

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | MONDAY 11 | JANUARY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 28°C
Min: 23°C
Rainfall: 2.1 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Margazhi 27
Tithi: Thrayodashi
Star: Kettai/ Moolam
Rahukalam:
7.30 am to 9 am
Yamagandam:
10.30 am to 12 noon

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.18 am
Zohar: 12.20 pm
Asar: 3.31 pm
Maghrib: 5.57 pm
Isha: 7.12 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.59 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.35 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 4.32 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 5.13 PM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+15,199)	(+136)
1,04,66,545	1,51,184

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+724)
TN: 8,26,261 12,222

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

9,03,81,294

DEATHS

19,39,210

COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES
218

worldometers.info

Bird flu confirmed in seven states

New Delhi: The Centre on Sunday said bird flu outbreak has been confirmed in seven states -- Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, while test results are still awaited for Delhi and Maharashtra samples. No samples have been confirmed positive in wild birds from Balod district, Chhattisgarh which were tested earlier, the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying said in a statement. After confirmation of avian influenza (bird flu) positive samples in poultry (two poultry farms) of Panchkula district of Haryana, the state government has deployed nine Rapid Response team, and containment operation is underway in both the epicentres.

Srinagar-Jammu highway reopened

Srinagar: The Srinagar-Jammu national highway was reopened on Sunday after seven days in the wake of heavy snowfall last week, even as the city and some other parts of Kashmir received another spell of snowfall, officials said. The 260 kilometre-long highway -- the only all-weather road connecting Kashmir with the rest of the country -- was re-opened for fresh traffic on Sunday morning, the officials said.



Is there any queue for vaccination for bird flu?

Black boxes of missing flight found

Jakarta, Jan. 10: Authorities said they determined the location of the crash site and black boxes of a Boeing 737-500 on Sunday, a day after the aircraft crashed into the Java Sea with 62 people on board shortly after taking off from Indonesia's capital. The head of Indonesia's National Search and Rescue

Agency, Bagus Puruhito, said officials believe they identified the location of the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder the so-called black boxes because emergency signals transmitted by the devices were detected by a navy ship's sonar system. "We have determined the position of the plane's black

boxes from two signals emitted by the devices," military chief Hadi Tjahjanto said. "Hopefully we can lift the black boxes in short time to determine the cause of the crash." Earlier Sunday, search and rescue operations resulted in parts of the plane being found in the sea at a depth of 23 meters, lead-

ing rescuers to continue searching the area. "We received reports from the diver team that the visibility in the water is good and clear, allowing the discovery of some parts of the plane," Tjahjanto said in a statement. "We are sure that is the point where the plane crashed." — AP

STATE | 3

Rajini, Kamal popular stars, marginal political players: Aiyar



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College students to get free data cards of 2 GB a day: CM

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 10:

The state government has decided to distribute free data cards of 2GB per day for college students for their use during the remaining months of this academic year. Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami made the announcement on Sunday for issuance of the free data cards. In a statement, the Chief Minister said the colleges are holding online classes for students owing to Covid-19 pandemic. In order to assist the students to attend the online classes, the government has decided to give free data cards with a usage capacity of 2 GB per day between January and April. About 9.69 lakh students studying in govern-



ment and government-aided arts, science colleges, polytechnic colleges, engineering colleges and students receiving scholarships in private colleges will benefit from the scheme.

The Corporation of Tamil Nadu Ltd. (Elcot), a state government-undertaking, will distribute the data cards to the students.

Electronics Corporation of Tamil Nadu Ltd. (Elcot), a state government-undertaking, will distribute the data cards to the students.

FANS GATHER TO DEMAND RAJINI'S ENTRY TO POLITICS

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 10

Hundreds of Rajinikanth fans got together in the city on Sunday to protest the matinee idol's refusal to enter politics as promised. A Rajini Makal Mandram leader had warned them against holding any demonstrations but the disappointed fans did not pay heed. They got together peacefully to express their view that the superstar should join politics.

RMM office bearer Sudhakar had warned members against holding protests while 38 district secretaries of the outfit had put out a notice instructing members to stay away from demonstrations.

PG3

Farmers disrupt Khattar's meet

SANJAY KAW | DC
NEW DELHI, JAN. 10

Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar was forced to cancel his kisan mahapanchayat programme in Karnal on Sunday after the farmers who are protesting against the Centre's three new agricultural reform laws uprooted tents and damaged the stage at the venue.

The police resorted to a mild lathicharge and used teargas and water cannons to stop hundreds of farmers from reaching a helipad at Kaimla village where Mr Khattar was scheduled to land.

Lashing out at Mr Khattar for using water cannons and teargas shells against the farmers, Congress leader Randeep

Singh Surjewala tweeted: "Respected Manohar Lal ji, please stop this pretence of Kisan Mahapanchayat in Kaimla village. By playing with the sentiments of those who provide us with food, please stop meddling with the law and order situation." In another tweet, he said: "If you want to have a conversation, have it with those who have been protesting for the last 46 days."

BJP-ruled Haryana had hit the headlines in November when it decided to stop the farmers on their way to Delhi from across the state as well as those in Punjab. For days, there have been reports of the police clashing with farmers, using batons, barricades, teargas and water cannons.

SDA CALLS OFF DHARNA FOR RECALL OF BEDI

Puducherry, Jan. 10: The ruling Congress-led Secular Democratic Alliance (SDA) in Puducherry on Sunday ended its three-day old agitation demanding the recall of Lt Governor Kiran Bedi, a day ahead of the original schedule, citing Pongal festivities.

Chief Minister V Narayanasamy, who addressed the participants on Sunday, said as the Pongal festival was being celebrated in the Union territory the number of days of the protest was reduced from four to three.

The protest was launched on January 8 with the ruling party accusing Bedi of "impeding developmental plans and welfare measures of the elected government."

Initially, the alliance had planned for an indefinite agitation but scaled it down to four days. He, however, said the agitation against Ms Bedi would be carried out in different modes.

PTI

WORLD | 5

Democrats ready for Trump's second impeachment today

SPORT | 8

Jadeja might bat with injections



CRICKET'S SHAME

Racist abuse of Indian team mars Sydney Test

Cricket Australia apologises, ICC seeks report

DC CORRESPONDENT
WITH AGENCY INPUTS
CHENNAI, JAN. 10

The ongoing third Test between India and Australia plunged into controversy after yet another incident of racist abuse rocked the Sydney Cricket Ground on Sunday. It was Hyderabad pacer Mohammed Siraj who, once again, faced racist slurs from the crowd even as Cricket Australia (CA) and the New South Wales Police are investigating the first incident reported on Saturday.

The game was halted briefly and a bunch of spectators was expelled from the stadium. It's learnt that Siraj was called a 'Brown Dog' and 'Big Monkey'.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has strongly condemned the incident and sought an action report from Cricket Australia (CA), the body that controls cricket in that country.

Apologising to the Indian team, CA promised to take the "strongest mea-



India pacer Mohammed Siraj (centre) gestures as Aussie captain Tim Paine looks on during the third Test between Australia and India at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Monday.

AFP

sures" against anyone found guilty of vilification. "It is most regrettable that an otherwise excellent test match contested in tremendous spirit by two friendly rivals has been tarnished by the actions of a small number of spectators over the past two days," head of Integrity and Security Sean Carroll said in a statement.

The behaviour of the

Sydney crowd has received widespread condemnation from cricketers. Indian captain Virat Kohli who was once fined for showing the middle finger at the SCG crowd called it "the absolute peak of rowdy behaviour". "Having gone through many incidents of really pathetic things said on the boundary lines, this is the absolute peak of rowdy

Having gone through many incidents of really pathetic things said on the boundary lines, this is the absolute peak of rowdy behaviour. It's sad to see this happen on the field. — VIRAT KOHLI, Indian captain

behaviour. It's sad to see this happen on the field. The incident needs to be looked at with absolute urgency and seriousness and strict action against the offenders should set things straight for once," Kohli tweeted.

Meanwhile, Aussie cricketers showed great solidarity towards their on-field rivals. Skipper Tim Paine joined India's huddle when the play was halted for a few minutes. Coach Justin Langer, too, condemned the incident.

BEHTAR ZINDAGI KE LIYE

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SHORT TAKES

₹16.81 lakh gold seized at airport

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 10

Customs officials at the Chennai International Airport seized gold worth Rs 16.81 lakhs. Based on intelligence tipoff, Jahir Hussain (35) of Chennai who arrived from Dubai by an Indigo flight was intercepted at the exit on suspicion of carrying gold.

On searching him, a bundle of gold paste weighing 390 grams was recovered from his person. On extraction, 329 grams of 24k purity gold valued at Rs. 16.81 lakhs was recovered and the same was seized under the Customs Act.

Union AMC aims to double AUM to ₹10K crore

Chennai: Union AMC's growth strategy is aimed at doubling its AUM (Assets under management) to ₹10,000 crore with growth coming in from B30 cities. The firm, co-sponsored by Union Bank and prominent Japanese foreign financial behemoth Dai-ichi Life Holdings Inc, has undergone changes in various facets of its operations as well as in ownership.

