

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
NELLORE | SUNDAY | 24 JANUARY 2021

WEATHER

Max: 31.5°C  
Min: 23.9°C  
RH: 63%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.  
Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 31/23 °C

COVID-19 C U N T

CASES

DEATHS

(+18,600)

(+223)

1,06,54,656

1,53,363

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+221)

(+2)

TS: 2,93,056

1,588

(+158)

(+1)

AP: 8,86,852

7,147

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

9,89,98,691

DEATHS 21,22,464

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

219

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Uttarayana

Tithi: Pushya Shuddha Ekadasi till 10.54 pm

Star: Rohini from 11.57 pm

Variyam: 3.08 pm to 4.54 pm; 6 am (Monday)

Durmuhuram: 4.34 pm to 5.18 pm

Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR

Jamadi-ul-Akhir 10,1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.24 am

Zohar: 12.21 pm

Asar: 4.28 pm

Maghrib: 6.04 pm

Isha: 7.18 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.38 AM

SUNSET TODAY 6.05 PM

MOONSET 3.30 AM

MOONRISE 2.16 PM

COUNTER POINT

BIHAR GOVT TO KEEP WATCH ON SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

This pop-up appears before we post anything!

SHORT TAKES

Petrol, diesel at new all-time high

New Delhi: Petrol and diesel prices on Saturday touched new all-time highs after rates were increased for the fourth time this week. Prices were hiked by 25 paise per litre each, according to a notification from oil marketing firms. This took the petrol price in Delhi to ₹85.70 per litre while diesel rate climbed to ₹75.88 a litre.

BSF detects Pak tunnel at border

Jammu: The Border Security Force (BSF) on Saturday detected another underground tunnel, constructed by Pakistan at the International Border (IB) to facilitate infiltration of terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir, in Kathua district during the past 10 days, a spokesperson of the border guarding force said.

Report on Page 5

Tractors set out for R-Day parade

Chandigarh: Several batches of farmers from Punjab and Haryana set out on Saturday in their tractor-trolleys and other vehicles to take part in the tractor parade on January 26 in Delhi. They carried some ration, mattresses and other essentials.

NATION | 5

Somnath Bharti sentenced to 2 yrs

WORLD | 6

Larry King passes away at 87 due to Covid

SPORTS | 8

Seamer Saini bowled through pain in Brisbane

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## SEC notifies GP polls, phase-1 on Feb. 5

Votes to be counted on same day, upa-sarpanch elections to be conducted after winners are declared

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 23

The State Election Commission (SEC) has issued notification for conduct of gram panchayat polls on February 5 from 6.30 am. to 3.30 pm in 11 districts during Phase-I. The districts left out are Vizianagaram and Prakasam. Polling during Phase-II will be held on February 9, Phase-III on February 13 and Phase-IV on February 17.

As per the notification released on Saturday by the SEC N. Ramesh Kumar, the notice for Phase-I elections will be released by the returning officer concerned on January 25 seeking filing of nominations by contestants between 10.30 am and 5 pm. Ward-wise electoral rolls of gram panchayats will be displayed on the same day. Scrutiny of nominations will be on January 28 from 8 am onwards. Appeal against rejection of nominations before the appellate authority will be accepted on January 29 up to 5 pm. Disposal of appeals will be taken up on January 30. Last date for withdrawal of candidatures is January 31 up to 3 pm.

The final list of contesting candidates will be published on January 31 after 3 pm. Polling will be conducted wherever necessary on February 5 from 6.30 am to 3.30 pm. Counting of votes will be taken up on the same day from 4 pm onwards. Results will be declared soon after completion of counting of votes and election of upa-sarpanch will also be held on the same day of declaring results. In case the election of upa-sarpanch is not held on that day, it will be held the next day.

State Election Commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar addresses a media conference on gram panchayat elections in Vijayawada on Saturday. — C. NARAYANA RAO

### 3.6 lakh first-time voters to miss out

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 23

Nearly 3.6 lakh first-time voters are missing their chance of exercising their franchise in the ensuing gram panchayat polls in Andhra Pradesh, state election commissioner (SEC) N. Ramesh Kumar has said.

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, he maintained that though the SEC wanted to adopt electoral rolls published on January 15, 2021, it was forced to hold elections as per the rolls published on January 1, 2019.

Page 2: PR department failed to update rolls: SEC

### Snowfall in Srinagar

A motorist stops during snowfall in Srinagar on Saturday. Traffic on the 270-km Jammu-Srinagar national highway was suspended following fresh snowfall in high-altitude areas, including both sides of Jawahar Tunnel, the gateway to the Kashmir valley. — PTI

## PM: Strong India is living Netaji dream, LoC to LAC

Kolkata, Jan. 23: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose would have been proud to see that the country has become strong and is following his footsteps from the Line of Control (LoC) to the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Bose would have also been proud that the government he dreamt of is fighting a pandemic with vaccines developed by it, and gave a befitting reply whenever its sovereignty was challenged, Modi said on the occasion of the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji being celebrated by the Centre as 'Parakram Diwas'.

"I sometimes wonder how Netaji would have felt if he had seen how a new and strong India is taking shape," he said at a programme held in the Victoria Memorial Hall here.

"Netaji had dreamt of strong India, from LAC to LOC we are following his footsteps. Whenever our sovereignty was challenged, we have given a

### BJP, TMC try to claim Netaji legacy

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, JAN. 23

Controversy cast a shadow on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Kolkata visit on Saturday to inaugurate the Centre's 'Parakram Diwas' celebration in memory of the

125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose as the solemn occasion witnessed a tug of war between the BJP and ruling TMC over the freedom fighter to woo the voters in poll-bound West Bengal.

Report on Page 5

befitting reply," he said while adding that country has a strong force and modern fighter aircraft such as Tejas and Rafale.

Modi said Netaji's birthday will be observed as 'Parakram Diwas' every year.

The prime minister also greeted participants in an international conference on "Revisiting the legacy of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose" at Belvedere House to mark his 125th birth anniversary. During his visit to Kolkata, Modi visited Netaji's ancestral

house and also inaugurated a commemorative stamp and coin to mark his 125th birth anniversary.

The West Bengal Chief Minister paid homage to the revolutionary on his birth anniversary and urged the Centre to declare January 23 as a national holiday.

"We are celebrating this day as #DeshNayakDibas. GoWB has also set up a committee to conduct year-long celebrations till January 23, 2022," she tweeted.

— PTI

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GP

CMYK



## SHORT TAKES

SEB SLEUTHS  
DETECT SPURIOUS  
LIQUOR CASEDC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JAN. 23

Special enforcement bureau sleuths seized 7,680 bottles of liquor and a vehicle in a spurious liquor case detected at Reddipalli village of Padmanabhan mandal falling under Bheemili SEB station.

The authorities identified eight accused persons in the case and two of them were sentenced to remand.

NEWLY SCULPTED  
IDOLS TO BE PLACED  
IN TEMPLE IN JAN. 28DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JAN. 23

The newly sculpted idols of lord Ram, Sita and Lakshmana by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams to be installed at the temple as per Agama Sastra on Jan. 28. Following desecration of the idol of Ram at Ramatheertham temple at Bodikonda in Vizianagaram district recently, the endowments authorities got the idols prepared roping in TTD.

However, once the reconstruction of Ramatheertham temple gets completed, the idols would be installed.

TWO ARRESTED  
FOR THEFT AT  
DURGA TEMPLEDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 23

Two persons, including a habitual temple offender, were arrested and nine kgs of silver was recovered in connection with the theft of three silver lions at Durga temple.

It may be recalled that the theft took place last June during the Corona period but it came to light later. The offender is notorious for similar offences in temples since 2008. He took away three silver idols attached to the chariot at the Durga temple.

Commissioner of police, Vijayawada, B Srinivasulu told the media here on Saturday that the accused Jakkamsetti Saibaba belongs to Gollavanitippa village of Bhimavaram mandal. The habitual offender works as a daily-wage labourer in aqua tanks and farmlands. He said the accused came to the Durga temple last June and noticed the silver lion idols attached to the chariot and there was no proper security due to the lockdown. He returned a few days later and made good with the three idols between 7.30 pm and 8.30 pm. He went to Tanuku and sold them to a gold trader for Rs. 35,000. The trader melted the three lions.

Srinivasulu said that the gold trader M Kamalesh of Surendra jewellery showroom was also arrested. The accused was involved in more than 20 such cases in West Godavari and Krishna districts.

VENGAIAH DIED DUE  
TO THREATS OF  
YSRC LEADERS: PKDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, JAN. 23

Squarely blaming Giddalur legislator Anna Rambabu for the suicide of a Jana Sena worker Bandla Vengaiah Naidu of Singarapalli in Prakasam district, party chief Pawan Kalyan rebuked CM Jagan for not taking any action against the MLA.

Addressing media persons after consoling the family members of the deceased and offering Rs 8.5 lakh to the family, Pawan Kalyan alleged that Vengaiah ended his life after Rambabu scolded him for questioning about the pathetic condition of roads in his habitation.

"You may forget your atrocities but we will remember. Though we don't have crores of rupees and private army apart from hired goons, we will continue our fight for justice" the actor-politician said.

Stressing that the downfall of Rambabu has started, he said they will not spare him after coming to power.

Jana Sena leader Nadendla Manohar hailed Pawan Kalyan for assuring to take care of Vengaiah's children's education apart from the compensation. Later, Pawan Kalyan handed over a representation to Siddharth Kaushal, SP, Prakasam district demanding stern action against persons responsible for abetting the suicide. He alleged that Vengaiah took the extreme step after Rambabu abused him and YSRC leaders threatened him.

## India First



BJP national general secretary Varanasi Ram Madhav speaks during a discussion on a book 'Because India Comes First' authored by him at a hotel in Visakhapatnam on Saturday.

— DC

Botsa slams Naidu, SEC for  
expediting election process

SEC has been acting in an inappropriate way and in a biased manner, says Botsa

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, JAN. 23

Municipal administration minister Botsa Satyanarayana on Saturday came down heavily against Leader of the Opposition N. Chandrababu Naidu for hobnobbing with State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar and weakening the state's democratic process.

He was in Nellore to take part in various developmental programmes along with Water Resources Minister Dr P. Anilkumar Yadav.

Speaking to media persons, he slammed Naidu for not holding elections

although the tenure of the local bodies had ended in 2018 when he was the chief minister.

Satyanarayana rebuked the SEC for preparing to hold the elections when the state government was struggling to contain Covid and was busy with the vaccination programme.

"Nimmagadda has been addressing officials like a political leader forgetting that he is a Commissioner", he said adding that he had never seen such a situation in his 30-year political career.

He expressed his displeasure over the SEC's stance against senior IAS officer Gopala Krishna

● "State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar has been addressing officials like a political leader forgetting that he is a Commissioner", said YSRC leader Botsa Satyanarayana.

Dwivedi while reminding that he had earlier served as the Election Commissioner with utmost sincerity.

Stressing that the SEC has been acting in an inappropriate way and in a biased manner, he said the SEC was utilising the constitutional body for his

personal reasons.

The minister said that the SEC had postponed the elections when the government was ready and there were only 50 odd Covid cases then.

"He is going ahead with the election process when the situation is critical in the state" the Municipal minister alleged while maintaining that nothing will happen if elections are postponed by two to three months.

Pointing out to some officers being relieved, he said the SEC had done so before releasing the election notification.

Satyanarayana charged that the opposition was behind attacks on temples

and theft of idols as they were frustrated at the rising popularity of the ruling party. He said CCTV footage on the Tekkali incident is a clear example of TD role in the incidents.

Meanwhile, the municipal development minister laid the foundation stone for the Gosha hospital in the town along with Dr. P Anil Kumar.

After a review of the activities of Nellore Municipal Corporation, the Minister inspected the housing colony built by TIDCO during the TD regime. Nellore rural legislator Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy was also present.

AP govt committing  
contempt of court: TDDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 23

Leader of Opposition in Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, Y a n a m a l a Ramakrishnudu on Saturday expressed anguish that the YSRC government was working against the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi and BR Ambedkar by resorting to unconstitutional and lawless practices.

