival, you must then quarantine for 10 days — not leaving your home for any reason at all, or take another test on day 5 and wait for proof of another negative result. And we will be stepping up our enforcement — both at the border and in-country," he added.

The latest measures will be in place for at least a month until being reviewed on February 15. — PTI

2 insider attackers kill 12
Afghan militia: Official

Kabul, Jan. 16: At least two members of an Afghan militia opened fire on their fellow militiamen in the western Herat province, killing 12, in what provincial police on Saturday described as an insider attack. Herat police spokesman Abdul Ahad Walizada said the attackers fled with the slain militiamen's weapons and ammunition, adding that Afghan government forces had regained control of the area.

A Taliban spokesman Yousaf Ahmadi in a tweet claimed responsibility for the insider attack, which took place late Friday. Meanwhile, a sticky bomb attached to an armoured police Land Cruiser SUV exploded Saturday in the western part of the capital, Kabul, killing two policemen and wounding another, Kabul police spokesman Ferdaws Faramarz said. Faramarz did not specify the identities of the casualties.

However, two members of the Afghan police force,

BOMB KILLS TWO
COPS IN KABUL

Kabul, Jan. 16: A roadside bomb targeting a police vehicle in the Afghan capital killed two policemen Saturday, officials said, as violence continues unabated in Afghanistan despite peace talks between the Taliban and government. The vehicle carrying the policemen was struck by the bomb in the centre of the capital on the road to the prestigious Kabul University, police spokesman Ferdaws Faramarz said. Two policemen were killed and one wounded, Faramarz said. — AFP

speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to brief the media, said Kabul's deputy police chief Mawlana Bayan was wounded in the attack.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for

the bombing in Kabul. In the southern Helmand province, a suicide car bomber targeted a police compound late Friday, killing one policeman and wounding two others, provincial police spokesman Zaman Hamdard said. The attack took place in Lashkar Gah district on the highway between southern Helmand province and the city of Kandahar. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack in Helmand. The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for multiple attacks in the capital in recent months, including on educational institutions that killed 50 people, most of them students.

IS has claimed responsibility for rocket attacks in December targeting the major US base in Afghanistan. There were no casualties. The violence comes as the representatives of the Taliban and the Afghan government earlier this month resumed peace talks in Qatar. — AP

CHINA COVERING
UP COVID ORIGIN,
CLAIMS POMPEO

Washington, Jan. 16: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo alleged Friday there were Covid-like illnesses among staff at a Chinese virology institute in autumn 2019, casting further blame on Beijing as health experts arrived in the country to probe the pandemic's origins.

The top US diplomat in a statement urged the World Health Organisation team that landed Thursday in Wuhan, where Covid-19 was first detected, to "press the government of China" on the "new information." "The United States government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the (Wuhan Institute of Virology) became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both Covid-19 and common seasonal illnesses," Pompeo said.

He said this contradicted reports that none of the staff at the institute had contracted Covid-19 or related viruses.

"Beijing continues today to withhold vital information that scientists need to protect the world from this deadly virus, and the next one," Pompeo said.

Covid-19 was first detected in Wuhan in late 2019 and has since killed more than two million people so far. — AFP

the UK's Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) said that details of all suspected reactions reported in association with approved vaccines to fight the deadly Coronavirus pandemic would be published along with its assessment of the data on a regular basis in the future.

— Agencies

U.S. RETAINS
LeT'S ULTRA
DESIGNATION

Washington, Jan. 16: The United States has reviewed and maintained the terrorist designations of Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) and Lashkar-i-Jhangvi (LJ), along with ISIL Sinai Peninsula (ISIL-SP) and several other organisations. Days ahead of the transition of power, the US Department of State said that it has amended the terrorist designations of LJ and ISIL Sinai Peninsula (ISIL-SP) to include additional aliases.

Additionally, the Department of State has reviewed and maintained the Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) designations of LJ, ISIL-SP, LeT, Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al Naqshabandi, Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis-Sudan (Ansaru), al-Nusrah Front, Continuity Irish Republican Army, and the National Liberation Army, a media note said.

"Based upon a review of the Administrative Records ... I conclude that the circumstances that were the bases for the designations of the aforementioned organisations as Foreign Terrorist Organisations have not changed in such a manner as to warrant revocation of the designations and that the national security of the US does not warrant a revocation of the designations," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a federal register notification published on January 14.

These organisations included Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al Naqshabandi, Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Fi Biladis-Sudan, Harkat ul-Mujahidin, al-Nusrah Front, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Continuity Irish Republican Army, and the National Liberation Army. — PTI

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Ranjona Banerji

Off the beaten track

How life got in the way of my one true calling

An autorickshaw driver in Jaipur a couple of years ago asked me, “Hope you don’t mind my asking but are you a writer?” A shop salesperson looked at my execrable handwriting and commented, “You must either be a writer or a doctor”.