Mr G. Pradeepkumar, CEO, said, "The AMC has implemented a more robust investment process resulting in improved performance of various schemes of Union AMC. The company also manages a portfolio for Daichi through FPI route. The contribution in the AAUM of Union Mutual Fund from Retail investors and from B30 cities has been good. We have close to 1% market share of the unique investors in the industry."

Mr VinayPaharia, Chief Investment Officer, said, "In the current market situation, we recommend asset allocation based mutual fund products. We prefer sectors such as IT and Telecom and are underweight Utility and Consumer Discretionary sectors. According to us, the key risk to both - equity and fixed income markets - would be any unanticipated spike in inflation leading to increase in interest rates."



Visitors taking a look at heritage cars at the Chennai Heritage Auto Display 2021, organised by Madras Heritage Motoring Club, in the city on Sunday. — DC

Call for speedy Mega Street implementation

T. SUDHEESH
CHENNAI, JAN. 10

The residents of the Textile Zone of North Chennai are calling for speedy implementation of the ambitious Mega Street Programme, which was introduced by the Civic body last February with a view to improving mobility, utility and liveability in the city. Their call comes at a time when Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) authorities have decided to construct a pedestrian plaza on MC Road to ensure hassle-free traffic in the area.

On Saturday, Chennai Smart City Limited said the textile zone of North Chennai would soon have a pedestrian plaza for ease of shopping and walking. As part of this, MC Road will be revamped with a pedestrian plaza, it had said.

Pedestrian plazas had been mooted under the non-motorised transport

policy and the projects come under the Mega Street Project, which is part of the Smart City mission. The GCC had earlier introduced pedestrian plazas in T Nagar and Nungambakkam. But, T. Nagar residents' welfare association urged the authorities to implement the project without delay.

"Under Mega street programme introduced as part of the Smart City Mission, GCC had announced various projects in T Nagar. But the encroachment on Ranganathan Street, Natesan Street and Railway Border Road near Mambalam Railway Station is always growing. A lane constructed as pedestrian plaza between Ranganathan and Natesan streets has now become a public urinal, and for nearby shops and commercial establishments to throw rubbish. If the Mega Street Programme is implemented, the lane can be kept

clean and the pedestrians could utilise the lane to reach the bus stand and railway station avoiding the congested Ranganathan Street", said V.S. Jayaraman, secretary of the association.

Meanwhile, an official, privy to the project, said that the Mega Street programme had slowed down because the corporation had to focus on the pandemic response. "The designers are onboard from a few months ago and they are currently developing the designs", the official said.

The Mega Street Programme was devised with a view to implementing continuous footpaths, streamlined carriage-ways, organised on-street parking and planned underground utilities. It also planned to integrate bus stops, street vending and other street furniture, locating them carefully so that they should not hamper the walking experience of pedestrians..

SL Navy apprehends nine Indian fishermen

Rameswaram (TN), Jan. 10: The Sri Lankan Navy has arrested nine Indian fishermen and seized one mechanised boat for allegedly fishing in that country's waters, besides damaging fishing nets in a separate incident, officials said here on Sunday.

The fishermen were arrested near Neduntheevu on Saturday, Fisheries department officials said.

Lankan navy personnel allegedly damaged fishing nets in 20 mechanised boats near Katchatheevu on Saturday, the officials added. They also allegedly hurled stones and bottles on the the Indian fishermen

cials said, adding that one boat was also seized by the Lankan navy. In a separate incident,

Lankan navy personnel allegedly damaged fishing nets in 20 mechanised boats near Katchatheevu on Saturday, the officials added. They also allegedly hurled stones and bottles on the the Indian fishermen.

Fishermen's association representative Sesuraja ruded the acts of the Sri Lankan Navy, saying damage to equipment caused

distress to the fishermen. The fishermen operating mechanised boats decided to strike work indefinitely from Monday, urging the Centre to expedite steps for the release of about 52 fishermen from Lankan custody at the earliest. About 800 boats and 5,000 fishermen would keep off the sea, representatives said.

— PTI

ESAF Small Finance Bank opens new branch

Chennai: ESAF Small Finance Bank opened a branch in Anna Nagar with SMN Swamy, Regional Director, RBI, Chennai inaugurating it in a virtual event. The bank has 506 branches in the country catering to more than 40 lakh customers through its outlets across 19 states and two union territories. The expansion underlines its mission to provide responsive banking services to the public and entrepreneurs alike. P. R. Ravi Mohan, Chairman, ESAF Small Finance Bank, also took part in the ceremony.

Rape victim identifies 2 railway contract staff

From P1

Two railway contract staff, identified by the police as Suresh (31) and Abdul Ajiz (30), entered the yard to clean the train and found the sleeping woman, and molested her. Police sources said Suresh and Abdul Ajiz threatened her of dire consequences if she complained to the police, or others, lest she should be accused of being a thief. The duo then accompanied her outside the yard to ensure that she did not approach the railway police.

When they were stopped by an RPF constable, the

The GRP personnel also checked the attendance details of the staff and found that Suresh and Abdul Ajiz had punched in around the time of the incident

staff told him that the woman was found sleeping inside a train in the yard.

Around 3:30 am on Sunday, the woman lodged a complaint with the GRP and its Tambaram unit registered a case. The police also took the woman to the railway

yard where she identified the accused.

The GRP personnel also checked the attendance details of the staff and found that Suresh and Abdul Ajiz had punched in around the time of the incident.

Both were booked for rape and threatening the woman (IPC 376, 506 (1)), and remanded in judicial custody.

The incident happened less than a week after a 40-year-old woman was raped by two men inside a temple premises in Vandipettai in Nagapattinam.

Cheating case against Travancore family

From P1

Former head of the family Uthradom Thirunall Marthanda Vrama, who died in 2013, was also on the list of accused.

The court directed other accused ACR Raj Ganesan

and BR Ramprabhu Raj also to appear before the court tomorrow.

The matter relates to the property belonging to the erstwhile Maharaja of Travancore in Adyar.

One Singaravelan had

purchased the land from the legal heirs of the family. However, subsequently, they allegedly sold the property to another person using fake documents.

Based on a complaint, CCB registered a case in

1994 against them.

After probe a chargesheet was filed before the court last week.

Based on this, the court directed them to appear before the court on Monday at 10 am.

COFFEE-BREAK

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



Aries: Money spent today is likely to be quickly replenished. Business and financial deals will probably prove very profitable. You may be feeling too energetic to relax.



Taurus: If you can go to work, you will achieve twice what you have been doing. You will find that you have a single-minded determination to succeed today.



Gemini: A little tension is possible, as you will not take no for an answer. Don't overdo it and scare a beloved away. Extreme care will be needed to earn profits.



Cancer: You will be torn between problems in your private life and work. Focus on a pressing matter at home. Work may not go well, as you have too many things on your mind.



Leo: Your energy levels may not be as high as expected. It's best to avoid physical work as mistakes and accidents are likely. If unavoidable, be extra careful.



Virgo: You may not agree with your partner on spending money. Unavoidable changes are on the way. Plan for the future carefully. Walk away from arguments, you are unlikely to win.

You share your b'day with

Rahul David is a former Indian cricketer and captain of the Indian national team. He is the Director of Cricket Operations at National Cricket Academy, Bengaluru, India. He also monitors the progress of India A and India under-19 cricket teams.



Libra: Major changes to your living arrangements and family life are likely. These may cause short-term problems in joint finances. You will be tempted to spend money.



Scorpio: A major disruption of plans is indicated. Although the news you get is unlikely to be bad, you may feel the repercussions for months to come.



Sagittarius: The day will simply fly past. You will achieve deep concentration and not be keen on routine tasks. You will be satisfied with what you have achieved.



Capricorn: There will be a huge increase in the number of people who contact you. Unexpected visitors will delay plans. Someone could bring some welcome news, and even an opportunity to create wealth.

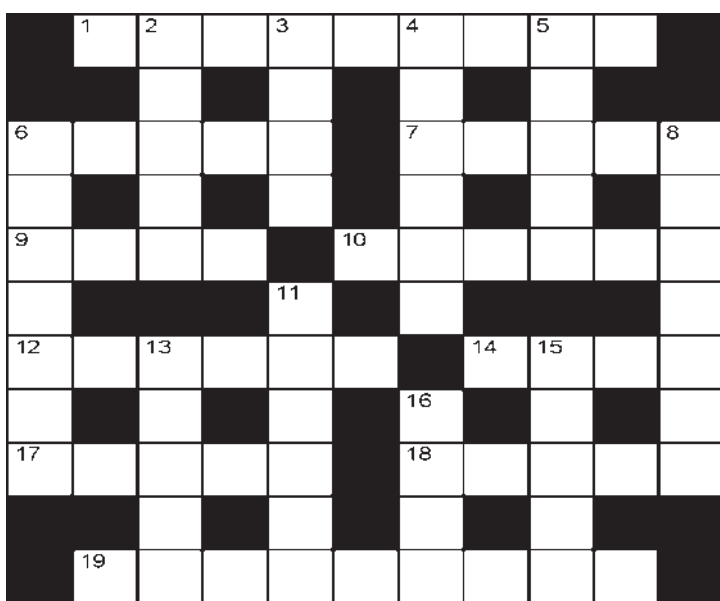


Aquarius: A good day to start sorting out a domestic dispute. Your confidence continues to grow. Your positive attitude enables you to tackle work with renewed vigour and more success.



