THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | MONDAY 7 | DECEMBER 2020

WEATHER



ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Karthigai 22 Tithi: Sapthami Star: Magam/ Puram Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 pm Yamagandam: 10.30 am to 12 noon

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

Pak fires on LOC, **IB**; none hurt

Jammu, Dec. 6: Pakistani troops opened fire and shelled mortars at forward posts and villages along the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch and Kathua districts, officials said on Sunday.

There was no report of any

damage on the Indian side, they said. At about 12:30 pm, Pakistan initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and shelling mortars along the LoC in Balakote sector of Poonch district. The Indian Army retaliated befittingly, a defence spokesman said. The officials said there was also a report of ceasefire violation by Pakistani Rangers in the Pansar border outpost along the IB in

The firing from across the border started around 10.15 pm on Saturday, prompting retaliation by the Border Security Force (BSF), the officials said, adding the cross-border firing between the two sides contin-ued till 2:25 am on Sunday.

Hiranagar sector of Kathua dis-

Free meal service for

slum dwellers begins

Chennai: "The Amma canteens are playing a pivotal role in feeding people, especially at a time of natural disaster, said Fisheries Minister D. Jayakumar while inaugurating the free meal programme to slum dwellers at Velachery Chennai on Sunday. The minister said that as many as 11 lakh people partook of breakfast in of the CM's announcement. The free cooked meals scheme will be on till December13, he said. It was on Saturday evening that Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami announced the distribution of free food among flood-affected people and had directed **Greater Chennal Corporation** Commissioner to provide cooked food among flood-affected people.



The Opposition parties are demanding a spacious Well of the House!

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PFIZER SEEKS EMERGENCY LICENSING

New Delhi, Dec. 6: Pfizer India has become the first pharmaceutical firm to seek from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) an emergency use authorisation for its Covid-19 vaccine in the country, after its par-ent company secured such clearance in the UK and Bahrain.

The firm, in its application submitted to the drug regulator, has sought permission to import the vaccine for sale and distribution in the country, besides waiver of clinical trials on Indian population in accordance with the special provisions under the New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019, official sources said.

"Pfizer India has submitted an application on December 4 to the DCGI seeking emergency use authorization (EUA) for its Covid-19 vaccine in

India," a source said.
"The firm has submitted the EUA application in Form CT-18 for grant of permission to import and market Pfizer-BioNTech's Covid-19-19 mRNA vaccine BNT162b2 in the country," the source said, citing the application. The UK on Wednesday became the first country to approve the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine against Covid-19.

China builds new villages on border PAWAN BALI |DC Evidence of new villages and accommodation similar to

NEW DELHI, DEC. 6

Continuing with its aggressive stand, the Chinese government has built new villages near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Arunachal Pradesh this year to beef up its defences and also to put pressure on India in the disputed area, the satellite images shared by independent OSINT (open source intelligence) indicate Sunday. This follows reports of

the Chinese building a village within Bhutanese territory near the site of the Doklam standoff between India and China in 2017. Going by the satellite

images, one of the villages constructed this year is a mere 5 km from the Bum-La pass at the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh. "Evidence of new villages and accommodation similar to what was seen at Pangda village in Bhutan is now visible near the Bum-La pass that sits between India and China on the eastern front," tweeted OSINT analyst Detresfa. He said that these villages had been built in order to strengthen the weakening border forces by balancing the outflow of residents. He said that the relocation move also promises to

what was seen at Pangda village in Bhutan is now visible near the **Bum-La pass that** sits between India and China on the eastern front

offer China better border surveillance and patrols through a network of herders. All these new villages are within Chinese territory.

This development is significant as the villages have come up at a time when India and China are involved in a major military standoff in eastern Laďakh. These villages will also help China to solidify its claim over these disputed areas.

However, this is not for the first time that China has built villages near the LAC. China had been building villages along the LAC for some time now. Even in 2019, there were reports of the Chinese building around 20-25 "model" villages at several points near the LAC. These villages had well connected roads and boasted of community halls, shops and playing areas.

DMK, Kamal back farmers' **Bharat Bandh tomorrow**

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 6

The DMK-led opposition bloc in Tamil Nadu on Sunday extended support to the December 8 'Bharat Bandh' called for by farmers agitating against the Union government's farm laws, saying their demand for the repealing of the three legilsations was "totally justified."

Actor Kamal Haasan's Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) also extended support to the protest by farmers. The party sent a team of office-bearers on Sunday to Delhi to express solidarity with the agitating farmers. The 10-member team is being led by the MNM Farmers' Wing state secretary Mayilsamy, a party release said, adding, the actor-politician has asked it to convey his support to the protest-

ers.
The DMK's Stalin-led grouping appealed to farmers' unions, traders' bodies, government employees' associations, labour unions and others in the state to extend "grand support" to the Bharat bandh and make it a success on Tuesday. In a statement, Mr Stalin, Tamil Nadu Congress Committee chief K.S. Alagiri, MDMK founder Vaiko and

Cong, Left, regional parties, too, pitch in

DC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS NEW DELHI, DEC. 6

Opposition parties, led by the Congress, five Left parties, the Aam Admi Trinamul Party Congress, Janata Dal Telangana Rashtra Samiti on Sunday supported the December Bandh' call given by the farmers' unions.

"We the undersigned leaders of political parties extend our solidarity with the ongoing massive struggle by the Indian farmers organised by various kisan organisations from across the country and extend our support to their call for a Bharat Bandh on December 8

Left leaders, said the ongoing protest outside Delhi by farmers was growing every day and drawing global attention.

The farmers were angry that despite five rounds of talks, the Centre has not made any "constructive"

demanding the withdrawal of these retrograde agrilaws and the Electricity Amendment Bill," the Congress and the Left parties said in a joint statement.

The statement further said the new agri-laws were passed Parliament in a "brazen anti-democratic manner preventing a structured threaten India's food security, destroy Indian agriculture and our farmers. lay the basis for the abolishment of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and mortgage Indian agriculture and our markets to the caprices of multinational agri-business corporates and domestic corporates".

proposals and recalled their representatives staging a "silent protest" and demanding a 'yes' or 'no' on withdrawal of the laws during their talks with the government, led by Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar.

TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY, **SAYS PAWAR**

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, DEC. 6

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) supremo Sharad Pawar, a former Union agriculture minister, has warned the Union government that if the deadlock continues much longer, the agitation will not be limited to Delhi and people from across the country will stand by the protesting farmers.

"I hope wisdom dawns on the government, and it takes cognisance to resolve the issue. If this stalemate continues, the protest will not be limited to Delhi, but people from every nook and corner of the country will stand by the protesting farmers," he said.

Mr Pawar is scheduled to meet President Ram Nath Kovind on December 9, the day the farmers' unions and the government are due to hold the next round of



Locals play cricket on NH-24 near Ghazipur border (Delhi-UP border) during farmers' protest march against the new farm laws, in New Delhi, Sunday.

India's Covid-19 tally goes up by 36,011

New Delhi, Dec. 6: India's Covid-19 caseload rose to 96.44 lakh, while the total number of people who have recuperated from the disease crossed 91 lakh pushing the national recovery rate to 94.37 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Sunday. The Covid-19 active caseload plunged to almost 4 lakh after 138

The total coronavirus cases mounted to 96,44,222 with 36,011 new infections

being reported in a day, while the death toll crossed to 1.40 lakh with 482 new fatalities, the data

updated at 8 am showed. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 91,00,792 pushing the national recovery rate to 94.37 per cent, while the Covid-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.45 per cent. There are 4,03,248 active

coronavirus infections in the country which comprises 4.18 per cent of the total caseload, the data

India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, and surpassed

90 lakh on November 20. According to the ICMR, 14,69,86,575 samples have been tested up to December 5 with 11,01,063 samples being tested on

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disease in AP: 1 dies, 292 ill

Amaravati, Dec. 6: A mysterious disease that began spreading in Eluru in Andhra Pradesh claimed one life on Sunday even as about 292 fell sick. More than 140 of the patients have returned home after treatment at hospital while the condition of others was stable, medical and health officials in West Godavari district said.

Nothing has yet been established as to what caused the disease that saw people suddenly falling unconscious after suffering from symptoms of fits and

A 45-year-old man who was admitted to the government general hospital in Vijayawada this morning with symptoms of nausea and epilepsy died in the

Majority of the people had recovered within a few minutes but at least seven were shifted to the government hospital on Sunday for bet-

ter treatment. Special teams of doctors have been rushed to Eluru to treat the victims while a house-to-house survey has been undertaken to identify prospective patients.

Health Commissioner Katamaneni Bhaskar also reached Eluru to take stock of the situation and monitor the treatment.

Expressing concern over the spread of the mysterious disease, state Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan directed the health authorities to ensure proper medicare to the afflicted persons. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has scheduled a visit to Eluru on Monday to visit the patients in the GGH and later hold a review meeting with the West Godavari dis-

trict officials. Deputy Chief Minister (Health) A K K Srinivas (Nani), who represents Eluru, said tests established that water contamination was not the cause of the unknown disease.

Nani visited the hospital again on Sunday and reviewed the situation and said there was no need to

panic.
"Most of the victims have recovered and others are stable. We have readied 50 beds in the GGH in Vijayawada to shift patients, if required. Our medical teams are attending to every patient," the Deputy Chief Minister said.

BJP MP GVL Narasimha

Rao, who spoke to state Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney, said a five-mem-ber team of doctors from AIIMS at Mangalagiri here was visiting Eluru to treat the patients.



SHORT

16 die due to **Covid-19 in city**

Chennai, Dec. 6: There were as many as 16 deaths in the city raising the State's Covid-19 tally to 11,793. Of 1,320 persons tested for the virus, 1,320 persons were coronavirus positive. Of them, 346 were from the city. The total active cases in TN are now 10 788 DC

35 fresh Covid-19 cases in Pondy, no deaths

Puducherry, Dec. 6: Puducherry reported 35 fresh Covid-19 cases on Sunday, taking the tally to 37,244, while the toll remained at 614 as there were no fatalities. The day also saw 62 patients getting discharged from various hospitals after

The Mahe region topped the list of fresh infections (18), followed by Puducherry 13, Karaikal 3 and Yanam 1, the Director of the Health Department S Mohan Kumar

said in a release.

Cumulatively 37,244 cases have been confirmed, out of which 36,238 were treated and discharged. Active cases remained

A total of 4.19 lakh samples have been tested so far, out of which 3.77 lakh had turned negative, Kumar said. The fatality and recovery rates in the Union Territory were 1.65 per cent and 97.30 per cent, he added. -PTI

Man caught smuggling gold in bandage

DC CORRESPONDENT

It seems there is no end to the modus operandi of gold smugglers. A 27-year-old passenger was caught on Sunday for smuggling gold in a bandage on his upper back. Chennai Customs officers caught the Ramanathapuram resident who had arrived from Dubai by Air India Express on Sunday.

Ahamed Anas was intercepted at exit gate by an alert customs officer who noticed an abnormal bulge in his upper back. On a personal search, the medical bandage was seen stuck on his upper back. On pulling it, two gold paste packets weighing 168 grams were found stuck to the inside of

the bandage. On extraction, 147 grams of gold 24K purity gold valued at Rs 7.5 lakhs was recovered and seized under Customs

Earlier on Saturday two Khan (47) and Mohamed Rafi (46) who arrived from Dubai by an AI flight were intercept-ed at the exit and four packets of gold paste in plastic pouches weighing 176 grams, were found ingeniously stitched to the bottom portion of their

On extraction, 142 grams of gold of 24K purity valued at ₹7.23 lakhs was reco-

BJP to hold meet sans police permit

ARULOLI M | DC THOOTHUKUDI, DEC. 7

TN BJP state president, L Murugan, on Sunday confirmed the participation of the Madhya Pradesh minister Shivraj Singh Chowhan at a public meeting planned to be organised by the BJP at Tiruchendur to mark the successful completion of the Vel Yatra on December 7 (Monday), despite the police refusing permis-



sion for the meeting. However, Thoothukudi police superintendent, S Jeyakumar, has issued a strong warning that who-

ever participates in the BJP meeting on Monday would face legal consequences, as they have been denied permission for the

Speaking to the media after offering prayers at Arulmigu Subramanyaswamy temple in Tiruchendur on Sunday morning, Murugan said that the Vel Yatra was a journey to fight against the ill elements like the VCK and the Karuppar

Koottam that portrayed Hindu women in a disrespectful manner, and maligned the sanctity of Lord Muruga by misinter-preting the devotional song 'Kanda Sashti Kavasam'.

Murugan also confirmed the participation of Madhya Pradesh CM, Shivraj Singh Chowhan, at the final day meeting, though the district administration has denied permission for the meeting.

<<<<

Sunday.

Cental team deputed by

the union government

makes an on-the-spot inspection of the dam-

age caused by cyclone

'Nivar' at Pallikarani on



Greater Chennai Corporation Commissioner G. Prakash provides free cooked food to flood-affected people in Chennai on Sunday.

Free meal service for slum dwellers begins

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 6

"The Amma canteens are playing a pivotal role in feeding people, especially at a time of natural disaster," said Fisheries Minister D. Jayakumar while inaugurating the free meal programme to slum dwellers at Velachery Chennai on Sunday.

The minister said that as many as 11 lakh people partook of breakfast in

Chennai within 12 hours of the CM's announce-ment. The free cooked meals scheme will be on till December13, he said. It was on Saturday

evening that Chief Minister Edappadi K. Pala-niswami announced the distribution of free food among flood-affected people and had directed Greater Chennai Corporation Commissioner to provide cooked food among flood-affected people.

For last couple of weeks, residents of low lying areas in the GCC, especially slums, have been struggling to cope with water stagnation due to the heavy rain caused by cyclone and the Northeast Monsoon season. The government, during a panel discussion on the impact of cyclone held at the Secretariat, decided to provide free meal for slum dwellers living in GCC limits for a week.

Central team inspects cyclone Nivar damage

Chennai, Dec. 6: An inter-ministerial team deputed by the Centre to make an on-the-spot assessment of the damage caused by cyclone 'Nivar' to Tamil Nadu and Puducherry visited different locations in Chennai, Chengalpattu and Tiruvallur districts on Sunday. Members of the central team, accompa-

nied by senior state gov-

ernment officials, visited

the affected parts and took

With Cuddalore district in Tamil Nadu bearing the brunt of cyclone 'Burevi', leaving acres of farmlands submerged in water and scores of citizens affected due to inundation, Chief Minister K Palaniswai on Sunday deputed one more minister to assist rescue and relief work. Law Minister C Ve Shanmugam will join his cabinet colleagues P Thangamani (Electricity) and MC Sampath, who holds the

Industries portfolio, the chief minister said. Sampath hails from the district.

