

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | SUNDAY 10 | JANUARY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 28°C
Min: 24°C
Rainfall: 2.4 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Margazhi 26
Tithi: Dwadashi
Star: Anusham/ Kettai
Rahukalam:
4.30 pm to 6 pm
Yamagandam:
12 noon to 1.30 pm

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.18 am
Zohar: 12.20 pm
Asar: 3.31 pm
Maghrib: 5.57 pm
Isha: 7.12 pm

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

CORONA COUNT

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

covid19india.org

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

8,97,26,503

DEATHS

19,28,300

COUNTRIES,
AREAS WITH
CASES

218

worldometers.info

Veteran Congress leader Madhavsinh Solanki passes away at 93

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

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

Bird flu scare: Delhi bans import of live birds

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

COUNTER

POINT



No cock left for fight due to flu, sir!

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

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

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

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

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

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



VINEETA PANDEY | DC

NEW DELHI, JAN. 9

Putting an end to the long wait for the Covid-19 vaccine, the Union government on Saturday announced that the nationwide inoculation drive will begin from January 16. The date has been decided keeping in mind forthcoming festivals like Lohri, Makar Sankranti, Pongal, Magh Bihu etc. Priority will be given to healthcare and frontline workers, estimated to be around 3 crore in number, followed by those above 50 years of age and the under-50 population groups with co-morbidities numbering around 27 crore.

“On 16th January, India takes a landmark step forward in fighting Covid-19. Starting that day, India’s nation-wide vaccination drive begins. Priority will be given to our brave doc-

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Min: India developing capabilities for undertaking deep ocean missions



Indo-American Sabrina is Harris’ Dy Press Secy

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SPORT | 8

Pujara’s slowest Test 50 derails visitors momentum



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PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO 3 CR HEALTHCARE AND FRONTLINE WORKERS

Covid vaccination drive to begin on January 16



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

— **Narendra Modi**
Prime Minister

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

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

virtual meeting with chief ministers on Monday on this issue.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10 newborn babies die in Maharashtra hospital fire

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, JAN. 9

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TWITTER BANS DON



Won’t be silenced, says Trump

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

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

POLITICAL LEADERS CONDEMN DEMOLITION

Memorial to Tamils destroyed in Lanka

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 9

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami with Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam at the AIADMK general council meeting at Vanagaram in Chennai on Saturday.

— *DC*

AIADMK general council meet endorses EPS as CM candidate

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passed at the general council, the party allowed KP Munusamy, deputy coordinator of the party, to speak out.

Munusamy said that someone coming out would not affect their functioning in any way, which was an indirect reference to Sasikala and gave a snub to the BJP that was trying to play Big Brother in the alliance by declaring that the national parties can only ride piggyback on the State parties.

He said the electoral fight was only between the AIADMK and DMK and the national parties had no big role to play in the State other than depending on the state parties.

Stating that he cannot be compared to leaders like CN Annadurai, MG Ramachandran and J. Jayalalithaa, Palaniswami said that he had done his mite for the development of the

party and that he would continue to contribute.

He used the word unity to define the course the party should take to defeat the enemies and took on DMK President M K Stalin saying that whatever it utters was a lie. Tracing his growth in the party, he said 42 years of his life were intertwined with the 48 year old history of AIADMK.

DMK’s corruption should be taken to the people, said Panneerselvam, in his speech, and urged the party leaders to strive for continuing the rule of Jayalalithaa as per her wishes. No one is a slave to anyone in the party, he said, adding that AIADMK was a cadre-based party.

Describing the DMK as a political virus more deadly than the Coronavirus, Panneerselvam called upon the party leaders to remove it from the scene. He said it would happen this year.

All-women AI crew take North Pole route to Bengaluru

New Delhi, Jan. 9: An all-women cockpit crew will operate the inaugural San Francisco-Bengaluru flight on Saturday, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said.

The Air India flight will fly on Saturday over the North Pole, taking the Atlantic route to reach Bengaluru, a senior official of the airline said.

“All women cockpit crew consisting of Capt Zoya Aggarwal, Capt Papagari Thanmai, Capt Akansha Sonaware & Capt Shivani Manhas will operate the historic inaugural flight between Bengaluru & San Francisco,” Puri said on Twitter. The aerial distance between San Francisco and Bengaluru is one of the longest in the world. “Air India’s woman power flies high around the world,” Puri said. The inaugural flight AI176 will depart from San Francisco in the USA at 8.30 pm (local time) on Saturday and it will land at the Kempegowda International Airport at 3.45 am (local time) on Monday. — *PTI*

● **The aerial distance between San Francisco and Bengaluru is one of the longest in the world**

Sydney crowd hurls racist abuse at Bumrah, Siraj



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

Sydney, Jan. 9: The Indian team has lodged an official complaint after the crowd at the Sydney Cricket Ground racially abused pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed

Siraj over the second and third day of the ongoing Pink Test between India and Australia.

