

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | THURSDAY 21 | JANUARY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 30°C
Min: 22°C
Rainfall: Nil

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Thai 8
Tithi: Ashtami
Star: Ashwini
Rahukalam:
1.30 pm to 3 pm
Yamagandam:
6 am to 7.30 am

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.20 am
Zohar: 12.23 pm
Asar: 3.35 pm
Maghrib: 6.01 pm
Isha: 7.17 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.05 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.36 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 12.15 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 12.57 AM

CORONA COUNT

| CASES | DEATHS |
|-------------|----------|
| (+11,136) | (+73_ |
| 1,06,07,585 | 1,52,827 |

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+549)
TN: 8,32,415 12,290

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

9,69,39,047

DEATHS

20,73,852

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
219

worldometers.info

Malayalam actor Unnikrishnan Namboothiri dies at 98

Kannur: Noted film actor Unnikrishnan Namboothiri, known for his comedy and grandfather roles, died on Wednesday, his family sources said. Namboothiri was 98. The actor had survived COVID-19 and was discharged from a hospital on Tuesday. A family friend of the actor said Namboothiri felt some uneasiness and was admitted to a private hospital but he passed away on Wednesday evening. ■ P2

Two killed in paragliding accident in MP's Khandwa district

Khandwa (MP): Two operators of a paragliding equipment fell 100 feet to their deaths at Hanuwantia in Madhya Pradesh's Khandwa district on Wednesday, police said. The incident took place around 6 pm, when the two employees of an event management company who were operating a paramotor, fell 100 feet, sub-inspector B S Mandloi of Moondi police station said.

COUNTER

POINT



Welcome to your office, Mr President!

SC rejects pleas seeking review of 2018 Aadhaar verdict

New Delhi, Jan. 20: The Supreme Court has dismissed a batch of pleas seeking review of its 2018 verdict upholding the Centre's flagship Aadhaar scheme as constitutionally valid but striking down some of its provisions, including its linking with bank accounts, mobile phones and school admissions.

A five-judge constitution bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar, by a majority of

4:1, rejected the review pleas against the apex court's September 26, 2018 verdict.

Justice D Y Chandrachud, one of the five-judges of the bench, dissented with the majority verdict and said that the review petitions be kept pending until a larger bench decides the question related to certification of a bill as a money bill.

The Aadhaar Bill was certified as a money bill which enabled the government to get

it cleared without getting the assent of a majority in Rajya Sabha.

"The present review petitions have been filed against the final judgment and order dated September 26, 2018. We have perused the review petitions as well as the grounds in support thereof. In our opinion, no case for review of judgment and order dated September 26, 2018 is made out," the majority order of January 11 said. —PTI

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CM accuses Stalin of being 'power hungry'



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Gujarat to rename dragon fruit as 'Kamalam'

SPORT | 8

Super Kings retain Raina, release six



■ New Prez calls for unity and healing ■ Tight security in Capitol Biden sworn in, swears by democracy

Washington, Jan. 20: Joe Biden became the 46th president of the United States on Wednesday, declaring that "democracy has prevailed" as he took the helm of a deeply divided nation and inherited a confluence of crises arguably greater than any faced by his predecessors.

Mr Biden's inauguration came at a time of national tumult and uncertainty, a ceremony of resilience as the hallowed American democratic rite unfurled at a U.S. Capitol battered by an insurrectionist siege just two weeks ago. The chilly Washington morning was dotted with snow flurries, but the sun emerged just before Mr Biden took the oath of office, the quadrennial ceremony persevering even though it was encircled by security forces evocative of a war zone and devoid of crowds because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"The will of the people has been heard, and the will of the people has been heeded. We've learned again that democracy is precious and democracy is fragile. At this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed," Mr Biden said. "This is America's day. A day in history and hope, of renewal and resolve."

And then he pivoted to challenges ahead, acknowledging the surging virus that has claimed more than 4 lakh lives in the United States. Mr



Joe Biden is sworn in as the 46th president of the United States by Chief Justice John Roberts as Jill Biden holds the Bible during the 59th Presidential Inauguration at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Wednesday. — AP



Kamala Harris is sworn in as vice president by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor as her husband Doug Emhoff holds the Bible during the 59th Presidential Inauguration at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, Wednesday. — AP

Harris takes oath as V-P, makes history

Washington, Jan. 20: United States Vice-President Kamala Harris broke the barrier on Wednesday that has kept men at the top ranks of American power for more than two centuries when she took the oath to hold the nation's second-highest office.

Ms Harris was sworn in as the first female vice president — and the first Black woman and person of South Asian descent to hold the position — in front of the U.S. Capitol by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor.

The moment was steeped in history and significance in more ways than one. She was escorted to the podium by Capitol Police

Officer Eugene Goodman, the officer who single-handedly took on a mob of Trump supporters as they tried to breach the Senate floor during the Capitol insurrection that sought to overturn the election results. Ms Harris was wearing clothes from two young, emerging Black designers — a deep purple dress and coat.

After taking the oath of office, a beaming Ms Harris hugged her husband, Douglas Emhoff, and gave President Joe Biden a first bump. Her rise is historic in any context, another moment when a stubborn boundary falls away, expanding the idea of what's possible in American politics. — AP ■ P5

Trump pardons 143 people before demitting office

Washington, Jan. 20 : Outgoing President Donald Trump has pardoned his former political strategist Steve Bannon, one of the key architects of his 2016 electoral victory, as he issued a wave of pardons using the final hours of his presidency to grant clemency to 143 people. The record 73 pardons and 70 commutations came in addition to the dozens of similar actions that Trump took after he lost the November 3 presidential elections to Joe Biden of the Democratic Party. —PTI

Trump leaves White House before Biden inauguration

Washington, Jan. 20: Donald Trump on Wednesday skipped his successor Joe Biden's inauguration and exited the White House for the last time as US president, saying he had "an amazing four years" and hoping that it would not be a "long goodbye." Trump left on the Marine One presidential helicopter along with his wife Melania, hours before Mr Biden's inauguration, he, however, left a note for Mr Biden is the practice. — PTI

Sasikala shifted to hospital after complaining of fever

Bengaluru, Jan. 20: Just days before her release from a prison here, V.K. Sasikala, close aide of former Tamil Nadu chief minister J. Jayalalithaa, was on Wednesday admitted to the Government Bowring Hospital after she complained of fever and breathlessness, jail sources said.

Earlier she underwent treatment at the jail hospital but later taken to the Bowring Hospital for a second opinion, sources added. The expelled AIADMK leader arrived in an ambulance and was taken inside the Bowring and Lady Curzon Medical College and Research Institute, also known as Bowring Hospital, in a wheelchair, hospital sources said. Later, the director-cum-dean of the institute Dr Manoj Kumar H.V. said in a statement that the 63-year-old Ms Sasikala, with comorbidities of hypertension, diabetes and hypothyroidism, has been admitted with cough and fever. He said she was stable with supportive measures and antibiotics and oxygen.

"She will be further evaluated and monitored. Investigation reports are awaited," Dr Kumar added. Earlier, a jail official said she was getting treated for fever and breathlessness in the jail hospital. "Now she will be taken to the Bowring hospital; the official said. It is not confirmed yet whether she is suffering from Covid-19. — PTI

Uncertainty has supporters in a quandary

G BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC

CHENNAI, JAN. 20

Supporters of V.K. Sasikala, who have been awaiting her arrival on the State's political scene by next Wednesday, are in a quandary on what to do next, now that there is a possibility of her release from Bengaluru jail getting delayed due to her hospitalisation.

The supporters are disappointed mainly because they had planned a massive reception for her. Since it was told that Ms Sasikala, on her release from the Parappana Agrahara prison on January 27, would be escorted by the Karnataka police by road till Hosur on the State border, plans were charted out accordingly.

According to some sources about 1000 cars and vans with the supporters from all over the State were expected to reach Hosur on January 27. After a grand welcome on the borders, the vehicles, according to the plan, would move as a convoy with her vehicle to Chennai.

COVID- 19

Vaccination campaign picks up across country

DC CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, JAN. 20

In a significant achievement in India's Covid-19 trajectory, the active caseload slipped below two lakhs (1.97 lakh) after six months and 24 days.

On Wednesday, India also registered one of the lowest daily new confirmed Covid-19 cases per million population in the last seven days. There were 13,823 new positive cases and 162 deaths in the last one day. This decline in daily new cases has also contributed to the shrinkage in active caseload.

On the other hand, 7,86,842 beneficiaries have been vaccinated for Covid-19 in the last five days, out of which 1,12,007 persons were vaccinated on Wednesday. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra are the few states were high number of vaccinations took place. On Wednesday, 82 cases of Adverse Effect From immunization (AEFI) were reported following the vaccination.

Ten people were hospitalised due to AEFI out of which three are under observation — one each

in Delhi, Murshidabad (West Bengal) and Chitradurga (Karnataka) while others were discharged. So far four deaths of beneficiaries who took the jab have taken place ever since the vaccination drive began on Saturday. While the post mortem of a healthcare worker from Telangana is going on, officials said three others died due to other reasons not related to vaccination.

The 42-year-old Telangana healthcare worker was inoculated on Tuesday. He later complained of chest pain and died early on Wednesday. Out of the four deaths, three have suffered cardiac arrest while one died due to cardio-pulmonary disease.

I-T raids evangelist Paul Dhinakaran's offices across state

DC CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, JAN. 20

Income Tax sleuths on Wednesday swooped down on 28 premises across Tamil Nadu belonging to Jesus Calls, an organisation that preaches Christianity and run by Paul Dinakaran.

According to the sources, around 200 officials of the Income Tax Department began raids on Wednesday at 6 am simultaneously at 28 places to check whether the organisation was involved in evading tax. The raids were conducted based on complaints of foreign funds irregularities against Mr Dhinakaran and his organisation.

The places that were raided include Jesus Calls headquarters at R.A. Puram in Chennai, Mr Dhinakaran's residence in Adyar and in Karunya University (deemed) located in Coimbatore. Other prayer towers located across the state are under radar. According to sources, Income Tax sleuths are also looking into the foreign direct investment that Mr Dhinakaran's organisation has received. Certain documents have reportedly already been seized. Jesus Calls Ministries and Karunya groups were founded by Paul Dhinakaran's father D.G.S. Dhinakaran. Paul Dhinakaran took over the organisation after his father passed away in 2008. ■ P2

SC refuses to stop farmers' tractor rally on R-Day

PARMOD KUMAR | DC

NEW DELHI, JAN. 20

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to entertain the Union government's plea seeking to restrain the agitating farmers from taking out a kisan tractor rally on Republic Day in Delhi and regretted that the "reputation" of the four members of the expert committee set up by it to end the deadlock was being "torn to shreds".

However, it issued notice on the Bharatiya Kisan Union (Lokshakti) plea for reconstitution of the expert committee formed to hear all parties to the dispute and submit a report with its recommendations.

Telling attorney-general K.K. Venugopal and solicitor-general Tushar Mehta it was for the police to take a call on allowing or not allowing the rally, Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde, asked them to withdraw the application seeking the restraint order, which they did.

Talks of third front return to TN politics

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC

CHENNAI, JAN. 20

Is there a possibility of a third front, on the lines of the People's Welfare Front that was formed for the 2016 Assembly elections, coming into being this time, too? Yes, going by some developments in the political scene in the state.

One of the major indicators for the formation of a possible alliance other than the two led by the DMK and AIADMK came from Tamil

● **One of the major indicators for the formation of a possible alliance other than the two led by the DMK and AIADMK came from TNCC president K.S. Alagiri's repeated statements in the past two days that actor Kamal Haasan's Makkal Neethi Maiam should align with them**

Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) president K.S. Alagiri's repeated statements in the past two days that actor Kamal Haasan's Makkal Neethi Maiam (MNM) should align with them. The same statement was earlier made by

Congress MP Karti P. Chidambaram, too. Though both the leaders have used the term 'our alliance,' it cannot mean the DMK-Congress alliance.

Recent developments in Puducherry where the DMK had openly stated that the

party would field candidates in all the 30 constituencies in the Union Territory and would also win all of them to form a government of its own, had ruffled the feathers of Congress leaders.

Though some see the DMK's assertion of supremacy in Puducherry as only a ploy to browbeat the Congress in Tamil Nadu to agree for a less number of seats, TNCC leaders are not happy about the developments and are seemingly looking for an alternative alliance. ■ P4



Jack Ma makes first public appearance in three months

Shanghai, Jan. 20: Alibaba Group founder Jack Ma made his first public appearance since October on Wednesday when he spoke to a group of teachers by video, easing concern about his unusual absence from the limelight and sending shares in the e-commerce giant surging.

Speculation over Ma's whereabouts has swirled in the wake of news this month that he was replaced in the final episode of a reality TV show he had been a judge on, and amid a regulatory clampdown by Beijing on his sprawling business empire.

