

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | TUESDAY 12 | JANUARY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 29°C
Min: 22°C
Rainfall: 1 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Margazhi 28
Tithi: Chaturtashi/ Amavasai
Star: Moolam/ Puradam
Rahukalam:
3 pm to 4.30 pm
Yamagandam:
9 am to 10.30 am
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.18 am
Zohar: 12.20 pm
Asar: 3.31 pm
Maghrib: 5.57 pm
Isha: 7.12 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.00 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.35 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 5.35 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 5.13 PM

CORONA COUNT

| CASES | DEATHS |
|-------------|----------|
| (+12,196) | (+164) |
| 1,04,79,628 | 1,51,362 |

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+682)
TN: 8,26,943 12,228

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

9,09,53,936

DEATHS
19,47,527

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
219

worldometers.info

Union minister Shripad Naik hurt in accident; wife, aide dead

Bengaluru: Union Minister for Ayush and Defence Shripad Y Naik was injured and his wife Vijaya and personal assistant killed when their car overturned at Ankola in Uttara Kannada district on Monday night, police said. The minister's condition was stable, they said.

Illegal coal mining: ED raids 12 locations in West Bengal

Kolkata: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday raided 12 premises across West Bengal, as part of an ongoing investigation into illegal coal mining, an official of the agency said. The searches were conducted at the residences and offices of people who are "considered close to Anup Majhi alias Lala" — the main accused in the coal scam, he said.

COUNTER POINT



Our boys are amazing! They are firing even during massive power outage!

Cinema theatres in Kerala to reopen on January 13

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JAN. 11

Cinema theatres in Kerala which were lying shut for the past 10 months due to Covid-19 lockdown and related restrictions are set to reopen on January 13 even as the state government announced a relief package for the film sector.

The opening day will mark the screening of Tamil actor Vijay's film Master. The film is expected to be released in 200 centres across the state. The decision to reopen the theatres was taken at a meeting held between Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and the representatives of theatre owners, distributors and producers here on Monday. The theatres will

have to comply with all Covid-related safety protocols including Central Government's direction of maintaining 50 per cent occupancy to ensure social distancing. The government announced a series of steps to provide relief to the theatres owners and film fraternity which is facing a huge financial crisis due to Covid pandemic.

NATION | 4

Country staring at food crisis: Mamata



WORLD | 5

Democrats start impeachment of Trump in House

SPORT | 8

Kohli becomes dad of baby girl



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SC raps Centre, mulls forming committee to study farm laws

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

The Supreme Court on Monday expressed its strong disappointment with the Narendra Modi government's handling of the farmers agitation seeking the repeal of three controversial farm laws, as the court indicated that it intends to set up a committee that will examine the laws, and the implementation of the laws will be put on hold till it submits its report.

As the farmers' agitation entered Day 48 on Monday, Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde expressed anguish over the government's failure to resolve the "strike" by the agitating farmers, who are braving the biting cold of winter. The Chief Justice, heading a bench that also comprised Justices A.S. Bopanna and

● **"We propose to form a committee and if the government does not (on its own offer not to enforce the laws), then we will stay the implementation of the farm laws. We are doing this because you have failed to solve the problem," the SC bench said**



V. Ramasubramanian, said: "We propose to form a committee and if the government does not (on its own offer not to enforce the laws), then we will stay the implementation of the farm laws. We are extremely disappointed with the way the Centre is dealing with this. We are doing this because you have failed to solve the problem. The government has to take responsibility. The laws have resulted in a strike and now you have to resolve the strike."

The court's strong observation came as attorney-general K.K. Venugopal resisted the suggestion from the court to stay the controversial laws. In an apparent concession, CJI Bobde said that they will put on hold their implementation, making a distinction between the stay of a law and the stay of its implementation. The court said staying the implementation of the farm laws will ease tensions and prevent the situation getting violent.

Objecting to any stay of the farm laws, Mr Venugopal asserted the laws were beneficial for farmers, and said: "the laws are within the legislative competence of Parliament and are intended to benefit the farmers."

The court recalled that in past hearings, it had given the Centre an option to make a statement that it will not go ahead with the implementation of the three laws till the contentious issues are resolved.

The government in earlier hearings was not enthusiastic over the court's suggestion not to go ahead with enforcing the laws, as Mr Venugopal had said in that situation the agitating farmers would not come for talks. On Monday too, the A-G said the agitating farmers will have to give up their demand for the repeal of the farm laws. ■ **P4**

It's a first: Centre not to print budget documents

New Delhi, Jan. 11: The voluminous budget documents will not be printed this year following the Covid-19 protocol and will instead be distributed electronically to the members of parliament (MPs).

This will be the first time since the presentation of independent India's first budget on November 26, 1947, that the documents containing income and expenditure statement of the Union government along with finance bill, detailing new tax and other measures for the new financial year, will not be physically printed.

All MPs will get soft

● **All MPs will get soft copies of the budget and Economic Survey that contains an account of the state of the economy**

copies of the budget and Economic Survey that contains an account of the state of the economy. The printing of documents requires staff to be locked up in the basement printing press of the finance ministry a couple of weeks ahead of the presentation of the budget. The printing all these years began with a 'halwa' ceremony that

marked the staff going into the basement press only to emerge after the budget is presented.

The familiar sight of trucks loaded with budget papers in Parliament on the budget day and scanning of these by security guard will also be given a miss.

The Budget for FY22 will come on the backdrop of an economic contraction of 7.7 per cent, the first time in the history of independent India.

So, all stakeholders have great expectation from the upcoming budget, which could provide a healing touch to the pandemic-battered economy and push growth. — *PTI*

BJP drops claims, admits EPS is CM candidate

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

In a major turnaround, the BJP has accepted Edappadi K. Palaniswami as the chief ministerial candidate of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the state, giving up its adamant stand that the issue would be decided by its high command. The PMK, another AIADMK ally, however, dug in its heels, demanding an assurance on exclusive reservation of 20 per cent for Vanniyaars as a pre-condition for continuing in the alliance. On its part, the DMDK averred that it was part of the AIADMK-led alliance. ■ **P3**

Rajini urges fans not to organise events

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

A day after hundreds of Rajinikanth fans gathered for an event to put pressure on their matinee idol to enter politics, the actor requested them not to give him more pain by organising such events in future.

In a statement on Monday, issued through his Twitter account, Rajinikanth said the event on Sunday was organised by some people along with those expelled from various positions in Rajini Makkal Mandram and from the fans association.

Expressing gratitude to those fans who did not attend the event as per the instructions of the Mandram leaders, the actor said he was happy the event was held with discipline and dignity.

"I have already clearly stated as to why I cannot enter politics now," he said, adding "I have told you my decision."

The statement, addressed to his fans, was issued in a letterhead bearing the address of Raghavendra Kalyana Mandapam in Kodambakkam, said that he was pained that an event like that was held against the wishes of the leaders.

Rajinikanth fans, wearing T-shirts with their icon's portrait emblazoned on it, from all over the state had participated in what they called a 'protest' at Valluvar Kottam to demand that their superstar change his mind. The gathering that raised slogans throughout the day dispersed peacefully in the evening.

NO OUT-OF-TURN VACCINATION FOR POLITICIANS, SAYS PM

Centre spares states from meeting cost of vaccinating Covid warriors

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday held a meeting, through video conferencing, with the chief ministers and administrators of all states and Union Territories to review the status and preparedness for Covid-19 vaccination that will kick off from January 16.

The Prime Minister said India aims to achieve vaccination for about 30 crore people in the next few months and added that the state governments will not have to bear the cost of inoculating the three crore health workers (including private sector), frontline workers, police, paramilitary and civil defence personnel, sanitation workers and revenue officials associated with containment and surveillance in the first stage.

Mr Modi, however, remained silent on who pays for the rest of the population though the Union health minister Harsh



Vardhan had said earlier that the vaccines will be free of cost for all.

The Prime Minister said that the priority of who gets the vaccine first has been decided as per the advice of the experts and scientific community after consultation with the states. He also cautioned that there will be no out-of-turn vaccination for politicians and, instead of jumping the queue, they should wait for their turn. The Prime Minister's statement came after requests from Haryana and Punjab state government to include their elected representatives like MPs and MLAs in the first phase vaccination list. ■ **P4**

Centre to purchase vaccine Covishield at ₹ 210 per dose

New Delhi, Jan. 11: The Union government on Monday placed a purchase order with Serum Institute of India (SII) for 11 million doses of Oxford Covid-19 vaccine, Covishield, each costing ₹210 including GST, official sources said. Dispatch of the vaccine is likely to start by late Monday, they said. The health ministry is also likely to soon sign a purchase order for another anti-coronavirus vaccine, Covaxin, which has been indigenously developed by Bharat Biotech, a source said. Covishield vaccine doses would be initially shipped to 60 consignee points from where those would be distributed to various vaccination centres across India, the sources said. — *PTI*

No first honour at Avaniyapuram jallikattu: HC

DC CORRESPONDENT
MADURAI, JAN. 11

The Madurai bench of the Madras high court has ordered that no first honour (mudhal mariyathai) will be given to any individual at the Avaniyapuram jallikattu event to be held in Madurai.

Taking up a petition seeking reorganisation of the Avaniyapuram jallikattu organising committee, alleged to have been dominated by a particular group ignoring wide representa-

tion, a division bench, comprising justices M.M. Sundresh and S. Anandhi, on Monday ruled against conferring "mudhal mariyathai" on any individual.

The division bench further ordered that the jallikattu event at Avaniyapuram should be conducted strictly in accordance with the provisions of Tamil Nadu Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Conduct of Jallikattu) Rules, 2017, and banned the use of flags of any organisation or party and fixing of flex banners or

materials projecting any leader at the site of jallikattu. On a complaint of the petitioner, Anbarasan, that the organising committee chairman has not maintained accounts properly for the donations received for the jallikattu in the previous years, the court ordered that a separate bank account be opened for the deposit of donations for the conduct of the event. The receipts and proper accounts for all transactions pertaining to the event must be maintained properly, it said.

CDS Gen Rawat reviews security scenario in Ladakh

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen. Bipin Rawat and Indian Air Force (IAF) chief Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria were in Ladakh on Monday to review the country's overall military preparedness as the stand-off between India and China entered ninth month.

Air Chief Marshal Bhadauria also undertook a visit to Air Force stations and advanced landing grounds in Ladakh. He joined the CDS for a comprehensive discussion on operational matters with senior IAF and Indian Army commanders at Air Force station at Leh.

The CDS will review the overall security scenario in the eastern Ladakh region and is likely to visit Kashmir on Tuesday. During the visit, the Air Chief interacted with field commanders and was briefed on the operational preparedness and status of deployed forces at air bases as well as in the forward areas. He also interacted with IAF and Indian Army personnel deployed at these locations. During his visit to Thoise, the IAF chief reviewed the ongoing logistic operations for the support and sustenance of troops in the winter season.

Earlier this month, Gen Rawat had visited forward air force bases in the eastern sector and interacted with army, ITBP and SFF soldiers deployed at the forward most air maintained posts in Arunachal Pradesh.

Last month, Army chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane had visited frontline posts in Ladakh including Rechin La in Chushul sector where Indian troops in August in a tit for tat action against Chinese army had occupied strategic heights.

Ashwin endures pain(e) in gritty draw

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

R. Ashwin won many a heart on Monday for his gritty effort in helping India pull off a nail-biting draw against Australia in the third Test at Sydney. Ashwin (39 off 128 balls) and a limping Hanuma Vihari (23 off 161 balls) put on an epic stand of 62 runs off 259 balls to defy the Aussies.

The Chennai cricketer showed tremendous resilience as he not only endured excruciating backpain, but also warded off attempts

from behind the stumps to distract him. Growing increasingly frustrated with the partnership, Aussie skipper Tim Paine tried to get under the skin of Ashwin. "I can't wait to get you to the Gabba, Ash. I'll tell you what, woohoo," chirped Paine. Ashwin, however, pulled no punches. "Just like we want to get you to India. That will be your last series," he shot back.

Then, Paine decided to hit below the belt. "At least my teammates like me, d**khead. I've got a lot more

Indian friends than you do. Even your teammates think you're a goose. Don't they? Every one of them," said Paine.

While Ashwin remained unruffled, Paine made a blunder by dropping Vihari. "With his hamstring and my (sore) back, we did not want to lose concentration and play a (bad) shot. In the last four-five overs we knew we were close and we started to slip a bit. So we wanted to rotate the strike and play each other's end," Ashwin said.



Australia captain Tim Paine pats R. Ashwin on the back after the third Test ended in a draw on Monday. — *AP*

SHORT TAKES

Thieves decamp with money and valuables

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

Burglars broke open the hundi (offering pot) at the Palandi Amman temple in Adambakkam and decamped with devotees' offerings.

The Adambakkam police, which is investigating the case, said the quantum of valuables or money stolen was yet to be ascertained. However, according to the temple priest, at least Rs one lakh in cash and some gold and silver jewels were stolen.

The incident came to light on Monday morning when the priest went to the temple for morning prayers. The priest found the front door open and the hundi broken. He immediately alerted the officials, who informed the police.

The Adambakkam police registered a case in this connection. The police have also recovered CCTV footage of the incident, in which two men were seen breaking in. Investigations are on.

Cow dies after live wire falls on it

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

A cow was electrocuted after a live overhead cable snapped and fell on it on Monday morning.

At Pozhichalur near Pallavaram, a cow belonging to Raja (54) was electrocuted and died on the spot as a live wire on the animal, while he was taking it for grazing.

On hearing the noise, the locals informed the EB office. After the power connection was disrupted on the line, the body of the cow was removed from the spot and a complaint was registered with Shankar Nagar police.