So, clearly, something gives me away. The problem is that I’m not THAT sort of a writer. Not the sort that everyone around me wants me to be. I’m not the sort of writer who spent the Pandemic lockdown carefully crafting my creative skills and honing my “talent” so I could write that exemplar novel, that series of high philosophy essays to understand humanity, that definitive book on the state of the nation.

Maybe I do want to be that writer. As an adolescent, like most others, I wrote those poems. Emotions crystallized in show-off nonsense from studying literature. The ones you really should find and burn before you burn so no unsuspecting young relative clearing your remains gets traumatised. I do confess then that I did have those dreams (have? had?), that so many have of being a “writer”. Of giving voice to that mandatory (what do you mean you don’t have one) book inside me. But is that really me, babe?

Okay I lie and exaggerate. I do have one book to my name. A definitive experience of researching and exploring India’s contemporary history, a labour of love for this country of ours and our journey as a nation. But that was in 1997. It was a co-authored and co-edited experience with Ayaz Memon, plus some 50 illustrious contributors. And today, it is out of print.

Also, at the turn of this century, I did sit down to write that novel. I made a space that was my own, surrounded by other people’s books. I rejigged my computer to give it more juice, I bought lots of A4 paper. Whatever the equivalent of lots of sharpened pencils in this digital age. Or as digital as it was then.

And I wrote, some 80,000 words. I greatly enjoyed myself. I laughed uproariously at my own jokes in case no one else would. I made up some characters and I based others on real-life people with I hoped enough tweaks just to make them unrecognisable. In some cases, I was quite happy to be vindictive assuming people I had forgotten to stay in touch with had also forgotten me. I did not follow all those publisher’s rules about flow charts and Autocad drawings to make an architectural model for my novel with as much work in the fake structure as in the real thing just to satisfy some management-brained “editor”. Did Jane Austen do that? Pah! Who on earth was anyone to tell me what to do?

Aah, arrogance. Because by then my characters got lives of their own and became uncooperative, as a well-known writer had warned me would happen. They just hared off in their own directions, far away from even my deliberately free-flowing structure. I contemplated murder of a few as my only option. I asked for advice from writer friends and writer critics and got plenty, both good and bad. The whole thing was on the verge when it was no longer fun...

And just then, life dropped a massive distraction into my life. Boy did I jump to it!

I still have the files, Manuscript 1, 2, 3 et cetera. I last looked through them 10 years ago. They seemed increasingly childish every time I took a re-look. Frankly, homicide of all the characters seemed like the only option. To spare myself the guilt, I did nothing. Which maybe is the same thing.

So that’s my career as a “writer”. I mean I am a writer. But not that kind of a writer. My admiration and respect for real writers has grown manifold. For their dedication and doggedness. For talent and their deep reserves. I salute them, the writers and their books, those I have read for ages, those I still do. Isn’t the human imagination fascinating? I read some. I review some. I collect some.

And then I stick to my type of writing. Short commentaries where 1,000 words seem like an imposition and 500 are about perfect. That’s me. The hack writer.

I take solace in this T.S. Eliot story.

“Don’t you think most critics are failed writers?” asked a fan-friend. Yes, said Eliot: “And so are most writers”.

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



Aah, arrogance. Because by then my characters got lives of their own and became uncooperative, as a well-known writer had warned me would happen. They just hared off in their own directions, far away from even my deliberately free-flowing structure.

Subhani



Why Akali Dal’s voice is missing in farmers’ stir



Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr

It was on the day the farm bills were passed in the Lok Sabha that the Akali Dal’s Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Union minister for food processing, announced her resignation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Cabinet in September 2020. She said her party was opposed to the bills, and that the government went ahead without heeding the protest of her party. But the Akali Dal then, and in the past three months since, did not state the specific reasons for their opposition to the farm legislation. The resignation of Ms Badal seemed to be an expression of despair rather than defiance. After leaving the government and the ruling National Democratic Alliance, neither the BJP nor the Akalis have attacked each other.

The BJP had attacked the Congress, and the Congress government of Amarinder Singh in Punjab, for opposing the farm laws as an act of hypocrisy. Home minister Amit Shah initially blamed the “Khalistanis” for fomenting the agitation, but later both Mr Shah and his party have refrained from targeting “Khalistanis” fearing the trouble it may unleash.

