

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | SATURDAY 12 | DECEMBER 2020

## WEATHER



Max: 29°C  
Min: 17°C  
Rainfall: Nil

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Karthigai 27  
**Tithi:** Thrayodashi  
**Star:** Visagam  
**Rahukalam:**  
9 am to 10.30 am  
**Yamagandam:**  
1.30 pm to 3 pm  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 5.03 am  
**Zohar:** 12.05 pm  
**Asar:** 3.16 pm  
**Maghrib:** 5.42 pm  
**Isha:** 6.57 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY 5.44 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.22 AM**  
**MOONRISE TODAY 3.41 AM**  
**MOONSET TOMORROW 3.41 PM**

## CORONA COUNT

| CASES     | DEATHS   |
|-----------|----------|
| (+27,757) | (+395)   |
| 98,24,822 | 1,42,617 |

covid19india.org

## STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,235 )  
TN: 7,96,475 11,870

## WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

7,10,88,688

## DEATHS

15,95,096

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 218

worldometers.info

## Joe Biden, Kamala Harris named TIME's '2020 Person of the Year'

**New York:** US President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris have been named by the prestigious TIME magazine as '2020 Person of the Year' for changing the American story, showing that the forces of empathy are greater than the forces of division and sharing a vision of healing in a grieving world.

## Industrial production rises 3.6 pc in October

**New Delhi:** Registering growth for the second straight month, industrial production rose to a eight-month high of 3.6 per cent in October on the back of recovery in manufacturing, consumer goods and power sectors. The manufacturing sector, which has a weightage of 77.6 per cent in the IIP, recorded a growth of 3.5 per cent in October.

## COUNTER POINT



Our stand is very clear... we support farmers in the day and corporates at night!

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Rohit clears fitness test at NCA



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## CAPITAL STRIKE

# Farmers union goes to top court on agri laws

**SANJAY KAW | DC**  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 11

As the deadlock between the Centre and agitating farmers drags on over the repeal of three farm laws, a farmers' union has challenged the new agriculture laws in the Supreme Court. The Bhartiya Kisan Union moved a petition in the apex court on Thursday claiming that the new laws will lead to commercialisation and throw farmers at the mercy of corporates. The petition also said that a "rail roko" agitation would begin soon.

While both sides are adamant on their position, Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Friday asked the farmers to stop their agitation in the "interest of the common people" and take the path of discussion. He said that the Central government has sent their proposal to the farmers' unions, adding that they have not yet responded.

The All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee, however, said that the government is "falsely claiming that the



Farmers gather in large numbers at Singhu border during their 'Delhi Chalo' protest march against the Centre's new farm laws, in New Delhi, on Friday.

— PTI

farmers' organisations have gone back on talks and should not have intensified their agitation at a time when talks are on. "In a statement, the AIKSSC said the farmers' organisations are always ready for talks and have responded each time the government has called them. It is the government which is adamant on not repealing the three Acts," they said.

After rejecting the Centre's draft proposal offering amendments to the three laws, the farmer leaders said on Thursday

that they would soon announce a date for blocking railway tracks across the country. The protesting farmers have planned to intensify their agitation over the next few days by blocking highways leading to Delhi, gheraoing BJP leaders and offices and taking out another "Delhi Chalo" march on Monday.

Farmers leaders have also been requesting more and more supporters to join the protests to increase pressure on the Centre for the withdrawal of the new laws. The Aam

Aadmi Party (AAP) has already decided to join the protests. In a statement on Friday, the party said, "In solidarity with the call given by farmers, AAP would lay siege to district headquarters across Punjab on December 14 against the new agrarian laws introduced by the Modi government at the Centre."

Ahead of the roadblocks planned by the farmer unions to further intensify their agitation, authorities are keeping a close watch on villages along the Rajasthan and Haryana borders.

## Social media abuzz over Stalin health scare

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, DEC. 11

DMK president MK Stalin visiting a small clinic after feeling dizzy while distributing relief material to people affected by the recent floods in his Kolathur Assembly constituency created a buzz in social media, triggering speculation about his health condition, on Friday morning. Though Stalin felt okay soon after complaining of giddiness, North Chennai MP, Kalanidhi Vellasamy, a medical doctor, advised him to have his blood pressure checked and guided him to a nearby clinic.

Since Stalin's blood pressure was a bit high, he was asked to wait for some time inside the clinic. In the meantime, news about Stalin 'taking ill' spread like wildfire with social media whirring with rumours on his hospitalisation.

After an hour, he went to Sri Ramachandra Medical College and Hospital, where he underwent a check-up followed by consultation with senior doctors. From the hospital he drove straight to Anna Arivalayam and inaugurated the new office rooms set up for the general secretary and treasurer.

Subsequently, he put up a Facebook post affirming that the protest, organised by the DMK demanding the removal of the toll gates within Chennai Corporation limits, would continue till the demand was met.

## Bengal officers to skip Delhi summons

**RAJNISH SHARMA & RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC**  
NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, DEC. 11

A day after Trinamul Congress workers' violent attack on BJP president JP Nadda's convoy at Diamond Harbour, the Lok Sabha constituency of chief minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew: Abhishek Banerjee in South 24 Parganas of West Bengal, the union home ministry, headed by Amit Shah, on Friday morning summoned top two bureaucrats of the Mamata Banerjee government to New Delhi on December 14.

State chief secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay and director general of police Virendra were directed to meet union home secretary Ajay Bhalla at 12.15 pm to "discuss the law and order situation including the incidents regarding certain Z-category protectees" in the poll-bound state.

The ministry of home affairs' step came after it received an adverse report from governor Jagdeep Dhankhar of "serious security lapses" on part of the state police which led to the brazen attack on Thursday leaving two senior BJP leaders, Kailash Vijayvargiya and Mukul Roy, who were also in Mr Nadda's convoy, injured. The MHA's move howev-

er has infuriated the Trinamul supremo and the chief minister amid reports of Mr Shah's possible visit to the state on December 19-20. She has not allowed her government's top two bureaucrats to go ahead, sources revealed.

In the afternoon Mr Bandyopadhyay assured Mr Bhalla in a letter of the state government's "elaborate arrangements for security coverage" which included a pilot and a bullet proof car for Mr Nadda in his convoy and a large deployment of police force led by the deputy inspector general of the range.

He however argued, "The tagging of many vehicles to the protectee convoys however made the situation unwieldy, because typically, security authorities are to handle a protectee convoy of a few vehicles only, and not with/in the presence of so many other vehicles which got tagged to the convoy traveling together."

sents in the Lok Sabha.

On Bharathi's vision on women empowerment, Modi said the poet's definition of progress had a central role for women.

"Mahakavi Bharathiyar's definition of progress had a central role for women. One of the most important visions was that of independent and empowered women," Modi said. "He wrote that women should walk with their heads held high while looking people in the eye. We are inspired by this vision and we are working to ensure woman-led development," the Prime Minister added. ■ P4

## Rajini to spend 70th b'day with brother in Bengaluru

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, DEC. 11

Actor Rajinikanth, who will be turning 70 on Saturday, will be spending the first birthday after making the historic announcement on his launching a new party with his brother in Bengaluru, away from the huge throngs of fans, admirers and well-wishers.

Before leaving for Bengaluru by road on Friday, the actor is said to have signed papers relating to the registration of his new party, whose name, symbol and flag would be announced just prior to the launch in 2021.

It is believed that none of the announcements could be expected to come before 'Sani Peyarchi' (the time when Saturn moves house according to the Astrological calendar), which falls on December 27.

In the meantime, the superstar is expected to take off to Hyderabad in a couple of days from Bengaluru for the shooting of the next film, *Annathe*, and be away from the hustle and bustle of the preparatory work for his



● **Before leaving for Bengaluru by road on Friday, the actor is said to have signed papers relating to the registration of his new party, whose name, symbol and flag would be announced just prior to the launch in 2021**

party launch. He met the top honchos nominated by him for the party.

Tamilaruvimanian, R. Arjunamurthy and Sudhakar and discussed with them the work to be done in his absence.

Tamilaruvimanian and Arjunamurthy, who met top leaders of the Rajini Makkal Mandram on Thursday to brief them about the work to be done in the run up to the party launch, also briefed the actor about the meeting and took instructions from him.

However, Rajinikanth's absence in Chennai could turn out to be a disappointment for his fans and Mandram members. Though the actor

prefers to spend his birthday outside Chennai and often gets away from the city, whenever he was in Chennai, huge crowds of fans would gather outside his gates to greet him.

This year, since his announcement of the new party had raised the hopes of many in the political and social circles, there was even a possibility of political leaders calling on him to greet him on his birthday. But now it looks that the superstar would be back in Chennai only to make the much expected announcements on his party launch and also kick start the work for the 2021 elections.



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## Modi joins TN in remembering Bharathi

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
with agency inputs  
CHENNAI, DEC. 11

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday hailed national poet and freedom fighter Subramanya Bharathi's vision of independent and empowered women and said his government was inspired by it to ensure woman-led development.

The Prime Minister was virtually addressing the International Bharathi Festival to mark the 138th birth anniversary of the eminent Tamil poet, hailed as Mahakavi, organised by Vanavil Cultural Centre.

● **"This is the era of new India's Nari Shakthi (woman power). They are breaking barriers and making an impact. This is new India's tribute to Subramania Bharathi," the Prime Minister said.**



Chief Minister K. Palaniswami also paid glowing tributes to Bharathi, reverentially addressed as Bharathiyar. Heaping praise on Bharathi, Modi said it was very 'difficult' to describe him and that he "cannot be linked to any single profession or dimension."

"He was a poet, writer, editor, journalist, social reformer, freedom fighter, humanist and much more. One can only marvel at his works, his poems, his philosophy and his life," the Prime Minister said. Modi recalled Bharathi had a 'close' link with Varanasi, which he repre-





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## SHORT TAKES

## VHS gifted CT scanner

**Chennai:** With a state-of-the-art CT scanner costing ₹1.62 crore being gifted by the Sanmar Group through its CSR trust, a new imaging department has been established at the non-profit multi-speciality institution The Voluntary Health Services (VHS) at Tharamani. The Madhuram and KS Narayanan Department of Imaging, named after the parents of Mr N Sankar, Chairman and Mr N Kumar, Vice Chairman of The Sanmar Group, was inaugurated by Mr N Kumar and Mr Vijay Sankar, Deputy Chairman.

A wide range of benefits of the CT scanner will effectively help medical management and surgeries at VHS, improving diagnosis and treatment, reducing the need for exploratory surgeries and reducing the length of hospitalisation.

## 29 employees killed in 22 accidents in NLCIL in 5 years

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CUDDALORE, DEC 11:

As many as 29 employees were killed in 22 accidents in the public sector Neyveli Lignite Corporation India Limited, Neyveli, Cuddalore, for the last five years. The shocking information was revealed recently in a reply to a RTI plea by the Navaratna public sector recently.

NLCIL replied that 21 accidents took place in the campus causing either injuries or death of employees since 2016. Both permanent and contract workers either injured or died. Only one mishap took place in 2015, seven in 2016, six in 2017, two in 2018, and in, three accidents took place in 2019.

The public sector witnessed two accidents as of the date in 2020. It may be noted that one accident occurred after the RTI response was furnished.

As a result of the industrial accidents nine employees and 20 contract workers have been killed between 2015 and 2020. One of the contract workers was killed in an accident that happened on November 16, 2020.

It may be noted that after a boiler exploded Thermal Power Station-II (TPS-II) injuring several workers. On July 1, another boiler exploded in TPS-II, killing six workers on the spot. The boiler that exploded on July 1 was not operational and a fire followed the explosion, killing six and injuring at least 17 others. RTI reply states that nine employees and 13 contract workers were killed in both the accidents.

An inquiry committee was set up by the company under the leadership of a retired chairman of the National Thermal Power Corporation Limited to probe the cause of the accident. The state Government and NLCIL issued compensation to the family members of the deceased.

## Public anger against toll plazas in Chennai raging

T. SUDHEESH | DC  
CHENNAI, DEC. 11

With Ahe assembly election fast approaching, the public anger against toll plazas in the city is now brewing online and offline. On Friday under the hashtag #Dont\_Want\_Tollgate, the cause was trended on Twitter for hours with hundreds of thousands of tweets. The netizens say toll gates are illegal and demanded that toll plazas within the Greater Chennai Corporation limits should be removed immediately. This comes at a time when the Opposition parties including the DMK are protesting against toll collection at various toll plazas in the city for the last couple of months.

