

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | SATURDAY 6 | FEBRUARY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 30°C
Min: 19°C
Rainfall: Nil

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Thai 24
Tithi: Navami/ Dashami
Star: Anusham
Rahukalam:
9 am to 10.30 am
Yamagandam:
1.30 pm to 3 pm
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.22 am
Zohar: 12.28 pm
Asar: 3.42 pm
Maghrib: 6.10 pm
Isha: 7.23 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.12 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.35 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 1.22 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 1.09 PM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+11,121)	(+92)
1,08,14,656	1,54,954

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+489)
TN: 8,40,849 12,379

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

10,56,62,723

DEATHS

23,00,912

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

219

worldometers.info

India fastest country to reach 5 million Covid vaccinations mark: Health ministry

New Delhi: India has become the first country in the world to reach the 5 million COVID-19 vaccination mark in just 21 days, the Union Health Ministry said as nearly 53 lakh beneficiaries have been administered shots under the countrywide inoculation exercise till Friday evening. The USA, the UK and Israel have reached 5 million vaccinations in 24, 43 and 45 simultaneous days respectively.

WB govt to reshuffle top police officials before Assembly poll

Kolkata: With the assembly election round the corner, the West Bengal government is likely to name Soumen Mitra as the new commissioner of Kolkata Police, a state government official said on Friday. Mitra will replace Anuj Sharma who may be made the additional director general (ADG) of the state CID, he said. Siddhinhath Gupta, presently the ADG of state CID may be named as the ADG (South Bengal).

COUNTER

POINT



Now, the phone is mightier than the pen and the gun!

SC grants interim bail to comedian Munawar Faruqui

New Delhi, Feb. 5: In a relief to comedian Munawar Faruqui, arrested in a case for allegedly hurting religious sentiments by passing objectionable remarks about Hindu deities during a show, the Supreme Court on Friday released him on an interim bail.

The top court also stayed the Madhya Pradesh High Court order of January 28, which had refused to grant him bail

noting that to “promote harmony” is one of the constitutional duties. It also stayed the production warrant issued against Faruqui by a trial court in Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh in connection with the FIR lodged in the state.

A bench of Justices R.F. Nariman and B.R. Gavi said issued notice on two petitions filed by Faruqui seeking bail in a case lodged in



Indore in Madhya Pradesh and clubbing and quashing of FIRs lodged for the same alleged offence in different

States. The top court sought response from Madhya Pradesh government on both the pleas filed by Faruqui and from Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Maharashtra governments on the plea seeking clubbing and quashing of FIRs.

“This being the case, we issue notice in both the petitions, and stay the Judgment of the High Court. The petitioner is released on ad-inter-

im bail on conditions to the satisfaction of the trial court. In the meantime, there shall be stay of the production warrants as well,” the bench said.

At the outset, advocate Saurabh Kirpal, appearing for Faruqui said, “This is a case of victimisation”. He said that allegations made in the FIR are vague in nature and procedure of arrest laid down by the court in its 2014

verdict was not followed. The bench noted the submission and said, “The counsel has pointed out to us that quite apart from the fact that the allegations made in the FIR are vague that the procedure contained in Section 41 CrPC as adumbrated by our Judgment in “Arnesh Kumar Versus State of Bihar and others” has not been followed before arresting the petitioner.” — *PTI*



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We bowled well in patches: Bumrah



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Vol. 16 No. 312 Established 1938 | 8 PAGES| ₹3.00

RBI MONETARY POLICY

Retail investors can buy gilt now

SANGEETHA G | DC CHENNAI, FEB. 5

In a structural reform that would put India among a group of select few countries, the Reserve Bank of India provided retail investors easy access to government securities. Projecting 10.5 per cent growth for next fiscal, the Central Bank kept the record low repo and reverse repo rate unchanged while continuing its accommodative stance.

“It is proposed to provide retail investors with online access to the government securities market- both primary and secondary — directly through the Reserve Bank (‘Retail Direct’),” RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said while announcing the decision of the monetary policy committee (MPC). Further to revive growth on a “durable basis”, the MPC left the repo rate unchanged at 4 per cent, which was slashed by 115 basis points since March last year. The reverse repo rate too was unchanged at 3.35 per cent — fourth time in



RB) Governor Shaktikanta Das announces the policy decision of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), via live streaming, in Mumbai, Friday. — *PTI*

a row. Finding inflation within the tolerance band, RBI projected 10.5 per cent real GDP growth for financial year 2021-22 in the range of 26.2 to 8.3 per cent in H1 and 6.0 per cent in Q3. Consumer Price Index inflation has been revised to 5.2 per cent for Q4 of this financial year from 5.8 per cent predicted earlier. CPI inflation could come down to 4.3 per cent by Q3 of next financial year. “After breaching the upper tolerance threshold continuously since June 2020, CPI inflation moved below 6 per cent in December for the first time

in the post-lockdown period,” Mr Das said. To support growth RBI continued its accommodative stance. The Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and the bank rate were left unchanged at 4.25 per cent. Further, RBI decided to gradually restore Cash Reserve Ratio in two phases in a non-disruptive manner to 3.5 per cent from March 27 and 4 per cent from May 22, 2021.

“CRR normalisation will open up space for a variety of market operations of the RBI to inject additional liquidity,” Mr Das said. Earlier, CRR of all banks was reduced by 100 basis points to 3 per cent till March 26, 2021. “In line with market expectations, the MPC voted unanimously to keep key rates unchanged. The stance continued to be accommodative as long as it is necessary to support growth as the economy comes out of the pandemic,” said Shanti Ekambaram, Group President — Consumer Banking, Kotak Mahindra Bank.

Centre agrees to allow extra attempt to UPSC aspirants

New Delhi, Feb. 5: The Centre Friday told the Supreme Court that it is agreeable to give an extra chance as a one-time relaxation to UPSC civil service aspirants, who had appeared in the 2020 exam amid the Covid-19 pandemic and are otherwise not age-barred. “Relaxation, only to the extent of providing one extra attempt for Civil Service Examination (CSE), specifically limited to CSE-2021, may be granted to only those candidates who appeared for CSE-2020 as their last permissible attempt and are otherwise not age-barred from appearing in CSE-2021,” the Centre told a bench headed by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar. “This relaxation for the candidates and to the extent as prescribed above, shall be a one-time relaxation only and shall apply only for appearing in CSE-2021 and shall not be treated as a precedent,” it told the bench. — *PTI*

Farmers take out massive rally in UP defying ban

SANJAY KAW & BHASKAR HARI SHARMA | DC NEW DELHI, FEB. 5

Defying a ban, thousands of people attended a mahapanchayat at Shamli in western Uttar Pradesh in solidarity with the farmers who have been protesting for over two months against the three agricultural laws at the borders of Delhi. Security, meanwhile, has been beefed up all across the Delhi-NCR area in the wake of the farmers’ unions calling a nationwide ‘Chakka Jam’ (blockading of roads) protest on Saturday.

Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait, who has become the face of the anti-farm law protests, said the ‘chakka jam’ will not take place in Delhi, Uttarakhnad and Uttar Pradesh, but will be done in other parts of NCR and the rest of the country, including the southern states.

“Dilli mein hum nahi kar rahe, wahan to raja ne khud qile-bandi kar li hai humare jaam karne ki zaroorat hi nahi hai (We are not going to do anything in Delhi, the king there has already forti-

fied it, there is no need for us to do a blockade now),” he said, in a veiled jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government over the fortification of the protest sites at the Ghaziipur, Tikri and Singhu borders.

Mr Tikait, however, did not attend the mahapanchayat in Shamli, saying his outfit had nothing to do with the meeting. But his brother Narendra Tikait attended it in his personal capacity. The state government had not given permission for the mahapanchayat, organised by the Rashtriya Lok Dal and Samajwadi Party, on the ground of the “unruly behaviour” of the farmers during the Republic Day tractor rally and “violation of Covid guidelines” by protesters. The administration even imposed Section 144 CrPC prohibiting the gathering of more than four persons from February 4 till April 3.

Despite the ban, a large number of people joined the mahapanchayat, where songs imploring the Prime Minister to listen to the voice of farmers played in the background.

Road blockade today; police heightens vigil

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA | DC NEW DELHI, FEB. 5

Ahead of the ‘chakka jam’ (road blockade) proposed by farmers, the Delhi police has made adequate security arrangements at the borders so that miscreants cannot enter the national capital. The police will also be monitoring the content on the social media.

“In view of the violence that took place on January 26, adequate security arrangements have been put in place by the Delhi police at the borders,” a police spokesperson said. Meanwhile, investigating the ‘toolkit document’ uploaded on a social media handle by teen activist Greta Thunburg, the police is now writing to Google to know the IP address from where it was uploaded.

Oppn couldn’t point out shortcomings, says Tomar

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 5

Asserting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the union government are committed to the welfare of farmers, agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Friday said neither the Opposition who criticised the three new farm laws, nor the farmers’ unions, which had held more than 10 rounds of discussions with the government, have been able to point out what is “kaala” (black) in the laws which they are claiming are “kaala kanoon” (black laws). Intervening in a discussion on the motion of thanks to the President’s address in the Rajya Sabha, Mr Tomar reiterated that the new laws are aimed at boosting farmers’ incomes and the government’s offer to amend them to assuage the farmers’ sentiments does not mean they are flawed.

Lok Sabha stalled for fourth day over farmer stir

New Delhi, Feb. 5: Lok Sabha proceedings were a virtual washout on Friday as relentless protest by Opposition members against the three farm laws continued for the fourth consecutive day, even as signs emerged that normal functioning could resume on Monday.

The government has always been ready for discussion and we are hopeful that Lok Sabha will function smoothly from Monday, parliamentary affairs minister Pralhad Joshi said.

While demanding repeal of the three laws, Opposition parties are also insisting on a stand alone debate on the farmers’ issue.

The government has maintained that Opposition can raise the issue during the debate on the motion of thanks. — *PTI*



ROOT SCORES 20TH TON

England captain Joe Root (right) and opener Dom Sibley put on 200 runs for the third wicket as the visitors made 263/3 on day one of the opening Test at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium on Friday. Root scored a century in his milestone 100th Test, while Sibley made a gritty 87. — *BCCI*

■ **Report on P6**

Pfizer withdraws application for emergency use of its vaccine

New Delhi, Feb. 5: Pharma major Pfizer on Friday said it has decided to withdraw its application for Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) of its Covid-19 vaccine in India. Pfizer was the first pharmaceutical firm to seek an emergency use authorisation from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) for its Covid-19 vac-

cine in the country, after it secured such clearance in the UK and Bahrain.

“Based on the deliberations at the meeting and our understanding of additional information that the regulator may need, the company has decided to withdraw its application at this time,” a company spokesperson said in a statement. — *PTI*

SHORT TAKES

2,000 kg of pickles donated to shrine in Tirumala

Tirupati, Feb. 5: An unusual offering of two tonnes of pickles was made by a devotee to the shrine of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala, near here, on Friday, an official of the temple said.

After offering worship at the temple, the devotee Kaaturi Ramu from Chirravuru village in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh handed over the pickles to TTD (Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam) Board chairman YV Subba Reddy at the temple-run pilgrims free meal canteen, the official told *PTI*.

