

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | FRIDAY 4 | DECEMBER 2020

## WEATHER



Max: 28°C  
Min: 25°C  
Rainfall: 5 mm

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Karthigai 19  
**Tithi:** Chaturthi  
**Star:** Punarpusam/ Pusam  
**Rahukalam:**  
10.30 am to 12 noon  
**Yamagandam:**  
3 pm to 4.30 pm  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 5.00 am  
**Jumma:** 12.03 pm  
**Asar:** 3.14 pm  
**Maghrib:** 5.40 pm  
**Isha:** 6.55 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY** 5.42 PM  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW** 6.18 AM  
**MOONRISE TODAY** 9.10 PM  
**MOONSET TOMORROW** 10.20 AM

## CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+29,331)	(+416)
95,64,565	1,39,102

covid19india.org

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,416 )  
TN: 7,86,1630 11,747

### WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

6,52,00,441

### DEATHS

15,05,989

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 218

worldometers.info

## US senate scraps per country cap on green cards

**Washington:** The US Senate has unanimously passed a bill that eliminates the per-country numerical limitation for employment-based immigrant visas and raises it for family-based visas, a legislation that will hugely benefit hundreds of thousands of Indian professionals in America who have been waiting for years to get their green cards. The passage of the Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act by the Senate on Wednesday comes as a big relief to Indian IT professionals who come to the US on H-1B work visas and their current waiting period for Green Card or permanent residency is running into decades.

## SC upholds levy of GST on lotteries, betting and gambling

**New Delhi:** In a significant verdict, the Supreme Court Thursday held that the levy of Goods and Services Tax (GST) on lotteries, betting and gambling does not amount to hostile discrimination and is not violative of right to equality under the Constitution. Upholding the validity of the provisions under the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017 empowering authorities to tax lotteries, a bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan dismissed a plea of Skill Lotto Solutions Pvt Ltd, an authorised agent for sale and distribution of lotteries organized by Punjab government.

## PM to address IIT2020 global summit

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver the keynote address at the IIT2020 global summit on Friday. The theme of this year's summit, organised by the PanIT USA, is 'The Future is Now'.

## COUNTER POINT



**They are blocking roads in support of farmers' agitation!**

## STATE | 3

CM calls Stalin 'statement hero'



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## WORLD | 5

Not game over in the fight against virus, warns UK PM



## SPORT | 8

Messi fined for tribute to Diego



## No breakthrough; farmers, Centre to meet tomorrow

**ANIMESH SINGH | DC**  
WITH AGENCY INPUTS  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 3

The marathon fourth round of talks on Thursday between the farmers' organisations and the Centre on the three controversial farm laws, which lasted for over seven hours, failed to break the impasse and the two sides are expected to meet again on Saturday, December 5.

Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar, however, said after the meeting that the government had "no ego" over the issue, and the new laws ensure safety for marginal farmers and the minimum support price will always remain.

The government assured the group of nearly 40 farmers' leaders that "all their valid concerns" would be discussed and "considered with an open mind", but the other side flagged several loopholes and deficiencies in the laws, which they said were passed hastily in September.

The farmers said they did not get any concrete assurance from the Centre on doing away with the laws. The representatives of farm unions stuck to their line that no amendments in the laws would be accepted by them.

At the same time, there are some indications that when the talks resume on Saturday, contentious issues like an assurance on MSP for farm produce, stubble burning and the grievance resolution mechanism under the subdivisional magistrates' courts will be discussed.

Sources said the government is considering the farmers' demand that they can approach the courts in case of a dispute over contract farming. ■ P4

## Issue may affect national security, Capt. tells Shah

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 3

Punjab Chief Minister Capt. Amarinder Singh, who met Union home minister Amit Shah on Thursday, cautioned that the ongoing farmers agitation will not only have an impact on the state's economy but would also have an implication on national security. During his 30-minute meeting with Mr Shah, Capt. Singh said the Centre should try and resolve the issue at the earliest so that protesting farmers can lift the roadblock along Delhi's main entry points. Talking to the media after his meeting, he said, "Discussions are on between the farmers and the Centre, there's nothing for me to resolve. I reiterated my opposition in my meeting with the home minister and requested him to resolve the issue as it affects the economy of my state and the security of the nation." ■ P4

## Parkash Singh Badal returns Padma Vibhushan

**Chandigarh, Dec. 3:** Akali Dal stalwart and former Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal on Thursday returned his Padma Vibhushan award in protest against the Centre's farm laws.

"I am who I am because of the people, especially the common farmer. Today when he has lost more than his honour, I see no point in holding on to the Padma Vibhushan honour," he said.

"Parkash Badal today returned the Padma Vibhushan award in protest against the betrayal of the farmers by the Government of India and against the shocking indifference and contempt with which the government is treating the ongoing peaceful and democratic agitation of the farmers against the three farm Acts," a SAD statement said. —PTI

## Advance winter session of Parliament: Congress

**Chandigarh, Dec. 3:** Congress leader Manish Tewari on Thursday demanded that the winter session of Parliament be convened at the earliest to debate various pressing issues facing the country like the ongoing farmers' protest against agriculture reform laws, Chinese aggression and the Covid-19 crisis.

"It is all the more important to convene the parliament for the winter session in view of the farmers' uprising when tens of thousands of farmers from different parts of the country are protesting around Delhi to seek the repealing of three controversial agricultural laws," he said.

"And the parliament is the best forum to debate and deliberate on these while keeping in view the concerns and demands of the farmers," he added. — PTI

## ON MONEY TRAIL

## ED raids PFI offices for links to anti-CAA stir

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 3

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday conducted searches at 26 premises across nine states linked to the Popular Front of India (PFI) in connection with its money laundering probe against the radical outfit.

The Central probe agency also raided the premises of PFI's chairman O.M. Abdul Salam and Kerala state president Nasarudheen Elamarom.

The ED is investigating PFI's financial links on alleged charges of fuelling the anti-Citizen-ship (Amendment) Act protests in the country and the Delhi riots in February this year, among other things.

In Chennai, the ED officials raided the office of the outfit and the houses of its functionaries.

The searches were aimed at collecting evidence in multiple money laundering cases that have been clubbed into one and are being probed against the PFI and those linked to it, sources said.

The ED had said in November it was investigating financial links between the PFI and Bhim Army in its money laundering case registered to investigate allegations of illegal funds being used to "fuel" the anti-CAA protests.

The agency is investigating the PFI under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, since 2018.

In Chennai, PFI members held a protest against the raid and said that the BJP government at the Centre was trying to divert the attention from the massive farmers' agitation and to cover up the BJP's failures.

## Mother, son spend 1 hour in mangled car on road, saved

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, DEC. 3

A businessman and his 85-year-old mother had a miraculous escape spending an hour in their car, mangled after being rammed by a speeding tipper truck on GST Road in the city on Thursday.

The accident happened at around 3.30 pm on Thursday when Vasudevan (59), a businessman from Ranipet, and his mother Komalavalli (85), were heading towards Nanganallur in the city to attend a function at their relative's home. A tipper truck carrying sand reportedly tried to overtake the car and rammed against it and dragged it a few meters against the centre median on the road. The car was completely mangled.

The passengers were injured and in a semicon-



The mangled remains of a car that was involved in the accident on GST Road on Thursday. — DC

scious state and hence could not get out of the car. Passersby who reached the accident site tried to rescue them but in vain. They were taken put only after the fire and rescue personnel from Tambaram and the Chromepet traffic investigation police arrived at the spot. They

had to cut the car open to save Mr Vasudevan. The passengers were later admitted in Government hospital in Chromepet and are said to be in stable condition.

The Chromepet traffic police registered a case and arrested the truck driver.

## ■ Superstar wants to change the fate of Tamil Nadu

# Rajini's party in 2021; to contest assembly polls

**G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC**  
CHENNAI, DEC. 3

Announcing that the time has come to change the fate of Tamil Nadu, film actor Rajinikanth announced on Thursday that he would launch his political party in 2021 and make an announcement on that on December 31.

Along with a hashtag 'will change, will change everything.. if not now, never' in Tamil, Rajinikanth first announced his decision on Twitter before emerging from his house in the afternoon to meet the media corps waiting for hours.

"I don't mind giving my life," he said, adding "political change is very very important. It's a compulsion. So I am starting a party."

He said he never went back on his word. If he lost the election it would be the people's loss and if he won it would be the people's victory, he said.

In a tweet, Rajinikanth said he would usher in Tamil Nadu a politics based on honesty, integrity, transparency and spirituality without depending on caste or religion. "Sure to create. It will be a miracle, a wonder. Will happen," he said.

Recalling that he had said in 2017 that he would field candidates in all 234 constituencies and was planning to tour the state to create a revival among the people, he said he could not do it due to the Coronavirus crisis.

Since he had undergone ■ P3



Actor-turned-politician Rajinikanth gestures during a press conference to announce the launch of his political party in January 2021, in Chennai, on Thursday. Also seen are former head of Tamil Nadu BJP's intellectual wing R. Arjunamurthy, and former Congress leader Tamizharuvi Manian. — DC

a kidney transplant, his body had less resistance when more immunity was needed during the time of Covid-19, he said. So, he could not meet the people directly, he said. "I came back alive from Singapore only because of the prayers of the people of Tamil Nadu," he added. Mr Rajinikanth also introduced two office-bearers of his to be launched party. One was Tamilaruvmianian, who has been meeting Rajinikanth for a long time and holding discussions with him for long hours, besides even giving interviews to media organisations on the actor's plans. He would be the overseer of the party.

The other one was Ra Arjunamurthy, who was the state president of the BJP's intellectual wing. ■ P3

## OPS welcomes move, hints at electoral pact

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, DEC. 3

Deputy Chief Minister and AIADMK leader O. Panneerselvam on Friday welcomed superstar Rajinikanth's decision to launch his political party in January 2021.

While welcoming Rajini's political inn-ings, mr Panneerselvam said, "Anything may happen in politics," adding, "if there is an opportunity, there will be an alliance with him".

"The key battle will be probably between

Rajinikanth and Sasikala. BJP will be in a dilemma," said BJP leader Subramanian Swamy in a tweet, suggesting that the AIADMK may suffer. But fisheries minister D. Jayakumar said the actor's announcement would not affect the AIADMK.

Many BJP leaders, including S Gurumurthy, and fans of the actor were euphoric over the decision.

At one point, a hashtag on the announcement by Rajinikanth was trending in the state.



## Varavara Rao to stay at private hospital till December 14

**Mumbai, Dec. 3:** The Bombay High Court on Thursday said the condition of poet-activist Varavara Rao, arrested in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case, had improved but he will continue to remain at Nanavati hospital till December 14. A division bench perused a medical report submitted by the hospital where Rao was admitted on November 18. "There is some slight improvement. He shall continue to remain admitted there till December 14," it said. — PTI

## Covid-19 caseload breaches 95-lakh mark

**New Delhi, Dec. 3:** India's Covid-19 caseload went past 95 lakh, while the total number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 89.73 lakh pushing the national recovery rate to 94.11 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Thursday. The total coronavirus cases mounted to 95,34,964 with 35,551 new infections being reported in a day, while the death toll climbed to 1,38,648 with 526 new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed. 'The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 89,73,373 pushing the national recovery rate to 94.11 per cent. — PTI



## Chandrababu Naidu, Pawan Kalyan extend wishes

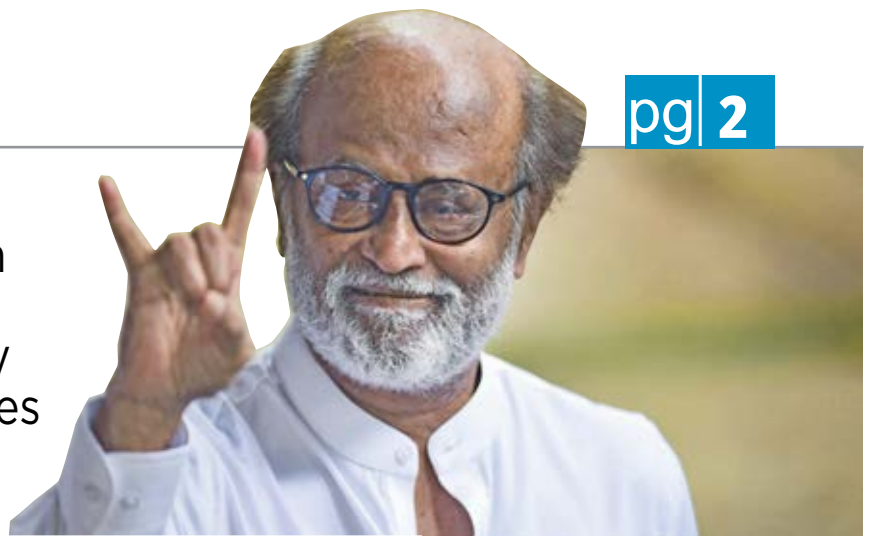
Amaravati, Dec 3: Telugu Desam Party president N Chandrababu Naidu and Jana Sena chief K. Pawan Kalyan welcomed Tamil superstar Rajinikanth's decision to join politics by floating a new political party. "Rajinikanth is my good friend. It's good that he is entering active politics. I welcome his decision," Chandrababu said at a press conference here on Thursday evening. In a democracy, it was natural for new political parties to emerge, he said, and hoped Rajinikanth would succeed in his new role as well. Speaking to the media in the temple town Tirupati, the Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan noted that Rajinikanth had been in politics for long, though not directly. "Previously, he worked for the victory of one party. He has a huge fan base and Rajinikanth was wanting to join active politics for some time," Kalyan remarked. He wished the very best for Rajinikanth and hoped the latter would be successful in his new venture.

— PTI



No one will be more happy than me even if I happen to lose my life for people's sake. I will never fail to keep my word. A political change is compulsory and very important. It is the need of the hour. If such a change does not happen now, it will never materialise. We have to change everything"

— RAJINIKANTH



# 'Thalaivar Aaattam Aarambam'

## Celebrities give thumbs up to Rajini

**ANUPAMA SUBRAMANIAM** | DC CHENNAI, DEC. 3

Some of the celebrities retweeted superstar Rajinikanth's tweet on his entry into politics and posted their views. They highlighted the hashtags posted by Rajinikanth in Tamil which roughly translates as— #WillChangeEverything, #IfNot—NowThenNever. Some of them like veteran comedian Senthil congratulated the superstar by calling him over phone.

news @rajini ikanth. I am also one among your million fans waiting for this moment. I pray to Raghavendra Swamy for all your wishes to come true. During this Covid crisis without even considering your health, you have decided to come and serve the people. Your dream will surely come true!



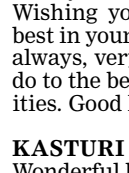
Superstar Rajinikanth political Party in January, announcement on December 31st. I suspected he didn't want to come. Never have I been so happy to have been wrong! #Vaa\_Thalaivaa



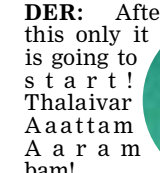
**KHUSHBU SUNDAR:** Dearest



Soun darya Rajinikanth retweeted her dad's political entry post with Baba icon.



