

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | THURSDAY 28 | JANUARY 2021

## WEATHER



**Max:** 30°C  
**Min:** 21°C  
**Rainfall:** Nil

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Thai 15  
**Tithi:** Pournami  
**Star:** Pusam  
**Rahukalam:** 1.30 pm to 3 pm  
**Yamagandam:** 6 am to 7.30 am  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 5.22 am  
**Zohar:** 12.26 pm  
**Asar:** 3.39 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6.06 pm  
**Isha:** 7.20 pm

**SUNSET TODAY 6.08 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.36 AM**  
**MOONRISE TODAY 5.50 PM**  
**MOONSET TOMORROW 6.08 AM**

## CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+11,146)	(+111)
1,07,01,427	1,53,862

covid19india.org

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+512)  
**TN:** 8,36,315    12,333

### WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

10,11,07,251

### DEATHS

21,75,141

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES  
**219**

worldometers.info

### Kerala HC notice to Kohli, actor Tamanna for online gambling ad

Kochi: The Kerala High Court on Wednesday issued notice to Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli and the state government in a plea seeking ban on online gambling in the state. Besides Kohli, a division bench, headed by Chief Justice S. Manikumar, also issued notices to Malayalam actor Aju Varghese and South Indian actor Tamanna Bhatia.

The celebrities are the brand ambassadors of online rummy games. — PTI

### SC offers no protection from arrest to *Tandav* makers

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday declined to grant interim protection from arrest to Ali Abbas Zafar, director of web series *Tandav*, and others seeking quashing of FIRs against them for allegedly hurting religious sentiments of Hindus and issued notices to Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and other states on their pleas. A bench was hearing petitions of Zafar, Amazon Prime India head Aparna Purohit, among others. — PTI

## COUNTER POINT



**It's high time we allocate more funds in the budget for teargas shells, lathis, water cannons...**

## Raj gang murders jeweller's wife, son

**SIKAZHI | HEIST**

**R. VALAYAPATHY | DC**  
SIRKAZHI, JAN. 27

Police shot dead a notorious thief in an encounter at Olaiyampudur near Sirkazhi in Mayiladuthurai district during the wee hours of Wednesday, after a hot chase of a four-member gang which committed a double murder in a jewelry owner's house, and

### Police kills one gang member in encounter, nabs two

decamped with 16 kg of gold jewels.

Police identified three of the four-member gang, suspected to be from Rajasthan, as Manipal, Manis and Ramesh. The identity of the fourth person is yet to be known.

Wearing masks, the men knocked the doors of jeweller Dhanraj's house who owned a jewelry-cum-pawn

broker shop at Sirkazhi. As soon as Dhanraj opened the door, the gang attacked him. As he swooned on the floor, the gang entered the house, broke open the steel almirahs where the jewelry was kept. Hearing the noise, Asha, wife of Dhanraj and their son Akil, rushed in and attempted to resist the gang, but were attacked with deadly weapons. Both

died due to injuries.

The gang fled in Dhanraj's car along with the booty. In a short while, the car developed a technical snag near Olaiyampudur village on the Sirkazhi bypass road near Melamathur, and the gang attempted to take cover in a nearby paddy field. But local villagers who witnessed the gang alerted the police. ■ P4



**SANJAY KAW | DC**  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 27

A day after the national capital witnessed unprecedented violence during Republic Day tractor rally, two farmers' unions - the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) and the Bharatiya Kisan Union (Bhanu) -- on Wednesday separated themselves from the ongoing protests against the contentious agriculture laws at Delhi borders.

AIKSCC leader V.M. Singh said his organisation is withdrawing from the agitation with immediate effect because the format of the protest is "unacceptable" to it. "We are discontinuing our agitation but our fight for farmers' rights will continue," he said at Ghazipur border.

Mr Singh said he and his organisation have nothing to do with the protest led by Bhartiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait. "I have nothing to do with the protest which is being led by them and over here being represented by Rakesh Tikait on their behalf..."

Mr Tikait, who has been



Yogendra Yadav (second left) , Rakesh Tikait (second right ) and other leaders of Sanyukt Kisan Morcha during a press conference regarding the violence in their January 26 tractor march, at Singhu border in New Delhi. — PTI

### THE DAY AFTER

**All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee:** The format of the protest is unacceptable. But our fight for farmers' rights will continue. We didn't come to defame January 26.

**Bharatiya Kisan Union (Bhanu):** Deeply pained by whatever happened in Delhi. Ending our protest.

**Samyuktha Kisan Morcha:** Will not call off the

at the forefront of the agitation, has alleged that the violence was part of a conspiracy of certain forces to defame their "genuine" movement to protect the interests of the poor farm-

ers. Hitting out at Mr Tikait, the AIKSCC leader said he neither spoke about issues faced by sugarcane farmers, nor he discussed their pain in meetings with the government.

**Union minister Prakash Javadekar:** The government has not shut the door on further discussions with farmer leaders.

ers. Hitting out at Mr Tikait, the AIKSCC leader said he neither spoke about issues faced by sugarcane farmers, nor he discussed their pain in meetings with the government.

### SWIMMING POOLS TO BE OPENED FOR ALL, THEATRES CAN ADMIT MORE

New Delhi, Jan. 27: The Union ministry of home affairs (MHA) on Wednesday allowed cinema halls and theatres to operate with more people while swimming pools have been permitted for use by all in fresh Covid-19 reopening guidelines.

According to these new guidelines, to be effective from February 1, there shall be no restriction on inter-state and intra-state movement of people and goods including those for cross land-border trade under treaties with neighbouring countries. No separate permission/ approval/ e-permit will be required for such movements, the MHA said. All activities have been permitted outside containment zones, except a few which will be subject to strict adherence of SOPs.

Social, religious, sports, entertainment, educational, cultural, religious gatherings have already been permitted up to a maximum of 50 per cent of the hall capacity, with a ceiling of 200 people in closed spaces; and keeping of the size of the ground or space in view, in open spaces.

"Now such gatherings will be allowed subject to SOP of the state and UT concerned. Cinema halls will be permitted to operate at higher seating capacity, for which a revised SOP will be issued by ministry of information and broadcasting in consultation with MHA," the guidelines said. — PTI

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## OTHER STORIES

## CM slams Stalin for trying to stall Jaya memorial

From P1

Among others, he credited her for the new Veeranam project, cradle baby scheme, reservation for women in local bodies and police department and Cauvery and Mullaiperiyar verdicts.

Mr Palaniswami slammed DMK chief M.K. Stalin for trying to stall the construction of the memorial through his 'benamis' by filing cases. "However, nothing prevented us from inaugurating the memorial," he said.

Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam said the party was indebted to Jayalalithaa and the memorial was built as a mark of their gratitude to her. He urged party men to dedicate their victory in the ensuing Assembly elections to her.

Speaker P. Dhanapal, ministers, MLAs and MPS took part in the mega event.

## Sasikala supporters eagerly waiting for her return

From P1

It was the happiest moment for all of them. "On doctor's advice, we will take a call on her returning to Chennai. People in Tamil Nadu are eagerly waiting for her," he said.

The formalities for her release were done at the state-run Victoria Hospital, where she is undergoing treatment for Covid-19 infection. Ms Sasikala would remain at the hospital for three more days as mandated under the Covid-19 protocol, though she is now asymptomatic.

"As per protocol, she will be discharged on the 10th day (January 30) if she is asymptomatic and free for oxygen support for at least three days," the hospital said in a bulletin. A large number of Sasikala supporters lined up outside the hospital, raised slogans in her favour and distributed sweets in celebration.

Ms Sasikala was in prison since February 2017 along with Ilavarasi and late Jayalalithaa's foster son V. N. Sudhakaran in connection with the Rs 66 crore disproportionate assets case.



## Violation of spl holidays Act: 2,000 firms in dock

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 27

Officials of the labour welfare enforcement wing, labour department, under orders of Labour Commissioner M. Vallalar held inspections in several institutions, industries, eateries, transport, horticulture firms and shops across the state, which violated the Tamil Nadu Industrial Establishments Holidays Act, 1958.

Raids held on the Republic Day exposed violations committed in this regard by 957 shops, 925 eateries, 94 transport organisations and 24 horticulture firms. In total, as many as 2,000 firms have been charged for violations, and legal action has been initiated against all of them.

The labour department enforces several welfare measures for workers.

Notable among those is the Special Holidays Act 1958, according to which all workers should be compulsorily provided a day's leave along with full wages, on all national, festival and special holidays like the Republic Day, May Day, Independence Day, Gandhi Jayanthi, and five other festival days.

In case this is not possible, the concerned institution, firm or industry has to pay its workers double wages for that particular day, for working on such holidays.

Workers also have to sign related papers signed by concerned authorities of their firms, and the same has to be forwarded to the labour department.

But invariably, several institutions miserably fail to honour this commitment to their workers in this regard.

## Techie ends life in Chennai

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 27

A 31-year-old woman techie allegedly ended her life at a house in Madambakkam near Tambaram due to marital problems, police said.

According to police, the deceased woman has been identified as Hemavathy, a resident of Mambakkam near Tambaram. She was a divorcee, police said, adding that Hemavathy re-married Karthik, a software engineer, who is also separated from his wife. Hemavathy and Karthik met through a matrimonial site and got married two years ago.

