

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | THURSDAY 4 | FEBRUARY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 29°C
Min: 20°C
Rainfall: Nil

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Thai 22
Tithi: Saphthami
Star: Swathi
Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm
Yamagandam: 6 am to 7.30 am
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.22 am
Zohar: 12.28 pm
Asar: 3.42 pm
Maghrib: 6.10 pm
Isha: 7.23 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.11 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.35 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 11.58 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 11.31 AM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+12,916)	(+107)
1,07,91,123	1,54,742

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+514)
TN: 8,39,866 12,371

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

10,46,13,851

DEATHS

22,69,394

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

219

worldometers.info

LIC IPO may hit market in Q4 of next fiscal: DEA Secretary

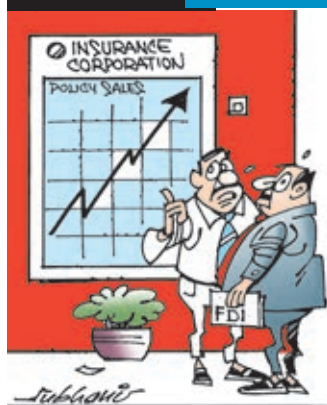
New Delhi: The initial public offering of LIC may hit the market in the fourth quarter of next financial year, and the government has introduced amendments to the Life Insurance Corporation Act 1956 to facilitate this, Economic Affairs Secretary Tarun Bajaj said on Wednesday. As many as 27 amendments have been pushed through the Finance Bill 2021 tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday along with the Union Budget 2021-22.

Low intensity earthquake hits Ladakh

Leh: An earthquake of 4.5 magnitude hit the Union Territory of Ladakh on Wednesday evening, an official of the Meteorological Department said. A police official said there was no report of damage from anywhere. "The earthquake was probably of low intensity and did not cause panic," he said.

COUNTER

POINT



Not public, but our employees are insuring their jobs!

TMC-BJP in war of words over defections

Alipurduar/Hooghly (WB), Feb. 3: The TMC and the BJP hit out at each other on Wednesday in poll-bound West Bengal over defections with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee saying it was ironical that the Centre did not have funds to bear the travel expenses of migrant workers but corrupt leaders were flown to Delhi in a chartered plane.

Newly inducted BJP leader Rajib Banerjee, who quit TMC and was among those who took take the chartered flight, slammed her for levelling allegations of corruption against him.

He said if indeed he was corrupt then why did the TMC hold talks with him to retain him in the party after he resigned from the state cabinet last month.

— PTI

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PMK-AIADMK talks end in stalemate



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Tharoor, Pande, others move SC to quash FIRs

SPORT | 6

My job is easy when Virat is around: Rahane



■ **Centre orders Twitter to remove offending hashtags**

Govt fightbacks global drive in support of protesting farmers

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, FEB. 3

Stung by the endorsement of the ongoing farmers' agitation by global pop icon Rihanna, top environmental activist Greta Thunberg and American lawyer Meena Harris, niece of US vice-president Kamala Harris, India on Wednesday defended its three new farm laws, saying it gives "expanded market access and provided greater flexibility to farmers", and blasted "propaganda" by "sensationalist social media hashtags and comments resorted to by celebrities" as being "neither accurate nor responsible".

The government also directed Twitter to comply with its order to remove contents/accounts related to farmer genocide hashtags, and warned that the microblogging platform may face "penal action" for non-compliance of its order.

Meanwhile, a number of Indian celebrities joined politicians to launch a hashtag campaign "#IndiaTogether and #IndiaAgainstPropaganda". Home minister Amit Shah, foreign minister S. Jaishankar, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar and actors Ajay Devgn and Akshay Kumar tweeted protesting against the global campaign. "India's sovereignty cannot be compromised. External forces can be spectators but not participants. Indians know India and should decide for India. Let's remain united as a nation," tweeted Mr Tendulkar.

Saying a "very small section of farmers in parts of India have some reservations about these reforms", the external affairs ministry accused "vested interest groups" of trying to "mobilise international support against India".

The reaction came after pop icon Rihanna referred to a media report on the farmers' stir and tweeted: "Why aren't we talking about this?!" Greta Thunberg tweeted: "We stand in solidarity with the farmers' protest in India". Ms Harris, a lawyer and author, was far harsher and



Bharatiya Kisan Union spokesperson Rakesh Tikait along with other farmer leaders during 'Kisan Mahapanchayat' against the new farm laws, in Jind district, on Wednesday. — PTI

Tikait warns govt of 'gaddi wapsi' demand

SANJAY KAW | DC
NEW DELHI, FEB. 3

In a show of strength by protesting farmers, Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait on Wednesday warned the government that it could find it difficult to stay in power if the new agri-marketing laws are not repealed.

Thousands of people who attended the khap mahapanchayat in Haryana's Jind adopted a five-point resolution which called for repeal of the three laws, constitutional guarantee of minimum support price (MSP), implementation of the Swaminathan Comm-

lashed out at the Indian government by tweeting: "It's no coincidence that the world's oldest democracy was attacked not even a month ago, and as we speak, the most populous democracy is under assault. This is related. We all should be outraged by India's Internet shutdowns and paramilitary violence against farmer protesters. Militant nationalism is just as potent a force in US politics as it is in India or anyplace else. It can only be stopped if people wake up to the reality that fascist dictators aren't

going anywhere."

The tweets have angered New Delhi that put out a statement on "recent comments by foreign individuals and entities on the farmers' protests".

The MEA said: "The Parliament of India, after a full debate and discussion, passed reformist legislation relating to the agricultural sector. These reforms give expanded market access and provided greater flexibility to farmers. They also pave the way for economically and ecologically sustainable farming." ■ **PS**

RS to debate on farm laws

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, FEB. 3

The government and the opposition in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday came to a consensus to add five extra hours to the duration of discussion on a motion thanking the President for his address to the joint sitting of Parliament to allow debate on the farmers' protest against three agri reform legislations.

The Rajya Sabha, which following Covid-19 protocols meets for five hours daily, will dispense with the Question Hour, Zero Hour and Private Member Business for the 15-hour discussion on the motion, Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu said.

Several Opposition parties including the Congress and the DMK asked the government to withdraw the three farm laws without making it a prestige issue and not to treat the agitating farmers as "enemies".

Speaking on the motion on thanks on the President's address, Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad suggested that Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself should make the announcement on the repeal of the laws.

Sasikala is still AIADMK gen secretary, says TTV

DC CORRESPONDENT
MADURAI, FEB. 3

V.K. Sasikala is still the general secretary of the AIADMK and her release from jail has created "chemical changes" in Tamil Nadu, her nephew and AMMK general secretary T.T.V. Dhinakaran has said.

Announcing that Ms Sasikala, the friend of former chief minister J. Jayalalithaa, would return to Tamil Nadu from Bengaluru on February 7, Mr Dhinakaran said elaborate arrangements have been made to welcome her back to the state.

Responding to the media on the AIADMK flag fixed at the bonnet of Ms Sasikala's car when she left the Victoria Hospital to her residence in Bengaluru on January 31, Mr Dhinakaran said, "the AIADMK flag was fixed in her car as she is the general secretary of the party."

"She being the general secretary of AIADMK, no body has the power as per the AIADMK bylaw to remove her from the post," said Mr Dhinakaran, who said the AIADMK general body meeting convened in 2017 to remove her from the post was against the party rules. "Chinamma (Ms Sasikala) has filed a case against her removal and she will continue her legal battle to retrieve the party, while we, as AMMK, continue our democratic battle to retrieve AIADMK, for which the AMMK was



launched," he said.

Reacting to AIADMK deputy coordinator K.P. Munusamy's statement that Mr Dhinakaran could be taken back into the party if he tendered an apology and gained the confidence of the party leadership, the AMMK general secretary commented, "Time will decide soon who are to apologise and who has the power to grant pardon."

Mr Dhinakaran said the closure of the Jayalalithaa memorial days after its opening last week was one such chemical change. "Anyway the memorial has to be reopened and Ms Sasikala will visit it to pay her homage," Mr Dhinakaran added.

Taking a dig at DMK president M.K. Stalin's "long wait for the chief minister's post", the AMMK general secretary said that the wait would continue forever as the AIADMK and AMMK cadres were committed to defeat the "evil force" the DMK.

He was in Madurai to attend the family function of AMMK organising secretary E. Mahendran.

Glassdoor collapses at Chennai Airport

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 3

A glass door at the height of about six feet at the Chennai International Airport terminal came crashing down on Wednesday morning, causing panic among passengers and security personnel at the premises.

The incident occurred when passengers from a private airline were walking in at the arrival area of the International terminal. Airport sources said

one of the passengers accidentally rammed against the glass door with his trolley bag and the glass door came off in the impact. The passengers were gripped by panic and even the security personnel on duty near the gate ran away, the sources said. No one was injured in the accident. The spot was later barricaded to avoid further accidents and arrangements have been made to replace the glass. An investigation is underway.