Different varieties of vegetable pickles, including mango, lemon, tomato, and gongura were packed in plastic canisters, the official said.

Ramu requested the TTD to utilise pickles at the canteen where over a lakh meals were served daily to the visiting devotees.

Meanwhile, a TTD press release said the foundation stone would be laid on February for the construction of a replica of the temple of Goddess Padmavathi to be built by the TTD in Chennai.

The foundation stone would be laid by the seer of Kanchi Kamakota Peetham Vijayendra Saraswati, the release quoted the TTD Board chairman as saying. — *PTI*

New Assembly: Pondy Speaker plea to LS counterpart

Puducherry, Feb. 5: The Speaker of the Puducherry Assembly V P Sivakolundhu presented a petition on Friday to the Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to ensure that Central assistance of ₹200 crore was available for the construction of a new Assembly building here. The Assembly has to be shifted to alternative site so that the present building can be preserved as a monument, the petition said. The existing premises accommodating the Assembly is a heritage building constructed during the erstwhile French regime. — *PTI*

Religious fervour



Devotees taking part in the annual Brahmotsavam festival of Parthasarathy Swami temple in the city on Friday. — *DC*

Man dies after earth caves in while digging drainage trench

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 5

A 28-year-old man died and another was injured when a 10-ft-deep pit dug up for underground drainage work caved in West Tambaram on Friday morning.

The incident took place when Sekar (28), Bharathi (24), residents of Tiruvottiyur in North Chennai were digging a trench for drainage on Kadaperi Burma colony in West Tambaram. They had been employed by a private firm under contract with the Tambaram municipality.

Police said that Sekar and Bharathi were inside the ten-feet-trench, digging it, while another worker was clearing the debris.

A little after 10 am, one side of the trench caved in trapping the two men underneath.

Other workers on the



Officials from the Tambaram municipality and Chennai metro water inspect the mishap site in West Tambaram on Friday. — *DC*

site and residents of Burma colony tried to rescue the men but in vain. Personnel from Tamil Nadu Fire and rescue services rushed to the spot

Kerala man reunited with family after six years

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 5

A 30-year-old Kerala man was reunited with his family on Friday, after a six years long wait, thanks to social workers at Udavum Karangal.

Udavum Karangal took Mr Sopan (30) from Kerala on December 12, 2015. He was transferred to the home from Kerala's Divyaraksha Social and Charitable Society care, treatment and restoration.

On arriving at Udavum Karangal he was given extensive psychiatric treatment, rehabilitation and care. It was after the medication that the social workers there started getting information about him.

He remembered Suresh kirana shop near his house at Belakalla village, Koppal district. Based on this piece of information, the social workers were able to trace the owner of the shop, Suresh. Through him, the workers reached Sopan's brother Peer Saheb and uncle Khaja Sab. On receiving the news about Sopan, Peer Saheb along with his uncle Khaja Sab rushed to Udavum Karangal Thiruverkadu on Thursday.

Peer said that Sopan was mentally sick for a long time and one day before six years, he went missing.

"It was an emotional reunion between two of the brothers on Thursday. They were counseled for con-

tinuing psychiatric treatment and regular medication besides family love and affection, to avoid further relapses of his problem. Sopan was given free medicines for a month as prescribed by the psychiatrist, says Vidyaaakar, the founder of Udavum Karangal.

In another reunion on the same day, a 25-year-old man who was found loitering aimlessly near Madhavayal Government hospital was rescued, treated at Udavum Karangal and reunited with his family.

The man identified as Mohammed Jaseem was rescued on 3rd February by the social workers. After he was found to be mentally ill, he was given

proper medication and within two days, he started opening up and started to divulge small information about his family and place of living.

He disclosed that his father worked in a hotel in Pondicherry. He also gave the phone number of his mother, Jarina Begum. He was married to a woman in Mumbai, however the woman left him as he did not have a job.

The social workers of Udavum Karangal contacted his mother and she was happy to know that her son Jaseem was found at last. On learning about her son, Jarina came to Udavum Karangal in Thiruverkadu on Thursday to take him back home.

Pseudoephedrine seized at Chennai airport

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 5

In a huge haul, 24.5 Kg pseudoephedrine worth Rs 2.45 crore were seized by Chennai air cargo customs at the airport.

According to air cargo customs, based on intelligence, they intercepted an export consignment suspected to contain narcotic substances at air cargo export shed in Meenambakkam, destined for Australia.

Cartoons declared as kitchenware like coconut scrapers, electric rice cookers, non-stick pans were examined. On cut opening carton containing coconut scraper, it was noticed that 3 small wooden boxes were ingeniously fitted in the frame of the scraper. On opening the boxes a polythene bag containing

white powder was found concealed inside.

The powder was taken in for laboratory testing and tested positive for pseudoephedrine. Pseudoephedrine is a sought-after chemical precursor in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine.

A total of 12 polythene bags containing 24.5 kg of pseudoephedrine valued at ₹2.45 crore were recovered from four coconut scrapers and were seized under the NDPS Act 1985.

It was found that a businessman from Chennai was sending this consignment to Australia. Searches were carried out and the exporter Vivekanandan(43), has been arrested. Further investigation is in progress.

In another seizure at the Chennai airport, customs

officials have received unclaimed gold bars worth ₹62 lakh hidden in the restroom of a private airlines flight, which arrived from Dubai.

The gold bars weighing 1.2 kg were found by the airline's staff and handed over to the Chennai customs.

According to the official sources, while the private airlines' staff were cleaning the aircraft that arrived from Dubai, they found bundles wrapped in adhesive tape, which were found to be gold bars on opening.

Gold bars with foreign marketing, weighing 1.2 kg and valued at ₹62 lakhs were recovered.

It has been seized as unclaimed under the Customs Act and an investigation is on, the officials said.

COFFEE-BREAK

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



Aries: Your idea is to relax and you want to spend time with like-minded people and discuss subjects, which interests you. All will be fine on the work front.



Taurus: This is a phase of empowerment and possibilities with exciting changes in the near future. Love and respect will be reciprocated by your partner.



Gemini: Artistic and creative endeavors will go well this evening. The stars are thrumming with power and you will feel your batteries all charged up and ready to go.



Cancer: On the family front, the time has come to take some important decisions; do not delay. You have the energy to work and play today.



Leo: On the domestic front, you can make significant progress, based on what you have already achieved. It's a superb day all round. Keep working hard.



Virgo: You may give a reason to your romantic partner to feel upset and neglected. Focus on your inner or creative life today. Expect to have guests or forge new associations.

You share your b'day with

Angad Bedi, Bollywood actor. He is best known for his roles in Pink, Dear Zindagi, Tiger Zinda Hai, Inside Edge, Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl, Ungli and The Zoya Factor amongst others.



Libra: Work behind the scenes or take a break from things if you can, because you will not enjoy the best of health today. Spend quality time with children.



Scorpio: You have been working behind the scenes, doing a lot of research on a new project, now is the time to put your knowledge and work before those who matter.



Sagittarius: Watch out for a tendency to be arrogant. Especially in the company of old friends you need to be your normal self and not sign your own laurels.



Capricorn: You are full of energy and in a mood to be more assertive than normal. But you may have to face delays in your plans. You will be restless. These delays are only short term.

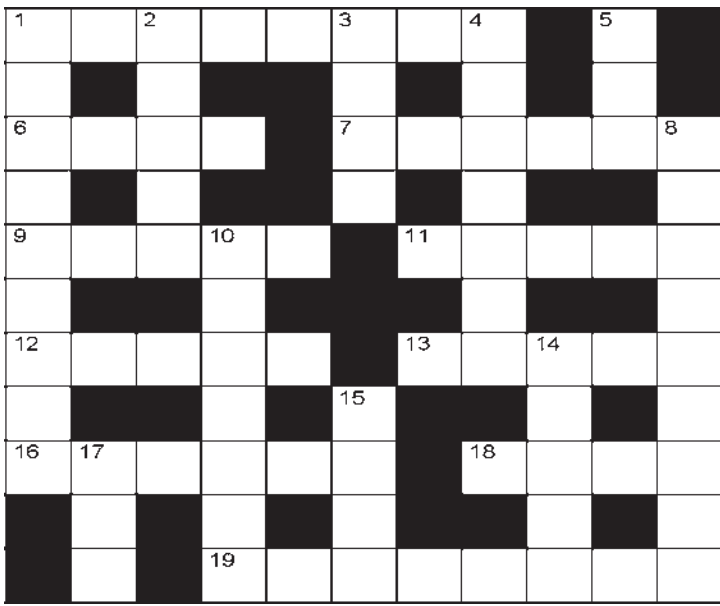


Aquarius: If you need help, it is likely to arrive just in time to save the day, and it may come from hidden or unexpected sources. Some of you will involve yourself to raise funds for charity work.



Pisces: Don't close your eyes to the offer but at the same time do not get lured by lucrative offers. Some of you may even sign a new deal or start planning for another branch of your company.

QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

1. Flying (8)
6. Curved structure (4)
7. Corset (anag) (6)
9. Dance club (5)
11. Drink deeply (5)
12. Saltpetre (5)
13. Living fence (5)
16. Mended with stitches (6)
18. Skin eruption (4)
19. Distributed sparingly (8)

Down

1. Left in the lurch (9)
2. Speed contests (5)
3. Corrosion (4)
4. Shut out (7)
5. Menagerie (3)
8. Invigorated (9)
10. Death investigator (7)
14. Waste pipe (5)
15. Check and correct (4)
17. Fuss (3)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

Across: 6. Battleship, 8. Crash, 10. Force, 13. Predecessor, 14. Gavel, 17. U-turn, 19. Assembling.

Down: 1. Saga, 2. Itch, 3. Reef, 4. Char, 5. Appearing, 7. Scapegoat, 9. Sedge, 11. Onset, 12. Act, 15. Vase, 16. Lump, 17. Ugly, 18. Ulna.

Word Mine

C
I
I
N
P
I
N
T
E

TODAY'S RATINGS: 5 AVERAGE: 6 GOOD: 8 OUTSTANDING

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

ANSWERS: cent, celtic, epic, insect, incipient, insect, insect, insect.

North	South
♦ A K R ♦	♦ K 5 ♦
♦ H R 2 ♦	♦ H R 2 ♦
♦ K ♦	♦ K ♦
West	East
♦ A 3 ♦	♦ Q 10 9 7 ♦
♦ Q 5 2 ♦	♦ P 8 3 ♦
♦ K 10 7 3 ♦	♦ 5 2 ♦
Declarer: West	North
Vulnerable: Neither	South
West	North
♦ A 3 ♦	♦ Q 10 9 7 ♦
♦ Q 5 2 ♦	♦ P 8 3 ♦
♦ K 10 7 3 ♦	♦ 5 2 ♦
2♦	2♦
Opening lead	♦ 7

Jumble

NUHDO
PLIME
MITFIS
CPTEKO

Print answer here: _____

Saturday's Jumble: ODDLY SWIFT WICKED ACHORD

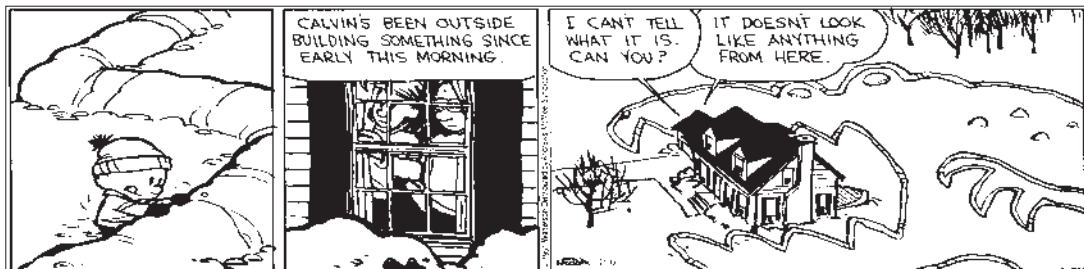
Answer: When she saw her mom upside-down doing a headstand, the girl — SAID WOW!



