

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | WEDNESDAY 2 | DECEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 29°C
Min: 21°C
Rainfall: Nil

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Karthigai 17
Tithi: Thuvithyai
Star: Mrigashirsham/
Thiruvathirai
Rahukalam:
12 noon to 1.30 pm
Yamagandam:
7.30 am to 9 am

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.00 am
Zohar: 12.03 pm
Asar: 3.14 pm
Maghrib: 5.40 pm
Isha: 6.55 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.41 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.17 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 7.22 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 8.37 AM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+32,407)	(+431)
94,95,661	1,38,090

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,404)	11,722
TN: 7,83,319	

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

6,39,06,592

DEATHS

14,80,383

218

worldometers.info

Gujarat MP passes away due to Covid in Chennai hospital

Ahmedabad: BJP MP from Gujarat Abhay Bharadwaj died on Tuesday while undergoing treatment for Covid-19 at a Chennai hospital, Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel said. Bharadwaj (66) was a prominent lawyer and was elected to Rajya Sabha in June this year. He tested coronavirus positive in August, after attending party meetings and a roadshow in Rajkot. He was first admitted to the government-run Covid hospital in Rajkot and put on artificial lung support. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the demise of the MP from his home state. — *PTI*

AG grants consent for contempt against comic artist for tweets

New Delhi: Attorney General K K Venugopal has granted consent for initiating contempt proceedings against comic artist Rachita Taneja for her alleged objectionable tweets against the Supreme Court.Sources said that Venugopal has granted consent on a letter of a law student who had sought his consent for initiating contempt of court proceedings against Taneja.“The Attorney General has granted his consent for initiating contempt proceedings against Rachita Taneja,” said the source who is aware of the development.The consent of either the Attorney General or the Solicitor General is necessary, under section 15 of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, for initiating contempt proceedings against a person. — *PTI*

COUNTER

POINT



If the situation continues like this, all the film stars will have to join politics!

STATE | 3

May play a role in 2021 Assembly polls: Alagiri



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■ Govt wants stir called off; protesters want laws dropped

Centre, farmers stick to guns, to meet tomorrow

SANJAY KAW AND BHASKAR HARI SHANKAR | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

As the farmers’ agitation completed six days on Tuesday, there seemed to be no resolution in sight at ending the crisis as both the sides remained adamant on their demands. While the government wants the farmers to end their protest and join a committee of experts to sort out issues related to the three recently enacted farm laws, farmers’ leaders say they want the new laws withdrawn or they will intensify their agitation.

With the marathon meeting between farmers’ leaders and the government remaining inconclusive on Tuesday, a second meeting is now scheduled to take place on December 3.

A delegation of 35 farmer unions, who held a meeting with three Union ministers on Tuesday, rejected the Union government’s offer to nominate their five members to a committee of experts to sort out issues related to the farm laws and said they would continue their agitation at the Delhi-Haryana border until their demands are fully met.

Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar, who led the meeting which was also attended by commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal and minister of state for commerce and industry Som Parkash, said the government will continue its dialogue with the farmers on Thursday.

After the meeting, Mr Tomar said, “the meeting was good and we have decided that the talks will be held on Dec. 3. We wanted a small group to be constituted but farmers’ leaders wanted that the talks should be held with everyone, we do not have a problem with it...” ■ **P4**

PMK protest for 20% quota turns violent

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC
CHENNAI, DEC 1:

The cadre of Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), heading to take part in their protest demanding 20 per cent exclusive reservation for Vanniyars in jobs and educational institutions, turned violent on Tuesday, threw stones on trains and blocked the tracks by placing electricity junction box covers on them, at Perungalathur. They also disrupted vehicular traffic on the bustling GST Road by parking their vehicles on the middle of the road. ■ **P2**

● Panel to study formalities for caste census: P2

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, DEC. 1

Corruption was rampant in the state and that it should be changed, said Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) founder Kamal Haasan, after inducting former IAS officer Santhosh Babu into his party.

More efficient and honest people like Mr Babu were waiting to join the party, he said.

Mr Haasan said he was not satisfied with the performance of the state government and that the recent waterlogging that



Civic workers carry out fumigation as farmers protest against new farm laws, at Ghazipur border, in New Delhi, on Tuesday.

— *PTI*

Mamata targets Centre on farm laws, PM-CARES

Kolkata, Dec. 1: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday hit out at the Centre for forcibly implementing the new farm laws and accused it taking up schemes without consulting the states or providing financial support for projects.

She sought to know where the money of the Prime Minister’s Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM CARES) fund is and wondered why no audit was conducted in it.

Ms Banerjee said the country is going through a “suffocating phase” and slammed the BJP for demanding audits into the direct cash transfer scheme for Cyclone Amphan affected families.She said her government will not work as per the whims and fancies of the Centre.

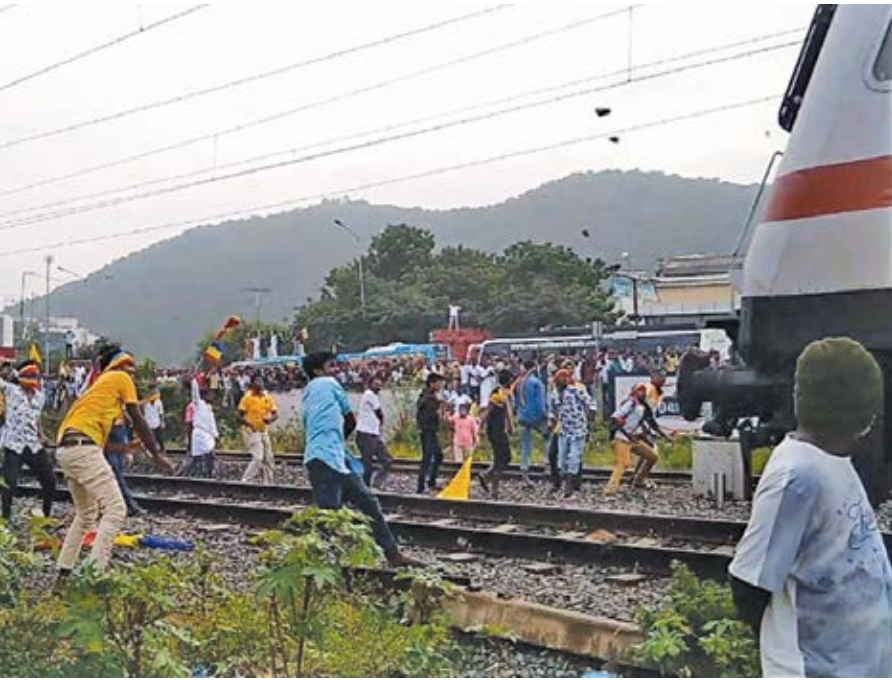
We will return awards: Former sportspersons

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

Several former sportspersons, including Padma Shri and Arjuna awardees who have extended their support to the agitating farmers, and said they will return their awards in protest against the Union government using “force” against the protesters.

Among the sportsperson who voiced their protest are Padma Shri and Arjuna awardee wrestler Kartar Singh, Arjuna awardee basketball player Sajjan Singh Cheema and Arjuna awardee hockey player Rajbir Kaur.

They said they will proceed to Delhi on December 5 and will place their awards outside the Rashtrapati Bhavan to register their protest.



PMK cadre pelting stones at Ananthapuri Express coming from Thiruvananthapuram and halted the train for more than 10 minutes between Vandalur and Tambaram on Tuesday.

— *DC*

WORLD | 5

US opposes release of Tahawwur Rana

GST revenue continues to grow, crosses ₹1 lakh cr mark

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO | FC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

Goods and services tax (GST) collections rose for the third month in a row in November, recording a mop-up of nearly at ₹1.05 lakh crore, government data released on Tuesday showed.

After marking year-on-year contraction during the April-August period, gross GST receipts have been showing a positive trend from September, indicating economic recovery in line with the lifting of lockdown restrictions across the country.

The November 2020 collections of ₹1,04,963 crore were higher than ₹1.03 lakh crore recorded in November 2019 but lower by ₹192 crore compared to October 2020 figures.

In last month’s mopup, the share of CGST was ₹19,189 crore and SGST was ₹25,540 crore. IGST and cess amounted to ₹51,992 crore and ₹8,242crore, respectively. The total number of GSTR-3B returns filed for the month was 82 lakh, the finance ministry said in a statement.

■ **Full story on P7**

China, Pak sign MoU to boost military ties

Beijing, Dec. 1: Chinese Defence Minister Gen Wei Fenghe on Tuesday called for scaling-up the very close military ties between China and Pakistan to a “higher level” to jointly deal with “risks and challenges” faced by the two countries.

Gen. Wei held talks with Pakistan Army chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa in Islamabad on Monday and signed a memorandum of

understanding to deepen defence cooperation between the all-weather allies.

“We should push the military relationship to a higher level, so as to jointly cope with various risks and challenges, firmly safeguard the sovereignty and security interests of the two countries, and safeguard the regional peace and stability,” the Chinese Ministry of

Defence here quoted Gen. Wei as saying.

The Chinese statement was also silent about the new MoU. Both countries rarely disclose the extent of their defence ties which spans all sectors of the army, air force and the navy. China is the major defence supplier to Pakistan, providing the fighter jets to modern naval frigates and other major armaments — *PTI*

BrahMos navy version test-fired successfully

New Delhi, Dec. 1: A naval version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile that can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft, or from land platforms

On November 24, the Indian Army had “successfully” test-fired the surface-to-surface BrahMos missile that flies at a speed of 2.8 Mach or almost three times the speed of sound.

The range of the new land attack version of the missile has been extended to 400 km from the original 290 km. India has already deployed a sizable number of the original BrahMos missiles and other key assets in several strategic locations. — *PTI*

BrahMos Aerospace, an

Voter apathy hits Hyderabad as only 35% cast votes

Hyderabad, Dec. 1: A high-decibel, no holds barred campaign involving a battery of BJP leaders such as Union home minister Amit Shah versus the ruling TRS for the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) election was followed by a low turnout polling on Tuesday.

About 35 per cent of the 74 lakh-odd voters turned up to cast their votes. Counting of votes will be taken up on December 4.

Polling passed off peacefully, but not without any glitch, as repoll was ordered in ward number 26 owing to a symbol mix-up involving the two Left parties- CPI and CPI (M), officials said.

Ballot papers were used in total 150 wards of the corporation.

Aiming to cash-in on its surprise success in the recent Dubbak assembly bypoll, the BJP seemed to have upped the stakes in the civic polls, fielding the “who’s who” of the saffron party for canvassing of votes.

While Mr Shah assured development to the southern city and free it from “Nizam culture” if voted to power, UP chief minister Adityanath, whose administration changed the names of Faizabad and Allahabad in his state to Ayodhya and Prayagraj, respectively, said Hyderabad could follow suit to become ‘Bhagyanagar’ if his party captured GHMC. — *PTI*

SPORT | 8

Shah Rukh invests in USA cricket league



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RELIEF TEAMS READY

Cyclone threat in southern districts

IMD for total ban on fishing in state till Dec. 4

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, DEC. 1

A low pressure depression that now lays 930 km from Kanyakumari in the Bay of Bengal was likely to turn into a cyclone and reach the Kanyakumari sea on December 3, bringing heavy rains, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami warned the people of southern districts.

He has directed nine rescue teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams to be stationed in Kanyakumari (2), Tirunelveli (3), Thoothukudi (2) and Madurai (2) districts.

Other rescue teams with officials drawn from the revenue, local body, fire, PWD, highways, electricity, health and other departments of the State government have also been asked to camp in the above said cyclone-prone districts, besides Tenkasi, Sivaganga, Theni, Dindigul, Ramanathapuram and Virudhunagar.

Those teams should be equipped with fuel, earth mover machines, electric tree cutters, sand bags and lamp posts, the Chief Minister said in a statement on Tuesday.

