

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | SUNDAY 10 | JANUARY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 27°C
Min: 22°C
Rainfall: 5 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Margazhi 26
Tithi: Dwadashi
Star: Anusham/ Kettai
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
Yamagandam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.18 am
Zohar: 12.20 pm
Asar: 3.31 pm
Maghrib: 5.57 pm
Isha: 7.12 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.59 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.34 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 3.30 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 3.15 PM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+18,813)	(+213)
1,04,51,339	1,51,048

covid19india.org

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

8,97,26,503

DEATHS

19,28,300

COUNTRIES,
AREAS WITH
CASES

218

worldometers.info

Veteran Congress leader Madhavsinh Solanki passes away at 93

Ahmedabad: Former external affairs minister and Congress veteran Madhavsinh Solanki, who had also served as chief minister of Gujarat for four times, died in Gandhinagar on early Saturday morning, Congress leaders said.

He was 93. “The death of Madhavsinh Solanki has brought extreme grief. May God give peace to his soul. He had made place in the hearts of people by his actions and deeds,” Gujarat Congress president Amit Chavda, who is also a relative of Solanki, tweeted.

Bird flu scare: Delhi bans import of live birds

New Delhi: The Delhi government on Saturday announced a ban on import of live birds and closure of the city’s biggest poultry market at Ghazipur after more avian deaths were reported in the national capital where three recreational parks and the famous Sanjay Lake were shut. Addressing an online media briefing, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said while no confirmed case has so far been registered in Delhi, his government is taking all possible measures to prevent the spread of the avian flu.

COUNTER

POINT



No cock left for fight due to flu, sir!

Boeing 737-500 plane feared crashed after losing contact in Indonesia

Jakarta, Jan. 9: An Indonesian budget airline plane with 62 people on board is suspected to have crashed into the sea shortly after the Boeing 737 took off from Jakarta airport on January 9, authorities said. Flight tracking data showed the Sriwijaya Air Boeing 737-500 plunged into a steep dive about four minutes after it left Soekarno-Hatta international airport. Sixty two passengers and crew were

on board, including 10 children, the nation’s Transport Minister, Budi Karya Sumadi, told reporters. The suspected crash site is near tourist islands just off Indonesia’s sprawling capital. The plane took off on January 9 afternoon and a search and rescue operation began with no official results available till the night. “We deployed our team, boats and sea riders to the location suspected to be where it went

down after losing contact,” Bambang Suryo Aji, a senior official at the agency, told reporters after nightfall.

Sriwijaya Air flight SJ182 was bound for Pontianak on Indonesia’s section of Borneo island, about 90 minutes flying time over the Java Sea.

“I have four family members on the flight — my wife and my three children,” Yaman Zai said as he sobbed at Pontianak airport. —*AFP*

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, JAN. 9

Putting an end to the long wait for the Covid-19 vaccine, the Union government on Saturday announced that the nationwide inoculation drive will begin from January 16. The date has been decided keeping in mind forthcoming festivals like Lohri, Makar Sankranti, Pongal, Magh Bihu etc. Priority will be given to healthcare and frontline workers, estimated to be around 3 crore in number, followed by those above 50 years of age and the under-50 population groups with co-morbidities numbering around 27 crore. “On 16th January, India takes a landmark step forward in fighting Covid-19. Starting that day, India’s nation-wide vaccination drive begins. Priority will be given to our brave doc-

CBI books Coastal Projects Ltd in over ₹4,736 cr bank fraud

New Delhi, Jan. 9: The CBI has booked Hyderabad-based Coastal Projects Ltd and its directors in connection with over ₹4,736 crore bank fraud in a consortium of banks led by the State Bank of India, officials said on Saturday.

The complaint from the SBI, now a part of the FIR, has alleged that the accused construction company, during the five year period between 2013 and 2018, falsified account books and financial statements to show unrealisable bank guarantee amounts as realisable investments, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) spokesperson RC Joshi said.

The company also allegedly gave wrong information on promoters’ contribution, converted receivables from related parties to investments to siphon off bank funds, he said.

The loan account of the company became a Non-Performance Asset with retrospective effect from October 28, 2013 and subsequently declared fraud on February 20 last year. Besides the company and its Chairman and Managing Director Sabbineni Surendra, the agency has also named Managing Director Garapati Harihara Rao, Directors Sridhar Chandra Sekhara Nivarthi, Sharad Kumar, Guarantor K. Ramuli, K. Anjamma, another company Ravi Kailas Builders Pvt Ltd, its directors Ramesh Pasupuletu and Govind Kumar Irani. “Searches were conducted at the residential and official premises of the accused at Hyderabad and Vijayawada, which led to the recovery of several incriminating documents and other material evidence,” Joshi said. —*PTI*

CITY | 2

Min: India developing capabilities for undertaking deep ocean missions



Indo-American Sabrina is Harris’ Dy Press Secy

WORLD | 5

SPORT | 8

Pujara’s slowest Test 50 derails visitors momentum



deccanchronicle.com, facebook.com/deccannews, twitter.com/deccanchronicle, google.com/+deccanchronicle

PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO 3 CR HEALTHCARE AND FRONTLINE WORKERS

Covid vaccination drive to begin on January 16



● **“The world is not only waiting for Indian vaccines but is also watching how India runs the world’s biggest vaccination programme”**
— **Narendra Modi**
Prime Minister

tors, healthcare workers, frontline workers including safai karamcharis,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.

Mr Modi on Saturday held a meeting to review the Covid-19 situation in the country, potential threat from the new UK mutant virus and vaccination plan. The meeting was attended by the Cabinet Secretary, principal secretary to PM, health secretary and other senior officials. The PM will have a

virtual meeting with chief ministers on Monday on this issue.

India till date has over 1.04 crore cases and over 1.50 lakh fatalities due to Covid-19. In the last 24 hours, 18,222 cases and 228 deaths were recorded. The total number of people with the new mutated strain of UK virus has now reached 90.

According to officials, the vaccination exercise will be conducted utilising experience of elections (booth strategy) and

Universal Immunization Program (UIP) without compromising existing healthcare services, especially national programs and primary healthcare.

The PM was also apprised about the Co-WIN Vaccine Delivery Management System that will provide real-time information of vaccine stocks, their storage temperature and individualised tracking of beneficiaries of the Covid-19 vaccine.

Emergency-use authorisation or accelerated approval has been granted by the Drug Controller General of India for Covishield (by SII) and Covaxin (Bharat Biotech). Central government is in the process of procuring the vaccines that will be delivered to main hubs in each zone and taken to different parts of the country from there.

10 newborn babies die in Maharashtra hospital fire

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, JAN. 9

In a shocking incident, at least 10 newborn babies died at the neonatal care unit of the district government hospital in Maharashtra, in the early hours of Saturday when a major fire broke out.

The incident took place at around 2 am on Saturday at the neonatal care unit of Bhandara district hospital. The babies lost their lives due to burn injuries and suffocation after fire and smoke engulfed the building. The infants were aged between one day and one month.

State health minister Rajesh Tope said that three of the 10 infants died of burn injuries while seven suffo-

● **The Maharashtra government has ordered a probe into the tragic incident. The government has also announced a compensation of Rs ₹5 lakh to the deceased’s parents**

cated to death because of the smoke. All the 10 infants, including eight girls, were underweight and needed to be given oxygen, he added.

District civil surgeon Pramod Khandate said there were 17 babies in the unit and seven were rescued.

A nurse first noticed smoke coming out from the neonatal section of the hos-

pital and alerted doctors and other staff who reached there in five minutes, he said.

Fire brigade personnel rescued seven babies from the “inbound ward” of the unit but could not save the 10 other babies, he said.

Dr Khandate said the ward where newborn babies are kept requires a continuous supply of oxygen.

“There were fire extinguishers and staff used them while trying to douse the fire. There was too much smoke,” he added.

The Maharashtra government has ordered a probe into the tragic incident. The government has also announced a compensation of ₹5 lakh to the deceased’s parents.

TWITTER BANS DON



Won’t be silenced, says Trump

Washington: utgoing US President Donald Trump has slammed Twitter for permanently suspending him, vowing that he and his support base would not be silenced.

The unprecedented move by the California-based microblogging site on Friday comes after Trump tweeted that he would not attend the inauguration of his successor Joe Biden on January 20. ■ **P5**

POLITICAL LEADERS CONDEMN DEMOLITION

Memorial to Tamils destroyed in Lanka

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 9

Political leaders, cutting across party lines, raised their voice in unison against the demolition of a monument, dedicated to the victims of Mullivaikal massacre, inside Jaffna University in Sri Lanka on Friday night. Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam, Leader of the Opposition M K Stalin were among those who expressed shock over the bulldozing of the memorial under cover of darkness and condemned it.

Stalin said that it was the continuation of destruction of many traditional memorials of Tamils in the island nation and urged the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to condemn the incident that had come after his foreign minister S Jaishankar visited Sri Lanka.

Makkal Neethi Maiam founder Kamal Haasan said that the massacre and killing of those who came to surrender in the last stage of the war in Sri Lanka itself cannot be forgotten.

TMMK founder TTV Dhinakaran said the rulers in Sri Lanka should understand that such action would have adverse effects, adding that the incident

● **The demolition evoked a protest by the students and local people**

had happened when the inclusive growth of Tamils should be their agenda.

Many other leaders too condemned the incident with MDMK general secretary and Tamilaga Valvurimai Katchi founder T Velmurugan called for a protest on January 11 to lay a siege of the Sri Lankan deputy high commission in Chennai.

Tamil activists and intellectuals too wanted the Indian government to condemn the demolition of the monument, sculpted by a student who lost his father when his family was trying to flee the war.

Erected in 2019 inside the Jaffna University campus, the memorial had raised the hackles of the Sri Lankan government, which is reported to have sacked the previous Vice Chancellor of the University as he had refused to demolish it.

The present governor, S Srisatkunaratnam, is reported to have said that the memorial cannot stand in the university premises as permission had not been sought for its erection from the relevant ministry.

Sydney crowd hurls racist abuse at Bumrah, Siraj



India bowlers Mohamed Siraj (left) and Jasprit Bumrah. — *Twitter*

for Cricket in India (BCCI) is furious with the turn of

events. According to BCCI

sources, Siraj was allegedly referred to as a “monkey” by a drunk spectator in one of stands at the Sydney Cricket Ground, reliving the infamous Monkeygate episode of the Indian team’s tour of Australia in 2007-08.

Sources aware of developments in the team said that the bowlers initially brought the matter up with stand-in skipper Ajinkya Rahane before the team went into a hud-

dle with the coaching staff led by Ravi Shastri and decided that this sort of behaviour should not and will not be ignored.

The relationship between the two teams has taken a turn in recent times with Queensland’s Health Shadow Minister Ros Bates’ comments regarding quarantine guidelines for the fourth Test in Brisbane also painting the visitors in poor light.

— *Agencies*

SHORT TAKES

Miscreants try to snatch chain from morning walker

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 9

Two bike-borne miscreants attempted to snatch a gold chain from a woman, who was out for a morning stroll in T Nagar on Friday.

The victim, Sakunthala, a resident of Rajambal street in T.Nagar, went for a walk on G.N Chetty road on Friday morning, when two men on a motorbike, came from the rear and attempted to snatch her gold chain. In a scuffle with snatchers, the woman fell on the road and also received minor injuries. The accused sped away after the victim fell. The entire incident was caught on a CCTV camera installed nearby. Pondy Bazaar police have registered a case and started a probe in the matter.

Kanchipuram police conduct special drill on riots prevention

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 9

A surprise security drill on riot prevention was conducted by the Kanchipuram police on Saturday in Walajabad amongst the public to make them aware of the activities carried out by the police during the times of unexpected riots.

Police said that to create awareness among the public about the measures conducted by the police to contain unexpected riots, the Kanchipuram police conducted a mock drill at Walajabad bus stand.

The officials used pellet guns, smoke bombs, lathi for demonstration. Water cannons were used to disperse the crowd. The people who demonstrated the protest were also taken to the Government hospital as a part of the drill.