C.R. Dhanesh, who supports the cause, said the toll plazas had mainly affected the lives of the common man as dignitaries and VIPs don't pay toll. "We pay road tax, vehicle tax and taxes for all the things we buy besides income tax. Is it fair for the government to create toll gates and collect fees? Common man is affected because we don't have any exceptions or ID cards to show at the toll gates," he said.

P. Suresh, another online protester, said that Fastag is the fastest way of looting the common man. "For travelling from Tirunelveli to Madurai we have to spend at least Rs 400 as toll which is equal to the petrol expenses of a car. The government sells us petrol for Rs 85 per litre. They have installed lots of toll gates in Madurai ring road inside the city. This is atrocious," he said.

According to K.D. Jha,



DMK protesting against toll gates within Chennai city limits and holding a demonstration in Sholinganallur on Friday.

## ‘20K vehicles pass through toll gates without paying tax’

V Rama Rao of Traffic and Transportation Forum, Chennai, said that Tamil Nadu Road Development Corporation data had shown over 20,000 vehicles pass through these toll gates in the city daily without pay-

ing tax. "Vehicles with party flags simply get away from paying fees though the rules say only people's representatives to Parliament and Assembly have exemption from paying toll. The lorry owners had suggested a one-time settlement

providing these services, he added. D. Jabez Anand tweeted to say that Tamil Nadu has most number of toll gates in the country and they collect more money because we people are polite and decent. "The roads were damaged in recent rains. The medians have disappeared. Grass and bush were not trimmed, but still desperate to collect the toll fee,

plan for toll feel payment. But the both Central and state governments have not taken a stand on it so far. Besides that, with the introduction of Fastag, the local resident pass is merged with it making travel of common man dearer," he pointed out.

he said.

Sundara Mahalingam, an activist, pointed out that the National Highways Fee (determination of fee rates and collection) Rules, 2008 didn't allow setting up of toll gates within 10km distance in a city. Why is this rule not applicable to Chennai? Lakhs of local commuters use OMR and ECR toll gates daily', he said.

## Karti Chidambaram gets relief from I-T case

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, DEC.11

In a major relief to Sivagangai MP Karti PChidambaram, son of former Union Minister PChidambaram and his wife Srinidhi Karti Chidambaram, the Madras high court has allowed the petitions filed by them, which sought to set aside the orders of the trial court, declining to discharge them from criminal prosecution launched by the Income Tax department in 2018 for alleged tax evasion in 2014-15 and 2015-16.

Justice N.Sathish Kumar allowed the petitions filed by Karti Chidambaram and Srinidhi Karti Chidambaram, which challenged the orders of the special court for trail of Criminal cases related to Elected Members of Parliament.

## HC asks if report was published on 2003 Mahabs offshore excavation

J. STALIN | DC  
CHENNAI, DEC. 11

The Madras high court has directed the assistant solicitor general of India to get instructions from the Archaeological Survey of India as to whether any report relating to the offshore excavation conducted one and half decade ago at Mahabalipuram has been published and if not, when it will be published.

A division bench comprising Justices N.Kirubakaran and B.Pugalendhi gave the directive while passing interims orders on a petition filed by K.Pushpavanam, which sought a direction to the authorities to allocate more funds for the 'protection and preservation' of monuments in the state of Tamil Nadu on par with state of Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh and to fill the existing vacancies in the department of archaeology in the state of Tamil Nadu and the ASI, Chennai circle and Tiruchy circle and other sub-circles.

The bench said it is represented that during the year 2003-2004 Alok Tripathi, conducted offshore excavation on behalf of the ASI at Mahabalipuram. Even though one and half a decade has gone, result has not been published. Therefore, the assistant solicitor general of India is directed to get instructions from the ASI as to whether any report has been published and if not, when it will be published. It is further submitted that after Alok Tripathi, the offshore excavation has become defunct. It is not known as to whether steps have been taken to make it active to do offshore excavation in India. In this regard also, the ASG will get instructions, the bench added.

The bench said Orissa Balu, Amicus Curiae, sub-

## PIL seeks action against mins, MLAs for violating Covid norms

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, DEC. 11

Pointing out that the state ministers, MLAs and AIADMK party cadres have failed to wear mask and maintain social distancing during the celebration of the announcement of the Chief Minister candidate for the forthcoming state assembly elections on behalf of the AIADMK at the party head quarters and thereafter at the memorial of former chief minister J. Jayalalithaa in Marina on October 7, 2020, a Public Interest Litigation has been filed in the Madras high court to direct the authorities to punish the violators of pandemic rules.

A division bench comprising Justices M.Sathyananarayanan and R.Hemalatha before whom the PIL filed by advocate Thondan Subramani came up for hearing ordered notice to the state government, Chennai corporation and disaster management centre and posted to January 6, 2021, further hearing of the case.

According to petitioner, on October 7, while watching the television in various channels, he witnessed the scenes pertaining to the selection of Chief Minister candidate, declaring Chief Minister Edappadi K.

mitted that he along with S.M.Ramasamy, retired Vice Chancellor, Gandhigram University and presently Consultant for Poombukar project in Bharathiyar University, Trichy, will do the preliminary study on Kumari Kandam. Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli and



Palaniswami as the Chief Minister candidate in the forthcoming election on behalf of AIADMK party. This was celebrated in a very jubilant manner by the Ministers, MLAs and the party cadres openly at the party headquarters and thereafter at the Samadhi of former Chief Minister J.Jayalalithaa. He was very much disturbed by the act of the people mingling with each other without wearing masks and without following the social distancing, he added.

He said the authorities, who were said to be the role model for others to follow the rules and regulations, have themselves broken the laws and the said act would send a wrong signal to the general public to behave in a weird manner. Therefore, he sent a representation to the authorities on October 9. But there was no response. Hence, he has filed the present PIL, he added.

Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, shall utilise the services of Orissa Balu and S.M.Ramasamy with regard to the preliminary study on Kumari Kandam and file a report before this court, the bench added and posted to December 18, further hearing of the case.



P. Subramanian

## Kovai's 'Gear Man' passes away

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, DEC.11

P. Subramanian, the founder of Shanthi Gears and Shanthi Social Service, passed away in Coimbatore on Friday. He was 78. He is survived by three daughters. He was admitted to the hospital a few days ago. Shanthi Social Service provides education to the underprivileged. It also runs a hospital, a pharmacy and canteen.

The canteen serves free food for hundreds of senior citizens every day. The hospital and pharmacy are run in a not-for-profit manner benefiting the underprivileged. Popularly known as 'Gear Man of Coimbatore', Subramanian established Shanthi Engineering and Trading Co in Coimbatore to manufacture small gears in 1969. In 1972 Shanthi Gear Products (Pvt) Limited was formed and it focussed on manufacturing gears for textile sector. After the firm's sale to Murugappa group, Subramanian began concentrating on social and philanthropic services through Shanthi Social Service established in 1996.

## CoP felicitates cops for hard work, cracking cases

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, DEC. 11

Chennai Police Commissioner Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal, on Friday, felicitated police personnel involved in cracking some tough cases, for their efficient, hard work, and also presented them awards and gifts.

The first case is a triple murder case, where three of a family, including a father, mother and a son were shot dead on November 11, 2020. The deceased were residents of No.6, Vinaya Maestri street, falling under C-2 Elephant gate police station limits.

Police identified the victims as Dali Chand (74), his wife Puspabai (68) and their son Sital Kumar (40). On the day of incident, the three were at home and an unknown gang had barged into the house between 2:30 pm and 6 pm and shot the three dead.

Based on a complaint filed by daughter of Dali Chand, Pinky, Chennai Police Commissioner Mahesh



Commissioner of police Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal inspects the weapons seized from accused involved in various cases. He also honoured police personnel for solving the cases.

Kumar Aggarwal, visited the spot and ordered quick investigations and arrest of the accused. Based on his orders, five special police team headed by Additional Police Commissioner A Arun, commenced investigations.

Soon, a police team headed by Kasimedu Inspector Jawahar proceeded to Pune and Sholapur from Chennai. With the assistance of

Sholapur district special police team, the team from Chennai traced the car used by Kailash to commit the crime. They also nabbed Kailash and his aides Iravindaranath Kar (25) from Kolkata, Vijay Utham Kamlei (28), and held enquiries. The three confessed to the crime and based on their inputs, police retrieved a hand gun and also seized the car.

Other accused including Sital Kumar's wife, Jeyamala, her other brother Raju Schinde and Raju Dhube and also Vilash Jalinder Pakre, were nabbed by police on subsequent days.

In the second incident, police safely recovered a three-and-half-month-old missing baby girl from the Koyambedu market after studying over 600 CCTV footage, and also nabbed six persons including two youths involved in the crime.

In the third case, a murder case file was pending in the Valasarawakkam police station for over 20 years.

Three of the accused had evaded arrest for the past 20 years.

## Active cases set to fall below 10K

**Chennai, Dec 11:** The active Covid-19 cases in Tamil Nadu continued to dwindle with the number of people under treatment for the viral disease sliding to 10,299 on Friday while the infection count inched toward the eight lakh mark.

The state added 1,235 fresh infections and 17 more deaths taking the infection tally to 7,96,475 and the toll to 11,870, a health department bulletin said.

As many as 1,311 people got cured of the contagion with the total recoveries climbing to 7,74,306.

The active cases, coming down with the daily recoveries outnumbering fresh infections, stood at 10,299 as against around 11,000 in the beginning of this month.

Only two districts - the state capital (307) and

**State added 1,235 fresh infections and 17 more deaths taking the infection tally to 7,96,475 and the toll to 11,870, a health department bulletin said**

## Puducherry reports 43 fresh Covid cases

**Puducherry, Dec 11:** Puducherry registered 43 fresh Covid-19 cases while two more fatalities took the toll in the union territory to 619, a top official of the Department of Health and Family Welfare said on Friday. The 43 fresh cases were reported during the last 24 hours raising the overall tally to 37,406. Director of the department S Mohan Kumar said in a release. The Mahe region accounted for 23 cases while Karaikal reported 12, fol-

lowed by Puducherry (7) and Yanam (one). The Puducherry and Karaikal regions reported one death each, he said. The Health department

considered the gold standard to detect Covid-19. All the fresh fatal cases were also suffering from chronic illness.

A 39-year-old man from Dindigul with 'diabetes mellitus' died on the same day of admission at a government hospital due to 'Covid Pneumonia', the bulletin said.



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## SHORT TAKES

**Farmers protest in support of Delhi agitation**DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUCHY, DEC. 11

Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangam district president M P Chinnathurai and hundreds of his supporters were arrested on Friday at Tiruchirappalli railway junction when they attempted to stage a rail roko and raised anti-central government slogans demanding the withdrawal of farm laws.

Speaking to newsmen before their arrest, Mr. Chinnathurai said the agitation was in support of the ongoing nationwide farmer's agitation in Delhi. He also appealed to the Union Government to withdraw its farm laws immediately and to protect the interest of the domestic farmers.

The agitators were released in the evening, police said.

**Tricolour towel on MGR's statue in Tiruchy**DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUCHY, DEC. 11

Tension prevailed for a while at the MGR statue area in Tiruchy city on Friday when a towel with tri-colour borders, usually used by Congress leaders and workers, was found draped on the head of the MGR statue near the Tiruchy district court, on Friday.

Upon information, a large number of ruling AIADMK members rushed to the spot and agitated over the issue.

Tourism minister Vellamandi N Natarajan and others came to the spot and removed the towel. The party members removed the old dried garland and performed a milk abishekam to the statue.

**Pongal: TNSTC begins online ticket booking**DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, DEC. 10

Chennai: The TNSTC has begun online booking of tickets for travel in buses for Pongal. Arrangements have been made to book tickets on [www.tnsc.in](http://www.tnsc.in), [www.redbus.in](http://www.redbus.in), [www.paytm.com](http://www.paytm.com) and [www.busindia.com](http://www.busindia.com), according to a press release.

**As election fever rises, parties take to mud-slinging in T'Kudi**ARULOLI.M | DC  
TIRUNELVELI, DEC. 11

The war of words between the AIADMK and the DMK touched a new low as the election fever is picking up. Thoothukudi MLA P.Geetha jeevan, referring to her political rival minister kadambur c raju as 'avan', is an example.

"Avan kuraikiravarai kuraikattum" (Let him bark to the extent he wants) was the comment made by Geetha Jeevan, countering Kadambur C Raju's reaction, "AIADMK men will chop anybody touching Amma's

memorial," which was also a counter for DMK leader A Raja, who alleged that former chief minister J Jayalalithaa was corrupt and that it should be mentioned in her cemetery.