— *PTI*

— *PTI*

SHORT TAKES

TN logs 1,404 new Covid-19 cases, 10 fatalities

Chennai, Dec. 1: Tamil Nadu on Tuesday reported 1,404 fresh COVID-19 cases taking the tally to 7,83,319 and with 10 more fatalities, the death toll mounted to 11,722. The new infections include 380 from Chennai and Kallakurichi district reported nil cases while districts including Ariyalur (5), Kanyakumari (6), Perambalur (3) and Theni (5) reported cases in single digits, in keeping with the overall state trend of declining coronavirus cases. Of the dead, nine had comorbidities and one no chronic illness. The 7.83 lakh plus case tally includes 2,15,739 from Chennai and the death toll of 11,722 covers 3,854 reported from the state capital, a Health department bulletin said. With 1,411 patients getting discharged from various hospitals, 7,60,617 people have so far got cured of the infection and active cases dipped to 10,980. As many as 65,058 samples were tested (under the Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction method) and in total 1,21,25,059 specimens were examined (RT-PCR) in 221 labs in the state. —PTI

Ex-judge Karman case: HC summons DGP, CoP on Dec.7

J. STALIN | DC CHENNAI, DEC. 1

The Madras high court has ordered the appearance of Director General of Police and Commissioner of Police, Chennai, before it on December 7, 2020, for rendering necessary and effective assistance to the court in connection with a petition filed by the Bar Council of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, which sought registration of a case against Justice Karman, a retired judge of the Madras high court, for allegedly making serious scandalous, vituperative, obscene and unpardonable utterances against former judges and some of the sitting judges of the Supreme Court of India as well as former judges and sitting judges of the Madras high court as well as the family members, especially, the women-folk, which have been uploaded and circulated by Dhanasekaran through visual media platforms.

A division bench comprising Justices M.Sathyamurayanan and R.Hemalatha was passing further interim orders on the petition filed by BCTP represented by its secretary C.Rajakumar..

One more dies of corona in Pondy, toll mounts to 611

Puducherry, Dec. 1: Puducherry logged 53 fresh cases of Covid-19 and one related death on Tuesday, raising the overall tally to 37,020.

Health Minister Malladi Krishna Rao told reporters that a 45-year-old man died of the viral infection in JIPMER here during the last twenty four hours ending 10 am today, pushing the toll to 611.

Rao said of the total 37,020 cases, the active cases were 439 while 35,970 patients recovered and were discharged so far.

Rao said the fatality and recovery rates were 1.65 percent and 97.16 percent respectively.

He said 72 patients were discharged from hospitals during the last 24 hours.

Rao also pointed out that of the total 53 new cases reported today 23 were from Puducherry, nine in Karaikal and two in Mahe.

Yanam region had 10 patients in hospital and nine in home isolation.

—PTI

Rao said of the total 37,020 cases, the active cases were 439 while 35,970 patients recovered and were discharged so far.**Hospital saves 35-year-old stroke patient**

Chennai: Three complicated, multi-disciplinary procedures were carried out on a 35-year-old patient, who had an Ischemic stroke, at Apollo Speciality Hospitals, Vanagaram. Mr. Ramkumar of Chennai was brought to the comprehensive stroke care centre with a sudden inability to use his left arm and leg and with symptoms of facial paralysis and vision loss in his left eye.

Neurologist Dr P.R. Prabash, interventional radiologist Dr. Swatee Halbe and neurosurgeon Dr. Siddhartha Ghosh carried out successive life-saving procedures like Thrombolysis followed by mechanical thrombectomy to remove a clot and

then an emergency decompressive craniectomy to treat a swelling in the brain.

Ms Suneeta Reddy, MD, Apollo Hospitals Group said, "All our comprehensive stroke centers are equipped with 24x7 stroke team along with high-precision CT, MRI facilities with the capability of performing specialised surgical and interventional procedures in no time. We had recently launched AI technology-enabled advanced stroke management to improve time-critical triage or transfer decisions and facilitate better patient outcomes. The stroke team will be able to remotely access the brain scans of patients on mobile app or email for faster decision."

Separate water ministry's need of hour in state

T. SUDHEESH | DC CHENNAI, DEC. 1

Though Chennai and its surrounding districts including Chengalpet, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur, which regularly have water crisis during summer, received 20.30 per cent excess rainfall during the last two months, lapped up by cyclone Nivar, the water management in the state remains an uphill task as it is looked after by various departments.

While the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) manages ponds and tanks in the city, the public works department (PWD), which controls lakes, Metro Water, is in charge of the water bodies that provide drinking water. They also work in coordination with many other departments to maintain water bodies and marshlands.

Though the demand for setting up a single agency to manage water resources under a minister like the water resource department in Kerala is a long-standing one, it has now become the need of the hour, as almost all water bodies in the city are brimming with water as a result of cyclone Nivar.

It may be recalled that on July 30 a division bench of the Madras high court comprising M.M. Sundresh and R Hemalatha, hearing a plea of S Kalaiyarasi, ordered that there has to be a separate ministry in the government to deal with encroachments, preservation of water bodies and

Green activists see red in Pallikaranai dredging move

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 1

The state government's reported move to dredge the Pallikaranai marshland has become a cause of concern among green activists.

Green activist Jeo Damin of Poovulagin Nambargal, an environmental organization, said the government was planning to deepen the marshland in Pallikaranai in the pretext of water conservation. If the marshland is dredged, it will get rid of rich biodiversity in the area.

The statement by the Chief Minister on Monday is clear that the government was planning to deepen the area. The

replenishing natural resources.

According to the data, the state has got as many as 39,000 tanks. Of these, around 10,000 tanks are being controlled by the PWD. Of 10,000 tanks, about 5,000 tanks are system tanks fed by riverine channels. The rest 5,000 tanks are enriched by rainfall.

The rest of the waterbodies, like tanks and Oorani, are maintained by various departments including railways, universities and local bodies.

Mr. Senthoro Pari, president, Enxora International, says reviving and

government claims that the move is inevitable as the surrounding areas have become flood-prone. Deepening the marsh will help to improve the water carrying capacity. But it would have an adverse impact on the biodiversity. It is not clear where the dredged sand would be transported to and if quantity concrete mixture would be put in the area. We are concerned about the proposal, he said.

Darwin Annadurai Duraiswamy, founder of Eco India, said that converting the ecosystem of Pallikaranai marsh is suicidal because it acts as a natural eco barrier. It absorbs entire chemicals and pesticides the city produces and prevents

them flowing into the sea. Pallikaranai marsh is also a natural habitat for hundreds of species of flora and fauna. So it is the duty of government to protect it. Pallikaranai marsh, one of the major dumping grounds in the city, has already shrunk from 15,000 acres to 1,500 acres due to indiscriminate dumping of solid wastes during the last four decades. The area is enriched with diverse ecosystem of 29 species of grass, 164 species of birds, 10 species of mammals, 21 species of reptiles, 50 species of fishes, nine species of amphibians and mollusks, five species of crustaceans, and seven species of butterflies, he said.

attention for improvement of water bodies in the state', he said.

Dr Shekhar Raghavan, Chennai's Rain Man, who founded NGO Rain Centre, also agreed with the concept of a new ministry for water management. "We had studied this matter post 2015 flood and suggested the government for the creation of a 'rainwater department' to manage the water predominantly received through the seasonal rainfall. But it has so far not become a reality. It is time for the government to think about seriously," he said.



Chennai District Collector, R. Seethalakshmi along with Government Multi-Speciality Hospital Director Dr R Vimala and Government Stanley Medical College Dean Dr P Balaji and other doctors take a pledge to mark World AIDS Day awareness programme on Tuesday. — DC

Gold, Saudi Riyals and US Dollars seized

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 1

The customs department at the Chennai airport seized gold worth Rs 12 lakh concealed in slipper straps and Saudi Riyals and US Dollars worth Rs. 6.5 lakh on Monday.

According to airport sources, Mohammed Hasan Ali (23) of Ramanathapuram who arrived from Dubai by Emirates Flight EK 544 was intercepted at exit by the customs officer as he was rushing through green channel and his slippers came off. The officer trying to help picked his slipper but to his surprise it appeared to be unusually heavy.

On examination it was noticed that the leather slippers had unusually broad straps having a spe-



cially designed cavity in which gold paste packets wrapped with red adhesive tape were concealed.

Four gold paste packets two from each slipper, weighing 292 grams were recovered. On extraction 239 grams of 24 K purity gold valued at Rs. 12 lakh was recovered and seized under the Customs Act.

In another case Sahubar Sathik (21) of Ramanathapuram who was destined for Dubai by Air India Express Flight IX 1643 was intercepted at departure terminal while

he was proceeding to the security hold area after clearing Immigration, on suspicion that he might be carrying foreign currency.

On his personal search 7,000 Saudi Riyals (SAR) in denomination of 500 were recovered from his wallet and 7,000 US Dollars in denomination of 100 were recovered from his hand baggage.

Total undeclared foreign currency equivalent to ₹6.5 lakh was seized Customs Act read with the Foreign Exchange Management (Export and Import of currency) (Amendment) Regulations, 2015. In all, Rs 18.5 kg worth gold, Saudi Riyals and US Dollars were seized under the Customs Act read with FEMA Regulations 2015. Further investigation is on.

19.21 LAKH TOOK METRO DURING SEPT 7-NOV 30

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 1

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) has attracted a total of 19.21 lakh passengers between September 7 and November 30. The ridership increased after CMRL resumed its services on September 7 in a graded manner after the 5-month-long lockdown.

In a press release on Tuesday, the CMRL said a total of 8.15 lakh passengers travelled in November alone while it was 7.03 lakh in October. From September 7 to September 30, 3.60 lakh passengers chose the metro.

In November, a total of 21,579 passengers utilised the QR code ticketing system while 4.72 lakh passengers used the travel card ticketing system. CMRL has offered a 20 per cent discount on QR code ticketing and 10 per cent discount on using travel cards.

All the entrance gates at all metro stations have been opened for public use. All the facilities inside the stations such as lifts, escalators and subways have also been opened. The CMRL requested all its passengers to co-operate with CMRL security, ticketing and other staff for a safe and smooth travel in its effort to prevent the spread of Covid-19 by maintaining social distancing.



PMK cadres led by Anbumani Ramadoss protesting near Munro statue on Tuesday. —DC



(Above) PMK cadres blocking arterial GST roads. Traffic snarls hit motorists and commuters on Tuesday morning. — DC

350 PMK men booked for damaging public property

Taking city to ransom during peaks hours

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 1

Traffic came to a standstill on GST Road for more than two hours on Tuesday morning after PMK members protested near Perungalathur when the police prevented them from entering the city for a political demonstration.

Motorists and bus commuters taking the arterial road were stranded for hours due to the protest. Members of the PMK gathered in front of a moving train in Perungalathur railway station in Chengalpattu and pelted stones at it, causing damage to the public property and triggering panic in the area. The train was forced to halt as the members pelted stones at it. Though the passengers of the train were unhurt, the windshield of the train was damaged, the police sources said.

A senior official of the Southern Railway said the protesters pelted stones at Ananthapur Express. The driver stopped the train to foil further damage to the train and prevent injuries to passengers. Window panes of the train were damaged. The

police cleared the protesters from the track after which the train proceeded towards Chennai Egmore.

PMK founder Ramadoss on Saturday called for a protest demanding 20 per cent quota for Vanniya in education and jobs from December 1. Following this, many PMK members gathered near Perungalathur in Chengalpattu to make their way to Chennai. However, the protesters were not permitted by the police to enter the city. Angered by this, the protesters also blocked traffic for three hours, affecting vehicular movement between Chennai and Chengalpattu districts. The police did not grant permission for the PMK demonstration as part of the Covid-19 safety protocol.

Senior police officers held talks with the protesters after which the protest was cleared and the traffic was restored after 10 am. However, the suburban train services resumed only after 2:30 pm.

At least 350 PMK cadres were booked by Tambaram railway police and Tambaram reserve police for damaging public property.

20 per cent quota our right, says Anbumani

From P1

Videos of the men going on a rampage on the railway tracks, with their flags clearly visible, made their rounds on social media, evoking public anger against the protesters.

After the trains stopped plying, the men knocked out covers of electricity junction boxes and placed them across the tracks. Police had a tough time chasing them away.

When the police crack-down on vehicles with PMK flags continued at Tambaram, there too the men abandoned vehicles on the road causing massive traffic snarls.

Inside the city, a group of cadre gathered below the iconic equestrian statue of Thomas Munro with a view to marching towards the TNPSF office, where they had planned to stage protests for four days as the first phase of a long-drawn agitation to press for 20 per cent reservation for the Vanniyar community in educational institutions and jobs in Tamil Nadu.

While party founder S. Ramadoss did not join the protesters – his heart and soul was at the agitation venue, he tweeted from his house – his son and youth wing leader Anbumani Ramadoss was there to guide the cadre.

Since the police surrounded the cadre gathered there and prevented them from moving anywhere, they dispersed from there and a delegation of top leaders of the party, including G K Mani and A K Murthy, went to the Secretariat to hold talks with Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami, Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam and other Ministers.

Emerging from the meeting, Anbumani Ramadoss said he had stressed with the Chief Minister the need for conducting caste-wise census – within hours the Chief Minister announced that he had set in motion the process for the census.