The billionaire, who commands a cult-like reverence in China, had not appeared in public since Oct. 24, when he blasted China's regulatory system in a speech at a Shanghai forum. —Reuters

K'taka, Maharashtra, TN top 3 states in Niti Innovation Index

New Delhi, Jan. 20: Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Kerala have been ranked as the top five states in innovation in Niti Aayog's second Innovation Index released on Wednesday. The index, released by Niti Aayog's Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar and CEO Amitabh Kant, has been developed on the lines of the Global Innovation Index. Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Bihar have been ranked at the bottom of the index. Karnataka topped the index for the second year in a row. Among Union Territories, Delhi topped the chart, while in the North-Eastern and hill states category Himachal Pradesh occupied the top spot. —PTI

SHORT TAKES

SR ferries fertiliser from Ranipet station after 25 yearsDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 20

After a gap of 25 years, the Southern Railway on Wednesday ferried fertiliser from the Ranipet railway station. One of the oldest in India, the rail line connecting Chennai with Ranipet was laid in 1858. The track between Walajah Road and Ranipet became defunct in 1995 due to poor patronage. The line was relaid as part of Tindivanam-Nagari new line project in 2012, but was not being used.

The Chennai division took upon the last mile commissioning works like welding, ballasting, packing and de-stressing and the line was made fit for goods traffic in November 2020. The first rake of 21 BCN wagons will transport 1,300 tonnes of fertilizer from Ranipet to Tadepalligudem and Dwarapudi in Andhra Pradesh.

Actor Unnikrishnan Namboothiri dies at 98

Kannur, Jan 20: Noted film actor Unnikrishnan Namboothiri, known for his comedy and grandfather roles, died on Wednesday, his family sources said.



Namboothiri was 98. The actor had survived COVID-19 and was discharged from a hospital on Tuesday. A family friend of the actor said Namboothiri felt some uneasiness and was admitted to a private hospital on Wednesday but he passed away in the evening. He is survived by his children Devi, Bhavadas, Yamuna and P V Kunhikrishnan. P V Kunhikrishnan is a Kerala High Court judge. Namboothiri is also the father-in-law of popular musician Kaithapram Damodaran Namboothiri. Namboothiri's notable outings in Tamil were Kandukondain Kandukondain and Pammal K Sambandam.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly, Ramesh Chennithala condoled the demise of the actor. "Namboothiri was an amazing actor who excelled in playing character roles. It's a huge loss to the cultural world," Vijayan said in his condolence message. Chennithala said Namboothiri was known as the grandfather of south Indian cinema. ".....with his demise, Malayalam movie industry has lost an excellent actor," Chennithala said. His debut movie was 'Kaliyattam' in 1996. Later he acted in numerous movies including 'Kaikudanna Nilavu', 'Madhuranombarakattu', 'Meghmalhar', 'Kalyanaraman', 'Rappakal' and 'Pokkiri Raja'. His role as a romantic grandfather in 'Kalyanaraman' was a huge hit.

— PTI



Paul Dhinakaran's 28 properties raided by I-T department.

— DC

I-T sleuths knock at Prayer TowersG. BABU JAYAKUMAR | DC
CHENNAI, JAN 20:

Income tax officials raided 28 premises of evangelist Paul Dhinakaran's 'Jesus Calls Ministries' in Chennai, Coimbatore and other places, including the Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences over charges of alleged tax evasion.

As news of the raids spread like wildfire, a wide range of emotions exploded in social media. While followers of Jesus Calls Ministries expressed anger over the raids, many others were delighted over the action against the controversial religious leader and his organisation.

Many were surprised over the crackdown since Dhinakaran had prophesied before the 2019 elections that Narendra Modi would return to power as Prime Minister, saying categorically that Jesus Christ had told him that in his dreams.

Launched in Chennai by the late D. G. S. Dhinakaran in the 1970s, Jesus Calls now runs 121 'Prayer Towers' in 10 countries, a few educational institutions, a social service organization, a religious television channel Rainbow TV, and sundry other outfits.

Built entirely on public donations, the group is now owned by the family of D. G. S. Dhinakaran, comprising his wife Stella Dhinakaran, son Paul Dhinakaran, his wife and their children. All of them are involved in some evangelical work or the other carried out by the organization and feature prominently in the videos released by them.

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Spearheading the group is Paul Dhinakaran, who is the richest Christian evangelist in India with an estimated net worth of over Rs 5,000 crore. He inherited the gargantuan spiritual empire after his father passed away in 2008.

D. G. S. Dhinakaran, hailing from Surandai village in the present Tenkasi district, started his religious career as a preacher and healer while working for the State Bank of India. He became popular as a radio evangelist after he started preaching through radio in 1972 and ran a publication with his wife Stella as editor.

He came up with the concept of Prayer Towers, in which the faithful could call the organisation over phone with their prayer requests. A volunteer or an employee would pray to God on behalf of the caller. Also the senior Dhinakaran came up with the Young Partners scheme in which children can be made 'partners' in the mission for a price.

Initially located in a small plot of land off Greenways Road, today the massive structure housing the headquarters of the organisation faces Greenways Road itself with the Dhinakarans buying off several plots of

land around it.

They faced the same charges of acquiring land around their Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences campus near Coimbatore. At one point the management of the educational institution was forced to close down a couple of off-campus centres in Coimbatore.

But more than that environmental and other violations committed in the construction of buildings for the Karunya institute, which was started in 1986 at Mathuravayapuram village in the foothills of the Western Ghats, marred the image of the institution granted the deemed to be university status in 2005.

Environmentalists have alleged that the institution, spread over 800 acres, was located bang on the elephant corridor that also has wetlands and water resources of river Noyyal. Several buildings were alleged to have been constructed without necessary approval.

Though the media had highlighted the environmental and procedural violations by Karunya, the deemed university has been functioning without any hitch. It was in that backdrop the present raids came as a surprise for many.

Photo electoral rolls: TN has more women voters than menA. ARUL PALANI | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 20

Women voters continue to outnumber men in Tamil Nadu, says Election Commission of India. In the special summary revision of photo electoral rolls- 2021 released by Chief Electoral Officer Satyabrata Sahoo on Wednesday, the total voters in Tamil Nadu stands at 6.26 crore and of this 3.18 crore are women, 3.08 are men and 7,246 are third gender.

As per the final electoral rolls the Assembly constituency with the highest number of electors is Sholinganallur Assembly constituency in Chengalpattu district with 6,94,845 electors (men 3,48,262, women 3,46,476 and third gender 107). Harbour Assembly constituency in Chennai district has the lowest num-



ber of electors with 1,76,272 electors (men - 91,936, women - 84,281 and third gender - 55). A total of 47 overseas electors have also been enrolled during Special Summary Revision 2021. So far 4,62,597 differently abled persons have been flagged in the electoral rolls.

The commission, in a release, stated that over 21.39 lakh persons were included in the rolls and over 5.09 lakh persons' entries were deleted dur-

ing the special summary revision. A total of 8,97,694 persons in the age group of 18-19 years were included, with Chennai registering 49,148 such persons, the highest in the state. As of January 15, 2021, there are a total of 72,853 service voters across the State.

Among the total voters, as on January 20, 2021 - 13.09 lakh are between the age group of 18-19 years, 1.23 crore between 20 to 29 years, 1.38 crore between 30 to 39 years, 1.32 crore between 40 to 49 years, 1.03 crore between 50 to 59 years, 67.23 lakh between 60 to 69 years, 35.33 lakh between 70 to 79 years and 12.98 lakh voters are 80 years and above.

The electoral rolls are available on the Chief Electoral Officer's website <http://elections.tn.gov.in> and electors can check their names by visiting

the portal.

All eligible persons who have completed 18 years as of January 1, 2021, and who do not find their names in the electoral rolls can apply (a) by visiting the respective offices of the Electoral Registration Officers and submitting Form 6 (b) By applying online through www.nvsp.in. (c) Through the 'Voter Helpline App' available on the Google Play Store, the Commission said.

District contact centres established in all the districts have been provided with the toll-free helpline number 1950 uniformly across the state. For any election-related queries, the public can call the district contact centre. The state contact centre is functioning in the office of the Chief Electoral Officer with the toll-free number 180042521950.

Food min clinical condition is improving: Hosp

Chennai, Jan. 20: Food minister R. Kamaraj, who had tested positive for Covid-19, is improving and his vital parameters are stable, a hospital said here on Wednesday.

The Minister was admitted to MGM Healthcare from Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital on Tuesday at 8 pm and he was shifted to the private facility with ventilator support.

"After being received in the hospital, a CT scan was done which revealed extensive Covid-19 lung changes." "Upon his arrival, the treatment protocols were optimised and his clinical condition is improving with all vital parameters being stable," Assistant Director of Medical Services, MGM Healthcare, Dr Anuradha Baskaran said in a bulletin. — PTI



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Republic Day parade rehearsal held on Kamarajar Salai on Wednesday.

— DC

Plea to recover idols stolen from templesDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 20

A Public Interest Litigation has been filed in the Madras high court to direct the authorities to conduct an inquiry into a complaint alleging missing of property registers and idols of the temples in Tamil Nadu and hand over a report, if the idols were stolen, to the Idol Wing police for recovery of the same.

The First Bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and

Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy before whom the PIL filed by R.Venkataraman, a social activist, came up for hearing, adjourned it by four weeks.

According to the petitioner, pursuant to an order of this court, the HR & CE department conducted a survey in all the temples in Tamil Nadu during the month of November 2020. During that time, he received reliable information with supporting evidences about the missing of temple properties including idols and the

property registers. He also came to know that several ancient idols were stolen and the superstructure of some temples does not exist at all. However, suppressing the theft of ancient idols worth Rs several crores and missing of property registers, the authorities were preparing new registers. Therefore, he gave representations to the authorities to take action immediately. But there was no response. Hence, he has filed the present PIL, he added.



Health secretary Dr J. Radhakrishnan along with Dean Dr Jayanthi welcoming first year MBBS 2020-21 batch students at Government Omandurar Medical College. The students followed Covid precautionary measures.

— DC

Marina vendors protest against 'Smart carts'DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 20

Around 500 Marina beach vendors along with their families staged a protest on Kamarajar Salai as the Greater Chennai Corporation began allotting the 'smart carts' to 900 vendors under the Marina beautification project.

According to the protesters, as the case is still pending in the court, the allotment for the smart carts should not happen. They also said that the allotment of shops to 360 new vendors is unfair.

The Greater Chennai Corporation has proposed to purchase 900 smart

The Greater Chennai Corporation has proposed to purchase 900 smart carts for the Marina beach

carts for the Marina beach. While 60% of these carts will be given to existing vendors, the GCP offered the remaining to the new vendors. Of the 900 shops to be allowed, 540 shops will be allocated to the existing vendors and 360 shops will to the new vendors.

The vendors on Wednesday staged a protest on Kamarajar Salai as the GCP began allotment using the lot system. "There are around 3,000 shopping

carts on the Marina beach. But the GCP has identified only 1,352 carts to be allowed on the beach. The court further reduced the number to 900. Vendors identified by the corporation are running shopping carts on the Marina beach for two generations and the civic body reducing it to 900 and allotting only 540 carts for the old vendors who had been dependent on the carts for decades, their livelihood will be affected severely," said a protester.

Meanwhile, the Chennai corporation by Wednesday evening allotted all the 900 carts in both the categories.

Air India staff dies of cardiac arrest at Chennai airportDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 20

A 57-year-old man worked for Air India at Chennai airport collapsed and died on Tuesday night.

According to the police, the deceased has been identified as Pasupathi Rajan (57), a resident of Ayanavaram. He worked at the Commercial section in the Air India office at Chennai airport. The incident happened on Tuesday night, when he was supervising the parcels that arrived in an Air India flight from Chicago. Pasupathi Rajan

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reportedly collapsed. He was rushed to a private hospital, where he was treated. However, he died. Doctors said he had a severe heart attack and died of it. Airport police transferred his body to the Chromepet Government hospital for post mortem. A case has been registered by the Airport police.

Trans-persons defy Covid, raise funds onlineT. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 20

Despite Covid-19 still disrupting the livelihood of vulnerable communities in the society, the trans-persons in the city have achieved an encouraging target in raising funds, thanks to online fundraising platforms.

Born2Win Social Welfare Trust for transgenders, established in 2013 in Chennai, collected more than Rs 3 lakh during the pandemic and distributed it

■ Born2Win Social Welfare Trust for transgenders, established in 2013 in Chennai, collected more than Rs 3 lakh during the pandemic and distributed it to at least 3,000 needy people across the state

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25,000 to Preethisha Premkumaran, a transwoman who started a tea shop at Ashok

Pillar.

Swetha Sudhakar, founder of the trust, said they started raising funds online after lockdown affected the livelihood of the community. "Though it has been a year since the pandemic hit, a large section of the community is still unable to return to work. We think it is high time to empower the community members to launch business ventures that can generate jobs for them. So we handed over a cheque for Rs 25,000 for the mobile tea shop initiative," she said.