However, people residing in the area panicked at first as they were unaware of the police drill. Kanchipuram's SP D Shammuga Priya oversaw the drill, sources said.

Farmers embark on 'Walk for justice'

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, JAN. 9

Members of various farmers' associations, including Thamizha Cauvery Vivasayigal Sangam, commenced a 'Walk for justice' (Neethi Kettu Nedum Payanam) at Vedaranyam in Nagapattinam district on Saturday. Former Lok Sabha member P V Rajendran flagged off the rally.

The farmers demanded that the Tamil Nadu Government should convene the state assembly and pass a resolution against the Union Government's farm laws, and also urged the Union Government to withdraw the laws, ₹2,500 per quintal of paddy and writing off all farm loans given by banks.

They passed through Thalaignayiru, Nagapattinam, Mayiladuthurai and will reach Thanjavur on Sunday. They will distribute pamphlets explaining the reason behind their rally to the wayside villagers, especially farmers.

Test positivity rate, active cases decline in Chennai

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 9

Even as the Covid-19 vaccination programme will be launched in the country on January 16, the test positivity rate and active cases are on a downward spiral in Chennai for over a month. But the recovery rate also went down during the last 80 days.

According to the data provided by the state health department, 6,112 patients recovered in the last 20 days against 7,715 in the previous 20 days. The number of recoveries between October 22 and November 9 was 11,017.

The trend of daily recovery shows as 1,803 (between June 24 and July 14), 1,313 (July 14 and

August 3), 1,038 (August 3 and 23), 1,220 (August 23 and September 12), 1,039 (September 12 and October 2), 1,192 (October 2 and 22), 797 (October 22 and November 9), 550 (November 9 and 28), 385 (November 28 and December 18) and 305 (December 19 and January 8).

When it comes to test positivity, 5,416 cases were reported in the last 20 days compared to 7,010 in the previous 20 days. The test positivity rate shows as 1,692 (June 24 and July 14), 1,166 (July 15 and August 3), 1,120 (August 3 and 23), 1,110 (August 23 and September 12), 1,121 (September 12 and October 2), 1,163 (October 2 and October 22), 564

(October 22 and November 9), 458 (November 9 and 28), 350 (November 28 and December 18) and 270 (December 19 and January 8).

The growth of positive cases shows 1,273 from May 3 to 4,882 on May 13 to 9,364 on May 23 to 16,585 on June 3 to 45,814 on June 24 to 79,662 on July 14 to 102,985 on August 3 to 125,389 on August 23 to 147,591 on September 12 to 170,025 on October 2 to 183,299 on October 22 to 205,419 on November 9 to 214,577 on November 28.

Alarmingly, the death rate stands steady. The daily death rate has increased from 26 (between June 3 and June 24) to 31 (between June 24 and July 14) to 44 (between

July 14 and August 3). But it started declining between August 3 and 23 as 20 and 19 in between August 23 to September 12. The rate was 14 in September. But it went up to 16 in between October 2 and October 22. The deaths came down to just 4 between November 28-December 18 and December 19-January 8. The death toll mounted from 17 cases on May 3 to 4,042 on January 8.

The health department conducted 1,46,95,106 sample tests while 1,43,89,165 individuals were tested across the state till January 8. According to the officials, most of the death cases are with comorbid conditions.

Three shops in Medavakkam burnt down

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 9

Three shops including a hardware shop and electrical shop were burnt down by a fire that broke out at midnight in Medavakkam, Chennai. The fire destroyed several lakhs worth goods. The fire broke out shortly after the store closed, left no casualties or damage to the store staff or owner.

Sakthivel (46) and his brother ran a hardware and an electrical shop next to each other on Medavakkam-Mambakkam Main road. Meanwhile, on Friday, as usual, the duo had closed the shops and left for their house.

Police sources said, at around 11:30 pm, smoke emanated from the shops. The residents who saw the shop on fire alerted the fire department.

Firefighters from Medavakkam, Tambaram and Velachery rushed to the spot and tried to douse the fire. But the electrical materials in the shops were prone to fire. Paints tubs, electrical appliances and pipes kept in the shops exploded with a loud sound, which made it difficult for the firefighters to douse the fire. The fire also passed on to another shop on the row. Two more vehicles from Tambaram and Thorapakkam were brought to control the situation.

When the water in the three fire trucks ran out, they turned the water trucks on the road and took the water to the fire truck to put out the fire. After about 2 hours of fighting the firefighters fought and brought the fire under control.

The fire department said several lakhs worth of goods were burned and damaged. A sudden fire at an electrical shop at night caused a stir in the area. Police have registered a case.



Agaramthen lake near Tambaram, the primary source for irrigation in the area, is overflowing due to recent heavy rain. The locals and farmers are happy.

— DC

No need for pharmacist in mini clinics, says HC

J. STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 9

Declining to direct the state government to create the post of pharmacist for the 2,000 mini clinics established in the state to tide over the present pandemic situation, the Madras high court has said it is not necessary that all clinics should have a pharmacist and it cannot also be said that no person, including the doctor is authorized to dispense medicines, as a doctor, who ultimately examines the patients and prescribe pills, is empowered to distribute medicines also to his/her patients.

Justice S.Vaidyanathan dismissed the petition filed by two registered pharmacists S.Vasanthkumar and D.Karthik, which sought a direction to the state government to include/create the post of pharmacist for the mini clinics established in the state in the GO dated December 5, 2020, and thereby consider them and other eligible persons for the post of pharmacist on temporary/time scale basis by suitably modifying the GO.

The judge said the petitioners have come forward with this petition presuming that there was a lacuna in the government order to the extent that medicines, prescribed by a medical practitioner, would be disbursed by the staff nurse.

A plain reading of section 42 of the Pharmacy Act in its entirety would make it very clear that even though it speaks about registered pharmacists, the doctor was empowered to disburse medi-

HC rejects plea against mutt

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 9

The Madras high court has dismissed a petition, which sought to forfeit the Dharmaparam Adheenam mutt from constructing any building for non-charitable purpose so as to earn income on its land situated on South Street at Thirukkadaiyur in Nagapattinam district.

The First Bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy dismissed the petition filed by S.Sundar.

The bench said the petitioner seeks to restrain the Dharmaparam Adheenam mutt from constructing any building for non-charitable purposes.

The judge said the petitioners have come forward with this petition presuming that there was a lacuna in the government order to the extent that medicines, prescribed by a medical practitioner, would be disbursed by the staff nurse.

cines to patients. The pharmacists will have to depend on the doctor and there was no need for a doctor to depend on the pharmacist. "The government, with a vast vision to eradicate the coronavirus



The petitioner has neither averred nor established that mutt qualifies as "state" for the purpose of Article 12 of the Constitution of India. "As such, we find that the petition is not maintainable. Accordingly, the petition is dismissed. However, the dismissal of the petition shall not preclude the petitioner from prosecuting a civil suit before the appropriate forum", the bench added.

and to meet out the emergent situation, has decided to set up mini clinics, in order to tide over the situation and to restore the situation to normalcy. In the considered opinion of this court, it is not necessary that all clinics should have a pharmacist and it cannot also be said that no person, including the doctor is authorized to dispense medicines, as a doctor, who ultimately examines patients and prescribe pills, is empowered to distribute medicines also to his/her patients", the judge added.

India developing capabilities for undertaking deep ocean missions, says Harsh Vardhan

Chennai, Jan 9: The government was in the process of developing a capability in which scientists can go deep into the ocean beyond three kilometres for taking up ocean exploration, Union Science and Technology Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said on Saturday. Participating in a function here, he said India was ranked at the top in weather forecasting and had never issued a false warning whenever cyclones were formed. "Normally it is about six hours of going down (in the ocean) doing some research activities and coming back. We are developing the capability in which scientists can go deep in the ocean beyond three kilometers and they can be there for almost 16 hours (for research purposes)," he said after dedicating coastal research

vessel 'Sagar Avneshika' at Chennai Port Trust here. On weather forecast, he said the natural calamity, the country remembers -- was the Tsunami of 2004 which caused a tragedy of a huge magnitude. "When we look back on how our scientists have developed (since Tsunami hit in 2004), we can proudly say that we are the best nation in the world in predicting early warnings of tsunami. We have never issued false warnings. My scientists tell me that Japan has issued false warnings on tsunamis," he said. The country's most ambitious mission was to launch a deep ocean mission which would look at all the aspects of the ocean as a source of minerals, a source of water and strengthen the scientific community, he said. "We are already in the

process and then we will take the help of big organisations in a collaborative way like DRDO, ISRO, people in IITs," he said. Vardhan said 'Sagar Avneshika' launched today can accommodate about 15-20 scientists for research purposes and has laboratories similar to research vessel 'Sagar Thara' for taking up scientific explorations. "The state-of-the-art vessel will transform our ocean research activities and boost our blue economy," he said. The vessel is equipped with advanced navigation systems as well as research and exploration apparatus. It would boost multi-disciplinary research on oceanography along the Indian coast and will deepen understanding of the ocean and help harness its enormous potential, he added.

—PTI

All those stories about election symbols



G. Babu Jayakumar

Just spamming

Will the loss of 'battery torch' lead the supporters of Makkal Needhi Maiam down a dark alley impelling them to press the wrong button on the Electronic Voting Machine? Reading about actor Kamal Haasan's political party seeking to retrieve the election symbol it was allotted in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections made one wonder if they believed that it was the 'battery torch' that won them whatever votes they polled in 2019. Or do they believe that the people have already started identifying the party with the 'battery torch'?

There is no doubt that any party has the right to seek the symbol that it wanted and what it felt it deserved

from the Election Commission and Haasan is entitled to ask for the same symbol that he was given the last time around. But how did the Election Commission come to decide on what symbol a party should get and not let the parties design their own symbols, as it should have been? And how did we come to adopt the election symbol concept that not all democracies have? Before we go into those historic details, let's look at a recent symbol-related election story that will throw light on the arbitrary manner (or is there a pattern behind it?) in which the symbols are allotted.

When the AMMK, the breakaway faction of the AIADMK, was all set to fight its first election in 2017

from R K Nagar Assembly constituency, it was allotted the symbol 'hat.' It was a by-election to fill the vacancy caused by the passing away of J Jayalalithaa. What the AMMK founder and the candidate for the by election, T T V Dinakaran did was to wear a hat as he went around the constituency, traversing through its nooks and crannies, evoking frenzied support. The polling was called off in the eleventh hour following allegations of cash flow and distribution of money to voters. Then when the by election was called for again, Dinakaran was denied the 'hat' symbol and allotted the 'pressure cooker' that he popularized with aplomb and won the election.

But the same 'pressure cooker' was denied to the AMMK in the next polls. When the 2019 Lok Sabha elections came, the party was given the 'gift pack' symbol, which the party popularized but did not do well in harnessing people's support. So when the 'pressure cooker' was restored to the party for the coming

Assembly elections, in the same Election Commission order that gave the 'battery torch' to another unknown party other than the MNM, Dinakaran's supporters were exulting, as though the symbol was part of the party's heritage. Posters were put up in the districts celebrating the retrieval of the lost symbol and the party, too, officially put the image of the 'pressure cooker' on its letter head.

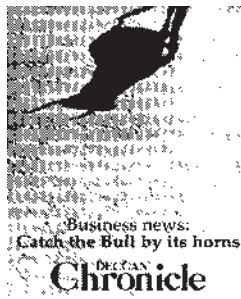
Though it may not be appropriate to attribute motives to EC denying the 'hat' first and then the 'pressure cooker' to TMMK, their cadre were of the view that the EC was influenced to take those decisions by the powers that be. If it was true, it was because of the perception in political circles that people identify parties more by their symbols. Perhaps it was that belief that prompted a BJP leader, Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay to file a plea in the Supreme Court in October, 2020, seeking removal of symbols from EVMs and ballot papers and replacing it with the name, age, educational quali-

cation and photograph of the particular candidate. Of course it will not work in India, where the symbol has been used since the first election after independence in 1951. It was then that the EC also started deciding on what symbol to allot to whom. As the story goes, when the political parties were called for a meeting to decide on the symbols by the EC, they all squabbled over one particular symbol: The Plough. With the Congress, the Socialists, Communists and Peasant and Workers Party laying claim to one symbol, the EC refused it to all and allotted the symbols on its own. Since then the EC decides on symbols. Period.