While the matter was brought up with the ICC match officials and the security officers at the SCG immediately after the game, the Board of Control

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

events. According to BCCI

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

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

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

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

— *Agencies*

SHORT TAKES

Miscreants try to snatch chain from morning walker

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 9

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

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

Kanchipuram police conduct special drill on riots prevention

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 9

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

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

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

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

Farmers embark on 'Walk for justice'

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, JAN. 9

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

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

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

Test positivity rate, active cases decline in Chennai

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 9

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Three shops in Medavakkam burnt down

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 9

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

— DC

No need for pharmacist in mini clinics, says HC

J. STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 9

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

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

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 9

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

—PTI

All those stories about election symbols



G. Babu Jayakumar

Just spamming

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

cation and photograph of the particular candidate.

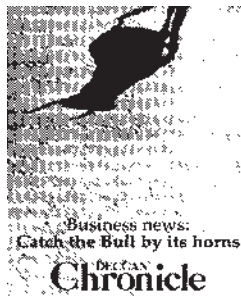
Of course it will not work in India, where the symbol has been used since the first election after independence in 1951. It was then that the EC also started deciding on what symbol to allot to whom. As the story goes, when the political parties were called for a meeting to decide on the symbols by the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

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

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

'Rising Sun' also has the distinction of being one of the symbols designed for the first elections in the country itself. It was then allotted to Ram Rajya Parishad.

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



தமிழ் வளர்ச்சி மற்றும் செய்தித் துறை			
நாடுமேல் கவிஞர் மாளிகை, தலைமைச் செயலகம், புனித ஜார்ஜ் கோட்டை, சென்னை - 600 009.			
செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறையின் செங்கல்பட்டு மாவட்ட செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்பு அலுவலகத்தில் காலியாக உள்ள தொழில்நுட்ப உதவியாளர் மற்றும் திரைப்படக் கருவி இயக்குபவர் பணிபுரிடக்கூடிய இடங்களைத் தேர்ந்தெடுத்தல், செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறை அலுவலகம் தகுதியான நபர்களைத் தேர்ந்தெடுத்தல், வரவேற்புப் புகளின் பணிபுரிடக்கூடிய இடங்களைத் தேர்ந்தெடுத்தல்.	செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறை அலுவலகம், செங்கல்பட்டு மாவட்டம்.	திரைப்படக் கருவி இயக்குபவர்	செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறை அலுவலகம், செங்கல்பட்டு மாவட்டம்.
1 பதவியின் பெயர்	தொழில்நுட்ப உதவியாளர்	திரைப்படக் கருவி இயக்குபவர்	
2 பதவியின் விவரம்	நிலை 8 (ரூ. 19500-62000)	நிலை 8 (ரூ. 19500-62000)	
3 காலியின் பணிபுரிடக்கூடிய இடம்	1 (ஒன்றாம்)	1 (ஒன்றாம்)	
4 இடம் கருவி முறை	மிகவும் பிற்படுத்தப்பட்டோர் மற்றும் சீமியினர் (முன்னுரிமை அற்றவர்)	பிற்படுத்தப்பட்டோர் (பிற்படுத்தப்பட்டோர்) (முன்னுரிமை அற்றவர்)	
5 பணிபுரிடக்கூடிய இடம்	செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறை அலுவலகம், செங்கல்பட்டு மாவட்டம்.		
6 தகுதிகள்	1. Diploma in Electrical and Electronics Engineering or; Diploma in Electronics and Communication Engineering and 2. Experience for a period of 2 years from a reputed company, in operating LED screens with computer hardware knowledge		
வயது வரம்பு	01.07.2020 அன்றுள்ளவாறு 18 முதல் 28 வயதிற்குள் இருக்க வேண்டும். மற்றும் தகு.முறையில் உள்ள ஆண்களாக இருக்க வேண்டும்.		
7 தகுதிகள்	1. Must have passed SSLC or its equivalent and; 2. Must have practical experience as Cinema Operator in a Cinema Theatre for a period of not less than 2 years or; Must have passed the examination conducted by the Government Board of Examiners for Cinema Operators and must have practical experience as Cinema Operator in a Cinema Theatre for a period of not less than two years or; Diploma in Cinematography or in Sound Recording and Sound Engineering or in Film Editing with practical experience as Cinema Operator for a period of not less than one year		
வயது வரம்பு	01.07.2020 அன்றுள்ளவாறு 18 முதல் 30 வயதிற்குள் இருக்க வேண்டும்.		
8 விண்ணப்பிக்கின்ற அனுப்ப வேண்டிய முகவரி	இலக்குகள், செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறை, நாடுமேல் கவிஞர் மாளிகை, தலைமைச் செயலகம், புனித ஜார்ஜ் கோட்டை, சென்னை - 600 009.		
9 விண்ணப்பிக்கின்ற அனுப்ப வேண்டிய கடைசி நாள்	மனுதள்ளும் பெயர், விலாசம், பிறந்த தேதி, கல்வி, அனுப்ப வேண்டிய முகவரி மற்றும் பிற விவரங்களுடன் கூடிய முழுமையான விண்ணப்பப் படிவத்தினை எதிர்ப்புறம், 22.01.2021 மாலை 5 மணிக்குள் அனுப்ப வேண்டும்.		