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

(Answers tomorrow)

CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs



bridge
PHILLIP ALDER

ONE OUT AND TWO IN IS GOOD BUSINESS

When entries are hard to find, it might be best to concede one trick unnecessarily to your opponents.

In today's deal, for example, South is in three no-trump, and West has led a fourth-highest club seven. What should declarer do?

In your partnerships, would South's two-diamond advance be forcing or only invitational? I like forcing, whereas a majority treat it as

encouraging but nonforcing. Here, though, North and South pushed on, North hoping that West's opening bid would help to steer his partner's play.

In theory this thought was correct, but declarer played without proper analysis. He called for a low club from the board and won with his nine. Then he continued with a diamond to the king and a heart to his king and West's ace. A second club ran to declarer's

North	South
♦ A K R ♦	♦ K 5 ♦
♦ H R 2 ♦	♦ H R 2 ♦
♦ K ♦	♦ K ♦
West	East
♦ A 3 ♦	♦ Q 10 9 7 ♦
♦ Q 5 2 ♦	♦ P 8 3 ♦
♦ K 10 7 3 ♦	♦ 5 2 ♦
Declarer: West	North
Vulnerable: Neither	South
West	North
♦ A 3 ♦	♦ Q 10 9 7 ♦
♦ Q 5 2 ♦	♦ P 8 3 ♦
♦ K 10 7 3 ♦	♦ 5 2 ♦
2♦	2♦
Opening lead	♦ 7

queen. South cashed the diamond ace and played another diamond. That established winners, but declarer had no hand entry left and went down two.

Declarer has a club winner in his hand, but he needs to keep it on the back burner. He must win the first trick with dummy's club ace, overtake the diamond king with his ace and continue with the diamond jack, driving out West's queen to establish a total of

five diamond winners. Suppose West shifts to a spade. South wins on the board and plays a club to his queen and West's king. After taking the next spade in the dummy, declarer leads a club to his jack and cashes the diamonds. He takes two spades, five diamonds and two clubs. Watch your entries and your communications.

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SHORT TAKES

Jallikattu stir cases to be withdrawn

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 5

Cases filed against the protestors who participated in the agitation demanding the restoration of jallikattu in 2017 will be withdrawn, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami announced on Friday.

Replying to the motion of thanks for the Governor's address in the state Assembly, Palaniswami said that only those cases filed on charges like assault of police personnel or setting fire to public property could not be withdrawn.

The government had taken the decision in view of the fact that the agitation was for a genuine cause, he said, regretting that some unpleasant incidents took place during the state-wide agitation.

The Chief Minister's customary reply referred to its various activities in the past and said that it had lived up to the expectations of the poor people by addressing their issues.

The lengthy reply listed the various measures taken for agricultural development, improving food production, combating the coronavirus crisis, industrial progress, providing protection to fishermen and everything that had been done.

The speech was peppered with lines from MGR film songs and also passages from Bharathiar poems.

■ City may be first in country to have such system

Groundwater monitoring system to come in Chennai

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, FEB. 5

With metro water installing 200 automatic groundwater level recorders one in every ward and 20 rain gauges, one each in 15 zones as well as five lakes, the authorities plan to make Chennai, the country's first city, to have a comprehensive automatic groundwater monitoring system.

T. Prabhushankar, executive director, Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB), told DC that the system will help to gather data from strategic locations spread across 420 sq.km. and would assist the detailed study on groundwater level and quality, and check over-exploitation of resources.

The real-time information

gathering will also help Metrowater effective and equal distribution of quality water across the city, especially during summer. We can act with more efficiency according to the requirement of the particular area. In case there is depletion in the water table in one depot, it would be an indicator to reallocate water in a quick manner.

Apart from this, making the information accessible to residents will help to create attitudinal changes among them. If one person identifies the GW table is very bad in their locality, they can change towards the exploitation for his domestic purpose, and spread the information to their community as well. Since the GW data is so dynamic, we think this system will play a pivotal role in changing effi-

ciency of Metrowater. It's the first comprehensive GW monitoring system when it comes to Metro cities in the country, he said.

"As the system is operational, residents can access real time data of groundwater, rainfall and lake water levels via portal in Chennai Metro Water website http://122.183.188.248:8080/CMWSSB-web/onlineMonitoringSystem/waterLevel.

Anyone can select the areas out of the 200 locations and can have a real-time record of groundwater levels in their respective locality. The portal will be updated with separate daily reports with downloadable format. Also reports of longitudinal GW data of a particular location over the selected time period can also be downloaded. And historical GW data right

from 1987 is also available on the portal. Similarly, real-time rainfall data along with history since 1965 and daily lake levels can be accessed from the portal. This is a milestone in the country in quantifying the water cycle and also making information accessible to the citizen," he said.

As part of the system, a total of 200 borewells with digital water level recorders and sensors were constructed. The sensors will transmit real-time data and help assess the fluctuation in the groundwater table.

It will also help to assess the impact of rainwater harvesting (RWH) measures in each area and rectify deficiencies in the system. According to officials, at least nine lakh RWH structures are already available across the city.

Seal illegal tourist cottages in MTR, urge greens

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, FEB. 5

The way in which the local body administration in the Nilgiris is moving about to close illegal tourist resorts, cottages and homestays in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve buffer zone limits has attracted criticism from activists.

The Nilgiris Environment and Animals Protection Samithi (NEAPS) wanted the administration to fully seal such places, instead of merely issuing notices and warning those who run such illegal tourist cottages and homestay facilities.

Following the death of a wild elephant due to burn injuries sustained by a fireball flung towards it by

workers in an illegal tourist resort in the MTR recently, and the subsequent legal notices served by activist 'Elephant Rajendran', the local body administration here issued notices to 55 such unauthorized tourist resorts, cottages and homestays, and warned them of severe action.

As the owners of such properties promised the officials that they will not use their buildings to run tourist cottages, the local body administration shied away from sealing such buildings.

Meanwhile, B.K. Kumaran, president, NEAPS, charged that in the name of hosting their relatives as guests, most of these unauthorized tourist cottages,

resorts and homestay facilities are accommodating tourists in their premises, which is also illegal. Without the connivance of concerned officials and police administration in Masinagudi, this type of illegal tourism will not happen.

"It is high time the district administration interferes in this issue and seals all such unauthorized tourist cottages, homestay facilities in the MTR buffer zone. No one understands why the local body officials are trying to show mercy on those running illegal tourist cottages. We urge that the vigilance department inquire into this and book the errant revenue and local body officials," Kumaran added.

Ryots laud farm loan waiver

G. SRINIVASAN | DC
THANJAVUR, FEB. 5

Farmers of the composite Thanjavur district, by and large, welcomed the waiver of crop loans borrowed from cooperative credit societies, announced by Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, in the assembly on Friday. However, they demanded that loans borrowed from nationalised and private banks should also be waived if all farmers are to be benefitted.

Sundara Vimalanathan, secretary, Thanjai district Cauvery farmers protection association, said that farmers who borrowed from cooperative credit societies constitute only 20 per cent. The remaining 80 per cent farmers have borrowed from nationalised and private banks. Steps should be taken to see that these loans are also waived.

He expressed regret that

the chief minister has not passed resolutions in the assembly protesting against the three legislations of the Central government, against which the farmers are agitating. "Some chief ministers have done that. If our chief minister also had done that, we would have appreciated him more," he said.

S. Ranganathan, secretary, Cauvery delta farmers welfare association, said, "I am absolutely happy about the announcement. I hope that it will be implemented in letter and spirit immediately." However, he suggested rescheduling of loans borrowed by farmers from nationalised and private banks to three installments with interest waiver. As majority of farmers have borrowed loans from nationalised and private banks, this should be considered, he added.

V. Jeevakumar, district

vice-president, All India Kisan sabha, said that loan waiver has come at a time when farmers had been hit by rain and the pandemic. There should not be any discrimination in implementing the waiver, and it should cover all farmers (ie) big, small and marginal.

N. V. Kannan, district secretary, Tamil Nadu vivasayil Sangam, affiliated to the CPI(M) said that besides cooperative loans, crop loans given by nationalised and private banks also should be waived. Another farmer, Rangarajan from Kuthur, said that most of the farmers who borrowed from cooperative credit societies are members of the ruling AIADMK. Waiver will benefit only them and to some extent other farmers. Waiver of loans borrowed from nationalised and private banks is essential.

Rlys to take up Madurai-T'kudi line, other TN projects

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 5

John Thomas, General Manager, Southern Railway, said that the Central government has planned to take up the Madurai - Tuticorin line via Aruppukkottai and the Rameswaram - Dhanushkodi line, and has allocated ₹94 crore in the current budget.

Addressing a virtual meet-

ing on Friday, John said the government allowed new line projects - Madurai - Tuticorin via Aruppukkottai and Rameswaram - Dhanushkodi line and allotted ₹20 crores and ₹75 crores, respectively. The government has allocated ₹200 crores for doubling of Maniyachi - Nagercoil line, and another ₹300 crore for the Madurai - Maniyachi -

Tuticorin doubling project.

It allotted ₹25.5 crore for the Omalur - Mettur dam line doubling project, and it will be completed in March 2021. ₹35 crore has been allocated for the Salem - Magnesite - Omalur doubling line which will be completed in August 2022.

John said that the Indian Railways has been allocated

an amount of ₹1,07,300 crore under 'Gross Budgetary Support' (GBS), of which the Southern Railway has been allocated a substantial amount of ₹3,855 crore, including stores and manufacturing expenses.

He stated that allocation under capital/GBS is very key as land acquisition for doubling and new lines have to be done. This will give a

fillip to the infrastructure in the Southern Railway.

In Tamil Nadu, 27 ongoing projects costing ₹30,961 crore are under different stages of planning and execution.

In Kerala, nine ongoing projects costing ₹8,799 crore over 458 kms length of lines falling fully/partly in the state are under different stages of planning and execution, he added.

Centrally-funded technical institutions breach reservation policy, says SFI

A. ARUL PALANI | DC
CHENNAI, FEB. 5

The Centrally-funded technical institutions continue to violate the reservation policy of the government and representation of SC/ST and OBC is very minimal in these institutions. The Union Minister of Education disclosed this in response to questions raised by Rajya Sabha members - Elamaram Kareem and Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya, on Thursday in the Rajya Sabha.

