

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | TUESDAY 8 | DECEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 28°C
Min: 21°C
Rainfall: 2 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Karthigai 23
Titthi: Ashtami / Navami
Star: Puram/ Uthiram
Rahukalam:
3 pm to 4.30 pm
Yamagandam:
9 am to 10.30 am

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.03 am
Zohar: 12.05 pm
Asar: 3.16 pm
Maghrib: 5.42 pm
Isha: 6.57 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.43 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.20 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 12.02 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 12.39 PM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+23,325)	(+343)
97,01,032	1,40,953

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,312)
TN: 791,552 11,809

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

6,76,83,887

DEATHS

15,46,195

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
218

worldometers.info

Sushil Modi gets elected unopposed to Rajya Sabha

Patna: Former Bihar deputy chief minister and senior BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi was on Monday declared elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha in a by-poll that was necessitated by the death of Union minister and Lok Janshakti Party founder Ram Vilas Paswan.

ESIC relaxes norms for availing health services in private hospitals

New Delhi: The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) on Monday allowed its beneficiaries to avail health services directly in any nearby private hospital in case of emergency. As per the existing practice, the insured persons and beneficiaries (family members) are required to go to an ESIC dispensary or hospital to obtain referral for hospitalisation in empanelled as well as non-empanelled private hospitals.

COUNTER

POINT



No food today... in support of farmers' Bharat Bandh!

SC stays Central Vista project, allows only inauguration

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 7

The Supreme Court on Monday pulled up the Centre for going ahead with its Central Vista project despite the challenge to the Rs 20,000-crore project pending before it, but allowed the foundation-laying of a new Parliament building by Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday, December 10, after the Centre assured the court that no construction or demolition work would be done till the case is finally decided. “We have shown deference

to you and expected that you will act in a prudent manner. The same deference should be shown to the court and there should be no demolition, nor construction nor any felling of trees,” said Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, who headed a bench that also comprised Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Sanjiv Khanna. The court took suo motu cognisance of the activities linked to the Central Vista project, including the construction of a new Parliament building, saying: “We have listed this matter



because of certain developments we came across in the public domain. We never thought you will go ahead so aggressively with the construction. The fact that there is no stay does not mean you can go ahead with every-

thing,” the bench told solicitor-general Tushar Mehta as the matter was taken up for hearing Monday morning. Mr Mehta sought a day's time to take instructions in the matter, but the court insisted on the Centre's views being conveyed in just five minutes, and adjourned the hearing until then. Taking on record a statement by the solicitor-general that “there will be no construction activity of any nature on the concerned site(s) nor demolition of any structure will be done, including the further translocation of tree(s) will be

kept in abeyance, until the pronouncement of the judgment in all these cases”, the court said, but permitted the authorities to “continue with procedural processes without altering the status of the site(s) in question in any manner, including to continue with the scheduled programme of foundation stone-laying on December 10, 2020.” The Central Vista area in Lutyens' Delhi houses iconic buildings like North and South Blocks of the Central Secretariat, Parliament House, Rashtrapati Bhavan and India Gate.



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Rajini has gurukripa, is man of his word: Brother



WORLD | 5
Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani tests positive

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Jadeja may miss first Test



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BHARAT BANDH — 11 AM TO 3 PM TODAY

All-India bandh to reflect solidarity with farmers

SANJAY KAW AND BHASKAR HARI SHARMA | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 7

With growing support from the trade unions and Opposition parties for Tuesday's “Bharat Bandh” call, some essential services, including supply of fruits, vegetables and milk, could get affected in Delhi, which is now the epicentre of the farmers' protests, and the rest of the country. The nationwide shutdown call is being observed by the farmers a day before their sixth round of talks with the Centre's representatives to mount pressure on the government to repeal the three controversial farm laws.

As the protesters have threatened to block the national highways and toll plazas during their strike, the Centre has directed all states and Union territories to tighten security and ensure peace and tranquillity. The home ministry, in a countrywide advisory, said the state governments and UT administrations must ensure that the Covid-19 guidelines issued with regard to health and social distancing are strictly followed. The Delhi police has also made adequate arrangements to ensure normal movement of people on roads during the “Bharat Bandh”. The police said anyone who tries to disrupt normal movement or tries to forcibly close shops or other establishments will be dealt with strongly under the law.

With massive protests at Delhi's borders continuing for the last 12 days, the protesting farmers at the Singhu border urged peace, and clarified that no shops or establishments will be forcibly closed on account of the bandh. ■ **P4**

The Congress and Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party were in favour of privatisation of the agri sector when in power, Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said. The repeal of the APMC Act was part of the 2019 manifesto of the Congress. Contract farming also started during the Manmohan Singh government in many Congress states, the minister added.



Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party is part of this opposition but Delhi government was the first to clear the farm laws, former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said.

The government has offered to amend the farm laws, but has remained firm on not scrapping the legislations.

The farmers have refused offers of amendments and say they will not end their protest till all three laws are history.

► Banks not to be hit by Bharat bandh, say unions

► In Punjab, petrol pumps decided not to open on Tuesday.

BJP blames Opposition, points to double standards

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 7

Insisting that a section of farmers have fallen in the grip of a few vested interests, the BJP on Monday said Opposition parties are supporting the protests by some farmers' groups against the recently passed legislations “to save their existence after being repeatedly rejected by people in different elections across the country.”

The ruling party said Opposition parties jumping in to support the protest and the ‘Bharat Bandh’ called by some farmers unions are “irresponsibly and unwarrantedly trying to give protests a wrong direction in order to serve their political interests.”

The BJP asserted that the reforms will benefit the small and marginal farmers, which are 86 per cent of the total farming community. ■ **P4**

Pointing out that the earlier Congress-led UPA government, the then agriculture minister and NCP supremo Sharad Pawar and the Congress' Rahul Gandhi had supported reforms in the APMC Act, senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad said whether it is CAA or Shaheen Bagh or any reform, Opposition parties oppose the Modi government for the sake of opposition forgetting their own work on the same issue in the past, exposing their “double standards.”

Reading from the Congress' 2019 Lok Sabha poll manifesto and citing a meeting of Congress chief ministers called by Mr Gandhi in 2013, a policy document of the erstwhile Planning Commission and letters by the then agriculture minister Mr Pawar to chief ministers of all states, Mr Prasad said all had suggested and supported amendment in the APMC

Act, which the Modi government has done. On the issue of contract farming, Mr Prasad pointed that during the UPA rule, states like Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chattisgarh, Odisha, Haryana, Goa, Maharashtra, MP, Mizoram had implemented model contract farming.

“I will reiterate again that farmers' land can neither be leased nor sold nor mortgaged in contract farming as it is not the land but produce that will be the collateral,” asserted Mr Prasad.

On allegations that the government wants to shut down mandis, Mr Prasad said since the implementation of reforms laws, the minimum support price (MSP) of six Kharif and Rabi crops have been hiked and by the end of November, 318 lakh tonnes of rice worth Rs 60,000 crore has been procured out of which 202 lakh tonnes of paddy has been procured from Punjab itself.

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, DEC. 7

Makkal Needhi Maiam founder, Kamal Haasan, hit out strongly at the DMK and AIADMK, calling them ‘children of corruption’ in retaliation to a popular charge made out against him, on social media and outside of it, that he was a Sanghi and a ‘B’ Team of the BJP.

Those who call a virtuous person as ‘Sanghi’ and ‘B Team’ support corruption, Haasan tweeted, saying that there was nothing surprising that a threat to corruption had united the people who had exploited Tamil Nadu and profited out of it over the years.

“Aren't they the ones who graced Tihar and Parappanna Aghahara?” Haasan asked making a direct charge against the DMK and AIADMK leaders by referring to the two jails in Delhi and Bengaluru.

He said he was ‘B Team’ only to Mahatma Gandhi, whom he described as one who proved that his life was his news and added “I am A Team since the age of 6 and I am telling this loudly to the children of corruption.” Haasan's angry retort was



Kamal Haasan



M.K. Surappa

prompted by a flood of remarks, mainly on social media, after he put out a video in support of Anna University Vice Chancellor M.K. Surappa, against whom the State government had ordered an enquiry by a retired judge of the Madras High Court.

Since Surappa had been in the eye of a storm with the DMK, AIADMK, many other political parties and Tamil activists objecting to his style functioning on various counts. Based on a plethora of complaints received against him, the State government ordered the enquiry.

Apart from introducing a chapter from Bhagwad Gita as a subject for engineering students, Surappa has been accused of giving an appointment to his daughter in Anna University.

There were other allegations of financial mismanagement too, besides the old charge that he wrote letters to the Centre without the State government's permission.

But Kamal Haasan took objection to the government action, called Surappa a clean man and likened his case to the incarceration of space scientist Nambi Narayanan in the infamous ISRO spy scandal, though in popular perception Surappa, as accused by the political parties and activists in the State, an ‘RSS stooge’ and a nominee of Governor Banwarilal Purohit. Reacting to that video people started attacking Haasan without miming words. So, he tweeted his retort, also seething with anger and self-righteousness.

One dead as BJP workers clash with police in WB

Siliguri, Dec. 7: Police fired teargas shells and used water cannons on Monday to quell a violent protest called by the Bhartiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) against the Mamata Banerjee government during which a BJP worker died, officials said.

Several protesters and police personnel were injured in clashes. The BJP alleged that a party worker identified as Ullen Ray was “beaten to death” by the police during

a batoncharge. However, police claimed there was no lathicharge and the cause of death of the protester was being ascertained.

The BJP condemned the police action and demanded imposition of President's rule in West Bengal in view of “breakdown of law and order”. The party has called a 12-hour bandh in north Bengal on Tuesday.

BJP workers were seen fighting pitched battles with police after they were stopped from moving past

barricades at two points near branch secretariat ‘Uttarkanya’ during the rally called to protest the TMC ‘misrule’.

The BJYM, the youth wing of the BJP, led by its chief and Lok Sabha member Tejaswi Surya, took out two protest marches claiming the state government had not fulfilled the promises made to the people of north Bengal and that the benefits of welfare schemes had failed to reach the common man. — **PTI**

It's back to in-person class



With colleges reopening after more than eight months due to Covid-19 pandemic, final year students are seen attending classes physically at DG Vaishnav College, Arumbakkam, on Monday.

— **DC**

Sisters who crossed from PoK sent home with gifts

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR DEC. 7

Two PoK sisters who had crossed over to Jammu and Kashmir inadvertently early Sunday morning were on Monday sent home with several gifts. The siblings were seen off by senior officers of the J&K civilian authorities and local commander of the Army at the Chakan Da Bagh crossing point along the Line of Control in Poonch district. “The sisters Laiba Zabair (17) and Sana Zabair (13)

were handed over to the Pakistani authorities this morning,” said an official. They are residents of Abbaspur village of Kahuta tehsil of PoK and, as per a defence spokesman, were apprehended by the Indian Army after noticing them moving in Sarla sector along the LoC in Poonch Sunday. “Own troops deployed along the LoC, having detected the crossing, exercised complete restraint to prevent any harm to the teenagers,” the spokesman said.

5 suspected terrorists held; Khalistani-Kashmir terror link comes to light

New Delhi, Dec. 7: The Delhi police Monday arrested five suspected terrorists, two of whom were allegedly involved in the killing of Shaurya Chakra winner Balwinder Singh in Punjab, exposing Pakistani spy agency ISI's attempt to link Khalistani operatives with terror outfits in Kashmir, officials said.