A day prior to Geetha Jeevan's diatribe against Kadambur Raju, another state minister KT Rajendra Balaji condemning DMK leader A Raja, used disrespectful words against Raja and also DMK president MK Stalin, that resulted in a clash between the AIADMK and the DMK cadres, at Virudhunagar on December 7.

Rajinikanth, who recently announced his entry into politics was also not spared by the Dravidian politicians, as the deputy secretary of DMK's election committee, Raja Kannappan, during his "Vidyalai Nokki Stalin" campaign at Tiruchendur in Thoothukudi district on December 9, commented Rajini of doing 'Thirunangai Arasiyal' (eunuch politics). Justifying his comment to media persons at a press briefing, Rajakannappan said, "How else could Rajini's politics be called, as he neither attacked the DMK or the AIADMK in the open."

**CM, Dy CM, DMK chief pay tributes to Bharathi****Lot for youth to learn from Bharathi, says PM Modi**

FROM P1

In every sphere of his government's working, there has been importance given to the dignity of women. "Today over 15 crore women entrepreneurs are funded by Mudra yojana. They are walking with their heads held high, looking us in the eye and telling us how they are becoming self-reliant," he said.

"Today, women are becoming part of our armed forces, with permanent commissioning. They are walking with their heads held high and looking us in the eye and filling us with confidence that the country is in safe hands," he said.

Further, the poorest of the poor women, who used to face problems of lack of safe sanitation, were benefited by the government's 10 crore safe and hygienic toilets, he said. "They do not have to face problems anymore. They can walk with their heads held high and

looking everyone in the eye as Mahakavi Bharathiyar had imagined," Modi added. "This is the era of new India's Nari Shakti (woman power). They are breaking barriers and making an impact. This is new India's tribute to Subramania Bharathi," the PM said.

The freedom fighter understood that any society which is divided will not be able to succeed and at the same time he wrote about the "emptiness of political freedom which does not address social inequities and does not address social ills," Modi added.

Today's youth can learn much from Bharathi "more importantly to be courageous" as "fear was unknown to him," Modi said, while recalling Bharathi's famous lines "achamillai achamillai" (I know no fear) lines. "I see the spirit in young India today. I see this spirit when they are at the forefront of

innovation and excellence. India's startup space is filled with fearless youth who are giving something new to humanity," he said. Such a can do spirit will bring wonders for our nation and our planet, he added.

While the poet sang songs of the greatness of ancient India, Vedas and Upanishads, our culture and tradition and our glorious past, "at the same time, he also warned us that simply living in past glory is not enough."

The freedom fighter wanted that there should be a spirit of enquiry for progress.

"His teachings are a strong reminder to us to remain united and committed to the empowerment of every single individual, especially the poor and the marginalised." "There is a lot of our youth have to learn from Bharathi. I wish everyone in our country reads his works and is inspired by them," Modi added.

global arena.

"He wrote songs on women's liberation," Palaniswami said, adding the freedom fighter had great dreams about an independent India.

ence activist.

Chief Minister Palaniswami described Bharathi as a "multi-faceted personality", who earned a unique place for himself not just in Tamil literary space, but in the



Modi virtually addressing the International Bharathi Festival organised by Vanavil Cultural Centre. CM Edappadi Palaniswami also seen.

— DC



Mylapore MLA R. Natraj, minister Ma Foi K. Pandiarajan carry Bharathi's jathi "pallakku" in Triplicane on Friday.

— DC

**Retrieve missing staff of Bharati statue: Vasan to Sisodia**DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, DEC. 10

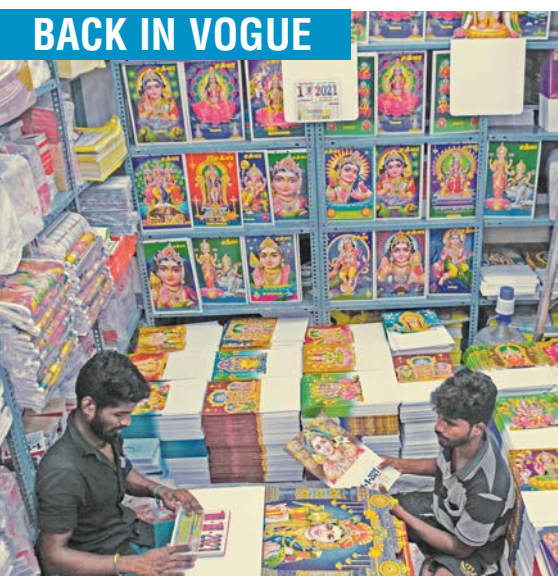
Rajya Sabha member and TMC president G.K. Vasan wrote to Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia on Friday, pointing out that the walking stick belonging to a statue of Tamil poet Subramania Bharati near Khan

Market in New Delhi was missing. Vasan noticed the theft when he went to pay respect to the statue on the occasion of Bharathi's 139th birth anniversary.

Vasan was invited by the Tamil Sangam in Delhi to celebrate the birth anniversary of Bharati. After respects were paid,

he was informed by mediapersons that Bharathi's staff was missing.

Following this, Vasan telephoned Mr Sisodia and when he could not be reached, he sent him the letter. He also called for proper maintenance of the statue and its surroundings.

**BACK IN VOGUE**

Despite the availability of digital diaries, shop owners say this year they get more orders for calendars with the picture of Lord Murugan, among Hindu gods, embossed on it. People still turn to printed wall calendars for auspicious timings and days, rahukalam and yamagandam timings. More people buy calendars with pictures of gods, scenery or photos of political party leaders. The number of people buying diary for their personal purposes has seen a dip but those presenting it to their near and dear ones has increased. Every year about 5 lakh calendars are produced for sale right from September, but this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown the business has just started, says Kumar, who is involved in the calendar business. He says that production and sale of calendars and diaries across Tamil Nadu are made from shops in Parry's Corner in Chennai but this year, due to the lockdown, they could not transport it, increasing the demand. "We are selling calendars with prices ranging from ₹15 to ₹400 per piece," he added.

— N. Sampath

**Smuggled gold worth ₹4.54 crore seized**DC CORRESPONDENT  
RAMANATHAPURAM, DEC. 11

Officials of the directorate of revenue intelligence (DRI) along with the Indian coast guard on Friday seized 8.95 kg of gold bars smuggled from Sri Lanka in the Gulf of Mannar near Mandapam, in Ramanathapuram district.

Acting on a tip off about gold smuggling along the Indian side of the Gulf of Mannar from Sri Lanka, Thoothukudi

regional DRI officers in coordination with the Mandapam Coast Guard, kept strict vigil on the arrival of boats near Mandapam in Ramanathapuram district. Around 12:30 am on Friday, officials found the suspicious movement of a fishing boat and intercepted it in the sea about one nautical mile away from shore. On a search, they found gold of foreign origin in the form of bars and cut pieces. The seized gold weighing 8.947 kg is

said to be worth ₹4.54 crore.

DRI officials also arrested five persons identified as Muhammed Rasik, Faiz Ahmed, Muhammed Farook, Jainul Fayaz Khan and Jaseem Ahmed on board the boat, and registered a case against them under the Customs Act 1962.

All the five arrested are said to be natives of Marakkarapattinam village near Mandapam in Ramanathapuram district.

**NIT signs MoU with Yi Tiruchy YUVA**DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUCHY, DEC. 11

Young Indians (Yi) Trichy has signed an MoU with the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Trichy. Through this MoU the Yuva students of the NIT, Trichy will be working towards nation building and youth leadership activities.

The MoU was signed by Dr Mini Shaji Thomas, director, NIT Trichy, and Mr Ketan J Vora, Yi chair, Yi Trichy chapter, C Pradeep, yuva chair, Yi Trichy chapter in the presence of Dr Kumaresan, dean, students welfare, NIT Trichy, Mr.Kishore, Yuva co-chair, Trichy and others, A Yi press release said here on Friday.

Young Indians (Yi) is an integral part of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), a non-government, not-for-profit, industry-led, and industry-managed organization playing a proactive role in India's development process. YUVA is one of the most active focus areas within Young Indians by which Yi members engage students from across the country in various initiatives that the students conceptualize, plan, and execute.

**Former MP Ramalingam defends farm laws**G. SRINIVASAN | DC  
THANJAVUR, DEC. 11

Former MP K.P. Ramalingam, who joined the BJP recently, has strongly defended the three farm laws brought by the central government and said some farmers are opposing it without knowing the benefits and without proper understanding.

He told the media that he met union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman and appealed to her to inform prime minister Narendra Modi not to repeal the laws.

"These legislations have been brought after persistent demands from farmers. This was envisaged even during the UPA government and DMK government. These laws will only

help the farmers as it would do away with taxes being levied by various state governments when the agricultural produce is moved from producing state to consumer state, which increases the price. For example, one kilo of apple costs Rs 10 or 20 in Himachal Pradesh where it is produced but sells at Rs 100 per kilo outside. This is

due to middlemen. These laws will do away with this practice," said Ramalingam. He said concepts like Uzavar Sandhai is akin to these legislations.

Tamil Nadu chief minister Edapadi K.Palaniswamy is welcoming the legislation as he is a farmer and knows well the benefits of the laws, Ramalingam said.

**To facilitate online coaching to tribals, villagers Phone towers in Nilgiris to get better power**B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC  
OOTY, DEC. 11

To facilitate online coaching for the tribes and other villagers in O'Valley area on the Nilgiris border in Gudalur taluk, and to connect villagers in the wooded zones to the world through internet and smartphone facilities, efforts are being taken to provide power supply for the mobile phone tower amidst the wooded zone to enhance mobile and internet connectivity.

The BSNL had erected a mobile phone tower to provide 2G mobile phone services in 2009 in Sandanamalait area in O'Valley limits. This was to help the eight tribal hamlets and 57 other hamlets in the vicinity to gain access to mobile phone facilities. Due to restrictions in providing the necessary electricity supply to the mobile phone tower which is located in the controversial 'Jenman lands' or Section-17 lands, the mobile phone tower

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC  
OOTY, DEC. 11

Fans and Rajini Makkal Mandram (RMM) in the Nilgiris began celebrating Rajinikanth's 70th birthday on Friday itself, a day in advance, by organizing pujas in temples and distributing food and gifts to the public.

It was the RMM women's wing in Kotagiri taluk that started the celebrations a day in advance by offering prayers at Sri Iyyapan temple in Kotagiri and organized an 'anna dhanam' on the occasion. S Kumar, RMM district



Rajini fans celebrated his birthday in advance on Friday at Kotagiri in Nilgiris.

— DC

secretary, the Nilgiris, said that Rajinikanth's birthday celebrations over the

years had laid the platform for his fans to reach out to the society with wel-

diesel generators are being used to keep the mobile phone tower functional. But, due to frequent technical and mechanical snags in the generator, power supply would often cripple leading to disturbances in mobile phone service.

The Nilgiris district administration brought this issue to the Central Empowered Committee of the Supreme Court looking after the section-17 lands to address this issue.

The committee recently gave its nod to provide

power supply to the mobile tower. Now, steps are being taken at a fast pace to provide power supply to the mobile phone tower before the end of this month to provide hitch free mobile/internet service to the villagers there.



Minister for Municipal Administration and Rural Development S P Velumani, Coimbatore District Collector K.Rajamani chairs a city development meeting with all department officials on collector office premises in Coimbatore.

— DC



## IN BRIEF

## Gold worth ₹4.5 cr seized mid-sea

**Chennai:** In a joint mid-sea operation on Friday, the Coast Guard and the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) foiled a bid to smuggle into the country gold bars worth ₹4.50 crore from Sri Lanka. Acting on a tip-off, the Coast Guard and DRI officials intercepted a fishing boat 'Sailor' with five fishermen off the Tamil Nadu coast and seized the gold concealed in a bag, a press release said. Initial investigations revealed that the boat with the contraband was proceeding from Gulf of Mannar to Marakkayar Pattinam near Mandapam in Ramanathapuram district, the release said. The gold weighed nine kgs and worth ₹4.50 crore, it said. The fishermen were apprehended and further investigations on, the release said.

## ASSAM RESUMES ANTI-CAA AGITATIONS

**MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, DEC. 11**

A group of 18-organisation led by Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) here on Friday organised a massive protest at Sivasagar in Upper Assam and threatened to intensify agitation against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) all over the state.