செ.ம.வெ.தி/24/நமர்வெண்/2021

IN BRIEF

MP ENFORCES
'LOVE JIHAD'
ORDINANCERABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, JAN. 9

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AIMIM'S BENGAL
ACTING PREZ
JOINS TMC

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

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

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

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

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

— PTI

FARMER
ENDS LIFE AT
PROTEST SITEDC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JAN. 9

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

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

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

BJP LAUNCHES
FARMERS
OUTREACH
DRIVE IN WB

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

- PTI

Soot and smoke telltale signs
of fire that claimed 10 lives

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- PTI

India's vaccines
ready to save
humanity : PM

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

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 9

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

PDP leader released on bail

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, JAN.9

People's Democratic Party (PDP) youth leader Waheed Ur Rehman Parra was on Saturday released from over six week long detection after a special court of National Investigation Agency (NIA) at Jammu granted him bail.

The NIA had arrested Mr. Parra on November 25 for his alleged "close links" with Kashmiri lawyer Irfan Shafi Mir, who was arrested by the police along with Hizb-ul-Mujahideen commander Syed Naveed Mushtaq alias Naveed Babu, another militant Asif Ahmed Rather and tainted J&K police officer Davinder Singh in January last year.

Since the arrest had come merely two days after Mr. Parra's filing his nomination papers for J&K's maiden District Development Council (DDC) elections, the PDP

● **THE NIA HAD arrested Parra on November 25 for his alleged "close links" with Kashmiri lawyer Irfan Shafi Mir, who was arrested by the police along with Hizb-ul-Mujahideen commander Syed Naveed Mushtaq, another militant Asif Ahmed Rather and tainted J&K police officer Davinder Singh.**

had termed the NIA's action as a political blackmail of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.

Mr. Parra subsequently won this election with a significant margin of votes from a segment of home district Pulwama while still in NIA custody. However, he wasn't allowed to take the oath as a member even via online mode despite a directive from the court.

The NIA had, however, maintained that Mr. Parra was arrested by it "in con-

nection with the Naveed Babu-Davinder Singh case for supporting Hizb-ul-Mujahideen in conspiracy with the other accused persons."

Mr. Parra was on December 20 sent to a 30-day judicial remand by a special judge of the NIA. A team of Counter Intelligence Kashmir (CIK), a wing of J&K police, carried out a raid at his home in Pulwama on December 30.

Late Saturday night, PDP president and former chief minister, Mehbooba Mufti, informed that Mr. Parra has been detained by an Intelligence wing of the J&K police now and while questioning it's legality she sought Lt. Governor, Manoj Sinha's intervention in the matter.

She tweeted, "Despite NIA Court granting bail to @parawahid after thorough court proceedings, he has now been detained by CIK in Jammu. Under what law & for what crime

has he been arrested? This is brazen contempt of court. Request @manoj-sinha_ji to intervene so that justice is served."

Earlier this week, the NIA had sought the details of his properties in Srinagar from the J&K police.

According to the agency, during the investigations into Singh's association with the Hizb militants, it came across phone records of Mir which showed that he was in close contact with Mr. Parra. The NIA sources had added that Mir had claimed during questioning that Mr. Parra sought his support during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections for his party candidate Mehbooba Mufti.

Singh who last served as Deputy Superintendent of Police at the Anti-Hijacking Squad at the Srinagar International Airport is facing charges under various anti terror laws for helping separatist militants back home.

Idea of forming anti-BJP
alliance in Assam fadesMANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, JAN. 9

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

Confusion over the proposed alliance between Congress and AIUDF started after AICC general secretary and party's state in-charge Jitendra Singh said that the Congress high command will not bypass the opinion of ground level workers before finalising an alliance with AIUDF for the 2021

Assam elections.

"There is nothing regarding the alliance. I have not met Mr. Badruddin Ajmal and nobody is in touch (regarding the alliance with AIUDF)," Mr. Singh told reporters. "I don't think there have been any talks between the Congress high command and AIUDF leaders. Any discussion on alliance politics has to go through the general secretary in-charge for the state," said Mr. Singh.

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

"Talks on Congress and AIUDF ties are at the

final stage," said Mr. Ajmal. In fact the idea of forming a grand alliance of all the anti-CAA forces was floated and stitched by late chief minister Tarun Gogoi.

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

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

Amidst stand-off, Chinese
soldier captured in Ladakh

FROM PG 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chinese state owned media *Global Times* said that China

has called for an immediate return of the soldier, who it claimed went missing due to "darkness and complicated geography".

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

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

Kerala govt permits reopening
of spas, ayurvedic resorts

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

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

"Such institutions can be opened fully in compliance with the COVID protocols. They must also take all precautions to ensure hygiene and safety," he said.

— PTI



SHORT TAKES

EASTER ATTACKS:
U.S. CHARGES 3
SRI LANKANS

Washington, Jan. 9: The US has charged three Sri Lankan nationals for allegedly being part of a group of ISIS supporters responsible for the 2019 Easter attacks. Mohamed Nufar, Mohamed Anwar Mohamed Riskan and Ahamed Milhan Hayathu Moahmed are currently in custody in Sri Lanka.

The criminal case was filed on December 11, in the US District Court in Los Angeles. Nufar, the "second emir" for the group of ISIS supporters that called itself "ISIS in Sri Lanka" who allegedly led the group's propaganda efforts, recruited others to join ISIS and led a series of multi-day military-type trainings.

