

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | FRIDAY 11 | DECEMBER 2020

## WEATHER



Max: 31°C  
Min: 22°C  
Rainfall: Nil

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Karthigai 26  
**Tithi:** Ekadashi/ Dwadashi  
**Star:** Chithirai/ Swathi  
**Rahukalam:**  
10.30 am to 12 noon  
**Yamagandam:**  
3 pm to 4.30 pm  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 5.03 am  
**Jumma:** 12.05 pm  
**Asar:** 3.16 pm  
**Maghrib:** 5.42 pm  
**Isha:** 6.57 pm

## US experts convene to decide whether to okay Pfizer vaccine

**Washington:** A US government advisory panel convened Thursday to decide whether to endorse mass use of Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine to help conquer the outbreak that has killed close to 300,000 Americans. The meeting of outside advisers to the Food and Drug Administration represented the next-to-last hurdle before the expected start of the biggest vaccination campaign in US history.

## COUNTER

## POINT



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## Gang rape by 17 men reported in Jharkhand

**NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, DEC. 10**

In a shocking incident, a 35-year woman was allegedly gang-raped by 17 men in Jharkhand's Dumka. The incident allegedly occurred under the Mufassil Police station Tuesday evening. According to reports, the victim in her statement to the police on Wednesday said that the crime was committed while she was returning home from the weekly village market along with her husband. According to reports, the victim in her statement mentioned that the men held her husband hostage before committing the crime. An FIR against seventeen people has been registered and one person was detained for questioning based on the victim's statement. ■ **P4**

## JIBE AT RAJINI

## Spiritual politics is old in TN: Minister

**DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 10**

For the first time after actor Rajinikanth announced his political entry, an AIADMK leader had countered him, at least by saying that there was nothing new in the 'spiritual politics' that the actor was talking about. The AIADMK has been practicing spiritual politics, which was inclusive of all faiths and did not refer to one particular religion, said Dairy Development Minister Rajendra Bhalaji on Thursday. Speaking to the media at the Secretariat, the Minister said AIADMK rule signified 'spiritual politics' and referred to the recent visit of Chief

Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami to the shrines of different religions — Velankanni Basilica of the Christians, Dharmapuram Adheenam of the Hindus and the Nagore Dargah of the Muslims — during his recent tour. He made a snide remark at Rajinikanth by saying "let him start his party and we shall see after that." To a question on Rajinikanth trying to appropriate the legacy of AIADMK founder M.G. Ramachandran (MGR), Bhalaji said the leader was common to all. Maybe Rajinikanth was impressed by MRG's policies, principles and hence wanted to follow him, he said.

## Central Vista: PM lays symbolic foundation

**New Delhi, Dec. 10:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the new Parliament building Thursday and described the event as a "milestone in India's democratic history", asserting that if the old Parliament House gave direction to the country post-independence, the new one would be a witness to the making of an 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

Addressing a gathering after laying the foundation stone and performing the ground-breaking ceremony, Modi urged the people to take a pledge to keep 'India First' and asserted that every decision should increase the strength of the country, whose interest is paramount. Asserting that Indian democratic traditions predate the Magna Carta, a 13th century document



Prime Minister Narendra Modi lays the foundation stone of new Parliament building, in New Delhi, Thursday. — PTI

## CM: Landmark structure

**Chennai:** "I am confident that this will be a landmark structure in Independent India," Chief Minister Palaniswami said in his letter to the Prime Minister. He added, "on behalf of the people of Tamil Nadu, I congratulate you for your personal touch in shaping the project. I had the pleasure of taking part in the function through video conference."

## Farmers' unions should consider govt proposal: Tomar

**New Delhi, Dec. 10:** Agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Thursday urged farmer union leaders to consider proposals sent to them to break the deadlock over protests against the three new farm laws and said the government is ready for further discussions with them any time.

Addressing reporters along with his cabinet colleague Piyush Goyal, Tomar also said he is hopeful of a resolution. "The government is keen and ready for further discussions with protesting farmers," he said, a day after the farmer unions rejected the government's written proposal, offering a written assurance on MSP and amendment to few provisions in the new farm laws enacted in September. — PTI

## Facebook may be forced to sell Instagram, WA

**Washington, Dec. 10:** The giant tech companies whose services are woven into the fabric of social life are now the targets of a widening assault by government competition enforcers. Regulators filed landmark antitrust lawsuits Wednesday against Facebook, the second major government

offensive this year against once seemingly untouchable tech behemoths. The Federal Trade Commission and 48 states and districts sued the social network giant, accusing it of abusing its market power to squash smaller competitors and seeking remedies that

could include a forced spinoff of Facebook's prized Instagram and WhatsApp messaging services. The company's conduct has crimped consumers' choices and harmed their data privacy, the regulators charged. Once lionised as innovators and job creators —

and largely left alone by Washington for nearly two decades — Big Tech companies have seen their political fortunes plummet. Facebook, Google, Amazon and Apple have come under scrutiny from Congress, federal regulators, state attorneys general and European authorities. ■ **P7**

## BJP prez Nadda's convoy attacked with stones, bricks in Kolkata

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, DEC. 10**

BJP president JP Nadda, in a convoy with several other party leaders, came under a violent attack with stones, bricks and bottles allegedly by the ruling Trinamul

Congress workers at Diamond Harbour in South 24 Parganas of West Bengal on Thursday afternoon for daring to make inroads to the Lok Sabha constituency of chief minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee.

The unprecedented incident took place a day after the BJP chief slammed the TMC over political dynasty and also led a rally in party supremo Mamata Banerjee's assembly constituency in Bhowanipore without any trouble. ■ **P4**



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New stores now open at Ambattur, Cathedral Road in Chennai





## SHORT TAKES

## Sex abuse of minor: Man gets 10-year jail term

DC CORRESPONDENT  
PUDUKKOTTAI, DEC. 10

The district fast track Mahila court on Thursday convicted and sentenced a 30-year-old man to undergo 10 years' imprisonment for sexually assaulting a seven-year-old girl here, in 2018. According to the prosecution, the accused Bharathi hailed from Mampatti village near Illuppur in Pudukkottai district. He sexually assaulted the girl on August 8, 2018. Based on the victim's parents' complaint, the all women police, Keeranur, arrested the accused under Pocco and filed a case against him before the Mahila court.

Judge Dr Sathya convicted and sentenced the accused to 10 years imprisonment and also slapped a fine of Rs 30,000. The judge directed that if the accused failed to remit the fine, he should undergo three more months of imprisonment.

The judge also directed the government to pay Rs 1.5 lakh as compensation, to the victim.

## Watery last journey for nonagenarian

A. ARUL PALANI | DC  
CUDDALORE, DEC. 10

It was a long and arduous last journey for 91-year-old G. Sellammal, who died in her village near Vriddachalam in Cuddalore district on Thursday. Her relatives and local residents carried her corpse wading through 6-feet deep water in the canal on the way to the graveyard and cremated the body.

As the coastal district received incessant rainfall for the past three weeks all the lakes and canals overflowed with rainwater.

Sellammal, of Melapalaiyur village near Vriddachalam, died following an illness. The local residents decided to conduct her last rites in a cremation ground. But, they faced problems as the canal passing through the village was overflowing making it difficult to carry the body to the graveyard. They decided to carry the corpse with the help of old tubes of four-wheeler tyres and collected a few tubes and pumped air in them.

The funeral procession was conducted in the village as usual. After reaching the canal bund, they tied a rope connecting one end of the bund with the other end and tied the corpse with the tube. With the help of the rope they waded through the 6-feet deep water and reached the other end of the canal. Subsequently, they reached the cremation ground and conducted the last rites.

A local resident, Govindan, said: "There is no proper road to the cremation ground in the village. We face difficulties to conduct funerals whenever the canal is filled with water. The district administration must set up a proper cremation ground and road".

## BAD ROADS NEED ATTENTION

Montieth road, Egmore



Dr Nair Bridge, Egmore



Korattur



Anna Nagar — DC

## On the brink of burnout? No room for complacency

B. Vijayalakshmi

## Viewpoint

With shopping malls and restaurants witnessing an increase in footfalls, big ticket retailers seeing a rise in sales, cinema theatres rolling out red carpet for movie lovers, airline operations picking up and colleges opening for UG final year and PG students and research scholars, Covid fear seems to have reduced in the state.

While traffic jams are back on weekdays, traffic congestion is witnessed on arterial roads even during weekends as people have decided to shop and eat out they had missed over the last eight months.

However, more than half of the students have not turned up as parents are not ready to send their wards to colleges now. Several engineering col-

leges, especially deemed universities, have decided to open only next semester. Similarly, theatres and multiplexes are yet to see the milling crowd as seat distancing, diligent hygiene and contact-less services have completely altered the movie-going experience in the country.

As fatigue has crept in after months of preparing meals and eating at home, dine-in services are lapped up by Chennaiites. Most of them are ready to take the risk of venturing out to escape the monotony of staying and working at home. Marina and Elliot's beaches, set to be opened on December 14, are bound to woo thousands

waiting to visit recreational getaways. On the other hand, people robbed of their livelihood and desperate for survival are ready to let their guard down and hunt for jobs.

Despite a second wave of corona infections reported in several cities, there has been no significant spike in fresh cases post Deepavali in Tamil Nadu metros.

Though a majority of sectors have opened up with government easing norms, the absence of regular public transport like suburban trains and limited bus services have stopped commuters from flocking to railway stations and terminuses. Also, increasing immunity and precautionary measures seem to have reduced the corona positive cases and casualties.

Until vaccine is out for usage, our hard fought gains cannot be squandered by Covid-fatigue people by giving up protective measures. It is also imperative that the government regulates testing strategies and ensures strict compliance of norms.

T. SUDHEESH | DC  
CHENNAI, DEC. 10

Even though the Southern Railway has increased suburban services in the city, college students and common passengers are struggling to commute as the services are restricted to limited passengers.

The regular classes, especially of post-graduate (PG) and final year undergraduate (UG) students, are already going on at the colleges, but the government has not allowed students to travel on the suburban trains. This comes at a time when other cities like Mumbai and Bengaluru have allowed the suburban train services in full swing. Esakki Nagaraj, state vice-president, Students Federation of India (SFI), said that the attendance in PG and UG classes is currently below 50 percent because of transportation problems. "If the suburban services are opened up, students

## 2 OMR sheets of MBBS aspirant

## HC seeks NTA explanation

J. STALIN | DC  
CHENNAI, DEC. 10

The Madras high court has directed the National Testing Agency (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test UG 2020) to thoroughly consider the entire materials that have been placed by an MBBS aspirant, conduct an investigation and file a report before the court by December 23, explaining as to how two OMR sheets containing name of this candidate were uploaded in the website and how it were completely in variance.

"It gives an opportunity to the 2nd respondent (National Testing Agency) to plug the leak, if there is one", said Justice N. Anand Venkatesh while passing interim orders on a petition filed by K.S. Manoj (a minor), which sought a direction to the NTA to declare the results and rank of the petitioner in Neet (UG) 2020 as 594 of 720 marks commensurate with his performance as reflected in first OMR answer sheet uploaded on October 16, 2020, and issue consequential directions to the authorities to allow the participation of the

petitioner in the counselling for admission to medical courses (UG 2020 with reference to 594 out of 720 marks in Neet (UG) 2020 and accordingly provide him admission to the medical course.

The judge directed the authorities to permit the petitioner to participate in the counselling for admission to the medical UG course by taking the marks of the petitioner in Neet as 594 marks and ultimately, if the petitioner secures a seat, the same shall not be finalized and the results shall be kept in a sealed cover, awaiting the final orders in this petition.

Petitioner's counsel M. Ravi submitted that the OMR answer sheet that was uploaded on October 5, 2020 in the website of NTA showed that the petitioner had secured 594 marks in the Neet-2020 exams and that this position continued in the website up to October 16, 2020.

However, this position changed all of a sudden on October 17, 2020 and the petitioner noticed that there was a complete change in the OMR sheet in the same website

wherein the marks came down to 248, he added.

The judge said the additional rejoinder filed by the petitioner based on the account retrieved from the Google Account of the petitioner, changed the entire complexion of this case. On the face of it, these materials substantiate the case of the petitioner that two OMR sheets were uploaded in the NTA website.

The one which was uploaded on October 5 and which remained in the website till October 16 and which showed that the petitioner had secured 594 marks in the Neet, has been filed by way of additional typed set of papers which contain the various screen shots taken by the petitioner on October 11 and 12.

This retrieved Google account has to be taken on face value since it was not possible to manipulate the Google Account, which was not within the control of the petitioner.

"It is not known as to how this OMR sheet completely changed from October 17 by bringing down the marks of the petitioner from 594 to 248", the judge added.

## Call to lift restrictions on travel on suburban trains

**The regular classes, especially of post-graduate (PG) and final year undergraduate (UG) students, are already going on at the colleges, but the government has not allowed students to travel on the suburban trains**

can commute to colleges located on the city outskirts with just Rs 10. But the students are forced to take MTC services, spending at least Rs 60-70 every day. So we have decided to take up the matter with the government to relax the restrictions on the suburban trains", he said.

Lekshmi, a final year UG student studying at a college in Kodambakkam, who used to travel on suburban trains, says it is difficult for students to reach colleges due to the restrictions on suburban trains. "Though girl students and working women are

allowed to travel on suburban trains, no male students and working men are allowed. So the students who want to attend practical classes have only the option of bus services to commute", she said.

The Traffic and Transportation Forum, Chennai, has taken up the matter with the Railway Board chairman through Coimbatore MP P.R. Natarajan. V. Rama Rao of the forum said that students are now permitted to attend interviews and exams only on production of hall tickets and relevant documents. Hence PG students are unable to attend colleges and have to depend upon bus service which is costly and time-consuming, especially to colleges on outskirts like Arakkonam, Gummidipoondi and Kancheepuram. So we demand the government to allow all common people to travel on suburban trains as the Covid-19 pandemic cases have come down drastical-

ly in Tamil Nadu. Meanwhile, MTC buses were allowed to operate with 100 per cent capacity.