Joe Biden eases immigration laws

Washington, Feb. 3: As part of his efforts to ensure that the legal immigration system operates fairly and efficiently, US President Joe Biden signed an executive order on Tuesday to review the policies of the previous administration, including that of the public charge. The review of the existing policies and the subsequent recommendations coming from 60 to 180 days from various federal agencies are likely to end up in benefitting hundreds and thousands of Indian professionals in realising their dream of citizenship of the United States.

"The federal government should develop welcoming strategies that promote integration, inclusion and citizenship, and it should embrace the full participation of the newest Americans in our democracy," Biden said in one of the three executive orders he signed on Tuesday.

— PTI

No job to protesters, says Bihar DGP

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, FEB. 3

● **The Opposition slammed the BJP-JD(U) alliance government for the order which it said was "against the Constitution"**

road blockages and is charged for this, then it should be mentioned in the person's character verification report by the police. Such people should be prepared for serious consequences as they will be barred from getting any government jobs or contracts," director general of police

S.K. Singhal said in the circular.

The development has triggered strong reactions in Bihar. The RJD, which is the main Opposition party in the state, has termed the state government's directive "against the Constitution".

"It seems that Nitish Kumar is trying to compete with Mussolini and Hitler by issuing such a kind of directive. It means that if a person uses his democratic right to protest against the system then he will be denied a job. This also means that they will not give jobs and will not allow

Daughters make wax statue of dad who died 8 years ago

G. SRINIVASAN | DC
THANJAVUR, FEB. 3

Daughters are affectionate more towards their fathers than to their mothers, they say.

The three daughters of late Selvam, a businessman of Pattukottai, who passed away eight years ago, proved this true by rekindling his memories through a statue made of wax and silicon on the occasion of the marriage of his third daughter to bless

her at the reception which was held at Pattukottai recently.

The marriage came to limelight with Lakshmi Prabha, the third daughter of Selvam, with bridegroom Kishore of Kumarapalayam touched the feet of a wax statue to get the blessings at the marriage reception. Relatives and friends who attended the reception were not only thrilled to witness the event but were also appreciative of the



Lakshmi Prabha and Kishore before the statue of her father at marriage reception at Pattukottai. — DC

love of the three daughters for their father.

According to Bhubaneswari, the elder

sister of Lakshmi Prabha, Selvam was alive for her and her other sister's marriages. Lakshmi Prabha is the last child in the family and Selvam was no more there to bless her at her on the occasion. It was Bhubaneswari who then suggested that they get a statue of Selvam made for the occasion. She and her husband Karthik, who came from London for the marriage, hired a sculptor Sidhara Murthy from Bengaluru and made an

exact life-like statue of her father using wax and silicon spending ₹6 lakhs. They brought the statue to the marriage reception which became the cynosure of all eyes; many felt his presence at the marriage, too.

Kalavathi, the mother of the three, looked the happiest among the family members, as shared the feeling that her husband was there to bless the newly-wed couple.

OTHER STORIES

Minister recovers from Covid-19

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 3

Food minister R Kamaraj, who was treated for Covid-19 at the MGM Healthcare Hospital and put under ECMO support has recovered well, according to Health Minister C Vijayabaskar.

"I thank the treating team at MGM, Hon'ble CM for the continuous follow up, the Dean and Directors at the RGGGH, and everyone who prayed for his recovery, Vijayabaskar tweeted on Wednesday.

Kamaraj, who tested positive for Coronavirus, was initially admitted to a private hospital and then shifted to the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, where his condition worsened. So he was admitted to MGM hospital.

Assembly adjourns after obituary references

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 3

The state Assembly adjourned for the day after making obituary references to Agriculture Minister R Duraikannu, well-known singer S. P. Balasubrahmanyam, noted cancer specialist Dr V Shanta and 22 former MLAs, who passed away in the recent past.

Duraikannu, who died on October 31, 2020, was elected from Papanasam Assembly constituency in Thanjavur district for three consecutive terms since 2006 and was made Minister in 2016. He hails from a family of agriculturalists and was known for his simplicity.

Having sung over 40,000 songs in 16 languages, Balasubrahmanyam was a playback singer who endeared himself to the people with his mellifluous voice. He has also been an actor, music director and dubbing artist in his career spanning more than half a century. A resident of Chennai, he passed away on September 25, 2020.

As head of the Adyar Cancer Institute in Chennai, Dr V. Shanta had made cancer treatment affordable to the poor. The internationally renowned oncologist passed away on January 19.

The resolutions were moved by the Speaker, after which the members stood in silence for two minutes paying homage for the 25 persons.

The House would meet again on Thursday to discuss on the Governor's address, with which the session began on Tuesday.



Fisheries minister and AIADMK leader D. Jayakumar rides the pillion on the bike holding the party flag to visit his constituency in North Chennai regularly as part of his election campaign.

Sasikala unlikely to cause a tumult in AIADMK

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

Going by the latest plans of the supporters of V. K. Sasikala, the arrival of former Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa's confidante in Chennai is unlikely to cause any turbulence within the AIADMK immediately as it has been speculated in some quarters.

To start with, Sasikala's support base among party cadre seems to be confined to the southern districts with very few in other areas coming out with posters welcoming her back and there is very little chance of them storming Chennai.

Even the present leadership of the AIADMK, who have expelled Sasikala from the general secretary post and may hence face her wrath, is unperturbed by the sporadic expressions of loyalty through posters to her as they are cracking the whip on those cadre by dismissing them



from the party itself.

Above all, the plan, unveiled to the media by Sasikala's nephew and AMMK founder T T V Dhinakaran at Madurai, does not envisage any direct confrontation with the present party leadership. Dhinakaran was only talking about taking a legal route to get back what was due to Sasikala.

The government abruptly closing down the newly-opened mausoleum of Jayalalithaa, on the pretext of completing the construction work, ostensibly

to prevent Sasikala from creating a hullabaloo there, something on the lines of what she did while going to Bengaluru in 2017 to undergo her sentence, too, was dismissed lightly by Dhinakaran.

Answering a question on that, he just quoted a Tamil axiom 'a wedding cannot be stopped by hiding the comb' indicating that he or his supporters have no plans to aggressively confront the present leaders and take control of the party by mobilising functionaries.

On the other hand, though the top leaders of the AIADMK like coordinator O. Panneerselvam and co-coordinator Edappadi K. Palaniswami have not reacted to the impending arrival of Sasikala on the scene with only fisheries minister D. Jayakumar consistently but firmly speaking against her.

On Wednesday, too, he reiterated that both Sasikala and Dhinakaran are not members of the

party and that the AIADMK has no plans of letting in anyone from the family. Also a heavy posse of police has been posted in Poes Garden, probably to prevent Sasikala's supporters creating a scene there.

Though Dhinakaran has organized a grandiose reception for Sasikala when she leaves her present place of stay on the outskirts of Bengaluru and enters the state borders at Hosur on February 7, it is unlikely that by mobilising an extravagant line up of vehicles to escort her to Chennai, he could make any political impact.

Otherwise, Dhinakaran himself said in Madurai that they would wait for the verdict on the case, challenging Sasikala's removal from the post of general secretary, which could take a long time and unlikely to impact the functioning of the AIADMK under the present leaders.

Though Dhinakaran

claims that the doing away with the general secretary post on the ground that Jayalalithaa was the 'permanent general secretary' (a slogan during her time) and nobody else would hold the post was not in tune with the party's Constitution, such matters would not be resolved immediately.

For the present leaders of the AIADMK, the task at hand is to form a coalition and give a tough fight in the coming Assembly elections with a view to coming back to power. Sasikala does not seem to have the inclination or wherewithal to stop the party leaders from going ahead with their plans for the elections.

Even if she tries to intervene by mobilizing her supporters within the party, who may be lurking at various levels in the organization, and try to intervene, it would only boomerang on her as the AIADMK would lose its voters and even the elections.

AIADMK to launch WhatsApp campaign

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 3

A new campaign, 'Ammavin Nallatchi Todara' (For Jayalalithaa's Good Rule to Continue), has been launched by the AIADMK to mark the 73rd birth anniversary of Jayalalithaa.

According to a press release from the party's IT cell, AIADMK plans to create 150 WhatsApp groups per constituency before Jayalalithaa's birth anniversary, falling on February 24. "The groups will apprise the people of the developmental work in their area and enable them to give their valuable inputs and feedback," the release said, adding everyone is

According to a press release from the party's IT cell, AIADMK plans to create 150 WhatsApp groups per constituency before Jayalalithaa's birth anniversary, falling on February 24

encouraged to join this campaign and become a part of the success story. They can join their constituency's group by texting "AMMA" to 8300234234. The WhatsApp groups will also enable the party leadership in understanding the needs and aspirations of party's cadre as well as constituents to create more effective campaigns and programs in the run up to the Assembly polls, the release said.