Southern Rly basket ball player bags award

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

The Southern Railway basketball player has bagged a Lifetime Achievement Award from the World Women forum. Anithaa Pauldurai, a basketballer, who is presently working as Chief Welfare inspector/sports in Southern Railway has been conferred 'Meenakshi Raghavan Lifetime Achievement International Award' for outstanding contribution to the field of sports by the World Women Wing.

The World Women Wing felicitated Anithaa Pauldurai on January 10, 2021, on the occasion of its 13th anniversary. Anithaa Pauldurai played for 18 years from 2000 for Indian National Women's Basketball team. She was the youngest ever to captain the senior national team at the age of 19. She is the first and only Indian Woman to have played nine senior FIBA (International Basketball Federation) Asian Basketball Confederation Championships. Besides, she has received Lifetime Achievement Award from Tamil Nadu Chief Minister in 2018 and also bagged the Honorary Doctorate (DLITT) in the field of Sports by DK International Research Foundation, in 2018. Anithaa Pauldurai brought laurels to the nation by winning four gold medals and two silver in International Championships besides winning 30 medals including 12 Gold in National Championships. Southern Railway congratulates Anithaa Pauldurai on her remarkable achievement and contribution to the field of sports.

Study unravels movement of Covid virus in lungs

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

A study conducted by the researchers of Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) found that movement of Covid-19 virus-laden droplets deep into lungs increased during low breathing.

A three-member study team, led by Prof. Mahesh Panchagnula, department of applied mechanics, IIT-M, claimed that when breathing frequency was checked in a laboratory they found that low breathing had increased chances of deposition leading to infection. Also, the multi-scale lung structure has a significant effect on a person's susceptibility to Covid-19. The findings of this study were published in the international peer-reviewed journal 'Physics of Fluids'.

Prof. Panchagnula said the study unravelled the mystery behind how particles were transported and

deposited in the deep lungs.

"We worked to understand how the rate of flow of the droplet laden with virus determines the deposition of the virus in the lungs. Our study found that holding the breath and having low breathing rate can increase chances of virus deposition in the lungs. The findings could pave the way for developing better therapies and drugs for respiratory infections. Our previous study had also highlighted the significant variability in aerosol uptake from individual to individual. That is the reason why some people are more susceptible to airborne diseases", he said.

The study team took a peek into the droplet dynamics in the lungs by studying the movement of droplets in small capillaries which were of a diameter, similar to bronchioles. They took water mixed with fluorescent particles and generated aerosols from this liquid using a

nebulizer. These fluorescent aerosols were used to track the movement and deposition of particles in the capillaries. Then the team studied the movement of the fluorescent aerosol particles in capillaries of size ranging from 0.3 to 2 millimetres which covers the range of bronchiole diameters, and found that the deposition is inversely proportional to the aspect ratio of capillaries, which suggests that the droplets are likely to deposit in longer bronchioles.

When the scientists also studied how steady and turbulent are the deposition in the capillaries with the 'Reynolds Number,' a parameter that quantifies the nature of flow, they found that when the flow of aerosol movement was steady and the particles are deposited via the process of diffusion while the particles deposited via the process of impaction during the flow was turbulent.



Three vehicles — a car, tempo traveller and a bus — collided with each other pm GST road, Tambaram, on Monday. The car was severely damaged but luckily all 3 who traveled in the car emerged safe with only minor injuries. Traffic on the arterial road was hit for some time due to the mishap.

—DC

Two ex-Travancore royals appear before court

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

Two members of the erstwhile Travancore royal family on Monday appeared before the special magistrate court in Chennai in connection with an alleged land grab case registered against them. Two other accused in the case also appeared before the court.

The court asked three members of the family, including current titular maharajah of Travancore, to appear before the court on February 6 without fail. The court warned that it would issue a warrant if

they do not turn up in the next hearing.

The royal family has land worth Rs 100 crore in Adyar. Of this, they sold 171 cents to an industrialist, Subbiah, in 1994. Again, they allegedly sold the same land using fake documents to others. The matter came to light in 2006. On complaint, the CCB police registered a case against six royal family members and two others who purchased the land. On submitting the chargesheet last week, the court directed them to appear before the court on Monday.

Royal family members

Aswathi Thirunal Ramavarma, Avittam Thirunal Aditya Varma and ACR Raj Ganesan and BR Rampabhu Raj appeared before the court on Monday. Puyam Thirunal Kellari Parvathi Bai, Aswathi Thirunal Gowri Lakshmi Bai and Moolam Thirunal Ramavarma did not appear before the court. The accused informed the court that one among the accused, Uthiradam Thirunal Marthanda Verma, passed away. Directing them to appear before the court the magistrate adjourned the case to February 6.

PONGAL COLOURS

Tamil Nadu gearing up for harvest festival



A woman colouring pongal pots for upcoming Pongal at Kodambakkam on Monday.

—DC



<<< Health secretary Dr J. Radhakrishnan distributes facemasks, dresses, sugarcanes and stationery items to students of Ambattur Government middle school Mogappair on Monday. Around 130 children participated in the Covid-19 awareness campaign and Pongal celebrations organised by Press photojournalists.

—DC

>>> Bull owners and their representatives wait in a long queue to get tokens for their bulls to take part in Alanganallur jallikattu in Madurai district on Monday. Since hundreds of bull owners from various places thronged the place without following Covid norms, police had to use mild force to bring them under control on Monday.

—K.Manikandan



Men enthusiastically take part in the rekla race organised by Thiru Sengoda Gounder Educational Trust and Sri Shakti Institute of Engineering and Technology at Venkatapuram in Coimbatore on Sunday.

—DC

College student ends life after losing money in online card game

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

A 20-year-old college student from Chennai's Maduravoyal neighborhood died by suicide on

Monday after losing his money in an online card game portal.

The deceased has been identified as Tamilselvan (20), who was residing in M.G.R

Nagar in Maduravoyal. He was second year B.com student at a private college in the city. Preliminary investigation by the police revealed that he had

spent ₹2000 from the pongal hamper given by the TN government betting on the online card game and gave only Rs 500 to his parents, for which they scolded

him. Upset over losing the money on the online game portal, he allegedly jumped into a well in his house and ended his life. Maduravoyal police were alerted about the

incident. Police and Fire personnel rescued the body of the deceased from the well and sent the body for post-mortem.

A case has been regis-

tered by the Maduravoyal police and further investigations are on.

The Tamil Nadu government in November, 2020, banned online games and gam-

bling after the Governor promulgated an ordinance to restrict such games from public to prevent them from the evils of online gaming.

Speak Out



Unused EB material dumped in a bus stop near Ice House police station.

— From our reader Ramesh in Triplicane

Why LPG subsidy not streamlined?

The oil companies are boosting their profits by pinching the pockets of common man every month. The following are the details of payment made for gas cylinder bought over a period of a few months. Is it new year gift?

- 24.12.2019 - ₹714/- Subsidy Recd. ₹174.71
- 10.03.2020 - ₹826/- Subsidy ₹268.38
- 25.05.2020 - ₹569.50 Subsidy NIL
- 28.12.2020 - ₹710/- Subsidy ₹25.95 on a

perusal of the above state-

ment, it is quite evident that the oil companies are taking us for a ride in the name of subsidy payment. While we could understand non-payment of subsidy for a reduced gas price of ₹569.50 in May 20, 2020 what's the logic in just paying ₹25.95 in December 2020 when the gas price has increased by more than ₹200?

Will the oil companies or the Central government come out with their reasons for this disparity in subsidy amount?

N.Mahadevan,
Chennai

Two youngsters arrested for robbery

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

Two youngsters have been arrested by the police for waylaying and robbing a mechanical engineer near Guduvanchery on Saturday mid-night. According to the police, the victim identified as P. Samson (23), a resident of Sriperumbudur in Kanchipuram district, works at a private tyre manufacturing company in Oragadam.

The incident happened on Saturday midnight, when Samson was returning to his house from workplace on his two-wheeler. Police sources said, when he was on the Orathur flyover near Guduvanchery, two masked -armed men intercepted him.

The duo allegedly pulled Samson off his bike and begun attacking him. They then dragged him into a bush on the roadside and took away his purse and

mobile phone. Police said, the robbers contacted Samson's father Prabhakar and demanded a ransom of ₹50,000. They threatened him of dire consequences if he went to the police.

However Prabhakar alerted the Guduvanchery and Manimangalam police regarding the incident. Police officers scanned through the mobile tower location of the victim which pointed the spot. On seeing the police, the robbers started running in different directions leaving Samson, but they were nabbed. Samson was rescued, the police said.

The Manimangalam police registered a case and arrested the accused, Ajith (21) and Vasanthakumar (18), both residents of Orathur. Police said the duo worked in a mechanic shop in Tambaram and carried out robberies during the night. They were remanded to judicial custody.

Special buses for Pongal

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

The Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) will operate 6,150 special buses for the benefit of the commuters to access the five bus termini in the city as the State Government will operate 10,228 at five places in the city. As many as 16,221 buses would be operated, including 10,228 buses from the city and 5,993 between various destinations in the state to clear the rush for Pongal.

The long-distance buses would be operated from Koyambedu, Madhavaram, KK Nagar, Tambaram Arignar Anna bus terminus of MEPZ and Poon-amallee. For the benefit of commuters to reach these temporary terminals the MTC has planned to operate, 4,078 special buses, in addition to 2,050 regular service buses every day from January 11 to 13 from the five bus terminals, a release stated.

SPEAKOUT IS A WEEKLY COLUMN.

Letters to this page should be typed or written on one side of the paper. All letters, including those sent by email, should bear the name, address and phone number of the writer. We will not use complaints without these details. If you have a complaint against a vendor or a corporate, mail the letter with supporting documentary evidence, or bring the same to the DC office.

speakout.chennai@deccanmail.com Letters must reach by Friday.

COFFEE-BREAK

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



Aries: Those involved in creative or intuitive work will be pleased with the results of your efforts. New friendships are likely and perhaps new love will be found!



Taurus: Some of your dreams could come true! Sharing your dreams with your partner will bring new-found closeness, as you understand each other better.



Gemini: An individual will have a profound effect on your life. A good time to travel. Though there may be a few delays, you could get to your destination soon!



Cancer: You discover that you can achieve your ambitions easier if you work together. You will want to spend your day with as many friends and relatives as possible.



Leo: Try to communicate with your partner, and make joint plans, as this will make things go more smoothly. Today, feelings of self-doubt could set in.



Virgo: You enter a period of self-doubt. You wonder whether you have been making yourself look foolish by acting more youthful than you are. You will be ruled by your heart, not your head.

You share your b'day with

Jeff Bezos, an American internet entrepreneur, industrialist, media proprietor, and investor. He is best known as the founder, CEO, and president of the multi-national technology company Amazon.



Libra: An outing is likely to bring about a chance meeting with an old acquaintance. Although only temporary, doubts are likely to create dissatisfaction and arguments.



Scorpio: You voice old feelings and are pleasantly surprised to discover they were mutual. A quiet day, spent with your beloved. You may find it difficult to control emotions.



Sagittarius: There is a real chance that the right person will soon come into your life. Take care not to be quoted as holding beliefs alien to your true nature.



Capricorn: You may badly affect a long-term friendship if you are not careful. You could be virtually hypnotised by someone new, but you'll show sufficient self-control to come out of the situation feeling flattened.

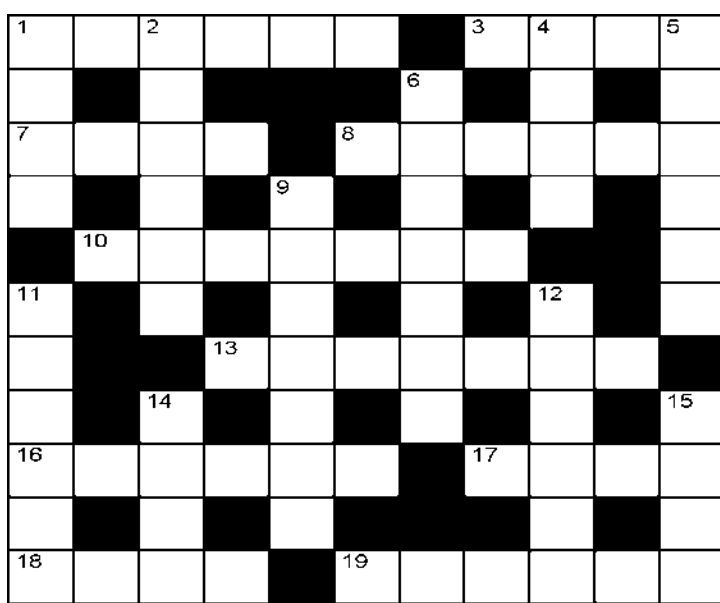


Aquarius: You could be in an argumentative frame of mind today. You will be keen to act as the Devil's Advocate. A short but exciting romance is on the cards. Spend time with children.



Pisces: Those that are single could fall deeply for someone new and exciting. The right attitude will prevent you from getting hurt and help you appreciate your new partner for what he/she is.

QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

1. Display ostentatiously (6)
3. Small nail (4)
7. Evict (4)
8. Underside (6)
10. Weakness (7)
13. Strikes out (7)
16. Profited (6)
17. Business transaction (4)
18. Lacklustre (4)
19. Volcano mouth (6)

Down

1. Total failure (4)
2. Ridiculous (6)
4. Decays (4)
5. Flue draught control (6)
6. Variegated (7)
9. Compared (7)
11. Embraced (6)
12. Pick (6)
14. Window ledge (4)
15. Make less distinct (4)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

Across: 1. Incognito, 6. Numbs, 7. Lined, 9. Gods, 10. Engage, 12. Extras, 14. Stud, 17. Tarry, 18. Cowed, 19. Downgrade.