**RAGHAVA LAWRENCE:** Thank you so much Thalaiva. So happy to hear this



**ANIRUDH RAVI CHANDAR:** After this only it is going to start! Thalaivar Aaattam Aarambam!



**KASTURI SHANKAR:** Wonderful breaking news!



## Dawn of new era in TN politics, say Rajini fans

**B. RAVICHANDRAN** | DC OOTY, DEC 3

A Rajini fan here aptly referred to the song 'Singam onnu purapatahey' in Rajini-starrer 'Arunachalam', where the actor plays the role of a political party leader campaigning for his candidate, making a comparison of matinee idol Rajinikanth's entry into politics.

Amid the pouring rain on Thursday, Rajini fans and supporters here celebrated the actor's announcement on Thursday about his plans to start a political party, and celebrated the moment bursting crackers and distributing sweets to the public. These are the ones, who in a first among Rajini fans association in the state, had gathered in mid-December 2017 for a walkathon from the Nilgiris border to Chennai, to urge their

hero enter politics. Secretary, Rajini Makkal Mandram, the Nilgiris, S Kumar, said that Thursday was an auspicious day for Rajini fans. "No doubt our Thalaivar has decided to script a new history in state politics dominated by Dravidian parties. His entry into politics will certainly deal a blow to the five-decade-old political culture of Dravidian parties, where family and dynasty politics had been ruling the roost. Thalaivar's way is always unique with a touch of spirituality, honesty and simplicity, and he will definitely deliver clean and transparent governance if voted to power. During many film shoots in the Nilgiris, 'Thalaivar' proved himself to be people friendly and accessible. We are hopeful that people will be with him to usher in a new era of politics in the state," Kumar added.



Rajini fans distribute sweets to commuters and pedestrians in the city on Thursday. — DC

## FANS CELEBRATE IN CENTRAL DISTRICTS

**DC CORRESPONDENT** TIRUCHY, DEC 3

Despite pouring rain, film star Rajinikanth's fans celebrated his announcement of floating a political party, by bursting crackers and distributing sweets to the public across the central districts of Tiruchy, Karur, Perambalur, Ariyalur, Pudukkottai, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam on Thursday. In Tiruchy district, many places including Srirangam, railway junction and central bus stand areas, his fans celebrated the moment by stopping buses and distributing sweets to the passengers.



Fans dance and burst crackers on hearing their thalaivar's decision to launch party in January. — DC



Rajinikanth with director and co-stars during the shoot of blockbuster movie Mullum Malarum at Geddai slopes, Ooty, in late 1970s.

## SHRC orders ₹3 lakh to man who lost wife, newborn

**DC CORRESPONDENT** CHENNAI, DEC. 3

The State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has directed the state government to pay a compensation of ₹3 lakh to a person who lost his wife and newborn child due to medical negligence during delivery of the baby at a primary health centre 10 years ago.

In the complaint, S. Selvarasu of Shakti Villagam village in Chidambaram taluk stated that on February 3, 2010 his wife Sumathy developed labour pain and was admitted at the government primary health centre, Sholapuram. After directing S. Jayalakshmi, staff nurse, to attend to the patient Dr. K. Vennila, (now deceased) the medical officer, left the hospital.

Medical officer Dr. S. Thangarathinam, nurses Jayalakshmi and Banupriya attended Sumathy. They did not follow the required medical procedures during delivery of the baby and Sumathy delivered a male child. However, the child died and subsequently Sumathy also died. Therefore, the complainant prayed to take action against the doctors and nurses for their negligence and recklessness during hospitalisation of Sumathy.

Challenging the complaint, the doctors and nurses stated that they acted as per the instruction of Dr. Vanilla. Despite the advice given by the respondent, Sumathy failed to cooperate during her delivery by not pushing the baby out, and the same was also informed to the relative of Sumathy. However, a male child was born and within a few minutes the baby died. Following that Sumathy fell sick and was taken to the government hospital, Kumbakonam by ambulance. There she was declared brought dead.

SHRC member Dr. A. Chittaranjan Mohandoss submitted that the patient was a

Challenging the complaint, the doctors and nurses stated that they acted as per the instruction of Dr. Vanilla. Despite the advice given by the respondent, Sumathy failed to cooperate during her delivery by not pushing the baby out, and the same was also informed to the relative of Sumathy

regular visitor to the PHC for checkup periodically. The doctors and nurses would be aware of the patient's health status. They also stated that "it is the mother's responsibility to push the baby while in labour". While this is a fact, if the mother is unable to do so, the medical persons present should have considered other options.

The plight of the patient after the unfortunate loss of the child is also not very clear, as the doctors and nurses state that everything was normal. It cannot be so if the patient collapsed within a few hours and is declared "brought dead on arrival" at a higher medical facility. This is clearly indicative of negligence and not ignorance as both the nurses claim to be very experienced. Though this medical team was fully aware of the health condition of Sumathy, being a senior nurse and junior nurses they had not responded to the condition of the patient promptly.

The SHRC member said the medical team is committed to their medical duties in treating and attending to patients with the best medical care that can be provided. In this case the medical team failed to do their duty. Negligence is a breach of a legal duty and a breach of this duty gives a patient the right to initiate action against negligence.

Stating that giving monetary relief will not bring back the life of two innocent people the SHRC recommended to the government to pay ₹3 lakh to the petitioner. The commission also recommended departmental action against the doctors and nurses.

# Polluters of water bodies 'goondas': HC HC directive on building licence renewal plea

**J. STALIN** | DC CHENNAI, DEC. 3

The Madras high court has ruled that people who pollute water bodies should be termed as 'goondas' and must be detained under the Goondas Act.

Pointing out that pollution of water bodies causes a lot of health hazards to people and also affects the environment as well, the court said unless very stringent measures are taken, it will be very difficult to control the menace.

A division bench comprising justices N. Kirubakaran and B. Pugalendhi asked the Tamil Nadu government to take immediate steps in this regard.

The bench was passing interim orders on the suo motu proceedings initiated pursuant to a news report about pollution in Karur. The report stated that in Karur district, untreated effluents are discharged from the dyeing units and other companies into river Amaravathi. Considering the seriousness of the issue, the bench directed the registry to put up this matter as a suo motu writ



petition.

In its order, the bench said the main source of water pollution in India was untreated sewage. Most of the water bodies in India, including perennial rivers, were polluted. The pollution of water bodies was a pollution of the entire land as it affects human beings, animals, birds, plants, causing environmental imbalance. Though India has developed industrially, no proper steps have been made regarding pollution control. Though the Pollution Control Board was monitoring the pollution, there are no proper infrastructures for treating the sewage and industrial effluents, the bench added.

The bench said the industries were polluting water bodies not only in Karur district, but

**DC CORRESPONDENT** CHENNAI, DEC. 3

The Madras high court has said that an application seeking renewal of a building licence is a fresh one and not a new application particularly when it is sought for the same project without any change made to the earlier plan which was sanctioned and permission was granted.

Justice N. Anand Venkatesh gave the ruling while quashing an order issued by the Udhagamandalam Municipality, rejecting two applications for renewal of the building licence on the ground that the applicants have approached the authorities with much delay and

throughout the country, by discharging untreated industrial effluents.

The Supreme Court in Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum Vs Union of India case, directed the polluters to pay compensation on the principle of polluters'

that too after the expiry of the licence period.

Allowing the petitions filed by M/s Mistair Realty's Private Limited, rep.by its director PKishore and Jansi Kishore, the judge directed the Udhagamandalam Municipality to renew their building licence after collecting the requisite scrutiny fee and other payments within four weeks.

Petitioner's counsel Abudukumar Rajarathinam submitted that his client was the owner of the properties, which were classified as 'primary residential zone' as per the master plan for Udhagamandalam Municipality. They also obtained a building licence for construction of residential

buildings in the said properties. However, due to financial constraints, they could not construct the buildings within the licence period.

Thereafter, they saved some money and applied for renewal of licence. But the authorities rejected their applications. Hence, they filed the present petitions, Abudukumar added.

The judge said once the authority concerned approves the site plan and a building licence was granted and the construction was not able to be completed within the licence period, on the application seeking for renewal, a fresh permit was given under section 204 of the Act for the site

plan already approved and there was no question of once again going through the entire process afresh once the building has already been approved by the authority concerned. The Municipality ought to have considered the renewal application submitted by the petitioners as a fresh application and dealt with the same under section 204 of the Act. The applications should not have been rejected merely on the ground of delay since the petitioners were not seeking for any change in the earlier plan that was sanctioned and they do not want to deviate from the earlier licence given for putting up the construction, the judge added.

very difficult to control the pollution of water bodies. Therefore, this court is of the opinion that those who are polluting the water bodies should be termed as 'Goonda' as per the definition in Section 2 of the Tamil Nadu Act 14

of 1982", the bench added. The bench also directed the secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Karur, to inspect the river Amaravathi at Karur and file a report about the actual position with necessary photographs.

## DMK worker killed in 'revenge attack'

**DC CORRESPONDENT** CHENNAI, DEC. 3

In a gruesome incident, a DMK worker was hacked to death in Tiruvannamalai on Thursday in a case of suspected revenge killing. The police have launched a manhunt for the accused, who escaped from the place after the murder.

Historysheeter 'Funk' Babu alias N. Babu, 47, of Gandhi Nagar, Tiruvannamalai was engaged in real estate business.

He was pursuing illegal

katta panchayat in the town and neighbouring villages. Several criminal cases, including murder charges, were pending against him in many police stations.

Babu was having tea in a roadside shop at 11.30 am. An unidentified gang reached the place and attacked him with deadly weapons.

They targeted his head and face. Within few minutes he collapsed and died on the spot. Immediately, the gang left the place on two-wheelers.

On information, the cops from Tiruvannamalai East police station rushed to the place and sent the body for post-mortem. On direction from the superintendent of police the cops collected CCTV footages from the area and found that four unidentified persons were seen escaping from the place in two-wheelers.

The cops also collected statements from the tea shop owner and others who were present in the place during the incident.

## IIT-M releases book to help entrepreneurs

**DC CORRESPONDENT** CHENNAI, DEC. 3

*Thoduvanam Thedi*, a book authored by Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) professors to help grassroots entrepreneurs enhance the success and sustainability of their businesses, was released on Thursday.

Written by Prof. A. Thillai Rajan, Prof. G. Arun Kumar and Prof. Saji Mathew from Department of Management Studies, IIT-M, the book was launched by Kamal Haasan in a

ceremony held at IIT-M campus.

Kamal said that the book would inspire the first-generation entrepreneurs raring to reach greater heights to realize their dreams and understand the nuances of running a business.

The book includes an edited collection of articles written in Tamil by faculty members and mentors who interacted with the participants of a pioneer training program IIT-M conducted in 2016 to train micro and grass-

roots entrepreneurs as a part of socially-relevant projects of the institute.

It was implemented in partnership with 'Hand in Hand India', a non-profit organization, with around 400 entrepreneurs in and around Kanchipuram district near Chennai having benefited.

The objective of the IIT-M initiative was to pioneer a social concept to enhance the creditworthiness of micro, marginal women entrepreneurs through training and development.



## SHORT TAKES

## Airport cancels 12 flights fro and to Chennai

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, DEC. 3

In a recent development , in view of cyclone Burevi, Chennai Airport has cancelled as many as 12 flights from and to Chennai, Tamil Nadu on Thursday.

According to the Airport sources, six flights scheduled between Chennai and Thoothukudi have been cancelled. Similarly, two flights from Chennai to Trichy and two flights scheduled to depart from Trichy to Chennai has also been cancelled, owing to the cyclone. Two flights between Chennai and Kochi were cancelled too , sources added. "We will monitor the situation and decide on the further course of action for December 4", said officials at the airport.

## 'Safety of people, property ensured'

ARULOLI M | DC  
THOOTHUKUDI, DEC. 3

Elaborate arrangements to ensure the safety of lives and property in the southern districts have been made in view of 'Burevi', said revenue and disaster management minister RB Udhaya Kumar. The minister also said that all fishermen had returned safe ashore.

Reviewing the precautionary measures taken in the southern coastal districts of Ramanathapuram, Thoothukudi, Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli on Thursday, Udhaya Kumar said that 490 relief centres in these southern districts including Tenkasi, are in a prepared state to accommodate 1,92,082 people at a time.

"Around 1,103 families living in low-lying areas in Ramanathapuram district have already been shifted to 66 relief centres on December 2," he said, adding that 1,200 boats that ventured for fishing from Ramanathapuram district, had returned safe. "All the 423 mechanised boats and around 4,300 country crafts that went to sea from Thoothukudi district also returned to shore safe. Those Kanyakumari fishermen who ventured for deep sea fishing in 106 boats had landed safely in 12 locations in Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka and Lakshadweep islands, added the minister. The government has deployed official teams to monitor all the 7,505 irrigation tanks in the 10 southern districts of Theni, Madurai, Sivaganga, Dindigul, Ramanathapuram, Virudhunagar, Tenkasi, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Kanyakumari. Among these, 985 tanks now have water to their fullest capacity, said the minister.

## Cops nab kinpin in mobile phone theft case

SANJEEVI ANANDAN | DC  
KRISHNAGIRI, DEC. 3

The special teams appointed to nab criminals involved in cell phone robbery cases, have arrested the main accused here after a daring attempt.

A cell phone laden container truck was hijacked here in October at Melumalai, near Shoolagiri on the Chennai - Bengaluru national highway.

The criminals had waylaid the truck with a sedan car. They immobilized the truck driver and his assistant and escaped with the truck transporting mobile phones worth Rs 15 crore. Later, the empty truck was recovered from Alagupavi, 10 kilometers from Melumalai, the place from where the truck was hijacked.

Special teams were formed to nab the criminals. Investigations took the police team to Madhya Pradesh. The police had arrested five persons earlier, and later, another five including the main accused S Rajendar (40) of Ottu village in Sonkatch tehsil of Dewas district, in Madhya Pradesh.

"Our team made a daring attempt and arrested the main accused Rajendar who was hiding at home in his village. His relatives tried to attack us, but our team overpowered them and took custody of the accused," a police officer said.

"Those who have been arrested so far belong to a particular community termed 'criminal tribes' by the British. Till date, they continue with this tag because of their criminal activities," the officer added.

The special team camping at Madhya Pradesh to secure people who went into hiding after committing the crime here, have also recovered four trucks and a car used for robbing the mobile phone-laden truck.



Ten additional judges for the Madras high court sworn in on Thursday.

— DC

## Ten judges sworn in as additional judges

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, DEC. 3

Justices G. Chandrasekharan, A.A. Nakkiran, V. Sivagnanam, G. Illangovan, S. Ananthi, S. Kannammal, S. Sathikumar, K. Murali Shankar, R.N. Manjula and T.V. Thamilselvi on Thursday were sworn in as additional judges of the Madras high court.