He termed it as a 'contempt of court' on the part of the State government to create obstacles for conducting panchayat elections in total disregard for the High Court division bench order. This was tantamount to contempt of court. By disrupting the functioning of the SEC, the government was causing a Constitutional breakdown.

He claimed that the Supreme Court had issued an order when TN Seshan was the CEC that the SEC would have the autonomous powers that are granted to Central Election Commission.

Alleging that the government was deliberately undermining the courts and the State Election

● "Supreme Court had issued an order when TN Seshan was the CEC that the SEC would have the autonomous powers that are granted to Central Election Commission", said Yanamala

Commission, he said that YSRC's thoughtless actions would pave way for imposition of Article 356. He claimed that Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has become a stigma to the post of a Chief Minister. Government officials were also disobeying SEC orders, he said. The TD leader accused the CM of undermining the Constitution by disregarding the 74th and 75th Amendments. He claimed that the Governor had a responsibility as per the Article 243 K (3) to make sure that the government should provide the staff to the SEC to conduct the polls. He claimed that the SEC had issued the panchayat poll notification as per the affidavit submitted by the Union Government for conducting polls and going about the vaccination programme simultaneously.

Collector goes  
on leave, cites  
health reasonsDC CORRESPONDENT  
KURNOOL, JAN.23

With the state election commission declaring the notification to conduct panchayat elections, the district administration gearing up to conduct elections in the district.

The first phase nominations will start from January 25th (Monday) onwards.

As many as 28.37 lakh population is in the rural areas where the elections were conducted for panchayat elections across the district. 21,15,243 voters would cost their votes to elect 970 village sarpanches, 10,006 ward members with present elections. However the officials arranged 10,212 polling centers and 24,500 polling staff and officials for conducting the election process. Another side as many as 6,100 police forces would be deployed to the poll duties.

When contacted, District Panchayat Officer (DPO) Prabhakar Rao said that they have received instructions and will conduct elections as

per schedule.

They are fully prepared and every other logistic requirement has been taken care of, he added.

On the other hand, the district collector G Veera Pandian went on three days leave from Saturday and in his place district joint collector Rama Sundar Reddy took the additional charge.

The district collector cited health reasons for his absence at a time when his presence was highly required to direct the officials in smooth conduct elections.

The district SP K Fakeerappa said the police department is providing the security and bandobast for smooth conduct of elections as per the directions of the state elections commission. He said the department will follow the directions issued by the state government also in this regard. He however said that he was given orders to all police officials in the district to be alert on election progress and identify sensitive areas where additional deployment would be sent.

SEC RAMESH INFORMS DGP GAUTAM  
SAWANG ABOUT THREAT TO HIS LIFEDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 23

State election commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar has written a letter to Director General of Police about keeping a close watch on chairman of state government employees Venkatrami Reddy, following the latter's provocative statements against the SEC.

The State election commissioner pointed out that right from the time he announced the election schedule for conduct of gram panchayat polls in the state, the government employees chairman has been opposing the polls, and is also making provocative statements.

ments.

In particular, Ramesh Kumar quoted Venkatrami Reddy's statement, "The constitution has given a right to every individual to defend their life. In continuance of this right, the constitution has given the right to kill."

The SEC said that the State Election Commission is viewing the statement as a potential death threat issued against the commissioner.

He asked the Director General of Police to take due cognisance of the statement and keep a close watch on Venkatarami Reddy's activities.

Jagan forgot his  
oath: TD MLCDC CORRESPONDENT  
KADAPA, JAN. 23

MLC Mareddy Ravindranath Reddy (B. Tech Ravi) has accused Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy of forgetting the oath that he has taken about upholding the Constitution when being sworn in as the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister.

Addressing a press conference in Kadapa city on Saturday, B. Tech Ravi maintained that state government officials not cooperating with State Election Commission is an example of the Chief Minister not upholding the constitution. He asserted that Telugu Desam will contest all the seats in Kadapa district in the forthcoming gram panchayat elections.

TD Kadapa parliamentary party president Mallela Lingareddy, who also addressed the press conference, said people of the state are fed up with

the YSRC government's corrupt activities. He pointed out that it is not cooperating even with the constitutional body like the State Election Commission.

Proddatur constituency TDP in-charge Praveen Kumar Reddy asked Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan to intervene immediately before the current situation in the state went out of control.

Former Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam chairman Putta Sudhakar Yadav accused the state government of intimidating and threatening Telugu Desam leaders.

"Efforts are being made to book illegal cases against our party leaders to prevent them from being nominated as candidates in the panchayat elections," he observed.

Putta Sudhakar demanded that reservations be provided to EBCs in gram panchayat elections.

## PR department failed to update rolls: SEC

FROM PAGE 1

This happened because the panchayat raj department failed to update its rolls with those who have completed 18 years of age, despite the SEC asking the department to do so. The SEC maintained that though the state government had requested the State Election Commission to defer local body polls in wake of the case coming up for hearing before Supreme Court on Monday, he is going ahead with the polls as contestants and people are having high expectations on holding of the polls. He said he trusts that Chief

Secretary and Director General of Police will extend their full cooperation in conducting the gram panchayat polls.

Maintaining that the SEC has no funds or man power, Ramesh Kumar said the commission is still committed to conducting the elections, so that it can discharge its constitutional responsibility. He pointed out that this issue has already been brought to notice of the state government as well as judiciary.

Referring to objections being raised by a section of state employees on conduct of polls, the elec-

tion commissioner pointed out that elections for local bodies and assemblies have been held in several states and are also scheduled to be organised in other states.

It is thus not right to postpone elections, he underlined.

Expressing confidence that the state government will extend all support to State Election Commission in holding the polls, he cautioned that in case it failed to do so, the state government will be solely held responsible.

SEC Ramesh Kumar asserted that it is his constitutional responsibility to conduct polls.

Any difficulty in doing so will certainly be taken to the notice of Governor and the judiciary, he remarked.

On unanimous elections, the SEC said that they will keep a close watch on such phenomena. Incidentally, though the State Election Commissioner had called for a video conference with chief secretary, DGP, panchayat raj principal secretary and commissioner, district collectors, SPs and other officials at 3.00 p.m. on Saturday to discuss arrangements for conducting the polls, none of them logged in for the online conference.



## SHORT TAKES

## UBI OFFERS ₹50L TO SVBC FOR PROGRAMMES

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, JAN. 23

The Union Bank of India, has put up a sum of ₹50,55,120 towards one-year sponsorship of Dharmic programmes on SVBC channel run by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams.

On the directions of Raj Kiran Roy, CEO and MD of the UBI, DD for the amount was handed over to the TTD additional EO and SVBC MD A.V. Dharma Reddy at latter's camp office in Tirumala on Saturday.

The UBI AGM Chandrasekar Reddy and Tirumala branch manager Sambashiva Rao were present.

## POLICE RECOVER ₹10 LAKH WORTH OF PROPERTY

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, JAN. 23

The Chittoor Sub-Division police have apprehended two chain snatchers and recovered ₹10 lakh worth gold ornaments on Saturday.

The accused have been identified as A. Mohammad Syed, 23, of Puneapalli village in Penumuru mandal and T. Pasha from Karnataka state.

The Chittoor DSP N. Sudhakar Reddy said that the offenders are involved in chain snatching offenses and thefts in Chittoor town, N.R. Peta, Chandragiri, Gudipala, Putalapattu and also in Yadamarri areas.

A team of police, led by Chittoor West Circle Inspector C. Lakshmi Kanth Reddy, caught hold of the accused when they tried to give a skip to police when the latter was checking vehicles on Chittoor - Vellore Road near Gudipala during the early hours of Saturday.

They confessed that they are responsible for scores of chain snatchings and thefts in Chittoor district when police grilled them. DSP said that the accused have tried to dispose of the gold ornaments in Vellore of Tamil Nadu, but in vain. The duo kept the gold ornaments in the tool kit of a motorbike.

## No side-effects from the vaccine: Experts

## A reaction after taking the vaccine is a common phenomenon

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, JAN. 23

Noted physician Dr C.V. Subhramanyam, senior medical officer at GGH Dr Krishna Moorthy, Dr Sriram Satish and Dr A. K. Chakravarthi of Apollo Hospitals, and Dr Bhaskar Reddy of Narayana Hospitals have allayed fears among people over the Covid-19 vaccine. They maintained that they had no complications after taking the vaccine.

Speaking to media persons here on Saturday, they said the vaccine helps in development of antibodies that form a shield against the dreaded Coronavirus.

The medical professionals maintained that a reaction after taking the vaccine is a common phenomenon. In fact, it indicates development of

immune system in the body.

They appealed to people not to believe in rumours over social media about adverse reactions after taking the vaccine.

Dr Chakravarthi, who had got infected by Covid-19 but recovered, said medical professionals and their family members are taking the vaccine. They have hardly found any side effects.

"Fever, body pains and fatigue are common if you take any vaccine. These are not limited to Covaxin alone. The only option to keep Covid at bay is vaccine," the doctors observed.

The senior doctors made it clear that the vaccine provides 100 per cent protection from the dreaded virus, especially to those with co-morbidities. They urged such people to take the vac-

## AP records 158 Covid cases

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 23

AP registered 158 fresh cases of Covid-19 and one death.

The state health authorities released Covid-19 bulletin on Saturday reporting that out of 43,770 samples tested, 158 persons were found infected with Covid-19. Out of a total number of 1,28,31,731 samples tested, 8,86,852 persons were found infected with Covid-19 and of them, 8,78,232 were recovered while 1,473 are still active with the virus.

Among the daily cases of confirmed Covid-19, East Godavari registered the highest number of 35 followed by 28 in West Godavari, 23 in Krishna, 18 in Visakhapatnam, 12 in Guntur, 11 in Anantapur, ten in Chittoor, seven in Kadapa, five each in Kurnool and Srikakulam, two in Prakasam, one each in Nellore and Vizianagaram.

Krishna district topped the state with highest number of cumulative Covid-19 active cases with 274 followed by 202 in

Guntur, 193 in East Godavari, 144 in Kadapa, 129 in Chittoor, 128 in Visakhapatnam, 88 in Nellore, 75 in Prakasam, 56 in Kurnool, 54 each in Anantapur and West Godavari, 41 in Srikakulam and 35 in Vizianagaram.

Among the daily cases of Covid-19 deaths, AP registered only a single case in Visakhapatnam, rising toll to 7,147.

Chittoor district continued to lead the state by registering highest number of deaths with 846.

cine without fail.

Stressing that the vaccines developed in India are safe, they pointed out that these vaccines are being

ordered by countries, such as Brazil, Nepal and Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, joint collector Prabhakar Reddy said around

12,000-odd health workers have been covered under the vaccine programme so far in SPSR Nellore district.

## HARASSED TIKTOK ACTOR ENDS LIFE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, JAN. 23

A TikTok actor, Rafi Shaik, living in Ranganayakula Peta, died by suicide allegedly following harassment by some people belonging to Narayana-reddypeta at Nellore late on Friday night.

Relatives of the deceased said that the people from Narayana-reddypeta abducted Rafi on Wednesday evening beat him up and released him. Before their release, the gang threatened to post the video of their assault on YouTube if he complained to the police.

Shaik's relatives said they had no idea why he

was beaten up. They lodged a complaint with the Nellore Rural police. The police attributed the attack to differences between Shaik and a childhood friend, Mustafa, living in Narayana-reddypeta. Mustafa had been nursing a grudge against Rafi for moving with the former's girlfriend despite his warnings.

Mustafa forcibly took Shaik to his village and threatened him in the presence of one Karthik and the girl. Shaik's parents also asked him to desist. Shaik died by suicide late on Friday.

Police registered a case on Saturday and began investigating.

## YOUTH HELD FOR BID TO ROB CASH FROM ATM

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, JAN. 23

The Nawabpeta police apprehended a youngster for attempting to rob cash from an ATM machine in Nellore. The accused identified as Shaik Shareef was also accused in different cases including a dacoity case and he was in jail for four years.

The Nawabpeta Circle Inspector K. Vema Reddy told media persons that Shaik Shareef had attempted to steal cash in the ATM of SBI Nellore branch located in Rebalavari street on January 22.