They worked at an IT company in Siruseri and lived at Karthik's house in Chitlapakkam near Pallikaranai. Police said, the couple, however, did not get along due to some marital problems. Sources alleged that the couple did not have a child and Karthik's family had been harassing her since she was unable to

give birth to a child. After an argument with Karthik regarding the problem, Hemavathy left for his mother's house in Madambakkam a week ago. On Monday night, while her parents were sleeping, she locked her room and allegedly hanged herself.

Her body was recovered and sent for post-mortem. Police said that Hemavathy's mother Shanthi lodged a complaint against Karthik and his family for allegedly harassing her. Selaiyur police registered a case and launched an investigation into the matter. An investigation by the Tambaram RDO has also been ordered.

Her body was recovered and sent for post-mortem. Police said that Hemavathy's mother Shanthi lodged a complaint against Karthik and his family for allegedly harassing her. Selaiyur police registered a case and launched an investigation into the matter. An investigation by the Tambaram RDO has also been ordered.



A bird's eye view of Marina where a sea of AIADMK cadre and leaders thronged the memorial of their party leader late Jayalalithaa on Wednesday.

— DC

## AIADMK cadre throng Chennai, choke traffic

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 27

As thousands of people thronged into the city to visit Jayalalitha's memorial on its inauguration day, there was heavy traffic congestion on Tiruchy-Chennai NH on Wednesday morning, espe-

cially from Chengalpet to Tambaram.

According to the police, traffic on GST road in the southern suburbs of Chennai was paralysed as people and cadres of AIADMK party were headed to the city to participate in the inauguration ceremony. Some of them were

prevented from entering by the police due to heavy disruption to the traffic flow.

A senior police officer said road traffic was completely hit on the Tiruchy-Chennai national highway with a large number of AIADMK cadres proceeding in private vehicles.

This heavy traffic hit arterial roads as well and police personnel were busy regulating the traffic. Passengers felt a lot of inconvenience due to the heavy traffic jam. The vehicles moved at snail's pace despite many police personnel regulating the traffic.

A passenger expressed his displeasure and said how usually it would take 45 to 50 minutes to cover the stretch and how it took around 3 hours to reach Tambaram from Chengalpet. Office-goers underwent a lot of inconvenience on Wednesday morning.

## Drop Alamparai harbour project: Greens

A. ARUL PALANI | DC  
CHENNAI, JAN. 27

Appealing to the state government to drop the fishing harbour project at Alamparai, near Mahabalipuram, the environmental activists have alleged that the scheme would pose a threat to ecology.

The project proposes to reclaim a hydrologically and ecologically sensitive inter-tidal zone for the construction of the harbour.

Two breakwaters of 600m and 400m each are also proposed close to the Alamparai estuary, for the

approach channel to the fishing harbour. The coastal erosion triggered by these breakwaters put the historical Alamparai Fort at the risk of falling into the sea. Any activity that will cause damage to archaeological sites is prohibited under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Rules, 1959.

"The proposed fishing harbour will cater primarily to largescale mechanised fisheries, which will change the fishing dynamics in the area. Increasing depth, reclaiming intertidal areas etc. will hurt the livelihood of the

small-scale, artisanal fisherfolk who use both motorised and non-motorised fishing boats. Further, those who rely on hand picking and cast netting of fish will be further marginalised," said Sathish Kumar, a fisherman from Alamparai.

The Kazhiveli lagoon, where the project is proposed, is part of a large coastal wetland complex comprising the Odiyur-Kazhiveli lagoons, draining into the Bay of Bengal through the Eedayanthittu estuary.

This brackish water body maintains an opti-

mum salinity gradient, protecting the fresh water further inland.

This wetland has been identified under the National Wetland Conservation and Management Programme by the government of India and as a key biodiversity area due to its unique ecological features. Without a valid environmental impact assessment report the fisheries department is planning to conduct a public hearing on January 29.

Hence, the activists demanded the government to halt the project immediately.

## Chloride main culprit behind Delhi fog, says IIT-M study

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 27

An international study carried out by the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) researchers has found that chloride was the highest inorganic fraction in the particulate matter which is primarily responsible for the haze and fog formation in north India, including Delhi. The research paper in this regard has been published in the peer-reviewed international journal 'Nature Geoscience' recently.

Dr. Sachin S. Gunthe, associate professor, department of civil engineering, IIT-Madras, who led the study, claimed that though many studies had found PM2.5 (particulate matter) was responsible for fog

"It had resulted in a hurdle to formulate effective policies to improve the air quality and visibility. New findings have enhanced the understanding about the precise role of PM2.5 in chemistry of fog formation, which will help policymakers to frame the better policies for improving the air quality and visibility in the national capital"

formation, the role of PM2.5 and a detailed chemistry of haze and fog formation over Delhi had poorly been done in studies. "It had resulted in a hurdle to formulate effective policies to improve the air quality and visibility. New findings have enhanced the understanding about the precise role of PM2.5 in chem-

istry of fog formation, which will help policymakers to frame the better policies for improving the air quality and visibility in the national capital," he said.

The study explains that complex chemical reactions involving hydrochloric acid, which is directly emitted in the atmosphere from plastic waste burning and few industrial processes, is primarily responsible for high PM2.5 chloride and subsequent haze and fog formation over Delhi during chilly winter nights.

The study was carried out in collaboration with Max Planck Institute for Chemistry, Germany; Harvard University, USA; Georgia Institute of Technology, USA; and Manchester University, UK.

## NO PUBLIC ENTRY INTO VEDA NILAYAM

**Chennai:** The Madras high court of Wednesday allowed the TN government to inaugurate Jayalalithaa's residence, Veda Nilayam at Poes Garden, in Chennai as a memorial but restrained it from throwing the house open to the public. Justice N. Seshasayee said the government can conduct the memorial's inaugural ceremony on Thursday. Taking note that inventory of articles in the bungalow was not done in the presence of the legal heirs J. Deepa and J. Deepak, niece and nephew of Jayalalithaa, the HC judge said no one should enter the building during the inaugural ceremony.

## Kid dies post vaccination, dad gets ₹2 lakh compensation

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 27

The State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) directed the state government to pay a compensation of ₹2 lakh to the father of a five-year-old girl child who died following vaccination in a government hospital in Chennai, three years ago.

In the complaint, D. Gopi of Kodungaiyur stated that his daughter Thanishka (5), had gone to the Institute of Social Pediatrics, government Stanley Medical College, for the purpose of taking M.R. Vaccine on May 2, 2018.

Thanishka was a hale and healthy child without any health issues before taking

In the complaint, D. Gopi of Kodungaiyur stated that his daughter Thanishka (5), had gone to the Institute of Social Pediatrics, government Stanley Medical College, for the purpose of taking M.R. Vaccine on May 2, 2018.

the vaccine. Soon after taking the vaccine, she fainted and was unable to breathe. Her eyes were burning. Hence, she was urgently taken for emergency treatment by the hospital staff, and the complainant was not allowed to even see his daughter after that. Around 3:20 pm the next day, the hos-

pital staff declared Thanishka was dead.

On Gopi's complaint, Flower Bazaar police registered a case. He alleged that due to the negligence and deficiency of service in the hospital, the child had died.

In reply, the hospital management stated that the child was vaccinated with MR vaccine and 15 to 20 minutes later, the child developed Anaphylaxis, which was promptly identified and treatment initiated in the emergency room. The condition of the child was explained to the parents in detail and the complainant and his wife agreed and also signed the hospital records. The same vaccine and dilu-

ents were given to 20 children the same day. Except Thanishka, all other children reported no complications. The government Stanley Hospital is providing proper services and also conducting the 'national immunization programme' routinely, till date.

SHRC member D. Jayachandran, said the death of Thanishka caused irreparable loss and much mental agony to the complainant. Considering the pathetic situation and also on humanitarian grounds, on behalf of the hospital, the state government is vicariously liable to pay compensation of ₹2 lakh to the victim's father, D. Gopi.

## ‘Girls without boyfriend not allowed’: SRM goes to cops

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JAN. 27

The SRM Institute of Science of Technology in Chengalpet's Kattankulathur has filed a complaint with the Crime Branch police on Wednesday, regarding a 'fake circular' making rounds on social media.

The circular, issued on the letterhead of the institute, said "Single girls would not be allowed in the SRM campus, and that it is mandatory for the girl students to have a boyfriend for security purposes".

The girl students will

have to show a recent photograph with their boyfriend to enter into the campus, the fake circular read.

The fake circular dated January 22, has the signature of registrar N. Sethuraman and others as in an official letter. After the fake circular went viral, the institution threatened the students of expelling them along with a police complaint if they circulated the notorious fake circular.

A message from the institute's Registrar office read, "This is to bring your kind attention that

there are a couple of fake and inappropriate circulars being sent under the name and designation of SRMIST's administration/registrar. These circulars contain false information and spoil the image of our Institute. Henceforth, any person - student attempting to send such unauthorized letters will be dealt with firmly and expelled from the Institution."

However, to ascertain the source of the message, SRMIST has filed a complaint with the Cyber Crime police, the notice said.