The Southern Railway increased the number of suburban services in the city to 320 from 244 from December 7. As per the latest guidelines, women would be allowed to travel on suburban trains throughout the day except during peak hours — 7 am to 9.30 am and 4.30 pm to 7 pm Monday to Saturday. Previously, the Southern Railway had fixed the peak hour timings from 7 am to 10 am and 4.30 pm to 7.30 pm. Children aged up to 12 accompanying women will be permitted to travel during the non-peak hours, the release added.

In the pre-pandemic period, a total of 1,180,000 passengers used the suburban services every day, including 400,000 in the western route, 560,000 in the southern route, 120,000 in the northern route and 100,000 in the MRTS route.

## Hospital helps 7-yr-old girl walk freely

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, DEC. 10

Apollo Hospitals, performed a procedure that transformed a 7-year-old girl child's life. Dr. Vijay Kishore Reddy and his team completed the procedure on the patient who was affected by "discoid lateral meniscal tear", an abnormal condition in children. Ms. Joyesmita Chando's parents brought her to Chennai from Guwahati as she was experiencing severe pain in the right knee, with difficulty in walking and restricted right knee movements.

The meniscus is a soft piece of cartilage that acts as a shock absorber to protect the knee. There are two of these C-shaped pads in each knee and they are crescent-shaped. A discoid meniscus is thicker than normal and has a different shape and texture. It is more likely to be injured than a normally shaped meniscus. Discoid meniscus may never cause injury in some people, but some will face issues because of this condition, usually during childhood.

The child underwent arthroscopic lateral discoid meniscus saucerization and repair which was done completely through keyhole procedure. Dr. Vijay Kishore Reddy, Orthopedic Surgeon, Apollo Hospitals, said, "Ms.

Joyesmita Chando is the youngest kid who have undergone a complete keyhole procedure for discoid meniscus in India. After seven months of misery her parents saw their child walking effortlessly on the same day of surgery."

Ms. Preetha Reddy, vice chairperson, Apollo Hospitals Group, said "Most of the orthopedic procedures are technically demanding procedure that should be performed by an experienced orthopedic surgeon in a medical center accustomed to performing arthroscopy at least several times a month. Our orthopedic department is at the forefront of providing most innovative therapies alongside other internationally acclaimed health-care institutions."

**The child underwent arthroscopic lateral discoid meniscus saucerization and repair which was done completely through keyhole procedure**

Preetha Reddy, vice chairperson, Apollo Hospitals Group, Baby Joyesmita Chando and her father seen along with Dr. Vijay Kishore Reddy, consultant orthopedic surgeon, Apollo hospitals.

## Discoid Meniscus Repair



## Flesh trade: 10 arrested

DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUCHY, DEC. 10

Police on Wednesday arrested 10 persons including 'TIK TOK' familiar 'Rowdy Baby Surya' for being involved in the flesh trade, under the guise of running 'spas' in different parts of the city. Police said, on a tip off about the crime, city police commissioner, Dr J Loganathan, formed a special team to check it, and raided spas in Woriyur, KK Nagar, Thillai Nagar in the city, and arrested and remanded them to judicial custody, police added. Police also rescued 12 women involved in the flesh trade, and sent them to the government women protection home, police added.

## Medicos form human chain against fee hike

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CUDDALORE, DEC. 10

More than 350 students of Government Rajah Muthiah Medical College, Chidambaram participated in the human chain protest on the campus on Thursday demanding the government to roll back hike in tuition fees.

Nearly 100 parents also took part in the agitation. Since taking over the Annamalai University including the medical college in 2013 the government had allotted ₹2,000 crore for the development of the varsity. Last month the government hiked the tuition fees of the medical college. The tuition fees were increased to ₹5.6 lakh for MBBS course and ₹9.6 lakh for MD and MS courses. However, the government fixed tuition fees

of ₹13,600 for MBBS and ₹30,000 for MD/MS in other medical colleges in the state. The students were staging protests on the campus for the last three days.

On Thursday, students organised a human chain protest on the campus. They have demanded the government to reduce the tuition fees immediately. The students have also planned to stage other forms of demonstrations if the fees are not reduced. They have also demanded the government to increase the stipend given to them and release the pending stipend. It may be noted that various political party leaders had urged the government to reduce the fees for students in Government Rajah Muthiah Medical College. Recently, DMK president

M.K. Stalin also demanded the Tamil Nadu government to reduce the fees charged by two government medical colleges — Rajah Muthiah Medical College, Chidambaram and IRT Perundurai Medical College, on par with fees charged by other state-owned medical colleges. Stalin said the fees at IRT Perundurai Medical College are fixed at ₹3.85 lakh which raises doubts in the minds of people whether these two are private colleges.

The government had hiked the fees in these two colleges like private medical colleges putting the poor students in difficulty. After telling the court that the fees for Rajah Muthiah Medical College this academic year is ₹4 lakh, the government has hiked it to ₹5.44 lakh, Stalin said.

## Govt urged to pay ₹30K damage for crop loss

DC CORRESPONDENT  
THANJAVUR, DEC. 10

The Thanjavur district council of the CPI has appealed to the state government to pay relief of ₹30,000 per acre to farmers whose samba and thaladi paddy crops have been damaged due to 'Burevi'

**A resolution to this effect was adopted at the council meeting held here on Thursday**

cyclone.

A resolution to this effect was adopted at the council meeting held here

on Thursday. CPI district secretary, MA Bharathi, said that concerned VAOs should provide cultivation certificates to farmers who cultivate lands belonging to temples and other religious establishments as tenants, extend the last date for payment of crop insurance premi-

um to December 31, and take up relief works on roads and bridges affected due to Burevi. He also said that farmers will take part in sit in agitations demanding repeal of three farm legislations brought by Central government in the district on December 14.



## SHORT TAKES

**Kamal to launch election campaign on Sunday**

**Chennai, Dec. 10:** Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) chief Kamal Haasan will launch his campaign for the 2021 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections from December 13, the party said on Thursday. The actor-politician will embark on his first phase of campaign between December 13-16, MNM vice president, Dr R Mahendran said in a release here. During this four-day schedule, Haasan will cover Madurai, Theni, Dindigul, Virudhunagar, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin and Kanniyakumari districts, he added. Haasan had launched MNM in February 2018 and the party had faced last year's Lok Sabha elections but could not return any MP. — PTI

**Rajaji's 142nd birth anniversary observed**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
KRISHNAGIRI, DEC. 10

Rajaji alias C Rajagopalachari has not only served India during the freedom movement and was also an activist against the creation of nuclear weapons, and also founder of the Tamil scientific terms society.

His 142nd birth anniversary was observed on Thursday, at his home in Thorapalli village near Hosur, Krishnagiri district.

Collector Dr V Jaya Chandra Banu visited the place where Rajaji was born, and garlanded a bust-size image of the leader at his house, now converted into a memorial.

**Stalin's Human Rights Day message**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, DEC. 10

The fight for rights would continue till humanity retrieved human rights, DMK President M K Stalin said, pointing out that people's rights and State's rights were being robbed of in broad daylight.

Wondering when the country would be eligible to celebrate Human Rights Day, Stalin, in a Facebook post, said farmers all over the country had come to the streets to fight and people in the lower rungs of society had lost their livelihood..

# Covid-19 tally inches towards 8 lakh mark

**Chennai, Dec. 10:** The coronavirus caseload in Tamil Nadu inched towards the eight lakh mark with 1,220 fresh infections reported on Thursday, while the death toll went up to 11,853 after 17 people succumbed to the virus.

The infection count now is 7,95,240. As many as 1,302 people were discharged from health care facilities after getting cured, aggregating to 7,72,995, a bulletin from the health department said. The number of active cases in Tamil Nadu stood at 10,392. Chennai added 313 and Coimbatore 124 cases, while the rest were scattered across other districts. Chennai continued to top the list of cases with

**Puducherry logs 24 new corona cases**

**Puducherry, Dec 10** Puducherry logged 24 fresh Covid-19 cases while two more people succumbed to the infection pushing the toll in the union territory to 617, a top Health department official said on Thursday. The two deceased were from the Puducherry region, Director of Health

18,856 infections out of more than 7.95 lakh cases. Eleven districts have added new infections in single digits while 30 districts reported zero fatalities. A total of 68,928 samples were tested on Thursday, taking the cumulative total to 1,27,44,479 specimens

and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said in a release.

The two did not have any comorbidities, he said, adding one of them aged 45 years died of septic shock and refractory hypoxemia while the other (aged 72) succumbed to Covid pneumonia and ARDS.

examined so far. Chennai also continued to top in the number of fatalities accounting for 3,898 of the state's overall 11,853. Of the 17 fatalities reported today, nine succumbed in private hospitals while eight in government. A 44-year-old man from Vellore was the only victim to suc-

Mohan Kumar said the Health department examined 1,570 samples during the last 24 hours and found 24 to be positive for coronavirus.

While the Puducherry region accounted for 12 of the 24 fresh cases, the Karaikal and Mahe regions reported six each. — PTI

cumb to the virus 'without any chronic illness' while the remaining 16 were with co-morbidities. Eleven of those who tested positive were returnees from other destinations including one individual from the United Arab Emirates, the bulletin said. — PTI

**Farmers attempt to block trains, arrested**

**G. SRINIVASAN | DC**  
KUMBakonam, DEC 10

The police arrested 40 farmers who tried to take part in rail roko agitation expressing solidarity with agitating farmers at Delhi and demanding the repeal of the three legislations on agriculture reforms brought by the Centre. The farmers reached the railway station, but were stopped by police.

The farmers were planning to stop the Cholan express from Tiruchy to Chennai.

As the police did not permit them, they sat in front of the station and agitated.

**The farmers were planning to stop the Cholan express from Tiruchy to Chennai**

## Randomised clinical trial on efficacy of Siddha medicine completed

**Chennai Dec. 12:** Tamil Nadu, which has initiated a number of clinical trials on the efficacy of Siddha formulations in the management of Covid-19, has completed a randomised study undertaken at the Stanley government hospital here in association with Siddha doctors.

The outcome will be announced soon with the concurrence of the Ayush ministry, researchers involved in the project said. Nine other clinical trials involving Siddha medicine either as stand-alone or adjunct with allopathic medicine that were taken up throughout Tamil Nadu are in various stages of completion. Apart from studying the reduction of SARS-CoV-2 viral load and reducing the onset of symptoms in asymptomatic Covid-19 with Siddha formulation Kabasura Kudineer (KSK) compared to Vitamin C & Zinc (CZ) used as supplement in allopathy, the ran-

domised trial examined the changes in the immunological markers of the Siddha medicine against control.

Also, the trial evaluated the safety of Siddha medicine and documented clinical profile of asymptomatic Covid-19 as per principles of Siddha system of medicine.

"The randomised clinical trial at Stanley GH by Siddha and allopathy doctors has been completed and a detailed manuscript is ready. The outcome will be announced after approval and concurrence of the Ayush ministry," Dr K Kanakavalli, Director General, Central Council for Research in Siddha (CCRS), said.

A total of 233 COVID-19 clinical trials, involving various systems of medicine, were registered from India with the Clinical Trial Registry of India (CTRI) from March 1, 2020, to June 22, 2020, when the infection cases peaked.

Out of these, 146 were interventional trials, 84 observational trials, and three post-marketing surveillance.

Randomised control trials are higher in number than non-randomised. Nearly 20 per cent of the trials involved patients, and research institutions sponsored more than half of the trials, Dr P Sathiyarajeswaran, director incharge Siddha Central Research Institute, said. In most of these trials, the interventional agent is either multiple drug combinations or compound drug formulations compared to single drug administration. "These are not normal clinical trials. These were taken up during the pandemic times involving the participation of patients. So, the outcome of the trials should be peer reviewed before publication," Dr Sathiyarajeswaran told P T I in an interaction. — PTI



CM Edappadi K. Palaniswami hands over free bicycles to class 11 students studying in government and government aided schools on Thursday. Deputy CM O. Panneerselvam and other ministers also present. — DC

## OPS formula for gender equality

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, DEC. 10

Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam came up with a novel idea to perpetuate gender equality by suggesting a legislation to enable the sharing power equally between a male and a female head of government for two and a half years each during a five-year term of rule.

Speaking at the valedictory of a six-day seminar to mark the International Day on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, organised for SHG members, government and

police officials and local body leaders, he said the AIADMK government had taken all steps to root out violence against women in the State.

Stressing on the need to teach children about sexual violence and gender equality, the Deputy Chief Minister said that future generations needed to be sensitised on the issue.

He also called upon SHGs to function as courts in dealing with crimes against women and children in their areas of operation and thus dispense with justice.

**PM to address intl Bharati festival today**

**Chennai, Dec. 10:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the International Bharati Festival 2020 on Friday, organiser of the event, Vanavil Cultural Centre, said here. The PM will address via video conferencing and also present Bharati award, K. Ravi, founder of Vanavil Cultural Centre, told reporters here on Thursday. The event is being conducted as part of the 138th birth anniversary celebration of Tamil poet and writer Mahakavi Subramanya Bharati. This year the festival is being organised in virtual mode due to the pandemic. Modi will address the festival at 4.30 PM on Friday, Ravi said. Minister for Tamil Official Language and Tamil Culture and Archaeology K Pandiarajan will also address the festival, he added. The Bharathi Award, to be presented by Modi, was instituted in 1994 by Vanavil Cultural Centre. Every year it is being conferred on eminent persons who have done laudable service in any field of social relevance and thus worked towards the fulfilment of Bharathi's dreams. — PTI

## Devenendrakula Vellalars thank CM

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, DEC. 10

Community and association leaders of the seven castes that had been combined to form the 'Devendrakula Vellalars' called on Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami to thank for his efforts to club them all together.