100 small satellites designed by 1,000 students are set to be launched in Rameswaram, the birthplace of Abdul Kalam, on February 7. Four such satellites developed by 40 students from 4 government schools in Ranipet district will also be launched. Students along with their science teacher Sathiskumar in their school.

—K. Senthil Nathan

PMK-AIADMK talks end in stalemate

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 3

Talks between leaders of the PMK and the AIADMK to finalise their alliance for the coming Assembly elections ended in a stalemate as the PMK stood its ground on getting some sort of an assurance on acceding to its present demand of 20 per cent reservation for Vanniyars in jobs and education.

Though negotiations have been going on for quite some time on the issue, Wednesday's discussions held at the residence of Electricity Minister P Thangamani for about two hours ended with the AIADMK representatives assuring to get back to the PMK after briefing Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on the reservation demand.

Subsequently, Thangamani, Municipal Administration Minister S P Velumani, Law Minister C Ve Shanmugam, Higher Education Minister K P Anbalagan, party deputy



coordinator K P Munusamy and other AIADMK representatives met the Chief Minister.

The PMK side was represented by its party leaders G K Mani, A K Moorthy and Advocate Balu, who went back to brief their party leader Dr S Ramadoss, who has taken the firm stand on wresting an assurance on the reservation demand.

Though both party members did not brief the media on the negotiations, it is said that the PMK now wants at least an assurance for a 7.5 per cent internal reservation within the 20 per cent quota for Most Backward Classes (MBC).

However, it is said, the AIADMK leaders are

The PMK side was represented by its party leaders G K Mani, A K Moorthy and Advocate Balu, who went back to brief their party leader Dr S Ramadoss, who has taken the firm stand on wresting an assurance on the reservation demand

apprehensive of promising any exclusive quota for the Vanniyar community since rumblings have already begun among the members of other communities that fall under the MBC category over the issue.

With the elections just three months away, giving in to the PMK's demand could lead to the AIADMK losing out on the votes of other communities that are seen as their principal vote bank, the leaders fear.

On the other hand, the AIADMK is not willing to let the PMK go as it might need its support in many constituencies in northern Tamil Nadu to win seats, particularly in the context of the DMK-led coalition possibly remaining intact.

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DECCAN Chronicle

4 FEBRUARY 2021

Farmers aren't hooligans; don't act like a police state

Are India's farmers — who have mounted a full-scale agitation to secure the rollback of three agricultural reform laws passed without consultation with them — hooligans? The narrative built up by the Centre and its supporters, including in the media, has been built assiduously around exactly this idea. It's in the chaotic events of Republic Day in New Delhi that the justification is sought to be excavated to denigrate the community of food-growers thus. From this springs the presumed validation of the rationale to deny farmers both the physical and moral space to protest, and deny them basic human rights by choking off avenues of water supply, their prospects of securing food by blocking transport channels, and by switching off the Internet that is crucial for them to communicate their voice of protest; in short virtually stamping out their right to free speech. These moves appear to be a prelude to the unleashing of fierce punishment on the farmer-protesters. Depending on circumstances, such punishment may take the form of brutal executive action. Or it's possible sections of civil society that ruling party outfits control are let loose on protesters. A trailer of this was seen recently when marauding young men in the hundreds, pretending to be "locals" inconvenienced by the agitation, descended on the camps of protesting farmers and their families as the police watched. In the times we live in, it will be a surprise if the government, if it so desires, fails to secure convenient judicial pronouncements.

Now that the hurdles have been cleared for a debate in Parliament on the farmers' protest, it is crucial that the Opposition parties, the ruling party, and those that are prone to sit on the fence seek to define farmers, farm agitators and hooligans. Before any judicial inquiry is instituted — if that is done — it is incumbent on the political class to frame a definition and tell us if they believe the men who indulged in violence and marred the spirit of Republic Day by unfurling religious flags and symbols at the Red Fort were farmers. In the narrative backed by the government and its supporters, these criminal elements are being called "farmers", no less. But are they? Or are they calculatedly infiltrated fifth columnists tasked with maligning an entirely peaceful agitation that the government wasn't sure how to handle?

It seems quite extraordinary that the police and the National Investigation Agency, that is routinely unleashed on harmless civil society protesters, has not been directed to trace the whereabouts of a loud-mouthed actor who had acted as a BJP MP's election agent in Punjab, and his accomplices who are listed as bad characters in Punjab. From this person's remarks, it would appear he is a votary of "Khalistan". While that may not be held against him, his actions on Republic Day merit thorough scrutiny.

The government is yet to exhibit due diligence in this matter. But it has shown alacrity in hammering thousands of nails in the roads, and erecting layers of barricades, presumably to ensure that the farmers don't go on the rampage on their tractors. But have they ever done so in the past? What we see here is a glimpse of Chinese or Russian police state tactics in action, not those of — what we so proudly claim — the world's largest democracy!

Putin bares his fangs

The jailing of Aleksei A. Navalny, the Kremlin's harshest critic and Russia's most visible Opposition leader, must be seen as the biggest move President Vladimir Putin has made in the pursuit of his pet pastime over the past two decades of acting brazenly against critics and oligarchs. The fiercest challenge to Mr Putin has been disposed of in the traditional manner of an authoritarian state after the politician survived an attempt to poison him with military-grade nerve agent Novichok applied to his underwear in August 2020.

Mr Navalny has gained stature as the anti-corruption champion who exposed the President and his cronies with investigative reports followed by six million people on YouTube and another two million on Twitter. Surviving the assassination attempt and recuperating in a German hospital, he returned to Russia to carry on his campaign. Mr Putin's government had tried to muzzle him with typical Kremlin tactics through the spy agencies, short jail terms or orders preventing him from running for President. As Mr Navalny's presence then ballooned into a growing threat, with thousands of Russians taking to the streets now to protest against his arrest and sentencing, Mr Putin may have thought it best to send him away to a far-flung prison in Siberia or thereabouts.

In two decades of Mr Putin's rule in post-Soviet Russia, whatever little resistance was there from critics had been ironed out with brutal state repression tactics. Boris Nemtsov, who spoke up against Russia's military action against Ukraine, was found dead and the oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky was detained for 10 years. The case of Mr Navalny may be no different, though as a lawyer in the field of politics he has become a rallying figure against the State. The Russian economy may struggle in the face of low oil prices, curbs on imports due to Western sanctions and a depreciating rouble, but Mr Putin's popularity as the strong man who takes on the West has not faded. He could come under pressure if the movement for freeing Mr Navalny picks up steam. Not without reason is it said that Mr Putin fears him the most.


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Reflections



Future unclear in Suu Kyi country: Do generals have a post-coup plan?

The pre-dawn coup in Myanmar on Monday recalls the worldwide outrage that Singapore's patriarch Lee Kuan Yew caused in 1996 by questioning Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's ability "to govern if ever she came to power". He said he had told the Americans, who were pressing for democracy to be restored, that they should be around to pick up the broken pieces if the experiment collapsed. It is tragically ironic 25 years later that the only way Ms Suu Kyi can prove her mettle may be another prolonged spell of imprisonment by the ruthless military junta. The sufferings of the 1.3 million persecuted Rohingyas will be much greater. But the worst victims of Monday's coup are more than 55 million Myanmar people whose long delayed and hard-won democratic rights have again been brutally suppressed. The 75-year-old Ms Suu Kyi has been accused of doing nothing to stop the rape, murder and possible genocide of Rohingyas. She was suspected of sharing the deep-seated prejudice of her Buddhist Mongolian compatriots against the darker skinned and largely Muslim, Bengali-speaking Rohingyas of Myanmar's Rakhine

province. Even under British rule, the old Burma was periodically ravaged by massacres of the immigrant Indian, mainly Tamil, community. While those immigrants were evicted at independence, the Rohingyas remained and today bear the brunt of Myanmar's racism. Ms Suu Kyi has reason to be grateful to the Rohingyas who supported her 1988 democracy movement. The Rohingya-led National Democratic Party for Human Rights returned four members to Parliament in the 1990 election when her victorious National League for Democracy should have formed the government. But the military suppressed all opposition, placed Ms Suu Kyi under house arrest, banned the NDP, and jailed and tortured its leaders. Myanmar does not now have a single Rohingya MP. The Rohingyas have no voting rights. Politically, Ms Suu Kyi was blamed for acquiescing in the 2008 constitution which entitled the Tatmadaw — the military — to choose the vice-president and the home, defence and border affairs ministers, as well as control 25 per cent of parliamentary seats. But she probably knew the limits of her authority. Monday's coup,

the military's declaration of another year-long state of emergency, and the appointment of the commander-in-chief, Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, as the national leader, confirmed that the military insists on obedience. As the daughter of liberation hero, Gen. Aung San, who was assassinated on the eve of independence in 1948, she may be an iconic figure, and quite popular with Myanmar's majority. But the military wanted her only to bestow legitimacy on their iron grip by letting the government turn a pretty face to the world. Like all those who stage coups, the Tatmadaw says it will hold a "free and fair general election" after the emergency ends. When that will be and how free the exercise can be is anybody's guess. But if the future is uncertain, there are no prizes for identifying the cause of the present crisis. The timing of this second suppression of civilian government — there were two other coups in 1962 and 1988 — is easily explained. Myanmar's Parliament was scheduled to meet on Monday to approve of the new government formed as a result of the general election held in November 2020. The Army was determined to prevent this because more