Chief Justice A.P. Sahi

administered the oath of office to the new judges at a simple function held on the premises of the Madras high court.

Advocate general Vijay Narayan delivered the welcome address.

With their appointments, the total number of judges has gone up to 63 as against the sanctioned strength of 75.

The Supreme Court

Collegium had on September 23 recommended the names of 10 district judges to be appointed as additional judges of the Madras high court for a period of two years. Accordingly, the Central government had on December 1 notified the appointment of these 10 judicial officers as the additional judges to the Madras high court.

## Protesting farmers held

DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUCHY, DEC. 3

Police arrested over 50 farmers and members of 'The Desiya Then Indhiya Nathigal Inaippu Vivasayeegal Sangam' including its state president P Ayyakannu at the railway junction here on Thursday, as they attempted to board a Chennai-bound train en route New Delhi to join the on-going farmers' stir in the capital.

It may be recalled that a nation-wide farmers' stir is continuing for the last eight days in New Delhi, demanding among other things withdrawal of the Union Government's

recent farm bills.

Ayyakannu and a group of farmers were already under house arrest from November 24 as they attempted to catch the Chennai-bound train en route to New Delhi.

Ayyakannu told the media, "The Union Government's farm bills will destroy the entire domestic agriculture sector besides severely affecting the interests of domestic farmers. Till the Centre withdraws these 'black acts', farmers' stir would continue."

He thanked the Left and other political parties for extending their support to the stir.

## Man dies of heart attack at Chennai airport

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, DEC. 3

A 45-year-old Jharkhand man died of suspected heart attack at the Chennai airport here on Thursday, minutes before boarding a flight to his native, police said.

Umesh Kumar Sharma, a native of Jharkhand along with his wife had come board an Indigo flight to Ranchi this morning and collapsed at the Airport.

According to the

sources, Umesh Kumar Sharma suffered chest pains and collapsed while clearing the security desk. A team of doctors at the airport immediately attended to him, but to no avail and he passed away, police said.

Sources said the duo has come to Vellore CMC a few days ago for treating Umesh Kumar's kidney disease. After the treatment, the duo was to board a flight to native, however he collapsed before boarding the flight.

## Arjunamurthy quits BJP, joins Rajini team

From P1

Soon after Rajinikanth announced that he would be the chief coordinator, state BJP general secretary Karu Nagarajan issued a statement saying that Arjunamurthy's resignation has been accepted and that he has been relieved from all responsibilities in the party permanently.

As far as party affairs went, the BJP cadre were urged to not have any truck with Arjunamurthy,

who had been taking active part in the state unit's activities. He attended the meeting addressed by Union home minister Amit Shah when he visited Chennai about 10 days back.

He was also arrested for taking part in the Vel Yatra at Palani.

Reacting to Arjunamurthy's appointment, VCK general secretary Thol Thirumavalavan tweeted that Rajinikanth was under pressure.

He would only function

as another face of the BJP, he said. Rajinikanth also wanted to project him as a right wing politician, he tweeted.

President of Tamil Maanila Muslim League Sheikh Dawood said that Rajinikanth would only divide the votes of the Congress-DMK enabling the AIADMK to emerge victorious in the elections.

His coming into politics would affect him and not the people of the State, he said.

## ₹59.85 lakh worth gold seized

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, DEC. 3

The customs department at the Chennai airport seized 1.19 kg gold worth ₹59.85 lakh on Wednesday.

Based on a tip-off that gold was likely to be smuggled from Dubai in an aircraft, Indigo flight 6E 66 was taken up for special checking. On rummaging, a specially designed cloth pouch was found con-

On rummaging, a specially designed cloth pouch was found concealed in hollow pipe portion of one of the seats of the Airport.

On opening the pouch six gold cut bits of 24 K purity weighing 1 kg and valued at ₹50 lakhs were

recovered and same seized as unclaimed under Customs Act.

In another case on Wednesday, a customs officer intercepted a passenger Vivek Manokaran (30) of Vellore who was wearing sandals on suspicion that he may be concealing gold in them as a few days back a passenger was caught with gold in his slippers.

He had arrived from Dubai by Fly Dubai Flight

## CORRUPTION CHARGES

## CM calls Stalin 'statement hero'

Salem, Dec. 3: Chief Minister K. Palaniswami on Thursday attacked the DMK and its leader M.K. Stalin, terming him a 'statement hero', over repeated allegations of corruption against the ruling dispensation, seeking to remind it of the "very big" 2G spectrum allocation scam. DMK MPs Kanimozhi and A. Raja, also former telecom minister, were earlier accused in the scam but acquitted by a special court. The CBI has since appealed against the lower court verdict in the Delhi High Court. Raja flayed Palaniswami, asking him to show any DMK leader who has been convicted for graft and said he was ready for a public debate on the issue with the chief minister. Speaking to reporters here, Palaniswami also defended the Centre's contentious recent farm laws, against which farmers have been staging a massive protest near Delhi. Refuting Stalin's allega-



tions of corruption and scam, especially in government tenders, Palaniswami said that due processes were being followed and ruled out any irregularities. "The 2G spectrum (allocation) scam was a very big scam. The amount of Rs 1.76 lakh crore (the alleged loss) is equivalent to Tamil Nadu's budget. It happened when they were in power at the Centre with the Congress," he said.

"(The then) Congress government took action and he (Raja) was put in jail," Palaniswami said and questioned how the opposition party could

now make allegations against the AIADMK government. He also questioned the "first come first serve basis" of spectrum allocation then, an aspect that was scrutinised. "Such a big scam happened and they are targeting the AIADMK government to conceal this," he said. Palaniswami also slammed the DMK for being a "dynastic" party and said Union Home Minister Amit Shah had also attacked it on the subject recently in Chennai, saying there would be no place for such politics in Tamil Nadu. On the protest by farmers against Centre's new farm laws, Palaniswami reiterated it did not affect the ryots and said it protected them from price fluctuation, among others. Farmers could now sell their produce anywhere in the country, he added. The chief minister quipped the BJP workers should be highlighting all these aspects and asked them to take the facts to people. He

also said he has not received any negative feedback from farmer unions in Tamil Nadu about the legislations. Responding to Palaniswami's tirade against his party and himself, Raja said no DMK leader has been convicted of corruption, since the days of the late Indira Gandhi or MG Ramachandran, even in "politically influenced" cases. "The statement made by the chief minister does not suit his office and is not in good taste," he told reporters in Chennai. Pointing out that he was picked by jailed former AIADMK leader VK Sasikala as CM prior to her incarceration in 2017, Raja alleged Palaniswami came to the post by "accident." "I am prepared for a debate tomorrow or day after with him on 2G (case) if he can show if any DMK leader has been convicted for graft allegations including in 2G," Raja said. —PTI

## Holiday for southern districts

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, DEC. 3

A public holiday has been declared in six southern districts for Friday as Cyclone Purevi that lay stationed in the Bay of Mannar near Pamban is likely to cross the shore between Pambam and Kanyakumari in the early hours.

An official press release, quoting a warning from the IMD, said that heavy rains and stormy winds were anticipated in the districts of Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, Ramanathapuram, Virudhunagar and Thoothukudi.

Other than those involved in essential services, people were advised not to venture out on any work, the release said, adding that government offices would function on one of the Saturdays in January, 2021 in lieu of the holiday declared on Friday.

## Rains submerge crops in Thanjavur dt

G. SRINIVASAN | DC  
THANJAVUR, DEC. 3

Heavy rains lashed the district for the past 36 hours under the impact of cyclonic storm 'Burevi'. Rain which started on Wednesday night continued for the whole day on Thursday and is still raining continuously.

Samba and thaladi crops, in panicle initiation stage in some places, and ready for harvest in some places, were affected by the rain. One hut was damaged in Peravurani area and water logging was reported in low-lying areas.

At Manora near Pattukottai, high tides were witnessed and sea water entered the fort in a particular place. Joint director, agriculture, Thanjavur, Justin, said that crops in 200 acres were submerged rain water in the district. Samba transplantation has been completed in 1,37,000 hectares and farmers have insured crops in 2,21,000 acres.

FZ 8517. On examination of his sandals, small gold cut bits were found wrapped with cello tape and attached to the inside of straps.

Four gold cut bits of 24K purity weighing 199 grams valued at ₹9.85 lakhs were recovered and seized under Customs Act. Total 1.19 kg gold valued at ₹59.85 lakhs was recovered and seized under Customs Act. Further investigation is on.

## Restructure post matric aid, fund on 60:40 basis, CM tells Modi

Chennai, Dec. 3: Chief Minister K. Palaniswami on Thursday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to issue suitable directions to the Social Justice Ministry to restructure the post matric scholarship scheme with a sharing pattern of 60:40 basis between the Centre and states. Emphasising that the Post Matric scholarship scheme should be considered "in line" with

other Centrally sponsored schemes, and funded with a sharing pattern of 60:40 between the Centre and the states, he said he had already addressed this issue in his earlier letters in 2018 and 2019 to the PM. In a letter to Modi, Palaniswami said, "I would like to bring to your kind attention an urgent and vital issue concerning Tamil Nadu; namely, the concept of application of

committed liability in releasing funds under the post matric scholarship scheme to the state." "I request the Prime Minister to kindly issue suitable directions to the Ministry of Social Justice to restructure the post matric scholarship scheme with a sharing pattern of 60:40 basis between the Centre and the states," he said in the letter. —PTI



Water-logging at Ram Nagar due to overnight rain.

— DC

## Water released from Chembarambakkam reservoir City receives large excess rainfall

T. SUDHEESH | DC  
CHENNAI, DEC. 3

Days after cyclone Nivar, Chennai city is getting another spell of heavy rain in the 'large excess' category due to the cyclonic storm 'Burevi'. For the last 24 hours (till 6am on Thursday), the city got 356.20mm rainfall, forcing the authorities to release water from the Chembarambakkam reservoir.

This comes in addition to 20.30 per cent excess rainfall during the last two months in Chennai and surrounding districts including Chengalpet, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur.

The district has already topped in the list by receiving 80cm actual rainfall against 59cm normal. With 23cm rainfall during cyclone Nivar between November 24 to 26, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has included Chennai in 'large excess' category with an increase of 190 percent from the normal rainfall till December 2.

It indicates that the city will get more rainfall during this northeast monsoon season due to 'Burevi'. The officials expect the city will receive an additional 23cm of rain as a full one month of the season remains.

On Thursday morning, the Greater Chennai Corporation announced emergency helpline numbers to lodge complaints regarding issues due to the release of water from the Chembarambakkam reservoir after inflow rose on Wednesday night. At

## Rains delay winter in Ooty

B RAVICHANDRAN | DC  
OOTY, DEC. 3

The impact of 'Burevi' was well reflected here as incessant rains and inclement weather made up the weather profile of the region here on Thursday.

Usually frosting begins in the Nilgiris in the first week of December, but this year, rains have begun to dominate the weather condition here. Though winter was to set in by this time, there is a sudden change in the weather pattern since Wednesday evening

cyclone 'Burevi', as weathermen have predicted more rains here for the next couple of days.

Collector of Nilgiris J Innocent Divya, said that all precautionary steps had been taken to manage the cyclone. Disaster management teams are in a state of alert in all the taluks in the district. Control rooms in the taluk and district headquarters will be monitoring the rain situation round the clock, she added.

least 1,000 cusecs of water were released at 12 pm. A warning was issued to people living close to the Adyar river.

The cyclone Nivar hit the coasts at a time when the state had already received 376 mm of rainfall as against the normal of 284.6 mm between June 1 and September 17. Compared to the period between October 1, 2015

and December 9, 2015, the percentage of rainfall is still behind. In 2015, Chennai and surrounding districts had received at least 172.33 percent of excess rainfall, recording 489 cm actual rainfall against normal 182cm. The state by the time had received 64 cm excess rain with 65cm actual rain against the normal 39.3 cm.



## SHORT TAKES

## SC PUTS ON HOLD GUJARAT HC'S ORDER ON COVID

PARMOD KUMAR | DC  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 3

The Supreme Court on Thursday put in abeyance the Gujarat High Court order directing that those not wearing mask in public places be made to do community service in Covid-19 care centres as it expressed concern over the implementation of the Centre and the state government's guidelines at the ground level.

A bench comprising Justice Ashok Bhushan, Justice R. Subhash Reddy and Justice M.R. Shah directed the Gujarat government to ensure that the guidelines issued by the Centre under the Disaster Management Act and the one issued by the state government are implemented vigorously and those violating it are punished.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Gujarat government said that the problem of people not wearing masks is serious but the solution prescribed by the High Court is not correct.

"Harm of not wearing masks is much less than sending such persons to Covid centre," he said.

However, Justice Shah said that there were serious gaps in the implementation of the guidelines on wearing masks and maintaining social distancing in public places, social gatherings and malls.

## MALEGAON BLAST TRIAL TO START ON DEC. 19

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC  
MUMBAI, DEC. 3

A special NIA court on Thursday directed all the seven accused in 2008 Malegaon bomb blast case to remain present before the court on December 19, as the trial in the case would begin on regular basis from that day. The court passed this order on Thursday, as BJP MP Pragya Singh Thakur, Lt Col Prasad Purohit and two other accused failed to appear before the court despite an earlier court direction.

Meantime, the Bombay High Court on Thursday clarified that it has not stayed the trial in the 2008 Malegaon blast case, and said the trial must go on.

The lawyers of the absent accused told the special NIA judge P.R. Sire that their clients were absent due to the Covid-19 situation. Following this the court directed all the accused to be present before it on December 19.

A division bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and M.S. Karnik was hearing a plea filed by Lt Col Prasad Purohit, seeking that charges against him be quashed because prior sanction was not taken to prosecute him.

According to him, section 197 of the CrPC lays down the procedure for prosecution of public servants and mandates that a prior sanction be sought from the government. Purohit said that in the absence of prior sanction, the trial court couldn't have taken cognisance of the charges against him.

## AIRLINES TO ALLOW MORE PASSENGERS

**New Delhi, Dec. 3:** The cap on the number of domestic flights that Indian airlines are permitted to operate was increased from 70 per cent to 80 per cent of their pre-Covid levels on Thursday, said Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri.

The minister had said on November 11 that the Indian airlines can operate up to 70 per cent of their pre-Covid domestic passenger flights due to the prevailing demand amid the coronavirus situation.

Puri tweeted on Thursday, "Domestic operations recommenced with 30K passengers on 25 May & have now touched a high of 2.52 lakhs on 30 Nov 2020."

"Ministry of Civil Aviation is now allowing domestic carriers to increase their operations from existing 70% to 80% of pre-Covid approved capacity," he stated.

The ministry had resumed scheduled domestic passenger services from May 25, after a gap of two months due to the coronavirus lockdown.

However, the airlines were allowed to operate not more than 33 per cent of their pre-Covid domestic flights.