Among those who met the Chief Minister at the secretariat on Thursday were 10 retired officers of the Central Civil Services, besides leaders of caste organisations, according to an official press release.

Responding to demands from the various caste leaders to combine the castes of Devendrakulars, Kadaiyars, Kaalaadis, Kudumbar, Pallars, Pannadi and Vathiriar, the government formed a committee headed by senior bureaucrat Hansraj Verma,

which recommended the clubbing of the castes into one.

Based on the recommendations, the demands of the caste groups and an anthropological report of the Madras University, the State government had recommended to the Centre to change the name of seven castes and rename them as Devendrakula Vellalars. The Chief Minister, who made the announcement at a press conference in Sivaganga, had also assured to follow up the matter with the Centre and expedite the renaming process.

The change in name, however, would not take the Scheduled Caste status now enjoyed by the members of the castes. All the benefits that they caste groups enjoy now would continue even after they are named as Devendrakula Vellars.

## Imported coal helps start 5th unit in TTPS

**ARULOLI M | DC**  
THOOTHUKUDI, DEC. 10

The 5x210 MW Tuticorin thermal power station (TTPS) completely stopped its generation last week, as the entire coal stocked in its coal yard got soaked with continuous rains here, and is expected to resume power

generation in all five units by importing fresh coal from the coal fields of Bihar and Odisha.

"TTPS has been sanctioned an emergency allocation of around 1 lakh ton of fresh coal to resume operations," said a TTPS source, according to which the plant received 55,000 tons of coal

by sea. The coal reached Thoothukudi port on December 9, but was diverted from the TANGEDCO coal handling facilities at Ennore Kamarajar Port TTA, while another consignment of coal is reportedly on the way from Haldia port in West Bengal.

Using the dry imported

coal, the TTPS administration on Thursday resumed operation of its fifth unit which went on smoothly to achieve its maximum generation capacity by the afternoon, said official sources.

It is also said that on receiving the next consignment of 55,000 tons of coal within this week, the TTPS

would be able to put into operation the rest of its four units. "The water-soaked coal also will not go to waste," said an official, who added that steps have been taken to dry the wet coal, and as it dries to a certain extent, it would be used by mixing it with the fully dry imported coal.

## Restore our jungle rights, plead tribes

**B RAVICHANDRAN | DC**  
OOTY, DEC. 10

TRIBESMEN IN THE NILGIRIS WANT THE GOVERNMENT TO EASE NORMS TO HELP THEM COLLECT MINOR FOREST PRODUCE (MFP) TO EARN A LIVELIHOOD, AS THEIR LIVES DEPENDED ON NATURE AND THE JUNGLE.

Pitching his argument in this regard, KM Alwas, secretary, Nilgiris Adivasi Welfare Association, said that MFP includes all non-timber forest produce of plant origin like bamboo, cane, waxes, resins, fodder, leaves, gums, natural dyes, nuts of wild origin, wild fruits, honey and wild amla, black stone flower and

tamarind. For the tribal communities who live in and around the jungles, the collection of these MFP products will bring cash income through sales and sustain their livelihood.

"Mountains and the tribes are inseparable. The tribes by nature know how to live in tune with nature. Their knowledge in conservation also is worth emulating. The Nilgiris is home to primitive tribes like the Toda, Kota, Kurumba, Kattunayakan, Irula and Paniya. For centuries, their livelihood had been dependent on MFP. Since MFP products are renewable sources by nature, no harm is done to jungles by collection of MFP periodically.

However, in recent times, there has been a curb and foresters are not allowing the tribes to collect MFP in the jungles. This has led to curtailed income flow to tribal families from the jungle resources. Though the Tribal Forest Rights Act of 2005 provides the provision and rights for the tribes to collect MFP in the jungles in Nilgiris, the forest administration doesn't allow the tribes MFP collection. We want the Nilgiris district administration to convene a meeting of forest officials to lift the ban on MFP collection in the jungles to provide livelihood for tribes, who form the core of tribal diversity in mountains," Alwas added.

### International Mountain Day

## Conserving hill biodiversity, daunting task: Experts

**B RAVICHANDRAN | DC**  
OOTY, DEC. 10

While the world observes the 'International Mountain Day' on Friday (today) under the theme 'Mountain Bio-diversity', the 'Greens' here feel that biodiversity conservation in the Nilgiris is a mounting task as various factors including climate change and global warming, add to the growing challenges in conservation efforts in mountains.

Field Officer, CPR Environmental Education Centre here, M Kumaravelu, said that the Nilgiris which is core centre of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (NBR), the first of its kind in the country, is home to about 3,300 species of flora, over 100 species of mammals, 350 species of birds, 80 species of reptiles and amphibians, 300 species of butterflies and innumerable vertebrates. Quite a few species among this flora and fauna are endemic. This speaks volumes about the rich mountain biodiversity in the NBR. Added to this is the diversity of tribal communities and local indigenous communities like the Badagas. "Conservation is already a daunting task in the Nilgiris where unplanned development activities, encroachments, degrada-



Toda tribesmen staging their cultural dance in the alluring environs at a toda hamlet near Ooty.

tion of the existing ecosystems, growing concrete culture, migration of local communities in search of jobs, are the issues to be addressed. Though the Nilgiris is known for its glorious wetland ecosystem and the unique grassland Shola forest ecosystem, many of these ecosystem which sustain various flora and fauna have vanished across the hills, as only in a few pockets such valuable ecosystems

are found now. The nature and jungle dependent culture of the native communities also have changed over the times. Most of the eco-destruction and habitat loss is due to unplanned developmental activities and mushrooming of concrete jungles. Unless this eco-destruction trend is stopped, the mountain bio-diversity conservation efforts will be in peril," he added.

The need of the hour is

to enact stringent mountain biodiversity conservation laws to protect what is left in the hills to ensure that the existing species of flora and fauna do thrive. In the present scenario, the threat from global warming and climate change also pose a big threat to mountain biodiversity. A detailed study is to be initiated to document the micro-climatic changes in different ecosystems, and the disap-

pearance of the fragile species in different micro-climatic zones. This will help plan for better biodiversity conservation strategies to protect the existing bio-diversity, and to retrieve the lost habitats, advocated

Kumaravel. Managing trustee, Nilgiris Environment and Socio-cultural Trust, V Sivadas, said that in the technology-oriented cyber era, one still needs to learn from the tribal communities and other indigenous communities about the ancient conservation methods of medicinal and herbal plants which is generally rich in the hills.

"The recent rainfall pattern shows that certainly there is a difference which is more harmful than helpful. The heavy rains would not only lead to soil erosion, but also inflict damage to the local ecosystems leading to the vanishing of certain endemic micro-flora which are helpful in soil health and slope stability. Impetus should be given to grow native plant species and try to find out ways and means to eradicate the invasive and exotic species, or otherwise that would play havoc with wildlife health and originality of the mountain biodiversity," Sivadas added.



Rajinikanth's brother Sathyanarayana takes part in the special homam organised for the well-being and success of the superstar at Arunagirinathar shrine along girivalam path in Tiruvannamalai on Thursday. — K. Senithil Nathan



## SHORT TAKES

IMA CALLS FOR  
NATIONWIDE  
PROTEST TODAYBHAGWAN PARAB | DC  
MUMBAI, DEC. 10

Doctors across the country on Friday (December 11) will protest against government's decision to allow non-graduate practitioners in Ayurveda to perform general surgeries.

The doctors from medical colleges, general practitioners, specialists, government services, resident doctors and medical students will take part in the demonstrations.

As a part of the protest, the doctors will withdraw all non-essential and non-Covid services on Friday from 6 am to 6 pm. All emergency services including casualty, emergency room, critical care, ICUs, Covid care, emergency surgeries and labor room will continue to function. However, OPD services will not be available and elective surgeries will not be posted.

The Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM) has issued a notification to train and allow the legal practice of surgeries by Ayurveda practitioners and the formation of four committees by NITI Aayog for the integration of all systems of medicine.

NE STUDENTS TO  
OBSERVE DEC. 11  
AS BLACK DAYMANOJ ANAND | DC  
GUWAHATI, DEC. 10

The North East Students' Organisation (NESO) a platform of students bodies of all the north-eastern states has decided to observe December 11, the day controversial Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 was passed by the parliament as "black day" across the region.

It was on December 11, 2019 that the controversial legislation was passed by the Parliament despite widespread protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

NESO chairman Samuel Jyrwa and secretary general Sinam Prakash here on Thursday said, "The CAA has been a glaring example of how a controversial bill was passed in the parliament in an autocratic manner, ignoring the massive protest by the people of the Northeast. The region, which is already bearing the burden of illegal migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh, would never accept this legislation and we would continue to fight against this black law."

Central Vista: PM  
lays symbolic  
foundation

FROM PAGE 1

The new building will be an inspiration when India will celebrate 75 years of its independence. The making of the new Parliament building is an example of co-existence of the new with the old, he said.

"I can never forget the moment in my life when I had the opportunity to come to Parliament House for the first time in 2014 as an MP. Before stepping in, I bowed and saluted this temple of democracy," Modi said.

"The current Parliament building played an important role in pre and post independent India. The first government of an independent India was formed here and the first sitting of Parliament took place here, our Constitution was drafted here, our democracy was re-established here. Babasaheb Ambedkar and others, after deep deliberations in the Central Hall, gave us a Constitution," he said.

Union ministers, ambassadors, leaders of different parties, including former Lok Sabha speaker Shivraj Patil and representatives of the YSR Congress, AIADMK, BJD and the TRS, were in the audience. However, some opposition leaders gave the event a miss. BJD MP Bhartruhari Mahabadi said it was a matter of pride to be present at the foundation stone-laying ceremony.

Businessman Ratan Tata, whose group firm has got the contract to construct the new building, was also there.

Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairperson Harivansh read out the statements from President Ram Nath Kovind and Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu.

Modi said the laws made inside this building and the debates that took place are a part of the country's democratic heritage, but it is important to accept reality as this building is now nearly 100 years old and has been upgraded from time to time.

Nadda's convoy attacked in  
Mamata nephew's LS seat

BJP alleges TMC workers involved, slam 'lawlessness, intolerance' in Bengal

FROM PAGE 1

Though Mr Nadda, who enjoys Z-category security cover by the central reserve police force, escaped unhurt, he informed that BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya and party's national vice president Mukul Roy were injured in the rain of bricks, stones and bottles thrown by the angry TMC supporters, who shouted "Go Back BJP" slogan, after blocking the convoy's way in Shirakol.

Apart from them, the cars of West Bengal BJP chief Dilip Ghosh and five more leaders were also damaged. Braving the attack on the second and final day of his state tour, Mr Nadda along with others reached Diamond Harbour and lashed out at the CM and her nephew.

"While coming here I witnessed how Bengal has slipped into anarchy under Mamataji's misrule. It has become a state of lawlessness and intolerance. Only Maa Durga's blessings helped me to reach here. I am safe because my car is bullet-proof. The TMC and its goons left no stone unturned to throttle democracy. But this Goondaraj will not stay. Lotus will also bloom here, starting from this place," he told a BJP meeting.

The BJP chief claimed, "Mamataji's misrule has lowered Bengal's height. It has to be restored. This is Diamond Harbour from where Jyotirmoyji, a known parliamentarian, once led. But the present MP is not visible in the parliament. It is a shame on democracy. Police and administration are getting politicised here. No administration exists here. It has collapsed. Without the central force's security, Bengal visit is a challenge."

Expressing his concern, union home minister Amit Shah tweeted, "Today, the attack on the BJP National President Shri @JPNadda ji in Bengal is really condemnable. The more it is condemned, the lesser would it be. The central government is taking this attack very seriously. The



Injured BJP national secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya receives treatment in South 24 Pargana on Thursday following an attack by alleged TMC activists. — PTI

Didi wonders if BJP men  
strike their leader's cars

Kolkata, Dec. 10: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday alleged that the BJP is holding rallies with arms every day and its workers are attacking fellow activists while blaming it on the ruling Trinamul Congress.

Banerjee, also the TMC supremo, said in a sarcastic way that personnel of security forces such as the CRPF, BSF, CISF and the Army are present at convoys of every BJP leader visiting West

Bengal.

Describing the TMC as the party of the state and the BJP as one belonging to Delhi and Gujarat, she urged people to stop "goons from outside" the state during elections here.

"They (BJP activists) are coming out (for rallies) with arms every day. They are slapping themselves and blaming it on the Trinamul Congress. Just think of the situation. They are roaming around with the BSF, CRPF, Army and the

CISF (personnel). Why are they so scared?" Banerjee said.

Her statement came days after the death of a BJP worker during a protest rally in Siliguri on December 7.

The police have claimed that armed persons were brought in the rally and the man was killed in firing from a shotgun which is not used by the force.

The saffron party, however, maintained that the police were behind the killing of its activist. — PTI

SHAH TELLS WB  
TO ANSWER FOR  
STATE TERRORDC CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA, DEC. 10

Expressing his concern, over the attack on the convoy of BJP chief J.P. Nadda by alleged TMC supporters in West Bengal, Union home minister Amit Shah tweeted, "Today, the attack on the BJP national president @JPNadda ji in Bengal is really condemnable. The more it is condemned, the lesser would it be. The central government is taking this attack very seriously. The Bengal government will have to answer to the peace loving people of the state for this sponsored violence."

He added, "Bengal has slipped into an era of tyranny, chaos and darkness under the Trinamul rule. The way political violence has been institutionalised and taken to an extreme level in West Bengal under the TMC rule is both tragic and worrisome for all those who believe in democratic values."

convoy. Everyone is safe and situation is peaceful. Matter is being investigated to find out actual happenings."

Senior TMC MP Sougata Roy wondered, "Why did the BJP need to prick Mr Banerjee's constituency with its national president's visit? They could have planned only a meeting there. Anyway, it would have been better had stones and bricks were not pelted."

