

COIMBATORE | WEDNESDAY 13 | JANUARY 2021

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SHORT TAKES

IJCCI organises online courses on Japanese lang

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

The language school of the Indo-Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry will commence a beginners course N5 - spoken and written Japanese, on January 23, 2021. Classes will be conducted online and will be held on Saturdays from 6 pm to 8 pm and on Sundays from 9 am to 11 am. Online classes for N4 AND N3 will also commence on Saturdays shortly, according to a press release.

They also commence classes for various levels of Japanese proficiency tests. For further details, persons interested can contact the language school of the Indo-Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, call 044-2435 2010/ 2435 4779/ 044-4855 6140. They can also be reached via email at indo-japan@ijcci.com or on their website at www.ijcci.com

Driver crushed to death on Vandalur-Minjur outer ring road

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

A 56-year-old driver lost his life on Tuesday morning after the truck he was driving lost control and overturned on the Vandalur-Minjur outer ring road.

The deceased person has been identified as Kumar of Chengam in Tiruvannamalai district, according to the police. Kumar had been transporting rocks from Tindivanam in Villupuram district to Chennai on his truck.

On Tuesday morning, when the truck was on Vandalur Minjur outer ring road, the vehicle allegedly lost control and overturned due to the overweight.

Eyewitnesses told police that the driver was thrown off the seat and fell on the ground when a huge rock from the truck fell from the truck and crushed him to death.

Based on the alert, Chrompet traffic investigation police reached the spot and removed the body of the deceased crushed under the debris. Police also employed Crane to remove the rocks from the road.

Chrompet traffic investigation police registered a case. Investigations are in progress.



A huge vadamalai (made of more than 1 lakh vadas) adorns Lord Anjaneya in Namakkal on the occasion of Hanuma Jayanthi on Tuesday.

— DC



Students of Sri Kanyaka Parameswari Arts and Science College for Women celebrate Samathuva Pongal at George Town on Tuesday.

— DC



Ahead of Pongal festival, farmers harvest sugarcane in Madurai district.

— DC

GOV CELEBRATES PONGAL PERUVIZHA WITH DIFF-ABLED

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

Governor Banwarilal Purohit celebrated Pongal Peruvizha 2021 with differently abled persons at Raj Bhavan on Tuesday. He also sanctioned ₹25 lakh to Freedom Trust of India, an NGO, from his discretionary fund to provide mobility aids and appliances for differently abled persons at Raj Bhavan, according to a

press release.

Addressing the gathering, the Governor said this year's Pongal festival was special as he was celebrating it with the differently abled members and Raj Bhavan staff. On this occasion Mrs Pushpa Purohit, Nawab Mohammed Abdul Ali, Prince of Arcot, Dr Sunder, Managing Director, Founder & Managing Trustee, Freedom Trust, N. Ravi, chairman, Bharatiya Vid-

ya Bhavan, Chennai Kendra, K.N.Ramaswamy, Director - Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Dr Sudha Seshayyan, Vice-Chancellor, the Tamilnadu Dr.M.G.R. Medical University, Anand Rao V. Patil, I.A.S., Secretary to Governor and other dignitaries participated. A Kuchipudi classical dance was performed by Natyasiromani Nadiya and her team and Poi kaal Kudhirai aatam by M.Sakthi and her team.

Assistant professor found dead on college campus

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

A 27-year-old woman assistant professor cum doctor of a private dental college in Chengalpet's Kattankulathur was found dead in her room on the campus.

Indu Pazhanivel (27), a native of Erode was an assistant professor in the SRM dental college in Kattankulathur and had been working there for two years. She was also the deputy warden of one of the hostel blocks, the police said.

According to the police, on Monday night, since Indu did not come out of her room for a long time, the hostel warden went to her room. Since she did not respond to the warden's calls nor answered the door, the warden alerted the police.

The Maraimalai Nagar police arrived at the spot and broke the door open to find Indu hanging from the ceiling. She was rushed to the SRM University hospital, but



Indu Pazhanivel

she was declared dead. The body of the deceased was sent to the Chengalpet government hospital for post-mortem.

The Maraimalai Nagar police registered a case and looking into a possible reason for the suicide. Sources said that Indu's father died recently due to cardiac arrest and she may have killed herself in grief. Police are also investigating whether she was facing any problems in the college.

Court directs police to book 'Master' producer

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

A day before the mega launch of the Tamil movie 'Master', starring Vijay and Vijay Sethupathy, a court in Chennai directed the CB-CID police to register a case against the producer of the film.

On a complaint from M/s. Novex Communications Private Ltd, the chief metropolitan magistrate court directed the police to register case against producer Xavier Britto. Malavika



Mohan, Arjun Das, Andrea Jeremiah and Shanthanu Bhagyaraj also acted among others in the action-thriller directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj. The film would be released on

Wednesday in view of Pongal.

Meanwhile, fans assembled in large numbers to buy tickets for the film. The video clippings of the film were leaked on social media and also shared in Twitter.

Lokesh Kanagaraj, in a tweet, stated that "It's been a 1.5 year long struggle to bring Master to you. All we have is hope that you'll enjoy it in theatres. If u come across leaked clips from the movie, please don't share it. In the petition, M/s.

Novex Communications Private Ltd stated that the company is engaged in obtaining copy rights of various kinds of music content and sub-licensing of such work of various Tamil films and songs.

Counsel for the petitioner T. Pazhanivel said during the audio launch of 'Master' in a star hotel in March last year, the company's 'on ground performance' rights of several Tamil film songs were performed by the persons conducting the event without obtaining any rights

from the complainant's company. Hence, Xavier Britto violated the Copy Rights Act. The company also submitted a complaint before the CB-CID on September 28 last.

When the matter came up before the chief metropolitan magistrate court, Egmore on Tuesday, the judge said he perused the complaint. A cognizable office is made out and directed the superintendent of police, IPR and Copy Rights Wing, CB-CID to register a case against Britto.

Bhogi smoke may affect Covid patients

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

AAhead of the Bhogi day customary bonfire, a ritual performed as a prelude to Pongal, the pulmonologists in the city, which is still reeling under the spread of Covid-19 pandemic, have warned that air pollution on the day could cause serious consequences to the health of Corona patients (post and pre-recovery), the elderly and infants alike.

The city has a history of putting hazardous materials including plastics, rubber and tyres into the bonfire in large proportions, resulting in a thick smoke in the air.

Last year, the level of pollution in the city on Bhogi day touched a maximum of 500 micrograms per cubic meter of particulate matter. So the health experts have advised people, who had a recent recovery from Covid-19, especially individuals with severe lung damage, to stay indoors throughout the Bhogi day. Dr. Varadarajan V. V., senior consultant - general paediatrics, paediatric pulmonology and paediatric Infectious diseases, said that breathing toxic air would be detrimental to the health of Covid-19 patients and lactating women. "If lactating

UNITED FOR LIFE BY JALLIKATTU



A couple, who fell in love with each other during the jallikattu protest in 2017, have submitted a representation to the Madurai district collector seeking permission to get married before vadivasal at the jallikattu arena, Alanganallur, in Madurai district.

