# nicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | THURSDAY 17 | DECEMBER 2020





Sarvari: Margazhi 2 Tithi: Thrithiyai Star: Uthiradam Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm Yamagandam: 6 am to 7.30 am **PRAYERS** 

**Fajar:** 5.07 am Zohar: 12.09 pm **Asar:** 3.19 pm Maghrib: 5.45 pm **Isha:** 7.01 pm

**CORONA C**UNT

**DEATHS** (+22,793)(+244)99,55,701 1,44,375

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,132)

TN: 8,01,161 | 11,919 WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

7,41,48,298 **16,48,456** 

218

worldometers.info

#### **Delhi court awards** 7-yr-jail term to **ISIS** operative

New Delhi: A Delhi court Wedne sday awarded seven-years jail term to an ISIS operative for conspiring to commit terror acts in the country, TN-based Mohamed Naser Packeer was deported from Republic of Sudan and arrested in the case on December 11, 2015.

#### **33 govt staff held, ₹7 cr** seized by DVAC in 3 months

Chennai: In a series of raids conducted on different entities by the Directorate of Vigilance and Antiaround ₹7 crore unaccounted income has been recovered. It may be learnt that DVAC seized unaccounted money of ₹6,96,29,605 7.232 kg of gold, 9.843 kg of silver 10.52 Carats diamond and fixed deposits of ₹37,00,000, apart from some incriminating Documents, from over 127 places in the state since October this year. During the period from 01.10.2020 to 14.12. 2020, on specific bribe compliant the DVAC & Anti-Corruption Officials arrested 33 government servants statewide for demanding and receiving a bribe



People are anxiously counting the days to get rid of the Covid year!



STATE | 4 Covid death rate very low in TN: CM



NATION | 5 Wasnik wary of change in MP leadership

SPORT | 8 Prithvi to open as Saha keeps



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'GOVT NEGOTIATIONS WON'T WORK'

# **Top court for Centre-farmers** committee to resolve issues

SANJAY KAW AND PARMOD KUMAR | DC

Noting that the Centre's negotiations with the farmers protesting against the agricultural reform laws have not yielded any results, the Supreme Court on Wednesday said it could form a committee to work out a solution between the two sides. The court said the proposed committee will comprise representatives from the government and farmers' unions across the country in an attempt to break the deadlock.

The protesting farmers described the court's suggestion on forming such a committee as their "moral victory" but remained firm on their stand that they will continue with their agitation till the three laws are repealed by the Centre. The ongoing protests, that are now in their third week, have seen thousands of farmers, primarily from Punjab and Haryana, gath-

**Cabinet approves** 

auction of spectrum

worth ₹3.92 lakh cr

New Delhi, Dec. 16: The Union Cabinet on

Wednesday approved a proposal for the auction of

2,251.25 megahertz of spec-

trum worth ₹3.92 lakh crore at the base price. The tele-

com ministry plans to issue a notice to invite bids in

December and hold the spec-

trum auction by March, tele-

com minister Řavi Shankar

has decided not to auction

frequencies in 3,300-3,600 Mhz bands that were identi-

fied for 5G services. "The

auction will be for spectrum in 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz,

2300 MHz and 2500 MHz fre-

quency bands. Spectrum

will be offered for assign-

ment for a validity period of

20 years. A total of 2,251.25

MHz is being offered with a

3,92,332.70 crore (at reserve

price)," an official statement said. "The notice inviting

application shall be issued

in this month and by auction will be conducted by March," Prasad told reporters after the Cabinet meet-

nications Commission, the

apex decision making body

of the Department of Tele-

com, in May had approved

the spectrum auction plan

worth ₹5.22 lakh crore

which included radiowaves

for 5G services as well.

However, a part of the 300

Mhz of spectrum identified

by the DoT for 5G services is being used by the Navy, and

the Department of Space has

also made claims on a signif-

icant portion of these

ing.
The

valuation of Rs

Digital Commu-

Prasad said.

The protesting farmers described the top court's suggestion on

forming such a committee as their "moral victory" but remained firm on their stand that they will continue with their agitation till the three laws are repealed by the Centre

ering at the borders of the

national capital. "Even if a committee is formed, our agitation will co-ntinue until the three laws are withdrawn," the All India Kisan Sangarsh Coordination Committee, a pan-India organisation of 250 farmers' groups, said. The AKS-SC said the formation of the committee would be fruitful only if it has the representatives of all national and regional farmers' outfits.

The farmers' unions also sent a written reply to the Centre rejecting its December 9 proposal in which it offered significant concessions. In an email to agriculture ministry joint secretary Vivek Agrawal, Sanyukt Kisan Morcha leader Darshan Pal said: "With reference to the pro-posal and letter received from you, we want to inform the government that the farmers' unions had held a joint meeting on the same day and discussed your proposal and rejected it because it was the written

December 5, 2020." Mr Pal also asked the government to stop maligning the farmers' movement. want the government to stop maligning the farmers' movement and stop par-

format of the proposal ver-

bally offered by the govern-

ment representatives on

allel negotiations with other farmer organisations," he

The written response from the protesting farm unions came a day after agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar said the government was awaiting a written response on its proposal sent to the farmers. Five meetings have taken place between the protesting farmers and the agriculture minister. Union home minister Amit Shah also met the farmers once, but the deadlock has persisted, with both sides sticking to their stance.

Hardening their stand further, the farmers' groups have now completely blocked the Delhi-Noida border at Chilla. Barricades were set up on the road, blocking vehicular movement from Noida to Delhi Traffic was also diverted from the Dalit Prerna Sthal, another site of farmers protests, to the Delhi-Noida-Direct (DND) flyway in the wake of the situation at the

# Open air meetings allowed from Dec. 19

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 16

Open air meetings will be allowed to be held from Saturday with an occupancy of 50 per cent of the maximum capacity of the premises for social, political, sports, educational, cultural, entertainment and religious gatherings.

Making the announcement, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami said prior permission of the district collector or the City Police Commissioner, in the case of Chennai Corporation, should be obtained for the meetings, in which norms relating to social distancing should be strictly adhered to.

In a statement on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said that the Coronavirus pandemic had been brought under control due to the efforts of the government that clamped down a lockdown on March 25 and brought in relaxations step by step subsequently.

The government had already given permission for meetings in closed spaces, he said, urging people to wear facemasks in public, regularly wash hands with soap at home and at work, maintain social distancing and not

"Following standard procedures, social, political. sports, educational, cultural, entertainment and religious gatherings of a maximum 50% capacity will be permitted in open spaces from December 19," the CM's statement said

step out or men without valid reasons. Health step out of their homes

Meanwhile, Health Secretary J. Radhakri-shnan inspected the IIT Madras camps, which sud-denly turned out to be Covid-19 cluster. He said 1104 tests had been held in the campus and 191 persons had been found to be infected by Coronavirus

In the Anna University campus, 550 tests were conducted and six persons were found to be positive, he said, adding that severe action would be taken against educational institutions that do not follow government norms relating to the pandemic.

Stating that the vaccine would come Radhakrishnan stressed on the need for wearing facemask and maintaining



#### **'Representation** of new India', says Virat Kohli

Adelaide, Dec. 16: India captain Virat Kohli on Wednesday declared himself a "representation of new India", forever ready to take up challenges with optimism, as he responded to Greg Chappell's view that he is "the most Australian non-Australian cricketer of all time".

On the eve of the first Test against Australia, Kohli was asked about his aggressive brand of cricket coupled with a fighting attitude that the former Australia captain, who also served as India coach, found similar to the mindset of his coun-

rrymen.
"I would like to say that
I have always been
myself," the skipper said during a virtual media conference ahead of the opening Test against Australia here starting Thursday. "The way my personality and character is, I am the representation of new India. For me, that's how I look at it," he asserted. — *PTI* 



#### **Shubhendu guits** as MLA, abandons **Mamata's TMC**

RAJIB CHOWDHURI |

**KOLKATA, DEC. 16** 

Dealing yet another blow to West Bengal chief minister and Trinamul Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee, her party's rebel leader: Shubhendu Adhikari quit as a TMC MLA of . Nandigram a day before his possible visit to New Delhi and his induction Apprehending "political vendetta" against him by his party, the TMC heavyweight also sought governor Jagdeer Dhankhar's "interventi on" in a letter to him for his and his aides' protection from implication by

At around 4 pm on Wednesday Mr Adhikari, accompanied by Congress MLA Sudip Mukherjee from Purulia, went to the West Bengal Assembly and handed over his resignation letter to Assembly secretary Abhijit Šom in absence of Biman Banerjee. Speaker

the police in false cases.

# PM Modi lights Swarnim Vijay Mashaal on Vijay Diwas



the National War Memorial's eternal flame marking the launch of the 50th anniversary celebrations of India's decisive victory over Pakistan in the 1971 war, which led to the creation of Bangladesh. This year is also being celebrated as "Swarnim Vijay Varsh". "On Vijay Diwas we recall the unwavering courage of our armed forces that resulted in a decisive victory for our nation in the 1971 war. On this special Vijay Diwas, had the honour of lighting the 'Swarnim Vijay Mashaal' at the National War Memorial," Mr Modi said in a tweet. Four Victory Mashaals (flames) will be carried to different parts of the country, including to villages of Param Vir Chakra and Maha Vir Chakra awardees of the 1971 war. The soil from the awardees' villages and from the areas where major battles were fought in 1971 are being brought to the National War Memorial.

# Banerjee to be CJ of Madras HC

New Delhi, Dec.16: The Supreme Court Collegium has recommended the elevation of Calcutta High Court judge Justice Sanjib Banerjee as the Chief Justice of Madras High

Currently, Justice AP Sahi is serving as the Chief Justice of Madras High Court. The Collegium's recommendations were pub lished on the apex court's official website Wednesday. Apart from Chief Justice of India SA Bobde, Justices NV Ramana, RF Nariman, UU Lalit and AM Khanwilkar are part of the five-judge Collegium. The appointment of Justice Sanjib Banerjee as the Chief



Justice of the Madras High

Court comes ahead of the retirement of sitting Chief Justice of Madras High Court AP Sahi. The serving CJ of Madras High Court AP Sahi took charge in last November, and was scheduled to retire by the end of December 2020.

#### JEE-Mains to be held 4 times a year starting 2021 "We have examined the

New Delhi, Dec. 16: The JEE-Mains for admission to engineering colleges will be held four times a year starting 2021 to offer flexibility to students and a chance to improve their scores, Union education minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank announced on Wednesday.

The first edition of the Joint Entrance Examination-Mains (JEE-Mains) will be held from February 23 to 26, followed by rounds in Moreh April and May March, April and May.

suggestions received from students and various quarters, and it has been decided that JEE-Mains will be held in four sessions in February, March, April and May," Nishank

The first session will be held from February 23 to 26 and the results will be declared within five days from the last date of exams, he said. "The move will ensure that students do not miss out on opportunities due to clash of • The first session will be held from February 23 to 26 and the results will be declared within five days from the last date of exams, Union education minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said

exams or due to the COVID-19 situation at present," the minister said. Nishank also said that students will be given a choice to answer 75 questions — 25 each in physics, chemistry and mathematics — out of 90 in the JEE-Mains paper. In the exam paper of 90 questions, 30 questions each will be from physics, chemistry and mathematics, he said.

The minister informed that a candidate need not appear in all the four sessions. "However, if a candidate appears in more than one session then his or her best of scores in

2021 will be considered for preparation of merit list or ranking. The question paper will contain 90 questions, in which the candidate will have to attempt a total of 75 questions. In the new paper pattern, there will be no negative marking in the 15 alternative questions,' Nishank said.

"The candidates have to attempt 75 questions out of 90, or 25 questions out of 30 in each section of chemistry, physics and maths," he said. — *PTI* 

# Ruling front scores big wins in Kerala local body polls

Kottayam, Dec. 16: Armed with support of the Jose K .Mani faction of Kerala Congress (M), the ruling CPI(M)-led LDF has made inroads in UDF strongholds in central Kerala wresting power in Kottayam and Idukki district panchayats and winning several municipalities and panchayats in the

civic polls. This was the first election since the Jose K Mani faction of the KC(M) severed its decades old ties with the UDF over its differences with the Congress over sharing the Kottayam district panchayat president's post in the previous council. As the results of the civic polls came in, the UDF leadership was stunned to see the collapse of the Congress-led front in its citadels in the district including Kottayam district panchayat, Pala municipality and

Puthuppally gram panchayat. Puthuppally is the stronghold of the Congress from where former Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Oommen Chandy has been elected to the state Assembly for the last five decades.

Buoyed by the stunning performance of his faction in the local body polls in many parts of the central Kerala districts including Kottayam and Idukki, Jose K Mani said the result clearly states the faction led by him was the real Kerala Congress (M). Recalling the contribution of his late father and Kerala Congress (M) founder-leader K M Mani in building base for the UDF in the state, Jose K Mani said the victory of LDF, in which his faction is a partner, is a "fitting reply to those who had backstabbed KM Mani." — PTI

#### Chennai airport proves a haven for pet transit across the world, the return of Chandran's family to there was no restriction for

T. SUDHEESH I DC CHENNAI, DEC. 16

Those who love animals send out an unequivocal message to the modern society that all species in this universe are no different from mankind. If you accept that philosophy, the family of Mr. Sarat Chandran Palat, a Palakkad native, who reached Chennai last week, will give you a feel of the deep bond between humans and animals.

Mr. Chandran, who bade goodbye to his three-decadelong health and safety expert job in Oman in August, wanted to spend rest of his retirement life



Sarat Chandran along with family and Candy at a apartment on Wednesday.

peacefully at his native place along with wife Manjula Vijayan and lone

daughter Shiyani. Since the Covid-19 pandemic derailed air travel

Kerala was possible only in December. When he went to book the flight tickets, he came to know that his family was ineligible to fly to Kerala as none of the airports there had the facility to receive his "Candy", a five-year-old tortoiseshell Arabian mau (cat). He and his family members were allowed to fly to Kerala on condition of leaving 'Candy behind. It was a tough choice, as spending the rest of their life without 'Candy'

was unthinkable. The family dropped their Kerala plan, and chose to fly to Chennai instead, where foreign cats to land. For the family, the goal was not easy as they

required to catch a flight that has a special facility of accommodating pets, pay the additional duty at the airport, and a whole host of conditions of the airline. Besides, the family had to find a foreign pet-friendly apartment in the pandemichit city. Finally, they managed to find one at Ramapuram here where they live in a two-bedroom apartment with Candy peacefully for the next one month. Then they will transport 'Candy' by road to

#### SHORT TAKES

#### TN reports 1,181 new **Covid-19 cases**

Chennai, Dec. 16: Tamil Nadu on Wednesday reported 1,181 new Covid cases taking the tally to 8,02,342 and the death toll touched 11,931 with 12 more fatalities.