Pisces: A very busy day. You will gather a team of people keen to help you and share the glory coming your way. You probably have been experiencing highs in your romantic life.

QUICK CROSSWORD



Across
1. With true identity disguised (9)
6. Deadens (5)
7. Covered internally (5)
9. Delites (4)
10. Hire (6)
12. Accessories (6)
14. Horse farm (4)
17. Linger (5)
18. Intimidated (5)
19. Demote (9)

Down
2. Identified (5)
3. Hops kiln (4)
4. Stockings (6)
5. South Pacific kingdom (5)
6. Fall to care for properly (7)
8. Feared greatly (7)
11. Ravine (6)
13. Body trunk (5)
15. Pulled behind (5)
16. Skin mark (4)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER
Across: 1. Building, 7. Unwed, 8. Level, 9. Malice, 10. Club, 12. Nick, 14. Guests, 17. Evade, 18. Knave, 19. Weakness.
Down: 1. Bowl, 2. Indict, 3. Dull, 4. Navel, 5. Augmented, 6. Albaster, 11. Buckle, 13. Chafe, 15. Spats, 16. Meek.

Word Mine

K
E
C
D
A
H
Y
N
E

TODAY'S RATINGS: 19 AVERAGE; 21 GOOD; 23 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 (tonight)
Yesterday's Jumble: STUNT (BAND) GIGGL (BOTTLE) Answer: When it comes to kanto, Chuck Norris has numerous accomplishments — UNDER HIS BELT

jumble



issue, declarer should win the first trick with dummy's diamond ace and play a spade to his ace (to guard against a 4-0 split). He draws trumps, cashes his three hearts, discarding a club from hand, and concedes one diamond and two clubs. But when overtricks are valuable, it is certainly reasonable to take the diamond finesse at trick one. Here, though, it loses, and East will shift to a low club. After South also plays low, 99.99%

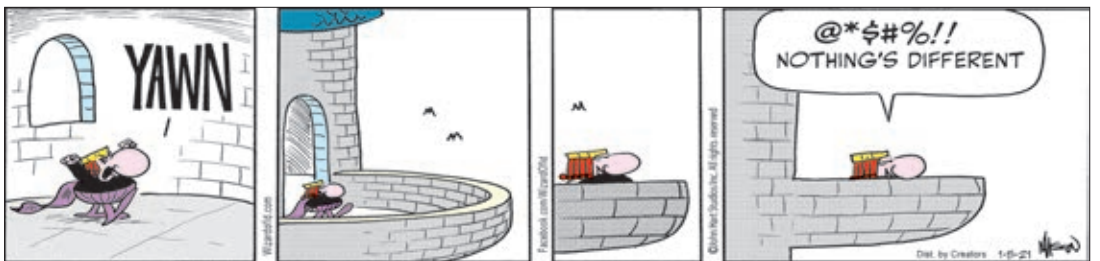
of players would win the club jack and cash the club ace. A few moments later, declarer will claim his contract. The genius receiving a positive mental push will win trick two with the club ace and return the club jack. Then East can win with his king and give partner a club ruff to defeat the contract.

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CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



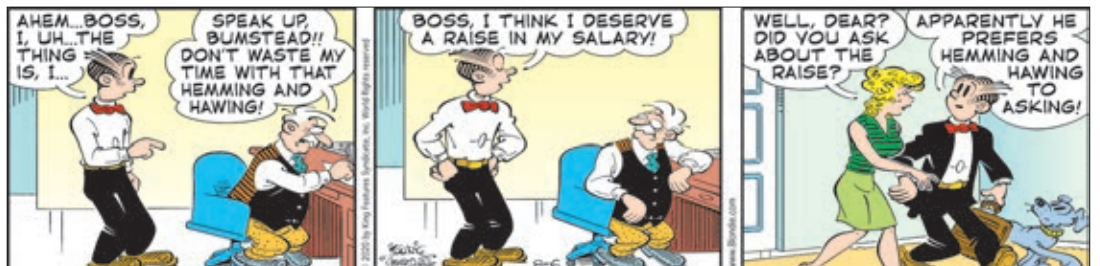
THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs

bridge
PHILLIP
ALDER

**SOME
PLAYS
ARE
TOO HARD
TO FIND**

Richard M. DeVos, who was a businessman and owner of the Orlando Magic basketball team, said, "Few things in the world are more powerful than a positive push. A smile. A word of optimism and hope. A 'you can do it' when things are tough."

Some defenses are just too tough for (almost) everyone. This deal is doubly difficult for both sides because it occurred during an online duplicate.

After West leads a low diamond, how should South play in four spades when overtricks are not important? How would his line change if he hoped to collect an overtrick? In addition, how would the defenders play?

North used the Jacoby Forcing Raise. South's jump to game indicated a minimum opening without a short side suit (singleton or void).

When overtricks are not an

SHORT TAKES

MTR reopens to tourists after 10 mnts

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, JAN. 10

Following all the others, finally, wildlife tourism has also resumed in the Nilgiris this weekend, opening the prospects of full-fledged tourism, with sustained flow of revenue.

While all tourist spots including public parks and lakes have been thrown open to tourists since September in a phased-manner, only the re-opening of wildlife tourism was pending. Now, much to the cheers and enthusiasm of wildlife tourists, the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR), was reopened for tourists on Saturday after nearly 10 months. Even now, some restrictions are being imposed in the MTR for tourists to visit the jungles and take a safari in the prescribed tourist zones within the MTR limits.

It is mandatory for MTR visitors to wear either a triple layer mask or N95 mask and undergo thermal scanning. Valid ID proof is also needed. Social distancing is to be strictly maintained. Fifty percent capacity will be allowed for vehicle safari.

Rest houses and dormitories in MTR will be open from January 11. Rest houses occupation can be made with maximum two persons per suite and dormitories with 50 percent occupancy. Persons with symptoms of cough and fever will not be allowed to enter the MTR. Vehicle safari will be held between 6:30 am and 10 am and between 2 pm and 5 pm.

Five police teams to crack twin migrants' cases

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, JAN. 10

Five police teams with a total strength of a little over 100 persons have been pressed into service to search the vicinity of a private tea estate in Kolakombai limits near here, for an eight-year-old girl child of a migrant labour, who went missing since the third week of December.

It may be recalled that the girl child of a Jharkhand-based migrant labour working in the private estate in Kolakombai limits went missing, and a complaint was lodged by her parents in the Kolakombai police station.

Even as investigation was in progress and a special team formed to trace the child, a family of another four Jharkhand-based migrant labourer, who are neighbours to the family of the missing girl, were found dead in their house last week, adding to the mystery.

Though cops in Kolakombai failed to make a breakthrough in both the cases, the ST wing of the BJP in Jharkhand is said to have informed ST wing of BJP in Tamil Nadu, to take up this issue with the cops and speed up investigations, since both the families are said to belonging to a tribal community in Jharkhand.

Now, the police administration in the Nilgiris has formed five teams to search the vicinity along the private tea estate in Kolakombai to trace the missing girl or to get some clues on the case.

Team to monitor ban on fox hunting

ZAKEER HUSSAIN | DC SALEM, JAN. 10

A special task force has been set up on behalf of the forest department to prevent the capture of the 'Bengal fox' ahead of the Kannum pongal festival. The 'Bengal fox' is an endangered species, and hence, is banned from any sport or hunting, according to the Indian wildlife Act. The 'Vanga Nari' jallikkattu is usually held in the villages of Vazhappadi and Attur areas in the district on the eve Kannum pongal, whereas the forest department has banned the worship of the Bengal fox.

People believe it will bring bountiful rain and good fortune. The animals are captured, muzzled and their hind legs tied with rope. After special rituals, the animals are chased through the village streets, much like the bulls in the conventional jallikkattu. After the event, the animals are released into the forest.

Every year, on the eve of Kannum pongal, the forest department sets up a team of officials to monitor and prevent the capture of the Bengal fox by villagers. The forest department is also raising awareness among the people that catching the Bengal fox is a crime under law. District Forest Officer, Murugan, said that it is an offense under the Wildlife Conservation Act to catch a Bengal fox and hold a jallikkattu. Catching a Bengal fox is punishable up to three years to seven years in prison.

'Rajini, Kamal popular stars, marginal political players'

New Delhi, Jan. 10 Describing Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan as "marginal political players", senior Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar has said they remain very popular film stars but are unable to attract public opinion to their point of view in political terms.

Aiyar, who has been named in three key panels set up by the Congress for Tamil Nadu polls, asserted that superstar Rajinikanth's decision that he will not enter electoral politics will not make a tinker's difference as the state readies for the assembly polls.

"When he (Rajinikanth) said he was going to come into politics, I said it is not going to make a tinker's difference, now that he has decided not to come into politics, I repeat what I said, it is not going to make a tinker's difference," Aiyar said.

"Kamal and Rajini are not anything but marginal political players. It was different in the old days when people like M G Ramachandran (MGR), Sivaji Ganesan and even Jayalalithaa were involved in films that carried a revolutionary social message," he said.