She said they were raising funds for trans-persons in other districts too, including Namakkal, Kovilpatti, Villupuram and Tiruchy. There are lot of transgenders who do not have the ID cards issued by the government. The online platform helped us to raise funds and find donors, Swetha said.

Preethisha Premkumaran said she initiated the business to survive the tough pandemic. "We lost our jobs. The financial support from Born2Win instilled confidence in us," she said.

Doctors save Covid+ woman with multiple fragment surgeryDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 20

The city doctors conducted a life-saving multiple fragment surgery on the elbow of a 70-year-old Covid-19 positive woman with multiple co-morbidities. The patient, Ms Saraswathy, from the city fractured her elbow after a fall and was hospitalised earlier this month.

Dr Nandkumar Sundaram, who led the surgery at Fortis Malar

Hospital, said the patient had high fever and acute breathlessness. She was put on high-pressure support in order to sustain her normal breathing. It took three weeks of intensive care to make her fit for the complicated multiple-fragment surgery," Dr Sundaram said.

"The surgery was done with the help of a tourniquet of the upper arm to cut the blood supply and help us operate with a clear vision. Due to the

Covid-19 situation, the patient was placed face down, ulna bone was divided and reflected back with the muscle to expose the elbow joint from the back without damaging the nerves and vessels. The bone was carefully fixed on both sides with a plate without creating any further fractures. Though it is difficult to operate an elbow joint, we were able to successfully fix the fracture', he said.

CM accuses Stalin of being 'power hungry'

Chennai, Jan. 20: AIADMK top leader and Chief Minister K. Palaniswami on Wednesday challenged DMK president M. K. Stalin again to have a debate with him on his allegations of corruption against the government and accused him of being power hungry.

In his campaign at nearby Sriperumbudur for the Assembly polls, Palaniswami said the leader of the opposition was not ready to accept his challenge. "You (Stalin) should come without a paper slip to debate. You must not read out from a

note prepared by someone else. List out your claims of corruption and I will answer," he said.

The AIADMK has often mocked Stalin for 'depending' on paper slips to address people. Dismissing as 'lies', the charges of corruption levelled by Stalin in a petition to Governor Banwarilal Purohit, the Chief Minister said he was ready to face the DMK leader and debate at any place to refute his allegations.

The Chief Minister said though he had already (earlier this month) asked Stalin

to turn up for an open debate, the DMK chief was not coming forward to accept his challenge.

"A tender for a road work in Tirunelveli was cancelled about a year and a half ago. Even without knowing that, Stalin has made a false claim of ₹700 crore corruption," he said.

In December, DMK had submitted a petition to Purohit, seeking action under the Prevention of Corruption Act and Palaniswami had then too said these were lies and defamatory in nature. Palaniswami said he con-

sidered "people as the Chief Minister," and the job of a Chief Minister is to execute the orders of the people.

The DMK chief was however 'power-hungry' and irritated in his bid to become the Chief Minister and does not 'know' anything about the country, he alleged.

Listing out his government's 'achievements', including bagging national awards in local administration, water management and education, he exhorted the people to vote for the 'two-leaves' symbol of the AIADMK. —PTI

Thulasenthrapuram celebrates swearing-in of Kamala Harris

DC CORRESPONDENT
MANNARGUDI, JAN. 20

The villagers of Thulasenthrapuram, near Mannargudi in Tiruvavur district, the birthplace of the ancestors of new US Vice-President Kamala Harris, on Wednesday celebrated her assuming office, with lot of enthusiasm.

As Ms. Harris, the first Indian-origin woman elected to the coveted post in the US, was sworn in, the people of Thulasenthrapuram designed snacks like murukku vadagam etc with the name of Ms. Harris.

The villagers offered special poojas at Sri Dharmashasta Temple in the village and burst crackers to express their happiness. They also organised a mass sadya to mark the event. The villagers said Ms. Harris should visit their village at least once in a year.

Stalin wants woman to retract words against OPS

DC CORRESPONDENT
MADURAI, JAN. 20

DMK president M.K. Stalin on Wednesday insisted a woman participant of his 'Makkal Gramasabha', held at Aranmanaiputhur in Theni district, to retract her 'nasty' words against Deputy Chief Minister and Bodinayakanur MLA O. Panneerselvam.

The woman, Lakshmi of Boothipuram in Bodinayakanur, while complaining about the bad shape of roads in the constituency, said she would even murder the Bodinayakanur MLA as he had not done anything good for the development

of the constituency.

An aghast Stalin said though he could understand the woman's anger against the Deputy Chief Minister, insisted her to retract the words. As the woman refused to apologise, the DMK president did not allow her to continue. Mr Stalin cautioned the woman that such verbal attacks on leaders had no place in a democracy.

Earlier, the DMK president, addressing the Makkal Gramasabha, came down heavily on Mr Panneerselvam for not doing anything for the state or for his own constituency despite becoming the chief minister thrice.

45 injured in Suriyur jallikattu

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, JAN. 20

As many as 45 persons, including three very seriously, were injured in a jallikattu (bull fight) event at Suriyur village near Tiruchy on Wednesday.

Sources said that 589 bulls and 369 bull tamers from different parts of the state took part in the event.

All the injured were given first aid at the camp hospital and three of them were referred to the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Government Hospital, Tiruchy.

H. Jayaraman Inspector General of Police, Tiruchy central zone, gave away the prizes to the winners.

Vigilance arrests cop while taking bribe

DC CORRESPONDENT
OOTY, JAN. 20

An inspector at the Cherambadi police station on the Nilgiris border with Kerala was arrested by the vigilance department

sleuths on Tuesday evening while taking ₹10,000 as bribe.

Vigilance department sources said that Anandavelu demanded Rs 40,000 every month from one Elias to allow his trucks car-

rying building materials and sand from Kerala to construction sites in Chermadadi. Elias apprised the vigilance officials and when he paid ₹10,000 to Anadavelu as the first instalment, he was

caught red handed.

This is the second such incident recently related to corruption involving police at Nilgiris border and the hill residents wanted the west zone police administration to act tough on cops.

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SHORT TAKES

MUMBAI POLICE
FILE FIR AGAINST
'TANDAV' TEAMSHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, JAN. 20

Mumbai police on Wednesday registered an FIR based on a complaint filed by BJP MLA Ram Kadam about web series *Tandav*. Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh said that action will be taken in the case as per law. Meanwhile, a four-member team of Uttar Pradesh Police arrived in Mumbai to conduct a probe into a case registered in Lucknow against the web series.

In a related development, the Bombay high court granted transit anticipatory bail for three weeks to Ali Abbas Zafar, the director of *Tandav*. He has been granted bail in connection with the FIR registered in the UP. The transit pre-arrest bail has been granted to enable him to approach the appropriate court for regular anticipatory bail.

The said FIR was registered at Hazratganj Police Station in Lucknow. Several people are named in the FIR and the team of cops from Lucknow intend to interrogate all those who were named in the FIR, before taking any action.

The UP police team, which has already reached the city, will first approach the Mumbai police for local assistance.

While several FIRs were filed across the country against the makers, Amazon Prime Video and the actors, the makers had also issued an unconditional apology on Tuesday for unintentionally hurting anyone's religious sentiments.

IS A THIRD FRONT,
A REPEAT OF
2016, BREWING?

FROM PAGE 1

Mr Alagiri himself said that the party was prepared to face the elections alone in Puducherry even while expressing a wish to maintain a cordial relationship with 'friends.' It means that the Congress would like to save the alliance with the DMK but would not mind losing it, too.

Some top Congress leaders are also said to be piqued over the way in which the DMK has started treating its major ally. It is not just the bargaining for allotting less number of seats but also the DMK's demand to know in advance the name of candidates that the Congress would field from the constituencies allotted to them.

While some Congress leaders feel that there was no harm in giving more seats to the DMK in Puducherry, they are very particular that they get a substantial number of seats in Tamil Nadu. In the event of the DMK trying to short-change the Congress by offering less seats in Tamil Nadu, they would like to break away from the alliance.

It is in this backdrop the call to MNM assumes significance. Haasan, too, on his part has kept the alliance question open, saying often that there would be a churning and some parties might go to him for a tie-up.

Since the VCK, too, is said to be in close touch with the Congress, it might also move over to the alternative alliance if it shapes up, say Congress functionaries, who have been alerted about a possible breaking of its present ties with DMK. While there are no indications of a party breaking away from the AIADMK alliance now, seat sharing talks could result in the snapping of ties of parties and they, too, might drift towards the third front if it evolves into an electorally viable alternative.

Final checks



Indian Air Force Rafale jet and Jaguar aircraft fly past Rajpath during the rehearsals for Republic Day Parade 2021 in New Delhi on Monday.

— PTI

MP rocked by 4
rapes in 10 days

Cong slams Shivraj govt for having failed to check growing incidents of rape in state

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, JAN. 20

Madhya Pradesh has witnessed barbaric rape of four girls in the last 10 days, triggering public outcry.

In a shocking incident, a 13-year-old girl was raped in her family's farmland in Jangda village under Ghodadangar police limits in Betul district by a local villager late on Monday evening. The victim had gone to the farm to switch off the motor.

On finding her alone, the accused Sushil Verma (45) raped her and then buried her under a heap of stones, Betul district superintendent of police Shimla Prasad said on Wednesday. The victim's sisters who came to the farm while searching her late on Monday night, had found her buried in a pit and alerted their father, who carried her to Ghodadangar hospital. She was later referred to Nagpur Medical College hospital. The accused has been arrested.

In another incident, a 13-year-old girl, resident of Umaria, had been raped for three days by nine people.

On January 11, the girl

● **IN A SHOCKING** incident, a 13-year-old girl, resident of Umaria, had been raped for three days by nine people.

was abducted and taken to Chhatan jungle in Umaria district by two youths, identified as Rahul Kushwaha and Akash Singh, where they allegedly raped her.

She was later taken to a nearby eatery where she was allegedly raped by the 'dhaba' owner Paras Soni and four of his associates, according to a complaint lodged by the victim in the local police station.

She was later taken to Chhatan jungle by them where she was gang-raped, she alleged.

According to her complaint, she was then bundled in a Katni-bound truck on January 12 by the accused.

The truck driver had raped her and then dropped her at Kala Badbara check gate. Later, she got a lift in a Umaria-bound truck in which she was raped by the truck driver.

The victim along with her family members filed FIR in the Umaria police station on January 15. While 7 accused were arrested, 2

others were absconding, police said.

On January 10, a widow was raped by three youths in the village of Umilia in Sidhi district. The three accused had then inserted an iron rod in her private parts.

She was battling for life in a hospital in Rewa. Two accused, Lalu kol and Bhailal Patel were arrested, while another accused was absconding, police said.

On Tuesday night, a girl was waylaid by two motorcycle-borne youths in Indore and then taken to nearby railway track where she was allegedly raped by them. Three other people who were waiting there also allegedly raped her.

They then bundled her in a jute sack and threw her on the railway track, police said.

She managed to free herself and called her friend who took her to the hospital. The girl has identified one of the accused as Akshyaya. All the five accused were absconding, police said.

Senior Congress leader and former chief minister Kamal Nath slammed the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government for having failed to check growing incidents of rape in the state.

Leaking secrets
of military ops
is treason: Cong

New Delhi, Jan. 20: Leaking of official secrets of military operations is treason and those involved in it must be punished, the Congress said on Wednesday on the purported WhatsApp chats of *Republic TV* editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami and demanded that the Prime Minister must come clean.

The party said those involved in the "anti-national act" deserve no mercy and the government should immediately order an inquiry into the "information leak" about the 2019 air strikes.

The Congress fielded its top leaders — former defence minister A.K. Antony, leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, former home minister Sushilkumar Shinde and former law and external affairs minister Salman Khurshid to launch a scathing attack on the government at a joint press conference.

The Congress said it would raise the issue in a big way in Parliament during the budget session starting January 29 and garner support of other parties for a joint offensive against the government including a joint parliamentary committee probe.

It also accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and top ministers who

SP TO HOLD JOINT
RALLY WITH SENA,
NCP IN MUMBAISONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, JAN. 20

In a bid to stop the BJP from coming to power in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), the Samajwadi Party (SP) is planning to organise a grand public rally of north Indians in alliance with the Shiv Sena and NCP. SP leader Ram Charitra Nishad met Shiv Sena president and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray in this regard.

The proposed meeting will be addressed by NCP chief Sharad Pawar, Thackeray and SP national president Akhilesh Yadav. Nishad said that the mega rally is likely to be held in Mumbai after Holi in March.

The BMC polls will be held along with UP Assembly elections in early 2022. Around 24 lakhs voters are north Indian in Mumbai.

are members of the Cabinet Committee on Security of violating the Official Secrets Act and demanded that action be taken against them and ascertain who leaked the sensitive information.