But television news channels supporting the Narendra Modi government have tried to build a counter-narrative that the Congress was using the “Khalistanis” to subvert the farmers’ agitation as it once did in the late 1970s and early 1980s to outflank the Akalis in Punjab’s politics. It is a line of argument that the Modi government and the BJP would still be wary of using because of the uncertain fallout and the stance of the Sikh diaspora’s political lead-

That even ostensibly farmers’ parties like the RLD and Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh, and INLD and the Jannayak Janta Party in Haryana, can’t take the farmers for granted is evident in their unflattering electoral performance in the past few years

The Akalis, who have been the major political voice of the Sikhs, have not been in the forefront of the agitation now that they walked out of the government and the NDA. It is not clear what the equation is between the Akalis and the leaders of the farmers’ unions.

holding the Akalis back from entering the fray and declaring their opposition to the Modi government. They may still be looking to return to the NDA and to the government once the stand-off between it and the farmers ends.

It is of course standard practice that political parties do not usually spearhead the agitation of a section of society though they would support it from the outside.

The farmers too need to keep political parties out to keep the legitimacy of their cause and avoid being accused of being pawns in the hands of the Opposition political parties.

It is indeed the case that both Akalis and the Congress in Punjab would like to support the farmers’ agitation and expect in return the vote of the farmers at election time.

If the impasse is over, and the Modi government manages to reach an agreement with the farmers, the Akalis might stand to gain. If, however, the impasse continues, there is the possibility that the Akalis might want to join hands with the Congress, as the Shiv Sena and the Congress did in Maharashtra, to oppose the BJP. At the moment, despite the silence and invisibility of the Akalis, there might be an active back channel between the Akalis and the BJP.

There is also the danger, as far as the Akalis are concerned, that if the BJP makes a peace deal

with the Punjab Sikh farmers, Mr Modi and Mr Shah, who are forever on the lookout to expand the BJP’s footprint, may absorb the Sikh constituency and the Akalis may be left high and dry. This was this strategy that backfired for the BJP in Maharashtra when it tried to undermine the Shiv Sena.

It looks like the farmers are confident that they can argue their own case, fight their own cause, and don’t need to depend on political parties. It is the parties who need to woo the farmers. That even ostensibly farmers’ parties like the Rashtriya Lok Dal and Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh, and Indian National Lok Dal and the Jannayak Janta Party in Haryana, can’t take the farmers for granted is evident in their unflattering electoral performance in the past few years. It is then reasonable to infer that the BJP would want to carve out its own farmers’ constituency.

Akali Dal leaders have held on to their belief that they represent the Punjabi constituency, taking advantage of the Sikh identity of Punjab’s farmers. The Sikh element in Punjab’s politics simply cannot be wished away. The BJP, on its part, will have a problem in balancing its Hindutva politics with that of the Sikh minorityism of the Akalis.

The farmers themselves have kept the protest as a farmers’ issue, pure and simple. They kept the ideologies of all stripes at bay. They are pressing on the simple issue of seeking repeal of the three farm laws. Economic experts explain the protest as anti-rational. The farmers, however, believe that their demand is rational too. The Akalis’ obligation at this point is to argue the case of the farmers so that the entire country knows that the farmers are not being obtuse and obdurate.

The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst

LETTERS

FUEL PRICES

Even when the crude oil prices are low in the international market, a litre of petrol costs ₹90 in India (*Tulasi pulls auto with rope over fuel price hike, DC, Jan. 16*). Diesel price is also close to petrol. After demonetisation, GST and the pandemic, citizens are made to suffer yet again with high fuel prices. Increased diesel prices will lead to commodities getting expensive. If prices continue to escalate, common man will also start pushing his own vehicle.

Teja Deenamsetty
Visakhapatnam

AP TEMPLE ATTACKS

The involvement of political parties in desecration of idols and temples and spreading false news is quite unfortunate to create differences among public (*TD, BJP cadres behind temple attacks, says DGP, DC, Jan. 16*). The culprits should be punished severely.

K.L.Rao
Visakhapatnam

PORTS ‘SNATCH’

As if India did not have enough problems, the Centre has introduced a draconian Indian Ports Bill, 2021. All the maritime States should oppose the Bill as it infringes on their powers. The Maritime Board of a BJP ruled Gujarat State is also opposing the proposal and Karnataka should follow suit. The Union government is unnecessarily stirring a Horne’s nest. The Centre must drop the idea.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

VACCINE DRIVE

After several dry runs, India has joined a select group of nations today with the rollout of the world’s largest vaccination drive against covid pandemic (*PM to start biggest battle on Covid-19, DC, Jan. 16*). It has, indeed, been a gigantic task and calls for appreciation. Further, vaccines are not a panacea and we still need to adhere to the Covid-19 protocols. We must continue to counter misinformation and reinforce the channels of communication in this drive.