All Assam Students' Union (AASU) has also decided to revive the anti-CAA protests from Saturday by starting 'Gono Hoanar', meaning public outcry, the agitation aims to press for repealing of the act. AASU general secretary Shankar Jyoti Baruah said, "The government has to repeal the CAA—an anti-Assam law that has already taken the lives of five Assamese citizens including innocent students during the agitation last year. The families of the five martyrs and AASU will continue to seek justice." The students' unions in Assam had launched a protest against the CAA after it was passed by Rajya Sabha, the Upper House of the Parliament.

## UZBEKISTAN TO JOIN TRANSPORT CORRIDOR (INSTC)

**SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, DEC. 11**

In a major development, Uzbekistan has agreed "in-principle" to India's request to join the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), an important initiative taken by India, Russia and Iran to promote transportation cooperation and to enhance connectivity with central Asian countries, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday.

The INSTC is the "shortest multimodal transportation route linking the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf via Iran to Russia and North Europe". The "in-principle concurrence" of Uzbekistan was conveyed by the Central Asian country at a Virtual Summit between the two nations on Friday co-chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. India had maintained that Uzbekistan's participation in the project would add to the "overall improvement of connectivity in the larger Eurasian space".

## VIGILANCE PROBE AGAINST SACKED BJD LEGISLATOR

**AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, DEC. 11**

Odisha Lokayukta on Friday directed the state Vigilance Directorate to investigate the corruption allegation levelled against expelled BJD leader and Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Panigrahi. The Lokayukta asked the Vigilance to submit a report within two months after preliminary investigation.

On December 7, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had recommended the Lokayukta for a probe into the corruption charges against Panigrahi, who is currently lodged at Jharpada jail after his bail plea was rejected by Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate (SDJM) Court on December 3.

This was the first case of corruption allegation that has been referred to Odisha Lokayukta by the state government after its formation.

## Centre, WB engage in power play

West Bengal refuses to let its chief secretary, DGP go to Delhi after MHA summons them

## Dhankhar asks Mamata PM talks to Nadda, to apologise to Nadda Vijayvargiya

**RAJNISH SHARMA & RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, DEC. 11**

A day after Trinamul Congress workers' violent attack on BJP president J.P. Nadda's convoy at Diamond Harbour in West Bengal, the Union home ministry on Friday morning summoned top two bureaucrats of the Mamata Banerjee government to New Delhi on December 14. The MHA's move, however, infuriated the Trinamul supremo and the state government has decided not to allow the two bureaucrats to go to Delhi, saying that the issue is being dealt with.

Nadda's convoy had come under attack in the Lok Sabha constituency of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew, Abhishek Banerjee.

State chief secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay and director general of police Virendra were directed to meet Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla at 12.15 pm on Monday to "discuss the law and order situation, including the incidents regarding certain Z-category protectees" in the poll-bound state.

On Friday afternoon, Bandopadhyay wrote a letter to Bhalla, assuring him of the state government's "elaborate arrangements for security coverage" which included a pilot and a bullet proof car for Nadda in his convoy and a large deployment of

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, DEC. 11**

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday advised Trinamul Congress supremo and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee "not to play with fire" and "apologise" for mocking BJP president J.P. Nadda as "Chaddha, Nadda, Fadda, Bhaddha" after her party workers' alleged brazen attack on his convoy at Diamond Harbour, also her nephew Abhishek Banerjee's Lok Sabha constituency, in South 24 Parganas a day before.

"It is dangerous that she is using the word 'outsider.' India is one nation. We all are Indians. We believe in one Constitution. The CM is not above the

● **THE GOVERNOR** says it is dangerous that she is using the word 'outsider.' India is one nation. We all are Indians. We believe in one Constitution. The CM is not above the Constitution. She must not call who is an outsider or an insider. Such a comment from her side is unwarranted, shameful and painful. Madam Chief Minister, please don't play with the fire.

She added, "What happened was most unfortunate. I once again make an appeal to her to withdraw her video with an apology."

On Thursday afternoon Banerjee had told a rally, "They (BJP) have no other work. Sometimes the Union home minister comes here. Otherwise its Chaddha, Nadda, Fadda, Bhaddha who are here. And when they do not have an audience, they call their workers for doing Nautanki."

Senior TMC MP Sougata Roy, however, rejected Dhankhar's demand of an apology from the CM.

"The question of Banerjee's apology does not arise. Why does the Governor feel so much anguish over a comment against the BJP chief? Is he a BJP representative?" he asked.

**DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, DEC. 11**

After senior BJP leaders' convoy in West Bengal came under attack allegedly from the ruling TMC cadre, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to party president J.P. Nadda and national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya, who were also in the convoy.

Many senior BJP leaders from the state, including Mukul Roy, Anupam Hazra and many MPs were in the convoy when it came under attack on Thursday.

The convoy of BJP leaders was pelted with stones when they were on their way to attend a party event in Diamond Harbour, which is the Lok Sabha constituency of

● **MANY SENIOR BJP** leaders from the state, including Mukul Roy, Anupam Hazra and many MPs were also in the convoy when it came under attack allegedly from the ruling TMC cadre on Thursday.

Abhishek Banerjee, chief minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee's nephew.

While Banerjee termed the incident as "nautanki," the BJP claimed that the state has "descended into an era of tyranny, anarchy and darkness" under the TMC rule. Crucial assembly polls in the state are lined up early next year and the BJP has launched an aggressive campaign in an effort to oust the TMC.

police force led by the deputy inspector general of the range.

He, however, argued, "The tagging of many vehicles to the protectee convoys made the situation unwieldy, because typically, security authorities are to handle a protectee convoy of a few vehicles only, and not with/in the presence of so many other vehicles which got

tagged to the convoy traveling together."

Pleading for relief from appearance, Bandyopadhyay told Bhalla, "Further, three cases have already been registered in this connection, while two of them are specifically for vandalism, one each at Usthi PS and Falta PS, both under the Diamond Harbour Police District. Seven persons have been

arrested in these two cases. While further reports are being obtained and compiled, in the circumstances, I am directed to request you kindly dispense with the presence of the state officials in the meeting, considering that the state government is already addressing this issue with utmost seriousness."

But, Sreerampore TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee

received an adverse report from Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on "serious security lapses" on part of the state police which led to the brazen attack on Thursday leaving two senior BJP leaders, Kailash Vijayvargiya and Mukul Roy, who were in Nadda's convoy, injured.

Sources said that Shah may visit the state on December 19-20.

## BJP TO HOLD AWARENESS DRIVE ON FARM BILLS

**DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, DEC. 11**

With the Modi government unwilling to buckle under farmer unions pressure to repeal the recently passed three farm sector legislations, the ruling BJP has decided to take the three laws to the farmers across the country by organising 'chaupals' and press conferences.

Despite the deadlock between the Centre and the farmers unions, mainly from Punjab, continuing even after series of talks between representatives from both sides, the government is hopeful that to "find a solution to the issues raised by the agitating farmers." But, with the farmer unions showing no sign of relenting, the BJP has decided to hold at least 700 press conferences & 700 'chaupals' till the strict levels to "dispel the myth and propaganda" against the three laws.

The party has also activated its social media team and supporters to explain why the three laws were enacted, why the reforms were needed in the agri sector and how its political opponents are "trying to mislead the farmers for their political interest."

The party has also asked its social media teams and cadre to highlight how opposition parties, including the Congress, had proposed the same reforms regarding AP-MCs, contract farming and some other issues.

## India's first mRNA vaccine gets nod for human trials

**New Delhi, Dec 11:** The country's first indigenous mRNA vaccine candidate developed by Gennova, Pune has received approval from drug regulators to initiate Phase 1/2 human clinical trials, the Department of Biotechnology said on Friday.

The novel mRNA vaccine candidate, HGCO19, is supported with seed grant under the Ind-CEPI mission of the Department of Biotechnology. The mRNA vaccines do not use the conventional model to produce immune response. Instead, they carry molecular instructions to make the protein in the body through a synthetic RNA of the virus. The host body uses this to produce the viral protein that is recognised, thereby, making the body mount an immune response against the disease. The mRNA-based vaccines are scientifically the ideal choice to address a pandemic because of their rapid developmental timeline, the DBT said. It is also considered safe as it is non-infectious, non-integrating in nature, and degraded by standard cellular mechanisms.

"They are expected to be

highly efficacious because of their inherent capability of being translatable into the protein structure inside the cell cytoplasm. Additionally, mRNA vaccines are fully synthetic and do not require a host for growth, for example, eggs or bacteria. "Therefore, they can be quickly manufactured in an inexpensive manner under cGMP conditions to ensure their availability and accessibility for mass vaccination on a sustainable basis," the DBT added. Gennova has completed all preliminary work and should be initiating the Phase 1/2 human clinical trial soon since the approval from the DCGI office has been received, the DBT said. "Establishment of a such indigenous technology platform will not only empower India to handle the COVID-19 pandemic but also ensure the preparedness for future outbreaks," Renu Swarup, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology said. Five vaccine candidates are under different phases of clinical trials in India, with the Serum Institute of India conducting phase 3 trial of the Oxford-Astrazeneca COVID-19 vaccine. — PTI

## Ladakh standoff result of Chinese actions: MEA

**SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI NEW DELHI, DEC. 11**

India on Friday blamed China for the situation on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Ladakh sector in the past six months, saying it was the "result of the actions of the Chinese side which has sought to effect a unilateral change in status along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh", adding that China should "match its words with actions" as it says it strictly observes the past agreements between the two nations to safeguard peace and tranquillity on the border. The two Asian giants have been locked in a military face-off in the Ladakh sector since this Summer, after China amassed thousands of its troops in the border areas in the Ladakh sector.

India also labelled as "factually incorrect" the Chinese Embassy's recent assertion that the proposed Joint release of commemorative stamps to mark the

70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and China was cancelled by the Chinese side on account of no feedback given by the Indian side before the launch time agreed by both. New Delhi pointed out that there "had been no discussion on any launch date with any Chinese authorities for this activity" and that the "launch of the 70th anniversary celebrations itself has not taken place yet, and therefore, the issue of going ahead with joint activities under its ambit does not arise".

In a statement at his weekly briefing, MEA Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said, "Our position has been very clear and has been articulated several times in the past. The situation that we have seen since the last 6 months has been a result of the actions of the Chinese side which has sought to effect a unilateral change in status along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh."



Doctors hold banners in Thane on Friday, during their strike, demanding the withdrawal of CCIM notification.

— PTI

## Doctors sport black armbands, ribbons

**DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, DEC. 11**

Doctors at several hospitals in the national capital, including AIIMS, on Friday sported black ribbons in support of the protest call of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) against the Centre's move allowing post graduate practitioners of Ayurveda to be trained in performing surgical procedures.

The IMA, which had given the nation-wide call on December 1, has

demanding withdrawal of the notification. Doctors at AIIMS, and various Delhi government-run facilities, including LNJP Hospital, Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital, DDU Hospital, GTB Hospital, BSA Hospital, Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital, and civic-run Hindu Rao Hospital performed duties while wearing black armbands and ribbons.

The Resident Doctors Association of AIIMS Delhi, in a statement said, "This step will not

only encourage already rampant quackery, but also undermine the safety of the public. We request the government of India to retract this notification immediately. We stand with our medical fraternity in this regard and support the strike called by Indian Medical Association."

President of FORDA, an apex bodies of various RDAs in the city, Shivaji Deb Barman said, "Doctors in Delhi observe black ribbon protest, but will not withdraw any

services".

The IMA has given a call for withdrawal of non-essential and non-Covid services between 6 am and 6 pm on Friday to protest against the notification.

"The notification by the Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM) to allow legal practice of surgeries by Ayurveda practitioners and the formation of four committees by NITI Aayog for integration of all systems of medicine will only lead to 'mixopathy', said the IMA.

**SHOOT TO KILL**

Device will help user to detect, engage targets effectively

## Special forces get a CornerShot boost

**DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, DEC. 11**

Counter-insurgency operations by special forces across the country are all set to get a major boost with the Centre procuring CornerShot devices to be used with Glock pistols.

The CornerShot, which provides its operator the ability to observe and engage targets from behind cover, will minimise casualties and gunshot wounds during counter-insurgency operations or hostile situations.

The ministry of home affairs (MHA) recently

cleared the proposal and orders for the state-of-the-art weapons system is to be placed shortly.

"CornerShot will enable the user to detect and engage targets effectively, using traverse firing in day or night. It also allows its user to see and fire around corners. It will go a long way in preventing and minimising casualties as the user will not be exposed to return fire by the enemy," a senior police official told *Deccan Chronicle*.

Though CornerShot systems are being used for training purposes, this will be the first time that personnel in the



CRPF, BSF and other forces will be using them in their Glock pistols.