The CM had on Saturday deputed 11 ministers to coordinate rescue and relief operations in the affected districts, includ-Tiruvarur Nagapattinam. rains under the influence of 'Burevi' lashed the state on December 3 and 4, par-ticularly several southern districts.

Jaidu, Tamil Governor Pr Purobit President M Venkaiah Banwarilal Purohit and Chief Minister K Palaniswami on Sunday paid tributes to B R Ambedkar on his anniversary. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution and a Dalit icon, passed away in 1956.
Naidu and Purohit paid

The parties condemned

Farmers protesting

demands.
The fifth round of talks between farmer representatives and government on Saturday

Vice Prez, Guv, CM pay tributes to Ambedkar Chennai, Dec. 6: Vice floral tributes to a portrait Twitter and paid tributes Stalin hailed Ambedkar as

of Ambedkar at Guindy Raj Bhavan, an official release said. The Vice President tweeted a video and pictures of his paying tributes Ambedkar on his official Twitter handle. "It is the duty of all of us to realise his dream of a socio-eco-nomically inclusive de-mocracy," Naidu tweeted. Palaniswami also took to

as a "social justice revolutionary". The CM said the late leader struggled to end untouchability and described him as a multifaceted personality. DMK President MK

to Ambedkar, hailing him

Stalin also paid homage to Ambedkar and hailed him as "this century's new Buddha" and a guide to all. In a Facebook post,

"a source of knowledge from India, this century's Buddha, a light for all the oppressed people and a guide to all at all times."

"I garlanded a portrait of Ambedkar at the Tiruvarur house of Kalaignar (the late M Karunanidhi) who always walked the path of social justice laid out by Ambedkar," he
— PTI

Parties condemn Centre for not acceding to demands



Farmers from Tamil Nadu join the ongoing 'Delhi Chalo' agitation against the new

From P1

the Centre for not acceding to their demand for withdrawal of the laws.

"Their demand for repealing of the three laws is totally justifi-ed...we extend our wholehearted support to the December 8 Bharat bandh," the statement

against the Centre's new tarm laws had on Friday announced the Bharat bandh on December 8 and threatened to intensify their agitation and block more roads leading to the national capital if the government does not accept their

ended in a deadlock

Tamil medium appointments in Govt service

When will decision be taken, HC asks

J. STALIN | DC CHENNAI, DEC. 6

that Pointing out Amendment Bill to "The Tamil Nadu Appointment on preferential basis in the Services under the State of Persons studied in Tamil Medium Act" is pending for the past eight months for getting assent before the appropriate Constitutional Authority (Governor of Tamil Nadu), the Madras high court directed the special government pleader to get instructions as to when a decision with regard to the Bill would be taken.

A division bench comprising Justices N.Kirubakaran and B.Pugalendhi gave the directive while passing interim orders on a petition filed by G.Sakthi Rao, which sought a direction to the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission, to allow only the candidates who have completed their entire education through standard 10 and 12 and a degree in Tamil medium to avail PSTM quota.
In his petition, Sakthi

Rao also sought a direc-

airection University, Alagappa Annamalai University, Bharathiar University, Bharathidasan University, Madras University, Madurai Kamaraj University, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Mother Teresa Women's University, Perivar University and Tamil Nadu Open University to stop issuing PSTM certificates to Dis-

tance Education courses. In its order, the bench said it was brought to its notice, as recorded earlier in the orders, dated November 27, 2020 and December 1, 2020, that an Amendment Bill was passed in the legislative assembly of Tamil Nadu on March 16, 2020 and the same was sent to the appropriate Constitu-tional Authority for assent. The Bill has been pending for more than eight months for a decision. The court suo motu impleaded the Secretary to the Governor of Tamil Nadu as 15th respondent in this writ petition, the

tion to the state government to frame proper rules for PSTM quota and pleader J.Padmavathi Dei took notice on benaif of the newly impleaded respondent, the bench said, Because of non-granting of assent to the Amendment Bill, which was passed in the legislative assembly of the State of Tamil Nadu as early as on March 16, 2020, the students, who studied in Tamil medium, are suffering".

The bench said it was represented by K.K.Senthil, standing counsel for TNPSC, that the educa-tional qualification certificates of nearly about 85 candidates, who got appointment as Group-I Officers during the years 2016-2019 under 20 percent reservation for Tamil medium students were stated to be with the State government. The SGP appearing for the State was to produce the educational qualification certificates of those candidates right from the schooling onwards before the court, in the next date of hearing, the bench added and posted to December 9, 2020, further hearing of the case.

Masterpiece Mank replays the days of Citizen Kane

CHENNAI, DEC. 6

We are still in the throes of the pandemic, its dangers still lurking. It might be of very little comfort but one of the spinoffs of the house arrest is the time available to view TV, with the OTT platforms contributing enormously to this pleasurable exercise. And along comes Mank on Netflix to make the day for cineastes to relive the glory days of great Hollywood film making if

the classical variety.

Mank's release has triggered such nostalgia for Citizen Kane of 1941 that old timers cannot but be thrilled to recall how Orson Welles' movie earned its tag as the greatest film ever made by Hollywood.

I vividly remember watching the Welles movie at the American Consulate on Cathedral Road as a film festival of the classics was held in the 1970s - Mr Smith goes to Washington, Citizen Kane, On the Waterfront...They were more than just movies, they were a cinematic experience from the days of black & white, now vintage and yet purveying cinematic art in an art form that trips the aesthetic chords. Mank is a fantastic recreation of the old art, its monochromic throwbacks a visual treat even if they were all shot digitally rather than on film stock like in the old days. This is an intriguing story of

Courtesy - Netflix.com an old film classic makes for a most entertaining watch though one would recommend that younger genera-tions read a bit about the making of Citizen Kane to

appreciate Mank. The director David Fincher of The Social Network, Fight Club fame) tries to overturn our old belief in the creative genius of Orson Welles, who in a debut film made such a movie possible, even if it flopped in theatres thanks to William Randolph Hurst, the multimillionaire media mogul of those times, conspiring against Citizen Kane because he hated the socialist ideas of Welles

while nursing the suspicion that his life was the one captured in the movie. He brought about a boycott by theatres as the Hollywood studios owned all the screens then. Mank takes a dig at the Hollywood studio system as well as Hearst (played by Charles Dance).

Gary Oldman brings alive the story of the alcohol-obsessed screen writer Herman J Mankiewicz and how he wrote the screenplay for Citizen Kane and finally claimed a share in the credits to the extent of getting his name ahead of Orson Welles. He, however, skipped the Oscars ceremony in

which the much acclaimed film wins only the prize for the screenplay from nine nominations. Obviously enough, Mank glorifies Mankiewicz at the expense of Welles, who gets almost a bit part for Tom Burke. Mank's witticisms, as he races to meet a deadline while in bed in a California ranch with a broken foot from an auto accident, are a standout and the film's best feature.

It may appear Fincher is demolishing the myth of directors being the ultimate creative hand behind movies as the story of Mank unfolds. What we have is a cinematic treat in the great scenes in which Mank gatecrashes the media mogul's circus-themed party and holds centre stage in a dia-tribe against the Hollywood system. He berates the likes of Louis B Mayer and Randolph Hearst even as he spews venom even in the line as he pukes, declaring that "The white wine came up with the fish". A washedup writer he may have been, but Mank gets in his two bits in while raging against the system - Hollywood, the studios and their politics. Truth to power and riches, so brilliantly filmed. Of

course, Hearst gets his own back in a lecture affectionately rendered just after having been the focus of Mank's verbal attack. With his hand on Mank's shoulder, he guides him out of the house just as he tells him the truth about how the organ grinder's monkey can stoke its own delusional grandeur in imagining that its act is the raison détre of the whole show on the road rather than the organ grinder's genius in employing the monkey to make what money he can by dishing out the entertainment to the public. Mank has to withstand the truth once again that while he may have been a hugely talented screen-writer he is kept in his job only because Hearst likes his wit. He was there to amuse, not influence the

course of events.

Chennai woman booked for abusing traffic inspector

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 6

A video of a young woman Assistant director who, allegedly in an inebriated condition, was said to have verbally abused a traffic police personnel, after her friend was booked for drunken driving in Thiruvanmiyur on Saturday night went viral in social media platforms. According to the police, the incident happened at South Avenue, Kamarajar Nagar in Thiruvanmiyur, when traffic police were undertaking a check on vehicles to nab drunken drivers. At 8.30 pm, the police stopped a car being

driven by Sesu Prasadh his duty. Three videos, (27) of Indira Nagar in Adyar. He was asked to blow into the breathalyser and the reading showed 209 mg alcohol content. The police seized the vehicle and registered a

case of "Drinking and Driving". However, his friend, later identified by the police as Kamini (28) of Indira Nagar and an assistant director in Kollywood, picked an argument with traffic Inspector Mariappan. She allegedly hurled abuses at the inspector and his team and police sources said the woman kicked the Inspector while preventing him from performing reportedly shot by the police, showed her verbally abusing the police and during the course of the argument she claimed to be from the media.

Inspector Mariappan lodged a complaint with the Thiruvanmiyur police station and a case was registered under Sections 294(b) (obscene language), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), and 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from dis-charge of his duty) of IPC. Meanwhile, on Sunday, the woman and her friend Sesu Prasadh surrendered before the police. Investigations are on.

TAKES

TNCC chief tests virus positive, says party

Chennai, Dec. 6: Tamil Nadu Congress chief K S Alagiri has tested positive for coronavirus, the party said on Sunday. The former Lok Sabha MP has been admitted to a private hospital for treatment, A Gopanna, TNCC media department chairman said in a statement.
"TNCC President K S Alagiri

has tested positive for coronavirus following a test today morning and has been admitted to a private hospital for treatment," he said. Gopanna asked those who had come in contact with Alagiri to undergo COVID-

City school boy electrocuted

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 6

A 13-year-old boy was electrocuted after he touched a faulty wire in his house in Pallikaranai on Saturday evening. Santhosh (13), son of Saravanan who is a resident of Sai Balaji Nagar in Pallikaranai, was a Class 8 student of a private school in the city. The incident happened at around 7.30 pm on Saturday.

A private electrician was hired by Saravanan to fix a faulty electric wire in the house. Police said. When the man was work-Santhosh accidentally touched the wire, received a shock and was thrown off.

The family rushed Santhosh to private hospital near the house, however he was declared dead upon arrival and the body was sent to Chromepet govern-ment hospital for a post-

Self-immolation: Auto driver dies of burns

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 6

A 43-year-old auto driver, who set himself on fire outside the Selaiyur police station on Friday night, passed away at the KMC hospital in the early hours of Sunday. The deceased had torched himself over police inaction on his com-

Srinivasan (43), a resident of Kamarajapuram in Tambaram was worked up over his 13year-old daughter allegedly eloping a few days ago with a 19-year-old college student from the neighbourhood and he had lodged a complaint with the Selaiyur police. It is alleged that the police did not take any effort to trace the minor girl and upset over this, he set himself on fire on Friday. He was rushed to Kilpauk medical college and hospital for treatment but having sustained 70 per cent burn injuries he died on Sunday.

Rain-soaked coal halts power generation

DC CORRESPONDENT THOOTHUKUDI, DEC. 6

The coal stocked for power generation at the stockyard at VOC Port has become wet due to the continuous rain, forcing the 5x210 MW Tuticorin Thermal Power Station (TTPS) to halt power generation on Sunday.
The problem started on

November 16, when Thoothukudi experienced continuous rains, said a TTPS officer, adding that since then the TTPS administration decided to reduce power generation as wet coal became sticky and clogged and cannot be ground into powder to be blown into the furnace for burning. The officer, pleading anonymity, added that using wet coal may even break the conveyor belts, and hence, the TTPS administration used furnace oil instead of coal for its generation for 15 days till November last week.

But, as furnace oil is costly, the TTPS administration decided to reduce its generation gradually from December 1, when the total generation at the five units was 724 MW against the power station's installation capacity of 1,050 MW. This was drastically reduced to 227 MW on December 3 and further lowered to 177 MW and 55 MW respectively on December 4 and 5 before bringing the five units to a halt pro-

ducing zero MW on December 6. The 2x500MW NTPL thermal power plant is a joint venture project of the TNEB and the NLC in Thoothukudi. This has also reduced its power generation to 352 MW against its capacity of 1,000 MW due to the coal in its yard getting wet due to the

Senior citizens demand National Commission, Trust

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 6

Senior Citizens have demanded setting up a National Commission along with the National Trust for Senior Citizens. Sending a 10-point letter to the T.R. Balu, Parliamentarian, Sriperum-pudur Constituency and T.M. Anbarasan, legislator of Alandur, Senior citizen forum said demanded the establishment of old age homes for Senior Citizens with integrated multi-facility centres and day care centres.

Asking for issuance of "Smart Identity Cards" for senior citizen and setting up of District level help lines for older person, medical examination and treatment at concessional charges in private Hospitals under Corporate Social Responsibility, the forum urged the Central Government and

Drunk driver

rams car into

2 pedestrians

CHENNAI, DEC. 6

DC CORRESPONDENT

Two pedestrians were

seriously injured after a

55-year-old man driving

a car in a drunken state

rammed his vehicle into

them. The incident took

place inside a private

medical University cam-pus in Thandalam, Sriperumbudur in

Kanchipuram district on

Saturday. According to the police,

the accused, identified as

Gunasekar (55) from his

driving licence, allegedly in an inebriated condi-

tion, rammed his car

against a physiotherapy student Vahitha (24) and Vadivelu (38) of Manali,

who were walking on the

pedestrian footpath. The

shocking incident was caught on CCTV camera

inside the University

As per the video clip,

the car that ran amok

knocked down Vahitha

and then hit Vadivelu,

before it came to halt

after hitting a tree. The

drunk driver was hand-

ed over to the Sri-

perumbudur Police.

campus.

Expedite the opening of the "National Centre of Ageing" which is to be situated at Guindy BCC Lab complex at a cost of ₹78 crore with a bed capacity of 200 and out-patient numbering 500. This will greatly help most senior citizens

Reserve Bank of India to formulate a policy decision so that the Senior citizens are paid 2percent interest over and above the rate fixed by the Banks in order to deal with the erosion in their income and to meet the cost of living, as many of the seniors in unorganised sector do not have any compensation like Dearness Allowance. It is the duty of a welfare state Government to help at the advanced age.

Expedite the opening of the "National Centre of Ageing" which is to be situated at Guindy BCC Lab complex at a cost of ₹78

of 200 and out-patient numbering 500. This will greatly help most senior citizens.