## Cadre hails Sasikala, thrown out of AIADMK

ARULOLI M | DC  
TIRUNELVELI, JAN. 27

A Tirunelveli district functionary of the AIADMK was expelled from the primary membership of the party for putting up posters welcoming Sasikala Natarajan, released from the Parappana Agrahara jail, Bengaluru.

The functionary, Subramanya Raja, deputy secretary, Tirunelveli district MGR mandram, had put up posters and banners welcoming Sasikala Natarajan. Posters carrying pictures of former chief ministers, C. N. Annadurai, M.G. Ramachandran and J. Jayalalithaa, along with Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami and deputy chief minister, O. Panneerselvam, were installed all over the district. The posters also contained words eulogising Sasikala Natarajan as AIADMK general secretary, seeking her to lead the party.

However, within a few hours following the display of the posters, a circular was released jointly by AIADMK coordinator O. Panneerselvam and deputy coordinator, Edappadi K. Palaniswami, expelling Ramasubramanya Raja from the party post, and also from the primary membership of the party.



The tale of King Harishchandra, considered the epitome of truth and virtue in ancient Indian history, etched on the compound wall of Villivakkam burial ground.

— DC



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New stores now open at Ambattur, Cathedral Road & Chrompet in Chennai



7 கோடி தமிழக மக்களின் இதயத் துடிப்பு

1 1/2 கோடி கழக தொண்டர்களின் உயிர் மூச்சு

கழகம் காத்து, தமிழகம் காக்க

தவ வாழ்வு வாழ்ந்த

தமிழர் குலசாமி

மாண்புமிகு முன்னாள் முதலமைச்சர்

ஸ்ரீரத்தினம்

**அம்மா**

அவர்கள்

கொலுவீற்று அரசாட்சி புரிந்த போயஸ் கார்டன்

**வேதா நிலையம் இல்லத்தை**

**நாட்டு மக்களுக்கு அர்ப்பணித்து**

தீவிரம் கைக்கும்

மக்கள் விரும்பும் முதல்வர்

கழக இணை ஒருங்கிணைப்பாளர்

மாண்புமிகு தமிழ்நாடு முதலமைச்சர்

அண்ணை

**எப்பாடி**

**கே. பழனிசாமி**

அவர்களுக்கும்

அண்ணை

**ஜெ. பன்னிரெண்டாம்**

அவர்களுக்கும்

கோவை மாவட்ட மக்களின் சார்பாக

கோடானு கோடி நன்றிகளை

தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறேன்.

மாண்புமிகு **S.P. வேலுமணி** M.A., M.Phil.,

கழக அமைப்புச் செயலாளர் / கோவை புறநகர் தெற்கு மாவட்ட கழக செயலாளர்  
நகராட்சி நிர்வாகம், ஊரக வளர்ச்சித்துறை மற்றும்  
சிறப்புதிட்டங்கள் செயலாக்கத்துறை அமைச்சர்



கோவை மாவட்ட அ.கி.அ.தி.மு. கழகம், கார்பு அணிகள் (ம) பொது மக்கள்





## IN BRIEF

**Padma Shri for Subburaman hailed****DC CORRESPONDENT**  
TIRUCHY, JAN. 27

The South Zone Board of Continuing Education (SZBCE) has congratulated Tiruchy-based expert in the field of eco-sanitation and founder of NGO SCOPE M. Subburaman for being chosen for the Padma Shri award.

In a release at Tiruchy on Wednesday, SZBCE chairman Dr. Sevai K. Govindaraju recalled the yeoman services of Mr. Subburaman in rural development and empowering the marginalised women in rural areas. Dr. Govindaraju also pointed out that for the past five years Mr. Subburaman's NGO has been focusing on ecological sanitation and constructed over 2,000 ecosan toilets on the banks of rivers Ganga and Cauvery and in tsunami-hit coastal villages of Tamil Nadu.

# State should decide on opening of schools: HC

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, JAN. 27

Pointing out that it is for the state government and the administration to assess the feasibility of opening the schools, the Madras high court has said since the pandemic has not completely died down and the process of vaccination has only been initiated, it is for the state government to decide what would be an appropriate date for schools to be reopened in the form as

was prior to the lockdown.

The First Bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy made the observation while disposing of a petition filed by the Chengalpattu District Private Schools Association, which sought a direction to the state government to reopen the schools at the earliest.

The bench said there is no doubt that the state

government is alive to the fact that schools have remained closed for a considerable period of time. Indeed, the Class X and XII students have recently been permitted to rejoin the classes in physical form after Pongal.

"It is premature for the court to jump in at this stage without a decision being taken by the state in such regard. While it is important to reopen educational institutions, as observed in a previous order pertaining to cine-

ma halls, it is better to err on the side of caution. Merely because the number of cases has gone down, an air of complacency should not develop. There is also the worry regarding the subsequent UK strain, which is more virulent as an infection", the bench added.

The bench said considering all aspects, the court feels that the state government should be left free to decide on its own without being put under any pressure.

## Ooty man gets 44-year jail term under Pocso Act

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
OOTY, JAN. 27

The Mahila court here sentenced a man to 44 years of imprisonment under the Pocso act.

Police said, one Antony Vinoth (34 years), hailing from Jayanthi Nagar area in Wellington, completed catering technology and was in search of a job.

In 2017, he developed an affair with a Plus II school girl in the area. Promising her marriage, he raped her and impregnated her. Later, he used tablets to

In 2017, he developed an affair with a Plus II school girl in the area. Promising her marriage, he raped her and impregnated her

abort the foetus.

After a brief lull, he again is said to have impregnated her several times, using the ruse of marriage. On all the occasions, he had fed her tablets to abort the foetus.

Sensing that Antony Vinoth was using her only for sex and trying to avoid marrying her, the girl lodged a complaint with

the All Women Police Station at Ooty. Police arrested him and filed a case against him at the Mahila court, Ooty.

The court which heard the case sentenced Antony Vinoth to 44 years of imprisonment and imposed a fine of ₹1 lakh.

Government pleader (Maila court) here, Malini Prabhakar, said that the DNA analysis of the foetus helped fix the crime. As of now, this is the maximum punishment accorded to a convict under the Pocso Act, she added.

### Temple car festival held at Srirangam

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
SRIRANGAM, JAN. 27

The annual Thai car festival of Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, Srirangam-Tiruchy, was held at Srirangam on Wednesday in which hundreds of devotees pulled out the temple car by chanting "Ranga Ranga" through four Uthira streets and returned it to its base.

Since this was the first festival after the relaxation of the lockdown due to Covid-19, there was an additional enthusiasm among the devotees.

### Coimbatore college students develop satellite for Isro

Coimbatore, Jan. 27: Students of Sri Shakti Institute of Engineering and Technology, here, have designed and developed a satellite at a cost of Rs 2.5 crore.

It would be inaugurated by chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) Dr R Sivan on January 28.

The formation of the Indian National Space Promotion and

Authorisation Centre in June last by Prime Minister Narendra Modi inspired 12 students of the institute to collaborate with ISRO and develop 'SriShaktiSat', the institute chairman Dr Thangavel told reporters here on Wednesday.

After installing Sri Shakti Sat Ground Station in collaboration with Serbia-based Community for Space Programme

Development, the institute became a member of the Satellite Networked Open Ground Station (SATNOGS) project, he said.

Thangavel said SATNOGS aimed at providing technologies for a distributed network of low earth orbit satellite ground stations.

Shrishaktisat would be weighing only 460 grams but can perform like any

other nano satellites weighing upto 10 kgs, he said.

The satellite would be used as a technology demonstrator for Internet of Things in space and for inter-satellite communication, he said.

After the virtual inauguration, the satellite would be handed over to Isro in February for its use, he added.

— PTI

## Jail bird jumps from hosp terrace, dies

**ZAKEER HUSSAIN | DC**  
SALEM, JAN. 27

A jail inmate, Muthuvel, admitted to the government hospital here for treatment, committed suicide on Wednesday by jumping from the second floor of the building.

Sources said, Muthuvel (29) hails from Nagarasampatti area near Pochampally in Krishnagiri district.

Muthuvel is said to have murdered his mother and stepmother last month, and after arrest, was lodged in the Salem Central Jail, Block - 8. He was also charged under the Goondas Act.

On January 16, Muthuvel jumped down from the jail terrace, and was admitted to the Salem government hospital. Three police personnel were also put on security duty.

On Wednesday morning, Muthuvel had gone to the restroom, and jumped down through the hospital toilet

**Muthuvel is said to have murdered his mother and stepmother last month, and after arrest, was lodged in the Salem Central Jail, block - 8. He was charged under the Goondas Act**

window.

Realising that Muthuvel had not come out for a long time, the security personnel went in search of him, and later found him lying dead on the ground, due to the fall.

The government hospital police and prison superintendent, Tamilselvan, were informed about the incident. Tamilselvan rushed to the hospital and held preliminary investigations. A magistrate is also investigating the case.



Highways department wrapping up work on vertical gardens at Tirumangalam flyover pillars. Around 70,000 saplings have been used for the beautification. —DC

## VOC port trust raises strenuous 'green' efforts

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
THOOTHUKUDI, JAN. 27

The VOC port trust here has taken strenuous efforts to improve its green credentials.

The port has started showing positive signs of growth in container handling in its third quarter of the current fiscal, despite the slowdown in the global maritime trade, said Port trust chairman T. K. Ramachandran.