Down: 2. Named, 3. Oast, 4. Nylons, 5. Tonga, 6. Neglect, 8. Dreaded, 11. Canyon, 13. Torso, 15. Towled, 16. Scar.

Word Mine

X
R
E
T
U
A
P
G
E

TODAY'S RATINGS: 3 AVERAGE; 4 GOOD; 5 OUTSTANDING

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used only once. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed.

ANSWERS: apex, apex, expert, expert, EXPLORE, extra

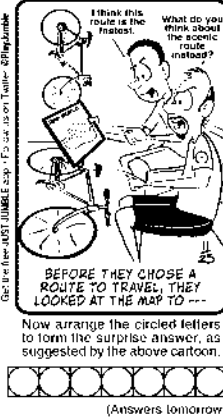
jumble

BROOT
LIEDY
PNRSIG
KWAANE

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Yesterday's Jumble Answer: VEHICAL, CATCH, SURELY, INDUCTION

The conversation between the architect and general contractor was — CONSTRUCTIVE



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

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CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



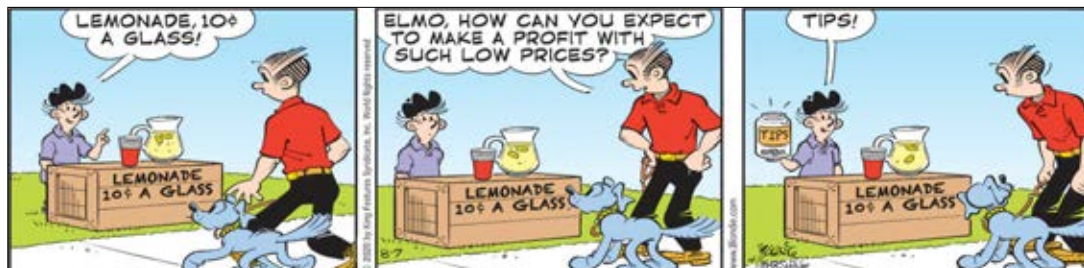
THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs



IN BRIEF

Aavin drivers demand promotions

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUCHY, JAN. 11

The Tamil Nadu Aavin Drivers Association has urged the state government to give them promotion based on their educational qualification.

In a release at Tiruchy on Monday, sangam's state legal adviser S. Nagarajan said that a resolution to this effect was adopted at the association's formation meeting held here on Sunday, where S.R. Saravanakumar was elected as president, Muthukrishnan as general secretary and G. Manikandan as treasurer.

The meeting also appealed to the government to give jobs to the wards of the Aavin employees who died in harness on compassionate grounds.

TN unit of Samajwadi Party seeks Bharat Ratna for Mulayam

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUCHY, JAN. 11

The Tamil Nadu unit of the Samajwadi Party has appealed to the Union Government to confer 'Bharat Ratna' on the party's founder and former UP chief minister Mulayam Singh Yadav.

In a press release at Tiruchy on Monday, party's state president Elango Yadav recalled the services of Mulayam to the people of the country, especially citizens of UP.

He said N. Naveen Balaji Neelamegam Yadav was nominated as the party's state spokesman and efforts are being taken to hold the party's state conference at Madurai in March and decided to invite party's national president Akhilesh Yadav and other all India leaders for the conference.

BJP accepts EPS as CM candidate

PMK demands quota assurance from AIADMK

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, JAN. 11

In a major turnaround, the BJP accepted Edappadi K Palaniswami as the Chief Ministerial candidate of the NDA in the State, giving up its adamant stand that the issue would be decided by their high command, while the PMK, dug in its heels, demanding an assurance on exclusive reservation for Vanniyars as a pre-condition for continuing in the alliance.

BJP Tamil Nadu in-charge, C T Ravi, acknowledging the AIADMK as the major partner of the NDA in the State and the DMDK averring that it was part of the AIADMK-led alliance are sweet tidings for the ruling party, which found itself in a tight spot by the posturing of PMK founder S Ramadoss.

"There is no scope for holding talks on the alliance till the demand for 20 per cent reservation for Vanniyars in jobs and education was agreed upon," Ramadoss tweeted after meeting State Ministers S P Velumani and P. Thangamani who held talks with him at his



Chief Minister Palaniswami, the health minister and top officials take part in the virtual conference with PM Modi on vaccination drive.

Thailapuram residence on Monday.

On the other hand, Ravi told the media at Srirangam, after visiting the Sri Ranganathaswamy temple, on Monday that the alliance would continue, despite boasting about the BJP growing stronger in the State of late.

That the volte face by Ravi comes after AIADMK deputy coordinator K. P. Munusamy said in unequivocal terms that national parties can only ride piggy-back on the State parties is a clear indication that the BJP has realized the futility of driving a hard bargain with the AIADMK.

For, Munusamy had said that the electoral fight in the State was only between the AIADMK and DMK, in his speech at the AIADMK's

general council-cum-executive committee meeting at Chennai on Saturday.

Ravi's climb down on the alliance question is also seen as a precursor to the formal finalization of the alliance and sorting out the thorny seat-sharing issue with AIADMK by the BJP national president J P Nadda when he visits Chennai on January 14 to take part in the Thuglak anniversary function.

However the PMK continues to be a thorn in the flesh for the AIADMK as Ramadoss made it clear that he only discussed the reservation issue with the visiting Ministers and not politics or elections with them.

The PMK, apart from trying to wrest a consent from the AIADMK on providing 20 per cent exclusive reservation for Vanniyars if it

was elected to power again, is also said to be seeking a large number of seats to contest in the Assembly elections.

But since the PMK, unlike the BJP, has a strong support base in many northern districts and even in Salem, where Edappadi, the Assembly constituency of Palaniswami is located, the AIADMK would like to have it in the alliance to ensure its victory.

Meanwhile, the DMDK held a meeting of its functionaries on Monday to discuss issues relating to the elections. It decided that its candidates would contest the elections in its own symbol, 'the nagara' (drum) and the party would seek as many seats as possible from the AIADMK, whose Chief Ministerial candidate they would accept.

Farmers to burn farm laws on Bhogi

DC CORRESPONDENT THANJAVUR, JAN. 11

The farmers under the banner of All-India Farmers Agitation Coordination committee here have decided to burn copies of the three laws enacted by the central government on agricultural reforms on Bhogi Day, January 13, demanding repeal of the three laws.

A meeting of the committee held here on Monday decided this. N.V. Kannan, district

coordinator of the committee, said that farmers of Tamil Nadu held a public meeting recently at Thanjavur, expressing solidarity with the agitating farmers at the Delhi border.

"We have been demanding repeal of the laws and as people burn old articles on Bhogi day, we have decided to burn the copies of the laws on that day in Thanjavur district," said Kannan.

Double Pongal bonanza for Viralimalai people

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JAN. 11

A personal gift from the house of health minister C. Vijayabaskar to all the families of his constituency

in Pudukottai district has made it a double bonanza for the people this Pongal as the distribution of the state government's gift of ₹2,500 cash, grocery package and sugarcane has already begun.

Delivered at the door steps of the people, Vijayabaskar's gift comes in a neatly designed bag

with the words 'Pongal seer' printed on it along with the benefactor's photograph and name, along with a brass pot packed in a box.

There is also a spoon and a lid to cover the pot and as a beneficiary commented that it is a ready-made package to cook the pongal dish. All one has to do is empty the ingredients into the pot, pour water and place it on the oven.

The choice of the traditional Tamil word 'seer' by Vijayabaskar to describe the gift package

is perhaps aimed at tugging at the heart strings of the people as 'seer' is the word used normally to refer to the set of articles presented to a woman by her family during wedding and also for special occasions and festivals after that.

The distribution of the gift package, however, would not attract any provisions of the law and the model code of conduct for elections has not kicked in though the entire State has already warmed up to the stirring of political campaigning.

One dies of suffocation in Coonoor

DC CORRESPONDENT COONOOR, JAN. 11

One person died and two of the same family were hospitalised due to suffocation from the smoke that emanated from a charcoal chimney at their house here.

According to the police in Coonoor, one Gajapathi(67), his wife Kalavathi(62) and their son Mahendran(37) residing at Ambikapuarm in Coonoor town lit fire in the charcoal chimney to warm their house and beat the cold on Sunday night. Unfortunately, they slept without dousing the fire. The smoke that emanated from the chimney in the night suffocated the trio and they were found unconscious on Monday morning.

While they were shifted to the government hospital, Kalavathi did not respond to the treatment and died. Gajapathi and Mahendran were shifted to a Coimbatore hospital.

Advt. No.-02/2021

Government of India
Public Enterprises Selection Board
invites applications for the post of
Director (Technical)
in
Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Ltd.
Last date of receipt of applications in
PESB is by 15.00 hours on
16th March, 2021
For details login to website
<http://www.pesb.gov.in>

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SHORT TAKES

MODI NOT ON TOOTER, CLARIFIES BJP

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

The BJP on Monday clarified that neither Prime Minister Narendra Modi nor any of its leaders, including national president J.P. Nadda, Union home minister Amit Shah among others, are on the swadeshi microblogging site Tooter.

Ever since the US based micro-blogging network Twitter suspended outgoing US president Donald Trump's official handle after the Capitol Hill violence, some handles on Twitter have been promoting the 'swadeshi' site which incidentally has a 'verified' handle of the Prime Minister has featured on the platform.

"Please note that neither the BJP or any of its state units, nor Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP National President J.P. Nadda have a presence on Tooter," BJP's IT cell head, Amit Malviya tweeted after the confusion created by Mr Modi's handle on Tooter.

Describing itself as a 'swadeshi social network,' Tooter has an account with a blue tick that has the same display picture and posts shared on Mr Modi's official Twitter handle.

AAP MLA SOMNATH BHARTI ARRESTED

Amethi/Rae Bareli, Jan. 11: Aam Aadmi Party MLA Somnath Bharti on Monday had ink hurled at him in Rae Bareli and was arrested later for allegedly making objectionable remarks last week.

He was arrested for criminal intimidation and promoting enmity between groups, police said, following remarks allegedly referring to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and the state's hospitals.

Minutes earlier, a youth hurled ink at the Delhi MLA when he was emerging out of a guest house.

Superintendent of Police (of Rae Bareli) Shlok Kumar said, "Ink was thrown on the AAP MLA, and the matter is being probed."

According to a purported video link, the AAP MLA recently said in Hindi, "Children are being born in hospitals, but they are of dogs."

Shortly after ink was flung at him, Bharti also retweeted a video clip in which he is heard using a derogatory term for Adityanath, while talking about "atrocities on women" in the state.

Amethi police arrested Bharti, a former Delhi minister, in Rae Bareli on Monday morning, on the basis of a complaint filed by BJP worker Somnath Sahu over the alleged remarks made last week.

The arrest took place less than an hour after the ink-throwing incident.

Reacting to the ink-throwing incident, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal hit out at Adityanath.

"Yogiji, our MLA Somnath Bharti ji was going to see your government school. Ink was thrown at him? Are your schools so bad? If someone goes to see your school then why do you get so scared? Fix the school. If you do not know how to do, then ask Manish Sisodia," he tweeted.

CENTRE SPARES STATES COST OF VACCINE

From Page 1

The Prime Minister said that the country is in a decisive phase of this fight, with the start of the world's biggest vaccination campaign from January 16. He underlined that "the most important thing in this vaccination campaign is the identification and monitoring of those who have to be vaccinated. For this, a digital platform named CoWin has also been created using modern technology."

The government will use Aadhaar to register genuine beneficiaries and for the timely second dosage. After a person receives the first dose of vaccination, CoWin will immediately generate a digital vaccination certificate. This certificate will also act as a reminder for the second dose, after which a final certificate will be given. Mr Modi noted that the booth-level strategy used for elections needs to be used here as well.

Country staring at food crisis: Mamata

There will be famine if BJP continues to remain adamant on the farm laws, says Bengal Chief Minister

Ranaghat (WB), Jan. 11: The country is staring at a food crisis and famine because of the "adamant" approach of the BJP to the continued agitation by farmers for withdrawal of the three new farm laws, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Monday.

She also called the BJP a "junk" party for inducting "rotten" leaders from other political outfits.

Reaffirming her opposition to the NRC, CAA and NPR, Banerjee, while reaching out to the Nadia district's Matua population, said all refugees will be granted land rights, and no one can banish them from the country.

"The country is staring at a food crisis. There will be famine and food shortage if the BJP continues to remain adamant on the farm laws. The Centre is trying to create famine through these farm bills.

"The farmers are assets of our country and we should not do anything that goes against their interest," she said, addressing a TMC rally here in Nadia district.

The TMC supremo also demanded immediate repeal of the three farm laws as sought by farmers agitating at Delhi's borders.

"We stand by the farmers and their demands. On one hand the BJP is lecturing us on farmers' issues and on the other it is torturing the farmers who are protesting against the laws. So many farmers were beaten up in Haryana and Punjab," she said.

Slamming the saffron camp over the Citizenship Amendment Act, the TMC boss said, those born in this country are its legitimate citizens.

"All refugee colonies in the state have been recognised by the West Bengal government. All refugee families will have land holding rights. We have started the process and several families have already got it.

"No one can remove you from here. You are born here and are citizens of this country. You don't need the BJP's certificate to prove your citizenship," she asserted.

Reaching out to the Matua community that

Leaders walk out of panel meeting

New Delhi, Jan. 11: Congress MPs Partap Singh Bajwa and Chhaya Verma and former Akali leader Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa on Monday staged a walkout from a meeting of the Standing Committee on Agriculture after the panel chairman refused to discuss Centre's three farm laws and their aftermath, sources said.

Citing the large-scale protests undertaken by various farmer unions that have seen thousands of farmers protest at the borders of Delhi for over 40 days, the three Rajya Sabha MPs raised the issue with the chairman of the standing committee.

constitutes roughly 40 per cent population of Nadia district, Banerjee said, the BJP was trying to "fool" them with the promise of citizenship.