To prevent from being recognised, he smashed the CCTV cameras before trying to break the ATM machine to steal the cash. He gave up the attempt and left after failing to break

● The Nawabpeta Circle Inspector K. Vema Reddy told media persons that Shaik Shareef had attempted to steal cash in the ATM of SBI Nellore branch located in Rebalavari street on January 22.

open the steel body of ATM.

Based on some evidence gathered at the scene, the police arrested the accused on Saturday near Nellore Railway Station and booked two cases against him.

Mr Vema Reddy said that Shareef was also involved in an ATM breaking offence in Nellore rural area limits in the past.

Sub-Inspectors B. Siva Prathap, B. Ramesh Babu and others were present.

## VRO TRAPPED FOR COLLECTING BRIBE TO ISSUE PATTAPASSBOOKS IN BANGARUPALYAM

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, JAN. 23

Anti Corruption Bureau officials trapped a Village Revenue Officer for demanding and collecting a bribe of ₹5,000 to issue Patta passbooks to five brothers in Bangarupalyam in Chittoor district on Saturday.

According to the Deputy Superintendent of Police, ACB, Mr Alla Bakshu, five brothers belonging to Bodagundla village in Bangarupalyam approached the VRO Nagaraju Naidu for Patta

passbooks after dividing a piece of agricultural land given by their mother.

The brothers paid ₹2,000 each when Nagaraju Naidu demanded ₹5,000 from each one of them to issue the passbooks but the VRO refused to deliver the books unless the balance amount is paid to him.

Irrked by this, one of the brothers, Venkatesh knocked on the doors of the ACB and paid ₹3,000 to the VRO for his passbook to the VRO as per their directions. The ACB team caught Nagaraju Naidu soon after he collected the amount.

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## SCHEDULE

Immovable property being land measuring Acres 65.13 Cents comprising of (I) land measuring (a) Acres 1.66 Cents in Survey No. 6/1, (b) Acres 4.45 Cents in Survey No. 6/2B2, (c) Acres 1.00 Cents in Survey No. 6/2C, (d) Acres 1.62 Cents in Survey No. 7/1A, (e) Acres 2.29 Cents in Survey No. 7/2A, (f) Acres 2.00 Cents in Survey No. 8/A, (g) Acres 2.29 Cents in Survey No. 9/1A, (h) Acres 2.34 Cents in Survey No. 9/2, (i) Acres 2.68 Cents in Survey No. 9/2C, (j) Acres 7.52 Cents in Survey No. 10/2, (k) Acres 1.00 Cents in Survey No. 11/3, (l) Acres 1.02 Cents in Survey No. 11/3A, (m) Acres 0.04 Cents in Survey No. 11/4B, (n) Acres 2.29 Cents in Survey No. 11/6, (o) Acres 0.29 Cents in Survey No. 11/7, (p) Acres 0.26 Cents in Survey No. 11/8, (q) Acres 2.44 Cents in Survey No. 12/1, (r) Acres 2.20 Cents in Survey No. 12/2, (s) Acres 0.37 Cents in Survey No. 13/1, (t) Acres 0.60 Cents in Survey No. 13/2, (u) Acres 0.38 Cents in Survey No. 13/3, (v) Acres 0.21 Cents in Survey No. 13/4, (w) Acres 0.18 Cents in Survey No. 13/5, (x) Acres 0.12 Cents in Survey No. 13/6, (y) Acres 0.93 Cents in Survey No. 14, situated at Zuvvi Chelika Village, Sullurupeta Revenue Mandal, Sri Potti Sriramulu Nellore District, Andhra Pradesh, and (II) land measuring Acres 24.95 Cents, comprising of (a) Acres 2.00 Cents in Survey No. 30-P2, (b) Acres 6.13 Cents in Survey No. 30-P4, (c) Acres 6.00 Cents in Survey No. 30-P5, and (d) Acres 6.62 Cents in Survey No. 30/3, situated at Padamati Kandriga Village, Sullurupeta Mandal, Sri Potti Sriramulu Nellore District, Andhra Pradesh and bounded by:

**North** : Internal Road Access Survey No. 30 of Padamati Kandriga Village to site.  
**South** : Kadalaru Village.  
**East** : Survey Nos. 67 of Padamati Kandriga Village & Survey Nos. 14 of Zuvvi Chelika Village.  
**West** : Survey Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5 Zuvvi Chelika Village.

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INDEPENDENT  
HOUSE

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SITUATION  
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**REQUIRED SECURITY** Guards for Construction site near Gachibowli, minimum 10th pass

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MATRIMONIAL  
BRIDE WANTED  
CASTE NO BAR

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## MUSLIM

**SECOND MARRIAGE** Hyderabad Muslim BA, LL.B, 19-01-1979, height 6' requirement Dr, Engineer, LL.B. Ph:9441573097, 9704575086. (A/2021/IC00098)

**ANDHRA SUNNIMUSLIM** seeking for their Son 30 - 5.6a B.Tech working @ Bangalore, looking for B.Tech Bride. Contact: 9866901525, 8 9 8 5 8 8 4 7 8 2 . Mail:pashamd12@g.mail.com (VZ/2021/C00005)

**SM FAMILY**, Son 32/ 5"8" very fair, MBA Bank Employee Seeks Alliance from Religious, Educated Girl. Send details photos Whatsapp 8374074405. (B/2021/C00857)

**(NO DEMAND) S/M Boy** 1990 B.Tech, 5'11" V.Fair working in top MNC company, handsome salary, well settled in India, Seeking Girl from Good family & Deendar well educated. Ph: 9 2 4 7 8 9 8 8 2 1 . mndnadeem717@gmail.com (S/2021/C00153)

**MUSLIM-SUNNI USA** boy-smp invite alliance for their SON working in USA 28yrs/5'-8" H1B-visa/MS(us)/ religious, handsome&fair from highly-educated family, looking for doctor(MBBS), Hijabi & Namazi girl who follows sunnah, from well-educated family. \*Only MBBS girl profiles\* Contact: +91-9 4 4 1 6 9 3 7 1 3 . syeda.bsu@gmail.com (W/2021/AT000982)

**CHICAGO BASED** Hyderabad Sunni/ Ahle Hadees Parents looking for a suitable alliance for our son 29 years Ht: 5'7" living in US from last seven years. Qualification M.B.A. Only Preferably someone already in U.S.A. Call/ WhatsApp 8074511601/ +1(312)7526930. (S/2021/C02078)

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GROOM WANTED  
HINDU

✓ **WANTED HINDU Groom** for Daughter 33, smart, attractive, 5Feet 4 inch, post graduate, CEO and Founder of her company. Daughter of senior retired Army Officer. Hindu, Balija Naidu. Contact on 9167201058 (HYMM/2021/C05875)

## MUSLIM

✓ **B.TECH (NIT)** Girl's Sunni Muslim Parents invite alliance for beautiful, very fair, slim, 27 yrs, 5'2", intelligent, working, from well educated decent family. Bride Groom must be M.Tech/ MS working abroad/ India- fair, below 32, above 5'8", well settled. Contact/ WA:



## DECCAN Chronicle

24 JANUARY 2021

**Shreya Sen-Handley**  
**Off the beaten track**

### Trump, and the art of leaving

This month we left an old and truly awful year behind with almost as much fanfare as ever, despite life being far from normal. But the degree of jollity and bonhomie that attend year-end salutations are out of the ordinary in themselves. Not only do we not display such fellow feeling in the course of the year, there is almost nothing else we leave behind with such elan.

At the end of the year, we reach out to even those we don't particularly like and wish them well. Do we mean it? Mostly, yes. Does it improve our state of mind going into the new year, even if it doesn't improve the year itself (as 2021 has already proven)? Yes! Although centering on fresh starts for ourselves, our genuine intention to begin well makes us behave better than we ordinarily would with others, and with more integrity than when exiting anything else.

Amongst those rare affairs we leave behind with grace are school and college; quitted almost perfunctorily and with some relief at the time, they accrue copious layers of sentiment over the years. We depart kids' birthday parties too with some decorum, but only because we've been bribed with return gifts and cake, and are children still, under strict behave-or-else orders from our parents. It is childhood then that most of us renounce with a modicum of dignity, because of the quick-gilding memories and the hurry we are in to leave.

In almost any other situation, we appear to exit as if "pursued by a bear". Because it isn't human nature to leave things well. Or well alone. If something's going well, our instinct is to not end it at all. Why stop something, we ask ourselves, that works to our advantage? We only wrap things up when they no longer serve our ends. When they're beyond redemption with no recompense. But oh, they can't run out on us either; we have to be the one that walks, have that last word, or leave behind an indelible impression. Even if it's a negative one; rendering a place, person, or situation, broken and unusable for those who come along.

Is that what Donald Trump's been doing since his election defeat? Like a spurned lover, does he want to destroy America, if America won't have him? The Capitol riot on January 6 when Trump supporters stormed the House of Representatives has been cast as many things; from a righteous protest by its right-wing adherents, to an insurrection and coup attempt by almost everyone else. And the last two it would appear to be, even as it unfolded on our screens like a Hollywood horror movie. But was it also Trump's bid, like an entitled, mean-spirited rock star leaving a hotel room worse than they'd found it, to trash Washington and American democracy, if he could no longer preside over it?

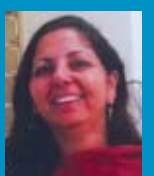
It's true we leave very few jobs with good grace, fearing a loss of earnings and very often, face. We might have been fired, or so thoroughly fed up by the time we call it quits, the good-will naturally dissipates. Even those we revere rarely bow out well. Sunil Gavaskar, retiring right after his 37<sup>th</sup> test century, and at the height of his fame, timed it to perfection. But not everyone steps down at the top of their game, when people are still asking why, rather than why not. Some might say Kapil Dev bid adieu a tad too late, when questions over his fitness were already being raised. Celebrities, basking in our adoration, find leaving the limelight quite the wrench. Like Barbra Streisand, they may have flounced off saying they'd had enough, charging you \$1,000 to watch their "last" performance, only to return a few years later. But budge up Babs, having left five dead and a country in disarray, Donald now takes the cake!

Trump may be an extreme example; of bad grace, ill intent, reprehensible actions, and orangeness, but it's not just those we place on pedestals who make debacles of departures. In more modest ways, we're all deficient in the art of leaving well. In my personal life, I've been hopeless. Not only do I not know 50 ways to leave lovers, I haven't even mastered one. I know I'm fortunate to be happily settled with my second husband and three children (two human and one canine), despite never having managed to finish a relationship well. Or indeed, at all. Despite the abuse, I dithered every time, fervently trying to fix what oughtn't be fixed, till the other party found a new punching bag and I could move on. Having talked to women trapped in abusive relationships like myself, and heard countless other tales of romantic stalemates, I can attest that if there are indeed 50 ways to leave your lover, they've only ever worked for Simon. Or Garfunkel.

Of course, there's ending relationships badly, and then there's instigating armed revolt to lay siege to parliament, or trash it because you can't crash it as I half suspect, but we can still learn a valuable lesson from the shocking events of this month. We can learn how *not* to execute the world's worst departure from the King (Kong) of all bad losers, if not in 50 different ways then at least in one. Whatever you do, wherever you are, however hard-done-by you feel (or even if you actually are), don't be a chump, don't do a Trump, never take a dump on those you're leaving. And with that one surefire way to make an elegant exit, I will say adieu, but so bad am I at leaving, I'll proffer this too — that if you can think of 49 other excellent modes in which to walk, tell us, won't you?