Noting that former Tamil Nadu Chief Ministers M Karunanidhi and C N Annadurai were also deeply involved in cinema, he said the powerful scripts written by Annadurai and extremely powerful dialogues by Karunanidhi that were delivered magnificently by MGR resulted in films in Tamil cinema having in the 1950s the same role as social media is today having in determining the politics of northern India.

"Since these two (Rajinikanth and Haasan) have never used cinema as a medium for a political message, they remain what they are - very very popular film stars, but not people who attract public opinion to their point of view in political terms," Aiyar said.

He argued that there have been no two actors more popular on the Hindi silver screen than Amitabh Bachchan and Rajesh Khanna, but "what flops they were in politics". The same thing applies in the South, he



Rajinikanth fans from all over Tamil Nadu gathered at Valluvar Kottam staging a peaceful protest urging him to change his decision and enter politics.

— DC

Fans believe they can push Rajinikanth into reconsidering decision not to enter politics

From P1

But Rajini fans were seen gathering at Valluvar Kottam from early in the day. The crowd only kept increasing through the day before the rally was wound up in the evening.

The actor had made it clear in a letter in the last week of December 2020 that his health may not permit him to participate in poll politics and expressed his inability to campaign during the pandemic. The actor had said that meeting lakhs of people during the pandemic may be risky and that

added.

Making a U-turn, superstar Rajinikanth last month announced he will not enter politics in view of his frail health, putting an end to his long-nurtured plans and describing his recent hospitalisation as God's warning. "Only I know the pain behind making this



even a vaccine may not offer full protection.

Rajini's statement in a letter had read - "Even if

announcement," the 70 year-old actor had said, just days before he was to spell out the contours of his party based on spiritual politics aimed at bringing a total change in the Dravidian heartland Tamil Nadu in the 2021 assembly elections.

Kamal had launched MNM in February 2018

the vaccine comes, if something happens to my health since I take immunosuppressants, then people who have trusted me and joined me will have to face several difficulties mentally and financially. Just because people will question me after I gave my word on my entry into politics, I don't prefer to sacrifice my allies and friends.

Forgive me because this decision will cause disappointment to those in Rajini Makkal Mandram and those who expected that I will enter politics."

and the party had faced the 2019 Lok Sabha elections but could not win a single seat. Kamal, through his ongoing poll campaign, has latched on to the welfare legacy of MGR and has been attacking both AIADMK and DMK over alleged corruption.

— PTI

Former IAS officer is man on a different mission now

A. ARUL PALANI | DC CHENNAI, JAN. 10

Former IAS officer, S. Sasikanth Senthil, is all set to walk on new turf. Senthil, a 2009-batch Karnataka cadre IAS officer quit the service in September 2019 and is ready to march miles to accomplish his mission.

Relieving himself from government service, he has decided to pursue his childhood dream of serving the people in the political arena. He has plans to embark on the journey to meet youth and elders in remote villages across the State after Pongal.

Dejected over anti-people, anti-farmer and anti-labour policies of the Central government, Senthil had taken the extreme step to quit a government job which remained a dream of thousands of youth across the country.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, he said "I have been monitoring BJP since it came to power in 2014. It had introduced several anti-people policies and demolished institutions which were built by our leaders over decades. It destroyed the cultural ethos and diversity of the people and the nation".

Government policies and actions had moved towards centralisation of power and oneness. "I hoped our institutions are strong and people will not tolerate the BJP for more than five years. However, to my shock the party returned to power in 2019", he said.

Registering his protest against abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution in August 2019 he quit the service in the next month. Prior to his resignation he was hailed as "People's Collector" and soon after resignation he



S. Sasikanth Senthil

was trolled as "anti-national." Since then he has taken part in protests against the government over CAA, CRC and other issues faced by the people. Last November he joined Congress.

Senthil was born in Chennai. After schooling in Perambur he had completed BE in Electronics and Communications at the then Regional Engineering College, (now National Institute of Technology, Tiruchirappalli) in 2000 and graduated in first class. During the campus interview he was selected for famous IT firm Polaris and worked in IT for a year before taking up a lecturer's job in an engineering college and then he also worked for an NGO.

His urge to serve the masses made him sit for UPSC Civil Service examination and in 2008 he was one of the toppers in the country securing 9th position in the civil service examination and was allotted IAS in Karnataka cadre. Senthil became known as a darling of masses and a responsible government officer.

He was known for adopting pro-farmer and people friendly policies. With support from the police he came down heavily on the mining mafia in Ballari. He maintained cordial relations with all the parties and

COVID SLUM RELIEF PROJECT BENEFITS MANY IN CITY

Chennai: The Covid Slum Relief Project, initiated by Rajan Eye Care Hospital and Chennai Vision Charitable Trust, has covered more than 25,000 families in 95 slums in the city.

The project also saw the distribution of 3M goggles, sanitisers, N95 masks, face shields to more than 2,000 members

of the City Police besides general hospitals and Corporation dispensaries.

Around 4,000 nitrile gloves were given to Namakkal and other government hospitals. N95 Masks.

Rice, wheat, bread and masks were given to Corporation and sanitary workers.

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2	Tumkur-Arsikere	Rs. 8,53,46,019/-
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Last date for submission of bids: Up to 11:00 hrs. of 27.01.2021		
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1	Birur-Hubballi	Rs. 1,17,60,169/-
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2	Birur - Hubballi	Rs. 1,35,44,786/-
Section: Ancillary work in connection with Deep screening by BCM for a length of 39.775km in Assistant Divisional Engineer/Davangere Sub Division under sanctioned work of Through Ballast Renewal (TBR) from km 210 to km 380 for a length of 71.23 km at scattered locations between Birur - Harihar stations. (locations for a length of 39.775km : 211/800-217/200(UP), 218/400-220/965(UP), 228/000-230/ 900(UP), 248/710-258/577(UP), 228/510-230/800(DN), 262/000-278/ 753(DN).		
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McSarnBleTVS/004/01/21

IN BRIEFS

Pregnant rape survivor dies in UP

Bareilly (UP): A 15-year-old rape survivor who was seven months pregnant died of pregnancy-related complications at the district hospital here, police said on Sunday. She was admitted to the hospital on Saturday night and passed away on Thursday night, they said. Additional director and superintendent in-charge of the hospital Dr Subodh Sharma said the girl was brought to the hospital in serious condition and her health deteriorated further. Despite best efforts by the doctors, she could not be saved, he added. Senior superintendent of police, Bareilly, Rohit Singh Sajwan said, “The post-mortem report says that the death took place due to infection.” “The viscera of the victim has been preserved,” he added.

KANPUR ZOO SHUT AFTER BIRD FLU CASES

Kanpur, Jan. 10: The Kanpur Zoological Park has been closed for visitors till further orders after samples taken from two dead birds found there tested positive for the avian influenza virus, an official said on Sunday.

The area up to one kilometre of the zoo has been declared an infected zone and the culling of birds has begun there, said Additional District Magistrate (City) Atul Kumar. “Four fowls and two parrots were found dead in the zoo in the last five days. Of these, two birds tested positive,” Kumar said. According to the official, the samples of dead birds were sent to the animal disease laboratory in Bhopal which confirmed the presence of H-5 strain of bird flu in them.

“The zoo has been closed for visitors and morning walkers. The hospital enclosure where the infected birds had been placed has also been shut down,” Kumar said. An area of 10 kilometres around the zoo has been cordoned off and declared containment zone for an indefinite period by the authorities.

Stop Covaxin trial in Bhopal, demand NGOs

Allege that gas tragedy survivors forced to volunteer

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOVAL, JAN. 10

Bhopal gas tragedy survivors on Sunday demanded Prime Minister Narendra Modi to halt the ongoing trial of Covaxin, the indigenously developed Covid-19 vaccine, in view of “violation of laws and guidelines”.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, four NGOs, comprising Bhopal gas tragedy survivors, said, “We are writing to you to apprise you of the ground situation with regard to conduct of the trial. Evidence has emerged that the trial in Bhopal is being conducted in gross violation of laws and guidelines governing clinical trials in India.

“This is leading to exploitation and harm to a community of people that are not just economically and socially deprived, but whose health is compromised owing to the destructive impact and its consequences”, they said.

The NGOs alleged that vulnerable people were being misguided and herded to participate in the trials and the consent procedure and other protocol of testing was being thrown to winds.

“The clinical trial (of the vaccine) should be stopped forthwith and an impartial probe be conducted”, they said.

According to Rasheeda Bee, a gas tragedy survivor and social activist, at least 700 out of the 1,700 people on whom this vaccine was being tested,

Didi promises free Covid vaccine to all

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, JAN. 10

With barely three months left for the West Bengal elections, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has announced that the government would provide Covid-19 vaccine “free of cost” to all but the promise only earned her sharp attack from the BJP and the Congress.

“You are aware Covid-19 vaccine is coming. With profound joy I inform that our government is making arrangements to reach out to all the people of the state with this vaccine free of cost. In the first phase we will provide this vaccine to all health workers,” Mamata Banerjee said in an open letter to all the frontline Covid warriors while saluting their service during the pandemic.

were those poisoned by the Union Carbide gas leak in 1984.