Extension of free bus pass for local trips to be extended without any restriction of number of trips and also the same facility to be extended throughout Tamil Nadu the Government should pay subsidy to

Transport Corporation Day care centres just like Creche where abandoned elderly people would be taken care. A separate Cell "Senior Citizen Safety " under a Joint Commissioner to look after oversee the problems and render help in appropriate manner as more than 10 lakh senior citizens are living in and around Chennai City Metropolitan police limits', said T. M. Sampath, President of the Forum in the letter.

Rajini supporters vow to aim for poll victory

G. SRINIVASAN | DC THANJAVUR, DEC. 6

Rajinikanth for confirming his entry into politics and deciding to launch his political party in January 2021, office bearers of the Rajini Makkal Mandrams in the district pledged to ensure victory of their party's candidates in all the eight assembly segments in Thanjavur district in the coming 2021 state assem-

Å resolution to this effect was adopted at the office-bearers meeting held here on Sunday. R Rajini Ganesan, district secretary, presided over the meeting. He said that the superstar has not betrayed the people of Tamil Nadu, and has decided to take a plunge in politics. This showed his honesty and keeping up his word.
"We have decided to add

five lakh more members in Thanjavur district and strengthen the party's



Rajinikanth

base in all unions (14 unions and three towns (urban) in the district before December 31. I will tour the district from December 8 to December 17 and will celebrate the birthday of the superstar in a grand manner at Thilagar Thidal in Thanjavur in January. We welcome Thamizharuvi Manian, who has been appointed as party overseer and Arjuna Murthy,

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUVARUR, DEC. 6

Stalin visits

DMK president MK Stalin accompanied by party's principal secretary KN Nehru and others, visited the rain hit areas and relief camps in the district on Sunday, and besides consoling the affected people, also distributed relief measures to them. Stalin visited rain hit areas of Ammaiyappan, Kavanoor, Thirumathi Hunnam Kamala Puram Vadakarai, Keela Manazi and Mangudi areas in the district. He

also visited a relief camp at the government school at Kachanam.

World Soil Day to rope in farmers

B.RAVICHANDRAN

ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil and Water Conservation, Research Station (IISWC-RC) here organised a function at Madithurai village near here to commemorate the World Soil Day to rope in the support of the farming community to keep a good soil health with good agriculture practices and related farm technologies for the overall wellbeing of

the living organisms.
On the occasion IISWC-RC also organised a soil health awareness camp cum exhibition at Madithurai. Dr V. Kasthurithilagam, Scientist (Soil Science) at IISWC-RC in

Dr.P.Raja, Principal Scientist (Soil Science) at IISWC-RC emphasized the significance of protecting soil health and stressed the importance of soil health cards for all for the farmers

her address stressed the need to protect microbial communities in soil to keep the soil alive as this is essential to help the cultivation process and for healthy growth of crops. Dr.H.C.Hombegowda, Scientist Senior

(Forestry), besides stressing on the need to protect forest, emphasized on the judicious application of fertilizers to ensure only optimum level of fertilizers is used in the soil to avert other complications due to over use of chemical fertilizers.

Dr.P.Raja, Principal Scientist (Soil Science) at IISWC-RC emphasized the significance of protecting soil health and stressed the importance of soil health cards for all for the farmers. He added that good soil health is the need for good crop health that in turn helpful in keeping good health of the human beings as well as the other organisms as the soil is the foundation for primary production in the terrestrial environment. A diverse community of living organisms, which constitute the soil biodi-

versity, keeps the soil healthy and fertile and determines the main biogeochemical hat sustain life on earth. Hence, there is a need for good soil management to pave the way for soil health for overall well being of all ecosystems and living organisms, he

added.
Mr.Bhojan, village president in his address has assured full cooperation of the villagers in all such activities. As a part of the programme an exhibition related to Improved Soil and Land Management practices, and field level demonstration to the farmers for the soil sample collections were also

Fishermen cry for help over cyclone damage

A. ARUL PALANI I DC DC, CHENNAI, DEC. 6

Devastated by repeated cyclones, the fishermen of the State demanded that the government provide immediate relief to them besides strengthening the infrastructure on the coastline. As advised by the State government, in the wake of the threat of Nivar and cyclones, the fishermen had not ventured into the sea and their livelihood had been affected for nearly three weeks.

The livelihoods of fishermen in Chennai, Thiruvallur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Pudukottai, Villupuram, Chengalpattu and Cuddalore districts have been severely affected. The fishermen in Thoothukudi, Ramanatha-puram and Kanyakumari districts have also suf-fered as a result of the cyclones.

Tamil Nadu has a 1,076 km long coastline contributing 5.209 lakh tons of marine fish production. The infrastructure facilities include 6 major fishing harbours, 3 medium fishing harbours, 36 fish landing centres and 254 fish landing points. The State ranks fourth in fish production in the country. The state exported 1.29

The livelihoods of fishermen in Chennai, Thiruvallur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Pudukottai, Villupuram, Chengalpattu and Cuddalore districts have been severely affected. The fishermen in Thoothukudi, Ramanathapuram and Kanyakumari districts have also suffered as a

lakh tons of marine products and earned a foreign exchange of Rs.5,591.49 crore during 2018-2019.

result of the cyclones

The State is one of the worst affected in the country by natural disasters. As many as 54 storms hit the state from 1890 to 2002 and 10 ferocious storms devastated the coastal districts in the 16 years between 2002 and 2018. Since 2014, six brutal cyclones - Thane, Ockhi, Vardah, Gaja, Nivar and Burevi, - have caused havoc, said Nanjil P Ravi of All India Fishermen Association, Chennai. Fishermen are the worst affected people whenever and storms damage boats and other infrastructure and disrupting their livelihood. More than 80 lakh fisher-

men directly and one crore others indirectly

depended on the traditionoccupation. About 20,000 mechanised boats and 45,000 fibre boats involved in the operation. Their operations have been affected for more than 20 days now and the government should give them temporary relief of Rs 20,000 through Fisheries Co-operative Societies, which play an important role in the uplifting of fisher folk. About 7.17 lakh fisher folk have been enrolled as members of 1,431 Primary Fishermen

Fisherwomen Co-operative Societies / District Co-operative Federation / Apex Co-operative Federation.

Similarly, Ravi demanded that the government enhance the infrastructure facilities in the fishing harbours, fish landing centres and fish landing points. For example, Kasimedu harbor parking facilities only for 800 to 900 boats. However, fishermen have more than 2.000 fibre boats. Already 40 boats were damaged in the cyclone. Ravi demanded that the government provide mechanised boats worth Rs 1 crore to four to six fishermen affected by cyclones.

Brito Antony of Nagercoil, Kanyakumari

fishers in Kanyakumari is far worse when compared to other fishermen in the State. Almost the entire population in 49 coastal villages depended on the traditional occupation and they have not ventured into the sea for more than two weeks.

"About 2,000 mechanised boats pursue deep sea fishing at a distance of 300 nautical miles from the Kanyakumari coastline. However, the fisheries department communication facilities work only upto a range of 25 nautical miles. They return home only after one week to 45days from deep sea fishing. There is no proper communication facility to inform them about impending cyclone in advance and before they leave home," he said.

Brito wants the Central and State governments to set up a Coastguard facility or an Aerial Assistance Unit to help the fishermen in distress during deep sea fishing. The authorities should enhance infra facilities on the Kanyakumari coastline. He also wants the government to set up a fishing harbour in Annai Nagar-Pallam in Kanyakumari district for the benefit of fishers of the region.

Congress men were brutally rain-hit areas assaulted by cops, says Alagiri

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 6

Even as the country was observing the 54 anniversary of Babasaheb Dr Ambedkar, the Tamil Nadu Congress cadre, led by executive chairman and Congress LS member Dr K Jayakumar, had planned to take a rally on Sunday from the Chennai High Court premises to the Chennai port, and pay homage to Dr Ambedkar's statue there.

In a press release on Sunday, TNCC president KS Alagiri said that when the rally was about to commence, police inspector Senkuttuvan prevented them. They were all asked to go in vehicles and

Police detained those who tried to take out a march. It is alleged that who tried to take out a march. It is alleged that ing, Congress LS member inspector Senkuttuvan Dr K Jayakumar and KS Alagiri.



insulted the Congress party by snatching the Congress flag along with from Dr pole Jayakumar's car, causing great resentment among the volunteers.

Following this, Dr Jayakumar got out of the car, walked with the Congress executives and volunteers, and paid hom Ambedkar, by garlanding

Central Chennai Congress (SC wing) leader MP Ranjan Kumar, were severely assaulted by police led by inspector Senkuttuvan, in which the shirts of Dr Jayakumar and MP Ranjan Kumar were torn.

The brutal assault on the Lok Sabha member is condemnable said the release and added that it was decided to lodge a complaint on the issue with the National Commission for the Underprivileged. apart,

should be taken against Senkuttuvan for attacking Dr Jayakumar without respecting his fundamental right to perform his aemocratic age to the statue of Dr there will be serious consequences if action is not taken against the police, warned TNCC president

Protest delays express train

R VALAYAPATHY | DC TIRUCHY, DEC. 6

duthurai Jan Shatabdi express train suffered a detention of about 30 minutes soon after its departure from the Tiruchirapalli railway junction on Sunday, as some members of the Vellalar Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam led by state general secretary, Hariharun, staged a rail roko by squatting on the tracks, as the train was

The Coimbatore-Mayila-

moving towards Mayila-Hariharun said that

their rail roko agitation was to urge Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami to withdraw his announcement that he would recommend to the Union government to merge all seven sub-castes of the Pallar community and to rename them as Devendrakula Velalars. Velalar and Vellalar are traditional names and it should not be linked with other communities, Hariharun added. Since the police were waiting at the main entrance of the railway junction for preventing the entry of the protesters onto the tracks, the protesters got into the railway junction through some

other unusual way. On information, police went to the railway track and arrested all the 52 agitators and allowed the train to continue its journey, after a detention of

TNCSC loadmen seek pay revision

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUCHY, DEC. 6

The Tamil Nadu Civil Supply Corporation (TN-CSC) 'Sumai Thookkuvorin' state protection association, appealed to the government to grant them pay on par with the Food Corporation of India's (FCI) load men, and also provide insurance cover for them.

Association state president M Veeraraghavan and general secretary, C Saravanan, told news-men after their annual general body meeting held here on Sunday, that a resolution to this effect was adopted at the meeting. He said the meeting also wanted the TNCSC to implement the outcome of the conciliation talks in front of the state labour commissioner on their charter of demands, and the appointments are to be made based on educational qualifications, etc.

Sanjay Pinto

hat's the possible fallout of not wearing a more fallout of not wearing a mask because it is "inconvenient" – a ventilator in a Covid19 isolation ward? What's a likely consequence of crowding textile showrooms to grab some fancy discount for that silk saree or branded shirt, flouting all norms of social distancing - wearing a hospital gown? With common sense still evading a sizeable chunk of complacent people, ordinances and fines on wearing masks are evidently not a deterrent. Even as many State governments are stopping short of strict enforcement of Covid pre-

cautions, the Gujarat High

Court seemed constrained to think out of the box. In Vishal S.Awtani Vs State of Gujarat (2020) it directed the State government to send violators to Covid centres to do non-medical community service.

caused by him." Referring

The Court held that "a violator not wearing a face cover/mask is not only putting himself to risk" but also "others around or in close contact with him to risk." The rationale spelt out was that "it provides an opportunity to the offender to have a firsthand experience of the injuries caused or could be

"Welfare State", it observed that "the foundation of the existence of the State lies in protecting its people and making the best possible efforts for their well-being" with a direction to "forthwith come up with the notification under the relevant statutes, providing that in



addition to imposition of fine, any person found not wearing a mask must render community service.'

The Division Bench envisaged "non-medical" tasks such as housekeeping, cooking, serving food or data entry work. "The nature of the duties given shall be appropriately decided by the authorities, considering the age, qualifications, gender and health status of the viola-

Referring to the incep-

tion of community service for traffic offenders in California in 1966, Justice Vikram Nath pointed out that it was "not a punishment in its true sense but a kind of reparation." Staying this Order, the

Violators as volunteers: Gloves off for masks on

Supreme Court reportedly observed that the direction was disproportionate and was beset with possible adverse health ramifications, but lamented that there was a "lack of will in implementation" of standard operating procedures and guidelines. "People are gathering in marriage functions and roaming around in malls!"

Isn't the Fundamental Right to Life of citizens under Article 21 of the Constitution being violated by individuals who do not wear masks? Doesn't the State have a public duty to enforce these basic precautions? If a fine or prosecution under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code and other provisions are not working, are the authorities going to sit back and allow another wave of infection?

When States across the country have had strict enforcement drives for the wearing of helmets, why is something so basic and crucial to public health during a 'once in a century' pandemic, not given the same priority? We are asking petrol bunks not to entertain customers without helmets. Great. What about those without masks?

We are quick to nitpick when proactive measures are mooted. During the initial lockdown, a young Superintendent of Police in Tamil Nadu made a mock video of youngsters gallivanting outside being bundled into an ambulance of Covid positive patients. The prank to shake people out of their irresponsibility was posted on the social media. Following objections from some quarters, it had to be

If the punishment of community service in a Covid care centre does not fit the offence of not wearing masks, why not tweak it to a single visit to understand the pain and suffering that goes on there? I'm sure the offenders will don a full Personal Protection Equipment suit before going there! Or, as we excel in preaching what we don't practice, why not form volunteer squads comprising violators, to make the lax sections of the public wear masks?! After all, that's the only 'vaccine' available

Complacency can be as lethal as the corona virus. We need to breathe down some necks and instil common sense - for all our

(The writer is an advocate at the Madras high court, columnist &

SHORT TAKES

COP, CIVILIAN HURT AS MILITANTS OPEN FIRE IN SRINAGAR

Srinagar, Dec. 6: Two people including a civilian, were injured after militants opened fire on a police party here on Sunday, police said.

The incident took place in Hawal area of the city, they said. Militants opened fire on the police party at Hawal Chowk, resulting in injuries to a policeman and a civilian. They have been taken to the hospital, a police official said. The area has been cordoned off to track down the militants, he said.



GUJARAT HC, COURTS SHUT AFTER JUDGE DIES DUE TO COVID

Ahmedabad, Dec. 6: The Gujarat High Court and subordinate courts in the state will remain closed on Monday on account of the death of Justice G. R. Udhwani, the HC said on Sunday Justice Udhwani (59), the sitting HC judge, tested positive for Covid-19 on November 19 and died at a private hospital here on Saturday due to complications arising out of the infection.