The active cases stood at 9,880 with 1,240 patients getting discharged from various hospitals and cumulatively 7,80,531 people have got cured

As many as 73,015 samples were tested and in total 1,31,59,822 specimens have been examined under the Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction

method in 232 labs in the state. Of the fresh cases, Chennai logged 341, nearby Chengelpet and Kancheepuram 74 and 40 respectively. The tally of 8.02 lakh plus cases include the capital's 2,20,903, a health department bulletin

Those dead include 10 with co-morbidities and two with no chronic illness. The death toll of 11,931 covers Chennai's 3,931, the highest.

#### **Heavy rains** expected in parts of TN till Dec. 19

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 16

Parts of delta and coastal districts of Tamil Nadu are expected to receive rainfall till December 19, according to the latest weather fore-

According to the latest bulletin from the Regional Meteorological Centre, heavy rain warning has issued heavy rain at isolated places over Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Mayiladuthurai, Pudukottai districts of Tamil Nadu and Karaikal area on December 16, 17 and Thunderstorms with lightning are likely to occur at isolated places over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal area between December 16 and 19.

As for Chennai, the sky condition is likely to be generally cloudy over the next 48 hours, with light to moderate rains.

N Puviarasan, Director, Area Cyclone Meteorological Chennai told reporters that the weather conditions are likely to prevail for the next few days at a few places over coastal Tamil Puducherry and Karaikal area. In interior districts, light to moderate rain or thunder is likely.

Onennai and its neigh districts Chengalpattu, Thiruvallur and Kancheepuram have received excess rainfall in the last two months.Other districts that have received significant excess rainfall during this period\_include Cuddalore, Ranipet, Tirupattur, Sivagangai. Tiruvannamalai, Thoothukudi, Villupuram and Virudhunagar.

# **Multi-crore GST fraud** unearthed, three held

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 16

The personnel of GST and Central Excise department, Chennai north, on Wednesday detected a multi-crore GST fraud case and arrested three persons including the managing director of a

famous company.
In a release, G. Ravindranath, Principal Commissioner, stated that the arrested persons colluded with each other to evade GST and as a result the government incurred a loss of ₹10 crore.

The fraud relates to illegally taking and passing of input credit of GST on the basis of bogus invoices without supplying or receiving taxable goods or services and without pay-

**B. VIJAYALAKSHMI | DC** CHENNAI, DEC. 16

A distinct feature of Mar-

gazhi is groups rendering

bhajans on the Mada stre-

ets of Mylapore every mo-

rning. However, the pan-

demic has taken its toll on

this age-old tradition. Gr-

oups singing carnatic and

devotional songs, playing

harmonium, mridangam

and even chaplakattai and

traversing the streets of

Mylapore and Triplicane

for a couple of hours brav-

ing early morning biting

cold are missing this time.

Ramani, who has been part of Sivan's bhajan

Papanasam

the appointment of profes-

sors and associate professors

since majority of such posts

in the country's premier

institutions are exempt from

In a joint statement, V.P. Sa-

nu, national president, and Mayukh Biswas, national ge-

neral secretary of SFI, have

condemned the committee

for proposing the recommen-

reservation.

Ashok

SFI: Improve social representation in faculty appointments

The fraud relates to illegally taking and passing of input credit of GST on the basis of bogus invoices without supplying or receiving taxable goods or services and without paying GST

A case has been booked against a business entity from Chennai city that sells readymade garments through its various retail outlets. The managing director of the firm and two other key individuals

involved in the fraud were

on the run for more than a

month. The personnel nabbed them after sus-

tained efforts.

A bhajan group rendering devotional songs on Mada street in Mylapore on

**Pandemic impact** 

Bhajan groups may miss their date with Margazhi

group for several years, told *DC*, "My grandfather

eminent musician-com-

poser Papanasam Sivan

would lead the early morning bhajans in Margazhi and several vet-

eran and illustrious musi-

those days. Musicians like

ghavan, S. Sowmya and

Vijay Siva were also part

of our bhajan group. We

used to sing Carnatic

stopped at vantage points.

While walking, we opted for **namavali** (chanting

names of gods and god-desses)." But this year Si-

government to reject the pro-

posal as it was violation of

They have sought the gover-

nment to revaluate PhD se-

lection process at IITs to find

out the bottlenecks /biases

faced by the candidates from reserved categories, release a

proper notification of the

PhD positions available in the

departments of all IITs along

the Constitution.

joined nim

Venkatara-

Subramanian,

whenever we

cians nave

Gayathri

songs

The enforcement and compliance management unit of the department arrested all the three persons, who are in their 40s, for committing a GST credit fraud of about Rs 10 crore on invoice value of more than Rs 150 crore. The arrests were made

after carrying out a detailed investigation, taking statements and conducting searches to gather evidence. The arrested persons were produced before Chief Additional Metropolitan Magistrate, Egmore, who remanded them to judicial custody

until December 22. The arrested managing director of the company is the main beneficiary and the kingpin of the racket. Colluding with the duo he

van group has not organised the Margazhi bhajan.

"With heavy heart, we

decided against conduct-

ing the bhajan due to pan-

demic threat," said Ashok

morning, a small group,

who follows Swami Hari

doss Giri, walked through

Mada streets in Mylapore

singing devotional songs.

Since wearing masks

and maintaining social

distance may not be possi-

ble during this early

morning sojourn, bhajan

groups will have to miss

their date with Margazhi

tribution, during each selec-

tion session, make informa-tion available to the candi-

dates about the parameters of

the PhD selection process for

each of the departments

/streams and the expectations

from PhD candidates in the IIT system, and make central

government-mandated SC/ST

and OBC observers in the

selection panel compulsory

for PhD and other interviews.

**B. RAVICHANDRAN I DC** 

The year 2020 saw a new

OOTY, DEC. 16

However, as Margazhi

weanesaay

Ramani.

dawned on

issued by fictitious firms established for the sole purpose of issuing such bogus invoices without supplying any goods or services.

The company made payments for these fake supplies through proper banking channels, but got the money back in cash from the fictitious compatheir commission for issuing bogus invoices. In order to plough the cash back into the company's account, the arrested persons created four fictitious companies and issued bogus invoices to these companies without making any supplies. Further investigation is underway, the release

#### Fire at car seat storage godown

CHENNAI, DEC. 16

A major fire was reported in the godown of a car seat manufacturing unit at Pondhur near Sriperumbudur in Kanchi on Wednesday morning. Th-

According to police, the fire was first noticed in the early hours of Wednesday from one of the godowns used to store vehicle seats. The thick smoke from the godown engulfed the entire area.

DC CORRESPONDENT

ere were no casualties, the fire personnel said.

on being alerted, fire and rescue services per-sonnel from Irunga-tukottai, Kancheepu-ram, Sriperumbudur and Magazal rushod to ram, Sriperumbudur and Magaral rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze in a few hours. The loss was estimated to be several lakhs. .A short circuit is said to be the cause of the fire. However, police are investigating to ascertain the exact cause of the fire. Sriperumbudur Police registered a case and further investigations

#### **Testing intensified**



Greater Chennai corporation health department organises nasal swab test at Ethiraj College for Women in the city on Wednesday.

## Miscreants rob varsity assistant registrar's family at knifepoint

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 16

A 56-year-old man and his wife were threatened at knifepoint by men who barged into their house in the wee hours of Wednesday. The gang alleged-ly robbed 40 sovereign jewels from the house in Pattamudaiyar Kuppam near Sunguvarchatram

in Kanchipuram district.
According to the police, the assistant registrar of the University of Madras, Shanmugam (56), resides in Pattamudaiyar Kuppam with her wife.

The incident happened at around 2 am on Wednesday when five men broke through the house from the back door and threatened the duo with lethal weapons ask-ing for money and jewels. The couple were locked

inside the restroom by

the robbers, the police said. Miscreants moved all around the house col-lecting all jewels from the bureau. They left with gold jewels worth 40 sovereigns, including the jewels his wife was wearing that time.

In addition to this, they confiscated the couple's mobile phone and warned them to not lodge a complaint with the

The couple inside the restroom the whole night panicking and alerted the Sunguvarchatram police station in the morning. Sunguvarchatram police registered a case. Forensic experts have examined the house and investigations are on. The victims were advised by the police to install CCTV

#### One killed, two injured as lorry runs amok

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 16

A lorry on Wednesday went out of control after the driver on the wheels reportedly slept and ran amok, killing one and injuring two pedestrians besides damaging a few vehicles moving on the road here, police said.

The incident happened near Perungalathur on

Wednesday afternoon. According to police, the lorry loaded with maida flour, on its way from died Salem to Chennai city lost said.

control and hit a state government bus, an autorickshaw and a motorcycle, before crossing the signal and hitting on three pedestrians.
Three men identified as

P a d m a n a b a n , Manikandan and Dilli Babu of Peerkankaranai were knocked down by the lorry. Passersby immediately rushed the trio to Chromepet government hospital, however, one of the injured, 60year-old Padmanaban died on the way, the police

Soon after the incident the lorry driver tried to flee the spot but locals caught him and handed over to the police. He was later identified by the police as Venkatachalam ( 27) of Ayyampettai in

Salem district.
The driver allegedly told police that he has been transporting goods with-in the state, without proper sleep for the last few days. The Chromepet traffic investigation police registered a case and began a probe into the

#### Customs seizes huge haul of gold at airport DC CORRESPONDENT ets were recovered from grams and valued at ₹26.5 after extraction. One 49

CHENNAI, DEC. 16

The customs officers at the Chennai airport seized a huge haul of gold worth ₹2.41 crore, weighing 4.77 kilograms. Seven persons were arrested by the officers for smuggling the

According to an official press release from the department of Customs , based on intelligence Mohammed Rabeek (25) of intelligence Ramanathapuram, Mohamed Yazeer Khan (23) of Chennai, Mujeebur Rahman (34) and Bilal (33) both from of Tiruchirapalli who arrived from Dubai by Air India Express flight IX 1644 were intercepted at exit.

On their personal search 4 gold cut bits, 4 gold chains, 6 gold paste pack-

their jeans. Iphones 12,cigarettes, health supplements valued at ₹9.8 lakhs were also recovered from their hand bags and seized. 8 bundles of gold paste weighing 1.928 kg were recovered from rectum of Mujeebur and Bilal, which on extraction yielded 1.72 kg gold. They were arrested . Mohamed Rabeek has also been

The officials on the same day intercepted, Fasil Rahuman (27) Ashok Kumar (22) both from Ramanathapuram, and Mathan Kumar (26) of Puddukottai who arrived by Fly Dubai flight.

On personal search 7 bundles of gold paste weighing 1.52 kg were recovered from rectum which yielded 1.38 kg gold gram gold chain was also recovered. Cigarettes valued at ₹9.35 lakhs were also recovered from their handbags and seized. All three were arrested. In another case

Mohamed Vaaris (25) of Chennai and Ihsanullah (32) of Ramanathapuram who arrived by Air Arabia Flight G 9471 arriving from Sharjah were intercepted and 3 bundles of gold paste were recovered from them.

Similarly, Sayed Mohamed of Madurai who have arrived by Emirates flight EK 544 was intercepted at exit .On personal search 6 gold chains concealed in handbag, 2 gold washers and 1 gold coin ingeniously concealed two wrist watches weighing 526 seized under Customs Act. Customs officials arrested

Rasuldeen (29) of Sivaganga bound for Dubai via Flight FZ8518 was intercepted after clearing immigration. On search, 5000 Pound Sterling and 500 Singapore Dollars valued at ₹5.13 lakhs which were undeclared were recovered and seized under Customs Act r/w FEMA.

In total, gold worth ₹2.41 crore, foreign currency worth ₹5.13 lakh and iPhones, cigarettes, health supplements worth ₹19.15 lakhs goods totally valued at ₹2.65 crores were seized in eleven cases by the Chennai custion is under progress.

#### the social representation in dation and sought the central with their categorywise dis-Plea in HC to honour scholars with Karunanidhi award

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 16

A. ARUL PALANI | DC

Slamming the recommenda-

tion of a committee consti-

tuted by the Union Ministry

of Education to exempt IITs

from following reservation

policies in faculty recruit-

ment, the SFI has urged the

central government to pro-

pose measures to improve

CHENNAI, DEC. 16

A Public Interest Litigation has been filed in the Madras high court to direct the authorities to continue to present the Award every year on the occasion of the birth-day of former Chief Minister M.Karunanidhi i.e., on June 3 for the best contribution to classical Tamil studies by a researcher or a research institution in the areas of archaeology, epigraphy, numismatics, ancient grammar and linguistic study, literary criticism, creative writing, translation and music, dance, drama, painting and sculpture, leading to the creation of new knowledge in ancient Tamil culture and civilization and gaining International recognition.

A division bench comprising Justices M.Sathyanarayanan and P.Rajamanickam before whom the petition filed by advocate S.Doraisamy, also Vice President of

Thanthai Periyar Dravidar Kazhagam, came up for hearing, ordered notice, returnable by March 3, 2021 to the Central Institute of Classical Tamil represented by its Ex-Officio Chairperson K.Palaniswami, Edappadi Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and two others.