than 70 per cent of voters defied Covid-19 and stringent pandemic restrictions to ensure a landslide victory for Ms Suu Kyi's NLD party. They inflicted a resounding defeat on the military-supported Union Solidarity and Development Party, which has been clamouring ever since for just such action. The military has now obliged the USDP by accusing the country's election commission of failing to address "huge irregularities" in the November election and is trying to justify its action by citing the need to preserve the "stability" of the state. But it is difficult to understand the Tatmadaw's long-term plans. If the emergency is for only a year, does it intend to restore truly civilian rule in February 2022? Since President Win Myint, the only person authorised under the constitution to declare a state of emergency, has also been detained, Monday morning's coup becomes an illegal operation. Moreover, Ms Suu Kyi's prompt and instinctive response was to urge her supporters to "not accept this" event and to "protest against the coup". In a letter written in preparation for her impending detention, she said the military's actions had put

the country back under dictatorship. The armed forces ruled Myanmar until 2011 when democratic reforms spearheaded by Ms Suu Kyi ended military rule. She spent nearly 15 years in detention between 1989 and 2010 and was internationally hailed as a beacon of democracy and awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. She is now a global heroine, and Monday morning's widely condemned coup was seen as much as an outrage against her as a national betrayal. Nevertheless, Lee Kuan Yew had feared that only the military could save Myanmar from civil war. Not for him P.V. Narasimha Rao's faith, expressed in Singapore to thunderous applause, that the answer to the problems of democracy was more, not less, democracy. He even saw Rao's defeat in 1996 as retribution for such colossal naivete. Despite a low opinion of Myanmar's generals, Lee saw the military as the only institution that could avoid civil war. Perversely, that may be true even now. The military remains the main protagonist in any Myanmarese power struggle, the only one that can crush all other contenders. The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author

Subhani



No new taxes? Budget's Mahabharata lessons



Mohan Guruswamy

While reading out the Budget proposals for 2021-22, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman crowed several times that there were "no new taxes". It reminded me of US vice-president George H.W. Bush, the 1988 Republican presidential candidate, who proclaimed at the nominating convention the famous words: "Read my lips, no new taxes!" These words defined his next three years at the White House, and the US economy, which cried loudly for a spending boost and hence higher taxation, tanked. His 1992 opponent was Bill Clinton whose campaign manager had the words "It's the Economy, Stupid!" printed/pasted on every desk of Mr Clinton's election office. George Bush Senior, whose tenure saw the collapse of the Cold War and a huge military victory in Iraq, lost the presidency to Bill Clinton after just one term. Even in a much poorer country and smaller economy like India, in the ultimate analysis it's the state of the economy that determines political longevity. But Prime Minister Narendra Modi's hucksters kept repeating all day on Monday and Tuesday this week that even a huge contraction of the economy and despite tens of millions of migrant workers being rendered jobless and homeless in a massive drop of the guillotine with the March 21, 2020, lockdown, Mr Modi won the state elections in Bihar later that year. But did he? The NDA polled 34.86 per cent of the popular vote while the Tejjashwi Yadav-led UPA got 36.20 per cent of the popular vote. The NDA

came to power with a very slim majority in the Assembly and the margins in as many as 11 seats were by just a few hundred votes. So to believe Mr Modi always wears a Teflon suit is quite erroneous. It's always the economy, stupid! Were there indeed "no new taxes"? Not only are there no new taxes for annual incomes below ₹15 lakhs, there are reductions. But for those with incomes above ₹2 lakhs per month, the new taxes impose a substantially higher burden. For a person with an annual income of ₹26.50 lakhs, the tax burden increases from ₹3.40 lakhs to ₹5.30 lakhs, or almost 60 per cent. This is not small change. There are taxes beyond I-T, which are borne directly by taxpayers, like those on petrol and diesel. Petrol will now cost ₹2.50 more per litre, while diesel will cost ₹4 more per litre. There will necessarily be a cascading effect on the economy. The transport sector consumes 72 per cent of the diesel refined in India so the five per cent hike in retail prices will have a noticeable ripple effect. Every lower middle class household will have at least a two-wheeler and higher petrol prices will be felt. Think of the consequences to the home delivery gig economy. Amazon, the biggest e-commerce player, pays a flat ₹10 per package, irrespective of weight, distance and volume. The deliveryman uses his own vehicle and pays for the fuel and other costs. We can now expect e-commerce goods to cost more. Individuals will also have to pay more for mobile phones, cars and imported tipples, among other things. So why claim "no new taxes"? As somebody said, two

things are certain to go up. One is us, the other is taxes! The newspapers and TV have trotted a range of people beholden to the government, for good or bad, from Kumaramangalam Birla to Ashok Hinduja, a panoply of CII and Fici presidents, and waiting economists to comment. All of them hailed it as a pathbreaking, visionary and breakout Budget. What else can they afford to say or dare to say? I saw Pranjoy Roy hosting the NDTV Budget show asking these worthies after letting them say their hosannas, if they had anything critical to say? Without exception, they hemmed and hawed, and apart from desiring more for their sectors said that all is great. But, not being professional actors, their mortification could not be fully masked. Decades ago, Lala Charat Ram, then Fici's president, when asked if he favoured the budget, blithely replied: "We favour all budgets, whatever the government!" But let us take a cursory look at the numbers. Total expenditure in FY20-21 was ₹34.50 lakhs crores. The proposed expenditure for FY21-22 is ₹34.83 lakhs crores (Page 3 of FinMin's 'Budget at a Glance'), so where is the money for a breakout? The vision painted is a long-term vision. For instance, Tamil Nadu going to the polls in a few months gets a declared appropriation of ₹65,000 crores to build 3,600 km of highways over the next five years, when what matters to people and the economy is what will be spent this

year. Similarly, Assam and West Bengal, also scheduled for the hustings soon, get ₹23,000 crores and ₹35,000 crores respectively. This is not even sleight of hand, is just political chicanery. The Centre intends to increase capital expenditure by ₹1.14 lakhs crores and proposes to spend ₹5.54 lakhs crores in FY21-22. This item rose by ₹1.30 lakhs crores in FY20-21 over FY19-20, so in effect the rate of climb has fallen. But on the morning after, every major newspaper lauded the increase in capital expenditure. Everybody has his or her own compulsions. Big brother is watching? Our leading pink newspaper had a banner headline shouting: "82% jump in health outlay". Another newspaper screams: "137% increase in health and well-being spend". But it adds sotto voce that this increase is mostly due to bringing the drinking water and sanitation (₹60,030 crores) and nutrition (₹27,000 crores) outlays, previously under different departments, under one caption of "health and well-being". There is a hike in outlay for health (₹71,269 crores), but it is a more modest nine per cent. When the Pandavas shouted "Ashvathama is dead", Drona, the commander of the enemy forces, assumed they were referring to his son. Refusing to believe them, he decided to check with Yudhishtira. "Tell me," said Drona to Yudhishtira, "Is my son dead?" Yes, Ashvathama is dead. Maybe it is an elephant? Maybe a man? He knew it was an elephant but had been forced by Krishna to lie or tell a half-truth. In the din of the war, all Drona heard Yudhishtira say was: "Yes, Ashvathama is dead." Clearly, Nirmala Sitharaman knows her Mahabharata well. The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.

LETTERS

PEG ELIGIBILITY AGE

The concession allowed to senior citizens 75+ relieving them from the obligation of filing income-tax returns is welcome. But how many of the citizens in that age group and beyond will benefit is a moot question. There are thousands of senior citizens below the age 75 who too survive merely on pension plus interest on bank investments the total of which is below the I-T exemption limit. Hence the finance minister can very well peg the age limit as 65+ for exemption of filing the IT returns. This will also reduce the workload in I-T offices.

S. Nagarajan Iyer, Coimbatore

SAVE PSUs

THIS REFERS to the proposal of the central government to resort to stake sale in public sector companies and financial institutions including two PSU banks to garner ₹1.75 Lakh crore in 2021-22, as announced by finance minister in the budget. It is pertinent here to mention that the public sector undertakings, which were coined as 'temples of economy' by our late prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, were started in different fields with an ambitious goal of achieving sustained economic growth and providing continuous employment to the masses. In order to create infrastructure like buildings, plant & machinery, etc., the central government has spent several thousand crores of public money over a long period of time. Hence, it owes the responsibility to run them viably by taking necessary steps like upgrading technology now and then.