The high court in a notification said a holiday is declared on Monday in the Gujarat HC and subordinate courts as well as their offices in the state on account of the sad demise of Justice G. R. Udhwani.

A full court reference via video conference will also be held at the HC on Monday to offer him tributes and condo-lences. Justice Udhwani, who hailed from Ahmedabad, was elevated as additional judge of the high court on November 12, 2012 and was confirmed as a permanent judge on July 10,

Before that, he served as registrar general of the high court between June 20, 2011 and November 11, 2012. He had also served as registrar of the high court. In his legal career spanning over three decades, he had also served as judge of the city civil court in Ahmedabad and as additional judge of a special POTA ((Prevention of Terrorism

BODY CAMERAS ON AURANGABAD CONDUCTORS

Aurangabad, Dec. 6: Bus conductors and ticket inspec-Maharashtra's Aurangabad city will soon be equipped with body cameras to keep a tab on the behaviour of passengers and other activities during transportation, an official has said.

A few days back, some women conductors of the civic- run buses complained of misbehaviour with them during their duty hours. "Acting on it, the Aurangabad Smart City Development Corporation has decided to install body cameras in the front pockets of shirts of the conductors and inspectors of its buses to record the activities in the vehicles during their duty," the ASCDCL official said in a statement on Saturday.

The cameras will help in the real-time examination of tickets and to keep an eye on other activities in the buses, he said The ASCDCL administration has also deployed former defence servicemen as line inspectors, who will check tickets of passengers and their behaviour, the official said. They will also ensure security of passengers and give the feedback of commuters to authorities, he added.

The ASCDCL has a fleet of 100 buses, out of which 29 are currently being run on 12 routes in the city, ferrying around 5,000 passengers in a day, another official said. The Maharashtra State Road Corporation's Transport employees have been hired as drivers and conductors of these buses, he said. During the lockdown period, these civic-run buses were used to ferry Covid-19 patients. Last month, the ASCDCL resumed its bus services for normal passengers, the official added.
The ASCDCL has been formed by the Aurangabad Municipal Corporation to

implement smart city projects. Aurangabad Commissioner Astik Kumar Pandey heads the ASCDCL.



Health workers scan temperatures of farmers during their ongoing Delhi Chalo agitation against the new farm laws, at Singhu border in New Delhi, on Sunday. farmers' organisations have given a call for a Bharat bandh tomorrow.

Congress, Left, regional parties come out in support of bandh

From Page 1

The Central government must adhere to the democratic processes and norms and meet the legitimate demands of our kisans-annadatas," it said. The letter was signed by The letter was signed by Congress president Sonia Gandhi, DMK chief M.K. Stalin, NCP president Sharad Pawar, RJD's Tejaswi Yadav, National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav and CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, among others. Yechury, among others.

Expressing solidarity with the farmers' unions, the Congress said it will hold protests that day at all district and state headquarters in solidarity with

THE CONGRESS said it will hold protests that day at all district and state headquarters in solidarity with the demands of the farmers

the demands of the farm-

ers. "I would also like to announce that Congress Party extends its whole-hearted support to the Bharat Bandh on December 8," its spokesman Pawan Khera said while addressing the media at the AICC headquarters.

"All our district headquarters and pradesh headquarters will participate in this bandh. They

will hold demonstrations and ensure that the bandh is successful," Mr Khera

Committing the Aam Aadmi Party's support to the Bharat Bandh, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said all AAP workers across the country will support the nationwide strike and appealed to all citizens to

support the farmers. The Aam Aadmi Party fully supports the 'Bharat Bandh' call made by farm-ers on December 8. AAP workers across the country will support it peacefully. There is an appeal to all countrymen that everyone should support the farmers and participate in it," the Delhi CM said in a

Farmer unions call for peaceful bandh

New Delhi, Dec. 6: Farmers camping at Singhu border protesting the Centre's new agri laws on Sunday sought maximum participation from all quarters in the 'Bharat Bandh' called on December 8 and said over 250 farmers from Gujarat will be coming to the national capital to join

Farmer leaders at the border also welcomed the support extended by a number of political parties and called upon all others to come forward

Bandh' on Tuesday. "This agitation is not only of Punjab farmers

but is of entire nation. We are going to strengthen our agitation and it has already spread across the nation. Since the government was not able to deal with us properly, we gave a call for 'Bharat Bandh'. During yesterday's meeting, even the ministers were upset with our call for 'Bharat bandh'," farmer leader Baldev Singh Yadav said. He appealed to everyone to make sure the bandh

Nadda: All parties are family-centric except the BJP

Dehradun, Dec. 6: Describing rival political parties as family-centric, BJP president J. P. Nadda on Sunday said the BJP is the only ideology-based party where the whole organisation is "one big

Nadda was addressing a booth committee of the Pradesh BJP on the third day of his four-day tour of Uttarakhand to galvanise the party's organisational

"All other political parties have become confined to families, whereas ours is a party which in itself is one big family," he said. "We are an ideologybased party that does not discriminate between classes, castes and relibetween gions," Nadda said.

Underlining the key role of the cadre in the party, he said even a booth level esh BJP vice preside Devendra Bhasin said.

to eminent positions only base is our speciality and it is built through booth committees," Nadda said at the meeting where he shared the dais with Pradesh BJP president Bansidhar Bhagat, district president Sita Ram Bhatt, Mandal president Vijendra Thapliyal and booth president Sonia Verma.

Presided by Verma, the meeting was termed as "historic" by the party. It is for the first time in the country's political history that the national president of a party shared the dais with the presidents of mandal and booth committees — two primary units of the party, Pradesh BJP vice president

Pressure on Shivraj to expand Cabinet

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC

Pressure is mounting on Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan from a strong section of the ruling BJP here to expand his Cabinet to accommodate two loyalists of senior party leader Jyotiraditya Scindia in his ministry.

Two former ministers, Govind Singh Rajput and Tulsi Silawat, resigned from Chouhan ministry ahead of the November 3 Assembly bypolls in the state when their six-month-tenure as non-MLA ministers came to an end on October 27.

The two former ministers, close lieutenants of Mr Scindia, staked claim

Cabinet after they won the

November 3 bypolls.

Mr Scindia has already held discussions with the chief minister on this as well as on accommodating two other former ministers, Imarti Devi and Giriraj Dandotia, who lost the byelections, heads of some corporations, BJP sources said.

"Mr Scindia discussed the issue with Mr Chouhan during his Bhopal visit last week. He is scheduled to arrive here on December 11 and may take it up with the party leadership here", sources close to Mr Scindia said. Pressure is also mount-

ing from other senior MLAs and former ministers seen as close to Mr Chouhan to induct them in the Cabinet

Kushwaha meets Nitish, may return

and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar may join hands again, following their recent meeting here four days ago, the Rashtriya Lok Samata Party (RLSP) chief on Sunday downplayed the speculations as 'premature guesswork".

Mr Kushwaha said he had a cordial meeting with Mr Kumar earlier in the week but denied hammering out a deal for the homecoming. He, however, did not rule out the possibility of a reunion in future.

Political circles had indicated that Mr Kushwaha may merge his RLSP with the ruling Janata Dal (United), and he would subsequently be inducted into the state cabinet as a member of the legislative council.

"It"s a wild speculation...I am not hankering for a ministerial post or a legislative council seat. We had a good meeting... we talked about the latest political situation. Beyond that, any guess has no basis," Mr Kushwaha said. He said Mr Kumar had invited him to his bungalow "to explore the option of working together", which he willingly accepted. Asked about the possibility of a reunion, Mr Grand Alliance.

Patna, Dec. 6: Amid buzz Kushwaha said "there is that former Union minister Upendra Kushwaha kushwaha said "there is no such plan as of now...but who knows what The RLSP might have

drawn a blank in the October- November state elections, but caste dynamics in Bihar suggests that Mr Kushwaha, a relatively empowered OBC group, may add to Mr Kumar's political heft.

After parting ways with Lalu Prasad in 1998, Mr Kumar had forged a powerful 'Luv-Kush' partnership with Kurmi and Kushwaha castes coming together as a potent OBC block against electorally significant Yadavs.

Mr Kumar had made Kushwaha the leader of the opposition in 2004. though he was a first-time MLA, ignoring many legislators who had suggested otherwise. With time, Mr Kushwaha turned a rebel and parted ways with Mr Kumar to form his own

The RLSP later became a part of the BJP-led NDA before 2014 general election and Mr Kushwaha was made a member of the Narendra Modi 1.0 government. But, the return of the JD(U) to the NDA fold in July 2017 changed equations once again, and the RLSP quit the coalition and became a part of the

ASSAM TO PROBE THREAT AGAINST VISITING CHURCH

Silchar, Dec. 6: The Cachar district administration of Assam has asked the police to investigate an inflammatory speech reportedly made by a local Bajrang Dal leader threatening to beat up Hindus visiting churches during Christmas celebrations.

Taking note of a viral video in which the saffron outfit's leader was seen issuing the threat, Cachar Deputy Commissioner Keerthi Jalli on Sunday said she has instructed the superintendent of police to probe the matter and 'take necessary steps".

Police, however, said no case has been registered as of now and the incident is being inves-

tigated.
"We have not received any complaint from anyone. However, we are looking into the incident after seeing the video," a senior police officer said.

- PTI

Health ministry: Not aware where Covid-19 vaccine records are kept

Union Health Ministry has said in response to an RTI application that it does not know where records related to agenda circulated in meetings of the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 are

Venkatesh Nayak of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative had approached the ministry seeking details of the constitution and working of the expert group such as dates of meetings, a copy of the detailed agenda circulated in relation to every meeting, presenta-tions made before its members, and material it had shared with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

Nayak had also sought to know the amount of sitting fees and every other remuneration or allowances payable to the chairperson and every member of the expert group and the amount of sitting fees and every other remuneration or allowances actu-

Vaccination of healthcare workers to start in TS, Raj

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, DEC. 6

Vaccination of healthcare workers will start first in Rajasthan and according to the response move on to other states of the coun-

Healthcare workers will be the priority and a total of one crore of them have to be vaccinated, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had stated recently. Vaccination of healthcare workers is important

for Covid-19 (NEGVAC)

was constituted under the chairmanship of Member

(Health) of Niti Aayog V. K. Paul on August 7 to pre-

ally paid to them. The pare a strategy for the roll-National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration

as their protection will closely monitored for effi-allow for vaccination of cacy ratio. The biggest vulnerable population challenge is the efficacy of Sources said that three

groups will be formed as three vaccines are going to be administered after clearances from the Drug Controller General of India. Covishield of Serum Institute of India, Covaxin of Bharat Biotech and Sputnik V of Dr Reddy's Laboratories will be administered, sources said.

The three groups will be

out of Covid-19 vaccine. The information on these points was not provided by the Central Public Information Officer (CPIO), saying the

which will have to be looked at." and material circulated not come under the definition of "information" which can be shared under the Right to

the vaccine where it has

to be determined how

much it will protect

Medical Organisations in

Asia and Oceania presi-

dent Dr K.K. Aggarwal

said, "We do not know if

people can become infected and also transmit the

virus after being vaccinat-

Lot of questions

against the disease.

Confederation

under the Right Information (RTI) Act. — PTI REAL | LIFE | Child found badly bruised with bite marks in September last year, director says mother unstable

Biological mom seeks toddler in custody of film maker

Mumbai, Dec. 6: A Bollywood film maker who is the foster father of a twoyear-old and the toddler's biological mother feature in a custody row, while a man has surfaced claiming to be the boy's father,

an official said on Sunday. The toddler was found at Borivli in September last vear badly bruised and having bite marks with the woman who claimed he had slipped out of her hands and hurt himself, an official of the Women and

Child Development department said.

While the woman, who had reached Mumbai from Uttar Pradesh leaving behind a daily wage labourer husband and a 12 -year-old son, was referred to a local NGO for mental illness treatment, the infant was taken by the Child Welfare Committee under its care, the official said.

After living in two foster care homes, the toddler shifted to the Bollywood directors home

in May this year as the previous family said the Coronavirus-induced lockdown had made it difficult to look after him, the official said.

At a recent meeting of Child Welfare Committee in Mumbai, the Bollywood director said he should be allowed to keep the toddler longer, as the mother was not mentally

However, the 30-year-old mother said she was medically fit to look after her son now. The Committee sought a fresh medical fitness certificate for the mother from a government hospital and a decision on with whom to keep the toddler is expected in a few days, the official said.

Meanwhile, a person claiming to be the tod-dler's biological father has approached the authorities, the official said, adding they will match his DNA report. A DNA test last month confirmed the woman is the toddler's bio-

logical mother. The toddler may be placed with the Children's Aid Society at Mankhurd here as per provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act, before the issue is

resolved, the official said. As per the Centre's model guidelines for foster care, a foster family can adopt a child after five years of care, if the child has no biological family

claiming her.
"We have been informed that the director, who is

married and has a son, is not looking to adopt the toddler," the official said. However, seeing the mothers condition, he became apprehensive and requested that the child be in foster care for a little longer till she is fine, the official added.

The NGO founder has informed the Committee that the woman may develop "severe reactive depression" if kept away from her son for long, the official said.

THE 30-YEAR-OLD mother said she was medically fit to look after her son now. The Committee sought a fresh medical fitness certificate for the mother from a government hospital and a decision on with whom to keep the toddler is expected in a

few days, the official said. DNA TEST last month confirmed the woman is the toddler's biological

SHORT TAKES **NICARAGUA MINE COLLAPSE: TWO BODIES FOUND**

Managua, Dec. 6: Rescue workers on Saturday said they had recovered the bodies of two men trapped in the collapse in southern Nicaragua of an unlicensed gold mine.

The accident occurred in the La Esperanza region, more than 200 kilometres (120 miles) southeast of the capital Ma-nagua. The two victims, identified as Israel Sequeira and Santos Herrera, were from the Rio San Juan department, local government official Johnny Gutierrez told official website 19 Digital.

He said rescue work, involving police, firefighters and army troops, would wind up no later than Sunday. Gutierrez did not speculate on the fate of other miners caught in the collapse. Local media said anywhere from seven to 18 miners were trapped when the rain-

soaked hillside collapsed. Amaru Ruiz, director of the nonprofit Fundacion del Rio, said that the hillside was honeycombed by mining tunnels dug over the years on private property. An estimated 3,000 people work in Nicaragua's unlicensed mines. Months of rain had saturated and weakened the clayey land, Ruiz added.

CHINA COAL MINE TOLL CLIMBS TO 23

Beijing, Dec. 6: The death toll due to a carbon monoxide leak inside a coal mine in southwest one person has been rescued, officials said on Sunday. The accident took place at around 5 pm (local time) on Friday at the closed Diaoshuidong colliery in Yongchuan district of Chongqing Municipality.