Adding that the VOC Port trust has been implementing electricity generation by non-conventional sources, Ramachandran said that the port has 5 MW land based solar power project, 140 KW roof top solar power project, 130 KW roof top solar



power project and 5 MW onshore wind farm, to cater to part of the port's electricity requirement.

"In addition, for the first time among the major ports of India, VOC port is in the process of procuring three electric cars for its use in the port," added Ramachandran.

The port is committed to transform itself as the transshipment hub of South India, following the approval of the ninth berth container project by the Union ministry of Shipping and Port.



## Martin's Duskhawker, rare dragonfly, spotted again

**B RAVICHANDRAN | DC**  
OOTY, JAN. 27

Naturalists belonging to the Coonoor-based Wynter-Blyth Association (WBA) and Travancore Nature History Society (TNHS) Trivandrum, rediscovered a rare dragonfly known as 'Martin's Duskhawker' in the Western Ghats.

It was on the Odonates of 'Western Ghats Facebook' group discussion between Dr. Kalesh Sadasivan, an avid naturalist from the TNHS, and Manoj Sethumadhavan from the WBA at Coonoor, that this species which was described in 1922, had not been sighted in south India ever since, has sprung to light. The last record of this species was by F.C. Fraser in 1933 in the Annamalai hills.

Manoj Sethumadhavan said, the Martin's Duskhawker (Anaciaeschna Martini) is a rare dragonfly species belonging to the family 'Aeshnidae'. This species was originally described by Selys in 1897 from Japan. F.C. Fraser in 1922, described Anaciaeschna donaldi from specimens collected from Kodaikanal, Yercaud and Ooty.

During a field walk in

September 2014 in Coonoor region by WBA members and during a similar nature expedition by TNHS members in June 2019 in Munnar region in Kerala, this dragonfly was photographed.

After further study of the species, Dr. Kalesh Sadasivan, along with Baiju Kochunarayan from TNHS in Munnar Hills and Manoj Sethumadhavan along with S. Jeevith from WBA, Coonoor, published their finding in the 'Journal of Threatened Taxa'.

According to Dr. Kalesh, the males of this species are virtually never seen in the field, while the females are seen during ovipositing on emergent aquatic vegetation. Manoj Sethumadhavan opined that its breeding season was from May to November, tallying with the monsoon rains in the region.

The species is a strong flyer, and hence, may be expected to be found across similar mountainous

locations with suitable habitats in Peninsular India, as commented recently by experts in the field. The status of the species is possibly locally 'not uncommon', but may be rare altogether in the Western Ghats.

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
THOOTHUKUDI, JAN. 27

Sleuths of the 'Q branch' police here, seized turmeric powder, turmeric finger and cardamom that were kept ready to be smuggled to Sri Lanka.

Acting on a tip off, cops intercepted a fully loaded lorry speeding towards the Kovalam coast near Muthaiahpuram here on

Enquiries with the lorry driver revealed that the consignment was meant to be smuggled to Sri Lanka through the Kovalam shore in Thoothukudi

Wednesday, and found 1.5 tons of turmeric powder, 2.8 tons of turmeric fingers, 125 kilograms of cardamom and 125 cigarette

packets.

Enquiries with the lorry driver revealed that the consignment was meant to be smuggled to Sri Lanka through the Kovalam shore in Thoothukudi. Police detained the truck and arrested four persons including the driver.

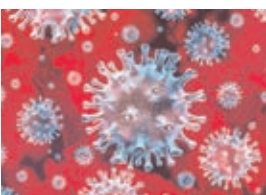
Muthaiahpuram police registered a case, and are investigating.

## Pondy adds 24 new cases to Covid tally

**Puducherry, Jan. 27:**

Twenty four fresh cases of coronavirus were reported on Wednesday in Puducherry, raising the total infection count to 38,934.

An 87-year-old person hailing from Sooramangalam village in Puducherry region died of the infection, taking the toll to 646 The new



cases were identified after examination of 1,979 samples in the last 24 hours.

While Puducherry saw 21 new cases, Mahe recorded three.

Karaikal and Yanam regions did not register any new case of infection, Director of Health and Family Welfare Department S. Mohan Kumar said in a release.

So far 5.65 lakh samples were tested and it was found that 5.22 lakh out of

them were negative.

He also said 36 patients were discharged after recovery from hospitals during last twenty four hours.

The fatality and recovery rates were 1.66 percent and 97.62 percent respectively.

The person who succumbed to the virus had severe covid pneumonia

and refractory hypoxemia.

The patient had coronary heart disease as comorbidity, the Director said.

The Covid-19 aggregate stood at 38,934 while there were 282 active cases and as many as 38,006 patients recovered and were discharged so far.

— PTI

## HC rejects plea against details regarding reservation within MBC

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, JAN. 27

The Madras high court has dismissed a petition, challenging the very constitution of a Committee, headed by a retired judge of the Madras high court, to ascertain certain details pertaining to reservation within the Most Backward Communities.

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

The bench said according to petitioner, the exercise was unnecessary particularly since there was a constitutional framework for undertaking such a study under Article 340 of the Constitution. The petitioner also suggests that the parameters of any study have been delineated in Supreme Court judgments and the Committee should adhere to the same. Advocate general pointed out that by an order dated August 27, 2020, the Supreme Court has referred the

issue as to whether there can be further reservation within a reserved class to a seven-judge Bench and the matter has not been taken up by the larger bench, the bench added.

The bench said it appears that the petition may be premature. Though the underlying submission was that there must be some mischievous chief afoot in forming this Commission at this stage and mandating six months for the Commission to return its report, it will be open to petitioner to challenge the report that the Commission files upon the acceptance thereof and at the stage of implementation if any. "A quia timet action in the present form in the field of administrative law may not be permissible, particularly since there is no certainty as to what the Committee or Commission may report. Accordingly, the petition is dismissed as premature without prejudicing the rights of the petitioner to canvass all available grounds at the appropriate stage", the bench added.

## MANIPAL KILLED IN FIGHT WITH COPS

**From P1**

Following this, a police team rushed to the spot. When they tried to nab them, the gang started attacking the police. In retaliation, the police team opened fire in which Manipal was killed. They secured Manis and Ramesh; the fourth person managed to escape.

Police removed the bodies of Asha and Akil to the government hospital, Sirkazhi, for post-mortem. Top police officials including inspector-general of police, Tiruchy zone, H. Jayaram, inspected the spot.

A special police team has been formed to nab the absconding person.

**Top police officials including inspector-general of police, Tiruchy zone, H. Jayaram, inspected the spot**



**K. SHANMUGAM**  
11th day homage is being conducted on 28/01/2021 @ S&D Lake Side-2 Apartment, Puzhal, Chennai.  
**Deeply mourned by**  
Family, Relatives, Grandchildren & Friends.  
**Ct: 9962329114 (Sathish)**







## DECCAN Chronicle

28 JANUARY 2021

### China playing long game, be vigilant and prepared

The skirmish involving Indian soldiers on the Sikkim-China border last week is just another event in a decades-long chain featuring Chinese expansionism. It may seem incongruous that while Commander level talks have been going on that an incursion should take place. Place the event against a historical perspective and the reality hits home that more things change the more China remains the same. The skirmish may indeed be a minor face-off as the Indian Army described it but if it true that the casualties in terms of injuries was on a scale of five to one on the Chinese side, it might just have served the purpose in sending the message across to the territorially ambitious northern neighbour. India is prepared to hold its positions, at least wherever it is placed advantageously in terms of terrain and is capable of giving it back.

The gap between perceptions and reality is huge when it comes to India-China relations. While the political class might want 1.35 billion Indians to believe that not a square mile of territory has been surrendered to the

Chinese since the 1962 war, the truth is huge swathes of disputed land, which in India's eyes is its, has been progressively taken over. It would not be far from the truth to suggest that the Chinese have come in as much as 25 to 30 km in places along the LAC and at least 5 to 8 km in the Finger area north of Pangong Lake in Ladakh. Historically speaking, this can be blamed on the unbridgeable gap in perceptions of LAC rather than weaknesses in the regimes in New Delhi, which, since the times of Vajpayee's prime ministership, have taken a harder stance on India-China border issues.

The reality of China's expansionism is being reflected too often for comfort in most recent times, whether in Doklam in 2017, Galwan Valley in 2020 or in Naku La in Sikkim a week ago. The complaints of our people in Arunachal Pradesh or Ladakh about Chinese soldiers and civilians using Indian roads to expand their presence across the LAC and taking over land they would normally use for grazing their yaks are real, so too whispers of villages coming up on what we perceive to be our side. There is no denying China's propensity to keep up the pressure on the 4,000 km border, ranging from Ladakh in the west to Arunachal Pradesh in the east and including on land bordering Bhutan and Sikkim.

Nothing could be more ideal than seeking peace through diplomacy and pursuing disengagement and de-escalation even if it means having to deal with a truculent neighbour whose deeds betray their words. Since recurring bouts of skirmishes cannot be ruled out, the way forward for India would be to keep continuously building and buttressing border infrastructure, particularly for the IAF whose capabilities are formidable, safeguarding areas around roads India has built and moving armour and men into strategic areas. All of this must serve eternal vigil about China while being prepared to shove if it comes to a push. Let us not for even a moment believe that China has changed.