"Leaking of official secrets is a criminal act. Leaking official secrets about military operation, national security matters, sensitive military operations especially military strike is treason, anti-national. They have to be punished for anti-national activities, for treason. They deserve no mercy," Antony said.

Referring to the WhatsApp chats between Goswami and ex-BARC CEO Partho Dasgupta, he said India's national security has never been compromised in such a way and never have the high offices of the prime minister, home minister and others been "brazenly compromised".

"Does the PM, Union home minister, in fact the entire government have any moral, political, Constitutional right to continue in office after such damning revelations? We demand that the PM should come clean on these accusations immediately in order to restore the severely damaged credibility of the highest office of the country," a joint statement by the leaders said. — PTI

India, EU hold
online talks on
maritime securityDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 20

India and the European Union (EU) held their first-ever maritime security dialogue in a virtual format on Wednesday during which "developments in maritime security environment, regional cooperation activities, developments of mutual interest and opportunities for cooperation between India and the EU" were discussed.

It may be recalled that India and the EU had — during their 15th bilateral Summit in July last year — agreed to strengthen military-to-military relations and naval cooperation and establish a maritime security dialogue to preserve safety and stability in the Indian Ocean, in what was seen as a veiled but clear signal to China.

In a statement on Wednesday, the ministry of external affairs said, "India and the EU held their first maritime security dialogue in a virtual format on 20 January 2021. The consultations involved exchanges on developments in maritime security environment,

regional cooperation activities, developments of mutual interest and opportunities for cooperation between India and the EU."

The ministry of external affairs added, "The EU-India Maritime Dialogue was chaired by Director Joanneke Balfourt on the EEAS side and Joint Secretary Sandeep Arya on the Indian side. The dialogue seeks to develop mutual understanding and cooperation opportunities between India and the EU in the maritime security domain as another factor of the strategic partnership between the two sides consistent with the India-EU Roadmap to 2025."

It may be recalled that India, along with the United States, Japan and Australia, is a member of the four nation Quad, an arrangement that aims to preserve a "rules-based order" in the Indo-Pacific region. In a major move, EU-member nation France had on Tuesday announced that there would be a "strategic triangle" along with India and Japan "committed to a rules-based Indo-Pacific" region.

BARC ex-CEO's bail
rejected in TRP scamSHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, JAN. 20

A Sessions court in Mumbai on Wednesday dismissed a bail application filed by Parto Dasgupta, former CEO of Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC), who has been arrested in connection with the alleged Television Rating Points (TRP) scam case in December last year.

A graduate from IIM Calcutta, Partho Dasgupta was the CEO of Broadcast Audience Research Council ("BARC") between June 2013 and November 2019. He had moved the bail application after he was remanded to judicial custody. The Crime Branch has charged him under sections 409 (criminal breach of trust by a public servant), 420 (cheating) of the Indian Penal Code.

He had filed the bail application through advocate Shardul Singh and Arjun Singh on the grounds that there was nothing more left to be recovered from him. The chats were not authenticated by a 65B certificate under the Indian Evidence Act hence it could not be considered as evidence. Moreover, an Oversight Committee has certified by their own report that TRPs cannot be tampered with

manually.

Special public prosecutor Shishir Hire had vehemently opposed the bail application filed by Dasgupta on behalf of police.

He had read out several WhatsApp chats between Republic TV editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami and the applicant to show their proximity. He had also contended that as an ex-BARC CEO the accused has good resources and if released on bail he could influence witnesses in the case. He had pointed out that in one of the chats, which are part of the supplementary charge sheet, Goswami allegedly offered to mediate with the PMO's office on behalf of Dasgupta, while in another chat they speak about manipulating the TRPs of Republic to surpass Times Now.

Advocate Hirey argued that Dasgupta, in his capacity as the CEO of BARC, was supposed to be a neutral party and that the rise in TRPs of a channel was directly proportional to its ad-revenue.

Dasgupta's lawyer Singh had also sought bail on the ground of parity. He had argued that the co-accused who was allegedly directly involved in manipulation, according to the report, is already on bail.

6 parties form 'alliance' in Assam

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, JAN. 20

In what is set to give a formidable challenge to the ruling BJP-led alliance in forthcoming Assembly polls, six opposition political parties, led by the Congress, have formally announced the formation of a 'grand alliance' to take on the BJP-led NDA government in Assam.

Besides the principal opposition Congress, the All India

United Democratic Front (AIUDF), the Communist Party of India (CPI), the CPI(M), the Communist Party of India (Marxist) Liberation, and the Anchalik Gana Morcha (AGM) led by Rajya Sabha MP Ajit Kumar Bhuyan are the part of the grand alliance.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, who is the senior observer of the All India Congress Committee

for the Assam elections made this announcement after several rounds of consultation with all the partners.

Among others present on the occasion were Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Ripun Bora, AICC general secretary in-charge for Assam Jitendra Singh, AICC general secretary and former Union minister Mukul Wasnik, senior Congress leader and AICC observer Shakeel Ahmed

Khan, leader of the state Congress Legislature Party (CLP) Debabrata Saikia, APCC vice-presidents Prodyut Bordoloi and Rakibul Husain, AIUDF leaders Aminul Islam and Hafiz Bashir Ahmed Kasimi, AGM president Ajit Kumar Bhuyan, CPI state secretary Munin Mahanta, CPI(M) state secretary Deben Bhattacharya, and CPI(ML) Liberation State secretary Rubul Sarma, among others.

India to despatch 20L
vaccine doses to B'deshSRIDHAR
KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, JAN. 20

After delivering one lakh doses of the Indian-manufactured Covishield (Oxford-AstraZeneca) vaccine to the Maldives and 1.5 lakh Covishield doses to Bhutan on Wednesday, India will step up its powerful display of neighbourhood vaccine diplomacy by despatching a massive 20 lakh doses of Covishield vaccine to Bangladesh and 10 lakh doses of the Covishield vaccine to Nepal on Thursday. The vaccines supplied have been manufactured by the Serum Institute of India at Pune. All four nations lie in India's immediate neighbourhood and the consignments are being seen as India's "gift" to these nations.

A consignment containing 20 lakh doses of the Covishield vaccine will reach Bangladesh's Capital Dhaka on Thursday. The vaccine delivery fulfils the assurance given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh

● **THE VACCINE** delivery fulfils the assurance given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during the bilateral Virtual Summit last month that India would facilitate supply of vaccines as and when ready.

● **10 LAKH** doses of the Covishield vaccine will be despatched to Nepal.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during the bilateral Virtual Summit last month that India would facilitate supply of vaccines as and when ready.

It is also being seen as reflective of India's strong commitment to "Neighbourhood First" Policy and Bangladesh's special place in it. A consignment of 10 lakh doses of the Covishield vaccine will also reach Nepalese Capital Kathmandu on Thursday. The Nepalese Government had earlier requested for supply of Indian manufactured Covid vaccines and the request was reiterated during the recent visit to India by the Nepalese Foreign Minister. Meanwhile, a consignment containing

1.5 lakh doses of the Covishield vaccine reached Bhutan's Thimphu on Wednesday. "VaccineMaitri" begins. Consignment arrives in Bhutan. Another example of #NeighbourhoodFirst." External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar tweeted. Also, a consignment containing one lakh doses of the Covishield vaccine reached the Maldivian Capital Male on Wednesday. "Indian vaccines reach Maldives, reflects our special friendship," External Affairs Minister Jaishankar tweeted. Bhutan and the Maldives were the first two foreign countries to receive the Covishield vaccines, highlighting their close strategic proximity to India.

NAME | CHANGE

Gujarat govt applies for a patent to change nomenclature of dragon fruit

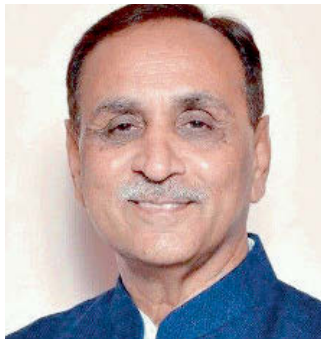
Guj to rename dragon fruit as 'Kamalam'

Gandhinagar, Jan. 20: The Gujarat government has decided to rename dragon fruit as 'Kamalam', Chief Minister Vijay Rupani has said.

The state government has applied for a patent to change the nomenclature of dragon fruit, which is largely grown in Kutch, Navsari and different parts of Saurashtra, to 'Kamalam', Rupani told reporters on Tuesday.

"The name dragon fruit is not proper, and due to its name one thinks of China. So we have given it the name 'Kamalam'," he said.

Asked why the name 'Kamalam' has been given to the fruit, Rupani said, "Farmers say it looks like lotus and that is the reason we



Vijay Rupani

have named it 'Kamalam'."

Notably, 'Kamal', or lotus, is the poll symbol of the BJP and Gujarat party unit headquarters is named Shri Kamalam. There is nothing political

● **CHIEF MINISTER** Vijay Rupani said, "the name dragon fruit is not proper, and due to its name one thinks of China. So we have given it the name 'Kamalam'."

● **THE FRUIT** is found in arid areas of the state and it is known for its nutritional value, like it also helps in increasing the hemoglobin, Rupani said in reply to question on the need to rename it.

behind renaming of the fruit, Rupani said.

The fruit is found in arid areas of the state and it is known for its nutritional value, like it also helps in

increasing the hemoglobin, Rupani said in reply to question on the need to rename it.

The CM also said it is the most expensive fruit available in the market at this time. The change in nomenclature of the fruit is yet to find its way among the masses and farmers.

Ahmedabad-based housewife Gayatri Vyas, who regularly eats the fruit for its nutritional value, said she is not aware that it has been changed as it is available as 'dragon fruit' only in markets.

The fruit comes from several different cactus species and is recommended to be eaten as it can boost immunity. Lately, cultivators from some of the state's arid regions like

Kutch have largely taken up farming of this fruit.

The NCP on Wednesday targeted the BJP over the Gujarat government's decision to rename dragon fruit as 'Kamalam', saying the time may not be far when the saffron party would start calling the country as "Kamalasthan".

The BJP has now started "branding itself on fruits also," NCP chief spokesperson Mahesh Tapase said in a statement.

Tapase said, "The BJP has now started branding itself on fruits also. We fear that the time may be not far when they would start addressing Hindustan as Kamalasthan." — PTI

SHORT TAKES

BIDEN SWORN IN, SWEARS BY DEMOCRACY

FROM PAGE 1

Though three other former presidents — Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama — gathered to watch the ceremonial transfer of power, Mr. Trump, awaiting his second impeachment trial, instead flew to Florida after stoking grievance among his supporters with the lie that Mr. Biden's win was illegitimate.

Mr. Biden, in his third run for the presidency, staked his candidacy less on any distinctive political ideology than on galvanizing a broad coalition of voters around the notion that Mr. Trump posed an existential threat to American democracy. Mr. Biden did not mention Mr. Trump by name in the early moments of his inaugural address but alluded to the rifts his predecessor had helped create.

"I know the forces that divide us are deep and they are real. But I also know they are not new. Our history has been a constant struggle between the American ideal that we all are created equal and the harsh, ugly reality of racism, nativism, fear, demonisation that have long torn us apart," Mr. Biden said. "This is our historic moment of crisis and challenge, and unity is the path forward and we must meet this moment as the United States of America."

Mr. Biden came to office with a well of empathy and resolve born by personal tragedy as well as a depth of experience forged from more than four decades in Washington. At age 78, he was the oldest president inaugurated.

— AP

HARRIS TAKES OATH AS V-P, MAKES HISTORY

FROM PAGE 1

But it's particularly meaningful because Ms. Harris is taking office at a moment of deep consequence, with Americans grappling over the role of institutional racism and confronting a pandemic that has disproportionately devastated Black and brown communities. Those close to Ms. Harris say she'll bring an important — and often missing — perspective in the debates on how to overcome the many hurdles facing the new administration.

Harris, 56, moves into the vice presidency just four years after she first came to Washington as a senator from California, where she'd served as attorney general and as San Francisco's district attorney. She had expected to work with a White House run by Hillary Clinton, but President Donald Trump's victory quickly scrambled the nation's capital and set the stage for the rise of a new class of Democratic stars.

After Harris' own presidential bid fizzled, her rise continued when Biden chose her as his running mate last August. Harris had been a close friend of Beau Biden, the elder son of Joe Biden and a former Delaware attorney general who died in 2015 of cancer.

DEMOCRACY HAS PREVAILED: BIDEN

Newly inaugurated US Prez, in maiden speech, calls on Americans 'to defend the truth and defeat the lies'

Washington, Jan. 20: "Democracy has prevailed," newly inaugurated US President Joe Biden said on Wednesday in his maiden speech as he called on Americans "to defend the truth and defeat the lies". Speaking shortly after taking oath as the 46th President of the United States, 78-year-old Biden also pledged to repair America's global allies, which suffered during his predecessor Donald Trump's four-year regime. "This is America's day, democracy has prevailed," Biden said, apparently referring to his Trump's efforts to deny him victory in the November 3 election won by him.

