

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | WEDNESDAY 13 | JANUARY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 29°C
Min: 21°C
Rainfall: Nil

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Margazhi 29
Tithi: Amavasai/ Prathamai
Star: Puradam/ Uthiradam
Rahukalam:
12 noon to 1.30 pm
Yamagandam:
7.30 am to 9 am
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.18 am
Zohar: 12.20 pm
Asar: 3.31 pm
Maghrib: 5.57 pm
Isha: 7.12 pm

Give question bank to students taking board exams: Par panel

New Delhi: A parliamentary panel on Tuesday suggested to the education ministry that a “big question bank” should be given to students of classes 10 and 12 in advance, out of which selected ones will come in the board exams, in a move aimed at mitigating their learning gap in wake of Covid-19, sources said.

COUNTER POINT



Season's rangoli!



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Court directs police to book ‘Master’ producer



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US acting Homeland Security chief quits

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India's injury toll mounts



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Vol. 16 No. 289 Established 1938 | 8 PAGES| ₹3.00

SC puts farm laws on hold, forms panel

■ Farmers unions sceptical, say committee members support laws

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, JAN. 12

In a major breather to the Narendra Modi government that has been caught in a cul-de-sac over the ongoing farmers agitation, the Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed the implementation of the three controversial farm laws for now, restored the minimum support price (MSP) system that was prevalent before the enactment of farm laws and set up a committee of four agriculture experts to examine the laws and submit a report within two months. The two months, the court

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

- Bhupinder Singh Mann (President, Bhartiya Kisan Union)
- Dr Parmod Kumar Joshi (Director for South Asia, International Food Policy Research Institute)
- Ashok Gulati (agricultural economist)
- Anil Ghanwat (President, Shetkari Sanghatana)

said, will start from the date of its first sitting and the first sitting has to take place within 10 days from Tuesday's order.

The clarification of the three-member bench of the Supreme Court, that the

WHAT THE COURT SAID

- MSP system shall be maintained until further orders.
- No farmer shall be dispossessed of his title as a result of action taken under the farm laws.
- Stay may assuage hurt feelings of farmers and encourage them to come to the negotiating table.

suspension of the implementation of the three laws is not indefinite, and that the court will take a final call on the farm laws only after it examines the committee's report, seems to suit the government which

WHAT FARMERS SAID



It is clear that the court is being misguided by various forces even in the constitution of the committee. These are people who are known for their support to the three Acts and have actively advocated for the same.

— **All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee**

is resisting the farmers' demand for repeal of the laws but is agreeable to making amendments.

The farmer unions, however, were not pleased and reiterated that they will not participate in the court-

ordered committee process, charging that “all the members of this committee are pro-govt and had been justifying the laws of the government.” They added that they would not call off their protest until the newly enacted legislations are repealed. “It is clear that the court is being misguided by various forces even in its constitution of a committee. These are people who are known for their support to the three Acts and have actively advocated for the same,” a statement issued by All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) said. ■ **P5**



Health secretary J. Raghakrishnan inspects the packets containing Covishield vaccine after its first batch from the Serum Institute of India, Pune, arrived at a storage facility in Chennai on Tuesday.

— DC

Vaccine Covishield arrives in Chennai

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

The first consignment of Coronavirus vaccine Covishield reached Chennai from Pune on Tuesday morning, four days ahead of the launch of a nationwide inoculation campaign against the pandemic Covid-19.

A flight carrying 53,650 Covishield vials of 10 doses each (5,36,500 doses), manufactured by Serum Institute of India, landed at the Chennai airport at 10: 22 am. The state has been sanctioned 20,000 doses of Covaxin, manufactured by Bharat Biotech International, too, which will be made available later. Health secretary J.

Radhakrishnan said the vaccines are being stored in government godown on the premises of the Directorate of Medical and Rural Health Services.

The state government has identified 307 locations across the state for administering the vaccines to priority groups including, healthcare workers. The state has about six lakh pre-registered beneficiaries in the priority groups. While 1,18,000 doses would be for Chennai, the remainder is set to be distributed to other districts.

Health minister C. Vijayabaskar told reporters in Viralmalai that the Covishield vials would be dispatched, with requisite cold storage amenity, to ten regional centres and then to all districts.

Most tourist spots shut during Pongal holidays

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

Most tourist spots in and around Chennai will be out of bounds for the public during the Pongal holidays from January 15 to 17 as crowding could lead to the spread of Coronavirus.