The PMK leader said that the protest was not directed against anybody and was being carried out only on the basis of the

decisions taken at their party meeting on November 22. The last phase of the agitation, to press for their 40-year-old demand, would be in January, 2021, he said.

The party had been prevailing upon several Chief Ministers like M G Ramachandran, M Karunanidhi and J Jayalalitha the need for implementing 20 per cent reservation for the community but nothing was done about it by any government, he said.

Stating that the 20 per cent reservation was their right, Anbumani Ramadoss said that it was required for national development. They had no other alternative, he added.

The Vanniyar community now comes under the Most Backward Class category, which has over 40 castes in the list and together enjoy 20 per cent reservation in admissions for educational institutions and in government jobs. Now the PMK wants a 20 per cent reservation for the Vanniyar community alone.

PANEL TO STUDY FORMALITIES FOR CASTE CENSUS

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 1

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami announced that a panel will be set up to study the modalities to gather quantifiable data for a caste census, which is now required for fighting the legal cases against the 69 per cent reservation in the state.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Chief Minister said that the panel would submit a report to the government on the method of collecting the data to find the population of various caste groups.

The announcement came hours after he held talks with PMK leaders, including Anbumani Ramadoss, who were demanding other things, a caste-based census to find out the demographic strength of every community in the state. Palaniswami's statement said that there was a demand for such a census from different caste organisations and political parties and that the data would be required to ensure that the welfare schemes of the government reached the beneficiaries.

Recalling that it was the AIADMK government that brought in the 69 per cent reservation in the state, Palaniswami pledged his governments' total commitment to social justice.

Chief Minister said that the panel would submit a report to the government on the method of collecting the data to find the population of various caste groups

In October, the PMK accused the government of not paying heed to people's grievances, and said it would hold an unprecedented, massive protest demanding 20% quota

SHORT TAKES

Plea against shifting Tasmac shop

ZAKEER HUSSAIN | DC ERODE, DEC. 1

Over 50 workers and labourers in and around Rattaisutripalayam area like R a s a m p a l a y a m , Chennimalaipalayam, Sinkulam and Thirumangalam tank, had dropped a petition in the complaint box at the collectorate here on Tuesday objecting the move to shift a Tasmac shop from Rattaisutripalayam to a far off place.

In their petition, they stated that they were around 500 customers of the Tasmac shop who were by profession construction workers, farm labourers, load men, tree climbers, daily wagers, forest workers and several such similar jobs.

To relax from the days' hard toil, they take to drinking, they said, and added that officials had earlier taken their consent and put up the Tasmac stall there. If the shop is shifted to the now proposed area, people will have to travel roughly 10 kms to drink, which would incur fuel expenses and even cause accidents, they said.

There is a coconut grove around the shop and no temple nearby, as alleged by some persons. The grove serves a perfect place for them to confine their drinking activities.

Hence, the petition demanded that the liquor shop be not shifted before opening another in the area, if at all authorities saw a dire necessity to shift it.

TN Left parties support protesting farmers

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 1

A coalition of Left parties in Tamil Nadu has decided to hold agitations in front of Central and State government offices in support of the farmers from North India who had laid a siege on Delhi, demanding the withdrawal of the three anti-farmers Bills recently passed in Parliament.

The Left parties, in a joint statement, said their agitation would be a continuous one at various places in the State and called upon farmers, farm workers, the working class and democratic forces to join them.

The statement was signed by CP (M) state secretary K. Balakrishnan, CPI state secretary R. Mutharasan and CPI(ML) Liberation state secretary N. K. Natarajan.

Their agitation would be a continuous one at various places in the State and called upon farmers, farm workers, the working class and democratic forces to join them.



Corporation Commissioner P.Kumaravel Pandian inspects fish shops and instructs to maintain hygiene at Singanallur in Coimbatore on Tuesday.



Former IAS officer Santhosh Babu joins Kamal Haasan's MNM party on Tuesday.

— DC

Doc's yeoman's service lauded

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUCHY, DEC. 1

The parents of seven students of government higher secondary school here, who got admission in the first year MBBS course this year under the 7.5 percent exclusive reservation quota, were all in praise of cardiologist Dr Senthilkumar Nallusamy here, for his benevolent gesture of donating free medical books and stethoscopes to these students,

through his 'Senthil Prabha Trust', at a brief ceremony held here, on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Senthilkumar thanked Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami for his bold step of providing 7.5 percent exclusive reservation for government schools.

Due to the Chief Minister's action, more than 300 students of government schools joined first year MBBS, of which 10 students hailed

from Tiruchy itself.

"Coming to understand that the parents of these students were daily wagers who found it difficult to buy the books, we decided to donate them and stethoscopes to motivate them further, added Dr Senthilkumar.

One of the beneficiary students, Hari, whose ambition is to become a cardiologist, said that he was feeling proud to receive the free books from a cardiologist.

Plea to expand Gandhi market

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUCHY, DEC. 1

The Tamil Nadu Vanigar Sangankalin Pervai has appealed to the government to further expand the existing Gandhi Market at here, which was closed from March due to the pandemic. The market was reopened on Monday evening after a prolonged legal battle.

Peravai's president T Vellaiyan told newsmen here on Tuesday that they

also appealed to the government to give up the move to shift the Gandhi market to another place, under the smart city scheme.

Instead, they wanted to extend the Gandhi market area and ensure the livelihood of the third generation retail traders involved in business at the Gandhi market.

He also called upon the traders at the Gandhi market to unite under one banner and fight the gov-

ernment's shifting move, but retain the market complex and its originality.

He requested the chief minister to permit retail trade in the Koyambedu market at Chennai immediately, and also appealed to political leaders to give an assurance in their election manifestos that they would never allow corporates to destroy the interest of domestic traders and farmers.

CPM cadre held for backing farmers' stir

DC CORRESPONDENT THANJAVUR, DEC. 1

Police arrested 86 members of the CPI(M) as they staged a demonstration before the head post office here on Tuesday, expressing solidarity with farmers who are agitating along the Delhi-Haryana border, demanding withdrawal of three farm legislations introduced by the Centre.

G Neelamegam, CPI(M), district secretary, Sami Nadarajan, district secretary, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal sangam, P Senthilkumar, district executive committee member, took part in the agitation. They said that farmers have been agitating peacefully in a democratic way, but the Centre is allegedly letting loose repressive measures to suppress their voices. The Centre should talk to the farmers and withdraw the farm legislation, the members said before the arrest.

Karikal Cholan awards

DC CORRESPONDENT THANJAVUR, DEC. 1

The 'Karikal Cholan awards' for the best books in Tamil from Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka, given by the G Sarangapani chair established by Mustafa Trust of Singapore in the Tamil University here, have been announced for the year 2018.

According to G Balasubramanian, vice-chancellor, Tamil University, who headed the committee to select the books for the award, 14 books were received from Sri Lanka, nine from Singapore and 17 from Malaysia. Of them, 'Erimalai', written by T Gnanasekaran, from Sri Lanka, 'Vaanan Ennum Bodhi Maram' written by AS Francis of Malaysia and 'Moongil Manasu' written by A Inba of Sri Lanka, were selected for the award for the year 2018.

The awards will be distributed at a function to be held in the university soon, said Balasubramanian. "We will try to give the awards for the year 2019 also in the same function," added the VC.

Efforts on to reach them, says district collector

161 fishing boats in KK dt yet to reach shore

DC CORRESPONDENT KANYAKUMARI, DEC. 1

Over a thousand fishermen who went deep sea fishing in 161 mechanised boats, are yet to return ashore in the district. Having gone beyond 200 nautical miles, they could not be reached by authorities, said Collector M Arvind, who added that the administration has been taking all steps to reach them.

Having identified 76 vulnerable areas, most of which is located in the 48 coastal villages from Arookiapuram to Neerodi, 75 temporary shelters have been set up to shelter people evacuated from the vulnerable areas, said the

"Communication gadgets that these fishermen have, cannot receive messages beyond 70 nautical miles away from shore. Usually, they go deep sea fishing up to 200 nautical"

collector. The district has deployed three teams of National Disaster and Relief Force (NDRF), two of which are stationed at Nagercoil and the third at Colachel.

Over 90 per cent of fishermen who went fishing returned ashore due to the depression, while 161

boats are yet to return. Relatives of fishermen who are still at sea, have urged the government to deploy Coast Guard and Naval ships and aircrafts for search operations, said Rev Fr Churchill, general secretary, South Asian Fishermen Fraternity (SAFF). "Communication gadgets that these fishermen have, cannot receive messages beyond 70 nautical miles away from shore. Usually, they go deep sea fishing up to 200 nautical," he added.

The collector said, "Through the state government all arrangements has been made for Kanyakumari fishermen fishing near Karnataka, Kerala, Goa and

Maharashtra, to land for safety in neighbouring harbours.

87 low-lying areas identified in Nellai dt: Identifying 87 low lying areas in the district, the district administration has set up a sub-collector headed taluk-level teams to monitor the situation in the hilly regions of Manjolai, Karaiyar, the city and rural areas, and in the seven coastal hamlets, said Collector Vishnu. Three NDRF teams consisting of 57 personnel and 60 SDRF personnel are kept ready to face the storm. Thoothukudi district has three NDRF teams deployed from Arakkonam.

Signature campaign to mark AIDS Day

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUCHY, DEC. 1

Collector S. Sivarasu on Tuesday launched a signature campaign and administered HIV AIDS awareness pledge and took part in a community feast here, as part of "World HIV Aids day" here.

In his address, Sivarasu said, due to various efforts, HIV affected percentage among the general public in the district has come down to 0.32 percent now, against 1.8 percent in 2010. Similarly, the ratio of HIV affected pregnant women also has come down from 0.2 percent to .03 percent.

Karur Collector S Malarvizhi launched the signature campaign

HIV affected percentage among the general public in the district has come down to 0.32 percent now, against 1.8 percent in 2010

towards insisting upon the general public to treat HIV affected persons cordially, and also administered HIV Aids awareness pledge to officials here, as part of the World HIV Aids day celebrations here. She also gave away cash prizes of ₹3,000, ₹2,000 and ₹1,000 and shields to three HIV-affected students, who scored good marks in the plus-II exams.

Perambalur Collector P Srivenkatapriya also launched a signature campaign as part of the World HIV Aids day at

Perambalur on Tuesday. Speaking on the occasion, she said the current year's theme for World HIV Aids day is 'Global solidarity shared responsibility'.

At Ariyalur, district revenue officer R Jainulabdeen inaugurated the World HIV Aids day celebrations and launched the signature campaign. He said that Tamil Nadu Aids Control Society and its district branches have jointly taken initiative for establishing the Red Cross society branches in all colleges across the district, and arranged a 16 hours aids awareness programme for college students. He said 90 HIV-affected persons were given welfare measures in the district in the current year.

TNCC's plough march postponed

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 1

The 'plough march' organised by the Congress party on Wednesday was postponed to December 5 in view of the cyclone, TNCC president K. S. Alagiri announced on Tuesday.

In a statement, Alagiri urged all district congress presidents to ensure that a 'plough march' was organized in one of the Assembly segments in their district on December 5.

The march was called to protest against the Centre anti-farmer policy and to demand the withdrawal of the recently enacted anti-farmer bills.

Train timings revised

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 1

Issuing a corrigendum and revised timing regarding a press release issued on December 1 relating to special trains between Dr MGR Chennai Central station and Palakkad, chief public relations officer, Southern Railway, B Guganesan, on Tuesday issued another press release.

The release stated that the trains will not have any second class chair car. The timings of the Palakkad – Dr MGR Chennai Central special train has been revised for stations from Jolarpettai to Chennai Central.

It was mentioned that the Palakkad – Chennai Central special train will leave Jolarpettai at 02:10 hrs to reach Chennai Central at



It was mentioned that the Palakkad – Chennai Central special train will leave Jolarpettai at 02:10 hrs to reach Chennai Central at 05:35 hrs, but as per revised timings, the Palakkad –

Chennai Central special train will leave Jolarpettai at 00:30 hrs and reach Chennai Central by 04:05 hrs

05:35 hrs, but as per revised timings, the Palakkad – Chennai Central special train will leave Jolarpettai at 00:30 hrs and reach Chennai Central by 04:05 hrs.

Train No.02651 Chennai Central – Palakkad daily special will leave Chennai Central by 21:40 hrs and reach Palakkad by 10:10 hrs the next day. The first service from Chennai Central will be on December 8, 2020.