Dr C Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

Email your letters to info@deccanmail.com, editor@deccanmail.com. You can also send them to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad-500 003.

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

City to be airlinked with Nagarjunasagar

HYDERABAD, JANUARY. 16

Linking of Hyderabad with Nagarjunasagar and a service between Hyderabad and Aurangabad were accepted in principle by the Indian Airlines and Civil Aviation Department.

Disclosing this, the Minister for Tourism, Mrs. Roda Mistry, said the service between Hyderabad and Aurangabad, attracting vast tourist traffic, could materialise in six months. Lighting of Aurangabad airport to facilitate night landing around that town would be done by the Civil Aviation Department.

Mohan Guruswamy



An important lesson from India’s history for PM Modi

The fortunes of India had irrevocably changed on May 29, 1658, when two Indian armies clashed on the dusty fields of Samugarh, near Agra. India’s history changed forever. Aurangzeb’s victory over his brother Dara Shikoh marked the beginning of Islamic bigotry in India that not only alienated the Hindus but also the much more moderate Sufis and Shias as well. Aurangzeb’s narrow Sunni beliefs were to make India the hotbed of Muslim fundamentalists, long before the Wahabis of Saudi Arabia sponsored the fanatics of the Taliban and the Islamic State. It was not only a battle for the Mughal throne, but also a battle for the very soul of India.

Aurangzeb’s victory here and other successful campaigns resulted in the creation of the greatest and biggest imperial India till then. But the seeds of India’s collapse were sowed.

In 1620, India had the world’s greatest national income, over a third of it, and was its greatest military power as well. It was the envy of Europe. The European traders came to seek Indian

goods for their markets. But no sooner was the iron hand of Aurangzeb no more that his imperial India began to disintegrate. The iron hand that ruled by dividing rather than uniting and that sought to impose a hierarchy by theological preferences gave rise to much discordance. But for Aurangzeb, Shivaji Bhonsle might have remained a minor western Indian feudatory? There are important lessons to be learnt from all this for those who rule and seek to rule India.

The weakening central rule and profit seeking peripheral kingdoms allowed European trading posts to be established. Weakening regimes led to the trading posts raising armed guards. Soon the overseas trading companies began warring each other and with so many minor states now free to make their destinies joining hands with one or the other it was the Europeans who got gradually got established. The Anglo-French wars of the Carnatic were fought by Indian armies beefed up by trading company levies. The East India Company of the British ultimately prevailed and the

French, Dutch, Portuguese and Danish got reduced to pockets.

A hundred years later, in 1757, the era of total foreign supremacy over India began when the East India Company’s troops drawn from South India and officered by English company executives defeated the army of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah at Plassey (Palashi) in Bengal, with the now usual mix of superior drilling, resolute leadership and a bit of treachery. At a crucial time, Mir Jaffar and his troops crossed over. India lay prostrate before Robert Clive.

Within a decade, on August 12, 1765, Clive obtained a firman from the then Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam, granting the dewan of Bengal, Bihar and Odisha to the Company. A Muslim contemporary indignantly exclaims that so great a “transaction was done and finished in less time than would have been taken up in the sale of a jackass”. By this deed the Company became the real sovereign ruler of 30 million people, yielding a revenue of four million sterling. The John Company grew from strength to

strength, and by 1857 the Grand Mughal was reduced to his fort conducting poetry soirees. It was the golden age of Urdu poetry.

The events of 1857 led to the formal establishment of India as a directly ruled colony of the British empire. It was yet another epochal event. India changed, for the better and for the worse. Once again India absorbed from outsiders, as it absorbed from the Dravidians, Aryans, Greeks, Persians, Kushans, Afghans, Uzbeks and all those who came to seek their fortunes here. The British were the only ones who came to take away its vast wealth in a systematic manner. The wealth taken from India to a great extent financed the Industrial Revolution in England.

From then to another epochal year ending with seven took ninety years. In 1947, India became independent. Its GDP is now the world’s third biggest. In a few decades it could conceivably become its biggest. But have we learned any lessons from history?

Given its abject failures on the economic front, the BJP/RSS regime in

New Delhi is now pushing India towards a Hindutva nationhood, by seeking to victimise a minority for the perceived wrongs and slights of the past. An intolerant religion can never be the basis of nationhood and national unity in India. The legacy of Aurangzeb tells us that. Aurangzeb had created the greatest empire that India had seen since Ashoka the Great. But it didn’t take very long for it to dissipate. In the hundred years that followed, a foreign mercantile company gained control over all of India.