“One gas victim died within 10 days of getting the trial shot and many continue to have health complaints of a serious nature”, she alleged. A Covaxin volunteer died nine days after he took the shot, she said.

Meanwhile, Bharat Biotech, a partner in the development of the

Accusing her of trying to claim credit for something that the Centre has already announced for the entire country, BJP national IT cell in-charge Amit Malviya on Sunday Tweeted, “Pishi was a disaster when it came to managing Covid. From doctors to policemen, everyone protested against Chief Minister’s apathy. But now that the Centre has announced free priority vaccination for 3 crore frontline workers across the country, Pishi is rushing to take credit.”

Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Chowdhury said, “Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal has already announced to give Covid-19 vaccine free of cost to all. Now the Bengal CM has done the same but to get votes in exchange of what I say: poll bribe.”

Covaxin, has issued a statement saying that the volunteer’s death was not related to the vaccine.

In a statement issued here, People’s College of Medical Science and Research Centre, said the post-mortem report conducted on the deceased by Medico Legal Institute cited that the cause of death was cardio-respiratory failure because of suspected poisoning.

New Delhi/Bengaluru, Jan. 10: Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Sunday expressed confidence of soon getting a final clearance from the central BJP leadership for the much-awaited cabinet rejig in the state after he met sen-

ior party leaders including its chief J.P. Nadda and Union home minister Amit Shah. State party in-charge Arun Singh was also present in an hour-long meeting held at Shah’s residence in Delhi. “On cabinet expansion, there was a detailed

INDIA GENERATED 33K TONNES OF COVID-19 WASTE

New Delhi, Jan. 10: India generated around 33,000 tonnes of Covid-19 biomedical waste in the last seven months, with Maharashtra contributing the maximum (3,587 tonnes) to it, according to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data.

Over 5,500 tonnes of Covid-19 waste was generated across the country in October — the maximum for a month so far. According to the data received from state pollution control boards, since June 2020, all states and Union Territories have generated 32,994 tonnes of Covid-19-related biomedical waste which is being collected, treated and disposed of by 198 common biomedical waste treatment facilities (CBWTFs).

Covid-19 biomedical waste could include PPE kits, masks, shoe covers, gloves, human tissues, items contaminated with blood, body fluids like dressings, etc.

According to the data, Maharashtra generated 5,367 tonnes of Covid-19 waste in seven months since June, followed by Kerala (3,300 tonnes), Gujarat (3,086 tonnes), Tamil Nadu (2,806 tonnes), Uttar Pradesh (2,502 tonnes), Delhi (2,471 tonnes), West Bengal (2,095 tonnes) and Karnataka (2,026 tonnes). — *PTI*

discussion. You will get good news soon,” Yediyurappa told reporters after the meeting.

He said the final names will be cleared as early as possible because there was “positive, fruitful and satisfactory discussion”. — *PTI*

States to hold door-to-door survey to enrol students

New Delhi, Jan. 10: The education ministry has asked the states to conduct a door-to-door survey to identify out-of-school children and prepare an action plan for their enrolment as part of efforts to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, especially on migrants, according to officials.

The ministry has also recommended relaxing detention norms to prevent drop-outs this year as well as a slew of measures to address learning loss due to the Coronavirus-induced shutdown of schools.

The move is particularly aimed at identification, admission and continued education of migrant children who have been affected during the pandemic, they said.

“In order to mitigate the impact of challenges thrown by the Covid-19 pandemic for out of school children, it was felt necessary for every state and UT to devise a proper strategy for preventing increased dropouts, lower enrolments, loss of learning and deterioration in the gains made in providing universal access, quality and equity in the recent years,” a senior ministry official said.

“The states and UTs have been advised to carry out

● **EDUCATION MINISTRY** has also recommended relaxing detention norms to prevent drop-outs this year as well as a slew of measures to address learning loss due to the Coronavirus-induced shutdown of schools.

proper identification of Out-of-School Children (OoSC) for 6 to 18 years age group through a comprehensive door-to-door survey and prepare an action plan for their enrolment,” the official added.

The ministry has also issued guidelines for offering support to students during the closure of schools and when they reopen.

“To ensure that school-going children have access to education with quality and equity and to minimise the impact of the pandemic on school education across the country, the ministry of education has prepared and issued detailed guidelines on steps to be taken by the states and UTs during school closure and when the schools reopen,” the official said.

Exploring the option of classroom-on-wheels and classes in small groups at the village level, increasing the access of children to online and digital

resources, use of TV and radio to reduce learning losses and ensuring easy and timely access to the provisions of uniforms, textbooks and mid-day meals are among the recommendations made by the ministry for student support during the closure of schools.

Similarly, the guidelines for student support when schools reopen after prolonged closure include preparation and running of school readiness modules and bridge course for the initial period so that they can adjust to the school environment and do not feel stressed or left-out.

Identifying students across different grades based on their learning levels and relaxing detention norms to prevent drop out this year have also been recommended.

The ministry has also suggested encouraging children to read books beyond the syllabus and indulge in creative writing and problem solving for ensuring reading with comprehension and numeracy skills.

Large-scale remedial programmes and learning enhancement programmes should be held to mitigate learning loss and inequality, it recommended. — *PTI*

RUMOUR TRIGGERS ‘GOLD RUSH’ IN MP

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOVAL, JAN. 10

Rumours that hidden wealth was buried in a river has triggered a treasure hunt by locals in some riparian villages in Madhya Pradesh, leading to deployment of police forces in the area. Thousands of people from around a dozen villages under Narasinghgarh subdivision under Rajgarh district have been thronging the nearby Parvati river for five days.

tals across the state. “The help of experts will be sought to find out the exact cause of this incident. I have directed to conduct a comprehensive inquiry into the incident,” Mr Thackeray said.

He also said that necessary arrangements will be made in all government hospitals in the state after finding out the cause of the incident.

Mr Thackeray said that the recommendations of the inquiry committee would be implemented in other hospitals in the state as well.

Spl panel to probe Maha fire mishap

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, JAN. 10

A day after 10 newborns died in fire at a Bhandara hospital in Maharashtra, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray visited the hospital and met the families of the deceased. He said Divisional Commissioner of Nagpur, Dr. Sanjeev Kumar and former chief fire officer of Mumbai, P.S. Rahangdale will also be a part of the committee which is investigating the fire incident.

Thackeray said he has ordered fire safety audit of all government hospi-

Democrats ready for Trump’s second impeachment today

Move to impeach comes amid continued fury over the storming of US Capitol

Pence to attend Biden’s inaugural

Washington, Jan. 10: Mike Pence will attend the upcoming inauguration of Joe Biden, multiple media reports said Saturday, the vice president becoming the latest longtime loyalist to abandon an increasingly isolated President Donald Trump.

Relations between Trump and Pence — previously one of the mercurial president’s staunchest defenders — have nose-

dived since Wednesday, when the vice president formally announced Biden’s victory in November’s election.

A mob of far-right demonstrators stormed the US Capitol the same day in a failed bid to stop Congress from certifying Biden’s win, in a riot blamed on Trump that left five dead.

Multiple media reports on Saturday cited senior administration officials as saying that Pence — who was forced to take shelter from the intruders during the riot — had decided to attend Biden’s inauguration on January 20.

The president-elect earlier in the week said Pence would be welcome at his formal swearing-in, due to take place in a scaled-down format due to the Covid-19.

“I think it’s important that as much as we can stick to what have been the historical precedents of how an administration changes should be maintained,” Biden told reporters.

“We’d be honored to have him there, and to move forward in the transition.” In his final tweet before being removed from Twitter on Friday, Trump said he would not attend the inauguration. — *AFP*

Amazon pushes Parler offline after violent US Capitol attack

San Francisco, Jan. 10: Amazon will suspend Parler, the tech giant confirmed Saturday, sending the social media network offline after it was banned by Apple and Google for allowing “threats of violence” in the wake of a deadly riot at the US Capitol.

The Parler social network has become a haven for conservatives who say they have been censored by other social media platforms. It had soared in popularity in recent months, becoming the No. 1 free app on Apple’s App

Store on Saturday after the much larger Twitter decided to permanently ban US President Trump from its platform for his role in inciting violence at the Capitol.

Messages of support for the Wednesday’s rioters along with calls for new demonstrations had flourished on the platform, leading Google to remove it from its app store on Friday, followed by Apple on Saturday.

Amazon then moved to wipe it from its cloud hosting Amazon Web Services, pushing it offline

entirely. In a letter to Parler first published by Buzzfeed, Amazon said the network was not acting quickly enough against violent content on the platform.

“We’ve seen a steady increase in this violent content on your website, all of which violates our terms of service,” the letter, the contents of which were confirmed by Amazon. Given the riot at the Capitol this week, the letter continued, there was a “serious risk that this type of content will further incite violence.” — *AFP*

Twitter not only suspended the [realDonaldTrump](#) account but took action against others, including [@POTUS](#), when he briefly turned to them.

Twitter also suspended the [realDonaldTrump](#) account but took action against others, including [@POTUS](#), when he briefly turned to them.