Riskan allegedly helped manufacture the IEDs used in the Easter Attacks; and Moahmed allegedly executed a police officer in order to obtain the officer's firearm, shot a suspected informant, and scouted a location for a separate terrorist attack.

INTEL OFFICIAL
'HURT' AFTER
OUSTER BY DON

Washington, Jan. 9: The ousted inspector general of the intelligence community says he is "disappointed and saddened" that President Donald Trump fired him, but he also encouraged other inspectors general to continue to speak out when they are aware of wrongdoing.

Trump notified Congress late Friday evening that he intended to fire Michael Atkinson because he had lost confidence in him. On Saturday, Trump made it clear that the move had been retaliatory, telling reporters that Atkinson was a "disgrace" and had done "a terrible job" because he had provided an anonymous whistleblower complaint to Congress — a move that was required by law.

Atkinson was required by law to notify Congress of the complaint, which was written by an anonymous intelligence official and detailed Trump's pressure on Ukraine to investigate Democrats.

GOOGLE BANS
PARLER FROM
PLAY STORE

Washington, Jan. 9: Internet giant Google has suspended US-based microblogging platform Parler — where most of the supporters of outgoing President Donald Trump are shifting their base — from its app store, citing posts inciting violence and demanding "robust" moderation for "egregious" content from the social networking service.

Simultaneously, Apple also warned Parler on Friday that it will ban the service from its app store if it doesn't start to moderate its content better.

The move by the two Silicon Valley companies came the day when Twitter permanently suspended Trump's account due to "risk of further incitement of violence".

"In order to protect user safety on Google Play, our long-standing policies require that apps displaying user-generated content have moderation policies and enforcement that removes egregious content like spots that incite violence," Google said in a statement.

FBI SEARCHES
LAWMAKERS'
OFFICES, HOMES

Nashville, Jan. 9: Federal prosecutors in Tennessee have said that FBI agents have searched the homes and offices of several state lawmakers.

US Attorney's Office of Middle Tennessee spokesman David Boling on Friday confirmed the searches included the homes of former GOP House Speaker Glen Casada, state Rep. Robin Smith and Casada's former chief of staff, Cade Cothren. The office of Republican Rep. Todd Warner also was searched, according to House Speaker Cameron Sexton.

Boling declined to provide any further information regarding the nature of the searches and how many lawmakers were involved.

A spokesman for the FBI referred all questions to the US Attorney's Office. Republican Gov. Bill Lee told reporters Friday that he had spoken to Sexton, a Republican from Crossville, about the searches, describing them as "FBI raids."

"It's certainly very concerning. I know very little about that. There's been no FBI outreach to us," Lee said.

15 charged over
Capitol violence

Legal action against Trump demanded

Washington, Jan. 9: The US Justice Department announced Friday that it has charged 15 people involved in the assault on Congress, including one man accused of possessing bombs made to act like "homemade napalm." But Ken Kohl, a federal prosecutor with the Washington US attorney's office, said they did not expect to charge anyone with "incitement" or "insurrection" in Wednesday's violence, amid calls for legal action against President Donald Trump, his lawyer Rudy Giuliani and others for encouraging it.

The department unveiled the cases against 13 people, including Richard Barnett, a Trump supporter who invaded the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Lonnie Coffman of Alabama, who was found carrying two handguns and had 11 Styrofoam-enhanced Molotov cocktails in his truck.

Others whose charges were unsealed include Christopher Albert of Maryland, who allegedly entered the US Capitol with a loaded handgun; and Mark Leffingwell, charged with punching an officer. Most of the 13 were charged with illegal entry into restricted buildings of Congress, and violent or disorderly conduct.

They were also charged with impeding government functions after forcing the shutdown of a joint meeting of Congress to officially certify that Trump rival Joe Biden had won the November 3 election, which Trump had until Thursday refused to accept. Barnett, famously photographed with his feet on a desk in Pelosi's office, was charged with theft of stationery.

"The lawless destruction of the US Capitol building was an attack against one of our nation's greatest institutions," said Acting US Attorney Michael Sherwin in a statement.

Kohl said that not all the charges filed over Wednesday's violence had been unsealed, and that more were in the pipeline as the FBI investigates.

"This investigation has the highest priority," he said, with "hundreds" of Justice Department investigators working the case.

Around 40 people were arrested and charged by

Don impeachment
is for Congress to
decide: Biden

Washington, Jan. 9: President-elect Joe Biden on Friday strongly indicated he does not back moves to impeach President Donald Trump, saying the quickest way to get him out of office is through the transition in two weeks. "The quickest way that will happen is us being sworn in on the 20th," said Biden, who will take the oath of office on January 20.

"What actually happens before or after, that is a judgment for the Congress to make. But that's what I am looking forward to: him leaving office."

The President-elect was addressing reporters in his hometown of Wilmington two days after Trump encouraged a mob of supporters to march on Congress.

Democratic leaders in Congress have growing momentum for attempting to impeach Trump for the second time in his

presidency.

There is little support so far among Republicans, although they too have loudly condemned Trump's behaviour.