*Shreya Sen-Handley is the author of the recently published Strange: Stories, the award-winning Memoirs of My Body, and a forthcoming book of travel misadventures. Her Twitter and Insta handle is @shreyasenh.*

**Anita Katyal**  
**Political Gup-Shup**



### Kharge or Sharma: Who will succeed Azad in LS?

Senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad has been the leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha for over six years. This post will soon be falling vacant as Mr Azad's term ends next month. The Budget Session of Parliament is barely a few days away but there's no clarity about Mr Azad's successor in the Upper House. From all accounts, the post would have gone to Anand Sharma who is the party's deputy leader in the Upper House. However, Mr Sharma now has competition as veteran leader Mallikarjun Kharge, who was recently elected to the Rajya Sabha, is emerging as a serious contender. The Opposition leader's post is critical as he or she leads the charge against the Treasury. Mr Kharge held the post in the Lok Sabha for five years (he moved to the Rajya Sabha after he failed to make it to the Lower House in the 2019 election) and despite the Congress party's poor bench strength, the veteran leader from Karnataka managed to get under the government's skin on several occasions. Though Mr Sharma has acquitted himself well in the

Rajya Sabha, Mr Kharge's seniority could well tilt the scales in his favour.

There is a strong buzz in the capital that Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh chief ministers Trivendra Singh Rawat and Shivraj Singh Chouhan may be shifted to Delhi when Prime Minister Narendra Modi reshuffles his Cabinet, which may now take place only after the West Bengal election. Mr Rawat has made himself unpopular with the people and party workers. Both complain that Mr Rawat has no presence and has failed to make any impact. Furthermore, he comes across as a poor second in comparison to his Uttar Pradesh counterpart Yogi Adityanath. Unlike Mr Rawat, Mr Chouhan's popularity ratings remain high but the BJP leadership is unhappy at his acquiring a larger-than-life image. Mr Chouhan has become increasingly assertive and aggressive in his second term and this has not gone unnoticed by the leadership in Delhi. In fact, the party has been keen on promoting another leader in the state for some time but has not got an

opportune moment to do so.

First, Congress insiders had a grouse that Nehru-Gandhi scion Rahul Gandhi was inaccessible to them and that his politically-inexperienced team members kept him from meeting party cadres. And now it is the same story with his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Congress general secretary in charge of Uttar Pradesh. When Priyanka joined politics two years ago, excited Congress cadres were confident that her entry would bring about a much-needed change in the party as she was reputed to be more open and connected well with workers. But, unfortunately for Congress members, it is as difficult to get an audience with Priyanka as it is with Rahul Gandhi. In Priyanka's case, they blame Sandeep Singh, the main honcho in her office, for her inaccessibility. Unhappy Congress members maintain that Sandeep keeps a tight control on her appointments and is known to give preference to those who defer to him. There have been several instances when Sandeep has exchanged hot words

with party leaders, the latest being UP legislator Aradhana Mishra.

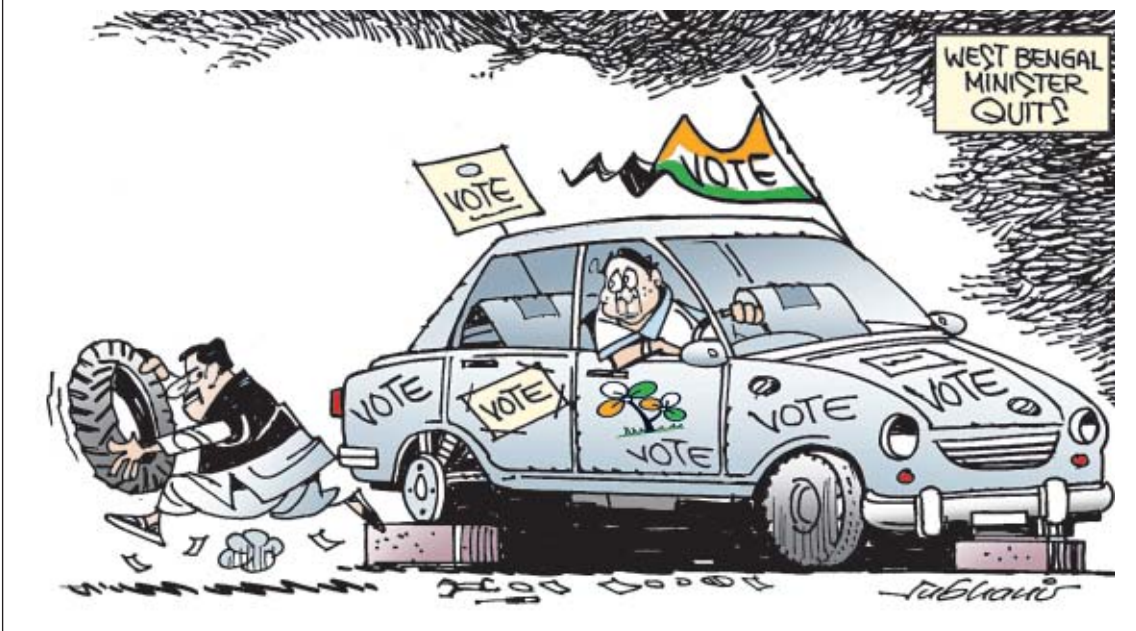
Ever since home minister Amit Shah visited Delhi Police headquarters for a review meeting last week, speculation has been rife that the force will finally get a full-ledged commissioner. According to the grapevine, S.M. Sahai, a 1987 IPS officer, presently serving in the PMO, is the frontrunner for the post. The present incumbent, S.N. Shrivastava, was given additional charge as police commissioner after his predecessor Amulya Patnaik demitted office last March. An order issued then had stated that Mr Shrivastava would hold this charge till further orders. He has since been continuing as an ad hoc police chief as his confirmation orders have yet to come. He is set to retire in June. This is perhaps the first time that Delhi Police has been functioning with an acting chief commissioner for such a prolonged period.

When Arnab Goswami, Republic TV's editor-in-chief and co-founder, was arrested

by the Mumbai Police last year in an abetment to suicide case, the ruling BJP had gone all out to defend him. Union ministers and party spokespersons had lined up to attack the Maharashtra government for indulging in a witch hunt. Mr Goswami is currently embroiled in a fresh controversy over his long WhatsApp chats with the head of the Broadcast Audience Research Council revealing that he was fixing his channel's TRPs. But, unlike the last time, no minister or BJP spokesperson has come to his rescue suggesting that the saffron party wishes to distance itself from its favourite news anchor. Maybe it has something to do with Mr Goswami flaunting his proximity to the government's top bosses and how they were ready to hand down favours to him. Worse, he made fun of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's poetry. Clearly, Mr Goswami's benefactors have not taken kindly to his remarks.

*Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist*

Subhani



## Resist new usurpers of Hindu's eternal legacy



**Pavan K. Varma**  
**Chanakya's View**

It is a truism to say that Hinduism is a way of life. What this essentially means is, that unlike many other religions, Hinduism does not lay down an inflexible code of do's and don'ts for its followers. It does not have only one God, nor only one book of faith, nor one Pope, nor a single place of paramount pilgrimage, nor only one presiding temple. Such diversity in practice often leads some uninformed observers to believe that Hinduism is not a cohesive religion: it is not one but many faiths. Such an assessment is wide off the mark. Hindus allow for differences of opinion, within and without, and variations in practice, dictated by choice not diktat, without diluting the core fealties of their faith.

But there are some people now who want to convert this remarkably eclectic religion, that has evolved from centuries of cerebration and philosophical insight, into a prescriptive faith. They want to dictate to its followers what they should wear, what they should drink, what they should eat, how they should practise their religion, what constitutes "correct" Hindu behaviour, what morality is, and who is a "good" Hindu as against a "bad" one. This, of course, is anathema for most Hindus. Hindus have been used to being Hindus in a self-assured way without being told that there is a higher "authority" that will judge them on how good or bad they are. What makes it worse is that those who believe that they are "better" Hindus, and therefore the "authority" to judge

the conduct of "lesser" Hindus, are woefully ignorant of what Hinduism is really about.

Inexplicably, Hindus never took this threat seriously, but they should have been alerted to its dangers long before. The Shri Ram Sena was founded in the 1960s by Kalki Maharaj, close to the Shiv Sena, and a former member of the Bajrang Dal and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. On January 24, 2009, members of the Shri Ram Sena barged into a pub — Amnesia — in Mangalore, and beat up a group of young men and women, on the grounds that the women were violating traditional Indian — read Hindu — values. Two of the women had to be hospitalised. Pramod Muthalik, the leader of the Sena said: "Whoever had done this has done a good job. Girls going to pubs is not acceptable. So whatever the Sena members did was right. You are highlighting this small incident to malign the BJP government in the state."

In January 2009, Muthalik announced a plan to target couples dating on February 14, Valentine's Day. "Our

**There are some people now who want to convert this remarkably eclectic religion, evolved from centuries of cerebration and philosophical insight, into a prescriptive faith. They want to dictate to its followers what constitutes 'correct' Hindu behaviour.**

**With progress, a vast number of Hindus want to have the freedom of being Hindus in accordance with their own vision of what that means. They are emerging as confident citizens of a globalised world, and do not wish to be straitjacketed in a narrow vision...**

activists will go around with a priest, turmeric, and a *mangalsutra* on February 14. If we come across couples together in public and expressing their love, we will take them to the nearest temple and conduct their marriage." Such incidents need to be recalled, because what then seemed to be a fringe trend, is increasingly becoming mainstream. The Love Jihad law passed by the UP government, and being emulated now by other BJP ruled states, may ostensibly be aimed at preventing fraudulent conversions of Hindu women through the ruse of marriage, but its real intent is to infantilise adult Hindu women and take away from them their constitutional right to marry whomsoever they wish.

Now, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, has announced a "samman" programme, where employed women can register at the local police station for their own safety. Ostensibly meant to protect women, what such a programme is likely to do in a patriarchal society is to empower policemen in the thana to keep a watch on where employed women go, who they meet, what they do, and why they don't return home at a "respectable" time. Women must become appropriately "chaste" in conformity with the limited vision of these self-anointed pro-

tectors of Hinduism, and Hindus in general must bow before their brittle and distorted notions of Hindu fidelity. Our memories are short-lived but we should not forget that some years ago, Govind Pansare, M.M. Kalburgi, Narendra Dabholkar and Gauri Lankesh, were shot dead allegedly by members of the Sanatan Sanstha and Hindu Janajagruti Samiti. The horrific murders were reportedly inspired by a book published by the Sanatan Sanstha, which argues that those who don't conform to prefixed ideas of Hindu spirituality and religion are villains of society and must be eliminated.

Hinduism has no 10 commandments. It has consciously chosen not to be prescriptive, and that is the key too for its survival and being a *sanatan* or eternal dharma. Its concept of dharma, while outlining a framework for ethics, leaves a great deal to the conscious choice that individuals make in given situations. With progress, education and modernity, a vast number of Hindus want to have the freedom of being Hindus in accordance with their own vision of what that means. They are emerging as confident citizens of a globalised world, and do not wish to be straitjacketed in the narrow vision of some blindly orthodox, patriarchal and largely upper-caste Hindus.

In the eighth century CE, the great Adi Shankaracharya could say: *Na mantram, na teertham, na vedam, na yagna, chidananda roopam, Shivo ham, Shivo ham*: There is no mantra, no pilgrimage, no Veda, no ritual, all that matters is Bliss and Awareness that makes each one of us Shiva. If Hindus want to preserve this real Hinduism, they must learn to resist the new usurpers of their great legacy.

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

### LETTERS

#### INTERNET IN VILLAGES

It will be a great technological leap forward for people of AP, if unlimited and uninterrupted Internet is provided in all villages. It will facilitate communication, education, industry, trade, agriculture, banking, commerce and all other sectors for if the plan is executed in letter and spirit as envisaged by the Chief Minister. However, every good policy has inherent disadvantages like misuse of social media for spreading rumours, fake news, etc. Therefore, rules must be in place to maintain tranquility. Otherwise, the government will be ushering in a Western style of life tearing apart the social fabric of our society.

**Govardhana Myneedu**  
*Vijayawada*

#### TRACTOR RALLY

The government must go for a referendum of the people for the contentious farm laws. The government has been literally pushed to the wall and there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel. The situation may lead to violence soon if preventive action is not taken immediately in view of the tractor rally on Republic Day in Delhi.

**K. Nehru Patnaik**  
*Visakhapatnam*

#### MYSTERY ILLNESS

Yet another outbreak of the mysterious disease in West Godavari district is a cause for concern (*Mystery illness strikes again, 22 unconscious, DC, Jan. 23*). An all out effort must be made to ascertain the cause of the ailment. It needs to be nipped in the bud before it is out of control. Further, authorities from food, civic and health need to monitor the situation constantly to contain it.