According to Doraisamy, the then Chief Minister M.Karunanidhi, who was the author of number of literary works in Tamil, has created out of his personal funds an endowment in his name for classical Tamil research in the Central Institute of Classical Tamil (CICT) in the vear 2009. From the endowment an award will be given to the scholar and researchers of eminence every year. The award was one of the highest honours confirmed in India. The award carries a cheque for Rs 10 lakh citation plaque and a bronze replica of the donar

M.Karunanidhi. The award

was scheduled to be present-

ed to the candidate every year on the occasion of the birthday of the donor (June 3). He said after he demitted the office of Chief Minister and after former Chief Minister J.Jayalalithaa, came to power, being the chairperson of the Society she gave a full stop for the activities of the society since the society was the brainchild

M.Karunanidhi. The society became more or less defunct. No Director was appointed to the society till her death. The M.Karunanidhi was not disbursed till date. Due to the intervention of the Union government, the present director was appointed in June 2020. However, he did not take any initiative to distribute the awards and the award amount of Rs 2 crore lving unutilized. Therefore, he sent a representation to the authorities. But there was no response. Hence, he has filed the present petition, he added.

leaf in the annals of elephant conservation in Nilgiris as the Supreme Court finally gave its nod for restoration of the Segur Valley elephant corridor now located in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) buffer zone. The final verdict came

after a 12-year-long legal

Mr. Elephant Rajendran, the Chennai-based advocate-cum-environmentalist, the petitioner in the public interest litigation on Segur Valley elephant corridor, whose tireless efforts yielded fruitful results this year, appreciated the role of Deccan Chronicle in the genesis of this case and its support for restoring the corri-



On October 14, 2020, the Supreme Court upheld the Madras high court judgment of 2009, on restoring the Segur Valley elephant corridor that stretches upto 22 km between Singara and Segur reserve orests in MTR buffer zone limits. The corridor is interspersed with

private lands and revenue lands. Due to mushrooming of concrete structures, including tourist resorts, in the lands and encroachments in the revenue lands in the corridor, it led to frequent man-elephant conflict in

Segur Valley elephant corridor is an important



A view of the Segur valley elephant corridor from Vibhuthimalai area in MTR buffer

corridor for migratory and free-ranging wild elephants in the Nilgiris elephant reserve and the elephant

reserve in Kerala. Now, around 800 structures in the private and revenue lands in Segur corridor are expected to be

removed soon after a three-member committee appointed by the Supreme Court submits its report to the court.

# 2 YEARS OF GOVERNANCE IN CHHATTISGARH

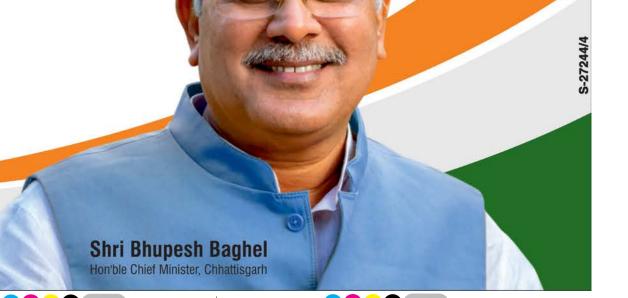
# REDEFINING 'NYAY'



- 244 cr irrigation tax pending since long waived off
- 94% of state's farmers selling their paddy crop at MSP
- Under 'Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana' 5750 cr into the account of farmers
- Under 'Godhan Nyay Yojana' average cow dung procurement of 15 cr per month
- Agriculture land acquisition compensation 4 times

- Amended 'Chhattisgarh Krishi Upaj Mandi Act' passed in legislative assembly
- Forest Rights Certificate holders covered under MSP
- Procurement of minor forest produce at MSP raised from 7 to 52
- Daily jobs to average 25 lakh labourers under MGNREGA





#### IN BRIEF **Stalin flays arrest** of TN fishermen

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 16

DMK President M K Stalin urged the External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to take immediate action to bring back the 36 fishermen from TN who have been detained by the Sri Lankan Navy.

Urging Jaisankar to ensure that the fishermen reached home along with their fishing gear safely, Stalin tweeted: 'The act of Sri Lankan navy to arrest Tamil fishermen even when the Covid-19 restrictions are in place is highly disappointing & unexpected.'

In another statement, Stalin urged the government to roll back the hike in domestic LPG cylinder price, which has been increased by ₹100 in 15 days.

G. SRINIVASAN | DC

THANJAVUR DEC.16

# **Covid death rate** very low in TN: CM

Due to the continuous efforts of the Tamil Nadu government, the death rate and number of people infected by Covid-19 in TN are very low compared with other states, said Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami.

Palaniswami made these remarks during a review meeting with Karur Collector S. Malarvizhi and other officials on the ongoing developmental activities and the preven-

on Wednesday. He said 4,999 persons were affected by Covid-19 in Karur district, of which 4,863 were cured. As many as 48 people died and at present 88 persons are undergoing treatment.

Till yesterday 1,10,401 tests were conducted and yesterday 1,269 RT-PCR tests were conducted in Karur district. So far, 10,647 fever were conducted in the district.

He said during the World Investors' Conference in 2019, MoUs worth ₹2,100 tive measures taken crore were signed for against Covid-19 in Karur starting new industries in

800 people will get jobs. He said a new check dam

across river Cauvery will come up at Nanjai Pugalur village at a cost of ₹406.50 crore and under the Lower improvement Bhavani scheme renovation of water bodies and extending the infrastructure of irrigation will be taken up at a cost of ₹933.10 crore in Erode, Tirupur and Karur districts.

Under the Kudimaramathu scheme, 90 works have been completed at a cost of ₹14.20 crore from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021, he

## **Memorial OF King Serfoji 2 to get facelift**

The memorial of Maratha

king Rajah Serfoji 2, the architect of Saraswathi Mahal library, at Rajagori cemetery will be renovated soon. Foundation stone for the renovation of the memorial was laid by M. Govinda Rao, the Thaniavur district collector.

The monument protection committee of the Sri Jayamala Rani educational

trust, headed by prince Shivaji Rajah, has taken up the renovation work. "People, particularly tourists, evince interest in seeing the memorial after they visit Saraswathi Mahal library. Hence the effort" said Shivaji Rajah.

Serfoji's contribution to the Saraswathi Mahal library was his precious personal collection of manuscripts and books collected by him during his Kasi yatra. He presented 5,000

ious languages like English, French, and Dutch. His contributions include the first English dictionary of Samuel Johnson, the first Tamil Bible printed at Tharangampadi,

medical books and paintings. He established Nava Vidhya Kalanidhi Salai and provided education to children and girls. Women teachers also worked here. He also established choultry at various places for the benefit of tourists and pilgrims. He conpalace complex and Vinayaka sannidhi at Big temple. Viswajit Ghatte Rao, vice-

president of the monument protection committee, Viveka-Gopal, secretary. Janaki Raveendran, commissioner of Thanjavur city corporation, Lakshmi Narasimhan, regional manager of Indian Overseas Bank, Sachin Joshi and Tanaji Sonahe, general managers of Bharath petrole-

# Kamal takes a swipe at 'one nation, one language'

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR I DC

Did traversing southern Tamil Nadu bring about a change of mind in Makkal Needhi Maiam founder Kamal Haasan? Going by his tweet on Wednesday it seems so, at least on the issue of Neet.

While the actor had said a few days back that he would plump for Neet, which is the common national level entrance for medical college admissions, he flayed the 'one examination' concept on Wednesday.

In the line of the 'one nation, one law, one examination, one religion, one Hindi, one chappathi, one jibba hides the idea of 'one Prime Minister,' Kamal said, adding that wherever the 'one' came up autocracy and oppression would rear their heads as history had informed us. "In an uneven society without

equality and social justice, mentioning that 'one' is a great injustice,' he said, taking a standpoint diametopposite to 'nationalist' that of BJP. rically reference to 'one Prime Minister,' in fact, is a swipe at nationalism itself.

So, has the tour of the southern districts that started from Madurai opened his eyes to the ground realities and helped him understand local aspirations better?

For, in an earlier tweet, he bemoaned the inordinate delay in putting up a statue for Tamil writer Puthumaipithan in Tirunelveli and



name of the literary genius if his

party came to power.
Prior to that he had exulted over the crowds at K Kamaraj's town (Virudhunagar) and his visit to the house of nationalist poet Bharathiyar in Ettayapuram, which he said had not seen any development.

But his mocking at 'one religion, one Hindi and one chappathi' was a surprise in that he seemingly expounds a view that is similar to that of the popular political parties in Tamil Nadu.

By referring to Hindi, chapati and jibba, he has directed his attack at the varied attempts from several quarters to impose north Indian cul-

ture and language on Tamil Nadu. In a speech, Kamal that Tamils would learn any language if they are let free but would 'spit out' anything that was imposed on them.

He also speaks indirectly against Sanskrit, calling it a dead language, thus taking the line of the regional parties on the contentious language

#### **Irregularities in rice** distribution: Former **DMK MLA moves HC**

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 16

Former DMK MLA M.Appavu has approached the Madras high court to direct the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption to forward his complaint against Food and Civil Supplies Minister R.Kamaraj and his subordinates, alleging irregularities in the distribution of additional 5 kgs of rice announced by the Union government to each family card holders during the Covid-19 pandemic period, to the Governor of Tamil Nadu to get prior approval for registering FIR under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

A division bench comprising Justices M.Sathyanarayanan and P. Rajamanickam before whom the PIL filed by Appavu came up for hearing, adjourned it to Jan.  $\bar{6}$ , 2021. According to petitioner, since mi-

llions of families and their wards were badly affected due to the pandemic of Covid-19 as well time and again extension of lock downs, the Union government considered their plight and announced to distribute additional free rice of 5 kgs to each family card holders for three months from April 2020. Tamil Nadu was also one among them to get the additional free rice to dis-tribute the TPDS card holders. On April 27, 2020 R.Kamaraj, Minister for Food and Civil Supplies and his subordinates/executives informed the Union government that they were unable to lift the additional free rice from the godown of Food Corporation of India and they were yet to purchase additional free rice for a sum of ₹438 crore. But, on May 22, 2020 he issued a press release stating that his department distributed additional free rice of 5 kg to each of the family card holders. On June 19, 2020 CM Edappadi K.Palaniswami issued a press release supporting R.Kamaraj that all categories of card holders were distributed free rice of 5 kgs. But on verification, the petitioner came to know that the additional free rice were smuggled by the subordinates of the accused and the Civil Supplies Crime Investigation department police seized free rice of 2,100 kgs which was directly delivered to private rice mill for polishing from the TNCSCS stock yard of Tirunelveli district

SHH! SHH!

#### Countdown begins for launch of communication satellite

countdown for the launch of communication satellite CMS-01 on board launch vehicle commenced

Wednesday, Isro said. The polar satellite launch vehicle's 52nd mission is scheduled for lift-off at 15.41 hours on Thursday from the second launch pad at the spaceport of Sriharikota 'subject to weather

Chennai, Dec 16: The 25-hour Countdown for the launch of PSLV-C50/CMS01 mission commenced on Wednesday at 1441hrs from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, SHAR Sriharikota," Isro said. CMS-01 is the 42nd communication satellite of the space agency

and it is envisaged for provid-

B. RAVICHANDRAN I DC

OOTY, DEC.16

The efforts of the forest teams to capture a 50year-old male wild elephant at the Nilgiris border went in vain on

Wednesday as the jumbo, escorted by other members in its herd, moved further inside the woods after receiving a tranquiliser dart.

**OUICK CROSSWORD** 

#### Efforts to trap killer jumbo go in vain The teams could spot the jumbo at **Dampalla in Cherangode limits after the** use of drones and three kumki ele-

The teams could spot the jumbo at Dampalla in Cherangode limits after the use of drones and three kumki elephants from Mudumalai Tiger

The jumbo killed three Chief Conservator of

phants from Mudumalai Tiger Reserve persons in three days in Kolapalli hamlet limits in Pandalur taluk in Nilgiris border along

> I. Anwardeen, Additional Principal

Kerala recently.

circle, said that this iumbo. named Sullikomban

Othaikomban by local populace when it unleashed a rampage in 2016 in Pandalur limits, has been renamed as Shankar after the profiling of the wild jumbos in the Gudalur forest division recently. "After the forest veterinary team

sent the tranquiliser dart in the afternoon, it joined its herd which included four other tuskers.

The other jumbos in the herd surrounded Shankar, moved little further in the woods and prevented the forest teams from approaching the herd. We will continue our operation on Thursday to capture it,'

#### ing services in Extended-C Band of the frequency spectrum covering India, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep conditions'. "PSLV-CMS-01 Mission: islands.

# COFFEE-BREAK

**Your day today** By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam Aries: Success comes in with abundant fame



the hard work and faith. Taurus: Health is good; enjoy dinner plans with loved ones. You may be feeling helpless and cornered today. Unsupportive associates at

work make things difficult for you to achieve.

and recognition in your chosen field, make the most of it! A surprise gift is in store. Keep up



it: Things both at work and home hit a peaceful note today. You are more relaxed. It's wise to handle certain important and fragile issues on your own.



ancer: You can't achieve it all in one day. Those going through a rough patch in their personal life are comforted by a new friendship. Finances improve for freelancers.

Be patient and less restless. Health is satisfactory. Work wise, those in artistic/



creative fields do well, but results that you expect may be a wee delayed, don't worry. firgo: You will be a great team player instead of a leader now for your job satisfaction. Some of you might feel nostalgic and miss your beloved. Your efforts at work help the company to gain more

profits and succeed. Spend time with family.

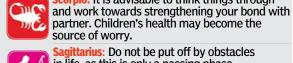


You share your b'day with

John Abraham, Bollywood actor. He is best known for his roles in Jism, Dhoom, Zinda, Water, Dostana, New York, Housefull 2, Race 2, Shootout at Wadala, Madras Cafe, Parmanu, Satyameva Jayate and Batla House amongst others. Libra: If you are thinking of taking up a home

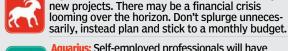


improvement project, set a budget so that you don't go overboard. You will have to be more energetic towards your profession. scorpio: It is advisable to think things through



Sagittarius: Do not be put off by obstacles in life, as this is only a passing phase. Businessmen will sail through tough conditions comfortably. Speculation may yield gains.

Capricorn: It is not a favourable time to start any



uarius: Self-employed professionals will have to work hard to satisfy their clients. Consult with others before taking a major decision. Don't let any fear of failing hold you back from working hard.



sces: It is advisable to take things slow. For now, inaction is better than wrong action. Hard work doesn't scare you away today. You might be willing to start a new project, but proceed with extreme caution. You might have misjudged it.