— *AFP*

Witnesses heard explosion before Indonesia crash

Jakarta, Jan. 10: Indonesian rescuers pulled out body parts, pieces of clothing and scraps of metal from the Java Sea early Sunday morning, a day after a Boeing 737-500 with 62 people onboard crashed shortly after takeoff from Jakarta, officials said.

Officials were hopeful they were honing in on the wreckage of Sriwijaya Air Flight 182 after sonar equipment detected a signal from the aircraft. Transportation Minister Budi Karya Sumadi told reporters that authorities have launched massive search efforts after identifying “the possible location of the crash site.”

“These pieces were found by the SAR team between Lancang Island and Laki Island,” National Search and Rescue Agency Bagus Puruhito in a statement.

Indonesian military chief Air Chief Marshal Hadi Tjahjanto said teams on the Rigel navy ship equipped with a remote-operated vehicle had detected a signal from the aircraft, which fit the coordinates from the last contact made by the pilots before the plane went missing. “We have immediately deployed our divers from navys elite unit to determine the finding to evacuate the victims,” Tjahjanto said.

More than 12 hours since the Boeing plane operated by the Indonesian airline lost contact, little is known about what caused the crash.

Fishermen in the area around Thousand

Islands, a chain of islands north of Jakarta coast, reported hearing an explosion around 2:30 pm Saturday. “We heard something explode, we thought it was a bomb or a tsunami since after that we saw the big splash from the water,” fisherman Solihin, who goes by one name, told *The Associated Press* by phone.

“It was raining heavily and the weather was so bad. So it is difficult to see around clearly. But we can see the splash and a big wave after the sounds. We were very shocked and directly saw the plane debris and the fuel around our boat.”

Authorities have yet to say why the Sriwijaya Air Boeing 737-500 went into a steep dive four minutes after it left Soekarno-Hatta international airport on Saturday afternoon.

But, on Sunday, they said that they had pinpointed the location of its black boxes — cockpit voice and flight data recorders — that could be key to explaining why the plane slammed into the Java Sea off the sprawling city’s coast.

The search and rescue agency said it had collected body bags filled with human remains, as well as debris from the wreckage, in waters about 23 metres (75 feet) deep.

Passengers Ihsan Adhlan Hakim and his new bride Putri were headed to Pontianak, the city on Indonesia’s section of Borneo island which had been flight SJ182’s destination, about 90 minutes away. — *AFP, AP*

WORLD

SHORT TAKES

LANDSLIDES IN INDONESIA LEAVE 11 DEAD

Jakarta, Jan. 10: Two landslides triggered by heavy rain in Indonesia left at least 11 dead and 18 injured, officials said on Sunday.

The second landslide in Cihanjuang village in the Sumedang district of West Java province occurred as rescuers were still evacuating people following the first disaster on Saturday, said National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Raditya Jati. Rescuers were among the victims, he said.

The rain stopped on Saturday night. A bridge and roads were blocked by the landslides as authorities struggled to bring in heavy equipment to clear the debris. Seasonal rains and high tide in recent days have caused dozens of landslides and widespread flooding across much of Indonesia, a chain of 17,000 islands where millions of people live in mountainous areas or near fertile flood plains close to rivers

QATAR-SAUDI REOPEN LAND BORDERS

Abu Samrah, Jan. 10: Qatar and Saudi Arabia reopened their land border on Saturday as they restored ties following a landmark deal to end a three and a half year rift. Saudi shut its side of Qatar’s only land border in June 2017 as part of a package of sanctions it said was a response to Doha’s backing radical Islamist groups and closeness to Iran.

Qatar *AFP* correspondents saw cars making the crossing on Saturday. A Qatari source said traffic at the Abu Samrah crossing, 120 kilometres (75 miles) south of Doha, had resumed around 0700 GMT.

Saudi Arabia, along with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt, all of which also imposed embargoes on travel and trade.

DECCAN Chronicle

11 JANUARY 2021

How moving court over agri row may go wrong

The latest round of talks between farmers' unions and the Union government has produced little more than déjā vu: Both sides stuck to their positions and decided on the date on which the next round of talks would be held. However, there are reports about the government suggesting to the farmers unions that the issue be settled in the court of law. As per them, the government has said if the court pronounces them unconstitutional or illegal, then it will repeal the laws and if the court sustains them, then the farmers should withdraw their agitation. Representatives of the farmers unions have made it public that they have no plans to go by the suggestion.

Leaving such an important issue to the court is not the way to settle it. This is so for several reasons. The farmers have consistently made it clear that they are not questioning the constitutionality or legality of the issue. For them, it's a policy decision by the government to withdraw from supporting agriculture and leave it to the whims and fancies of the corporate sector. This will undermine whatever sense of security the farming community enjoys at present, they say. They have opposed the proposed amendment to the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2020, which, they feared, will cut power subsidies for the farming sector. Their grouse has been that all the bills together reflect the policy of the government — it is plotting to eliminate the agriculture market system in the garb of giving farmers more options, as the laws allow corporates unbridled freedom to monopolise procurement of agriculture produce and make farmers their captive producers. They warn the government to abandon it, legal or not.

Courts, especially the Supreme Court, show no enthusiasm to wield that constitutional power when it is required, and required urgently

There is a section of legal experts who hold the view that the Centre has legislated on agriculture which is a state subject and hence moving the court makes sense. And the courts are expected to make use of the all-powerful tool of judicial review to test pieces of legislations against the Constitution. They have done it in the past and held several of the laws unconstitutional. However, courts, especially the Supreme Court, show no enthusiasm to wield that constitutional power when it is required, and required urgently. The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, and the virtual annulment of Article 370 are two legislative steps this government has taken which many perceive to be questioning the very idea of India as reflected in the Constitution. They have moved the apex court but the court has not found it compelling enough to take up. The petitions have been pending with the court for more than a year now. There is no guarantee that the courts will treat this issue differently.

Democratic governments have the right to legislate and the government has exercised that power, though in a questionable way — that the bills were rushed through Parliament is a fact even the government would not oppose. Now, the affected people are exercising their right, the right to protest, to compel the government to go back on its move. It is a matter to be decided in the spirit of democracy; calling upon an even-otherwise-reticent judiciary to decide on policy is hardly an option.

No room for racism

The India-Australia Test series was hit by complaints of racist abuse from spectators at the Sydney Cricket Ground. The touring Indian team was right to bring it to call it at once and the host board, too, reacted with alacrity not only in expelling at least six spectators but also profusely apologising for the despicable racist behaviour of some Australians in the crowd on two successive days of the third Test. There is just no place for racism in sport, whether such overt acts of discrimination come from within the game and its players or from a source beyond like spectators who come to watch games.

We are often reminded that cricket is a gentleman's game that prides itself on having been a constant metaphor for fair play. But sport also mirrors the society it is played in. Stray elements like rowdy or drunken spectators cannot be expected to eternally preserve a safe and inclusive environment. The only thing cricket can do is to keep such elements out of the arena. It must be seen acting with an iron fist at every instance of racially coloured comments. Cricket Australia has also promised to pursue the Sydney Test matter with law enforcement and in the courts.

Given its racial history as the country that had a "White Australia Policy" starting in 1901 and in place for decades, Australian society might be facing a real problem in racism even as it works hard on achieving equality amid diversity and to promote inclusivity. Soccer may have a much larger problem in tackling racism as well as hooliganism but it has firm policies that leave no room for racism anywhere — "in the stands, not at home, not on the streets". The universally popular sport of football has built a track record of acting against racist elements with sanctions against match-staging authorities too. Cricket must do, too, and not only in Australia but in India as well where racist abuse from the stands is common enough a phenomenon but doesn't get as much attention due to the language barrier.

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Subhani



Sitharaman's Third Act: What'll be her Big Idea?



Sanjaya Baru

Sanjayovacha

Despite her best efforts, Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has not yet secured her place in the history books. It may not be fair to expect ministers in the Narendra Modi government to aspire for a place in history given the towering and overshadowing personality of the Prime Minister. But then, some finance ministers have been able to carve out a place for themselves with their proposals or at least their speeches. Dr Manmohan Singh's 1991 Budget gave him a place in the history books long before he earned it again as Prime Minister with the India-United States civil nuclear deal. Palaniappan Chidambaram will be remembered for his "dream budget" that slashed income tax rates. Arun Jaitley will always be remembered for launching the Goods and Services Tax. Ms Sitharaman should also aim to leave her imprimatur on some idea.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown economics of 2020 have, without doubt, intervened to queer the FM's pitch. We now know from official data that the economy has shrunk by close to 8.0 per cent, and that India is among the worst performing economies this year in terms of growth and employment generation. While all this has spurred the government into action, the fruits of much of this action will take time to ripen. The FM can spend money and secure early results and Ms Sitharaman has promised to spend a trillion rupees on infrastructure investment. Her fiscal management, praised and criticised in equal measure, can nur-

ture the green shoots of economic revival, but with some inflationary consequences.

Opinion on such revival is sharply divided among the economy-watchers. While the finance ministry insists that the economy is on the rising arm of a V-shaped recovery, the government's critics believe that the shape of the recovery is at best a W, with the spike in the middle a mere bump rather than pyramidal in shape. The real alphabet to worry about is K — a mix of a V on top for some and an inverse-V at the bottom for others. Rising inequality, high levels of unemployment and the still hesitant improvement in investment suggest that some sections of society may well be experiencing a V-shaped improvement in their fortunes, but others are living through the downside of an inverse-V.