On June 26, this was increased to 45 per cent and on September 2, it was further increased to 60 per cent.



Farmers block a part of the Delhi-Meerut National Highway during their protest march against the new farm laws, in New Delhi on Thursday.

— PTI

## Farm laws: Mamata warns of a nationwide agitation

Mamata to hold party meet today, says Centre must withdraw farm laws

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, DEC. 3

As the farmers' protest against three laws continues, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday demanded that the Centre withdraw the laws immediately. Otherwise, she threatened to launch her agitation nationwide.

The Trinamul Congress supremo's threat came within few days of her support to the farmers' agitation and offer to join them, if invited, as the Left has already hit the streets over the issue in the state ahead of the Assembly election.

In a Facebook post, Banerjee said, "I am very much concerned about the farmers, their lives and livelihood. GOI must withdraw the anti-farmer bills. If they do not do so immediately we will agitate throughout the state and the country. From the very start, we have been strongly opposing these anti-farmer bills."

Clarifying her party's stand, she added, "We have called a meeting of the the All India Trinamul Congress on Friday, December 4. We will discuss how the Essential Commodities Act is

## FARMER STIR MAY AFFECT NATIONAL SECURITY: CAPT

From Page 1

Asked if he was trying to mediate between the agitating farmers and the Central government, Capt. Singh said a discussion is going on between the two sides. "It is for them to resolve... we have reiterated Punjab's position," he said.

The meeting was held simultaneously with the interaction between the agitating farmer leaders and the government at Vigyan Bhawan here, sources said.

According to sources, the meeting with Capt. Singh, which was slated in the morning, was delayed by over two hours and started around noon.

The Punjab Assembly has already passed Bills to oppose the three contentious laws that were brought by the Centre.

impacting common people and resulting in sky rocketing prices. The central government must withdraw this anti-people

## No breakthrough in talks, Centre, farmers to meet

From Page 1

Under the current rules, such a dispute can only be resolved by the subdivisional magistrate.

At the end of Thursday's talks, All India Kishan Sangharsh Coordination Committee general secretary Hannan Mollah said all the farmers' outfits would meet at 11 am on Friday to take a collective call on the next round of talks with the government on Saturday.

Another farmers' leader, Kulwant Singh Sandhu, said the government offered many proposals, including on MSP and the procurement system, which will be discussed among the farmers' organisations on Friday.

Earlier, the farmers had warned that the December 3 meeting was the govern-

ment's "last chance" to call a special session of Parliament and repeal the three contentious laws.

Mr Tomar told reporters after the meeting that the Centre had "no ego involved" over the issue, and it will ensure vexed issues like registration of traders, assurances on MSP and safety for small and marginal farmers are resolved.

He tried to reassure the unions that the farm laws give complete safety for small farmers and their lands would not be usurped by corporates. "MSP has always been there and will remain so in the future as well," the minister said. The government is also open to looking into the farmers' concerns on an ordinance on stubble burning and an electricity-related law, Mr

Tomar said.

The farmers had demanded a special session of Parliament to repeal the three laws, saying this is the "last chance" for the government.

Earlier in the day, after a meeting with Union home minister Amit Shah, Punjab chief minister Capt. Amarinder Singh appealed to both sides to resolve the issue, saying the unrest affects his state's economy as well as national security.

Ahead of the meeting, the farmers said that simply giving MSP a legal status "will not serve the purpose". They said that "nothing less than repealing the three laws" will do. They then added: "We will not leave till the government, repeals the three laws," they said.

Air India, Coal, BSNL, BHEL, banks, defence, etc. Withdraw ill-conceived disinvestment & privatisation policy. We must not

allow treasures of our nation to be transformed into Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) personal assets."

## TMC MLA hails PM as 'head of family'

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA, DEC. 3

Joining the league of rebel Trinamul Congress MLAs ahead of Assembly election in West Bengal, Bally legislator and late ICC president Jagmohan Dalmiya's daughter

Baishali Dalmiya has stumped her party, wondering how its leaders could call Prime Minister Narendra Modi an "outsider" when he is the "head of our family."

In a video message which went viral, she was heard saying, "These people are calling our honourable PM an outsider. Whenever someone comes here from another state, he is labelled as an outsider. They do not even know that India is a country. The PM is the head of our family. He is seen in

that way. When the PM, being the head, is tagged as an outsider in India then whom am I?"

Dalmiya's outburst, after several posters demanding no party ticket to an 'outsider' in the next Assembly polls circulated allegedly by the TMC in her Assembly constituency in Howrah, came ahead of Modi's visit to the state on December 24.

● **THE TMC** termed rebel Nandigram MLA Shubhendu Adhikari a 'closed chapter'.

city of which he is the Chancellor.

Meanwhile, the TMC termed rebel Nandigram MLA Shubhendu Adhikari a 'closed chapter' after his rebuttal to its claims of reaching a truce with him.

The former state minister, expected to make an announcement on December 6, is all set to quit his posts in the TMC though it remains a secret whether he would resign as an MLA before his defection to the BJP.

Senior MP Saugata Roy

## Police close key routes connecting Ghaziabad-Delhi

**New Delhi, Dec. 3:** Police on Thursday closed routes on two national highways connecting Ghaziabad to Delhi as farmers remained adamant on their demand for scrapping of the Centre's agriculture reform laws and stayed put at the national capital's borders with Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

The protesting farmers had on Wednesday threatened to block other roads of Delhi if their demands were not met.

"The local police have closed the routes on NH-9 and NH-24 from Ghaziabad to Delhi. On NH-1, both sides of the route have been closed near Shani Mandir," the Delhi Traffic Police tweeted.

The crowd of farmers continued to swell at Ghazipur, prompting the police to close the Delhi-UP border on NH-24.

"The Ghazipur border on NH-24 is closed for traffic from Ghaziabad towards Delhi due to farmers' protests. People are advised to avoid NH-24 for coming to Delhi and use Apsara/Bhopra/DND instead," the traffic police said.

It said NH-44 is closed on both sides and asked people to take alternate routes via NH-8, Bhopra, Apsara border, and Peripheral expressway. At the Chilla border, one carriageway from Delhi to Noida has been opened for traffic. However, the other carriageway from Noida to Delhi is still closed.

People commuting from Noida to Delhi are advised to avoid Noida link road, the traffic police said.

The Delhi-Haryana border at Jharoda and Jhatikra remained closed for traffic movement. The Badusarai border is open only for two-wheeler traffic.

However, people can travel to Haryana through Dhansa, Daurala, Kapashera, Rajokri, NH-8, Bijwasan/Bajghera, Palam Vihar and Dundahera border points, the traffic police have said.

The police also kept the Haryana-Delhi border at Singhu and Tikri closed for traffic for the eighth day on the trot.

"Singhu border is still closed from both sides. Lampur, Auchandi & other small borders also closed. Please take alter-

## FARMERS WHO END LIFE ARE COWARDS, SAYS K'TAKA MANTRI

**Bengaluru, Dec. 3:** Karnataka Agriculture Minister B.C. Patil on Thursday said the farmers who commit suicide are cowards.

"The farmers who commit suicide are cowards. Only a coward who can't take care of his wife and children commits suicide. When we have fallen (in the water), we have to swim and win," Patil said addressing farmers at Ponnampet in Kodagu district of Karnataka.

The Minister was explaining to bamboo growers of Ponnampet how profitable the agriculture business is, but some cowards do not realise that and commit suicide. To buttress his point, Patil cited an example of a woman who was wearing gold bangles.

"When I enquired with her how her hands were full of gold bangles, You know what she said? She said, This mother earth has given me for my 35 years of toil. Doesn't this please you all after listening to this?" Patil told the gathering. He said when a woman who had depended herself entirely on agriculture and achieved big why other farmers cannot do it.

Reacting to this, Congress Karnataka unit spokesperson V.S. Ugrappa condemned the Minister's statement, saying he has shown disrespect to the farming community.

"It's a disrespect to the farmers. He should apologise for it," Ugrappa said.

— PTI

nate routes. Traffic has been diverted from Mukarba Chowk & GTK Road," the traffic police tweeted.

"Traffic is very heavy. Please avoid Outer Ring Road from Signature Bridge to Rohini & vice versa, GTK road, NH 44 & Singhu, Auchandi & Lampur borders," it said.

As traffic spilled over to alternate routes, it led to long jams there as well.

The farmers' unions also called for a nationwide protest on Saturday to oppose what they claimed was "corporatisation" of farming.

— PTI

## MEA STILL MUM ON BORIS AS R-DAY GUEST

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 3

At its weekly media briefing on Thursday, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) evaded a question from reporters on whether British Prime Minister Boris Johnson had been invited by India to be the chief guest at the Republic Day parade next month, saying that in such matters on the chief guest attending the Republic Day event, "the announcement is made closer to the event".

There had been reports on Wednesday that had said that the British Prime Minister had been invited by India to be the chief guest at the Republic Day parade.

It may be recalled that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had spoken on phone to Johnson just last week on November 27 in which the two "leaders agreed that officials from both sides would continue their work to quickly finalise an ambitious long-term roadmap for the India-UK partnership".

The MEA had said last week, "The two leaders exchanged thoughts about the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, and reviewed the promising cooperation between India and United Kingdom in the area of vaccine development and manufacturing."

## BATTLE | READY

Stand off with China prompted Army to demand creation of powerful post

## Army set to get new deputy chief for strategy

PAWAN BALI | DC  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 3

At a time of military stand off with China in Eastern Ladakh, government has finally cleared hurdle in the re-organisation of army headquarters by approving creation of all powerful post of Deputy Chief of Army Staff (Strategy).

It was Doklam stand off of 2017 with China, which had led to Indian Army proposal to set up a new all

powerful Deputy Chief of Strategy.

According to sources Centre has issued government sanction letter for the creation of the post of Deputy Chief of Army Staff (Strategy).

The current DG of Military Operations Lt Gen Paramjit Singh is likely to be the first Deputy Chief of Army Staff (Strategy).

This will be the third Deputy Chief post which is being created in the

Indian army headquarters.

The creation of the post was suggested as part of the overall restructuring of the Army Headquarters in 2018.

The new Deputy Chief of Army Staff Strategy will deal with all operational and force planning. As per the plans, he will have DG Military Operations, DG Military Intelligence, Strategic Planning, Operational Logistics branches, as well as the

newly created Information Warfare branch under him.

Currently DG (Military Operations) and the DG (Military Intelligence) are reporting to Army Chief or Vice-Chief.

In keeping with the needs of the future battlefields, hybrid warfare and social media reality, the new DG Information Warfare will have under him the ADGs Strategic Communication and Information Warfare.

## CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF PITCHES FOR THIRD AIRCRAFT CARRIER

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 3

Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh said on Thursday that his force is ready to face "dual-challenge" of Covid-19 and China, even as he pitched for a third aircraft carrier.

The Naval chief said that aircraft carriers are "absolutely necessary" for an aspirational India. He said Navy was moving forward with its plan to have a third aircraft carrier and will place a case for it before the government.



## SHORT TAKES

FLORIDA COP, 1  
OTHER WOUNDED  
IN SHOOTING

**St. Petersburg (Florida), Dec. 3:** A Florida police officer and at least one other person were wounded in a shooting Wednesday, authorities said.

The shooting occurred Wednesday afternoon, according to a St. Petersburg police Facebook post. The wounded officer was taken to a nearby hospital for medical treatment, the *Tampa Bay Times* reported. Officials didn't release details about the other person or how they were wounded. Police haven't released information about what led to the shooting.

A video posted to Facebook appears to capture the shooting. More than a dozen gunshots can be heard, as several plainclothes officers fire at a vehicle that appears to be blocked in by other vehicles, including marked police vehicles.

MAN GETS THREE  
MONTHS FOR  
SHOOTING FLARES

**Fort Myres (Florida), Dec. 3:** A Florida man has been sentenced to three months in federal prison for shooting distress flares from a boat when there was no real emergency and triggering a US Coast Guard rescue operation.

Justin Patrick Obert, 32, was sentenced Wednesday in Fort Myers federal court, according to court records. He must also pay \$13,414.78 to cover costs associated with the rescue. He pleaded guilty in August to communicating a false distress message. "Mariners on the water rely and count on Coast Guard assets and personnel to be ready and able to respond when they are in distress," Coast Guard Capt. Matt Thompson said in a statement. "Hoax calls can redirect critical rescue capabilities and put lives at risk in the dangerous maritime domain." Obert was on a vessel in the Gulf of Mexico near Fort Myers Beach in September 2019 when he drunkenly discharged two red flares, according to court documents.

The Coast Guard, Fort Myers Beach Fire Rescue and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission all responded. Officials determined that Obert had discharged the flares despite not needing emergency assistance.

KEYS-BYRNE,  
STAR OF *MAD*  
MAX FILMS, DIES

**Los Angeles, Dec. 3:** Veteran actor Hugh Keys-Byrne, who played villain Immortan Joe in George Miller's cult hit "Mad Max: Fury Road", has died. He was 73.

A representative for the actor told *Deadline* that the actor died peacefully on Tuesday morning. Filmmaker Brian Trenchard-Smith, who worked with Keys-Byrne for 1975 film "The Man from Hong Kong", was the first to break the news of the actor's demise in a Facebook post on Wednesday. "Hugh had a generous heart, offering a helping hand to people in need, or a place to stay to a homeless teenager. He cared about social justice and preserving the environment long before these issues became fashionable.

"His life was governed by his sense of the oneness of humanity. We will miss his example and his friendship. Vale, Hugh," Trenchard-Smith wrote. Born in 1947 in Srirangar, Jammu and Kashmir to British parents, the actor was very young when his family moved to Britain. Keys-Byrne later moved to Australia where he featured in many Royal Shakespeare Company productions, including "As You Like It", "The Balcony", "Hamlet", "King Lear", "The Man of Mode" and "Much Ado About Nothing". He started his acting career when he was cast in TV series "Bellbird", created by Barbara Vernon.

The actor appeared in a number of series and films, including as Morrie Grosse in Trenchard-Smith's 1975 action flick "The Dragon Flies". Keys-Byrne's big moment came when he was roped in to play Toecutter in Miller's 1979 movie "Mad Max", which featured Mel Gibson in the lead. More than thirty years later, Miller requested Keys-Byrne return for his another plunge in to the world of "Mad Max" with 2015's "Fury Road", starring Tom Hardy and Charlize Theron. In the movie, Keys-Byrne played the villainous Immortan Joe, the head of a cult reigning the Wasteland.

Throughout the film, Joe and his biker gang terrorised Theron's Furiosa and Hardy's Max Rockatansky as they seek to liberate the world.

China Moon probe  
to return with rocks

**Beijing, Dec. 3:** China's latest lunar probe has finished taking samples of the moon's surface and sealed them within the spacecraft for return to Earth, the government announced on Thursday.