"I want to assure everyone that no one needs to be afraid of the NRC, NPR and CAA."

The Matuas, originally from East Pakistan, are a scheduled caste group, who entered India, particularly West Bengal, after Partition and creation of Bangladesh. While many of them have got Indian citizenship, a sizeable number has not.

The BJP had made significant gains in the district in the last Lok Sabha polls and bagged the Ranaghat seat. Nadia has two Lok Sabha seats.

She exuded confidence about returning to power for the third consecutive time with an even bigger mandate.

Calling BJP president J.P. Nadda's lunch at a tribal household in the state on January 9 a "show off", Banerjee claimed that the food items served to him were cooked at five-star hotels.

Accusing the BJP of being a "party of outsiders" trying to "destroy" the state's culture,

Due to the refusal of the chairman to allow the situation to be discussed by the committee, the three MPs decided to walk out of the meeting in protest, the sources said.

The panel is chaired by BJP MP P.C. Gaddigoudar. The meeting held at the Parliament annexe building was to take note of the evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying) in connection with the examination of the Subject "Status of Veterinary Services and Availability of Animal Vaccine in the Country".

-PTI



An artist with a physical disability gives finishing touches to a painting on the theme of farmers protest, during their ongoing agitation over the farm reform laws at Singhu border in New Delhi on Monday.

-PTI

● **THE CONGRESS** on Monday demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi apologise to the farmers of the country and repeal the three farm laws which are being opposed by them, after the Supreme Court rapped the Centre over the handling of the agitation.

Adityanath after taking note of their actions that caused damage to public property.

He said the central and state governments have dug up roads and caused blockades on the national highways around the national capital.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi should apologise not only to the families of 65 farmers who have sacrificed themselves, but also to the 62 crore farmers of the country. The prime minister should thereafter talk to the agitating farmers himself and nothing short of it is acceptable to the 'annadatas'," he told reporters.

Surjewala said the prime minister should come forward and wipe the tears of

farmers, he should shed his support for crony capitalists and announce the repeal of the three farm laws immediately.

He held the prime minister, the home minister and chief ministers of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh directly responsible for the current agitation, saying they stopped the farmers from coming to Delhi and expressing their anger and opposition to the farm laws in a Gandhian manner.

"The Supreme Court is the protector of laws and the Constitution and we all have faith in it. If someone opposes the laws in a Gandhian manner, then the court will also support such an opposition, as protesting peacefully is a basic right enshrined in the Constitution.

"The prime minister and home minister are responsible for the current situation. We are confident that the Supreme Court will take note of the anti-national action of the prime minister and the home minister as well as the chief ministers of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and register cases against them," he added.

-PTI

SUPREME COURT MULLS FORMING COMMITTEE TO STUDY FARM LAWS

From Page 1

Discomforted over the court's taking a dim view of the Centre's handling of the farmers' agitation, solicitor-general Tushar Mehta protested and said that the court's observations were "harsh", insisting the government did its best to break the deadlock and resolve the issue.

"You did your best, but it did not seem to have any effect," Chief Justice Bobde then retorted, appearing unimpressed.

The court is likely to pronounce orders on Tuesday on issues related to the farm laws and the farmers' protests at Delhi's borders and may take a call on setting up a committee headed by a former chief justice of India to find ways to resolve the impasse.

In this regard, senior counsel Dushyant Dave, appearing for some of the farmers' organisations, suggested the name of former chief justice of India R.M. Lodha to head the committee, and offered to

speak to him.

The court also voiced its concern over the protests taking a violent turn, taking note of what had happened on Sunday in Haryana. "Who is going to be responsible for bloodshed? We need to uphold Article 21 as a constitutional court. What if some conflagration takes place?" the chief justice said, in a poser.

He also asked the various farmers' unions and outfits who were party to the matter to persuade the women, the old and children to go back to their native places. "Can you convey to them the Chief Justice has made this request," he told Mr Dave and H.S. Phoolka, who were appearing for the farmers.

The court once again reiterated that it can't interfere with the farmers' right to agitate against the farm laws but hoped they could shift to another venue to ease the inconvenience being caused to the public.

India returns captured PLA soldier to China

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

India on Monday handed back the Chinese soldier who was caught last week near Pangong Tso in Eastern Ladakh.

The soldier was apprehended on Friday morning after he had transgressed across the Indian side of line of actual control (LAC).

"Chinese soldier who had been apprehended on 08 January 2021, has been handed back to China at Chushul - Moldo (Ladakh) on Monday," said a senior Indian army official.

The soldier was caught on Friday morning near Gurung Hill, which is one of the peaks in Kailash range, which Indian Army had pre-emptively occupied in August in tit for tat action against Chinese aggression on North bank of Pangong Tso.

The move meant that Indian soldiers dominated peaks in the area and had choked PLA movement in the sector.

China had 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.

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

India and China are involved in a tense mili-

● **The soldier** was caught on Friday morning near Gurung Hill, which is one of the peaks in Kailash range, which Indian Army had pre-emptively occupied in August in tit for tat action against Chinese aggression on North bank of Pangong Tso.

● **The move** meant that Indian soldiers dominated peaks in the area and had choked PLA movement in the sector.

● **INDIA** and China are involved in a tense military stand-off from last eight months in Eastern Ladakh.

tary stand-off from last eight months in Eastern Ladakh.

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.

The soldiers deployed in front bases in Ladakh are now fighting the elements with temperatures dipping way below sub-zero temperatures.

The altitudes in Ladakh range from high to super high altitude and the area experiences heavy snow fall, after the month of November.

This coupled with the wind chill factor, temperatures dips down

'GALWAN HEROES' MAY BE HONOURED

New Delhi, Jan. 11: Colonel B. Santosh Babu and some of the other Indian Army personnel, who were killed while valiantly fighting Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh in June last year, are expected to be honoured with gallantry awards on Republic Day, sources said on Monday.

Col. Babu, the commanding officer of the 16 Bihar regiment, was among 20 Indian soldiers who laid down their lives in the fierce hand-to-hand combat on June 15 in the Galwan Valley, an incident that marked one of the most serious military conflicts between the two sides in decades.

-PTI

GAINING | MOMENTUM

Total cost to be around Rs 1,100 crore

Work on Ram temple to start soon

Hyderabad, Jan. 11: Work on the foundation for the Ram temple at Ayodhya would begin this month and construction of the temple complex is expected to conclude in about three-and-a-half years, Swami Govinda Dev Giri ji Maharaj, Treasurer of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust, said on Monday.

"How the foundation shall be built, that has been decided just now. The excavation has begun but the actual foundation construction has not begun. It will start this January," he said at a press conference during a visit here.

He was asked if the for-

mal construction of the temple has begun, and if not, when it is going to begin.

Asked about the total cost of the project, he said he "guessed" that the cost of the main temple within the boundary should be between ₹300 crore and ₹400 crore.

The total cost could be over ₹1,100 crore, which includes the ₹300 crore to ₹400 crore for the main temple and the development of 67 acres (at the complex), he said.

He said the construction of the temple is likely to be completed in three to three-and-a-half years.

Giri ji Maharaj said more than ₹100 crore of donations has been collected as

per accounts in Ayodhya.

Asked if donations for temple construction would be accepted from foreign countries as well, he said they are not being allowed at present as FCRA (Foreign Contributions Regulation Act) facility is not available. However, FCRA facility (permissions as per FCRA) is expected to be available in two months, he said.

"We don't want to build just a temple of stones and bricks. We want to build the nation. We want to build the national spirit. The spirit of love, the spirit of philanthropy, the spirit of universal brotherhood and at the same time, spirit of might," he said.

People would listen only

if the country is strong, he said. The temple would belong to the whole nation with donations received from all, he said.

He recalled that an industrialist had offered that his family would bear the cost of construction.

Saying that Ayodhya would be the cultural capital of the world after the construction of Ram temple, he said youths from neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan would be invited to Ayodhya every year and they will be allowed to tour the country, with a view to bringing people together and promote their understanding of India.

-PTI

CBI PROBE FINDS 70 KIDS ABUSED BY UP ENGINEER

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

A CBI probe into the Uttar Pradesh child porn racket has revealed that 70 children were allegedly exploited by the Uttar Pradesh government junior engineer Ram Bhawan, who was arrested last year.

Sources in the agency said, "the victims include children as young as 4 years to adults of age 22 years. Some of the exploited children are relatives of Ram Bhawan." The arrested junior engineer Ram Bhawan is now undergoing certain tests at the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in the national capital, sources said, adding he will also be examined for his mental stability apart from HIV.

The CBI has brought the junior engineer to the national capital for a detailed forensic, medical and psychological assessment by a team of AIIMS doctors, officials said.

He will undergo tests to assess psychological state, voice analysis and potency by experts, officials said.

The team of AIIMS experts will conduct an exhaustive analysis of his psychological condition, they said. His voice analysis will be done at Central Forensic Science Laboratory to compare it with the voice in videos recovered during searches at his residence, they said.

In addition, he will also undergo a potency test to discard any future claim by the accused about his inability to perform sexual acts, they said.

SHORT TAKES

CHINA: NO BIRTH CONTROL IN XINJIANG

Beijing, Jan. 11: A Chinese official on Monday denied Beijing has imposed coercive birth control measures among Muslim minority women, following an outcry over a tweet by the Chinese Embassy in Washington claiming that government polices had freed women of the Uighur ethnic group from being “baby-making machines.”

Xu Guixiang, a deputy spokesperson for the Xinjiang regional government, said Monday that birth control decisions were made of the person's own free will and that “no organisation or individual can interfere.” “The growth rate of the Uighur population is not only higher than that of the whole Xinjiang population, but also higher than that of the minority population, and more significantly higher than that of the (Chinese majority) Han population,” Xu said.

KIM ASSUMES LATE FATHER'S MANTLE

Seoul, Jan. 11: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has had his official party title changed, state media reported Monday, assuming a position previously held by his late father in what analysts said was a move to bolster his authority.

The North Korean economy is struggling in the face of self-imposed coronavirus isolation, and is subject to multiple sanctions over its banned nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes.

At the same time, nuclear talks with the United States have been deadlocked since the collapse of the Hanoi summit between Kim and President Donald Trump in February 2019. The ruling Workers' Party of Korea “unanimously adopted” a decision to elect Kim as general secretary at its congress on Sunday, the official KCNA news agency reported. “All the delegates expressed full support with stormy applause in great excitement,” it said.

JIHADISTS KILL 13 SOLDIERS IN NIGERIA

Kano, Jan. 11: Thirteen soldiers have died in an ambush by jihadist fighters from the Islamic State West Africa Province group in volatile north-eastern Nigeria, two army sources said on Monday.

Heavy gunfire and rocket-propelled grenades hit a military convoy in Gazagana village, 30 kilometres from Yobe state capital Damaturu on Saturday. “We lost 13 soldiers in this ambush and several were injured,” an officer said.

The convoy was headed for a military base at Buni Yadi, another 20 kilometres from Damaturu, said the second army source, who gave the same death toll.

“It was a fierce battle and the terrorists also suffered casualties,” he said, without giving a figure. The ISWAP group carries out regular attacks in Buni Yadi region on soldiers and travellers, with the violence spilling over into Borno state.

Since 2009, the jihadist campaign in northeast Nigeria has focused on Borno where the Boko Haram group is also active.

AZERBAIJAN, ARMENIA HOLD TALKS IN RUSSIA

Moscow, Jan. 11: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday hosted his counterparts from Armenia and Azerbaijan, their first meeting since a Russia-brokered truce ended six weeks of fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh.

As he sat down for talks in the Kremlin with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Putin said that the peace agreement has been successfully implemented, laying the foundation for a fair settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He noted that senior officials from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia will now discuss further moves to restore traffic links in the region after the decades-long conflict. The November 10 peace deal ended 44 days of hostilities in which the Azerbaijani army routed Armenian forces and reclaimed control over large parts of Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas. Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan but was under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia.

Biden taps career diplomat William Burns as CIA chief

Taps a retired veteran diplomat who helped lead secret talks with Iran

Washington, Jan. 11: US President-elect Joe Biden on Monday announced William Burns as his pick to lead the Central Intelligence Agency, tapping a retired veteran diplomat who helped lead secret talks with Iran.

Burns, along with Biden's nominee for director of national intelligence, Avril Haines, will be tasked with rebuilding the US spy community's reputation after it was heavily politicized under outgoing President Donald Trump.

Currently president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a leading Washington foreign policy think-tank, Burns will be the first career diplomat to lead the CIA. Presidents have generally turned to intelligence or military veterans or politicians to lead the largest, best-funded component of the sprawling US intelligence community.

But Burns has deep experience in security and intelligence matters after spending over three decades in the US foreign service, including a stint as ambassador to Russia from 2005-2008.

“Bill Burns is an exemplary diplomat with decades of experience on the world stage keeping our people and our country safe and secure,” Biden said in a statement.

Burns will replace Gina Haspel, an agency veteran who became the first female CIA director after Tr-



In this file photograph taken on January 16, 2010, a reporter from Iranian television (L) asks a question of US diplomat Williams Burns (C) as he leaves a meeting of the Iran 6 in New York.

— AFP

ump moved Mike Pompeo to be secretary of state.

One of Trump's most trusted aides, politically ambitious Pompeo was accused of catering to his boss's whims and allowing intelligence material to be twisted to serve Trump's policy desires while he led the agency.

Haspel, in the position since 2018, has been more low-key and disciplined, intelligence experts say, and even openly fell out of

favour with the president in his final months in office when Trump rejected intelligence that Russia was again meddling in the election to help him.