The five suspects were arrested after an encounter with police in east Delhi's Shakarpur area, they said. Police claimed that with these arrests they have been able to unearth a nexus involving Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, Pro-Khalistan radicals, Hizbul Mujahideen and those involved in narco terrorism. Of the five accused, Gurjit Singh and Sukhdeep Singh are residents of Gurdaspur in Punjab, while Shabir Ahmad, Md. Ayub Pathan and Riyaz Rather are from Kashmir and are affiliated with terrorist organisation Hizbul Mujahideen, a police officer said.

Gurjit and Sukhdeep were allegedly involved in the killing of Balwinder Singh in Punjab, he said. Balwinder Singh, who had received the Shaurya Chakra for fighting militancy, was shot dead in October. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said a police team swung into action after it received a tip-off on Monday morning that two Punjab-based “criminals were supposed to receive some money from three Kashmiris”. “On this specific information, five people were arrested from the Laxmi Nagar area in Delhi after a brief exchange of fire,” he said. — **PTI**

OTHER STORIES

Gold worth ₹15 lakh seized at city airport

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, DEC. 7

The Chennai Air Customs officers on Sunday seized gold worth ₹15 lakh from a woman passenger who arrived from Dubai.

According to a press release, on Sunday night, a lady passenger, Jothi Chinraj, (38) from Rasipuram in Tamil Nadu, who arrived by a FlyDubai flight from Dubai, was intercepted at the exit by an alert lady air intelligence officer as she was walking nervously and rushing through the green channel.

On being questioned she gave evasive replies and was taken for personal search. On examination, her brassiere was found to be unusually heavy. On opening the brassiere, two packets of gold paste wrapped with black adhesive tape weighing 344 grams were recovered. On extraction 295 grams of 24K purity gold valued at ₹15 lakh were recovered and seized under the Customs Act. Further investigation is under progress.

Pondy adds 26 new coronavirus cases

Puducherry, Dec 7: Puducherry added 26 new Covid-19 cases while one related fatality pushed the toll in the union territory to 615, a top Health department official said on Monday. The 26 new cases were identified at the end of the examination of 1,651 samples during the last 24 hours ending 10 AM Monday, raising the overall tally to 37,270. Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said in a release. A 70-year old man succumbed to the infection at the government hospital here pushing the toll to 615, he added. He said of the 26 new cases, Mahe logged 14, followed by Puducherry with nine and Yanam(3). Karaikal did not report any fresh case of infection. He said as many as 25 patients recovered and were discharged during the 24 hours. The fatality and recovery rates were 1.65 per cent and 97.30 per cent respectively. Of the total 4.21 lakh samples tested so far, 3.79 lakh samples turned out to be negative. Of the total 37,270 Covid-19 cases so far, 392 were active while 36,263 patients were treated and discharged so far, Mohan Kumar said. — PTI

Alliance with Cong disastrous: Chouhan

FROM P1

Chouhan in a cynical tone commented, "Whoever forges alliance with the Congress will sink with it."

Appreciating TN BJP state president L Murugan for the Vel Yatra, he said that the month-long yatra has created an upsurge in favour of the BJP, which hopes for a new dawn in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

Initially, planned to be a public meeting, the BJP agreed to organise the event as an indoor meeting in a private marriage hall in Tiruchendur on the advice of the district police.

Raghavendra mandapam gearing up for makeover

Speculations rife over Rajini's party name, flag, office

ANUPAMA
SUBRAMANIAN | DC
CHENNAI, DEC. 7

Superstar Rajinikanth visited his elder brother Sathyanarayana Rao in Bengaluru on Sunday late evening to seek his blessings before launching the new political party soon. He travelled by road to the Karnataka capital. The superstar was back in Chennai on Monday afternoon, which was also confirmed by his brother.

Meanwhile, pictures of Rajini, sporting a simple white dhoti and kurta, bending down with folded hands before his brother as a mark of respect, which were shared by his publicist, went viral within minutes.

The actor was also seen discussing with his brother, with the facemasks intact, seemingly about his foray into politics. The actor will turn 71 on December 12.

In the meantime, speculations on Rajini's party name and flag have also surfaced. Sources say that akin to actor-turned-politician Vijayakanth, who converted his marriage hall into a party office, Rajinikanth is also toying with the idea of renovating his sprawling Raghavendra kalyana mandapam, situated in the heart of the city at Kodambakkam, into his party office. Accordingly, it is



Rajinikanth talking to his brother at the latter's residence in Bengaluru.

'Rajinikanth has gurukripa, is a man of his word'

Bengaluru, Dec 7: Ahead of launching his political party next month, Tamil superstar Rajinikanth paid a visit to his elder brother R Sathyanarayana Rao in Bengaluru, where he grew up. "We hadn't met for quite some time. He came last night and left this morning for Chennai after spending some good time," 77-year-old Rao

learnt, an image makeover is being given to the premises.

told PTI on Monday. Sixty-nine-year-old Rajinikanth sought the blessings of his brother, who wished him good health and a long life. Rao declined to offer comments on the political innings of his brother. "Didn't he say that he (Rajinikanth) will talk about that on December 31?" Rao said. Rao recalled that Rajinikanth

spent his childhood in the city, where he was born, and lived here till the age of 22 before shifting to Chennai. "He (Rajinikanth) has 'gurukripa' (grace of the guru)," he said. "He (Rajinikanth) is a man of his word. He definitely does what he says. He always keeps his word," Rao added.

— PTI

So far his fans are using a flag in blue, red and white with the face of

Rajinikanth right in the centre and is hoisted when his movie is released.

Third phase of Covaxin trial begins in SRM hosp

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, DEC. 7

The clinical trial for Covaxin, conducted by Chennai's SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre, began its third phase on Monday. The hospital said the first two phases of the vaccine trial were successful.

In a press statement, the hospital said that over 1,000 persons will be subjected to the vaccine trial in its third phase. Speaking to the press, Pro-Chancellor Dr P Sathyanarayanan said that the hospital has so far added 500 volunteers for the test and that the recruitment will happen till the end of December. "We are trying our best to make this work, as it will be India's first indigenous vaccine," he said.

Dr Satyajit Mohapatra,



principal investigator of the study, said that any person aged above 18 and has not been infected by Covid-19 in the past can participate as a volunteer in the third phase of the vaccine trial. "Pregnant women are excluded. The vaccine shot will be administered twice - 28 days apart," he added. The statement also said

that in the first two phases of the vaccine, none of the volunteers suffered any serious adverse reactions except mild fever and body pain. There were 30 participants in the first phase of the trial which began in July 2020; 45 participants were administered the samples in the second phase, which was done in August. The third phase of the trial is aimed at inducing immunogenicity in the volunteer. Immunogenicity is the ability of an antigen (or a foreign substance) to provoke an immune response in the body.

Covaxin is developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council for Medical Research. The vaccine received the nod from the Drug Controller General of India for human trials earlier this year.

HC notice to TN on plea against ban on online games

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, DEC 7

The Madras high court has ordered notice to the state government on a petition, which sought to quash an ordinance promulgated by the Tamil Nadu government, banning online games playing with stakes in Tamil Nadu.

A division bench comprising Justices R.Subbiah and C.Saravanan before whom the petition filed by Jungle Games India Private Limited, represented by is authorized representative Rahul Nandkumar Bhardwaj, an online gaming platform, adjourned it to December 21, 2020.

The petitioner provides an online web and mobile based platform and offers competitive games of rummy in three popular formats. The state of Tamil Nadu promulgated Ordinance 11 on November 21, 2020, amending and inserting section 3-A to the Tamil Nadu Gaming Act, prohibiting any game with stakes played on cyberspace including rummy and also completely removed the application of section 11 of the Act which provided that the provisions of the Act would not be applicable to games of only skill like

Plea to supervise construction of new govt med colleges

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, DEC 7

A public interest litigation has been filed in the Madras high court to direct the authorities to constitute a committee to supervise as to whether the construction work is made as per the norms fixed by the Medical Council of India in respect of construction of buildings for all the new upcoming

Rummy, along with amendments to section 49 of the Chennai Police Act and omitting the schedule to the Tamil Nadu District Police Act, he added. He contended that the game of online rummy was no different from playing physical rummy other than the fact that the game was conducted and played virtually. The 13 card rummy game being conducted by the petitioner on its platform was a 'game of skill' in conformity with the judgments of the Supreme Court and various other high courts. While so, the state



Government Medical Colleges in the State of Tamil Nadu, which will start

government promulgated the ordinance, whereby under section 3-A and 11 of the Act, the petitioner, who was providing a platform to play online rummy for stakes which was a 'game of mere skill' has been prohibited and brought under the purview of gaming under the Act. This instant petition was in assertion of its legal and constitutional rights amongst any other remedies available to it, particularly, challenging the actions of the state government in classifying 'rummy' when played online constitutes gambling

functioning from the academic year 2021-2022.

A division bench comprising Justices M.Sathyanarayanan and R.Hemalatha before whom the PIL filed by N. Rajasekaran of Tiruvallur district, came up for hearing ordered notice to the Union and state governments and Medical Council of India and posted to February, further hearing of the case.

under Section 3-A of the Act and that 'rummy' when played offline/physically was a 'game of mere skill' and was therefore, exempted from the purview of the penal provisions of the Act, which was not only discriminatory, arbitrary and illegal but shows absurdity of the understanding of the state government in relation to 'game of mere skill', he added.

During the hearing, when the counsels orally requested the court to grant interim relief, the bench declined to pass any interim order.

Man tries to save daughter, drowns

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, DEC. 7

A 55-year-old man drowned in the sea while trying to rescue his 11-year-old daughter, who was swept into the sea by a huge wave, at the Tiruvannmiyur beach on Monday morning.

According to Tiruvannmiyur police, the deceased has been identified as Balaji, a resident of Vellai Amman Koil Street, Shastri Nagar. He had taken his daughter to swim and play at the Tiruvannmiyur beach. While his daughter was playing on the shore, a huge wave swept her into the sea. Hearing her

cries, Balaji sought the help of local fishermen and stepped into the sea to rescue her. While the fishermen rescued the girl, Balaji drowned, police said.

On being alerted, the Tiruvannmiyur police went to the spot and, after a few hours, found his body floating a few km away. The body was taken to the Government Royapettah Hospital from where it has been sent to Government Kilpauk Medical College Hospital for post-mortem, the police official said.

The Tiruvannmiyur police have filed a case and are investigating the matter.

Sub-inspector dies in road accident

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, DEC. 7

In an unfortunate incident, a sub-inspector died in an accident after he lost control of his motorcycle when a dog crossed his way on a road near Thirukazhukundram on Sunday night.

The deceased has been identified as Chandrasekaran (54). Hailing from Walajapet in Ranipet district, he had been working as a special sub-inspector at the Thirukazhukundram police station in Chengalpet district. Sources said

Chandrasekaran on being assigned work regarding a case was on his way to Sathurangapattinam on the Thirukalukundram bypass road late on Sunday night when a dog suddenly crossed his path. He lost his control and fell off his vehicle while applying the brake to avoid hitting the dog and suffered a severe head injury.

He was then admitted to Chengalpet government hospital where he passed away after failing to respond to treatment. The Thirukazhukundram police have registered a case.