Change 5, the third Chinese probe to land on the moon, is the latest in a series of increasingly ambitious missions for Beijing's space programme, which also has a probe en route to Mars carrying a robot rover. The Change 5 touched

down on Tuesday on a mission to return lunar rocks to Earth for the first time since 1976.

The probe "has completed sampling on the moon, and the samples have been sealed within the spacecraft," the China National Space Administration said in a statement.

Plans call for the upper stage of the probe to be launched back into lunar orbit to transfer the samples to a capsule for return to Earth. — *AP*

China tiff: Morrison  
seeks conciliation

**Wellington, Dec. 3:** A diplomatic war of words between Australia and China over a graphic tweet seemed to finally cool on Thursday as Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison struck a much more conciliatory tone.

Morrison's change in approach came even after he was thwarted in getting his views out directly to Chinese people over the messaging app WeChat, after the Chinese company deleted his post on the grounds it could distort historical events and confuse the public.

Earlier this week, Morrison expressed indignation and anger at the tweet posted by a Chinese official that showed a fake image of a grinning Australian soldier holding a bloodied knife to a child's throat. The post took aim at alleged unlawful killings and abuses by Australian soldiers during the conflict in Afghanistan.

Earlier this week, Morrison called the tweet "truly repugnant" and "deeply offensive" and demanded an apology from China. But China had not

backed down, saying that Australia should be the one examining its actions. On Thursday, Morrison took a much different approach, telling reporters in Canberra that his aim was for the two countries to have a "happy coexistence."

"My position and my government's position is to seek constructive engagement," he said. "The relationship with China is a mutually beneficial one. It supports both our countries, it is good for both of our countries." China is Australia's largest trading partner. Morrison said Australia had made its views very clear on both the tweet and the WeChat message. WeChat is ubiquitous in China and is used for everything from getting news to making electronic payments.

The company is held responsible for ensuring content doesn't attract negative attention, and censorship is relatively common. Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said he was disappointed about the tweet and the deleted post. — *AP*

JuD spokesperson  
gets 15 years' jail

**Lahore, Dec. 3:** Mumbai terror attack mastermind and Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed's spokesperson Yahya Mujahid has been sentenced to another 15 years in jail by a Pakistani anti-terrorism court in a terror financing case.

Mujahid was last month handed down 32 years jail term by the anti-terrorism court (ATC) in two terror financing cases. Besides Mujahid, the ATC Lahore on Wednesday also handed down 15 years' imprisonment to JuD's senior leader Zafar Iqbal and six months jail term to Saeed's brother-in-law Hafiz Abdul Rehman Makki.

Earlier, the ATC Lahore had sentenced Iqbal for 26 years imprisonment in three such cases. Judge Ijaz Ahmad Buttar announced the verdict under different provisions of the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997. The three convicts were present in the court when the judge announced the verdict. The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab police had registered as many as 41 FIRs against JuD leaders, including Saeed in different cities.

The trial courts have so far decided 25 cases. The ATC has sentenced Saeed for a collective imprisonment of 21 years on terror financing charges under sections 11-N of Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 in four

COP GUARDING  
POLIO TEAM  
GUNNED DOWN

**Peshawar, Dec. 3:** A police officer assigned to guard a polio immunisation team was killed when unidentified gunmen opened fire at him.

The incident happened on Wednesday in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province's Bannu district. Sub Inspector Akhbar Zaman was on his way back home after performing his duty when two men on a motorcycle opened fire at him, resulting in his death on the spot.

The accused fled the scene. No group has claimed responsibility. Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria suffer from endemic polio, a virus that can cause paralysis or death. — *PTI*

cases so far.

Saeed-led JuD is the front organisation for the Lashkar-e-Taiba which is responsible for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attack that killed 166 people, including six Americans. Saeed, a UN designated terrorist whom the US has placed a \$10 million bounty on, was arrested on July 17 last year in the terror financing cases. — *PTI*

## COVID | CURBS

Virtual visits are on, where kids chat with Santa online for prices ranging from \$20 to \$100

## Ho, ho — Whoa! Virus keeping most Santas at a distance

**Miami, Dec. 3:** Brad Six becomes Santa Claus, pulling his black boots over his red pants in the office of a Miami outdoor supply company.

It's hot, so he forgoes the traditional heavy jacket for a lightweight vest and grabs his Santa hat. But before sliding it on, the gray-bearded 61-year-old dons a plastic face shield and then takes his chair positioned behind a plexiglass sheet. "Getting paid is nice, but to get your battery recharged and to really get something lasting out of it requires interacting with the kids — you

don't get a lot of that this year," said Six, who first portrayed Santa 35 years ago. This is Santa Claus in the Coronavirus Age, where visits are conducted with layers of protection or online.

Putting hundreds of kids daily onto Santa's lap to talk into his face — that's not happening for most. The physical attributes that make the perfect Santa align perfectly with those that make Covid-19 especially deadly.

"Most of us tick all the boxes: We are old, we are overweight, we have diabetes and if we don't have

100 world leaders to speak at  
UN session on Coronavirus

Will chalk out recovery path from pandemic which has claimed 1.5 mn lives

**United Nations, Dec. 3:** Nearly 100 world leaders and several dozen ministers are slated to speak at the UN General Assembly's special session starting Thursday on the response to Covid-19 and the best path to recovery from the pandemic which has claimed 1.5 million lives, shattered economies, and left tens of millions of people unemployed in countries rich and poor.

Assembly President Volkan Bozkir said when he took the reins of the 193-member world body in September that it would have been better to hold the high-level meeting in June. Nonetheless, he said Wednesday it "provides a historic moment for us to come together to beat Covid-19." "With news of multiple vaccines on the cusp of approval, and with trillions of dollars flowing into global recovery efforts, the international community has a unique opportunity to do this right," he said.

"The world is looking to the UN for leadership. This is a test for multilateralism." When financial markets collapsed and the world faced its last great crisis in 2008, major powers worked together to restore the global economy, but the Covid-19 pandemic has been striking for the opposite response: no leader, no unified action to stop the pandemic that has circled the globe.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres sent a letter to leaders of the Group of 20, the world's richest nations responsible for 80 percent of the global economy ahead of their summit in late March as Covid-19 was starting its killing spree urging that they adopt a "wartime" plan and cooperate on an international response to suppress the coronavirus. But there was no response. The two-day special session will not be raising money to finance vaccine immunisations or taking any political action, and there will be no final declaration, just a summary document from Bozkir.

"The real point of this special is to galvanize concrete action to approach our response to Covid-19 in a multilateral and collective way," General Assembly spokesman Brenden Varma said Wednesday. Leaders and ministers from over 140 countries will deliver pre-recorded speeches on Thursday



Local restaurant employees and staff members hold placards during a protest against the restrictions imposed by the authorities after indoor dining was banned following a rise in Covid-19 cases in Karachi on Thursday. — *AFF*

Not game over in the fight  
against virus, warns UK PM

**London, Dec. 3:** Prime Minister Boris Johnson sought to strike a note of caution amid the excitement of the UK becoming the first country to approve the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine against Covid-19, warning that it is not "game over" for the deadly virus just yet.

Johnson hailed the "searchlights of science" fighting back against the world's "invisible enemy" but urged people to not get carried away with over optimism over the course of the "long and cold months" ahead while the two-dose vaccine starts to be injected into the arms of those at the highest risk of death from the dis-

ease. He urged people to follow the Covid Winter Plan of tiered lockdown which is now in force across England, with a majority of areas still under high alert measures of social distancing.

"It is a fantastic moment, but the worst thing now would be to think that this is the moment when we can relax our guard and think it's game over in the fight against Covid. It's not. This is not the end," Johnson said, during a briefing at 10 Downing Street on Wednesday evening. "We have been waiting and hoping for the day when the searchlights of science would pick out our invisible enemy and give

us the power to stop that enemy from making us ill — and now the scientists have done it," he said.

"It is all the more vital that as we celebrate this scientific achievement we are not carried away with over optimism, or fall into the naive belief that the struggle is over. It's not, we've got to stick to our Winter Plan," he noted.

He said that in line with the advice of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, the first phase of the vaccine deployment will include care home residents, health and care staff, elderly and those who are clinically extremely vulnerable. — *PTI*

The final panel is on recovery from Covid-19. — *AP*

after an in-person opening in the General Assembly including speeches by Bozkir and Guterres. Among the leaders slated to address the session are French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, and European Union chief Charles Michel.

The US will be represent-

ed by Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar. Friday's session will focus on three panels, the first on the UN's response to Covid-19 and the second on vaccines that will include representatives from producers BioNTech and Oxford University-AstraZeneca, and the World Health Organization's ACT-Accelerator which is working to get vaccines to the world's poorest people.

Biden urges Americans to  
avoid Christmas travel

**Washington, Dec. 3:** US President-elect Joe Biden has urged Americans not to travel during the Christmas and New Year holidays so as to prevent the spread of the deadly Coronavirus pandemic. The novel Coronavirus has so far infected 13,921,374 people and claimed 273,799 lives in the US — both the numbers highest in the world. "You cannot be travelling during these holidays. As much as you want to," Biden told a group of workers and small business owners in Wilmington, Delaware.

"Christmas is going to be a lot harder," he said during the virtual round-

table. "I don't want to scare anybody here, but understand the facts. We're likely to lose another 250,000 people dead between now and January...because people aren't paying attention," the Democratic leader said.

The Centre for Disease Control (CDC) has warned that this winter may be the most difficult time in the US public health history. CDC Director Robert Redfield on Wednesday said the US could see another 200,000 Coronavirus deaths in the next three months if people do not take heed of mitigation measures like mask-wearing and social

distancing. According to the Covid tracking project, the number of Corona virus patients in US hospitals have surpassed 100,000 for the first time.

Biden said Americans need to take precautions till the vaccination is done. "There's two things that are happening for real. One, help is on the way in terms of vaccines. But the vaccine is not the most important thing. It's the vaccination. It's one thing to pay and the government having people show up and get the vaccine that's delivered to the state capital or to hospitals, wherever it's gonna be delivered," he said.

## LOST

It is notified for the information that my Original and Duplicate Qualifying Examination Certificate of Main(10th) Examination of Year 1992 and Roll No. 4113131 issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Name of the candidate **M K Sushant**, Sreegeetham P. muzhapplangad, Kannur - 670662, Kerala Tel.No +91 8890013000

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TUK Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai-600032.  
Tel: (+91) 44 22254794 Email: arstps@cipet.gov.in, arstps@cipet@gmail.com

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TENDER No.	Description	Due Date & Time
CIPET-SARP-ARSTPS/ CCTV/ e-Tender/2020-21	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of CCTV system at CIPET: SARP ARSTPS	25.12.2020 @ 3.00 p.m.

Interested and eligible bidders are requested to apply through e-tender website [www.tenderwizard.com/CIPET](http://www.tenderwizard.com/CIPET) and also visit [www.cipet.gov.in](http://www.cipet.gov.in) for complete details on technical specification and commercial terms. CIPET-SARP ARSTPS reserves the right to extend the date or cancel the Tender or to accept or reject any / all the bids/quotation either in part or in full without assigning any reasons thereof. For more details, please contact : Mobile: (+91) 98404 56404/75953 31211. Director & Head

**TAMILNADU POLICE HOUSING CORPORATION LTD**  
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1. For details, visit [www.tntenders.gov.in](http://www.tntenders.gov.in) & [www.tnphc.com](http://www.tnphc.com)  
2. e-Bids are invited by the Superintending Engineer/CC/ TNPHC Ltd., for the Design, Manufacture, Supply, Delivery, Installation and Commissioning of Passenger Lift 3 Nos. with 13 Persons capacity for the work of Construction of New Building for Community Hall at S.M. Nagar, Avadi in Chennai City (SE/CC/DB/1791-A/2020).  
3. Approximate value of work : Rs.54.75 Lakhs (with GST)  
4. Date and time for Downloading /Uploading of bid documents through online : 14.12.2020 at 12.00 Noon to 21.12.2020 upto 6.00 P.M.  
5. Date & time of opening of the bid : 23.12.2020 at 11.15 a.m.  
6. Other details can be seen in the bid documents.

Superintending Engineer/CC  
TNPHC Ltd., Chennai.

DIPR/4493/TENDER/2020

**PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited**  
Regd. Office: PSER, Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001  
Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2010SGC033813  
Website: [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in)

E-Tender Enquiry No.299/P-2/EMP-W-11765 Dtd: 26.11.2020 & ID: 2020\_POWER\_56830\_1

Scope of Work: Maintenance Of Switchyards And Transformer Yards Areas (22 Acres Approximately) At 2 X 850kw Micro Hydel Project And 4x210 Mw GGSSTP, Roopnagar

EMD:

1) The tenderer shall be required to submit earnest money Rs.90,000/- (Rs. Ninety Thousand) online on website <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

2) The co-operative societies were required to submit EMD as per notification no. 76/52/79-C-1(5)/8856, Dated: 04.11.2019 which was valid up to 13.08.2024 issued by Co-operative department, Govt. of Punjab.

Time period: As per NIT

Date & time up to which tender shall be received: 05.01.2021 11:00AM

Date & time of opening of tender: 12.01.2021 11:30AM

Tender specification can only be downloaded from website <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in/> & no hard copy of the same will be issued by this office.

Note:

1. In case any difficulty regarding uploading of the tender the prospective bidders are requested to get clarification from this office or M/s e-procurement system Government of Punjab. Contact No. +91-(172)-2970284/63. It is also requested to get their digital signature well in time so as to submit tenders through e-tendering only.

2. It is informed that in case tender process is not completed due to any reason, no corrigendum will be published in newspapers. Details regarding corrigendum may be seen on website: [eproc.punjab.gov.in](http://eproc.punjab.gov.in)

RTP-34/2020  
RO: H122993

SE/HQ  
GGSSTP, Rupnagar



## DECCAN Chronicle

4 DECEMBER 2020

### Amid challenges, there is hope Covid's end is near

The British government clearing the vaccine against coronavirus, developed and manufactured jointly by German startup BioNTech and US pharma major Pfizer, so that vaccination in that country could start as early as next week, is perhaps the biggest news of 2020. The pandemic, Covid-19, which the virus causes, has made six crore ill and killed more than 14 lakh people, rendering itself into the biggest threat to public health in recent times. A vaccine to keep it at bay now offers humanity a reason to look at their lives and livelihoods with a little more hope than that they have done with in the past 10 months.

It was a truly global endeavour that resulted in the development of the vaccine at a record speed — the lead was taken by a Turkish couple who set up their startup in Germany and was supported by a US pharma major. And the final product, which the whole world was waiting for, was cleared for by the British regulator. The mRNA vaccine, or memory RNA vaccine, uses a fragment of genetic code from the coronavirus to teach the body how to prompt an immune response and fight the disease. It is for the first time that such a process has resulted in a vaccine that's authorised for public use. Reports say the vaccine is 95 per cent efficient, particularly among the elderly adults. The British regulator has insisted that the vaccine candidate has been subjected to thorough quality checking, allaying fears of expediency leading the push.