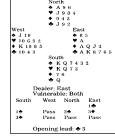
**SUIT PREFERENCE WINS** REGULARLY

eorge Szell, a conduc-tor, was in the United States on his way back to Europe from Australia when World War II broke out. He never left. He said, "Conductors"

"Conductors must give unmistakable and sugges-tive signals to the orchestra, not choreography to the udience." A bridge defender must

give unmistakable signals to his partner, not worry about three spades after West

best at declarer-play, sec-ond-best at bidding and 10th-best at defense! To defend well, not only do you need to watch the cards closely and signal accurateclosely and signal accurately to partner, but he must be
doing the same, and both of
you must be interpreting
these cards correctly.
The best defenders use a
lot of suit-preference signals. Today's deal shows
what is possible. How
should the defenders defeat
three sades affer Weet



#### 12 17 18 Across Down Across: 1. Involved, 6. Punt, 7. Cipher, 9. Rumba, 11. Vodka, 12. Aloft, 13. Petri, 16. Tomato, 18. Omen, 19. Outmoded. 1.Infatuated (8) 1. Conductor's stick (5) 7. In search of (5) 2. Sieve (6) 8. Butter ingredient (5) 3. Diplomacy (4)

9. Hazard (6) 4. Foe (5) 10. Wheel cover (4) 5. Itinerant (9) 12. Sloping path (4) 14. Carpenter's tool (6) 6. Adorn (9)

17. Alcove (5) 18. Marsh plants (5) 19. Come together and form one whole (8)

**Word Mine** 

GOOD; 21 OUTSTANDING How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's

the letters snown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed.

11. Refrain (6) 13. Showily manly (5) 15. Setting (5)

16. Sense (4)

**Down:** 1. Important, 2. Venom, 3. Vice, 4. Deplore, 5. Cue, 8. Realigned, 10. Buffalo, 14. Tamed, 15. Moat, 17. Odd.

## jumble LIGAE **RADHO RRTEEF** CDTEKO

(Answers tomorrow)

KIOSK RUNNY MEEKLY CACTUS

During the California Gold Rush, this land owner had a — ONE-TRACK "MINE"

leads the club three? leads the club three?
In the auction, if you think
West ought to have bid four
diamonds over three
spades, tune in tomorrow.
East wins the first trick
with his club king and cashes the heart ace. West
should realize that this is a
singleton, so he must signal
with his heart 10 under partner's ace, a suit-preference ner's ace, a suit-preference signal for diamonds. East now shifts to the diamond three. West takes that trick

heart six. After East ruffs and leads the diamond jack, West overtakes with his king and delivers a second heart ruff to defeat the con-tract by two tricks; plus 200 to East-West.

Looking for a seasonal present for a bridge player? Give her or him a subscription to Phillip Alder's bridgeforeveryone.com

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#### CALVIN AND HOBBES | Bill Watterson











ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe JOB CENTRE



TARZAN|Edgar Rice Burroughs





#### **WASNIK WARY OF CHANGE IN** MP LEADERSHIP

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, DEC. 16

All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary incharge of Madhya Pradesh affairs Mukul Wasnik on Wednesday remained non-committal on change of guard in state Congress amid growing demand in the party here to replace Kamal Nath as PCC

Wasnik who arrived here in the morning on a 3-day-visit to the state to review preparations of the party for the upcoming civic body polls, told reporters that the party needed seni-or leaders for their experience and the young ones for revitalisation of the organisation.

He was replying to a question as to if change in leadership in

MP Congress was imminent. When insisted by reporters to clear the air on the matter, he quipped "Do you expect me to answer all your questions today itself".

Nath's recent statement that he needed 'some rest' and wanted to stay at home has given birth to speculation that he may pave the way for a new

#### **J&K SOUTHERN DISTS SEE LOW VOTER TURNOUT**

DC CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, DEC. 16

The seventh phase of Jammu and Kashmir's first ever District Development Council (DDC) elections recorded an overall 57.22 per cent voting on Wednesday.

State election commissioner (SEC) K.K. Sharma said that the polling was by and large peaceful in the 31 constituencies where voting took

He said Jammu division recorded an average voter turnout of 71.93 per cent with frontier district of Poonch highest 80.12 per cent followed by Reasi district with 76.75 per cent and Udhampur 75.63 per

cent voting.
The lowest 58.82 per cent turnout in Jammu division was reported from hilly Doda

The Kashmir Valley reported 39.52 per cent average voter turnout with Bandipora district recording the highest polling at 70.47 per cent followed by Baramulla with 59.53 per cent and Kupwara district recorded 59.23 per cent polling,

Once again, the southern dis-- Anan tnag, Kulgam, Pulwama and Shopian- considered to be the hotbed of militancy saw majority of voters staying away from the polling. As per the official statists, Ananthag recorded 22.46 per cent, Kulgam 17.98 per cent, Pulwama 11.06 per cent and Shopian just 6.55 per cent polling.

#### RAM TEMPLE TO **BE BUILT USING ONLY DOMESTIC FUNDS: TRUST**

Ayodhya: The Ram temple in Ayodhya will be built using domestic funds collected from the general public through a mass contact programme as its trust doesn't have required approvals for accepting donations from abroad, general secretary of the trust Champat Rai said on Wednesday. Underlining that the Ram temple would actually take the form of a 'rashtra temple', he said,"Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Teerth Shetra is going to start the mass contact and contribution campaign across the country for construction of the temple." Addressing a press conference, Rai said photographs of the proposed new model of the temple will also reach crores of households through this campaign.— PTI



Ex-servicemen join farmers' protest against the new farm laws at Singhu Border in New Delhi on Wednesday.

# Govt clears ₹3,500 cr aid for sugarcane farmers

#### Move to benefit 5 crore farmers, 5 lakh workers in sugar mills

• THIS SUBSIDY aims at covering expenses on marketing

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, DEC. 16

government Wednesday cleared financial assistance of ₹3,500 crore to sugar mills for the export of 60 lakh tonnes of sweetener during the ongoing marketing year 2020-21 as part of its efforts to help them clear outstanding dues to sugarcane farmers.

Briefing media after the meeting, information and broadcasting minister Prakash Jayadekar said the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved a subsidy of ₹3,500 crore on exports of 60 lakh tonnes of sweetener

costs including handling, upgrading and other processing costs and costs of international and internal transport.

The dues will be directly credited to their accounts on behalf of sugar mills against the cane price dues, and the subsequent balance, if any, will be credited to mills' accounts.

Farmers sell their sugarcane to the sugar mills, however, they don't get their dues from the sugar mill owners as they have surplus sugar stock. To address this concern, the government has facilitated the evacuation of surplus the sugarcane farmers.

The CCEA has approved the subsidy at the rate of ₹6 per kg for the current year, much lower than about ₹10.50 per kg in the 2019-20 marketing year keeping in view favourable international prices

official According to sources, the government will incur about ₹3,500 crore for this purpose, and this assistance would be directly credited into farmers' accounts on behalf of and the subsidy amount sugar stock. This will price dues and subsequent will directly be given to enable payment of dues of balance, if any, would be

credited to mill's account. The decision will benefit five crore farmers and 5,00,000 workers employed in sugar mills and related ancillary activities. Sugar mills will be able to earn ₹18,000 crore revenue from the export, said Javadekar, who is also Union environment minister. This subsidy aims at cov-

ering expenses on marketing costs including handling, upgrading and other processing costs and costs of international and internal transport and freight charges on the export of up to 60 LMT of sugar limited to Maximum Admissible Export Quota (MAEQ) allocated to sugar mills for the

# Adhikari resigns as TMC legislator

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC

Dealing yet another blow to Mamata Minister Trinamul Banerjee's Shubhendu Adhikari quit as Nandigram MLA a day before his visit to New Delhi and likely induction in the BJP. Adhikari, fearing a "political vendetta" against him by the TMC, Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar's "intervention" in a letter for his and his aides' protection from being implicated by

the state police in false nation was not immediate-

At around 4 pm on Wednesday Adhikari, accompan-Assembly and handed over his resignation letter Assembly secretary Abhijit Som, in the absence of Speaker Biman Banerjee. He also sent a copy of his resignation letter to Banerjee via email. His move came nearly three weeks after he had resigned from the Mamata Baneriee Cabinet. A drama, however, unfolded later as Adhikari's resig-

ly accepted till reports last came in, according to sources, since an MLA is requiied by Congress MLA Sudip red to submit his resignatithat there is no pressure on nıs decision. Adhikari remained silent. But his loyalists under the banner of *Dadar Onugami* (elder brother's followers) hoisted the BJP flag at his office in Heria in East Midnapore in jubilation.

In the evening Dhankhar tweeted Adhikari's letter, which states: "I am constrained to seek your inter-

head so that the police and tus in the state is dissuaded from implicating me and Mukherjee from Purulia, on letter physically in front went to the West Bengal of the Speaker to ensure criminal cases out of political motivation and vendetta. I am in public lile nov for 25 years, during which my prime focus has been and is to be in service of the people. I have passionately involved myself with tion to serve the people in all positions, including as a minister in the government till my resignation on 27.11.2020."

#### EC starts preparations for 5 state polls

week,

next year.

Deputy

Commissioner Sudip Jain

would be in West Bengal in

the coming days, sources

said on Wednesday. The ter-

ms of the legislative assemblies of West Bengal, Tamil

Nadu, Assam, Kerala and

Puducherry is coming to an

end between April and June

செ.ம.தொ.இ./4721/ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளி/2020

# Chennai airport proves a haven for pet transit

FROM PAGE 1

"We don't think no wealth with us will match with the life of our Candy. We will spend all we earned our entire lifetime to live with her", vows Mr. Chandran.

"Yes, it is a fact that we could have saved over Rs 1 lakh if any of the Kerala airports had facilities for receiving foreign pets or abandoned her in Muscat. Now we are thinking about settling down in Chennai in a year if things would turn around according to plan. Because we love he said. It was Manjula who

saved the cute mau five years ago when she was going to attend Bhagavad Gita class near their apartment. She saw a baby cat aged 2-4 weeks lying tied to a public dustbin. She immediately called her daughter to feed it. At first sight, her daughter wanted to keep the cat at home. But, mom was sceptical. Amidst the dilemma, they rang up Chandran to solve the issue.

"When I reached the both mentally and ground floor of our financially," he said.

this city and its people apartment from the who are pet-friendly," office, he says, the helpless baby cat ran to me and upped its hands as if it wanted my help to survive. I took it to my apartment and put it on

my lap.
The next moment it slipped into sleep. At that moment I made up my mind that this cat was ours and the rest of our life was for her. I convinced my wife. Today we experience the grace of almighty whenever we look at her sharp eyes. Since she came to us, our life changed

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS **OPEN TENDER** No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e

Tender/19/0162 Date: 14/12/2020. The following e-Tenders can be accessed under the link www.ireps.gov.in Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link www.ireps.gov.in → login -E-Tender Stores/Supply. Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding particular India ranks 131 in UN's human development index tender or IREPS related information if any, Dy CMM/HQ/CLW/Chittaranjan, 0341-2525594 or SMM/CON/ HO,0341-2535631.Sl. No. Tender No.; Brief Description of Item; Qty.; Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees); Tender Closing Date & Time (IST): [1]:

> 05/01/2021at11:00hrs. [2]; 91200924A; Zr. Cu. Rotor;34,643.00 Numbers at 11:00 hrs.

# CPM-led LDF registers big win in local body polls

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,

The CPM-led ruling Left Democratic Front in Kerala on Wednesday registered a significant victory in local body polls considered as the semifinals ahead of crucial Assembly elections

Minister Pinarayi Vijayan termed the success of ruling front as "peoples victo-

ry."
"It's a befitting reply from the people of Kerala to the forces who tried to destroy our achievements, central agencies which worked with ulterior motive, communal forces which wanted to weaken the unity of the people and the forces which unleashed lies against the government," he

the government," he said.

The Chief Minister said the people irrespective of caste, creed, religions are constanted. gion, region extended wholehearted support to

"The mandate reflects the secular mindset of

G. Panchayats 941 22, 514, 377, B. Panchayats 108 44 152 D. Panchayats 14 10, Municipalities 86 35 Corporations

the people of the state,"

For the LDF, the victory is vital as it comes in the backdrop of serious allegations related to gold smuggling, corruption in mega projects faced by the government and Chief Minister's office. Almost all central agen-

cies including CBI, ED, Customs, NIA are camping in the state in connection with the investigations into various cases forcing even Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to accuse the BJP-led government at the Centre of misusing these agencies to derail the pro-people projects and topple democratically elected state govern-

Despite facing such

(G) Grama; (B) Block; (D) District an adverse political situation, the LDF manan adverse aged to keep its rural base almost intact winning 514 grama panchay-

> The UDF which was expected to do better this time, ended up with 377 grama panchayats.

However, the UDF maintained its upper hand in municipalities winning 45 of the 86. The LDF won 35 while BJP added one more to its

2015 tally.
Meanwhile, Opposition leader Chennithala claimed that the UDF had improved its perform-ance compared to 2015. Chennithala 'LDF cannot claim a big victory as its tally in grama panchayats and municipalities has gone down," he said.

**Bharat Biotech's vaccine well tolerated** 

#### SC SEEKS CENTRE'S **REPLY ON PILS FOR REMOVING FARMERS**

**New Delhi, Dec. 16:** The Supreme Court on Wednesday issued a notice to the Centre and others on a batch of petitions seeking removal of farmers camping at several roads near Delhi borders in protest against the three new agri

A bench comprising Chief Justice S.A. Bobde, and Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian also indicated that the court may form a committee having representatives of the government and the farmer unions across the country to resolve the deadlock over the legislations.

In a hearing conducted via video conferencing, the bench directed the petitioners to make protesting farmer unions parties to the pleas and posted the matter for hearing on Thunegotiations with "Your

protesting farmers have not worked apparently till now,' the bench told the Centre.

Meanwhile, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the bench that the government will not do anytning against the interest of farmers.

Multiple pleas have been filed in the SC seeking a direction to authorities to immediately remove the farmers. saying commuters are facing hardships due to the road blockades and the gatherings might lead to an increase in the number of Covid-19 cases.

# with no serious adverse events

of phase 1 clinical trial of COVID-19 vaccine Covaxin, indigenously developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the ICMR, showed that it was was well tolerated in all dose groups with no serious or

adverse events.