### Kerala must step up Covid fight

Kerala, which once led other Indian states in containing the pandemic, Covid-19, appears to have lost its way and is now lagging behind them in most parameters, excepting the mortality rate. At present, the state has about 71,000 active cases, which make about 41 per cent of the total active cases in the country. Its test positivity rate of 12.48 is the highest in the country.

There have been a lot of factors contributing to the steady spike in the number but experts are in unison pointing to the complacency people exhibit in following the Covid-appropriate protocol. It has been well-established that crowding, close contacts and closed spaces facilitate easy spread of the virus. With the restrictions on most events gone, the state has witnessed a spurt in events with people paying little or no attention to the rules of the "break-the-chain" campaign. Elections to the local bodies held in November and the festival season that followed did not help the situation either.

A key point is the low mortality rate that has taken the fear factor off the people's minds. The state has seen only 3,643 deaths due to Covid-19 as on January 26, thanks to the healthcare infrastructure it has created over the decades and the efficient mechanism it has put in place to treat the patients. The state has not yet reached a point where its facilities are overwhelmed though healthcare experts fear that outcome, should the trend continue unchecked.

The state government should act swiftly to contain the Covid spread, and even consider reintroducing some of the controls it has lifted. The state health minister is on record stating that the grassroots work undertaken by the local self governments helped contain the pandemic in the initial phases. The government should try and revive that spirit. With the elections to the state Assembly round the corner, it does not have much time to spare either.

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Subhani



## As farmers lose ground, govt will take tough line



Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr

The Republic Day "tractor parade" mayhem at two points in Delhi

on Tuesday is an episode in the two-month-long standoff between the Narendra Modi government and the Punjab farmers that is neither too big nor too serious. There are always moments in long-drawn agitations when unruly elements indulge in unseemly acts. An agitator placing some flags of a Sikh gurdwara and of the farmers' union was indulging in a mindless prank, or the man driving the tractor into a police cordon was a man who had no sense. But this foolish episode has been blown out proportion by young television news channel reporters and anchors. Their innocence and ignorance were both amusing and touching to watch.

The significance of the fracas on Tuesday has more to do with the position of the farmers, who could proudly claim till then that theirs was a peaceful protest and they could sit on a high moral perch. Their inflexible stance carried a quixotic nobility about it. All that vanished by the afternoon of Republic Day as some of the agitation's senior leaders even apologised as they blamed the people who had turned into hooligans and they tried to say that the troublemakers were not from their fold. Of course, that defence is weak and unconvincing. And it will be hard for them to live down the avoidable clash with the police. But the farmers and their leaders have lost strategic ground as well. They cannot any longer speak with the courage and confidence they had before Tuesday. They may not be to blame for

the trouble and violence that erupted on the streets, but they cannot escape the moral responsibility.

The more curious part in this showdown is that of the Delhi police and that of the Union home ministry, with home minister Amit Shah at the helm. The unintended consequences of Tuesday's clash with the agitators allows the government to corner the farmers and their leaders, and it also gives them the room to prosecute the suspected "Maoists" and "Khalistanis" who ran amok on the streets. There is an uncanny resemblance to what the police did in February 2020 during the communal riots in northeast Delhi. The Delhi police literally adopted the guerrilla tactic of allowing the protesters to unleash violence, and they used the violence to turn the tables on the agitators. In last year's riots, the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act stir was used to shut down the months-long peaceful protest at Shaheen Bagh. It remains to be seen whether Mr Shah will try to use Tuesday's violence to push the farmers back now that they are on the backfoot. But that is unlikely to happen as the principal leaders of Punjab's farmers aren't going to allow themselves to be distracted by Tuesday's developments; their eyes are focused on the repeal of the farm laws. Mr Shah may not have an easy time though he has ordered the deployment of paramilitary forces in Delhi, Haryana and Punjab. It is, however, clear that Mr Shah will have more of a say in dealing with the agitation now.

Behind this political grandstanding by the government following Tuesday's events, there is the troubling fact that the Delhi police has lost the ability to tackle agitations and protests. It has been argued by well-meaning neutral observers, including those who have a sneaking sympathy for the Narendra Modi government and a corresponding antipathy for Punjab's "pampered farmers", that the Delhi police could not have deployed sufficient forces at all points of the tractor parade's route due to the constraints of numbers. That the police officers could not but trust the farmer unions leaders, and the police was caught off-guard by the overwhelming numbers of angry protesters with their speeding tractors, swords, rods, etc. This lament of betrayal by police officials is as naive as that of the farm leaders' blaming so-called saboteurs.

It is quite evident that the Delhi police has not been exposed to agitations like before, and that its personnel haven't been trained sufficiently to tackle such situations. The police officers as well as Union home ministry officials should have realised that there was a need for a larger force to monitor the movement of tractors and the protesting farmers. The decision to deploy paramilitary units on Tuesday should have been taken on Monday the moment it was decided to allow the tractor parade. These miscalculations are indeed part of the fallibility of those in command. It is however to be seen whether they will learn any lessons for the future.

The confrontation between the agitating farmers and the government will turn more hostile than before, and this may not help to find a face-saving exit for either of the two sides. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has kept himself aloof from the issue apart from giving general, vague rhetorical responses. The people on the ground are agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar, railway and commerce minister Piyush Goyal and of course home minister Amit Shah. Mr Shah was earlier active in dealing with the agitation but then moved back and let Mr Tomar hold the fort. It was clear Mr Shah was not the man to take conciliatory positions of any kind, while Mr Tomar played the role of conciliator quite deftly.

After Tuesday's minor explosion, it is likely that Mr Shah will again be in the forefront and will show the mailed fist of the government. This may not help to end the agitation and the deadlock. The force deployment becomes inevitable all around. The government might relish the moment as it would create the momentary satisfaction that is in control of the situation. The Prime Minister, with his unsailable parliamentary majority in the last seven years, has not shown any signs of flexibility on any issue. The deployment of forces will maintain "law and order", but the decisions that gave rise to the agitation still need to be reviewed. Somewhere down the line, the Modi government is losing its political capital. But ruling parties, cocooned behind the turrets and moats of power, do not care much for the changes in the sentiments of the people. There is clear trouble ahead of the political kind, even as the Prime Minister and his colleagues exhibit self-righteousness.

**The Delhi police is to be blamed for its inept handling and lack of preparedness. The farmers too have lost the moral high ground as rogue elements ran amok on the capital's streets.**

The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst

### LETTERS

#### SHOCKING ORDER

The groping of a minor cannot be considered sexual assault without 'skin-to-skin contact' or if clothes were not removed, is a Bombay High Court order. It is highly shocking if not surprising too. The Supreme Court has put the order on hold. It is welcome from the ladies point of view. It is surprising that the Bombay High Court ruling has come from a lady Judge. This order was highly disturbing. Any act to malign the modesty of women amounts to sexual harassment and needs severe punishment to the perpetrators.

Groping a minor's breast without removing the clothes is no doubt a sexual assault on the minor. Or for what else is it done? A wrong has been corrected or else a dangerous precedent would have been created.

Sravana Ramachandran, Chennai

#### IN TROUBLED WATERS

The other day, cricketer Shikhar Dhawan was caught feeding birds during a boat ride in the Ganga at Varanasi despite a strict ban on the feeding of birds due to bird flu scare. The district administration, however, has decided to spare Dhawan, but has initiated punitive action against the boatman for not informing the cricketer about the ban. Here's a classic example of how the rich and influential escape the net while the poor get the boot!

P.G. Menon, Chennai

#### PERFECT PLAN

The popular saying, "plan your work and work your plans" aptly fits the current Indian cricket team. Both head coach Ravi Shastri and the bowling coach Bharat Arun deserve approbation for the strategy they devised long before to plot the downfall of Australia in the recently concluded Test series by contriving a 'leg-side trap' plan, which paid off successfully. However, as we all know, the result of a cricket match often hangs on slender thread, with ability and luck waltzing amidst swings in fortunes. Imagine, if Rishab Pant, whose heroics with the bat on the last day at Gabba, Brisbane that effectively sealed the Test and the series in India's favour, had got out in the closing stages of the game, then the outcome of the series could well have gone the other way. In such a scenario, it is questionable if the above game plan formulated by the Indian think tank would really have cropped up now for discussion.

R. Sivakumar Chennai

Dilip Cherian  
Dilli Ka Babu



### Foreign assets on IRS radar as CBDT lobbies for more funds

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) is strengthening its drive against unaccounted foreign assets and benami properties with a slew of steps. It has launched a new online facility to encourage informants to tip off tax sleuths on black assets abroad. Further, it has started creating special Foreign Asset Investigation Units (FAIUs) in its 14 directorates across the country. Already, sources say, some 70 investigators have been transferred to these units to kickstart their operations. Sources say that CBDT has also put in a request for more Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officers. Since this requires additional resources, the CBDT has sought more allocation in the Union Budget to fund the drive.

The FAIUs will function under director-general ranked income tax officers, and depending on how these units are grouped, they will also have directors, additional directors and sufficient support

staff to perform their mandated job. All these units will be directly monitored by the CBDT, though it is unclear at this stage how this will be achieved.