What ought to be the central message of this year's Budget speech? Clearly, it will have to boost the confidence of all sections of society that the economy can return to the medium-term trajectory of 7.6 per cent growth experienced through much of the Manmohan Singh era (2004-2014). During Dr Singh's first term (2004-09), the average annual growth rate was a record 8.0 per cent — the highest in recorded history for a five-year period — and in his second term (2009-14), it slipped to 7.0 per cent. The decline began in 2012.

While the Narendra Modi government has claimed that its growth record is no worse than its predecessor's the fact remains that after six years in office it has not been able to turn the investment rate up. The percentage share of

gross investment in national income (gross domestic product) fell to a low of 28.0 per cent, having climbed all the way up from below 30.0 per cent at the turn of the century to nearly 37.0 per cent in 2010. The government may have succeeded in getting consumers to consume, but getting investors to invest and savers to save remains a challenge.

In an essay written for a book I have recently edited on the post-Covid economy (*Beyond Covid's Shadow: Mapping India's Economic Resurgence*, Rupa, 2021), Dr C. Rangarajan, a former chairman of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, among other things, underscores the fact that the lockdown has weakened an already weak pre-Covid economy and the Budget has to kickstart economic growth by stimulating investment, savings, demand and employment generation. Kickstarting the trillion rupee infrastructure programme, along with the privatisation of public enterprises, increased spending on education, health, research and development and encouraging the growth of employment-generating sectors can restore momentum to the economy.

In his essay in my book, economist and Parliament member Subramanian Swamy bemoans the lack of strategic thinking on economic policy and recommends a balanced mix of incentives for savings and investment with a more open and competitive economy that increases productivity of capital. He believes that Prime Minister Modi has so far not been able to

give a clear direction to the economic growth process. Rather than promise too many things to too many constituencies, this year's Budget should define the roadmap to make India a \$5 trillion economy by 2025. All policy must aim to serve that end. In their essays, both Bibek Debroy, currently chairman of the PM's Economic Advisory Council, and Rajiv Kumar, vice-chairman of the Niti Aayog, assure us that the government is aware of the nature of the challenge and that it would address it convincingly to ensure the revival of growth.

However, not everyone within the so-called Sangh Parivar seems to be equally aware of the negative impact that the politics of the ruling party is having on the economics of its government. Experience around the world through the past century shows that sustained high economic growth is a function of domestic political stability and moderation. Even China's growth acceleration began only after its domestic politics became more moderate and stable. The biggest challenge for economic policy today is not just to end the post-Covid and post-lockdown uncertainty but also for the Bharatiya Janata Party to re-establish its credentials in offering a development-oriented administration rather than one that is obsessed with divisive religious and communal issues.

Finally, a friendly word of advice for Ms Sitharaman. Get a good speechwriter. At least this year one prays that the FM's mouth will not go dry and she runs out of breath reading a long, boring speech. Budget speeches are remembered both for content and style. A smart finance minister should get both right at least to earn good editorials if not a footnote in the history books.

The writer is a public policy analyst, a former newspaper editor and adviser to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh

LETTERS

BLAZE AFTER BLAZE

Fires at various hospitals due to electric short circuits have been taking place with unfailing regularity, the latest one being at the Bhandara district general hospital in Maharashtra where 10 toddlers perished. "Strict action will be taken against the guilty" is the stock answer the authorities trot out after every tragedy, but they do precious little to avoid a recurrence. They close the mouths of the victims' kin by doling out some monetary compensation. Pity, human life has become so cheap in our country!

P.G. Menon,
Chennai

CAPITOL RIOT

January 6, 2021 will go down as one of the darkest days in the history of US democracy as the supporters of Trump, culminating in a giant act of domestic terrorism, led to the riotous takeover of the Capitol building and disturbed any hopes for a peaceful transition of power. Trump men storm Capitol. Over the past many weeks Trump has endeavoured to overturn the election results, asserting fraud despite his inability to substantiate even a single instance. Stoking fire, Trump fuelled baseless conspiracy theories and incited his supporters to indulge in vandalism. By thinking only of himself and not the good of the nation, he trampled on the values of the US constitution. It remains to be seen what consequences Trump and his proxies will face. The assault on American democracy was the clear effort of a single man, who is a notorious demagogue.

R. Sivakumar,
Chennai

STREAK OF RUN OUTS

It's disheartening to note that there were three run-outs in India's first innings of the Third Test against Australia in Sydney. Test batting is all about playing steady and long innings. On a placid and flat track in Sydney, one expected that India would gain a substantial lead in the first innings. But that did not happen, thanks to the hosts' disciplined bowling and fielding and India's dismal batting performance. India conceded a lead of 94 runs which tilted the scales in Australia's favour. Run-outs are unpardonable in the longer version of the game, to say the least.

S. Ramakrishnasayee,
Chennai

A.G. Noorani



When Shaheen Bagh sit-in won global respect, exposed govt

Recent events in India have brought to the fore the dimensions of the right to protest, which is itself absolute except in cases of extreme necessity. The problem arises, as it does in all cases of human rights, where the fundamental rights of other citizens and also the legitimate, recognised rights and duties of the state are involved. Protest can be expressed through the media, public meetings, or processions marching through public streets. Mammoth processions and sit-ins pose the greatest challenge.

One was the famous Shaheen Bagh meeting comprising mostly women, Muslim women at that. It predictably polarised society, with the BJP pouring scorn on the protesters. The law and administrative measures Modi's extremist government proposed affected mostly, if not only, Muslims. The sit-in was spontaneous and efficient. They prayed and protested, and aroused international admiration.

A petition was filed in the Supreme Court challenging their

right to do a 'sit-in' similar to those of the 1960s US civil rights movement. The court delivered a brief judgment, noting that "the grievance... was that the persons opposing the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens had adopted a method of protest which resulted in the closure of the Kalindi Kunj — Shaheen Bagh stretch, including the Okhla underpass. It was submitted that the public roads could not be permitted to be encroached upon in this manner..."

In their pursuit of an out-of-the-box solution, the court considered it appropriate to appoint two interlocutors to meet the protesters and submit a report. The court noted, "In what manner the administration should act is their responsibility and they should not hide behind the court orders or seek support therefrom for carrying out their administrative functions. The courts adjudicate the legality of the actions and are not meant to give shoulder to the administration to fire their guns from. Unfortunately,

despite a lapse of a considerable period of time, there was neither any negotiations nor any action by the administration, thus warranting our intervention."

That is a tall order to the police; for involved are complex issues of law that troubled in Indian, British and US courts in the past. India's apex court tried to come to grips with them years ago. A century ago, Justice Benson of the Madras high court said, "No doubt a highway is primarily intended for the use of individuals passing and re-passing along it in pursuit of their ordinary avocations, but in every country, and especially in India, highways have, from time immemorial, been used for the passing and re-passing of processions as well as of individuals and there is nothing illegal in a procession or assembly engaging in worship while passing along a highway, any more than in an individual doing so."

He added, "The practice of using the public highways for religious processions has existed in India for thousands of years. ... That alone is

sufficient to raise a presumption that it is lawful and to throw on those who allege it to be unlawful the onus of showing that it is forbidden by law, but this it admittedly is not. The law recognises the use of the highway by processions as lawful, and gives the magistrate and superior officers of police powers to direct the conduct of assemblies and processions through the public streets and to regulate the use of music in connection with them."

In 1973, the apex court ruled that processions may be regulated to a reasonable degree but that conferment of absolute discretion in the police was violative of the fundamental right to assemble peaceably without arms.

The best statement of law was made by Justice K.K. Mathew: "Public meeting in open spaces and public streets forms part of the tradition of our national life. ... [T]he people have come to regard it as a part of their privileges and immunities. The state and local authority have a virtual monopoly of every open space... [I]f the state or

municipality can constitutionally close both its streets and its parks... the practical result would be that it would be impossible to hold any open-air meetings in any large city. The real problem is that of reconciling the city's function of providing for the exigencies of traffic [and] recreation... with its other obligations, of providing adequate places for public discussion in order to safeguard the guaranteed right of public assembly."

Politics has marched ahead of the law. Unresponsive regimes create public dissatisfaction. The Supreme Court appointed 'interlocutors' in the Shaheen Bagh case. For over a month, Punjab's farmers have assembled in huge numbers on the borders of Delhi. Their organisation inspires respect. Old and young women and the youth set up a virtual city, sleeping in the bitter cold. Try and teach the law to them. It is sincere conciliation that is called for. This concept is alien to Narendra Modi.

By arrangement with Dawn

SHORT TAKE

Holders Arsenal in FA Cup 4th round

London: Emile Smith Rowe had a red card overturned and scored in extra time to help holders Arsenal reach the fourth round of the FA Cup beating Newcastle 2-0. The substitute was issued a red card by referee Chris Kavanagh for a tackle on Sean Longstaff at the end of the 90 minutes, but the card was downgraded to yellow on a VAR review. “Obviously the incident wasn’t ideal and it definitely wasn’t intentional, so I’m happy to get the goal and go through to the next round,” Smith Rowe said. It proved decisive, as he grabbed the opener in the 109th minute.