**Dr C. Ghanshyam**  
*Visakhapatnam*

#### CONGRESS CHIEF

Once more, the Congress is nurturing a distant dream of having a new chief by June 2021 (*DC, Jan 23*). After buying time for four months, history will repeat itself in the perennial dynastic party with old wine in old bottle. The CWC will give an unanimous resolution reposing full faith in the leadership of Sonia /Rahul/Priyanka and request one of them to lead the party in future.

**Parthasarathy Mandadi**  
*Tirupati*

### 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

#### Boeing catches fire, splits

BOMBAY, JANUARY. 23

A major portion of Air India's Boeing-707 "Nandadevi" was burnt today when it jumped off the runway at Santa Cruz airport, caught fire and grazed through the airfield for about two furlongs before coming to a halt.

In the process it broke into two, its tail portion dropping on the way.

Huge tongues of flame suddenly leapt up and when the fire was brought under control after two hours by the fire-fighting squads, all that could be salvaged of the aircraft was the cockpit and part of the first class portion of the passenger lounge.



IN BRIEF

MAHA TO START JAIL TOURISM FROM JAN 26

Nagpur, Jan. 23: The Maharashtra government will start 'jail tourism' in the state from Pune's Yerawada prison on January 26 to facilitate people to visit and see from close quarters the historical prisons, a minister said on Saturday.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar will inaugurate the jail tourism initiative at Yerawada Central Jail on the Republic Day, state Home Minister Anil Deshmukh said in a press conference.

This is the first of its kind initiative in the country, he claimed. "Jail tourism in the state will start from the Yerawada jail in the first phase. Students from schools, colleges and other people will get a chance to visit these historical places," he told reporters here.

"Under the British rule, several freedom fighters, including Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanya Tilak, Motilal Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Sarojini Naidu, Subhas Chandra Bose had been imprisoned in Yerawada jail and their memories have been preserved there," he said.

Deshmukh said that guides will be provided to the visitors and ticket prices will range from ₹5 to ₹50. The prisons in Thane, Nashik and Ratnagiri will also be part of the jail tourism initiative, the minister added.

SOMNATH BHARTI SENTENCED TO 2 YEARS IN JAIL

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 23

A court on Saturday sentenced AAP MLA Somnath Bharti to two years in jail for assaulting the AIIMS security staff in a case registered in 2016. Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Ravindra Kumar Pandey also imposed a fine of Rs one lakh on the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader.

Bharti, however, was granted bail to enable him to file an appeal before the high court against his conviction in the case and jail term.

According to the prosecution, on September 9, 2016, Bharti, along with nearly 300 others, brought down the fence of a boundary wall at the AIIMS here with a JCB operator.

"The court is of the considered view that the prosecution has duly proved its case beyond all reasonable doubt against accused Somnath Bharti," the magistrate said.

The court convicted Bharti for various offences under the IPC, including under sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 353 (assault or use of criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and 147 (rioting). It also held the AAP MLA guilty under section 3 (mischievous causing damage to public property) of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act.

The offences carry a maximum punishment of five years in jail. The court, however, acquitted Bharti's associates and co-accused - Jagat Saini, Dileep Jha, Sandeep Sonu and Rakesh Pandey - citing a lack of evidence against them.

The case was lodged on the basis of a complaint from R.S. Rawat, Chief Security Officer, AIIMS.

BSF DETECTS UNDERGROUND TUNNEL ALONG IB IN KATHUA

Jammu, Jan. 23: The Border Security Force (BSF) on Saturday detected a second underground tunnel constructed by Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district to facilitate the infiltration of terrorists, a spokesperson of the border guarding force said.

This is the second such structure found in 10 days.

The secret tunnel was detected during an anti-tunnelling operation in the border outpost (BOP) Pansar area of Hiranagar sector, opposite Abhiyal-Dogra and Kingre-de-Kotha in Shakargarh, the spokesperson said.

This is the second underground tunnel detected by BSF personnel in Hiranagar sector during the past 10 days, fourth in the past six months along the International Border (IB) in Samba and Kathua districts and 10th in the past decade.

On January 13, a 150-metre-long tunnel was detected in Bobiyaan village in the same sector.

The spokesperson said the latest tunnel was unearthed on a specific intelligence input in the early hours of the day during the anti-tunnelling drive. "The tunnel is about 150 metres long and 30 feet deep with about three feet diameter," he said, adding that the BSF had shot down a Pakistani Hexacopter carrying loads of weapons and ammunition in June 2020 in the same area besides foiling an infiltration bid by terrorists in November 2019. - PTI

INDIA-CHINA TO HOLD CORPS COMMANDERS MEETING TODAY

PAWAN BALI | DC  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 23

India and China will hold ninth round of Corps Commanders meeting on Sunday at Moldo to try resolve the ongoing military stand-off in the Eastern Ladakh.

The last round of the Corps Commanders meeting was held on November 6. However, due to lack of any tangible progress no meeting was held between the army commanders in over two and a half months.

The military stand-off in Eastern Ladakh is in ninth month with both sides having deployed around 50,000 troops at each side of the line of actual control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh. Despite temperatures dipping to -30 degrees C in the region, both India and China have maintained troops at forward posts this winter at LAC in Ladakh.

India is reported to be have asked Russia for early deliveries of S-400 air defence missile system to be mainly deployed at LAC.

Lalu's health deteriorates



Rashtriya Janata Dal chief Lalu Prasad Yadav being shifted to AIIMS in New Delhi from Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences hospital after his health deteriorated, in Ranchi on Saturday. On Friday, Prasad's wife Rabri Devi, daughter Misa Bharti, sons Tej Pratap and Tejaswi reached Ranchi in a special plane after being informed of the veteran leader's deteriorating health. - PTI

Farmer leaders allege conspiracy to kill them

New Delhi, Jan. 23: A man is being questioned by the Haryana police after protesting farmers alleged that a conspiracy was hatched to kill four of their leaders and create disturbance during their proposed tractor parade in Delhi on January 26, officials said on Saturday. The man was presented before reporters by the protesting farmer leaders on Friday night.

A police official said the man, stated to be around 21 years of age, was being quizzed in Sonipat by the Crime Branch of the state police. He said the man was residing in Sonipat and had no previous criminal record.

"He was not carrying any arms or ammunition. We are questioning him, but nothing has so far been found that points to any kind of conspiracy, as is being alleged," the official said, adding that further investigations are underway.

At the Singhu border press conference late on Friday night, the farmer leaders presented the man who claimed that his accomplices were asked to pose as policemen and baton-charge the crowd during the proposed tractor parade in the national capital on Republic Day.

The farmer leaders claimed that they caught the man from the protest site at the Singhu border.

MP CONGRESS PROTESTS OVER FARM LAWS

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC  
BHOHAL, JAN. 23

Police used tear gas shells and water cannons as Congress activists led by Madhya Pradesh party chief Kamal Nath here on Saturday staged a rally in protest against 3 farm laws brought by the Centre. The police used 'mild force' to disperse the Congress workers and leaders who were marching towards Raj Bhawan to gherao it. "Police used tear gas shells and water cannons after the demonstrators went unruly", a police officer said. "The situation is now under control", Bhopal district deputy inspector general of police Irshad Wali said.

Congress on Saturday launched the state level rally here after holding rallies at district headquarters in the state over the last past couple of weeks in support of the farmers' demand to repeal the 3 farm laws.

He was subsequently handed over to the

Haryana police. Farmer leader Kulwant Singh Sandhu alleged that attempts are being made to disrupt the ongoing agitation against three farm laws.

The man, who had his face covered with a scarf, claimed at the press conference that a plan was hatched to shoot four farmer leaders, who are known faces in the media, at the stage on Saturday. "On January 26, there was a plan to create disturbance during the tractor parade by opening fire on Delhi Police personnel, which would prompt them to retaliate against the protesting farmers in a strong manner," he said.

Thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, have been camping at several border points of Delhi since November 28 last year, demanding a repeal of the three farm laws and a legal guarantee to the minimum support price (MSP) for their crops.

Enacted in September last year, the three laws have been projected by the Centre as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove middlemen and allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country. However, the protesting farmers have expressed their apprehension over the new laws. - PTI

'Jai Shree Ram' chants greet Didi

Mamata declines to speak at Netaji event after 'Jai Shree Ram' slogans were raised

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, JAN. 23

Controversy cast a shadow on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Kolkata visit on Saturday to inaugurate the Centre's 'Parakram Diwas' celebration in memory of the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose as the solemn occasion witnessed a tug of war between the BJP and ruling Trinamul Congress over the iconic freedom fighter to woo the voters in poll-bound West Bengal.

All eyes were set on the event at the Victoria Memorial where Mr Modi and chief minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee faced each other in person after a gap of a year and also shared the dais.

Ms Banerjee also greeted the PM with a welcome stole.

However, their joint public appearance, supposed to be the last before the Assembly Elections, could not beat the rising political temperature in the state due to a neck and neck battle between two rival parties for poll success. As the anchors announced Ms Banerjee's name to deliver her address, the CM was greeted with *Jai Shree Ram* slogans from the audience, leaving her furious. One of the anchors tried to pacify those shouting the slogan and urged them to give an opportunity to Ms Banerjee to speak.

The CM said, "I think there should be a dignity at a government programme. It is a government programme and not an event of any particular political party. It is rather a programme of all political parties and the public at large. I am obliged to the PM and Union ministry of culture for organizing the event in Kolkata. But it does not suit you to insult someone after inviting her. In protest of that I will not say anything."

She then angrily returned to her seat. Eulogising Bose Mr Modi said that his government has been following his footsteps to make the country *atmanirbhar* from the LAC to LOC.

Earlier former TMC MP and grand nephew of the

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA, JAN. 23

Stoking mass sentiment about Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on his 125th birth anniversary, chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday sought the Centre to declare the iconic freedom fighter's birthday a national holiday, restore his concept, Planning Commission and unravel the mystery about his death.

The Trinamul Congress supremo raised the three key demands while preferring her 'Deshanayak Diwas' to the Centre's 'Parakram Diwas' in memory of the birth anniversary of Bose after paying tribute to him at his statue at the Shyambazar Five-point crossing and leading an eight-km-long march across the city to outsmart Prime Minister Narendra Modi hours before his visit to Kolkata to inaugurate 'Parakram Diwas' celebration.

Ms Banerjee told a rally at Red Road, "The central government is yet to declare Netaji's birthday as a national holiday. We are sad about it. In protest, we demand that Netaji's birthday has to be declared as a national holiday, either today or tomorrow. We also do not know how he had died. This should be revealed

Bengali legend, Sugata Bose got a call from the PMO to learn that Mr Modi would pay a surprise visit to the Netaji Bhavan, the ancestral house of the family at Elgin Road in South Kolkata that now houses the Netaji Research Bureau, which was earlier not in its itinerary.

Some BJP leaders including Kailash Vijayvargiya, who gathered outside the address, tried to enter but were stopped.

They however shouted *Jai Shree Ram* slogan when Mr Modi dropped at the Netaji Bhavan after landing in Kolkata.

● THE CHIEF MINISTER urged the Centre to declare Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's birthday a national holiday.

through an inquiry. Netaji, according to us, was eliminated because his freedom struggle had scared many."

Countering the slogan 'one nation, one election' of Mr Modi and BJP, the TMC chief, in her bid to play up regional politics ahead of the polls, also called for regionwise bifurcation of the nation's capital into four including one at Kolkata to decentralise union powers from New Delhi. She argued that parliamentary sessions can be held in the four regional capitals in turns.

She added, "Kolkata once used to be the capital of the country. When the British used to rule the nation sitting here, why can't Kolkata be one of the capitals of the country? I feel it has to be done since it was the origin of renaissance and freedom movement. I ask the Centre to set up the country's capital in four corners: North, South, East and North East. Why would the parliamentary sessions be restricted to a particular place? What is there in Delhi? Maximum are outsiders there."