The CornerShot weapon system consists of two joined sections.

The front portion holds the pistol along with the camera and other features including tactical LED light, laser device besides other attachments. The rear section houses the operating features, monitor, controls and has a foldable butt.

Among other countries, Israel has been a leading manufacturer of CornerShot systems that are used by military special forces and counter-terrorism units across the world.

They mostly use it for their Beretta and Glock pistols.

"CornerShots that are being purchased will



## DECCAN Chronicle

12 DECEMBER 2020

### Nadda stoning: All parties guilty of decorum breach

The attack on the motorcade of BJP president J.P. Nadda in the Diamond Harbour area near Kolkata on Thursday is disquieting. We know the culture of violence appears deeply embedded in West Bengal, ironic as this is for a part of the country to which the uplifting description “renaissance” is ascribed for the all-round effervescence seen here in the nineteenth century in conditions of colonial modernity. No political party operating in the state can claim to be free of guilt in this regard.

Even so, when politically mobilised hooligans, even at a symbolic level — as seems the case in the attack on Mr Nadda’s entourage — target the highest functionary of a political party, in this case the organisational head of the ruling party of the country, it is time for all concerned to reflect and get back to the drawing-board — for the sake of West Bengal and India. If not, political misfortune is apt to overtake us, no matter which party is in the saddle.

The BJP veteran Rajnath Singh, the defence minister and a former BJP chief, put the matter in a very sober way when he noted after the sorry incident, “Attack on political leaders is highly condemnable. The incident should be thoroughly probed and accountability should be fixed.”

This is the right way, but “nothing happened” to Mr Nadda’s convoy, tweeted the state police. It noted, “A few bystanders threw stones at vehicles trailing his convoy. Everyone is safe and the situation is peaceful,” adding that a probe was on. What are they probing if nothing happened and all is tranquil? At any rate, the police are charged with investigating a crime in neutral fashion, not pass judgments.

When the force has already passed a judgment, it is likely the probe will be designed to be a formality. The head of police ought to be asked questions about his organisation taking such a cavalier view of things in its social media interactions — and frankly, in its actions. It should have been proactive in clearing the route the BJP leader’s convoy was taking. If it pleads that it had not been told about it in advance, it is even worse. The local police ought to know. This is no one else’s business, Mr Nadda’s ‘Z plus’ security status notwithstanding.

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee can hardly be said to have covered herself with glory when she rhymed disparagingly on Mr Nadda’s name. This is not “bhadrakalok” at all, and sits even worse on a CM’s tongue. “I have asked the police to find out all this,” she said in public remarks. But she ought to be ordering a magisterial inquiry.

The state is to have Assembly elections in a few months. If events of recent weeks are an indication, political violence may possibly rise. BJP is desperate to unseat Ms Banerjee’s Trinamul Congress. In the circumstances, it is necessary not to fan political passions. Union home minister Amit Shah tweeted soon after the tawdry incident, “The West Bengal government will have to answer for the state-sponsored violence.”

This is an observation laden with political partisanship, and because state polls are due soon it gives off the sense of President’s rule being imposed. The home minister ought to sound more sober and act with due responsibility.

### A lone ranger departs

In the culture wars of yesteryear, his dance was totally lost on critics. Not considered Indian enough in the West, and Western enough in India, his zany moves failed to satisfy either the “diversity” or the “fashionableness” criteria. Then there were the traditionalists. Whenever he approached potential sponsors for money for his performances or projects, they invariably asked him, “What is modern dance?”

Astad Deboo kept on dancing, for 50 years, not just in India, but all over the world. His dance education was grounded in kathak, taken up at age six. His inspiration, on the other hand, had been a show by the American Murray Louis Dance Company, which he chanced to attend while pursuing a commerce degree in erst-while Bombay. The adventurous Parsi boy left Mumbai in 1969 onboard a cargo boat and hitchhiked his way through Europe to reach New York in 1974.

In New York, Deboo enrolled at the famous Martha Graham dance academy, but dropped out. He then trained with Pina Bausch in Germany and, in 1977, returned to India and learned kathakali under E. Krishna Panicker, eventually evolving his own style that was minimalist and eloquent in equal measure. But it was not until 1986 that his breakthrough came in terms of peer recognition when Deboo was commissioned to choreograph for Maya Plisetskaya, the prima ballerina of Bolshoi Theatre. The versatile Deboo would go on to collaborate with Bausch herself, theatre artiste Alison Becker Chase, rock band Pink Floyd, dhruwad singers the Gundecha brothers, even Manipuri’s Thang-Pink martial artistes and Pung cholom dancers.

Acolades arrived late, in the form of a Sangeet Natak Akademi award in 1995 and a Padma Shri in 2007, and when they came were too little given his contributions.

It would not be incorrect to comment that Deboo was among the few who changed Indians’ puritanical approach to music and dance. For a long time, he was the only one in his field of contemporary dance, a genre he single-handedly, or rather single-footedly, pioneered in India. He leaves behind a transforming legacy, and unreserved admiration in the hearts of his now-sizeable tribe of students, dance aficionados and followers.

KAUSHIK MITTER

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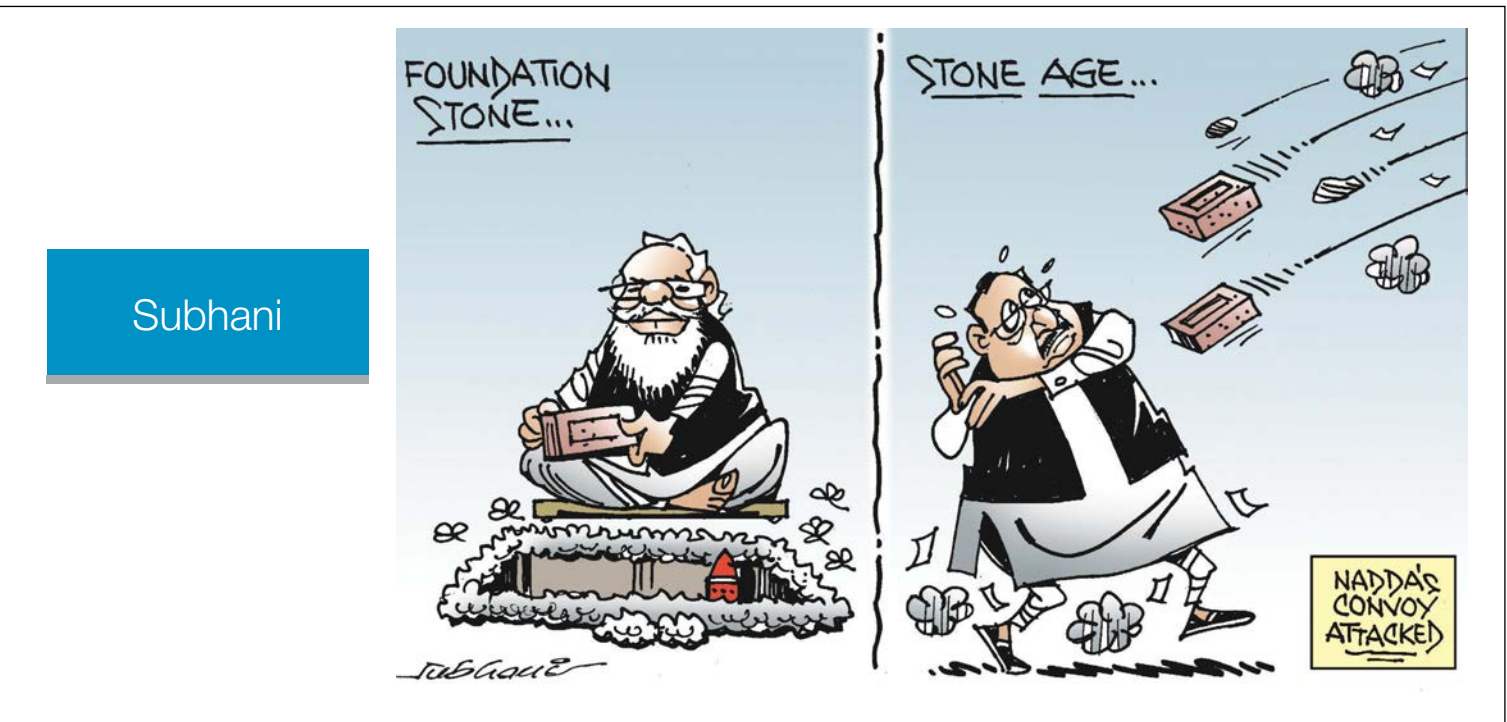
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## V is for valour, victory... But V is also for vaccine!



Shobhaa De

There is a joke doing the rounds on the social media which goes something like this: “Meanwhile, in Ullhasnagar, everybody is waiting impatiently for the original Covid vaccine to be launched... They say that their duplicate has been ready for two months!” That joke says it all, and is such an accurate reflection of collective angst as one hears the “latest” vaccine-waley breakthroughs, with sombre experts weighing in with their considered opinion on the V-word. In Mumbai, it is as if Covid never happened, or at any rate, even if it did, the virus has miraculously vanished, and the party can begin. In drawing room discussions, the conversation flits from, “Are you going to take it?” to “I hear SRK went to Pune and has already taken it”. I am asked if I plan to take it, and I hesitate before replying... truth be told, I am still sitting on the fence. When I saw pictures of 90-year-olds getting jabbed, I turned cynical because I found it hard to understand why they would risk it at this stage of their lives. The Covid updates in the national dailies remain unread by me, and I switch off when prime time panel discussions breathlessly focus on “Who will win the vaccine race?” The point is, whichever pharmaceutical company wins that Covid Cup, it still won’t solve our problems here in India. But sure... shareholders who have invested in any of the big pharma players will be in a joyous mood over Christmas and New Year.

The off-site narratives of the vaccine story are most engaging. Kids and senior citizens, frontline

workers and others in privileged categories, are busy boasting about being one up on the rest. Getting a shot will soon become a social test — if you aren’t amongst the first to extend an arm for the jab — hey — poor you! The usual “janata class” jamboree will kick in, with folks who will try to jump the queue, bribe their way to “qualify”, forge certificates and documents, call up influential “contacts”, fake illness, do whatever it takes to stake a claim and brag about it. “I have taken the shot — and you haven’t? Arrey! You should have called me, na? I know somebody who would have arranged it for you — that too, at home. Why go and stand in a line like all the others?” Funny... our “line complex”! We hate being seen standing in an orderly line anywhere. If you have to line up, it means you are a nobody — that’s the thinking. I remember one of our most dazzling billionaire wives cribbing that she hated flying “commercial” because it involved lining up with the hoi polloi! She used to frequently berate her husband publicly for not getting her a private jet. “It is so humiliating to be seen at an airport standing with the public!” she would moan and groan. It didn’t matter that personalities in the league of Ratan Tata and Azim Premji not only fly commercial, but carry their own bags on board, with

**My own state of denial has made me push Covid and the vaccine into the background. I am not convinced it is THE answer, no matter what the docs say.**

**Neither have I understood the booster shot logic or the reactions to it — headaches, body aches and other symptoms. It’s being described as ‘The Post-Vax effect’.**

Azim preferring to fly economy class whenever possible — but that is his special brand of eccentricity. I suspect we will see a similar scramble for the vaccine, with India’s swish set flying off to get their shots in London rather than wait it out for their turn back home. “Apna Time Aayega” holds no appeal for most self-styled VIPs, who consider it infra dig to be told they need to line up like everybody else.

My own state of denial has made me push Covid and the vaccine into the background. I am not convinced it is THE answer, no matter what the docs say. Neither have I understood the booster shot logic or the reactions to the vaccine — the headaches, body aches and other symptoms. It’s being described as “The Post-Vax effect” and it isn’t sounding good — pain swelling, fever. “The vaccine works! Crow those whose faith is undiminished, even if the statistics aren’t in place right now to make such declarations about this particular vaccine. But when it is pointed out that America has crossed the 15 million coronavirus cases, and people are still dropping like flies there, the writing on the wall is ominous indeed. What can be said to reassure citizens? Canada has already picked its vaccine of choice (Pfizer-BioNTech), the same one approved by Bahrain and the United Kingdom. Approvals are being rushed by several other countries, after stating just how rigorously the testing process is being imposed. I dunno! Call me a sceptic — this unholy rush to “market” the vaccine seems more

driven by commerce than humanitarian compulsions. To think such a swathe of people across the globe will be at the mercy of agencies and governments! If your government decides — “This is the one” — then, that is the one! We will never know why this one was picked over that one. Who lobbied for it — who had the most to gain... Today, this one magic-vaccine is going to determine the future of the world — and it will instantly become the single most potent factor when it comes to votes and elections. Its availability and efficacy will determine the fate of governments and political parties across the world. Citizens may never know why a certain pharma company was picked over rivals. Questions about decisions that will affect the health and well-being of our planet will be decided by politicians! The almost unlimited power of the virus over our lives has been established. Now comes the challenge of how we can tame the microbe, save ourselves and keep the faith. What if we discover a few years down the line that our governments have shortchanged us by withholding vital information. Or that our leaders sold our safety in order to stay in power. That the wrong pharma horse was backed? That a corrupt system bought a vaccine it knew full well would not work as promised and made guinea pigs out of us? We have given the mandate a bit too easily. Was there ever a choice?