— AP

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UPHILL TASK FOR INDIA

Sydney, Jan. 10: Cheteshwar Pujara was left to summon his trademark doggedness with skipper Ajinkya Rahane after India lost their openers in pursuit of an improbable 407, setting the stage for an intriguing final day of the third Test against Australia in which the visitors will primarily try to bat out three sessions here.

Having drawn flak for his 50 off 176 balls in the first innings, none would mind such an effort from India’s Test specialist after the visitors finished the fourth day on 98 for 2 largely due to a 71-run opening stand between Rohit Sharma (52) and Shubman Gill (31).

Rohit’s untimely dismissal at the fag end, trying to pull Pat Cummins, did hurt India but it’s two best defensive players Pujara (9 batting off 29 balls) and skipper Ajinkya Rahane (4 off 14 balls) were at the crease when stumps were drawn.

The pitch, with variable bounce and the dark patches acting like snake pits for Nathan Lyon, would pose its own set of challenges

for a team with two injured batsmen in their line-up.

Both Rohit (52 off 98 balls) and Gill (31 off 64 balls) showed admirable application under pressure but most importantly didn’t let the bad deliveries go unpunished.

The three cover drives off Rohit’s blade and a cross-batted straight drive of Gill were out of top drawer.

Rohit, for good measure, pulled Cameron Green over mid-wicket for a six and they both looked comfortable while negotiating the Australian attack.

It was after 53 years that an Indian opening pair had struck two 50 plus partnerships in the same Test Down Under.

Last time also it was in Sydney where Farokh Engineer and Syed Abid Ali had a decent outing albeit in a lost cause.

It took a peach of a delivery from Josh Hazlewood (1/11 in 8 overs), coming for his second spell, which straightened after pitching and the resultant nick, ended an impressive 71-run stand.

SCORECARD

Australia 1st Innings 338
India 1st Innings: 244
Australia 2nd Innings (overnight 103/2): David Warner lbw b Ashwin 13, Will Pucovski Saha b Siraj 10, Marnus Labuschagne c Saha b Navdeep Saini 73, Steven Smith lbw b Ashwin 81, Matthew Wade c Saha b Navdeep Saini 4, Cameron Green c Saha b Bumrah 84, Tim Paine not out 39. Extras (b-1, lb-4, nb-3) 8. **Total (for 6 wkts, in 87 overs) 312 decl.**
FoW: 16-1, 35-2, 138-3, 148-4, 208-5, 312-6.
Bowling: Jasprit Bumrah 21-4-68-1, Mohammed Siraj 25-5-90-1, Navdeep Saini 16-2-54-2, Ravichandran Ashwin 25-1-95-2.

India 2nd Innings: Rohit Sharma c Starc b Cummins 52, Shubman Gill c Paine b Hazlewood 31, Cheteshwar Pujara batting 9, Ajinkya Rahane batting 4. Extras (lb-1, nb-1) 2. **Total (for 2 wkts, in 34 overs) 98.**
FoW: 71-1, 92-2.
Bowling: Mitchell Starc 6-0-27-0, Josh Hazlewood 8-3-11-1, Pat Cummins 9-1-25-1, Nathan Lyon 9-3-22-0, Cameron Green 2-0-12-0.

Pujara, just after coming in, successfully asked for a DRS review after being adjudged leg before.

A delectable chip shot coming down the track off Lyon helped Rohit bring up his half-century but his dismissal in the next over left fans yearning for more.

As far as Australia are concerned, they hardly put a foot wrong during the two sessions that they batted.

Steve Smith (81 off 167 balls) missed out on a sec-

ond hundred but rookie Cameron Green flayed a hapless Indian attack with a well-made 84 off 132 balls that had four sixes. They declared at the stroke of tea, having scored 312 for 6.

Marnus Labuschagne (73 off 118 balls) once again batted positively during his second century partnership of the match (103 runs) with mentor Smith, who employed a more cautious approach.

The butter-fingered Indian fielders also didn’t help the bowlers’ cause as

Hanuma Vihari, vice-captain Rohit and Rahane missed regulation catches at square leg, slip and gully respectively.

Jadeja might bat with injections

Senior India all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, who dislocated his left thumb on day three, has been ruled out of the first two games in the upcoming series against England.

Jadeja was not able to bowl in Australia’s second innings after a short ball from Mitchell Starc hit him on the gloves, requiring immediate medical attention.

The four-Test series against England starts with a double header in Chennai from February 5.

The left-handed cricketer, who made a valuable 28 and took four wickets in the first innings might take a painkiller injection and come out to bat on the final day of the game at SCG as India seek to save the Test.

“He might bat if needed with injection to save the Test,” the source added.

— PTI

TN OFF TO WINNING START

Kolkata, Jan. 10: Tamil Nadu posted a thumping 66-run win over Jharkhand in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament, courtesy opener C Hari Nishanth’s unbeaten 92-run knock and an all-round effort by the bowlers. Debutant medium-pacer R Sonu Yadav picked up three for 31 to star in the winning start.

Brief scores: Tamil Nadu 189 for 5 in 20 overs (C Hari Nishanth 92 not out, Dinesh Karthik 46) beat Jharkhand (123 for 7 in 20 overs, Anand Singh 28 not out, Sonu Yadav 3/31, Sandeep Warrier 2/22) by 66 runs.

CFC, ODISHA IN 0-0 DRAW

Bambolim: Odisha FC and Chennaiyin FC traded missed chances to play out a goal-less draw in their Indian Super League match here on Sunday. The match saw both teams failing to convert clear-cut chances. That Odisha had three shots on target while Chennaiyin managed just two exemplified how much both sides cancelled out each other. Chennaiyin, the better side in terms of possession, though had a couple of chances to get a winner but their forwards were unable to convert them.

ASHWIN ON RACISM IN OZ

Sydney: Seasoned off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin on Sunday said racist abuse from the crowd at the Sydney Cricket Ground is not new and needs to be dealt with an iron fist after some spectators were asked to leave for targetting Indian players.

Speaking at the end of the fourth day’s play, Ashwin said the Indian players have faced racism in Sydney earlier too and “disappointment” will be a “mild word” to describe how they are feeling.

— PTI

LIVE RICH FINANCIAL Chronicle

Rollout of 5G to create more jobs

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JAN. 10

Hiring activity for the roll-out of 5G services has started in a modest way. Industry expects numbers to swell multi-fold as the rollout begins.

While uncertainties still prevail and telecom service providers are seeking clarity on 5G auctions, the job opportunities would be huge once the rollout happens.

“The application of 5G is across domains and hence the impact will be witnessed across sectors from manufacturing to telecom to e-commerce to agriculture. With advantages such as increased range to low latency, and more importantly less energy intensive, this tech will connect more users than before. Overall, the opportunity for 5G and its ecosystem is limitless...Hiring for this domain will continue for at least the next two to three years,” said Vijay Sivaram, CEO of Quess IT Staffing.

According to Aditya Narayan Mishra, director and CEO of CIEL HR Services, “Currently, some of the IT service providers like Tech Mahindra, HCL, Accenture and smaller IT companies have started hiring professionals for software architecting, development and testing in 5G. The positions open for the next three months would be

somewhere around 5,000. These jobs are mostly in cities like Benagluru and Gurgaon,”

However, the telecom service providers have not yet started hiring people in a big way. “Telecom companies have been operating in a subdued environment for some time. In the backdrop of the pandemic, they will not be initially aggressive about investing heavily,”

says Rituparna Chakraborty, co-founder and executive vice president, TeamLease Services.

However, once the roll-out happens, for the next six months we would see increased hiring activity. The positions open could be more than 50,000 in the future,” said Mishra.

Telecom service providers also might train their existing staff for the new technology as the number of people who have the required skills is also limited. 5G being a new technology, not many people with more than five years of experience are available globally.

“While the demand is high, the overall availability of talent is yet to catch up, hence models such as ‘train and hire’ are becoming more common. Telecom service providers will hire a mix of freshers and experienced candidates as global services firms are also hiring in big numbers,” said Sivaram.

FMCG firms could raise prices as inflation bites

New Delhi, Jan. 10: Consumers may have to shell out more for their daily use products as FMCG firms, which are facing inflationary pressure on their key raw material inputs, are considering raising their product prices.

Some fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies like Marico and others have already gone for price hike, while some which include Dabur, Parle and Patanjali are closely monitoring the situation.

FMCG players have been trying to absorb the price increase of raw material inputs such as coconut oil, edible oil and palm oil, but they are unlikely to hold the prices of their commodities for a long time as that will impact their gross margins.

“We have seen a significant

rise in input cost and especially edible oil in the last three to four months and that is putting pressures on our margins and costs. As of now, we have not taken any price hike but we are closely monitoring it and if it goes like this then probably, we may go for a price hike,” Parle products senior category head Mayank Shah said.

According to him, these commodities are cyclic in nature.

When asked about the price hike, Shah said: “It will be across products as edible oil is being used in all products. It would be at least 4 to 5 per cent.”

Dabur India CFO Lalit Malik said the recent months have seen inflation inching up for some key raw materials like amla and gold.

— PTI



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