M. Govindaraj, Gudiyatham

ENFORCE RULES

IT IS really shameful that the elected representatives of the people, whether in Parliament or Assembly, continue to boycott sessions after sessions, under one pretext or other. It seems they are more concerned about their own or their party's benefits than that of the people who elected them to power. It is high time the Supreme Court & Election Commission or concerned authorities, put an end to such disturbances. If an ordinary employee goes on such a protest, the company enforces the 'No work, no pay' rule and cuts the proportionate salary and perks. Why not the government bring in such a rule and cut the salary and perks of those members who disturb the sessions?

N. Mahadevan, Chennai

SHORT TAKES

SIVASANKAR GETS BAIL IN KERALA GOLD SCAM CASE

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC KOCHI, FEB. 3

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's former principal secretary M. Sivasankar was granted bail in dollar smuggling case by economic offences court here on Wednesday. He was released from Kakkanad sub jail in the evening.

The additional chief judicial magistrate court (economic offences) granted bail to the former principal secretary and directed him to furnish a bond of ₹2 lakh, two sureties for the like amount and appear before the investigating officials here every Monday.

THAROOR, PANDE, OTHERS MOVE SC TO QUASH FIRS

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, FEB. 3

Congress member of parliament Shashi Tharoor, senior journalist Rajdeep Sardesai, Mrinal Pande, Zafar Agha, Vinod K Jose, Paresh Nath and Anand Nath on Wednesday moved the Supreme Court for the quashing of multiple FIRs registered against them for alleged misreporting of violence relating to farmers agitation in the national capital on Republic Day.



GIRL RAPED, KILLED, HER 2 RELATIVES ALSO MURDERED

Korba, Feb. 3: A 16-year-old girl was allegedly raped and smashed to death with stones in Korba district of Chhattisgarh, police said on Wednesday.

The accused allegedly also killed the girl's father and his four-year-old granddaughter, who were along with her, they said.

The incident occurred near Gadhaproda village under Lemru police station area on January 29, but came to light on Tuesday, following which six accused were arrested in this connection, Korba Superintendent of Police Abhishek Meena said.

The accused were identified as Santram Majhiwar (45), Abdul Jabbar (29), Anil Kumar Sarthi (20), Pardeshi Ram Panika (35), Anand Ram Panika (25) and Uamshankar Yadav (21), all natives of Satrenga village in the district, he said. "The deceased man, a resident of Barpani village, had been working as a cattle grazer at the house of prime accused Manjhiwar since July last year," he said.

Based on the statement of the accused, police reached the crime spot, where they found the injured rape victim alive and two others dead.

Govt fightbacks global drive in support of protesting farmers

FROM PAGE 1

Criticising celebrity endorsements of the farmers' stir, the MEA added: "Before rushing to comment on such matters, we would urge that the facts be ascertained, and a proper understanding of the issues at hand be undertaken. The temptation of sensationalist social media hashtags and comments, especially when resorted to by celebrities and others, is neither accurate nor responsible."

New Delhi further said: "A very small section of farmers in parts of India have some reservations about these reforms. Respecting the sentiments of the protesters, the Government of India initiated a series of talks with their representatives. Union ministers have been a part of the negotiations, and eleven rounds of talks have already been held. The government has even offered to keep the laws on hold, an offer iterated by no less than the Prime

Minister of India."

Government sources said Twitter had unilaterally unblocked accounts and tweets despite specific order for blocking. Twitter is an "intermediary" and is obliged to obey direction of the government, sources said, adding that the platform may face penal action for not complying with government orders.

Government notice quoted more than half a dozen Supreme Court judgments including of

constitutional benches as to what is public order and what the rights of authorities are.

The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) had recent directed Twitter to block around 250 tweets/Twitter accounts that were making "fake, intimidatory and provocative tweets" on January 30 with hashtags accusing the Modi government of planning farmers "genocide" without any further substantiation.

Mufti accuses J&K police of torturing govt's opponents

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, FEB. 3

Former chief minister and People's Democratic Party (PDP) leader, Mehbooba Mufti, on Wednesday accused the intelligence wing of Jammu and Kashmir Police of joining Central agencies in "terrorising" the people of Kashmir.

In a series of tweets, Mufti alleged that J&K police's CID wing is also implicating the political opponents of the government in false cases. She claimed that after failing to substantiate charges against PDP's youth leader Waheed ur Rehman Para, the intelligence wing of the police replaced the head of its

Special Investigating Team (SIT) which was probing a case as he refused to be an accomplice in framing invented charges.

"J&K CID has joined the list of central agencies that work to terrorise Kashmiris & falsely implicate them. After failing to substantiate charges against PDP's @parawahid CID replaced the SIT head because he refused to be an accomplice in framing invented charges", she wrote on micro-blogging site.

She also alleged that Parra is being persecuted and tortured to admit the false allegations and that he has been kept under inhuman conditions. "Investigation against him has been fraudulent

and politically motivated from day one...he is being persecuted & tortured to admit the false allegations. Since an admission didn't happen he is being kept under inhuman conditions. This investigation has been fraudulent & politically motivated from day one", she tweeted.

The former chief minister said that the institutions meant to uphold law and order bring disrepute by getting involved in these deceitful investigations. "The norm dictating such deceitful investigations is 'Show me the man & I'll show you the crime'. Shameful & appalling that these actions discredit & bring disrepute to the institu-

tions meant to uphold law & order," she said in another tweet.

Parra was last month arrested by the J&K police in connection with a case related to an alleged nexus involving politicians, militants and their Over Ground Workers (OWGs) and sympathisers and illegal money transactions.

The police sources had said that the case in which the J&K police's Criminal Investigation Kashmir (CIK) wing arrested Parra was registered by it under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 sometime ago and has since filed over two dozen FIRs at various police stations across the Union Territory.

WORLD

Suu Kyi charged, now military gets legal basis to detain her

Ousted leader's government accused of not probing voter fraud allegations

Yangon, Feb. 3: Police levelled their first formal charge against Myanmar's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi, members of her party said on Wednesday, giving military authorities who staged a coup a legal reason to detain her at least through the middle of the month.

The charge — that Suu Kyi was in possession of illegally imported walkie talkies — came to light two days after she was placed under house arrest and appeared to be an effort to lend a legal veneer to her detention, though the generals have previously kept her and others locked up for years. The military announced on Monday that it would take power for one year — accusing Suu Kyi's government of not investigating allegations of voter fraud in recent elections. Suu Kyi's party swept that vote, and the military-backed party did poorly.

National League for Democracy spokesman Kyi Toe confirmed the charge against Suu Kyi that carries a maximum sentence

of three years in prison. He also said the country's ousted president, Win Myint, was charged with violating the natural disaster management law. A leaked charge sheet dated February 1 indicates they can be held until February 15. "It was clear that the military were going to look for some legal cases against the leaders of the National League for Democracy and especially Aung San Suu Kyi to actually legitimise what they've tried to do," said Larry Jagan, an independent analyst of Myanmar affairs. "And that is really a power grab."

Police and court officials in the capital Naypyitaw could not immediately be contacted. At the same time that authorities were working to keep Suu Kyi in detention, hundreds of lawmakers who had been forced to stay at government housing after the coup were told Wednesday to leave the capital city within 24 hours and go home, said a member of Parliament from Suu Kyi's party who is among the

Washington in touch with India and Japan on coup

Washington, Feb. 3: Terming the detention of Myanmar's top civilian leaders by the military "a coup", a senior State Department official has said that the United States is in constant touch with regional allies like India and Japan on the latest developments in Naypyitaw as the two countries have better contact with the military in the Southeast Asian nation.

Myanmar's military on Monday took control of the country for one year and detained all the top political figures, including de facto leader Aung San

Suu Kyi. "We have certainly been in frequent contact with our like-minded allies and partners in the region. You mentioned Japan and India. We're having daily ongoing conversations with them, and we certainly appreciate that some other countries have better contact with the Burmese military than we do, so we're continuing those conversations," a senior State Department official told reporters during a conference call on Tuesday.

The United States categorically said the military action in Burma is a coup.

"After a careful review of the facts and circumstances, we have assessed that Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of Burma's ruling party, and Win Myint, the duly elected head of government, were deposed in a military coup on February 1," the State Department official said.

Myanmar was called Burma before 1989 when the ruling junta, backed by the armed forces, changed its name. This was done to maintain the country's global image after a total crackdown on a pro-democracy movement.

— PTI

Suu Kyi's party has called for non-violent resistance, and people in Yangon honked car horns and banged on pots and pans on Tuesday night.

— AP

WHO team visits Wuhan lab at centre of speculation

Wuhan, Feb. 3: World Health Organisation investigators on Wednesday visited a research centre in the Chinese city of Wuhan that has been the subject of speculation about the origins of the Coronavirus, with one member saying they'd intended to meet key staff and press them on critical issues. The WHO team's visit to the Wuhan Institute of Virology was a highlight of their mission to gather data and search for clues as to where the virus originated and how it spread. "We're looking forward to meeting with all the key people here and asking all the important questions that need to be asked," zoologist and team member Peter Daszak said, according to footage run by Japanese broadcaster TBS.