But then the symbols allotted randomly become the assets of the party in course of time. One such symbol is the 'Rising Sun', which is today identified with the DMK and considered as something inseparable from the party's identity. Interestingly when M Karunanidhi first contested the Assembly elections in 1957 from Kulaithalai con-

stituency he was allotted the 'Rising Sun' which was then earmarked as a symbol for independents. He won the seat, made history and subsequently the symbol itself came to his party and remained with it.

'Rising Sun' also has the distinction of being one of the symbols designed for the first elections in the country itself. It was then allotted to Ram Rajya Parishad. Even the 'Two Leaves' the endearing election symbol of the AIADMK popularized by the party founder M G Ramachandran (MGR) was also allotted to the party randomly. But it was so popular that when it was frozen in the 1989 with the Jayalalithaa's faction getting the 'Rooster' and the Janaki Ramachandran faction 'Two Doves' many felt the DMK swept that election because the 'Two Leaves' was missing in the ballot paper. It may not be the case that voters go only by the symbol in 2021. But then, one cannot be sure and that explains the legal fight for the 'Battery Torch.'



Business news.
Catch the Bull by its horns
Deccan Chronicle

தமிழ் வளர்ச்சி மற்றும் செய்தித் துறை			
நாமக்கல் கவிஞர் மாளிகை, தலைமைச் செயலகம், புனித ஜார்ஜ் கோட்டை, சென்னை - 600 009.			
செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறையின் தொழில்நுட்ப செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்பு அலுவலகத்தில் காலியாக உள்ள தொழில்நுட்ப உதவியாளர் மற்றும் திறனுடைய கருவி இயக்குனர் பணிபுரியக்கூடிய இயக்குனர், செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறை அலுவலகம் துருப்பாளர் நாயக்காட்டிக்கு, விண்ணப்பங்கள் வரவேற்கப்படுகின்றன. பணிபுரியும் தொழில்நுட்ப விலாஸ் கிழவருமார்.			
1	பதவியின் பெயர்	தொழில்நுட்ப உதவியாளர்	திறனுடைய கருவி இயக்குனர்
2	உத்திய விவரம்	நிலை 8 (ரூ. 19,500-62,000)	நிலை 8 (ரூ. 19,500-62,000)
3	காலிய பணிபுரியக்கூடிய எண்ணிக்கை	1 (ஒன்று)	1 (ஒன்று)
4	இளவழி	ஆதி திராவிடர் (முன்னாள் பெற்றோர்) (முன்னாள் பெற்றோர்)	பொதுப்பேட்டை (முன்னாள் பெற்றோர்) (முன்னாள் பெற்றோர்)
5	பணிபுரியத்தக்க இடம்	செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறை அலுவலகம், தொழில்நுட்ப துறை	தொழில்நுட்ப துறை அலுவலகம், தொழில்நுட்ப துறை
6	தகுதிகள் தொழில்நுட்ப உதவியாளர்	1. Diploma in Electrical and Electronics Engineering or, Diploma in Electronics and Communication Engineering and 2. Experience for a period of 2 years from a reputed company, in operating LED screens with computer hardware knowledge	
வயது வரம்பு		01.07.2020 அன்றுள்ளவாறு 18 முதல் 28 வயதிருந்து இருக்க வேண்டும். மற்றும் நடைமுறையில் உள்ள ஆணைகளின்படி.	
7	தகுதிகள் திறனுடைய கருவி இயக்குனர்	1. Must have passed SSLC or its equivalent and; 2. Must have practical experience as Cinema Operator in a Cinema Theatre for a period of not less than 2 years or; Must have passed the examination conducted by the Government Board of Examiners for Cinema Operators and must have practical experience as Cinema Operator in a Cinema Theatre for a period of not less than two years or; Diploma in Cinematography or in Sound Recording and Sound Engineering or in Film Editing with practical experience as Cinema Operator for a period of not less than one year	
வயது வரம்பு		01.07.2020 அன்றுள்ளவாறு 18 முதல் 30 வயதிருந்து இருக்க வேண்டும்.	
8	விண்ணப்பத்தை அனுப்ப வேண்டிய முகவரி	இயக்குனர், செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறை, நாமக்கல் கவிஞர் மாளிகை, தலைமைச் செயலகம், புனித ஜார்ஜ் கோட்டை, சென்னை - 600 009.	
9	விண்ணப்பத்தை அனுப்ப வேண்டிய கடைசி நாள்	புதுதலை செய்தி, விவரம், பிறந்த தேதி, கல்வி, அனுப்பும் செய்தி மற்றும் பிற விவரங்களுடன் கூடிய முழுப்பை என விண்ணப்பம் படிவத்தினை கைப்பெறப்பட்டு, எண்ணித்தொகுப்பில் நடைமுறையில் 22.01.2021 மாலை 5 மணிக்குள் அனுப்ப வேண்டும்.	

செ.ம.வெ.தி/24/நமகல/2021

IN BRIEF

MP ENFORCES
'LOVE JIHAD'
ORDINANCE

**RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, JAN. 9**

Madhya Pradesh government on Saturday brought into force the contentious Freedom of Religion ordinance, known in political parlance as 'Love Jihad' law, providing a maximum jail term of 10 years for forcible marriage of a girl for the purpose of changing her religion.

The ordinance was enforced 2 days after the governor Anandiben Patel gave her assent to it on Thursday.

Earlier on December 29, the state cabinet gave a nod to the ordinance in the wake of suspension of the winter session of the state assembly, scheduled to commence on December 28.

The state cabinet had last month given approval to the Freedom of Religion Bill, 2020, which was scheduled to see passage in the state assembly in the now-suspended winter session.

The ordinance has provided a maximum of 10 years' imprisonment for forcible marriage of a girl for the purpose of changing her religion.

It has been made mandatory for the bride and the groom to notify the local district magistrate 2 months ahead of their conversions, failing which the marriage would be nullified.

The ordinance has provided 5 years' jail term for the religious leaders and priests involved in the forcible marriages. Onus would be on the accused to prove his or her innocence.

AIMIM'S BENGAL
ACTING PREZ
JOINS TMC

Kolkata, Jan. 9: Sk Abdul Kalam, the acting West Bengal unit president of All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, joined the Trinamool Congress on Saturday along with several other members of the Asaduddin Owaisi-led party, months ahead of the assembly elections.

Joining the TMC at its headquarters in Kolkata, Kalam said there has been an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity in West Bengal for several years and he switched sides to keep the "poisonous air" at bay.

"We have seen that West Bengal used to be an oasis of peace. But of late, the air has become poisonous and this has to be set right. That is why I decided to join the Trinamool Congress," he told reporters.

The AIMIM leader and his followers joined the TMC in presence of senior party leader and state minister Chandrima Bhattacharya. Kalam said AIMIM should have tried to foray into West Bengal in the past and seeking a political entry at this point of time will not be proper.

"It will lead to unnecessary cutting into votes, which is not desired at all," he added.

— PTI

FARMER
ENDS LIFE AT
PROTEST SITE

**DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JAN. 9**

As stalemate continues over farm laws, with both government and farmer refusing to blink, a petition was filed in the Supreme Court on Saturday seeking removal of farmers from protest sites on Delhi border on the grounds that the protesters were blocking roads causing inconvenience to people.

The petitioner has also mentioned that violent protests have taken in place in some places and they have destroyed telecom towers causing inconvenience and financial loss to the public. The Supreme Court is expected to hear a bunch of petitions relating to the new Farm laws on January 11. The next round of talks between the farmers and government is to be held on January 15.

Meanwhile, a 72-year-old farmer allegedly died due to suicide at a protest site in Ghaziabad. "The deceased was found hanging at one of the mobile toilets at the protest site. He has also left behind a note which is written in Punjabi," said a police officer. Shamsher Rana of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) said that the farmer had blamed the union government for not accepting the demands of the protesters.

BJP LAUNCHES
FARMERS
OUTREACH
DRIVE IN WB

Katwa (WB), Jan. 9: Amid ongoing protests over the new farm laws, BJP president J.P. Nadda on Saturday launched a new campaign to woo the farmers of West Bengal and said the BJP government at the Centre has increased the agricultural budget six-fold and the Minimum Support Price by 1.5 times.

Nadda, who launched the *Krishak Suraksha Abhiyan* and 'Ek Mutti Chawal' (a fistful of rice) to woo farmers in the poll-bound state, said the Modi government has worked more for the farmers community than the previous governments at the Centre.

He also mocked at West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for agreeing to implement the PM Kisan Yojna only after realising that her party is fast losing ground among the farmers in the state.

Nadda, said it is "too late" for the TMC government to agree to implement the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi.

"Since coming to power, the Modi govt has increased budget on agriculture by six times. In 2013-14, the budget on agriculture was only ₹22,000 crore. Today, it stands at ₹1,34,000 crore," Nadda said here.

Nadda said its Prime Minister Narendra Modi who implemented the Swaminathan Committee report on Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops.

"MSP according to Swaminathan Committee has been implemented only by PM Modi, increasing it nearly by 1.5 times," he said.

Later in the afternoon Nadda launched 'Ek Mutti Chawal' (a fistful of rice), a programme under which he would collect rice from farmers' homes and brief them about the benefits of the new agri legislations, as part of efforts to blunt the opposition "anti-farmer" allegations against the BJP-led Central government following farmers protests.



Charred remains of furniture and other equipment inside the new born babies care unit of the Bhandara District General Hospital after a fire which broke out in the wee hours, in Bhandara district on Saturday.

- PTI

Soot and smoke telltale signs
of fire that claimed 10 lives

Bhandara, Jan. 9: The families of some of the 10 infants killed in a hospital fire here had complained about power fluctuations but no action was taken, alleged a former minister, as the blackened walls and charred furniture inside the ward told their own story of the ferocity of the blaze that broke out early Saturday.

Access to the Bhandara district hospital was barricaded to keep the media away and restless crowds milled around outside, anxious for any information on the deaths of the 10 infants, aged between one and three months, inside the Special Newborn Care unit.

The scale and nature of the incident left the people of this east Maharashtra city shaken and condolences poured in from various sections of society.

While politicians, including current and former ministers, were allowed inside the build-

● **A NURSE first noticed smoke coming out from the neonatal section of the hospital and alerted doctors and other staff who reached there in five minutes**

ing, scarcely anybody else was. Hospital authorities were tightlipped, refusing to divulge any information on the tragedy that had made national headlines.

As anxiety mounted, speaking to those allowed inside was the only way for reporters to get information and try and piece together a narrative.

Former Maharashtra energy minister Chandra Shekhar Bawankule said the BJP claimed that relatives of the infants had complained about power fluctuations in the ward for the last week.

"I spoke with relatives of the deceased infants. They told me that power fluctu-

ations had been happening in the hospital ward since the last seven days. The relatives had asked the hospital staff to check electric switches etc, but apparently no action was taken," Bawankule said.

Demanding a high-level inquiry, he also alleged that the hospital didn't have proper fire safety and electrical equipment in place. According to him, a proposal to purchase fire safety equipment worth over ₹1 crore at the hospital sent to the principal secretary, health, and the director of health, in the state government is pending for approval.

While most people were not allowed inside, photographs from the ward gave an indication of intensity of the fire and its aftermath of soot and smoke.

The walls were blackened, only the occasional patch of yellow showing through, the floor was thick with ash and dust and much of the furniture

was charred. The metal stretchers and a few other accoutrements of a special hospital care unit such as the drip stand survived the fire, which broke out around 1.30 am.