Photos: E. K. Sanjay

Thazhambur, Navalur under water

Chennai, Dec. 7: With the northeast monsoon continuing to bring heavy rains to Chennai and its surrounding districts, people in the city's suburbs - Semmancheri, Thazhambur and Navalur - are still experiencing severe waterlogging in their areas. People are leaving the area due to absence of power supply. A group of residents of Ezhil Muga Nagar and Jawahar Nagar protested seeking government attention to their plight. They said the Chengalpattu district administration and the different departments of the state government have done little to address their grievances since the onset of monsoon. The residents of Casagrand Elan & Jagannath Meadows said that vendors bringing essential commodities had not visited their areas for the past few days. They urged the state government to increase the height of roads from Rajiv Gandhi Salai (OMR) to localities inside Thazhambur, deepen and desilt lakes and ponds in these areas. They also want the authorities to deepen and strengthen water channels which bring rainwater to Buckingham canal.



SHORT TAKES

CAN'T BUILD NEW CENTURY WITH OLD LAWS: PM

Lucknow, Dec. 7: Amid the row over laws meant to bring a major change in the agri-marketing sector, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said reforms are needed for development and some laws from the past century have become a burden now.

Launching the Agra metro rail project through video conference, Modi said the reforms carried out by his government are also getting reflected in election results. His pitch on the importance of reforms comes ahead of Tuesday's Bharat Bandh over the three new farm laws enacted at the Centre. But during his brief address, the Prime Minister made no direct reference to the new laws or the farmers' protests.

"Reforms are needed for development. Reforms are very much needed for a new order and to give new facilities. We cannot build the next century with the laws of the previous century," he said. "Some laws that used to be good in the past century have become a burden in the present century. Reforms should be a continuous process," he said. Modi said his government is carrying out "holistic reforms".

"Earlier, reforms used to happen in a piecemeal manner; or keeping in mind some sectors and departments," the Prime Minister said.

SUSHIL MODI ELECTED UNOPPOSED TO RS

Patna: Senior Bihar BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi was on Monday declared elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha in a by-poll that was necessitated by the death of Union minister and Lok Janshakti Party founder Ram Vilas Paswan.

Sushil Modi was declared elected unopposed on the last date for withdrawal of nomination papers.

In addition to the former deputy chief minister a lone independent candidate, Shyam Nandan Prasad had filed his nomination papers which were rejected during scrutiny.

Prasad's papers were not supported by at least 10 members of the 243-strong assembly as proposers, which is mandatory, poll officials said.

Sushil Modi was handed over his certificate in the presence of a host of dignitaries, including Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, with whom he is known to enjoy an excellent rapport, his successors as deputy chief minister Tar Kishore Prasad and Renu Devi and state BJP president Sanjay Jaiswal.

SC REFUSES TO QUASH FIR AGAINST ANCHOR

New Delhi, Dec. 7: The Supreme Court on Monday refused to quash FIRs lodged against TV anchor Amish Devgan for his alleged defamatory remarks on Sufi saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti during a show on June 15, but granted him protection from arrest till conclusion of probe if he continues to cooperate in the investigation.

The top court, however, agreed to the submission of the news anchor that all pending FIRs pertained to the same telecast and ordered transfer of all seven cases registered in Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Telangana and Madhya Pradesh to Ajmer where the first complaint was registered. A bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Sanjiv Khanna reproduced the relevant portions of the transcript of the debate anchored by Devgan on June 15 and said that it was "apparent that the petitioner (the journalist) was an equal co-participant, rather than a mere host".

"The transcript, including the offending portion, would form a part of the 'content', but any evaluation would require examination and consideration of the variable 'context' as well as the 'intent' and the 'harm/impact'.

"These have to be evaluated before the court can form an opinion on whether an offence is made out.

The evaluative judgment on these aspects would be based upon facts, which have to be inquired into and ascertained by police investigation," the bench said.

CONGRESS BACKS BHARAT BANDH IN MP, C'GARH

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, DEC. 7

Former chief minister and Madhya Pradesh Congress unit president Kamal Nath on Monday declared his party's support to the December 8 "Bharat Bandh" call given by different farmers' bodies in protest against the 3 farm laws by the Centre.

In a statement issued here, Nath said all the district units of the party in the state have been asked to stage demonstrations in district headquarters and submit memorandum to the local district collectors seeking withdrawal of the 3 'controversial' farm bill passed in the parliament recently, on the day. Nath also slammed the Centre for bringing the laws without consulting the farmers' bodies.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Tuesday said the ruling Congress would support "Bharat Bandh."

He described the 3 farm laws as 'anti-farmer' and demanded the Centre to repeal them.



Farmers distribute eatables during their agitation against the new farm laws at Singhu border in New Delhi on Monday.

— PTI

Cong: Govt responsible for inconvenience due to stir

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, DEC. 7

Lending its full support to the 'Bharat Bandh' called by farmers' unions against the three central agriculture laws, the Congress on Monday said the government would be responsible for any inconvenience caused to people due to the strike.

Around 18 Opposition parties, including the Congress, have already supported the 'Bharat Bandh' call.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi asserted that the Congress supported the "peaceful" Bharat Bandh. The 'Adani-Ambani Farm Laws' have to be revoked, "Nothing less is acceptable", Gandhi tweeted.

Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jakhar said that the government would be responsible for any inconvenience caused to the people due to the

Delhi lawyers support farmers' Bharat bandh

New Delhi, Dec. 7: The Coordination Committees of all the district courts in the national capital have extended their support to the farmers' call for 'Bharat bandh' on December 8 as a sign of protest against the recently enacted farm laws.

strike.

"The Modi government is squarely responsible for the current situation and it would be responsible for any inconvenience caused to the public during the Bandh tomorrow," Jakhar told the media. Accusing the government of following the US model in acting as a "lobbyist" for corporates, he said, "Please do not fol-

low America. The government should not become a lobbyist for the corporate. Corporatising agriculture is not acceptable. The Prime Minister should take note of it".

He said government's intention behind bringing the three laws is "suspect" and accused the ruling dispensation of "misleading" the country on the three legislations.

— PTI

India hosts fewer foreign defence firms despite largest importer tag

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, DEC. 7

India hosts a relatively low number of large foreign defence manufacturers considering that it has been among the world's largest arms importers for decades and has a policy of domestic arms — industrial development, according to a report by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

The report looked at the international presence of the 15 largest arms companies in 2019. These companies are present in a total of 49 countries, through majority-owned subsidiaries, joint ventures and research facilities.

The report said that it identified 13 foreign entities in India. However, only two are involved in manufacturing activities.

Airbus, BAE Systems, Boeing, General Dynamics, L3Harris Technologies, Leonardo, Lockheed Martin and Thales all have foreign entities in India.

UK hosts the most entities about 14 per cent of the total for the 15 largest arms companies. This was followed by Australia (9.5 per cent), the USA (9.0 per cent), Canada (7.5 per cent), Germany (7.3 per cent), Saudi Arabia (6.0 per cent), Italy (3.8 per cent) and India (3.3 per cent).

With a global presence spanning 24 countries each, Thales and Airbus

are the two most internationalised companies — followed closely by Boeing (21 countries), Leonardo (21 countries) and Lockheed Martin (19 countries).

The report said that low presence of foreign companies could be explained by its Indian rules on foreign investment in its domestic arms industry, which have evolved over time. As India developed its arms procurement policy, it introduced offset requirements to leverage foreign technologies in support of its arms industry. However, between 2006 and 2014 the offset rules capped foreign direct investment in Indian arms companies at 26 per cent; this rose to 49 per cent

after 2014. In September 2020 the cap was revised again, to 74 per cent. "This higher threshold may raise the interest of major arms companies in partnering with India's domestic firms or setting up local subsidiaries, it said.

In August, India announced a negative list of 101 defence platforms and weapons whose import will be progressively banned starting December 2020 to boost indigenisation of defence production under Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative. India hopes with this embargo, contracts worth ₹4 lakh crore will be placed with the domestic industry within the next five to seven years.

AIIMS RDA said.

In the letter, it stated that Ayurveda is a strong system to uphold its dignity and do wonders on its very own without any illegitimate support or encroachment into any separate stream of medicine. Bachelors of Ayurveda must be given entirely separate degrees and titles such as 'Vaidya' and not similar to the doctors learning and practising modern medicine. Bachelor and Masters degree in allopathy and all other streams of medicine must be distinct in order to avoid "crosspathy" in

disguise, the RDA said.

"Thus, standing in solidarity with all the practitioners and learners of modern medicine in India we oppose these new regulations which would encourage quackery and demerit and its immediate withdrawal in order to preserve the sanctitude and uphold the virtues of both Ayurveda and Modern Medicine and above all to safeguard the health of the patients and population. If no immediate action is taken against the same, we shall be forced to take strict, further steps," the RDA warned. — PTI

KEJRIWAL REVIEWS ARRANGEMENTS AT BORDER

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, DEC. 7

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday visited the Singhu border, where thousands of farmers are protesting against the Centre's new farm laws, and checked arrangements made for them by the city government.

The visit comes a day after the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) extended its support to the 'Bharat Bandh' called by farmers' organisations on December 8. Kejriwal was accompanied by his cabinet ministers and some party MLAs during the brief visit to the protest venue on the Delhi-Haryana border.

"I checked the arrangements. We received a lot of pressure to allow the use of stadiums as temporary prisons but we did not give permission and I feel this helped the movement. Since then our party MLAs and ministers have been involved in ensuring that farmers do not face any discomfort," he said.

"We are working like 'sewadaar'. Here I have not come as a Chief Minister but as a 'sewadaar' to serve the farmers. It is our responsibility to support the farmers," he told reporters.

On Sunday, Kejriwal had said that all AAP workers across the country will support the nationwide strike and appealed to all citizens to support the farmers.

Thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, are protesting at various border points of Delhi against the new farm laws.

The Centre's offer to amend the contentious laws failed to cut ice with farmer groups during the fifth round of talks on Saturday.

● THE VISIT comes a day after the AAP extended its support to the 'Bharat Bandh' called by farmers' organisations on December 8. Kejriwal was accompanied by his cabinet ministers and some party MLAs during the brief visit to the protest venue on the Delhi-Haryana border.

Polling to be held in five districts of Kerala today

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DEC. 7

Five of the 14 districts in Kerala will go to polls on Tuesday in the first phase of local body elections, considered the semifinals ahead of the Assembly polls in 2021.

The voters of Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha and Idukki districts, will go out to vote in polling booths amid Covid-19 safety protocol. The polls are crucial for the ruling CPM led LDF, opposition Congress led UDF and the BJP which is making desperate attempts to make inroads into the red bastion.

All eyes are set on the prestigious Thiruvananthapuram corporation. The BJP buoyed by the massive surge in GHMC elections in Hyderabad believes that the corporation is within their striking range.

In 2015 polls it won 34 seats becoming the main opposition. This time it is targeting 70 of the 100 wards. The LDF on the other hand is confident of retaining the corporation on the strength of its development work and pro-poor welfare programmes.

There are 88,25,620 registered voters across these districts who will elect representatives to 318 grama panchayats, 50 block panchayats, five district panchayats, 20 munic-

ipalities and 2 corporations. Though the main fight is between the ruling CPM led LDF and opposition Congress led UDF, with the BJP put putting up a strong fight the local body polls are expected to witness triangular contests in many local bodies.

The LDF which has traditionally maintained an upper hand in local body polls, is facing a tough challenge this time in the wake of sensational gold smuggling case involving chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan's former principal secretary M. and some other functionaries of the CMO.

Though the local issues usually gain precedence over state or national issues in the local body polls, the gold smuggling, corruption and the arrest of CPM's former state secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan's son in a money trail related to drug racket are being used widely in opposition campaigns.