"With unity we can do great things," he said referring to the challenges ahead of him from fighting the Coronavirus to addressing racial injustice. "Unity is the path forward," he asserted, laying out his vision to defeat the pandemic, build back better, and unify and heal the nation. Biden asserted that he will be the president for all Americans, all those who voted for him and those who did not vote for him. In his speech that lasted for 21 minutes, Biden praised Americans for rising to the challenge and reclaiming democracy. He mentioned the attempt to undo it at that exact location two weeks ago, and renewed his campaign goals of overcoming the pandemic, bringing racial justice and fighting climate change.

Biden also criticised those who have stoked anger and division, and asked those who opposed him to "hear me out." He called out those who lie for political power and profit. "There is truth, and there are lies," he added. In a message to the international community, Biden said that he would rebuild the alliances frayed over the past four years. "We can make America once again the leading force of good in the world." "We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again, not to meet yesterday's challenges but today's and tomorrow's challenges," he said. "We will lead by the power of our example," he said in his message to the international community.

The 78-year-old veteran Democratic leader said: "We'll be a strong and trusted partner for peace, progress and security." "America has been tested, and we have come out stronger for it. We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again. We'll lead, not merely by the exam-

READY TO SERVE, SAYS KAMALA IN 1ST TWEET AFTER TAKING OATH

Washington, Jan. 20: Kamala Harris was on Wednesday sworn in as America's first woman Vice President during a historic inauguration at the West Front of the Capitol. Harris, 56, the 49th US Vice President, will serve as the deputy of President Joe Biden, 78, who also took the oath of office, becoming the 46th US President.

Harris took over the office of the US Vice President from 61-year-old Mike Pence. Biden succeeded President Donald Trump, 74. In her first tweet as Vice President from her official Twitter handle, she said: "Ready to serve."

Harris, the daughter of an Indian immigrant from Chennai, scripted history by becoming the first-ever woman Vice President of the United States. She is also the first female, first Black and first South Asian American vice president. Her husband Douglas Emhoff, 56, is the first "Second Gentleman" — the first male spouse of a vice president in the US. Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the first Latina member of the Supreme Court, administered the oath of office to Harris. She was sworn in on two Bibles — one that belonged to a close family friend named Regina Shelton and another that belonged to Thurgood Marshall — the country's first African American Supreme Court justice.

— PTI

ple of our power, but by the power of our example. We'll be a strong and trusted partner for peace, progress and security," Biden said. Many world leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, have tweeted their congratulations to the new administration and expressed their optimism at working together. "My warmest congratulations to Joe Biden on his assumption of office as President of the United States of America. I look forward to working with him to strengthen India-US strategic partnership," Modi said. "My best wishes for a successful term in leading USA as we stand united and resilient in addressing common challenges and advancing global peace and security," he said.

— PTI



Vice President-elect Kamala Harris greets former US President Barack Obama ahead of Joe Biden's inauguration as the 46th President of the United States on the West Front of the US Capitol in Washington, on Wednesday. — AP

12 Guard troops pulled out

Washington, Jan. 20: Twelve US National Guard troops have been pulled from duty protecting the presidential inauguration of Joe Biden, partly due to an investigation of extremist sympathies in the ranks, the Pentagon said Tuesday. Two of the 12 were removed from duty for making "inappropriate comments or texts," said National Guard Commander General Daniel Hokanson.

The two were sent home, he said, declining to explain what was said in the comments. They were pulled from

BIDEN HOMELAND SECURITY PICK TO REOPEN ASYLUM FOR MIGRANTS

Washington, Jan. 20: President-elect Joe Biden's Homeland Security secretary nominee Alejandro Mayorkas promised Tuesday to apply US asylum laws to undocumented immigrants but did not say how he would deal with a caravan of Hon-

duran migrants now bound for the US.

Mayorkas told a Senate committee vetting his nomination that the government would roll back departing President Donald Trump's tough measures to seal the southern US border.

— AFP

the force "out of an abundance of caution," he said. The removal of the other 10 troops was also unex-

plained, but was "unrelated to the events taking place at the Capitol or to the concerns that many people

have noted on extremism," said Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman.

The actions against the 12 came amid concerns that the far-right extremists who took a part in the assault on the US Capitol on January 6 have associates or sympathisers in the US military.

Concerned about a possible threat to Biden or others, the FBI has investigated whether there were extremists among the up to 25,000 National Guard troops being deployed in Washington to keep security for the inauguration.

— AFP

FROM GAGA TO GARTH, MIRANDA TO MORENO: CELEBS JOIN

Washington, Jan. 20: Like so much this past year, the inaugural celebration will be like no other: pared down, distanced, much of it virtual. But for actor Christopher Jackson — the original George Washington in Broadway's "Hamilton" — performing in a virtual "ball" is a way of participating in an essential rite of American democracy.

"I'm glad to play a part in it," says Jackson, who will perform at the quadrennial ball for the Creative Coalition, a fundraiser for arts education and one of the more prominent unofficial events surrounding Joe Biden's inauguration. "It's a great honour, and I'm very grateful that we have allowed our system to continue to work in the way it was intended." Jackson — not to mention former costar and "Hamilton" creator, Lin-Manuel Miranda — joins a slew of celebrities descending on Washington, virtually or in person, for entertainment surrounding the inauguration of Biden and Kamala Harris.

Although the festivities have been radically scaled down due to the raging Coronavirus pandemic and security threats, a steady stream of A-list names have signed on, headlined by Lady Gaga singing the national anthem on the West Front of the Capitol, with Jennifer Lopez and Garth Brooks contributing musical performances.

— AP

'Aggressive stance' against China: Spy chief

Washington, Jan. 20: Asserting that China is a "challenge" to the security and prosperity of the US, spy chief nominee Avril Haines has said she supports an "aggressive stance" to deal with the challenges that the country is now facing from Beijing.

America's approach to China has to evolve and essentially meet the reality of the particularly assertive and aggressive China that is being experienced now, Haines told lawmakers during her confirmation hearing for the post of Director of National Intelligence on Tuesday.

US President-elect Joe Biden has nominated Haines, who had served as White House Deputy National Security Advisor in the Obama administration, as his next spymaster.

If confirmed by the Senate, 51-year-old Haines would be the first woman to occupy this position. In this capacity she would oversee as many as 18 American intelligence agencies, including CIA and FBI. "China is a challenge to our security, to our prosperity, to our values across a range of issues, and I do

support an aggressive stance, in a sense, to deal with the challenge that we're facing. So I think that's the place that we are now, and one that is more assertive than where we had been in the Obama/Biden administration. And if I'm confirmed, I think frankly the intelligence community can do a lot to help in that respect," she said. "Providing, keeping our focus, putting our resources and effort in making sure that we understand the intentions and capabilities of China," she said.

— PTI

APPROACH CHINA FROM POSITION OF STRENGTH, NOT WEAKNESS: BLINKEN

Washington, Jan. 20: Identifying a rising and assertive China as a major national security threat to the United States, the incoming US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken has said that America needs to approach the challenge from a "position of strength, not weakness".

"As we look at China, there is no doubt that it poses the most significant challenge of any nation

state to the United States in terms of our interests, the interests of the American people," Blinken told members of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee during his confirmation hearing. "There are rising adverse aerial aspects to the relationship. Certainly competitive ones and still some cooperative ones when it is in our mutual interest," Blinken added.

— PTI

Kamala brings in new style of dressing

Washington, Jan. 20: Vice President-elect Kamala Harris' understated and elegant signature style of blazers combined with sneakers signals a new way of power dressing. Harris, 56, made history as the first female, first Person of Colour and first South Asian American vice president on Wednesday.

Emerging as a woman of conviction and dedicated towards her work, Harris makes sure her approachable personality is reflected through her attire, several US media outlets reported. Her no-nonsense wardrobe often features sharp blazers, skinny pants, pearls and Converse sneakers.

Her style is understated, tailored, elegant, businesslike, with a touch of whimsy, said Susan E. Kelley, who runs the blog What Kamala Wore, in a report in the *New York Post*. The clothes don't wear her; she wears the clothes, Kelley said.

That professional polish mixed with West Coast nonchalance signals a new way of dressing for

the corridors of power, it said.

Harris opted to wear a dress designed by two Black designers for her historic inauguration as the US Vice-president. In opting to wear the dress designed by Christopher John Rogers and Sergio Hudson, Harris has sent her own message to the country that Black designers have arrived on the scene. Rogers is a young Black designer, from Baton Rouge, and lives in New York City. Hudson is a Black designer from South Carolina. Rogers has sold made-to-order designs from his Brooklyn studio since 2016, according to Forbes.

Harris' fashion sense dates back to the days when she was a lawyer in San Francisco. She had a big collection of sharp blazers in neutral tones along with accessories like boldly patterned scarves, colourful Converse or the jangly bangles she wears alongside a Cartier watch, the report said.

Harris has always maintained a simple yet graceful look,

whether it is her debut as the vice presidential candidate or her victory speech when the Democrats won the November 3 presidential election.

"She dressed in her usual work style of dark neutrals and simple lines. In the pictures, she doesn't look stiffly styled or glamorously made-over for her debut as a vice-presidential candidate. Her clothes do not look like they've been pulled fresh from a shopping bag," a report in the *Washington Post* said. She largely eschews the usual red, white and blue accents politicians generally employ to drive home their patriotism, the *New York Post* report said. Daughter of a Jamaican father and an Indian mother, Harris is giving fashion goals to women who want to look stylish yet comfortable in what they wear.

— PTI

VOGUE'S NEW HARRIS COVER AFTER ROW

New York, Jan. 20: Vogue will publish a limited edition of its latest issue featuring a different photo of Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris after the original cover image sparked controversy, the magazine said Tuesday.

Critics slammed the photo that graced the hard copy of the February issue, saying it was poorly composed and diminished Harris's achievements as the first

Black woman to be elected vice president.

Social media users criticised the lighting of the photo — in which Harris wears a blazer, jeans and sneakers — and also questioned whether the magazine had lightened her skin.

Following the backlash, Vogue announced it would release some copies with a more formal portrait of Harris wearing a light blue Michael Kors pantsuit.

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GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU / DINDIGUL CITY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Roc.No. 3716/2020/E4 E-Re Tendering Notice Dated : 19.01.2021

Government of Tamil Nadu sanctioned a Special Road Programme for Corporations for the year 2020-2021. Under this scheme the Commissioner, Dindigul City Municipal Corporation invites sealed bids from the eligible and qualified contractors for the following works as detailed in the table given below

No. of Packages : 11th Call I to VIII - Road Improvement

Value put into tender (Rs. in lakh) Ranging from Rs.167.00 lakh and Rs.199.00 lakh

Tender document available from : 22.01.2021 to 10.02.2021 afternoon 3.00 PM

Tender opening : 11.02.2021 @ 3.30 P.M.

Period of Completion : 180 days

Tender document and schedule available in <http://tntenders.gov.in> and <http://municipality.tn.gov.in/>

tenders can be downloaded at free of cost from 22.01.2021. The Bidding document will be received by the Corporation Commissioner, Dindigul City Municipal Corporation by way of off-line and e-submission also in 2 cover system up to 10.02.2021 - 3.00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit: 10% of the value of work should be submitted along with the tender by means of DD in favour of Commissioner, Dindigul City Municipal Corporation to a drawal at Dindigul. If e-tender, the EMPD should be dropped in the tender box before closure time, it is at 3.00 PM on 10.02.2021. Evaluation of bids will be done as per Tender Transparency Act 1998 of Government of Tamil Nadu and rules there us. If the said tender date happens to be a holiday, the tenders will be opened on the next working day. The Commissioner, Dindigul City Municipal Corporation reserves the rights to accept or reject any bidding document at any time without assigning any reason there for. Eligibility criteria and other details can be had from the Bidding document. For other details contact e-mail address : comdr.dindigul@gov.in Contact No. : 0451-247428

Commissioner, Dindigul City Municipal Corporation

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

THANJAVUR CITY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

THANJAVUR SMART CITY LIMITED

TENDER NOTICE Dated: 18.01.2021

Bid Notice No. 12792/2020/MCE4

Sealed Tenders are invited by The Managing Director & Commissioner, Thanjavur City Municipal Corporation from the Registered Contractors E- submission is also permitted, for the following works upto 3.00 PM on 09.02.2021. The Tenders will be opened by the Corporation Commissioner (or) his authorized official in the Corporation Office on the same day at 3.30 P.M. If the office happens to be closed on the date of receipt of the Tender specified, the Tender will be opened on next working day. The Contractor who wish to participate in the Tender may now down load the Tender documents through <https://tntenders.gov.in> by using E-Token / Digital Signature Cards on or before 08.02.2021 up to 3.00 P.M. Any other information may be obtained from the Corporation Executive Engineer, Thanjavur at the above office during office hours. The Managing Director & Corporation Commissioner has every right to cancel / postpone the Tender in view of Administrative reasons.

| Sl. No. | Name of the Work | Estimate Cost (Rs.in Lakhs) | Earnest Money (Rs.in) | Contractor Class |
|---------|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. | Development of Street Vendors Infrastructure in Thanjavur City Municipal Corporation | 83.00 | 83,000/- | I Class |

Commissioner & Special Officer, Thanjavur City Municipal Corporation.