In the midst of the gloom shone a bright blue and white sign saying LED.

State health minister Rajesh Tope told reporters that at least three of the 10 infants died of burn injuries while seven were suffocated to death because of the smoke.

District civil surgeon Pramod Khandate said there were 17 babies in the unit and seven were rescued.

A nurse first noticed smoke coming out from the neonatal section of the hospital and alerted doctors and other staff who reached there in five minutes, he said. Fire brigade personnel rescued seven babies from the 'inbound ward' of the unit but could not save the 10 other babies, he said.

- PTI

India's vaccines
ready to save
humanity : PM

India delivering essential medicines to every needy in the world, says Modi

**DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 9**



● **India has today not only become self-reliant in them but has started exporting PPE Kits, Masks, Ventilators, Testing Kits.**

India is ready to protect humanity with not just one but "two Made in India Corona Vaccines" and the world "is also eyeing how India runs the world's largest Vaccination program", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a Virtual format on Saturday while addressing the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention—the flagship event of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) that provides an important platform to engage and connect with "the 31 million strong Indian Diaspora have established themselves in all corners of the globe".

PM Modi said, "Today, India is ready to protect humanity with not one but two Made in India Corona Vaccines. Being the pharmacy of the world, India has done the work of delivering essential medicines to every needy in the world and is still doing it today. Today, the world is not only waiting for India's vaccine, but it is also eyeing how India runs the world's largest Vaccination program."

He also said, "In this era of Pandemic, India again showed what our potential is. ... Be it PPE Kits, Masks, Ventilators, Testing Kits, all these were (earlier) sought from outside India. India has today not only become self-reliant in them but has started exporting many of these products as well. Today India is one of the countries with the lowest Fatality Rate and Fastest Recovery Rate in the world."

The PBD Convention—the theme of which was "Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat" (self-reliant India)—was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and featured a keynote address by the President

of the Caribbean nation Suriname Mr. Chandrikapersad Santokhi who was the Chief Guest at the event. PM Modi hailed the contributions of Suriname President Mr. Santokhi as "a shining example" of the service of the Indian Diaspora to the world.

On the occasion, 30 individuals and organisations were conferred the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA)—the highest honour for overseas Indians/persons of Indian origin—by President Ram Nath Kovind in recognition of their outstanding achievements both in India and abroad in various fields. The awardees included Ms. Priyanka Radhakrishnan, New Zealand's Minister for Youth, Community and Voluntary Sector, and Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities.

Quoting the wisdom of ancient Tamil sage Thiruvalluvar who had said, "the best land in the world is that which does not learn evils from its opponents and which, if ever in trouble, does not decrease the welfare of others", PM Modi announced that the next PBD will be "associated with the celebration of the 75th year of independence".

Idea of forming anti-BJP
alliance in Assam fades

**MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, JAN. 9**

The idea of forming a grand alliance of anti-BJP parties by Congress in Assam has started fading with two newly formed regional parties rejecting the offer and a month after contesting the Bodoland Territorial Council elections together the Congress has denied having any tie up with the All India United Democratic Front for assembly polls in April.

Confusion over the proposed alliance between Congress and AIUDF started after AICC general secretary and party's state in-charge Jitendra Singh said that the Congress high command will not bypass the opinion of ground level workers before finalising an alliance with AIUDF for the 2021 Assam elections. "There is nothing

regarding the alliance. I have not met Mr Badruddin Ajmal and nobody is in touch (regarding the alliance with AIUDF)," Mr Singh told reporters. "I don't think there have been any talks between the Congress high command and AIUDF leaders. Any discussion on alliance politics has to go through the general secretary in-charge for the state," said Mr Singh.

The remarks of the AICC general secretary came soon after AIUDF supremo Badruddin Ajmal said that an alliance between the two parties was going to be finalized soon.

"Talks on Congress and AIUDF ties are at the final stage," said Mr Ajmal. In fact the idea of forming a grand alliance of all the anti-CAA forces was floated and stitched by late chief minister Tarun

Gogoi. Two newly formed regional political parties - Assam Jatiya Parishad and Rajior Dal have also rejected the idea of grand alliance with the Congress party.

"Since the beginning, our stand is clear. We will try to unite all regional forces and maintain distance from the national parties. We are firm on this and so we have decided to form an alliance with Rajior Dal. An agreement in this regard will be signed very soon," AJP president, Lurinjyoti Gogoi told reporters.

Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) led by Lurinjyoti Gogoi, former All Assam Students' Union (AASU) leader and Rajior Dal led by jailed farmers' leader Akhil Gogoi came into being following the anti-CAA agitation in December 2019, which turned violent.

SECURITY | MATTERS

Army says the apprehended soldier is being dealt with as per laid down procedures

Amidst stand-off, Chinese soldier captured in Ladakh

FROM PG 1

The Indian Army move had caught Chinese by surprise and they had made several unsuccessful attempts to occupy these peaks. The area had also witnessed firing incident for the first time in four decades between the two armies as tensions had escalated.

"The PLA soldier had transgressed across the LAC and was taken into custody by Indian troops deployed in this area," said Indian Army on Saturday.

In a strong statement Indian Army said that troops from either side are deployed along the LAC since friction erupted

last year due to unprecedented mobilisation and forward concentration by Chinese troops.

"The PLA soldier is being dealt with as per laid down procedures and circumstances under which he had crossed the LAC are being investigated," said Indian Army.

Sources said the Chinese soldier is being questioned to know whether he accidentally crossed over or was trying to spy.

Earlier in October Indian Army had apprehended a Chinese soldier in Demchok sector of Eastern Ladakh, who was returned.

Chinese state owned media

Global Times said that China has called for an immediate return of the soldier; who it claimed went missing due to "darkness and complicated geography".

It further claimed that China had informed India as soon as the incident occurred, and sought help from the Indian side.

The incident has happened at a time when there has been no breakthrough in talks on disengagement between India and China despite eight round of Corps Commanders meeting between the two sides. Due to differences there has been no further rounds of Corps Commanders meeting since November 6.

23 SAILORS STUCK IN CHINA

New Delhi, Jan. 9: Twenty-three Indian sailors stuck in China will return on January 14, Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Saturday.

The cargo ship MV Jag Anand is set to sail towards Chiba in Japan, Mandaviya said.

"Our seafarers stuck in China are coming to India. Ship MV Jag Anand, having 23 Indian crew, stuck in China is set to SAIL toward Chiba, Japan, to carry out crew change, will reach India on 14th January," the ports, shipping and waterways minister said in a

tweet.

He said this could be made possible only due to the strong leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Mandaviya also acknowledged "the humanitarian approach of the Great Eastern Shipping Company towards the seafarers and standing by them in this crucial time!"

On December 30, 2020, he had said that Indian sailors stuck in China will be brought back soon as diplomatic talks are on with the neighbouring country.

- PTI

Kerala govt permits
reopening of spas,
ayurvedic resorts

Thiruvananthapuram: The spas, ayurvedic resorts and other such facilities in Kerala, which were closed months ago due to COVID-19 pandemic, are all set to welcome visitors again as the state government has issued orders for reopening them by adhering to safety norms. The spas and ayurvedic resorts used to welcome a large number of tourists both domestic and international holidayers in the southern state, popularly known as the God's own country, every year.

The state Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran said the order was issued to reopen the spas and Ayurvedic resorts in the state which were closed in the wake of outbreak of coronavirus.

— AFP

<div>  <div> தமிழ் வளர்ச்சி மற்றும் செய்தித் துறை </div> </div>	
<p>நாமக்கல் கலிங்கர் மாளிகை, தலைவரைப் பேரவையம். புனித ஜார்ஜ் கோட்டை, சென்னை - 600 009.</p>	
<p>செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறையின் சிறப்புண்கிரி மரபட்ட செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்பு அலுவலகத்தில் காலியாக உள்ள திட்டப்பட்டு கருவி இயக்குபவர் பணிபிடித்ததை நிபந்திப்பது, செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறை அலுவலர்கள் தகுதியான நபர்கிடமிருந்து விண்ணப்பங்கள் வரவேற்கப்படுகின்றன. பணிபிடிப்பதற்குரிய விவரம் கீழ்க்கண்டது.</p>	
1	<p>பதவியின் பெயர் : திரைப்படக் கருவி இயக்குபவர்</p> <p>உத்திய விதிப்பு : திரை 8 (த. 19500 - 62000)</p> <p>காலிய பணிபிடிக்கின்ற விண்ணப்பிக்க : 1 (ஒன்று)</p>
2	<p>இதன் கருவி முறை : பொதுப்பேட்டி (முன்னாள் துறை)</p> <p>பணிபிடித்தபட்டும் இடம் : செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறை அலுவலகம், திரைக்கிரி மரபட்டம்.</p>
3	<p>தகுதிகள் : 1. Must have passed SSLC or its equivalent and; 2. Must have practical experience as Cinema Operator in a Cinema Theatre for a period of not less than 2 years or; Must have passed the examination conducted by the Government Board of Examiners for Cinema Operators and must have practical experience as Cinema Operator in a Cinema Theatre for a period of not less than two years or; Diploma in Cinematography or in Sound Recording and Sound Engineering or in Film Editing with practical experience as Cinema Operator for a period of not less than one year</p>
4	<p>வயது வரம்பு : 01.07.2020 அன்றுள்ளவறு 18 முதல் 30 வயதிற்குள் இருக்க வேண்டும்.</p>
5	<p>விண்ணப்பப்படுகின்ற அலுவல் வேண்டிய புகவரி : இயக்குபவர், செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறை, நாமக்கல் கலிங்கர் மாளிகை, தலைவரைப் பேரவையம், புனித ஜார்ஜ் கோட்டை, சென்னை 600 009.</p>
6	<p>விண்ணப்பப்படுகின்ற அலுவல் வேண்டிய கடைசி நாள் : மறுதலிப்பர் பெயர், விவரம், பிந்தித்தி, கலிய, அலுவலகம் தகுதி முறையிற் பிற் பிண்புகருள், கருபு பருமையு வண்ணப்பர் புகவரிக்கை கையெழுப்புக, சான்றிதழ்களின் தகவல்கள் 22.01.2021 பரவல் 5 பண்பிக்குள் அலுவல் வேண்டும்.</p>

DECCAN Chronicle

10 JANUARY 2021



Sanjeev Ahluwalia

Off the beaten track

C-virus funk? Relax, and respect the kids

Parenting is a thankless job except when your child flashes you an admiring look of appreciation and love or envelopes you in a warm, spontaneous hug. But most of the time, you — the parent — are under scrutiny, by your children, your parents and relatives, society and indeed the law — with everyone expecting you to trip up.

The job comes with perks. You get to make the rules — mostly. But more commonly parents are running up the down escalator — coping with their own personal disasters and ghosts, pretending to be in control of the situation or just making do with paying the daily bills.

The most challenging scenario is when “special children” are born. So steeped are most of us in the quicksand of the “norm” that anything out of that spectrum imposes extreme stress. The wonder is that most parents do eventually cope with the daunting task of loving and serving unconditionally.

But parenting is never easy. Nor does one fall automatically into it — at least not well enough. It is fairly straightforward to make babies. Sadly, it is never straightforward to nudge them to grow up to be humane, empathetic, caring siblings, mothers or fathers, responsible citizens and productive members of society.

Even in ordinary times, parenting is a formidable task. It becomes much harder in extraordinary times. Think long wars or extended violence — there are fifty-five such events happening across the globe. Add to that periodic drought, famine, economic distress or the pandemic we are struggling through.

What should parents do if carefully formulated plans collapse into mere physical survival? Look back to the “hunter-gatherer” age for role models? Is it even sensible to bring up a child believing in the “nice” social lessons of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, learnt over the last century, when society itself seems to be hurtling back to where we began?

More than 90,000 people died in 2020 in continuing conflicts across the globe — some of these started as early as 1947 and continue glowing like the embers of a major fire. Covid-19 has devastated human life and social norms more decisively than any other calamity and more confusingly so since there is no one to blame but ourselves.