The Aringnar Anna zoological park at Vandalur, the monuments and tourists spots in Mamallapuram, the Guindy National Park in Chennai

and all the beaches would be closed for the common people during the three days, an official release said.

Earlier, the government had announced that the public would not be allowed entry into the beaches in Chennai on January 17 when Kaanum Pongal would be celebrated by the people of the State. But on Tuesday, the ban was extended to the entire Pongal weekend by adding more tourist spots.

Schools to open for Classes X and XII on Jan. 19

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Tuesday announced that schools would open for Classes X and XII on January 19. Hostels to accommodate students in those classes can also be opened, the Chief Minister said. Schools should ensure that a class room did not house more than 25 pupils and that other Coronavirus prevention norms were strictly adhered to, he said in the

press release on Tuesday.

Most of the parents, whose opinion was sought between January 6 and 8 on the reopening of schools, had favoured the move, the release said.

The idea of reopening schools after Pongal holidays was mooted on the basis of views expressed at the review meeting on December 28, 2020, in which district collectors, medical experts and public health professionals participated.

Students should be provided with vitamin and zinc

tablets, it said, urging parents, teachers and students to fully cooperate with the government move.

The release also claimed that the spread of Coronavirus had been coming down step by step in all the districts.

Meanwhile, PMK youth wing leader Anbumani Ramadoss said that it would be appropriate if schools were opened only after the vaccination process for Covid-19 started and urged the government to withdraw the order.

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New stores now open at Ambattur, Cathedral Road & Chrompet in Chennai

SHORT TAKES

IJCCI organises online courses on Japanese lang

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

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

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

Driver crushed to death on Vandalur-Minjur outer ring road

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

— DC



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

— DC



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

— DC

GOV CELEBRATES PONGAL PERUVIZHA WITH DIFF-ABLED

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

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

press release.

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

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

Assistant professor found dead on college campus

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

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

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

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

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



Indu Pazhanivel

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

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

Court directs police to book 'Master' producer

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

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

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



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

New Covid cases see dip in Pondy with 18 additions

Puducherry, Jan. 12: Puducherry witnessed a drop in the number of daily coronavirus infections with only 18 people testing positive to the virus on Tuesday, pushing the aggregate to 38,495.

One more person succumbed to the viral infection, raising the toll to 639.

The deceased aged 38

years had liver disease among other co-morbidities, a release from Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said.

The 18 new cases were identified at the end of examination of 3,637 samples.

The fatality and recovery rates were 1.66 percent and 97.58 percent respectively.

— PTI

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

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

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



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

— DC

Sivadass said, "Goodwin, an Englishman by birth, first met Swami Vivekananda in New York in December 1895, and became devoted to him for the rest of his life.

Bhogi smoke may affect Covid patients

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

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

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

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

UNITED FOR LIFE BY JALLIKATTU



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

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

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

— K. Manikandan

women are exposed to toxic pollutants, it will destroy the health of the baby as well. Children are especially at risk as hundreds of toxic pollutants, that get emitted during the burning of tyres, as well as a tremendous number of small particles, set

tle deep in the lungs," said Dr. Varadarajan. The exposure to high levels of air pollution during pregnancy can cause miscarriages as well as premature birth, autism spectrum disorder and asthma in children. Air pollution can damage children's

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

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

Salem bulls get set for jallikattu event

ZAKEER HUSSAIN | DC
SALEM, JAN. 12

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

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

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

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

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

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

hence, are keen to take their bulls for jallikattu.

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

Wednesday in view of Pongal.

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

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

In the petition, M/s.

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

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

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

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

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

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

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

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



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

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

In another case, Mohamed Amsath (33) of

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

Swami Vivekananda's steno Goodwin remembered

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, JAN. 12

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

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

Secretary, Manas Trust, V

DECCAN Chronicle

13 JANUARY 2021

Not court's call to have panel review farm laws

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

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

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

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

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

Test of character

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

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

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

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

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Kozhikode: No 6/1002 E, First Floor City Mall, Opp. YMCA Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001
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Trump bid for a 'cor' in DC follows a long US tradition!