Train No.02652 Palakkad – Chennai Central daily special

will leave Palakkad by 15:35 hrs and reach Chennai Central by 04:05 hrs the next day. The first service from Palakkad will be on December 9, 2020.

Coach composition would be AC First Class-cum-AC 2 tier – 1, AC 2 tier – 1, AC 3 tier – 2, Sleeper Class – 11, General Second Class – 4 and Luggage-cum-brake van – 2 coaches.

Reservations for the above special trains will open at 08.00 hrs on December 2.

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, DEC 1

As the Nilgiris recorded an influx of a little over 75,000 tourists in November, now the tourism stakeholders in the hills want the government to re-open all tourist attractions in the hills like the 'Boat houses' in Ooty and 'Pykara lakes' to draw more tourists.

Though the horticulture department run public parks like the Government Botanical Garden (GBG) and Government Rose Garden had been opened for tourists since September 9, tourist flow here was rather on a snail's pace, as only around 20,000 tourists visited this hill town in two months time till October.

Once the mandatory e-



Boat House at Ooty lake, a tourist attraction, which has been closed to tourists since March.

— DC

pass norms were lifted in late October, tourism began to pick up in

Nilgiris. This was evident by the fact that the GBG, the major indicator of

tourist flow to the hills, recorded 76,704 tourists in November alone.

N Chandrasekar, secretary, Nilgiris Hotels and Restaurants Association, urged the government to take steps to re-open all tourist destinations including the boat houses at Ooty and Pykara lake, Dodabetta peak, Ecotourist spot in Neerkachi mund, Dolphin's Nose in Coonoor and Kodanad view point in Kotagiri, to pep up tourism activities. "As only a few horticulture run public parks are opened now, many tourists are bored with visiting only the gardens. Tourists who would like to come and stay here always wanted to enjoy the lake tourism, eco-tourism and other such attractions. So, it is high time the government takes a favorable decision on the matter," he suggested.

SHORT TAKES

85-YEAR-OLD
HELD FOR RAPING
5-YEAR-OLD

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
KENDRAPARA, DEC. 1

An octogenarian man in Kendrapara district was on Monday night arrested for allegedly raping a five-year-old girl.

According to police, Sunakar Patra (85), a grocery shop owner, allegedly raped the child on Sunday evening after luring her inside the shop with chocolates.

"The accused was arrested after the girl's parents lodged a police complaint. During interrogation, the accused confessed to the crime," inspector S.K. Pradhan, said.

The girl was medically examined, the officer said.

The accused Patra was booked under sections 376 AB (punishment for rape on woman under twelve years of age), 294 (obscene acts), 341 (wrongful restraint) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code.

Besides, sections 4 and 6 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 were also slapped on him.

"Soon after his arrest, the accused was produced in a local court. The court sent the accused Sunakar Pradhan to judicial custody for 14 days," the inspector informed.

49% VOTE IN
J&K'S DDC 2ND
PHASE POLLS

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, DEC. 1

The second phase of Jammu and Kashmir's first ever District Development Council (DDC) elections recorded around 49 per cent voter turnout on Monday.

J&K's state election commissioner K.K. Sharma, while addressing a press conference here said that like the first one, the second phase of DDC elections has been conducted "successfully" with 48.62 per cent of the electorate using their right of vote in 43 constituencies.

"The polling has been peaceful in all 43 constituencies, having a of total of 3,77,401 voters including 2,01,792 male and 1,75,609 female," he said.

He also said that Jammu division recorded an average voter turnout of 65.54 per cent with frontier district of Poonch registering the highest percentage of 75.07 per cent followed by Jammu district with 69.97 per cent.

The lowest turnout in Jammu division was in Kathua, another border district, which recorded 60.10 per cent.

The Kashmir division recorded 33.34 per cent voter turnout with Bandipora district recording highest polling at 69.66 per cent followed by Kupwara district at 58.69 per cent and Ganderbal with around 49.14 per cent polling in the second phase of elections.

The lowest turnout of 8.67 per cent was reported from Pulwama district, the hotbed of insurgency.

NAGA GOV REJECTS
SEPARATE FLAG,
CONSTITUTION PLEA

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, DEC. 1

Nagaland Governor R.N. Ravi who is also the interlocutor for Naga peace talks has outrightly rejected the demand of NSCN (IM) for separate flag and constitution for Nagaland.

Ravi in his address on the 58th anniversary of the state's formation said, "The Indian National Flag and Constitution are the pride of the people of India. The Government of India is absolutely clear that there is and there shall be only one National Flag and Constitution in India. Anyone talking anything contrary is peddling preposterous lies. They are trying to confuse and mislead the people."

In what was a clear message for the NSCN (IM) insisting on a separate flag and constitution for Nagaland, Ravi asserted, "The territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Union of India is supreme. The Government of India has never ever talked, much less negotiated with anyone on the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country. Any misadventure to disintegrate this great nation shall not be tolerated."

The Governor went on saying that the Central government has already recognised "the uniqueness of the Nagas".

Never spoke about inoculating entire country with vaccine: Govt

Kerala, Delhi, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh have recorded decline in active Coronavirus cases

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

There was never any talk of inoculating the whole population of the country with Covid-19 vaccine, the Centre said on Tuesday said.

Responding to a question at a press briefing, ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava said the purpose of the Covid vaccine drive would be to break the chain of viral transmission.

"Our purpose is to break the chain of virus transmission. If we are able to vaccinate a critical mass of people and break the chain of transmission, then we may not have to vaccinate the entire population," he said.

"The role of masks is also vitally important and that will continue even after the vaccination. Because we are starting with a small group of population at a time and therefore masks will be protective and continue to be used so as to help in breaking the chain of viral transmission," Bhargava said.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said there was never a talk about inoculating the whole population of the country with Covid-19 vaccine.

"I just want to make this clear that the government has never spoken about vaccinating the entire



Medics from Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation take swab samples of commuters for Antigen and RT-PCR Test for Covid-19 at Nerul Railway Station in Navi Mumbai on Tuesday.

country. It's important that we discuss such scientific issues, based on factual information only and then analyse it," said Bhushan.

Meanwhile, daily new cases and India's active cases continue to be on a

decline while the recoveries are on a rise. On Tuesday, the total active were almost 4.36 lakh and the share of active cases in the total positive cases has further shrunk to 4.60 per cent. India's total tally of Covid-19 is 94.63 lakh with

31,118 fresh detections. The fatalities so far have been 1.37 lakh out of which 482 deaths occurred in the last 24 hours.

In Delhi, the daily rise in high number of fresh cases has halted a bit even though it is still reporting

much higher cases than many states and UTs. Kerala and Maharashtra also have high cases.

Union Health Ministry officials said while some states like Kerala, Delhi, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, etc have witnessed a

decline in the active caseload in the past 24 hours, states like Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Assam and Goa have reported an addition to their caseload.

The ICMR has said that the initial findings into an 'adverse event' allegedly suffered by an Oxford Covid-19 vaccine trial participant in Chennai did not necessitate halting of the trials and it is the role of drug regulator to ascertain or refute if any causal link between the event and the intervention.

On allegation of the 'adverse event' in a Serum Institute of India trial, the government said it will not affect vaccine timelines in anyway.

A 40-year-old man who was a volunteer in the third phase of the "Covidshield" vaccine trial in Chennai has alleged serious side effects, including a virtual neurological breakdown and impairment of cognitive functions.

He has sought ₹5 crore compensation in a legal notice to Serum Institute and others, besides seeking a halt to the trial. However, the SII has rejected the charges as "malicious and misconceived" and said it will seek damages in excess of ₹100 crore.

ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava said adverse events occur with drugs or vaccines or any other health intervention.

Differences in Congress over support to stir

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

As the farmers' protest continued for the sixth day on Tuesday, differences surfaced within the Congress on the nature of the agitation. While Congress top brass led by former party president Rahul Gandhi came out in full support of the protests, a certain section of Congress leaders in Punjab expressed apprehension about the agitation being hijacked by rogue elements including Khalistanis.

Observing that everyone was indebted to the farmers for their hard work, he said this debt could be repaid only by giving them justice.

"The food grower is sitting in protest on the roads and fields and speeches are being given on TV. We all are indebted to the hard work of farmers. This debt will be over only by giving them justice and their rights, and not by mistreating them or by beating them with batons or using tear gas against them," the former Congress President tweeted.

"Wake up and come down from the chair of arrogance and think of giving the farmers their rights," he added.

However, sources said

● WHILE CONGRESS top brass led by former party president Rahul Gandhi came out in full support of the protests, a certain section of Congress leaders in Punjab expressed apprehension about the agitation being hijacked by rogue elements including Khalistanis.

that within the Congress, specially in Punjab, there was a deep concern over the turn the movement was taking.

Ravneet Singh Bittu, Congress MP from Ludhiana, came out in the open and said that rogue elements including Khalistanis entering the agitation remained a concern.

Sources said that Punjab Congress Chief Sunil Jhakhhar held a meeting with Chief Minister Amarinder Singh over this.

It might be recalled that Haryana Chief Minister M.L. Khattar had been the first to claim that the agitation had been infiltrated by Khalistanis.

The Centre had invited agitating farmer unions for talks on December 3 but looking at the seriousness of the issue and in view of Covid pandemic and cold, the meeting was postponed to Tuesday.

The stir appeared to intensify despite a strong defence of the legislation by the government.

I am people-made star, says Urmila

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, DEC. 1

Former Congress leader and Bollywood actress Urmila Matondkar joined the Shiv Sena on Tuesday in the presence of Maharashtra Chief Minister and the party president Uddhav Thackeray at his residence 'Matoshri' in Mumbai.

Matondkar said that she is not a "media-made star" but a "people-made star". She also said that Kangana Ranaut, who has crossed sword with Shiv Sena, has already got a lot of "unnecessary publicity". The Sena has already sent Matonkar's name to Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari for a member of Legislative Council last month.

More than a year ago, Matondkar had quit the Congress citing "petty in-house politics". She was defeated by a huge margin in Lok Sabha election 2019 from North Mumbai seat by BJP's Gopal Shetty.

After her induction in



Rashmi Thackeray ties a thread on the wrist of actor-turned politician Urmila Matondkar as she joins Shiv Sena in Mumbai on Tuesday.

Shiv Sena, Matondkar said that there is no need to give unnecessary importance to Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut, who compared Mumbai with Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) following the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput in June this year. "We have already given so much importance to her (Kangana Ranaut). There is no need to further

comment on her (Kangana Ranaut)," she added.

When asked about her resignation from the Congress, 46-year-old Bollywood actress said she had quit that party but not politics. "I am impressed by the leadership of Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray and his work. Hence I decided to join the party. I had received a call from

Thackeray himself before joining the party. I have been told that my name is recommended (to Governor) for the post of MLC. I wish to work for women's issues in my political life," Matondkar said.

When asked about the recent arrests from the film industry in drug cases and the bad publicity received by the industry, Matondkar said that Bollywood people need to do something for themselves. "People like us will help them. I have stood behind Bollywood in the past and will do so in future too. I have been asked in the past too why did they (Bollywood industry people) not speak?" she added.

Praising Thackeray's leadership in the state, Matondkar said that Maharashtra has faced difficult times in the last 10 months of Covid-19. "The MVA government performed well during this difficult time. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has led Maharashtra very well," she said.

Government, farmers stick to their guns

From page 1

We have requested the farmers to suspend their protests and come for the talks. This decision depends on farmers' unions and farmers. "Our movement against farm laws will continue and we'll definitely take back something from the government, be it bullets or a peaceful solution. We'll come back for more discussions with them," said

Chanda Singh, a member of farmers' delegation.

Farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, are holding protests at the Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur borders of the national capital against the Centre's new agri-marketing laws. "Today's meeting was good and some progress was made. During our next meeting with the government, we'll convince them that no clause of farm law is pro-farmer.

Our agitation will continue," said Prem Singh Bhangu, president, All-India Kisan Federation.

Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan) president Joginder Singh Ugrahan said the government's meeting with protesting farmers' unions remained inconclusive.

Tuesday's meeting was reportedly the third round of talks between the farmers and the government in the last few months. At the

first round, chaired by agriculture secretary Sanjay Aggarwal, the farmers had walked out and tore up copies of the new laws. The second round of meeting, co-chaired by the agriculture minister and railway minister on November 13, lasted for seven hours.

Hours before Tuesday's meeting, Union ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, BJP chief J.P. Nadda and others held discussions on

the matter. The leaders were of the unanimous view that the matter should be resolved at the earliest so that the agitation does not spill over to other parts of the country.

Last December, protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act, which began in Assam, spread to all parts of the country leading to students being attacked, protesters being shot at, and polarising the nation on communal lines.