Almost all major central investigation agencies including National Investigation Agency (NIA), CBI, Enforcement Directorate, Customs are probing cases related to gold smuggling and alleged corruption in government's major schemes. The LDF on its part has tried to build a counter attack accusing the central agencies of implementing the political agenda of the BJP led government at the Centre.

QUACK | CHARGE

Surgery by PG Ayurveda practitioners poses threat, say docs

Docs want Ayurveda surgery order recall

New Delhi, Dec. 7: The AIIMS Resident Doctors' Association (RDA) on Monday demanded withdrawal of a Central Council of Indian Medicine notification authorising post-graduate Ayurveda practitioners to be trained in general surgical procedures, saying it would "encourage quackery" and "pose hazardous risk" to the health of the population.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has given a call to all doctors practising modern medicine to withdraw non-essential and non-Covid services on

December 11 protesting the new regulations.

Emergency services, along with ICUs and CCUs, will function but no elective surgical case will be posted, the doctors' body has said.

Doctors of modern medicine across the country will hold demonstrations in over 10,000 public spots on Tuesday in small groups of 20 following the Covid-19 protocols between 12 noon to 2 pm to protest the regulations, IMA said.

In a letter to Union health minister Harsh Vardhan, the RDA raised

objection over the "mixing of streams" of medicine, stating it "poses hazardous risk to the health of innocent, general population which may be irreversible and fatal".

It said that modern medicine has evolved over a period of time through groundbreaking research and all possible developments. "This journey of modern medicine is entirely different from that of Ayurveda. Therefore, it is neither legitimate nor safe for our patients to be treated by the doctors with incomplete knowledge of the different streams," the

SHORT TAKES

ACTING AMERICA
DEFENCE SECY IN
INDONESIA

Jakarta, Dec. 7: The acting US secretary of defence met with his counterpart in Indonesia on Monday as part of a visit to Asia in which he will push Washington's free and open Indo-Pacific policy.

Christopher Miller met Indonesian Minister of Defence Prabowo Subianto on Monday, according to Prabowo's office. The Pentagon has said during his trip Miller will meet with his counterparts and other senior officials to discuss the importance of the bilateral defence relationships and securing a free and open Indo-Pacific.

After Indonesia, Miller will head to the Philippines. Miller was installed by President Donald Trump on November 9 after he fired Mark Esper.

POPE TO MAKE
PILGRIMAGE TO
IRAQ IN MARCH

Vatican City, Dec. 7: Pope Francis will make a pilgrimage to Iraq in March, pandemic conditions permitting, the Vatican said on Monday, announcing what would be the pontiff's first trip abroad in more than a year.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Brunelli on Monday said Francis will make the March 5-8 visit, with stops in Baghdad, and the "plains of Ur, linked to the memory of Abraham," the Biblical patriarch, as well as to the cities of Irbil, Mosul and Qaraqosh.

Brunelli said the trip's schedule will be announced later and will take into consideration "the evolution of the worldwide health emergency" that is the Covid-19 pandemic. It would be the first trip abroad for Francis since November 2019, when he visited Thailand and Japan. Francis turns 84 on December 17. The Vatican said Francis had accepted invitations from the Iraqi government from the local Catholic church.

INDIAN EXPAT
CHARGED IN UAE
FOR MURDER

Dubai, Dec. 7: A UAE-based Indian expat has been charged with beating a compatriot to death after a heated argument over illegal rented accommodation, according to a media report.

The Dubai Court of First Instance on Sunday heard the case and charged the 31-year-old accused for assaulting and leaving his compatriot in unconscious condition following an argument after he went to collect rent from the victim, the *Gulf News* reported on Sunday.

According to records, the incident happened in August when the victim's mother was worried as her repeated calls to her son went unanswered. She then called his friend, who went to his rented apartment to check after breaking open the door with the security guard and found him lying dead on the bed.

Dubai Police were alerted and investigations revealed that the victim had died three days before the body was discovered, the report, which does not identify both the victim and defendant, said.

MINERS' DEATH:
CHINA CITY
CRACKS WHIP

Beijing, Dec. 7: China's southwestern megacity of Chongqing has ordered a crackdown on breaches of mine safety following last week's deaths of 23 workers in one of the country's worst recent mining disasters.

State media reported Monday that officials were called to a video conference Sunday and told to undertake thorough reforms after the deaths at the Diaoshuidong mine, which was caused by the buildup of deadly levels of carbon monoxide in the shaft. There have been no reports of arrests, although a full investigation has been launched into Friday's disaster.

One miner was rescued from the mine, where the death toll had originally been put at at least 18. Miners were reportedly dismantling equipment in the mine, which had been closed two months earlier and may have lacked the ventilation systems needed to clear the gas that leaks from the coal seam. China's coal mining industry used to be the world's deadliest, suffering more than 5,000 fatalities a year from explosions, floods and gas leaks. Safety improved dramatically after authorities overhauled the industry starting about 15 years ago.

Sinovac steps up
making vaccines

Chinese company gets \$500 mn investment, to produce 600 million doses by end of year

Taipei, Dec. 7: Chinese vaccine company Sinovac announced Monday that it is planning to complete a new facility to double its annual vaccine production capacity to 600 million doses by the end of the year, while also securing a \$500 million investment in a boost to its Covid-19 vaccine development efforts.

The company is currently conducting the last stage of clinical trials for its vaccine candidate in Brazil, Turkey and Indonesia and is among the frontrunners of China's vaccine efforts. China has at least five Covid-19 vaccine candidates running late stage clinical trials across more than a dozen countries.

Sino Biopharmaceutical Ltd., a pharmaceutical conglomerate, bought a 15 per cent stake in Sinovac for an investment of \$500 million. The funds will allow the company to "improve our vaccine sales capabilities, expand in Asia markets, develop and access new technologies, and most importantly, accelerate our efforts to help combat the global pandemic," Sinovac CEO Yin Weidong said in a statement. On Sunday, 1.2 million doses of its experimental vaccine arrived in Indonesia and are expected to be approved for use soon. Sinovac's candidate is a two-dose inactivated vaccine, an old-school technology in which a live virus is killed and then purified. It can be stored at 2 to 8 C (36 to 46 F), within the range of a normal refrigerator, unlike some other vaccines candidates that require far lower temperatures. Sinovac's experimental vaccine is currently approved for emergency use in China, although it has not yet obtained final market approval.

Under emergency use, it has been distributed to groups the Chinese government deemed suitable, including front-line medical workers and border personnel. The latest public data from the company, published in the science journal *Lancet*, showed its

Virus 'war zone',
warns Korean min

Seoul, Dec. 7: South Korea's health minister said Monday that the Seoul metropolitan area is now a "Covid-19 war zone," as the country reported another 615 new infections and the virus appeared to be spreading faster.

The president, meanwhile, issued a call to expand testing and contact tracing. The country has recorded more than 5,300 new infections in the past 10 days and Monday was the 30th day in a row of triple-digit daily jumps. Most cases have come from the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area, where half of South Korea's 51 million people live. With people increasingly venturing out in public and spending longer hours indoors amid cold temperatures, health workers have struggled to stem transmissions tied

to restaurants, saunas, schools, hospitals and long-term care facilities.

"The capital area is now a Covid-19 war zone," health minister Park Neung-hoo said, asking for vigilance. He said the country may have to increase social distancing to prevent the resurgence in the capital from "exploding into a major outbreak nationwide and collapsing health-care system." Na Seong-woong, a senior official from the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, said the country could be reporting around 900 new infections a day next week if it fails to slow the spread. While Korea managed to contain a major outbreak in spring, it's less clear where the reinforcements will come if the virus wreaks havoc in the Seoul area. — AP

TRUMP LAWYER
RUDY GIULIANI
TESTS POSITIVE

Washington, Dec. 7: Rudy Giuliani, the personal lawyer to Donald Trump, has tested positive for Covid-19, becoming the latest person in the US president's inner circle to be infected by the deadly virus. Giuliani, 76, has been taken to the Medstar Georgetown University Hospital in Washington DC, according to US media reports.

The news of the former mayor of New York testing positive was first tweeted by President Trump on Sunday. The president and his team have been criticised for shunning Covid-19 safety guidance.

Trump, 74, was tested positive in October. — PTI

TECH PROVIDES
RESULTS IN LESS
THAN 30 MINS

Washington, Dec. 7: Scientists have developed a novel technology for a CRISPR-based Covid-19 diagnostic test that uses a smartphone camera to provide accurate results in under 30 minutes.

According to the research published in the journal *Cell*, the new diagnostic test can not only generate a positive or negative result, it also measures the viral load — the concentration of virus — in a given sample. All CRISPR diagnostics to date have required that the viral RNA be converted to DNA and amplified before it can be detected, adding time and complexity, the researchers said.

In contrast, the new approach skips all the conversion and amplification steps, using CRISPR to directly detect the viral RNA, they said. — PTI

Iran says US 'got the message',
changed behaviour in Gulf

Tehran, Dec. 7: Iran said on Monday it was glad the United States "got the message" and modified its behaviour in the Persian Gulf, after the top US Navy official in the region said his forces had reached a state of deterrence with Iran after months of regional attacks and seizures at sea.

"We are happy that the other party has got the message and made its behaviour more respectful," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said. He said the US military is the "main source of tension" in the region and that Iranian forces have always acted professionally.

"Unfortunately, the US has often had an unprofessional approach toward Iran's navy," he said. He was responding to Vice Adm. Sam Paparo's remarks, delivered at a conference in Bahrain on Sunday. Paparo, who oversees the Navy's 5th Fleet based in Bahrain, said the two sides

HALEY OPPOSES BIDEN'S PLAN TO
REJOIN IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

Washington, Dec. 7: Nikki Haley, the former US envoy to the United Nations, on Monday opposed President-elect Joe Biden's plan to re-join the Iranian nuclear deal, saying the Trump administration's sanctions on Tehran deprived the regime of the money it needed to harm American military.

"The Iran deal is only as reliable & trustworthy as the partner who signs the agreement & Iran is nei-

ther of those. Iran continues to enrich uranium, sponsor terrorists & call for Israel & America's destruction. Members of the Iranian parliament recently chanted 'Death to America'," Haley tweeted.

In an interview to *The New York Times*, Biden had expressed his desire to rejoin the Iranian nuclear deal, one of the key foreign policy accomplishments of the Obama Administration. — PTI

responding with a missile attack on US forces.

The US Navy routinely has tense encounters with the Revolutionary Guard, whose speed boats race alongside American warships in the Persian Gulf and sometimes conduct live-fire drills with machine guns and missile launches in their presence.

In recent years Iran has seized oil tankers and been blamed for a series of limpet mine explosions targeting tankers. Tehran denied involvement, but Revolutionary Guard members were filmed taking an unexploded mine away from one tanker.

In recent days, a mine struck an oil tanker off Saudi Arabia and a cargo ship near Yemen came under assault. Suspicion immediately fell on Iranian-backed rebels in Yemen, known as Houthis. The rebels have not commented on the attacks. — AP

Azerbaijan's war victory



A TV crew works on Bakus Azadliq square in front of a huge poster reading "Karabakh is Azerbaijan!" decorating the facade of a hotel on Monday, days ahead of December 10 military parade celebrating the country's victory in its armed conflict with Armenia over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region. — AFP

Texas officer kills man suspected
of hitting worker with his vehicle

Mesquite, Dec. 7: An off-duty police officer shot and killed a 30-year-old man who refused to stop after striking a highway construction worker with his vehicle in Dallas, authorities said.