The BJP under Narendra Modi might keep gaining electoral dominion over all or most of India. But has he learned any lessons from history? Does he want to become the Hindu Aurangzeb? What is worrisome is that we know well that history is not Narendra Modi’s forte.

The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.

SHORT TAKES

Covid clouds over Oz Open

Melbourne: Three coronavirus cases have been detected among charter flights carrying tennis players, coaches and officials to Melbourne ahead of the Australian Open, health authorities and tournament organizers said on Saturday. A total of 47 players from the two affected flights arriving from Los Angeles and Abu Dhabi are now in a strictly enforced 14-day quarantine without the ability to leave their hotel rooms even to practice. The Australian Open is scheduled to start February 8. Health authorities said two positive Covid-19 cases emerged from a charter flight from Los Angeles and Tennis Australia said there was a third positive case from a flight from Abu Dhabi. The cases from Los Angeles involved an aircrew member and a passenger who was not a player. — AP

Pandya brothers' father no more

Vadodara: India cricketers Hardik and Krunal Pandya lost their father Himanshu, who died on Saturday after suffering a heart attack. He was 71. "Krunal, who was leading Baroda in the Syed Mushtaq Ali trophy, left the bio-bubble created for the tournament to be with his family," association secretary Ajit Lele said. Hardik is not playing the national T20 tournament as he is preparing for the white-ball series against England. He has also left Mumbai, where he was training, for Vadodara. Himanshu had played a key role in the success of his cricketer sons. India skipper Virat Kohli and legendary Sachin Tendulkar, led the cricketing fraternity in condoling Himanshu's demise. — PTI

Lanka dig in after Root double ton

Galle, Sri Lanka: Joe Root completed his fourth double century for England on Saturday but insisted it will mean nothing if his side cannot overcome a defiant Sri Lanka in the first Test. The England captain made 228 of his team's 421 all out — 26 runs short of his brilliant 254 career best against Pakistan at Old Trafford in 2016. But Lahiru Thirimanne led Sri Lanka's stubborn resistance, hitting an unbeaten 75 while Kusal Perera made 62 as the home team reached 156-2 in their second innings. After their disappointing 135 in the first innings, they need another 130 to reach England's total. Root's 321 ball innings with a six and 18 fours dominated the day. — AFP

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 135 & 156/2 in 61 overs (Thirimanne 76*, Perera 62) vs England 421 in 117.1 overs (Root 228, Lawrence 73).

Adilabad to play Warangal for title

Hyderabad: Adilabad Rural and Warangal Urban entered the finals of the TCA Telangana North East Cup U-14 T20 cricket tournament. In the semifinals played at the Indira Priya Darshini Stadium in Adilabad, Adilabad Rural defeated Adilabad Urban by five wickets while Warangal Urban beat Warangal Rural by 67 runs. Sathwik Rathod hit 67 not out but in a losing cause for Adilabad Urban while Yuvaraj Singh's 4 for 27 turned the game for Warangal Urban.

BRIEF SCORES

- Adilabad Urban 169/2 in 20 overs (Sathwik Rathod 67 n.o., Hiranya Dokul 31) lost to Adilabad Rural 170/5 in 15.5 overs (Anas Syed 48, Bhavesh 3/32)
- Warangal Urban 158/5 in 17 overs (Rithwik 60, P. Pradyum 37 n.o.) bt Warangal Rural 91 in 16.2 overs (Yuvaraj Singh 4/27).

Live on TV

BADMINTON

Thailand Open: Finals from 7:30 am on Star Sports 2 HD, 3

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Sheffield United vs Tottenham Hotspur from 7:30 pm; **Liverpool vs Manchester United** from 10 pm; Manchester City vs Crystal Palace from 1:30 am (Monday) on Star Sports Select 1, HD

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OPENING WOES

Rohit, Shubman fail to give India strong start on Day Two

Brisbane, Jan. 16: Rohit Sharma's indiscreet shot selection pegged India back after rookie bowling attack restricted Australia to 369 on a rain-curtailed second day of the fourth Test on Saturday.

With heavy thunder-showers preventing any play in the post tea session, India ended the day at 62 for 2.

Rohit was elegant as ever in his 44 off 74 balls before Nathan Lyon in his 100th Test enticed him to come down the track but the half-chip-half-loft was safely pouched by Mitchell Starc in the deep. India also lost Shubman Gill (7) who edged one off Pat Cummins to Steve Smith. Cheteshwar Pujara (8) and Ajinkya Rahane (2) added only two runs in the 6.1 overs before the break.