The Central Executive Committee of Students' Federation of India (SFI), in a release, stated that the repre-

sentation of SC, ST and OBCs, once again has proven to be a blatant disregard for Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admissions) Act 2006 in the Centrally-funded technical institutions.

The Central executive committee of the Students' Federation of India condemned the intuitions for their deliberate attempt to bypass the reservation norms. The Union Education Ministry also failed to solve the issue of under-representation in technical education and research, even after decades of reservations being in existence. The situation is grave and deplorable, hence

we demand an immediate redressal of the same, the committee stated.

The SFI has also reiterated demand for a legislation to check proper implementation of reservation, and also stop caste-based discrimination. Allying that the IIM, Ahmedabad, had scrapped reservation policy, the SFI demanded the Union Ministry of Education to release a white paper on the social category-wise distribution of admissions at all programs offered at the UG, PG and PhD levels of every Central educational institutions for the last five years, along with their gender-wise data.

Pondy CM assures Taiwanese investors of all support

Puducherry, Feb 5: Chief Minister of Puducherry V. Narayanasamy said here on Friday that the territorial government was ready to support investors from Taiwan for industrial development in the Union Territory.

After holding discussions with the Director-General of Taipei Economic and Cultural Centre (TECCC), Chennai, Ben Wang, the Chief Minister told reporters that he had informed the foreign official that land for industries was

already available in Karaikal, an enclave of Puducherry.

Narayanasamy said the visiting Taiwanese team was interested in collaborating with Puducherry for promoting industrial enterprises.

The expertise Taiwan has in producing e-vehicles, semi conductors, IC chips, manufacture of computers, mobile phones and also fish processing activities could be of help for promoting industrial activities here, the Chief Minister said.

—PTI

DMK challenges govt on release of 7 Tamils

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 5

Governor Banwarilal Purohit's refusal to take a decision on the release of the seven Tamils convicted in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case led to the DMK president M. K. Stalin pointing fingers at the AIADMK government, accusing it of taking the people for a ride on the issue.

If the Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami was willing to meet the President to plead for the release of Tamils, DMK MPs would accompany him, Stalin said in a statement on Friday. Earlier law minister C Ve Shanmugham told reporters that the government was consulting legal experts to find a way to secure the release of the seven persons languishing in jail for three decades.

Farm loan waiver a political stunt, says DMK prez Stalin

DC CORRESPONDENT
THOOTHUKUDI, FEB. 5

Farm loan waiver was done not in the interest of farmers but a political stunt to derive mileage for the polls, criticised in DMK president M. K. Stalin.

He addressed a meeting in Nattathi village

in Srivaikundam constituency Thoothukudi district, on Friday evening.

On the release of Perarivalan and six others jailed in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, Stalin said that



Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami staged a drama on the issue. "CM met the governor on the issue only after we urged the governor to take a deci-

sion to release the seven," said Stalin. He blamed the chief minister and the government for not properly representing the issue to the governor, thus delaying the matter. "The chief minister played the same drama in the Neet issue," Stalin added.

■ Move will save up to ₹35k crore over five years for state government

Freeze expenses, retire coal power plants, say experts

A.ARUL PALANI | DC
CHENNAI, FEB. 5

The cash-strapped Tangedco and the state government can save up to ₹35,000 crore over five years through a combination of retiring 3.1 GW of old coal power plants, freezing expenditure on 3.5 GW of new plants at early stages of construction and availing of cheaper power to meet future demand, said

an analysis conducted by research group 'Climate Risk Horizons'.

The report of 'Recipe for Recovery' points out that Tangedco's participation in the UDAY scheme in 2017, failed to revive the power distribution companies (Discom). The Centre recently approved a bailout package of ₹30,230 crore for Tangedco, but without measures to either lower the cost of power supply or

raise tariffs, energy experts fear that dues would continue to accumulate.

The report identifies cost reduction and savings opportunities available through retirement of coal power plants that are over 20 years old. Such plants are typically less efficient, more polluting, and are now legally required to meet the 2015 air and water emission norms notified by the ministry of environment,

forests and climate change. The deadline for compliance with the norms is 2022, but so far, little progress has been made.

Retiring 3.1 GW of old plants (instead of incurring the capital expenditure to retrofit them will save approximately ₹1,670 crore in avoided costs. These plants are Thoothukudi, Mettur, North Chennai and NLC II Stage I. Replacing the scheduled generation

from these old plants with cheaper electricity, either from renewable or through purchases on the open market, will save another ₹1,459 crore annually (₹7,3 00 cr over a five year period), as cheaper options are now available.

"These old plants are not on track to meet the 2022 deadline for compliance with the air pollution norms. Rather than incurring 1,600 crores or more on

retrofits, it is more economic to retire them. The power surplus situation in the state and country, as well as cheaper renewable energy creates a potential win-win situation for Tamil Nadu's consumers through retiring these assets", said report author Ashish Fernandes of Climate Risk Horizons.

Tamil Nadu's coal fleet has been running below 60 percent plant load factor

for the last three financial years. Moreover, over three GW of new coal plants are nearing completion and expected to be commissioned in the next 12 months, ensuring surplus electricity generation.

Sundarrajan G of 'Puvulagin Nanbargal' said, "The coal plants in question are responsible for significant pollution in terms of both air emissions and fly ash. Retiring them is the right

thing to do environmentally. The government must re-examine the continued construction of coal plants and shelve those that are at an early stage."

As many as 3.5 GW of state-owned plants are in the early stages of construction - Uppur, Udangudi and Ennore Expansion. Freezing expenditure by halting construction on these plants would save over ₹26,000 crore.



DECCAN Chronicle

6 FEBRUARY 2021

US remarks a wake-up call Delhi can't ignore

The American government's statement on Thursday — in which the right of peaceful protest, free speech, and unhindered access to the Internet were flagged as signs of a "thriving democracy" — is a straightforward response to the egregious steps of the Narendra Modi government in recent days. These are the first substantive public observations on India by the two-week-old Biden administration. The message — in the backdrop of the farmers' agitation in the country, and the comments by journalists and other public figures in that context — accords with the sentiments of millions of Indians, and millions worldwide, who are surprised by the turn of events and processes in India for some time.

President Joe Biden's administration has underlined first principles in a neutral, moderate voice. Also, the US state department's cautionary observations — which was reiterated by the US embassy in India — was in response to a question by the American newspaper *The Wall Street Journal*, not off its own bat. This is a useful device suggestive of an official criticism, but not quite.

It will be obvious except to the dense that the present US administration's first public observations on India came immediately after the Narendra Modi government targeted some international icons, including the famous pop star Rihanna, the teen Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg (who is nominated for the Nobel Prize) "and others" for lending support to the farmers' stir (since it is being railroaded by a monstrous government, actions which have drawn considerable domestic criticism).

Through a tweet, the climate activist offered a "toolkit" to back protesters. This is standard mobilising tactic for activists everywhere with the use of "Twitter storm" and the like. Supporters of the ruling party in India do this routinely when playing polarising games at election time.

The so-called "toolkit" has moved the Indian government, including its normally staid external affairs ministry, and the ruling party, to smell an international "conspiracy", no less, to defame India. This is laughable, of course.

The Delhi Police, frequently a violent and communal force, has filed a FIR against international personalities without naming anyone. This is a fig leaf. It is clear that Ms Rihanna and Ms Thunberg, "and others" (including the US vice-president's lawyer-writer niece Meena Harris), are the principal objects of its ire.

These FIRs — the official call for investigation — by the Delhi police, which is directly controlled by Union home minister Amit Shah, are related to extremely serious criminal offences such as sedition and attempt to cause disharmony as between communities. Before the international celebrities, it had been the turn of journalists in India — last week six well-known editors, in a long string of journalists in recent times, and senior politicians like Shashi Tharoor — to face exactly the same official allegations. The US state department's remarks appear to have this figured.

In its sorry response, the India's external affairs ministry is self-congratulatory, calling India a "vibrant" democracy with "shared values" with the United States. In today's climate, is it? No amount of seeking to falsely equate the January 6 attack on the US Capitol and the January 26 move by infiltrators in the entirely peaceful farmers' movement to create chaos at the Red Fort, hides the ugly reality of our present.

Don't pardon Rajiv killers

Given the embarrassing task of granting clemency to seven life convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, the Tamil Nadu Governor, Banwarilal Purohit, has ducked the responsibility. He has passed the political football back to the President of India saying he is the appropriate authority to take the call though he may find it difficult to explain why he sat on it for two-and-a-half years before declining to decide. The prisoners for life, some of whose sentences were commuted to life and thus got a reprieve from the gallows, have been languishing in Tamil Nadu prisons for close to three decades. The question that arises is whether they deserve any sympathy.

Mercy may be a quality that is twice blessed, as the Bard of Avon put it, but sympathy for the conspirators of a heinous crime aimed at one who had been Prime Minister of India may be totally misplaced even if some of them may have, innocently or otherwise, contributed very little to the plot like buying a 9-volt battery to complete the circuit to blow up the explosives hidden in the body belt worn by the assassin Dhanu. The plot, hatched by LTTE's murderous chief Velupillai Prabhakaran, seemed to have come straight out of a Frederick Forsyth novel and was carried out on Indian soil near Chennai, killing 18 including Rajiv Gandhi and the assassin and injuring 43 bystanders on May 21, 1991.