Sources also reveal that the CBDT is not averse to hiring the services of experts like data analysts and chartered accountants from outside the government if required. The FAIUs will also probe cases of Indian entities named in global tax document leaks, such as the infamous Panama Papers. It does appear that the IRS cadre, often eclipsed by the other more high-profile civil services, may get their moment in the sun.

#### DON'T KEEP VIGILANCE CASES PENDING, SAYS CVC

In a significant move, the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has urged cadre controlling authorities, including the Union home ministry and the department of personnel and training (DoPT), to facilitate and approve vigilance

**Speculation is rife that Mr Arvind Sharma could be named the home minister or even deputy chief minister of UP. But many see a larger plan for Mr Sharma in UP politics.**

clearance of IAS, IPS and IFS officers if the state government or relevant department fails to respond within three months on vigilance queries.

The communication from chief vigilance commissioner Sanjay Kothari also states that in all instances where the authorities fail to provide details of vigilance cases against babus within three months, the officers will be considered as clean and fit for promotion.

Sources say that this order is consequent to the commission discovering that often cadre-controlling authorities do not adhere to the

rule, leading to long-pending and unresolved complaints shown against the officers' names. Apparently, in some instances, even the concerned officers were unaware of a complaint pending against them!

If the CVC has its way, this could put an end to the many frivolous vigilance cases that are kept pending for months (and years in some cases) and give deserving officers their career dues.

#### SHARMA TO SPEARHEAD MODI'S UP PLAN

The advent of Arvind Sharma, a former Gujarat cadre IAS officer and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trusted lieutenant, in the hurly-burly of Uttar Pradesh politics is being watched keenly. Mr Sharma recently joined the BJP after having retired as MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises) secretary at the Centre. He is to join the state legislative council.

Speculation is rife that Mr

Sharma could be named the home minister or even deputy chief minister of UP. But many see a larger plan for Mr Sharma in UP politics. They feel that Mr Modi wouldn't depute his trusted ex-babu to simply become an MLC or minister. It is believed that Mr Modi will start the party's campaign for the 2022 Assembly elections through Mr Sharma. So, it is quite likely that Mr Sharma's role will be to help chief minister Yogi Adityanath's government implement government schemes in the state before the polls.

The move also reiterates Mr Modi's oft-seen penchant for introducing his trusted bureaucrats in politics. Retired bureaucrats and technocrat professionals are his first choice—bringing R.K. Singh, Hardeep Puri and S.K. Jaishankar into politics is an example.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com Let's multiply the effect.



## quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	47,409.93 -1.94
Nifty 50	13,967.50 -1.91
S&P 500*	3,775.91 -1.91
Dollar (₹)	72.91 0.05
Pound Sterling (₹)	100.07 -0.43
Euro (₹)	88.60 0.02
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,421*231 0.00
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	56.30 0.70
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.954 0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.003 -0.037

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

## JLR appoints creative chief to board

Jaguar Land Rover appointed its chief creative officer Gerry McGovern to the board of management to help redefine the Jaguar brand as Britain's biggest carmaker reviews its strategy under new CEO Thierry Bollere. McGovern would be "developing the character, distinction and personality of each" brand and the role includes leading the design function at the marques, the firm said.

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## Double-digit growth in HUL rural sales FMCG firms sight consumption rise

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, JAN. 27

Revival of consumer sentiments, combined with festive season consumption, helped FMCG companies post impressive growth in revenues, volumes as well as profits in the third quarter. Health and hygiene products, food and refreshments and rural consumption supported the performance of fast moving consumer goods firms.

Hindustan Unilever's total sales grew by 20 per cent in the December quarter, while its domestic consumer business grew by 7 per cent. Sales volumes, excluding acquisition of GSK, grew 4 per cent. Health, hygiene and nutrition, which form 80 per cent of HUL's portfolio, grew in double digits. Foods and refreshments were up by 19 per cent. Rural market, which grew in double digits, also supported sales.

HUL's profit after tax for the quarter went up 19 per cent to Rs 1,921 crore against Rs 1,616 crore in the year-ago quarter. As the commodity prices had gone up, HUL made double-digit price hike in tea and a 2.5 per cent increase in skin cleansing products during the quarter.

"With Covid cases coming down sharply and increasing mobility, economic activity in the country continues to improve. The rapid rollout of vaccines will give further impetus to economic growth," said Sanjiv Mehta, chairman and MD of HUL.



"Good recovery in lagged parts, 80 per cent of portfolio grew in double digits. Minimal margin compression, strong brand investments continue, which is the right strategy in our view," finds Edelweiss Securities.

Emami reported 36.6 per cent jump in its standalone net profit at Rs 202.17 crore for the third quarter as revenue from operations surged by 13 per cent to Rs 845.37 crore. The company posted a strong growth of 16 per cent in its domestic business led by 13 per cent growth in volumes.

"We are witnessing a consistent and all-round growth coming from all channels over the last two quarters and expect to continue with this growth trajectory. Most of our brands, including power brands and digital-first brands in the healthcare segment are on their growth path," said Harsha V. Agarwal, director, Emami.

While rural markets continued to perform better, growth in urban markets also picked up. E-commerce grew by 3.5x and

modern trade registered growth of 51 per cent during the quarter for Emami. Marico reported a 13.04 per cent rise in consolidated net profit for the third quarter while revenue from operations went up by 16.33 per cent. Revenue from operations grew on the back of a strong domestic volume growth of 15 per cent. Marico saw robust demand for more than 95 per cent of its portfolio amidst steadily improving consumer confidence.

Jyothy Labs reported an 18.23 per cent rise in consolidated net profit. Revenue from operations of the company was up 13.26 per cent. According to Jyothy Labs, revival of the consumer sentiment reflected in the company's performance across its brand portfolio.

"The performance of FMCG companies have improved sequentially along with volume growth. Discretionary spends are also recovering. We should expect better performance in the coming quarters," said Kaustubh Pawaskar, AVP, fundamental research at Sharekhan.

## Market gains of this month wiped out

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, JAN 27

Profit taking ahead of the Union Budget, the outcome of US Fed meeting and monthly futures & options contracts expiry led to Nifty and Sensex falling for the fourth consecutive session and wiping out of all the gains made this month.

The Nifty-50 closed below the 14000 level at 13967.50, down by 271.40 points or 1.91 per cent while the Sensex closed at 47409.93, down by 937.66 points, or 1.94 per cent. The Sensex lost 2382.19 points, or 4.78 per cent, in the last four sessions.

The sharp fall led to a notional loss of Rs 2.62 lakh crore of investors' wealth on Wednesday and over Rs 8.07 lakh crore in the last four days.

Investors are apprehensive of US Federal Reserve's next monetary policy move which will be known only on Thursday morning.

"Global cues were weak as investors got cautious about possible roadblocks to US stimulus plan and ahead of Fed policy announcement.

Absence of FII buying over last two days too added to the nervousness. The foreign portfolio investors were net sellers of equities worth Rs 1688.22 crore on Wednesday, much higher than the previous session. This is the first instance of the benchmark indices falling for four days in a row since September 2020...markets have erased all gains for CY21 year to date and turned negative," said Siddhartha Khemka of Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

## Govt plans ₹3 L cr spend to revive power utilities

SIDDHARTHA SINGH &  
DEBJIT CHAKRABORTY  
JAN. 27

The government plans to spend Rs 3 lakh crore (\$41 billion) on a new plan to revive regional electricity retailers, people with knowledge of the matter said, after a previous attempt failed to stem losses at the utilities.

The spending would be spread over a few years and is likely to be unveiled on February 1 as part of the government's budget for the year starting April 1, the people said, asking not to be identified as the proposal isn't public. The plan for carrying out reforms for reducing losses of state distribution utilities was sought by the power ministry and is under discussion.

The government is focusing on turning around electricity distributors to ensure reliable power supplies, improving the financial health of generators and making the sector more attractive to foreign investors. The combined loss at the power distribution companies, mostly controlled by state administrations, jumped 69 per cent to Rs 49,620 crore in the year ended March 2019, the latest available data.

The spending would focus on upgrading infrastructure and technology of the ailing utilities to make them more efficient and reduce financial losses, according to the people. Under the plan, the central government would provide annual grants to states that meet targets set by



## BUDGET MAY ADDRESS INVERTED DUTY STRUCTURE FOR STEEL GOODS

New Delhi, Jan. 27: The government is likely to address the issue of inverted duty structure for certain steel products in the Budget to boost domestic manufacturing, sources said. Inverted duty structure refers to taxation of inputs at higher rates than finished products that results in build-up of credits and cascading costs. Sources said the

Centre may consider removing customs duties on raw materials used for manufacturing certain flat-rolled products of stainless steel.

The import duty on key inputs for stainless steel flat products—ferro nickel and SS scrap—is now higher than the import duty on final goods coming in from Free Trade Agreement partners. —PTI

revenue because of technical and commercial reasons, including loss of power supplies through theft, poor transmission infrastructure and inefficient billing and collection. The plan will be a modified version of an earlier programme unveiled in 2015 to revive power distributors through restructuring of their debt. That attempt remained unsuccessful in making retailers profitable by March 2019.

—Bloomberg

# COFFEE-BREAK

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

**Aries:** Working people may have good time. Students may have to put in more efforts to attain their aims. Before you invest in real estate, take advice of a family member.