The challenges are not over. The vaccine needs to be stored at around minus 70 degrees Celsius, a logistical challenge only a few countries can take up. Mass production, safe distribution and proper administration based on a transparent protocol could still pose difficulties before the vaccine reaches all the needy people. One can take comfort from the fact that there are at least five more candidates that are easier to store and distribute and are in the final stages of clinical trials. Their arrival in the next few weeks will ease the situation substantially.

Now that science has done its job of coming up with an answer to a potential danger to human race, it's time for politics to take over and design a formula, which can address the needs of the last man on the street. Reports offer no hope in this, though: the entire bulk of early production has been pre-ordered by the rich western nations. India's hopes rest on its vast vaccine manufacturing capabilities built over decades; still the government has sounded cagy vis-a-vis assurances of inoculating everyone. Then there are nations with neither the money nor the production capacities but still house millions of vulnerable people. Their cries of desperation could easily be lost in the cacophony of global marketplace, which recognises only a few ideas, such as capital and profit. It is incumbent on countries, such as India, which in the past have used their leverage to amplify the voice of the less privileged on the global scene. There is a lot to gain by saying, "I am my brother's keeper", especially if he is a potential target of a deadly disease.

### Cricket: Individuals shine

On the current tour of Australia, Virat Kohli passed the milestone of 12,000 ODI runs in fewer innings than Sachin Tendulkar, who with 18,426 ODI and 15,921 Test runs, remains cricket's greatest gatherer of runs. More significantly, India stopped a run of seven ODI defeats on the trot since 2019 with a consolation win over Australia after having been comprehensively outplayed in the first two ODIs in Sydney when the series was alive. The celebration of Kohli's feat amid what is for him a leaner time at the crease in comparison to his purple patches in his more prolific years in international cricket since his debut in 2008 is, however, a pointer to how Indian cricket is extremely rich in individual feats of record breakers while rating considerably lower as a team.

The pattern of ineffectual cricket stemming from a lack of mental preparedness to be combat-ready even for what is considered a great rivalry with Australia was in stark evidence in the two defeats at the Sydney Cricket Ground, which presented belters for batsmen. The bowling attack was clueless about adjusting to the challenge and was taken to the cleaners twice by Australian batsmen, most of all Steve Smith who held out impressive lessons in how to make adjustments after a particularly poor IPL outing. Those Indian cricketers who seemed heroic match winners at times in the same IPL were found wanting when it came to chipping in for the national team cause.

A run of seven years without a trophy from any rated global event like the World Cups in the 50 overs and T20 formats or the Champions Trophy is a telling comment on Team India's record. The skipper Kohli's inability to inspire his team in the manner of Mahendra Singh Dhoni is clear even if he remains his team's pre-eminent performer, averaging an unprecedented 50+ in all three formats. Impressive as the comeback win in Canberra was, Team India's performances have been generally dissatisfactory. Fans must begin to appreciate that occasions arise for true celebrations when India performs as a combination in a team sport.

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Subhani



## Keeping Big Biz out of banks not a good idea



Sanjeev Ahluwalia

It's curious how resistance to any big change, invariably, comes from the "progressives" within a political system.

Farmers in Punjab and Haryana — the "gold standard" of agricultural productivity in India — are up in arms over the government's hurried attempts to liberalise the marketing of agricultural produce, allowing farmers to sell to anyone they wish. So why are the farmers outraged?

They say that they never asked for this "gift", so why was it being imposed on them? They suspect that it is a move to allow the "back-door" entry of "corporates" enabling them to get control over the agricultural sector. Never mind that nothing is envisaged to stop farmers who are happy to sell to "Ardhita" cartels in Central government-regulated mandis (markets) to continue to do so. Conspiracy theories, once born, acquire a life of their own.

In a similar vein, otherwise forward-looking Indian economists of the "left liberal" American tradition condemn the recommendation by a working group of the Reserve Bank last month that industrialists should be allowed to own banks, albeit with suitable checks, to create a "Chinese wall" (bad name this one!) around the banking operations of such business groups, to avoid "connected or mutual" lending.

Never mind that the only "unconnected" lending in Indian banking is when a middle-class woman goes to a bank for a loan to buy a house or a scooter! For all other personal or business lending, the bank must know and trust the borrower. How else do you explain the constant socialising that rotund banking types engage in? Networking has always been

the traditional "oil" in the banking sector, and "connections" matter.

So why are economists of repute up in arms despite these ground realities. They say that "big business" cannot be "trusted" to play with a straight bat and would bend the rules to favour lending and, more important, soft-soap defaults, by borrowers connected to them.

Pause here for a fact check. The ₹10 trillion-plus non-performing loans, even before the Covid-19 pandemic, are not the result of happenstance. Much of this is "directed" lending to unworthy "favoured" business borrowers. These came to light when growth stalled, pulling out the plug from various ponzi schemes in real estate and the stock markets. Stiffer asset classification rules from the RBI also helped to unearth the scams. Publicly-owned banks are the most affected, though poor governance and low managerial propriety standards were visible in some private banks as well.

Formalising the reality of this "jugalbandi" by letting big business own banks transparently, rather than remain the unseen puppeteer, can only help reduce the existing systemic risk rather than increase it. Private banks should grow their asset share to equal that of public banks (which is now 70 per cent) while boosting credit levels to equal the GDP, up from 60 per cent today. Timely and forceful intervention by the RBI against delinquent management — private or public — as in the recent case of the Lakshmi Vilas Bank, is the way to go, to contain the rot, not to pull up the drawbridge against industry ownership in banks.

Consider the oldest, iconic Indian "brand" the Tatas. Do we envisage a Tata, a Godrej, a Bajaj

or a Mahindra managed bank being less sound than the "diversified ownership" private banks in operation today? Look at the "newbie" business brands — Jio for instance. Does Mukesh Ambani need to own a bank to get access to credit or to nudge its flow? What if N.R. Narayana Murthy or Azim Premji were to float banks. What could possibly compel them to damage their international stature and credit rating by committing irregularities in their banking operations?

We have moved well beyond the stymied sources for wealth creation which existed in 1949, when the Banking Regulation Act was framed. Regulatory systems and public expectations have evolved. Even the 2013 guidelines, liberalising the entry of private banks, did not specifically bar big business from owning banks. Forty per cent of the capital of the best private banks is held by international investors. The gains from retaining a healthy and "sustainable" asset profile and international governance standards far outweigh the domestic "benefits" from bending licensing norms for dodgy loans.

Left-leaning consumer activists raise the spectre of "concentration of wealth" and "higher inequality" if business is let in through the banking door. These fears are overblown. Increasing the number of well-capitalised private banks will induce competition and dilute the concentration of economic power. The way to reduce inequality is not by preventing billionaires from becoming richer, but by improving

public services, creating decent jobs and enhancing the incomes of the poor.

Globalisation, corporatisation and industrialisation do tend to concentrate surpluses at the top. But they also expand the economic pie. Walking away from these pervasive global trends is not an option if growth is to be preserved. Pushing it to the high single digits, requires extensive liberalisation — cutting through the post-1991 residual red tape and "re-liberalisation" — hacking through the new accumulation since then with a motorised saw.

The key to manage big corporates is to have strong community-based governments with heightened accountability to the people, so that "cozy deals" and "crony capitalism" — a much larger generic problem beyond banking — are exposed and the guilty brought to book.

Are we there yet? Possibly not. Can we get there. Yes, we can. But not by stepping into Emperor Xi's boots and undermining the public profile of big business — just to keep them in respectful submission. The Chinese regulators, last month, torpedoed the giant \$35 billion IPO of the Ant Group in Shanghai and Hong Kong to rein in the "outsoken" Jack Ma (shades pf Rahul Bajaj?), who criticised the government publicly.

Efficient banking is a key "commanding height" of the Indian economy. Accountability of banks to their creditors and minority shareholders needs to be strengthened. The RBI recognises that. But to shun the financial heft and managerial excellence of big business in scaling up bank services is like marching into the future with one hand permanently tied behind our back — ideologically pure, possibly. But irresponsibly courageous and blindly devotional to the blunt governance strategies of an earlier era.

The writer is adviser, Observer Research Foundation

#### LETTERS

#### RAJINI'S POLITICAL ENTRY

Actor Rajinikanth's announcing his decision to launch his new political party on December 31 finally ends lengthy suspense of over two decades when people kept asking all along, "Will he or will he not". This should bring about a considerable change in the present dynamics of Tamil Nadu politics, considering his huge popularity and fan base. As promised earlier by him, he has also confirmed that his proposed party would contest all the seats in the forthcoming crucial Assembly elections. Whatever might be the ultimate outcome of his big political plunge, his bold decision to face and take on some inevitable physical and mental challenges during the next few months preceding the polls despite some health related issues, is indeed praiseworthy, especially at a time when the pandemic is still very much on.

A. Mohan, Chennai

#### CASTE WAR

THE CURRENT imbroglio on PMK's insular demand of 20% exclusive reservation in education and government jobs for the Vanniyar community has stirred the hornet's nest (*PMK protest fizzles out the second day*, Dec. 3). One shudders to think on what would happen if every community made such a demand, leave alone the PMK's uncouth act of letting loose vandalism to draw the attention of the government. That said, it remains to be seen as to how the data of the Centre and the States would hand in the egalitarian society, even as all major political parties have caste tags attached to them to woo voters. Come what may, it is an undeniable fact that not all those who hail from SC/ST/OBC are financially poor, nor those who belong to FC are financially sound. The need of the hour is 'social justice policy' that would transform the fanatic concept into egalitarian perspective. Till then, caste differentiation would loom large.

E.S. Chandrasekaran, Chennai

#### NATARAJAN'S DEBUT

FROM A non-descript village of Chinnappampatti in Tamil Nadu to boarding the flight to Australia, pace bowler Thangarasu Natarajan's cricketing journey has been truly remarkable. The left-arm seamer stole the limelight during this year's IPL with his consistent performance for Sunrisers Hyderabad, and the highlight of it was the sensational yorker with which Natarajan took the big wicket of AB de Villiers in the play-offs. Though originally named in the T20 squad, Natarajan was drafted into the playing XI for the final ODI against Australia, and he helped India win the game by picking up two crucial wickets on his debut.

R. Sivakumar, Chennai

James Ball



### Why 'immunity passports' can be problematic

A few months ago it wasn't certain we would find a Covid-19 vaccine. Now, we have three, with potentially more on the way — and the rollout of the Pfizer jab due to begin in Britain next week. It's an extraordinary achievement for the research community, our best hope of restoring normal life and a huge relief after a year of disappointments. But the UK government should beware of geeks bearing gifts. To get herd immunity, it has to persuade 60 to 90 per cent of people to get vaccinated.

You can see Boris Johnson's problem. If he makes vaccination voluntary, we may never hit the target we need for herd immunity. It's not just antivaxers. Some people who are usually amenable to vaccines will worry about a "rushed" new one — and fear the speed of its development means corners were cut. Others may not wish to take the vaccine offered by the government if they believe one of the others on the market, or on the way, will be more effective. The Oxford/AstraZeneca, with its 70 per cent effectiveness rate, is so last season, darling. Everyone's going 95 per cent gene-based Moderna this year. (Or they would if it was on

offer!) People holding out for a vaccine of choice could cause delays. So what to do?

Enter Nadhim Zahawi, a Tory MP who was set to rebel over this week's tier vote until he was given the new job of minister for vaccine delivery. He's a Cameron-era MP who came of political age when the "nudge unit" was at large, thinking of ways to change behaviour without passing laws. He has started floating the idea of cinemas, pubs and other venues creating a system by which people can socialise in ways the tier system would not normally allow — if they can prove they've had the vaccine.

This opens the door to a system where the government uses vaccination to decide in what ways citizens are allowed to be involved in which parts of society. The Prime Minister has tried to give his reassurance that making vaccines compulsory is "not the way we do things in this country". But if airlines, pubs and cinemas make them compulsory at the government's suggestion, that's presumably okay.

The first problem with this should be glaringly obvious: someone would have to provide verifiable information

of who had been vaccinated. That would need to be the government, likely via the NHS. Dido Harding has floated the prospect that her white-elephant £12 billion NHS Test and Trace app could used for this purpose, which would mean transforming an app every Brit was assured would protect their privacy and anonymity into a health passport they might have to show before ordering a beer.

The Prime Minister, in typical amiable-buffoon mode, seems quite keen on framing immunity certificates as "freedom passes", as innocuous as pensioners' bus passes. If a piece of paper will let you go to a bar, visit the theatre or go to a football match, how could it be anything but a good thing — says the logic that ignores that before the coronavirus, people could do all of these without having to show their government-issued papers.

When David Blunkett proposed identity cards back in 2004, Boris Johnson said he'd rather eat one than show it when requested. He quoted 1964 US Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater to the effect that "extremism in defence of liberty is no vice". Now he seems to have ambled

into becoming a vocal advocate of an even more intrusive form of ID card, one that shares not only our identity but also our health information. It would be the cornerstone of a new biosecurity state.

Modern technology makes casual state intrusion into our daily lives easier than ever. But it doesn't change the rights and wrongs of any of it. Even if you care not one iota about civil liberties, you can still see the dangers in what's being proposed here. For one, there is an uncomfortable precedent in requiring people to prove their health or vaccination status before they can access public life. At what point should that stop? No access to schools for unvaccinated pupils? Routine tests for flu before getting the Tube? Why not an app showing a verified set of your latest STD results before you can have a government-sanctioned fling?

The final, grim truth of "immunity passports" is they're not even all that likely to work — not least because they are the absolute confirmation of what the most fervent anti-vaccination protesters have always warned about. If the government suddenly tries to make vaccines a condition of public

life, that plays into every conspiracy theory about mass vaccination now spreading like wildfire online. It is generally not a good idea for anyone to prove such people "right", especially not on such a vital issue. The more extreme fringes of the anti-vax movements warn vaccines would contain the mark of the devil, or some surveillance chip.

Tying vaccination into a government-run tracking app, and making it a requirement of engaging in public, risks turning a movement of dangerous cranks into this generation's civil liberties freedom fighters. Worse still, it risks radicalising people currently unsure about a vaccine into being absolutely sure they don't want one.

We must sympathise with the government, which faces a huge challenge, and one prone to frustrations. It could be that developing the vaccine is the easy part compared with persuading enough people to actually take it. But that's the job ministers have signed up for, and they owe the public better than making up poorly thought-through policy live on air.

By arrangement with the Spectator



quick  
BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	44,632.65	0.03
Nifty 50	13,133.90	0.15
S&P 500*	3,678.77	0.27
Dollar (₹)	73.91	-0.13
Pound Sterling (₹)	99.05	-0.54
Euro (₹)	89.46	-0.57
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,887.481	0.98
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	48.36	0.11
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.932	0.011
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.938	-0.008

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

Ultratech to spend  
over ₹5,400 cr on  
capacity addition

UltraTech Cement, India's largest cement maker, announced a Rs 5,477-crore investment to add 12.8 million tonnes capacity, taking its overall output to over 136 mt per annum. The company said its board in a meeting approved capacity expansion plan with a mix of brown-field and green-field expansion. "The additional capacity will be created in the fast-growing markets of the eastern, central and northern regions," the firm said.