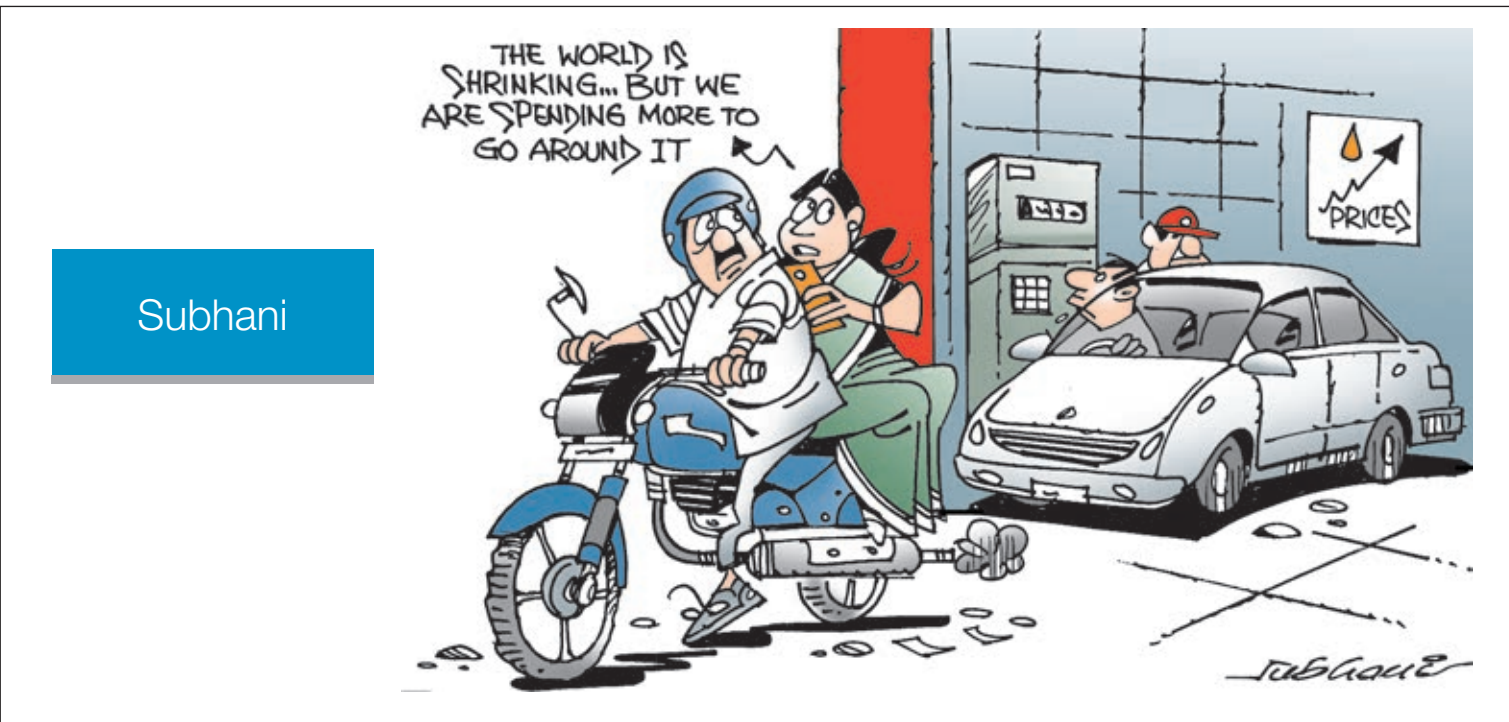
Sympathy on humanitarian grounds for the surviving plotters has been built up in the strange political ambience in a state that once viewed a Tamil Eelam in northern Sri Lanka as a desirable outcome. Rajiv Gandhi, confused by a welter of opinions on the Tamils issue, may have erred in judgment in sending a peace keeping force to the island nation and paid the price. No government at the Centre could be seen as weak in pardoning the killers of a Prime Minister. The ball is back with the President even as the top court will continue to grapple with the legal challenges to lifetimes in prison.

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Subhani

Yeh Rihanna-Wihanna, Greta-Vreta... kaun hai?



Shobhaa De

I was in salubrious Goa, desperately trying to dodge zillions of Dilliwallas who have as good as taken over this gorgeous state and established their own "klonies" across favoured villages and hamlets. Poor Goans, I thought to myself. First came the Israelis, then the Russians — and now these! Arpora has become a mini-Gurgaon, and the locals aren't amused. In such a surrealist setting, it was a bit tough for me to focus on a single tweet posted by a Barbados-born singer and the havoc it generated across India. Well, I'm getting carried away — it was Dilli netas and assorted celebrities/influencers who jumped in, and boom! Rihanna went viral. Be honest — how many of you reading this column had even heard of Rihana before this *hungama*? Okay — maybe, you had heard her. And even danced to her tracks, but did Rihanna and what she tweeted impact your life even remotely? No, *na*? I recall enjoying *Under my umbrella*, which brought Rihanna into the global stage way back in 2007. After that, I totally forgot all about her.

Now, I am unlikely to forget! The 32-year-old singer with a staggering 100 million followers on Instagram. No wonder our *netas* got sufficiently *hilaaoed* and obviously rattled, when she had the gumption to tweet in support of our protesting farmers. More than 226.3K retweets followed, with 490.3K users "liking" the tweet. Whoa! What was going on?

Uske baad, that opinionated Greta what's-her- face, got into the act and *lagaoed* her own

tweet. Mayhem followed as all *desi* patriots scrambled to counterattack these impudent folks who had dared to question our official stand on the farmers' protests. People who had absolutely nothing to do with either the farmers or the government, jumped in feet first to damn and attack the global "influencers", accusing them of generating an international conspiracy designed to break up our vast country and hand it over to China! Stumped? So was I ... as it is, the sultry Goan weather had started to play tricks with my mood and thinking (without feni, let me hastily clarify), *upar se*... I was going through *zabardast* tweets posted by super-patriotic Indians, basically asking Rihanna and Co to butt out of India's affairs. Someone brilliant called Sambit Patra (know him?) thundered on a bigoted/compromised television channel: "Why doesn't Rihanna tweet about the 1984 riots?" Excellent question, Shri Patra. But the singer was born in 1988 and Twitter started only in 2006. *Koi baat nahi* — loyalty game question to all those big names who have passed the patriotic test with flying colours — did

same Sikh Regiment, dealing with this strange situation that their traumatised families can do little about. Jeet Singh's son Veer works as a guard. He said: "Our fathers fought for India in their youth. The government has disrespected them by putting such veterans in jail." The two farmers own an acre of farmland each, on which they grow wheat. Today, they are languishing in jail and being called "Khalistanis" and "terrorists". Rihanna sang *Unapologetic* in 2012. You go figure who deserves an apology in this case.

Soon, everybody had jumped in to express their two bits' worth. I saved my *gyaan* and stayed out — savouring grilled calamari at a beach shack seemed a far more worthwhile pursuit. I thought lazily and idly to myself, trying hard not to get distracted by the overdressed Gurgaon crowd swigging beer at the next table: "Why is everybody frothing at the mouth and dissing Rihanna?" Then I remembered. If VVIP *Bharatwaasis* did not step up publicly and lecture us on our duty as citizens ("call out Rihanna, tell her not to meddle in India's affairs, let the world know we can handle our own internal matters..."), their bag of *sarkari* goodies would be snatched away. The more relevant counter question to all those big names who have passed the patriotic test with flying colours — did

Perhaps Rihanna does indeed possess remarkable understanding of complicated political, social and cultural issues in distant lands she may never ever set foot in. But the chances are, she goes along with what her PR team places before her.

even one of them understand the highly complex farmers' problem? Frankly, it beats most analysts. Without getting to the bottom of what is nothing short of an unfortunate impasse at the moment, why ignite more fires? Who is Rihanna to us? Had her tweet been ignored, we would not have attracted even more global scrutiny — it was as if the entire government machinery at the time was busy dealing with a famous foreign entertainer's tweet!

Most super celebrities hire PR teams to manage social media accounts and project a finely calibrated public image. Perhaps Rihanna does indeed possess remarkable understanding of complicated political, social and cultural issues in distant lands she may never ever set foot in (unless the money is good, of course). But the chances are, she goes along with whatever her alert and socially aware PR team places before her. In simple words, it is shrewd brand building. It shows her as a thinking star concerned with humanity. That's it! Yes, a tweet from such an individual does snowball into a bigger controversy, if it catches on — like it did this time. These are the expected repercussions in the age of celebrity — deal with them wisely, as a government. By falling into the trap, we fed the monster and kept the story alive. *Mogambo* is very *naraaz*, okay? Get smart, you guys. Focus on *asli* matters. Rihanna's other hit was titled: "*Bitch, better have my money...*" She has made hers. The "bitch" has delivered. Where does that leave us? Still roping in celebrities to counter Rihanna! Hello! She has moved on, okay? She is probably tweeting about saving endangered dolphins in some remote bay. Such *bewakoofi*, I tell you!

Readers can send feedback to www.shobhaade.blogspot.com

LETTERS

TWITTER STORM

The tweets of international celebrities in support of the protests of farmers has triggered an unwarranted backlash from the ruling establishment at the Centre with many terming it as an infringement on our sovereignty. The very notion that the tweets of a few international celebrities could undermine, weaken or challenge our country's sovereignty is misplaced. Had not people all over the world lent their support through social media platforms on the 'Black Lives Matter' movement which gained momentum after the death of a black man George Floyd in US? Nobody in the US had termed the support from outside for Black Lives Matter movement as an infringement or an assault on the sovereignty of their country. It is time BJP-led ruling dispensation at the Centre refrain itself from wasting its energies through its knee-jerk reactions over a few tweets expressing support for protesting farmers.

M. Jeyaram, Sholavandan

SETTLE FARMERS' ISSUES

THE HIGH-HANDED passage of the farm laws was characteristic of the ruling BJP and its tyrannical nature. Months of demonstrations and sit-ins by the farmers across the country have grown into a stalemate marked by deadlocked talks between farmers and the Narendra Modi administration. Despite several rounds of talks, with two of them involving a three-minister panel of the Union government and a few dozen representatives of the farmers' unions, the impasse remains. The Centre cannot keep procrastinating the issue and has to make a decision and make it public very soon. The year 2020 has been a traumatic one for all and any continuation of defiance, arrogance and inconsistency by the Centre on decision-making will not give a positive signal in 2021, the year of hope, which is already a month old.

R. Sivakumar, Chennai

CHARACTER CERTIFICATES

IT IS baffling that MP makes character certificate *must for DL* (Feb. 5). The comical (il)logic of this order is to curb crimes against women in Madhya Pradesh and also suspend driving licences of those accused of crimes against women. Is there any connection between women molestation and men driving vehicles? So, a teetotaler and man of impeccable character will be the future driver of vehicles in MP. First of its kind, we have to wait and watch for improved behaviour of drivers towards womenfolk. What about character certificate for female drivers? Are they exempt from this rule, if so, gender discrimination?

Parthasarathy Mandadi, Tirupati

Farrukh Dhondy
Of Cabbages & Kings



"Gratitude is an angel
With a very short memory.
Jealousy, a demon
With a stimulated long one
Indifference shrugs its shoulders
In dismissal whenever he
Encounters a strong emotion
Condemning it as the wrong one."
— From the **Opera Bheeda Pareeda**
Translated from Hungarian by **Bachchoo**

It was a Greek called Aristarchus who in 200 BC first said that the earth was a globe. Galileo was certain of it and in later centuries the Portuguese Magellan added the decisive circumnavigating proof. An early definition of "globalisation" was born. Today "globalisation" means an exchange of culture and trade amongst most if not all nations of the world and it would certainly include the phenomenon of the spread of the Internet to every crook and nanny of the world.

A Marxist definition would concentrate on the international flow and exchange of capital and of labour — with American motor car manufacturing relocating to the Far East and Coca Cola being concocted, bottled and sold

from the Uighar districts of western China.

Its inevitability hasn't led to popularity. There are Canutes who wish to turn back the tide. The most boastful and vociferous of these in recent times was one Donald Trump, whose opposition to globalisation may not have included the conviction that the world was flat (though one can never be sure what neo-troglodytes believe). It certainly included a political programme that attempted to reverse the flow of capital out of, and labour into, the United States of America. It negated international treaties designed to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons and was opposed to global action on climate change.

Britain's political position was paradoxical. On the one hand, Brexit caused the UK to leave one of the planet's largest trading blocs to go it alone, and on the other hand it trumpeted intentions to open Little England to an ambitious programme of international trade, an invitation to capital to come here with the promise of low taxes and Rishi Sunak's free ports, while at the same time stopping the import of even necessary labour. Welcome to "Free port and deport

England" — both policies perpetrated, ironically, by British ministers whose origins are Indian and Indo-African.