But Haspel's long tenure in the agency included taking part in the torture of Al-Qaeda suspects after the September 1, 2001 attacks, now clearly illegal activity that is one of the darker blemishes on the CIA's reputation — though Trump thought it was a

good thing. Broadly respected and having served in top positions under both Democratic and Republican administrations, Burns and Haines should have little trouble gaining approval by the Senate.

Burns, 64, served in the US diplomatic corps for 33 years, in jobs that took him around the world, including important roles in the Middle East in addition to his Russia posting. He was central in the

back-channel negotiations by the previous administration of Barack Obama that set the stage for the 2015 deal to limit Iran's nuclear capabilities — a deal that Trump summarily quit in 2018, with the support of Pompeo but not everyone in US intelligence circles.

At Carnegie since 2014, Burns defended the idea that Washington should remain a leader and support multilateralism as Trump radically reshaped the US world role, cancelling treaties, bullying allies, and taking a US-first, go-it-alone stance.

“If Donald Trump had been reelected for a second four years as president, then American democracy would have gone straight into the intensive care unit,” Burns said in an online conference last month. After “erratic” and “unsteady” policies under Trump, Biden will have “the most difficult inheritance that any new president has faced since Franklin Delano Roosevelt at the height of the Great Depression 90 years ago,” he said. “Recovering the power of America's example of our competence after the experience of the last few years is going to be a critical driver of our foreign policy.” The biggest geopolitical test for the United States going ahead, he said, is “going to be managing an intense, long-term competition with China.” — AFP

Democrats start impeachment of Trump in House

Washington, Jan. 11: Democrats began the process of impeaching President Donald Trump for a second time on Monday if Vice President Mike Pence and the Cabinet do not remove him from office.

Democrats introduced a resolution calling on Pence to invoke the 25th Amendment of the Constitution and remove Trump from the White House for being unfit to discharge his duties.

Republicans blocked an immediate vote on the resolution and Democrats followed up by introducing an article of impeachment of Trump for “incitement of insurrection” over his role in Wednesday's storming of the US Capitol by his supporters.

The dramatic moves come just nine days before Trump is to leave the White House and President-elect Joe Biden is to be sworn in as the 46th president of the United States. Democratic Representative Steny Hoyer of Maryland introduced the resolution calling on Pence to invoke the 25th Amendment and declare Trump “incapable of executing the duties of his office.” Republican Representative Alex Mooney of West Virginia objected to passing the resolution by what is known as “unanimous consent” and it will be put to vote on Tuesday. After Republicans blocked the resolution, a single article of impeachment against Trump was

SCHWARZENEGGER COMPARES CAPITOL MOB TO NAZIS

Washington, Jan. 11: Former California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appealed for unity Sunday after the violent attack on the US Capitol, which he described as an attempted coup by President Donald Trump, drawing comparisons to Nazi Germany.

In a video posted on Twitter that quickly went viral, the Hollywood star compared the attack by Trump supporters to Kristallnacht, or the “Night of Broken Glass,” when Nazis carried out pogroms in Germany in 1938 that included breaking the windows of Jewish-owned stores. — AFP

introduced in the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives.

Trump was impeached by the House in December 2019 and now risks being the first president ever to be impeached twice.

It is unclear whether the body would hold a trial this time to consider the latest charges. Though time is running short, Democrats likely have the votes in the House to impeach Trump again and could draw increased Republican support for the move. — AFP

PLANE'S BLACK BOXES: SEARCH INTENSIFIES

Jakarta, Jan. 11: The search for the black boxes of a crashed Sriwijaya Air jet intensified Monday to boost the investigation into what caused the plane carrying 62 people to nosedive at high velocity into the Java Sea. The Boeing jet disappeared minutes after taking off from Jakarta during heavy rain on Saturday, and the search has yielded plane parts and human remains but no survivors.

Authorities have said signals from the boxes were detected between Lancang and Laki islands in the Thousand Islands and chain just north of Jakarta's coast. — AP



An Indonesian National Transportation Safety Committee investigator inspects the debris found in the waters around the location where Sriwijaya Air passenger jet crashed at Tanjung Priok Port in Jakarta on Monday. — AP

Covid origins: WHO team in China on Jan. 14

Beijing, Jan. 11: China said on Monday that a group of experts from the WHO will arrive in the country on Thursday for a long-anticipated probe into the origins of the Coronavirus pandemic, ending the uncertainty and delay which drew sharp criticism from the world health body.

Experts from the WHO will conduct a field visit to China on January 14, the state-run CGTN quoted China's National Health Commission as saying in a report. Confirming the visit, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing on Monday that China supported scientists around the world to conduct a global study on the origins and transmission routes of the virus.

Zhao declined to provide

details of the schedule of the experts and whether they would be permitted to visit the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV). US President Donald Trump, who has termed coronavirus “China virus”, has alleged that the virus may have emanated from WIV and called for a probe into it. WIV has denied the allegation, saying it is politically motivated.

The 10-member team of WHO experts is expected to visit Wuhan, but it is not clear yet whether they would visit WIV too. When asked about it, Zhao directed the questions relating to the schedule of the WHO experts to relevant authorities. “China stands ready to closely cooperate with WHO and international experts. With specific details of itinerary, I refer to you to competent

authority,” he said.

“The origin tracing may involve more countries. The WHO needs to conduct similar studies in other countries and regions,” Zhao said, highlighting Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's recent comments that China “raced against time” and was the first country to report Coronavirus cases to the world.

“More and more research suggests that the pandemic was likely to have been caused by separate outbreaks in multiple places in the world” he said. The team's visit to China, especially to Wuhan where the virus first emerged in December last year, has become a bone of contention as Beijing, which questions the widely-held view about the virus' origins in Wuhan. — PTI

Mallya legal fees: Funds not given

London, Jan. 11: A UK court hearing an urgent application on Monday refused to sanction the release of substantial sums held with the Court Funds Office (CFO) as part of bankruptcy proceedings being pursued against liquor tycoon Vijay Mallya by a consortium of Indian banks, led by the State Bank of India (SBI).

Judge Sebastian Prentis, who presided over a remote hearing at the Insolvency and Companies Court (ICC) of the High Court in London, concluded that Mallya had failed to provide the “basic information” required for such a validation order

and agreed only to allow sufficient funds to cover an appeal hearing scheduled in the bankruptcy case for Wednesday.

“As to the urgency of this application, I remain puzzled,” the judge noted, as he raised questions about updated evidence on full disclosure of assets at Mallya's disposal, including jewellery and a “fine suite” of high-value luxury cars that were listed as being owned by him.

The 65-year-old former Kingfisher Airlines chief seeks approval to use 2.8 million pounds of the estimated 2.9 million pounds held by the court. — PTI

Champs-Elysees to be turned into new Paris garden

THIS MONTH'S PARIS FASHION WEEK GOES DIGITAL

Paris, Jan. 11: Ending the confusion over the fate of Paris Fashion Week, French fashion's regulatory body has said that this month's Paris men's and haute couture shows will be strictly audience-free over

Coronavirus fears.

The Federation de la Haute Couture et de la Mode has told luxury houses they will not be allowed to invite guests this season, after instruction by police. The federation said that “we con-

firm that there can be no public gatherings”, adding that “houses can still organise 'real' runway shows with models broadcast live, provided events take place behind closed doors.” — AP

bottom of the throughfare — scheduled to be completed before the Paris Olympic Games in 2024 — and then the whole of the avenue.

It's going to be another

extraordinary garden,” Mayor Anne Hidalgo told the *Journal du Dimanche* newspaper.

The plan is in keeping with other efforts by the Socialist city leader to

create green spaces in the densely populated French capital, where elegant squares and tree-lined boulevards are often overwhelmed by vehicles. A Champs-Elysees lobby

group pushing for the project said it was “delighted with this announcement and welcomes the decision by the mayor's office which appears to want to make the makeover of the Champs-Elysees one of its main urban projects of this decade.”

Hidalgo has led efforts to reduce traffic in the city, which has seen the closure of two main road arteries that ran along the river Seine and the building of new infrastructure for bikes and electric scooters.

— AFP

| GREATER CHENNAI CORPORATION Storm Water Drain Department | | | |
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| S.W.D.C.No.83/0002/2021 | | | |
| E-Short Tenders are invited for the following work as per details furnished below. | | | |
| Name of the Work | Approx. Value of work (With GST 12%) | EMD | Eligible Class |
| Formation of Park, Providing Children Playfield, Open Lawn, Badminton Court and Volley Ball Court in Ramapuram Lake at Bharathi Salai in Dn-155, Zone-11 | Rs.82 Lakhs | Rs.81,500/- | Class-I |
| 1. Tender last date and time of submission: 27.01.2021 upto 3.00 pm. 2. Bid document will be available in website https://tntenders.gov.in 3. Tender open date and time: 29.01.2021 at 3.30 pm. DIPR/184/Tender/2021 | | | |
| Superintending Engineer /SWDD | | | |

DECCAN Chronicle

12 JANUARY 2021

Will FM offer India the mega-stimulus it needs?

With the Union Budget just 20 days away, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman must be giving the final contours to her second full-fledged financial statement for the country — the third if one were to include the interim budget that she presented in 2019. Coming in the middle of a rare pandemic that wiped out several businesses in the service sector, plummeted consumer demand and left hundreds of thousands of people unemployed, all eyes in the country will be looking at Ms Sitharaman's Budget for relief.

Though the Reserve Bank and the government had announced steps, including a loan moratorium, emergency working credit, and cash transfers to women from the economically low-income families, the concerted action fell short of addressing the collapse of consumer demand. Despite its groundbreaking announcements, the government had provided a stimulus that worked to be just around 1.2 per cent of GDP and the economy continued to wobble. The government, however, promised to unleash its economic firepower at a later stage, which raised hopes of a belated stimulus in the Union Budget that could put the economy back on its tracks.

Of late, there have been several hints of the finance minister presenting an expenditure-heavy Budget on February 1. However, there is no clarity on the avenues for revenue mop-up, especially in the wake of a not-so-healthy state of tax collections in a recession-hit economy. Some reports suggested the possibility of a cess — possibly named after Covid-19 — to raise revenue to boost government spending. However, the jury is out on how a new tax that takes away money from people's pockets would help to revive consumer demand. It was suggested that it could be levied on super-rich individuals. But will it be enough to finance a mega stimulus that the people of this country are expecting from the government? The answer is very unlikely.

Without a credible revenue-raising plan, the Union Budget 2021-22 may end up being a statement of intent rather than action. The government should, therefore, shed some of its worries about the fiscal deficit and unleash its spending power on productivity projects such as metro rail projects and dedicated freight corridors that have long-term utility of reducing India's dependence on imported fossil fuel. Alternatively, it could guarantee or refinance construction loans for subprime borrowers who already own land where they intend to build or rebuild houses. While this would be an expenditure neutral measure for the government, this step would create an upsurge in the construction activity that will have a positive ripple effect on many other sectors and create lakhs of jobs. The government could also ease up on fiscal deficit to invest on health infrastructure that the country woefully lacks by building primary healthcare centres on its land and let private healthcare professionals run it on a public-private partnership model.

Borrowing for creating value for the future generations is always seen as better than doling out handouts — a principle that the ruling BJP always claims it has believed in. The finance minister will hopefully be guided by this principle while preparing for the Union Budget on February 1.

Indonesia: Air disaster again

It is tragic but it was probably predestined that the New Year's first air disaster should occur in Indonesia, the country with the worst aviation safety record with 104 civilian airliner accidents and over 1,300 related fatalities since 1945. Not much time flies by without the nation of 17,508 islands witnessing aviation incidents. The last major disaster was a Lion Air Boeing Max going down without giving the pilots a chance of re-establishing control of the aircraft thanks to the controversial anti-stall software programme. The event last week involved a much older Boeing 737-500 plane of Sriwijaya Airlines, which went down into the Java Sea, probably from mechanical failure or pilot error, which can be established only after studying data from the black boxes that divers have located.

Aviation is no more dangerous than it was before the Covid-19 pandemic struck, but pilots are complaining the downtime in 2020 due to severe travel curbs, when they have had to do with simulator training rather than frequent flying, may be affecting their performance somewhat. While aviation experts believe the plane climbing out of Jakarta may have been going too slowly for 10,000 feet altitude, the fall within a few seconds must have been horrendous. The budget flight had already faced a weather delay and Indonesian aircraft also face unique problems like flights through volcanic ash that may affect engine performance because of ingestion. And in any case, poor maintenance is a problem that has dogged Indonesian aviation.

The families of the 62 unlucky people on board may get some sense of closure only from the fact that it appears to be an accident, and not due to diabolical corporate carelessness as in the Boeing Max disasters or the Malaysian aircraft that may have been flown to extinction. However, it is no comfort that open skies in an era of lackadaisical attitude to air safety could be an invitation to such poor advertisements for aviation. Ironically, this comes as an all-woman crew steered Air India's longest flight over the North Pole on the way from San Francisco to Bengaluru, epitomising air safety.

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KAUSHIK MITTER
Editor

R. MOHAN
Resident Editor

K. SUBHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:
Chennai: SP 3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai 600032. Phones: (044) 22254747, 22254748
Coimbatore: 77 Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore 641009. Phone: (0422) 2231255, 2231256
Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad 500 003. Phone: (040) 27803930-4. Fax: (040) 27805256
Bengaluru: 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Ft. Road, Koramangala, Bangalore-560095. Ph: 08043460500; Fax: 080-22960551/52/55
Visakhapatnam: Survey No. 1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017. Phones: (0891) 2552333/2552334, Fax: (0891) 2755285
Vijayawada: No. C 3 & 4, Patnamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.). Phones: (0866) 2555284/ 2555287, Fax: (0866) 2555234
Rajahmundry: Vemagiri, Dhawleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry 533125. Phones: (0883) 2417208, 2417618
Anantapur: Thapovan Colony, Bangalore Bye-Pass Road, Anantapur 515004. Phones: (08554) 276903, Fax: 08554-276904
Nellore: Survey No. 527/2, Burrampur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chemudugunta Panchayat, Nellore. Phone: (0861) 2348581/ 82, Telefax (0861) 2348580
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Subhani



The Three Ks: Some old ideas revisited



Asad Durrani

View from Pakistan

Khursheed Ali Khan was no run-of-the-mill general. Behind a laissez-faire demeanor, he was a serious practitioner of military art, with a sterling soldierly character. In a war game, he tasked me with making a plan, but then suggested I modify it to bring out a few lessons. Nothing unusual, except whenever a visitor would pick holes in my design, K always clarified why it was forced upon me.