ANNUAL | CENSUS 22 groups have been formed for the census set to take place for nine days from Jan. 5

Bhitarkanika National Park all set for crocodile census

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, DEC. 1

Bhitarkanika National Park, one of the world's biodiversity rich sites, is all set for the annual crocodile census.

The census, according to state forest department sources, will take place for nine days — from January 5 to January 14.

Known for its unique flora and fauna, Bhitarkanika boasts of having a strong crocodile population, hundreds of bird species, reptiles and amphibians.

The Odisha government has already put a nine-day ban on entry of tourists into the Park from January 5 to January 14 to facilitate smooth conduct of the census.

Bikash Ranjan Dash, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Rajnagar Wildlife region, on Tuesday said as many as 22 groups have been formed to count the crocodiles in the 27 creeks and rivers within the park and its nearby areas.

The forest department will also deploy nine boats for the census.

According to the DFO,



A crocodile basking in the sun at Bhitarkanika National Park.

— Dr Sandeep Tripathi, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Odisha

the restrictions on the visitors are meant to prevent noise pollution during

counting of the reptiles in the park. "The headcount drive of

the endangered estuarine crocodiles will be conducted under the supervision of wildlife personnel. The enumerators assisted by trained local forest staff and some herpetologists, including noted crocodile researcher Dr Sudhakar Kar, would cover Bhitarkanika river system besides innumerable creeks, water inlets and nullahs, Dash said.

The engaged team members will scout the rivers and other water bodies of the park and its nearby areas to count the crocodiles while wearing masks and adhering to social dis-

tancing norms. "All the team members will follow Covid-19 guidelines during enumeration," the DFO said.

In last census conducted on January 3, 2020, the population of the saltwater or estuarine crocodile (Crocodylus porosus) in the water bodies of Bhitarkanika Park its nearby areas in Kendrapara district had increased, with forest officials counting 1,757 individuals. In 2019, they had counted 1,742 crocodiles in the area.

As many as 22 teams were formed in January

this year to count the crocodiles in all the creeks and rivers within the park and its nearby areas.

During the last census, the enumerators sighted 620 hatchlings, 325 yearlings, 288 juveniles, 185 sub-adults (six to eight feet long) and 339 adults (more than 8 feet long).

Similarly in 2019, the enumerators had sighted 619 hatchlings, 347 yearlings, 273 juveniles, 178 sub-adults and 325 adults. They had also sighted around 12 albino crocodiles and four giant crocodiles of more than 20 feet long.

ED ISSUES NEW SUMMONS TO SENA MLA

SAURABH JOSHI | DC
MUMBAI, DEC. 1

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday issued a fresh summons to Shiv Sena MLA Pratap Sarnaik to appear in connection with the ongoing money laundering probe.

Sarnaik is likely to appear before the agency on Thursday, after completing a self-imposed Covid-19 quarantine after returning from Goa.

His son Vihang is also summoned by the ED to be questioned in the probe involving their security agency.

The agency had shot summons to him asking him to appear for questioning, however, Sarnaik went into a quarantine and his daughter-in-law was also hospitalized, for which he sought more time to join the probe. With his quarantine completed, the ED officials issued another summons to him. "The summons are for him and his son to be questioned in the money launder probe," said an officer.

SHOW 'UTMOST RESTRAINT, HOME MINISTRY TO COPS

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC 1

Even as intelligence inputs suggest that the number and strength of agitating farmers on outskirts of Delhi could increase substantially in the coming days, the Home Ministry has categorically asked all security forces deployed all along the borders of the national capital to "show utmost restraint and sensitise their security personnel accordingly."

Sources claimed that Home Ministry wants the security forces to adopt a "humane approach" towards the farmers and ensure that no force, even in terms of use of water cannon or tear gas should be used against the farmers.

"We want to have a humanitarian approach towards the protesting farmers as it has been peaceful so far. Even if there is slight or some small provocation from them, the security forces have been asked to handle the situation with a lot of restraint," a Home Ministry official said. Meanwhile, inputs from multiple agencies suggests that the number of agitating farmers is likely to increase substantially in the coming days.

SHORT TAKES

GERMANY BANS FAR-RIGHT, PRO-NAZI GROUP

Berlin, Dec. 1: Police raided homes in three German states early Tuesday after the German government banned a far-right group, a spokesman for the interior ministry said.

The homes of 13 members of the far-right group Wolfbrigade 44 were searched in Hesse, Mecklenburg West-Pomerania and North Rhine-Westphalia to confiscate the group's funds and far-right propaganda material, the German news agency *DPA* reported.

"Whoever fights against the basic values of our free society will get to feel the resolute reaction of our government," Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said, according to his spokesman, Steve Alter. The group's goal is to re-establish a Nazi dictatorship, according to security officials. The 44 in their name stands for the fourth letter in the alphabet, DD, and is an abbreviation for Division Dirlwanger. Oskar Dirlwanger was a known Nazi war criminal and commander of a Nazi SS special unit. The far-right group was founded in 2016. It is known for possessing illegal weapons and members have participated in far-right protests. Earlier this year, the German government banned other far-right groups, including the Combat 18 and the Nordadler.

TAINTED RICE WINE KILLS 7 IN CAMBODIA

Phnom Penh, Dec. 1: Seven people died and more than 130 others were hospitalised in Cambodia after drinking rice wine that health authorities believe was adulterated with a toxic substance.

The Health Ministry said the incident happened Saturday in a remote rural area of central Cambodia's Kampong Chhnang province, where villagers drank the wine at a funeral ceremony. It said a toxic substance in the wine was the cause of the deaths. Most of the people who were sickened are recovering, with some already released from the hospital, it said in a statement Monday.

Dangerous cheap but powerful alcoholic drinks are a perennial problem in Cambodia's poor rural areas, and several accidental poisonings are reported each year. Often the alcohol is not distilled properly and contains methanol, which can kill even in small amounts.

Rice wine is typically homemade and is popular at social gatherings, although in at least one case the tainted wine was a bottled brand made in the capital, Phnom Penh, that had been sold in provincial markets for several years without incident.

The Health Ministry said it sent three experts to the village on the day of the incident to investigate the situation and make sure sales and consumption of the wine were immediately stopped. In one of the worst incidents, 14 villagers died and more than 200 others were sickened in the province of Kratie in May 2018.

BIDEN, HARRIS GREET ON GURU NANAK B' ANNIV

Washington, Dec. 1: US President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris have greeted the Sikh community on the 551st birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, emphasising that the timeless and universal message of compassion and unity from the founder of Sikhism can inspire and help Americans heal as people and as a nation.

In a joint statement issued by the offices of Biden and Harris, the two leaders said that for more than five centuries, Guru Nanak's teachings on spiritual enlightenment, service to humanity and moral integrity have endured and are embodied each day by Sikhs in America and around the world. "For more than five centuries, Guru Nanak's teachings on spiritual enlightenment, service to humanity, and moral integrity have endured and are embodied each day by Sikhs in America and around the world, as we have seen during this challenging year," Biden and Harris said.

"We are grateful to all of the Sikh Americans who continue to stand by their neighbours as essential workers of the pandemic, and who open their hearts and community kitchens in their gurdwaras to prepare, serve, and deliver countless meals for people most in need," they said. "During the summer of protest, we saw Sikhs of all ages marching peacefully for racial and gender equality, religious pluralism, and fidelity to truth and justice — core tenets of the Sikh faith," they said.

Euphoria in Azerbaijan



Azerbaijani soldiers hold national flags and a portrait of Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev as they celebrate the transfer of the Lachin region to Azerbaijan's control, as part of a peace deal that required Armenian forces to cede the Azerbaijani territories they held outside Nagorno-Karabakh, in Aghjabadi, Azerbaijan, on Tuesday. Azerbaijan has completed the return of territory under a Russia-brokered peace deal that ended six weeks of fierce fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh.

— AP

Vaccine: Europe agency to decide on Dec. 29

It will convene meet to find efficacy for it to be approved

Berlin, Dec. 1: The European Medicines Agency will convene a meeting on December 29 to decide if there is enough data about the safety and efficacy of the Covid-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech for it to be approved, the regulator said Tuesday.

The agency also said Tuesday it could decide as early as January 12 whether to approve a rival Covid-19 vaccine developed by Moderna Inc. The German pharmaceutical company BioNTech and its US partner Pfizer said earlier Tuesday that they had asked the regulator for speeded-up, conditional approval of their Coronavirus vaccine, concluding the rolling review process they initiated with the agency on October 6.

The move comes a day after rival Moderna said it was asking US and European regulators to allow the use of its Covid-19 vaccine. BioNTech said if the vaccine, currently named BNT162b2, is approved, its use in Europe could begin before the end of 2020.

The companies said last month that clinical trials with 44,000 participants showed the vaccine is 95% effective. The efficacy rate in particularly vulnerable older age groups was more than 94%, they said. In a statement, the EU medicines regulator said it had already begun a "rolling review" of the Moderna vaccine based on laboratory data previously submitted by the company and would now assess data on how well that vaccine triggers an immune response and whether it is safe enough for broad use across Europe. The agency said that "if the data are robust enough to conclude on quality, safety and effectiveness," then it could approve the Moderna vaccine at a meeting scheduled for January 12.

BioNTech and Pfizer have already submitted a request for emergency approval with the US Food and Drug Administration and the UK regulator MHRA, as well as rolling submissions in other countries including in Australia, Canada and Japan.

— AP

Trump Coronavirus adviser Atlas resigns

Washington, Dec. 1: US President Donald Trump's controversial special adviser on the Coronavirus, Dr. Scott Atlas, has resigned. During his four months in the role, Atlas, who had no formal experience in public health or infectious diseases, questioned the need for masks and other measures to control the pandemic that has killed over 268,000 people in America.

While questioning the usefulness of masks he was against lockdowns and promoted the idea of herd immunity. The 65-

year-old the Stanford University neuroradiologist resigned on Monday at the end of his 130-day temporary assignment, according to US media reports.

Atlas tweeted a photo of his resignation letter on Monday. In the letter, he said his "advice was always focused on minimising all the harms from both the pandemic and the structural policies themselves, especially to the working class and the poor." "I sincerely wish the new team all the best as they guide the nation," he wrote.

— PTI

UK MPs to vote on tier-based lockdown

London, Dec. 1: UK Parliamentarians on Tuesday are set to vote on the government's tier-based Coronavirus lockdown as the country's health minister said the Covid-19 situation was "back under control" but vigilance was necessary. UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock attempted to rally lockdown sceptics at a Downing Street briefing on Monday evening, reiterating the need for a regional system of tiers, which come in force after England's current nationwide lockdown imposed in wake of Covid ends on

Wednesday.

"While we can let up a little, we can't afford to let up a lot," said Hancock.

"We've reduced pressures on the NHS (National Health System), we've brought down the number of Coronavirus cases, we've got this virus back under control... The success of our collective efforts means that from Wednesday, everyone in England, even those in tier three, can have some greater freedoms — but we don't have much headroom," he said.

— PTI

Trafficking up: Nobel winner

United Nations, Dec. 1: Nobel Peace Prize laureate Nadia Murad said the Coronavirus pandemic has increased trafficking of women and gender-based violence, leaving the health and safety of women "on the line." The 27-year-old activist, who was forced into sexual slavery by Islamic State fighters in Iraq, said curfews, lockdowns and travel restric-

tions imposed by governments to slow the spread of the virus "have had unintended consequences on women worldwide."

"Rather than reducing human trafficking and gender-based violence, the pandemic has increased the risk of exploitation and brutality against those most vulnerable," she said. "Numerous countries have seen increases in

VIRUS: BIBLICAL BETHLEHEM LOSES CHRISTMAS CHEER

Bethlehem, Dec. 1: The Coronavirus has cast a pall over Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem, all but shutting down the biblical town revered as Jesus' birthplace at the height of the normally cheery holiday season. Missing are the thousands of international pilgrims who normally descend upon the town. Restaurants, hotels and souvenir shops are closed.

The renowned Christmas tree lighting service will be limited to a small group of authorised people, as will church services on Christmas Eve. "Bethlehem is dead," said Maryana al-Arja, owner of the 120-room Angel Hotel on the outskirts of Bethlehem.

The hotel was the site of the West Bank's first Coronavirus outbreak — when a group of Greek tourists came down with the virus last March. She kept her 25 workers on staff for several months but ultimately couldn't continue to pay them.

Al-Arja, who herself was infected with the virus, said she has been forced to close the hotel and lay off the entire staff because there is no sign of the pandemic ending or tourists visiting anytime soon.