Yet now, gentle reader, the most dreadful reminder that the tide of globalisation is upon us is not the rush of refugees from Africa to Europe or the determination of Japanese car manufacturers to relocate to countries where the promise of profit is the greatest. Independent of the will of capital and labour, nature has shown its near-apocalyptic hand. There have been plagues before, and Sars and Ebola did spread from one country to another, but Covid-19 and its menacingly developing variants is, after the very early spread of the ancestors of homo sapiens to all corners of the globe, the first truly fast-moving inhabitant of everywhere.

Earlier plagues hit single countries. Daniel Defoe wrote his *Journal of the Plague Year* as a novel covering events in London 1665. Then Shakespeare, it is said, wrote *Macbeth* and *King Lear* under lockdown in the early years of the seventeenth century. The Internet has alerted me to several literary efforts attempting to capture the ennui, isolation, change in shopping arrangements, etc during today's

Covid lockdowns. No doubt there will be whole novels about what Netflix programmes some scribbler watched, with photographs of the meals they cooked in these dreadful months. I myself have found time to complete two books which have nothing to do with how I spend my time or what I cook but are brilliant fictional... (*I've repeatedly told you that this space is not for your idiotic self-advertisements — Ed. Sorry yaar, iss mushkil vakht mey thhodee si publicity sey kya farak padhta? — fd*).

The globalist way of looking at these times is to see them as a battle between two species of evolved life — the mutating, deadly coronavirus strains and the scientifically analytical and creative genius of scientists and the ingenuity of political ordering.

The scientific effort of the geneticists, doctors, epidemiologists and others who have not only invented and deployed five developed vaccines, and with many more to come, but have found treatments to alleviate the symptoms of the infected.

The political efforts, subject to all manner of constraints and forces, including crass cronyism — as in Britain where jobs and public funds

are given to Tory friends and supporters — profiteering and fraud are confused and less laudable.

Here, gentle reader, are a couple of shameful statistics:

First: The International Labour Organisation estimates that the plague has cost the workers of the world a loss in earnings of \$3.7 trillion. According to Oxfam, the increase in wealth of the world's top billionaires in ten months of the plague has been \$3.9 trillion.

Next: As of January 23, 39 million people in the so-called "first world" had received an anti-Covid vaccination. The number of people who have been vaccinated in the continent of Africa, excluding South Africa, was 29. Yes, you read that correctly. No, I haven't missed out the words "thousand" or "million". There are reports, since that grim statistic, saying that subsequently other nations have allocated funds to get the vaccines across to Africa.

This isn't about generosity, it's self-preservation in a globalised world in which the enemy species has to be fought and subdued, if not annihilated altogether — through... err... globalisation?

To ensure safety
in a globalised
world, all must
get the vaccine...

SHORT TAKES

FOREST GUARD
KILLED BY
POACHERS IN MPRABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, FEB. 5

A forest guard took on the poachers in a Madhya Pradesh jungle 'singlehandedly' and shot video of his attack by them in his mobile before his death.

Blood-ridden body of Madanlal Verma (52), a forest guard posted in Ratanpur beat of Punjapur forest range in Dewas district, was found on the bank of a water body inside the jungle on the intervening night of Thursday and Friday.

His cell phone, recovered near his body, has led to disclosure of the attack on him by the poachers and his subsequent death.

POLICE TOLD TO
FILE REPORT ON
KANGANA'S CASESHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, FEB. 5

A magistrate court in Mumbai on Friday directed the police to submit a progress report on the inquiry it had ordered into a complaint against actor Kangana Ranaut and her sister for posting alleged hateful messages on social media.

On Friday when the matter came up for hearing, the Amboli police sought further time to file their report on the complaint filed by advocate Ali Kaashif Khan Deshmukh alleging that the sisters tweeted hateful contents against a particular community.

Initially the magistrate in Andheri had ordered an inquiry in October, 2020 and asked the police to file their report by December 5, 2020.

Government ready to listen
to protesting farmers: TomarDC CORRESPONDENTS
NEW DELHI, FEB. 5

Asserting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Centre are committed to the welfare of farmers, agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Friday said neither the Opposition members who criticised the three new farm laws, nor the farmers' unions, which had held more than 10 rounds of discussions with the government, have been able to point out what is "kaala" (black) in the laws which they are claiming are "kaala kanoon" (black laws).

Intervening in a discussion on the motion of thanks to the President's address in the Rajya Sabha, Tomar reiterated that the new laws are aimed at boosting farmers'

incomes and the government's offer to amend them to assuage the farmers' sentiments does not mean they are flawed. As the government continued its defence of the laws, the Congress, which is supporting the farmers' unions protests against the laws, sought a Supreme Court-monitored probe into the Republic Day violence, when a protesting mob turned violent and unfurled a Sikh religious flag at the Red Fort.

While the Rajya Sabha saw the agriculture minister strongly defending the laws, the Lok Sabha witnessed sloganeering by Opposition members who demanded the repeal of the laws. The Lower House saw multiple adjournments before it was adjourned for the day till

Monday.

"The farmers unions, the Opposition parties have failed to point out a single flaw in three new farm laws. We are not standing on prestige. We have been asking what is black in this law, and no one is answering," said Tomar in the Rajya Sabha, where he also attacked the Congress, that is leading the protest in Parliament, as indulging in "khood ki kheti".

Amid the uproar in Parliament, the Prime Minister held a strategy meeting with Union home minister Amit Shah, parliamentary affairs minister Prahlad Joshi and I&B minister Prakash Javadekar on how to tackle the ongoing protests by the farmers and the Opposition campaign.

Shivraj, Nath hold
closed-door meetRABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, FEB. 5

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday held a closed-door meeting with his predecessor and veteran Congress leader Kamal Nath here sparking speculations on 'track 2 talks' to end the impasse over the on-going farmers' stir.

The one-to-one meeting, held in the Chief Minister's official residence here, lasted about 20 minutes. Neither the Chief Minister nor Nath spoke to the media to detail what transpired in

the meeting.

Congress spokesman here Narendra Saluja, however, indicated that the two leaders discussed the farmers' issues.

"Farmers' issues cropped up in the meeting", Saluja told reporters giving credence to the speculations on track 2 talks to end the impasse over the over 2-month-long farmers' stir in Delhi.

Incidentally, Nath left for Delhi after the meeting on a week-long visit to the national capital where he was scheduled to meet several senior leaders of Congress.

WB Cong seeks alliance with
ISF to win Muslim votebankRAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, FEB. 5

Desperate to reclaim its Muslim votebank from the ruling Trinamul Congress in the forthcoming West Bengal Assembly elections, the state Congress leaders have sought UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi's permission to include a third party in their alliance, Indian Secular Front, floated by influential cleric of Furfura Sharif, Pirzada Abbas Siddiqui. The Congress already has an alliance with the Left Front and the two parties are in the middle of seat-sharing talks. On Thursday, leader of the Opposition in the state, Abdul Mannan, wrote to the Congress president, "Amidst the dialogue process with the Left Front on electoral alliance, I would like to add a possibility of a grand alliance in Bengal to target more winnable seats. You are aware that Congress party in WB stood in the state for the support of minority votes since many years."

INDIA-U.S. TO
JOINTLY
CONDUCT
'YUDH ABHYAS'PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, FEB. 5

Indian and US armies will conduct exercise 'Yudh Abhyas' from Monday at Mahajan Field Firing Range (MFFR) in Rajasthan.

Some 500 soldiers (250 from each side) will participate in the exercise to be conducted from February 8 to 21.

This annual training exercise enhances combined interoperability capabilities through training and cultural exchange, which foster enduring partnerships.

"Yudh Abhyas provides excellent opportunities for professional and cultural exchanges that strengthen partnership between Indian and US military through shared learning and training," said US embassy in a statement. Training commences with expert academic exchanges and professional development workshops that focus on training at the corps-level and below; combat against conventional, unconventional and hybrid threats; humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Beijing warns off US
warship near South
China Sea islands

Beijing, Feb. 5: China on Friday warned off a US warship sailing near contested islands in the South China Sea, Beijing said, the first such encounter made public since the inauguration of President Joe Biden.

The USS John S. McCain "broke into China's Xisha territorial waters without the permission of the Chinese government," Beijing's military said in a statement, using its name for the disputed Paracel Islands.

The People's Liberation Army "organized naval and air forces to track, monitor and warn off" the warship, the Chinese military said, blasting the US for "seriously violat-

ing China's sovereignty"

and "harming regional peace."

The Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer on Thursday also conducted a routine transit through the waterway separating the Chinese mainland and Taiwan, which Beijing says constitutes part of its territory.

Washington has argued that such exercises are in line with international law and help defend right of passage through the region amid competing claims by China and other governments.

China lays claim to nearly all of the South China Sea, including the Paracel Islands.

— AFP

US govt strips posts of
'QAnon Congresswoman

Washington, Feb. 5: The Democratic-led US House voted on Thursday to discipline a congresswoman who embraced QAnon conspiracy theories and endorsed violence, capping weeks of mounting turmoil over holding to account a lawmaker whose extremist rhetoric caused a rupture in Republican ranks.

Conservative first-term

congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene, facing bipartisan opprobrium for a series of disturbing comments and support of social media posts advocating the assassination of Democratic lawmakers, was stripped of her two assignments on the House education and budget committees.

— AFP

Farmers take out massive
rally in UP defying ban

FROM PAGE 1

Chants of "Inquilab Zindabad" were also raised by farmers who walked or drove to the venue on tractors.

"We are saying in one voice, if anyone raises a lathi to the farmer, we will crush that finger. Let's take a decision today, if this government is not hearing you out, you do the same in next year's election," RLD leader Jayant Chaudhary said. After Section 144 was imposed to ban large gatherings, Mr Chaudhary tweeted on Thursday: "144 reasons why I will go to Shamli tomorrow!"

Addressing the gathering, Mr Chaudhary accused the BJP of hatching a conspiracy for the Republic Day violence. "The Delhi police chose to remain a mute spectator to the acts of vandalism by rowdy elements on January 26 in Delhi."

Mr Chaudhary also accused the Centre of treading the path of rigidity and arrogance. He advised the Narendra Modi government not to make it a prestige issue and repeal the laws.

At another mahapanchayat in Dausa, a resolution seeking repeal of the three farm laws and withdrawal of cases filed against farm-

ers for the Republic

Day was passed. The resolution also sought compensation for the families of farmers who died during the protests which started in November last year.

Addressing the mahapanchayat, former Rajasthan deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot said: "While making these laws, none of the state governments or farmers' organisations was consulted. The Government of India claims these farm laws are in the interest of the farmers but they are being opposed across the country."