The vaccine induced robust binding and neutralising antibody responses which were comparable to those observed in the convalescent serum collected from patients who had recovered from COVID-19, according to the findings which have appeared on medRxiv, a preprint

A preprint is a version of a scientific manuscript posted on a public server prior to formal peer review. One serious adverse event was reported, which was found to be unrelated to vaccination, findings showed. It was a double-blind randomised controlled phase 1 clinical trial to evaluate the safety and immunogenicity Covaxin (BBV152). The document mentions that BBV152 is stored between 2 degrees Celsius and 8 degrees Celsius, which is compatible requirements and further efficacy trials are

New Delhi, Dec 16: underway. According The interim findings to the "A Phase 1: Safety and Immunogenicity Trial of an Inactivated SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine first vaccination, local and systemic adverse events were predominantly mild or moderate in severity and resolved rapidly, without any prescribed medication. A similar trend was observed

serious

after the second shot administered. was Pain at the injection site was the most common local adverse "One adverse event was reported. The partici-

pant was vaccinated on July 30. Five days later, the participant reported symptoms of COVID-19 and was found to be positive SARS-CoV-2, according to the findings. "The symptoms were mild in nature, but the patient was admitted to the no tal on August 15. The participant was discharged on August 22 following a negative nucleic acid result. The event was not causally associated with the vaccine," the findings showed. To ensure generalisability, the trial was conducted on volunteers from diverse geowith all national graphic locations and immunisation programme cold chain tions, enrolling 375 participants across 11

#### **GREATER CHENNAI CORPORATION**

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Zonal Officer-5

ந.க.எண்: 5166/2020/ஆ5 பேரூராட்சிகள் துறை தமிழ்நாட்டிலுள்ள 12 மாவட்டங்களில் 2020–21 ஆம் ஆண்டிற்கான தமிழ்நாடு நகாப்புற சாலை கட்டமைப். மேம்பாட்டுதிட்ட வட்டி தொகையின் கீழ் சாலை பணி செய்வதற்கான ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளி கோகும் அறிவிக்கை. . பேரூராட்சிகளில் மேற்காணும் பணிகளை மேற்கொள்ள 34 பேரூராட்சிகளின் செயல் அலுவலாகளால், தகுதியான ஒப்பந்ததாராகளிடம்முந்து பணிகள் வாரியாக ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளிகள் வரவேற்கப்படுகின்றன. ஒப்பந்தபுள்ளி தொடாபான லிபரங்களை சம்பந்தப்பட்ட பேரூராட்சிகளில் பெற்றுக் கொள்ளலாம்.

ஒவ்வொரு சிப்பமும் சுமா**ர் ரூ.15.00 இலட்சம்** முதல் **ரூ.150.00 இலட்சம்** வரை மதிப்புள்ளது. . பணி வாரியான ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளி நமூனாவிணை https://tntenders.gov.in.மற்றும் http://townpanchayats.tn.gov.in/tend என்ற இணைபதள முகவரிகளிலிருந்து இலவசமாக எடுத்துக் கொள்ளலாம். இந்த இணையதள முகவரிகளிலிருந்த ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளிகள் குறித்த முழு விபரங்களும் பெறலாம்.

. பொதுவான நேரம் மற்றும் நாள். (அனைத்து பேரூராட் சிகளுக்கும் பொதுவானது) அ) ஒப்பந்த நமூனா பதிவிறக்கம் செய்தல் : 17.12.2020 காலை 10.00 மணி முதல் 06.01.2021 மாலை 3.00 மணி வரை ஆ) ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளி சமர்ப்பித்தல்: 06.01.2021 மாலை 3.00 மணி வரை

இ) ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளிகள் திறத்தல் : 06.01.2021 மாலை 3.30 மணி இர்ப்பத்தபுள்ளி பெறப்படும் நாளன்று அலுவவகத்திற்கு விடுமுறை தினமாக அறிவிக்கப்படின், அதற்கு அடுத் மலை நாளில், அதே நேரத்தில், அதே இடத்தில் ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளி பெறப்பட்டு திறக்கப்படும்.

## நகான் : 10310/2020/ஆ5 பேரூராட்சிகள் துறை நாட்டிலுள்ள 34 யாவட்டங்களில் 2020-21 ஆம் ஆண்டிற்கான சிறப்பு சாலைகள் திட்டந்தி ஒடித்து புக்கு ஆற்றுக்கானத்தில் பறிக்கள் கேற்கொள்ள 176 பேரூராட்சிகளின் செயல் அலுவலர்களால், தகுதியால ஒப்பத்ததாரங்கிட்பிருந்து பணிகள் வளியாக ஒப்பத்தப்புள்ளிகள் வரவேற்கப்படுகின்றன. ஒப்பத்தபுள்ளி தொடர்பான விபரங்களை சம்பத்தப்பட்ட பேரூராட்கிகளில் பெற்றுக் கொள்ளனம். 2. ஒவ்கொரு பணியும் சுமார் சூ.10.00 டைசம் முதல் சூ.2.50 கோடி வரை மதிப்புள்ளது.

. பணி வளியான ஒப்பத்தப்புள்ளி நமூனாவினை https://intenders.gov.in மற்றும் http://townpanchayats.tn.gov.in/tender என்ற இணையதன முகவரிகளிலிருந்து இலைசமாக எடுத்துக் கொள்ளவாம். இந்த இணையதன முகவரிகளிலிருந்து ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளிகள் குறித்த முழு வியரங்களும் பெறலாம்.

ணியரங்களும் பெறலாம்.
4. பொதுவான நேரம் மற்றும் நாள். (அளைத்து பேரூராட்சிகளுக்கும் பொதுவானது)
அடுப்பந்த நருகளா புதிவிறக்கம் செய்தல் : 18.12.2020 காலை 10.00 மணி முதல் 06.01.2021 மாலை 5.45 மணி வரை
(ரு. 200 கோடி மற்றிட்டிற்கு குறையான சாலைப்பணிகள்) : 18.12.2020 காலை 10.00 மணி முதல் 19.01.2021 மாலை 5.45 மணி வரை
(ரு. 200 கோடி மற்றிட்டிற்கு குறையான சாலைப்பணிகள்) (சிவகங்கை மாலட்டம் – கோட்டையூர் சாலைப்பணிகள்) : 19.01.2021
யாலை 3.00 மணிவரை (ரு. 200 கோடி மற்றிட்டிற்கு கேரையான சாலைப்பணிகள்) சிவகங்கை மாலட்டம் – கோட்டையூர் சாலைப்பணிகள்) : 19.01.2021
யாலை 3.00 மணிவரை (ரு. 200 கோடி மற்றிட்டிற்கு கேரையான சாலைப்பணிகள்) (சிவகங்கை மாலட்டம் – கோட்டையூர் சாலைப்பணிகள்) : 19.01.2021
யாலை 3.00 மணிவரை (ரு. 200 கோடி மற்றிட்டும் நிலக்கை மாலட்டம் – கோட்டையூர் சாலைப்பணிகள்) குற்பத்தியுள்ளிகள் திறத்தல் : 06.01.2021 மாலை 3.30 மணி (தே.200 கோடி மற்றிட்டிற்கு குறையான சாலைப்பணிகள்) : 19.01.2021
யாலை 3.00 மணி (தே.200 கோடி மற்றிட்டும் நிலக்கை மாலட்டம் – கோட்டையூர் சாலைப்பணிகள்) திலம்களை சாலைப்பணிகள் (சிவகங்கை மாலட்டம் – கோட்டையூர் சாலைப்பணிகள்) திலம்கள்களை சாலைப்பணிகள் (சிவகங்கை மாலட்டம் – கோட்டையூர் சாலைப்பணிகள்) திருப்பத்தியுள்ளி கொடி காலக்கள் கொடியூர் கூடிர்க்கிய திருப்புள்ளி (அற்றிட்டிற்கு திருப்புள்ளி) மற்றிட்டும் திறக்கப்படும்.

#### and standards of living. Life expectancy of Indians at birth in 2019 was 69.7 years while Bangladesh has a life expectancy of 72.6 years and Pakistan 67.3

Human Development Index is the measure of a nation's health, education, the 2020 Human Development Report said. Bhutan (129),

New Delhi, Dec 16: India

dropped one spot to 131 among 189 countries in the

2020 human development

index, according to a report

released by the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP).

Bangladesh (133), Nepal (142), and Pakistan (154) were ranked among countries with medium human development, the report said. India's HDI value for 2019 is 0.645 which put it in the medium human development category. India has been positioned at 131 out of 189 countries and territories, according to the

Īndia had ranked 130 in 2018 in the index. Norway topped the index, followed by Ireland, Switzerland, Hong Kong and Iceland, the report showed. Talking to reporters, UNDP Resident Representative Shoko Noda said the drop in India's ranking doesn't mean 'India didn't do well but other countries did better". Noda said India can help other countries too and lauded its commitment to reduce carbon emissions.

According to the report published by the United Nations Development Programme on Tuesday, India's gross national income per capita fell to USD 6,681 in 2019 from USD 6,829 in 2018 on purchasing power parity (PPP) basis. Purchasing power parity or PPP is a measurement of prices in

different countries that uses the prices of specific goods to compare the absolute purchasing power of the countries' currencies. The report said evidence

from Colombia to India indicates that financial security and ownership of land improve women's security and reduce the risk of gender-based violence, clearly indicating that owning land can empower women. It further said indigenous children in Cambodia, India and Thailand show more malnutritionrelated issues such as stunting and wasting.

New Delhi, Dec. 16: The

Election Commission has

started its preparations for five assembly polls due some

time in April-May next year

with two if its senior officials set to visit West Bengal

and Tamil Nadu in the next

few days. While EC Secretary

General Umesh Sinha would

be visiting Tamil Nadu next

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# Chronicle

# Facts don't back PM's theory on farmers' stir

rime Minister Narendra Modi's speech in Kutch on Tuesday, in which he spoke of "a great conspiracy to mislead farmers, in and around Delhi", can be said to mark a new stage in the agitation of farmers of North India, in the vanguard of which are Punjab farmers. This stage bespeaks the hardening of the government's stand against the farmers knocking on the doors of the nation's capital for the past 20 days.

After six rounds of dialogue between the government and the farmers' representatives, including a session with Union home minister Amit Shah, the food growers maintain their opposition to the three controversial agri-laws, passed in controversial circumstances last September. The government is just as adamant and will not agree to their repeal, the farmers' key demand. The farmers have rejected the government's implied offer of amending specific sections of the three laws if farmers can pinpoint them.

In Parliament, and in various statements made by the government's representatives outside the legislature, not excluding the remarks of the PM at various forums, the government is yet to cogently explain to the need for the laws that have created a storm, other than to say that these represent much-needed "reform" that will benefit farmers and the farm sector, and will not leave them worse off. The agriculturists are not persuaded, however. The government's bland assurances have done nothing to reassure farmers that the real reason for these "reforms" was to not to benefit big industry, rather than the owners

Ironically, even as Mr Modi attacked the Opposition parties — and when he does that he specifically means the Congress since he says "they" were unable to bring reforms when in power — the real attack on the government has come from Akali Dal president Sukhbir Badal on the same day that the PM was accusing the Opposition of misleading farmers and playing politics in the guise of backing farmers. The Akalis depend principally on the votes of agriculturists.

Such was the force of the Dal's opposition to the three farm laws that its announcement of leaving the Narendra Modi government came on the floor of the Lok Sabha, in the course of the discussion on the controversial farm laws. Subsequently, the Punjab party left the ruling alliance. Therefore, the notion of innocent farmers being "misled" by the Opposition — assiduously propagated by the government and the BJP — does not square with the facts. In the first instance, this opposition to the agri-laws came from the Akali Dal when it was a member of the ruling NDA until three months ago. This was clearly a case of opposition from within.

In a newspaper interview, Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar said the BJP under Mr Modi came back with an increased majority in 2019 because of the "transformative" policies of demonetisation and GST. The extremely negative economic effects of these policies did not concern him and he equated more seats in Parliament with approval of these policies by the people. In the same way, he noted, the farm laws, that have triggered a tsunami of protest, will also be backed by the electorate.

The farmers seem to be up against the strength of ideology rather than eco-

# Naked power grab

he fracas in the Karnataka Legislative Council may be par for the course in many a legislature, but it did nothing for the reputation of a House of Elders. The physical pushing and shoving of the deputy chairman, who was the presiding officer at the time and the kind of street language members used against each other made this a new low so far as meetings at the majestic Vidhana Soudha building in Bengaluru goes. The issue does run deeper and the incident only further illustrates the naked power grabbing politics grip-

ping places reserved for people's representatives.

It appears the ruling party BJP was in a tearing hurry to pass the contentious Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill 2020 and the Congress, afraid of losing the chairmanship and control of the council, was hell bent on stopping the proceedings and the Bill. But the Congress chairman had no right to duck legislative business in adjourning the House on December 10 even as the BJP and JD(S) had no right to forcibly occupy the chair through

deputy chairman Dharmegowda to try and pass the Bill. The Congress' fear of losing the last vestige of power in Karnataka it had enjoyed in its alliance of convenience with the JD(S) till 2019 may have led it to such subterfuge in blocking legislation the BJP is keen to enact. The cattle protection laws are in keeping with BJP's pursuit of Hindutva, to enable which it has been seen enticing the JD(S) into its sphere of influence by dangling the

carrot of an alliance that may stretch into the next Assembly elections. The JD(S) is a past master in the art of gravitating towards evidenced in its supremo H.D. Devegowda once becoming Prime Minister of India in a large coalition with a minuscule number of MPs. Its effort to remain relevant in Karnataka politics today is understandable. However, the least expectation is presiding officers of legislatures will meticulously follow the rule book so as not to deny a majority from having its say, such majority always being on the floor of the House.

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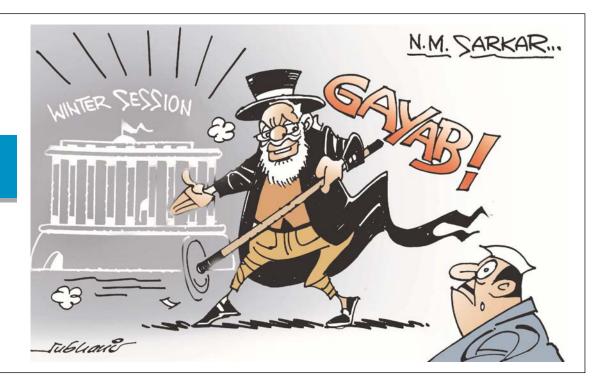
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# Child nutrition crisis may derail India's aspirations

Food Campaign.

of the weakening of the

social protection frame-

work with inadequate

budgetary support and

no expansion in response

to the economic slow-down which could have

affected affordability of

diets. PDS (public distrib-

ution system) provides only rice and wheat in

most states. Some states

also give pulses and oil,

but many poorer states

Some experts point out that the work of the

Narendra Modi govern-

ment's flagship National

Nutrition Mission and

Anaemia Mukt Bharat

(AMB) campaign, with

an ambitious target of

reducing anaemia by

three percentage points

per annum till 2022, are

not really captured in the

NFHS-5 data because

they really got going only

Even if that is so, it is

vital to review what is

actually happening on the ground. There are

enough indications that

all is not well with many

programmes. Take the

mid-day meals, for exam-

ple — the Central govern-

ment's flagship school-

improving the nutrition-

al status of students and

feeding pro-e aimed at

recently.

based

gramme

don't," she adds.