## Rajnath suggests restraint for peace

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 10

At a time when India is facing Chinese aggression in the Eastern Ladakh, Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday told ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) that exercising self-restraint in the conduct of activities and avoiding actions that may further complicate the situation, will go a long way in bringing sustained peace to the region.

ADMM Plus is an annual meeting of Defence Ministers of 10 ASEAN countries and eight partner countries.

● **RAJNATH SINGH** emphasises India's call for an open, inclusive order in Indo-Pacific based upon respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations, peaceful resolutions of disputes through talks.

In his address, Singh emphasised that Indo-Pacific region in particular confronts numerous traditional and non-traditional security threats. Defence minister recalled the launch of the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in last year's East Asia Summit and stated that IPOI is an open global initiative which draws on existing regional cooperation architecture and mechanism. He noted the commonality between

India's IPOI and ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific, both being opportunities for cooperation.

In his speech addressing the defence ministers of ASEAN member countries — USA, Russia, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand — Singh emphasised India's call for an open and inclusive order in Indo-Pacific based upon respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations, peaceful resolutions of disputes through dialogue

and adherence to International rules and laws. He also reiterated India's support to freedom of navigation and over-flight for all in International waters in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Singh stated that terrorism remains a major scourge for the region and world. He reiterated that the structures that support and sustain terrorism continue to exist, including in India's neighbourhood. He called for stronger commitment and need to strengthen International mechanism to fight terrorism, jointly and vigorously.

BJP: Crime against women  
on rise due to JMM

FROM PAGE 1

"The matter is being investigated. One person has been detained for questioning after he was identified by the victim", DIG Santhal region, Sudarshan Mandal told reporters.

According to Jharkhand Police statistics, on an average five cases of rapes have been registered in the state till July this year. The state police website shows that around 1033 cases of rape have been registered till July, which is higher than the figure recorded in 2019.

Meanwhile, the BJP which is the main opposition party in Jharkhand

● **THE VICTIM** in her statement mentioned that the men held her husband hostage before committing the crime.

has blamed the state government for failure in controlling law and order and rising crime against women.

Terming the scenario in the state as "Jungle Raj" BJP state unit has demanded action against all those who have been involved in the case. "The system in Jharkhand has collapsed. We demand strong action against the criminals through a fast track court", BJP spokesperson Praful

Shahdeo said.

According to BJP leaders in Ranchi incidents of crime against women has increased after Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) formed the government in the state. Senior BJP leader Louis Marandi said, "the situation has turned worse after the JMM government came to power in the state. Crime against women has become frequent in tribal districts which is a major cause of worry for all of us. We feel that tribals are not safe under the current regime. We demand immediate action against all those who have been involved in the crime".

Scindia lobbies for accommodating  
his loyalists in Shivraj's ministryRABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, DEC. 10

Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha member Jyotiraditya Scindia has started lobbying with the party leadership here to accommodate his loyalists in the state ministry as well as the organisation.

Scindia who is arriving here on Friday on a day's visit to the state is scheduled to meet Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan here to discuss with him on the issue, sources close to him told this newspaper on Thursday.

This would be Scindia's second meeting with Chouhan in the last fortnight.

● **JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA** is scheduled to meet Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan here to discuss with him on the issue.

Sources said Scindia was keen to re-induct 2 former ministers, Govind Singh Rajput and Tulsi Silawat, in the Shivraj cabinet as soon as possible. The two former ministers, considered staunch loyalists of Scindia, had resigned from the Shivraj government on October 27 when their 6-month-tenure as non-MLA ministers ended.

They have been elected to the house in the November 3 Assembly by-elections.

"The delay in their re-induction in the state min-

Triangular Parl to  
see Lotus symbol

New Delhi, Dec. 10: Indian Parliament's new building will have a triangular shape to reflect the importance of triangles being a sacred geometry in various religions, while its interiors will have three national symbols as their main themes — Lotus, Peacock and Banyan Tree.

The new building, being constructed by Tata Projects Ltd, will come up in front of the existing Parliament House that was built nearly 100 years ago at a cost of ₹83 lakh at that time and would eventually be turned into a museum.

The new building will house larger Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Halls, with capacities of 888 seats and 384 seats respectively, to accommodate an expanded Parliament after the freeze on its expansion lifts in 2026.

The Lok Sabha Hall will also have additional capacity, up to 1,272 seats, to host joint sessions.

"The new Parliament building is designed in a triangular shape, since it sits on a triangular plot and has three main spaces — Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and a Cental Lounge. Also, triangles are sacred geometries in various religions and cultures of the country," the new building's architect Bimal Patel said.

"In the Lok Sabha cham-

ber, we have used the national bird Peacock as its theme, in Rajya Sabha chamber we have used the national flower Lotus as its theme and in Central Lounge courtyard we have used the national tree Banyan as its theme," Patel said. The National Emblem will crown the new Parliament building.

He said the architecture of the new building is in harmony with the present building so that both buildings complement each other. The ceiling of the new Parliament building will have fresco paintings like that of Rashtrapati Bhawan and carpets will have traditional designs, instead of the current single colour carpets, Patel said.

To retain some of the characteristics of the existing Parliament, the interior walls of the new one will have shlokas inscribed on them. Dholpur stone will be largely used, as is the case with the existing Parliament, and in some interior portions, red granite may be used in place of the red sandstone.

This will be a building with most modern facilities but displaying our culture and tradition as well, the eminent architect said. The four-storey building will be built on 64,500 square metres area. — PTI

Pressure mounts on  
BJD to sack SahooAKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, DEC. 10

Aiming to nail the ruling BJD in the five-year-old girl Pari murder case, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led by its new Odisha in-charge Daggubati Purandeswari on Thursday visited the victim's village Jadupur and met her parents.

The party, while accusing the local lawmaker and state minister Arun Sahoo of shielding the accused involved in the kidnapping and murder of Pari, said it would not stop from its agitation against the ruling party unless the minister is sacked.

Accompanied by BJP's state president Samir Mohanty and several party leaders, Purandeswari held discussion with the deceased girl's parents and also visited the spot near the house where the girl's

body was found.

"Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo, who is accused of shielding the accused, should immediately resign on moral grounds. The SIT formed by the state government has no judicial powers. For a proper investigation into the case, we demand a CBI probe. The matter is also linked to organ trading. We will fight till Pari's parents get justice," said Purandeswari.

She also said that the government was "incapable" of providing security to the couple. Purandeswari's visit follows unrelenting statewide protests by the BJP workers against the state government's inaction to arrest the Pari murder case accused and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's noncommittal attitude to sack Arun Kumar Sahoo from his cabinet for his alleged complicity in the crime.

Kerala records 76.38 pc in  
2nd phase of civic pollsDC CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
DEC. 10

Huge voter turnout was witnessed in the second phase of local body elections in Kerala with the state recording 76.38 per cent polling on Thursday.

All districts which went to polls recorded high polling percentages. Wayanad recorded the highest polling with 79.46 per cent, Kottayam 73.91 per cent, Ernakulam 77.13 per cent, Thrissur 75.03 and Palakkad 77.97 per cent. The polls went off peace-

fully with no incident of violence being reported from any part of the state. However, there were routine complaints of EVM snag in some polling stations which held up polling for a brief period.

While the three major fronts; the CPM led ruling LDF, Congress led UDF and BJP led NDA made claims and counter claims about their electoral prospects, the top leadership of these parties are keeping their fingers crossed over the heavy turnout.

LDF Convenor A. Vijayaraghavan said the ruling fro-

nt is going to register a significant victory in the polls while Congress leader and former minister Thiruvananthoor Radhakrishnan said the high voter turnout indicated the electorate's anger against the government. The BJP leaders claimed that the two fronts were in for a surprise this time.

The LDF and UDF are locked in a direct fight in Ernakulam, Wayanad and Kottayam districts, while BJP is putting up a stiff competition in Thrissur and Palakkad districts where triangular contest is likely to be witnessed in many wards.

former ministers in his cabinet, by going for mini-expansion of his ministry", the BJP leader said.





## SHORT TAKES

CHINA SANCTIONS  
US OFFICIALS  
OVER HK MOVES

Beijing, Dec. 10: China said on Thursday it will impose sanctions on US officials who have “performed badly” over Hong Kong issues, in response to restrictions slapped on Chinese officials this week over Beijing’s harsh clamp-down on the city.

The financial hub was rocked by pro-democracy protests last year that were largely halted by a sweeping national security law imposed by Beijing, drawing criticism over eroding rights from countries including the US.

On Monday, the US said it was freezing any US assets and barring travel to the United States for 14 vice chairs of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, which spearheaded the tough new law.

U.S. BOMBERS  
FLY ON MISSION  
TO DETER IRAN

Washington, Dec. 10: In a new show of military might, two American bomber aircraft took off from the United States and flew over a swath of the Middle East on Thursday, sending what US officials said was a direct message of deterrence to Iran.

The flight of the two massive B-52H Stratofortress bombers over the region, the second such mission in less than a month, was designed to underscore America’s continuing commitment to the Middle East even as President Donald Trump’s administration withdraws thousands of troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.

The long-range heavy bombers, which are capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear weapons, are a formidable sight and are flown less frequently in the Middle East than smaller combat aircraft, such as American fighter jets. Adversaries often complain about bomber flights in their region, deeming them a provocative show of force.

NOBEL PRIZE  
WINNERS WARN  
ABOUT HUNGER

Oslo, Dec. 10: Accepting the Nobel Peace Prize in a ceremony held online because of the coronavirus, the World Food Programme (WFP) warned on Thursday of a “hunger pandemic” it said could be worse than Covid-19.

“Because of so many wars, climate change, the widespread use of hunger as a political and military weapon, and a global health pandemic that makes all of that exponentially worse, 270 million people are marching toward starvation,” WFP executive director David Beasley said.

“Failure to address their needs will cause a hunger pandemic which will dwarf the impact of Covid,” he said, removing his facemask to make his remarks broadcast from the WFP’s headquarters in Rome.

The largest humanitarian organisation fighting famine, the UN agency founded in 1961 feeds tens of millions of people each year — 97 million in 2019 — across all continents.

SEXUAL ABUSE  
SHAKES FBI’S  
SENIOR RANKS

Washington, Dec. 10: An assistant FBI director retired after he was accused of drunkenly groping a female subordinate in a stairwell. Another senior FBI official left after he was found to have sexually harassed eight employees.

Yet another high-ranking FBI agent retired after he was accused of blackmailing a young employee into sexual encounters. An Associated Press investigation has identified at least six sexual misconduct allegations involving senior FBI officials over the past five years, including two new claims brought this week by women who say they were sexually assaulted by ranking agents.

Each of the accused FBI officials appears to have avoided discipline, the AP found, and several were quietly transferred or retired, keeping their full pensions and benefits even when probes substantiated the sexual misconduct claims against them. Beyond that, federal law enforcement officials are afforded anonymity even after the disciplinary process runs its course, allowing them to land on their feet in the private sector or even remain in law enforcement.

3,054 die of Covid  
in 24 hours in USAdvisory panel convened to decide on  
endorsing mass use of Pfizer virus vaccine

Washington, Dec. 10: The US has set a new grim record of more than 3,000 Covid-19 related deaths in a single day, reflecting a bleak reminder of the pandemic’s devastating toll, even as two coronavirus vaccine candidates appear to be on the verge of clearing the country’s final regulatory hurdles.

According to The Covid Tracking Project, the US on Wednesday reported as many 3,054 reported deaths — the highest single-day total to date. The previous single-day record was on May 7 at 2,769 deaths, it said. Overall, there were 1.8 million tests reported on Wednesday, 2,10,000 cases, and a record 1,06,588 Covid-19 patients in US hospitals, it said.

The 7-day average for Covid-19 deaths are at an all-time high as deaths are rising throughout the country, it said. So far more than 15 million Americans have been infected with Covid-19 and 2,86,249 people have lost their lives, according to Johns Hopkins University.

The US, the worst-affected country by the Coronavirus pandemic, is in the final stages of approving at least two Covid-19 vaccines — one by Pfizer and BioNTech and another by Moderna.

A US government advisory panel convened on Thursday to decide whether to endorse mass use of Pfizer’s Covid-19 vaccine to help conquer the outbreak that has killed close to 3,00,000 Americans.

The meeting of outside advisers to the Food and Drug Administration represented the next-to-last hurdle before the expected start of the biggest vaccination campaign in US history. Depending on how fast the FDA signs off on the panel’s recommendation, shots could begin within days.

The FDA panel functions like a science court. During the scheduled day-long session, it was expected to debate and pick apart the data — in public and live-streamed — on whether the vaccine is safe and effective enough to be cleared for emergency use.

“The American public demands and deserves a rigorous, comprehensive and independent review of the data,” said FDA’s Dr. Doran Fink, who

Cyberattackers hit  
vaccine regulator

The Hague, Dec. 10: Documents related to the Pfizer Coronavirus vaccine were illegally accessed during a cyberattack at the EU regulator, the company said Wednesday, as Germany and other northern hemisphere countries grappled with a winter surge in the pandemic.

The Amsterdam-based European Medicines Agency (EMA) reported the cyberattack as European countries eagerly await a vaccine, including Germany where Chancellor Angela Merkel is pushing for tougher action against a second wave of Covid-19 that is proving deadlier than the first there.

While the EMA did not give details on the attack, Pfizer and BioNTech said documents relating to their vaccine candidate had been accessed, but that “no systems have been breached in connection with this incident.” The EMA has promised to reach a decision on conditional approval for Pfizer/BioNTech’s vaccine by December 29, with a ruling on Moderna’s version to follow by January 12.

described agency scientists working nights, weekends and over Thanksgiving to get that done.

With unprecedented interest in the normally obscure panel, the FDA broadcast the meeting via Youtube, and thousands logged on to follow the discussion. The FDA is not required to follow the committee’s advice but is widely expected to do so.

Once that happens, the US will begin shipping millions of doses of the shot. The meeting came as the Coronavirus continues surging across much of the world, claiming more than 1.5 million lives, including more than 2,89,000 in the US. Hanging over the meeting is a warning from British officials that people with a history of serious allergic reactions shouldn’t get the vaccine.