There were six boundaries from Rohit but he did not fiddle at deliveries in and around the off-stump channel even as Cummins and Josh Hazlewood bowled a testing spell under overcast conditions.

The shot of the session was an on-drive off Cummins which came after a streaky boundary through the slips in the same over. Another delightful stroke was an off-drive off Cameron Green as 49 runs were added for the second wicket.

There wasn't much swing on offer but the pace off the track has increased compared to the first day and it only helped that the Australian pace attack is a more well built one with average speed being at least 6-7 kmph more than their Indian counterparts.

Pujara, at the other end was playing his usual 'grinding out' game but it didn't look too arduous till Rohit kept the scoreboard ticking at the other end. It wouldn't be an over statement to say that among all top order batsman across both sides, Rohit looked the most comfortable and till his dismissal never looked like being troubled by the four-pronged attack. — PTI



Washington Sundar (centre) is congratulated by teammates after taking the wicket of Australia's Nathan Lyon on the second day of the fourth Test at the Gabba in Brisbane on Saturday. — AP

SCORECARD

Australia first innings (overnight 274/5): David Warner c Rohit Sharma b Mohammed Siraj 1, Marcus Harris c W. Sundar b Shardul Thakur 5, Marnus Labuschagne c R. Pant b T. Natarajan 108, Steven Smith c R. Sharma b W. Sundar 36, Matthew Wade c S. Thakur b T. Natarajan 45, Cameron Green b W. Sundar 47, Tim Paine c R. Sharma b S. Thakur 50, Pat Cummins lbw b S. Thakur 2, Mitchell Starc not out 20, Nathan Lyon b W. Sundar 24, Josh Hazlewood b T. Natarajan 11. Extras (b-4, lb-5, nb-6, wd-5) 20. **Total (all out in 115.2 overs) 369.**

FoW: 1-4, 2-17, 3-87, 4-200, 5-213, 6-311, 7-313, 8-315, 9-354.

Bowlers: Mohammed Siraj 25-10-66-1, T Natarajan 24.2-3-78-3, Shardul Thakur 24-6-93-3, Navdeep Saini 7.5-2-21-0, Washington Sundar 31-6-89-3, Rohit Sharma 0.1-0-1-0.

India 1st Innings: Rohit Sharma c M. Starc b N. Lyon 44, Shubman Gill c Smith b Cummins 7, Cheteshwar Pujara batting 8, Ajinkya Rahane batting 2. Extras (nb-1) 1. **Total (For 2 wks, in 26 overs) 62.**

FoW: 1-11, 2-60.

Bowling: Mitchell Starc 3-1-8-0, Josh Hazlewood 8-4-11-0, Pat Cummins 6-1-22-1, Cameron Green 3-0-11-0, Nathan Lyon 6-2-10-1.

Indian bowlers impress McDonald

Brisbane, Jan. 16: Australia's assistant coach Andrew McDonald on Saturday praised the highly inexperienced Indian bowling attack for the final Test and singled out Washington Sundar, saying the young off-spinner filled the shoes of Ravichandran Ashwin "quite well".

Hit by a barrage of injuries through the series, India picked debutants Washington (3/89) and medium pacer T. Natarajan (3/78) in the

playing eleven on Friday. The duo was travelling with the squad as net bowlers.

"I thought they (the Indian bowlers) were very consistent. I thought Washington Sundar in particular was disciplined and fill that role of Ravi Ashwin quite well and kept it tight and was able to take some key wickets on the way," McDonald said at the virtual post-day press conference after Day Two.

"So, for me I suppose, he

is a bowler who controlled well the tempo of the game and I think it stood out for me."

McDonald, who also coaches in the IPL, was also impressed by Natarajan.

"...Natarajan shaped the ball early, there is lot (to like) about him, left-arm swing bowler, no doubt he is inexperienced but has enough played first-class games to be play his first Test on this tour, (that) is a great achievement, so I think they held their

own," the 39-year-old said.

The left-arm pacer had impressed in the limited overs leg of the tour after making the Indian team at the back of a stellar IPL. "They (Indian bowlers) applied pressure throughout the innings and they made (it) difficult for ourselves. Times when we felt we would get on the top, they were able to bounce back and get key wickets at crucial times. It was great arm-wrestle, so full credit to their attack." — PTI

Sharath sets tune-up camp for paddlers

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 16

Achanta Sharath Kamal, World No-32, took an initiative for the benefit of a group of budding table tennis players to beat Corona pandemic blues. The nine-time national champion organised a 15-day camp in Chennai to maintain the rhythm of the players as doors are getting opened for national and international tournaments.