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

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

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

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

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

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

revelations of the US-aided coup.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

By arrangement with Dawn

Subhani



Educational activism of a different kind is needed



Devi Kar

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The writer is a veteran school educator based in Kolkata

LETTERS

WELCOME MOVE

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

R. Ganesan, Chennai

SC ON FARMS LAWS

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

M. Jeyaram, Sholavandan

TEAM SPIRIT

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

V. Rajagopalan, Chennai

SHORT TAKES

EC DISCUSSES SECURITY FOR STATE POLLS

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 12

The Election Commission of India on Tuesday held a meeting with the Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla to discuss requirement and availability of the Central Armed Paramilitary Forces (CAPF) during the upcoming Assembly polls in several states. Other related issues, including law and order situation, transfer posting of officials were also discussed.

Assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and the Union Territory of Puducherry will be held this year. The term for Tamil Nadu Assembly ends on May 24; Kerala June 1; West Bengal May 30; Puducherry June 8; and Assam May 31.

The ECI had in December issued an advisory to states saying in order to ensure free and fair election, states should ensure that the officers directly connected with conduct of elections in an election going state/UT are not posted in their home districts or places where they have served for a considerably long period.

Besides, officials against whom the ECI had recommended disciplinary action in the past and which is pending or has resulted in a penalty or the officers who have been charged for any lapse in any election or election related work in the past, may not be assigned any election related duty.

CULLING OF BIRDS ORDERED IN LATUR

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, JAN. 12

In a sign of bird flu spreading rapidly in Maharashtra, birds from one more district — Latur — have also found positive for the avian influenza. The Latur district authorities have ordered culling of birds in the villages of Kendrewadi and Sukni as precautionary measures.

Earlier, birds from five districts in Maharashtra — Mumbai, Thane, Ratnagiri, Parbhani and Beed were found to be infected by the bird flu. In Latur, at least 225 birds have died in Kendrewadi till Monday, while 12 hens have died in Sukni and four in Wanjarwadi of Udgir taluka. After Parbhani and Beed, Latur is the third district in Maharashtra to report cases of bird flu.

Latur district collector Pruthviraj B.P. has ordered culling of birds in 1 km radius.

Farmers say members of SC panel on agri laws pro-govt

Unions: Never demanded SC form a committee to resolve impasse

New Delhi, Jan. 12: Agitating farmer unions on Tuesday disapproved of the committee appointed by the Supreme Court to break the deadlock over the acts and said they will continue their protest against the three legislations.

Addressing a press conference at Singhu Border here, Union leaders claimed the members of the committee are “pro-government”, and asserted they will not appear before it.

The Supreme Court earlier in the day stayed the implementation of the controversial farm laws till further orders and set up a four-member committee to resolve the impasse between the Centre and the farmer unions protesting at Delhi's borders over the legislations.

“The members of the SC-appointed committee are not dependable as they have been writing on how agri laws are pro-farmer. We will continue our agitation,” farmer leader Balbeer Singh Rajawal told the presser.

The farmer leader said that unions never demanded the apex court form a committee to resolve the impasse over the laws, alleging the Central government is behind these developments.

“We are against the committee on principle. It is the government's way to distract attention from the protest,” he said. The farmer leaders said the Supreme Court



Wrestling competition organised during farmers protest against the new farm laws at Tikri border in New Delhi on Tuesday.

— PTI

can repeal the farm laws suo motu.

Another farmer leader Darshan Singh said they will not appear before any committee, adding Parliament should discuss and resolve this issue. “We don't want any external committee,” he said. However, the farmer leaders said they would attend the January 15 meeting with the government.

The four members of the committee are BKU president Bhupinder Singh Mann, Shetkeri Sangathana (Maharashtra) president Anil Ghanwat, South Asia Director for International Food Policy Research Institute Pramod Kumar Joshi, and agriculture economist Ashok Gulati.

During the hearing, the top court sought the cooperation of the protesting farmers and made it clear that no power can prevent it from setting up a committee to resolve the

impasse.

Thousands of farmers, mostly from Haryana and Punjab, have been protesting at several border points of Delhi since November 28 last year, demanding a repeal of the three laws and a legal guarantee to the minimum support price (MSP) system for their crops.

Farmer leaders welcomed the SC's order to stay the implementation of three farm laws on Tuesday, but said they would not call off their protest until the legislations are repealed.

The Sankyuikt Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of around 40 protesting farmer unions, has called a meeting later in the day to decide the next course of action.

The farmer leaders said they are not willing to participate in any proceedings before a committee appointed by the Supreme Court, but a formal decision on this will be taken by the Morcha.

SC puts farm laws on hold, forms panel

FROM PAGE 1

Having stayed the implementation of farm laws “until further orders”, the court also directed that the farmers' land holdings shall be “protected” and no farmer shall be “dispossessed or deprived” of his/her title of land as a result of any action taken under the farm laws.