This was Biden's first extended reaction to the talk of impeaching Trump or trying to persuade Vice President Mike Pence to invoke the 25th amendment removing the president from office.

Biden's hesitancy to support his party on impeachment reflects the fact that he already faces a mammoth task in working to heal divisions in US society.

"We're going to do our job and Congress can decide how to proceed," Biden said.

"The idea that I think he shouldn't be out of office yesterday is not an issue. The question is what happens with 14 days to go, 13 days left to go?"

— AFP

The lawless destruction of the US Capitol building was an attack against one of our nation's greatest institutions.

— MICHAEL SHERWIN
Acting US Attorney

Washington police, mostly for curfew violations, weapons offences and unlawful entry. But the charges announced by Kohl Friday were on the federal level and potentially carry heavier punishment.

He said the FBI was not investigating anyone on possible "incitement" or "insurrection" charges.

Some people have called for Trump, Giuliani, Trump's son Donald Jr. and others to be charged with incitement for openly encouraging the president's supporters to take action just hours before the mob stormed the Capitol.

"We don't expect any charges of that nature," Kohl said.

— AFP

POLICE UNION
HEAD SORRY FOR
DEFENDING MOB

Chicago, Jan. 9: The president of the Chicago Police officers' union apologised for defending the pro-Trump mob that stormed the US Capitol and downplaying this week's violence that left four people dead. In a statement posted on Facebook on Friday, John Catanzara, called his "poorly worded" comments made during an interview with WBEZ, Chicago's public radio station, a lapse in judgment. "I certainly would never justify any attacks on citizens, democracy or law enforcement," he wrote.

In the initial comments, he characterised participants as supporters of the president who believed that the election had been stolen.

— AP

Indo-American Sabrina
is Harris' Dy Press Secy

Washington, Jan. 9: Indian-American Sabrina Singh would serve as Deputy Press Secretary to the Vice President in the White House, according to an announcement made by the Biden-Harris Transition. Singh was Press Secretary to Vice President-elect Kamala Harris on the Biden-Harris campaign. Prior to her role on the campaign, she served as senior spokesperson for Mike Bloomberg's presidential campaign and National Press Secretary for Cory Booker's presidential campaign.

She previously served as deputy communications director for the Democratic National Committee, spokesperson for American Bridge's Trump War Room and Regional

Communications Director on Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign.

Singh has also worked at SKDKnickerbocker, served as Communications Director for Representative Jan Schakowsky and worked at various Democratic committees, said the Biden-Harris Transition as it announced additional members of the Vice President's Office at the White House.

Prominent among them being Yael Belkind, Assistant to the Chief of Staff to the Vice President; Vincent Evans as Deputy Director of the Office of Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs; Michael Fuchs as Deputy Chief of Staff; Kate Childs Graham as Director of Speech Writing and Dr Ike

Irby as Policy Advisor to the Vice President.

Deanne Millison has been named Deputy Policy Director to the Vice President; Rachel Palermo as Assistant Press Secretary; Mike Pyle as Chief Economic Advisor; Peter Velz as Director of Press Operations; and Herbie Ziskend as Deputy Communications Director.

These diverse, experienced, and talented individuals will join the Office of the Vice President. The appointments demonstrate that the president and vice president-elect are building an administration that looks like America and is ready to deliver results for the American people on day one, the transition said.

— PTI

Spain sees heaviest snowfall in 50 yrs

Madrid, Jan. 9: Heavy snow continued to fall across much of Spain on Friday, causing chaos on the roads, particularly in the centre of the country, with the capital Madrid seeing its heaviest snowfall in 50 years.

By nightfall, the extreme weather brought by Storm Filomena had left many areas under a deep blanket of white in a rare bout of wintry weather not seen in decades to the Iberian peninsula.

As the snow showed no signs of letting up, Madrid's Barajas airport halted all incoming and outgoing flights. "For safety rea-

sons, operations have been stopped at #Airport AS #Madrid-#Barajas, until visibility is improved. The work to clear the runways continues in order to resume operations as soon as possible #BorrascaFilomena," it tweeted.

The blizzard also caused havoc on the roads, with nearly 400 affected across Spain and hundreds of vehicles stranded in the snow and ice.

The worst-hit regions were Castilla La Mancha, Valencia and Madrid, with the capital seeing its heaviest snowfall since 1971, Spain's public television said. Hours of

intense snow which was still falling by 2100 GMT cut off the city's two main ringroads, the M30 and the M40, and a red alert was declared in the city centre where police struggled to help people stranded in vehicles.

The transport authority said the snow had disrupted traffic on almost 400 main roads, where in many cases lorries and heavy goods vehicles were unable to pass, while many roads were only passable with snow chains.

On the secondary road network, more than 50 roads were impassable and around 170 roads required chains. And hun-

Twitter permanently bans Don

San Francisco, Jan. 9: Twitter said Friday it has permanently suspended President Donald Trump's account, citing the risk of further violence following the assault on the US Capitol by his supporters.

"After close review of recent Tweets from the @realDonaldTrump account," Twitter said in a blog post explaining its decision, "we have permanently suspended the account due to the risk of further incitement of violence." Twitter — Trump's favourite megaphone — blocked him for 12 hours after the deadly attack on the US Capitol on Wednesday and threatened permanent suspension if he continued breaking its rules.