Karthikeyan, a writer from Alanganallur, and Vidyadarani, a social

activist, met during the pro-jallikattu protest staged in front of vadivasal at Alanganallur in 2017. Since then they were wearing only khadi dress. As the couple fell in love during the pro-jallikattu protest, they wish to get married in front of vadivasal at Alanganallur by exchanging rings.

— K. Manikandan

tle deep in the lungs," said Dr. Varadarajan.

The exposure to high levels of air pollution during pregnancy can cause miscarriages as well as premature birth, autism spectrum disorder and asthma in children. Air pollution can damage children's

brain development, and also cause pneumonia, which kills almost one million children aged below five every year. Children who breathe in higher levels of pollutants also face a greater risk of short-term respiratory infections and lungs damage. The asthma proliferation among children in the country has increased by 40 percent since 1994. So it's important to avoid polluted air", added Dr. Varadarajan.

"This is a very high level of air pollution for anyone and especially for people recovering from Covid-19, opined Dr. Aishwarya Vinoth, consultant, pulmonology, Rela Hospital. "The Covid-19 patients who are under home oxygen support and pulmonary rehabilitation therapy will have exertional breathlessness in their recovery phase. So such toxic fumes can deteriorate their recovery. The exposure to air pollution can trigger an exacerbation of asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and cause any previously existing respiratory illness such as interstitial lung disease and lung cancer. Considering the city's high pollution rates and pandemic situation, it is better to avoid the Bhog custom this year", she advised.

Salem bulls get set for jallikattu event

ZAKEER HUSSAIN | DC
SALEM, JAN. 12

Bulls are being trained here in the district to participate in the oncoming jallikattu competitions held as part of pongal celebrations.

Since Jallikattu is held in Koolamet near Attur in the district on the eve of pongal festival, farmers

here have been taking pains to train their bulls, to keep them fighting fit for the sport.

There are hundreds of bulls in the district which are registered to participate in the sport, and farmers have been giving their bulls special training and nutritious fodder, for over three months as part of the training.

For bull training, the animals are taken to an area filled with mounds of mud and trained in mud banging and swimming.

Farmer Murugan from Alagapuram said the rains have been heavy this year and agriculture was really on an all time best. Most of the farmers are happy with their agricultural prospects, and

hence, are keen to take their bulls for jallikattu.

"We are preparing our bulls to participate in this year's event. We are currently adding more cottonseed to the regular food given to the animals, thus increasing its nutritive value. This mainly helps prevent fracture of the animals' legs while running," added Murugan.

Swami Vivekananda's steno Goodwin remembered

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, JAN. 12

On Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary on Tuesday, an event was held at the 153-year-old St Thomas Church here, to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of JJ Goodwin, personal stenographer of Swami Vivekananda, who was laid to rest in the church cemetery, way back in 1898. This event was to mark the 'National Youth Day' to remember Goodwin and his connection with Swami Vivekananda.

Sri Ramakrishna Math and the Manas spiritual organization here jointly organized an event, in which Fr Jerome of St Thomas Church joined the function and held a special prayer at the grave site of JJ Goodwin, in the church cemetery.

Secretary, Manas Trust, V



A memorial held at the grave of JJ. Goodwin at the cemetery, St Thomas church, in Ooty commemorate National Youth Day as well as the 150th birth anniversary of JJ. Goodwin.

— DC

Sivadass, said, "Goodwin, an Englishman by birth, first

met Swami Vivekananda in New York in December 1895,

and became devoted to him for the rest of his life.

Goodwin was a professionally trained stenographer and in shorthand, he took down Swamiji's lectures. Goodwin travelled with Swamiji in the US and India, and we owe much to Goodwin for making available for us many of Swamiji's precious lectures.

When Goodwin preferred to stay in Ooty in the summer of 1898, when Swamiji was away in Japan, he developed Enteric fever (Typhoid) and passed away on June 2, 1898, at a very young age of 28 years. Devotees of the Swamiji across the globe are celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Goodwin this year, by organizing several events," Sivadass noted.

On the demise of Goodwin, Swami Vivekananda remarked that he felt as if he lost his right hand. This aptly reflected the importance of Goodwin in Swamiji's life, Sivadass added.

Gold and foreign currency worth ₹32.55 lakhs seized at Chennai Airport

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

The Customs officials at the Chennai Airport seized foreign currency and gold worth ₹32.55 lakhs and arrested a flyer in connection with the smuggling.

According to the press release from the Commissioner of Customs, based on information, Nouffar (28) of Ramanathapuram, and two lady passengers Sabur Fathima (44) of Chennai and Thilsath (39) of Trichy were intercepted on suspicion of carrying gold in departure terminal after they had cleared Immigration and were proceeding towards security hold area to board FlyDubai flight FZ8518 bound for Dubai.

On examination of the backpack of Nouffar, a wallet was found inside from which 2800 US dollars were recovered and on further search 2500 Saudi Riyals, 3500 EURO and 4000 Swiss Franc were found concealed by ingeniously folding in white paper inside totally valued at Rs 8.86 lakhs. He was arrested as he had a previous offence registered against him.

Similarly, on the personal examination of ladies 11000 US dollars (5500 each) wrapped with adhesive tape were found concealed inside their under-



wear and 6200 USD (3100 each) were recovered from their handbags.

20000 US Dollars, 2500 Saudi Riyals, 3500 Euros, and 4000 Swiss Franc valued at Rs 21.30 lakhs were recovered and seized under Customs Act read with Foreign Exchange Management (Export and Import of Currency) Regulations, 2015.

In another case, Mohamed Amsath (33) of

Chennai who arrived from Dubai by FlyDubai flight FZ8517 was intercepted at the exit. On personal search, one gold paste bundle weighing 260 grams was recovered from the rectum which on extraction yielded 220 grams of gold valued Rs. 11.25 lakhs and the same was seized under the Customs Act. Further investigation is under progress.

IN BRIEF

Stalin, Vaiko welcome SC order

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

DMK president M. K. Stalin and MDMK general secretary Vaiko welcomed the decision of the Supreme Court to stay the farm laws in the cases filed by various parties, including DMK. "This is a victory for farmers protesting across India," said Stalin in a Tweet, adding "I once again urge the Union Govt to commit to repealing the farm laws in the next Parliament Session." Vaiko, in a statement, urged the Centre to withdraw the controversial laws.

Caste integration: Vathiriyars say no

Thoothukudi: Jan. 12: A section of people belonging to the 'Vathiriyar community' in the district have opted themselves out from the integration plan of the sub-castes of the Scheduled communities as 'Devendrakula Vellalars'. Stating that their social life is different from that of the six sub-castes of the SC list, the Vathiriyar community leaders protested against CM's promise of including the Vathiriyar community into the 'Devendrakula Vellalar' fold. Sagayaraj, president, TN Cholarakula Vathiriyar association, said Hansraj Varma committee report that recommended integration of only six sub-castes in the SC list, excluding the Vathiriyars.

Pongal turns political this year

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

Pongal festivities would have an added political flavor to it this year as the top honchos of Congress and BJP are all set to celebrate the festival in the State with Rahul Gandhi watching a Jallikattu event at Avaniapuram in Madurai and J P Nadda attending the Thuglak anniversary celebrations in Chennai.