Perhaps there is a lesson there for us and our children. An old one. Just one rotten apple destroys an entire pile. We should change our rotten ways if our children are to identify and shun rot. The maxim of survival of the fittest is the “learned knowledge” born out of uncaring times. If society thrives so do, we. The impending disaster from climate change illustrates this truism.

The difficult part is to embed these noble notions into a workable social ethic which preserves the spirit of competition without impeding collaboration; recognises the human impetus for acquisition but tempers it with a notion of relative equality; acknowledges that humans are not saints but nor are they Hobbesian creatures of dystopia.

When faced with a conundrum, parents assume that role modeling will do the trick — being the person you want your child to be. This is an honest way to go — you can’t expect your child to be honest, fair and just if you aren’t. But even this doesn’t guarantee success. No child is a clone of their parents. And force fitting them into narrow roles has an even chance of success or disaster.

Parenting is a high-risk venture. There are so many moving parts, any of which could pitch the game against the parent or the child. Covid-19 is one such. It has also taken away the relief that external actors — teachers, friends, extended family — gave hard pressed parents via “me time”. “Family time” is all we have for those working from home. This is what most parents wished for. Many might now be having second thoughts. Possibly children too feel similarly. Too much of a good thing is never as good as when it is rationed out in dribbles.

Here are three survival strategies to get you through Covid-19 with your sanity intact.

First, quit role modeling. It’s stressful to keep up an act 24x7. Being yourself can bring surprisingly good results. Children are very resilient. They know that adults are fallible and can be surprisingly responsible when asked for help. It is we, adults, who force them into infantile irresponsibility well beyond the initial years when this assumption is valid.

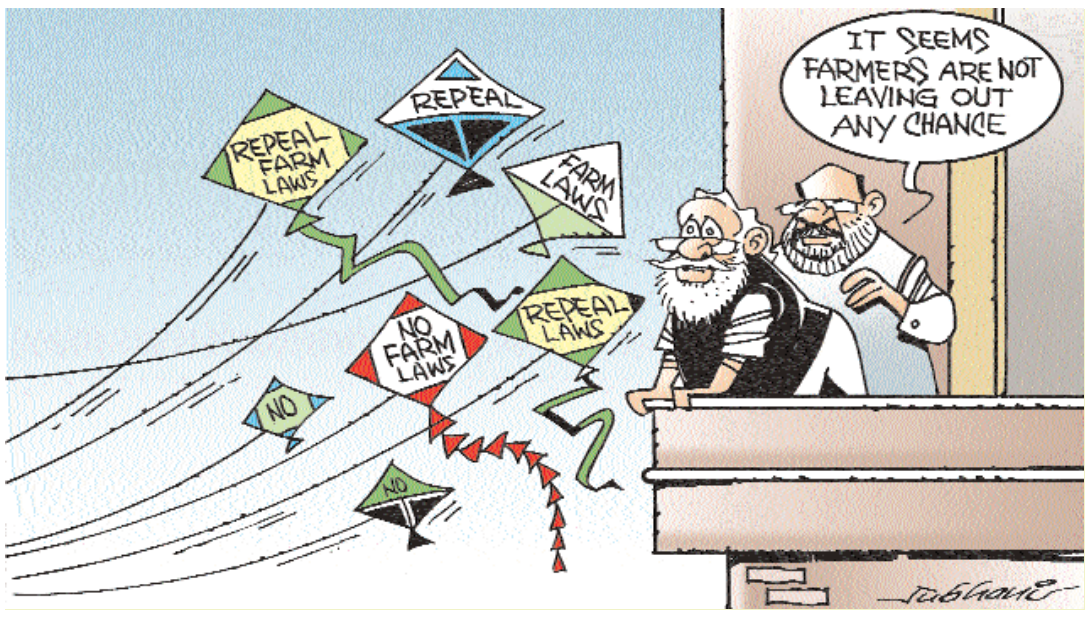
Second, imagine what you always wanted your boss to do — to quit micro-managing you. Become your ideal boss. Lay out fair rules on how your lives will run. Encourage your children to become equal partners in fleshing out what this means in practice — who does what, when and why. Things will probably not work like clockwork. The house will become messy. The kids may need time to discipline themselves about homework or time spent on social media. Your spouse might resent the change just as much as the kids. But in the end, there is a good chance everyone will sort themselves out per their natural inclinations and capacities.

Third, avoid dreaming of the future. “*Que sera sera*” remains the motto. The only thing real is the present — remain in it. This doesn’t mean that planning should be junked. But a future directed by you is as dead as the Planning Commission. Shape your children into commandos — street smart but equipped with the attributes for happiness and success — good health, a head for languages and code, music and art, digital capability and high social and human capacity. The rest will unfold as challenges and opportunities present themselves.

Children are born pure and unsullied. It is we who contaminate them with backward looking limitations. Now is a good time to shed the patrimonial legacy of parenthood and discover the joy of surviving together — the good news being — no one is watching, excepting you.

The writer is adviser, Observer Research Foundation

Subhani



Why J. Khanna dissented from Central Vista ruling



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

The Supreme Court (SC) has in a two-against-one judgment given a conditional green signal to the government’s plans to massively rebuild the central core of the capital of the Republic. We have no option but to accept the view of the highest court of the land, but the dissenting judgment of Justice Sanjiv Khanna raises issues which, if brushed under the carpet, would sanctify the government’s predilection to rule by law rather than that by rule of law.

The old saying, the way to hell is paved with good intentions, has a new resonance to the manner in which our current government acts. The end goal is often good, but the manner in which it is sought to be achieved is sorely wanting. The recent farm laws provide an illustrative example. No one can question the proposition that the agricultural sector needs reforms. But there is something inherently undemocratic if the reforms are pushed through without adequate consultations.

The farm bills were passed by blatantly violating every procedure and protocol of Parliament; they were hurriedly cleared on a Sunday, without sufficient discussion, by a voice vote, and without referring them to a Select Committee where the views of stakeholders could be taken on board in an organized and transparent manner. The farmers massed on the borders of Delhi are basically saying that there was no conversation with them.

This is precisely what a great many concerned citizens, members of civil society, architects,

town planners, environmental experts, landscapists, conservationists, and heritage specialists are saying about the rebuilding of New Delhi. Justice Sanjiv Khanna, in his dissenting judgment, used a very telling expression to describe the undemocratic opacity of the government. He said that there was a lack of “adequate and intelligible disclosure”. A project of this nature, he went on to elaborate, must involve the public as they are the real stakeholders of national heritage; the public must be given an informed voice; it should have had “fair participation” in deliberations, and given appropriate information and details.

This was especially important, Justice Khanna said, because the proposed changes to the heart of New Delhi’s heritage core are not only massive, but irreversible. Physical construction or demolitions cannot be undone, and have permanent consequences. The argument, it must be reiterated, is not against change. Cites are not fossilised in the past. The government is within its rights to make changes. Nor is Lutyens’ legacy writ in stone. In any case, as a person,

Why was an open design competition not held? On what criteria did the government’s in-house committee decide that a Gujarat based firm, which may have done the redevelopment of the Sabarmati river front, had the best design even when its bid was the most expensive?

Justice Sanjiv Khanna, in his dissenting judgment, used a very telling expression to describe the undemocratic opacity of the government. He said that there was a lack of ‘adequate and intelligible disclosure’.

Lutyens was an incorrigible racist, with a deep sense of contempt for Indians and all things Indian. But the city he designed with Herbert Baker has been part of our history for the last seven decades and more. If we wish to change our architectural past, should not that process be fully transparent, and informed by adequate and intelligible information put out in the public realm?

The answer, of course, is yes. But was this done? Many questions hang unanswered in the air. Why was the original brief for the project marked by such uncommunicative brevity? Why were all the drawings, layout plans and explanatory memoranda, inviting suggestions and objections, not put on a public website? Why was an open design competition not held? Why was a public jury of well-known non-governmental experts along with government nominees not constituted to decide the best bid? On what criteria did the government’s in-house committee decide that a Gujarat based firm, which may have done the redevelopment of the Sabarmati river front, had the best design even when its bid was the most expensive? Why have the criteria for this subjective and secretive selection not been made public even now? Why was the permission of the Heritage Conservation Committee not obtained? Why was the environment clearance granted by the Expert Appraisal

Committee not a speaking order, clearly giving reasons, and as Justice Sanjiv Khanna observed, showing application of mind? Why was a detailed report showing why our current Parliament needs to be junked, and is beyond all retrofitting to suit future needs, not made public? Since the changes involved building a new Parliament, could not there have been a discussion in Parliament, rather than merely briefing representatives of political parties?

The BJP may have an absolute majority in Parliament, but that does not mean that the process of democratic consultation, and the imperative of transparency, can be dispensed with. When governments behave as if they know best what is good for the people, and treat the views of the people themselves as unimportant, the consequences lack credibility and legitimacy. On a TV debate the other day, Mohandas Pai said that democracy cannot mean checking out every decision with all the people. My only response to him is not to trivialise the democratic process. Obviously, not everyone can be consulted, but there are standard and institutionalised ways in which the government can attempt to gauge what is best for the people. When this is not done through intelligent and adequate disclosure, and a transparent process of consultations, the result is contentious and counter-productive. This is what the angry farmers are saying, and this is what those who are distressed at manner of the remaking of New Delhi, are reiterating. Their views are best summed up in this couplet: *Yun dikhata hai aankhen mujhe baaghsabaan, jaise gulshan pe kuch haq har-mara nahin*: The caretaker of the garden looks at me such, as though I have no say in the well-being of the garden.

The writer, an author and a diplomat, is in politics

LETTERS

WELCOME DECISION

It is heartening to know that the Tamil Nadu government has withdrawn its order on 100% occupancy in theatres following a direction from the Central government as also the Madras high court. At the same time, it is great that the Union minister for health & family welfare has lauded Tamil Nadu Covid management, which is a feather in our Chief Minister’s cap. Likewise, the high court should also pass an order to rein in political leaders who flout coronavirus rules of wearing masks and following social distancing during their meetings. No doubt the vaccines are available now, but prevention is better than cure.

N. Mahadevan, Chennai

ECONOMIC SURVEY

IN THE backdrop of a discernible uptick in economy activity following the easing of restrictions, the pace of economic recovery appears to have been gathering momentum to the cheer of many. The first estimates of national income for the current financial year released by NSO (National Statistical Office) gave an indication that Indian economy is likely to contract by 7.7 per cent in 2020-21. Indian economy had contracted by 15.7 per cent in the first half of the year with Covid-19 induced lockdown inflicting substantial damage to almost all the sectors of the economy barring agriculture. But in the second half of the year, the economic contraction was pegged to be minimal and almost at the same level as it was last year. With the imminent roll-out of vaccine likely to provide a much needed fillip to economic activity, especially in the high contact services sector, growth in the fourth quarter will be stronger than expected earlier.

M. Jayaram, Sholavandan

NEW FARM LAWS

THE AGRI reforms bill that were brought to Parliament and subsequently became laws have been subjected to severe criticism by Congress-led states. Rahul Gandhi went to the extent of describing them as a death sentence passed on the farmers. It is to be noted that the agitation is in full steam only in Punjab and no other top leaders seem to be actively involved in the street fights inspired by Rahul Gandhi, who too has discontinued it and vanished from the venue of dharnas in Delhi. With his constant and never ending nitpicking of anything done by Modi government he has made people believe that if any act of Modi is opposed with this much of vehemence and force by Rahul then it would be for the benefit of the people. Except a handful of states where the protests are symbolic there is no notable opposition in other places in the country.