Government officials there are investigating two reports of reactions that occurred when the country began mass vaccination on Tuesday.

Still, a positive recommendation and speedy US approval appeared nearly certain after FDA scientists issued an overwhelmingly positive initial review of the vaccine earlier this week.

FDA said results from Pfizer’s large, ongoing study showed that the shot, which was developed with Germany’s BioNTech, was more than 90% effective across people of different ages, races and underlying health conditions, including diabetes and obesity. No major safety problems were uncovered, and common vaccine-related side effects like fever, fatigue and injection site pain were tolerable.

“The data presented in the briefing report were consistent with what we heard before and are really exciting,” said Dr. William Moss, head of Johns Hopkins University’s International Vaccine Access Center.

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## Fed tax officials probing Hunter Biden

TRUMP, REPUBLICANS PIN HOPES ON  
TEXAS TRIAL TO OVERTURN RESULTS

Washington, Dec. 10: A longshot Supreme Court lawsuit from Texas against four states key in the November 3 election gave President Donald Trump fresh hope of stalling if not overturning Democrat Joe Biden’s victory.

Texas — a state Trump won — lodged the suit late on Tuesday against Michigan, Georgia, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, challenging Biden’s victory in each of the four.

The suit was seen as audacious and barely legally sound, given that no one state has any legal right to interfere in another’s election processes.

Texas alleged that the



France’s President Emmanuel Macron talks with Spain’s Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell as he arrives at the EU headquarters’ Europa building in Brussels on Wednesday, prior to a European Union summit. — AFP

Deadline to salvage Brexit  
accord extended to SundayEU chief publishes ‘no deal’  
Brexit contingency scheme

Brussels, Dec. 10: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen gave themselves until Sunday to decide on the future of post-Brexit negotiations, after a three-hour dinner left the two sides “far apart”.

Johnson came to Brussels on Wednesday in a last gasp effort to salvage trade talks that are teetering towards failure and the two leaders agreed that their negotiators should attempt one last push to bridge the divide.

“We had a lively and interesting discussion on the state of play across the list of outstanding issues,” Von der Leyen said in a statement after the dinner at her Brussels’ headquarters. “We gained a clear understanding of each other’s positions. They remain far apart,” she added.

A senior UK source said the talks were “frank” and that it remained unclear whether the “very large gaps” between the two sides can be bridged.

The leaders agreed to further discussions by their negotiating teams “over the next few days” and that a “firm decision” should be taken by Sunday, the UK source said.

EU negotiator Michel Barnier and his UK counterpart David Frost have narrowed the gaps over eight months but London insists it will reclaim full sovereignty at the end of the year after half-a-century of close economic integration. — AFP

Brussels, Dec. 10: EU chief Ursula von der Leyen on Thursday published a back-up plan to protect road and air travel and fishing rights if Britain leaves the union without a trade deal.

The UK left the European Union on January 31 and at the end of this month will leave the bloc’s single market and customs union, bringing a half-century of ever

closer economic integration to an end.

Negotiators from London and Brussels have been trying to agree a follow-on trade pact that would govern cross-Channel business after the transition period ends, but talks are deadlocked with three weeks to go.

The EU’s Michel Barnier and his UK counterpart David Frost resumed their talks on

Thursday with barely 72 hours left before the decisive moment, and the contingency plan served as “no deal” warning shot.

“Negotiations are still ongoing. However, given that the end of the transition is very near, there is no guarantee that if and when an agreement is found, it can enter into force on time,” von der Leyen said. — AFP

EU weighs sanctions over  
Turkey’s Med drilling work

Brussels, Dec. 10: Concerned that their credibility is at stake, European Union leaders are set on Thursday to give the green light to the expansion of sanctions against Turkey over its exploration of gas reserves in Mediterranean waters claimed by EU members Greece and Cyprus.

At their last summit in October, the leaders offered “a positive political EU-Turkey agenda” to Ankara, including trade and customs benefits and

the prospect of more funds to help Turkey manage Syrian refugees on its territory if it halts its “illegal activities” in the eastern Mediterranean.

But EU foreign ministers agreed this week that Turkey’s behavior has not improved, and on Thursday’s summit is shaping up as a “crucial” meeting for EU-Turkey relations. “All of them considered that we have not seen a fundamental change of direction,” EU foreign policy chief Josep

Borrell told reporters after chairing a videoconference between the ministers on Monday.

“In several aspects the situation has worsened.” The 27 EU countries are split over how best to handle Turkey. France and Cyprus have pushed for tougher measures like economic sanctions, but other countries are concerned about further undermining the country’s already ravaged economy and destabilising the region. — AP

UK spokesperson clarifies after  
Boris confuses farmers’ protest

London, Dec. 10: The UK Foreign Office is closely following the protests by farmers in India, a government spokesperson said on Thursday as it clarified that Prime Minister Boris Johnson had “clearly misheard” a question in Parliament when he responded with Britain’s stance on the India-Pakistan dispute instead.

The gaffe occurred during the weekly Prime Minister’s Questions (PMQs) session in the House of Commons on Wednesday, when Johnson reiterated that any dispute between India and Pakistan was for the two countries to

● A UK GOVERNMENT spokesperson said: “The Prime Minister clearly misheard the question in Parliament. The Foreign Office are following the issue of protests in India closely”.

settle bilaterally in response to a question by Opposition Labour MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi about conveying British Sikh “anxieties” over the ongoing protests against agricultural reforms in India.

A UK government spokesperson said: “The Prime Minister clearly misheard the question in Parliament. The Foreign

Office are following the issue of protests in India closely”. Dhesi, who has been very vocal on the protests by farmers against India’s agricultural reforms, had raised the issue of the footage of “water cannons, teargas and brute force” being used against the peaceful protesters.

“So, will the Prime Minister (Johnson) convey to the Indian Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) our heartfelt anxieties, our hopes for a speedy resolution to the current deadlock and does he agree that everyone has a fundamental right to peaceful protest,” he questioned Johnson. — PTI

## DYING | STATISTICS

## Diabetes, dementia in top 10 causes of death, non-communicable diseases 7 out of 10 causes

## Heart disease kills more people than ever: WHO

United Nations, Dec. 10: Heart disease, which has remained the leading cause of death at the global level for the last 20 years, is now killing more people than ever before, according to the World Health Organisation.

The WHO said diabetes and dementia are also among the world’s top 10 causes of death.

The WHO’s 2019 Global Health Estimates, released on Wednesday, said non-communicable diseases now make up 7 of the world’s top 10 causes of death, an increase from

4 of the 10 leading causes in 2000.

The new data cover the period from 2000 to 2019. “Heart disease has remained the leading cause of death at the global level for the last 20 years. However, it is now killing more people than ever before,” the organisation said.

Heart disease now represents 16 per cent of total deaths from all causes and the number of deaths from heart disease increased by more than two million since 2000 to nearly 9 million in 2019.

● DEATHS FROM diabetes increased by 70 per cent globally between 2000 and 2019, with an 80 per cent rise in deaths among males. In the Eastern Mediterranean, deaths from diabetes have more than doubled and represent the greatest percentage increase of all WHO regions.

Diabetes and dementia enter the top 10 causes of death. Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of

dementia are now among the top 10 causes of death worldwide, ranking 3rd in both the Americas and Europe in 2019. Women are disproportionately affected: globally, 65 per cent of deaths from Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia are women.

Deaths from diabetes increased by 70 per cent globally between 2000 and 2019, with an 80 per cent rise in deaths among males. In the Eastern Mediterranean, deaths from diabetes have more than doubled and represent the

greatest percentage increase of all WHO regions.

The WHO said the estimates reveal trends over the last 2 decades in mortality and morbidity caused by diseases and injuries, clearly highlighting the need for an intensified global focus on preventing and treating cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases, as well as tackling injuries, in all regions of the world, as set out in the agenda for the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

“These new estimates are another reminder that we need to rapidly step up prevention, diagnosis and treatment of non-communicable diseases,” Director-General of WHO Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said. “They highlight the urgency of drastically improving primary health care equitably and holistically. Strong primary health care is clearly the foundation on which everything rests, from combatting non-communicable diseases to managing a global pandemic.” — PTI

**South East Central Railway**  
**E-Tender Notice**  
E-Tender Notice No. TRS-BIA-20-21-  
LC-04  
**Name of Work :** Outsourcing for the work of cleaning/washing of Electric locomotives of Electric Loco Shed, S.E.C.Rly, Bhilai. **Cost of the Work :** ₹ 62,06,067.46/- (Rupees Sixty Two Lakh Six Thousand Sixty Seven and Forty Six Paise Only). **Earnest Money :** ₹ 1,24,200/- (to be deposited through net banking or payment gateway in "http://www.irops.gov.in"). **Completion period of the work :** Two(2) years from the date of commencement of work. **Date & Time of Closing of tender:** 11.30 hrs on 19.01.2021. Website particulars, and details of tender can be seen at: <https://www.irops.gov.in>. The complete particular of the tender is available on IREPS website <https://www.irops.gov.in>. Manual offers are not allowed against the tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.  
**Divl. Elect. Engineer(TRS)**  
**PR/R/TRS/VR/122 S.E.C.Rly/Bhilai**  
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# DECCAN Chronicle

11 DECEMBER 2020

## Farmers' standoff has a few lessons for govt

After a meeting with Union home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday following a sudden and late invitation, and considering the government's proposals advanced through a 20-page note, the protesting farmers have announced intensification of their agitation.

The protest is already a fortnight old. The new element in it is that it threatens to engulf the entire country, not just the borders of the national capital with Haryana leading on to Punjab, which has emerged as the epicentre of the dissatisfactions.

This is suggested in the programme announced by a coordination committee of the dozens of farmers' bodies from across the country. This plan visualises demonstrations at district headquarters across India, taking over toll plazas nationwide, in measured steps blocking entry by road to the national capital, and protesting at the door of all BJP MLAs, MPs, and ministers.

From being seen as a movement of Punjab farmers to begin with, it is the all-India profile of the movement that has now emerged. This is a clear rebuff of the home minister who had invited only 13 of the many more farmer organisations for talks last Tuesday, excluding in fact the largest farmers' union of Punjab, giving rise to speculation that, at one level, the effort was to sow seeds of discord among protesters.

Five representatives of Opposition parties led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, and including NCP chief Sharad Pawar, and leaders of CPI(M), CPI and the DMK, called on President Ram Nath Kovind to submit a memorandum in support of the farmers' demands, and later addressed the media to publicise their endorsement.

While the farmers have not called for the support of political parties, the backing given to them by these entities can only impart operational resilience and muscle to any future deepening of a planned nationwide protest. Moreover, in the forum of Parliament, it is parties that represent various sections of the people, not associations and unions of occupation or trade groups. It is open to the government to appreciate that the linking of political parties brings on a new dimension, making it prudent to offer serious political conciliation. If not, the country is staring at serious economic dislocations and an atmosphere of confrontation and mistrust in the body politic.

In the written offer made to the farmers on Wednesday after the meeting with the home minister, the government has agreed to present its assurance in black and white that the minimum support price regime won't be dismantled, that terms on which private traders (the feared big business and multinational corporations) will operate in the farm sector will be the same as the present APMC "mandis", whose vanishing the farmers fear, and also that contract farming being encouraged through the contentious agri-laws will not cause land alienation from farmers.

These seem reasonable, but farmers still demand the total repeal of the three laws passed without due discussion in Parliament and without consultation with them, the key stakeholders. Their demands have sometimes been called "maximalist". But what they emphasise, in effect, is that legislation must not be carried out on the strength of a party's brute majority in legislature, ignoring those who are impacted the most.

## Breaking up Big Tech

The war against Big Tech just got bigger in the US where the Federal Trade Commission and a coalition of attorneys general of 46 states sued Facebook on the grounds that it transgressed antitrust law and hence should be broken up. This comes on top of the Justice Department taking similar legal action Alphabet's Google two months ago. The day cannot be far when Amazon will be facing similar charges, perhaps Apple, too, for its restrictive App Store practices. Together, the quartet is the creme de la creme of the new economy, whose bloated growth into behemoths gave them the power to influence society by dictating digital lives and the economy while enjoying a global footprint.

The charge against Facebook is it used its dominance to crush rivals at the expense of everyday users even as its power rose manifold with the acquisition of Instagram and WhatsApp. The same charges could as well be aimed at other tech giants who have already been facing intense scrutiny from lawmakers in Congressional hearings. Given the US history of successfully breaking up monopolies like Standard Oil, US railroads and AT&T, besides Microsoft in the new millennium, Big Tech world could look quite different in a few years.

While socialist countries can move against monopolies by simply nationalising industries like India did its banks and the life insurance business, only to suffer a different kind of lazy monopoly, the US believes in dismantling monopolies to ensure healthy competition thrives. The Internet may not be that much different for users if Facebook were to hive off WhatsApp or Amazon were to divest some of its 88 acquisitions. The only difference would be that Google cannot demote competitions through clever search algorithms or Amazon copy goods of their own sellers to take a greater slice of the marketplace.

When threatened with anti-monopoly action by the UK, Mark Zuckerberg challenged a nation saying he would invest elsewhere in Europe. And now you know why the arrogance of unbridled power should be curtailed by promoting healthy competition free of restrictive trade practices.

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Subhani



## How Nehru had gutted the Constitution in 1951



Karan Thapar

As I See It

I'm part of a generation that grew up thinking of Jawaharlal Nehru as the architect of our democracy and the guardian of our Constitution. For many this was beyond questioning. However, a book published earlier this year reveals a very different side of the first Prime Minister. It argues that the first amendment to the Constitution, that he got passed in 1951, gutted the original. So sweeping were the changes that constitutional scholar Upendra Baxi calls the post-amendment document "the second Constitution". He doesn't believe that it bears credible resemblance to the original.