— AP

US opposes release of Tahawwur Rana

Washington, Dec. 1: The US government has moved a motion in a federal court in California opposing the release of Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, who has been declared a fugitive by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack case, describing him a flight risk.

Rana, 59, a childhood friend of David Coleman Headley, was re-arrested on June 10 in Los Angeles on an extradition request by India for his involvement in the 26/11 Mumbai terror strike in which 166 people, including six Americans, were killed.

Pakistani-American LeT terrorist Headley was involved in plotting the 2008 Mumbai terror attack. He was made an approver in the case, and is currently serving a 35-year prison term in the US for his role in the attack. Rana is a declared fugitive in India. His extradition hearing is scheduled for February 12. In a motion filed before

the US District Court Judge in Los Angeles Jacqueline Chelonian on Monday, US attorney Nicola T Hanna urged the court to deny Rana's motion for release for failure to prove that he is not a flight risk or that special circumstances exist and continue to detain him pending resolution of this extradition proceeding.

Hanna's motion comes in opposition to the latest effort of Rana to avoid detention pending extradition, by capitalising on the developments of the Covid-19 pandemic. Rana's attorney has argued that pandemic warrants his release from custody. Hanna said a fugitive facing extradition is entitled to bail only if he can demonstrate that he is not a flight risk, is not a danger to the community, and that "special circumstances" warrant his release from custody.

Rana in his court filing has said the Bureau of Prison (BOP) was unable to manage the Covid-19

pandemic and as such he should be released from custody. Hanna argued that BOP is committed to fighting Covid-19 and protecting the inmates in its custody. "In addition to ignoring the BOP's ability to manage the pandemic, Rana ignores the significant increase of Covid-19 cases in the population in which he wishes to be released," Hanna said, adding, unlike the BOP, Rana will not have immediate access to frequent Covid-19 testing, and should he test positive, treatment.

Following the increase of Covid-19 cases, Metropolitan Detention Centre Los Angeles began testing inmates, including Rana. MDC-LA has not received the results of his Covid-19 test conducted on November 27. Accordingly, it has placed Rana in isolation, pending confirmation that he is not positive for Covid-19. In denying Rana's initial motion for release in July, the court had said he constituted a flight risk.

— PTI

Rahm may be transport secy

Chicago, Dec. 1: President-elect Joe Biden is considering former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, a substantial and somewhat divisive figure in Democratic Party politics, to serve as his transportation secretary. Biden's selection of his nominee to lead the Transportation Department is not believed to be imminent and Emanuel is among multiple candidates in the running for the Cabinet position, according to people familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

But his candidacy threatens to pull at the divisions among Democrats that Biden has largely managed to avoid as he begins to fill out his administration. Progressive leaders, including Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, have been especially vocal in criticising the prospect of Emanuel joining the Cabinet.

Emanuel, a former three-term congressman who served as Barack Obama's first White House chief of staff and was a senior adviser in Bill

Clinton's administration, has been a significant force in Democratic Party politics for much of the last three decades. He also turned reviving Chicago's ragged public transportation system and overhauling the city's two busy, worn airports into a top issue during his eight years as mayor.

Emanuel is also credited with making Chicago one of the most bicycle-friendly cities in country during his time in office. But selecting Emanuel could be a tough sell to some in the progressive wing of the Democratic Party who are critical of his handling of the high-profile police shooting death of Laquan McDonald, a Black teen killed by a white police officer, during his time as Chicago's mayor. Whether Emanuel is ultimately picked could also be affected by other factors as Biden has placed a premium on building out a Cabinet and team of senior advisers from a diverse set of backgrounds, according to people familiar with the matter.

— AP

Biden gets access to Prez Daily Brief

Wilmington, Dec. 1: Joe Biden on Monday got his first look as president-elect at the President's Daily Brief, a top secret summary of US intelligence and world events — a document former first lady Michelle Obama has called "The Death, Destruction, and Horrible Things Book." Biden has already had eyes on different iterations of the so-called PDB, which is tailored to the way each president likes to absorb information. More than a decade ago, Biden read President George W. Bush's PDB during Biden's transition into the vice presidency.

After that, he read President Barack Obama's PDB for eight years. Now, after a four-year break, he's reading President Donald Trump's PDB.

"The briefers almost certainly will be asking Biden what he prefers in terms of format and style," said David Priess, author of "The President's Book of Secrets," a history of the PDB. "At a minimum, they're seeing what seems to resonate most with him so that when they make the book his book, they can tailor it to him."

Obama's PDB was a 10- to 15-page document tucked in a leather binder, which he found waiting for him on the breakfast table. Later in his presidency, he liked reading the ultra-secret intelligence brief on a secured iPad. "Michelle called it 'The Death, Destruction, and Horrible Things Book,'" Obama wrote in his recently released book, "A Promised Land."

— AP

SPACE | RESOURCES

Research may radically change logistics of future missions to the Red Planet and beyond

Novel system can extract oxygen, fuel from Mars water

Washington, Dec. 1: A team led by an Indian-origin scientist in the US has developed a new system that can extract oxygen and hydrogen fuel from the salty water on Mars, and may radically change the logistics of future missions to the Red Planet and beyond.

The researchers noted that Mars is very cold, and water that is not frozen is almost certainly full of salt from the Martian soil, which lowers its freezing temperature. Using electricity to break the briny

water down into oxygen and hydrogen fuel requires removing the salt, which is a cumbersome and a costly endeavour in a harsh, dangerous martian environment, they said.

The team, led by Vijay Ramani, a professor at the Washington University in the US, examined the new system in a simulated Martian atmosphere at minus 36 degrees Celsius. "Our Martian brine electrolyser radically changes the logistical calculus of missions to Mars and beyond. This technology is equally

useful on Earth where it opens up the oceans as a viable oxygen and fuel source," said Ramani.

In 2008, NASA's Phoenix Mars Lander "touched and tasted" Martian water, vapours from melted ice dug up by the lander. Since then, the European Space Agency's Mars Express has discovered several underground ponds of water which remain in a liquid state thanks to the presence of magnesium perchlorate salt.

In the journal *Proceedings of the National Acad-*

● **IN 2008, NASA's Phoenix Mars Lander "touched and tasted" Martian water. Since then, the European Space Agency's Mars Express has discovered several underground ponds of water which remain in a liquid state thanks to the presence of magnesium perchlorate salt.**

emy of Sciences (PNAS), the researchers noted that in order to live — even

temporarily — on Mars, not to mention to return to Earth, astronauts will need to manufacture some of the necessities, including water and fuel, on the Red Planet.

NASA's Perseverance rover is en-route to Mars, carrying instruments that will use high-temperature electrolysis. However, the Mars Oxygen In-Situ Resource Utilisation Experiment (MOXIE) will be producing oxygen only from the carbon dioxide in the air. The system developed in Ramani's lab can produce

25 times more oxygen than MOXIE using the same amount of power, said the researchers, adding it also produces hydrogen, which could be used to fuel astronauts' trip home.

"Our novel brine electrolyser incorporates a lead ruthenate pyrochlore anode developed by our team in conjunction with a platinum on carbon cathode," Ramani said. "These carefully designed components coupled with the optimal use of traditional electrochemical engineering principles has yielded this

high performance," he said. The careful design and unique anode allow the system to function without the need for heating or purifying the water source, the researchers said.

"Paradoxically, the dissolved perchlorate in the water, so-called impurities, actually help in an environment like that of Mars," said Shrihari Sankarasubramanian, a research scientist in Ramani's group and joint first author of the research paper on the study.

— PTI

DECCAN
Chronicle

2 DECEMBER 2020

Regulators amiss in not probing vaccine ‘effect’

India, which has the world’s second largest total Covid-19 caseload, has been an active participant in the global effort to find a vaccine against the coronavirus. Several Indian manufacturers are in tie-ups with foreign pharma majors and laboratories for conducting clinical trials here, while some others are developing their own vaccines. If one were to go by the optimism they exude, then we have a solution to the pandemic in the weeks ahead, or months.

Vaccine production is a complex process, which involves science, technology, protocol, practice and ethics. World over, regulators have been willing to relax some norms, primarily administrative in nature, so that the process can be expedited and a vaccine comes out at the earliest. However, none has ever been willing to compromise on core protocols.

India, a major player in the manufacture of vaccines, has not been that active in their development, though. There are allegations that clinical trials conducted in India, whether for vaccines or for other medical formulations, are less than transparent and that international norms and protocols are not observed in the full. There have been different views about the information passed on to participants before their consent was taken in many such trials.

It is in this background that reports of the Serum Institute of India, one of the leading players with a global reputation in the field of vaccine manufacturing, planning to sue a participant who flagged a serious adverse event that occurred during the trial for Covid vaccine must be seen. A more thorough investigation was warranted considering the importance of the vaccine projects.

There are many issues involved here. The immediate one is the response of the regulatory authorities. The global practice has been, even in the midst of the pandemic, to halt the trial, study the event when one is reported, and then decide whether to go ahead with it or not. Most leading vaccine candidates for Covid-19, too, have reported such instances. It is not yet clear if India, too, has followed the pattern; we have not heard about the government or a regulator ordering a halt to the trial. The scientific and regulatory bodies involved in the process, such as the Indian Council for Medical Research or the Drugs Controller General of India, have also been silent. This is unacceptable.

The safety of the participants of the trials is another major concern. It should not be left to the participant to take up the issue; there must be independent institutions that must go to the bottom of such charges and come up with the truth. While genuine complaints must be addressed with all seriousness, those with ulterior motives, if any, must be dealt with accordingly.

The Prime Minister has reportedly directed various government agencies to work with vaccine manufacturers and sort out the issues they face. This is a welcome move. At the same time, the government must also look for regulatory deficiencies and meet them on par with global practices. It should not allow expediency to get the better of ethical practices in the name of the pandemic.

Is Rajini under pressure?

After a series of false starts since 1996, actor Rajinikanth almost made it clear in late October that he was not game for politics. Though his fans show desperation in seeing him as a political leader and, in due course, chief minister, the superstar displayed no inclination of joining politics and even cited his health as one impeding reason. So even after that bunch of ardent fans who turned up at his Poes Garden residence to persuade him to change his mind was sent off and it almost became clear that Rajinikanth would keep off the humdrum of politics, why did he call for a meeting on Monday?

While it’s a totally different matter if Rajnikanth would provide clean governance, as his fans tout, or bring about a change in Tamil Nadu or not, why is his impending arrival, or the lack of it, on the political scene engendering palpable anticipation. Are some political parties like the DMK and AIADMK, which trace their lineage to the Dravidian tradition that Rajinikanth purportedly abhors, wary of fighting him electorally, as his supporters see it? No, those parties show no sign of fright.

Then, does he hope to turn a Pied Piper leading the masses on a so far untrodden garden path and turn the affairs of the state upside down, thus unsettling existing social structures and disconcerting cultural mores? Does he have a plan and an agenda for revolutionary changes that would go against the status quo, upending socio-politico systems for a better future? Of course there have been no such indications.

So, what is beckoning him? What’s that that makes him go back-and-forth, repeatedly? If it is the clarion call from fans, he would have easily said “no” and quit. So, the call emanates from somewhere else, suddenly evolving into a command, as someone believes that he alone can break the State’s electoral strangleholds.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

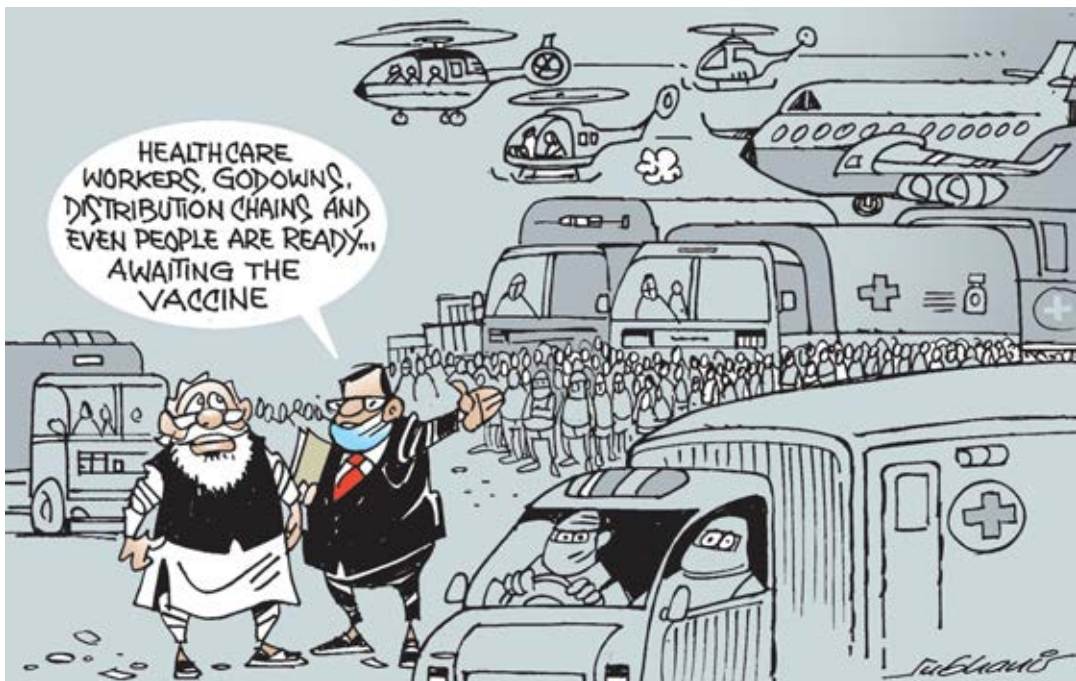
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Subhani



Are America’s days over as world’s moral arbiter?