The Mesquite Police Department said off-duty officers from the East Texas cities of Jefferson and Seven Points were providing construction security in Dallas early Saturday when the construction worker was hit. The suspect refused to stop at the scene, and officers requested assistance as they pursued him on Interstate 635, police said Saturday in a statement.

The suspect finally stopped "after contact was made between the suspect's vehicle and the officer's vehicle" in the Dallas suburb of Mesquite, according to the statement. One of the officers then shot the suspect, police said.

The statement did not explain what prompted

● **THE SUSPECT refused to stop at the scene, and officers requested assistance as they pursued him on Interstate 635, police said Saturday in a statement.**

the shooting nor if the off-duty officers identified themselves to the suspect as police. Mesquite Lt. Stephen Biggs said Sunday that he couldn't say much more than what was included in the statement because the investigation is ongoing.

Biggs added Sunday that he was told the off-duty officers were in a vehicle owned by a private security company. It was not immediately clear who told him that. When Mesquite officers arrived, the suspect had been shot and the off-duty officers who pursued him were providing first aid.

Mesquite police then took over first aid until

paramedics arrived. Police said the suspect died at a hospital. Biggs said the construction worker had been in stable condition but forwarded questions about updates to Dallas police, who respon-

ded to the shooting. Dallas police Officer Tamika Dameron said Sunday that the department did not know the current condition of the construction worker. — AP

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NOTICE INVITING TENDER	
Tender Enquiry / Specification No.	MQP-169 /2020-21/PR
Short Description	Procurement of 20-in-1 Meter Pillar Boxes for incorporating Single Phase Energy Meters
Start date of downloading of tender documents/Bid submission start date	08.12.2020 at 11.00 Hrs
Last date of downloading / Bid submission	07.01.2021 till 11.00 Hrs
Bid opening date (Part-I & II)	14.01.2021 at 11.30 Hrs
Intending officer and Contact No.	SE/HMC, PSPCL, Patiala 96461-18774
Detailed NIT and set of specification/ tender documents can only be downloaded from website https://eprc.punjab.gov.in. Tender ID is 2020_POWER_56994_1	
Note: Corrigendum, if any, after the publication of this tender enquiry shall only be uploaded on site and will not be published in any newspaper.	
C-365/2020 RO : I/14018	SE/HMC PSPCL, Patiala



LIBRARY | UPDATE

PoC George Floyd's 'I can't breathe' also finds mention

Fauci's 'Wear a mask' tops quotes list

New Haven (US), Dec. 7: A plea from Dr Anthony Fauci for people to "wear a mask" to slow the spread of the Coronavirus tops a Yale Law School librarian's list of the most notable quotes of 2020.

The list assembled by Fred Shapiro, an associate director at the library, is an annual update to "The Yale Book of Quotations," which was first published in 2006. Also on the list is "I can't breathe," the plea George Floyd made repeatedly to police officers holding him down on a

Minneapolis street corner. Several quotes from the presidential campaign appear including Joe Biden telling a student: "You're a lying dog-faced pony soldier."

Shapiro said he picks quotes that are not necessarily admirable or eloquent, but rather because they are famous or particularly revealing of the spirit of the times.

THE LIST 1. "Wear a mask." — Dr. Anthony Fauci, CNN interview, May 21. 2. "I can't breathe." — George Floyd,

plea to police officer, Minneapolis, May 25. 3. "One day — it's like a miracle — it will disappear." President Donald Trump, referring to the coronavirus in remarks at an African American History Month reception at the White House, Feb. 27. 4. "I see the disinfectant that knocks it out in a minute, one minute. And is there a way we can do something like that by injection inside or almost a cleaning?" — Trump, in remarks at a White House Coronavirus Task Force news

briefing, April 23. 5. "I will never lie to you. You have my word on that." — White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany, at her first press briefing, May 1. 6. "My most fervent wish is that I will not be replaced until a new president is installed." — Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, statement dictated to granddaughter Clara Spera, September. 7. "If you have a problem figuring out whether you're for me or Trump, then you ain't Black." — Joe Biden, in an

interview with "The Breakfast Club" radio programme, May 22. 8. "The science should not stand in the way of this." — McEnany, referring to school reopenings in a news briefing, July 16. 9. "You're a lying dog-faced pony soldier." — Biden, in a remark at student at campaign event, Hampton, N.H., Feb. 9. 10. "We are all Lakers today." — Los Angeles Clippers coach Doc Rivers, in a remark to reporters after the death of Kobe Bryant, Orlando, Fla., Jan. 26. — AP

DECCAN
Chronicle

8 DECEMBER 2020

Govt needs to do more to
push vaccine awareness

The news of Haryana health minister Anil Vij contracting Covid-19 after receiving a shot of Covaxin, the Coronavirus vaccine that Indian company Bharat Biotech International Ltd has developed in association with the Indian Council for Medical Research, may be seen as a setback but the larger point the incident flags is the need for a far better understanding of the defence that human beings have created against the killer micro-organism. It has now emerged that the state minister, who volunteered for the trial, had received only one shot of the vaccine and that he had missed the second one, which should have been administered 28 days after the first one. Though anyone's body should start developing immunity with the first dose itself, it would take the second dose to make it fairly foolproof. According to the company, the Covaxin trials are based on a two-dose schedule, which are administered 28 days apart. The vaccine's efficacy will be determined two weeks after the second dose. As per the data the company has published, it expects a certain number of infections among the volunteers, and the minister contracting the disease is not entirely unexpected. It may be remembered that the efficiency of the Pfizer vaccine that has been given a licence in the United Kingdom as well as Bahrain is only 95 per cent.

So, it's no reason to be less confident about the indigenous vaccine development process that is now under way. It should not also impact India's partnership in the development and manufacture of the other vaccines as well — Indian volunteers are part of the clinical trial of vaccines developed in foreign countries; Indian companies are gearing up for the mass production of vaccines once they receive the authentication.

However, the incident related to the Haryana minister has some lessons for the government. It has been working with the stakeholders on the details of the way people are to be vaccinated. It has a lot of ground such as finalising the norms for preparing the priority list, arranging the logistics, creating a cold chain and setting up the last mile inoculation mechanism to cover.

It looks like the government has taken one area for granted — public awareness about the vaccine. That the government had made no plans as such on handling Covid-19 when it struck is obvious — most decisions were haphazard, giving little thought on their impact on the people at the bottom. It is noteworthy that the government later launched awareness campaigns about the pandemic. And given that the number of daily cases has not risen the way it was projected, it would be safe to assume that the campaign had played its part.

The government should think of designing a similar campaign on the need for vaccination and its protocols. If a minister can skip a dose for whatever reason, it is highly likely that millions of Indians could do something similar due to sheer ignorance or negligence, defeating the very purpose of the entire exercise. This is a serious public health issue, and the government must use whatever tools it has to make it a success. The campaign on vaccination looks as important as vaccination itself.

Christmas threat harmful

The extreme right-wing group Bajrang Dal's threat to Hindus who may wish to attend church on Christmas Day in Assam's Barak Valley is a self-destructive diktat emanating from hard Hindutva. It's a clear threat not just to communal harmony but also an assault on Hinduism, which is an open religion that for millennia has been known to respect variety, plurality and diversity and for its acceptance of all other faiths. The likes of the Bajrang Dal do no justice to the beliefs of its own faith that has been able to assert itself globally without threatening any other faith.

Regardless of such threats materialising to pose a danger to ordinary people who have been accustomed to celebrating the special days of all faiths, the truth is they serve only to tear the fabric of harmony prevailing in most parts of India. Fringe elements tend to be pockets of religious bigotry and communalism, but their voluble presence presents an image that brings about an avoidable perception across the world that India is a hotbed of Hindu communalism.

The threat itself was triggered by a non-event in the assumed closing of a Vivekananda cultural centre in Shillong, which was denied by the Meghalaya government, which said the centre was merely shut for a district holiday. Taking offence at imaginary slights and assuming a rigid stand on religious matters is not uncommon for Hindutvadis. What makes this case curious is that the main character in this play of religious fervour, Mithu Nath of Bajrang Dal, is indoctrinated to the extent of claiming that Hindus have never broken a mosque or church to build a temple. Recent history doesn't bear that out: we know how the Babri Masjid was brought down in a cataclysmic moment for inter-religious harmony.

All governments need to rein in such divisive forces or at least reassure people that they will not come to any harm if they follow the simple but eloquent practice of enjoying all festivals: whether it be Diwali, Id or Christmas.

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Subhani



Worry on Brahmaputra
waters seems misplaced



Mohan
Guruswamy

Last week, the Chinese state media said the country could build up to 60 GW of hydropower capacity on a section of the Brahmaputra, citing a senior executive. Yan Zhiyong, chairman of the state-owned Power Construction Corporation of China, speaking at an industry conference, said plans to dam the river were a “historic opportunity”. This is not a confirmation but an old pipe-dream. But it has set off a howl of protest in the social media.

The Chinese have built a run of the river hydel (215 MW) project at Zhangmu, just like the dams that India is building on the Jhelum and which Pakistan vigorously contests. The bottom-line is that the upper riparian states may use the water but not divert it. But we seem to have other concerns too. An external affairs ministry consultant has cautioned: “First, China’s attempt to build infrastructure in Tibet and improve its connectivity with the Chinese mainland has been one of China’s major strategies, not only in terms of military preparedness but also to overcome the challenge of regional disparity. Second, China has been working on improving infrastructure and connectivity with the frontier states along its border. Finally, the Brahmaputra is a major lifeline for India’s northeastern region. If the situation continues unabated, it will have long-term implications for India.”

Let’s examine these. Shouldn’t the improvement of infrastructure within its own territory be the concern of every government? Are we to keep complaining about every road or bridge, just in case military vehicles

use them? Our first two concerns are not really serious. Then there is the concern over the Brahmaputra waters. We need to familiarise ourselves with some realities.

Many Indian and international security experts have been warning of the looming “water wars” between the two countries. A few years ago, the late B.G. Varghese, an acknowledged expert on the India-Pakistan-China water disputes, and myself made a presentation on this subject at the well-known think-tank, the Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS). We showed that India and Bhutan together generate about 80 per cent of the system’s input. China accounts for almost half the basin area, but it actually contributes a fraction of the system’s input of waters. The narrow Yarlung Tsangpo actually becomes the mighty Brahmaputra only after it enters India after the Great Bend. Yet the water wars narrative persists.

The supporters of this narrative believe that China already has a plan to divert the Brahmaputra river’s waters — more specifically, the western route of China’s South-North Water Diversion Projects. They are referring to the Grand Western Water Diversion Plan (GWWD), which was proposed a long time ago by Chinese water expert Guo Kai, to divert water from the upstream sections of six rivers in southwest China, including the upstream Mekong, the Yarlung Tsangpo River, and the Salween, to the dry areas of northern China. Writing about this, Zhang Hongzhou, of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Singapore, unambiguously states: “This is a misperception. It was

only an idea. And it will be no more than an idea.”