DIPR/404/Tender/2021

PARADIP PORT TRUST

e-TENDER CALL NOTICE

No.ADO/EG/07/13(Vol.V)/139 Dtd.18.01.2021

Name of the Work : "Providing Secretarial and other assistance for official works of Administrative Department".

Estimated cost put to tender ₹ 2,24,85,418/- (Excluding GST @ 18% & Contractor's Commission). The last date & time of submission of bid is 01.02.2021 upto 1700 Hrs. For details please refer our website : www.paradipport.gov.in/ <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>.

Asst. Secretary (Admin.)

PPT/PR/373/20-21 Dt.20.01.2021

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

THANJAVUR CITY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

THANJAVUR SMART CITY LIMITED

TENDER NOTICE Dated: 18.01.2021

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| Sl. No. | Name of the Work | Estimate Cost (Rs.in Crore) | Earnest Money (Rs.in Lakhs) | Contractor Class |
|---------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. | Development of Land, Approach Road, Internal Paver Block Road, Solar Street Lights, Security Room & Toilet Facilities for Proposed 3 MWP Solar Power Plant at Sirajudeen Nagar Sewerage Water Treatment Plant in Thanjavur City Municipal Corporation | 2.00 | 2.00 | I Class |

Commissioner & Special Officer, Thanjavur City Municipal Corporation.

DIPR/402/Tender/2021

DECCAN Chronicle

21 JANUARY 2021

When Team India staged mother of all comebacks

Team India staged the mother of all comebacks to win an away Test series in one of the most difficult terrains to conquer while overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds. This win in Australia will go down in Indian cricket history as the greatest achievement, perhaps outranking the 1971 twin series wins in the West Indies and England and the 2001 win at home against Ricky Ponting's Australians in which too they had come back from a Test down to win the series. The team had similarly beaten Australia in the 2018-19 series Down Under but the home team then were without Steve Smith and David Warner.

This is indeed the dawn of a new era as the touring India squad laid to rest many conservative theories about experienced players and a settled XI being the key to success. The remarkable story of this triumph was shaped by fringe players who were pushed on to centre stage and who flourished beyond imagination in the limelight. Only Ajinkya Rahane and Cheteshwar Pujara played all four Tests. And when India went into the decider at the Woolloongabba arena in Brisbane, India's combined bowling attack had fewer Test wickets in their bag than Australia's occasional leg spinner Marnus Labuschagne. It is the deeds of such unlikely heroes that makes folklore of sport.

Rahane at the helm was as if Buddha were put in charge of a cricket team as opposed to the demonstrative Kohli, which just goes to show there are many ways to play the great game

The saga of raw physical courage starring Pujara at the Gabba and before him that of Hanuma Vihari and Ashwin who salvaged the draw in Sydney will be spoken of for a long time to come. But nothing made all this seem like a fairytale than the transformation of young Rishabh Pant who went from impulsive striker to matchwinner in the space of two Tests, his 97 in Sydney turning the series on its head as it gave a glimpse of victory from counterattacking cricket before his decisive 89 not out in Brisbane which cemented the balletic 91 of opener Shubman Gill who had shown that the Australian

pace bowlers could be taken on even in their Gabba.

Who would have imagined that the mother of all turnarounds would come from the very depths of despair of 36 all out in Adelaide and that the matchwinners would come from diverse backgrounds as the son of autorickshaw driver, Siraj being the only Indian bowler with a five-for in the series, the son of street vendor, Natarajan who went from net bowler to Test performer and Test benchwarmers Washington Sundar and Shardul Thakur would star with bat and ball. It was cheeky of netizens to suggest that the series verdict means Virat Kohli is free to seek more paternal leave because he as the skipper had assiduously built not only this team but also instilled in it this positive attitude.

It is time then for Indian cricket to bury old shibboleths and reshape the future with an open and all-inclusive approach recognising the fact that today's youngsters, exposed to big team atmosphere and subject to expert international coaching and conditioning in the IPL, are equally adept at playing to win. Rahane at the helm was as if Buddha were put in charge of a cricket team as opposed to the demonstrative Kohli, which just goes to show there are many ways to play the cricket.

Vaccine aid for neighbours

India has long called itself the pharmacy of the world and has now decided to live up to the claim. By the time these lines are printed, lakhs of doses of made-in-India vaccines against the novel coronavirus would have landed in our neighbouring countries, and more will do so in the coming days. While six nations — Bhutan, the Maldives, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and Seychelles — will get the Indian vaccines in the first tranche, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Mauritius will get them once "necessary regulatory clearances" are given. It is noteworthy that the Indian vaccines would be the first to arrive in most of these nations.

Vaccine, all said and done, is a knowledge product: it calls for the use of the knowledge humankind has created and every single tool it has made till now for its successful rollout. India's soft move, peppered with diplomatic quotients, will earn a lot of goodwill for the country. It will also prove to the neighbours, and the world at large, that India becoming a superpower will benefit all.

The only exception as of now is Pakistan. The Drugs Regulatory Authority of Pakistan has cleared the use of Covishield, manufactured by Serum Institute of India, and the government there is reportedly exploring ways to get it through Covax, an alliance set up by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations and World Health Organisation or directly. Both the routes are fine but India should positively decide should a request come from the western neighbour. It will have no dramatic consequences but will be the stating of the obvious — the real challenges the two now-estranged nations face are similar, and the ways to overcome them will be more successful if they are adopted together. Should it happen, the vaccine could produce some antibodies against ultra-nationalism and religious bigotry, too. The government should seize this chance.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

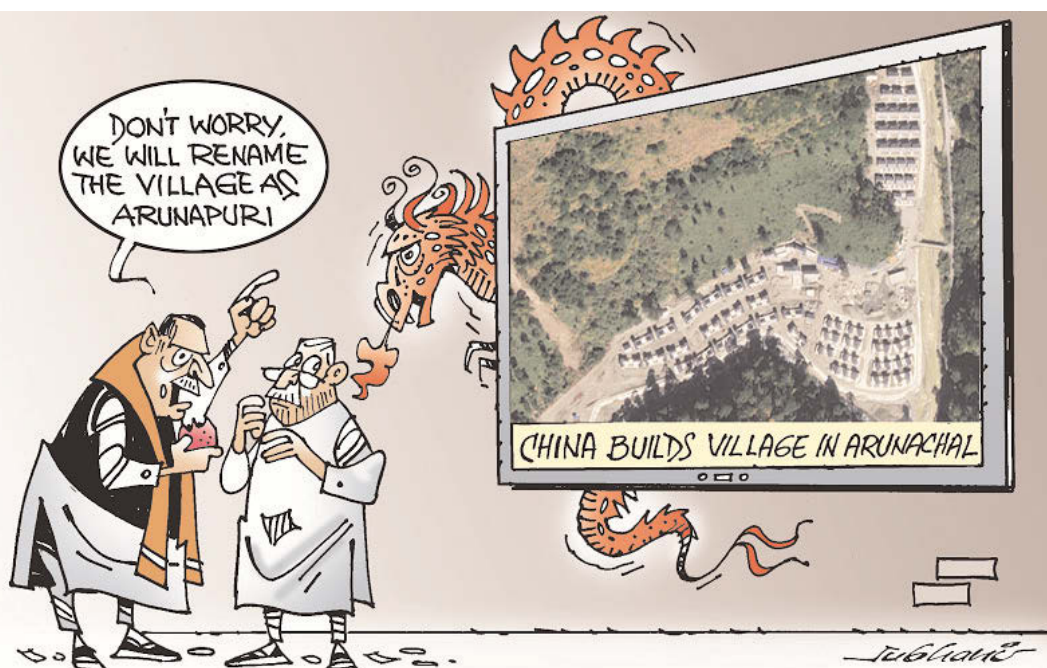
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Subhani



India, world must gear up as Biden era begins



K.C. Singh

President Joe Biden takes over America's presidency under unprecedented circumstances. It is only the fourth time in US history that the outgoing leader refused to attend his successor's inauguration, all earlier examples being from the nineteenth century. The transition has been disorderly, to say the least, despite the US facing a serious spike in Covid-19 cases, with over 400,000 dead and the economy slowing down. Domestic challenges are rivalled by those abroad as the Trumpian foreign policy legacy is equally fractious.

While Mr Biden's nominees to head the state and defence departments and the CIA are all well-known individuals, their depositions before Senate committees a day before the inauguration give an insight into the new administration's thinking. Antony Blinken, the incoming secretary of state, began with his personal story as the descendant of those who either fled Soviet pogroms or Nazi concentration camps. He ended with the touching tale about his late stepfather, hiding in a bush as disarray descended with Allied troops advancing into Germany in 1945, stepped out on seeing a tank with a five-pointed white star and told the African-American GI emerging from its turret the only three English words his mother taught him: "God bless America".

These anecdotes bolstered Mr Blinken's argument that the US must lead the world "not only by the example of our power, but by the power of our example". He listed the most pressing challenges as rising nationalism, receding democracy, growing rivalry from "China, and Russia and other authoritarian states, mounting a threat to a stable and open international system". He also noted "a technological

revolution" was reshaping our lives. If the US doesn't lead, he said, "there can be only two outcomes: another nation will step in or none will, and chaos shall ensue".

On specifics, Mr Blinken argued the US must defeat Covid-19, out-compete China and take the lead in tackling climate change. President Biden is likely to take action on all three fronts the very first day. The US will rejoin the Paris climate agreement, return to the World Health Organisation, reverse travel bans on select Muslim nations and reach out to alienated allies. But he singled out China as the most significant challenge. Therefore, President Trump was right in the direction of his China policy, but wrong in the means he chose.

The defence secretary-designate, Gen. Lloyd Austin (Retd), talked about India's near western neighbourhood. While he reiterated the US resolve to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, he qualified it, as Mr Trump avoided doing, by saying safeguarding the gains in women's rights, etc, must be a precondition to a final settlement. On Pakistan, he seemed to regress to old formulations like underscoring its importance to Afghan peace and regional stability.

Mr Blinken also singled out democracy and human rights as central to the Biden administration's global outreach. Thus overall, while India would be happy with the tone and tenor on China, though what the new China containment strategy will be is still unclear, it would be cautious about Pakistan again getting more wriggle room. But New Delhi can't take the talk about human rights lightly. It was speculated whether the sudden early retirement of a bureaucrat close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his induction into Uttar Pradesh politics is

not a first step in curbing the zeal of UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath in pursuing a majoritarian agenda and intolerance towards anyone criticising him. A comedian's being detained for perceived insult raises questions about freedom of speech being curbed. The four-year free pass the government got on this count is now over. This is happening as the BJP prepares for a no-holds-barred electoral fight in West Bengal, and when the farmers' protests at Delhi's main entry points is nearing two months.

In Britain, the farmers' protests led to 100 MPs, across party lines, raising concern. A similar move can't be ruled out in Washington, with Democrats now controlling both Houses. External affairs minister S. Jaishankar had earlier drawn the ire of a congressional committee by illogically seeking the exclusion of Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal from a meeting he was to attend as she had been critical of the government's actions in Kashmir, including Article 370's abrogation. She has been re-elected and may revisit that issue and now new ones like the farmers' protests.

President Donald Trump's administration poisoned US foreign policy well before departure by ramping up sanctions against Iran, raising the level of ties with Taiwan, declaring China's actions against Uighurs as genocide, etc. The aim was possibly to reduce Mr Biden's strategic space to re-balance ties with those nations, or if he did so make him vulnerable to attacks over being soft on perceived antagonists. Interestingly, like the debate over Mr Modi having gone overboard with his Houston rally with

Mr Trump, thus sowing seeds of distrust amongst Democrats, Australian PM Scott Morrison is being similarly excoriated. He attended a rally with Mr Trump in Ohio and Opposition leader Anthony Albanese is calling it a foolish alignment with a losing candidate.

But the key question is whether Mr Biden, with eight years as President Barack Obama's deputy and decades in the US Senate, can return the US and the world to its pre-pandemic, pre-Trump order. That seems unlikely both because China's rise, if anything, has been accelerated by the current global crises and also as Mr Biden has a domestic right-wing insurgency on his hands, which Mr Trump may continue to pour fuel on from his perch in Florida. Liberal internationalism needs re-invention. A post-Brexit and weakened British PM Boris Johnson has proposed a "D-10", a grouping of the G-7 plus three other democracies: India, South Korea and Australia. The US must reassess how to counter China's success in getting two groups off the ground after Mr Trump's defeat: Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and the Europe-China investment agreement. Will Mr Biden re-engage with the new version of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which Mr Trump walked out of. India just joined the UN Security Council for a two-year term. Will the Biden administration's revived interest in international institutions enable India to use its membership to push for UNSC reforms and curb the rising penetration of China in UN bodies.