In his book *Sixteen Stormy Days*, Cambridge scholar Tripurdaman Singh identifies several fundamental rights which the first amendment adversely affected. I shall only focus on two.

The first is freedom of speech, perhaps the most important of all rights in a democracy. Nehru's 1951 amendment added new grounds on which this could be curbed. In addition to the existing grounds of libel, slander, defamation, contempt of court and anything that undermines the security of the state or tends to overthrow it, Nehru added relations with foreign states, public order and, most important, the interests of the security of the state.

Now, Tripurdaman Singh argues, this amendment created the grounds to validate sedition. This is because "the interests of the security of the state" can be variously interpreted and, thus, permits a wide range of speech to be classified under it. And this gave the state enormous powers. Admittedly Nehru did not misuse them, but his successors certainly did. Thus the first amendment "opened the floodgates for drastic and

oppressive laws" like the National Security Act, the Maintenance of Internal Security Act and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, all of which have been used to ban books, arrest journalists, jail activists and harass political opponents.

The second fundamental right that Nehru's 1951 amendments made redundant was the right to property. Because the courts placed obstacles in the way of his attempts to acquire zamindari lands — in the case of Bihar requiring unaffordable compensation — Nehru amended the Constitution to ensure that such compensation need not be paid. Consequently, the right to property may have continued in theory but in practice, because compensation was not necessary when lands were forcibly acquired, it ceased to be a fundamental right.

Let me mention one other element of Nehru's first amendment which seriously damaged the original Constitution. This is the insertion of the Ninth Schedule. Here, Tripurdaman Singh writes, "laws could be placed to make them immune to judicial challenge even if they violated fundamental rights". In other words, the Constitution now provided protection for unconstitutional laws. Frankly, this is nothing short of a constitutional monstrosity and, arguably, the worst of the amendments pushed through in 1951.

Now, if the content of the amendments was troubling, the impact they had on Indian politics was no less disturbing. For a start, Nehru established the precedent of amending the Constitution to overcome adverse judicial pronouncements. His successors and his daughter, in particular, made this almost a regular practice. Today, when governments don't like what the Supreme Court has said, they

blithely change the Constitution to overturn its verdict.

Tripurdaman Singh identifies two other equally important points. First, "the very concept of the judiciary and the Constitution as checks on the government" was undermined. Instead, a tradition of using executive power to subdue the judiciary began. Second, the 1951 amendments undermined the constitutional position of the individual qua class, caste, community and State. Since the original document had placed the individual at its heart, this changed not just its focus but, more critically, its character.

So why did Nehru do all of this? The answer is simple but hardly a valid justification. He felt the original Constitution was blocking his policies and reforms. As Tripurdaman Singh writes: "Zamindars, businessmen, editors and concerned individuals had repeatedly taken the Central and state governments to court ... (and) the courts had come down heavily on the side of the citizens and struck mighty blows against the government". So, to rein in the courts, Nehru amended the Constitution from which they got their powers. In the process, he gutted it. Nehru thus became the first Prime Minister to damage the Constitution.

However, Tripurdaman Singh's book goes one critical step further. It not only exposes what Nehru did to the Constitution, equally importantly it shines a cruel light on how he did it.

In June 1951, when the first amendment was passed, the Constitution was barely 16 months old. Yet in that brief period Nehru decided it was an impediment to his government's policies. This doesn't speak highly of his commitment to the Constitution. In fact, as Tripur-

**So sweeping were the changes in the first amendment that constitutional scholar Upendra Baxi calls the post-amendment document 'the second Constitution'**

daman Singh says, Nehru argued that his government, with its huge majority, represented "the will of the people" and thus took precedence over the principles of and the rights enshrined in the Constitution. Consequently, Nehru had no qualms using a provisional and largely unelected Parliament to amend the Constitution.

But it was worse than that. The Constitution stipulates that amendments require a two-thirds vote in both Houses of Parliament. However, the provisional parliament was a unicameral institution. In 1951, the Rajya Sabha did not exist. So Nehru misused the Constitution (Removal of Difficulties) Order to get around this. It wasn't intended for this purpose, but that did not deter him.

This is a technical and complicated point and I deliberately won't go into detail. However, what Nehru did is uncannily similar to what Narendra Modi did in 2019 when he changed the constitutional character of Jammu and Kashmir. Just as Nehru misused Article 392, from which the Constitution order gets its authority, to change the amendment procedure, so too Narendra Modi misused Article 370 to amend critical definitions thus enabling him to de-operationalise the article. Both were guilty of a sleight of hand.

The only thing I can add to salvage Nehru's image is that B.R. Ambedkar, whom we consider the Father of our Constitution, was a member of Nehru's Cabinet when the first amendment was approved and did not protest. Even Sardar Patel, who died six months earlier and may have had reservations about the impact on the right to property, would have supported the new curbs on freedom of speech. In fact, as Tripurdaman Singh points out, he considered free speech "exaggerated exuberance".

This raises the question: how committed to protecting our freedoms were the men who fought for our Independence? The answer will have to wait for another day.

*The writer is a television commentator and anchor*

### LETTERS

#### FARMERS ON WARPATH

Since day one of agitation, the farmers of Punjab have been aggressive in their tone and tenor and made it clear to Centre to repeal three farm laws. They mean business in planning to block national highways to Delhi and not allow toll-plazas to function on Dec. 14. It is an open secret that all the anti-BJP parties have supported the rich Punjab farmers' lobby to choke the capital and make Modi wave the white flag. The storyline is again similar to anti-CAA and NRC agitation at Shaheen Bagh. Any act by Centre to maintain law and order will be publicised by the Opposition as anti-democratic and suppression of the farmers' peaceful agitation and will approach Supreme Court. What the Opposition could not do in Parliament they want to pursue on the streets by coaching the farmers how to reject all proposals from Centre.

**Parthasarathy Mandadi, Tirupati**

FARMER UNIONS are resolute in the repeal of farm laws passed by the NDA government. That they want to block all entry points to the capital in their bid to achieve the objective is unacceptable. This will affect the livelihood of many. What right have they got to affect lives of others? After all, two wrongs cannot make a right. Moreover, according to reliable sources, out of 70 crore farmers in the country, only 70,000 are against it. The protesters must reconsider their points of disagreement and bring an end to the impasse.

**S. Ramakrishnasayee, Chennai**

#### DIGGING THE GRAVE

INFORMATION AND publicity minister Kadambur C.Raju has proclaimed that the Edappadi K. Palaniswami-led AIADMK would revive the cases related to the suspicious deaths of DMK leader A. Raja's close aide A.M. Sadiq Batcha, and M.K. Stalin's associate civil contractor Ramesh. The minister has said that the deaths had taken place during the DMK rule and would be dusted off and reinvestigated once the AIADMK comes to power for the third consecutive term after the 2021 election. Are we to assume that the party has not had the time to dig the grave so far, and that it would be able to do so only during the third term? Come election time our leaders have absolutely no idea of what to promise to woo the electorate.

**P.G. Menon, Chennai**

Saeed Naqvi

Wide Angle



## Is Naseer right? That Hyderabad more 'cultured' than Lucknow?

I don't know when the interview was done but I saw it on YouTube last week. Naseeruddin Shah dismissed Lucknow as a centre of culture and praised Hyderabad sky-high by comparison. Naseer's right but there's a reason why Lucknow lost out in the culture stakes with both Hyderabad and Lahore. Both cities were around, their "culture" intact, till 1947. Lucknow had begun to "die" in 1857, after the British exiled Nawab Wajid Ali Shah to Metiabruz near Kolkata in late 1856, triggering 1857's Great Uprising.

Lucknow, however, retained its premier slot for the institution of the "ulema", plural for "alim" which derives from "ilm", or knowledge with theology as the main expertise. With Maulana Kalbe Sadiq's death at the age of 83 last month, the curtain finally fell on the institution of a long line of Lucknow's "ulema".

That this was largely a Shia institution is easily explained: the Nawabs of Awadh were Shia, which is where the patronage came from. This mustn't detract from the fact that internationally known Sunni institutions like Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulema also flourished. There was considerable intellectual rapport between the sects. How

else does one explain the masterly study of Anis and Dabir, written by one of Nadwa's greatest scholars Shibli Nomani. Anis and Dabir were famous Marsia writers, a genre focused on the tragedy of Karbala, central to the observance of Muharram, not exclusively but primarily a Shia occasion.

Kalbe Sadiq came from a long line of "ulema", theological scholars conversant with liberal traditions of which Sufism was another part. Saiyid Waris Shah, Pir of Dewa Sharief, 7 km from Lucknow, had a simple explanation for not going through the "namaz" rituals. "Where is the space to bow in supplication?" The implication was: "He is in me".

During my schooldays, a phase of cultural bifurcation between school and home, the two towering "Alims" of Lucknow were Maulana Kalbe Hussain (alias Kabban Sahib), Kalbe Sadiq's father, and Maulana Ali Naqi (Naqqan Sahib), both brilliant orators whose sermons were much valued at congregations called the "Majlis", provided the speaker deftly brought in Karbala to clinch the argument.

Lucknow's celebrated tapestry of manners found itself frayed even in this limited circle of theologians and

their followers. A group, clearly not from among "Naqqan Sahib's" followers, created what for Lucknow was a major scandal. The group accused the respected cleric of blasphemy and physically assaulted him.

Apparently, Naqqan Sahib had in his research spotted mention of water in Imam Hussain's tent. Even a hint like this was anathema to a bunch of fanatics. The absence of water in Karbala's torrid heat heightens Hussain's tragedy. For that reason, even a suggestion of water in Karbala would soften the tragic effect. The truth, of course, is "Naqqan Sahib" had never said "water" was available. He simply cited sources hinting at such a possibility.

Worst was the treatment of poet Yaas Yagana Changezi, a contemporary of Jigar, Firaq and Josh. Yagana wrote: "*Samajh mein kuch nahee ata./ Parhey jaaney se kya hasil?/ Namazon mein hain kuch maaney,/ to pardesi zabaan kyon ho?*"

In one of his "*naats*", or religious songs, Yagana referred to Prophet Mohammad in less than reverent terms. He probably did not know that he had violated one of the unenforced codes: "*Ba Khuda deewana baash-o/ Ba Mohammad hoshiyar.*" (Take liberties

with God, but be careful with Mohammad)

Dara Shikoh's prime minister, Chandrabhan Brahman, broke the code brazenly: "*Panja dar panja-e-Khuda daram/ Man che parua e Mustafa daram.*" (My hand is in the hand of God: Why should I worry about Mohammad?)

It reflects in the backward slide of a tolerant culture that Yagana did not go scot free. His face was blackened and he was given a donkey ride through the old city.

The liberal streak in the "ulema" of Lucknow comes out in bold relief in an incident concerning Josh Malihabadi. His Marsia titled "Hussain and Revolution" became a cult poem even in devout circles. Josh became a popular invitee to various Imambaras of Lucknow, indeed across the country, including Hyderabad. He built up a reputation for Marsias, second only to the great Mir Anis. A group of orthodox Shias turned up at the residence of the great Alim of his age, Maulana Naasir ul Millat, armed with a complaint. Josh, devoted to liquor (he called it *Kaaba e khaas o aam*), should be banned from reciting Marsias from pulpits in "our sacred imambaras".

After reading Josh's Marsias, the Maulana invited the complainants and Josh. What happened next was dramatic. The maulana spread out his personal prayer mat for Josh and invited him to recite "Hussain and Inqilab". The message from the maulana was straightforward: that a Muslim can turn towards Ka'aba and say his prayers anywhere. "Ram is central to the Hindu ethos." He initiated the joint Shia-Sunni namaz, allowing the Sunni cleric to take the lead.

He traced Muslim backwardness to a singular lack of education and dedicated his life to establishing non-sectarian institutions in every possible field. But he died a disappointed man because of the expanding communalism and a community trapped in the snare of selfish political leaders.

*The writer is a senior journalist and commentator based in New Delhi*



quick  
BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	45,959.88	-0.31
Nifty 50	13,478.30	-0.38
S&P 500*	3,671.57	-0.03
Dollar (₹)	73.66	-0.12
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.36	0.55
Euro (₹)	89.06	0.14
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,652*534	1.11
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	50.99	2.13
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.916	-0.001
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.933	-0.008

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

Hina Nagarajan  
to head United  
Spirits from July 1

United Spirits Ltd (USL), a part of global liquor giant Diageo, appointed Hina Nagarajan as the firm's new CEO with effect from July 1, 2021. Incumbent Anand Kripaluni will step down on June 30. Nagarajan is currently MD, Africa regional markets at Diageo and will join USL as the CEO-designate from April 1. She will be a member of the Diageo executive committee. Nagarajan will be based in Bengaluru.

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■ Smaller players may find norms tough  
Dividend cap won't  
affect large NBFCsFALAKNAAZ SYED  
MUMBAI, DEC. 10

The Reserve Bank of India's proposal to restrict dividend payments by non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) could impact several hundreds of unlisted NBFCs, but may not have any material impact on the listed ones.

The apex bank's draft norms on dividend payouts for NBFCs have been anchored on the capital adequacy ratio (CAR) and net non-performing loans (NPL) and only firms meeting the prescribed prudential requirements would be allowed to declare and distribute dividends. The RBI proposes to cap the dividend payout ratio for NBFCs at a maximum of 50 per cent.

Asutosh Mishra, head of research, institutional equity at Ashika Stock Broking, said, "There are thousands of unlisted NBFCs in India and of them around 400-500 could be impacted. Several manufacturers such as Hero, Maruti, Ashok Leyland, Bajaj Auto have their own unlisted NBFC arms and such NBFCs may have to restructure their operations to comply with the new regulatory norms in order to pay dividends. However, the large listed NBFCs may not have any significant impact."

A Kotak report said LIC Housing Finance (due to low capital adequacy ratio), Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services (due to high net NPL) and Shriram



Transport Finance (due to high net NPLs) will not be eligible to pay dividends, if the norms apply to the previous year. "Kotak awaits the final set of guidelines and implementation time-lines," the report said.