Prof Bose, also the NRB chairperson, said, "I had told the PMO that Mr Modi is welcome as a PM in honour of Netaji and not as a political personality. The CM also visited here alone in the morning. The PMO agreed. Alongwith my brother Sumantra Bose, director of the NRB, I welcomed the PM and guided him to visit the museum. No political leader was allowed. We protected the sanctity of the occasion."

On the Centre's 'Parakram Diwas' he added, "I do not like it because Netaji was not a mere warrior. I like Deshanayak Diwas."

U.P.: SEER MURDERED

Pilibhit (UP), Jan. 23: A 60-year-old seer was allegedly beaten to death by unidentified people in Sindhaura village in Pilibhit district.

According to the police, the 'naga sadhu', identified as Sompal, was living in a hut near a temple in the village. On Saturday morning, when the niece of the seer visited him, she found him dead, following which cops were informed.

Thank you, says Brazil for vaccine

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 23

Ecstatic over India supplying the Covid vaccine to his country, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying that Brazil was "honoured to have a great partner" like India.

The Prime Minister replied that the "honour is ours", adding that India is a "trusted partner" of Brazil and pointing to efforts to fight the pandemic.

At a weekly media briefing earlier on Friday, the Ministry of External Affairs had said that vaccines had been despatched already to Brazil and Morocco as contractual supplies, with Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Bangladesh and Myanmar also set to receive these.

It may be recalled that in addition, vaccine supply as a gift from India under grant assistance has so far been made to seven countries including five neighbours - Bhutan, the Maldives, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Mauritius and Seychelles.

Sri Lanka and Afghanistan will also receive vaccines as grant assistance once regulatory approvals are received from these two countries. Observers point out that

● OBSERVERS POINT out that India's vaccine supplies especially as grant assistance to neighbouring countries has been a huge success

India's vaccine supplies especially as grant assistance to neighbouring countries has been a huge success of Indian foreign policy and has generated much overseas goodwill for New Delhi. India is also seen as having scored over giant eastern neighbour China which had expanded its influence drastically in south Asia in the past several years.

MEA Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava had said, on Friday, "As you can see the supply of Indian made vaccines are underway both as gifts as well as on commercial basis. ... In terms of quantities and types of vaccines, the supplies abroad on G-to-G, G-to-B and B-to-B basis would be based on availability and regulatory approvals."

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his continued support to the global COVID-19 response, saying acting together, including sharing of knowledge, will help in combating the coronavirus.

FISCAL | MATTERS

'Halwa Ceremony' kickstarts process of compilation of Budget documents

App for hassle-free access of Budget papers launched

New Delhi, Jan. 23: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur and senior officials of the finance ministry on Saturday participated in the symbolic 'Halwa Ceremony' that marks the beginning of compilation of budget documents.

Unlike the past, the voluminous budget documents will not be printed this year following the Covid-19 protocol and will instead be distributed electronically to the Members of Parliament (MPs).

Previously, the ceremony marked the launch of printing exercise for the budget.

This will be the first time since the presentation of independent India's first budget on November 26, 1947, that the documents containing income and expenditure statement of



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman along with MoS for Finance Anurag Singh Thakur during Halwa ceremony in New Delhi on Saturday. - PTI

the Union government along with the finance bill, detailing new taxes and other measures for the new financial year, will not be

physically printed. "In an unprecedented initiative, Union Budget 2021-22 will be delivered in paperless form for the first

time. The Union Budget 2021-22 is to be presented on February 1, 2021," the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

On the occasion, the Finance Minister also launched the 'Union Budget Mobile App' for hassle-free access of Budget documents by Members of Parliament (MPs) and the general public using the simplest form of digital convenience.

The mobile App facilitates complete access to 14 Union Budget documents, including the Annual Financial Statement (commonly known as Budget), Demand for Grants (DG), Finance Bill etc. as prescribed by the Constitution, it said.

Finance Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey, Economic Affairs Secretary Tarun Bajaj, Financial Services

Secretary Debasish Panda, DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Expenditure Secretary T.V. Somanathan and Chief Economic Adviser K.V. Subramanian and other senior involved in the Budget preparation and compilation process, were also present in the customary pre-Budget event. "Later, the finance minister reviewed the status of the compilation of the Union Budget 2021-22 and extended her best wishes to the officials concerned," it said.

The statement further said that the App has a user-friendly interface with embedded features of downloading, printing, search, zoom in and out, bidirectional scrolling, table of contents and external links, etc.

The App can also be downloaded from the Union

Budget Web Portal (www.indiabudget.gov.in), it said, adding, the App has been developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) under the guidance of the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA).

The Budget documents will be available on the Mobile App after the completion of the Budget Speech by the Finance Minister in Parliament on February 1.

As part of the ritual, 'halwa' is prepared in a big 'kadhai' (large frying pot) and served to the entire staff involved in the Budget making exercise of the ministry.

Halwa was served while maintaining Covid protocol with all present in mask and those distributing sweets were wearing gloves. - PTI



SHORT TAKES

HAFIZ SAEED'S  
THREE AIDES  
SENT TO JAIL

Lahore, Jan. 23: A Pakistani Anti-Terrorism Court has sentenced three leaders of Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed's Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD) terrorist organisation to six months in prison in a case of terror financing.

Saeed's brother-in-law Hafiz Abdur Rehman Makki, JuD spokesperson Yahya Mujahid and Zafar Iqbal were handed down the six-month imprisonment each by the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore.

With Friday's sentencing, the collective imprisonment of Mujahid and Iqbal has climbed to 80 and 56 years respectively. The verdicts against them will run concurrently in the terror financing cases registered by the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of the Punjab police.

The verdict was announced against Zafar Iqbal, Abdul Rehman Makki and Yahya Mujahid. — PTI

NAVALNY WIFE,  
SUPPORTERS  
HELD AT RALLY

Moscow, Jan. 23: Russian police on Saturday detained over 1,000 protesters, including the wife of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, as several thousands took to the streets nationwide to denounce President Vladimir Putin's rule. Thousands of people, including teenagers, packed Moscow's central Pushkin Square and nearby streets as riot police hauled off demonstrators and beat others with batons.

Among those detained were Navalny's wife Yulia Navalnaya and his prominent aide Lyubov Sobol. AFP journalists saw several protesters left badly injured after clashing with police in Moscow.

"What a joy that you are here!" Navalnaya wrote before being detained and posting a picture of herself from inside a police van. The protests in Moscow were estimated to be the largest demonstrators since 2019 when Navalny supporters rallied to demand free local elections.

Navalny had called on Russians to protest this week after surviving a near-fatal poisoning with Novichok and returning to Moscow following months of treatment in Germany, only to be arrested on arrival.

Some protesters marched towards the Kremlin, while others blocked Tverskaya Street, the Russian capital's main thoroughfare.

Police clashed with the demonstrators in the city centre and hit them with truncheons, AFP journalists said.



Larry King

LARRY KING,  
BROADCASTING  
GIANT, DIES

Los Angeles, Jan. 23: The iconic talk show host Larry King, one of the most recognizable figures on US television as he interviewed everyone who was anyone over a career spanning 60 years, died Saturday at the age of 87.

The company he co-founded, Ora Media, did not state a cause of death but media reports said King had been battling Covid-19 for weeks and had suffered several health problems in recent years. King, with his trademark suspenders, black rim glasses and deep voice, was best known for a 25-year run as a talk show host on CNN's "Larry King Live."

"For 63 years and across the platforms of radio, television and digital media, Larry's many thousands of interviews, awards, and global acclaim stand as a testament to his unique and lasting talent as a broadcaster," Ora Media said in a statement posted on Twitter.

King's long list of interviewees ranged from every US president since 1974, world leaders Yasser Arafat and Vladimir Putin, and celebrities such as Frank Sinatra, Marlon Brando and Barbra Streisand.

In an emotional last "Larry King Live" show in 2010, tributes included one from President Barack Obama, who in a video message called King "one of the giants of broadcasting".

Trump impeachment  
trial to begin on Feb. 8

Harris' vote as Senate chairman gives Dems majority

Washington, Jan. 23: The United States Senate would begin the impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump on February 8, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said. "The January 6th insurrection at the Capitol, incited by Donald J. Trump was a day none of us will ever forget. We all want to put this awful chapter in our nation's history behind us. But healing and unity will only come if there is truth and accountability. And that is what this trial will provide," Schumer said on the senate floor.

Both the Republican and the Democratic Party now have 50 seats each in the 100 member Senate. However, the crucial vote of Vice President Kamala Harris in her capacity as the chairman of the senate gives the Democrats a majority in the upper chambers of the Congress.

Giving details of the impeachment process, Schumer said the house managers will come to read the article of impeachment at 7 pm on Monday. Members will then be sworn in the next day.

After that, both the house managers and the defense will have a period of time to draft their legal briefs, just as they did in previous trials, he said.

"During that period, the senate will continue to do other business for the American people, such as cabinet nominations and the Covid-relief bill, which would provide relief for millions of Americans who are suffering during this pandemic. Then, once the briefs are drafted, presentations by the parties will commence in the week of February 8th," Schumer said.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said that the impeachment began with an unprecedentedly fast and minimal process in the house. The sequel cannot be an insufficient senate process that denies former president Trump his due process or damages the senate or the presidency itself, he said.

"Senate Republicans strongly believe we need a full and fair process where the former president can mount a defence and the senate can properly consider the factual, legal, and constitutional questions at stake," he said.

The Republican leader suggested that the impeachment trial begin on February 11. "That timeline would have provided the Senate some more floor



Work is done on a new border wall being constructed on Friday in Jacumba, California. President Joe Biden has unveiled an immigration reform proposal offering an eight-year path to citizenship for some 11 million immigrants in the US illegally as well as green cards to upwards of a million DACA recipients and temporary protected status to farmworkers already in the United States. — AFP

Heads of America-funded  
global broadcasters resign

Washington, Jan. 23: The heads of three federally-funded international broadcasters were abruptly fired late Friday as the Biden administration completed a house-cleaning of Donald Trump appointees at the US Agency for Global Media.

Two officials familiar with the changes said the acting chief of the USA-GM summarily dismissed the directors of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks just a month after they had been named to the posts.

The changes came a day after the director of the Voice of America and his deputy were

removed and the chief of the Office of Cuba Broadcasting stepped down. The firings follow the forced resignation of ex-Prez Donald Trump's handpicked choice to lead USAGM only two hours after Joe Biden took office.

Trump's USAGM chief Michael Pack had been accused by Democrats and others of trying to turn VOA and its sister networks into pro-Trump propaganda machines. Pack had appointed all of those who were fired on Thursday and Friday to their posts only in December.

The two officials said the acting CEO of USAGM, Kelu Chao, had fired Middle East Broadcasting Network director Victoria Coates, Radio Free Asia chief Stephen Yates and Radio Free Europe head Ted Lipien in a swift series of moves late Friday.

It was not immediately clear if any of those removed would try to contest their dismissals. — AP

BIDEN CALLS  
UP TRUDEAU,  
OBRADOR

Washington, Jan. 23: President Joe Biden made his first calls to foreign leaders as America's commander in chief on Friday, dialing up Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador at a strained moment for the US relationship with its North American neighbours.

Biden's call to Trudeau came after the Canadian prime minister this week publicly expressed disappointment over Biden's decision — one of his first acts as president — to issue an executive order halting construction of the Keystone XL oil pipeline. — AP

US to revisit Taliban deal

Washington, Jan. 23: The Biden administration has said it will review the US-Taliban deal to assess whether the militant group is reducing violence in keeping with its side of the agreement in the Afghan peace accord. During a telephonic conversation with his Afghan counterpart Hamdullah Mohib, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan underscored that the US will support the peace process with a robust and regional diplomatic effort, "which will aim to help the two sides achieve a durable and just political settlement and permanent

ceasefire". National Security Council spokeswoman Emily Horne said on Friday.

"Sullivan also made clear the United States' intention to review the February 2020 US-Taliban agreement, including to assess whether the Taliban was living up to its commitments to cut ties with terrorist groups, to reduce violence in Afghanistan and to engage in meaningful negotiations with the Afghan government and other stakeholders," she said.

The Trump administration had signed the peace deal with Taliban in Febru-

ary last in Doha.