The camp, from January 3 to 18, is going on under the director supervision of Sharath and it is effectively supported by Rajath Kamal and also Muralidhara Rao (national coach) and Srinivasa Rao (Dronacharya

awardee), at the SDAT AKG academy in Chennai. Well-known fitness trainer Ramji Srinivasan too has been a great help for players.

Hyderabad's S. Fidel R. Snehit, current youth (U-21) national champion, Gujarat's Manav Thakkar (World No.1 in Youth), Manush Shah of Gujarat (India No.3 in the youth category) and Bengal's Arjun Ghosh (India No.6 in the men's section) and three budding players from Tamil Nadu got a chance to take part in the camp.

"As far as I remember, this is the first camp which was mentored by the current world top ranking Indian player for the benefit of the prospec-



Achanta Sharath Kamal (left), SFR Snehit (right) and other table tennis players pose after a session at the SDAT AKG-academy in Chennai.

tive champions. It is going really well," Achanta Srinivasa Rao said.

"Following a national camp organised by the

TTFI in Sonapat in November-December last year, the players were eager to have another full-fledged session. The main

target of the camp is to help us get into a match mode keeping in mind that the National Championships are scheduled in February and Olympic qualifiers are in March in Qatar." Sharath said adding that the training sessions helped all the players improve their skill set, agility, strength and technique in preparation for the tough tournaments that are coming up on the circuit.

Snehit on his part was thrilled. "It is a wonderful camp. I thank Sharath Anna for giving us an opportunity to spend time with him. He shared a lot of knowledge. Such mentoring plays a vital role in our progress. It is a memorable experience," he said.

Board should look into India's alarming rate of injuries



Ayaz Memon
Over The Top

What an extraordinary Test series this is turning out to be! After India lost the first match from a potentially winning position in a 'freak' hour's batting that saw them being bowled out for an abysmal 36, a white-wash by Australia looked the likely outcome, more so with Virat Kohli and Mohamed Shami (for different reasons) no longer available.

What's transpired since has been straight out of Ripley's Believe It Or Not. Shrugging off the trauma of the sensational col-

lapse at Adelaide, India went on to win the second Test in a remarkable turnaround. Perhaps even more amazing was the manner in which the third was saved, Cheteshwar Pujara, Rishabh Pant, Hanuma Vihari and Ravichandran Ashwin batting out the last day against all odds.

By the time the fourth match started, India's squad was severely depleted, resembling a battalion of the 'walking wounded' in a war zone.

Eight key players were out of commission, Kohli was on paternity leave.

Shami, and K.L. Rahul too were already back in India because of injury. Ashwin, Jasprit Bumrah, Vihari, Ravindra Jadeja and Umesh Yadav were still in Australia, but all *hors de combat*.

This made picking the playing XI excruciating easy at one level, excruciating at another: few players to choose from, yet how to assemble the best combination to fight the Aussies?

The batting, despite Kohli not being there, was not as badly dented as the bowling. Having rightly decided be on the attack rather than defend (difficult, given the players available), the big question was whether to play two spinners and three pacers, or four pacers and a spinner.

The history of matches at the Gabba, where fast

bowlers have been more successful, swung the mandate in favour of Thakur and Natarajan to join Siraj and Saini. For the spinner's slot, Washington Sundar was preferred over Kuldeep Yadav to shore up the batting.

This meant India's bowling attack had a collective experience of four Tests (Siraj 2, Saini 1, Thakur 1) and two debutants (Sundar and Natarajan) when they took the field at Brisbane! I can't think of a less experienced bowling attack since representing independent India.

India's performance so far at Brisbane has been admirable. The rookie bowling attack has handled the pressure well, shown fine skill and restricted Australia to 369. It's not a small score, but nowhere near 450 that Tim Paine was expecting after

choosing to bat first.

Had Rohit Sharma, after a sparkling 44, not been seduced into indiscretion by a delivery that Lyon held back cleverly seeing the batsman jump out of the crease, India would have been on equal terms with Australia going into the third day. Now Australia are a nudge ahead.

However, with Pujara and Rahane at the crease, Pant, Agarwal and Sundar to follow, there is quite a lot of batting to come. If India survive the first session without too much damage, this Test could be heading for a tantalising finish too.

Where grit, tenacity, commitment and character are concerned, India's performance in this tour has been outstanding. Nevertheless, the number of players that have been

All eyes are on Kerala's Azhar

Chennai, Jan. 16: Kerala's Mohammed Azharuddeen wouldn't have set out on the arduous journey to emulate the Mohammed Azharuddin of Hyderabad, if not for a cricket-crazy elder brother and a die-hard fan of the former India captain.