“While we may not stifle a peaceful protest, we think that this extraordinary order of stay of implementation of the farm laws will be perceived as an achievement of the purpose of such protest at least for the present and will encourage the farmers bodies to convince their members to get back to their livelihood, both in order to protect their own lives and health and in order to protect the lives and properties of others,” the court said.

Noting that the negotiations between the farmers' bodies and the government have not yielded any result so far, the court said, “We are of the view that the constitution of a committee of experts in the field of agriculture to negotiate between the farmers' bodies and the Government of India may create a congenial atmosphere and improve the trust and confidence of the farmers... We are also of the view that a stay of

implementation of all the three farm laws for the present may assuage the hurt feelings of the farmers and encourage them to come to the negotiating table with confidence and good faith.”

Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde, taking note of the agitating farmers' lukewarm response to the court's suggestion on Monday to set-up a committee to examine the contentious laws, said on Tuesday that they are not forming the committee to “appease” everyone. He said that the committee will be a part of the “judicial proceedings” and its report will be for the purposes of the court. He was heading a bench which also comprises Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian.

Making it clear that the suspension of the operation of three farm laws would not be for an indefinite period, the court said that the setting up of the committee will not be an “empty” exercise, making it clear that all those involved in the dispute, including government and the agitating farmers, will have to appear before it. The court noted that senior lawyers Dushyant Dave, Colin Gonsalves, H.S. Phoolka and Prashant Bhushan representing different bodies of agitating farmers were not present in the hearing.

Agri experts welcome SC decision; term it sensible

New Delhi, Jan. 12: Eminent agriculture economists on Tuesday welcomed the Supreme Court's decision to stay the implementation of the new farm laws till further orders and set up a four-member committee to resolve the impasse over them between the Centre and farmers' unions protesting at Delhi borders.

Former Union minister and eminent economist Y.K. Alagh said he thinks it (the SC's decision) is very sensible. “Because they (the SC judges) have said that you (the Centre) must do adequate preparation because the new farm laws were passed in a big hurry,” Alagh said.

He pointed out that the bench headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde and Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian said the Centre can develop a framework for the new farm laws only after the Covid-19 virus is over.

“Because you can't talk about trade and transport when there are lockdowns,” Alagh said.

Echoing similar views, eminent economist and former Planning Commission member Abhijit Sen said, “I think it is good. It (the SC)

● EMINENT ECONOMIST and former Planning Commission member Abhijit Sen said, I think it is good. It (the SC) has stayed it (the Centre's new farm laws)”.

Mahendra Dev S., professor of economics at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR) also said, “That's a good suggestion (the staying of new farm laws by the SC).” Noting that the protesting farmers are demanding the repeal of the new farm laws and the government

is only ready to amend the new farm laws, he said the panel can suggest what are the alternatives. Talking about the state of Indian agriculture, Alagh said agriculture did well last year; it was the only sector which did well in a horrible year.

“But it could do better. And, if we implement the farm laws well, we will move over from three per cent growth rate to a higher growth rate which is what we need,” he said.

Spurious liquor kills 12 in MP

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, JAN. 12

At least 12 people, including 3 members of a family, have died and 10 others hospitalised after consuming spurious liquor in 2 villages in Morena district under Chambal region of Madhya Pradesh, police said on Tuesday.

The victims hailed from villages of Manpur Prithwi and Pahawali.

“Eleven people have died so far. We are waiting for autopsy reports to ascertain the cause of their deaths”, Chambal region inspector general of police Manoj Sharma said.

Another person succumbed in the district hospital in Morena on Tuesday evening, taking the toll to 12. According to the police, the victims started reporting at various government hospitals in Morena district on the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday.

Some of them were shifted to a government hospital in

● THE LOCALS staged a blockade on NH-552 by laying the bodies on the road demanding compensation.

Gwalior when their condition worsened. The locals later staged a blockade on National Highway-552 by laying the bodies on the road demanding compensation of ₹20 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased.

Morena district collector Anurag Verma rushed to the spot along with police force to bring the situation under control.

Police registered a case against seven people under relevant sections of Indian Penal Code and Excise Act in connection with the incident.

However, no one has been arrested so far, police said. “The accused will be arrested soon”, the police officer said.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan placed local district excise officer Javed Khan under suspension in connection with the incident.