According to the draft norms released by the RBI on Tuesday, NBFCs that have capital adequacy ratio (CAR) below 15 per cent or net non-performing loans (NPLs) above 6 per cent are not eligible for paying dividend. NBFCs have to comply with these requirements for three consecutive years (including the current fiscal) to be eligible for dividend payouts. The payout ratio caps range from 15-50 per cent based on the two ratios.

"The draft circular on dividend distribution by NBFCs is unlikely to impact most of the NBFCs. Over the last three years, dividend payout ratios have been about 10-20 per cent for most entities, with a few in the range of 20-30 per cent. Ica expects NBFCs to comfortably meet the CAR criteria but a few entities having high NPLs would find it difficult to meet the

net NPA filter and thus dividend payout could be impacted for those, if this circular is implemented. Ica notes that while HFCs have not been specifically mentioned in this draft, meeting the CAR criteria would be relatively easier given the lower risk weights on the large part of their portfolio. Also, the net NPA criteria specified for NBFCs may not be a constraint for HFCs to pay out dividend considering the low NPAs for the segment," said Manushree Sagar, VP-financial sector ratings at Ica Ltd.

Kailash Baheti, CFO, Magma Fincorp, said, "Within NBFCs the NPAs for different classes of NBFCs would be very different. A vehicle financing company would typically have higher NPAs. A tractor financing company would have even higher NPAs. The higher NPAs are well covered by higher yield and does not necessarily mean weak business. It would be sensible to have different thresholds considering the underlying business of each NBFC."

CCI raids offices  
of UltraTech,  
ACC, AmbujaADITYA KALRA  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 10

India's antitrust body on Wednesday conducted raids at offices of UltraTech Cement and two subsidiaries of the world's largest cement maker LafargeHolcim, two sources close to the matter said.

Swiss firm LafargeHolcim in a statement to Reuters confirmed officials visited the Mumbai offices of ACC and Ambuja Cements and said the companies were fully cooperating with the authorities, but could not comment further as the matter is ongoing.

Several officers of the Competition Commission of India (CCI) were involved in search operations conducted simultaneously at multiple locations, the sources said, asking not to be named because of the confidential nature of the raids.

Searches were also conducted at Shree Cement Ltd, a third source said.

None of the Indian cement companies responded to requests for a comment. The CCI did not respond either.

In 2012, the CCI imposed a total penalty of \$1.1 billion on several cement-makers for colluding to under-use their plants and create a shortage of cement. An appeal against that decision is still pending.

In recent years, the CCI has raided offices of other foreign firms, including beer giant Carlsberg and commodities trader Glencore.

—Reuters

Lawsuits could force FB to  
sell Instagram, WhatsApp

FROM PAGE 1

Their once-considerable political support in Congress has eroded. Lawmakers and consumer advocates have accused Facebook of anticompetitive behavior, most starkly in buying up aspiring smaller rivals like Instagram and WhatsApp and by copying features introduced by competitors. Critics say such tactics squash competition and could limit viable alternatives



for consumers looking, for instance, for comparable services that do less tracking for targeted advertising. Businesses, including mom and pop shops, might have to pay more for ads if they have

fewer choices to reach consumers online.

The new lawsuits were announced by the FTC and New York Attorney General Letitia James, culminating separate investigations over the past year and a half.

The FTC said Facebook has engaged in "a systematic strategy" to eliminate its competition, including by purchasing smaller up-and-coming rivals like Instagram in 2012 and WhatsApp in 2014.

## Tata rejects Mistry's offer as 'nonsense'

UPMANYU TRIVEDI  
DEC. 10

Tata Group rejected a truce offer by Pallonji Mistry's conglomerate that suggested swapping the Mistry family's stake for shares worth \$24 billion in the listed Tata companies. "It's nonsense. This kind of relief cannot be granted," Tata's lawyer

Harish Salve said during a hearing before the Supreme Court on Thursday. "I'm opposing it," he said, arguing on behalf of the largest Indian conglomerate. The Mistry-led Shapoorji Pallonji Group had informed the court in October that it estimated its 18.4 per cent stake in Tata Sons-- the group's

main holding company -- to be worth more than Rs 1.75 lakh crore (\$23.7 billion). It was seeking pro-rata shares in all listed Tata entities, cash, or any marketable instrument in lieu. Tata Group earlier this week pegged this valuation at \$11 billion, or less than half of Mistry's ask.

—Bloomberg

## ICICI Lombard offers cashless OPD, cover reset

Mumbai, Dec. 10: Non-life player ICICI Lombard on Thursday announced 100 per cent resetting of the sum assured multiple times and also cashless OPD in its bid to offer maximum benefits to likely Covid-19 patients.

As part of offering a more comprehensive health policies, the fourth largest non-life insurer launched four refreshed policies of the existing ones—health shield, health shield plus, health elite and health elite plus—offering

enhanced protection.

Some of the new coverage benefits include donor expenses, domiciliary hospitalisation, emergency assistance, worldwide cover, unlimited reset, air ambulance, super no claim bonus, sum insured protector and claim protector, cashless OPD services, among others, the company said in a concall.

We are redefining the health insurance space by introducing benefits that are aligned to the new normal and contextual to

today's customer needs, it said.

With the unlimited reset benefit, a policyholder can reset up to 100 per cent of the base sum insured unlimited times in a policy year for an un-related ailment, the company said.

The sum insured protector feature increases the sum insured every year in line with inflation rates.

The new plans also comes with services such as free health check-ups and online chat with doctors and dietician.

—PTI

## COFFEE-BREAK

Your day today By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam



**Aries:** Taking insights from your partner before making important decisions will be beneficial. Work pressures may increase. Be assertive but don't lose your temper.



**Taurus:** Teamwork will be productive. Focusing on domestic issues will be a priority. Social engagements are likely to be on the agenda. Some of you may be in a contemplative mood.



**Gemini:** Being patient with people who challenge your authority may be difficult, but losing your temper will be counterproductive. Meetings could lead to ideas for new ventures.



**Cancer:** Keeping up with new commitments will be hard so don't make promises in haste. A practical and pragmatic approach will help you resolve issues.



**Leo:** Effective communication will help you make a positive impact in important meetings. Delegating tasks with colleagues will speed up the pace at work.



**Virgo:** You may want to take up a small home improvement project. A slow recovery from an ailment is likely to pick up pace. Career plans will materialise. Businessmen will gain from new collaborations. A fine time for romance.

You share your b'day with

**Hailee Steinfeld.** Hailee Steinfeld is an American actress, singer and model. She's acted in famous films like *Pitch Perfect* film series (2015-2017).



**Libra:** Take a break from your tasks to relax. Taking the initiative will be productive. Planning a romantic occasion will enhance your love life.



**Scorpio:** The day will help you create a positive impact and stay ahead of the competition. You may be in a contemplative frame of mind. Time to take a break.



**Sagittarius:** Giving colleagues a stake in your projects, combined with your natural flair for communications, will make it easier for you to get your plans on the agenda.



**Capricorn:** Socialising or engaging in activities that make you happy will be a priority. Be discreet with plans that are in the pipeline. Meetings can lead to valuable information.

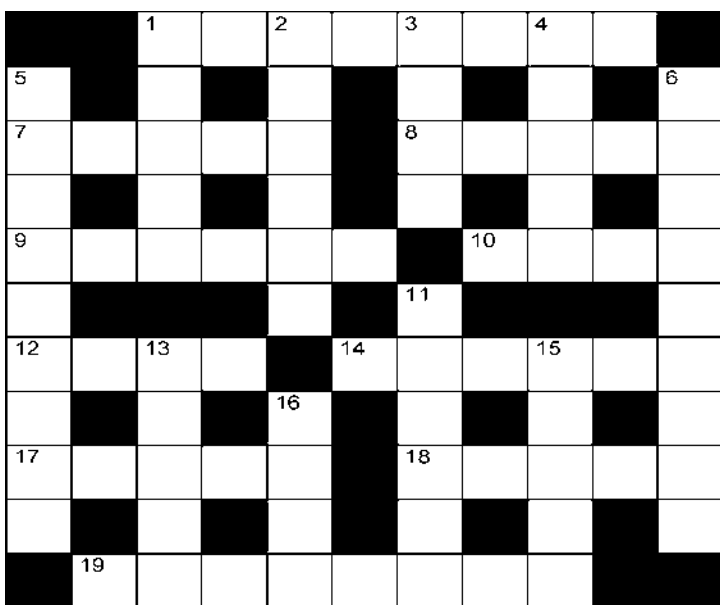


**Aquarius:** Patience and flexibility will help you deal with upcoming obstacles. At work don't lose your cool. You will be in a cheerful and optimistic mood. Setting new benchmarks and goals may be on the agenda.



**Pisces:** Implementing new strategies will be productive. Find ways to express your appreciation for your partner. Finding ways to increase your financial security will be on your mind. You may need to spend some time sorting out glitches.

## QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

- Gloaming (8)
- Ward off (5)
- Arc (5)
- Poster (6)
- Cremation wood pile (4)
- Military flute (4)
- Strait (anag) (6)
- Young eel (5)
- View (5)
- Simulation (8)

Down

- Give medical care (5)
- Undamaged, in one piece (6)
- Craving (4)
- Rugged (5)
- Exaggerated (9)
- Heavenly (9)
- Cowardly (6)
- High temperature (5)
- Progeny (5)
- Worry (4)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

**Across:** 1. Submerge, 6. Axis, 7. Mosaic, 9. Sense, 11. Cairn, 12. Onion, 13. Debut, 16. Errata, 18. Data, 19. Heighten.

**Down:** 1. Soapstone, 2. Balm, 3. Romp, 4. Enslave, 5. Ski, 6. Constrain, 10. Stomach, 14. Boast, 15. Sari, 17. Roc.

## Word Mine

G  
L N M  
A N I T E

TODAY'S RATINGS: 40 AVERAGE: 45

GOOD: 50 OUTSTANDING

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed.

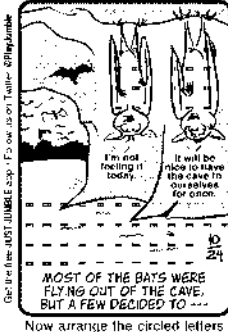
Print your answer here: \_\_\_\_\_

Yesterday's Jumble: RATIO FUDGE SOCKET LUNACY

Answer: When Gideon Surdick showed how his new zipper worked, people were — "FASTEN-ATED"

## Jumble

CIBRH  
CRNUH  
PNNKIA  
GRAAUJ



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumble: RATIO FUDGE SOCKET LUNACY

Answer: When Gideon Surdick showed how his new zipper worked, people were — "FASTEN-ATED"

zipper worked, people were — "FASTEN-ATED"

zipper worked, people were — "FASTEN-ATED"

zipper worked, people were — "FASTEN-ATED"

zipper worked, people were — "FASTEN-ATED"

zipper worked, people were — "FASTEN-ATED"

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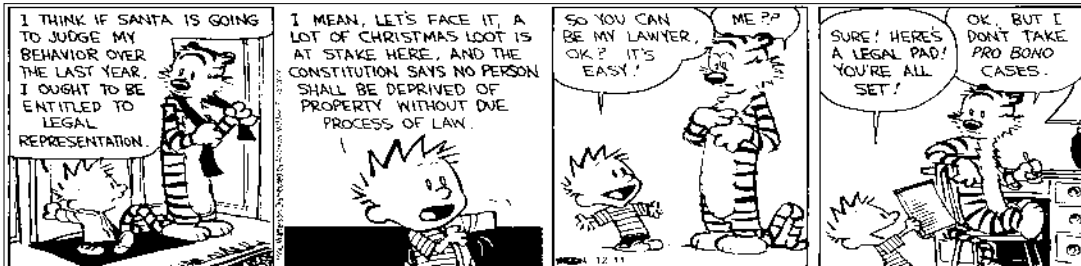
zipper worked, people were — "FASTEN-ATED"

zipper worked, people were — "FASTEN-ATED"

zipper worked, people were — "FASTEN-ATED"

zipper worked, people were — "FASTEN-ATED"

CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



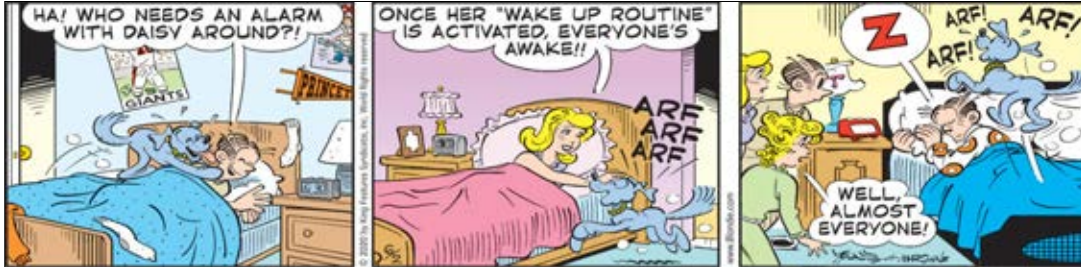
THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli &amp; craig boldman



BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs

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Syndicate  
(Asia Features)



## SHORT TAKES

## Dad-to-be Kane pulls out of Test

**Wellington:** New Zealand captain Kane Williamson on Thursday pulled out of the second Test against the West Indies in Wellington as he awaits the imminent arrival of his first child. The abrupt U-turn came just hours after batting mainstay Williamson had told head coach Gary Stead he would play in the match, which begins on Friday. Williamson had flown home to Tauranga to be with his wife Sarah on the even of the match. After confirming his availability he flew back to Wellington where, after further discussions with Stead, he agreed it would be best if he returned to be with his wife. "It's a decision that we've come to around the best interests for him and for Sarah, and also for our team," Stead said. Williamson had previously said the baby was due "mid-to-late December". — *AFP*

## East Bengal held by Jamshedpur

**Vasco:** SC East Bengal held a wasteful Jamshedpur FC for a goalless draw to secure their first point of the Indian Super League at the Tilak Maidan Stadium, here on Thursday. SCEB's Eugenenson Lyngdoh was given the marching orders following a second yellow card in the 25th minute but their defence led by Hero-of-the-Match Mohammed Irshad stayed compact and foiled every attempt. After three losses on the trot, laggards SCEB finally opened their account as they now have one point from four matches, while JFC moved to fifth place with six points from five games. SCEB coach Robbie Fowler criticised the referee's decision for the second yellow on Lyngdoh and said the "standard needs to improve". — *PTI*

## Satyasagara is new CCFC coach

**Chennai:** Former I-League champions Chennai City FC on Thursday appointed Satyasagara as the team's new head coach for the upcoming season. Satyasagara, a former assistant coach of the club, replaces Singapore's Akbar Nawas, who parted ways with CCFC in October last. "I am delighted for the new opportunity that has come my way. As everyone knows I was working with Akbar Nawas and I am familiar with the CCFC culture and setup. I am also excited to work with young local talents," Satyasagara said. "The local talent in Tamil Nadu has always excited me and I am waiting to see what is in store for us this year," he added. Satyasagara has a lot of experience behind his back as he has been involved with coaching for almost 26 years now. Club owner Rohit Ramesh said: "He has been with us for two years now. He knows the culture and the pedigree of our club keeping in mind to promote our local talent. We wish him the best." Satyasagara takes over from Nawas, who guided CCFC to the I-League title in the 2018-19 season in his first full season in charge. The I-League 2020-21 season will get underway on January 9 next year.