Reporters followed the team to the high security facility, but as with past

visits, there was little direct access to team members, who have given scant details of their discussions and visits thus far. Uninformed and plainclothes security guards stood watch along the facility's gated front entrance, but there was no sign of the protective suits team members had donned Tuesday during a visit to an animal disease research center. It wasn't clear what protective gear was worn inside the institute.

The team left after around three hours without speaking to waiting journalists. Following two weeks in quarantine, the WHO team that includes experts in veterinary medicine, virology, food safety and epidemiology from 10 nations has over the past six days visited hospitals, research institutes and a traditional wet market linked to many of the first cases.

— AP

ANTIVIRAL CURE FOR COVID-19 IDENTIFIED

London, Feb. 3: Researchers have identified an antiviral drug which is highly effective against the Covid-19 causing Coronavirus, and could have major implications in how future disease outbreaks are managed. The team, including researchers at the University of Nottingham in the UK, found that the plant-derived antiviral, at small doses, triggers a highly effective broad-spectrum host-centred antiviral innate immune response against three major types of human respiratory viruses, including Covid-19.

— PTI

JEFF BEZOS TO STEP DOWN AS AMAZON CEO

New York, Feb. 3: Jeff Bezos, who founded Amazon as an online bookseller nearly three decades ago, will step down as the CEO of the \$1.7 trillion global e-commerce giant and will become the executive chairman, a move he said would give him "time and energy" to focus on his other ventures and passions.

Amazon, which announced on Wednesday that 2020 net sales increased 38 per cent to \$386.1 billion, compared with \$280.5 billion in 2019, said Bezos will transition to the role of Executive Chair in the third quarter of 2021 and Andy Jassy, CEO of the company's cloud business, Amazon Web Services, will become CEO at that time. Bezos has been Amazon's CEO since its founding in 1995. He oversaw its growth from an online bookseller into a \$1.7 trillion global retail and logistics giant, which has also made the 57-year-old into one of the world's richest persons.

"Amazon is what it is because of invention. We do crazy things together and then make them normal," Bezos said, adding that the company pioneered customer reviews, 1-Click, personalised recommendations, Prime's insanely-fast shipping, and much more.

TAMILIANS STAGE STIR IN LANKA

Colombo, Feb. 3: Tamil political and civil society groups in Sri Lanka held a protest rally on Wednesday, highlighting the grievances being faced by the community in the island nation.

They alleged that lands owned by Tamils are being grabbed and Tamil areas are being systematically populated with the majority Sinhala community since the military conflict ended in 2009. They claimed that Tamil political prisoners continue to languish in jails. Members of Tamil National Alliance said the court order was served on politicians, preventing them from taking part.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No. 04/MYS/2021 Dated: 20.01.2021

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders (IREPS) for the following works:

S/L	Name of Works	Approx. Value
1.	Assistant Divisional Engineer/ Sakaleshpur Sub Division: Greasing of rails in cavers with railways grease between Sakaleshpur - Subramanyas Road stations for a period of one year.	Rs. 34,15,749/-
2.	Assistant Divisional Engineer/ Mysuru Sub Division: Replacement of bridges having steel girder of span 9.14m with PSC slab in Bridge No. 119A (2X9.14m) in Mysuru - Arasikere section (Total-2 spans).	Rs. 71,04,536/-
3.	Assistant Divisional Engineer/ Chitradurga Sub Division: Mysuru - Cutting of tree branches at Colo Colony, Vontikoppal railway colony and Ashokapuram colony.	Rs. 13,23,000/-

Last date for submission of bids: Up to 11:00 hrs. of 11.02.2021

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Divisional Railway Manager (Works) Mysuru

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Short Term e-tender Invitation for Bids No: 33/2020-2021 Dated: 02.02.2021

Name of Work	Approximate value of work in Lakhs
Construction of New Rural Police Station Building at VIKKIRAMASINGAPURAM in Tirunelveli District	₹. 72.57 + GST 12%
Construction of Rural Police Station Building at DEVIPATTINAM in Ramanathapuram District	₹. 70.38 + GST 12%
Construction of New Traffic Police Station Building at KANNIYAKUMARI in Kannyakumari District	₹. 66.83 + GST 12%

1) For Tender document, visit www.tntenders.gov.in
2) Date and Time for downloading and submission of the tender documents: 09.02.2021 from 12.00 Noon to 15.02.2021 upto 06.00 P.M.
3) Date and time of opening of the e-tender - 17.02.2021 at 11.15 A.M.
4) Detailed Tender Notice available in the website www.tnphc.com & www.tnphc.com

Superintending Engineer, South Circle, TNPHC Ltd.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No. NIT/14/21/4, Dated 27.01.2021

South East Central Railway has implemented an e-system. On the behalf of the President of India, Principal Chief Material Manager, South East Central Railway invites e-tenders for supply of the following items. Advertised tenders will be dealt through e-procurement system only. No manual offer will be entertained. These tenders can be accessed under the link www.ireps.gov.in.

Sr. No.	Tender No.	Description	Tender Closing/Opening date & time	Qty.
1	03211024A	Boilder Suspension Hangers	18.02.2021 At 10:30 hrs	3400 Nos.
2	03212302	Slack Adjuster	At 10:30 hrs	122 Nos.
3	04211155	110 Volts Brushless	20.02.2021 At 10:30 hrs	860 Nos.

Railway reserve the right to issue any corrigendum to the tenders. Corrigendum & important Notice to vendors may be seen in the link www.ireps.gov.in.

Principal Chief Materials Manager
S.E.C. Railway, Bilaspur

Mamata says polls will be announced within a week

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, FEB. 3

Covid-19 pandemic has affected the revenues of Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation very hard as it has seen a whopping 21 per cent fall in the revenue income for the year 2020-21. It has compelled the richest civic body in the country to dip into reserves by taking an internal loan to fund the infrastructure projects in the city for the next fiscal year. The BMC had set a target of ₹28,448 crore from the revenue income for the year 2020-21. However, due to the coronavirus crisis, it had to revise the target down to ₹22,572 crore, facing a loss of ₹5,876 crore.

The BMC on Wednesday presented a budget of ₹39,038.83 crore for the financial year 2021-22. It is the richest municipal corporation in the country and its annual budget is higher than even small states like Kerala, Goa and north-east states.

"In the wake of Covid-19 pandemic, the need arose to divert our attention by all means to health activities to face the pandemic. Though we are successful in riding over the pandemic, the out-

break adversely affected the economy overall and there is a considerable downfall in the revenue," said Iqbal Singh Chahal, BMC chief.

According to civic officials, Covid-19 pandemic and consequent lockdown resulted in closure of the small as well as large commercial units, due to which property tax collection was adversely affected. The slow-down in real estate also led to reduction in assessment of new properties thus decreasing the revenue collection. Many ready possession flats in the city also remained unsold. In addition to that, the lockdown also resulted in restriction on movement of people and migration of labour which adversely affected the construction business in the city.

In Mumbai, the BMC has presently undertaken several major projects like Coastal Road, Goregaon-Mumbai Link Road, Mithi river works, sewage disposal, water tunnels, municipal hospital repairs etc which require large capital expenditure. For this, the civic body has proposed to raise ₹5,876 crore by way of Internal Loan from its reserves.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

NIT No. 20/2020-2021/BMC/MCH/CHENNAI Dated: 02.02.2021

FORM OF CONTRACT & FORM

For and on behalf of the Government of Tamil Nadu, sealed tenders will be received by the Superintending Engineer, P.W.D., Building Construction & Maintenance, Chennai, till 03.02.2021 upto 03.00 PM. For the work item the eligible contractors in P.W.D. Works Department as mentioned below on 18.02.2021 upto 03.00 PM, and will be opened by the Superintending Engineer on the same day in the presence of Contractors or their authorized agents at 03.30 PM.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Approximate value of work	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit & Period of Completion	Eligible Contractors	Cost of tender documents with GST (in Rupees)	Cost of Tender Document & EMD should be remitted in favour of
1.	Provision for AC arrangement in the new Contracted Temporary Quarters and Construction of Temporary Emergency and Covid Care facility at Sakaleshpur Hospital, Chennai-3.	Rs. 183.00 Lakhs	Rs. 23,00,000/- (Three) Lakhs	Class I in P.W.D. work-Monetary limit of Rs. 100 Lakhs and A.C. experience	Rs. 5,000/- "GST"	The Engineer, P.W.D., Electrical Division, Chennai

NOTES: - 1. Tender schedule can be downloaded free of cost from the website "<http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in>" or "<https://www.tenders.gov.in>". 2. Tender schedule can also be obtained from the Building Construction & Maintenance Office, Medical Store, Chennai. 3. EMD (5% of the value of the work) upto Rs. 5 Lakhs to be submitted in the form of bank drafts as mentioned above and to be submitted through Chennai in State Bank of India. Chennai-1. 2. Details of the work and the schedule of the work are given below: www.tenders.tn.gov.in or www.tenders.gov.in

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, P.W.D., Building Construction & Maintenance Office, Medical Store, Chennai-600 005.