While the TNCC described Rahul Gandhi's visit as his 'salute to Tamil' (Rahulin Tamil Vanakkam), Nadda is expected to sort out the BJP's alliance tangle with the AIADMK. Nadda is actually standing in for Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who was originally scheduled to come to Chennai that day.

So, on Pongal Day, many party cadre and functionar-

ies would be heading towards the events of their respective leaders with their party flags fluttering on their vehicle bonnets instead of biting leisurely into sugarcane or relishing the special dishes at home with their families.

Also the VIP visits could lead to traffic diversions, road blockades and heavy police presence on the roads, robbing the festival of its holiday aura and laid back attitude.

In fact, political parties have already started celebrating Pongal in their own way all over the State as part of their pre-campaign activities to reach out to the people and organize and motivate their cadre for electioneering.

That the BJP made one of its Pongal events too symbolic was caught by the cameras that revealed the arrangement of cotton

filled pots and a woman posing to grind a packet of ground turmeric powder in the stone hand grinder (ammi kal), prompting meme creators to go gaga over it.

Apart from the State government's grand gift bonanza to ration cardholders, which include Rs 2500 cash, groceries and a sugarcane, distribution of personal pongal gifts by political leaders made news.

The news about the special 'Pongal seer from the house of Health Minister C Vijayabaskar' to the voters of Virallimalai Assembly constituency had a serious repercussion when the Minister threw out the mike of a television channel at a press conference in Pudukkottai.

The Minister was angry that the channel had put out a story on his munifi-

cence to voters that he refused to speak to the media outlet representatives.

Reacting to Vijayabaskar's behavior at the press conference, DMK President M K Stalin warned him that the people were watching it all and would teach him a lesson in the elections.

Aloor Shah Nawaz, a prominent leader of the VCK, was trolled on Twitter under a hashtag 'Hindus Wakeup' for saying that the religious rituals associated with Pongal were prompting atheists and people of other faiths to feel excluded from the festivities.

Since Shah Nawaz, in the video that went viral, wanted the festival of Tamils to be a pure secular celebration, the trolls went to town attacking him and also giving a clarion call for 'Hindu Unity'.

In 1st phase, six lakh health staff will be vaccinated: Min

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC
VIRALLIMALAI, JAN. 12

The government has identified as many as six lakh health care frontline workers to receive Covid-19 vaccination from January 16 onwards in 307 places, as part of the first phase of the nationwide vaccination drive, said Health Minister Dr C Vijayabaskar.

Speaking to newsmen here near Pudukkottai on Tuesday, Dr C Vijayabaskar said that Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami would formally inaugurate the drive on January 16.

The Centre has airlifted

5,36,550 Covid-19 vaccine doses to Tamil Nadu, which is stored in 10 zonal centres across the state, and 20,000 Covaxin injection doses, are expected to reach here shortly, he added.

On completion of the first phase, the public would be given the vaccine, whose trial has proved the vaccine to be cent percent safe, with no side effects, he added. Thanks to the Chief Minister's efforts, Covid-19 is under control in the state, and the number of affected persons is now reduced to 800 cases per day, said the minister.

To a question, he said

that in England and other European countries, the pandemic impact was high resulting in shortage of beds to treat the cases, but in Tamil Nadu, there is no question of shortage of beds. The state had conducted as many as 1.45 crore RT-PCR tests so far, and this was appreciated by the other states, and even the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and also other countries across the globe, he claimed.

Later, the Minister inspected the jallikattu (bull fight) ground where the event would take place on January 17, and other arrangements.

4 electrocuted in freak mishap

DC CORRESPONDENT
THANJAVUR, JAN. 12

Four persons were electrocuted to death when a private bus in which they were travelling skidded on the roadside and its roof came in contact with a high tension wire alongside the road at Varahur, 20 km from here, on Tuesday.

According to the police, 40 passengers were travelling in the bus from Grand Anicut to Mannargudi via Thirukattupalli. At Varahur, when it turned left to negotiate a lorry coming in the opposite side, the soil gave in and the bus slipped. The roof came in touch with the live wire connecting electric poles.

The deceased were D.Nadarajan (65) of Vizhuppankurichi village in Ariyalur district, Ganesan (55), son of Mariappan of Karupur near Thiruvaiyaru, Kalyanaraman (65) of Varahur agharam and Kausalya alias kavitha (30), wife of Manikandan of Varahur Kudiyaana Street.

The four died on the

spot. An injured Muniyammal (52) has been admitted to the Thanjavur medical college hospital. The bodies were sent to Thirukattupalli government hospital.

The police arrested the driver of the bus John Flemmingraj (30) of Kuthur and conductor Manikandan of Neman.

The police said the road from Varahur to Kandiyur is being widened and soil has been put on either side. When the bus turned left to avoid a lorry coming in the opposite side the soil gave in and the bus slipped.

M. Govinda Rao, Thanjavur district collector, Rupesh Kumar Meena, DIG of police, Thanjavur range, and Deshmukh Sekar Sanjay, SP, Thanjavur district visited the spot and conducted inquiries. R. Vaithilingam, Rajya Sabha MP, visited Thirukattupalli hospital and consoled the relatives of the deceased. Durai. Chandrasekaran, Thiruvaiyaru MLA (DMK), and M.Rangasamy, former MLA (AMMK) also visited the hospital.

Woman sets herself on fire, kids escape

DC CORRESPONDENT
PERAMBALUR, JAN. 12

A 36-year-old housewife allegedly committed suicide by setting herself on fire, after attempting to kill her two daughters aged 10 and 2 in a similar way at Muthunagar in Perambalur on Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Mahalakshmi, wife of Kumar, working as a physical education teacher at the government higher secondary school, Esanal in Perambalur district. They have two daughters Jayashri and Moniga Shri.

While Kumar was in Tiruchy to visit his ailing sister, the deceased poured kerosene on her and set herself on fire and attempted to kill her daughters in a similar way. However, the alert Jayashri forcibly took her 2-year-old sister, locked themselves in another room and saved themselves.

The deceased cried for her life, while her daughters also raised alarm. The neighbours who broke open the doors found the deceased dead with severe burns. The Perambalur town police took the body to government headquarters hospital here and are investigating.

Chennai based YouTube channel crew arrested for obscenity

SINDHYA SAMUEL | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

Chennai city police have arrested the crew members of a YouTube Channel, 'Chennai Talks' who reportedly asked obscene questions to a woman who visited the Besant Nagar beach and posted it on the channel.

According to the police, M. Dinesh (31), owner of Chennai Talk YouTube chan-

nel, K. Asen Badshah (23), the anchor of the channel and cameraman K. Ajay Babu (24) were arrested by Shastrri Nagar police.

Police said that Dinesh had started the channel in the year 2019 and the channel has more than 200 videos and reportedly seven crore people had seen them. The city police have approached YouTube to take down the channel.

Police said that the crew used to target young women and couples who visited Besant Nagar beach and ask them obscene questions. They upload the content with the sole intention to make their video viral.

A video by the team 'How 2020 went! Girls Open Speech', the anchor was seen asking women at the Besant Nagar Beach questions about how they spent the last year

amid lockdown rules. The questions they asked had put women in an uncomfortable position and Subsequently landed them in the police net. Shastrri Nagar police acted on a complaint from a woman who was threatened by the crew on the Elliots beach. When the woman opposed shooting such videos, the anchor and the cameraperson threatened her.