Patralekha Chatterjee

**Dev 360** 

t can be tempting to blame every crisis on the Covid-19 pandemic. But quite often, facts get in the way. Many things were bad enough even prior to the onset of the pandemic, that gutted so many lives and livelihoods.

The latest data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) is a case in point. It shows that several states across the country are doing worse since the last NFHS was conducted in 2015-16. They have reversed course and are showing worsening levels of child malnutrition despite improvements in sanita-

tion and better access to fuel and drinking water. Arguably, the first set of findings from the NFHS-5, conducted in 2019-20, four years after the last one (2015-16), relates to only 22 states and Union territories and does not include major states like Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. Data for states will released sometime in the middle of next year.

It is also true that not everything in NFHS-5 reeks of gloom.

Immunisation coverage has expanded in many states, the number of households using clean fuel has improved. Ditto with sanitation facilities. The total fertility rate (TFR) across most Indian states is also declining.

All this is good news. But we can't afford to take the eye off the ball and gloss over the heartbreaking reality of growing numbers of stunted and undernourished chil-

dren in India. In Maharashtra, the percentage of children in the 6-59 months group who are anaemic has shot up from 53.8 per cent (2015-2016) to 68.9 per cent in 2019-2020. Rural children are more severely affected. In the same period, the percentage of children under five who are stunted (low height for age) has gone up from 34.4 to 35.2.

What leapt out at me was the data from Mumbai. Children in the 6-50 months group who are anaemic has risen from 65.7 per cent in 2015-2016 to 72.8 per cent in 2019-2020.

Or take Gujarat, a relatively affluent state. The percentage of children under five who are stunted has risen from 38.5 (2015-2016) to 39.0 (2019-2020). In the same period, children under five who are severely wasted has gone up from 9.5 per cent to 10.6 per cent and those between 6-59 months who are anaemic has shot up from 62.6 per cent in 2015-2016 to 79.7 per cent in 2019-2020.

Nutrition experts point out that out of 22 states and Union territories for which we have data, there is a surge in severe acute malnutrition cases in 16 states/UTs, compared to NFHS-4 conducted in 2015-2016.

Even Kerala, that usually leads in social poliproblems: is growing anaemia among children.

The underfed hugely outnumber the overfed but alongside the crisis of child under-nutrition, we are also seeing a rise in child obesity, perhaps due to more junk food consumption. All this is exacerbated

by widespread under-nutrition and anaemia among women, including those who are pregnant. What is going wrong and what has changed

between 2015-2016 and "We don't have granu-

lar data for all states and promoting the universal-Union territories as yet but the first lot of data from NFHS-5 points to What leapt out at me worsening malnutrition was the data from and anaemia in several states. From the data that's available, it's hard to pinpoint why malnutrition worsened even before the pandemic set in, but it's important to note that the period when it worsened coincides with the time India suf-

We had demonetisation education. in 2016, which gutted much of the informal sector which dominates the Indian economy. We don't know to what extent those who took a

severe hit during demonetisation have recovered. The GST rollout also affected small businesses and rural wages have stagnated," says Dipa Sinha, assistant professor of economics at New Delhi's Ambedkar University and a key fig-ure in India's Right to "The other unknown for which we don't have much data is the impact

> makers sleepless nights. Stunting is a marker of chronic or recurrent undernutrition, usually associated with poor socioeconomic conditions, poor maternal health and nutrition, fre-quent illness, and/or inappropriate infant and young child feeding and care in early life.

Children who suffer only not grow to their full height, there is also a tive potential.

nutrition are more likely to have children who suf fer from stunting or wasting, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and undernutrition. mia is also hugely debilitating. It can affect children's cognitive perforand physical mance growth. In women, anaemia can adversely impact the capacity to work and can lead to poor pregnancy out-

Children are India's future, on whom the country's dreams rest, but they are paying the price of adult bungling and apathy. We can't afford that. Nor can we afford diversions like the needless hullabaloo over serving boiled eggs, a source of protein, to poor children in government

Mumbai. Children in programmes. the 6-50 months group who are anaemic has risen from 65.7 per cent in 2015-2016 to 72.8 per cent in 2019-2020.

isation of elementary

According to the Accountability Initiative of the Centre of Policy Research, only 14 states in India could utilise 100 per cent of the funds allocated to them for mid-day meals for the year 2018-2019, and states like Telangana, Assam and Goa used only two-third of the money allocated to them under this head. Gujarat and Haryana used only 40 per cent of the funds allocated to them for mid day meels them for mid-day meals. All this goes to show that there is a lot that is dysfunctional on the ground. India's child nutrition crisis should give policy-

from stunting may not risk that they would not develop their full cogni-

Experts say mothers who suffer from under-

The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee @gmail.com

#### **WHAT AN IRONY**

Makkal Needhi Maiam president Kamal Haasan has rightly said that 'Puratchi Thalaivar' M. G. Ramachandran, known as MGR and as 'Makkal Thilagam', is not the sole property or asset of AIADMK alone. He has rightly asserted that MGR is known as 'Makkal Thilagam' and not 'AIADMK Thilagam' and that some of the ministers would not even have met him. It is a matter of concern and irony that the AIADMK leaders who were addressing their rule as 'Amma Aatchi' all along has now switched to the words MGR Aatchi (MGR rule) and started giving prominence to MGR in posters, banners and advertisements keeping in mind the forthcoming assembly elections.

M.C. Vijay Shankar, Chennai

#### RYOTS SHOULD END STIR

APROPOS REPORT Conspiracy afoot to confuse farmers: PM (Dec. 16). The economists cry that due to farmers' agitation the nation is losing ₹3,500 crores per day. And the Prime Minister and the Home Minister had assured that the government will amend the laws suitably. Yet the agitating farmers are not willing to withdraw their agitation. Regrettably the Centre too is intransigent against repealing the 3 farm laws. The moot question is why Yechury, Prashanth Bhushan, Yogendra Yadav, Kejriwal and their ilk who are lending support to the farmers did not sympathise nor visit given 34,000 acres of their land for establishing Amaravati as AP's capital city, agitating for one year? In this regard, the Prime Minister's statement that "there is a conspiracy, confused and instigated the farmers" gains credence. It is time the farmers gave up their agitation and settled issues through negotia-

A. Seshagiri Rao, Chennai

#### **CORRUPTION IN RTO**

IN A surprise raid in Virudhunagar RTO, sleuths of the anti-corruption wing are reported to have seized unaccounted cash of ₹25.66 lakh. Two motor vehicle inspectors have been suspended in this connection. About three months ago, the DVAC officials had seized nearly ₹4 lakh unaccounted cash in Sriperumbudur RTO. The cash was reportedly found concealed in the flush tank of the restroom, generator room and also inside the vehicles used by officials. When computerisation was introduced, the authorities had made a tall claim that transparency would be the hallmark of administration, and corruption and malpractices would be a thing of the past. Unfortunately, things have not changed a wee bit.

P.G. Menon, Chennai

#### Dilip Cherian Dilli Ka Babu



Gymkhana divided on suspension of ex-cop

ue to various complex rules around admission, the Delhi Gymkhana Club has maintained its exclusive "aura" for 107 years. Its governing body is comprised of various retired government and defence officials as well as other private citizens. Its elections are a hotly contested affair, often leading to accusations of use of "illegal" and "unlawful" means between the contestants.

These days the club is roiled by a

letter written by 50 members collectively to the club president expressing their outrage at the "arbitrary decision" of the governing body. One of the issues that has riled members is the proposed suspension of a member, Dr Parvez Hayat, a retired IPS officer, for a day and further debarring him from contesting the club elections. Sources say that the member's suspension was the result of allegations levelled against him by viceadmiral B.S. Randhawa. The letter alleged that the club authorities did not observe the rules and due process before taking the decision to suspend the retired IPS officer.

Such controversies are not new Earlier this year, the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) had ruled that the club was acting in a manner "prejudicial to public interest" and, therefore, must be probed. It said that a five-member central government appointed panel should investigate the affairs of the club, including land usage and its admission policy for members.

#### **UPRIGHT BABU RILES**

UTTARAKHAND MINISTER These days your average babu can Blind obedience is what is expected from them, leaving little room for independent decision-making. But like always, there are exceptions to the rule. An instance from Uttarakhand has recently come to light. There is even a touch of the bizarre about it!

The state's minister of women and child welfare, Rekha Arya, reportedly wrote to the DIG of Dehradun, Arun Mohan Joshi, inquiring about her additional secretary V. Shanmugam, who, she said, was "missing". And since the officer was "incommunicado", she feared he might have been kidnapped!

As it turns out, according to sources, trouble had been brewing between the minister and the IAS officer for some time. Matters came to a head sometime in September when Mr Shanmugam awarded a contract in a tender possibly against the wishes of the minister. Subsequently, he went into a two-day "self-isolation" and did not take any calls from his

office or the minister.

The irate mantri forced chief minister Trivendra Rawat to order an inquiry into the award of the contract, but additional chief secretary Manisha Panwar has reported that the probe did not find any misconduct by Mr Shanmugam. Further, Mr Panwar has stated that the officer had followed due process while awarding the contract and while going on leave. This is where matters rest. for now. It remains to be seen whether the minister will pursue the issue further or let it fly. It would also be interesting to see if the babu manages to hold on to his post or gets transferred elsewhere.

Contrast this with a powerful babu in Delhi who did not vanish after his "gaffe". Immense sweeping powers and other capabilities were exercised in Delhi and his statement vanished instead. What

One issue that has riled up members is the proposed suspension of a member, **Dr Parvez Hayat, retired IPS** officer, for a day and further debarment of him from the club elections. The member's suspension was the result of allegations levelled against him by vice-admiral B.S. Randhawa.

was reported in the media (of course, the story was promptly withdrawn, though the video exists!) on questioning the credentials of democracy itself led to much speculation whether this was just a gaffe or something

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.













#### SHORT TAKES

#### **ANIME STUDIO ARSON: JAPAN DETAINS MAN**

**Tokyo, Dec. 16:** Japanese prosecutors on Wednesday charged a man with murder over the 2019 arson attack on Kyoto Animation that killed 36 people, the country's deadliest violent crime in decades.

Shinji Aoba, 42, was detained in the aftermath of the July attack, but has been under constant medical supervision since then after sustaining severe burns in the incident.

The charges include murder, attempted murder, arson, trespass and breach of the armscontrol law, the Kyoto prosecutor's office said, without giving further details.

More than 30 people were also injured in the attack, in which Aoba is accused of breaking into the studio's building, spreading gasoline around the ground floor and setting it alight.

#### TRYING TO FLEE: **CHINA INDICTS 10 HK RESIDENTS**

Hong Kong, Dec. 16: Chinese prosecutors on Wednesday announced the indictment of 10 people from Hong Kong over an attempt to flee the city amid a crackdown on opposition political activity.

The Yantian district prosecutor's office in the city of Shenzhen just across the border from Hong Kong said on its microblog that 10 of the suspects were charged with illegally crossing the border whi le two were also charged with organising the attempted journev. Two others are minors and a decision on how to handle their cases will be made at a later time, the office said.

Relatives of the 12 say they have been prevented from hiring their own lawvers and that the accusations against them are politically motivated. The 12 were arrested at sea in August while they were apparently attempting to flee to Taiwan after a tough national security law took effect in Hong Kong.

# Many European nations impose pre-Christmas virus restrictions

Berlin, Dec. 16: Several European countries on Wednesday imposed tight. Record death toll in Germany er Coronavirus restrictions ahead of Christmas, Frankfurt Am Main, as the United States rep- Dec. 16: Germany regisorted another record num-tered a record number of ber of new infections.

Hopes for an end to the Wednesday, the first day of pandemic were boosted by a new partial lockdown to positive assessments of try and cope with a surge the Moderna Covid-19 vac- in infections. cine, but a study warned that at least a fifth of the world's population in poorer nations may not have access to vaccines until 2002

With the virus resurgent Coronavirus cases were in Europe, Germany clos-registered, a figure close ed non-essential shops and schools, swathes of England came under tighter curbs, and Denmark extended its restrictions.

closing the shops, it's for our health. We can't wait for things to fall enout." for things to fall apart," said shopper Jurgen in Geneva, Dec. 16: World Berlin, where people were Trade Organisation negorushing to finish their tiators were debating We-Christmas purchases before the shutdown.

ore the shutdown. all trade barriers inhibit-Germany had coped rela-ing the delivery of intertively well with the first national food aid as the wave in the spring, but it Coronavirus pandemic has struggled to contain a pushes humanitarian resurgence in recent months and its health minister Dozens of WTO membesaid it wanted the Euro- rs, including the United pean Union to approve the States, the European Uni-Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine on and China, support the

"before Christmas". Calls have been growing Singapore and the World for the EU health regulator for the speed up its vaccines won the 2020 Nobel Peace decision process, with the Prize for its humanitarian bloc lagging behind a growing number of nations that have authorised the drug.

The formula fitter in the fitting fitting work.

"This is a very important proposal," EU ambassador to the WTO Joao

Britain has already star- Aguiar Machado told ted using it, but high in-fection numbers forced If adopted, the proposal London on Wednesday to would "ban export restricjoin large parts of central tions on these foodstuffs and northern England un- which hinder the World der tough, economically Food Programme's ability painful restrictions. Pubs, to procure (food products bars, restaurants and oth- for) the populations most er hospitality sites will in need across the world." close, apart from takeaways, as will theatres and other entertainment venues. enjoys strong support, it her entertainment venues.

to the daily record of nearly 30,000 infections report-

ed on Friday. previous daily deaths from Covid-19 on record for fatalities was also reached Friday, when almost 600 people were reported to have died as the number of those in intensive care in the country reached alarming levels. Some 83 percent of It said 27,728 new

#### intensive care beds in hospitals were occupied on Wednesday, the Interdisciplinary Association for In-WTO mulls how

#### **US AUTHORISES** FIRST AT-HOME dnesday a proposal to lift **COVID-19 TEST**

Washington, Dec 1 6: The United States on Tuesday authorised its first rapid at-home test for Covid-19, which is available over-the-counter and produces a result in

around 20 minutes.