DPR/19/TENDER/2021

Government of India

Central Hindi Directorate

Department of higher education

Ministry of Education

Shiksha Puraskar Scheme, Year 2020

Central Hindi Directorate, Deptt. Of Higher Education, Ministry of Education Govt. of India provides five Awards of the value of rupees one lakh each every year to encourage original writings in Hindi in the field of education. Application in the prescribed proforma for the year 2020 are invited as under:-

Scope:-

Under the scheme, excellent and thought-provoking books originally written in Hindi and non-Hindi-speaking authors in various fields of knowledge such as Sociology, Humanities, Basic Science, Science and Technology, Engineering and Medical Sciences, and other subjects related to education shall be entertained. Creative Literature, text-books. Thesis and translated books shall not be considered. Manuscripts are not accepted.

Eligibility:-

Writers from any part of India or publishers on their behalf may submit their books under the scheme. Non-resident Indians or foreign Scholars are also eligible. The officers and employees of Central Hindi Directorate shall not be eligible. The Officers/employees of other Ministries/Officers of Central Government/State Governments may apply with the prior permission of their Departments.

Rules:-

- Books published between year 2015 to 2019 shall only be considered.
- The published books must contain at least 200 pages each.
- The writers awarded once under the scheme shall not be considered again.
- Manuscripts shall not be considered under the scheme.
- The books awarded by the Government of India/Undertaking/institutions under it or by State government or professional institutions shall not be considered.
- Books received under the scheme shall not be returned.
- It is mandatory to submit Five copies of the books along with the application.
- The portion of the books displaying the name of the author and that of the publisher should be removed from three out of 5 copies of the book and must be rebound before sending to the Directorate. The remaining 2 copies should be sent as they are.

The prescribed application form can be downloaded from the Directorate's website i.e. www.chdpublication.mhrd.gov.in. Entry must reach to the address cited below by hand or by post within 60 days from the publication of this Advertisement.

(Gandhari Pantley)
Deputy Director (Vistar)
Central Hindi Directorate
West Block no. - 7, R.K. Puram,
New Delhi-110066
Tele: 011-26105211-234/212
Davp 21252/11/0007/2021

SHORT TAKES

Ajay re-elected as BFI president

New Delhi: Incumbent Ajay Singh was on Wednesday re-elected President of the Boxing Federation of India, comfortably defeating challenger Ashish Shelar in the polls which had an International Boxing Association (AIBA) observer in attendance.

Singh, also the chairman of Spicejet airlines, prevailed 37-27 in the elections held at a Gurugram hotel for a fresh four-year term. He will have a new secretary general by his side in Assam's Hemanta Kumar Kalita.

Kalita would be succeeding Maharashtra's Jay Kowli, who had decided against contesting for the post after extending his support to Shelar ahead of the elections. "I don't want to comment on the margin, I am happy that the BFI has reposed faith in me. I hope to live up to the expectations and take boxing forward," Singh said. — *PTI*

Serena sizzles; Osaka, Barty toil

Melbourne: Serena Williams continued her impressive Australian Open preparations with a straight-sets thrashing of Tsvetana Pironkova Wednesday, as world number three Naomi Osaka and top-ranked Ashleigh Barty struggled.

Williams has been in belligerent form at the Yarra Valley Classic and overpowered the Bulgarian with a 6-1, 6-4 victory in 74 minutes. The American will play world number six Karolina Pliskova or compatriot Danielle Collins in the quarter-finals. Osaka and Barty, however, were pushed to the brink, but both avoided early exits at Melbourne Park. Japan's Osaka was made to work hard against in-form Katie Boulter, but fought back for a 3-6, 6-3, 6-1 victory to reach the quarter-finals in the Gipsland Trophy. Meanwhile, Barty also had a fright in her match against Marie Bouzkova of the Czech Republic, but recovered from a second-set stutter to win 6-0, 4-6, 6-3. — *AFP*



Members of the Indian cricket team jog during a training session at M. A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Tuesday.

— BCCI

WISE CAPTAIN

My job is easy when Virat is around: Rahane

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC CHENNAI, FEB. 3

After punching above their weight against Australia, India are bracing for another mouth-watering heavyweight clash. But vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane made it clear that the team will not lower their guard when they take on England in a four-match Test series starting here on Friday.

Not one to rest on his laurels, Rahane said there was no room for complacency against England, who were the last team to win a Test series in India. "We know what happened in Australia was special. We did enjoy and celebrate the victory. But it's in the past now. We have a lot of respect for our opponents, England. We will not take them lightly. They are a balanced side. We have to play good cricket and back our strengths. It's all about staying in the moment," said Rahane.

Rahane had led India



Virat Kohli (right) catches a ball during a training session at MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Tuesday.

— BCCI

admirably in the absence of regular skipper Virat Kohli. Now that Kohli is back from paternity leave, Rahane is happy to hand over captaincy to him.

"Virat is back and that's a big positive. With him around, my job is really easy as I can take a back-seat and only need to help him. The captain has too many things on his mind. As his deputy, my job is to visualise situations and give inputs to him when-

ever he needs them. It helps us a lot. We always think about playing as a unit," he added.

The curator for the opening test has said the Chepauk wicket would sport an "English look" with lush green outfield and a decent amount of grass on the wicket. Rahane, however, feels it's too early to say how the wicket will behave. "Indian wickets always suit spinners. We have to wait and see," he added.

In Ravindra Jadeja's absence, Axar Patel is tipped to make his Test debut. Asked about the bowling combination for the opening Test, Rahane chose to keep his cards close to his chest. "The team management will decide the combination only on the match eve, after the final training session," he said.

As New Zealand have already qualified for the World Test championship, the India-England series will decide the other finalist. Rahane said India are not thinking that far ahead. "Right now, we are focussed on only the Chennai Test. The championship is still three-four months away. We deserve to be there though," he added.

Being in a bio-bubble with a lot of restrictions can be overbearing for athletes. But Rahane said Indian cricketers are mentally tough and know how to cope with it. "We are not mentally tired at all. We are a family. We are enjoying time in the team room," he said

ROOT WANTS TO BE PART OF T20 WC SQUAD

New Delhi, Feb. 3: England's Test captain Joe Root wants to be in the squad for the upcoming T20 World Cup though he understands it is not going to be a cakewalk for one of the country's finest batsmen in the game's traditional format.

Root will be appearing in his 100 Test when he leads England in the series opening match against India from Friday.

The focus, for now, is the four-match Test series but the technically sound Root has not given up on his T20 ambitions.

"For me, the most important thing is that England go into that World Cup with the strongest squad and give ourselves the best chance of winning there, and hopefully, I can be a part of that squad," Root said.

Trott backs Root to fire

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 3



Jonathan Trott

Having played a crucial role in England's historic Test triumph in 2012, Jonathan Trott knows a thing or two about what it takes to achieve success in India. It was Trott's gutsy hundred and his century stand with Ian Bell in the second innings that earned England a hard-fought draw in Nagpur and then a 2-1 series win.

Back in India, this time as England's batting consultant, the former middle-order batsman is helping Joe Root & Co. by sharing his expertise. "My message varies from player to player, but the fundamentals of playing in India are the same. It's really important to post a big first innings total. Otherwise, it's difficult to catch up. So, whether it's with the bat or ball, you have to start well. Playing spinners and executing your strategy against them are the most important things," said Trott who played 52 Tests.

Trott said India's bowling attack is not just about spinners as England are leaving no stone unturned in preparation for the much-awaited series. "We certainly saw that India's pace attack did really well in Australia. It's important to prepare for everything; confronting the new ball attack, the reverse swing and spin in the middle. To be able to play well in Chennai's humid conditions is not easy. You have to be fit and switched on all

the time," added Trott, winner of the ICC Player of the Year award in 2011.

England skipper Root has been leading from the front by scoring a truckload of runs. Trott said captaining in subcontinental conditions is a skill in itself. "Handling the conditions and rotating the bowlers accordingly is a big challenge for a skipper. But, captaincy comes naturally to Root. He is a good decision-maker and has a great presence around the guys as well. I have full confidence in his ability," he added.

POPE ADDED TO ENGLAND SQUAD

Surrey batsman Ollie Pope has been added to the England Test squad. Pope has fully recovered from a left shoulder injury sustained in August 2020. "The England medical team are satisfied with his progress and he is available for selection. He has trained with the full squad over the past two days," said an ECB release.

NATARAJAN NAMED IN TAMIL NADU'S VIJAY HAZARE SQUAD

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 3

Left-arm pacer sensation T Natarajan was on Wednesday named in the Tamil Nadu squad for the upcoming Vijay Hazare Trophy ODI tournament. But TNCA is awaiting BCCI's nod for him to play the tournament. Dinesh Karthik, who led the state to a memorable triumph in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament, has been named captain of the 20-member squad.