As NWFP governor, he asked me — as I had recently left the service — to outline a few ideas on how to address some intractable issues. The paper I wrote was titled “Three Ks that defy resolution”. These were Kabul, Kashmir and Karachi. The K word was to acknowledge the proposal's sponsor. A quarter century may have elapsed, but in a discussion the other day when similar subjects came up, I had to revisit my old thesis. It was based on some ideas that we from the military used to pester the political governments with, and having headed the National Defence College, one believed our core issues needed a structured approach. The concept was heavy on strategy and avoided concrete steps unless they were required to illustrate an argument.

It was really self-evident. Issues with a long gestation period — all three Ks were brewing for decades — would need to be thought through for the long haul. Over time, there would be developments needing adaptation or modification of original assumptions, even of plans.

In Afghanistan, for instance; after the Soviet pullout, infatuated with the resistance we realised at great cost that the tribesmen may have pur-

sued a common agenda against the occupiers, but were now rivals for Kabul's throne. A historian in the decision-making echelons would have sounded the right alarm. Genuine Afghan hands were strongly opposed to using unconventional warriors in set-piece battles like Jalalabad, and later against the Northern Alliance. When the Taliban emerged as an anti-Mujahideen force, its momentum may have surprised us; but not the old Communist cadres growing beards to drive militia tanks and fly the helicopters.

Later we may have factored in the role of spoilers, but our counter-measures were mostly transactional. India's Afghan strategy was of course Kautilyan, but because of our neighbourhood advantage it could be contained. But our official sources exaggerated it to the extent that paranoid Afghans were convinced our involvement in Afghanistan was essentially to keep India out. After the Soviets left, America's interests were never aligned with ours. We still sucked up to them — and even believed post-9/11 that our bilateral ties were again “strategic”.

Besides improving ties with Iran and Russia, and keeping China and Turkey on board, we did well to retain leverage with Taliban against great external pressure for two decades and could thus bring them to the table whenever required. But we now need some experts in Afghan psyche and those with credibility among the key factions to steer the intra-Afghan dialogue, or to disengage from this messy affair.

The Kashmir imbroglio was no less complex. Surprised by the robustness of the popular surge for independence in early 1990s, we never really got a handle over the multi-

ple challenges such movements present — providing an effective political umbrella; influencing the militancy so that it didn't lead to any unintended consequences; and creating the necessary rapport with resistance groups. Finding the right mix of military and non-military prongs required a more subtle direction than swinging between arming the resistance to abandoning it. Engaging India in the Composite Dialogue framework was wise, and there may have been even some collateral benefit in Gen. Pervez Musharraf's four-point salvo; but if anyone believed Indians would voluntarily give up their position of advantage, he should have his head examined. After August 5, 2019, the handling of developments in the Valley clearly showed there were hardly any experienced hands in our Kashmir policy cells, and our responses were therefore limited to cartography and rewriting milestones.

I don't think I ever understood the rise and fall of Karachi, but it was quite clear our once vibrant multi-ethnic megapolis was heading for an implosion — and all of us with our eyes wide shut.

Even a cursory look at this narrative suggests issues with roots in history, or simply too complex, were beyond the depth of our state structures. On core issues, one needed a core group to charter a course, steer its conduct, and adapt it to the evolving environment. A bureaucratic or politically partisan system could not be entrusted with this — not only because its key members were mostly on the move, but also as those at the helm often force the pace to add a feather in their otherwise colourless cap.

K took the paper to BB

After August 5, 2019, the developments in the Valley showed there were hardly any experienced hands in our Kashmir policy cells

— then in her second incarnation as PM — who didn't seem terribly pleased as with the Taliban now taking big strides in Afghanistan, she didn't want to share the spoils of the “victory” with a hybrid group that had the Opposition on board. Nevertheless, she appointed a pretty clued-up security adviser, who all by himself had no sway with the hands on the Afghan wheel, which only moved in the military track. Before that Nawaz Sharif had made it clear his Kabul policy would be conducted by his kitchen cabinet, not the Afghan cell. Soon thereafter he outsourced the Kashmir struggle to a private contractor. However, both mainstream parties had a common approach on Karachi: break up the MQM and let the devil take the hindmost.

It is of course unfair to put all the blame for fly-by-night policies on the political leadership. Members of the Deep State were reluctant to permit any rank outsiders, regardless of experience or expertise, in the decision-making corridors. Who knows when a group, even if dominated by the civil and military hierarchy, working under the chief executive and essentially in an advisory role, would get enough traction due to its sound judgment. That could blow the myth of the State's claim to total wisdom.

No surprise there. People in power are always protective of their turf. But the worst part is that they seldom pick up the courage to tell their political masters, civil or military, that most of our festering issues may not be fixed in an estimative timeframe — and therefore their management should take priority over a wishful outcome.

A council of wise men has always been a good idea since Plato's days.

Lt. Gen. Asad Durrani (Retd) is a former director-general of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, has participated in several Track II initiatives, and an author and commentator

LETTERS

ELECTION SYMBOLS

It is true that the image created by the symbols and the loyalty the cadres of the parties entertain and nurture in their mind for them is quite obvious and visible. Election symbols have become the most cherished preserve of all political parties. In due course voters develop sentimental attachment with the symbols and I have heard people telling quite often that they don't care who stands as a candidate or his merits and credibility. They vote only for the party that contests with the particular symbol. Candidate's qualifications and credentials are immaterial. In India elections without symbols are therefore wholly inconceivable and impossible.

V. Rakesh Kaushik, Chennai

NO SAFE PLACE FOR WOMEN

IT IS really a matter of concern and shock that not a day passes without news of rape/molestation in Tamil Nadu. After the news of the rape of a woman inside temple premises by two persons again there is a case of rape of a vegetable vendor by two contract employees of the railways now in an EMU train in the Tambaram railway yard. No place is safe for women in Tamil Nadu and not even a temple has been spared for the shameless and ruthless act by sexual perverts who seem to prowl freely thanks to the inefficient supervision by the police and the lack of strict and stringent punishment for the rapists.

M.C. Vijay Shankar, Chennai

LESSON TO LEARN

IT IS not that difficult even for a novice in global politics to arrive at the conclusion that it is none other than the incumbent President Donald Trump who is behind the recent ugly insurrection in the US perpetrated by his supporters. The unprecedented siege of Capitol Hill by these mad elements is a culmination of communal disharmony and hatred induced in them by the belligerent Trump. Right from the day he occupied the White House, he had only been doing this by encouraging white supremacists with his nation first and pseudo patriotic outbursts that resulted in such a wonderful democracy to stand divided on communal grounds. What has happened in the US must serve as an eye opener to people of all other democracies as well in that they should not fall a prey to such divisive-minded leaders who try to mesmerise them with their sugar coated vitriol.

Tharcus S. Fernando, Chennai

Aakar Patel



On Republic Day, time to reclaim our basic rights

This month we will celebrate Republic Day, which is different from Independence Day. The difference may not be fully understood or appreciated. On August 15 we mark the anniversary of the day that India stopped being ruled by outsiders. We refer to this as freedom. On January 26, Republic Day, we mark the day when we put in force the laws that make the people of India sovereign. It must be noted that for some reason we mark Republic Day with a celebration of militarism. The marching in formation of armed men and their machines. We might want to ask those in parts of India which have experience of the military, such as the Northeast and Kashmir, what they make of this celebration or whether they consider this a proper way to mark the formation of the republic.

A republic is more than a democracy. A democracy is a system of majority rule government through elected representatives. Universal adult franchise — meaning the right to vote for these elected representatives — is only one aspect of being a republic. The other two aspects are guaran-

teed fundamental rights and civil liberties. These are equally important and without them you can have a democracy but not a republic. These include the right to freedom of expression, right to peaceful assembly, right to freedom of religion, right to form associations and to practise any occupation and the right to life and liberty. You could have a nation where adults can vote and elections are carried out, but none of these rights and liberties exist in a meaningful way. It would be a democracy, but it would not be a republic. The rights would not really be with the people but with the State, meaning the government and those who run it.

To give you an example, Indians have the right to peaceful assembly. It is actually a fundamental right, meaning one that enjoys a high degree of protection from encroachment. But do Indians have the right to peaceful assembly? They do not. They have the right to make an application to the police and the authorities seeking permission for a peaceful protest. The State has the right to approve, reject or not respond. Similarly, the right to occupation

does not exist (there is a Supreme Court judgment which says the rights of the cow surpass those of a butcher), nor does the right to freedom of religion as the new laws in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh and several old laws and judgments show. The freedom of expression is legally criminalised in India through laws on sedition, defamation and contempt. Indeed, none of the rights and liberties that the Constitution saw initially as being “fundamental” are present in the original form today. It is safe to conclude that India is a democracy, but is it a republic? The reality is that today the rights are not with the citizen, they rest in the main with the State.

This has happened with the passage of time. The Constitution initially gave Indians all the rights referred to above in more or less unrestricted form, as they exist in other republics like the United States. It was the amendments that came later which began to cut away the freedoms to the extent that it can now be honestly said that they do not exist at all. The State appropriated sovereignty from the people. This happened, as many

will know, through footnotes to the Constitution, added as amendments to Part 3, which is the part on Fundamental Rights. The right to freedom of speech was now qualified. And the footnote reads that nothing shall prevent the State from making any law imposing reasonable restrictions on free speech which affect the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.

Who will determine whether these restrictions are reasonable? The State. The people, who through the Constituent Assembly had granted themselves the right to freedom of expression, were now made subordinate to their government.

The restrictions came not because of popular demand but because the government felt that it could not allow people too much freedom.

Similarly footnotes and their interpretations took away the real meaning of other rights, including the one to life and liberty.

The State in India can jail individuals without a crime having been committed.

This is called preventive detention, and it upends Articles 21 and 22 through a footnote. What is the difference between a government that wants this power over citizens and the British Raj?

The question is what can be done about this. The solution is obviously to get the State to undo the damage it has done over the years.

Article 13 says that the “State shall not make any law which takes away or abridges the rights conferred by this Part and any law made in contravention of this clause shall, to the extent of the contravention, be void”. Clearly, the State has committed overreach against its citizens.

Our pledge on this Republic Day must be to use those parts of the Constitution that are still on our side and take back our rights and liberties lawfully from the State, which has usurped them. That would be truly worth a celebration.

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

quick BITES

| INDICATORS | % |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Sensex | 49269.32 1.00 |
| Nifty 50 | 14484.80 0.96 |
| S&P 500* | 3,809.27 -0.40 |
| Dollar (₹) | 73.42 -0.23 |
| Pound Sterling (₹) | 99.01 0.60 |
| Euro (₹) | 89.26 0.43 |
| Gold (10gm)* (₹) | 48,866,389 0.79 |
| Brent crude (\$/bbl)* | 55.60 -0.70 |
| IN 10-Yr bond yield | 5.924 0.00 |
| US 10-Yr T-bill yield* | 1.131 2.14 |

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Govt not to print Budget documents

The voluminous budget documents will not be printed this year following the Covid-19 protocol and will instead be distributed electronically to the MPs. This will be the first time since the presentation of independent India's first budget on Nov. 26, 1947, that the documents containing income and expenditure statement along with finance bill, detailing new tax and other measures for the new financial year, will not be printed.

Vani Manja is Boehringer's country MD



Drug firm Boehringer Ingelheim said it has appointed Vani Manja as country MD for India, effective Jan. 1. Vani will look after the businesses in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. She will also join the board. Vani succeeds Sharad Tyagi, who retired on Dec. 31. She was formerly the global head of Boehringer Ingelheim's go-to-market and business steering organisation, based in Germany. She joined the group in the US in 2011.

Agdhi's AI-based tech to check quality of seeds

Agri-start up Agdhi launched an Artificial Intelligence-based technology to check quality of seeds. Traditionally seeds are inspected manually. The Bengaluru-based firm said its AI vision technology—along with photometry, radiometry and computer vision—offers efficient methods for seed classification and seed quality analysis. The colour, texture, size, and shape, is extracted from images of seeds.

Gail to consider share buyback, dividend on 15th

GAIL (India) Ltd, the nation's largest gas distribution firm, will on Friday consider buyback of shares with a view to returning surplus cash to shareholders, the biggest being the Government of India. In a stock exchange filing, the company said its board will meet on January 15 to consider share buyback as also payment of interim dividend for the fiscal year ending March 2021. It did not give details.



■ Closer to ₹200-L cr m-cap milestone Sensex moves past 49K-mark

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, JAN. 11

India's most widely tracked equity index, the Sensex, seemed cruising to the 50000-mark, an unthinkable milestone a few years ago, as it closed above the 49000-mark for the first time, gaining 486.8 points to close the day at 49,269.32. The new record high came on positive global cues and third quarter earnings expectations, fall in daily Covid cases and high expectations from the upcoming union budget.

The Nifty 50 Index, too, closed at a new high of 14484.75, up 137 points, or 0.9 per cent.

With the ongoing massive rally, the BSE's market capitalisation is getting closer to the Rs 200-lakh crore mark, as it is now at Rs 196.56 lakh crore.