None of this is possible unless the BJP takes a hard look at its domestic politics since Mr Modi's 2019 re-election. Peace at home, constitutionalism, rule of law and respect for human rights is a precondition to any genuine partnership abroad with major democracies recovering from the right-wing onslaught on their institutions.

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambksingh.

The key question is whether Mr Biden can return the US and the world to its pre-pandemic, pre-Trump order. That seems unlikely because of China's rise and also as Mr Biden has a domestic right-wing insurgency on his hands.

LETTERS

SHANTA, A HUMANIST DOCTOR

The passing of Dr V.Shanta a name synonymous with cancer care who worked tirelessly towards providing qualitative and affordable health care services and treatment to cancer afflicted patients in the country till the end came, is an irreparable loss to both medical fraternity and common man alike. As chairperson of Adyar Cancer Institute, Dr Shanta had opened its gates to people from all strata of society and ensured no cancer patients went untreated because of their crippling poverty and impecunious circumstances. At a time when profitability has emerged as a sole driving force for private hospitals, Dr Shanta and her Adyar Cancer Institute remained an exception.

M. Jeyaram, Sholavandan

■ **THE PASSING** of Dr V. Shanta, the world renowned and the most loved oncologist who dedicated her entire life to the treatment of cancer patients is a great loss to thousands of her cancer patients and the cured. She was an embodiment of selfless service to the cancer afflicted, particularly the poor. At a time when cancer was considered a killer disease, she made the world realise that cancer is not only curable but preventable too. There are only a few who could match the yeoman service rendered by her to humanity and it would be very difficult to fill the vacuum she has left. We now hear loud cries that the country's tallest civilian award Bharat Ratna should be conferred on her in recognition of her achievement in the control and treatment of cancer. Why were they waiting till she died to make this appeal? We never recognise dedicated souls like Dr Shanta during their lifetime but only honour them posthumously.

Tharcious S. Fernando, Chennai

PHENOMENAL WIN

IMPOSSIBLE, THEY say, is often untried. Winning a Test series Down Under is never easy. But then it is not impossible if a team is committed to win and has a great leadership. Rahane and his boys have exemplified it in the series, winning it 2-1. Especially, chasing successfully a target of 328 runs in the fourth Test on a difficult pitch in Brisbane without the services of run-machine Kohli is something incredible. Every member of the team deserves accolades for their remarkable performance in the last three Tests.

S. Ramakrishnasayee, Chennai

Mail your letters to editor@deccanmail.com

Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



Free to air views, ex-babus square up in 'letters war' on 'love jihad' law

Perhaps service rules stopped them from airing their views but after retirement bureaucrats are not bound anymore and can voice their thoughts freely. This has led to the formation of pro and anti-government groups among retired babus who jump into the fray at the behest of their conscience (or political leaning).

In the most recent instance, the "love jihad" law legislated by the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has triggered a "letter war" between former bureaucrats, those who criticise the law and those who have rallied behind the state government. The ranks of the ex-babus have been joined by retired Army officers, members of the judiciary and others.

Earlier, a group of 104 retired bureaucrats wrote to Yogi Adityanath, expressing "deep disapproval" and concern at the use of the "love jihad" law. Noted signatories included retired bureaucrats

like former NSA Shiv Shankar Menon, former chief of R&AW A.S. Dulat, former Chief Information Commissioner Wajahat Habibullah, former principal secretary in PMO, T.K.A. Nair and former Union health secretary K. Sujatha Rao among other notables.

Now, a Forum of Concerned Citizens, comprising of over 250 retired officers has written to the chief minister endorsing the 'Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance 2020' and the motive behind it. In their letter, the group of former babus and ex-Army officers said that the legislation rightly provides that marriages done for sole purpose of unlawful conversion can be declared unlawful by family courts. They termed the letter by anti-love jihad babus a "politically motivated pressure group" and said that they don't represent thousands of civil servants who believe in New India emerging as the greatest democra-

cies of the world.

One may be tempted to believe that this is an instance of political battles being fought by proxy!

CADRE MERGER

More than a year after the Centre abrogated Jammu & Kashmir's special status under Article 370 and bifurcated the state into Union territories, the J&K cadre of IAS, IPS and IFOs has been merged with the Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT) cadre. This allows officers posted in these states and UTs to work in J&K and vice-versa.

Necessary modifications may be made in the corresponding cadre allocation rules by the Centre. The notification issued by the government states that officers allocated to AGMUT cadre shall function following the rules framed by the Centre.

Observers see in the move a message of total integration of J&K with the Centre. It also solves the

Centre's problem of the reluctance of J&K cadre officers to serve in Ladakh, as it now creates a larger pool of UT cadre officers. Ladakh, they say, suffers from a paucity of officers. Due to its harsh climate officers are reluctant to serve there. But with the Chinese threat looming, the Centre wishes to focus on Ladakh's development. So, clearly, it is as much a political move as an administrative one.

MAMATA'S BIG PROMOTION PUSH IN BENGAL

Political or administrative compulsion? West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee has promoted 31 IAS officers as secretary and additional secretary in one big push to bolster the state government's administration ahead of the Assembly elections.

With the BJP making a determined effort to breach her stronghold, the Trinamul leader is taking steps to strengthen the administra-

tive machinery, which has come under fire from various quarters. Among the 19 officers promoted as secretaries are additional secretaries Smita Pandey, Vijay Bharti, Shubhanjan Das, Samir Kumar Bhattacharya, C.C. Guha, Rajat Bose, Kaushik Halder, N.C. Sarar and T.K. Rudra.

The new additional secretaries include V. Lalithalakshmi, Sourav Pahari, Mukta Arya, Devi Prasad Karanam, Shakeel Ahmed, Uttam Patra, Santanu Saha, Nirmalya Ghosh, Anindya Narayan Biswas and Dipankar Chowdhury.

But this is early in the poll campaigning and chances of further changes in the state administration cannot be ruled out as the CM seeks to stave off the BJP's onslaught to dislodge her party from power. Watch this space for updates.

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

SHORT TAKES

Nadella, Pichai hail Indian team

Washington: Top Indian American CEOs Sundar Pichai and Satya Nadella on Tuesday congratulated the Indian cricket team on their historic test series win in Australia. A fearless Indian team, driven by its courageous youngsters, pulled off an exhilarating three-wicket win over Australia in the fourth and final test of the the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Brisbane on Tuesday. "One of the greatest test series wins ever. Congrats India and well played Australia, what a series #INDvsAUS," tweeted Pichai, chief executive officer of Google and Alphabet. "Last hour of the last day of the last test. Test series for the ages. Congrats to Team India!", Microsoft CEO Nadella wrote on the microblogging site. Both Nadella and Pichai are self-confessed cricket enthusiasts and closely follow the Indian team, making interesting observations at the end of important tournaments. — PTI

More Covid cases linked to Oz Open

Melbourne: Three more people linked to the Australian Open have tested positive for Covid-19 in Melbourne, increasing to 10 those associated with the Grand Slam tennis tournament which begins on February 8. Victoria state Emergency Services Minister Lisa Neville confirmed the new cases had been detected on Wednesday, adding that authorities are "very confident" one of the cases is a tennis player who is shedding the virus and is not infectious. The player is already in hard lockdown as they were on board a flight into Melbourne with another positive case. The other two cases are a player and their support person. Those 10 positive cases mean a total of 72 players remain in hard lockdown after being deemed close contacts of those positives on three charter flights into Melbourne from Abu Dhabi, Doha and Los Angeles. There were 17 tournament charter flights which arrived into Australia over three days last week so players and their entourages could undergo a mandatory 14-day quarantine. Australian Open director Craig Tiley said 3,200 tests have been conducted on the more than 1,200 players, support staff and tournament officials. — AP

Leicester City humble Chelsea

Leicester, UK: Leicester moved to the top of the Premier League at the midway point of its campaign after a dominant 2-0 victory over Chelsea. Wilfred Ndidi and James Maddison scored in the first half on Tuesday to lift Leicester above Manchester United and Manchester City into first place. Leicester manager Brendan Rodgers has been happy for his players to go under the radar in the title race, but his bright and energetic team continues to show its credentials and is now unbeaten in six league games. Even with Vardy's goal drought extending to five games, Leicester had enough quality to beat Chelsea that has now lost five of its last eight league games to pile pressure on manager Frank Lampard. — AP

Shakib shines in Bangla win vs WI

Dhaka: Shakib Al Hasan took four wickets for just eight runs in a stunning international comeback Wednesday as Bangladesh beat the West Indies by six wickets in their first one-day international in Dhaka. Shakib, playing his first ODI after a one-year ban, helped Bangladesh bowl out a weakened West Indies for 122 in just 32.2 overs. In reply, the home side reached 125-4 in 33.5 overs, with skipper Tamim Iqbal hitting 44 off 69 balls. — AFP

Brief scores: West Indies 122 in 32.2 overs (K. Mayers 40; Shakib 4; Al Hasan 4/8) lost to Bangladesh 125/4 in 33.5 overs (T. Iqbal 44; A. Hosen 3/26).

HEAT'S ON KOHLI

Victory under Rahane puts Virat in focus

New Delhi, Jan. 20: First things first. There is no imminent threat to Virat Kohli's captaincy in any format and neither is BCCI even remotely thinking on those lines. But that's the news part of the story. When it comes to views, there are many — some are quite open about the theory of split captaincy and some are speaking about it in hushed tones.

Ajinkya Rahane's calm demeanour in India's biggest overseas series win has opened up a debate but to disappoint the fans of the Test vice-captain, there is little chance of a permanent anointment for him in the immediate future.

However, there could be a paradigm shift in how the leadership group in the Indian cricket team works when Kohli re-enters that dressing room after a month-long paternity break.

When Kohli left, it was a team that was down in the dumps — dismissed for its lowest Test score of 36. But a lot has changed since that fateful afternoon in Adelaide.

While head coach Ravi Shastri is absolutely right in saying that this team bears Kohli's "stamp and character" but from December 19 in Adelaide to January 19 in Brisbane, a few senior cricketers will be perceived a bit differently.

Rohit Sharma, Ravichandran Ashwin, Cheteshwar Pujara and certainly Rahane, in their own little way, have created a legacy but post Brisbane, that legacy will need proper acknowledgement.

These four will not ask for it as they have now earned it after quite literally putting their bodies on line.

So when Kohli enters that Indian dressing room, he will remain the "first" but "among equals" in a leadership group that possibly will be more inclusive.

On Friday, when a question was put forth on this to stand-in skipper Rahane after the match got over but expectedly, his tight defence couldn't be breached.

"I don't want to think about all these things. This is a victory that we all need to enjoy and I will think about England series once I am back in India," Rahane dodged the question. — PTI



Indian coach Ravi Shastri (right) talks to players in the dressing room with captain Ajinkya Rahane by his side after India beat Australia to clinch the Border-Gavaskar Test series 2-1 at the Gabba in Brisbane on Tuesday.

Pant is best keeper-batsman

Dubai, Jan. 20: India's Rishabh Pant became the top-ranked wicket-keeper batsman in the world after his sensational series-winning 89-run knock in the Brisbane match pushed him to a career-best 13th spot in the ICC Test batting rankings, issued on Wednesday.

Pant, who won many admirers for his fearless and mature batting, has 691 points in his kitty. South Africa's Quinton de Kock (677) is the next best wicket-keeper batsman in the list in the 15th position.

Australia batsman Marnus Labuschagne's first-innings century in Brisbane took him past India skipper Virat Kohli (862 points) to third position with a career-best 878 rating points. Kohli missed the action as he was on paternity leave.

Young India opener Shubman Gill continued his upward trajectory, moving up from 68th to 47th spot after a crucial 91 in the second innings of the fourth Test, which India won by three wickets on Tuesday.

Middle-order mainstay Cheteshwar Pujara moved up one place to seventh after his dogged effort, while Mohammad Siraj



India's Rishabh Pant hits a six during his match winning knock against Australia on the final day of the fourth Test at the Gabba in Brisbane on Tuesday. — AP

jumped 32 places to 45th after taking six wickets in the match, including a five-wicket haul in the second innings.

Debutant Washington Sundar and Shardul

tions, while Thakur re-entered the batting list in 113th position and bowling list in 65th position.

Australia captain Tim Paine moved up three spots to 42nd after scores of 50 and 27 while fast bowler Josh Hazlewood leapfrogged New Zealand's Tim Southee to the fourth spot after grabbing six wickets in the match, including a haul of five for 57 in the first innings.