The Sastri Nagar police reg-

istered a case under sections 294(b) (abusive language), 354(b) (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 509 (intending to insult the modesty of any woman), 506(1) (criminal intimidation) of the IPC and Section 4 of the Woman Harassment Act. The Saidapet court Tuesday remanded the accused to 15 days judicial custody.

COFFEE-BREAK

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



Aries: You may question whether your friends really like you or simply feel sorry for you. You may have been keeping a secret from your partner. Now is the time to reveal it.



Taurus: Your plans will be welcomed by your partner. This is a time for surprises and secrets to be revealed. Today you will be noticeably weak-willed.



Gemini: You will find it almost impossible to resist temptations today. A confrontation with a close one, possibly regarding finances, is likely.



Cancer: A change in fortunes is indicated. You may enter into a new project that will be of benefit to you and your family. Peace is likely to return to your home life.



Leo: A chance for your whole family to work together. Time should produce a closeness you feared was lost forever. You may realise you aren't getting any younger.



Virgo: You will start taking more responsibility for your actions. You will find the courage and ability to do things. The day will help you reassess your life, and what you value the most.

You share your b'day with

Natalia Dyer is an American actress. She is known for her role as *Nancy Wheeler* in the Netflix science fiction series *Stranger Things*. She is also known for her role in the films like *Hannah Montana: The Movie* amongst others.



Libra: You do things in a direct manner, but now you're mysterious, especially with someone who thinks it's fun to hide something from you.



Scorpio: You get the feeling you haven't been informed about something. You won't mind unless someone on your side has defected. There might be a surprise for you!



Sagittarius: Make sure the romantic front doesn't affect work. You may inherit some ancestral property. Your opponents will find you a real headache.



Capricorn: The end of a prolonged legal battle will prevent monetary losses. Discussing goals with important people will help. Apologising for mistakes strengthens bonds of love. A good time to improve knowledge.



Aquarius: Taking your beloved for granted could make ties snap. You may plan to enjoy quality time with the family. Don't lose heart over a sluggish start in financial matters.



Pisces: Avoid getting angry over domestic problems. It's time to let your beloved know you care. Professional life could be disappointing. An unnecessary quarrel with neighbours could mar domestic peace.

bridge
PHILLIP
ALDER

WHO SHOULD DECLARE; WHO SHOULD DEFEND?

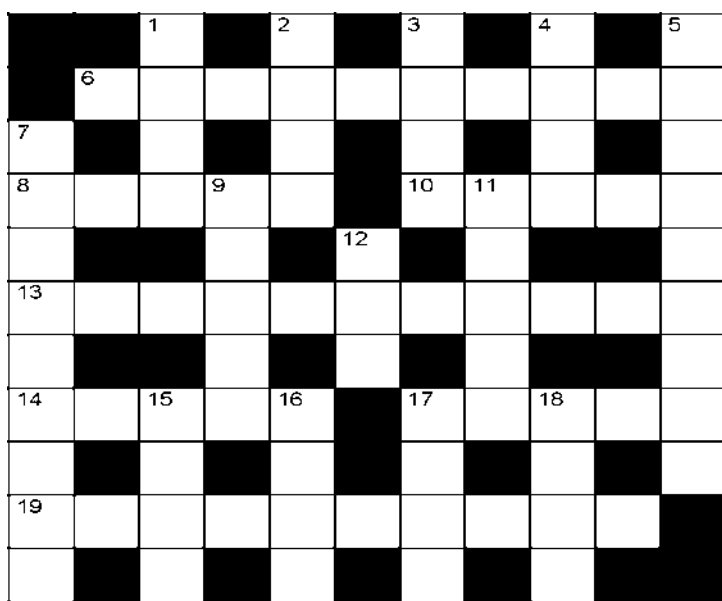
This quotation is often credited to Cicero in 55 B.C.: "The national budget must be balanced. ... People must again learn to work, instead of living on public assistance." It was actually written by Taylor Caldwell, a historical novelist.

Yesterday, I gave a deal in which one player had made a takedown double at the three-level, and his partner had to decide whether to pass, con-

verting it into a penalty double, or to bid. I recommended that, with a balanced hand, pass; with an unbalanced hand, bid.

Here is another example. What should South do over his partner's second double? If South had followed my advice, he would have passed and gone plus 100 for down one and 14 out of 15 match-points in a virtual duplicate at Bridge Base Online. North-South would have taken one

QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

6. Annoyance (10)
8. Foe (5)
10. Worship (5)
13. Flared trousers (11)
14. Collision (5)
17. Comedian (5)
19. From corner to corner (10)

Down

1. Costing nothing (4)
2. Cunning (4)

3. Festive occasion (4)
4. Grain store (4)
5. Cut across (9)
7. Weedkiller (9)
9. Slime (anag) (5)
11. As above (5)
12. Menagerie (3)
15. Absent (4)
16. Head covering attached to a coat (4)
17. Wheedle (4)
18. Flour factory (4)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

Across: 1. Flaunt, 3. Brad, 7. Oust, 8. Bottom, 10. Frailty, 13. Deleties, 16. Gained, 17. Deal, 18. Dull, 19. Grater.

Down: 1. Flop, 2. Absurd, 4. Rots, 5. Damper, 6. Mottled, 9. Likened, 11. Hugged, 12. Select, 14. Sill, 15. Blur.

Word Mine

Q
A E E
D R R L U

TODAY'S RATINGS: 3 AVERAGE; 4 GOOD; 5 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.

ANSWERS: ARIES, AQUARIUS, CAPRICORN, LIBRA, PISCES, SAGITTARIUS, SCORPIO, TAURUS, VIRGO, ZODIAC. Opening lead: 3H

Jumble

TELFE
NLUPK
LEWBOL
WAREYL



Yesterday's Jumbles: ROBOT, YIELD, SPRING, AWAKEN. Answer: Before they chose a route to travel, they looked at the map to — "WAY" THEIR OPTIONS.

spade, two diamonds and two clubs.

However, South does not read my prose, so he advanced with three spades, which was passed out. How did declarer do after West led the diamond 10? South won with his diamond queen and played a spade to the king — a great guess. When that held, declarer played another trump. East won with the 10 and shifted to the heart eight.

The defenders took their heart winners, then East tried to give his partner a diamond ruff. South won on the board and played a third trump. When they split 3-3, declarer claimed, having the last six tricks with one spade, two clubs and three diamonds. Plus 140 was a cold top. So much for my theories!

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CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs



DECCAN Chronicle

13 JANUARY 2021

Not court's call to have panel review farm laws

The order of the Supreme Court on Tuesday staying the implementation of the three recently passed laws to regulate farming in India and the formation of a four-member committee to study them is perplexing, to say the least. The court issued the order while hearing petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the laws.

While the court is very well within its rights to stay the operation of a law suspecting it to be ultra vires on the Constitution, it defies logic when it appoints a committee to study an aspect of the law other than legal. It must be reiterated that the highest court of the land has not been called upon to adjudicate on the impact of a government action borne out of a government policy; it has been asked strictly to subject that action to judicial review and see if it meets the constitutional and legal requirements.