Trump returned to Twitter late Thursday, posting a video message that seemed aimed at calming tensions after the mayhem

MY SUPPORT BASE, MYSELF WON'T
BE SILENCED: TRUMP AFTER BAN

Washington, Jan. 9: Outgoing US President Donald Trump has slammed Twitter for permanently suspending him, vowing that he and his support base would not be silenced. The unprecedented move by the California-based microblogging site on Friday comes after Trump tweeted that he would not attend the inauguration of his successor Joe Biden on January 20.

At the time of suspension, Trump had 88.7 million followers and followed 51 people. In a statement

caused by his supporters.

He acknowledged his presidency was ending and promised a smooth transi-

tion to Joe Biden, although he did not go so far as to congratulate or even say the name of his successor.

after he was banned, Trump said: "I predicted this would happen. We have been negotiating with various other sites, and will have a big announcement soon, while we also look at the possibilities of building out our own platform in the near future. We will not be SILENCED!"

"Twitter is not about FREE SPEECH. They are all about promoting a Radical Left platform where some of the most vicious people in the world are allowed to speak freely."

— PTI

Twitter said at the time it was continuing to watch Trump's social media activity to determine whether further action was needed.

The decision to suspend Trump's account came after a pair of tweets on Friday, according to the one-to-many messaging platform. In one of the tweets, Trump vowed that none of his supporters would be "disrespected," and in another, he said he would not be attending Biden's inauguration on January 20, as is customary. "These two Tweets must be read in the context of broader events in the country and the ways in which the President's statements can be mobilised by different audiences, including to incite violence, as well as in the context of the pattern of behaviour from this account in recent weeks," Twitter said.

— AFP

China WHO
trip: No timeline

Beijing, Jan. 9: China is ready to receive a WHO expert team to probe the origin of Covid-19 and has reached a consensus with the UN's top health agency, a senior Chinese official said on Saturday, but gave no specific timeline for the visit.

The exact time when the WHO expert team will arrive in Wuhan, where the virus emerged in December last, and investigate into the coronavirus origin is still under negotiation, Zeng Yixin, deputy head of the National Health Commission, said. China and the World Health Organisation have reached a consensus on specific arrangements of the investigation with four video conferences, Zeng was quoted as saying by state-run Xinhua news agency.

Zeng stressed that China's position on the WHO investigation is positive, open and supportive, and the country hopes such joint efforts would help deepen the understanding of the virus and better prevent infectious diseases in the future. In a rare instance of criticism from the global body, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, often accused of being pro-China, in a media conference in Geneva on Tuesday had expressed disappointment over China not finalising the necessary permissions for the experts team's arrival.

"I'm very disappointed with this news, given that two members had already begun their journeys and others were not able to travel at the last minute, but had been in contact with senior Chinese officials," he said. Tedros said he "made it clear" that the mission was a priority for the UN health agency.

Chinese experts are waiting for their WHO counterparts, he said. Once the WHO experts complete their procedures and finalise the schedule, Chinese experts will go to Wuhan with them to conduct the probe, Zeng was

U.S. RECORD:
NEARLY 2.9 LAKH
CASES IN 24 HRS

Washington, Jan. 9: The United States hit a new record for coronavirus cases Friday, notching nearly 290,000 in a span of 24 hours, according to a real-time tally by Johns Hopkins University.

The country, the hardest-hit in the world by the Covid-19 pandemic, also recorded 3,676 virus deaths in the same day, the Baltimore-based university said.

The day before, the US had recorded a record of nearly 4,000 deaths in 24 hours. Some 131,000 people are currently hospitalized in the US for Covid-19, according to the Covid Tracking Project.

The world's largest economy has recorded 21.8 million coronavirus cases and more than 368,000 deaths since the start of the pandemic.

The country, where health restrictions vary drastically between localities, is ultimately counting on a massive vaccination campaign begun in mid-December to bring the health crisis to an end.

dreds of lorry drivers were held up across the country.

The AEMET weather agency described the situation as "exceptional and most likely historic".

Earlier in the day, children in Madrid could be seen hurling snowballs or playing under snow-covered palm trees, while others snapped photos of the rare whitout which began in earnest the day after Spain celebrated King's Day — or Epiphany.

AEMET had earlier warned another 20 centimetres (eight inches) of snow was expected in Madrid, the high central plains.