England's Joe Root has returned to the top five with his highest rating points tally (738) in two years after scoring a first-innings 228 to help his team win the first Test against Sri Lanka by seven wickets in Galle.

Root has advanced six places, overtaking the likes of Pakistan's Babar Azam and Pujara in the process.

Jonny Bairstow (up five places to 58th in batting) and Sam Curran (up two places to 39th in bowling) also gained.

For Sri Lanka, Lahiru Thirimanne's progressed 12 places to 87th position while left-arm spinner Lasith Embuldeniya (up six places to 47th) and medium pacer Asitha Fernando (up 11 places to 96th) also gained. — PTI

Super Kings retain Raina, release six

New Delhi, Jan. 20: Sanju Samson replaced Steve Smith as Rajasthan Royals captain after the Australian batsman and some other under-performing stars were released by their respective IPL franchises even as Chennai Super Kings retained veteran Suresh Raina for the upcoming 14th edition of the league.

The deadline for the eight franchises to submit the lists of retained and released players for the next season ended on Wednesday.

Samson was appointed to the top job after RR decided against renewing former skipper Steve Smith's contract.

Smith's contract ended in October 2020.

The Australians, smarting from a Test series loss to an injury-plagued India, took a hit as the likes of the explosive Glenn Maxwell and opener Aaron Finch too were released by Kings XI Punjab and Royal Challengers Bangalore respectively.

Also released by KXIP were West Indies all-rounder Sheldon Cottrell, Afghanistan's Mujeeb-ur-Rahman and New



Suresh Raina

Zealand's Jimmy Neesham, who underwent a surgery recently to treat an injured finger.

CSK's Harbhajan Singh and Mumbai Indians' Lasith Malinga were among the other big names to be released by their respective sides ahead of next month's auction.

Harbhajan was joined by the likes of Kedar Jadhav, Piyush Chawla and Murali Vijay who were also let go by CSK. Also released by MI was Sherfane Rutherford, while Delhi Capitals decided to enter the next edition without English batsman Jason Roy, wicketkeeper Alex Carey, leg-spinner Sandeep Lamichhane and seamer Mohit Sharma. — PTI

WHO'S IN & OUT

■ **Chennai Super Kings — Players retained:** MS Dhoni, Ravindra Jadeja, Narayan Jagadeesan, Ruturaj Gaikwad, KM Asif, Josh Hazlewood, Karn Sharma, Ambati Rayudu, Suresh Raina, Imran Tahir, Deepak Chahar, Faf du Plessis, Shardul Thakur, Mitchell Santner, Dwayne Bravo, Lungi Ngidi, Sam Curran, Sai Kishore. **Released (6):** Harbhajan Singh, Shane Watson, Piyush Chawla, Kedar Jadhav, M. Vijay, Monu Kumar Singh.

■ **Delhi Capitals — Players retained:** Ajinkya Rahane, Rishabh Pant, Kagiso Rabada, Anrich Nortje, Marcus Stoinis, Daniel Sans, Shimron Hetmyer, Chris Woakes, Shikhar Dhawan, Prithvi Shaw, Shreyas Iyer, Axar Patel, Amit Mishra, Ishant Sharma, Ravichandran Ashwin, Harshal Patel, Lalit Yadav, Pravin Dubey, Avesh Khan. **Released (6):** Mohit Sharma, Tusar Deshpande, Keemo Paul, Sandeep Lamichhane, Alex Carey, Jason Roy.

■ **Kings XI Punjab — Players retained:** K. L. Rahul, Chris Gayle, Mayank Agarwal, Nicholas Pooran, Mandeep Singh, Sarfaraz Khan, Deepak Hooda, Prabhsimran Singh, Mohammed Shami, Chris Jordan, Darshan Naidkande, Ravi Bishnoi, Murugan Ashwin, Arshdeep Singh, Harpreet Brar, Ishan Porel. **Released (9):** Glenn Maxwell, Karun Nair, Hardus Viljoen, Jagadeesha Suchith, Mujeeb ur Rahman, Sheldon Cottrell, Jimmy Neesham, Krishnappa Gowtham, Tajinder Singh.

■ **Kolkata Knight Riders — Players retained:** Eoin Morgan, Dinesh Karthik, Nitish Rana, Shubman Gill, Rinku Singh, Rahul Tripathi, Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Kuldeep Yadav, Lockie Ferguson, Pat Cummins, Prashidh Krishna, Sandeep Warrier, Shivan Mavi, Varun Chakravarthy, Andre Russell, Sunil Narine, Tim Seifert. **Released (6):** Nikhil Naik, Siddhesh Lad, M. Siddharth, Tom Banton, Chris Green, Harry Gurney.

■ **Mumbai Indians — Players retained:** Rohit Sharma, Quinton de Kock, Suryakumar Yadav, Ishan Kishan, Chris Lynn, Anmolpreet Singh, Saurabh Tiwary, Aditya Tare, Kieron Pollard, Hardik Pandya, Krunal Pandya, Anukul Roy, Jasprit Bumrah, Trent Boult, Rahul Chahar, Jayant Yadav, Dhawal Kulkarni, Mohsin Khan. **Released (7):** Lasith Malinga, Mitchell McClenaghan, James Pattinson, Nathan Coulter-Nile, Sherfane Rutherford, Prince Balwant Rai, Digvijay Deshmukh.

■ **Rajasthan Royals — Players retained:** Sanju Samson, Ben Stokes, Jofra Archer, Jos Buttler, Rryan Parag, Shreyas Gopal, Rahul Tewatia, Mahipal Lomror, Kartik Tyagi, Andrew Tye, Jaydev Unadkat, Mayank Markande, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Anuj Rawat, David Miller, Manan Vohra, Robin Uthappa. **Released (8):** Steve Smith, Ankit Rajpoot, Oshane Thomas, Akash Singh, Varun Aaron, Tom Curran, Anirudha Joshi, Shashank Singh.

■ **Royal Challengers Bangalore — Players retained:** Virat Kohli, AB de Villiers, Yuzvendra Chahal, Devdutt Padikal, Navdeep Saini, Washington Sundar, Mohammed Siraj, Kane Richardson, Adam Zampa, Joshi Philippe, Shabbaz Ahmed and Pavan Deshpande. **Released (10):** Aaron Finch, Chris Morris, Isuru Udana, Moeen Ali, Pawan Negi, Gurkeerat Singh Mann, Shivam Dube, Dale Steyn, Parthiv Patel, Umesh Yadav.

■ **Sunrisers Hyderabad — Players retained:** David Warner, Kane Williamson, Rashid Khan, T. Natarajan, Abhishek Sharma, Basil Thampi, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Jonny Bairstow, Manish Pandey, Mohammed Nabi, Sandeep Sharma, Shahbaz Nadeem, Shreevats Goswami, Siddarth Kaul, Khaleel Ahmed, Vijay Shankar, Wriddhiman Saha, Abdul Samad, Mitchell Marsh, Jason Holder, Priyam Garg, Virat Singh. **Released (5):** Sanjay Yadav, B. Sandeep, Billy Stanlake, Fabian Allen, Yarra Prithviraj.

CA lauds India, BCCI for sacrifices

Melbourne, Jan. 20: Cricket Australia on Wednesday saluted the Indian team's "resilience, courage and skill" during its historic Test series win over the hosts and expressed gratitude to the BCCI for the "sacrifices" it made to ensure a smooth conduct of the epic contest.

A second-string Indian team, led by Ajinkya Rahane, braved all odds to defeat a full-strength Australia by three wickets at the Gabba here to win

the four-Test series 2-1 and retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy on Tuesday in Brisbane.

"On behalf of everyone at Cricket Australia, we congratulate Team India for their resilience, courage and skill demonstrated in retaining the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in a series that will be talked about for generations to come," CA wrote in a Thank You note to the BCCI.

The note, written by CA interim CEO Nick

Hockley and Chair Earl Eddings, was addressed to "friends in Indian cricket", the BCCI, acknowledging the role played by the Sourav Ganguly-led board in successfully completing the tour amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Australian cricket will forever be grateful to the BCCI for their friendship, trust and commitment in helping to deliver a series that has brought joy to many millions of people around the world at a time they needed it most," the

letter read. "The unique challenges of international touring during a global pandemic are considerable and we thank India's players, coaches and support staff for all they have given.

"Over the past nine weeks, the Indian and Australian men's teams completed outstanding One-Day International and Twenty20 International series, followed by one of the greatest Border-Gavaskar Test series ever competed," it

added. The CA officials said that the BCCI's cooperation was crucial to making the tour a hit. The series gave the financially struggling CA a major boost with an expected revenue of 300 million Australian dollars.

"Despite the many public health and logistical challenges, the BCCI engaged with a spirit of cooperation befitting their status as one of international sport's greatest ambassadors," CA further added. — PTI

Warne predicts huge Oz fallout

Brisbane, Jan. 20: The legendary Shane Warne believes the embarrassing Test series loss to an under-strength India will result in a "huge fallout" in the Australian team and said a few heads could roll in the coming days.

India recorded one of their most memorable wins on Tuesday when they defeated a full-strength Australia by three wickets in the fourth Test here to pocket the four-match series 2-1 and retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

"I think there'll be a huge fallout from this (defeat). There's not too many times that you lose to the second or third (choice) side," Warne was quoted as saying by Fox Cricket.

"Their (Australia) tactics will come into question, and they have to. Bowlers will come into question, people's spot in the team will come into question. It has to. You can't just deflect it and flick it off and say India were too good for us," he added.

Warne was, however, effusive in his praise for the Indian team which braved injuries to its key players and absence of Virat Kohli after the first Test on paternity leave to emerge triumphant.

"That's not taking anything away from those Indian guys that played but their first selection side, there's probably only two or three players in that side who would play," Warne added. — PTI

Ponting in awe of rookie Indian team's super win

Brisbane, Jan. 20: A "shocked" Ricky Ponting is struggling to comprehend how India's "A team" overwhelmed Australia in the Test series in their own backyard.

"I'm quite shocked that Australia weren't quite good enough to win this series. The cold hard facts of it are pretty much that was the India 'A' team that played this Test match and still won," Ponting told *cricket.com.au*.

"Considering everything the Indian team has been through in the last five or six weeks, with the captain leaving, all the injuries they've had they've been through 20 players (Australia) have been at full-strength, bar Davey (Warner) missing

I'm quite shocked that Australia weren't quite good enough to win this series. The cold hard facts of it are pretty much that was the India 'A' team that played this Test match and still won.

— **RICKY PONTING**
former Australia captain



early on, so it's really hard to comprehend.

"It's probably not even (India's) second-picked team because you think of Bhuvneshwar and Ishant Sharma and those guys who didn't even make it out here. Rohit Sharma turns up for the last two Test matches only," he added. Ponting said India

won all the key moments throughout the series.

"They've played really good, tough, hard Test match cricket day-in and day-out. India have won all the big moments in every Test match and Australia have fallen short. That's been the difference between the two teams," he added. — PTI

Laszlo backs CFC strikers to perform

NEHA SURANA | DC CHENNAI, JAN. 20

After blowing away their chance to climb up the points table by settling for a goalless draw against a 10-man SC East Bengal, Chennaiyin FC have another opportunity to move into the top-four when they face ATK Mohun Bagan on Thursday.

CFC coach Csaba Laszlo said he is trying to bring the best out of the team. "We know that we didn't score many goals and we must be more clinical in the front. If you see how fast the games are coming, you don't have too much time to show the players many tactical elements. But we are trying to work with the time that has been given us," he said.

Having scored only 10 goals so far this season, CFC's attacking side has often come under the scanner. "Honestly, we are fighting with injuries and also some kind of luck but we are not complaining. I can

take every critic positively and make sure one learns from the criticism.

"In the last game (against East Bengal), if I analyse the game, I think we were not so powerful in the mid-field, we were not creative and the goal position was not the best. We know what our problems are and where we have to work more. People have to understand that every coach and every single person behind the team are working every minute of every hour in a day to make the team better," he said.

Speaking in support of his strikers, Laszlo said, "It is a very difficult job to score goals, you must be not just confident but should have the skills too. I am hundred per cent sure that our strikers are skilled but sometimes the luck is not there. I am encouraging them and I believe in my players. Because I see them on a daily basis how they are working hard."

IBRAHIM CROWNED CHAMPION

Chennai, Jan. 20: Pune's Muhammad Ibrahim was crowned champion in the Pro Class, while Gurgaon's Amitesh Rao bagged the Junior Class Title in the Mumbai Falcons Indian eRacing Championship in association with Volkswagen Motorsport India.

More than 300 registrations from over 40 cities were received for Season 4 of the Mumbai Falcons iERC. The introduction of new classes, were a big boost to participation. Delhi's Muskaan Jubbal won the Women's class while Akunuri Sri Abilash from Chennai, and Kollam's Steve George won a race each in the Amateur Class.

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