Indranil Banerjee

The Donald Trump era may be drawing to a close in the United States, but America will never be the same again. At least not the America that once shone proud, flashing its democratic credentials, hoist on its self-made pedestal.

Mr Trump and the recent US presidential elections have irrevocably tarnished the American democratic model and eroded its moral authority. Today, America increasingly looks like a tired, somewhat tattered democracy, struggling with its inherent inefficiencies and flaws, clawed by manipulators and creased by unwieldy procedures.

The bitter and highly polarised November 2020 election was watched with disbelief and distaste across the world. Even nations at the bottom of the democratic ladder couldn’t restrain their delight and disdain at America’s tortured electoral process.

“What a spectacle!” exclaimed Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei of the US elections. Khamenei, a champion of one of the world’s most repressive regimes, tweeted: “One says this is the most fraudulent election in US history. Who says that? The President who is in office. His rival says Trump intends to rig the election! This is how #USElections & US democracy are.”

The incoming US President, Joseph R. Biden, who will be sworn in on January 20, 2021, knows that he has his job cut out for him. Before the elections he pledged to unite America and end the “grim era of demonisation”.

“It is time to heal America”, he declared, adding he fought this election “to restore the soul of America, to rebuild the backbone of this nation, the middle class and to make America respected

around the world again, and to unite us here at home”.

But all that is easier said than done. America remains totally polarised, like never before, and having once slipped from the top of the global hierarchy, it might be difficult if not impossible to crawl back. Mr Biden’s democratic credentials, statements and worldview hark back to an era forever lost. The old days of American hegemony are not lamented by the world. Internally too, Mr Biden will find it hard to restore those values so missed by liberal, egalitarian Americans.

The world will take a lot of convincing to believe that the core values of democracy, liberty and equality that America once preached is indeed being practised there again. Faith once lost is always difficult to restore. Like Sisyphus’s rock, it keeps rolling down.

The implications for the global order are profound. With moral authority came power and the United States unabashedly wielded it. Toppling regimes became acceptable worldwide if it was seen as a benevolent act by the United States for the greater glory of democracy and liberty.

Iraq’s Saddam Hussain could be hunted down and hanged as he was a despot responsible for killing opponents and throttling democracy. This disguised the real reason for the killing, which was the dismantling of the Ba’athist regime in Iraq and forever destroying that country’s strategic capabilities in the Middle East. By hanging Saddam and bombing Iraq to the ground, Washington ensured Iraq would never again pose a threat to its allies and interests in the region.

Not surprisingly, the US could similarly get away with helping repressive regimes, like the Shah’s Iran, Gen. Pervez Musharraf’s Pakistan

and the dozens of dictatorships it supports the world over.

In other words, the torch of liberty and democratic values has been used as a weapon of coercion, cajolement and manipulation by Washington in the post-World War II era. The most powerful use of these values was the vilification and undermining of enemy regimes that don’t necessarily adhere to them.

Thus, the democratic ideal and values of personal freedoms played a large part in undermining and ultimately bringing down the Soviet empire. This was a huge strategic victory, which demonstrated the advantage of holding the moral high ground and espousing a value system eagerly sought after by people from other cultures and nations.

The US has for long used its democratic credentials to further its geopolitical aims and civilisational narrative which equated good with the American way of life. This narrative has broken down. The breakdown of this dynamism is bound to have severe repercussions around the world.

While the end of using democratic credentials as a tool for hegemonic objectives will not be lamented, what will be is the erosion of those core values. All said and done, those values did serve to rescue many societies from various forms of utter despotism.

Who will shine the moral beacon in the years to come? With America’s democratic ideal broken and suspect, Europe cringing and unable to come to terms with growing ethnic and religious diversity, it will be the despotic ascendant powers like the People’s Republic of China that will seek to assume the

status of global role model. This cannot but be a terrible portent. Something better must emerge. But from where, in this wilderness of ideologies and systems currently prevailing all over the world?

One unusual suggestion has recently been made by Singapore’s best-known diplomat-academic Kishore Mahbubani. In a recent piece in the *South China Morning Post*, he wrote: “India is entering a geopolitical sweet spot. What does this mean? In a world crying out for a strong, independent voice to provide moral guidance to a troubled planet, the only realistic candidate is India. None of the three other obvious candidates — the United States, the European Union and China — can step up to the plate now.”

“India’s rise is ‘reassuring’ because it is not perceived as a threat by other powers. Given this trusted position, India can take advantage of it by providing the world ethical leadership, of the kind that Gandhiji would have provided if he were alive today”, Mahbubani wrote, adding that India could become the global champion of multilateralism and a rules-based behaviour.

Within India, however, there is widespread disillusionment and a sense of dejection arising out of the uncontrolled spread of the Covid-19 pandemic and sustained economic contraction. Massive job losses, economic dislocation and disappearing public savings have left a nation bewildered and despondent.

Internally too, India is acutely polarised and fragmented; and few in the world are looking up to it as a potential role model. Yet, as Mahbubani argues, India has the potential to emerge as the world’s ethical flag bearer. But for that to happen, the country will require a benevolent, consensual, farsighted statesman as a leader, who is capable of unifying a vast and diversified nation — and perhaps the world as well.

The writer is an independent commentator on political and security issues

LETTERS

FARMERS’ PLIGHT

Farmers of India have felt exploited for long. The reforms that the Centre brought in, apparently to make the agriculture sector more efficient and lucrative in the form of three ordinances in June, have had the effect of upsetting large sections of them further. Parliament passed them into Acts in September. More than 500 farmers’ unions are now on a path of agitation. Thousands of farmers from neighbouring states, stopped by the police on their way to Delhi, are camping at several points around the national capital. They have refused to move to a designated site, a condition first set by the Centre for talks. The Centre has aggravated its original mistake of rushing through these laws without wide consultation and political consensus by taking a condescending attitude towards critics. Farmers’ plight is going from bad to worse.

C.K. Subramaniam, via e-mail

THE ONGOING agitation by the farmers is fully justified. They voted for the BJP in the last two general elections in the strong belief that the Narendra Modi government would address the agrarian crisis and alleviate their woes. On the contrary, farmers’ problems have worsened over the years as farm incomes have been squeezed by slower output growth, higher costs and increased vulnerability to changing climate. Added to these issues, the recent agricultural bills introduced by the Centre have only come as a threat to the existing MSP system, which eventually will leave the farmers at the mercy of big corporate houses that would control the market. Will the Centre understand that the agrarian crisis not only affects the life of a farmer and his family, but the rural economy as well?

R. Sivakumar, Chennai

RAJINI’S PREDICAMENT

GOING THROUGH the statements made by actor Rajinikanth in a meeting of the secretaries of his Rajini Makkal Mandram indicating his hesitation to float a political party in view of his health condition, particularly during the pandemic, one cannot miss the pathetic situation the actor has been pushed into today. It tantamounts to his pleading with his fans to recognise his health concerns and leave him out of this political game. It is time Rajini announced his decision not to plunge into politics using the sympathy card and allow his fans to go back and attend to better jobs. It is better he retires peacefully even from acting when he is enjoying a good reputation in the society, particularly filmdom.

Tharcisus S. Fernando, Chennai

A.G. Noorani



Congress in crisis, but India needs strong Opp.

Parliamentary government, as it is understood in the UK, works by the interaction of four essential factors: the principle of majority rule; the willingness of the minority for the time being to accept the decisions of the majority; the existence of great political parties divided by broad issues of policy, rather than by sectional interests; and finally the existence of a mobile body of political opinion, owing no permanent allegiance to any party and therefore able, by its instinctive reaction against extravagant movements on one side or the other, to keep the vessel on an even keel. In India none of these factors can be said to exist today,” the British Parliament’s joint committee on constitutional reform observed in 1933-34.

These words, as a pretext for denying independence as well as a slur, offended Indians.

Today, it is hard to deny the truth of these observations. India has done remarkably well in many spheres, yet its one glaring failure lies in the political sphere. It has failed to evolve

a vibrant political system in which political parties alternate in occupying power. Instead, the pattern has been one of monolithic power that drives others to forge a coalition, which falls apart shortly after it comes to power.

Jawahar Lal Nehru governed as Prime Minister from August 1947 till he died in May 1964. In this moment of trial, Congress leaders failed the nation. The correct procedure was to hold a leadership election. However, no one wanted the hated but ambitious Morarji Desai. So Congress president K. Kamaraj met the MPs individually and declared the consensus: Lal Bahadur Shastri.

When he died in January 1966, an election was held for the first time. Indira Gandhi defeated Desai by 355 votes to 169. In the 1967 election, the Congress was re-elected and elected Indira as leader. She appointed Desai as deputy prime minister, but he did not reconcile himself to his defeat.

This came to be known as the so-called “Congress culture” — democratic in form but barren of the spirit of democracy. Indira’s opponents

selected a presidential candidate who would checkmate her as Prime Minister. She split the party and her faction swept the polls in 1971. She ruled autocratically till 1977. To defeat this monolith, the Opposition parties united in a bid for power — only to break up in ego.

Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980. On her assassination in 1984, her son Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister and presided over a corrupt, authoritarian regime. Once again, a coalition of egos united to oust him, only to fall apart.

This pattern continues. A monolith opposed by a conglomeration whose leaders cannot unite. A naked contest for power on both sides, with one difference — the monolith is led by a strong leader; the conglomerate is a house divided by a clash of egos. Certain features stand out. There is no internal democratic working in any political party. Cabals rule them all.

The BJP, the political front of the RSS, came to power under Atal Behari Vajpayee, a liberal. It lost the 2004 election to a Congress-led coalition

that ruled till 2014. As Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh won international and domestic acclaim. But his second term was torn apart by internal conflict, corruption and Sonia Gandhi’s baleful influence as Congress president.

The situation changed in 2014. The BJP returned to power, but under the leadership of autocrat Narendra Modi. He consigned the old guard to the shelf, starting with L.K. Advani, who had opposed Mr Modi’s claim to be Prime Minister. He foisted his henchman of Gujarat days, Amit Shah, upon the party as its president.

There is no one to challenge it. The Congress is like a duke in reduced circumstances. Its president no longer commands the respect she once did. Imitating Indira, Sonia promoted her son Rahul.

Three of the tallest leaders in the Congress have demanded “reforms”, specifically elections to the party’s committees and posts, including president. The chickens have come home to roost. The “strong” leader no longer commands the respect she once did. Leaders are only followed

so long as they can get the party elected and provide jobs for the minions.

Sonia Gandhi has two fatal defects — her anointed heir is not respected or liked. And she has no contribution to make to ideology or programmes. Worse, she has reduced the Congress to the level of a “B-team” of the BJP. Sonia and Rahul ostentatiously pay obeisance at temples, devotion neither revealed till recently. On Ayodhya, Kashmir and similar issues, the Congress supports the BJP. Designed to compete for the Hindu vote, this cheap stratagem has done the Congress no good. It is in a stage of decline.

Yet it would be tragic and dangerous for India’s democracy if the Congress were to pass into oblivion. India needs a powerful opposition to the Narendra Modi government’s arbitrary and rabidly communal ways.

The writer is an author and lawyer, and one of India’s top constitutional experts

By arrangement with Dawn

SHORT TAKES

Hamilton tests Covid-19 positive

Sakhir, Bahrain: The Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 Team says seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton has tested positive for Covid-19 and will miss the Sakhir Grand Prix this weekend.