— AFP

தமிழ் வளர்ச்சி மற்றும் செய்தித் துறை			
நாமக்கல் கவிஞர் மாளிகை, தலைமைச் செயலகம், புனித ஜார்ஜ் கோட்டை, சென்னை - 600 009.			
செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்பு அலுவலகத்தில் காலியாக உள்ள தொழில்நுட்ப உதவியாளர் மற்றும் திறைப்படைக் கருவி இயக்குபவர் பணிபுரியும் நியமிக்கப்பட்ட இயக்குநர். செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறை அலுவலகம் தகுதியான நபர்களைத் தேர்ந்தெடுத்தல் விற்பனைப்புகள் வாங்கப்படும்படிக்குறிப்பிடுகிறது. பணிபுரியும் தொழிலாளர் விவரம் கீழ்வருமாறு:-			
1	பதவியின் பெயர்	: தொழில்நுட்ப உதவியாளர்	திறைப்படைக் கருவி இயக்குபவர்
2	தகுதிப் பரிகிதம்	: நிலை 8 (ஏ. 19500-62000)	நிலை 8 (ஏ. 19500-62000)
3	காலிய பணிபுரியும்புள்ள எண்ணிக்கை	: 1 (ஒன்று)	1 (ஒன்று)
4	இளைஞர்	: பொதுப்பேர்ப்பு (புள்ளிப்பெயர்) (புள்ளிப்பெயர்) (புள்ளிப்பெயர்)	மிகவும் குறிப்பிடப்படும்படி மற்றும் சீரமைப்பு (புள்ளிப்பெயர்) (புள்ளிப்பெயர்)
5	பணிபுரியும்புள்ள இடம்	: செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறை அலுவலகம், கள்ளக்குறிச்சி மாநகரம்.	
6	தகுதிக்கத் தொழில்நுட்ப உதவியாளர்	: 1. Diploma in Electrical and Electronics Engineering or; Diploma in Electronics and Communication Engineering and 2. Experience for a period of 2 years from a reputed company, in operating LED screens with computer hardware knowledge	
	வயது வரம்பு	: 01.07.2020 அன்றுள்ளவாறு 18 முதல் 28 வயதிற்குள் இருக்க வேண்டும். மற்றும் நடைமுறையில் உள்ள ஆணைகளின்படி	
7	தகுதிக்கத் (திறைப்படைக் கருவி இயக்குபவர்)	: 1. Must have passed SSLC or its equivalent and; 2. Must have practical experience as Cinema Operator in a Cinema Theatre for a period of not less than 2 years or; Must have passed the examination conducted by the Government Board of Examiners for Cinema Operators and must have practical experience as Cinema Operator in a Cinema Theatre for a period of not less than two years or; Diploma in Cinematography or in Sound Recording and Sound Engineering or in Film Editing with practical experience as Cinema Operator for a period of not less than one year	
	வயது வரம்பு	: 01.07.2020 அன்றுள்ளவாறு 18 முதல் 30 வயதிற்குள் இருக்க வேண்டும்.	
8	விற்பனைப்புகளை அனுப்ப வேண்டிய முகவரி	: இலக்குநர், செய்தி மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறை, நாமக்கல் கவிஞர் மாளிகை, தலைமைச் செயலகம், புனித ஜார்ஜ் கோட்டை, சென்னை - 600 009	
9	விற்பனைப்புகளை அனுப்ப வேண்டிய கடைசி நாள்	: மனுக்கள் பெற, விவரம், பிறந்த தேதி, கல்வி, அனுப்பத் தகுதி மற்றும் பிற விவரங்களுடன் கூடிய முழுமையான விற்பனைப் படிவத்தினை வகைப்படுத்தி, சமீபத்திலுள்ள தகவல்களுடன் 22.01.2021 மாலை 5 மணிக்குள் அனுப்ப வேண்டும்.	



All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi

is holding its
47th Annual Convocation
(in hybrid virtual mode)
on
Monday, 11th January 2021 at 10.00 AM
at Jawahar Institute Auditorium
AIIMS, New Delhi

Dr. Poonam Khetrpal Singh
Regional Director, South-East Asia
World Health Organization
will be the Chief Guest and will deliver the Convocation Address

Dr. Harsh Vardhan
Hon'ble Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India
and President-AIIMS, will preside over the function

Sh. Ashwini Kumar Choubey
Hon'ble Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare,
Govt. of India, will be the Guest of Honor

Prof. Randeep Guleria
Director, AIIMS New Delhi
will admit the successful candidates to their respective degrees

In view of the restrictions due to COVID-19, you are requested to
join the Convocation online at www.aiims.edu