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■ RBI halts card, digital expansion  
HDFC Bank told to  
freeze new plansFALAKNAZ SYED  
MUMBAI, DEC. 3

After several incidents of outages in digital services of HDFC Bank in the last two years, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has temporarily barred the lender from new digital banking launches and issuing new credit cards besides asking the bank's board to examine the lapses and fix accountability. The restrictions do not affect the bank's existing customers.

The private lender's managing director and chief executive officer Sashi Jagdishan on Thursday assured clients that "there is no reason to worry" and that they "can continue to transact with the bank without any concern."

The apex bank's order came on Wednesday, days after the last instance of service outage across its digital banking channels, including internet banking, mobile banking and other payments. The outage, which happened on November 21, had severely inconvenienced customers and was the third major outage faced by the country's largest private lender in a span of two years.

"The RBI has advised the bank to temporarily stop all launches of the digital business generating activities planned under its programme—Digital 2.0 (to be launched) and other proposed business generating IT applications, and sourcing of new credit card customers," the bank



informed the stock exchanges in a filing. HDFC Bank is the largest issuer of credit cards and has 1.49 crore customers as of September this year while it has 3.38 crore debit card-holders.

Started in 2018-19, Digital 2.0 is part of the bank's elaborate strategy to transform itself into a bank of the future. It comprises improving customer experience, using analytics to power customer interactions and developing new applications; empowering virtual banking offerings and bringing in innovation to shape up customer preferences. Under Digital 2.0 partnerships are planned with technology companies and fintech players to improve services.

"We had two outages, one in Nov 2018 and second one in Dec 2019. We have taken help of external expertise, understood what needs to be done further and have substantially implemented the inputs to strengthen our IT infrastructure and systems. Unexpectedly another incident happened on Nov 21, 2020 and the pri-

mary reason for the same is the power outage in our Primary Data Centre. We are working on war footing to strengthen this area also now," said Jagdishan in his message to the bank's customers.

"Some of our strategic digital initiatives to improve the front end digital experience, improve digital origination, straight through processing, next generation of mobile and internet banking, APIs based banking on the edge etc would now be readied and launched post the approval and clearance from the regulator," he added.

HDFC Bank shares plunged to a low of Rs 1,374.25 on the BSE before closing at Rs 1,377.05, down 2.13 per cent. The bank's promoter HDFC Ltd's shares also fell 0.95 per cent to close at Rs 2253.90. Shares of its main rival, State Bank of India and its subsidiary SBI Cards and Payment Services, gained 3.87 per cent and 5.31 per cent, respectively.

(With inputs from Ravi Ranjan Prasad)

NCLT nod for  
R-Infratel plan;  
lenders may  
get ₹4,400 cr

Mumbai, Dec. 3: The National Company Law Tribunal on Thursday approved a resolution plan of Reliance Infratel following which the lenders may get around Rs 4,400 crore and Reliance Jio may pick up the assets of the debt-ridden telecom infrastructure company, according to sources.

Reliance Jio through its subsidiary placed bids to acquire the assets of Reliance Communications' fully owned subsidiary Reliance Infratel and the same have been approved by the tribunal as part of the resolution plan, a source aware of the development said.

"The lenders will get around Rs 4,400 crore from Reliance Digital Platform, a group company of Reliance Jio and the successful resolution applicant," the source said.

Under the approved resolution plan, RCom and its subsidiary Reliance Telecom Infrastructure Ltd will go to UV Asset Recon-struction Company, while the tower unit Reliance Infratel will go to Jio for a total consideration of Rs 20,000-23,000 crore to be paid over a period of seven years.

Reliance Infratel has around 43,000 towers and 1,72,000 route kilometres of fibre. The Resolution Plan was approved by 100 per cent votes of the committee of creditors.

—PTI

Self-made women make up  
a third of India's wealthiestSANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, DEC. 3

Roshni Nadar: Wealthiest of All

As many as 31 self-made women have made it to the list of 100 Indian wealthy women. Of the 31 self-made women in the Kotak Wealth Hurun—Leading Wealthy Women List 2020, six are professionals and 25 are entrepreneurs.

With a wealth of Rs 36,600 crore, 67-year-old Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw of Biocon is the richest self-made woman and occupies the second place in the list of the wealthiest women. Out of the 13 women from the pharmaceuticals industry, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw is also the only self-made woman from the sector. Radha Vembu of Zoho with a wealth of Rs 11,590 crore is the second richest self-made woman and fifth among India's richest women.

Arista Network's Jay-

shree Ullal, with a wealth of Rs 10,220 crore, is the richest professional manager. Indra Nooyi of PepsiCo too has figured in the list.

There are six startup founders and of them Falguni Nayar of Nykaa and Divya Gokulnath of Byju's have registered a wealth of Rs 5,410 crore and Rs 3,490 crore respectively and have built their companies into unicorns.

The 100 richest women have a cumulative wealth of Rs 2,72,540 crore. With a wealth of Rs 54,850

crore, Roshni Nadar Malhotra, chairperson of HCL Technologies, is the wealthiest woman on the list. Among the 100, 38 have wealth of Rs 1,000 crore and more.

With four entrants, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise produced the most number of women leaders on the list, followed by Godrej Group which contributed three entrants to the list.

"The women on the Kotak Wealth Hurun—Leading Wealthy Women 2020 List are the most successful women business leaders in India. Their stories deserve to be shared and studied. What is it that makes them successful? How did they do it? I hope this list can inspire more women to become entrepreneurs, run businesses or lead companies," said Anas Rahman Junaid, manager director and chief researcher, Hurun India.

## SC asks Franklin to consult investors

New Delhi, Dec. 3: The Supreme Court on Thursday asked Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund to initiate steps within one week for calling a meeting of unit-holders to seek their consent for closure of the six mutual fund schemes and said there will be no redemption of units by investors till further orders.

The top court also agreed to hear an appeal filed by Franklin Templeton against the Karnataka High Court order, which stopped the fund house

from winding up its debt fund schemes without prior investor consent.

A bench of Justices S. Abdul Nazeer and Sanjiv Khanna observed that the issue is big and people wanted a refund.

It said that without prejudice to the rights of any party, trustees are allowed to call a meeting of unit-holders to seek their consent for approval and in this regard steps be taken within one week.

Advocate Pratap Venugopal, appearing for the Sebi, submitted that the

regulator has no role in the winding up process but had written to RBI in this regard.

The bench posted the matter for further hearing next week and directed that all cross appeals be placed on record.

On October 24, the Karnataka High Court had said that the decision of the Franklin Templeton Trustee Services Private Limited to wind up six schemes cannot be implemented unless the consent of the unit holders is obtained.

—PTI

## COFFEE-BREAK

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



**Aries:** Fear may affect your aspirations. While with your romantic partner, you may find necessary strength, but you may lose the company if you dictate terms.



**Taurus:** Distrust in romance prevents a healthy relationship from developing. Meeting an influential person may bring very good results for both of you.



**Gemini:** You'll meet someone you haven't met for long. You'll eventually adapt to new techniques You'll still be drawn to physical attributes but your sex drive won't rule you.



**Cancer:** You want to improve yourself and others' quality of life. Expect some news from abroad. Avoid shoddy purchases. Don't reveal personal information.



**Leo:** Indulging in charity work brings mental satisfaction. You also have ideas on becoming more self-sufficient. Today, chase money owed to you.



**Virgo:** You'll want to see a million places today. Business-related seminars bring the latest market information, which eventually helps you in business. Meeting important persons may help you achieve your goals.

## You share your b'day with

Jay-Z is an American rapper. He is widely known for his albums like The Blueprint, The Black Album, American Gangster, Watch the Throne, Everything Is Love.



**Libra:** It's a favourable time for business and finances. Remain alert at work; someone's trying to tarnish your image. Stay off from things creating breathing problems.



**Scorpio:** You'll commit to your partner. Your efforts get you promoted. Managers raise their business potential by learning about new management concepts.



**Sagittarius:** You might relax your adamant principles for others' sake. You'll be slightly reserved today, with your childhood memories flooding in.



**Capricorn:** Avoid personal problems in romance. Expect a sudden income/benefits/profit boost. Care for your father's health. Try enhancing your self-confidence and focus.

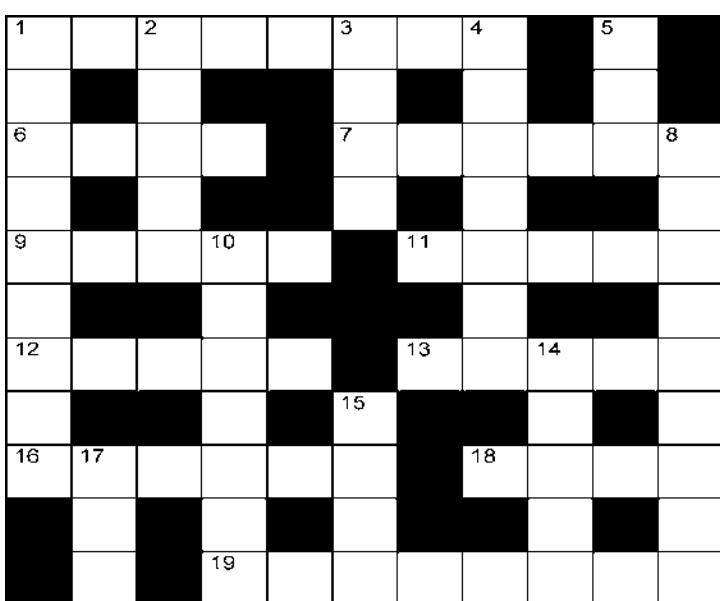


**Aquarius:** Staying even-keeled becomes difficult. You're drawn to superficial disturbances manifested by your need to contact your soul's deeper parts. Relationships get demanding.



**Pisces:** Those seeking love shouldn't be disappointed. Expect intense encounters. You may shine, with you or your work in the spotlight. Some of you attend important meetings and might need to deliver a speech.

## QUICK CROSSWORD



Across  
1. Hurdle (8)  
6. Alleviate (4)  
7. Container with handle (6)  
9. Shears (5)  
11. Sword (5)  
12. Whole range (5)  
13. Confused (2,3)  
16. Equipment (6)  
18. Drink (4)  
19. Anguish (8)

Down  
1. Inadvertent mistake (9)  
2. Japanese dish (5)  
3. Block (4)  
4. Bewitch (7)  
5. Dudgeon (3)  
7. Word book (9)  
10. Defeated (7)  
14. Velvety leather (5)  
15. Charges (4)  
17. Intention (3)

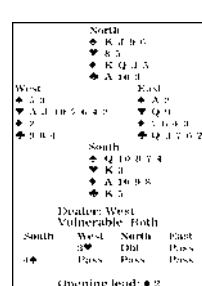
YESTERDAY'S ANSWER  
Across: 6. Grievances, 8. Elder, 10. Radar, 13. Disposition, 14. Gully, 17. Drape, 19. Intolerant.  
Down: 1. Arid, 2. Jeer, 3. Fair, 4. Acid, 5. Estranged, 7. Verdigris, 9. Expel, 11. After, 12. Ask, 15. Late, 16. Yell, 17. Dare, 18. Acne.

## Word Mine

X  
E E O  
M P T E R

TODAY'S RATINGS: 4 AVERAGE; 5 GOOD; 6 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.



## jumble

S E R T C  
C K N K A  
N O R E D Y  
T O R E S E

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

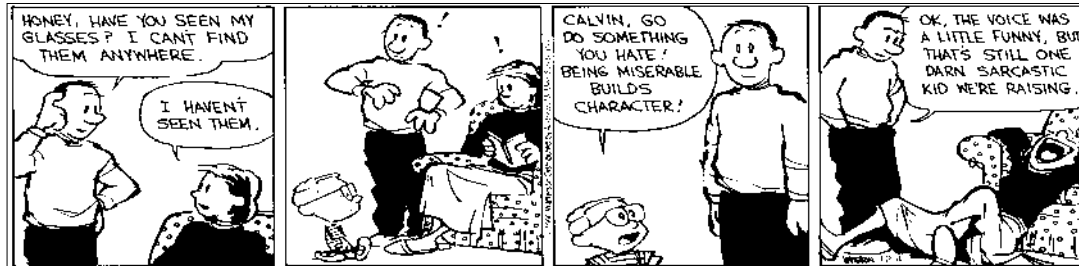
Yesterday's Jumble: FABLE OFFER VACUUM SHRUNK  
Answer: The town's landfill was over capacity and beginning to "REEK" HAVOC

his partner a diamond ruff. West will exit with a club and wait for two heart tricks -- down one. Is there a chance for South to survive? Declarer must remove West's free exit card. South cashes his club king, leads a club to the ace and ruffs dummy's last club in his hand. Then he plays a trump to East's ace. If East gives his partner a ruff, West is endplayed, forced to open hearts and donate South a trick with his king.

Instead, East must lead the heart queen (or heart nine). If South plays low, East then gives his partner the diamond ruff. So South covers the queen with his king. West wins and must hope that he can get his partner back on lead. West returns a low heart, hoping partner has the nine (or queen) -- success!

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CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli &amp; craig boldman



BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs

bridge  
PHILLIP  
ALDER

CAN  
YOU  
SPOT  
HOW TO  
SUCCEED?

beck, a musician, singer-songwriter and record producer, said, "I just go in the studio and write on the spot and see what comes out."