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

**Australia 'A' vs India:** Day 1 from 9 am on Sony Six, HD

**Big Bash League:** Melbourne Stars vs Brisbane Heat from 1.45 pm on Sony Ten 2, HD

**Lanka Premier League:** Dambulla vs Colombo from 7.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

## FOOTBALL

**Indian Super League:** Mohun Bagan vs Hyderabad FC from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

**Italian League:** Sassuolo vs Benevento from 1.15 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

## WWE

**SmackDown:** Bouts from 6.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

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## SUPERMAN CITY

## Real Madrid, PSG carve out victories; Reds held

**Paris, Dec. 10:** Karim Benzema sent Real Madrid through to the last 16 of the Champions League on Wednesday alongside their rivals Atletico, while Neymar scored a hat-trick as Paris Saint-Germain beat Istanbul Basaksehir in a match that had been delayed for 24 hours over a racism row.

Real are Europe's most decorated club with 13 European Cups but they needed to beat Borussia Moenchengladbach in Madrid to be sure of making it through the group stage of the Champions League for a 24th straight year.

Benzema was their hero, easing the pressure on coach Zinedine Zidane with two fine back-post headers in the first half securing a 2-0 win in a game played behind closed doors at the Alfredo di Stefano Stadium.

The Frenchman also hit the bar in the second half and in the end it was a result that suited both teams, with a 0-0 draw between Inter Milan and Shakhtar Donetsk allowing Real to top Group 'B' and Gladbach, former European Cup runners-up, to go through as runners-up.

Players from the German club gathered around smartphones and laptops after full time in Madrid to follow events in Milan, where a winner for either team would have knocked Gladbach out.

They celebrated wildly when their qualification was confirmed.

"Moments like that live long in the memory. It was absolutely incredible and the joy was uncontrollable," said Gladbach midfielder Christoph Kramer.

Shakhtar go into the Europa League while Inter finish bottom of their group, failing to reach the last 16 for a third season running.

Meanwhile Atletico needed to beat Red Bull Salzburg in Austria to qualify as runners-up in Group 'A' behind Bayern Munich, and did so with Mario Hermoso and Yannick Carrasco scoring in a 2-0 victory.

Salzburg now go into the Europa League while reigning European cham-



Mohamed Salah (centre) of Liverpool and Midtjylland's Jens Cajuste vie for the ball during their UEFA Champions League Group 'D' football match in Herning, Denmark, on Wednesday. — *AFP*

## THE RESULTS

<b>Real Madrid</b> (Benzema 9, 32)	<b>2</b>	<b>Paris Saint-Germain</b> (Neymar 21, 38, 50, Kylian Mbappe 42-pen, 62)	<b>5</b>
<b>Borussia Moenchengladbach</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Istanbul Basaksehir</b> (Topal 57)	<b>1</b>
<b>Manchester City</b> (Torres 48, Aguero 77, Sterling 90)	<b>3</b>	<b>Bayern Munich</b> (Suele 63, Choupo-Moting 80)	<b>2</b>
<b>Marseille</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Lokomotiv Moscow</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Liverpool</b> (Salah 1)	<b>1</b>	<b>Inter Milan</b> Shakhtar Donetsk	<b>0</b>
<b>Midtjylland</b> (Scholz 62-pen)	<b>1</b>		<b>0</b>

2019 winners ahead early on but Alexander Scholz's penalty gave the hosts an honourable draw.

PSG had wrapped up their qualification for the last 16 on Tuesday thanks to Manchester United's defeat at RB Leipzig, despite their own game

being suspended after an unprecedented walkout. Both sets of players refused to continue after a row erupted over an alleged racist remark by the fourth official aimed at Basaksehir's assistant coach, Pierre Webbo.

With a new set of officials, the game restarted in the 14th minute on Wednesday and Neymar scored a hat-trick while also winning a penalty converted by Kylian Mbappe.

That was Mbappe's first Champions League goal in 12 months, and he scored again later on after Mehmet Topal pulled one back. With their 5-1 victory, PSG go through as group winners.

Pep Guardiola's Manchester City made it five wins and a draw in Group 'D' as they eased to a 3-0 victory against Marseille with Ferran Torres and Sergio Aguero getting second-half goals before an Alvaro Gonzalez own goal.

Also, Porto beat Olympiakos 2-0 in Piraeus courtesy of Otavio's early penalty and a Matheus Uribe goal. — *AFP*

## KOHLI MAINTAINS TOP SPOT IN ODI RANKINGS

**Dubai, Dec. 10:** India captain Virat Kohli cemented his spot at the top of the ICC Men's ODI Player Rankings for batsmen after scoring two half-centuries in the recently-concluded three-match series against Australia.

Kohli, who had scored 89 and 63 in the second and third ODI against Australia in Sydney and Canberra respectively, has 870 points.

Despite missing the ODI series owing to a hamstring injury, Rohit Sharma (842) remains at the second spot, five points ahead of Pakistan skipper Babar Azam, who is number three in the rankings.

Playing his first ODI since the ICC Cricket World Cup 2019, India all-rounder Hardik Pandya struck 90 in the first game and 92 not out in the third to make his first appearance in the top 50 batsmen at 49th place with a career-best of 553 points.

From the Australian camp, captain Aaron Finch's innings of 114 in the first ODI, followed by 60 and 75 helped him up to a career-best tally of 791 points and fifth place.

Steve Smith's twin centuries in the first two matches enabled him to move back into the top 20 for the first time since 2018. He is currently at number fifteen with 707 points. Glenn Maxwell's 167 runs in the series and featured two half-centuries pushed him back up to 20th rank. — *PTI*

## Italy's 1982 WC hero Rossi dead

**Milan, Dec. 10:** Paolo Rossi, who fired Italy to victory in the 1982 World Cup after almost missing the tournament through a match-fixing scandal, has died aged 64, prompting an outpouring of grief and tributes.

Rossi's wife Federica Cappelletti announced the death in an *Instagram* post featuring a photo of the couple, accompanied by the comment "Forever," followed by a heart.

She did not disclose the cause of his death.

"He didn't want to go, I hugged him tightly and told him 'Paolo, now go, you have suffered too much'," Cappelletti said.

"It is not easy to summarise in a few words all that Paolo was," she continued.

"A unique person, full of optimism even in the most difficult moments, a great person but at the same time simple. He knew how to talk in the same way with Heads of State but also with the people we met at the supermarket. This was Paolo and this was his greatness," she further added.

Rossi's funeral will take place in his adopted city of Vicenza, in northeastern Italy, with his ashes returned to his native Tuscany, Cappelletti added.

Rossi won the hearts of Italian fans when his goals propelled Enzo Bearzot's Azzurri — who started the tournament with three uninspiring draws — to a third world title.

He exploded onto the stage of the 1982 tournament with a hat-trick in the 3-2 defeat of Brazil. In the semifinals he scored both goals as Italy beat Poland 2-0, and he hit



In this file photo, Paolo Rossi poses at the Juventus Stadium in Turin, Italy. — *AP*

the opening goal in the 3-1 win over West Germany in the final.

Goalkeeper Dino Zoff, who captained the 1982 winning side, described Rossi as an "extraordinary footballer, excellent teammate and friend".

"He was irreplaceable in that group. And the relationship with him was great. We were a team of friends, a great group," Zoff said.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte paid tribute to an "unforgettable champion", saying that his goals that summer "gave a dream to an entire generation".

"You will always remain our hero. Ciao Pablito," Juventus coach Andrea Pirlo, wrote on *Twitter*.

"Paolo was a friend, a golden boy; benevolent, humble and intelligent. He will be forever remembered by the (Juventus) team and everyone with a black and white heart," France football legend Michel Platini, who played alongside him at Juventus, said in a statement. — *AFP*



In this July 8, 1982 file photo, Paolo Rossi of Italy races across the pitch after scoring his team's first goal against Poland during their Fifa World Cup semifinal match at the Nou Camp Stadium, Barcelona, Spain. — *AP*

## Highs and lows of Rossi's mixed life

**Rome, Dec. 10:** Football is mourning the death of Paolo Rossi, the prolific striker whose goals led the Azzurri to World Cup glory in 1982. Here are the standout moments from the career of one of Italy's greatest players:

## INAUSPICIOUS START

Rossi made his debut with Juventus in 1973 and then loaned to Serie 'B' side Vicenza for the 1976-77 season. Rossi was Serie B's top scorer that year, firing Vicenza to promotion, and he led the Serie 'A' scoring charts the following season, earning a call-up to Enzo Bearzot's Italy squad for the 1978 World Cup in Argentina. Rossi shone in the tournament, scoring three goals as the Italians finished fourth.

## TOTONERO SCANDAL

Despite his World Cup heroics, Rossi again struggled with injuries in the following season. Rossi then got embroiled in the 'Totonero' match-fixing scandal and was banned for three years, later reduced to two as he continually protested his innocence. The ban ruled Rossi out of the 1980 European Championship, where hosts Italy finished fourth. However, he was rehired by Juventus and returned in time for the tail-end of the Turin team's victorious

1981-82 season, earning a spot in Italy's 1982 World Cup squad.

## WORLD CUP GOLD

A 2-1 win over Argentina was followed by the most memorable match of Rossi's career, when he hit a hat-trick as Italy downed star-studded Brazil 3-2 to reach the semifinals. Rossi won the Golden Boot for top-scoring with six goals, the Golden Ball as the tournament's best player, and that year's Ballon d'Or.

## HEYSEL TRAGEDY

After the World Cup, Rossi enjoyed his most successful club spell with Juventus, where he formed a formidable partnership with Michel Platini and Zbigniew Boniek.

Juventus won the 1983 Coppa Italia, the 1983-84 Serie 'A' title and UEFA Cup Winners' Cup and the 1984 UEFA Super Cup. Rossi also top-scored with six goals as Juventus reached the 1983 European Cup final, where they lost to Hamburg. However, Rossi's final game for Juventus was marked by tragedy. At the 1985 European Cup final 39 fans died in a stampede and wall collapse following crowd disturbances. Season-long spells at Milan and Hellas Verona followed, before Rossi retired in 1987. — *AFP*

## 30,000 SPECTATORS TO THROG BOXING DAY TEST

**Melbourne, Dec. 10:** The iconic Boxing Day Test between India and Australia is set to be played in front of 30,000 fans per day after the Victorian government eased crowd restrictions on Thursday.

In a world scarred by the Covid-19 pandemic, the limited overs series between Australia and India saw the return of spectators.

The Boxing Day Test scheduled to be played between December 26 to 30 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground was earlier restricted to 25 per cent of the total capacity crowd — about 25,000 fans a day.

However, the decision to increase the cap to 30,000 was made after the state went past 40 days without a new Covid-19 case.

"We're so excited to be able to welcome so many fans to the MCG in what's been such a challenging year for Victorians! #AUSvIND," Cricket Australia tweeted.

The much-anticipated four-Test series is scheduled to begin from December 17 in Adelaide.

The Adelaide Test will be the only five-day game which Virat Kohli will feature in before he returns to be with his actor wife Anushka Sharma for the birth of their first child in early January. — *PTI*

## Chennai to host 2 Tests in India-England series

**New Delhi, Dec. 10:** India's much-anticipated Day/Night Test against England will be held at Ahmedabad from February 24 next year and the city will also be the venue of one more Test and five T20 Internationals at its newly-constructed Motera Stadium.

The two other venues that have been allotted matches as per BCCI's rotational policy are Chennai, which will host two Test matches, and Pune that will host the three ODIs during the February-March series.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah on Thursday announced Motera as the venue for the day/night Test during the Gujarat Cricket Association's Indoor Academy inauguration. The match will be India's second pink ball Test at home after the Bangladesh game at the Eden Gardens last year.

"England team will not travel the length and breadth of the country in the prevailing situation (Covid-19 pandemic). There are only three cities where BCCI is creating a bio-bubble. Two

Tests and five ODIs will be in Ahmedabad. The remaining two Tests will be in Chennai and three ODIs in Pune," a senior BCCI source said. "As per our rotational policy, Pune and Chennai were due to get matches long back. With this series, they would get a chance to host their pending games," he further added. It is understood that a successful hosting of England series would pave the way for a good and successful IPL at home after it had to be taken to UAE this year. — *PTI*



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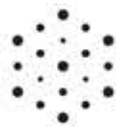
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