The Yarlung Tsangpo originates near Mount Kailash and traverses eastward for about 1,700 km as a relatively shallow and small river when the river enters the area known as the Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon. This is the deepest canyon in the world, and at 504.6 km is longer than the famed Grand Canyon (446 km) in the US. As the gorge bends around the 7,800-metre-high Mount Namcha Barwa and cuts its way through the eastern Himalayan range, its waters drop from about 2,900 metres (9,500 ft) near Pei to about 1,500 metres (4,900 ft) at the end of the upper gorge, where it is joined by the Po Tsangpo river. The river continues through the lower gorge to the Indian border at an elevation of 660 metres (2,170 ft). The steep river drops make it a raging torrent all along the canyon. As the canyon passes between the peaks of the Namcha Barwa and Gyalra Peri mountains, it reaches an average depth of about 5,000 metres (16,000 feet) around Namcha Barwa. The canyon’s average depth overall is about 2,268 metres (7,440 feet), while the deepest depth reaches 6,009 metres (19,714 feet). Now imagine the physical challenge of damming this canyon. And if it is meant to also support irrigation in Yunnan, the water has to be lifted a few thousand metres and will involve monumental costs. Even in China a cost-benefit analysis will make its unviability apparent. Even the technically less challenging American-designed Three Gorges

Dam in Hubei cost China over \$50 billion.

Now let’s look at some basic realities of the Yarlung Tsangpo-Brahmaputra system. While China has the largest spatial share of the basin at over 50 per cent, it generates only 22 per cent of the total basin discharge. Tibet’s low precipitation and desert conditions is the main reason for this. In contrast, the India section of the basin, with about 34 per cent of the basin area, contributes about half of the total discharge. This is because of melting snows in the eastern Himalayas and the severity of the monsoon. Equally significant is the contribution from Bhutan, that has 6.7 per cent of the total basin area but generates 21 per cent of the output. The utilisation rate of water in the Brahmaputra is very low. Prof. Pranab Kumar Ray, director, Centre for Hydro-Meteorological Research, Kolkata, in “Rivers of Conflict or Rivers of Peace”, a paper published by the ORF, estimates that the utilisable water of the Brahmaputra system is just four per cent of the total discharge. This is a reflection of the very high speed of the discharge and its sheer volume. That’s to say even a 10 per cent or 20 per cent cut in the Brahmaputra’s water flow is unlikely to cause water scarcity of any nature in the Indian part of the basin.

Quite clearly, the “water wars” scenario is unfounded in the case of Brahmaputra. We need to think of ways to harness more of the mighty Brahma-putra for power and agriculture to help the people of India (and Bangladesh), rather than let 96 per cent of it to just flow into the Bay of Bengal. We must work with Bangladesh closely rather than just keep pointing fingers at China.

The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.

LETTERS

BHARAT BANDH

The Bharat Bandh call by various Opposition parties in the country on Tuesday to express solidarity with the farmers from Punjab and Haryana, who are fighting tooth and nail to get the new farm laws of the NDA government repealed, is totally uncalled for.

Indebtedness of farmers is the main malady in the Indian agricultural sector. If they get a reasonable price for their produce, which the new laws assure, the problem could be mitigated. One cannot be oblivious of the fact that the aim of the government is to ensure maximum price for farm produce. Moreover, it has been parroting that the Minimum Support Price will be there. What else do the farmers or the parties need?

S. Ramakrishnasayee,
Chennai

KAMAL’S SUPPORT TO VC

THIS IS with reference to your report *Kamal backs Anna varsity VC Surappa*. The Commission set up by the state government to enquire into allegations against the VC of Anna university is expected to study and enquire into complaints already received and any further to be received by it. As experience shows, such commissions have very rarely completed their task in stipulated period fixed at appointment. While processes as per rules need to be carried out, one finds the support of Kamal in this as noteworthy. The commission should also note that opposition to Surappa had begun politically even before he assumed charge as VC at Anna university. The commission should look into the details in an unbiased manner. Trust that it will not get used as a tool of politicians to hurt an individual who would not oblige them in wrongdoings. The reputation on the university should not get sullied resolutely.

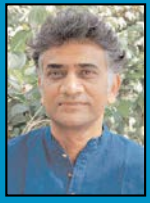
B. Sundar Raman, Coimbatore

INDIA WIN T20I SERIES

A COMMANDING batting performance by the Indian team helped them beat Australia by six wickets in the second T20 International at the Sydney Cricket Ground. The win helped Virat Kohli’s side take an unsailable 2-0 lead. Most teams have opted to bat first after winning the toss at the SCG, but India decided to get the most out of the surface, which had a tinge of green, early on. Strong batting line up and clever captaincy by Kohli saw the game through. The turning point of the game was the foolish run out of Matthew Wade that tilted the game in India’s favour and prevented a 200-plus score.

C.K. Subramaniam, Chennai

Aakar Patel



Will Centre
be forced to
give in to
the farmers?

Once again, the Narendra Modi government has shown that it will ignore the concerns of large numbers of Indians till it becomes a national crisis. Exactly a year ago, after a series of threats from the Union home minister to India’s minorities, the government passed legislation that Amit Shah said would be the first step of his chronology on citizenship. We know what happened immediately after that — protests by those whom the laws were victimising, no support for them from India’s internal democratic structure, international condemnation of India’s actions, and then violence instigated and encouraged by the ruling party.

Earlier this year, the government passed, by ordinance during the Covid-19 pandemic, a set of laws that would change the way that agriculture would be done, especially in the northwest. Nobody had asked for these laws, no farmers’ groups were consulted and there was no explanation on why these had been brought into force

through the ordinance route. Of course, this government follows the adage of “never apologise, never explain”. It has never apologised, and it has never explained.

For most of the media, which is urban and middle class, the farmers’ laws made no sense. Google will throw up dozens of reports, often from the same publication, with the headline “farmers bills explained”. Few of us have seen a mandi, know what APMC stands for or does and what the issue of MSP means to the average Punjab. For this reason, the issue was off the headlines very soon.

Predictably, the farmers began a protest that soon developed into a mass movement but appeared small because it was ignored by the national media and was localised in a couple of states. The government in New Delhi also ignored it and in fact escalated its confrontation by disallowing the Indian Railways from operating trains to Punjab even after the protesters had said they would not disrupt traffic. No railway property was damaged in the peaceful protest, but for two

months no train went through even after the protesters had left the railway tracks.

It was clear that the government was not going to back off its legislation unless it was forced to. At this point, the farmers began their march to besiege the national capital. The BJP made a few attempts to hold them back in Haryana, a state that it controls, but was unable to because of the resolve of the farmers. We are now seeing the consequences of arrogance and hardness. The government has no option but to negotiate with the farmers. It is about to rewrite the laws that it should have written up after consulting them in the first place. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will say that he means well and wants to double the farmers’ incomes, but he will not concede that he needs to consult them before coming up with his genius idea that will help them do this.

Notice the similarities between the farmers’ movement and the protests across the country against the citizenship amendment laws. First, that these laws were passed

without anyone having asked for them. Second, that the minorities they affected went on to protest immediately because they sensed the danger to them that the rest of the population did not, and third, that the rest of us did not care about the laws and had little or no empathy for those who were affected. It was the Muslims in the lead in the protests against being sent to concentration camps, and it was the Sikhs in the lead on the issue of the controversial farm laws. Fourth, that the government recklessly and deliberately demonised the protesters, calling them terrorists, separatists and “Khalistanis”.

Fifth, that the rest of the world was alarmed by what the government was doing and intervened. India does not like to be lectured by other nations but if you do something dumb then you have to face the consequences. The European Union’s members of Parliament wrote up a very strong motion against India’s citizenship laws, and India was able to only delay the tabling of the motion with difficulty. Canada, which has a large and

influential Sikh population, told India that it was “concerned”. India objected to this interference but could do little because we have no real leverage. If thousands of Canadians were migrating to India monthly instead of the other way around, we might have had some say.

The sixth thing that will likely be common to both these issues is that they will end in the same way. Mr Modi made Amit Shah eat his brave words on his chronology and said that the issue of the National Register of Citizens had not been discussed. That lay the matter to rest. On the issue of the three farm laws, something similar will come. The government has used all the tricks it has on the farmers. But they are still standing there blockading Delhi, prepared to be there for months. Their demands will have to be met, of course, and this government will move on to the next great idea, without an apology or an explanation.

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

quick
BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	45,426.97	0.77
Nifty 50	13,355.75	0.73
S&P 500*	3,695.77	-0.09
Dollar (₹)	73.90	-0.14
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.85	1.66
Euro (₹)	89.36	0.47
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,703▼104	0.21
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	49.16	-0.09
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.924	0.026
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.939	-0.030

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Hindalco to set up ₹730 cr plant in Silvassa

Aditya Birla group firm Hindalco Industries said it plans to set up a 34,000-tonne aluminium extrusion plant at Silvassa, in Dadra and Nagar Haveli, at an investment of Rs 730 crore. In a regulatory filing, it said the new plant will service the fast-growing market for extruded aluminium products in the western and southern regions. It said the project signals a big step forward in Hindalco's downstream strategy.

IndiGo to refund all passengers by January 31



IndiGo said it will refund all customer credit shells, which were created when flights were cancelled due to the coronavirus lockdown earlier this year, by January 31. The airline said it has processed close to Rs 1,000 crore of refunds, which is about 90 per cent of the total amount it owed to its customers. CEO Ronojoy Dutta said, "As our incoming cash flow dried up, we were unable to immediately process refunds."

NSE starts weekly F&O contracts in 3 currency pairs

The NSE launched weekly futures and options contracts on three currency pairs-- euro-rupee, yen-rupee and pound sterling-rupee. "NSE is launching a weekly futures contract for the first time, while we have already seen market acceptance in weekly options contracts across asset classes," the exchange's MD and CEO Vikram Limaye said. The weekly derivatives on currency pairs will reduce time-related costs, he said.

Nissan receives 5,000 bookings for Magnite

Nissan Motor India said it has received 5,000 bookings for its newly launched compact SUV, Magnite in five days. The firm also received over 50,000 enquiries for the vehicle launched on Dec. 2 at an introductory price of Rs 4.99 lakh, with over 20 variants. Over 60 per cent of the bookings have been received for the top 2 grades (XV and XV Premium), and more than 30 per cent are for CVT Automatic, Nissan said.



■ Growth in tier-I cities and metros came to 20%
Online festive sales double in small cities

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, DEC. 7

Smaller cities played a key role in driving e-commerce festive season sales this year. Online sales almost doubled in volume terms in smaller cities this festive season.

The tier-II and III cities have been growing way faster than metropolitan cities and its impact is visible in the festive season sale as well, finds Unicommerce, e-commerce focused SaaS platform. Tier-II and beyond cities have witnessed a growth of 99 per cent as compared to last year's festive season. The growth in tier-I and metropolitan cities remained around 20 per cent.

According to Amazon, initial days of the festive season saw 91 per cent of new customers coming



from smaller cities.

However, states like Delhi, Maharashtra and Karnataka with metropolitan cities continued to dominate e-commerce sales. These three states contribute 55 per cent of India's e-commerce volume in the festive month.

Personal care category emerged as the biggest gainer, with 176 per cent

order volume growth over last year's festive month. Beauty and wellness reported 52 per cent order volume growth.

Fashion and accessories witnessed an order volume growth of 71 per cent. Electronics continued to be the highlight of festive sales, with all marketplaces extensively promoting discounts and offers on

electronic products. The segment saw a substantial growth of 65 per cent in order volume. RedSeer Consulting too found that mobiles and appliances remained strong this year driven by new launches, discounts, bank offers and smart upgrade plans of brands.

Returns remained a concern for e-tailers despite automation, though the industry overall observed a 35 per cent decrease in return orders this season compared to last year. Fashion and accessories remained the category with maximum return orders.

This year brands got serious about online selling by developing own websites. Brand websites witnessed 77 per cent order volume growth compared to 60 per cent for marketplaces.

PSU insurers go slow with crop insurance

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, DEC. 7

Major general insurers, especially public sector players, are learnt to be shying away from insuring their crops through the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, or PMFBY, scheme. They feel the current crop insurance scheme is not lucrative enough for them to focus on it.