The court's move is worrisome on many counts even when one does not count the selective activism it demonstrates. One, by appointing a committee on a government action, and saying it will issue an order based on the report of that committee, the court is seeking to have a say on government policy. It was only recently that another bench of the same court, in its judgment on petitions against the Central Vista project, made it clear that the court does not have the wherewithal to sit in judgment on a government policy and that the Parliament is the right forum to debate it. Now, the court has, instead of performing its job as the interpreter of the Constitution, chosen to be a mediator and influencer on government policy. This is a dangerous proposition, as it goes against the spirit of the Constitution, which is clear on the separation of powers.

The same logic applies to the farmers, too. They have no compulsion to go by the court even if it finds the laws are beneficial to them. They can continue with their agitation and the Chief Justice of India, who heads the bench, has repeatedly clarified that the farmers have every right to hold peaceful protests. On the other hand, the court can hardly order scrapping of the laws even if it finds them to be detrimental to the interests of farmers. That people who are sympathetic to the farmers' cause have already come out arguing that all the members in the panel have supported the three laws in varying degrees poses another question mark on its legitimacy.

The farmer's grouse is simple — the government is trying to withdraw from supporting the farming sector and is handing it over to the private corporates. They see a policy in it and oppose it. The government can either convince them that they are indeed in their interest or convince itself that they are not so, and repeat them. Either way, it should be a political decision. The farmers know it well, and hence they insist that they were not raising a legal question. The apex court must see their logic, instead of ordering them to cooperate with the committee it has appointed.

Test of character

A battered and bruised Team India would not surrender. In a display of courage perhaps unequalled in 74 years of Test matches against Australians who are considered the cricket world's toughest opponents, Team India drew the third Test in Sydney and go to Brisbane with the scores 1-1. A series-winning chance is intact though the squad has sustained a huge number of injuries, besides losing its skipper to paternal leave who coincidentally was blessed with a daughter on the famous day his team did their "Dunkirk Act" at SCG under able replacement Ajinkya Rahane.

Courage can too readily be equated with sporting achievement but in this case bravery was the foremost quality that saw Ravichandran Ashwin, barely able to get up from bed with a sore back and Hanuma Vihari, who had strained a hamstring, fight a lengthy rearward action right up to the draw of stumps. Such resolute resistance in the face of "sledding" (as derived from sledgehammer blows aimed at mental disintegration of batsmen) brought out the worst in the Australians, especially in captain Tim Paine, who was the white knight riding in to rescue his country's cricket from an "Ugly Aussie" image.

A draw is also a result in Test cricket and a hard fought one often exemplifies an indomitable spirit unwilling to accept defeat. Such a position would not have been possible if not for Rishabh Pant playing like the fearless modern white ball cricketer and a stoic Cheteswar Pujara joining him in attack mode as if his younger colleague had inspired him. A glimpse of victory may have faded when Pant threw it away because he does not quite possess the temperament of specialist batsmen who treasure a milestone century.

The Aussies aimed at breaking the resistance with a new ball at red hot pace directed at the bodies of Ashwin and Vihari who have bruises to show as valorous badges. To rally from the depths of despair of 36 all out to win the second Test and then draw the third is an epic achievement and BCCI's tweet in salute was apt — "Bruised. Broken. But never short of character".

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Subhani



Educational activism of a different kind is needed

Devi Kar

I have been an "examination warrior" of sorts for years. But in a different sense to the title of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's book of the same name. Mr Modi has written a useful book to help students "slay" exams. There is a contradiction here, though, because while he urges students to treat exams like festivals (I rather liked this approach), he also advises students to be "warriors" implying that examinations are something to be conquered. My fight has been with the school examination system which requires students in their last year of school to write papers for hours at a stretch and their entry into college depends to a degree on the results of this single examination. Educators have observed to their satisfaction that many examination reforms were necessitated by the current Covid-19 pandemic. However, the same pandemic has given birth to a horrific practice, which must be nipped in the bud. This is the testing of pre-primary children for admission into school.

Even in pre-Covid times I used to be horrified to hear that little children were interviewed and assessed by the school authorities for admission into the nursery classes. Most of these children were already attending playschools, some of which would "prepare" these tiny mites, all of 18 months of age, for "The Interview in The Big School". Mock interviews would be held so that the tots would get used to interacting with unfamiliar persons. Parents too would be given practice in

objecting to the admission procedure and risk their application being rejected.

It was bad enough in the past, but in this pandemic year it was disturbing to be told that children who had not even turned two were being made to attend virtual lessons. Some parents went for customised activity packages which I learnt were delivered at intervals so that the curriculum could be tackled in a methodical way. Other parents said that they were lucky to find a Montessori teacher in the neighbourhood who came to their housing complex and taught a group of toddlers on a regular basis. This arrangement gave their children the much-needed opportunity to socialise with other children of the same age.

On deeper questioning, it became evident that this whole exercise of attempting to "educate" toddlers was largely to prepare them for entry into the primary department of one of the reputed schools.

In this context I have some questions to ask the authorities and teachers of the schools that assess such small children before admitting them. The first and most important question is: "Can you really identify the brighter children on the basis of naming a few colours, fruits and vegetables?" Children develop at their own individual pace and at this age you cannot make out anything about their

potential. Over the decades that I have been in school education, I have seen enough to know that there are late bloomers, there are moody children and quiet ones who have eventually turned out to be outstanding students. Conversely, I have seen little children mastering formal schoolwork at the basic stages but falling behind when there was need for more complex work involving problem-solving or independent thinking. My next question is: "Will you reject a child who refuses to answer your questions or suddenly tires of the whole thing and starts bawling?" I remember the case of one little girl who stubbornly refused to tell the head teacher her name. On the way home, when her mother asked why she hadn't opened her mouth, she said: "My name was written on the card that you pinned to my dress, why was she asking me?"

Some children are precocious, but precociousness is not equivalent to giftedness. In fact, it is accepted that IQ tests are not reliable in the case of very young children as the intelligence quotient of a child takes some years to stabilise. As for assessing parents, I suppose schools, like clubs, may feel entitled to have their own criteria for parents.

But this article is more about unfairness to children. I am calling out all schools that test pre-primary children for admission into their nursery or kindergarten classes. You are adopting a practice that goes against the principles of pre-primary education, besides adding stress to the already stressful lives of parents. Finally, you are guilty of giving some of these little children their first taste of failure. Activists need to urge the schools to stop this insensitive practice at once.

The writer is a veteran school educator based in Kolkata

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LETTERS

WELCOME MOVE

This is with reference to your news item *It's a first: Centre not to print budget documents* (Jan. 12) wherein it is stated that union budget papers are not to be printed but to be given to MPs in soft copies. This must be welcomed. Why cannot the same method be followed by Election Commission of India? Printouts must be made wherever needed concerning only to particular wards. Big volumes in book forms must be avoided. Even verifications must be made online without giving printouts in each one's hands. World is becoming paperless. ECI must adopt this at a greater speed.