V. Rahul Venkatasubramanian, Chennai

Mail your letters to editor@deccanmail.com

Anita Katyal
Political
Gup-Shup



Divide and win Sikh farmers; artist’s mighty snub to govt

The Akali Dal-controlled Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee has announced that it will not be inviting Prime Minister Narendra Modi for Sikh centenary events in protest against the Centre’s “anti-farmer” stand but it has not stopped informal contacts between the government and Akali Dal leaders as both sides attempt to resolve the ongoing farmers’ stir. Akali Dal’s Rajya Sabha MP Naresh Gujral is said to have called up urban development minister Hardeep Puri recently to draw his attention to the number of Sikh farmers who have died in the last month and urged him to find an early solution to the protests. Mr Puri apparently showed no remorse and instead asked the Akali MP to ensure that the Leftists are kept out of the picture. The BJP is convinced that the protests are being led and managed by Left-leaning activists and cannot countenance dealing with or yielding to their demands. In any case, Mr Puri is also said to have told Mr Gujral that the Modi government has no intention of

repealing the farm laws but is willing to face certain clauses to provide a two-face-saver to the farmers.

As the only Sikh minister in the Modi government, Hardeep Puri has been fielded in the media regularly after farmers from Punjab and Haryana began their protest at the Delhi border. On his part, Mr Puri is doing his bit to appease and mollify the angry Sikh community. It was, therefore, not surprising that the minister made time last week, despite his hectic schedule, to release a coffee table book on the life and teachings of Guru Nanak Dev, authored by Harminder Kaur. Mr Puri later posted photographs of the release function held in his office with a short message mentioning the author’s name and that the paintings in the book were by artist Arpana Caur. However, Arpana Caur was missing from Mr Puri’s photographs. According to the grapevine, Ms Caur refused to attend in protest against the Modi government’s Central Vista redevelopment plans. Arpana Caur is among the large number of

artists, architects and conservationists who have petitioned the Centre against the demolition of the buildings housing the National Museum and the Indira Gandhi Centre National Centre for the Arts.

Stand-up comedian Munawar Faruqui, who was arrested recently in Indore for allegedly making indecent remarks against Hindu deities, seems to have fallen victim to longstanding rivalry between BJP leaders. Mr Faruqui was taken into custody following a complaint by Eklavya Singh Gaur, son of local BJP legislator Malini Laxman Singh Gaur, who is a camp follower of Sumitra Mahajan, former Lok Sabha Speaker and former Indore MP. Ms Mahajan is known to be a long-time rival of BJP general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya, also from Indore. According to reports from Madhya Pradesh Eklavya Gaur had been chafing ever since Kailash Vijayvargiya’s son and BJP legislator Akash grabbed headlines last year when he beat up a civic body officer with a cricket bat,

Not only did he get away with it but the incident enhanced Akash’s political profile. Eklavya Gaur is hoping Mr Faruqui’s arrest will win him brownie points with the BJP bosses.

It would seem that the BJP is playing a cat-and-mouse game with former Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia, who joined the saffron party last March. After making him wait for nearly two months, Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan finally expanded his Cabinet last week and re-inducted two Scindia loyalists — Tulsiram Silawat and Govind Raju — in the ministry. While appeasing Mr Scindia, the chief minister was also quick to send out a message that the former Congress leader cannot dictate terms to him. Two days after the Cabinet expansion, the Chouhan government ordered the transfer of Commissioner, Gwalior Municipal Corporation, Sandeep Makin, known to be close to Mr Scindia. In fact, Mr Scindia has been so protective about Mr Makin that even Kamal Nath could not touch the officer despite several

attempts to move him out.

Though the election for the Congress president’s post is yet to be announced and there is no formal word from Rahul Gandhi about his future plans, it is being assumed that the Nehru-Gandhi scion will return as party chief again. Word to this effect is doing the rounds in the Congress. Consequently, everyone, including senior Congress leaders, has started courting Rahul Gandhi’s team members. There is no “Ahmed Patel” in his office but Kaushal Vidyarthi is among those who is said to be a member of the Congress leader’s core team. It is, therefore, not surprising that he is much in demand with the Congress leaders who vie to get a word with him. One leader went as far as to suggest that Mr Vidyarthi’s role in Rahul Gandhi’s office can be compared to that of R.K. Dhawan and V. George in the offices of Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi, respectively.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

OUR CRITIC'S RATING Outstanding ★★★★★ | Great ★★★★ | Good ★★★ | Okay ★★ | Poor ★ | Truly Terrible TT

Soul joins mid-life crisis, jazz fantasia

Soul
CAST: Jamie Foxx, Tina Fey, Questlove, Phylicia Rashad, Daveed Diggs, Angela Bassett, Graham Norton, Rachel House, Alice Braga, Richard Ayoade
DIRECTOR: Peter Docter
RATING: ★★★★★
Streaming on: Disney + Hotstar

Peter Docter's "Soul" features stairway-to-heaven visions of the afterlife, a pre-birth "before" realm where souls are glowing turquoise orbs and an in-between spiritual realm trafficked by some kind of psychedelic pirate. And yet, kind of magically, it's about "just regular old living."

Pixar may have started simple with talking toys, but their concepts have grown increasingly elaborate over the years, giving abstract shape to interior consciousness ("Inside Out"), brightening a peopled world of the dead ("Coco") and conjuring a mythical suburban land with a father's half-resurrected body ("Onward"). "Soul" is a step further, again: a grand metaphysical whist — a mid-life crisis movie, a New York jazz fantasia and a body-swap comedy, all in one.

Part of the fun, of late, with Pixar's more ambitious movies is following a plate-spinning act that juggles animation whimsy, kids-movie imperatives and the meaning of life in some seemingly impossible combination that nevertheless in the end makes us cry. You can imagine a Pixar Mad Libs coming up with a movie about hamsters in space that's really about graduating high school, or one with unicorn cousins who learn to cope with trauma.

But part of what's refreshing about "Soul," which debuts Friday on Disney+, is its uniqueness. It's a deliberate and over-



due new direction for Pixar. The animation giant's 23rd film, "Soul" is its first to feature a Black protagonist. Kemp Powers, the screenwriter of the upcoming "One Night in Miami," is also Pixar's first African American co-director. The film is lushly set in a sun-dappled Manhattan. You will even hear, for a moment, A Tribe Called Quest playing in the background of a barbershop. For an animation world that has almost always been colored white, this borders on radical. It's also joyous.

Joe (Jamie Foxx) is a middle-school music teacher who has

long pined for his own career as a jazz pianist. On the day his big shot finally comes — a chance to sit in with the revered saxophonist Dorothea Williams (Angela Bassett) and her quartet — a stray step into an open manhole robs him of his dream. With his body laying comatose in a hospital, Joe's soul lands in a netherworld — and Pixar's animating ingenuity goes into overdrive. Faced with an escalator to The Great Beyond reminiscent of Powell and Pressburger's magnificent "A Matter of Life and Death," Joe runs the other way and drops into The Great Before — a soft, pastel-colored purgatory

where nascent souls find their "spark" before plunging to Earth. It's a rolling, blue-hued land of mentorship, overseen by benevolent figures elegantly outlined in Picasso-like two-dimension.

Not everything is perfect in The Great Before. Some souls struggle to find their spark. Joe, posing as a Swedish psychologist to elude capture, is assigned to mentor number 22 (Tina Fey), a problem child who's already cycled through everyone from Mother Teresa to Muhammad Ali looking for her spark, her purpose.

It's the elusiveness of purpose that "Soul" swirls around, tenderly examining what gives life meaning. For some, it might come as easily as the notes that pour out of Dorothea's sax. (The jazz scenes, courtesy of Jon Batiste, are brilliantly transpositive, part of the film's rich musical life, as scored by Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross.) But even as "Soul" rhapsodizes the beauty of artistic creation, it ponders the value of life for souls of less premeditated determination. "Soul," a celebration of those less certain of their path in life, is a kind of corollary to Pixar's "Ratatouille," a portrait of a very purposeful young artist.

This comes through not just in 22's journey but Joe's too, as he tries desperately to return to his life and realize his long-held ambition. In the end, Joe may remind some of Burt Lancaster's Archibald "Moonlight" Graham in "Field of Dreams," another who returns from beyond to get another swing at an unrealized dream — and in doing so only realizes how good he had it, in the first place.

But the meaning of "Soul" also comes through in the pointillist realism of Pixar. As delightful as its imagery of the afterlife is, the best stuff might be back on Earth. It would spoil things to say too much, but Joe and 22 land back in New York in a body-swap twist that includes a therapy cat. Not all of this works, in the end: "Soul" is seeking such a high plane of sublimity that it's sometimes forcing Pixar-styled transcendence a little too much.

But the landscapes of "Soul" are full of life. City streets team with it. This is, undoubtedly, the best the Manhattan subway has ever looked. Little joys — pepperoni pizza, lollipops, helicopter seeds spiraling to the ground — steadily accumulate. And "Soul" turns out to be not an exploration of the afterlife but a wondrous whirligig of daily life.

— AP



The Dissident is essential viewing

It's hard to decide what's most shocking in "The Dissident," Bryan Fogel's urgent, gripping new documentary about the horrific murder of Saudi columnist Jamal Khashoggi.

Of course, there are the terrifying details of the killing itself, chillingly recounted here through transcripts of recordings from the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, where Khashoggi was suffocated and dismembered with a bone saw. A few examples: The transcripts note laughter as the murderers strategized in advance how they'd dismember the body, pondering whether the hips would fit into a bag. And later, a Turkish official tells us, the killers ordered 70 pounds of meat from a well-known Istanbul restaurant, presumably "to mask the smell of a burning corpse."

Then there are the detailed revelations from Omar Abdulaziz, a young associate of Khashoggi's, about the extent of the regime's efforts to silence its critics, including the torture of his own younger brother and the arrest of more than 20 of his friends back in Saudi Arabia. And the descriptions of extensive Saudi hacking efforts, including the infiltration of the cellphone of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos.

Then there's this stark statement at the end of the film: "To date there have been no global sanctions or punishment against Saudi Arabia for the murder of Jamal Khashoggi."

If "The Dissident" were a fictional thriller rather than a documentary, one can imagine a studio head asking the screenwriters to perhaps tone down the grisly details, for the sake of plausibility.

But it's all too real, and Fogel, who won an Oscar for his previous film, "Icarus," about sports doping in Russia, doesn't hesitate to go bold. This is not a dry film: Fogel employs pounding music at tense moments, and uses lively graphics and dramatic flourishes like a CGI battle between flies and bees to illustrate a Twitter propaganda war. But it does not feel superfluous.

Rather, it feels passionate: Fogel is dedicated to making sure the world remains focused on Khashoggi's story. Unfortunately, his task is harder than it should be. Despite deserved rave reviews at the Sundance Film Festival, the major streaming services did not step forward to acquire the film — including Netflix, for which Fogel won the Oscar. It was eventually acquired last spring by independent distributor Briarcliff Entertainment, and is available on demand this week.

The film operates on several simultaneous tracks as it unfurls the tragic tale. One track follows Abdulaziz, the young Saudi dissident who serves almost as a narrator — and moral conscience — to the story.

We learn not only about Abdulaziz's risky public campaign against the Saudi regime and the repercussions he's already suffered, but about his secret collaboration with Khashoggi and how their work together may have sealed the elder man's fate. We learn that in the days preceding the murder, the two men were collaborating on an elaborate social media campaign to fight Saudi propaganda.

Another track traces the event itself, starting with poignant security footage of Khashoggi leaving his apartment building hand in hand with his fiancée, Hatice Cengiz, and hailing a cab to the consulate. We then see him stride into the building, never to depart again. We soon hear from those shocking transcripts.

Fogel brings in a wide array of voices, from Khashoggi's fellow journalists and friends to prosecutors, intelligence officials and technology experts. Agnes Callamard, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the case, doesn't hide her shock when she describes listening to recordings of the killings, and demands an investigation into the role of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the powerful Saudi heir widely accused of directing the assassination, which he denies.

Then there's the most emotional voice: Cengiz, who waited for a dozen hours outside the consulate on the fateful day. She shares affectionate voice mails and smiling selfies documenting her courtship with the Washington Post columnist who, when she met him at a conference in May 2018, struck her with "how lonely he looked." (Khashoggi, a former regime insider, had been forced to leave his homeland and his family behind as he became a target of the regime.)