Readers can send feedback to [www.shobhaade.blogspot.com](http://www.shobhaade.blogspot.com)

**What if we discover a few years down the line that our governments have shortchanged us by withholding vital information? That the wrong pharma horse was backed?**

### LETTERS

#### OPS FORMULA

To put an end to the gender disparity in governance, TN Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam is reported to have stressed the need to have legislation whereby a woman and man should share power equally for two-and-half years each during the five-year tenure (*OPS formula for gender equality*, Dec. 11). While the idea is welcome, why should there be legislation when it can be implemented without backing of any rule by the political parties of their own volition? Though the political parties can as well allot as many seats as possible for women candidates to contest in the elections to state legislatures and parliament without waiting for the Women’s Reservation Bill to become reality, why are they hesitant to do so? The reasons are not far to seek. Though every political leader waxes eloquence about gender equality, in reality, no one would want to share power with women. The suggestion of OPS falls under this category, as this is just for the sake of public consumption.

**V.S. Jayaraman, Chennai**

#### CORRUPTION IN POLITICS

**APROPPOS REPORT** *The debate for Big Debate goes on* (Dec.10). What baffles is both the big Kazhagams’ top leaders were imprisoned a few in the 2G spectrum case and a few in the disproportionate wealth cases. Yet their cohorts challenge each other for a public debate pretending that they are non-corrupt only to fool the public. In fact the public knows that the ingenious ones involve in wholesale corruption in a scientific manner like 2G spectrum and underground telephone exchange and escape. But apprentices who indulge in retail corruption as in the RTO and sub-registrar offices get caught. Why don’t they ask the Supreme Court to order investigation retrospectively against politicians?

**A. Seshagiri Rao, Chennai**

#### CENTRAL VISTA PROJECT

**THERE MAY** be acceptable rationale behind the ambitious plan to modify the Central Vista skyline of Lutyens’ New Delhi by building a new Parliament, central secretariat, offices and residences for President, Vice-President and Prime Minister by the Narendra Modi-led government at the Centre. The question is whether such an ambitious project at an expense of at least ₹1,000 crore involving public money is warranted at a time when the nation is grappling with Covid-19 pandemic.

**M. Jeyaram, Sholavandan**

### Farrukh Dhondy Of Cabbages & Kings



*“What use the scorching summer That burns the buds of spring? And these intense obsessions That with them despair bring?”*

*What good the freezing winter In which viruses survive? Oh! take the seasons as they come It’s good to be alive!”*

— From *Great Expectorations* by Bachchoo

## Why we need to ‘tolerate’ all those who have contrary views

Philosophy quibbles over words? If language is the avatar of thought, then ideas, propositions and proofs are the recipes in the avatar’s cookbook. No, not cardamom pods, but cinnamon sticks? Not “ambiguity” but “ambivalence”. “Generalisation” is the foundation of science, “generality” the enemy of it. And thus, we philosophers (*Kabh sey? Pack it in yaar!* — *Ed. Arrey kuchh tho pretension karney do sethji — fd*) purify the dialect of the tribe.

Long years ago, in my teenage in Pune, there was an establishment at one end of the cantonment’s Mahatma Gandhi Road called the Punjab Book Service. It had a display window in which were arranged books such as Bertrand Russell’s *History of Western*

*Philosophy*, Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, several literary hard-covered tomes and titles which made the Punjab Book Service (PBS) look like it was in any street in Oxford or Cambridge.

But those titles were not what the clientele wanted and were not the titles stocked in the body of this lending library. The front room had packed shelves of detective stories, Perry Mason courtroom sort of stuff and “Westerns”. There was a back room which you entered through a heavily beaded curtain, with shelves full of brown-paper-covered pamphlet-like books with titles such as *Confessions of a Russian Princess*, *Forget the Hocus Enjoy the Pokus* and *The Nun’s Delight*. All to be borrowed overnight or so for a few annas.

Gentle reader, I beg you to believe that I only became aware of these titles when my friend Dara Cama borrowed them. I never crossed the beaded curtain.

Then a fateful day Dara went to the showcase and brought Will Durant’s *Story of Philosophy* to “Punjabi”, as we called the proprietor, at the book-borrowing counter.

Punjabi stared at the hard-covered volume as though he had never seen it

before. There was a long pause because he couldn’t believe that anyone wanted to read the stuff that he used as decoy material for his chaaloo lending library. He looked up.

*“Arrey vah Kyemah! Thoo flaaafy pudthai?”*

And yes, it was the moment when I converted from addiction to Earl Stanley Gardner to “flaafy”. And then it was I came to appreciate, as perhaps Socrates did, that substituting one word for another changes the world.

This memory of such realisation came to me when in September of this plague year Cambridge University’s vice-chancellor issued a sort of fatwa on free speech demanding of the university staff and students that they “respect” all opinions. His bulletin was widely interpreted as the outlawing of any arguments or contentions which would offend any group. The fatwa was probably issued as a caveat to opponents or those who would argue against the “reality” or achievability of gender transformation. The call to “respect” the insinuations of “trans” people and their supporters was interpreted in some quarters as a ban on expressing any opposition to them.

This could, if extended, apply to a ban on countering the arguments of anti-

vaccers, people who oppose vaccination.

A professor of philosophy at the university, Arif Ahmed, saw this fatwa as a mandated opposition to free speech. He proposed a simple amendment: substitute the word “tolerate” instead of the word “respect”. That would recognise the right to live with, but not agree with, opinions which seemed to you either ridiculous, contrary to scientific fact or unacceptable for some reason of faith, or otherwise.

Prof. Ahmed calls the vice-chancellor’s directive a policy and labels it as “academic McCarthyism”. The injunction to “respect” an opinion could merely mean to support the fact that it exists. But it could also mean to refrain from publicly contradicting it.

Prof. Ahmed began alone but soon signed up a fair number of academics and students to his amendment to the directive. He is certainly motivated by the acute opposition to the recent practice in British universities of banning (they call it “no-platforming”) people whose views they feel will offend one or another minority.

Prof. Ahmed sees that as an infringement of free speech within institutions which should be the champions of it and of vociferous arguments against

offending ones. He told London’s *Times* that there is the risk of “self-censorship”, that there are now views and opinions in British academia that dare not speak their name.

He goes controversially further, saying that it’s right for academics to engage with white nationalists or even Islamic fundamentalists and that people should be able to hear their, possibly toxic, reasoning, and “make up their own minds and criticise as disrespectfully as they want”.

Myself? If I was president of the Cambridge Union and Osama bin Laden (Fish be Upon Him) was still alive, I’d send him an email asking him to speak about why Donald Trump — sorry, I mean America — is in his opinion The Great Satan. I’d perhaps invite Richard Dawkins or someone more militant to speak against him and let a thousand flowers (followers?) fight it out.

I shall not cease from mental strife... etc. — As we go to press, Cambridge announces that the Arif amendment and others were passed with a huge majority.

Should tolerators and repliers, supporters of all free speech, now be termed “Arifists”?



## SHORT TAKES

BIDEN, HARRIS TIME  
'2020' PERSON  
OF THE YEAR

**New York:** US President-elect Joe Biden and Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris have been named by the prestigious *Time* magazine as '2020 Person of the Year' for changing the American story, showing that the forces of empathy are greater than the furries of division and sharing a vision of healing in a grieving world.

It named the Democratic leaders for its annual prestigious honour, choosing them over other finalists — front-line health care workers, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Dr Anthony Fauci, the Movement for Racial Justice and US President Donald Trump.

INDIAN AMONG 3  
HELD IN \$3MN  
FRAUD CASE IN US

**Washington, Dec. 11:** An Indian-American from Michigan has been arrested along with two others on charges of conspiring to defraud at least 43 victims of more than \$3 million through the sale of phony business opportunities, a US attorney has said. David Weinstein, 61, Vijay Vanam Reddy, 45, and Kevin Brown, 61, have been charged with one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud.

Reddy on Thursday made an appearance in a Detroit federal court. Brown and Weinstein were arrested on December 8. Brown was released on \$50,000 bond and Weinstein a day later. From September 2015 through August 2018, the three advertised business opportunities for sale on various websites. They purported to sell "blocks" of contracts with medical providers who allegedly wanted to outsource their medical billing, collections, appeals, answering, credentialing or transcription functions. The buyers would then provide the contracted services to the medical providers and earn a profit.

## UK, EU prepare for 'no-deal' Brexit

British PM admits Sunday deadline for next discussion does not hold out great promise

**London, Dec. 11:** British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has issued the starkest warning yet that the UK could be out of the EU on January 1, 2021, without a trade agreement in place as the two sides remain divided on key areas amidst last-ditch talks between the chief Brexit negotiators.

After Johnson's urgent talks with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in Brussels failed to break the logjam over the European Union (EU) fishing rights in UK territorial waters as a non-member and competition rules for businesses, the Prime Minister admitted that a Sunday deadline for their next discussion does not hold out great promise.

"At the moment, I have to tell you in all candour, the treaty is not there yet and that was the strong view of our Cabinet," Johnson said on Thursday night.

"There's a strong possibility that we will have a solution much more like Australian relationship with the EU than a Canadian relationship with the EU," he said.

An Australia-style agreement effectively means no trade agreement and the two sides would then be trading on World Trade Organisation (WTO) norms, with considerable barriers to movement of goods as well as people. With the UK no longer signed up to the EU rules, it would also mean travel restrictions for Britons travelling to and from the EU at the end of the Brexit transition period on December 31, given the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown rules. —PTI



Fishermen sort and load trays of salmon heads to be used as bait for crab and lobster pots as they prepare for their next voyage to sea, on the South Pier of Bridlington Harbour fishing port in Bridlington, north east England on Friday. Trade talks between the UK and the EU continue in Brussels with EU members' future access to Britain's rich fishing waters remaining a major sticking point.

— AFP

UK BUSINESSES  
WANT BREXIT  
DISCUSSIONS

**London, Dec. 11:** British trucking firms, supermarkets and other businesses on Friday imploded the government to strike a last-minute trade deal with the European Union, as the two sides' leaders told their citizens to brace for New Year upheaval in the UK-EU trading relationship.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said there is a "strong possibility" that negotiations on a new economic relationship to take effect Jan. 1 will fail. Johnson and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen have set a Sunday deadline to decide whether to keep talking or prepare for a no-deal break.

"We have not yet found the solutions to bridge our differences," von der Leyen said Friday at an EU summit in Brussels. "We will decide on Sunday whether we have the conditions for an agreement or not." Either way, she said, "in less than three weeks, it will be new beginnings for old friends."

Britain left the EU on January 31 but has continued to follow the bloc's rules during a transition period that lasts until the end of the year. Months of talks on a future trade deal have failed to bridge the gaps on three issues — fishing rights. —AP



Joe Biden

BIDEN'S CABINET  
GIVES DISTINCT  
OBAMA FEEL

**Washington, Dec. 11:** President-elect Joe Biden is getting the old gang back together. Increasingly deep into the process of selecting Cabinet members and other senior staff, the incoming Biden administration has a distinctly Obama feel.

There's Denis McDonough, former President Barack Obama's chief of staff who Biden announced on Thursday would be nominated as the secretary of veterans affairs. Susan Rice, Obama's former national security adviser, was named the director of Biden's White House Domestic Policy Council.

That's on top of Biden already tapping Obama's agriculture secretary, Tom Vilsack, to head the department once again, former Secretary of State John Kerry to serve as special envoy on climate and Kerry's Obama-era deputy Antony Blinken to lead the State Department. Jeff Zients, who did stints as acting Office of Management and Budget director and a top economic adviser in the Obama White House, will return as Biden's Coronavirus response coordinator. —PTI

## EU leaders agree on climate deal

**Brussels, Dec. 11:** EU leaders on Friday agreed an ambitious target for cutting greenhouse gas emissions after unlocking the bloc's landmark budget and Coronavirus recovery fund at a marathon summit.