The test, made by California-based Ellume, will sell for around \$30 and the company plans to roll out three million units in January 2021, and millions more in subsequent months. Stephen Hahn, commissioner of the Food and Administration, said the emergency use authorization represented a "major milestone."

unanimous backing which is required for all decisions at the global trade

# **Senate run-offs: Biden campaigns**

Nominates Buttigieg as transportation secy

ent-elect Joe Biden threw his weight into the Democratic battle for control of the US Senate on Tuesday, as his White House win was finally acknowledged by top Republicans and holdout

tensive Care and Emergency Medicine (DIVI) said.

The latest figures come

as a new partial lockdown

was imposed, with non-essential shops and scho-

ols closed in a bid to halt

in infections.

"exponential growth"

The restrictions will

apply until January 10, with companies also

urged to allow employees

to work from home or to

offer extended company

VIRUS HUNT: WHO

Falkensee, Dec. 16: A German scientist who is part of a small team of

experts assembled by the

World Health Organisation to investigate the origins of

the Coronavirus says they

plan to sift through sam-

ples and medical data from

China to help determine

where the bug first jumped

from animals to humans

and which species it came

from. The search for the

source of the new Coronav-

irus has sparked claims of cover-ups and fuelled polit-

ical tensions, particularly between the US adminis-

tration of President Donald Trump and Beijing.

Most researchers think

that the virus, also known

as SARS-CoV-2, originated

in animals in China, proba-

bly bats, and the WHO has

put together a 10-person

team to examine the science. Mission member Fab-

ian Leendertz, a biologist

at Germany's Robert Koch

Institute who specialises in

emerging diseases, said th-

at the goal is to gather data to be better prepared for

possible future outbreaks.

TO SIFT CHINESE

SAMPLES, DATA

foreign leaders.
Biden flew into Georgia
— a southern state he won in an upset against President Donald Trump — to host a rally for two Democratic candidates in run-off races that will determine the Senate's balance of power.

"Honk for your next United States senators Jon Ossoff and Rev. Raphael Warnock," Biden told the crowd at the drive-in event in Atlanta urging voters to turn

out in force on January 5. "Send me these two men, and we will control the Senate!" One day after the Electoral College affirmed Biden's victory, attention shifted to the looming Senate battle — and to the shape of the incoming administration, as Biden also announced he had nominated Pete Buttigieg, a former Indiana mayor and presidential rival, as secretary of transporta-tion. He would be the first openly gay person confirmed by the Senate to a presidential cabinet post in sync with Biden's pledge to usher in the most diverse cabinet ever when he takes office on January 20.

AFGHAN, **TALIBAN IN** PAK TO TALK **PEACE** 

## Rouhani: 'Happy' Trump leaving "Thank God, these are his final days," Rouhani

**Tehran, Dec. 16:** President Hassan Rouhani said Wednesday that Iran was "very happy" over the looming departure from office of US counterpart Donald Trump, who led a campaign of "maximum pressure" against the Islamic republic.

President-elect Joe Biden, who defeated Trump at the ballot box in November, has signalled a willingness to return to diplomacy with Iran after four tense years under the outgoing president.

"Some say you are over-excited by the advent of Mr. Biden. No, we are not, but we are very happy to see Trump leave," he said in televised comments at a cabinet meeting.

added, calling Trump a "tyrant", "the most unr-uly, lawless president" and a "terrorist and mur-derer." The electoral college confirmed Biden as the next US president on Monday even as the incumbent continues to refuse to accept defeat.

The formal handover of power will take place on January 20 when Biden is sworn in.

Tensions between Tehran and Washington soared during Trump's presidency as his administration sought to bring Israel and the Gulf Arab states closer together with a hard line against Iran.

McConnell said on the Se-

nate floor, adding that Am-

And while Trump still refuses to concede — continuing to tweet baseless allegations of mass fraud that have been rejected in dozens of lawsuits - top Senate Republican Mitcĥ McConnell finally broke his silence with a message to the president: It's over.

"The Electoral College has spoken. So today I want to congratulate President-elect Joe Biden,"

**Islamabad, Dec. 16:** A high-level Afghan-Taliban delegation arrived here on

Wednesday to hold talks

with the top Pakistani lead-

ership as part of efforts to

push forward the reconcilia-

tion process, amid growing incidents of violence in Afghanistan The Taliban

ericans can also "take pride" that they will have the eir first female VP in Kamala Harris. Biden said that he had a "good" phone conversation with Mc-Connell, a longtime Senate colleague. "I told him that while we disagree on a lot of things, there are things we can work together on," he said. -AFP

Political Commission (TPC) headed by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, is on a December 16-18 visit to Pakistan, according to the Foreign Office (FO). "During the visit, the delegation will meet with the Foreign Minister and call on the Prime Minister," the FO said.

# # FINANCIAL Chronicle THURSDAY | 17 DECEMBER 2020 | CHENNAI

INDICATO	RS	%
Sensex	46,666.46	0.87
Nifty 50	13,682.70	0.85
S&P 500*	3,703.40	0.24
Dollar (₹)	73.58	0.09
Pound Sterling (₹)	99.31	-1.25
Euro (₹)	89.49	0.03
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	49,059▲215	0.43
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	50.70	-0.06
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.944	0.003
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.928	0.007
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

# LPG price raised again by ₹50; ATF costlier by 6.3%

Cooking gas LPG price was increased by Rs 50 per cylinder, the second hike in rate this month following firming of international prices. Also, aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was raised by a steep 6.3 per cent. Non-subsidised LPG price was increased to Rs 694 per 14.2-kg cylinder from Rs 644 earlier. according to a price notification of state fuel marketing companies. On Dec. 1, price was hiked by a similar Rs 50 per cylinder.

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## ■ Guv's advice for raising credit-GDP ratio

proposal put forward by

But while the draft text

# Lend by cash flow, not collateral: Das

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, DEC. 16

Banks should rely less on collateral security for lending and instead focus more on cashflow-based lending to help improve the credit-to-GDP ratio in the country, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Shaktikanta Das said on Wednesday. The credit bureaus and the proposed public credit registry (PCR) are expected to improve the flow of credit as well as credit culture, the apex bank chief added.

India is ranked amongst he most financially underpenetrated economies, which suffered from a bad loan problem with industrial credit while also having an underpenetration in last mile credit. As per RBI data, the scheduled commercial banks' credit as a per cent of GDP came down to 50.99 per cent in FY20 from 51.51 per cent in FY19.

On the other hand, the credit-to-GDP ratio in advanced economies and China is in the range of 150 to 200 per cent.

To improve the credit to GDP ratio, access to credit and cost of credit need to be addressed by lesser reliance on collateral security and greater cash-flow lending. Credit bureaus and the proposed Public Credit Registry framework are expected to improve the flow of credit as well as credit culture," Das said in his keynote address titled the National Strategy on Financial Education 2020-



25 at the webinar on 'Investing in investor education in India: Priorities for action' organised by the National Council of Applied Economic Re-search (NCAER).

The views had earlier been put forth by former deputy governor Viral Acharya, who, in July this year, said that an estimated 50 per cent of Indians were employed informally and remained invisible to banking system despite earning as much as their peers in the formal system. "When they want a loan, the bank denies them credit unless they provide a hard asset collateral, which is not easy to come by if you are the last mile and below the poverty line," Acharya had said.

He said the average Indian could not provide collateral and hence collateral and hence resorted to informal finance which remained infamous for 'extraordinary high rates, onerous terms and inhuman collection policies'. Acharya had cited the example of micro entrepreneurs and said that "if the formal financing system can observe the cash flow patterns of

entrepreneurs micro through other transactions that they are doing, they can start doing cash flow lending and can start serving the unique needs of the customers based on the specific maturity profile and their cash flows.

India, with a large section of population in the working age group, is already the third largest economy in the world in terms of purchasing power parity and is aiming to become a \$5 trillion economy. "We need to harness the

demographic dividend by meeting the aspirations of a large young population. This necessitates creating an enabling environment and infrastructure in the form of education, training and opportunity. Among all the prerequisites for achieving demo-graphic dividend and accelerated growth, quality of human resources, greater formalisation of economy, a higher credit to GDP ratio and greater financial inclusion are the differentiating factors that would elevate our economy to the desired level,"

#### 400 foundries stop work over high raw material price

Coimbatore, Dec. 16: About 400 small and tiny foundries in the district remained silent on Wednesday as part of their indefinite strike to draw the attention of the Centre to the spiralling price of raw materials in the last two months.

The foundries, affiliated to the Coimbatore Tiny and Small Foundry Owners Association (Cosmafan), stopped proindefinitely, duction resulting in a loss of Rs 30 crore daily, its president Shiva Shanmugha

kumar said.
The increasing prices would not only affect the foundries but also related industries such as wet grinder, pump & motors textiles and automobiles, who are the large-scale customers of foundry products, he said.

ranged from 30 to 55 per cent compared to the pre-lockdown period, he said. Hoarding by the trad-

The price increase

ers, thus creating artificial scarcity of the mate rials, also contributed to the price hike, he said, adding the entire industrial sector is seeking the intervention of the Centre to bring down the prices for its survival.

The Coimbatore and Tirupur Medium Industries Association, with nearly 50,000 units, has also given a call to down shutters for a day on Wednesday to express solidarity with striking foundries. Nineteen SME associations had already staged a demonstration here on Tuesday. -PTI

# Sebi relaxes norms for CIRP firms, MF sponsors

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD

The Sebi board on Wednesday made changes to the shareholding norms for corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) companies, relaxed mutual fund sponsor eligibility criteria and also decided to relax minimum promoter contribution in follow-

on public offer. The regulator said firms that remain listed due to implementation of resolution plan under the Insolvency and Bankrupt-cy Code will be required to have at least 5 per cent public shareholding at the time of their admission to deal on a stock exchange. There is no such mini-

mum requirement now. Further, such companies will be provided 12 months to achieve public shareholding of 10 per cent from the date shares are admitted for dealings on the stock exchange and

36 months to achieve public shareholding of 25 per cent. For this, the current timelines are 18 and 36

months, respectively.
The Sebi also decided to relax the profitability criteria for becoming a mutual fund sponsor, aiming to facilitate innovation and expansion in the sector.

The regulator has also decided to segregate and ring-fence assets and liabilities of mutual fund schemes. This is in addi-tion to the existing requirement of segregat-ing bank accounts and securities accounts.

On sponsor eligibility,

the Sebi said sponsors that are not fulfilling the prof-itability criteria when applying will also be considered eligible to sponsor a fund. "This is subject to having a net-worth of not less than Rs 100 crore for the purpose of contribution towards the net-worth of the Asset Management Company (AMC)." The net-worth of the

AMC has to be maintained till it makes profit for five consecutive years.

The new rules will open the gates for new players to come in as mutual fundsponsors with high networth but no profitability. At present, a sponsor has to show profits in three out of the immediately preceding five years.

The board approved the proposal to do away with the applicability of minimum.

the applicability of minimum promoters' contribu-tion and the subsequent lock-in requirements for the issuers making a Further Public Offer of

## Covid steals 81 mn jobs in Asia-Pac

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, DEC. 16

Covid-19 wiped out some 81 million jobs in the Asia-Pacific while 364-429 million casual workers were affected by the Indian lock-down measures, says the International Labour Org-anisation (ILO) in a

The report estimates that in Asia and the Pacific, the Covid-19 crisis has led to a gap of 81 million jobs compared with the pre-crisis numbers. The regional jobs gap in 2020 is largely

driven by South Asia, where the employment estimate is nearly 50 million jobs below the pre-crisis baseline, corresponding to a 7.4 per cent drop in employment.

"India implemented one of the strictest lockdowns among the large middlecountries...An income estimated 364-429 million workers have been adversely affected by the lockdown measures," the report said.

While India's total Covid-19 fiscal response package as a percentage of GDP

was higher than the median among the Asia-Pacific government countries. support to income or revenue, as part of the Covid-19 policy expenditure, was on the lower side and lesser than countries like Paki-stan, China and Australia. Overall, in Asia-Pac,

labour income is estimated to have declined by 9.9 per cent in the first three quarters of 2020. An additional 22-25.4 million persons could be added to working poor or those living on less than \$1.90 a day.

New Delhi: Australian Tom Moody has been appointed director of cricket at Indian Premier League side Sunrisers Hyderabad, who are captained by his compatriot David

Moody, 55, was the Hyderabad coach for seven years and led them to their only IPL title in 2016. He was replaced by another Australian, Trevor Bayliss, last year and late on Tuesday the franchise announced that Moody would be returning. The former bats-man switched to coaching and TV commentary after retiring in 2001 and helped Hyderabad reach the play-offs five times

during his stay as coach. Hyderabad, who also have New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson and Afghanistan spin ace Rashid Khan in their ranks, failed to reach this year's final when they lost to DC in the playoffs in November. -AFF

#### **Shuttler Foo Kune** banned for doping

Geneva: Mauritian badminton player Kate Foo Kune, her country's flag-carrier at the 2016 Rio Olympics, was banned for two years for doping on Wednesday after failing to prove her drink was spiked. Foo Kune tested positive for a banned steroid last year but she escaped a ban when the **Badminton World Federation's** anti-doping panel accepted her explanation that she was the victim of sabotage. But after a BWF appeal against its own panel's decision, the Swissbased Court of Arbitration for Sport said there was no evidence of foul play. "The CAS panel found the athlete's assertion of intentional spiking during the 2019 African Badminton World Championships devoid of

#### Floyd, Laila voted to Hall of Fame

supporting evidence," said a statement from the court,

announcing a two-year ban

from December 15. - AFP

Canastota, New York: Floyd Mayweather, who captured 11 world titles in five weight divisions and retired unbeaten, former heavyweight champion Wladimir Klitschko, and Laila Ali have been elected to the International Boxing Hall of Fame and Museum. The Class of 2021 announced Tuesday also includes former Olympic champion Andre Ward, Ann Wolfe, Marian Trimiar, and Dr. Margaret Goodman. Elected posthumously were: Davey Moore, Jackie Tonawanda, cut man Freddie Brown, manager-traine Jackie McCoy, journalist George Kimball, and television executive Jav Larkin. Honorees were selected by members of the Boxing Writers Association and a panel of international boxing historians. Induction day is scheduled for June 13 and also will include last

#### **Prez candidate**

year's class. — AP

wants Leo to stav

Barcelona: Barcelona presidential candidate Jordi Farre said on Tuesday he would work to make sure Lionel Messi stays at the Catalan giants should be elected next month, and hinted at a improbable bid for Neymar by the cash-strapped club. Farre was promoter of the motion that led to previous club chief Josep Maria Bartomeu's resignation.