Cengiz shows us the La-Z-Boy chair Khashoggi bought to furnish their home, a chair that made him inordinately happy. Later, when she returns to the apartment after his death, she sits quietly in that chair, stroking its arm. She asks police where his belongings are. They apologize that they needed them for the investigation. It all feels very immediate and raw.

"I still wonder when all of this will end, when I will be a normal person again," she says. "I don't know."

Cengiz said this week that she hopes this film "will keep alive Jamal's name and Jamal's life and his values." Filmgoers can help by simply finding and watching the movie. It should be required viewing for anyone who cares about free speech and democracy.

— AP



The Dissident
DIRECTOR: Bryan Fogel
RATING: ★★★★★
Available online, on demand

A spirited drama of abuse and resilience

Herself
CAST: Molly McCann, Clare Dunne, Ruby Rose O'Hara, Ian Lloyd Anderson, Shadaan Falfeli
DIRECTOR: Phyllida Lloyd
RATING: ★★
Streaming on: Amazon Prime

Phyllida Lloyd's "Herself," an Irish drama of spousal abuse set against Dublin's housing crisis, has some narrative weak spots but its foundation of resilience and heart is strong.

Previous forays into film by Lloyd, a veteran theater director, have been more elaborate, starker affairs ("Mamma Mia!") "The Iron Lady"). But "Herself" is a smaller, neo-realistic and often stirring story about Sandra (Clare Dunne, who co-wrote the script with Malcolm Campbell), a mother of two daughters (Molly McCann, Ruby Rose O'Hara) and the wife of a monstrous brute, Gary (Ian Lloyd Anderson).

Some of the major beats in "Herself" verge on cliché but everything in between rings true thanks to Dunne's steadfast performance and the film's delicate sense of humanity. The film begins almost immediately with the ruthless beating of Sandra by Gary. It's an anguishing scene, of course, though one, given its blunt timing in the film, divorced from any connection to the characters. Still, Lloyd from the start keeps the camera's focus on the connection between Sandra and her young girls, whom she sends running as soon as Gary comes home.

The bond between Sandra and daughters — both of whom are far more natural than most children seen in movies — is the abiding through line of "Herself," as is Sandra's determination to find a safe home for her children.

Housing a n d home-

lessness has been a problem in Ireland in recent years, and it's not uncommon for those needing public housing to be put up in hotels for months or even years.

When Sandra approaches the housing authority, which places her in a hotel, "Herself" verges on the kind of social realism Ken Loach specializes in. Sandra

comes up with a novel pitch: If she builds her own house from a kit costing about \$50,000, she'll actually cost the government less money.

Sandra, a waitress at a pub, finds an unlikely benefactor in a physician she helps care for (a very good Harriet Walter) who offers a backyard as a plot. Through pluck and community, Sandra assembles a small, improvised crew of helpers, led by a reluctant but kindly contractor named Aldo (Conleth Hill, also very fine). A warm spirit of neighborly goodwill grows as everyone pitches in, which Aldo attributes to the Irish term of the old Irish term of "meitheal."

That may sound like a feel-good, made-for-the-movies tale, and "Herself" does indeed conjure an air of fable. But the film, earthy and sober, refuses to be carried aloft by sentiment, instead navigating a difficult and painful path toward self-preservation and renewal.

— AP



Vanessa Kirby is raw, dynamic

Pieces of a Woman
CAST: Vanessa Kirby, Shia LaBeouf, Molly Parker, Sara Snook, Ellen Burstyn
DIRECTOR: Kornel Mundruczo
RATING: ★★★★★
Streaming on: Netflix

"Pieces of a Woman" begins with a tragedy. Martha (Vanessa Kirby) is expecting her first child with her partner Sean (Shia LaBeouf). For a few minutes, we see them in the final stages of preparation for life with a baby: She's saying farewell to her co-workers and packing up her things; Her mother is signing the papers on a practical minivan; And they're hanging the final photos up in the well-stocked and tastefully neutral nursery.

Then, suddenly, Martha is in labor and for almost 30 minutes the audience is given a front row seat to the most realistic and graphic depiction of a home birth ever put on film. It's a difficult labor — Martha is almost drunk with pain — and it's made even more stressful by the fact that their midwife is unavailable and a replacement is sent. Then it ends in death.

It is a brutal and harrowing start to a film that is committed to telling the ugly truth about a loss so devastating that it's almost taboo. And it's just one of many deeply unpleasant occurrences to come. Like Martha and Sean, you are left somewhat paralyzed and drained after the events of the beginning and have no



choice but to continue this emotionally wrenching and hauntingly visceral journey with them.

Martha attempts to go about her life but is constantly being reminded of what happened, whether it's seeing children out in the wild, running into her mother's friend at the grocery store or all the physical postpartum changes that one's body endures regardless of whether or not the child has survived. She's also navigating her own family's grief, arguments over burials and epitaphs and a legal battle against the substitute midwife (Molly

Parker), which is thankfully relegated to the backdrop.

Kirby, the English actor who portrayed Princess Margaret in the first seasons of "The Crown," plays Martha not as a wilting flower but as a kind of steely, determined robot alternating between utterly detached and aggressively angry. It is fiercely unguarded.

If the gutting discomfort feels more authentic than you're used to, it's because the story is personal for the writer and director couple. Kata Weber wrote the script based on her own experience losing

a child with director Kornel Mundruczo during pregnancy. And "Pieces of a Woman" goes places that many films wouldn't dare. The first half hour will likely get most of the attention but there are a few other jaw-dropping scenes of grief and anger that you must see to believe including a late film argument between Martha and her mother, who is played by Ellen Burstyn.

Aside from the revelatory moments, however, the film unravels a bit as it goes on. The focus turns too often to Sean, a construction worker whose relationship with Martha, an educated professional from a wealthy family, never makes a lot of sense.

His descent is a bundle of clichés and distracts from the uniqueness of Martha's story. He also has a moment of sexual aggression with Martha that is even made even more troublesome to watch in light of the recent allegations against LaBeouf.

But it doesn't detract from Kirby's achievement here. Hers is an unforgettable vulnerable performance that deserves attention and consideration this awards season. The same also goes for Burstyn in a difficult supporting role that she commands.

This movie will not be for everyone, but it is important not least because it continues to advance the discourse around miscarriages which is a trauma that couples, but mainly women, have been expected to shoulder in secret for far too long. The ending won't be satisfying either, but that's probably the point. There is often no satisfying end to tragic loss, just survival.

— AP

SHORT TAKES

Liverpool survive scare in FA Cup

Birmingham: They were given pre-match odds of 90-1 by some British bookmakers. Some of them were dropped off at the stadium ahead of the game by their mothers and fathers. A bunch of new jerseys needed to be printed before kickoff on Friday, adding rarely seen squad numbers up to 76 for the teenagers who, at late notice, were about to play for Aston Villa against the superstars of English champions Liverpool in the FA Cup. Imagine the widespread disbelief, then, when Villa's kids defied grim predictions by reaching half-time of the supposed third-round mismatch at 1-1 against the best team in the country. As expected, Liverpool pulled clear in the second half, but there was little to really celebrate from the 4-1 win at an empty Villa Park. — AP

Karlovic 2nd oldest to win on ATP Tour

Miami: Ivo Karlovic of Croatia became the oldest player to win an ATP Tour match in a quarter-century, hitting 27 aces night to beat No. 7-seeded Pablo Andujar of Spain 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 in the first round of the Delray Beach Open. Karlovic, who turns 42 next month, is the oldest to win on the top men's tour since Jimmy Connors at age 42 in 1995. The victory was the veteran's first since last February. No. 8 seed Frances Tiafoe defeated fellow American Donald Young 6-3, 6-4. Qualifier Roberto Quiroz overcame a shaky stretch in the first set to beat American Noah Rubin 7-6 (1), 6-3. Quiroz led 5-3, lost serve twice and then rallied, dominating the tiebreaker. — AP

East Bengal add to BFC's misery

Margao: Matti Steinmann's first-half strike proved to be the difference as SC East Bengal beat Bengaluru FC 1-0 to record their second win of the Indian Super League here on Saturday. The Kolkata team are now unbeaten in their last five games, while BFC's misery continued with their fourth consecutive defeat this season. — PTI

Mohammedan off to winning start

Kolkata: Ali Faisal's second-half strike helped newly-promoted Mohammedan Sporting beat debutants Sudeva Delhi FC 1-0 as the I-League season got underway here on Saturday. Faisal's 58th-minute goal proved to be the difference between the two sides in a match that could have gone either way. In a cagey first half, both teams appeared to be gauging each other's strengths without exposing themselves to counter-attacks. Sudeva Delhi, the first club from the national capital to play in the I-League, had the first shot on target in the seventh minute when Kean Lewis cut inside from the left flank only to force the opposition custodian into an easy save. — PTI

Live on TV

CRICKET

Australia vs India: Third Test — Day Five from 5 am (Monday) on Sony Six, Ten 1, HD

Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 Tournament: Jharkhand vs Tamil Nadu from 11.55 am; Assam vs Hyderabad from 6.55 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: Chennaiyin vs Odisha from 4.50 pm; Jamshedpur vs Kerala Blasters from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

FA Cup: Chelsea vs Morecambe from 7 pm on Sony Ten 1; Manchester City vs Birmingham City from 7 pm; Marine vs Tottenham Hotspur from 10.30 pm on Sony Ten 2.

Italian League: Roma vs Inter Milan from 5 pm on Sony Ten 2; Juventus vs Sassuolo from 1.15 am (Monday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

GOLF

PGA Tour: Sentry Tournament of Champions from 2.30 am (Monday) on Eurosport, HD

Regd. No.
TNENG/2010/35692

Printed & Published by
K. Sudhakar on behalf of
Deccan Chronicle Holdings
Limited and Printed at
Deccan Chronicle Press situated at
No 2/22, Sengallipalayam Road,
N.G.G.O Colony Post,
Kurudampalayam Village,
Coimbatore - 641 022. RNI
Registration No: TNENG/2010/35692
Ph No : 2231252, 253, 255, 257 & 358
Editor: **KAUSHIK MITTER**

SLOW & UNSTEADY

Pujara's slowest Test 50 derails visitors momentum

SCORECARD

Australia 1st Innings 338

India 1st Innings (overnight 96/2): Rohit Sharma c and b Hazlewood 26, Shubman Gill c Green b Cummins 50, Cheteshwar Pujara c Paine b Cummins 50, Ajinkya Rahane b Cummins 22, Hanuma Vihari run out 4, Rishabh Pant c Warner b Hazlewood 36, Ravindra Jadeja run out 28, R. Ashwin run out 1, Navdeep Saini c Wade b Starc 3, Bumrah run out 0, Mohammed Siraj c Paine b Cummins 6. Extras (lb-2, w-5, nb-2) 9. **Total (In 100.4 overs) 244.** **FOW:** 70-1, 85-2, 117-3, 142-4, 195-5, 195-6, 206-7, 210-8, 216-9. **Bowling:** Starc 19-76-1-1, Hazlewood 21-10-4-3-2, Cummins 21-4-10-29-4, Lyon 31-88-7-0, Labuschagne 3-0-11-0, Green 5-1-11-0. **Australia 2nd Innings:** David Warner lbw Ashwin 15, Will Pucovski c (sub)W Saha b Siraj 10, Marnus Labuschagne batting 47, Steven Smith batting 29. Extras (lb-1, nb-3) 4. **Total (For 2 wkts, in 29 Overs) 103.** **FOW:** 1-16, 2-35. **Bowling:** Jasprit Bumrah 8-1-26-0, Mohammed Siraj 8-2-20-1, Navdeep Saini 7-1-28-0, Ravichandran Ashwin 6-0-28-1.

lar, showed how to bat positively on a dead track hitting six boundaries in 67 balls.

As Shane Warne pointed out during commentary, it would be very difficult to chase any score in excess of 250 with variable bounce and the odd balls keeping low.