Squad: K Dinesh Karthik (Captain), B Aparajith (Vice captain), B. Indrajith, KB Arun Karthick, C Hari Nishaanth, M Shahrugh Khan, N Jagadeesan, L Suryaprakash, M Kaushik Gandhi, J Kousik, M Ashwin, R Sai Kishore, M Siddharth, R Sonu Yadav, K Vignesh, T Natarajan, A Aswin Crist, Pradosh Ranjan Paul, G Periyasamy and M. Mohammed.

FINANCIAL Chronicle

quickBITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	50,255.75 0.92
Nifty 50	14,790.00 0.97
S&P 500*	3,837.05 0.28
Dollar (₹)	72.95 0.02
Pound Sterling (₹)	99.59 0.27
Euro (₹)	87.80 0.29
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,387*232 0.48
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	58.75 2.25
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.084 -0.70
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.124 0.017

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Christie's Intl. Real Estate enters India

Global real estate consultant Christie's International Real Estate said it has entered into India in partnership with Delhi-based Himmat and Rohini Singh LLP to tap opportunities in luxury housing market. Christie's International Real Estate is a global network offering exclusive home and luxury real estate services to buyers and sellers worldwide. The company is part of British auction house Christie's.

Printed & Published by K Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed & Published at Deccan Chronicle Presses situated at SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai. Editor: T.Venkatram Reddy, RNI Reg. No. TNENG/2008/25473 Air surcharge Re 1. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle is prohibited.

Nifty-50 inching towards 15K milestone

Sensex breaks 50000 barrier

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, FEB. 3

The Sensex finally closed above 50000 for the first time, as the post Budget rally continued for the third consecutive session, with banks leading the gainers.

The index shot up to a new all-time high of 50526.39 before closing at 50255, gaining over 458 points, or 0.92 per cent.

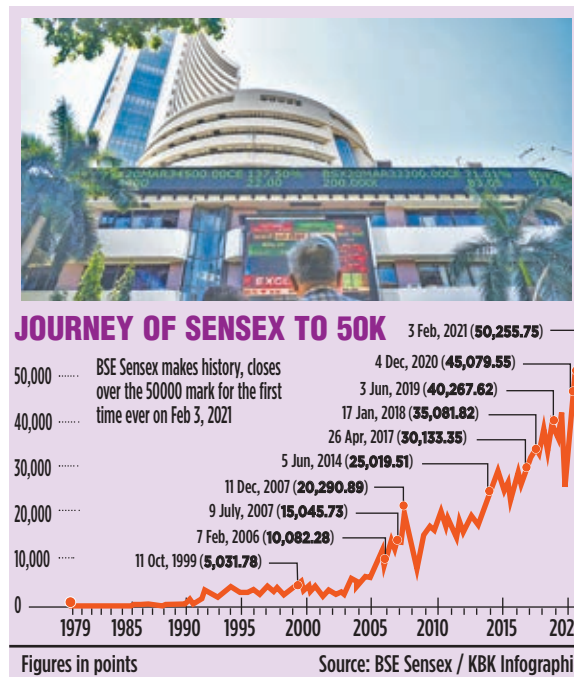
The Nifty-50 Index too clocked a new all-time high of 14868.85 and finally closed at 14789.95, up 142.10 points, or 0.97 per cent.

The broader market outperformed the benchmarks. The BSE Mid-cap Index gained 1.38 per cent while the BSE Small-cap Index gained 1.47 per cent.

The all-round rally helped BSE's market capitalisation touch a new all-time high of over Rs 198.43 lakh crore.

The 15000 milestone for the Nifty-50 looks possible with the Budget announcement adding to the upward market momentum right now, said analysts.

"We can expect some resistance to set in he Nifty-50 at around 15,000 level. The budget is fueling a rally in all economy-driven sectors, along with banking. The uptick in global markets, resumption of FII flows and strong earnings trend coming from Q3 results are other factors that are taking markets higher," said Jaideep Hansraj, MD



& CEO, Kotak Securities.

"In the last three sessions, almost all sectors have participated with many stocks showing eye popping moves. While the banking space already has rallied sharply in the last couple of sessions, other sectors such as Pharma and the PSE's were seen buzzing on Wednesday. The Nifty continues to clock new records and is now not far from creating a new history of 15000 mark," said Ruchit Jain, senior analyst-technical and derivatives, Angel Broking.

Expectations from third quarter results of telecom

major Bharti Airtel also buoyed market sentiments as the stock touched a new 52-week high of Rs 622.40 on the BSE.

"Bharti Airtel posted the highest ever consolidated quarterly revenues of Rs 26,518 crore—up 24.2 per cent year on year. Overall, numbers were above street expectation in all the fronts," said Keshav Lahoti, analyst, Angel Broking.

Foreign portfolio investors were net buyers of equities worth Rs 2,520.92 crore, who returned to the buying side post-Budget topping the more than Rs 6,000-crore buying on Tuesday.

INSIDER DEALS: BIYANI BARRED FROM MARKET FOR A YEAR

New Delhi, Feb. 3: The

Sebi on Wednesday barred Kishore Biyani and certain other promoters of Future Retail Ltd from the securities market for one year for indulging in insider trading in the shares of the company.

Apart from Kishore Biyani, who was the CMD and promoter of Future Retail Ltd (FRL), others facing ban are Future Corporate Resources Pvt Ltd, Anil Biyani and the FCRL Employee Welfare Trust.

In addition, the regulator has imposed a fine of Rs 1 crore each on Kishore Biyani, Anil Biyani and Future Corporate Resources. Besides, they have been asked to disgorge Rs 17.78 crore for the wrongful gains made by them.

Future Corporate Resources and FCRL Employee Welfare Trust have been directed to disgorge Rs 2.75 crore for the wrongful gains made by it.

Anil Biyani and Future Corporate Resources are promoters of FRL.

Sebi had conducted an investigation in the scrip of FRL to ascertain whether certain persons and entities had traded during the March 10, 2017 to April 20, 2017 period on the basis of Unpublished Price Sensitive Information (UPSI) pertaining to segregation of certain business of the firm.

Trading on the basis of UPSI violates provisions of Prohibition of Insider Trading norms. — *PTI*

Bezos to move as Amazon quarterly sales hit \$125 bn

JEFFREY DASTIN & AKANKSHA RANA FEB. 3

Amazon.com Inc founder Jeff Bezos will step down as CEO and become executive chairman, naming the head of its lucrative cloud computing division as successor in a sign of the company's transformation from web retailer to internet conglomerate.

This summer, Bezos, 57, will hand the keys of the world's largest online retailer to Andy Jassy, head of its cloud division Amazon Web Services known as AWS. The announcement on Tuesday settles a long-running question about who would replace the world's second-richest person at the company's helm.

Bezos is ending his role as CEO on a high note: the business he began as an internet bookseller 27 years ago is now one of the world's most valuable companies and posted three consecutive record profits after losses in decades prior. On Tuesday, Amazon reported quarterly sales above \$100 billion for the first time at \$125.6 billion.

Jassy, 53, joined Amazon in 1997 after Harvard Business School, founding AWS and growing it to a cloud platform used by millions of customers, the company's website said. He had been a clear contender for the top job since Amazon created two CEO roles years ago, the other held by recently retired consumer CEO Jeff Wilke.

Jassy has aimed to bestow a rock-star aura to keynotes at AWS's annual



Jeff Bezos

Las Vegas conference, speaking before over 60,000 attendees in 2019 after upbeat music preceded his talk.

Bezos, who already has

focused on other personal enterprises in years past, said in a note to employees posted on Amazon's website, "As Exec Chair I will stay engaged in important Amazon initiatives but also have the time and energy I need to focus on the Day 1 Fund, the Bezos Earth Fund, Blue Origin, The Washington Post, and my other passions." Blue Origin is Bezos' space company.

He added, "I've never had more energy, and this isn't about retiring."

— *Reuters*

ANDY JASSY USHERED IN CLOUD COMPUTING BOOM

MATT DAY FEB. 3

Incoming Amazon.com Inc CEO Andy Jassy cuts a low profile outside of the wonky world of cloud computing. But for much of the last decade he's been arguably the most important person in the tech industry.

The unit he leads, Amazon Web Services, has reshaped how companies buy technology, by simplifying computing services into their component pieces and offering them essentially for rent over the internet.

In the same earnings report in which Amazon said Jassy, 53, would succeed Jeff Bezos later this year, the company reported that AWS pulled in \$12.7 billion in sales in the fourth quar-

ter, making the unit a \$50 billion business on an annual basis.

"Andy brings the first principles thinking that has always been a part of what's made Amazon successful - deeply trying to understand the end customer, creating building blocks by which other people can build and then being good at rapidly iterating," said Matt McIlwain, a managing director with Madrona Venture Group in Seattle, who has closely tracked Amazon's rise. "He watched how Jeff approached problems. That's very important because there a lot of things that are deeply embedded in the culture of Amazon."

Jassy has led AWS since the launch of its first major services in 2006.

— *Bloomberg*