WORLD

US Acting Homeland Security chief quits

Wolf resigns over the storming of the US Capitol by outgoing President Donald Trump's supporters

Washington, Jan. 12: Chad Wolf, the acting secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, has resigned over the storming of the US Capitol by outgoing President Donald Trump's supporters. His resignation comes amidst Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) warning of a nationwide “armed protests” being planned in the run-up to President-elect Joe Biden's January 20 inauguration.

Wolf — whose department oversees numerous federal law enforcement bodies and also is in charge of security for Biden's inauguration ceremony — said last week that he was staying in his position until the end of Trump's administration on January 20.

“I am saddened to take this step, as it was my intention to serve the department until the end of this administration,” Wolf wrote in an email to the staff of the Department of Homeland Security on Monday. “Unfortunately, this action is warranted by recent events, including the ongoing and merit-less court rulings regarding the validity of my authority as Acting Secretary.

These events and concerns increasingly serve to divert attention and resources away from the important work of the department in this critical time of a transition of power,” he said. His resignation comes into effect from Monday midnight.

‘Armed protests’ planned at all capitols, Washington: FBI

Washington, Jan. 12: The FBI is warning of plans for armed protests at all 50 state capitals and in Washington in the days leading up to President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, stoking fears of more bloodshed after last week's deadly siege at the US Capitol.

An internal FBI bulletin warned that, as of Sunday, the nationwide protests may start later this week and extend through Biden's January 20 inauguration, according to two law enforcement officials who read details of the memo

Peter Gaynor, Administrator of Federal Emergency Management Agency, replaces Wolf as DHS acting secretary for the remaining duration of the Trump administration.

He is the third Cabinet member of the Trump administration to resign after the January 6 incident that resulted in the death of five people, including a police officer. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and the Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao resigned last week. Congressman Bennie Thompson, Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, in a statement said for months

to *The Associated Press*.

Investigators believe some of the people are members of some extremist groups, the officials said. The bulletin was first reported by ABC. “Armed protests are being planned at all 50 state capitols from 16 January through at least 20 January, and at the US Capitol from 17 January through 20 January,” the bulletin said, according to one official.

The officials were not authorised to speak publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity. The FBI issued at least

one other bulletin — they go out to law enforcement nationwide on the topic — before the riots last week.

On December 29, it warned of the potential for armed demonstrators targeting legislatures, the second official said. Army General Daniel Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, told reporters Monday that the Guard is also looking at any issues across the country. The riots followed weeks of online calls for violence in Washington in the waning days of Donald Trump's presidency. — AP

pson said.

Wolf joins a growing exodus of officials in the final days of the Trump administration. US Deputy National Security Advisor Matt Pottinger, first lady Melania Trump's chief of staff Stephanie Grisham, White House Deputy Press Secretary Sarah Matthews, White House social secretary Rickie Niceta, US special envoy for Northern Ireland Mick Mulvane, acting chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisors Tyler Goodspeed are among the officials who have resigned over the Capitol violence. — PTI

Biden names two PIOs to Office of WH Counsel

Washington, Jan. 12: US President-elect Joe Biden on Monday named two Indian Americans — Reema Shah and Neha Gupta — to the Office of the White House Counsel.

Shah, who had served on the debate preparation team for Biden on the Biden-Harris Campaign, has been named as Deputy Associate Counsel while Gupta, currently an attorney in the Office of the General Counsel for the Biden-Harris Transition, has been named as Associate Counsel in the Office of the White House Counsel. Shah was an associate at Latham & Watkins and a Bristol Fellow in the Office of the Solicitor General at the Department of Justice.

She served as a law clerk to Justice Elena Kagan on the US Supreme Court and Judge Sri Srinivasan on the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit.

Originally from New Jersey, Shah is a graduate of Harvard College, Cambridge University

Indian-Americans in Biden admin

1. Neera Tanden, Director of the Office of Management and Budget
2. Dr. Vivek Murthy, Surgeon General
3. Vanita Gupta, Associate Attorney General
4. Ali Zaidi, Deputy National Climate Advisor
5. Gautam Raghavan, Deputy Director of the Office of Presidential Personnel
6. Bharat Ramamurti, Deputy Director for the National Economic Council for Financial Reform and Consumer Protection
7. Vinay Reddy, Director of Speechwriting
8. Rohini Kosoglu,