Pat Cummins (4/29 in

21.4 overs) was brilliant on an unresponsive track with some effective short-pitched bowling and got good support from Josh Hazlewood (2/43 in 21 overs) and Mitchell Starc (1/61 in 19 overs), having set up a leg-side trap.

To make matters worse for India, there were run-outs and two batsmen —

Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja — were hit on the left elbow and left thumb respectively.

Earlier, Pujara's ultra-defensive approach put tremendous pressure on his colleagues and India never quite got the momentum going as Cummins, Hazlewood and Starc continuously attacked the batsmen — first with a leg-side field and short-ball strategy and then on the corridor of uncertainty.

Pujara doesn't play the pull or hook shot well and he wasn't allowed room to either cut or drive.

"I don't think it was the right approach (by Pujara), I think he needed to be a bit more proactive with his scoring rate because I felt it was putting too much pressure on his batting partners," former Australian captain Ricky Ponting wrote on twitter. — PTI

FOR THE RECORD

● Hanuma Vihari, R. Ashwin and Jasprit Bumrah were run out in the first innings on the third day of the third Test at Sydney on Saturday. It provides the seventh such occasion of three Indian batsmen dismissed run out in an innings and the first such occasion against Australia in Tests.

● Overall, it was the 37th occasion of three or more batsmen dismissed run out in an innings in the annals of the Test cricket.

● Shubham Gill and Cheteshwar Pujara scored 50 runs in India's first innings to provide the first occasion of two Indian batsmen scoring exact 50 runs in the same innings. It also provides the 12th such occasion of two batsmen scoring exact 50 runs in the same innings in Tests.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER



India's Jasprit Bumrah (right) is run out as Australia's Will Pucovski watches on Day Three of the third Test in Sydney on Saturday.

— AP

CUMMINS REVEALS OZ'S PLANS AGAINST PUJARA

Sydney, Jan. 9: Australia entered the four-match Test series against India determined to make it "as hard as possible" for Cheteshwar Pujara to score, the home team's pace spearhead Pat Cummins said after his terrific display in the third Test on Saturday.

Pujara has been criticised for his ultra-defensive approach in the series so far and instead of propping up his team's response to Australia's first innings total of 338, his slow 50 off 176 balls on the third day of the third Test derailed India's momentum.

"Today I got a bit of assistance from the pitch. But he (Pujara) is someone you know you are going to have to bowl a lot at," Cummins said.

The world's No. 1 bowler dismissed Pujara, who had been a thorn in Australia's

flesh during the 2018-19 series, for the fourth time in the ongoing rubber.

"We got our head around that this series, for him to score runs, we are going to make it as hard as possible, and whether he bats for 200-300 balls, we would just try and bowl good ball after good ball, challenge both sides of his bat, and fortunately, so far it has worked."

Cummins was asked about Pujara's slow scoring rate. "It's one of those things. You know he (Pujara) is going to hang around. At one stage he had been out there for 200 balls or 150 balls and I looked up there thinking they are still 200 away from our first-innings total."

"So, that fell a long way away and if we continue bowling well, you're not overly bothered."

— PTI

JADEJA INJURES HIS THUMB, OUT OF 4TH TEST

Sydney, Jan. 9: Depleted India's injury woes worsened on Saturday with senior all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja sustaining a left thumb dislocation and fracture which is likely to rule him out of the final Test in Brisbane, starting January 15.

However, there is some good news for India as wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant's elbow injury is not serious and he will probably be available when India bat to save the Test match. Both players underwent scans after being hit by short balls from Australian pacers on third day of the Test match.

"Pant will be able to bat as his injury isn't that serious," a senior BCCI source said on Saturday.

— PTI

Injured Crivellaro ruled out of ISL-7

NEHA SURANA | DC CHENNAI, JAN. 9

Chennaiyin FC's woes worsened on Saturday after their captain Rafael Crivellaro was ruled out of the rest of the season due to a ligament injury on his left ankle.

The Brazilian will be heading home leaving the two-time champions' season in limbo. Crivellaro's absence will be a big setback as Chennaiyin look to arrest their slide when they take on Odisha FC on Sunday.

"I don't want to talk about Rafa's position; everybody knows that he is not just our captain and that he is also a very important player for us and now we have to replace him in a different way. Also, tactically I will have to work again a little bit differently because we played 4-2-3-1 and I don't want to change too much because I think this worked," said CFC head

Crivellaro's absence will be a big setback for Chennaiyin

coach Csaba Laszlo.

Laszlo believes that it is not right to hide in the shadow of the injuries.

"We have good players and enough resources to replace players. This is football life; you will always have injuries and other problems. But I don't like talking about problems; we have to talk about solutions and work on them," he said. Laszlo owned up to the mistakes that led to CFC's 1-4 defeat at the hands of Hyderabad FC in the previous game.

"It was very bad. In that game, from the first minute and until the last we were not really on the pitch. My team and I have to just go back and think about the past eight games where we played really good football and created good chances," he said.

Domestic season finally underway

Mumbai, Jan. 9: India will witness its first major cricket tournament in the country since the Covid-19 disruption when the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy begins the much-delayed domestic season from Sunday, presenting a platform for the hopefuls to impress before IPL auctions.

The presence of seasoned campaigners such as Shikhar Dhawan, Suresh Raina and Ishant Sharma will add sheen to the tournament but one of the biggest talking points in the lead-up has been S. Sreesanth's comeback to top-flight cricket after serving a ban for his alleged involvement in the 2013 IPL corruption scandal.

Sreesanth, 37, will turn out for Kerala in the national T20 championship from January 10-31.

But the focus, mostly, will be on domestic uncapped players with the IPL auctions scheduled in February.

The tournament also assumes significance as it is an opportunity for the new senior selection committee to draw up a wider pool of players for the T20 World Cup, which will be played in India later this

● **The presence of seasoned campaigners such as Shikhar Dhawan, Suresh Raina and Ishant Sharma will add sheen to the T20 tournament.**

year. No cricketing activity had happened since mid-March last year and after meticulous planning, the BCCI decided to conduct the tournament at six different venues with as many bio bubbles.

The teams have been divided into six groups — five Elite and one Plate and the league stage matches will be played at Mumbai, Vadodara, Indore, Kolkata, Chennai and Bengaluru with the knockouts scheduled in Ahmedabad.

The lead-up had its share of controversies with many players lodging a complaint after being served poor quality food in a posh South Mumbai hotel.

Then, staff members of a hotel in Chennai, where players of three Plate Group teams were staying, were found Covid-19 positive. — PTI

Oldest living Oly champ turns 100

Budapest, Jan. 9: For Agnes Keleti, the oldest living Olympic champion, the fondest memory of her remarkable 100 years is simply that she has lived through it all.

The Holocaust survivor and winner of 10 Olympic medals in gymnastics including five golds celebrates her 100th birthday on Saturday in her native Budapest, punctuating a life of achievement, adventure, tragedy and perseverance which, she says, passed by in a flash.

"These 100 years felt to me like 60," she said at a celebration in Budapest on the eve of her birthday.

Leaving through a copy of a new book about her life *The Queen of Gymnastics: 100 Years of Agnes Keleti* her trademark modesty was on full display.

"The queen of gymnastics," she said, switching to English. And in Hungarian: "That's an exaggeration."

Keleti, who was born Agnes Klein in 1921, had her illustrious career interrupted by World War

II and the subsequent cancellation of the 1940 and 1944 Olympics.

Forced off her gymnastics team in 1941 because of her Jewish ancestry, Keleti went into hiding in the Hungarian countryside where she survived the Holocaust by assuming a false identity and working as a maid.

Her mother and sister survived the war with the help of famed Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, but her father and other relatives perished at Auschwitz, among the more than half a million Hungarian Jews killed in Nazi death camps and by Hungarian Nazi collaborators.

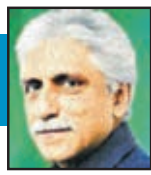
Resuming her career after the war, Keleti was set to compete at the 1948 London Olympics but a last-minute ankle injury dashed her hopes. Four years later, she made her Olympic debut at the 1952 Helsinki Games at the age of 31, winning a gold medal in the floor exercise as well as a silver and two bronzes. — AP



Agnes Keleti, former Olympic gold medal winning gymnast, is jubilant in front of her birthday cake in Budapest, Hungary, on January 4.

— AP

Superb fielding makes Jadeja an all-round package



Ayaz Memon
Over The Top

Ravindra Jadeja running out Steve Smith in the first innings has been a major highlight of the ongoing Sydney Test. Josh Hazlewood getting rid of Hanuma Vihari with a splendid diving stop followed by a direct hit at the bowlers end while still sprawled on the ground was another stellar fielding effort so far in the match, but all things considered, Jadeja's was a nudge better.

He had to cover 25-30 yards, all the while keep-

ing one eye on the ball, the other on the batsmen trying to complete the second. Haring in from the deep, Jadeja picked up the ball on the run, then found the bullseye with only one stump to aim at, leaving Smith inches short of the crease. It made for one of the most dazzling pieces of fielding action seen in recent times anywhere.

This was not an isolated instance of Jadeja's brilliant fielding. In the 8-9 years since he has been part of the Indian team, he's made a huge impact

with the speed with which he covers ground, his sure catching, and direct hits from very difficult angles. All of these put pressure on rival batsmen who are loath to take any risk against him.

How would Jadeja rate as a fielder in Indian cricket? From those I've seen he is certainly among the best 5, the others being Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi, Eknath Solkar, Kapil Dev and Mohamed Azharuddin. For sustained excellence over many matches and many years, this cluster moves ahead of the likes of Abid Ali, Brijesh Patel, Yuvraj Singh, Mohamed Kaif, Robin Singh, Virat Kohli.

Electric-heeled Pataudi earned the sobriquet of "Tiger" for his prowling presence and speed in the covers. In fact, he was the

first to put emphasis on fielding after becoming captain in 1962. With a predominantly spin attack at his disposal, Pataudi structured the legendary close-in trap for Bedi, Prasanna, Chandrashekar and Venkatraghavan which proved so rewarding from the 1960s through the 1990s.

Solkar was one of those brought in by Pataudi into the Indian team and earned immortality for his exploits standing at forward short-leg. Apart from his quicksilver reflexes and clean catching, Solkar was courage personified. Remember, in his time, there were no helmets. Fielding at short-leg carried huge risk which Solkar bore heroically.

Kapil Dev was a natural athlete and with great ball

sense. Strong legs made him cover big distances on the field speedily, and his catching was brilliant because of fine anticipation which got him into position early. His throws to the wicket-keeper from the deep came in like missiles. Late in his career, he fielded in the slips with success too.

Azharuddin is arguably the best all-round fielder India's had, equally good in the deep and close-in, either at silly point or in the slips/gully/leg trap. He was also big-hearted like Solkar, taking many knocks at silly point. Unlike in Solkar's time, however, there were helmets around when Azhar was playing.

The common factor between these five is their love for fielding. Where so

many players see it as chore and a necessary evil, Pataudi, Solkar, Kapil, Azhar and Jadeja were passionate about it. Pataudi once told me that the runs saved/given away should be factored into averages to get a player's true worth.

Historically, Indian cricketers haven't been renowned for their fielding. Speed and athleticism in players were not given too much significance. The essential demand used to be for 'safe' rather than spectacular fielding. That situation has changed dramatically in the last two decades.

Fielding standards in the country have improved because of better grounds, more scientific training methods, proper diet and sports medicine, increased

competition (both outside and within) and, of course, livelihood.

Money attached to cricket is extremely high today. Nobody wants a 'passenger' in the field.

Jadeja is the modern exemplar for brilliant fielding and an inspiration for budding cricketers. In fact, his fielding prowess has been a big factor in why he is now a regular member of the Indian team in all three formats. Breaking into the side essentially as a left-arm spinner, Jadeja's batting has also improved by leaps and bounds — especially in the five-day format — in the past couple of years. But it is his superb fielding that makes him a complete 'all-round' package which selectors and team management can't ignore.