After the IT sector bellwether Tata Consultancy Services posted impressive third quarter performance last Friday, IT stocks made hefty gains on Monday, with the BSE IT Index moving up 3.63 per cent.

Another sector that helped market benchmarks gain close to 1 per cent was automobile. The BSE Auto Index was up 2.56 per cent.

The top gainers included Infosys (4.90 per cent), Wipro (3.87 per cent), Tech Mahindra (2.54 per cent), TCS (1.75 per cent) and HCL Technologies (6.09 per cent).

TCS hit a new all-time high of Rs 3,224 before closing at Rs 3,175. TCS market capitalisation soared to Rs



NSE LAUNCHES DERIVATIVES ON NIFTY FINANCIAL SERVICES INDEX

New Delhi, Jan. 11: The National Stock Exchange on Monday launched derivatives on the Nifty Financial Services Index, which will give more flexibility to institutional and retail investors to manage their hedge. This is the first time the exchange has made available weekly futures for the stock index derivatives.

The index consists of 20 stocks and is designed to reflect the behaviour and performance of the Indian financial market, which includes banks, financial institutions, housing finance, insurance companies and other financial services firms. The first day witnessed volumes of 1.4 lakh contracts being traded.—PTI

11.91 lakh crore, close to top company by market-cap, Reliance Industries (Rs 12.02 lakh crore) as the latter's stock price fell 1.8 per cent to Rs 1,897 on the BSE.

Recounting the day's market movement Shrikant Chouhan, analyst-equity technical research, Kotak Securities, said, "Another day with tremendous gains for the market. Markets closed higher for the day, led by auto, IT, pharmaceuticals and select FMCG stocks...It seems that the market has gained momen-

tum due to the bright possibilities of bold announcements in the forthcoming union budget."

The top auto sector gainers included Tata Motors (11.11 per cent), Ashok Leyland (3.8 per cent), Maruti (2.75 per cent), Bajaj Auto (2.40 per cent) and Mahindra & Mahindra (2.37 per cent).

Foreign portfolio investors were net buyers on Monday of equities worth Rs 3,138.90 crore while the domestic institutions were net sellers by Rs 2,610.13 crore.

NEXT TRANCHE OF MINING AUCTION SOON: MINISTER

New Delhi, Jan. 11:

Coal minister Pralhad Joshi on Monday said the next tranche of commercial mines auction will be launched this month and stressed that further rounds will continue thereafter.

Speaking at the agreement signing ceremony for commercial coal mining and launch of single-window clearance system, he said commercial coal mining has been made a part of the system now. "The next tranche of commercial mining auction would be launched in January 2021, and further tranches will continue thereafter," he said.

Speaking at the function, home minister Amit Shah said the country has reached a position where the coal sector can be the biggest contributor towards the target of India becoming a \$5 trillion economy by 2025.

He said despite having the world's fourth-largest coal reserves, India is importing coal and this is not right for the country. The coal minister said the single-window clearance portal is in the spirit of minimum government and maximum governance.

At present, about 19 major approval or clearances are required before starting a coal mine. In the absence of a unified platform for clearances, the companies were required to approach different departments, he said.

—PTI

Pandemic shrinks women workforce more than men

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

The coronavirus pandemic has affected women workforce disproportionately compared to men. The women labour force in India shrank by 10.5 per cent against 2 per cent for men between October 2019 and October 2020, finds the Asian Development Bank.

Despite being a universal crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women, says an ADB blog.

Between March and April 2020, 37 per cent of the female workforce, or 15.4 million women, lost their jobs versus 28 per cent of men. The labour force shrank by 10.5 per cent for women versus 2 per cent for men between October 2019 and October 2020.

Women-owned small businesses, which largely operate in consumer-facing sectors such as textiles, food processing and handicrafts, witnessed a sharp demand shock, with revival being slow. In the informal sectors, anecdotal evidence points toward men being preferred for re-employment as the economy opens.

Women also face additional mobility restrictions. Even before Covid-19, only 54 per cent of women were allowed to go to a nearby market alone. Only 48 per cent could visit places outside their village or community by themselves, according to the National Family and Health Survey conducted in 2015-



IN AN UNEQUAL WORLD

- ▶ Women-owned small businesses, which largely operate in consumer-facing sectors, witnessed a sharp demand shock
- ▶ In March-April, 37% of the female workforce lost their jobs versus 28% of men
- ▶ The labour force shrank by 10.5% for women versus 2% for men between October 2019 and October 2020

16. With the pandemic, women now require strong reasons to leave home, inhibiting their ability to work, run businesses, study or even avail of health care services and government aid.

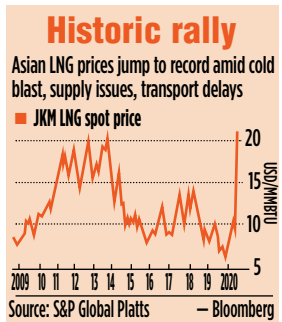
The pandemic has led to an increase in domestic work. On an average, women spent five hours per day on unpaid household and care-giving work compared to 30 minutes for men, according to a survey conducted in 2019. As school closures continue and families remain at home during Covid-19, women's care work has increased by almost 30 per cent.

Further, the digital gender divide has worsened inequity in access to education, health and work opportunities. In India, 63 per cent of adult women own a mobile phone compared to 79 per cent adult

men. Only 21 per cent use mobile internet compared to 42 per cent adult men. Women are systematically denied access to technology, with phone use governed by male relatives. With online classes, telemedicine and work from home becoming the norm, women are at risk of getting left behind, unable to acquire the skills required to participate in a digital economy, say the ADB.

However, government has taken a few steps that have benefitted women. Direct cash transfers, free grains for ration cardholders, increase in collateral-free lending limits for women self-help groups and increase in the number of person days under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme are some of them.

ASIA'S ICY WINTER SENDS ENERGY PRICES SOARING



Jan. 11: China's coldest winter in decades meant state-owned energy giant Sinopec was desperate to unload heating fuel from a vessel headed to a northern port, yet freezing temperatures that have swept parts of Asia froze a thick sheet of ice and blocked access.

With the help of an ice-breaker ship and a cannon loaded with hot water, workers spent 20 hours clearing a pathway for the tanker to dock and discharge its cargo of liquefied natural gas in Tianjin.

The effort underscores how frigid temperatures have upended energy markets across Asia, catching some companies flat-footed and sending prices for electricity, fuel and vessels to record highs. And with temperatures showing no signs of easing in key markets in Japan, China and South Korea, it could be weeks before any return to normality.

"This winter has definitely caught the market off-guard," said Henning Gloystein, a director at Eurasia Group. "My hunch is that this spike will end with springtime."

A La Nina weather phenomenon has sent a wave of cold air across North Asia this winter. Beijing last week recorded its lowest temperature since 1966, while Seoul had its coldest day since 1986, and record snowfall is sweeping across Japan's west coast.

The chill is creating a surge in heating demand across the region. Japan's spot electricity prices have soared more than 10-fold to record levels.

—Bloomberg

Housing launches grow YoY for first time since lockdown

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JAN. 11

The December quarter saw yearly growth in new launches of housing units, the first time after the pandemic. While new launches of housing units have gone up in the October-December quarter both on a quarterly basis and yearly basis, sales were actually down against year-ago quarter.

As many as 54,329 new units were launched in the eight prime residential markets during the three months. New launches grew by 173 per cent over 19,865 units launched in the July-September quarter. This also reflected a 12 per cent growth over the 48,530 new units that were launched in the December quarter in 2019. This was the first quarter that witnessed a yearly growth since the onset of the pandemic, signalling a turnaround in the market, finds PropTiger.

NCR, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Pune saw yearly growth in new launches. An increase in home-buying interest and muted new launches in the prior three quarters helped markets. Units in the sub-Rs 45 lakh category were the largest contributor to the overall supply, with a 46 per cent share.

However, for the entire 12-month period in 2020, only 122,426 units were launched and this was about half the new supply in 2019 at 244,256 units.

Similarly, home sales declined by 27 per cent compared to the



December quarter of 2019 despite showing 68 per cent improvement over the preceding quarter. As many as 58,914 units were sold during the December quarter. However, compared to the overall sales registered in 2019, 182,639 units sold in the pandemic-hit 2020 showed a 47 per cent decline.

Except Ahmedabad, home sales increased across all other cities when compared to the preceding quarter. Stamp duty cuts by the Maharashtra government supported sales in Mumbai and Pune markets. Low interest rates, stagnant housing prices and attractive offers by developers were the other factors which supported sales.

According to Knight Frank India, driven by the Covid-induced need for larger homes, the share of Rs 50 lakh and above ticket sizes in total sales has gone up from 44 per cent in the second half of 2019 to 57 per cent in H2 2020.

December finally marked the best growth in retail sales of passenger vehicles (PV) as new launches, cheaper finance and pre-buying to escape the January price rise helped boost demand in Asia's third biggest car market.

The segment also recorded the second-best monthly total this financial year. PVs comprise cars, SUVs and vans.

PV sales grew 24 per cent in December to 271,249 units as against 218,775 units recorded in the same month last year, as per data sourced from 86 per cent of the regional transport offices (RTOs), shared by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association, or Fada, on Monday.

Wholesales dispatches to dealers by 14 PV manufacturers during December stood at 276,544 units, a growth of 18 per cent compared to the same month last year. The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers, or Siam, will issue sales later this week.

Cars set best monthly growth in this fiscal

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, JAN. 11

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STANCHART SEES INDIA CHARTING COURSE TO A TIGHTER BUDGET

ANIRBAN NAG
JAN. 11

India will seek to narrow its budget deficit next financial year, amid expectations of improved revenue collections and economic rebound, according to Standard Chartered Bank Plc.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman will likely target fiscal deficit - the gap between income and expenditure - at 5.3 per cent of gross domestic product in the budget for the year starting April 1, the bank's chief South Asia economist Anubhuti Sahay wrote in a report to clients. That will be slimmer than the current year's number, which Standard Chartered expects to be 6.7 per cent of GDP, or even as high as 8.4 per cent if factoring in off-budget spending to help the economy shake off the pandemic fallout.

Although the government announced stimulus steps worth 15 per cent of GDP in the current year, the actual fiscal cost is seen at less than 2 per cent of GDP with most of the measures taking the form of loan guarantees. That compares with direct spending of about 3 per cent of GDP on average in other emerging markets, according to S&P Global Ratings.

The gains will be "driven by improved tax collection, higher divestment proceeds and reduced pandemic-related expenditure amid a better growth environment," Sahay said. "The fiscal consolidation path for FY22-26 will be keenly watched to assess medium-term market impact," she said.

—Bloomberg

Findings cast fresh shadow on operations, compliance practices

Carlsberg probes find potential bribes, lapses

ADITYA KALRA
NEW DELHI, JAN. 11

An investigation of alleged unlawful practices at Carlsberg India found "potential improper payments" to government officials and other regulatory lapses, its former auditor said in a document seen by Reuters. Reports by a different global consultancy, also seen by Reuters, disclosed other lapses at Carlsberg India Pvt Ltd in 2018, including child labour.

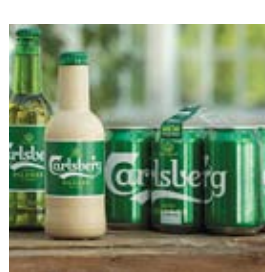
The findings cast a fresh shadow on operations and compliance practices at the Indian joint venture of Danish brewer Carlsberg A/S, which according to IWSR Drinks Market Analysis has a 17

per cent share of India's \$7 billion beer market.

Carlsberg's probes and a boardroom dispute come amid other challenges: an antitrust investigation last year concluded Carlsberg India colluded for years on prices with other rivals, though a final ruling is pending.

An India affiliate of the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) network recently resigned as Carlsberg India's financial auditor after declining for two years in a row to give an opinion on the brewer's financials, amid boardroom tussles and internal probes into local practices.

Since at least 2019, Carlsberg had been probing allegations levelled by



some past and current employees around promotion of alcohol in prohibited areas, kickbacks and bribery, according to regulatory filings and the document prepared by local PwC affiliate Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP.

The investigation "concluded that there were internal control weak-

nesses... potential improper payments made to government officials/other persons and possibility of misappropriation of company's funds over past years by certain customers," says the PwC document, which details the basis of the firm's resignation.

"However, the amount of misappropriation and other amounts relating to inappropriate practices could not be ascertained."

Responding to questions from Reuters, Carlsberg said, "We cannot rule out breaches of our policies and code of conduct." The company said it does everything possible to prevent such incidents.

The investigations "specified that Carlsberg

Group's policies were breached in the period until 2018" and the probes identified the need for further strengthening of controls, the company said.

"Carlsberg India has taken several actions as a consequence of the findings, including... dismissal of and formal warnings to employees," it said.

Carlsberg told Reuters in November the auditor had quit because of "highly disruptive side-effects" of a commercial conflict with its joint venture partner, the Nepal-based Khetan Group. Three nominee directors from Khetan refused to approve the last two annual results. —Reuters

SHORT TAKES

Kohli becomes dad of baby girl

New Delhi: India captain Virat Kohli and his actor wife Anushka Sharma were on Monday blessed with a baby girl.

Kohli made the announcement on his official Twitter handle. "We are thrilled to share with you that we have been blessed with a baby girl this afternoon. We thank you all for your love, prayers and good wishes," Kohli tweeted.

"Anushka and the baby are both healthy and we are feeling beyond blessed to start this new chapter of our lives. We hope that you can respect our privacy at this time," added the star batsman who returned from Australia on paternity leave after leading India in the first Test. The news came on a day when India snatched a remarkable draw in the third Test against Australia in Sydney to keep the series alive at 1-1. — PTI

India, Oz retain top-2 Test spots

Sydney: Australia and India on Monday held on to their top two positions in the World Test Championship (WTC) standings following the engrossing draw in the third Test here.