The 27 member states struck a deal on a binding target to slash emissions by at least 55 percent by 2030 following an entire night of intense wrangling in Brussels.

● **TURKEY** on Friday called on the European Union to act as an 'honest mediator' in its dispute with EU members Greece and Cyprus over the exploration of gas reserves in the Mediterranean, after European leaders approved expanding sanctions against Ankara.

The fight was over how the cost of the effort should be shared across the countries: highly dependent on coal, Poland — allied with several Eastern European countries — fears serious eco-

nomic consequences and demanded details on the aid it would receive.

"Europe is the leader in the fight against climate change," European Council president and summit host Charles Michel

declared on Twitter.

French President Emmanuel Macron tweeted an appeal for action now the target was agreed, insisting: "Let's do everything to succeed. Now. All together. Because there is no plan B!" As part of its commitments to the Paris Climate Agreement, the EU has pledged to become climate-neutral by 2050, the date when it would offset or capture more greenhouse gas than it emits. —AFP

S. KOREAN DIRECTOR  
KIM KI-DUK PASSES AWAY  
AT 59 DUE TO COVID

**London, Dec. 11:** South Korean filmmaker Kim Ki-Duk, known for films such as "*Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter... and Spring*", "*The Isle*" and "*Pieta*", has died due to complications from Coronavirus. He was 59. The filmmaker passed away at a hospital in Latvia, where he had arrived last month to

buy a house, reported local outlet Delfi.

The news of his death was confirmed by Russian director Vitalijis Manskis to Delfi. Ki-Duk was known for his peculiar movies, which were often laced with provocative themes like sex, violence and animal cruelty.

Born on December 20, 1960 in Bonghwa in North Gyeongsang Province, South Korea, Ki-Duk studied fine arts in Paris from 1990 to 1993. He started his film career as a screenwriter and made his directorial debut with 1996 feature "*Crocodile*". —PTI

FINANCIAL  
Chronicle

SATURDAY | 12 DECEMBER 2020 | COIMBATORE

quick  
BITES

| INDICATORS             | %               |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Sensex                 | 46,099.01 0.30  |
| Nifty 50               | 13,513.85 0.26  |
| S&P 500*               | 3,639.00 -0.79  |
| Dollar (₹)             | 73.64 0.03      |
| Pound Sterling (₹)     | 97.75 0.35      |
| Euro (₹)               | 89.31 -0.17     |
| Gold (10gm)* (₹)       | 48,594▼102 0.20 |
| Brent crude (\$/bbl)*  | 50.03 -0.22     |
| IN 10-Yr bond yield    | 5.956 0.040     |
| US 10-Yr T-bill yield* | 0.883 -0.025    |

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

Gems & jewellery  
sector pares debt  
by 26% to \$7.7 bn

The gems & jewellery sector has cut its outstanding debt by 26 per cent to \$7.7 bn in 18 months. The industry has faced difficulties in securing credit in the wake of a few bank fraud cases, Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council chairman Colin Shah said. "The gross bank debt of India's gems and jewellery industry has reduced by a healthy rate of 26 per cent from \$10.44 bn in March 2019 to \$7.75 bn in October 2020."

■ Carlsberg, SABMiller, UB in the dock  
Beer cartel faces  
hefty CCI penaltyADITYA KALRA  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 11

Top executives of Carlsberg, SABMiller and United Breweries (UB) exchanged commercially sensitive information and colluded to fix beer prices in India for over 11 years, according to a government antitrust investigation report seen by Reuters.

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) in 2018 raided the offices of the three brewers and started an inquiry. The investigation's findings—which are not a final judgment of wrongdoing—cast a shadow on the brewers, which account for 88 per cent of the country's \$7 billion beer market.

Senior CCI members will consider the report, drafted in March, as they decide on fines, which could exceed \$250 million, two sources familiar with the case said. The CCI members could agree with or dispute the findings of its investigation team.

Executives' conversations, WhatsApp messages and e-mails contained in the report show the companies regularly and collectively strategised in seeking price increases in "several states", forging a cartel the CCI said gave them more bargaining power with state authorities.

The companies also used the All-India Brewers Association (Aiba) as a "common platform" to decide collectively on prices; and the local group then lobbied on the compa-



nies' behalf for price increases, the CCI report found.

At least thrice executives exchanged messages urging one another to keep their plans quiet, the report showed.

"We should avoid getting caught," Aiba's director general wrote in an e-mail in 2016 to executives of the three companies.

The brewers coordinated to "manipulate the government machinery" and "were well-aware that their collective approach through the association (Aiba) was violating" competition law, the 248-page CCI report said. The report concluded the cartel existed between 2007 and October 2018.

The CCI did not respond to Reuters queries. Aiba and Carlsberg declined to comment, citing ongoing CCI proceedings.

United Breweries, part-owned by Heineken, said it had cooperated with authorities and would make submissions to the CCI. Heineken didn't comment. The world's largest brew-

er, Anheuser-Busch InBev, which acquired SABMiller in 2016, said it takes "antitrust compliance very seriously".

The CCI raids in 2018 seized hundreds of files and more than 2 terabytes of data from laptops, pen drives and smartphones.

The case was triggered when AB InBev used CCI's "leniency programme" to disclose that it had detected a cartel while integrating SABMiller's operations in India. Later in 2018, UB and Carlsberg also filed leniency applications.

Under the programme, the CCI can reduce the penalties it imposes on companies depending on the cooperation they provide. In this case, 19 beer executives engaged in anti-competitive practices, the report says.

"The collusion... has been mostly through the highest level of management in these companies," the report said, including managing directors, vice presidents, and sales and marketing heads.

—Reuters

UAE's Lulu  
Group to  
set up food  
unit in J&K

**Dubai, Dec. 11:** The UAE-based Lulu Group International plans to set up a food processing centre in Sri-nagar for sourcing agri products from Jammu and Kashmir.

The plan was revealed by Lulu Group chairman Yusufali M.A. on Thursday to a Jammu and Kashmir delegation led by principal secretary (agriculture production & horticulture) Navin Kumar Choudhary.

"As per the commitment made during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the UAE in 2019, Lulu Group is fully focused on sourcing a wide range of agri products from J&K," Yusufali said.

Currently, Lulu imports apples and saffron from Kashmir and imports will significantly increase in the coming years. The group imported more than 400 tonne of Kashmiri apples till date, according to an official statement.

Yusufali said the Lulu group is one of the leading importers of food and non-food products from India and setting up a new food processing and logistics centre will further boost export of Kashmiri products to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and other countries.

Choudhary welcomed the Lulu Group initiative to host a J&K special fortnight at its super markets across the Gulf region on the occasion of Republic Day-2021. —PTI

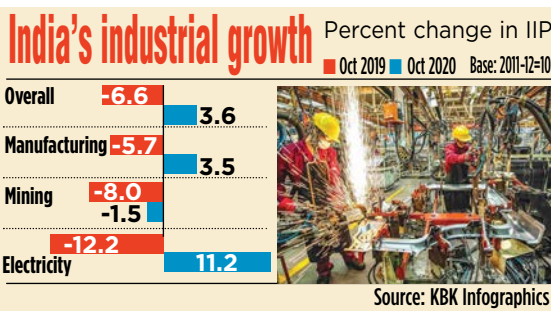
Industrial output rises  
3.6% in OctoberFC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 11

With an upward growth in most sectors, especially manufacturing, electricity and consumer durables, the industrial output, or the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), for October registered 3.6 per cent growth, according to government data released on Friday.

This is the second consecutive month when IIP data remained in positive territory after six months of contraction. The IIP was up 0.5 per cent in September.

The manufacturing sector, which has a weightage of 77.6 per cent in the IIP, recorded a growth of 3.5 per cent in October.

In line with the Reserve



Bank of India's expectation, the October IIP number showed a sign of healing the economy. However, for the April-October period, industrial production contracted 17.5 per cent against 0.1 per cent growth in the year-ago period.

The October IIP growth was mostly driven by the electricity and manufac-

turing sector. The electricity sector grew 11.2 per cent, while the manufacturing sector jumped by 3.5 per cent year-on-year.

The output of capital goods—a barometer of investment—grew 3.3 per cent in October. There was a contraction of 22.4 per cent in the year-ago month.

## Home prices fall 2.4% in India

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, DEC. 11

Home have become more affordable in the Indian market in the last one year, with prices dropping by 2.4 per cent. The demand for housing units have also gone up during the period.

Property consultants Knight Frank India says India has come down seven places in the Global House Price Index, as residential prices have dropped 2.4 per cent for the 12-month period and six-month period to September end. Prices were down 0.5 per cent for

the September quarter compared to June quarter. This led to India moving down to 54th place on the index in Q3 2020 against 47th rank in Q3 2019.

The demand for housing units jumped in India as well. Home sales volume jumped in top eight cities by 2.5 times to 33,403 units in Q3 2020 compared to 9,632 in Q2 2020. New residential unit launches increased by 4.5 times to 31,106 units in Q3 2020, compared to 5,584 units in the previous quarter.

Knight Frank said mainstream residential prices across 56 countries and territories worldwide saw

an average 4.5 per cent price correction in the September quarter. Around 16 per cent of the surveyed global countries and territories registered a decline in yearly price growth.

In Q3 2020, India, Ireland, Spain and Hong Kong witnessed the weakest price growth year-on-year.

Turkey led the index for the third consecutive quarter with annual price growth of 27 per cent. New Zealand with 15 per cent price rise jumped from 11th to second place between Q2 and Q3 as the country saw demand increase post-lockdown.



## SHORT TAKES

## Verstappen is at maximum speed

**Yas Island (Abu Dhabi):** Max Verstappen posted the fastest time Friday in the first practice for the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. The Red Bull driver was 0.34 seconds ahead of Mercedes rival Valtteri Bottas and 1.14 seconds quicker than Renault driver Esteban Ocon. Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton returned for Mercedes after recovering from the Coronavirus and had the fifth fastest time. He struggled early in the session with a brake sensor issue which needed fixing in the team garage. A second practice will be held later Friday at the Yas Marina circuit. — AP

## Joshua, Pulev on the boil at weigh-in

**London:** Anthony Joshua warned Kubrat Pulev he faces "the real one" in Saturday's world heavyweight title bout in London as the pair almost came to blows at the weigh-in. Former Olympic champion Joshua defends his IBF, WBA and WBO belts at Wembley Arena against the veteran Bulgarian in front of 1,000 fans due to Coronavirus restrictions. The two men have been scheduled to fight twice before but both times the bout was postponed — in 2017 Pulev was injured and Covid-19 put paid to a planned fight in June. But the 39-year-old, nicknamed "The Cobra", boasts an impressive 28-1 record.

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## Hitman is fit, set for Tests

Rohit clears fitness test at NCA, to leave for Australia on Dec. 14

**New Delhi, Dec. 11:** Senior India batsman Rohit Sharma on Friday cleared an eagerly-watched fitness test at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru and will leave for Australia on December 14, three days before the start of the marquee Test series against the world's number one team.

Rohit had sustained a hamstring injury during the IPL, which led to him missing the white-ball leg of the ongoing tour. He is also out of reckoning for the first two Tests but can now be there for the last two games. "Rohit has cleared the

fitness Test and will soon be flying out to Australia," a senior BCCI official said on conditions of anonymity.

Rohit's fitness test took place under the supervision of NCA director Rahul Dravid, who is entrusted with the responsibility of giving him his fitness certificate.

As per the Australian government's rules, the star batsman will have to undergo a mandatory 14 days of hard quarantine before being able to train for the last two Tests in Sydney (January 7 to 11) and Brisbane (January 15 to 19). He is flying straight to



Rohit Sharma

Sydney and will get a week's training there.

There had been confusion around Rohit's status over the past few weeks. Captain Virat Kohli spoke about a lack of clarity on

the issue that has been full of intrigue ever since he injured his left hamstring during a league match while playing for Mumbai Indians in the IPL.

The injury, which forced him out of four IPL games, prompted the national selectors to not consider him for the Australian tour.

Omitted from the squad for the much-anticipated tour, he soon returned to lead his franchise in the remainder of the lucrative league, adding to the curiosity.

On November 9, the BCCI provided an update on his status, saying the

selectors had kept Rohit out of only the limited-overs leg for him to "regain full fitness" for the Test series.

But the white-ball vice-captain came to Mumbai instead of travelling straight to Australia with his national teammates after leading Indians to IPL title triumph in the UAE.