DAVP 17112/13/0024/2021

DECCAN Chronicle

10 JANUARY 2021



Sanjeev Ahluwalia

Off the beaten track

C-virus funk? Relax, and respect the kids

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

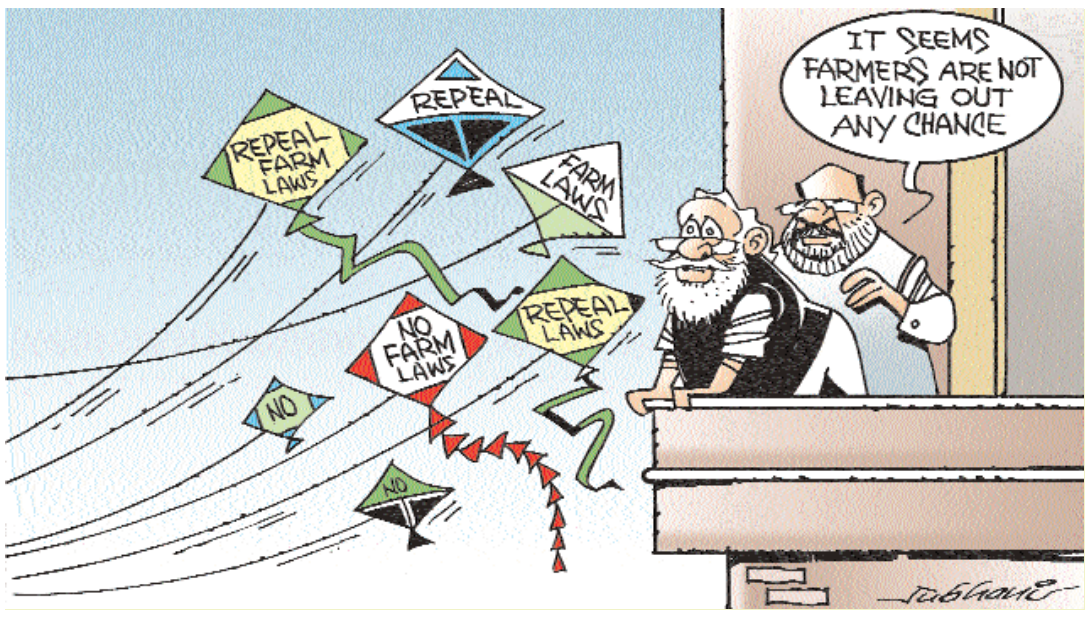
Second, imagine what you always wanted your boss to do — to quit micro-managing you. Become your ideal boss. Lay out fair rules on how your lives will run. Encourage your children to become equal partners in fleshing out what this means in practice — who does what, when and why. Things will probably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

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

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

The writer is adviser, Observer Research Foundation

Subhani



Why J. Khanna dissented from Central Vista ruling



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya’s View

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LETTERS

WELCOME DECISION

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

N. Mahadevan, Chennai

ECONOMIC SURVEY

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

M. Jayaram, Sholavandan

NEW FARM LAWS

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

V. Rahul Venkatasubramanian, Chennai

Mail your letters to editor@deccanmail.com

Anita Katyal
Political
Gup-Shup



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

attempts to move him out.

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

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

SHORT TAKES

Liverpool survive scare in FA Cup

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

Karlovic 2nd oldest to win on ATP Tour

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

East Bengal add to BFC's misery

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

Mohammedan off to winning start

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

Live on TV

CRICKET

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

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

FOOTBALL

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

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

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

GOLF

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

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SLOW & UNSTEADY

Pujara's slowest Test 50 derails visitors momentum

SCORECARD

Australia 1st Innings 338

India 1st Innings (overnight 96/2): Rohit Sharma c and b Hazlewood 26, Shubman Gill c Green b Cummins 50, Cheteshwar Pujara c Paine b Cummins 50, Ajinkya Rahane b Cummins 22, Hanuma Vihari run out 4, Rishabh Pant c Warner b Hazlewood 36, Ravindra Jadeja run out 28, R. Ashwin run out 1, Navdeep Saini c Wade b Starc 3, Bumrah run out 0, Mohammed Siraj c Paine b Cummins 6. Extras (lb-2, w-5, nb-2) 9. **Total (In 100.4 overs) 244.** **FOW:** 70-1, 85-2, 117-3, 142-4, 195-5, 195-6, 206-7, 210-8, 216-9. **Bowling:** Starc 19-76-1-1, Hazlewood 21-10-43-2, Cummins 21-4-10-29-4, Lyon 31-88-70-0, Labuschagne 3-0-11-0, Green 5-1-11-0. **Australia 2nd Innings:** David Warner lbw Ashwin 15, Will Pucovski c (sub)W Saha b Siraj 10, Marnus Labuschagne batting 47, Steven Smith batting 29. Extras (lb-1, nb-3) 4. **Total (For 2 wkts, in 29 Overs) 103.** **FOW:** 1-16, 2-35. **Bowling:** Jasprit Bumrah 8-1-26-0, Mohammed Siraj 8-2-20-1, Navdeep Saini 7-1-28-0, Ravichandran Ashwin 6-0-28-1.

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

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

Pat Cummins (4/29 in

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

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

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

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

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

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

FOR THE RECORD

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

● Overall, it was the 37th occasion of three or more batsmen dismissed run out in an innings in the annals of the Test cricket. ● Shubman Gill and Cheteshwar Pujara scored 50 runs in India's first innings to provide the first occasion of two Indian batsmen scoring exact 50 runs in the same innings. It also provides the 12th such occasion of two batsmen scoring exact 50 runs in the same innings in Tests.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER



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

— AP

CUMMINS REVEALS OZ'S PLANS AGAINST PUJARA

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

Pujara has been criticised for his ultra-defensive approach in the series so far and instead of propping up his team's response to Australia's first

innings total of 338, his slow 50 off 176 balls on the third day of the third Test derailed India's momentum.

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

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

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

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

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

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

— PTI

JADEJA INJURES HIS THUMB, OUT OF 4TH TEST

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

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

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

— PTI

Injured Crivellaro ruled out of ISL-7

NEHA SURANA | DC CHENNAI, JAN. 9

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

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

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

Crivellaro's absence will be a big setback for Chennaiyin

coach Csaba Laszlo.

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

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

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

Domestic season finally underway

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Oldest living Oly champ turns 100

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

— AP

Superb fielding makes Jadeja an all-round package



Ayaz Memon
Over The Top

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kapil Dev was a natural athlete and with great ball

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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