**Taurus:** You are likely to take the help of credit card to borrow money. Don't deal in a property which is crime ridden. Ego problem is likely to cause some stress.

**Gemini:** Know your calories and stay positive, eat healthy to get that fit body. Don't allow your personal problems to ruin your mental joy.

**Cancer:** Whichever loan you finally decide on, make sure you have a plan to repay. The emotion of anger is neither good nor bad. It's important to know how to deal with anger.

**Leo:** Avoid passive smoking. It could lead to serious diseases. Couples make adjustments to make the relationship work. Anger is likely to show negative effects on body.

**Virgo:** Your health needs utmost attention as eating out might be bad for your health. Overeating can lead to unwanted weight gain. Feel with your heart and think with your mind.

### You share your b'day with

Shruti Haasan is an Indian film actress. She is best known for her roles in the films like Oh My Friend, Luck, Gabbar Singh, Srimanthudu, Welcome back, Gabbar Is Back amongst others.



**Libra:** Students will excel in competitions. Growing a business means taking many decisions. Creating a strategic plan will help you prepare a realistic vision.

**Scorpio:** Your contribution to a project may not appear adequate to your higher authorities. Those struggling on the education front will need to work very hard.

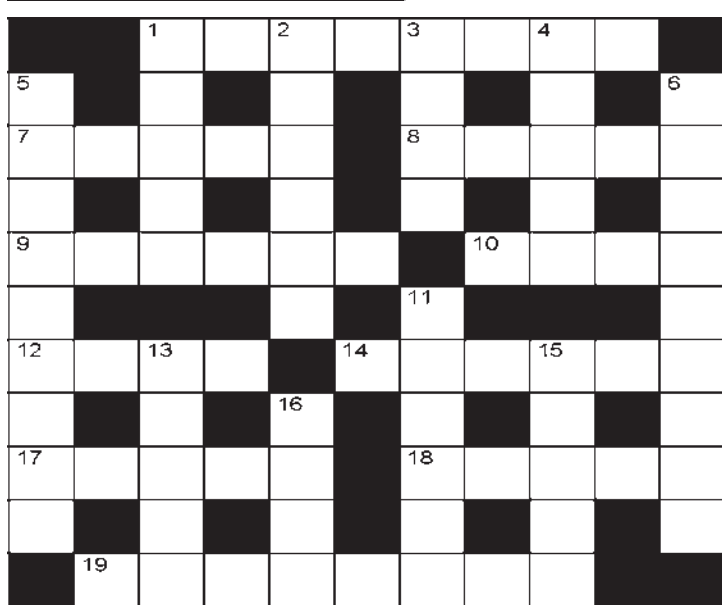
**Sagittarius:** Having better understanding will have a reflection on love affair. A little misunderstanding in love affair could force partner to snap ties.

**Capricorn:** Some natives will gain considerably from the sale of old properties. Some of you require a medical check-up; don't put this off any longer. Working people may remain under stress due to the work pressures.

**Aquarius:** You will handle increased workloads and additional responsibilities with great sincerity and win appreciation from everyone. Spiritual activities may be there in the family.

**Pisces:** Moderate gains may be expected in speculative activities. Part of your sick debts can be successfully recovered. Think twice before signing any contracts. Minor repairs will take place at your residence.

### QUICK CROSSWORD



Across  
1. Art of clock-making (8)  
7. Vexed (5)  
8. Aromatic herb (5)  
9. Up-to-date (6)  
10. Standard (4)  
12. Villain (4)  
14. Big gun (6)  
17. Assisted (5)  
18. Accounts inspection (5)  
19. Sailor's dance (8)

Down  
1. Travelled on foot (5)  
2. Jockeys (6)  
3. Ear part (4)  
4. Zest, verve (5)  
5. Sacking (9)  
6. Do away with (9)  
11. American state (6)  
13. Cowboy show (5)  
15. Prod with elbow (5)  
16. Biblical garden (4)

Yesterday's Answer  
Across: 1. Tendered, 6. Orca, 7. Umpire, 9. Harsh, 11. Asked, 12. Issue, 13. Steer, 16. Kennel, 18. Kiln, 19. Kamikaze.  
Down: 1. Toothpick, 2. Nicer, 3. Rout, 4. Deposit, 5. For, 8. Endurance, 10. Sputnik, 14. Erica, 15. Slam, 17. Ebb.

### Word Mine

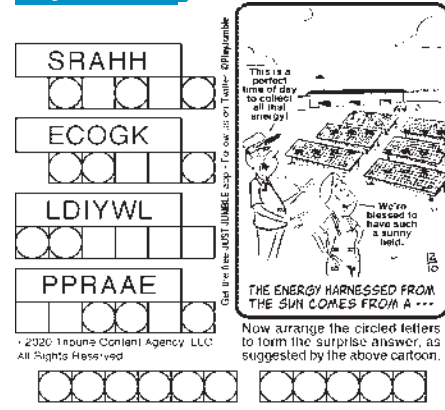
B  
T  
O  
R  
L  
E  
E  
D  
S

TODAY'S RATINGS: 30 AVERAGE: 35  
GOOD: 40 OUTSTANDING

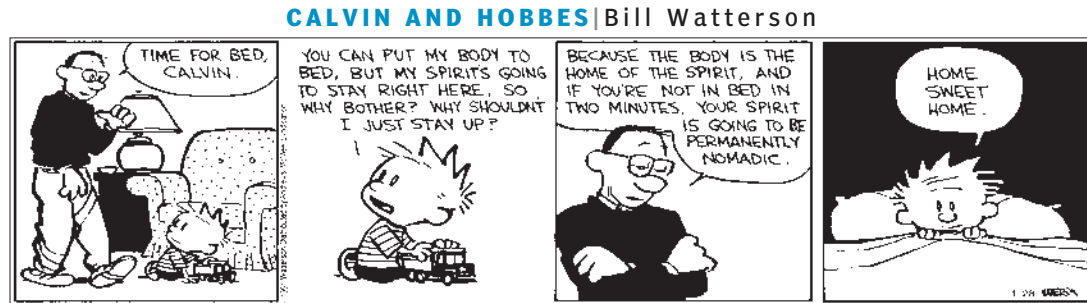
How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not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

South: A J K L T  
West: A J K L T  
East: A J K L T  
North: A J K L T  
Center: A J K L T  
South: A J K L T  
West: A J K L T  
East: A J K L T  
North: A J K L T  
Center: A J K L T  
South: A J K L T  
West: A J K L T  
East: A J K L T  
North: A J K L T  
Center: A J K L T

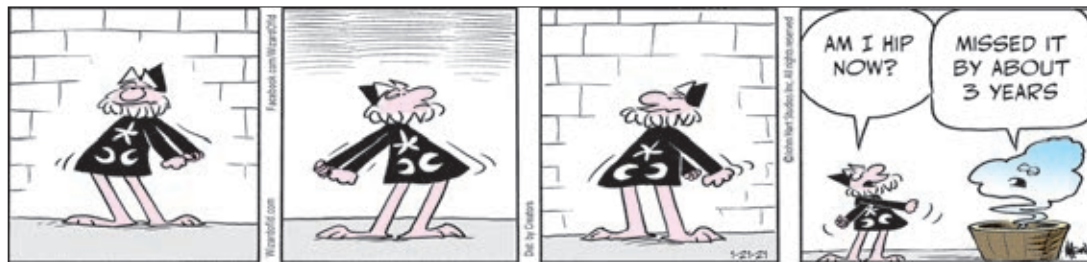
### jumble



Unusual No-trump, showing at least 5-5 in the minors, North used a transfer bid, which resulted in South's declaring at four spades. West led a spade. Declarer drew trumps ending on the board, learning that West had started with three. What did South do next? West was marked with 3-0=5=5 distribution. So declarer led dummy's heart six and won the trick with that card! Then came the



### THE WIZARD OF ID Parker and Hartsd



### ARCHIE Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



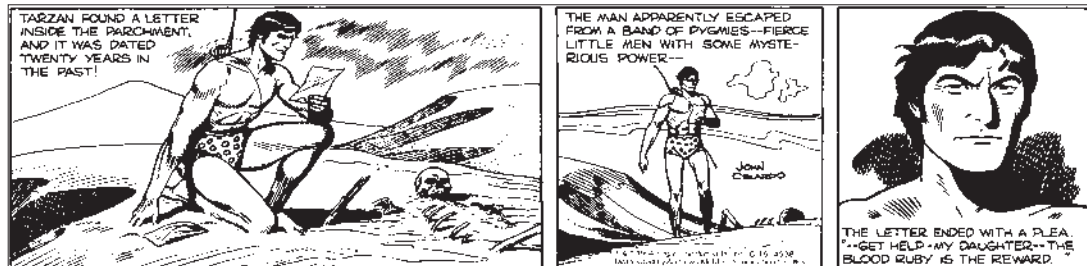
### BLONDIE Dean Young and John Marshall



### ANDY CAPP Reg Smythe



### TARZAN Edgar Rice Burroughs

bridge  
PHILLIP  
ALDER

## SLINGS AND ARROWS OF FORTUNE RULE

George Chapman, an English dramatist who died in 1634, wrote, "Fortune, the great commandress of the world, / Hath divers ways to advance her followers: / To some she gives honour without deserving, / To other some, deserving without honour." There are bridge deals in which the luck -- or misfortune -- seems random. Today's is one example. North-South have two almost-identical 5-3 major-

suit fits. However, 10 tricks are the limit in hearts because the trumps break 5-0. In spades, 11 tricks can be won. When this deal was played at Bridge Base Online, one North-South pair got a fortuitous result. First, South upgraded his hand to a strong no-trump because of ace-king, ace-king and the good five-card suit. (The Kaplan-Rubens method values that hand at 16.15 points.) Then, over West's

South: A J K L T  
West: A J K L T  
East: A J K L T  
North: A J K L T  
Center: A J K L T  
South: A J K L T  
West: A J K L T  
East: A J K L T  
North: A J K L T  
Center: A J K L T  
South: A J K L T  
West: A J K L T  
East: A J K L T  
North: A J K L T  
Center: A J K L T

heart queen and another heart to the 10 and king. South cashed the heart ace, discarding a club from the dummy, and played a diamond to the king. Plus 450 turned out to be a top. Of the other eight pairs in game, one made four spades and one made four hearts, both exactly, and six went down in four hearts.