#### Live on

Australia vs India: First Test — Day One from 9.30 am on Sony Ten 1, 3, Sony Six, HD

Big Bash League: Hobart Hurricanes vs Melbourne Renegades from 5.40 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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

English Premier League: Aston Villa vs Burnley from 11.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

Italian League: Roma vs Torino from 1.15 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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Editor: KAUSHIK MITTER

# T'S SHOWTIME City held; Wolves peg back Chelsea

# Tough India face Australian might in Pink Ball affair

Adelaide, Dec. 16: A peerless Virat Kohli and his "fearless" India would look to unleash their might on an Australian team which is ready for revenge but not exactly in 'pink of health' ahead of the first Day/Night Test starting Thursday. here

Media mogul Kerry Packer, while promoting his path-breaking 'World Series Day/Night Test matches' on Channel 9 back in late 1970s, had an unforgettable caption unforgettable caption "Big Boys Play At Night".

Even in 2020, there couldn't have been a more appropriate catch-line for a series where Kohli's magnificence meets its Cheteshwar doggednoss match in Steve Smith's doggedness challenged by a much younger Marnus Labuschagne, ready to show the world that he isn't a one-season wonder. All this would be under lights at the Adelaide

And then there are those mean fast men on both sides aiming to instill the fear of pink ball in twilight zone, creating all sorts of doubts in the batsmen's minds.

A Josh Hazlewood versus Mohammed Shami will be as enticing a sub-plot as Jasprit Bumrah bowling those yorkers in reply to Pat Cummins' barrage of bouncers.

With a workhorse like Ishant Sharma missing from Indian ranks and the enforcer David Warner absent in the Australian

However, there will certainly be some distinct home advantage for Australia along with the experience of playing playing more day/ night Tests.

A day/ night Test match has its own little grammar batsmen expected to attack in the first session while bowlers are at their peak once the sun sets, allowing the pink kookaburra to pick its pace up.

Never has an Indian team been so spoilt for choices with multiple options in place for various positions. But Indian skipper Virat

Kohli made it clear that Gill and KL Rahul will have to wait for their chances with the management deciding to stick to an out-of-form Prithvi Shaw in the open-

captain Úirat Kohli on

Wednesday declared him-

self a "representation of new India", forever ready

to take up challenges

with optimism, as he

Chappell's view that he is

"the most Australian non-Australian cricketer

On the eve of the first

Test against Australia,

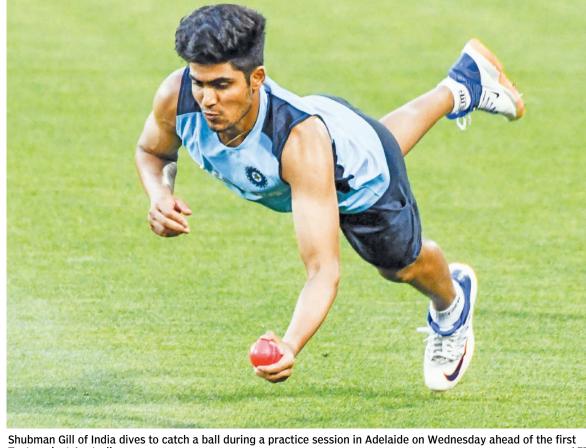
Kohli was asked about his

aggressive brand of

cricket coupled with a

responded

of all time".



Test against Australia.

#### **NUMBERS GAME**

The first day/ night Test match of the four-match Border-Gavaskar series between India and Australia will be played at Adelaide Oval from Thursday (December 17) It will be the 99th Test match between the two teams and on 49th Test match on Australian soil.

Australia have a good record against India in previous Test matches played between the two teams. They have won 42 and lost 28 in 98 previous encounters between the two sides. The remaining 27 matches ended with out a result which include one tied match. They have won 29,  $\,$ lost seven and drew 12 in 48 Test matches played against

India have a better record against Australia since 2000. They have won 17, lost 15 and draw 10 in 42 Test matches from January 2000 to January 2019.

• Australia have won seven, lost two and draw three in 12

Test matches played against India at Adelaide Oval. India's victories here came in 2003-04 and 2018-19. Adelaide Oval is hunting ground for Indian skipper Virat Kohli, who has scored 431 runs at 71.83 in six innings of

three Test matches with three hundreds at this ground. India are in third place in the Test Team rankings with 114 rating points, whilst Australia top the rankings with 116.46 rating points. New Zealand follow closely in second with 116.37 rating points. India will feel the pressure as the race to the World Test Championship final heats up.

- S. PERVEZ QAISER

snow tne game, got his place in the

side as the third pacer. On Tuesday, India's top batters were being troubled by Natarajan's

Always been myself: Kohli

former Australia captain,

who also served as India

coach, found similar to

the mindset of his coun-

trymen. "I would like to

say that I have always

been myself," the skipper

said during a virtual

media conference ahead

of the opening Test

against Australia here

"The way my personali-

ty and character is, I am

the representation of

new India. For me, that's

starting Thursday.

Also, Umesh Yaday pre- deliveries with pink kookdictably, after his good aburra at the Adelaide

If Natarajan, at 130-plus, can trouble them so much, then Mitchell Starc, the world's top wicket-taker Thangarasu in pink ball Tests, can be

how I look at it," he

"In my mind, it's not

(about) being compared to the Australian mindset

as such. It's how we have

started to stand up as the

Indian cricket team and

my personality has been

like this from day one" he

The new India, accord-

ing to one of the coun-

try's most followed sport-

ing icons, is the one that's

not afraid to take up chal-

asserted.

added.

## Prithvi to open as Saha keeps Adelaide, Dec. 16: India for his fifth cap on

have kept faith with opener Prithvi Shaw while opting for Wriddhiman Saha ahead of Rishabh Pant as wicketkeeper for the opening day-night Test against Australia in Adelaide starting Thursday.

Selectors also confirmed Umesh Yadav as the third alongside Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah in the absence of the injured Ishant Sharma, while Ravi Ashwin won the race to be their frontline spinner ahead of Kuldeep

The flamboyant Shaw was under pressure from another young talent — Snubman Gill, also 21 to open the innings alongside Mayank Agarwal after just one decent knock in four warm-up

Thursday while Gill continues his wait to earn a

"Prithvi has performed at the Test level, but he would be playing in Australia for the first time. I think it is very exciting to see his progress as well," the İndian captain Kohli said.

The dogged and experienced Cheteshwar Pujara will come in at number three, followed by Kohli in his only Test of the tour before heading home for the birth of his first child. Pant, an explosive batsman who became a viral sensation on India's last

tour of Australia with his banter behind the stumps, also stroked a quickfire ton against Australia 'A' but he was surprisingly overlooked in favour of Saha .India won their maiden series 2-1 in But he will take the field Australia in 2018-19.—PTI

# **SACHIN ALL PRAISE FOR**

Mumbai, Dec. 16: Ajinkya Rahane is blessed with a "smart brain" and should be able lead India well against Australia in the three Tests with his controlled aggression, says iconic Sachin Tendulkar,

Rahane will take over captaincy from Virat Kohli after the first Day/Night Test in Adelaide. Tendulkar, having watched Rahane captain India against Australia at Dharamsala, is hopeful of a good show

"This is going to be slightly different. Having interacted with Ajinkya Rahane, I know he has a very smart brain and he is balanced," Tendulkar told YouTube channel Sports Today on the eve of the first Test. What Tendulkar likes is Rahane's intensity and preparedness before any big series.

Manchester, Dec. 16: Manchester City's falter-ing Premier League title challenge suffered another setback on Tuesday as lowly West Brom held out for a 1-1 draw at the Etihad. City could have moved to

within three points of leaders Tottenham and Liverpool, who face each other on Wednesday, but threw away two points against the side sitting second bottom of the table. Ilkay Gundogan opened

the scoring for Pep Guardiola's men but Ruben Dias's own goal just before half-time proved costly as City's problems in front of goal continued in a second-half despite a siege on the West Brom goal.

A point edges City up to fifth on goal difference, while West Brom move to within two points of safety at the other end of the

West Brom had the first big chance of the game when the ball ricocheted off Joao Cancelo into the path of Karlan Grant and he forced Ederson into a

fine save low to his left. City's probing was finally rewarded on the half hour as Raheem Sterling got to the by-line and his cut back was fired home from the edge of the area by Gundogan. Guardiola's men shot

themselves in the foot by conceding for the first time in seven games two minutes before half-time as they failed to clear a freekick into the box and Semi Ajayi's shot was deflected into his own net by Dias.

It was one-way traffic

#### THE RESULTS

**Manchester City** (Gundogan 30)
West Bromwich Albion 1 (Dias 43-og)

Wolverhampton Pedro Neto 90+5) Chelsea (Giroud 49)

after the break as City set up camp in the West Brom half but lacked the imagination or pace to open the visitors up. Meanwhile,

Frank Lampard believes Chelsea have become complacent after the Blues blew a lead to lose 2-1 at Wolves and back-to-back Premier League defeats for the first time during his reign in charge.

Daniel Podence produced a moment of magic as he twisted and turned inside the Chelsea box to find space for a shot and his effort deflected off Reece James and inside Edouard

Mendy's near post.

Neto thought he had won a penalty when driving past James, but after a VAR review referee Stuart Attwell overturned his original decision as there was no contact on the Portuguese winger.

However, Neto was not to be denied on the counterattack deep into stoppage time as he accelerated past Zouma and drove low into the far corner to move Wolves into the top half of the table and within three points of the top four.



Olivier Giroud (top left) of Chelsea vies with Romain Saiss (top right) of Wolverhampton Wanderers during their English Premier League match at the Molineux Stadium in Wolverhampton, central England, on Tuesday. The Wolves carved out a 2-1 victory.

# THE HIGH-FLYING KAITH

# Chennaiyin goalkeeper Vishal Kaith is in fine form

NEHA SURANA | DC CHENNAI, DEC. 16

Goalkeeper Vishal Kaith is one of the standout performers for Chennaiyin FC in the ongoing ISL season. A couple of gravity-defying saves he pulled off against NorthEast United and Bengaluru FC were outstanding. After spending three seasons at FC Pune City, 24-year-old keeper from Himachal Pradesh joined Chennaiyin in 2019 and he has been a vital cog since then. Vishal spoke to this newspaper on the thankless job of goalkeepers who make the headlines more for their mistakes than saves.

Excerpts

How is the experience of working with the new goalkeeping coach, Martin Raska?

It's been an absolute revelation this season. I have to attribute my improvement and reflexes to Martin. He has helped me improve



concentration with many drills that are genuinely out of the box. For example, we even train occasionally with tennis balls, just so our focus improves with the target being smaller. It's been a brilliant experience so far. I only hope to learn and improve more under him and help our team keep clean sheets and achieve success

A thankless job, goalkeeping is

a high-pressure position. How do you deal with it? It is definitely not easy. As a goal-

keeper there is little margin for error. That composure to deal with the pressure comes with hard work and preparation. And knowing that we must keep learning and improving every day.

The height of a goalkeeper makes a big difference. As some one who is a six-footer, what are your thoughts on it?

It is a physical attribute that helps goalkeepers. You can say it is a requirement of sorts. That being said, there are goalkeepers who are relatively short too. Their agility and reflexes have to be real-

You made a strong comeback after the Mumbai match. What were the areas that you worked

My focus was on maintaining my concentration level and not get-

ting bogged down by setbacks. It is important to bounce back and I have to have a positive mindset along with the team. Despite the off-color start we have had, as a group, we are determined to do well this season. We have performed exceedingly better than our points tally suggests. Now, it's time to fulfil our potential and get the results we deserve.

Did the shorter pre-season and the coach's late arrival affect

Chennaiyin's performance?
Yes and no! Right now, we are in the groove, so we aren't thinking about the pre-season or lack of preparation. At the same time, it would have helped to have more time. But that's the case with all teams, we can't be giving any excuses. I feel we have been a bit unlucky, also allowing our concentration to drop. We will surely work harder and improve in coming games, hopefully with a win against FC Goa next up.

# Arun, Sandeep in TN probables list

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 16

Dinesh Karthik, Murali Vijay and Vijay Shankar were on Wednesday named in a 26-strong probables list by Tamil Nadu for next month's Syed Musthaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament.

Swashbuckling batsman K.B Arun Karthick, who returns to Tamil Nadu after a gap of seven years, medium-pacer Sandeep Warrier, who moved from Kerala, have also been included in the

Senior India off-spinner R. Ashwin, all-rounder Washington Sundar and left-arm pacer T Natarajan miss out as they are in Australia on national duty.

The players picked by the men's senior state selection committee of the TNCA also includes medium-pacer Aswin Crist, who last represented the state in February 2018 and

returns after recovering from injury.

The selected players will play three practice matches on December 19, 20 and 21 at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in the city. The final squad will be picked on December 21.

The tournament is set to be played across six states under-bio secure environment from January 10 to

Tamil Nadu probables: Dinesh Karthik, M Vijay, B Aparajith, B Indrajith, Vijay Shankar, M Shahrukh Khan, C Hari Nishaanth, Pradosh Ranjan Paul, K B Arun Karthik, Akshay V Srinivasan, N Jagadeesan, M Abhinav, Aswin Crist, M Mohammed, Perivasamv.

Warrier, S Harish Kumar, K Vignesh, R Silambarasan, J Kousik, R Sonu Yadav, M Ashwin, R Sai Kishore, M Siddharth.

Sathivannaaravanan and M E Yazh Arun Mozhi.