The dead are among 24 people trapped underground by exces-sive levels of carbon monoxide gas at the coal mine, where they were dismantling equipment in a pit. The mine was suspended and shut down over two months ago.

The cause of the accident is

being further investigated, state-run Xinhua news agency reported on Sunday. The Diaoshuidong coal mine, which was established in 1975 and became privately-owned in 1998, has an annual production capacity of 120,000 tonnes of coal, according to the local emergency

management department. In March 2013, hydrogen sulfide poisoning in the mine left three dead and two injured. Though safety improvements have reduced deaths at coal mines in recent years, mining accidents are common in China, which is the world's largest coal producer. At least 16 peo ple died in late September after high levels of carbon monoxide trapped miners at the Songzao

coal mine in Chongqing. China, which is both the world's largest producer and reported more than 100 coal mining accidents in 2020.

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING IN BETHLEHEM MUTED

Bethlehem, Dec. 6: Only a few dozen people attended the lighting of the Christmas tree in the biblical city of Bethlehem on Saturday night, as coronavirus restrictions scaled back the annual event that is normally attended by thousands.

A small group of residents and religious leaders participated in the tree-lighting ceremony at Manger Square near the Church of the Nativity, where Christians believe Jesus was born. Others watched it virtually due to restrictions prompted by the virus pandemic. Some officials, including Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh, attended in person and addressed event participants watching online. Shtayyeh said the Palestinian leadership is receiving the new year with determination to "confronting the (Israeli) occupation more firmly" and ending the internal political division with the rival militant Hamas group.

He said the Palestinians would "defeat the settlement"building in the occupied West Bank despite the pandemic. Bethlehem Mayor Anton Salman said Christmas is being observed this year in

ways like no time before. 'We resorted to modern technology and to the virtual world to celebrate the lighting of the Christmas tree, wishing hope and optimism would flutter upon Palestine and the world, Salman said. Thousands of pilgrims and tourists typically visit Bethlehem, fill hotels and dine at restaurants during the Christmas season, bringing the area a much-needed injection

fly back home

Indian seamen who were stranded in Yemen for over 10 months after their ship sank in the Gulf of Aden flew back to India on Saturday from Dubai.

The 14 seamen were taken into custody on February 14, 2020 by the local Houthi authorities in Yemen, the Indian embassy in Djibouti said in a statement. "After persistent and painstaking efforts, the Embassy of India, Djibouti was able to get them released on November 28 through its Sana'a office," it said.

According to the emba-ssy, the stranded Indians had lost their passport and other documents and belongings. It also requested all maritime and other authorities concerned to take note of their situation and support them. The rescued seamen have been identified Mohanraj Thanigachalam, William Nicamden, Ahmed Abdul Gafur Wakankar, Fairuz Nasruddin Zari, Sandip Balu Lohar, Nilesh Dhanraj Lohar, Hiron SK, Dawood Mahmood Jivrak, Chetan Hari Chandra Gawas, Tanmay Rajendra Mane,

ed that they have not received their salaries from the last 10 months. They requested the Indian embassy in Oman and their Omani employer to release their pay.

Sanjeev Kumar, Maniraj Mariyappan, Praveen Thammakarantavida Abdul Vahab Musthaba.

The Indian Consulate in Dubai confirmed the arrival of the Indian seamen in Dubai. Chandrashekhar Bhatia of the Gulf_Maharashtra Business Forum said that the Indians took a flight on Saturday night.
Bhatia also shared a let-

ter signed by GMBF Global President Sunil Manjerakar in which he thanked the government and officials who helped ensure the release of the seamen. In another note shared by Bhatia, the sea-men claimed that they have not received their salaries from the last 10 the Indian embassy in Oman and their Omani employer to release their salary. -PTI

Houthi-held 14 Defiant Don says US election Indian seamen was 'rigged' in favour of Biden

At a rally, Trump falsely claims he won Georgia in the Prez race

Washington, Dec. 6: A defiant Donald Trump is Trump presses Georgia Gov showing no signs of sur-render and has reiterated to help subvert Prez poll yet again his unsubstantiated allegations of wide-spread voter fraud, claiming at his first post-poll

rally in Georgia that he won a "rigged" United States presidential election that he lost. Trump alleged on Saturday that Atlanta, Dec. 6: President Donald Trump fruit-lessly pressed Georgia's governor on Saturday to call a special legislative session aimed at subverting the presidential elecof his Democratic opponent Joe Biden, who is now the President-elect. tion results in that state as Trump's fixation with his defeat overshadowed his party's campaign to save rigged our presidential election, and they're gonna try to rig this election too," Trump told his cheering supporters at the rolly in Coorgin where he

the last month's US elec-

tion was rigged in favour

"They cheated and they

rally in Georgia where he

campaigned for his Rep-

ublican candidates for the

Special Senatorial elec-

Trump began by falsely claiming he won Georgia

in the presidential race.

The state has already cer-

tified its election results, declaring Biden the win-ner. Trump claimed he

won an election that he

lost. "If I lost, I would be a

very gracious loser. If I

lost, I would say I lost and

I would go to Florida and I would take it easy," Trump

its majority in the Senate. Trump and Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp spoke by phone hours before Trump was to appear at a rally in Valdosta, Georgia, where Republicans hoped the president would dedicate his energy to imploring their supporters to vote in two runoff elec-

Trump was a resident of

New York. After becoming the president, he moved

his residence from New

Thousands of his support-

ers, not only from Georgia

but also from the neigh-bouring states, as far as

said at the rally.

But it remained an open question whether his first postelection political rally would be a mission to help his party or himself. Hours before the event, Trump asked Kemp in the phone call to order the legislative session; the governor refused, according to a senior government official in Georgia with knowledge of the call who was not authorised to dis-cuss the private conversation and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

A person close to the White House who was briefed on the matter verified that account of the

California and Ohio, came

to hear his speech.
This was Trump's first

public rally after he lost

the election and Biden was

declared as the President-

"I think they say that if you win Florida and if you win Ohio, in history

from the governor, Trump also asked him to order an audit of signatures on absentee ballot envelopes in his state, a step Kemp is not empowered to take because he has no authority to interfere in the elec-toral process on Trump's behalf. Trump vented his frustrations on Twitter after the call. "Your people are refusing to do what you ask," he complained, as if speaking with Kemp.

ly, do.'

"What are they hiding? At least immediately ask for a Special Session of the Legislature. That you can easily, and immediate-

you've never lost an elec-

tion. This has got to be a first time — but the truth is they were right, we've

never lost and we're win-

ning this election," Trump

said. He urged his support-

ers to go out and vote for the January 5 Senate elec-tions in Georgia.

The cheering crowd frequently erupted into chants of "stop the steal!" and "fight for Trump." "This election was rigged, and we can't let it happen to two of the most respected people in Washington. We can't let it hapen again. Your governor cou-

vote early starting December 14. You have to

do it. They cheated and they rigged our presiden-tial election, but we will still win it. We will still

win it. We'll still win it.

And they're going to try and rig this election, too,"

he said.
"If you don't vote, the socialists and the commu-

nists win. They win. Geo-

rgia patriots must show up

and vote for these two incredible people. They are two of the finest peo-ple you will ever meet," he

ld stop it very easily if he knew what the hell he was doing. He could stop it very easily," he claimed.

He alleged that "thousands of illegal votes were cast in each state" and insisted falsely that poll

watchers were "thrown out" of polling places in Pennsylvania.

Santa's balancing act



A fire brigade height rescuer dressed as Santa Claus abseils down from the roof of the Children's University Hospital Eppendorf in Hamburg, Germany, on Sunday.

US, IRAN REACH 'UNEASY DETERRENCE'

Dubai, Dec. 6: The top US Navy official in the Mideast said Sunday America has reached an "uneasy deterrence" with Iran after months of regional attacks and seizures at sea, even as tensions remain high Washington and Tehran over the Islamic Republic's nucle-

ar programme. Vice Adm. Sam Paparo, who oversees the Navy's 5th Fleet based in Bahrain, struck an academic tone in comments to the annual Manama Dialogue hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies. He described having a "healthy respect" for both Iran's regular navy and the naval forces of its Revolutionary Guard.

'Wolf Warrior diplomacy' charge dismissed by China

Beijing, Dec. 6: China has sought to dismiss the use of the term "Wolf Warrior diplomacy", which is used to describe confrontational rhetoric by its diplomats to ward off criticism on a host of issues, calling it yet another version of "China threat theory" being float-

ed by Beijing's critics.
"Obviously, the "Wolf
Warrior diplomacy" is actually another version of the "China threat" theory and another "discourse trap," whose purpose is to prevent China from fighting back, Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng said in the first official reaction to the widely-used phrase among international diplomats and media to highlight Beijing's

once known for their lowkey approach in dealing with complex domestic and global issues. But their style changed in recent years as Beijing battled increasing global adversity on issues like Coronavirus, which became a pandemic after emerging from Wuhan, allegations of mass internment camps in Xinjiang and imposition of national security law in Hong Kong. Critics also say the change in style is fuelled by the pursuance of aggressive nationalism by the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) under the leadership of President Xi Jinping.

Le said that as a responsible major country, Cĥina has always been a defend-

Chinese diplomats were er of the international order, a contributor to global governance and a provider of international public goods. It was a time when there seemed to be less inordinate criticism world and Chinese diplomats have changed, a write up in the CPC's aggressive tabloid *Global* Times said.

"In some Westerners' eyes, Chinese diplomats are now engaged in 'Wolf Warrior' style diplomacy, named after a 2015 Chinese patriotic action film and its 2017 sequel. The change seemingly has made the West feel challenged," it said. The term was coined from the 2017 Hollywood Rambo style Chinese action film "Wolf

Violence erupts in Paris protest over security law

Paris, Dec. 6: Violence erupted in Paris on Saturday for the second consecutive weekend at a mass protest against a new security law, with demonstrators clashing with police, vehicles set alight and shop windows

The weekly nationwide protests are becoming a major headache for President Emmanuel government, Macron's with tensions intensified by the beating of a black music producer by police last month.

However, the numbers were less than half this Saturday with the nationwide figure at 52,350 against 133,000 a week earlier, the interior ministry said. Around 5,000 opie demonstrated Paris against 46,000 last week, it added.

Members of the so-called yellow vests movewhich shook ment, with protests against a lack of equality in France over the winter of 2018-2019, were also prominent in the rally.

Windows of a supermarket, property agency and bank were broken while several cars were in flames along Avenue Gambetta as thousands of demonstrators marched towards the central Place de la Republique, AFP reporters said.

Objects were also thrown at police who responded by using tear gas, in a repeat of the vioprotests last weekend against the security law that would restrict publication of pictures showing the faces of police.

streets to create impromptu barricades that they then set on fire. A bank was ranscaked by inside and brought out papers that they burned in the street. Protesters, some letting off smoke bombs and firecrackers, snouted siogans includ ing "Everyone hates the

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin wrote on Twitter that police in Paris were facing "very violent individuals".

"The thugs are breaking down the Republic," he said.

Sixty-four people were detained across the country, Darmanin said, adding that eight police were injured.

95 ARRESTS AT **SECURITY LAW PROTESTS: MIN**

Paris, Dec. 6: Police arrested 95 people_during protests across France against a planned security law, and 67 offi-cers were injured during Some demonstrators used objects left in the the demonstrations, Int-

Darmanin said Sunday. In Paris, the site of the worst violence, 48 police officers or gendarmes were injured during Saturday's street clashes, the interior ministry said on Twitter.
A firefighter was also

injured in the capital after being hit by a pro jectile, a police source said. Paris police held 25 people, including two minors, said the prosecutors' office. It was the second week-

end of violence in the capital during protests against a security bill currently going through French parliament.

Demonstrators clashed were set alight and shop windows smashed.

UN: India's solar leadership can help world attain climate goals

United Nations, Dec. 6: India's leadership on solar and industry transition is the reason to believe the world can achieve its climate goals, a top UN official has said, asserting that as governments look to restart their economies after Covid-19, it is vital to pursue a recovery that is not only sustainable, resilient and fair, but also job-rich.

UN Deputy Secretary General Amina Mohammed highlighted "encouraging news" on global efforts to overcome climate change while attending a webinar titled People and Climate- Just Transition in Practice' last week. "Today there is encouraging news: Japan and the Republic of Korea, together with more than 110 other countries, have now pledged carbon neutrality by 2050.

China says it will do so before 2060. India's leadership on solar and the industry transition is reason to believe that we can achieve our climate goals,

she said. She said the European Union and its Member States had a strong history of leadership on climate action, including the commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

"It is essential that the European Union delivers on its promise to adopt a new climate target this year, by coming forward with a baseline of reducing emissions by at least 55 per cent by 2030," she

-PTI

POWERFUL TOOL

4,200 artists from 53 countries participate in the first international online art competition Indo-US-run NGO starts virtual art gallery on disability

by an Indian-American has launched a virtual art gallery on the theme of disability that aims at colouring the world with inclusion of specially-abled people through the creati-

ve expression of artwork.
The launch of virtual art gallery by Voice of Specially Abled People (VOSAP) on Saturday follows the successful "VOS-AP Art From Heart Con-

Washington, Dec. 6: A test", which was partici-US-based global NGO run pated by more than 4,200 pated by more than 4,200 artists from 53 countries. An international panel of eight judges declared 50 winners from 24 countries using online platform of

VOSAP.

This is the first international online art contest on theme of disability with this huge response, a media release said. In a letter to VOSAP founder Pranav Desai, Prime Minister Narendra Modi

THE DIGITAL platform not only gives global exposure to artists but also helps redefine disability with vivid paintings, drawings beautifully portraying aspirations, issues, talents, solutions, emotions of specially abled people.

congratulated 50 winners and later stated it is heartening to see tech interventions like VOSAP Virtual Art Gallery will lead to better understanding of skills and talents of Divyangjan (specially-abled). VOSAP said this unique initiative to spread awareness on skills, talent of specially-abled people by virtue of powerful tool of visual art and using technology is now taken to the next level with launch virtual VOSAP Art Gallery of selected 250 art-

work of 250 artists.

This digital platform can to touch hearts of millions reach to millions of people around the world and not only gives global exposure to artists but also helps redefine disability with vivid paintings, drawings beautifully portraying aspirations, issues, talents, solutions, emotions of specially abled people.