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU USILAMPATTI MUNICIPALITY E-TENDERING NOTICE (PROCUREMENT)					
Rec No: 104/2021/E1 Government of Tamil Nadu has sanctioned under the scheme of 15th OFC 2020-21, for Supply and Delivery of Tigratory Usilampatti Municipality for the year 2020-21. Under this scheme the Municipal Commissioner, Usilampatti invites sealed bids from the eligible and qualified contractors for the following work as detailed in the table given below:					Date: 05.02.2021
Sl. No.	No. of Package	Value of work	Tender document available from	Tender Submission Date and Time	Period of Completion
1	1	Rs. 30.00 Lakh	06.02.2021	23.02.2021 upto 3.00 PM	30 days

Tender document and schedule are available in <http://tenders.gov.in> and <http://municipality.tn.gov.in/tenders> can be downloaded at free of cost from The Bidding document will be received by the Commissioner, Usilampatti Municipality by way of offline and e-submission also in 2 cover system upto 23.02.2021, 3.00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit @ 1% (one%) of the value of work should be submitted along with the tender. The e-tender, along with the EMD should be dropped in the tender box before closure time, it is at 3.00 PM on 23.02.2021. Evaluation of the bids will be done as per Tender Transparency Act 1958 of Government of Tamil Nadu and rules there of. If the said tender date happens to be a holiday, the tenders will be opened on the next working day. The Municipal Commissioner reserves the rights to accept or reject any bidding document at any time without assigning any reason there of. Eligibility criteria and other details can be had from the Bidding document. For other details contact e-mail address : comm.usilampatti@tn.gov.in Contact No.: 04552-252384
DIPR/65/TENDER/2021 Commissioner(J/c), Usilampatti Municipality

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY	
E-Tender Notice No. 18. UB. 120-2021 Dated: 03.02.2021	
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders for the following works :	
Sl. Name of Works	Approx. Value
1 Sub Work-1: Provisions of station master's rest room with wash facility at Kariganuru, Pappayanaahalli, Gadiganur, Kudatini, Daroji, Yashwantha Nagar, Ramgad, Swamihalli, Olapapur, Rayadurg, Somalapuram, Bannathalli, Ranjithpur, Vysankere, Pachhapur, Navagund Road, and Devayaru (17 stations)	Rs. 1,29,82,812/-
2 Proposed construction of loco inspector counselling room at Ballan Junction & Vasco-da-Gama.	Rs. 28,91,223/-
3 Sub Work-1: Gadag - Proposed construction of overhead tank of capacity 2.25 lakhs liters to improve water supply system. Sub Work-2: Koppal - Proposed construction of overhead tank of capacity 2.25 lakhs liters to improve water supply system.	Rs. 1,01,71,548/-
4 Sub Work-1: Bhanapur - Provision of high level platform of PF 1 to make 540m length with cement concrete flooring at Bhanapur station. Sub Work-2: Bannikoppa - Provision of high level platform of PF 1 to make 540m length with cement concrete flooring at Bannikoppa station.	Rs. 1,68,52,464/-
5 Sub Work-1: Somapur Road - Provision of high level platform of PF 1 to make 450m length with cement concrete flooring at Somapur Road station. Sub Work-2: Hariapur - Provision of high level platform of PF 1 to make 540m length with cement concrete flooring at Hariapur station.	Rs. 1,15,12,308/-
6 Hotagi Junction Section - Proposed construction of canal crossing as pre cast RCC box of size 3.5X3.5X28m at Km. 218/300-400 between Minchal-Nimbal station for KBJNL (Deposit work)	Rs. 1,73,91,902/-
7 Construction of 2500 meter boundary wall between Vijayapura - Ibrahimpur Road section (pre cast post and pre cast panel (as per drawing No-RDSO/VKS/2017/3/sheet 1 of 2 and 2 of 2))	Rs. 58,47,426/-
8 Sub Work-1: Repairs to class room, Sr.DSC/Hubballi chamber and toilet at Sr.DSC/RPF/office at Hubballi. Sub Work-2: Hubballi - Repairs to roof by providing Galvanized sheet in South Western Railway Mazdoor Union office	Rs. 1,35,51,871/-
9 Hubballi - Repairs to flooring, Brightening of building compound wall, aluminum partition, polishing doors and gardening at Rail South India Hubballi	Rs. 1,35,51,871/-

Last date for submission of bids: Up to 11:00 hrs. of SL No. 1 to 5 on 01.03.2021 SL No. 6 to 9 on 02.03.2021
For details log on to www.rps.gov.in
Divisional Railway Manager/Works Hubballi
PUB/255/ANR/095/SL/2021/21

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited	
Regd. Office: PSEB, Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001	
GURU HARGOBIND THERMAL PLANT, LEHRA MOHABBAT DISTT. BATHINDA (PUNJAB) - 151 111	
e-tendering website- http://eproc.punjab.gov.in	
NOTICE INVITING TENDER (Through E-tendering)	
Tender Enquiry No.: 65/CHP/OP-305/GHTP/2021-22 Dated 04/02/2021	
SHORT DESCRIPTION: To provide support at the vital location/ equipments for operation of coal handling plant as per scope of work on Stage-I & II at 2x210 MW + 2x250 MW, CHP, GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat Distt., Bathinda.	
EMD: Minimum Rs. 7,00,000/-	
Last Date & Time for bid submission : 03/03/2021 upto 11:30 hrs.	
Date & Time of opening of Fee stage bid : 05/03/2021 upto 11:30 hrs.	
Detailed NIT and tender specification can be downloaded from PSPCL website http://eproc.punjab.gov.in from dated 05/02/2021 onwards.	
Note:	
1. The prospective bidders can obtain clarification regarding tender specifications from this office. For registration of digital signatures and uploading of tender, information may be sought from http://eproc.punjab.gov.in	
2. It is informed that in case the tender process is not completed due to any reason, no corrigendum will be published in newspapers. Detail regarding corrigendum may be seen on PSPCL official website i.e. https://pspcl.in .	
GHTP-06/21 RO: 6155/12/78/2021/1324	Superintending Engineer, Mechanical Mtc. Circle-II, O&M, GHTP, PSPCL, Lehra Mohabbat, Distt. Bathinda (Pb.)-151111.

SELECTION OF NCs(E) IN
INDIAN AIR FORCE FOR
COOK AND SAFAIWALA TRADE

- Applications are invited from Eligible Civilian candidates (MALE) born between 01 Apr 1993 to 01 Apr 2004 (Both Days Inclusive). For Selection as NC (E) in COOK (01) and SAFAIWALA (01) Trade in Indian Air Force (Total 02 Vacancies). Educational Qualification is Matriculation. Candidates Below 22 Years of Age Should be Unmarried at the time of Enrolment. Candidates above 22 Years of Age May be Married. However, They will not be provided any Married Accommodation or any other allied Privileges during the training.
- Applications are available at AFS Tambaram (Station orderly Room) and Completed Applications are to be submitted to Station orderly Room On or Before 09 Feb 2021. The Trade any Physical test will be conducted tentatively with effect from 11 FEB 2021 onwards.

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY Kota Division		
No. W/623/15	Civil Engineering E-Tender Notice	Date: 04.02.2021
Sr. Divisional Engineer (Coordination), West Central Railway, Kota for and on behalf of President of Union of India invites following open E-Tenders. S.N.-1, Tender No.: 12/2021, Description of work: CFCL Siding-Execution of 60Kg/52Kg AT Welding, Approx. Cost: ₹ 23,10,484.70, Last date & Time of submission of tender: 15.30 Hrs. On date 26.02.2021, S.N.-2, Tender No.: 13/2021, Description of work: Bharatpur (Ammunition Depot): Rehabilitation of existing rail cluster bridges (21 Nos) by pre cast RCC box (by cut and cover method) in connection with complete track renewal work, Approx. Cost: ₹ 5,38,03,273.25, Last date & Time of submission of tender: 15.30 Hrs. On date 26.02.2021, S.N.-3, Tender No.: 14/2021, Description of work: Bharatpur (Ammunition Depot): Construction of RCC drain of length 7.00 Km, Approx. Cost: ₹ 3,81,59,600.33, Last date & Time of submission of tender: 15.30 Hrs. On date 26.02.2021, S.N.-4, Tender No.: 15/2021, Description of work: Bharatpur: Provision of 3 Unit Type-II quarters at Ammunition depot, Approx. Cost: ₹ 43,68,441.44, Last date & Time of submission of tender: 15.30 Hrs. On date 26.02.2021, S.N.-5, Tender No.: 16/2021, Description of work: Balance work of Construction of fencing/barricading on approaches of station for high speed route on Nagda-Mathura section, Approx. Cost: ₹ 3,55,97,910.21, Last date & Time of submission of tender: 15.30 Hrs. On date 26.02.2021, S.N.-6, Tender No.: 17/2021, Description of work: Nagda-Kota Section: Through Weld renewal in 60kg/52kg rails at site using road cum rail mobile/stationary flash butt welding plant-6000 joints total-95 Kms (DN & UP) & yard lines/loop lines, Approx. Cost: ₹ 5,82,04,754.70, Last date & Time of submission of tender: 15.30 Hrs. On date 26.02.2021, S.N.-7, Tender No.: 18/2021, Description of work: Guria Depot:- Supplying of 65000 cum. 65 mm. Size machine crushed stone ballast of approved quality and loading into hoppers/wagon at, Approx. Cost: ₹ 3,71,30,600/-, Last date & Time of submission of tender: 15.30 Hrs. On date 26.02.2021, Note: Bidders are required to submit bid security declaration in lieu of Bid security/Earnest Money. Complete details are available in the E-tender notice uploaded on the railway website www.irapps.gov.in and also placed on the notice board of the Sr. Divisional Engineer (Coordination), DRM Office, West Central Railway Kota's office. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Sr. Divisional Engineer (Coordination) West Central Railway, Kota		
For & on Behalf of the President of Union of India		
रेल यात्रा के दौरान निवासयत हेतु 138 पर एच सुरक्षा हेतु 192 पर संपर्क करें।		

WORLD
Biden calls out
Russia, China

Washington, Feb. 5: President Joe Biden ended US support for Saudi Arabia's devastating war in Yemen and dramatically increased the welcome to refugees, ushering in a major reset in American foreign policy.

In his first major speech on foreign affairs as president, Biden also froze former president Donald Trump's plans to redeploy troops from Germany and vowed a tough approach against what he described as a rising authoritarian threat from China and Russia.

Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris traveled together to the State Department in a symbol of a renewed focus on diplomacy after Trump's tumultuous four years.

"America is back. Diplomacy is back," Biden told a socially distanced auditorium of diplomats.

In a speech shortly afterward, Biden said the United States would end all support including connected arms sales for ally Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen, which he said "has created a humanitarian and strategic catastrophe."

He appointed a US special envoy for Yemen, veteran diplomat

Timothy Lenderking, who Biden said would support UN efforts to reach a ceasefire and revive peace talks between the government and Huthi rebels who control much of the country, including the capital Sanaa.

"This war has to end," Biden said.

Saudi Arabia reacted to Biden's speech by reasserting its commitment to a political solution in Yemen, according to state media.

Riyadh also welcomed Biden's "commitment to cooperate with the kingdom to defend its sovereignty and counter threats against it," the official Saudi Press Agency added.

Trump — who argued arms sales were creating US defense jobs — viewed the war as a way to hit back at the Huthis' ally Iran.

Biden backs a return of diplomacy and a nuclear accord with Iran but, strik-

ON AMERICA
Biden said the United States will welcome up to **1,25,000** refugees in the first fiscal year of his administration — far above the record-low 15,000 last approved by Trump, who was a vociferous critic of non-Western immigration.

ON RUSSIA
Biden said that he had warned Vladimir Putin that the US will no longer be "rolling over in the face of Russia's aggressive actions." "We will not hesitate to raise the cost on Russia and defend our vital interest and our people."