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## SHORT TAKE

## IPL auction in city on February 18

**Chennai:** The 2021 IPL player auction will be held on February 18 in Chennai, the league announced with a tweet on Wednesday. The announcement comes after the IPL Governing Council meeting on January 6, where it was decided that the 2021 edition of the tournament would remain an eight-team event. With the second Test of the India-England series scheduled to end on February 17 — the first two Tests are in Chennai and the last two in Ahmedabad — February 18 presents the organisers with a day-long window to conduct the auction. The eight franchises had announced their list of retained and released players by the deadline of January 20. It is, however, not yet certain if the tournament would be held in India. The three-member Governing Council, headed by Brijesh Patel, deliberated on the matter in that meeting at the start of the year, and kept their options open. With the pandemic continuing to surge in India, the UAE remained as one of the options.

## English test on card

## Head coach Silverwood happy with England's rotation policy

**London, Jan. 27:** England head coach Chris Silverwood said that he is happy with the rotation policy they currently have in place. England faced criticism from former players for resting wicketkeeper-batsman Jonny Bairstow, all-rounder Sam Curran and fast bowler Mark Wood for their first two Tests against India.

"I'm perfectly happy with the system we're using at the moment. I stand by it," England head coach Silverwood told a conference call with reporters.

"We've got to look after our people. We're spending a lot of time locked in hotel rooms inside bio-secure bubbles and it's not easy," he said.

"It's good that we're being proactive and looking after people... They can't be with me all the time, that's not the world we live in. I'd just ask them (England fans) to understand why we do what we do," said Silverwood.

England had rested all-rounder and Test vice-captain Ben Stokes and fast bowler Jofra Archer for their recently concluded two-Test series in Sri Lanka. Their four-match Test series in India starts on February 5 in Chennai.

"We're resting in the best interests of the player and equally to get the best out of them long term... I do



England team arrive at Chennai airport.

believe we have to be proactive in looking after them, rather than wait until there's a problem," said Silverwood.

## Ashwin, Natarajan nominated for ICC Player of the Month

India off-spinner R. Ashwin and wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant were on Wednesday nominated for the player of the month awards by the International Cricket Council. Two other Indians — Mohammed Siraj and T. Natarajan — are also in the fray.

All four cricketers played a role in India's recent Test series win against Australia.

The ICC said the awards will recognise the best performances of both male and female cricketers across all forms of international cricket throughout the year.

Other players named for the awards for January are England captain Joe Root, star Australia batsman Steve Smith, Rahmanullah Gurbaz of Afghanistan, Marizanne Kapp and Nadine de Klerk of South Africa and Nida Dar of Pakistan.

## BCCI prez Sourav back in hosp with chest pain

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI**  
KOLKATA, JAN. 27

BCCI president Sourav Ganguly, who had suffered a 'mild' cardiac arrest earlier this month and underwent a stent implantation in one of his three arteries with blockages, took admission to Apollo Gleneagles Hospital on Wednesday afternoon after he reportedly felt a minor chest pain and dizziness again at home in the morning.

Wearing a blue jacket, the 48-year-old former Indian cricket team captain was however seen walking into the private hospital off EM Bypass near the Salt Lake stadium steadily after getting down from his car in the convoy which brought him through a Green Corridor, created by the Kolkata Police, from his Behala residence in South Kolkata. His wife Dona accompanied him.

Sourav "has come for a check up of his cardiac condition. There is no charge in his parameters



Sourav Ganguly

since his last hospitalisation and his vital parameters are stable," the private hospital stated, according to sources.

The BCCI chief has been kept under observation in a cabin under cardiologists Dr Aftab Khan and Dr Saroj Mondal and family friend Dr Saptarshi Basu. This is the second time, Sourav, who has a family history of

ischemic heart disease, fell ill in less than a month. On January 2 he was admitted to Woodlands Hospital after a mild heart attack struck him leading to a black out during a fitness session on the treadmill at the gym of his residence.

On January 7 Sourav was discharged from the hospital after he underwent angiography and angioplasty in one artery as the doctors including cardiac surgeons: Devi Shetty and Ramakant Panda prescribed the decision for the removal of the remaining blockages in two other arteries to be taken at least after a gap of two-three weeks.

Like the last time, Union home minister Amit Shah inquired about Sourav's health from BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya also. Later CAB chief Avishek Dalmiya and his elder sister and Bally MLA Baishali visited Sourav. Baishali said, "Sourav is keeping well. His medical reports are good."

## Solanki seals win with six for Baroda

**Ahmedabad, Jan. 27:** Vishnu Solanki helped Baroda pull off a last-over heist against Haryana with a sensational 71, which included a six off the game's final ball, to fire his team into the semifinals of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy here on Wednesday.

Baroda first restricted Haryana to 148/7 in the third quarterfinal, and then it was Solanki, who hammered four fours and five sixes in his 46-ball unbeaten knock to get his team over the line after 18 runs were needed off the final over.

Haryana had brought down the equation to 23 off 12 balls for Baroda and their skipper Mohit Sharma (0/30) conceded only five runs in the penul-

time over to make the equation tougher for Baroda.

However, 28-year-old Solanki had other plans and took on medium pacer Sumit Kumar (1/37) in the final over, hitting two sixes and a four, to script an eight-wicket win for his team. In another quarter-final match, Rajasthan got better of Bihar by 16 runs, riding on Mahipal Lomror's unbeaten 78.

## BRIEF SCORES

■ **Haryana 148/7** in 20 overs (Himanshu Rana 49; K. Kakade 2/7) lost to **Baroda 150/2** in 20 overs (Vishnu Solanki 71 not out; Yuzvendra Chahal 1/15).

■ **Rajasthan 164/5** in 20 overs (Mahipal Lomror 78 not out; S. Kashyap 2/28) bt **Bihar 148/4** in 20 overs (Mangal Mahrouf 68 not out; Chandrapal Singh 1/21).



## Sindhu, Srikanth lose in openers

**Bangkok, Jan. 27:** Star Indian shuttlers P. V. Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth fought their hearts out before suffering close defeats in their respective group 'B' openers at the \$1.5 million HSBC BWF World Tour Finals here on Wednesday.

A week after a demoralising defeat at the Toyota Thailand Open quarterfinals, World champion Sindhu produced a much-improved performance but still lost to world number one Tai Tzu Ying of Taiwan 21-19, 12-21, 17-21.

"It was a good match, there were no easy points. In the third game I came back and it was just one point difference at one stage. I broke my racket strings twice (during rallies) and that made a difference," Sindhu said.

"It's a tough group. I have to give 100 per cent," she added. It was Sindhu's 16th defeat to Tzu Ying in 21 meetings.

Former world number one Srikanth too squandered an opening game advantage, losing 21-15, 16-21, 18-21 to world number three Anders Antonsen of Denmark in a gruelling 77-minute contest.

Olympic silver medallist Sindhu, who had won the

prestigious title in 2018, will next play home favourites Ratchanok Intanon, who had handed her a humiliating defeat last week, while Srikanth, ranked 14th, will face fourth seed Wang Tzu Wei of Chinese Taipei on Thursday.

In the women's singles, the opening game was a close fight as Sindhu and Tzu Ying engaged in an enticing battle.

Tzu Ying led 5-3 early on before grabbing a 11-8 advantage at the interval as Sindhu lost a few points on the net.

In the decider, Tzu Ying again led 6-3 but she stumbled to defensive errors as Sindhu levelled the score with a smash.

However, the second seed Taiwanese held a 11-9 lead at the break after Sindhu made another error at the backline.

After the change of sides, Sindhu managed to keep the two-point difference till 13-15 before a lucky net cord and a weak return at the net by Sindhu gave Tzu Ying a 17-13 lead.

Sindhu narrowed it to 16-18 and then 17-19 before Tzu Ying sealed the contest with the Indian going to the net twice. —PTI

# NAYA SAAL, NAYA DHANG.

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Regd. No. TNENG/2010/35692

Printed & Published by **K. Sudhakar** on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited and Printed at Deccan Chronicle Presses situated at SP 3, Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032.  
RNI Registration No: TN ENG/2005/14987  
Ph Nos: 22254747, 22254748, 22254749, 22254751  
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