"Inclusion of 1 BN+ specially abled people is a 21st-century opportunity in front of all of us and such initiatives are aimed

of people so that there is "True Access" in the society, beyond physical accessibility," Desai said. The launch was celebrate

ed with a live event hosted by singer and multi-talented Sparsh Shah. Over 5,000 people watched it on social media platforms and they all were very inspired by soulful singing of Sparsh and life story of Jessica.

Chairman of Executive Board of WHO and Union

Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan gave a video message stating that this idea of VOSAP to use art as a tool to mobilise artists to become change makers of tomorrow is exemplary. Dr Thawar Chand Gehlot, Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, also delivered his video message and appreciated VOSAP efforts towards inclusion Divyangjan.

Chronicle

7 DECEMBER 2020

To end farm stir, PM must signal shift in govt stand

In the confrontation between the country's farmers and the Centre, the Union government first appeared to be uncaring, relying on its brute Lok Sabha majority. Before the vote on the troubling farm-related laws in September, it gave no value to farmers' representatives who travelled to Delhi to have its ear. Bureaucrats, rather than political leaders, were sent to meet them, which basically meant reeling off the catechism. In Parliament, the government laughed off moves by Opposition parties to have the three contentious farm bills sent to a select committee for a close discussion.

And now the government appears stuck on the Singhu border with Haryana and on to Punjab, and on the UP border, where farmers from several states, with the robust contingents from Punjab becoming the toast of the country, are amassed several divisions of them, if military terminology be permitted, with women and the elderly participating too.

Five rounds of talks between the 30-odd farmers' unions and the government's

Calling a special session of Parliament, which the agitating farmers as well as some Opposition parties, including Congress, have demanded,

representatives — with the Union agriculture minister in the lead — have produced no results. The farmers have given an all-India strike call for tomorrow (December 8). The government has offered another round of talks the following day in which it has promised to come with some "concrete proposals". If the proposed strike is met with repression in the smallest degree, the next meeting is unlikely to take place.

In any case, "concrete proposals" would appear to be wispy. This is because, in effect, the government side has so far reiterated in different ways that it is have demanded, not going to budge from the stand the BJP took in Parliament. Prime Minister Narendra Modi batting repeatedly for the three agri-laws passed in Parliament has become the stumbling block. In effect he has taken up cudgels for

the corporate sector directing through contract farming what crops to grow and in what quantities and then dictating the price through large-scale storage and mar-

The Indian farmer has thus come to fear losing his agency. This is why even in states — and these are the majority — where the minimum support price is not offered in practice, farmers appear to be rallying to the wider cause being currently articulated. There are few takers for the government's assurance that the MSP regime will not be scrapped when the new laws kick in. Since the PM's public stance has become the limiting factor, the negotiations in Delhi's Vigyan Bhavan have been pretty pointless, really speaking. Perhaps only some assurance from Mr Modi can unlock doors at this stage.

Since farmers have risen in agitation against existing laws, only Parliament has the authority to modify them in a way that will satisfy India's food growers, or to undo them. Calling a special session of Parliament, which the agitating farmers as well as some Opposition parties, including Congress, the main Opposition party, have demanded, to discuss the whole issue afresh, suggests itself. Also remember that the bills were passed in Rajya Sabha by a voice vote, with the deputy chairman not permitting division. This was irregular. There is also substantial legal opinion, which suggests that the subject of agriculture in all its aspects is the exclusive remit of the states and not the Centre in our constitutional scheme. This makes the three laws ab initio suspect.

Rajini: A long way to go

is is a mystique that is so overpowering that whatever he does makes news. For, the klieg lights love to shine on him, be it inside or outside film studios. For, the klieg lights love to shine on him, be it inside or outside him seems. So it was only natural that his announcement on the launch of his own political forms of the continued to camp outside a fragree They can be a fragree Theory outside a fragree Theory outside Theory ou ical party in 2021 sent the media corps into a frenzy. They continued to camp outside the gates of his house in Poes Garden, a professional practice that the media in Chennai is accustomed to since the days of the late J. Jayalalithaa, who too lived in that posh locality. Lingering on, hoping to catch up on any nugget of information that may be flung out of the gates, the media seeks to stitch a narrative on Rajinikanth's political future.

Beyond that, in a domain whirring with rumours and speculations, another strategy is scripted based on the secret wishlist of those who really want to see Rajinikanth as the next chief minister of Tamil Nadu. Dwelling in that domain is a set of serious politicians, desperately wanting the 69-year-old actor on the political arena, as their hatchet man. Theirs is an agenda distinctly different from that of the superstar's legions of fans, who blindly believe that their matinee icon can change the world upside down in real terms, too.

But the superstar has seemingly given in to the wishes of those serious politicians and not the devout fans after a quarter century of dilly-dallying. That he had a change of heart soon after BJP honcho Amit Shah came calling to Chennai, having conveyed his reluctance to take the political plunge just over month ago on health grounds, and his surprise appointment of an otherwise obscure BJP "intellectual" as prime coordinator almost hit the nail on who exactly was choreographing his moves.

However, all media narratives, high hopes of fans and clever political manoeuvres notwithstanding, when the voter finally adjudicates on the matter, the mystique could be blown to smithereens.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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Biden in Afghanistan



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

n the wake of the September 9, 2001, terror attacks on the US, President George W. Bush greenlighted Operation Enduring Freedom on October 7, 2001. The avowed aim was to rid Afghanistan of the Taliban and Al Qaeda. For 17 months the then A m e r i c a n Administration under Afghanistan, bringing the total number of US Bush-Cheneytroops deployed to a Rumsfeld hundred thousand. Forty thousand Nato combine relentlessly pounded that war devastated troops, country from air and

land even as a bulk of the Taliban and Al Qaeda leadership escaped to Pakistan and even Iran where they were sheltered by the respective deep states of these nations. Black sites, waterboarding, rendition and Guantanamo Bay were some of the new words that entered the everyday lexicon of people around the world.

On March 20, 2003, the United States of America invaded Iraq and soon Afghanistan became a sideshow for Bush Administration. By the demitted office in January 2008 the number of US troops Afghanistan were 47,000 in number. They were supplemented by 50.000 additional Nato troops and 70,000 personnel of the Afghan national army. However, the mission had not gone according to plan. Despite a civilian administration under Hamid Karzai assuming office on December 22, 2001, the hold of the Afghan government and the coalition forces on Afghanistan was at best

tenuous. Barack Obama inherited the war. Even as a Democratic presidential nominee Obama had visited Afghanistan on the 19th of July, 2008. He made a distinction between the United States' involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan by terming the latter as a war of necessity. In

February 2009, Obama increased the number of US troops by 21,000 that laugh. included 4,000 military trainers. Ten months later, bowing to pressure from the Pentagon Afghan war to and the ground com-Donald Trump who during his 2016 election campaign had heavily mander in Afghanistan, General McChrystal Obama announced a critiqued the continuing surge of 30,000 troops in presence

were already serving their tours of duty in that country.

However, the situation did not stabilise and the Taliban kept on gaining ground. While its grip on the country side kept waxing and waning but on the whole its influ-

additionally,

ence increased.
On December 28, 2014, the United States and Nato ended their combat missions in Afghanistan and commenced Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS) and the Nato-led Resolute Support. The objectives of both these missions were narrowly defined, namely to conduct countargeting terrorist groups like Al Qaeda terrorist and its local ISIS affiliate, as well as focusses on building up local Afghan security forces to help fight the Taliban. However, this recalibration was nothing more than a fig leaf to create the illusion of an honorable exit. The fact being that the Taliban continued to hold sway over much of the countryside. Obama handed over

If Biden sticks to the Doha exit plan to bring US troops down to 2,500 with the Taliban not keeping its end of the bargain it is doubtful whether the Ashraf Ghani government would be able to hold up

All the blood and treasure that the **US** has expended would go down the tube with the clock being turned back to 2001. The Taliban and its mentor Pakistan will have the last

Afghanistan. However on the 21st of August of 2017, in the eighth month of his Presidency he declared at Fort Myer: "I arrived at three fundamental conclusions about America's interests Afghanistan. First, our nation must seek an honorable and enduring outcome worthy of the tremendous sacrifices that have been made, especially the sacrifices of lives. The men and women who serve our nation in combat nation in combat deserve a plan for victonation ry... Second, the consequences of a rapid exit are both predictable and unacceptable. 9/11, the worst terrorist attack in our history, was planned and directed from Afghanistan because that country was ruled by a ment that gave comfort and shelter to terrorists. hasty withdrawal would create a vacuum that terrorists, including ISIS and Al Qaeda, would instantly fill, just as happened before September 11. Third and finally, I concluded that the security threats we face in Afghanistan and the broader region are immense. Today, 20 USdesignated foreign terrorist organisations are active in Afghanistan and Pakistan — the highest concentration in any region anywhere in the world." He added another 4,000 troops to the by-now-depleted US

presence in Afghanistan that stood at 8,400 post the 2015 winding down. However Trump realised that things were not working out. A year later, on September 21, 2018, he appointed Ambassador Zalmy Khalilzad

as the American Special Representative for Afghanistan reconciliation to try and broker a deal with the Taliban. On February 29, 2020 Khalilzad and Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar signed the agreement for bringing peace in Afghanistan in Doha. It was followed up with the intra-Afghan talks between the government in Kabul and the Taliban that began on September 12 to map out a political role for the latter. However, they are bogged down over procedural issues as yet with a huge trust deficit to bridge especially between the

women of Afghanistan and the Taliban. Concurrently, violence levels, rather than decreasing, are only escalating. At least 369 pro-government forces and 212 civilians were killed in Afghanistan in October 2020 marking the highest civilian death toll in a single month since September 2019 with the US also launching air strikes in the Helmand Province and Donald Trump threatening to bring the bulk of the US troops home by Christmas both Iraq

from Afghanistan. This is the situation that Joe Biden inherits. In a piece in the Foreign Affairs magazine in spring, he stated: "It is past time to end the foris easier said than done for if Biden sticks to the Doha exit plan to bring the number of US troops down to 2.500 with the Taliban not keeping its end of the bargain it is doubtful whether the Ashraf Ghani government would be able to hold up. All the blood and treasure that the US has expended would go down the tube with the clock being turned back to 2001. The Taliban and its mentor Pakistan will have the last laugh while a child born in 1979, who for the last 41 years only knows conflict as the new normal, the last ween.

The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal. Twitter handle @manishtewari.

LETTERS

STRANGE CHOICE

Tamilaruvi Manian, who is entrusted with supervising work for the political party to be launched by Rajinikanth early next year, has reportedly confessed that he had criticised the actor earlier without knowing the facts about him. What a pity that Rajinikanth is banking on a person who makes assessment of an individual without knowing the facts!

> P.G. Menon, Chennai

OBDURATE FARMERS

It is shocking to learn that the protesting farmers at Delhi's Singhu border do not want to budge an inch in their demand for repealing the new farm laws. That they have stationed the lorries and tractors chock-a-bloc on the highway and have also turned a deaf ear to the conciliatory tone of the Union government is really unwelcome. They have also announced a Bharat Bandh on Tuesday, which is totally unnecessary as farmers from many other States are convinced about the new laws. It's indeed a tough test for the government which must handle the issue with aplomb.

S. Ramakrishnasayee,

WAKE-UP CALL FOR TRS

This refers to the write up on Battle on 'Bhagyanagar' concludes in stalemate. KCR. His party failed to read the writing on the wall and did not learn lessons from its debacle in the recent Dubbaka by-election, which the BJP won. It is a given BJP an upper hand in enlarging its ground in the south. Corruption, dynastic politics, appeasement of the minorities while neglecting the majority, besides there being no development activities in the last seven years and unemployment are causes for its debacle. If TRS does not mend its ways of functioning, it may face the same fate in the 2023 general elections as it is solely responsible for the bloom of lotus in Hyderabad.

Saravana Ramachandran,

BIGGEST TEST

THE CENTRE'S EFFORTS to buy time from the protesting farmers have paid off for the time being with both sides agreeing to meet for the sixth time on Wednesday, a day after the proposed Bharat Bandh. The government pacified the farm unions saying an intra-government deliberation was needed to present a concrete proposal. The farmers rejected the government's proposal to amend farm laws, insisting upon repeal. Breaking the stalemate will be the biggest test for the Narendra Modi government. N.J. Ravi Chander

Bengaluru

Kishwar Desai **London Diary**



After vax 1st, will 'lucky Boris' swing Brexit deal?

es — the vaccine is coming! The vaccine is coming! And I have been told—that people are now heading back to the UK as this may be the first country to get a reliable injection to beat the pandemic.

But the problem is how to keep the virus from spreading during these last few weeks — and once again rules, regulations, etc., are being trotted out. As always these have raised levels of dismay. But a week is a long time in politics and from being one of the most unpopular prime ministers for imposing restrictions — "lucky" Boris is now shooting up the popularity charts!

Who even remembers that just last Monday Parliament debated legislation about imposing a system of tiers in different parts of the country to replace the lockdown? This was so unpopular even among Tory MPs that Boris Johnson faced the worst backbench revolt of his year long Premiership. Fifty six Tory MPs voted against the government. Had Labour Party and Scottish Nationalists also voted

against, the government would not have been able to impose the tiers.

et the very next day came the **Y** good news that the Pfizer vaccine was ready and had won its approval from the UK regulators. Someone had the foresight to book forty million of these vaccines for us. So the Prime Minister was pulled up from the depths of defeat to a sense of being the first off the starting line! UK had once again beaten the world!

A list has been quickly drawn up of who has priority for receiving the first round of shots. The vaccines have to be kept at -70 degrees C so the logistics are tricky. They also arrive in packages of 975 so only hospitals can deal with such large numbers. As of now care home patients and frontline workers have top priority. Then comes the turn of the NHS staff followed by the over 80s and then down the age ladder. Fortunately, thanks to the NHS — there are detailed lists of everyone — their addresses and even who has what illness. This will make the task easier.

Fortunately, unlike in India, the VIP system does not apply here. While I am worried about whether my father at 97 will get the vaccine in India (as he should be in the first list), in the UK everyone awaits their turn, and Parliamentarians and other VIPs are not a priority. And even the Queen, at 94, will wait to receive it, when her turn comes. This is always reassuring.

he triumph of UK being first in the world among the "vaxxers" did not go down well with everyone. Tory Ministers could not help boasting that it was thanks to Brexit that UK could be the first, leaving the EU behind — as all of Europe will get it at the same time. The £U regulators then retaliated by casting some doubts on the early bird decision of the UK regulators. Had corners been cut? Then the Americans joined in. Dr Fauci, hitherto the hero for standing up to Donald Trump, said the US regulators would take longer to approve. But he later added that he did not doubt the decisions of the UK

However, just when things were

beginning to look rosy, the Brexit crisis has resurfaced. A deal has to be signed by end of December. Otherwise UK exits Europe without a deal. If that happens, lorries going from here to Europe across the Channel as well as EU lorries coming to UK will need to fill in many forms and pay tariff on the goods. Some people predict queues of lorries stretching for miles at the ports. Apart from the delay, it will play havoc with social distancing. It may even delay the vaccines arriving from Brussels. So it is a delicate few days of negotiations before the 27 nations of EU unanimously approve of the Brexit deal. Will 'lucky' Boris swing it again?