India's remarkable show saw them stay marginally ahead of third-placed New Zealand in the WTC points tally.

"An incredible battle in Sydney has helped both teams retain the top two spots in the ICC World Test Championship standings. A difference of 0.2 per cent between India and New Zealand," ICC wrote on its twitter handle.

New Zealand had earlier achieved the number one position in the ICC Test Team Rankings for the first time in history following their clean-sweep of Pakistan and West Indies. Both Australia and India bagged 10 points each after the draw. — PTI

Chennaiyin FC sign Lanzarote

Chennai: Chennaiyin FC confirmed the signing of Spanish midfielder Manuel Lanzarote on a short-term deal till the end of the ongoing Indian Super League season. The 36-year-old former FC Barcelona graduate will arrive in Goa immediately and undergo the mandatory quarantine procedure before joining the squad. Lanzarote's acquisition comes on the back of CFC captain Rafael Crivellaro being ruled out for the rest of the season following an ankle ligament injury he suffered against ATK Mohun Bagan on December 29, 2020.

"I am very happy and proud of the opportunity to play for a club that has won the ISL twice. Although it will be a very short stage, I hope to contribute with my experience and be able to help my teammates to achieve our goal," said the Spaniard on joining the two-time ISL champions. "Lanza (Manuel Lanzarote) is a seasoned professional with experience of playing in India. We hope to have him involved at the earliest and remain in the mix to push for the play-offs at that stage. Albeit for a short period, we welcome him to the club and look forward to working together in achieving our objectives," said head coach Csaba Laszlo.

Live on TV

BADMINTON

Thailand Open: Round of 32 from 7.30 am on Star Sports 2 HD, 3

CRICKET

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

Big Bash League: Perth Scorchers vs Hobart Hurricanes from 1.45 pm on Sony Six, HD

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: North East United vs Bengaluru FC from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

English Premier League: Sheffield vs Newcastle from 11.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1; Wolverhampton Wanderers vs Everton from 1.45 am (Wednesday) on Star Sports Select 2; Burnley vs Manchester United from 1.45 am (Wednesday) on Star Sports Select 1, HD

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Editor: **KAUSHIK MITTER**



Ravichandran Ashwin (left) is congratulated by captain Ajinkya Rahane as Hanuma Vihari (second from right) is congratulated by teammate Mohammed Siraj after play on the final day of the third Test against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Monday. — AFP

DRAWSOME!

Vihari, Ashwin pull off memorable draw to keep Test series alive

Sydney, Jan. 11: Ravichandran Ashwin and Hanuma Vihari battled pain and a hostile Australian bowling attack while resolutely displaying the largely extinct art of Test-saving batsmanship to snatch a remarkable draw for India after Rishabh Pant raised visions of an improbable win here on Monday.

Chasing a Herculean target of 407, Pant (97 off 118 balls) and the ever-steady Cheteshwar Pujara (77 off 205 balls) produced an amazing 148-run stand before India were forced to down the shutters finishing on 334 for 5 in 131 overs when players shook hands.

Draw is as big as win for Rahane

Sydney, Jan. 11: India captain Ajinkya Rahane on Monday said the heroic draw that his side pulled off in the third Test against Australia was as good as a victory and especially commended Hanuma Vihari, who battled the excruciating pain of a hamstring injury to stay at the crease.

"...today we all saw that special knock. I think this knock was more special than his hundred (in 2019 in the West Indies) especially the way he batted after getting injured," Rahane said after the match.

"To show that kind of motivation, hunger and hang in there for your team, that's what shows the character of an individual. It's all about what the team wants and credit to him. There was pressure and the way he batted was special," said Rahane, lauding the young man from Andhra Pradesh.

For Rahane, the credit of the draw goes to all

| SCORECARD | |
|---|--|
| Australia 1st Innings 338 | |
| India 1st Innings: 244 | |
| Australia 2nd Innings 312/6 decl. | |
| India 2nd Innings (Overnight 98/2): Rohit Sharma c Starc b Cummins 52, Shubman Gill c Paine b Hazlewood 31, Cheteshwar Pujara b Hazlewood 77, Ajinkya Rahane c Wade b Lyon 4, Rishabh Pant (wk) c Cummins b Lyon 97, Hanuma Vihari not out 23, Ravichandran Ashwin not out 39. Extras (lb-3, w-2, nb-6) 11. Total (For 5 wickets in 131 overs) 334. | |
| FOUW: 1-71, 2-92, 3-102, 4-250, 5-272. | |
| Bowling: Mitchell Starc 22-6-66-0, Josh Hazlewood 26-12-39-2, Pat Cummins 26-6-72-1, Nathan Lyon 46-17-114-2, Cameron Green 7-0-31-0, Marnus Labuschagne 4-2-9-0. | |

The series stands at 1-1 going into the fourth Test in Brisbane but an Indian team which has turned into a 'mini-hospital' would be walking away with a lot of pride. They put up a proper fight in

adverse circumstances already soured by racist chants and abuses from the crowd here during the course of the game.

Pant's innings will be remembered for a long time but none can forget

VIHARI'S KNOCK WAS EQUAL TO SCORING A TON: ASHWIN

Sydney, Jan. 11: Ravichandran Ashwin on Monday equated Hanuma Vihari's unbeaten 23 off 161 balls in a match-saving stand of 62 runs with him in the third Test against Australia here to scoring a hundred.

"After Pujara and Pant's wicket and with Vihari injured, it was going to be difficult to go for a win. Touring Australia is never easy so Vihari can be proud of himself. It was a knock equal to scoring a

hundred," Ashwin told *Channel 7*.

Ashwin said the confidence gained from productive net sessions helped him finally come good against Australia as he and Vihari saved the third Test.

"I have been batting well in the nets, so it was great to spend some time in the middle. Chasing 400 in Sydney was never going to be easy, as the ball was going up and down. That knock by Pant set us up," he said. — PTI

those, who performed in pressure situations responding to the team's requirements.

"This is as good as winning a Test match. When you come abroad and play a match like this, it was really special as I said. It's as good as victory.

"Credit to Vihari, Ashwin, (Rishabh) Pant, (Cheteshwar) Pujara, the way they batted. Rohit (Sharma) at the start. Everyone chipped in but credit to those two guys in the end."

Pant, who has copped so much flak in the past few

months, came good on Monday with his exhilarating 97-run knock and the skipper couldn't have been happier for him.

"The way he played the knock was really good and unfortunately he was out on 97. Yes, he can drop catches but as long as he is learning, that is very important. I am really happy for Rishabh for the way he batted today. It was a really special knock."

Pant was promoted to No.5 on the day and Rahane gave him credit for executing the plan to perfection.

"As captain and team management, you can make strategies but it's upto individual to execute that plan (No.5). Rishabh did that for us.

"The way he counter-attacked was really good to see and about Rishabh's character, we know that he can actually win the game for us in any situation. We had that belief, he is improving day by day as a cricketer," he added. — PTI

Australian skipper Tim Paine after the match.

The duo, in 42.4 overs, scraped their way for a 62-run stand, which certainly would have made Rahul Dravid proud on his 48th birthday.

Vihari hobbled with a torn hamstring but defended dourly, Ashwin got hit on the ribs but carried on manfully while also engaging in some chatter with Tim Paine and close-in fielders.

Catches landed in no man's land and that was the slice of luck they needed. When Marnus Labuschagne was brought in the 112th over, one knew that they had done their job. — PTI

HANUMA OUT OF FINAL TEST, MAY MISS ENG SERIES

New Delhi, Jan. 11: India's injury woes in the Test series against Australia compounded on Monday after the hero of their drawn game in Sydney, Hanuma Vihari, was ruled out of the fourth Test with a hamstring tear that could keep him out of action for a considerable time.

It has been learnt that Vihari was taken for scans after the match.

However, a BCCI source confirmed that Vihari is unlikely to be fit in time for the next Test starting in another three days' time. "The extent of Vihari's tear can only be ascertained after the scan reports come through. But even if it's a grade 1 tear, he is out for at least four weeks and then will need some rehabilitation time. So it's not only Brisbane Test but also, he won't be a part of England Tests at home," a source said. — PTI



Rival captains Australia's Tim Paine (left) and India's Ajinkya Rahane gesture to each other after the final day of the third Test at the SCG on Monday. — AP



Really proud of #TeamIndia! Special mention to @RishabhPant17, @cheteshwar1, @ashwinravi99 and @Hanumavihari for the roles they've played brilliantly. Any guesses in which dressing room the morale will be high? #OneTeamOneCause #AUSvIND.

— SACHIN TENDULKAR
cricket legend

Hope all of us realise the importance of pujaara,pant and Ashwin in cricket teams..batting at 3 in test cricket against quality bowling is not always hitting through the line ..almost 400 test wickets don't come just like that..well fought india..time to win the series.

— SOURAV GANGULY
BCCI president and former India captain

Loved the fight and determination of India all day today. Starting with Pant and Pujara, and then for Vihari and Ashwin to withstand Australia and look largely in control for most of the day was very impressive. Can't wait for Brisbane now. #AUSvIND

— RICKY PONTING
Former Australia skipper

A fitting birthday gift for Rahul Dravid. An extraordinary display of resistance, fight and patience by India today.

— INTERNATIONAL CRICKET COUNCIL

Unbelievable Grit, determination and character shown by #TeamIndia. What an unbelievably spirited effort and some serious grind. Well done men. test cricket at its best

— K.L. RAHUL
India batsman

Even a half-strength, battled, bruised, injured, ridiculed, abused, bio-bubble fatigued India is difficult for a full strength Australia to beat at home. No praise high enough for this herculean effort. Told you this is a damn good team. Cherish it. #AUSvsIND

— WASIM JAFFER
Former India batsman

Feel so so proud of the Team, Pant showed why he needs to be treated differently & d grit showed by Vihari, Pujara & Ashwin was unbelievable

— VIRENDER SEHWAG
Former India opener

Some incredible fight shown today by @BCCI @cheteshwar1 @ashwinravi99 @Hanumavihari @RishabhPant17 and all involved in that performance throughout. Well done to my good mate @RaviShastriOfc. Long live test cricket.. #INDvAUS #TestCricket #TeamIndia #fight

— SIMON DOULL
Former New Zealand pacer

Delhi hammer giants Mumbai

Mumbai, Jan. 11: Delhi started their campaign at Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy with a thumping 76-run win over domestic heavyweights Mumbai in an Elite Group 'E' game at the Wankhede Stadium here on Monday.

Put in to bat, Delhi rode on a blazing 74 off 37 balls by two-down Nitish Rana to post a mammoth 206 for 4 and then bundled out Mumbai for a meagre 130, with left-arm pacer Pradeep Sangwan (3/20) leading from the front.

Delhi openers Shikhar Dhawan (23) and Hiten Dalal (24) started in an aggressive manner putting 38 in 4 overs. However, Dhawan could not convert his start, and Delhi were 56/2 at one stage.

However, one-down Himmat Singh (53 off 32 balls) and Rana took the Mumbai attack to cleaners and added 122 for the third wicket.

The left-handed Rana hammered seven fours and five sixes, while Singh struck three boundaries and four maximums as Mumbai bowlers were made to toil hard.

Mumbai never got going in the chase as they lost half their side for 52. Mumbai batters Yashasvi

Jaiswal (0), Aditya Tare (3), Suryakumar Yadav (7), Siddhesh Lad (4) and Sarfaraz Khan (15) fell cheaply.

All-rounder and India player Shivam Dube hit a whirlwind 42-ball 63, with three fours and five sixes, but that was too little and too late. India speedster Ishant Sharma, who returned to competitive cricket after sustaining a side strain during IPL, ended with figures of 2/16.

In Chennai, Bihar beat Arunachal Pradesh by 18 runs in their opening Plate group match.

Opting to bat, Bihar were bowled out for 122 in 20 overs with MD Rahmatullah (24) making the highest score. For Arunachal Pradesh, medium-pacer Manvan Patel took 4 for 20. In reply, Arunachal faltered after a bright start and were restricted to 104/9. — PTI

BRIEF SCORES

■ Delhi 206/4 in 20 overs (Nitish Rana 74, Himmat Singh 53; Shams Mulani 2/43) bt Mumbai 130 in 18.1 overs (Shivam Dube 63; Pradeep Sangwan 3/20, Ishant Sharma 2/16).

■ Andhra Pradesh 107/6 in 20 overs (Ricky Bhui 39; Jayant Yadav 2/13, Yuzvendra Chahal 2/21) lost to Haryana 108/4 in 15.5 overs (C.K. Bishnoi 42 n.o, S. R. Chauhan 35; Naren Reddy 1/4).

UNACCEPTABLE, UPSETTING: RAHANE ON RACIST ABUSE

Sydney, Jan. 11: India skipper Ajinkya Rahane on Monday said the racial abuse that his teammates endured from the crowd during the third Test against Australia here was unacceptable and found support from his Australian counterpart Tim Paine, who said he stands with the tourists on this issue.

Play was halted on Sunday for about 10 minutes after India pacer Mohammed Siraj complained of racial abuse from a section of the crowd, leading to expulsion of six spectators and an unreserved apology from Cricket Australia.

CA has also promised strongest possible action

against the offenders, which includes the possibility of them being banned for life from the SCG.

"We have lodged a complaint and I spoke to the match referee and umpires whatever I had to speak. Whatever happened is not acceptable at all and shouldn't happen anywhere in the world and we were upset about it," Rahane stated at the post-match press conference on Monday.

Paine, who had won hearts by joining the Indian team's huddle on Sunday, said he did so to "make sure that the visitors knew that he and his team were against any sort of abuse". — PTI