The BCCI then issued another press release on November 26, a day after Kohli claimed he did not know why Rohit had not done his rehab in Australia, stating that the reason behind the opener coming back to India was his father's illness. — PTI

## Virat, Indian with Aussie trait: Greg

**Adelaide, Dec. 11:** Batting great and former India coach Greg Chappell has called Virat Kohli the "most Australian non-Australian" cricketer of all time and thanked the sport's "most important" figure for championing the cause of the Test format with his "all-out aggression".

Chappell invoked Mahatma Gandhi before crediting Kohli's intensity for bringing about a paradigm shift in Indian cricket.

"Many previous Indian cricket teams tended to play with undue deference to their opponents, as if in accord with the Gandhian principle. Sourav Ganguly

was the first Indian captain to try to change that approach. It worked to a degree in India, but usually hit a hurdle overseas," Chappell wrote in *Sydney Morning Herald*.

"Virat Kohli does not believe in passive resistance. He is a proponent of all-out aggression. His idea is to dominate the opposition."

Kohli is the most Australian non-Australian cricketer of all time. He embodies the new India. As the premier player and captain of the world's pre-eminent cricket power, he feels an abiding responsibility to the wider game," he added. — PTI

## Bumrah blasts maiden 50 in India's warm-up match

**Sydney, Dec. 11:** Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah headlined the opening day's play with a maiden first-class fifty and then chipped in with a couple of wickets in an impressive bowling effort putting India in the driver's seat against Australia in the pink ball warm-up game on Friday.

With his unbeaten 55 off 57 balls, Bumrah was the top-scorer for the visitors, who folded for a disappointing 194 in 48.3 overs at the Sydney Cricket Ground. The Indians however came back strongly with the ball to bundle out Australia 'A' for 108 at stumps as 20 wickets fell on a curtailed when almost an hour was lost due to heavy rain.

India's pace attack did well to intimidate Australian youngsters with short-pitched stuff



Jasprit Bumrah in action during India's warm-up match against Australia 'A'.

— TWITTER

as Mohammed Shami and Navdeep Saini got three wickets apiece.

On a day when the recognised batsmen struggled to put runs on the board, Bumrah, who came into the game with a Test batting average of 2.9, produced a stellar performance with the willow, smashing the ball six times to the fence and

twice over it. He reached his half-century in style, hooking a bouncer by all-rounder Will Sutherland for a huge six over the deep square-leg fence.

Earlier, after skipper Ajinkya Rahane opted to bat, Prithvi Shaw (40) and Shubman Gill (43) showed enough glimpses of why they are rated so highly by almost everyone in the Indian cricket fraternity.

However, the rest of the teammates including the seasoned Rahane, failed to impress on the first day of their final tune-up before the start of the four-match Test series beginning December 17. — PTI

**Brief scores: Day 1, India 'A' 194 in 48.3 overs (Shubman Gill 43, Bumrah not out 55; Wildermuth 3/13) vs Australia 'A' 108 in 32.2 overs (Alex Carey 32; Md Shami 3/29, Navdeep Saini 3/19, Bumrah 2/33).**

## Ahamed, Ann hog limelight

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, DEC. 11

KY Ahamed led an emphatic 1-2 finish for TVS Racing as he vanquished his mentor and multiple champion Jagan Kumar to win the premier Pro-Stock 301-400cc race in the first round of the MRF MMSC fmsci Indian National Motorcycle Racing Championship at the MMRT, here on Friday.

Later, international Rajiv Sethu brought some cheer to Honda camp with a commanding win from pole position in the Pro-Stock 165cc class race, ahead of Jagan Kumar (TVS Racing) and Mathana Kumar, the other Eneos Honda Erula Racing rider.

Other winners in the National championship races of the day were 22-year old Bengalurean Ullas Santrupt (RACR Castrol Power Racing) in the Novice (Stock 165cc) class and local girl Ann



Ann Jennifer

Jennifer (Sparks Racing) who took the honours in the Girls (Stock 165cc) race with ease.

Meanwhile, another Bengalurean, Abhikesh Vasudev chalked up a fluent win in the TVS One Make Championship (Open) and Navneeth

Kumar from Puducherry topped in the Novice category of the same championship.

In the Pro-Stock 301-400cc race, Ahamed and pole-sitter Jagan fought a thrilling battle with the latter initially in the lead before his team-mate upped his pace to move into the front midway through the six-lap race. Thereafter, the duo opened up a sizeable lead over the rest of the pack for a 1-2 finish for TVS Racing. Completing the podium was Hyderabad's Karthik Mateti (Gusto Racing).

The Pro-Stock 165cc race saw Sethu taking a sizeable lead at the start. Behind him, Jagan, Mathana Kumar and Senthil Kumar, the other Eneos Honda Erula Racing rider were involved in a close fight for podium spots. Jagan finally pulled off a brilliant move over Mathana at the last corner of the last lap to finished second.

**RESULTS National Championship: Pro-Stock 301-400cc (Race-1):** 1. KY Ahamed (TVS Racing) (11mins, 47.347secs); 2. Jagan Kumar (TVS Racing) (11:48.059); 3. Karthik Mateti (Gusto Racing) (11:51.430).

**Pro-Stock 165cc (Race-1):** 1. Rajiv Sethu (Eneos Honda Erula Racing) (12:08.653); 2. Jagan Kumar (TVS Racing) (12:13.410); 3. S Mathana Kumar (Eneos Honda Erula Racing) (12:13.445).

**Novice (Stock 165cc, Race-1):** 1. Ullas Santrupt (RACR Castrol Power Racing) (13:06.057); 2. Nithin S (Sparks Racing) (13:06.281); 3. Mohan Babu (Pvt, Chennai) (13:06.512). **Girls (Stock 165cc, Race-1, 5 laps):** 1. Ann Jennifer (Sparks Racing) (10:58.872); 2. Lani Zena Fernandez (Gusto Racing) (11:14.395); 3. Alisha Abdullah (Sparks Racing) (11:14.456).

## COFFEE-BREAK

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



**Aries:** Your good negotiating skills will help you emerge as a winner when discussing potential business partnerships. You will be focused on your tasks and goals.



**Taurus:** Effective communication skills combined with your passion for work will help you achieve results. Discussions could get a little intense.



**Gemini:** Travel plans can go through changes. Increasing work pressures and approaching deadlines could leave you a little tired and pressed for time.



**Cancer:** Working with others on the career and domestic front will help you gain insights as well as speed up the pace of things. Support your partner emotionally today.



**Leo:** Social engagements will give you opportunities to network. Planning ahead will allow you to anticipate and pre-empt problems. Keep calm and work harder.



**Virgo:** Don't be in a hurry to implement your ideas till you have spent time going over the details. Important factors affecting your projects may need to be reworked to avoid delays or obstacles later.

You share your b'day with

**Rajinikanth, an Indian actor who works primarily in Tamil cinema. He is bestknown for his roles in Baashha, Sivaji, Enthiran and 2.0 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 and work towards strengthening your bond with partner. Children's health may become the source of worry.



**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 new projects. There may be a financial crisis looming over the horizon. Don't splurge unnecessarily, instead plan and stick to a monthly budget.

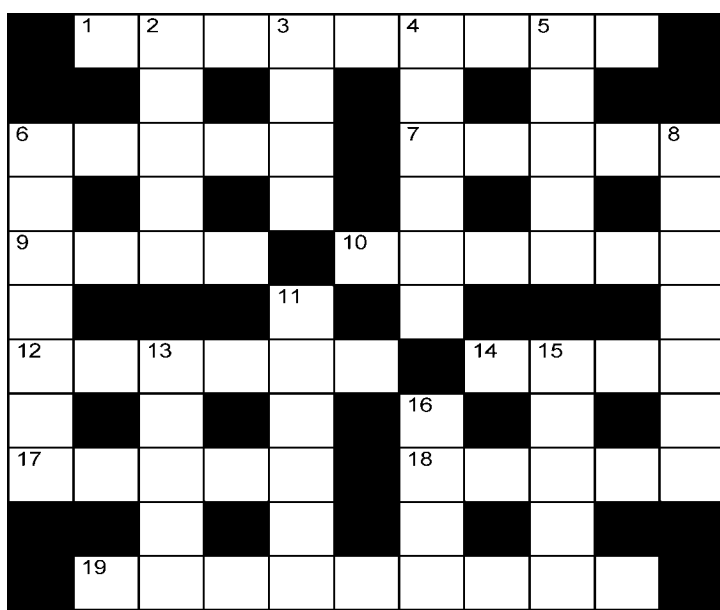


**Aquarius:** Self-employed professionals will have to work hard to satisfy their clients. Consult with others before taking a major decision. Don't let any fear of failing hold you back from working hard.



**Pisces:** 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.

## QUICK CROSSWORD



**Across**  
1. Idleness (9)  
6. Inane (5)  
7. Rider's straps (5)  
9. Suspend (4)  
10. Workshop (6)  
12. Concealed, dormant (6)  
14. Threads across a warp (4)  
17. Extent (5)  
18. Coaxed (5)  
19. Numbered target (9)

**Down**  
2. Synthetic fabric (5)  
3. Table of marble (4)  
4. Greetings (anag) (6)  
5. Tyke (5)  
6. Student (7)  
8. Seen (7)  
11. Aim (6)  
13. Disorder known as athlete's foot (5)  
15. Enthusiastic (5)  
16. Greek aniseed spirit (4)

## YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

**Across:** 1. Twilight, 7. Avert, 8. Curve, 9. Notice, 10. Pyre, 12. Fife, 14. Artist, 17. Elver, 18. Vista, 19. Pretence.

**Down:** 1. Treat, 2. Intact, 3. Itch, 4. Hardy, 5. Magnified, 6. Celestial, 11. Craven, 13. Fever, 15. Issue, 16. Fret.

## Word Mine

H  
E  
E  
T  
R  
C  
A  
T  
R

TODAY'S RATINGS: 35 AVERAGE: 35  
GOOD: 43 OUTSTANDING

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle?

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

Answers tomorrow

## jumble

TAMLE  
SAAIL  
RHITS  
UJRINO

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Answer here: TAMLE

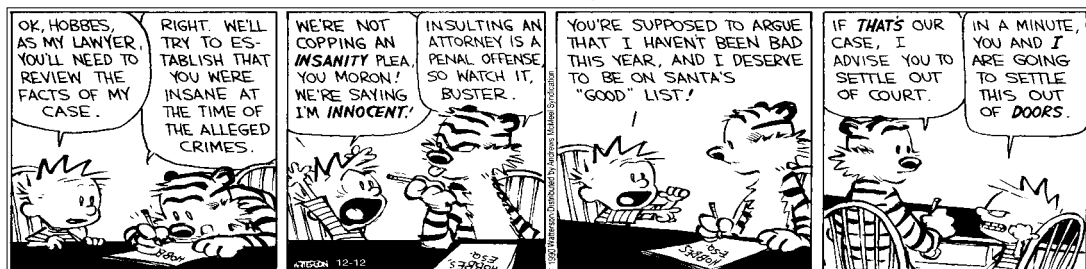
Saturday's Jumbles: BIRCH CHURN NAPKIN JAGUAR

Most of the bats were flying out of the cave, but a few decided to — HANG BACK

(Answers tomorrow)

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CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs



## A NEGATIVE INFERENCE MADE LIFE HARDER



**bridge**  
**PHILLIP ALDER**

**O**n the second round of the auction, if opener may either rebid two of partner's major or double, the raise guarantees four-card support and a minimum opening. Instead, a support double shows three trumps in responder's suit with any hand strength. There isn't one in this deal, but its absence had an influence on the defense.

The board occurred when Argentina faced USA1 at the 2005 Bermuda Bowl world

team championship in Portugal. In the auction, Jeff Meckstroth (North) cue-bid two clubs with his surprisingly strong hand. Then, when Eric Rodwell (South) showed his second suit, North jumped to game.

Sitting West was 18-year-old Agustin Madala. If he had led his singleton, he would have beaten the contract easily. Madala would have won the first round of trumps with his

king, put his partner, Pablo Lombardi, on lead with a spade and received a diamond ruff. The heart ace would have been the fourth defensive trick. But leading declarer's first-bid suit is rarely good, and East's pass over North's two-club cue-bid had denied as many as three spades. So West, hoping to give his partner a ruff there, led a low spade, East winning with the ace and returning the 10. Declarer rose with his spade

king, played a diamond to dummy and discarded his spade jack on the club ace. South ruffed a club in his hand and led a low heart, but the Argentines made no mistake. West went in with his heart king and led another spade. East ruffed with the heart ace and played back a diamond for his partner to ruff.