The accord drew up plans for withdrawal of United States troops from Afghanistan in exchange for security guarantees from the insurgent group. As part of the deal, the US committed to withdraw its 12,000 troops within 14 months.

There are currently only 2,500 American troops left in the country. The Taliban committed to prevent other groups, including Al Qaeda, from using Afghan soil to recruit, train or fund raise toward activities that threaten the US or its allies. — PTI





## SHORT TAKES

## Savio vs Vinod in Club Fight Night

**Hyderabad:** Stage is set for the Club Fights Pro Boxing Nights spectacle which will unfold at the Lal Bahadur Stadium here on Sunday night.

The bouts will be a closed door affair keeping in view with the Covid protocol. The event will be streamed live on three online channels — Fite.TV, sportrecs.com and The MMA India Show Facebook Page.

Savio Michael will be the star attraction of Fight Night, taking on Vattedu Vinod in the Super Bantamweight bout. The 23-year-old had dished out a sterling performance in the Senior National championships against Sunil Siwach. He has been one of the most talented boxers in the country.

"I feel that the time is ripe for such boxing bouts to take the centrestage in the country," said organiser Kailashnath Yadav of Red Corner Fight Nights.

## THE FIGHT CARD

**Super Bantamweight:** Savio Michael vs Vattedu Vinod.

**Super Lightweight:** Sara Nithin Raj vs Abhinay Kumar.

**Super Flyweight:** Sai Kumar vs Mohd Zahed.

**Super Lightweight:** Niraj Kumar vs Clinton David.

**Feather weight:** Trijot Singh vs M. Jayanth.

## Levante, Valladolid play out stalemate

**Valencia, Spain:** Levante needed Roger Marti's late goal to salvage a 2-2 home draw with Valladolid in the Spanish league on Friday.

The match came alive when Levante's Dani Gomez scored in the 62nd minute from a pass by Jorge Frutos after the midfielder sped down the left and set up the forward.

Ruben Alcaraz made up for two misses in the first half when he helped rob the ball from Levante's Mickael Malsa and scored from outside the area to level in the 73rd.

Oscar Plano appeared to have given Valladolid the winning goal five minutes later after a pass by Pablo Hervias.

But Marti dribbled around his marker to open a tight shooting angle.

He drove a shot that took a deflection off a defender before finding the net to seal the draw in the 83rd.

Levante moved into 10th place and Valladolid into 15th.

— AP

## Roma handed 3-0 loss in Italian Cup

**Rome:** Roma were handed a 3-0 Italian Cup defeat to Spezia on Friday after they made six substitutions during a chaotic Last 16 clash they had already lost earlier in the week.

Paulo Fonseca's side were eliminated on Tuesday after a 4-2 extra-time defeat at the Stadio Olimpico, which they finished with nine-men after initially recovering from an early two-goal deficit to take the match beyond 90 minutes.

The capital city club were down to nine less than two minutes into extra time after Gianluca Mancini and goalkeeper Pau Lopez were both dismissed, and in the aftermath of the second red card brought on Daniel Fuzato and Roger Ibanez to take their total of subs over the allowed maximum of five.

In a statement Serie 'A', which organises the Italian Cup, said the 3-0 loss has been awarded because it was a larger margin of defeat than the one handed to Roma on the field.

— AFP

## Kerala held by 10-men Goa

**Bambolin:** A 10-men FC Goa managed to fend off a tough press from Kerala Blasters to settle for a point with a 1-1 draw in the Indian Super League here on Saturday.

The Gaurs took the lead through a 25th-minute strike from Jorge Ortiz Mendoza, while Rahul KP (57th) scored with a brilliant header in the second half.

Goa were reduced to 10 men in the second half after Ivan Gonzalez received marching orders following two yellow cards within a span of seconds. Goa started with what they do best — playing intriguing short passes, maintaining maximum ball possession and keeping Kerala on the back foot.

Kerala were lucky not to concede early in the game.

Ortiz played a one-two with Nogueira at the edge of the box, and shot past the keeper Albino Gomes. The effort hit the woodwork not once, but thrice before the ball bounced back into play.

Goa continued their surge with Ortiz and Nogueira combining once again. — PTI

## Wolves move ahead

## Vitinha takes Wanderers into FA Cup fifth round

**London, Jan. 23:** Nuno Espirito Santo admitted Wolves had been lucky to scrape into the FA Cup fifth round as Vitinha's sublime strike sealed a hard-fought 1-0 win against non-league Chorley on Friday.

Nuno's side were fortunate to avoid an embarrassing upset after a lacklustre display at Victory Park.

Vitinha's brilliant long-range drive put Wolves ahead early in the first half.

But sixth tier Chorley, the last non-league club standing in this season's competition, pushed Wolves all the way and could easily have forced extra-time.

Wolves keeper John Ruddy had to make several good saves before they secured a Last 16 tie against Southampton or Arsenal.

"They were well organised. We should have moved the ball faster but a win is a win. They were tough," Wolves coach Nuno said.

Wolves are winless in their past six Premier League games and Nuno will hardly have been encouraged that a revival is around the corner after their trip to suburban Lancashire.

Taking possession 35 yards from goal, Vitinha set his sights and unleashed a ferocious, swerving drive that flashed over startled Chorley keeper Matthew Unwin.

It is doubtful Unwin faced many shots of that quality in the National League North, but the on-loan Porto midfielder's first senior goal was Wolves' only strike on target in the entire game.

Patrick Cutrone did go close for the visitors with a rising drive that just cleared the bar.

Connor Hall threatened an equaliser when his header forced Ruddy to save early in the second half.

Wolves were struggling to keep Chorley at bay and Ruddy had to tip over Andy Hall's header before the plucky underdogs eventually ran out of steam. — AFP



**They were well organised. We should have moved the ball faster but a win is a win. They were tough.**

— NUNO ESPIRITO SANTO  
Wolverhampton Wanderers manager



Fabio Silva (right) of Wolverhampton Wanderers and Chorley's Andy Halls vie for the ball during their FA Cup fourth round match at Victory Park in Chorley, England, on Friday. Wolverhampton won 1-0.

— AP

## Neymar, Kylian roar for PSG

**Paris, Jan. 23:** Neymar made his 100th appearance for Paris Saint-Germain on Friday and marked the occasion with a goal in a 4-0 rout of 10-man Montpellier that took Mauricio Pochettino's side clear at the top of France.

Kylian Mbappe scored two goals and Mauro Icardi was also on target with PSG leading 1-0 before netting three times in the space of four minutes around the hour mark.

The game, played behind closed doors at the Parc des Princes, was conditioned by the early sending-off of Montpellier goalkeeper Jonas Omlin for a foul on Mbappe, as PSG made the most of their extra man.

It was their fourth straight win since drawing at Saint-Etienne in Pochettino's first match in charge after the Argentine was appointed as coach on January 2.

The former Tottenham Hotspur boss was back on the Paris bench having spent a week self-isolating following a positive Covid-19 test that forced him to miss his new team's 1-0 win at Angers last weekend.

PSG are now three points clear of second-placed Lille, who go to inform Rennes on Sunday. Lyon in third are five points behind the leaders before visiting derby



Neymar (left) of Paris Saint-Germain drives the ball during the French league football match against Montpellier at The Parc des Princes Stadium in Paris on Friday. PSG won the match 4-0.

— AFP

rivals Saint-Etienne, who will be without seven players because of a coronavirus outbreak.

The capital club's rivals may have their work cut out trying to overtake the reigning champions on this evidence, with the attacking quartet of Neymar, Mbappe, Icardi and Angel Di Maria running riot.

Neymar's goal took his tally to 81 in 100 appearances for PSG since his world-record 222 million-euro (\$264m) move from Barcelona in August 2017.

His time in Paris has

been marred by injuries at important moments but there can be no disputing his impressive record in front of goal as he prepares to face his old club in the last 16 of the Champions League next month.

## MBAPPE BACK IN FORM

Mbappe was more prominent in this game, however, as he scored his first goals of the Pochettino era.

Pochettino said: "I was already happy with Mbappe's performances before tonight. I am

pleased that he scored because scoring goals is crucial for a striker's confidence. But we knew it was only a matter of time," he added.

The France World Cup-winning star was scythed down just outside the box by Omlin in the 16th minute, with the Swiss goalkeeper initially shown a yellow card before the punishment was upgraded to red following a VAR review.

PSG made the extra man count as Di Maria played in Mbappe to open the scoring with a dinked finish over substitute goalkeeper Dimitry Bertaud in the 34th minute.

Pochettino lost goalkeeper Keylor Navas to injury at half-time, while captain Marquinhos was also forced off early in the second half. The coach later said he thought it was "nothing serious" for either player.

Mbappe cut the ball back for Neymar to make it 2-0 on the hour mark, before Icardi tucked in his third goal in four games.

It was 4-0 in the 63rd minute when Icardi set up Ligue 1's leading scorer Mbappe to finish for his second of the night and 14th of the season. Layvin Kurzawa almost provided the cherry on top of the cake soon after, but his stunning overhead kick was tipped onto the crossbar by Bertaud. — AFP

## Elvedi nets brace to down Dortmund

**Berlin, Jan. 23:** Defender Nico Elvedi netted twice as Moenchengladbach ended their six-year wait to beat Dortmund when their 4-2 home win on Friday lifted the Foals to fourth in the Bundesliga table.

Two goals by Dortmund striker Erling Braut Haaland were bookended by Elvedi netting from set-pieces in the action-packed opening 32 minutes.

Algeria left-back Ramy Bensebaini restored Gladbach's lead early in the second half before substitute Marcus Thuram headed the hosts' fourth.

Dortmund are now fifth — out of the Champions League places — after failing to win any of their last three games since their impressive 3-1 win at RB Leipzig in early January.

In the other direction, Gladbach are fourth having taken 13 points from a possible 15 in 2021.

They are eight points behind leaders Bayern, who are at bottom side Schalke on Sunday.

Following home wins over league leaders Bayern and second-placed



Nico Elvedi (right) of Moenchengladbach scores the opening goal against Borussia Dortmund during their German league match in Moenchengladbach, Germany, on Friday. Moenchengladbach won 4-2.

— AP

RB Leipzig already this season, Gladbach claimed another big-name Bundesliga scalp.

It was also a significant win for their coach Marco Rose, who the German media are tipping to replace caretaker boss Edin Terzic at Dortmund next season.

After 12 straight defeats

to Dortmund, Gladbach earned their first win over the Black-and-Yellows since April 2016. "We're finally ended the run of defeats," Rose added.

Breel Embolo came on for Gladbach in the second-half despite police claims, which the Swiss striker denies, that he attended a party in Essen

last Saturday that broke Germany's lockdown rules.

Dortmund made a lethargic start at Borussia Park and a Gladbach goal after 44 seconds was ruled out by the VAR.

However, the hosts took the lead with 11 minutes gone when Lars Stindl's curling free-kick was

headed home by Elvedi.

Dortmund roared back with two goals inside six minutes, both created by Jadon Sancho for Haaland, who fired home his first from a tight angle on 22 minutes.

After Jude Bellingham won the ball back for Dortmund, great footwork by Sancho then again unpicked Gladbach's defence for Haaland to blast his side 2-1 ahead on 28 minutes.

However, another Stindl free-kick on 32 minutes could only be parried by Roman Buerki and Elvedi tapped home the rebound from close range to make it 2-2 at the break.

Gladbach regained the lead five minutes into the second-half when Bensebaini swung in a shot which curled outside Buerki's grasp.

Dortmund conceded their third goal of the night from a set-piece when Thuram headed home a Florian Neuhaus corner 11 minutes from the whistle.

It was the France forward's first appearance after suspension for a spitting at an opponent last month. — AFP

## Ankith slams a big century

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 23

Ankith Kumar smashed a big hundred to turn the spotlight on himself in the Hyderabad Cricket Association's A-2 Division two-day league matches played on Saturday.

Ankith slammed an almost run-a-ball unbeaten 192 which included 30 boundaries and a six to single-handedly guide International CC to 307 against Time CC.