However, a few private players have been looking at the scheme for widening their market reach. For

instance, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company has increased its presence in the segment and has gone ahead of its peers. Its exposure to the sector currently stands at Rs 1,700 crore.

"All the major players, who are active on the non-life insurance space in the country, have reportedly reduced their exposure to the crop insurance, as they don't find the PMFBY scheme lucrative any more in its revised form. Therefore, they are slightly

pushing away from this scheme to avoid losses," a senior official of a public sector general insurance company told *Financial Chronicle* on condition of anonymity.

Data with sector regulator Irdai shows private insurers' exposure to crop insurance stands at Rs 1,615 crore for HDFC ERGO, Rs 1,605 crore for Reliance General Insurance, Rs 1,370 crore for SBI General Insurance and Rs 843 crore for Iffco Tokio. In contrast, the

exposure of the largest state-run non-life insurer, New India Assurance, is Rs 675 crore.

Ashish Agarwal, head-agri business & CSC, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, said the firm has been participating in the PMFBY scheme from its launch in 2016. "We have been authorised to enrol farmers under the PMFBY by the governments of Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Rajasthan during the kharif 2020 season."

Dip in wages of informal workers: ILO

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, DEC. 7

While the pandemic saw workers' wages shrinking, informal workers in India experienced a sharper fall than formal workers, finds the International Labour Organisation. ILO also found that the gap between real and nominal minimum wages of unskilled workers in India has become significantly wider in the past 10 years.

Post-pandemic, formal workers' wages have been cut by 3.6 per cent in India, while informal workers have experienced a much sharper fall in wages of 22.6 per cent, finds ILO's Global Wage Report. Around two-thirds of countries whose short-term statistics are available showed



decreasing wages or slower average wage growth.

In India, delayed increase or freeze in minimum wages because of the Covid-19 crisis have taken place at the local or sectoral level. For example, in the Punjab region, the local government reversed its order announcing a minimum wage increase, says the report.

Further, the report also found that the gap between

CEO of fashion retailer quits to prioritise wife's career

Berlin, Dec. 7: The chief executive of online fashion retailer Zalando is stepping down to focus on his family, saying his wife's career should take priority in the coming years.

Rubin Ritter, one of three co-chief executives at Zalando, has been in the job since 2010.

Tasked with overseeing strategy and communications, the 38-year-old helped turn the Berlin-based start-up into one of the world's top online fashion retailers with 14,000 employees and net profit of almost 100 million euros (\$121 million) in 2019.

In a statement, Zalando said Ritter had informed



Rubin Ritter

the company on Sunday of his decision to step down in 2021, more than two years before his contract ends.

"I feel that it is time to give my life a new direction," Ritter was quoted as saying.

I want to devote more time to my growing family, he added. My wife and I have

agreed that for the coming years, her professional ambitions should take priority.

The head of Zalando's supervisory board, Cristina Stenbeck, said the company regretted Ritter's decision but we have the highest respect for the underlying personal motivation.

Last month, Ritter published the company's first report on diversity and inclusion, saying these should be seen as an opportunity rather than a challenge.

The company has been criticised for currently having only men on its five-member management board.

— AP

Franklin seeks investors nod to wind up schemes

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, DEC. 7

The Trustee of Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund in India has sought unitholders consent for the orderly winding up of the six fixed income schemes, abiding with the December 3 interim order of the Supreme Court.

"Voting 'Yes' will allow schemes to monetise assets without resorting to distress sales and will maximise value to Unitholders," the fund house said in a release. Voting will take place during December 26-28.

Santosh Kamath, CIO, Franklin Templeton Fixed

Income India, said, "From April 24, 2020 to November 27, 2020, the six schemes under winding up have received Rs 11,576 crore from maturities, pre-payments, and coupons. Four out of the six schemes are already cash positive and have close to Rs 7,226 crore available to return to unitholders, subject to fund running expenses. All of this cash has been received without any secondary market sale (active monetisation) of the securities in these six schemes."

He said of the Rs 11,576 crore received, nearly half has come from securities rated 'A'.

KOTAK LAUNCHES FIRST REIT MF

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, DEC. 7

Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company has launched India's first diversified REIT Mutual Fund. Kotak International REIT Fund of Funds is an open-ended mutual fund scheme that will invest in units of SMAM Asia REIT Sub Trust Fund. This mutual fund scheme will have a diversified investment portfolio comprising listed REITs which will invest in real estate projects like residential, office, data centres, warehousing, retail and hospitality. The new fund offer (NFO) opens on December 7 and closes on December 21.

ICICI BANK LAUNCHES INTEROPERABLE APP

Mumbai, Dec. 7: ICICI Bank launched a new mobile payment app that is interoperable and allows payments and other services to customers of any other bank. Through iMobile Pay, customers of other banks can link their accounts to it.

DLF TO EQUIP OFFICES WITH AIR FILTRATION

New Delhi, Dec. 7: DLF will invest Rs 30 crore over the next six months to install new air-filtration technology, MERV-14, in all its office buildings to ensure safe re-entry of tenants and their employees in its office buildings, the company said.

LEAD SCHOOL TO HAVE AI-LED ASSESSMENT

Mumbai, Dec. 7: LEAD School, an EdTech player in K-12 education, has acquired QuizNext, an AI-powered gamified student assessment and practice platform. Commenting, LEAD School co-founder and COO Smita Deorah said, "Beyond online classes, students need a lot of support in a remote learning environment for a full schooling impact."

HIGH-TECH ASSISTANCE Pilot project running across 100 locations in MP, Maharashtra

Voda, Nokia team up for SmartAgri solution

New Delhi, Dec. 7: Vodafone India Foundation, the corporate social responsibility (CSR) arm of Vi, has, in partnership with Nokia, deployed a smart agriculture solution that aims to enhance farming practices and improve productivity of farmers.

Vodafone Idea CSR has deployed Nokia's World-wide IoT Network Grid (Wing) solution to equip farmers in the country with precise and practical data to help them achieve better yields.

"Deployment of the smart agriculture-as-a-service solution includes soil probes, weather stations, insect traps and crop cameras to help drive productivity of soy



and cotton crops," a press release said.

A pilot project, being implemented across 100 locations in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, aims to benefit over 50,000 farmers in the region by enhancing their productivity and income.

"The SmartAgri project aims to enhance the liveli-

hoods of small farmers through sustainable farming approaches, deployment of IoT (Internet of Things) solutions and by improving their access to information, using technology," it added.

Under the project, over 400 sensors have been deployed over 1,00,000

hectares of farmland to collect various data points, which are then analysed by a cloud-based and localised Smart Agriculture app.

The app offers local language support as well as weather forecast and irrigation management information.

"The sensors generate insights that is helping to improve soy and cotton crop yields. Crop management through Wing can include smart irrigation, smart pesticide control, and proactive information sharing frameworks on crops and weather, as well as a platform for commodity exchange," the release added.

The use case can also employ Remotely Piloted

Aircraft System (RPAS) technology, or drones, instead of traditional sensors for crop management.

"To demonstrate the impact of technology in transforming agricultural practices in India, Vi CSR chose the agri-heartlands of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, and onboarded Nokia as the IoT solutions provider, and Solidaridad for field implementation," it said.

The CSR initiative will be showcased at the Voda Idea booth during India Mobile Congress 2020 from December 8 to 10. Telecom operator, Vodafone Idea, offers products and services to its customers under the brand name 'Vi'. —PTI

SHORT TAKES

Reds join Spurs at top of EPL

London: Liverpool turned on the style for their returning fans on Sunday, beating Wolves 4-0 to join Tottenham at the top of the Premier League after another episode of the Son Heung-min and Harry Kane show.

Jurgen Klopp's men had not had the chance to play in front of their supporters since they ended their 30-year wait to be crowned English champions but made up for lost time.

"You'll Never Walk Alone" rang out around Anfield as 2,000 home fans — the maximum allowed under coronavirus rules — witnessed strikes from Mohamed Salah, Georginio Wijnaldum, Joel Matip and an own goal. Liverpool have now won 31 of their past 32 home league games, scoring 93 goals while conceding just 25. Earlier, Jose Mourinho's Spurs beat faltering Arsenal 2-0 at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium and Leicester, who ended the day in fourth spot, struck late to beat rock-bottom Sheffield United 2-1. — *AFP*

Milan pip Samp to maintain lead

Rome: AC Milan kept hold of their five-point lead at the top of Serie 'A' on Sunday after a hard-fought 2-1 win at Sampdoria, while Napoli moved third after strolling to victory over bottom side Crotone. Franck Kessie's penalty on the stroke of half-time and Samu Castillejo's 77th-minute strike were just enough for the seven-time European champions, who were without injured talisman Zlatan Ibrahimovic, to move up to 26 points and keep second-placed local rivals Inter Milan at arm's length. Napoli are six points back in third after goals from Lorenzo Insigne, Hirving Lozano, Diego Demme and Andrea Petagna earned the away side a 4-0 win at Crotone.

Ivory Coast midfielder Kessie coolly struck home his spot-kick after Jakub Jankto unluckily handled while challenging for the ball with Theo Hernandez. — *AFP*

Sociedad held, cede La Liga lead

Madrid: Real Sociedad were unable to regain first place in La Liga on Sunday night when they were held to a goalless draw at Basque rivals Alaves. Deprived of injured captain Mikel Oyarzabal, top scorer in La Liga with seven goals, Sociedad were unable to breach the home defence. The draw dropped them one point behind Atletico, who on Saturday beat Valladolid 2-0 for a seventh straight Liga victory.

Srini nominated to attend BCCI AGM

Chennai: Former Indian Railways cricketer S. Srinivasan has been nominated to represent Railways Sports Promotion Board in the upcoming annual general meeting of the BCCI.

Srinivasan is secretary of newly-formed Indian Railways Cricketers' Association (IRCA). According to BCCI rules, a representative from the Indian Railways shall be entitled to vote at the AGM only if he is a former cricketer and elected by an association of former players. The IRCA was formed to fulfill the criterion.

Live on TV

CRICKET

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

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: Bengaluru vs NorthEast United from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

Champions League: Zenit vs Dortmund from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 2; Barcelona vs Juventus from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 2; Chelsea vs Krasnodar from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Six; Leipzig vs Manchester United from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 1; PSG vs Istanbul Basaksehir from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 3

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Editor: **KAUSHIK MITTER**

India eye clean sweep

Kohli's men look to extend unbeaten run in last T20 against Oz

Sydney, Dec. 7: The series pocketed and their confidence restored, India would eye nothing less than a clean sweep when they take on an Australian side significantly weakened by injury blows, in the third and final T20 International here on Tuesday.

Skipper Virat Kohli and his main protagonist of the white-ball leg, Hardik Pandya, will feel a sense of *deja vu* given that the script has panned out exactly like 2016 when the team got walloped in the ODIs but came back strongly to rout the Aussies 3-0 in the T20 International series.

After a couple of crushing defeats in the first two ODIs, the Indians have turned a corner starting with the final ODI in Canberra.

Even the absence of a white-ball pro like Ravindra Jadeja didn't have an impact during their convincing six-wicket win in the series-clinching second T20 on Sunday.

What will boost the Indian team's morale manifold is the fact that it had the confidence to rest both Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah, relying on a troika of pacers, who between them haven't played even 40 games collectively.

India's new white-ball sensation Thangarasu Natarajan has had a superb initiation in international cricket with Australian batsmen still finding it difficult to read him.