The team issued a statement saying Hamilton was tested three times last week and returned a negative result each time, the last on Sunday afternoon at the Bahrain International Circuit where he won the Grand Prix. "He woke up on Monday morning with mild symptoms and was informed at the same time that a contact prior to arrival in Bahrain had subsequently tested positive," the team said. "Lewis, therefore, took a further test and returned a positive result. This has since been confirmed by a retest. Hamilton is in isolation in accordance with the health protocols in Bahrain. Apart from mild symptoms, he is otherwise fit and well, and the entire team sends him its very best wishes for a swift recovery," the team statement said. — AP

Bach unopposed in bid for 2nd term

Lausanne: Thomas Bach will stand unopposed to serve a second term as International Olympic Committee president, the body said on Tuesday. Bach, a 66-year-old German lawyer, is set to be confirmed for a second and final four-year term at an IOC session in March in Athens. Bach was initially elected for an eight-year term as Olympic chief in September 2013, taking over from Belgian Jacques Rogge. If re-elected, Bach's term will end in 2025, a year after the Paris Olympics. The next term for the IOC presidency will start after the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, which will now take place from July 23-Aug 8, 2021, having been postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic. Bach, who won gold for West Germany in the foil fencing team event at the 1976 Olympics, was elected an IOC member at the age of 37. — AFP

Olympic rings back in Tokyo Bay

Tokyo: The five Olympic rings are back in Tokyo Bay. They were removed for maintenance four months ago shortly after the Tokyo Olympics were postponed until next year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The rings arrived on Tuesday after a short cruise from Yokohama and are positioned on a barge in the shadow on Tokyo's Rainbow Bridge. The rings painted blue, black, red, green, and yellow are gigantic. They stand about 15 meters tall and 33 meters in length about 50 feet tall and 100 feet in length. The rings will be lighted at night and herald the coming of the Olympics, which are to open on July 23, 2021, followed by the Paralympics on August 24. The rings made their first appearance early in 2020, just a few months before the Olympics were postponed late in March. — AP

Lopez banned 8 years for fixing

London: Spanish tennis player Enrique Lopez was banned for eight years on Tuesday for fixing matches at tournaments in 2017. The Tennis Integrity Unit said Lopez cannot play in or attend any officially recognized tournament while banned. He was fined 25,000. The 29-year-old Lopez reached a career high singles ranking of No. 154 in 2018, though never qualified for the main draw at a Grand Slam event. His best doubles ranking was No. 135. The TIU said three charges of match fixing were proven and two charges were not proven. The tournaments Lopez tried to corrupt were not identified. — AP

Live on TV

CRICKET

Australia vs India: Third ODI from 9.10 am on Sony Six, Ten 1, HD

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: Hyderabad FC vs Jamshedpur from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

Champions League: Istanbul Basaksehir vs RB Leipzig from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 2; Manchester United vs PSG from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2; Ferencváros vs Barcelona from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1; Juventus vs Dynamo Kyiv from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Six; Sevilla vs Chelsea from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 3

Third time lucky?

India look to salvage pride in third ODI against Oz

Canberra, Dec. 1: Left chasing shadows in the first two games, a listless Indian team would most certainly tweak their bowling combination in order to avoid a second successive clean-sweep when they take on Australia in the third and final ODI here on Wednesday.

A 0-3 defeat against Australia would be their second rout in consecutive ODI series having met the same fate in New Zealand earlier this year.

"We are very much determined to go out there to win the next match and see that it's not a clean sweep," top-order batsman Shreyas Iyer said when asked what his team can do to stop Australia's first in 20 years.

"Our bowlers are really positive with their work ethic and we could see that during training, a few of the bowlers practising with certain plans," he added.

The first two games turned out to be run-fests in which Australia out-batted Virat Kohli's men and before they switch over to the T20 series, a win at the picturesque Manuka Oval could do their confidence a world of good.

Skipper Kohli has been the first to admit that they have been "out-played" in the two games and it is expected that some corrective measures will be taken in order to get their campaign back on track.

Navdeep Saini, India's fastest bowler, like a lot of others on his first tour of Australia, has looked clueless.

It could well be possible that one among Shardul Thakur, with an experience of 27 international games, or the 'yorker sensation' rookie left-armer Thangarasu Natarajan will be seen replacing Saini.

In case of Natarajan, it could be his international debut. — PTI



India captain Virat Kohli (left) talks with teammate Mohammed Shami during the second One-Day International match against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday. — AP

Iyer glad that Oz have plan against him

Canberra, Dec. 1: Overwhelmed that the Australians devised a short ball strategy against him, Indian batsman Shreyas Iyer says it can best be tackled by adopting a counter-offensive approach and taking advantage of the field placing.

Josh Hazlewood got Iyer into a tangle with a well-directed bouncer in the first ODI while he gave a better account of himself in the second game where

he scored 38 off 36 balls.

"I am really happy that they are coming up with a plan (against me)," Iyer said on the eve of the inconsequential third ODI when asked about the home team peppering him with short-pitched stuff.

"I feel overwhelmed and take it as a challenge. But I thrive under pressure and it motivates me to go against them. I feel it (a short leg and leg gully) helps to take advantage

● **Hazlewood got Iyer into a tangle with a well-directed bouncer in the first ODI while he gave a better account of himself in the second game where he scored 38 off 36 balls.**

and score more runs and make best use of it." Playing the short stuff

is all about mind-set for Iyer along with the adjustment while batting at the nets.

"It's all about mind-set that you need to adjust. How you need to place yourself on the wicket. Rather than bending down too much (during stance), you stand upright. It easier to pick up the short one.

"I have set a pattern for myself. Every time I play, I give myself a little bit of time and get set." — PTI

Langer feels Warner paves way for others to grab slot

Canberra, Dec. 1: A groin injury has ruled David Warner out of at least the first Test against India and Australia coach Justin Langer says the temporarily vacant opening slot will go to the one who performs well for Australia in the upcoming tour games against the visitors.

The Australian cricket fraternity has been debating about Warner's opening partner in the Test series with a few backing the struggling Joe Burns to keep his place while others want the young William Pucovski to open.

However, the injury to Warner has changed the scenario and has created a situation where both Burns and Pucovski could open.

Langer said, it has



David Warner

taken "a bit of pressure off".

"No wonder I'm a bit more relaxed. We've won a few games and I don't have to worry about who we're going to pick for the Test side," Langer was quoted as saying by the Australian media after the team arrived

here for the third ODI.

Australia A will lock horns with India A from December 6 and against senior Indian team on December 11 in Sydney before the Test series.

"I've said it so many times, the hardest part of the job is selecting the teams, but we've got an Australia A game starting in a few days and it'll be a good opportunity for those guys against the Indian A side to put their hand up.

"And then after that is another Australia A game versus the actual Indian Test side at the SCG under lights with a pink ball," Langer said.

"We'll work out who's going to play in that game and certainly there's huge opportunities for people to put their hand up." — PTI

CAPTAIN FINCH STANDS FOR STRUGGLING STARC

Canberra, Dec. 1: Top pacer Mitchell Starc's patchy form is among the few worries for a rampaging Australia in the ongoing series against India but skipper Aaron Finch on Tuesday threw his weight behind the seasoned campaigner, saying there is no need to panic just yet.

The left-arm seamer, who has an outstanding record with the new ball in white-ball cricket, has been far from his best in the ongoing series against India. In the two ODIs, Starc has managed to claim just one wicket while giving away 147 runs in 18 overs. Australia won both the games.

"He hasn't been at his very best, and you have to understand his standards are a lot higher than what you expect from most other people because of how dominant he's been over

the last eight or nine years, especially in the white-ball formats," Finch said.

"He'd love to be swinging the ball and getting it right early on, but the reality is when you're defending big totals and playing against good players, they're coming hard at you," he added.

With star pacer Pat Cummins rested for the final ODI, Finch said there will be discussions on how to use Starc.

"So, there'll be conversations today about what we can do slightly different.

"We'll chat about that today. But, definitely no panic stations here from my point of view," Finch said.

Since the World Cup last year, Starc has endured a dip in form. The pacer has picked just 12 wickets while bleeding runs at an economy of 6.28 in 11 matches. — PTI

SHAH RUKH INVESTS IN USA CRICKET LEAGUE

Kolkata, Dec. 1: Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's Knight Riders Group, on Tuesday, announced their foray into the untapped US cricket market investing in development of Major League Cricket with a multi-million dollar T20 tournament.

As per the deal, Knight Riders, will join hands with American Cricket Enterprises (ACE) to become a stakeholder in development of the sport in the region.

"For several years now, we have been expanding the Knight Riders brand globally and closely watching the potential for T20 cricket in the USA," Shah Rukh, the principal owner of the Knight Riders group, said in a media statement. — PTI

Mumbai sweep aside East Bengal

Goa, Dec. 1: A thumping 3-0 victory over newcomers SC East Bengal helped Mumbai City FC climb top of the Hero Indian Super League table at the GMC Stadium here on Tuesday.

Hugo Boumous assisted all three goals as a brace from Adam Le Fondre (20', 48') and a strike from Hernan Santana (58') saw Mumbai register their second straight win with SCEB yet to open their account.

Mumbai made four changes from their 1-0 win against FC Goa, with Ahmed Jahouh returning to the eleven. Meanwhile, SCEB made two changes to the side that lost the Kolkata derby.

SCEB suffered a huge blow early on as defender Daniel Fox was replaced by Mohammad Rafique.

Mumbai had the opportunity to break the deadlock in the 10th minute but they failed to convert.

Six minutes later, Mumbai goalkeeper Amrinder Singh was also called into action. Rafique pounced on a misplaced pass from Jahouh before firing a shot from long range that was kept away by Amrinder. But it didn't take long for Mumbai to grab the lead. Mumbai won the ball outside their own box and Rowlin Borges provided a sublime diagonal ball towards Boumous on the left. The Frenchman displayed brilliant compo-

HYDERABAD FC LOOK TO EXTEND UNBEATEN RUN

Vasco, Dec. 1: Hyderabad FC will look to continue their unbeaten run when they play their third game in 10 days, taking on Jamshedpur FC in an Indian Super League match here on Wednesday.

While the league has seen a series of draws over the weekend, Hyderabad and Jamshedpur are coming into the game on the back of contrasting form.

While Hyderabad are unbeaten in two games to be currently placed at the fourth position, Owen Coyle's Jamshedpur are ninth in the table.

JFC played two eventful games so far a season opening 1-2 loss to Chennaiyin FC followed by a 2-2 draw against Odisha FC on Sunday. — PTI

sure in the box to beat his marker and find Le Fondre, who made an easy tap in. The Islanders continued to dominate the game after taking the lead. — Agencies

PELEGRINI'S BETIS LOSE AGAIN IN LIGA

Seville, Dec. 1: Eibar defeated Real Betis 2-0 in the Spanish league, handing Manuel Pellegrini's team their fifth loss in six matches.

Japan forward Yoshinori Muto and Esteban Burgos scored five minutes apart early in the second half to give Eibar the away victory.

The Basque Country club moved to 12th place, while Betis dropped to 15th after their third defeat in a row. It was outscored 17-5 in their last six games, with their only win against promoted Elche.

Pellegrini has been trying to rebuild his team without Spain midfielder Sergio Canales, who injured a tendon two weeks ago with the national side and is expected to be out until next year.

Eibar has lost only one of their last seven games. They won in Seville despite playing without defender Paulo Oliveira and forward Quique Gonz lez because of injuries, and without striker Kike Garcia because of a suspension. — AP



Fulham's Ademola Lookman (left) celebrates with Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa after scoring against Leicester City in their English Premier League match at King Power Stadium in Leicester on Monday. — AFP

Fulham escape relegation zone

London, Dec. 1: The first ballooned over the crossbar. The second was a dreadful attempt at a "Panenka" that flopped into the goalkeeper's arms. The third flew off target because of an unfortunate slip.

Three embarrassing penalty misses have summed up Fulham's miserable start to life back in the English Premier League, so hopes weren't exactly high when the team was awarded another against Leicester on Monday.

This time, no mistake. Ivan Cavaleiro one of the spot kick culprits from previous matches stepped up and curled his effort high into the net for a goal that ultimately proved the winners at King Power Stadium.

A 2-1 victory was only Fulham's second in 10 games since promotion

back to the top-flight and it lifted the team out of the relegation zone.

It also ended Fulham's penalty nightmare.

"I didn't feel pressure," said Cavaleiro, who slipped before shanking a penalty over the bar in last week's 3-2 home loss to Everton.

"That happens in football and the manager just gave me confidence to take it and I did." — AP

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