From his name to his career option, everything to do with Azharuddeen was decided by Kamaruddeen. The journey continues, though.

While the first step towards fulfilling his family's dream was taken when he was chosen to represent Kerala in 2015, he shot into the national limelight recently with his 37-ball 100 in the domestic T20 Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy match against Mumbai. "I have met him like twice or thrice. Once in my hometown and once in Hyderabad when we were there to play Ranji Trophy and he was the head coach of Hyderabad. I shared the story of how I was named after him with Mohd Azharuddin sir," Azharuddeen said.

"To be frank, like my elder brother, I did not follow Azharuddin sir. I have just watched a few videos of his on Youtube," the Kerala stumper added.

The 26-year-old from Thalangara in north Kerala's Kasaragod town, known for its love for cricket rather than football, said the blistering knock would have surely pleased his brother Kamaruddeen, who had changed his youngest brother's name from Ajmal to Azharuddeen after his birth.

Azharuddeen has seven brothers and all are big-time cricket fans. "My family is a cricket family. I have seven elder brothers. Everyone has played cricket. Obviously they follow the game when I play. Even if they don't watch, they used to follow the scorecard," he says.

About his memorable



Mohammed Azharuddeen

knock against Mumbai, which was the third fastest T20 ton by an Indian batsman, Azharuddeen said he had not made any special preparation prior to that.

The player's game was affected after he was dropped down in the batting order by former coach Dav Whatmore.

"I am an opener. After Dav Whatmore came as coach he made me a middle-order player. I came down the order due to team requirements. It was not a good slot for me. I just requested the coach (Tinu Yohannan) to allow me to bat in the right slot, which is opening.

"I like to hit straight. One of my strengths is hitting straight. I am good at hitting straight, against fast bowling and spin bowling. It was a true wicket (in the game against Mumbai) and I batted with confidence," he added.

Asked if he was looking forward to the IPL auction scheduled next month, Azharuddeen said he was not too worried about it. "I am in a good zone. I am not worried about the IPL auction or something. I am just concentrating on our fourth match against Andhra," he said.

When asked about his goals, Azharuddeen mentioned playing in the IPL and scoring hundreds in Ranji Trophy. — PTI

Hyderabad lose 4th round to TN

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 16

Hyderabad lost to Tamil Nadu by seven wickets in their Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament fourth round match played in Kolkata on Saturday.

Electing to bat, Hyderabad made 152 for 7 in the stipulated overs thanks to useful knocks by B. Sandeep (41) and Sai Pragnay Reddy (30). However, Tamil Nadu rode on the brilliance of N. Jagdeeshan (78) and Dinesh Karthik (40 n.o) to finish the match with three balls to spare.

In another match, Assam pulled off an upset 13-run win over Bengal in a Elite Group 'B'. Bengal opted to field and saw the talented Riyan Parag (77) help Assam put up a fighting 157 for 5 in 20 overs. The visiting team restricted Bengal to 144 for 8.

In Vadodara, Baroda continued their winning run by claiming a 60-run victory over Maharashtra.

This is Baroda's fourth win on the trot in the league stage after having defeated Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in their first three outings.

Put in to bat, Baroda rode on stand-in skipper Kedar Devdhar's stroke-filled unbeaten 99 off 71 balls to post a competitive 158 for four. Medium pacer Atit Sheth (4/17) then wreaked havoc to scuttle out Maharashtra for a meagre 98 and give his team four full points. — PTI

BRIEF SCORES

- Hyderabad 152/7 in 20 overs (Sai Pragnay Reddy 30, B. Sandeep 41, B. Aparajith 2/22, Warrier 2/24, M. Ashwin 2/40) lost to Tamil Nadu 155/3 in 19.3 overs (N. Jagdeeshan 78, Dinesh Karthik 40 n.o). **Points:** Tamil Nadu 4, Hyderabad 0.
- Baroda 158/4 in 20 overs (Kedar Devdhar 99 not out, 28; Taranjitsingh Dhillon 2/30) lost to Maharashtra 98 in 16.5 overs (Naushad Shaikh 32; Atit Sheth 4/17, Ninal Rathwa 3/21).

injured during the IPL. What are the factors causing so many Indian players — compared to those from any other country — to suffer such injuries? Is it work overload, training regimens that don't match individual physique, players not being attentive about their own fitness, poor assessment and treatment of niggles (by sports medicine experts attached to the Board) which then flare up into serious problems? Or are there other reasons?

This situation needs to be inquired into. The BCCI would do well to have a committee of experts study the issue and come out with a white paper on how to lick it. There are long term implications of the problem which must not be lost in the acclaim over the heroic performances in Australia.



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