R. Ganesan, Chennai

SC ON FARMS LAWS

EXPRESSING ITS disappointment over the way negotiations between the protesting farmers against three contentious farm laws and the Union government have progressed till date, the Supreme Court had not only asked the Union government to keep the newly enacted farm laws in abeyance till the expert panel constituted by it discusses the same and submits a report but also went further and asserted it would stay the implementation of the farm laws if the government was not ready to do so. The SC cannot be faulted for taking such a strong stance against the union government. Even after having eight round of negotiations, impasse over the farm laws remains unbroken. As a court-appointed panel sitting in judgment on a law passed by Parliament will have both intended and unintended consequences, it is time the government strives to find a political solution rather than leaving the ball in the court of higher judiciary.

M. Jeyaram, Sholavandan

TEAM SPIRIT

THE PLAY on the final day of the third test between India and Australia was an exhibition of the team spirit prevalent in our team. None played for their personal records. Despite injuries troubling Ashwin and Hanuma Vihari they endured the pain to save the team from the jaws of defeat. The pair proved a problem for the most successful fast bowlers of today as they could defend any type of ball bowled by the Aussies. The runs scored by Ashwin and Vihari are equal to centuries under normal circumstances and the country is indebted to them for their guts and grit.

V. Rajagopalan, Chennai

Jawed Naqvi



Trump bid for a 'cor' in DC follows a long US tradition!

It's still a week to go before Donald Trump demits control of the nuclear codes, and US whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg is seeing mischief afoot in the Gulf. With Iran as a potential target of the defeated President's sublimated rage, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has shared the larger concern with the US military, but there's little news about what the Pentagon's response was. Ms Pelosi discussed with the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff the "available precautions for preventing an unstable President from initiating military hostilities or accessing the launch codes and ordering a nuclear strike".

The world is waiting out the fraught days before Joe Biden can put the doomsday trigger out of reach of the "unstable" Mr Trump. True to form, Mr Trump plans to fly away to Scotland a day before Mr Biden's January 20 inauguration. The white supremacist hero is adulated by the global right, and there's no dearth of those who see in him their role model.

It's quite likely that other than dodging inevitable criminal cases he will be slapped with and the barrage of legal probes expected to be

ordered into his dodgy tenure, Mr Trump hopes to use the overseas stay to keep the racist pot boiling. His American fans and other right-wing groups will hang on to every word he utters to pliable or conniving TV anchors.

The delusional right-wing assault on Capitol Hill by men and women smitten to death by Mr Trump's fantasy world may seem ordinary by America's own standards. As the wag said: "Given travel restrictions in view of the pandemic, the US had to stage this year's coup in Washington DC." Another gleefully had a rejoinder. "The coup failed because there were no US embassies in America."

It was America that applauded Boris Yeltsin in a similar but more successful endeavour at murdering democracy. It was only 30 years ago that Mr Yeltsin was guided by US intelligence to bombard the Russian Parliament in a fatal assault on his rivals, the Communist deputies in the Duma. Mr Yeltsin deployed tanks and heavy weapons to blow up his own Parliament. US intelligence helped him break into the Russian military communications channels, according to Seymour Hersh's 1994

revelations of the US-aided coup.

As soon as deputies staged their resistance to Mr Yeltsin's pro-market reforms on August 18, 1991, and moved to impeach him, America's NSA, according to Hersh, was able to decrypt conversations between the two leaders, Vladimir Kryuchkov, KGB chairman, and Dmitri Yazov, defence minister, taking place over a supposedly secure hotline. President George H.W. Bush, himself a former CIA chief, ordered the information to be given to Mr Yeltsin. However, according to Hersh, fearing Russian reaction if word of American interference leaked out, Mr Bush broke the law by not telling Congress. In a parallel move, he also set into motion the dismantling of the secular, pro-Moscow Arab structures, inflicting the first military defeat on Saddam Hussein.

Why should it surprise that Mike Pompeo, author of Mr Trump's anti-Iran military buildup, also has his roots in US intelligence? He became secretary of state after a stint as head of the CIA. Consider it a curious irony in the end that Donald Trump, who seemed to loathe US agencies and had nothing nice to say

about the CIA or any other outfit, became so dependent on the machinations of the Deep State. How would that change for Mr Biden?

Daniel Ellsberg described in *The Guardian* recently the increased danger of a US military assault on Iran under Mr Trump's supervision. If that comes about, it would also have the fingerprints of Benjamin Netanyahu and Mike Pompeo.

"President Trump's incitement of criminal mob violence and occupation of the Capitol makes clear there is no limit on the abuse of power he may commit in the next two weeks. Outrageous as his incendiary (action) was on Wednesday, I fear he may incite something far more dangerous in the next few days: his long-desired war with Iran," Ellsberg wrote.

Ellsberg reports the dispatch a fortnight ago of B-52s nonstop round-trip from North Dakota to the Iranian coast. He says it was the fourth such flight in seven weeks, one at year's end — along with his buildup of US forces in the area. It is a "warning not only to Iran but to us".

According to Ellsberg, by mid-November, as the B-52 flights began, Mr Trump had to be dissuaded at the

highest levels from directing an unprovoked attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. But an attack "provoked" by Iran (or by militias in Iraq aligned with Iran) was not ruled out.

US military and intelligence agencies have frequently provided presidents with false information that offered pretexts to attack America's perceived adversaries, says the author of the Pentagon Papers. It is not unusual for US militaries to suggest covert actions that could provoke the adversaries to some response that justifies US "retaliation".

Ellsberg refers to the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, Iran's top nuclear scientist, in November, and the killing exactly a year ago of Gen. Soleimani. Iran didn't rise to the bait.

Mr Trump is running out of time to generate a ruse to block resumption of the Iran nuclear deal by the incoming Biden administration. "US military and covert planning staffs are up to the task of attempting to meet that challenge, on schedule." Powerful interests rather than the constellations may want the teacup not to reach the lip.

By arrangement with Dawn

Some of them were shifted to a government hospital in

SHORT TAKES

Sindu, Praneeth lose in Thai Open

Bangkok: World champion P V Sindhu suffered a shock defeat on her return to international badminton, losing in three games to Denmark's Mia Blichfeldt in the opening round of YONEX Thailand Open Super 1000 event here on Tuesday. Months after the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the international calendar, Sindhu, seeded sixth, returned to action with a 21-16 24-26 13-21 defeat to world no 18 Blichfeldt in a 74-minute battle. The loss ended India's campaign in women's singles as the other contender Saina Nehwal was forced out after testing positive for COVID-19 on the eve of the tournament. In men's singles, world No. 13 B Sai Praneeth too suffered a straight game loss to Thailand's Kantaphon Wangcharoen on his return to competition. — PTI

F1 season to start in Bahrain

London: The start of the Formula One season has been delayed a week and will start in Bahrain after the Australian Grand Prix was postponed from March to November because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Australian race in Melbourne, initially set to open the season on March 21, has been rescheduled to Nov. 21 with F1 organizers citing "the ongoing situation regarding COVID-19". The Chinese Grand Prix has also been postponed but no new date has been set for the race. Strict travel restrictions for the pandemic make Australia and China among the hardest countries for F1 teams to enter. The season will start with the Bahrain Grand Prix on March 28 at Sakhir, less than four months after the same venue held two races as part of the 2020 season.