A bridge player goes to the table, pays careful attention to important spot cards and watches the tricks roll in. But sometimes it does require some imagination. On today's deal, what happened in four spades after West led his singleton

diamond? Note South's jump to four spades. When partner makes a takeout double and you have positive values, jump (or cue-bid the opponent's suit with a really good hand). Remember, a simple bid promises 0 points. When an opponent opens with a preempt and leads a different suit, that is a singleton. So, if declarer immediately plays a trump, East will take the trick and give



## SHORT TAKES

### Messi fined for tribute to Diego

**Barcelona:** Lionel Messi was fined 600 euros (\$720) for taking his jersey off to pay tribute to Diego Maradona, the Spanish football federation said. The federation's competitions committee fined the Argentine player for his actions after scoring in Barcelona's 4-0 win over Osasuna in the Spanish league on Sunday. After a strike from outside the box, Messi took off Barcelona's blue-and-burgundy to reveal the red-and-black of Maradona's jersey from his stint at Newell's Old Boys. Messi then blew a kiss with both hands to the sky as he looked upward. After the game, Messi posted a photo of his tribute alongside an older image of Maradona in the same shirt, adding the message Farewell, Diego in Spanish. Maradona died last week at the age of 60. The federation also refused to void the yellow card that was shown to Messi for taking off his jersey, and fined Barcelona 180 euros (\$216). — *AP*

### 48 NBA players test Covid positive

**Los Angeles:** The NBA announced Wednesday that 48 players have tested positive for the Covid-19, a dramatic increase over the zero positive tests reported during last season's quarantine bubble in Florida. The league said the positive tests are the result of 546 tests carried out between November 24-30 as the NBA gets set to begin preseason games in nine days. The zero positive tests were from the beginning of last season's quarantine bubble to the end of the season in mid-October. One team, the Golden State Warriors, has already delayed the beginning of their individual workouts by a day this week because of players testing positive. This was the initial round of tests for players as they returned to their teams ahead of the start of individual workouts on Tuesday. — *AFP*

### Grosjean's fiery crash to be probed

**Paris:** An investigation has been opened into Formula One driver Romain Grosjean's horrifying crash at the Bahrain Grand Prix, governing body FIA said Thursday. The FIA said it could take up to eight weeks before the conclusions are made public. Grosjean was discharged from a military hospital in Bahrain on Wednesday. "The investigation into the Grosjean incident will look at all areas including competitor safety devices such as the helmet, HANS (a head restraint device), safety harness, protective clothing, survival cell, headrest, in-car extinguisher system and the Halo," the FIA said in a statement. "Analysis will also include chassis integrity and the safety barrier performance," it added. — *AP*

### State TT c'ship from Dec. 9

**Chennai:** Tamilzhaga Table Tennis Association will conduct the state championship from December 9 to 14. Matches will be conducted for all categories (cadet to senior singles). Entries close on December 6. For details contact: entriestamizhagatta@gmail.com.

## Live on TV

### CRICKET

**Australia vs India:** First T20 from 1.40 pm on Sony Six, Ten 1, HD

**South Africa vs England:** First ODI from 4.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

**Lanka Premier League:** Colombo vs Jaffna from 8 pm on Sony Six

### FOOTBALL

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

### FORMULA ONE

**Sakhir Grand Prix:** Practice-1 from 6.55 pm; Practice-2 from 10.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

### WWE

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

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# Back to T20 mode

## India look to pose tougher challenge to Aussies in T20s

**Canberra, Dec. 3:** Short of resources in ODIs, India will have enough options to choose from to pose a stiffer challenge to Australia when the two sides clash in a three-match T20 series beginning here on Friday.

The 1-2 ODI series loss reaffirmed that India have a lot of work to do in the 50-over format but they possess a much more balanced squad in the shortest format.

The presence of Washington Sundar, Deepak Chahar and T Natarajan, who did well on his ODI debut on Wednesday, lends much-needed balance to the bowling department.

With Hardik Pandya not bowling regularly, India had only one specialist all-rounder in Ravindra Jadeja in the one-dayers.

However, there is a possibility that Hardik can roll his arm over for a brief spell like he did from the second ODI onwards.

Natarajan could also make his T20 debut on Friday having shown enough promise in his maiden international appearance.

Unlike the SCG, the Manuka Oval surface had enough for both the spinners and pacers. It will be interesting to see who opens up the bowling alongside Jasprit Bumrah with the toss-up being between Mohammad Shami and Deepak Chahar.

Yuzvendra Chahal, who had a forgettable outing in the ODIs, will also be looking to bounce back.

In batting, K L Rahul is expected to go back to his preferred opening slot alongside Shikhar Dhawan.

Australia, after naming the same squad for ODIs as well as T20s, would be backing themselves to beat India after a clinical display over the last one week.

Star batsman David Warner is unavailable due to a groin injury and it remains to be seen if Marnus Labuschagne comes alongside Finch on Friday. — *PTI*



Virat Kohli (left) shares a light moment with his teammates in this file photo.

## NUMBERS GAME

### INDIA-AUSTRALIA IN T20 INTERNATIONALS

Team	M	W	L	T	N/R	Success%
India	134	83	44	3	4	64.55
Australia	128	68	55	2	3	55.07

### HIGHEST INNINGS TOTALS:

**India:** 202-4 in 19.4 overs at Rajkot in 2013

**Australia:** 201-7 in 20 overs at Rajkot in 2013

### LOWEST INNINGS TOTALS:

**India:** 74 in 17.3 overs at Melbourne in 2008

**Australia:** 86 in 16.2 overs at Dhaka in 2014

### HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORES:

**India:** 90\* Virat Kohli at Adelaide in 2016

**Australia:** 124\* Shane Watson at Sydney in 2016

### BEST BOWLING IN AN INNINGS:

**India:** 4-11 Ravichandran Ashwin at Dhaka in 2014

**Australia:** 4-21 Jason Behrendorff at Guwahati in 2017

### FOR THE RECORD:

● In Twenty20 International matches between the two countries it is 11-8 in favour of India although Australia won the previous series 2-0 in India.

● Virat Kohli who has scored 24 fifties in 76 innings needs one more fifty to equal Rohit Sharma's record of the most fifties scored in Twenty20 Internationals. Rohit Sharma has scored four hundreds and 21 fifties in 100 innings.

● Aaron Finch who has smashed 96 sixes in 64 innings needs four more to become the first Australian and sixth batsman overall to complete a century of sixes in Twenty20 internationals. — *S.PERVEZ QAISER*

## WILLIAMSON GIVES KIWIS A FLYING START

**Hamilton, Dec. 3:** The West Indies delight at winning the toss on a lush green wicket turned to frustration as New Zealand were rarely troubled in posting 243 for two on day one of the first Test in Hamilton on Thursday.

Kane Williamson, despite being troubled with cramp late in the day, produced a masterful innings to be unbeaten on 97 at stumps with Ross Taylor on 31.

Williamson featured in a 154-run stand with Tom Latham for the second wicket before Latham was bowled for 86.

After the start of play was delayed two hours by rain, the Windies were delighted to win the toss with an emerald wicket that potentially offered untold demons for their pace attack.

But after Gabriel bowled Will Young early for five, the tourists found they did not getting the assistance they expected from the wicket.

Chase also saw flaws in the visitors' attack which they failed to rectify.

It appeared to be a case of not doing thorough homework as Latham said the pitch was not unusual for New Zealand.

Williamson, who will resume on Friday requiring just three runs to register his 22nd Test century. — *AFP*

### BRIEF SCORES

**Day 1: New Zealand 243/2** in 78 overs (T. Latham 86, Kane Williamson 97, Kemar Roach 1/53) vs **West Indies.**

## BCCI set to add two teams in IPL

### AGM AGENDA

- Election of Vice President
- Election of 2 representatives of General Body in IPL Governing Council
- Adoption of Annual Budget FY 20-21
- Adoption of Ombudsman and Ethics Officer
- Adoption of Cricket Committees and Standing Committees as mentioned in Rules 26 and 25 (Constitution) respectively
- Appointment of Umpires Committee in Rule 27.
- Appointment of representative/representatives in ICC and/or similar committees.
- Approval of two new teams to the IPL.
- Discussion on BCCI's stand on inclusion of cricket in Los Angeles Olympic Games in 2028.
- To update ICC Matters
- To update on NCA matters.
- To update on ICC T20 World Cup 2021 to be held in India.
- To update on India's FTP Program.

**New Delhi, Dec. 3:** The BCCI will hold its Annual General Meeting on December 24 to discuss the induction of two new IPL franchises besides the appointment of India's ICC representative and three new national selectors.

Also on the agenda is the election of a new vice-president. As per norm, the BCCI has sent a 23-point agenda to all affiliated units 21 days prior to the holding of the AGM.

The most significant point is seeking approval for two new teams to make it a 10-team IPL.

It is understood that the Adani Group and Sanjeev Goenka's RPG (owners of the Rising Pune Supergiants) are interested in owning new teams with one franchise surely from Ahmedabad.

Another important point will be BCCI's representative to the ICC and the Asian Cricket Council. It is expected that secretary Jay Shah will be the BCCI representative in the global committees.

Appointment of three new selectors, along with a chairman of selectors, is also on cards given that Cricket Committees and Standing Committees are part of the agenda.

"Selection committee is a part of cricket committee plus the technical committee also needs to be formed. They are all statutory sub committees," a senior BCCI source said.

The all-important Umpires' sub-committee will also be formed and matters related to the National Cricket Academy will also come up for deliberation.

The agenda also includes discussion on India's

Future Tours Program for 2021, preparation with regards to organisation of next year's T20 World Cup (includes the ICC tax issue) and inclusion of cricket in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

On the administrative front, one of the primary points on the agenda is election of new vice president, a position which has been left vacant after Mahim Verma's resignation.

It is expected that the choice would be unanimous.

Also, two representatives from the governing body will get a seat in the IPL governing council. — *PTI*

## Krishna dazzles as ATK edge Odisha

**Fatorda, Dec. 3:** An injury-time winner from Roy Krishna helped ATK Mohun Bagan secure a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Odisha FC in an Indian Super League fixture here on Thursday.

Krishna (90+5'), netted his third goal in as many games to ensure the Mariners climbed to the top of the ISL table.

The first half proved to be a cagey affair but both sides failed to grab their chances and take the lead.

ATKMB dominated the early exchanges and constantly raided the opposition box. However, Odisha did well to close down the spaces and keep things tight at the back.

Despite the dominance displayed by Habas' side early on, it was Odisha who missed a great opportunity to go ahead after the break.

A well-worked set-piece routine during the 38th minute saw Cole Alexander whip in a dangerous cross into the box. Jacob Tratt, unmarked, got to the end of it but failed to get his header on target.

Despite the miss, Odisha FC kept knocking on the door only for ATKMB's defense to thwart the danger.

The result ensured Odisha FC's winless run continued. — *PTI*

## BENGALURU, CHENNAIYIN TO RENEW RIVALRY

**Bambolim, Dec. 3:** Bengaluru FC will look for their first win of the season when they take on southern rivals Chennaiyin FC in an Indian Super League match at the GMC Athletic Stadium here on Friday.

Both the teams have played twice so far, with BFC winless following consecutive stalemates, while CFC registering a victory and draw.

The fixture between Chennaiyin and Bengaluru has become a huge rivalry since BFC entered the ISL fold in 2017. The final that season was a closely contested affair that CFC won 3-2 on Bengaluru's turf to lift a second ISL title.

In the head-to-head battle, both the clubs have won three apiece with one draw being played out last season.

It promises to be yet another intense contest, as the likes of Anirudh Thapa, Rafael Crivellaro and Lallianzuala Chhangte aiming to make it two wins out of three. — *PTI*

## Not much fun without fans: Thapa

NEHA SURANA | DC  
CHENNAI, DEC. 3

Playing in front of empty galleries is no fun for professional sportspersons. But players from ISL have learnt to deal with it. Chennaiyin FC's star player Anirudh Thapa, however, is missing the team's boisterous fans dearly.

"It is really different. The electrifying stadium filled with energetic fans...we used to enjoy them. It's not much fun this season. But we know they are watching us so obviously we need to give our best in every game," said Thapa.

After playing out a goalless draw against rivals Kerala Blasters, Chennaiyin FC are gearing up for another Southern Derby as they meet Bengaluru FC in an ISL game on Friday. Thapa, Chennaiyin's vice-



Chennaiyin FC players during a training session.

captain, said Bengaluru are a good team.

"They have been together for a very long time. It's just the beginning of the season, you never know what might just come up. Last season both our teams didn't start well. Hopefully, we will have a good season."

The 22-year-old midfielder feels training under Hungarian coach Csaba Laszlo is a great opportunity to learn and improve his game.

"This year we are playing a different formation and obviously I am learning a lot because of his vast experience from the European leagues. Wherever he puts me in, I will give my best," he said.

Thapa's season got off to a great start when he scored a stunner within a minute against Jamshedpur.

"It gave me the confidence to march forward and make more attempts. Hopefully, I will score more goals," said Thapa.

CFC head coach Laszlo said he has done his homework for the Bengaluru clash.

"In terms of physicality, they are a tall team. They create opportunities from set pieces and also from long throw-ins. We must be prepared for it. I think we have our weaknesses and they have theirs. But we have to use their weaknesses and focus on our strengths. We have to shoot more and score more," he said.

"We know that Bengaluru played out two draws and generally everyone wants to win such games. It is a special game, it is like a derby for us. If we win this game, it will help us stabilise our position in the table," Laszlo said.



Cristiano Ronaldo (right) of Juventus outruns Dynamo Kiev's Tomasz Kedziora (left) and Denys Popov during their UEFA Champions League Group 'G' match at the Juventus stadium in Turin on Wednesday. — *AFP*

## Ronaldo rocks; PSG, Barca win

**Paris, Dec. 3:** Neymar's brace helped Paris Saint-Germain to a vital 3-1 win over Manchester United on Wednesday that took the French club to within touching distance of the Champions League Last 16, while Borussia Dortmund secured their qualification for the next round and Olivier Giroud scored all four goals in Chelsea's 4-0 thumping of Sevilla.

PSG could have been on the brink of elimination from Group 'H' with a defeat at Old Trafford but Neymar put last season's runners-up ahead in the sixth minute and the world's most expensive player sealed their victory in stoppage time.

In between, Marcus Rashford's shot went in off Danilo Pereira to bring United level in the first half

THE RESULTS			
<b>Juventus</b> (Chiesa 21, Ronaldo 57, Morata 66)	<b>3</b>	<b>PSG</b> (Neymar 6, 90+1, Marquinhos 69)	<b>3</b>
<b>Dynamo Kiev</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Manchester United</b> (Rashford 32)	<b>1</b>
<b>Barcelona</b> (Antoine Griezmann 14, Martin Braithwaite 20, Ousmane Dembele 28-pen)	<b>3</b>	<b>Borussia Dortmund</b> (Guerreiro 44)	<b>1</b>
<b>Ferencváros</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Lazio</b> (Immobile 67-pen)	<b>1</b>
<b>Chelsea</b> (Giroud 8, 54, 74, 83-pen)	<b>4</b>	<b>RB Leipzig</b> (Poulsen 26, Mukiele 43, Olmo 66, Sorloth 90+2)	<b>4</b>
<b>Sevilla</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Basaksehir Istanbul</b> (Kahveci 45+3, 72, 85)	<b>3</b>

but Marquinhos prodded the French champions back in the 69th minute post which Neymar netted one more goal to send United packing.

There is a three-way tie on nine points at the top of the group with RB Leipzig right in contention after Alexander Sorloth scored in injury time to give them

a 4-3 victory at Istanbul Basaksehir.

Meanwhile, history was made in Turin as France's Stephanie Frappart became the first woman to referee a men's Champions League game when Juventus beat Dynamo Kiev 3-0.

The game was also notable for Cristiano Ronaldo scoring his 750th career goal, his record-extending 132nd in the Champions League.

Federico Chiesa and Alvaro Morata also scored for Juve, who had already qualified from Group 'G' before the game, along with Barcelona.

The Catalans kept up their perfect record and stayed on course to win the group by beating Ferencváros 3-0 in Budapest without the rested Lionel Messi. — *AFP*