There is already huge excitement over Christmas.
Decorations are up and going by the crowds thronging into Harrods — it seems Christmas has come early. This is the vaccine effect - though Oxford Street lights are a bit dim because several well known stores have gone into administration together. Arcadia. a consortium of well known brands

such as Top Shop, Top Man, D H Evans, Miss Selfridge Burton, Dorothy Perkins, was owned by Sir Philip Green — a billionaire who lives on a yacht in the South of France. He has refused to rescue these shops and 13,000 employees will be made redundant. As a consequence Debenhams which has been on the High Street across the country since 1,778 has also gone bankrupt with 12,000 employees losing their jobs. No "Merry Christmas" just a silent night for them. But this has also meant that it is a shopping bonanza for all those who have been at home for far too long. And so yes, those long queues you see in London are not for the vaccine — but to pick up some great discounts from the shops which are closing down. Ironically — the biggest profits will be made just before the cash registers stop ringing!

Kishwar Desai is an award winning author, and playwright. Her latest book, The Longest Kiss: The Life And Times of Devika Rani, will be published shortly.













E FINANCIAL

Chronicle

MONDAY | 7 DECEMBER 2020 | COIMBATORE

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	45,079.55	1.00
Nifty 50	13,258.55	0.95
S&P 500*	3,699.12	0.88
Dollar (₹)	73.79	-0.17
Pound Sterling (₹)	99.50	0.42
Euro (₹)	89.79	0.26
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,813 ▼ 136	-0.27
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	49.21	1.03
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.897	-0.034
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.941	2.172
* As of Friday		

Everstone snaps up pharma firm Calibre for ₹1K cr



Singapore-headquartered and India-focused PE firm Everstone Capital has acquired a controlling stake in Calibre, a specialty ingredients player focused on pharma, nutrition and personal care segments, in a reported Rs 1,000-crore deal. Mumbai-headquartered Calibre, founded in 1984 by Ranjit Bhavnani in Gujarat, is a leading specialty ingredients player in the iodine derivatives, persulfates and per■Insurer cuts stake in several firms

quick LIC's holdings rise 40% in H1

MUMBAI, DEC. 6

Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), India's insurance behemoth and a dominant player in the stock market, saw the value of its top 200 equity holdings jump by 40 per cent in the first half of this fiscal to \$77 billion (Rs 5.7 lakh crore). The figure must have gone up considerably since the end of the September quarter, as the stock market has rallied 13 per cent in the last two

LIC's market portfolio saw significant stride in the last two decades when compared with the market capitalisation of the BSE.

In the March 2000 quarter, the value of LIC's holdings was just \$4 billion compared with the BSE m-cap of 102 billion. But in March 2010, LIC's portfolio value jumped \$59 billion the BSE m-cap zoomed to \$1.14 trillion. According to a Kotak Institutional Securities report, when the BSE mcap peaked to \$1.8 trillion in March 2019, LIC owned

\$81 billion of that. In March 2020, when the markets were at a low, having lost over 35 per cent to the pandemic scare, the value of LIC's equity holdings plunged to \$55 billion--the lowest in six years. However, its holding rose by \$22 billion, or 40 per cent, to \$77 billion during April-September 2020. LIČ is said to have pumped Rs 55,000 crore into the equity market since April against Rs 32,800 crore in the same



FDI INFLOWS CROSS \$500 BN

New Delhi, Dec. 6: Foreign direct investinflows Indian equities crossed the \$500-billion milestone during the April-September 2020 period, booting India's credentials as a safe investdestination. According DPIIT data the inflows during H1 stood at \$500.12 billion. About 29 per cent of the FDI came through Mauritius and 21 per cent via Singapore.

period a year ago. During July-September, LIC raised its holdings in Yes Bank to 5 per cent from 1.6 per cent (in Q1), in HDFC AMC to 2.8 per cent from zero Q1 and in Mahanagar Gas to 4.2 per cent from 1.6 per cent. It picked up 2.6 per cent stake in Ramco Cement and 2.3 per cent stake in Alkem Laboratories from nil. LIC

QUICK CROSSWORD

than doubled its stake in Container Corporation from 2.1 per cent to 4.4 per cent in the first half.

However, LIC pared its stake in Bank of Baroda from 3.3 per cent to zero and in Dr Reddy's Laboratories, it nearly halved the stake from 4.2 per cent to 2.2 per cent, so it did with Cipla from 4.2 per cent to 2.5 per cent. It sold its entire 1.7 per cent holding in GMR Infrastructure and 1.4 per cent holding in

Bayer Cropscience. It reduced the stake in Britannia Industries from 4.6 per cent to 3.3 per cent, in ICICI Bank from 8.3 per cent to 7.3 per cent and Tata Power from 7.1 per

cent to 6.1 per cent.
Similarly, the insurer pared its stake in Bharat Electronics to 2.3 per cent from 3.3 per cent, from 3.9 per cent to 2.9 per cent in GSPL, from 7.1 per cent to 6.2 per cent in Gateway Distriparks and from 4.7 per cent to 3.8 per cent in Wipro. In Indiabulls Housing it cut the stake from 10.7 per cent to 9.9 per cent and in Vedanta from 6.4 per cent to 5.6 per

THERMAL PLANTS **MAY GET TO SELL POWER BEYOND AGREED PERIOD**

SUDARSHAN VARADHAN BENGALURU, DEC. 6

India's power ministry proposes letting coalfired power plants keep selling power after completing their 25-year agreements with buyers, a letter seen by Reuters shows, despite national promises to close old plants to curb pollution. The proposal, if appro-

ved, would help old coal plants earn additional revenue, increase liquidity in short-term power markets and help distribution companies in access cheaper states power, the ministry said in the draft proposal dated Friday.
"It is in the consumer

interest to keep the tariff of electricity as low as possible," says the letter sent to states and utilities such as NTPC Ltd. Such a move would

enable federal-run electricity generators such as NTPC "to sell power in any mode" after distribution companies exit an agreement upon the completion of the tenure, the ministry said.

Power minister R.K. Singh and finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman have previously said they plan to shut old coalfired power plants. The environment ministry has also pushed for shutting down coal plants, which account for 80 per cent of India's industrial pollution, if they do not comply with green laws.

A final decision on the proposal is not immi-– Reuters

Angola stops diamond sales to boost local mfg

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, DEC. 6

Angola, the third largest producer of diamonds in Africa, plans to stop direct sales of rough diamonds to India. It is putting pressure on the Indian polishing industry to invest in that country in order to create a diamond value chain locally.

Angola wants to increase diamond production from about 9 million carats per year to 15 million carats by 2022 as part of its efforts to cut its over dependence on oil exports and diversify its export basket. Angola has only explored 40 per cent of its diamond-rich territory within the country. As it is facing difficulties in attracting foreign investment, Angola wants Indian polishing companies invest in the country.

"Angola is in the process of consolidating reforms for the diamond sector and we are working on setting up a bourse and selling rough locally through tenders. We do not plan to send rough directly to India, instead we would like Indian companies to manufacture diamonds locally," Eng. Fernando Amaral of Sodiam said Gems and Jewelery Promotion Council in a recent meeting. Sodiam is the stateowned diamond trading company of Angola.

"Diamonds are important source avenue for Angola and its people, and with the new diamond policy modali-



ties we would like to sell through sights, tenders and spots. The sight contracts will be only for two years. Angola is hoping to increase diamond production from about 9 million carat per year to 15 million carat by 2022. We invite Indian companies to invest in Angola and

cut and polish diamonds locally," he added.

"The Angolan state announced a diamond policy focused on marketing and trading of pough. ing and trading of rough that offers incentives for those who invest in diamond mining in the country. We believe India can play a key role here,' said Jose Carlos Ferreira de Sousa of Endiama, an Angolan national company dedicated to the prospecting, exploration and marketing of dia-

Currently, 95 per cent of the rough diamonds produced by Angola comes to India either through Belgium, Dubai or directly for polishing. India's imports of rough diamonds from Angola amounted to just \$6.01 million in FY20.

According Indian diamond industry, stoppage of direct sales of roughs will not affect Indian industry. "Angola is trying to develop its value chain. It wants Indian companies to invest in that country. However, it is not feasible. Only two compa-nies- KGK Group and Kapu Gems- have set up manufacturing facilities in Angola. Even if they do not sell roughs directly, it is not going to affect us," said Vipul Shah, vice chairman, GJEPC.

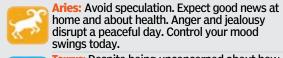
In fact, Indian industry has a dominating presence in the global diamond value chain, which was evident during the lock-down times. When the industry had decided to stop imports of roughs in order clear the inventories, mining companies had faced a tough time. The price of rough diamonds across categories had fallen by 20 to 25 per cent during the April-June period. With the resumption of imports, prices have returned to earlier levels.

COFFEE-BREAK

detached helps.

chlorates segments.

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



home and about health. Anger and jealousy disrupt a peaceful day. Control your mood swings today. Taurus: Despite being unconcerned about how others judge you, getting these concerns out of your mind will be tricky now. Being more



Gemini: Children's arrogance may dampen your day. Clearing subordinates' misunderstandings at work may be difficult and their disinterest in you could be disappointing.



ancer: Some of you may consider an image makeover. Creating a good impression with-out accomplishing tasks or by missing deadlines turns counterproductive. : Review financial decisions carefully.



Avoid speculation and risky ventures. Influence your family to amicably resolve misunderstandings with loved ones.



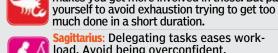
Virgo: Avoid splurging. Career-enhancing promotions happen soon. Those with interests abroad may expect positive news. Realistic expectations about your partner improve your

You share your b'day with

Udyan Sagar, better known by his stage name Nucleya, is one of the highest paid DJ in India. He is an Indian electronic music producer.

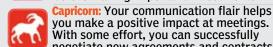


ibra: Minor glitches add to workload; backup plans help. Don't get too aggressive about others accepting your views. Focus on practical and financial aspects. corpio: Enthusiasm about certain projects



much done in a short duration. arius: Delegating tasks eases workload. Avoid being overconfident. Understand long-term trends and forecasts before making important investments.

makes you get more involved in those. But pace



you make a positive impact at meetings. With some effort, you can successfully negotiate new agreements and contracts. Rely on your own assessment for



decisions and not on others' advice. Focus on health. Resting helps you become more productive. Focus more on professional life.



ces: Avoid undue financial risks. Domestic discussions get intense. It gets busy now. Health issues need attention. Expect a hectic but satisfying day at work. You'll have a happy love life today.



ALDER

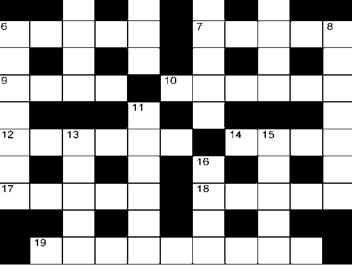
WHEN THE **WINDS BLOW UP SUDDENLY**

Sir Winston Churchill, who was born in breathtaking Blenheim Palace, said, "Never, never, spade queen? never believe any war will be smooth and easy, or that anyone who embarks on the strange voyage can meas-

ure the tides and hurricanes he will encounter." Bridge players should bear that in mind. South felt like he had been blown over by a hurricane after today's deal. What do you think of

the auction, and how should South might have opened two clubs, but given the one-diamond start, three diamonds was a major

underbid. He should have jumped to three no-trump, showing at least six strong West North Pass 1♥ Pass 3♥ Pass Pass diamonds, 18 or 19 high-card points, in theory blacksuit stoppers and, often, a singleton heart. North's



Across

- 1.Agitated (9) 6. Diminished (5)
- 7. Grasping instrument (5) 9. Bare (4)
- 10. Standard-bearer (6)
- 12. Contaminate (6) 14. Disconcert (4)

19. Candour (9)

17. Melancholy (5) 18. Compound of oxygen (5)

Word Mine

S

UP

- 2. Coated internally (5) 3. Foam (4) 4. Magnitude (6)
- 5. Boredom (5) 6. Ahead (7)
- 8. Earnest (7) 11. Astuteness (6)

Down

13. Baking ingredient (5)

LOTIVE

VIRHET

15. Wrong (5) 16. Robe (4)

jumble CLUKY **RDONU**

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's the letters snown in tooday's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are

words and proper names are not allowed.

◆ 9 ♥ Q 7 5 4 3 2 ◆ 9 4 ◆ A Q 9 H Dealer: South Vulnerable: North South

three-heart rebid was also strange, since it promised a six-card suit. Why not continue with three spades? Note that three no-trump came out of nowhere. West ruffed and led a spade, trumped by East. Then East

Looking at all 52 cards. South can take 13 tricks via three spades (finessing dummy's 10 on the second round), two hearts and eight diamonds. But the declarer, thinking that it wasn't necessary to assume West had

the spade jack, won with the spade king, cashed the heart ace, played a diamond to the jack and discarded a spade (not the club king!) on the heart king.

A Category 5 hurricane

Across: 1. Simplify, 7. Auger, 8. Crepe, 9. Career, 10. Isle, 12. Loot, 14. Stoops, 17. Tweed, 18. Theft, 19. Mastodon.

Down: 1. Sugar, 2. Marvel, 3. Lick, 4. Flees, 5. Calculate, 6. Necessity, 11. Stated, 13. Omega, 15. Ocean, 16. Edit.

cashed the club ace for Copyright United Feature (Asia Features)

CALVIN AND HOBBES | Bill Watterson







THE WIZARD OF ID|Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman







BLONDIE Dean Young and John Marshall







ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe







TARZAN Edgar Rice Burroughs







THE RESULTS

West Ham

26-pen)

Chelsea

Leeds

Burnley

(Brady 3) Everton

Pulisic 90+3)

(Bamford 4)

(Soucek 38)
Manchester United

(Pogba 65, Greenwood 68, Rashford 78)

Manchester City (Sterling 5, De Bruyne

(Giroud 27, Zouma 61,

(Calvert-Lewin 45+3)

firing home in the area.

distance and minutes later United were ahead, Greenwood turning and

CHELSEA GO ATOP

Chelsea also came from a

goal down to win 3-1 as fans

made a return to Stamford

Bridge for the first time

since March.
Patrick Bamford gave

Leeds a shock early lead as

he took advantage of hesitation in the Chelsea

defence to round Edouard

Mendy and slot home his eighth goal of the season.