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Editor: **KAUSHIK MITTER**

India's injury toll mounts

Brisbane, Jan. 12: The injury-ravaged Indian team was dealt another telling blow on Tuesday as pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah was ruled out of the fourth Test against Australia due to an abdominal strain. If that wasn't enough, Mayank Agarwal — tipped to be Hanuma Vihari's replacement in the playing XI in Brisbane — has sustained a knock on the hands and it could be a hairline fracture.

To make matters worse, Ravichandran Ashwin's back spasms have aggravated after battling for three hours on the final day, leaving little options for India on the bench.

Bumrah, key to India's attack, sustained the strain during the drawn third Test in Sydney.

It has been learnt that Bumrah's scan reports showed a strain and the Indian team management does not want him to aggravate the injury, keeping in mind the upcoming four-Test series against England.

"Jasprit Bumrah suffered an abdominal strain while fielding in Sydney. He is going to sit out of the Brisbane Test but is expected to be available against England," a BCCI source said.

While the Indian team management is heaving a sigh of relief that Bumrah hasn't sustained a tear but wants to be on the side of caution as playing in Brisbane and breaking down in the middle of the Test match could have an even more adverse effect on the team.



Ravindra Jadeja underwent a surgery in fractured thumb.

"If we take the risk of him playing at 50 percent, what if the injury aggravates and he breaks down in the middle of the match and then ruled out for better part of England series?" "England is the last series which will decide the qualification for World Test Championship final and we are in contention and would require a fit Bumrah," the senior BCCI source added.

It is now expected that two-Test old Mohammed Siraj will be leading the Indian attack and will be joined by Navdeep Saini, Shardul Thakur and T Natarajan in the Brisbane Test, starting January 15.

Unless, Bumrah is fielded at 30 percent fitness, risking the entire England series, T Natarajan will make his debut.

The problem with Indian team is after injured KL Rahul's departure and Hanuma Vihari's grade 2 tear, there are no back-up middle-order batsmen left in the reserves.

The only two available batsmen are two out of form openers in Prithvi Shaw and Mayank Agarwal.

It remains to be seen if India, knowing their depleted strength and long tail, decide to take the conservative route of playing four bowlers and six batsmen with Rishabh Pant as

the wicketkeeper.

If Agarwal's scans reveal that it's a bruise and not a fracture, then it could well be Prithvi Shaw batting at number three followed by Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane and Agarwal himself at number six.

If they go with five bowlers, then collective experience of pace attack will be three Test matches and 10 balls (Siraj-2, Saini -1, Shardul -10 balls on debut, Natarajan-yet to play).

TEAM INDIA DENIED BASIC FACILITIES IN BRISBANE

The Indian cricket team, which landed in Brisbane for the fourth and final Test against Australia, was in for a shock on Tuesday as it was lodged at a hotel which "lacked basic facilities", prompting an intervention from the BCCI top brass.

It is learnt that BCCI president Sourav Ganguly, secretary Jay Shah and CEO Hemang Amin have all got in touch with their Cricket Australia counterparts after complaints reached them and have been assured that the Indian contingent will be made to feel comfortable from here on. The series is tied 1-1 currently.

"There was no room service or house keeping facilities. The gym is very basic and not of international standards and the swimming pool can't be accessed. This wasn't what they were promised when they checked in," a senior BCCI source said on conditions of anonymity.

ty.

India will be playing the fourth Test in the Queensland capital from January 15 where the surge of COVID-19 cases and a border lockdown with New South Wales has led to a strict hotel quarantine for the Ajinkya Rahane-led team.

Asked if the players were being allowed to mingle, the Board source said: "Yes, they have been provided with a team room and are allowed to meet each other inside the hotel."

WARNER SAYS SORRY

Australian batting star David Warner on Tuesday condemned the racist slurs hurled at Indian players, particularly pacer Mohammed Siraj, during the third Test here and said such behaviour by the spectators was not acceptable.

Siraj, on his maiden tour of Australia, and senior pacer Jasprit Bumrah were abused for two consecutive days by the crowd.

Play was, in fact, halted on the fourth day for a few minutes after the Indian team complained to the umpires, which led to the expulsion of six spectators from the stands and an unreserved apology from Cricket Australia.

"I'd also like to say sorry to @mohammedsirajofficial and the Indian team as racism, and abuse is not in any way acceptable or tolerated anywhere at any time, and I would expect better from our home crowd," Warner said in an instagram post. — Agencies

Chennaiyin FC hungry for victory

NEHA SURANA | DC CHENNAI, JAN. 12

After playing out a goal-less draw just three days ago, Chennaiyin FC and Odisha FC will once again lock horns on Wednesday with an aim of moving up the ISL table. With just eight goals in 10 outings, Chennaiyin are the bottom of the scoring chart and head coach Csaba Laszlo is well aware of the problem.

"It's our biggest problem. I think we create a lot

of chances, but somehow we didn't score enough goals," said Laszlo.

Laszlo said the team are working hard to improve their set-piece conversion. "We don't concede many goals from set-pieces. Against East Bengal, we scored two goals from corners and against Mumbai City two from indirect set-pieces. I think we are improving," added the coach.

Rafael Crivellaro's absence has left a big hole in the CFC line-up but that's not the only



Chennaiyin FC's Enes Sipovic.

headache for Laszlo.

"It is painful (Rafa's absence) for us but our biggest misery is goal scoring. I don't want to put extra burden on players. I hope the next part of the season will be better for us. In the next 10 games we have to be in a different shape," he said.

Spanish midfielder Manuel Lanzarote was picked as the replacement for Crivellaro. Laszlo said Lanzarote will start training with the team in three weeks after completing his quarantine.

TAMIL NADU DRUB ASSAM

Kolkata, Jan. 12: Tamil Nadu posted their second successive victory in the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament on Tuesday when they drubbed Assam by 10 wickets.

Spinners Sai Kishore and M. Ashwin bowled in tandem to restrict Assam to 126 for seven in 20 overs. TN openers made the chase look easy with an unbeaten century stand.

Brief scores: Assam 126/7 in 20 overs (R Ahmed 29; Mohammed 2-23, Sai Kishore 2-17, M Ashwin 2-16) lost to Tamil Nadu 128 for no loss in 15 overs (Hari Nishaanth 47*, N Jagadeesan 78*).

CEC REAP RICH HAUL

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JAN. 12

The Chennai Equitation Centre (CEC) reaped a rich haul at the Junior National Equestrian Championship in New Delhi as they won 12 medals. Tiyyasha Vathul emerged champion in the junior individual showjumping category.

In team events, CEC junior contingent clinched two gold medals, in dressage and showjumping events. In children group 1, Tanusha Kumar claimed the top spot in dressage category. In children group 2, Jaiveer and Hansika won gold and silver respectively in showjumping. Jaiveer was also awarded top scorer for the same event.

Meanwhile, Abbas Bharmal, who has been training at the CEC for the past three years, came second in the South Zone event and finished sixth in the Federation Equestre International (FEI) World Jumping Challenge.

Results: Show jumping: Individual: Junior: Tiyyasha Vathul (Gold); **Children 2:** Jaiveer (Gold), Hansika (Silver). **Teams: Junior: CEC (Gold); Children 2: CEC (Gold). Dressage: Individual: Children 1:** Tanusha Kumar (Gold); **Children 2:** Pradhyutha Prasanna (Silver). **Teams: Young: CEC (Silver); Juniors: CEC (Gold); Children 2: CEC (Silver).**



(From left) Tanusha Kumar, Pradhyutha Prasanna and Kavya Gopal.