ON GERMANY
Putting on hold plans set in motion by Trump to reduce the US troop presence in Germany, a cornerstone of NATO security since the start of the Cold War.

ON YEMEN
US President said that the war in Yemen "has to end", pledging to terminate US support for Saudi-led offensive operations and to halt arms sales. "This war has to end," Biden said.



ingly, he only indirectly mentioned Tehran in what was billed as a broad-brush speech on his international priorities.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken also said he will revisit Trump's last-minute designation of the Huthis as a terrorist group.

In Yemen, senior political official Hamid Assem voiced hope that Biden's plan will mark the end of a six-year war that has left tens of thousands dead.

"The Biden administration saw that the war in Yemen carries a heavy cost and that America's reputation has been tarnished by the killing of the people of Yemen," he said.

In another sharp reversal, Biden said the United States will welcome up to 1,25,000

refugees in the first fiscal year of his administration — far above the record-low 15,000 last approved by Trump, who was a vociferous critic of non-Western immigration.

"The United States' moral leadership on refugee issues was a point of bipartisan consensus for so many decades when I first got here," said Biden, who was elected to the Senate in 1972.

"We shine the light, the lamp, of liberty on oppressed people. And our example pushed other countries to open wide their doors as well." Among groups seeking asylum, Biden said his administration would welcome LGBTQ people fleeing persecution over their sexual orientation.

SHORT TAKES

Shastri pitches for break post IPL

Chennai: Indian cricketers must get a two-week break after this year's IPL to recover from fatigue since staying in bubbles is "mentally draining", head coach Ravi Shastri said on Friday.

The Indian players have not taken a break since the IPL 2020 in September in the UAE. The IPL was followed by a challenging Australia tour comprising four Tests, three ODIs and three T20Is. With the final spot in the World Test Championships at stake, India is currently hosting England in a bilateral series consisting of four Tests, five T20Is and three ODIs. "I do believe you need a break from international cricket at some point. After the England series, yes they go into the IPL. Again after the IPL, a couple of weeks off is a must," Ravi Shastri told *Star Sports*. — *PTI*

Consecutive win for Daruvala

Abu Dhabi: Mumbai Falcons and Jehan Daruvala continued their winning spree with a 2nd consecutive victory in the Asian Formula 3 Championship. A thrilling battle kept fans on their toes as Jehan had to fight tooth and nail to win Race 2 and also completed a hat trick of podiums to finish second in Race 3 and move into the championship lead. The Mumbai resident had a near perfect launch from pole position and held his position into the first corner. Behind him, Isack Hadjar of France also held onto second, while championship leader Guanyu Zhou dropped a position to allow Dino Beganovic into third. The first few laps were uneventful and once the top few settled into a rhythm, Hadjar seemed to have more pace than Jehan. He soon started piling on the pressure, with numerous attempts which did not stick. Hadjar then had a good run out of the corkscrew section and came alongside Jehan. The two entered the corner side by side, but Jehan held on.

Regd. No.
TNENG/2010/35692

Printed & Published by
K. Sudhakar on behalf of
Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited
and Printed at
Deccan Chronicle Presses situated
at SP 3, Developed Plot, Industrial Estate,
Guindy, Chennai - 600 032.
RNI Registration No: TN ENG/2005/14987
Ph Nos: 22254747, 22254748, 22254750,
22254751
Editor: **KAUSHIK MITTER**

Sweeping success

Root sweeps his way to 20th Test ton, puts England on top

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR
CHENNAI, FEB. 5

With a ringside view from behind the stumps, Rishabh Pant could easily see it. Shoulders drooped and heads bowed — the team's body language, at one time, was as flat as the surface. The wicket-keeper's constant egging, urging his teammates to lift themselves, summed up Team India's frustrating opening day on the field.

Joe Root (128 not out) and Dom Sibley (87) gave a masterclass on how to play spinners in subcontinental conditions with a brilliant 200-run stand for the third wicket as England stole a march over India on a featherbed in the opening Test here. At stumps, England, who won the toss, were 263/3 in 89.3 overs. Opener Sibley was dismissed lbw by Jasprit Bumrah in the last over of the day.

While Root, playing his 100th Test, unleashed his most potent weapon, sweep, in all possible ways — reverse, slog and even switch hit — to slam his 20th Test hundred, third in as many matches, Sibley personified resilience and proved to be the perfect foil for his in-form skipper.

The pitch had little to offer the bowlers, but the England batsmen had to show a lot of patience. Sibley's marathon stay in the middle — 286 balls and 382 minutes — was significant as the 25-year-old not only absorbed the pressure early on, but also wore the Indian bowlers out with his dogged defence. With classic old-school technique, Sibley used his long strides effectively. He got closer to the pitch of the ball, didn't have any qualms in defending good deliveries and rotated the strike diligently to keep the Indian spinners at bay.

Root joined forces with Sibley after Rory Burns (33) and Dan Lawrence (five-ball duck) fell to R. Ashwin and Bumrah, respectively, before lunch. Burns, who made a solid opening stand of 63, plotted his own downfall when he played a reverse sweep to lob a simple catch to Pant. It was Ashwin's slowest ball of



England's Joe Root celebrates after scoring a century against India on the first day of their first Test match at MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Friday. — *BCCI*

SCORECARD

England 1st Innings: Rory Burns c Rishabh Pant b Ravichandran Ashwin 33, D. Sibley lbw b Jasprit Bumrah 87, D. Lawrence lbw b Bumrah 0, J. Root (batting) 128. Extras (LB-4, NB-11) 15. **Total (for 3 wickets in 89.3 overs) 263.**
FoW: 1-63, 2-63, 3-263.
Bowling: Ishant Sharma 15-3-27-0, Jasprit Bumrah 18.3-2-40-2, Ravichandran Ashwin 24-2-68-1, Shahbaz Nadeem 20-3-69-0, Washington Sundar 12-0-55-0.

the first session. When Bumrah trapped new batsman Lawrence with the help of a reverse swing, England were two down for 63.

India had the visitors under the pump, but Kohli may be guilty of letting the guard down later. His decision to take both

Ashwin and Ishant off the attack post-lunch was inexplicable. The packed leg-side field which had proved effective against the Aussies couldn't stop the England batsmen from scoring.

Root who averaged more than 100 in the recent Sri Lanka Tests continued

his purple patch. The contest between Ashwin and Root was fascinating. The England skipper cleverly negated the offie by not employing sweep shot. As Root grew in confidence, the sweeps were a delight to watch.

More than three years after making his Test debut, Bumrah got to play his first match at home. He bowled just a three-over opening spell before Ashwin was introduced as early as in the eighth. Left-arm spinner Shahbaz Nadeem who made it to the side following a knee injury to Axar Patel couldn't trouble the batsmen and bowled a bunch of no-balls.

NUMBERS GAME

JOE ROOT SCORES HUNDRED IN 100TH TEST MATCH

● Joe Root became the 15th Englishman and 69th player overall to complete a century of Test matches after appearing in the Chennai Test on Friday (February 5).

● The England skipper who made his debut in India, at Nagpur in 2012, also played 50th Test match on Indian soil, at Visakhapatnam, in 2016..

● After making an unbeaten 128 off 197 balls with 14 fours and one six in England's first innings, the right hand top-order batsman, also became the ninth batsman to score hundred in 100th Test match.

● Australian Ricky Ponting is the only batsman to make two hundreds in 100th Test match. England's Colin Cowdrey, Alec Stewart, South African Graeme Smith and Hashim Amla, Pakistan's Javed Miandad and Inzamam-ul-Haq and West Indian Gordon Greenidge also scored a century in their 100th Test match before Joe Root..

● The 200-run stand between Joe Root and Dom Sibley is England's second best third wicket stand in India and fifth best overall. Alastair Cook and Kevin Pieterston's 206-run stand is England's best third wicket stand in India.

● Anil Choudhury became the 63rd Indian umpire to officiate in Test cricket. He made his debut as a Test umpire after stood in 20 one day internationals and 28 Twenty-20 internationals.

● Nitin Menon and Anil Choudhury are the two Umpire in this Test match. The last time two Indian umpires stood in a home Test was in the Ahmedabad Test against Sri Lanka in February 1994, when Kapil Dev went past Richard Hadlee's record of most wickets in Tests. The umpires then were A.L. Narasimhan and V.K.Ramaswamy.

— *S. PERVEZ QAISER*

Root wants to make it count

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 5

Skipper Joe Root who scored a scintillating century in his 100th Test and guided England to a commanding position against India wants to make it count. England had made 477 in the first innings the last time they played a Test here in 2016, but eventually they lost by an innings. So, Root knows the importance of a big total.

"I think we have to try and get as many runs as we can. We want to bat the whole of tomorrow and possibly a bit into the third day, then things could fall in place. We will try and score 600-700," said Root.

Root knows it's not easy to bat long in the humid conditions here. "But, I am ready for more. We have to try and consolidate our position. It's an impressive start, but we have to make it count. That's the most challenging part for us," he added.

The flat surface had noth-

ing for spinners on Friday, but Root expects the track to wear out. "It's an unusual looking surface but it played pretty well. I think it's going to spin as the game goes on. With a bit of reverse swing, it was a good contest against India's bowlers. I was just trying to get used to the surface, get used to the bounce, and as I got in, I found it easier," added Root.

Root was all praise for his opener Dom Sibley. "It was a fantastic innings. He had a few question marks over his game after the Sri Lanka series. To go out there and put a performance early on in the series is amazing. It's a high quality attack and we had to deal with spin and reverse swing," he added.

Root became only the third Englishman to score a century in his 100th Test, following in the footsteps of Colin Cowdrey and Alec Stewart.

"It was very special," he said.

We bowled well in patches: Bumrah

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 5

It turned out to be a challenging 'home' debut for Indian speedster Jasprit Bumrah. Operating in short spells, Bumrah picked up two England wickets, but found the dry conditions difficult for a pacer.

"It was an interesting first match for me here. The pitch was on the flatter side and there was no lateral movement. The ball got scuffed up as the wicket was hard and dry. We are not trying to complain about the wicket. We are trying to figure out the options and resolve the issues," said Bumrah.

As the ICC has banned the use of saliva in the wake of Covid-19, bowlers have found it difficult to shine the ball. "When the ball becomes soft, it doesn't shine as well as we want it to. In India, the ball gets scuffed up easily. So to make the ball heavy, you have to shine one side sometimes, with sweat, and it doesn't really serve

the purpose. You can't make one side heavy with sweat and it doesn't really work that way. But these are the rules and we have to make do with what we have at the moment," said Bumrah.

Bumrah said India bowled well in patches. "I felt we created a lot of pressure. We didn't give too many runs except in the last session. In the beginning of the last session, I think our body language was a bit down with not many wickets coming in. And also, it's not easy to keep yourself going in the searing heat. After a while, we started putting in more effort to get back into the game," he added.

Left-arm spinner Shahbaz Nadeem's selection over wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav surprised many, but Bumrah backed the decision. "In hindsight, you can say a lot of things. As a team we went in, and backed all of them to perform well. Maybe after the game, we can discuss what could have been done better," he said.

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