As Pandya so rightly put it, Natarajan's spell and the 10 runs that Australia failed to score became the difference between winning and losing on Sunday.

The difference between India and Australia during the last game was the batting of the two teams during the middle overs.

Australia lost a bit of momentum after stand-in skipper Matthew Wade was dismissed while his opposite number Kohli played some outrageous shots after the Powerplay to up the ante. — *PTI*



Members of the Indian team celebrate their T20 series victory over Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Sunday. India are leading the three-match series 2-0. — *AFP*

Umesh, Ashwin impress in warm-up

Sydney, Dec. 7: Senior pros Umesh Yadav and Ravichandran Ashwin staked strong claims to be included in India's playing XI for the first Test with impressive performances against Australia A, who scored 286 for 8 on the second day, riding on Cameron Green's unbeaten century.

Australia now have a 39-run lead after India A declared their innings at 247 for 9 in the first hour of the second day, with

skipper Ajinkya Rahane remaining unbeaten on 117.

With Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah being automatic choices, Umesh (18-3-44-3), fighting for third pacer's slot, certainly looked more penetrative compared to Mohammed Siraj (19-4-71-2) with the new ball.

Yadav removed both rival Test team openers Will Pucovski (1) and Joe Burns (4) in his third and fourth over with the new

ball to make initial inroads.

Ashwin (19-2-58-2) also did his Test chances no harm as he reminded old timers of Australian off-spinner of 80's Greg Mathews (hero of 'Madras' tied Test) bowling with his cap on.

Only that Mathews was protecting himself from Chennai heat while Ashwin was reluctant to give it to fellow fielders.

For Australia A, the giant all-rounder Green

continued his rich vein of Sheffield Shield form with an unbeaten 114 off 173 that had 10 fours and a six. He showed good temperament against the Indian attack while adding 104 runs for the sixth wicket with his national skipper Tim Paine (44) after being reduced to 98 for 5. — *PTI*
Brief scores: Indian A 247/9 decl. (Rahane 117*, Pujara 54) vs Australia A 286/8 (Green 114*, Paine 44, Yadav 3/44, Ashwin 2/58).

Jadeja may miss first Test

New Delhi, Dec. 7: Indian all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja is likely to miss the opening Test against Australia owing to the concussion and a hamstring injury that he sustained during the opening T20 International in Canberra.

The 32-year-old, who is on the cusp of his 50th Test, is likely to be out for at least three weeks which certainly rules him out of the first Day/Night Test in Adelaide starting December 17.

In case it turns out to be a hamstring tear, it could well rule him out of the second Boxing Day Test in Melbourne from December 26.

"As per ICC's concussion protocols, after any head injury, a player needs to be rested for 7 to 10 days, which effectively rules Jadeja out of the three-day day/night warm-up game at the SCG from December 11," a BCCI source said on



Ravindra Jadeja

conditions of anonymity.

"Therefore, it is next to impossible that the Indian team management would field Jadeja, without any warm-up game time ahead of the opening Test," the

source added.

However, more than concussion, it is understood that the hamstring injury is likely to keep Jadeja out of action for at least one Test if not two. — *PTI*

JAMSHEDPUR'S STEEL EXPRESS HALTS ATK

Goa, Dec. 7: A fine brace from Nerijus Valskis ensured Jamshedpur FC bagged their first win in the Indian Super League Season 7 as they beat early pace-setters ATK Mohun Bagan 2-1 at the Tilak Maidan Stadium, here on Monday.

Valskis (30', 66') scored in either half for Owen Coyle's side, while Krishna pulled a late goal back for ATKMB.

The result also meant ATKMB's perfect run in the campaign came to an end following the defeat.

Jamshedpur made two changes to their side which was held to a 1-1 draw against Hyderabad FC. Owen

Coyle handed a first start to William Lalunfela while goalkeeper TP Rehenesh was back in the side after serving a suspension.

Eduardo Garcia, Brandon Inman, Glan Martins all started for ATK Mohun Bagan as coach Antonio Habas made three changes to his side which defeated Odisha FC. Yet, despite fresh legs, the Mariners got off to a lackluster start.

It wasn't smooth sailing for Jamshedpur either as ATKMB threatened them during counter-attacks. But JFC's resilience and power shone through. — *Agencies*

Anju won medals with one kidney

Kochi, Dec. 7: Olympian Anju Bobby George, who secured a historic bronze medal in the 2003 World Athletics Championship in Paris, on Monday said she achieved success and reached the top with a single kidney.

In a tweet, the ace athlete, a gold medalist in the IAAF World Athletics Finals (Monaco, 2005), said she had many limitations, including being allergic to even a painkiller, but still made it.

"Believe it or not, I'm one of the fortunate, among very few who reached the world top with a single KIDNEY, allergic with even a painkiller, with a dead takeoff leg... Many limitations...Still made it. Can we call, magic of a coach or his talent," Anju tweeted.

Her career blossomed under the coaching of husband Robert Bobby George. Anju said she chose the pandemic season to make this revelation to "motivate" all the sportspersons in the current generation, who are missing their practice and competitions due to the spread of the deadly virus.

"The general perception of the people is that I have a perfect body. But the fact is that I achieved all the success in my field by overcoming all difficulties. I hope that sharing of my experience will help motivate all aspiring sportspersons," she said.

She said she complained of fatigue while in Germany for a competition in 2003 and doctors there advised her rest for six months and not to even think about sports "It was just 20 days ahead of the Paris World Athletics Championship. I overcame all the issues and won a medal in Paris," she said.

Anju came to know she was living with a single kidney during an overall health check-up in Bengaluru 2001 due to some health issues before starting her international career. "It was shocking news for me. But Bobby (husband) motivated me to continue my career and achieve success. He even offered his kidney if I face any problem," she said.

Anju said she was now mature enough to handle



Anju Bobby George

● **In a tweet, the ace athlete, a gold medalist in the IAAF World Athletics Finals (Monaco, 2005), said she had many limitations, including being allergic to even a painkiller, but still made it.**

the situation brought about by her health issues.

"If I had gone public with my health then, the situation would have been different," Anju said.

Responding to her tweet, Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said she brought laurels to India through her hard work, grit and determination. "Anju, it's your hard work, grit and determination to bring laurels for India, supported by the dedicated coaches and the whole technical backup team. We are so proud of you being the only Indian so far to win a medal in the World Athletic Championship!" the minister said in his response to her tweet.

The Athletics Federation of India said as India's only medalist at the IAAF World Championships (Paris, 2003), a gold medalist in the IAAF World Athletics Finals (Monaco, 2005) and a remarkably consistent performer, Anju is among the country's most inspirational track and field stars.

She finished sixth at the 2004 Olympics with a personal best leap of 6.83m, but was elevated to fifth place in 2007 when USA's Marion Jones was disqualified for a doping offence. — *PTI*

England tour off after Covid strike

Johannesburg, Dec. 7: England's cricket tour of South Africa has been called off after a Covid-19 outbreak in the England touring party, both countries said on Monday.

The joint announcement from the two boards, which alluded to the "mental and physical health" of the players, came after the rearranged first match in the three-match series on Sunday was cancelled after two members of the England touring party tested positive for the virus.

England will return home having played all three matches in the T20 series but none of three scheduled ODIs.

"Cricket South Africa and the England and Wales Cricket Board have agreed

to postpone the remaining matches in the current ODI Series. The decision was taken jointly by the two Boards to ensure the mental and physical health and welfare of players from both teams," a joint statement said.

Many of the England players spent long stretches during the summer in a bio-secure bubble and some were also confined during the Indian Premier League in the Emirates which followed.

Two of the younger members of the squad, Tom Banton and Tom Curran have pulled out of contracts in Australia's Big Bash League in the last week, citing the pressure of living in the bio-secure bubbles. — *AFP*

Jadeja absence throws conspiracy theories out of window



Hemant Kenkre
Silly Point

The Australians don't take defeat on their chin and move on. Their last setback, in the first Twenty20 match (T20) coming on the back of another loss in the final One Day International (ODI) at Canberra has put them in a bit of a spot. The reactions of their cricketers, both current and former, to the losses, shows that the confidence they had gained after wins in the first two ODIs has been shaken and that's good news for India.

The concussion substitute issue, which has

opened debates across platforms, where Yuzvendra Chahal replaced Ravindra Jadeja and bowled India to a win in the first T20 saw responses from the hosts which affirmed their discomfort. Coach Justin Langer's head-shaking argument with match referee David Boon during the innings break was followed by Aussie all-rounder Moises Henriques doubts whether Chahal's was a 'like-for-like' replacement for the injured Jadeja.

Former Aussie international Tom Moody commented that he had no

issues with the substitution but raised a question if the correct 'protocol' was followed since no physio or doctor came on to the middle when the Indian left-hander was struck on the helmet by a Mitchell Starc bouncer. Though these reactions were aimed at officials (match referee and umpires — as the decisions would ideally remain in their domains) they did lead to the perception that the replacement by India wasn't 'fair dinkum' to put it in Aussie slang.

The 'issue' unnecessarily raised by the Aussies was because Jadeja suffered a hamstring injury after he was hit on the head and their reactions were bordering on that fact. Coming back, the questions one could ask Moody will be about protocols that need to be followed.

Would coach Langer's act of arguing with match referee Boon, a veteran cricketer and an Australian to boot, in full public with cameras focussed on them be considered as correct protocol? Would Moody have done the same while coaching a team in the Indian Premier League?

As someone who has been a frontline coach Moody should know what is and isn't part of cricketer's covenant. It just maybe that the former coach may have suffered a moment of 'brain fade' just the way former Aussie skipper Steve Smith did while touring India in the 2017 series.

Cricketers were always taught to respect the umpires decisions as final and any argument about the same was abhorred upon. In today's parlance, arguments with referees

and umpires are taken as part of cricket's changing scenario which makes for great viewing and juicy stories but is terrible if looked at from the point of view of the spirit of the game.

Looking back, Chahal replacing Jadeja wasn't exactly a major achievement by India but a mere opportunity for them to get a leg spinner in a game that was helping that genre of bowling. Calling it a masterstroke by India would be a misnomer.

Indian captain Virat Kohli was honest enough to admit that there were no plans to play Chahal in the match and the decision they took worked for them this time and may not work in the future. Also, Jadeja being ruled out of the remainder of the T20 series and put under medical observation throws all

conspiracy theories out of the window.

The reactions from the Australians will now put Kohli and team India in a better frame of mind as they approach the crucial Test series. They know that the Aussies are riled after two consecutive losses and have given them a foot in the door. The host team's decision to rest their star bowler Pat Cummins and all-rounder Marcus Stoinis showed that they missed their opportunity for a clean sweep and gave the visitors a much needed lifeline.

The Aussies hate for anyone to get under their skin. We saw how former Indian skipper Sourav Ganguly irritated his counterpart Steve Waugh (by keeping him waiting for the toss) in 2001 taking Waugh away from his objective of beat-

ing India and conquering the last frontier. This time, they have inadvertently allowed the Indians to affect their psyche. Their adverse reactions to a superficial incident shows that they got complacent, effectively masking their failure to keep dominating over the visitors.

If India do keep up the momentum and win the T20 series (this is written before the second T20 match at Sydney) it will put them in a great position for the Test series. With Ajinkya Rahane's century and Cheteshwar Pujara's fifty for India 'A' against Australia 'A' in the ongoing practice match at the Drummoyne Oval in Sydney, the mood in the team India's camp will be upbeat and more positive than it was a week ago — a great build up for the Test series.