BABU'S 5-DECADE JOURNEY

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JAN. 12

Chennai District Carrom Association on Monday celebrated B. Bangaru Babu's 50 years of service as a sports administrator. A former international player himself, Babu played a key role in raising the standard of carrom in India. Babu is 90 years old now. A founder member of Madras State Carrom Association and All India Carrom Federation, Babu is currently the patron in chief of the chennai federation. The International Carrom Federation was founded in 1988 and Babu became its first secretary. He edited "Carrom Courier", an english quarterly which educated the international carrom community. He was also responsible for bringing out the Official Laws of Carrom by ICF.

FINANCIAL Chronicle

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	49517.11 0.50
Nifty 50	14563.50 0.54
S&P 500*	3,803.94 0.11
Dollar (₹)	73.25 0.27
Pound Sterling (₹)	86.01 -0.05
Euro (₹)	81.51 -0.05
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,946▲297 0.60
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	56.43 1.38
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.931 0.12
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.168 0.034

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Karnataka Bank Q3 profit rises 10% to ₹135 cr



Private sector lender Karnataka Bank reported a 10 per cent increase in net profit at Rs 135.38 crore for the December quarter on account of a decline in bad loans. The Mangalore-headquartered bank had reported a net profit of Rs 123.14 crore in the year-ago period. Total income declined to Rs 1,868.62 crore from Rs 1,993.68 crore. The gross NPAs eased to 3.16 per cent of assets from 4.99 per cent.

■ Only 40-57% of claim amounts reimbursed
Insurers go stingy with Covid claims

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, JAN. 12

Though the number of Covid-19 claims settled by non-life insurance companies has risen sequentially during the December quarter, the claim amount settled by them against the amounts claimed, has not increased in the same proportion. This indicates that policyholders are now paying a significant portion of the claim amount from their pockets owing to disagreements between hospitals and insurers on charges.

Sample this, during October to December 27, the total number of claims reported were 4.23 lakh, of these 83 per cent, or 3.51 lakh, claims were settled. However, in value terms, claims worth Rs 6,235.8 crore were reported, of which only 57 per cent, or Rs 3,578.50 crore were settled. Similarly, during July to September 2020, there were 2.94 lakh Covid-19 related claims reported to insurers. Of these, 62 per cent, or 1.82 lakh, claims were settled. However, in terms of value, the reported claim amount was Rs Rs 4,629.30 crore, of which insurers settled claims worth Rs 1,842.3 crore, or a mere 40 per cent of the reported claim amount.

A senior official of an insurance company said, "The pendency appears big (claims pending) because the Covid treatment is long drawn. Patients after discharge continue to remain in quarantine and use med-



Cadila aims to supply 150 mn doses

CHRIS KAY JAN. 12

Cadila Healthcare Ltd, a drugmaker working to develop an indigenous coronavirus vaccine, said it expects to supply between 100 million to 150 million doses of its candidate this year.

The Ahmedabad-based firm's ZyCoV-D vaccine was approved to com-

mence with final stage human trials in December, and it is recruiting 30,000 volunteers for its phase 3 tests, according to a presentation filed with the stock exchanges on Tuesday. Cadila's plasmid DNA candidate doesn't use an infectious agent, like other vaccines, and instead introduces the DNA sequence encoding the antigen. — Bloomberg

patients in a ward but only to the insured patients in the ward. There are several items which are not payable by us and have been communicated to the hospitals."

Take the case of N. Akhter, a 76-year old female who suffered from breathlessness due to Covid-19 infection. Her

Philippines may tap meat, fish freezers for vaccine

ANDREO CALONZO JAN. 12

The Philippines is preparing cold storage for Covid-19 vaccines, with government telling industry groups with facilities for storing meat and fish to be ready to help in keeping and distributing the shots.

The Philippine cold chain industry expects revenues to hit 20 billion pesos (\$416 million) by end-2023.

Local cold-chain logistics operators can help distribute the vaccines throughout the archipelago, as low-temperature storage facilities are mostly in cities, said Anthony Dizon, president of the Cold Chain Association of the Philippines. The group is waiting for the government's final decision on which shots to buy, he added. — Bloomberg

one-day bill in the intensive care unit of a top South Mumbai hospital was around Rs 33,000. Out of which, the insurer, however, did not pay Rs 5,318 charged for disposable gown, PPE kits, shoe cover and face mask and Rs 600 charged for resident doctor visits. So, the patient has to pay nearly Rs 6,000 per day.

TATA CHEMICALS IN TALKS FOR ARCHEAN'S IND. SALT UNIT

BAIJU KALESH & P R SANJAI JAN. 12

Tata Chemicals Ltd is in advanced talks to acquire the industrial salt unit of Chennai-based Archeon Group that could value the business at Rs 450 crore (\$61 million) at a minimum, according to people familiar with the matter. The board of Tata Chemicals is set to discuss the potential offer as soon as this month, said the people, who asked not to be identified as the information is private.

A representative for Archeon declined to comment, while a representative for Tata Chemicals didn't provide any immediate comment.

The Archeon unit, with a production capacity of 3 million tonnes, makes industrial salt used as an intermediary in the manufacturing of products from detergents, textile dyes to plastics and glass.

A potential deal could offer a reprieve to Archeon, which has been struggling to service its debt obligations for the past two years. The company, founded in 1982, has businesses spanning from industrial salt, fertilisers to mining. In 2018, India Resurgence Fund, a JV between Bain Capital and Piramal Enter-prises invested \$156 million in Archeon's marine chemical business. — Bloomberg

Amazon tells Sebi to suspend Future-RIL deal



SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JAN. 12

After receiving a validation for Singapore tribunal's interim award from Delhi High Court, Amazon has once again asked markets regulator Sebi to suspend the Future-Reliance deal. It has also asked the Sebi to instruct stock exchanges not to issue any approval letter to Future Retail.

In the letter dated January 5, Amazon informed the regulator about the constitution of the arbitral tribunal by Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) in the arbitration proceedings initiated by Amazon against inter alia FRL, Kishore Biyani and Rakesh Biyani. A three-member tribunal consisting of Singaporean barrister Michael Hwang Albert van den Berg and Jan Paulsson have been formed at the SIAC.

"We wish to highlight that in view of the constitution of the Arbitral Tribunal, the interim award passed by the Emergency Arbitrator stands automatically

extended for the duration of the Arbitration Proceedings unless it is reconsidered/ modified/ vacated by the Arbitral Tribunal," Amazon said in the letter seen by *Financial Chronicle*.

Hence, Future Retail continues to be expressly enjoined and restrained by the interim award from taking in any steps in furtherance... In October, Amazon had received an interim order from SIAC barring Future Retail from taking any step to dispose of or encumber its assets or issuing any securities to secure any funding from a restricted party.

Amazon wants the Sebi to take action by suspending review of the impugned transaction (Future's transaction with Reliance), and not granting any no-objection in relation to the same. It also wants the regulator to direct Indian stock exchanges not to issue any no-objection/ approval letter to FRL.

Amazon has been writing letters to regulators and stock exchanges from October 3 on this matter.