Domestic Policy Advisor to the Vice President

9. Shanthi Kalathil, Coordinator for Democracy and Human Rights
10. Mala Adiga, Policy Director to Dr Jill Biden
11. Tarun Chhabra, Senior Director for Technology and National Security
12. Sumona Guha, Senior Director for South Asia
13. Aisha Shah, Partnerships Manager, Office of Digital Strategy
14. Sabrina Singh, Deputy Press Secretary, Office of the Vice President
15. Vedant Patel, Assistant Press Secretary

and Yale Law School. On the other hand, Gupta served as a Deputy City Attorney in the San Francisco City Attorney's Office, where she was general counsel to several city agencies, litigated constitutional and statutory challenges to city laws and administrative decisions, and participated in the office's affirmative public protection advocacy — PTI

Emergency imposed in Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur, Jan. 12: Malaysia's king on Tuesday approved a Coronavirus emergency that will suspend parliament at least until August and halt any bids to seek a general election in a political reprieve for embattled PM Muhyiddin Yassin.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT CORPORATION (CHENNAI) LTD.	
TENDER NOTICE	
Max sealed and superscribed tenders invited for the procurement of Printing Items, Base Coat Paint Items, Display of Advertisement on Buses, GPS based on - Board bus stop Announcement System with Audio Advertisement and Tender cum Public Auction for Condemned all scrap materials & Condemned Vehicles from the eligible tenders who shall submit documentary evidence.	
DESCRIPTION	
1) Procurement of Printing Items & Procurement of Base Coat Paint Items	10.00 am to 12.00 Hrs From 13.01.2021 to 29.01.2021 (For SI.No.1)
2) Display of advertisement on 170,400,500 & 630 buses; Display of advertisement in the passenger queens handles made 800 buses and GPS based on - board bus stop announcement system with audio advertisement in 500 buses.	10.00 am to 13.00 Hrs From 13.01.2021 to 29.01.2021 (For SI.No.2) upto 14.30 Hrs. on 29.01.2021 (For SI.No.3) upto 15.00 Hrs. on 29.01.2021 (For SI.No.2) at 15.00 Hrs. on 29.01.2021 (For SI.No.1)
3) Tender cum public auction for condemned all scrap materials & condemned vehicles	10.00 am to 13.00 Hrs From 13.01.2021 to 29.01.2021 (For SI.No.2) upto 14.30 Hrs. on 29.01.2021 (For SI.No.3) upto 15.00 Hrs. on 29.01.2021 (For SI.No.2) at 15.00 Hrs. on 29.01.2021 (For SI.No.1)
4) Tender cum public auction for condemned all scrap materials & condemned vehicles	10.00 am to 13.00 Hrs From 13.01.2021 to 29.01.2021 (For SI.No.2) upto 14.30 Hrs. on 29.01.2021 (For SI.No.3) upto 15.00 Hrs. on 29.01.2021 (For SI.No.2) at 15.00 Hrs. on 29.01.2021 (For SI.No.1)
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SHORT TAKES

Sindu, Praneeth lose in Thai Open

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

F1 season to start in Bahrain

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

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

India's injury toll mounts

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

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

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

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

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

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



Ravindra Jadeja underwent a surgery in fractured thumb.

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

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

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

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

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

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

the wicketkeeper.

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

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

TEAM INDIA DENIED BASIC FACILITIES IN BRISBANE

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

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

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

ty.

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

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

WARNER SAYS SORRY

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

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

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

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

TAMIL NADU DRUB ASSAM

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

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

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

CEC REAP RICH HAUL

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

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

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

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

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



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

BABU'S 5-DECADE JOURNEY

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

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

Chennaiyin FC hungry for victory

NEHA SURANA | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

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

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

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

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

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



Chennaiyin FC's Enes Sipovic.

headache for Laszlo.

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

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

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

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, JAN. 12

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

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

A senior official of an insurance company said, "The pendency appears big (claims pending) because the Covid treatment is long drawn. Patients after discharge continue to remain in quarantine and use medicines for nearly two months after discharge and they submit the final bills only after that."



Cadila aims to supply 150 mn doses

CHRIS KAY
JAN. 12

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

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

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

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

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

Philippines may tap meat, fish freezers for vaccine

ANDREO CALONZO
JAN. 12

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

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

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

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

BAIJU KALESH & P R SANJAI
JAN. 12

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

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

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

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

Amazon tells Sebi to suspend Future-RIL deal



SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JAN. 12

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FINANCIAL Chronicle

quick BITES

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

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Karnataka Bank Q3 profit rises 10% to ₹135 cr

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

Printed & Published by
K Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed & Published at Deccan Chronicle Presses situated at SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai.
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