However, Lampard's men

are now unbeaten in 16

matches in all competi-

tions and showed why they

are serious title contenders

by storming back to win

comfortably.

Man Utd climb

to fourth spot

London, Dec. 6: Manchester United roared

back to beat West Ham 3-1

on Saturday, while Chelsea

moved top of the Premier League by the same score-

line over Leeds as fans returned to the English top-flight for the first time

United fell behind at the

London Stadium, but for

the fifth consecutive away

league game came back to win as a three-goal blitz

from Paul Pogba, Mason

Greenwood and Marcus

Rashford turned the tables

in a 13-minute spell after

half-time. United, who have won

nine successive league

games on the road, are now

fourth in the table, one point ahead of Manchester City, who earlier cruised

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer

started with Bruno Fernandes and Rashford

on the bench in an attempt

to keep two of his star men fresh for Tuesday's crucial

Champions League trip to

But they were needed to inspire a second-half turnaround after Tomas Soucek's goal seven min-

utes before half-time gave

West Ham a deserved lead

at the break.
Cheered on by 2,000 fans in their cavernous 60,000-

stadium,

Hammers should have

been further ahead but

Pogba started the fight-

back in the 65th minute

with a superb strike from

squandered their chances.

past Fulham 2-0.

RB Leipzig.

in nine months.



Mick Schumacher

Schumacher's

son wins F2 title

Sakhir, Bahrain: Mick Schumacher, the Formula Onebound son of seven-time world champion Michael Schumacher, clinched the Formula Two drivers' championship title on

Sunday. Despite finishing 18th in the final race of the season at the Bahrain International Circuit, ahead of Sunday's later Sakhir Grand Prix, he took the title by 14 points ahead of nearest rival Briton Callum Ilott, who finished 10th.

Jehan takes first win

Jehan Daruvala won the race, taking his first F2 victory after Schumacher had flat-spotted a tyre on the first lap in his Schumacher was third on the

grid alongside llott and took second at the start, but fell back and after a pit-stop for new tyres had to rely on others finishing ahead of the Briton. llott, who needed to finish second to retain a title bid, fell down the order and finished 10th. Schumacher ended the season on 215 points and llott

Mbappe scores 100th goal for PSG

Paris: Kylian Mbappe scored his 100th goal for Paris Saint-Germain after making a late appearance as a substitute for the Ligue 1 leaders in Saturday's 3-1 victory at in-form Montpellier. With Neymar preserved ahead of next week's crucial Champions League clash against Istanbul Basaksehir and Mbappe rested from the start, Colin Dagba's first career goal gave PSG the lead on 33 minutes. English forward Stephy

the ball just crossing the line despite the best efforts of Dagba and Keylor Navas. Moise Kean restored the advantage for PSG on 77 minutes after Rafinha triggered a quick counter, hitting a magnificent solo goal for his fifth in seventh

Mavididi levelled before half-

time at the Stade de la Mosson.

league games. The Italy international was then replaced by Mbappe, who wrapped up the victory in stoppage time as he brought up his century of goals in his 137th game for PSG. - AFP

Cadiz shock for Barca, Real win

Madrid: Lionel Messi's Barcelona suffered a fourth Liga defeat of the season as they went down 2-1 to Cadiz on Saturday, while Real Madrid eased the pressure on Zinedine Zidane with their first league

win since October. Barca are now a distant seventh, 12 points off leaders Atletico Madrid, who beat Real Valladolid 2-0.

Live on

Lanka Premier League: Colombo vs Galle from 3 pm; Jaffna vs Dambulla from 7.30 pm on Sony

Indian Super League: Jamshedpur vs Mohun Bagan from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

English Premier League: Brighton vs Southampton from 1.30 am (Tuesday) on Star Sports Select 1

Italian League: Fiorentina vs Genoa from 1:15 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 2. HD

Raw: Bouts from 6.30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

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Editor: KAUSHIK MITTER

SHORT AND SWEET

Dhawan, Pandya seal T20 series for India with a game to spare

Sydney, Dec. 6: India sealed the T20 International against Australia with a game to spare after a swashbuckling Hardik Pandya finished what Shikhar Dhawan had set out to achieve with a scintillating 36-ball 52 in the second and penultimate match

here on Sunday.
The visitors thus avenged their 1-2 ODI series loss, chasing down a challenging 195-run target set by the home side. They won the opener in Canberra by 11 runs on

Needing 25 of the final 12 balls after fetching 12 in the 18th over, Pandya brought the equation down to 14 in the last over with two fours. The allrounder then hit two sixes to seal the match

in India's favour.
Pandya remained unconquered on 42 off

India were off to a sedate start with no boundaries coming in the first two overs. But fours and sixes rained from the willows of Dhawan (52) and K.L. Rahul (30) once the duo got their eye in.

Dhawan got himself a couple of boundaries and a six off Glenn Maxwell as India scored 34 runs in two overs to gain the momentum they were looking for. Dȟawan, despite coming down the wicket early, managed to pull Sean Abbott over deep midwicket for another six.

Australia got their first breakthrough when Rahul gave a sim-ple catch to Mitchell Swepson at deep point. But India had still managed a strong start, reaching 60/1 at end of Powerplay.
Having played some

fine shots, Dhawan topedged an attempted slog sweep off leg-spinner Adam Zampa to give Australia their second wicket.

Sanju Samson got out after a 10-ball 15 but it with the bat.

Sydney, Dec. 6: India captain Virat Kohli on

Hardik Pandya's "raw tal-

Pandya struck an

unbeaten 22-ball 42 to take India home with six

wickets in hands in the

second T20 International

and help the visitors take

a 2-0 unassailable lead in

the three-match rubber

"Yeah meant a great

deal. We've played as a

team in T20 cricket. The

fact that we don't have Rohit and Bumrah, our

established white ball

players, in and still doing

positive for coron-

Cricket South Africa

and the England and

Wales Cricket Board

said in a joint state-

ment that two mem-

bers of England's tour-

well makes me happy and



Captain Virat Kohli hugs teammate Hardik Pandya to celebrate India's victory in the second T20 international against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Sunday. India won by six wickets.

was debutant Daniel Sams, who gave the hosts their biggest breakthrough when he had Virat Kohli caught behind for a well-made 24-ball 40.

Earlier, stand-in skipper Matthew Wade led from the front with a half century and powered hosts to a strong total after a fairly commanding performance

SCORECARD

Australia: Matthew Wade run out (Kohli/Rahul) 58, D Arcy Short c Shreyas Iyer b T. Natarajan 9, Steven Smith c Hardik Pandya b Chahal 46, Glenn Maxwell c Washington Sundar b Thakur 22, Moises Henriques c Rahul b T. Natarajan 26, Marcus Stoinis (not out) 16, Daniel Sams (not out) 8. Extras (lb-1, w-8) 9. **Total (for 5 wkts, in**

FoW: 1-47,2-75,3-120, 4-168, 5-171. Bowling: Deepak Chahar 4-0-48-0, Washington Sundar 4-0-35-0, Shardul Thakur 4-0-39-1, T Natarajan 4-0-20-2, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-51-1. India: K. L. Rahul c Swepson b Andrew Tye 30, Shikhar Dhawan c Swepson b Zampa 52, Virat Kohli c Wade b Daniel Sams 40, Sanju Samson c Steven Smith b Swepson 15, Hardik Pandya (not out) 42, Shreyas Iyer (not out) 12. Extra (lb-1, w-2, nb-1) 4. Total (for 4 wkts, in 19.4 overs) 195.

FoW: 1-56, 2-95, 3-120, 4-149. **Bowling:** Daniel Sams 3.4-0-41-1, Sean Abbott 2-0-17-0, Andrew Tye 4-0-47-1, Glenn Maxwell 1-0-19-0,Mitchell Swepson 4-0-25-1, Moises

Kohli hails Pandya's raw talent STARC TO MISS FINAL T20 GAM

Sunday said winning the **BUMRAH'S RECORD** series against Australia without estab-■ Yuzvendra Chahal equalled Jasprit Bumrah's Indian lished players like Rohit Sharma and Jasprit Bumrah meant a great deal to him and lavished record of most wickets in Twenty-20 Internationals by dismissing Steven Smith on Sunday. praise on the marauding

■ It was leg-break googly bowler's 59th wicket at an average of 23.98 in 44th innings of as many matches. Bumrah also claimed same number of wickets in at an average of 20.25 in 49 innings of 50 matches

CHAHAL EQUALS

■ Only three bowlers completed a half century of wickets in Twenty20 for India.

■ R. Ashwin the third one who claimed 52 wickets at an average of 22.94 in 46 innings of as many matches.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

the win.

While Rohit has missed the series because of a hamstring injury he suf-

I am very proud of this $\,$ IPL, Bumrah has been team," Kohli said after $\,$ rested $\,$ from the $\,$ T20 matches keeping in mind the upcoming four-Test

series against Australia. The India skipper believes that with his raw

talent, Pandya, who earned the man-of-the-match award for his batting, can become a bankable player for the team in years to come.

'The reason for him (Hardik) coming into the team in 2016 was pure ability. He has raw talent. And now he realises that this is his time, the next 4-5 years, to be that bankable player that can win you games from anywhere. His plans are right and I'm glad to see that,'

Kohli said. "He now realises that this is the time to establish in that (finishing) role and play match-winning knocks for us. He plays with all his heart and he certainly got that competitive nature about him and also has the skill to execute that at the highest level."

FINAL T20 GAME AGAINST INDIA

Sydney, Dec.

The 30-year-old pacer gles but returned to claim Canberra on Friday.

family illness.

"There is nothing in the world more important than family and in this case Mitch is no exception," said Australia head coach Justin Langer said in a statement.

the time he needs."—PTI

Henriques 1-0-9-0, Adam Zampa 4-0-36-1.

Australian pacer Mitchell Starc has pulled out of the remainder of the T20 series against India due

to an illness in his family. had missed the third ODI due to back and rib nigtwo wickets in the 11-run loss in the first T20I in

He had arrived in Sydney on Saturday but soon left the team bubble after learning about a

"We will give Mitch all

Kumar, Gomez and Nongdamba Naorem returned to the starting Kiwis blow Windies away

Jorge Ortiz Mendoza (52') ensured Juan Ferrando picked up his first win as Goa head coach. Vincente the far post. Gomez (90') scored a consolation goal for Kerala. Ferrando made two changes to the side that was held by NorthEast United as James Donachie and Alexander Jesuraj included. Nishu

Manchester United's Mason Greenwood (left) scores

at The London Stadium on Saturday.

Goa, Dec. 6: FC Goa bagged their first win in

the Hero Indian Super

League Season 7 as tĥey

thumped Kerala Blasters 3-

1 at the Fatorda Stadium,

A brace from Igor Angulo

(30', 90') and one from

here on Sunday

against West Ham in their English Premier League match

Angulo shines as Goa secure win

eleven for Kerala. The first big chance for the Gaurs arrived early on in the 10th minute when Mendonza beat Nishu to take control of a long ball and fired a shot from outside the box, only to see his

to grabbing the lead once again seven minutes later, only to be denied by the upright. A miscued pass from Rohit Kumar put Angulo through on goal. The striker, with only the keeper to beat, attempted to curl his shot into the bottom corner but it struck

The home side came close

effort hit the crossbar.

However, Angulo soon made up for the missed opportunity around the half-hour mark as he put Goa ahead. Gama flicked the ball towards Angulo in the box and the striker delightfully dinked it over Kerala goalkeeper Albino Gomes to bag his fourth goal of the season.

Goa returned hungrier

after the break and continued to pile on the pressure. Their efforts soon bore fruit as they doubled their lead through Mendoza.

SARANGI ELECTED VP OF WORLD SQUASH FEDERATION

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, DEC. 6

Debendranath Sarangi, president of Squash Rackets Federation of India, has been elected as one of the vice-presidents of the World Squash Federation. The election was held virtually at the 50th WSF Annual General Meeting on Saturday. Pablo Serna (Colombia) and Karim Darwish (Egypt) were the other VPs elected. England's Zena Wooldridge is the new president of

"I feel honoured to have been elected to this post and I will strive to implement new initiatives at the WSF, said Sarangi who became the second Indian on the board of WSF after N. Ramachandran who served as president from 2008-2016. Sarangi is also the vice-president for the Asian Squash Federation and a member of the Ethics Committee for the WSF & Olympics

GAME CANCELLED AGAIN Dec. 6: New Zealand claimed the first Test Paarl (South Africa), against the West Indies by a ing party had now contracted the virus, Dec. 6: Two members comprehensive innings and although further tests 134 runs after ending a battling rearguard century by The statement did not Jermaine Blackwood in Hamilton on Sunday. specify whether the individuals affected The West Indies were all were players or supout in the first session on day four for 247 after only

of England cricket's touring party in South Africa have returned unconfirmed positive tests for Covid-19, forcing Sunday's first oneday international to be cancelled and placing 'Cricket South Africa

ENGLAND-SOUTH AFRICA

(CSA) and the England the rest of the tour in jeopardy. The match in Paarl and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) have to cancel was to have opened the agreed one-day series after today's Betway One-Friday's scheduled first match in Cape International series opening match, which was due to take place in Paarl," the Town was scrapped just before play was to begin after a South governing bodies said. African player tested

A decision on the remaining two matches in the series will be taken after the test results are ratified independently by medical experts, the statement added.

making 138 in their first innings in reply to New Zealand's 519 for seven.

Blackwood was the second to last wicket to fall for 104 after a 155-run stand with Alzarri Joseph who made 86. The victory was set up

over the first two days when New Zealand captain Kane Williamson, the man of the match, crafted a majestic 251 and the West Indies were always on the back foot from there.

fourth day at 196 for for six

Joseph advancing the total

with Blackwood

to 244 before Kyle Jamieson and Neil Wagner combined to take the final three wickets in the space of 10 deliv-Wicketkeeper The tourists went into the

Shane Dowrich, who injured a hand on the first day, did not bat in either innings. New Zealand had a

against New Zealand on Day Four of their first Test in Hamilton, New Zealand, on Sunday, chance for a key breakthrough early in the day when Blackwood, on 89, edged a ball straight to Ross Taylor.

West Indies' Jermaine Blackwood celebrates his century

Brief Scores: West Indies 138 & 247 (Blackwood 104, Joseph 86, Wagner 4-66, Jamieson 2-42) lost to **New** Zealand 519 for 7 decl.