In another match, Kapil and Gaurav set up an emphatic eight-wicket win for the Hyderabad Public School (Begumpet). Kapil took three wickets while conceding 10 runs to bowl out Brother XI for a paltry 88, a score which HPS overhauled as Gaurav scored 43 not out.

**Brief scores:**  
**A-2 DIVISION (TWO-DAY)**  
**Day-1:**

■ International CC 307 in 76.5 overs (Ankith Kumar



Ankith Kumar

**192 n.o — 193b, 30x4, 1x6, Arsalan 3/14, Manish 3/37) vs Time CC 3 for no loss in 6 overs.**

■ Brothers XI 88 in 53.2 overs (Avinash 34, Kapil 3/10) lost to Hyderabad Public School (Begumpet) 89/2 in 24.4 overs (Gaurav 43 n.o). **Points:** HPS-B 5, Brothers XI 0.

■ New Star CC 257 in 77.2 over (Md Ibaaduddin Khan 30, Mirza Mudassir Baig 78, K. Sai Krishna 32, Yasir Arafath 30, Syed Rasheed 4/53) vs Tirumala CC 8 for no loss in 5 overs.

## Lakshman, Roopa on top of podium

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 23

L. Lakshman Tej of Hyderabad won the 110 metres hurdles in the boys under 18 category at the 7th Telangana State Junior Athletics Championships for Jumps, Hurdles and Steeple Chase events organised by the Hyderabad District Athletics Association at the GMC Balayogi Stadium in Gachibowli, here.

Lakshman clocked 16.26 seconds to leave Syed Fareed Ali of Khammam (16.76) and S. Chandu of Vikarabad (21.06) in second and third places.

G. Roopa Sri of Hyderabad finished first in the girls U-16 80 metres hurdles with a time of 13.50 seconds. A. P. Lalitha (Medchal, 13.84) and K. Nikhila (Suraypet, 13.94) came second and third.

G. Parashuram of Kamareddy won the boys U-16 80m hurdles event in 12.06 secs. V. Sandeep of Mahbubabad (12.62) and M. Chandra Kumar of Ranga Reddy (12.87) came second and third.

**THE RESULTS**  
**Boys U-16**

■ **80 metres Hurdles:** 1. G. Parashuram (Kamareddy) 12.06 secs, 2. V. Sandeep (Mahbubabad) 12.62, 3. M. Chandra Kumar (Ranga Reddy) 12.87.

■ **5,000m Race Walk:** 1. Dharamveer Singh (TAA) 27:21.8, 2. K. Niraj Reddy (Khammam) 33:06.3, 3. M. A. Moinu (Khammam) 33:06.5.

■ **High Jump:** 1. K. Pranay (Mancherla) 1.86 metres, 2. T. Hardayal Singh (Kamareddy) 1.50m, 3. P. Mahesh (Narayanapeta) 1.50m.

■ **110m Hurdles:** 1. L. Lakshman Tej (Hyderabad) 16.26, 2. Syed Fareed Ali (Khammam) 16.76, 3. S. Chandu



L. Lakshman Tej



Ch. Padmasheer

(Vikarabad) 21.06.  
■ **2,000m Steeple Chase:** 1. K. Ramesh (Nagarkurnool) 6:51.5, 2. D. Shiva Kumar (RR) 7:09.9, 3. L. Bala Beeraiah (Wanaparthy) 7:35.3.  
■ **10,000m Race Walk:** 1. Raj Mishra (RR) 52:33.0, 2. D. Jagadish (Naigonda) 1:09.40.0, 3. B. Shivamani (Jagti) 1:12.20.0.

■ **3,000m Steeple Chase:** 1. G. Bhaskar Goud (Siddipet) 15:35.9, 2. M. Raju (Wanaparthy) 15:57.5, 3. A. V. Sarad (Khammam) 16:36.5.

■ **400m Hurdles:** 1. Ch. Padmasheer (Hyderabad) 1:06.9.

■ **1,000m Race Walk:** 1. Y. Shruthilaya (Jagti) 1:45.57, 2. K. Ganga (Jagti) 1:50.52.

■ **Girls U-18**  
■ **100m Hurdles:** 1. A. Nandini (Medchal) 13.81.

■ **400m Hurdles:** N. Vijayalaxmi (RR) 1:16.8.

■ **Girls U-16**  
■ **80m Hurdles:** 1. G. Roopa Sri (Hyderabad) 13.50, 2. A. P. Lalitha (Medchal) 13.84, 3. K. Nikhila (Suraypet) 13.94.



Girls singles runner-up Ika Raju (from left), winner Rishitha Basi Reddy, Chief Guest Iftekhar Shareef, boys singles runner-up Showrya Syamala and boys singles champion V. Thirumurugan pose at the presentation.

## Thirumurugan, Rishitha champs

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 23

Rishitha Basi Reddy and V. Thirumurugan won the girls and boys titles respectively at the All India Tennis Association C7 Under-14 tournament held at Sania Mirza Tennis Academy in Murtuzaguda.

In the final, Rishitha prevailed over Ika Raju in three sets at 6-4, 3-6, 7-5 while Thirumurugan came back from a set down to sink Showrya Syamala 4-6, 7-5, 6-3.

However, Showrya took the boys doubles title alongside Hrishik Valipally as they beat Rahul Lokesh and Anish

Jain in straight sets at 6-1, 6-3.

D. Laxmi Siri and Rithika Kakarlamudi emerged the girls doubles champions with a 2-6, 7-5, 10-7 victory over Ika Raju and Rishitha Basi Reddy.

**THE RESULTS (all finals)**  
**Boys singles:** V. Thirumurugan bt Showrya Syamala 4-6, 7-5, 6-3.

■ **Girls singles:** Rishitha Basi Reddy bt Ika Raju 6-4, 3-6, 7-5.

■ **Boys doubles:** Hrishik Valipally/ Showrya Syamala bt Rahul Lokesh/ Anish Jain 6-1, 6-3.

■ **Girls doubles:** D. Laxmi Siri/ Rithika Kakarlamudi bt Ika Raju/ Rishitha Basi Reddy 2-6, 7-5, 10-7.



## SHORT TAKES

## Murray pulls out of Oz Open

**Melbourne:** Five-time Australian Open finalist Andy Murray withdrew from the year's first Grand Slam tournament, saying on Friday he could not figure out a workable quarantine that would allow him to compete amid the coronavirus pandemic. The announcement comes a little more than a week after Murray, who has won three Grand Slam singles titles elsewhere, said he tested positive for Covid-19 shortly before he was due to board a charter flight to Melbourne. "Gutted to share that I won't be flying out to Australia to compete at the Australian Open. We've been in constant dialogue with Tennis Australia to try and find a solution which would allow some form of workable quarantine, but we couldn't make it work," Murray said. — AP

## Hockey women slump to 1st loss

**Buenos Aires:** Indian women's hockey team suffered their first defeat on the tour of Argentina when they lost 1-2 to B side of the hosts, letting Agustina Gorzelany strike late in the match. Sol Pagella (11') put the Argentina side ahead while Indian forward Salima Tete (54') scored in the final quarter. However, the Indian defence let Gorzelany score three minutes after finding the equaliser. In the previous matches, India drew 2-2 and 1-1 respectively with the Argentina junior team. "Today we played against a stronger Argentina squad consisting many of their senior players. This was a perfect practice match for us ahead of next week's schedule where we play against the Senior side," said chief coach Sjoerd Marjine. — PTI

## Clippers score 6th straight win

**Los Angeles:** Kawhi Leonard scored 31 points, Paul George added 29 and the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 120-106 on Friday night for their sixth straight win. Serge Ibaka had 17 points and 11 rebounds to help the Clippers improve to 12-4, tying the Lakers for the NBA's best record. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led the Thunder with 30 points and eight assists against his former team. Lu Dort added 19 points. The Thunder were in catch-up mode most of the way before dropping their second straight and fourth in five games. They were just 14 of 42 from 3-point range and only got to the free throw line 13 times. The Clippers grabbed control in the first half, scoring 36 points in the first quarter and 34 in the second on 63 per cent shooting. They had scoring runs of 21-2 and 11-4 in the first. They opened the second quarter with a 19-10 spurt, including George's steal and dunk followed by his consecutive 3-pointers, for their largest lead of 27 points. From there, the Thunder put together a 25-15 surge, hitting five 3-pointers, to trail 70-53 at halftime. The Thunder worked to reduce a 23-point deficit to 10 points in the third. They outscored the Clippers 15-2 during one stretch, helped by eight points from Dort and Muscala's first 3-pointer after he missed four attempts in the first half. — AP

## Live on TV

## BADMINTON

**Thailand Open:** Final from 10.30 am on Star Sports 2 HD, 3

## CRICKET

**Big Bash League:** Sydney Thunder vs Adelaide Strikers from 10.35 am; Sydney Sixers vs Hobart Hurricanes from 1.45 pm on Sony Six, HD

## FOOTBALL

**Indian Super League:** Jamshedpur vs Hyderabad FC from 4.50 pm; Bengaluru vs Odisha from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

**Italian League:** Verona vs Napoli from 7.30 pm; Lazio vs Sassuolo from 10.30 pm; Parma vs Sampdoria from 1.15 am (Monday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

## UFC

**Fight Night:** Dustin Poirier vs Conor McGregor and other bouts from 8.30 am on Sony Ten 1, HD

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## NO PAIN NO GAIN

Saini says he risked aggravating his injury to play in Brisbane Test

**New Delhi, Jan. 23:** A groin strain prevented India pacer Navdeep Saini from giving his best in the Brisbane Test but fearing that he may not get such a big stage again, he remained at the beck and call of his captain and ended up bowling five overs despite injury. Saini finally made his Test debut in the Australia series after years of wait, said he risked aggravating his injury by bowling in the second innings but given what was at stake, "it was a no brainer".

"Ajinkya *bhaiya* asked me if I would be able to bowl with the injury, I just had to say yes," Saini said.

Having taken four wickets in his debut game at Sydney, Saini suffered a groin strain in Australia's first innings and could bowl only 7.5 overs at the Gabba, increasing concerns for an already injury-hit India, who were forced to go into the game with a bowling attack which had the combined experience of four games.

For someone who made a massive leap of playing Ranji Trophy for Delhi in 2013 straight from making a quick buck in tennis ball cricket across Haryana, Saini wondered about the timing of his injury as he had just realised his dream of playing Tests.

But the like of the rest of his teammates, he showed a steely resolve and carried on.

"I was fine and suddenly I got injured. I was wondering 'why it is happening in such a crucial game and have got the opportunity to play after a long time'.

"I just wished if could keep going with that injury and support my team. I knew I might not



Paceman Navdeep Saini bowls on Day Four of the fourth Test against Australia at the Gabba in Brisbane in this file photo. — AFP

get a stage like that again. Captain asked me if I could do it. I was in pain but said I would do with whatever I could," he added.

Mohammed Siraj was seen counselling Saini

consistently in the latter's maiden Test. It helped the Delhi pacer immensely as he and Siraj go back a long way.

"He is one of my best mates. We have played a lot together (for India A).

We talk a lot about bowling. He was always there for me in the first game. Pace is important but he was telling me to also focus on line and length to be effective," Saini said of Siraj. — PTI

## ANDERSON'S 6-FOR KEEPS SL IN CHECK

**Galle (Sri Lanka), Jan. 23:** England pacer James Anderson returned his best figures of 6-40 in Asia to help bowl out Sri Lanka for 381 on Day Two of the second Test on Saturday.

The tourists were 98/2 at stumps after Lasith Embuldeniya struck early to remove the openers. Skipper Joe Root, on 67, and Jonny Bairstow, on 24, were batting as England trail by 283 runs in Galle.

Anderson, 38, denied wicketkeeper-batsman Niroshan Dickwella a century after sending him back on 92 to claim his 30th five-wicket haul and second in Sri Lanka — his previous best was 5-75 in Galle in 2012.

The pace spearhead struck in his first over of the day to send Angelo Mathews caught behind for 110 after the former captain added just three runs in the morning.

But the dismissal was Joe Root's mastermind after he reviewed the umpire's call, which was not out, and replays suggested the ball had grazed Mathews' bat.

Wood sent debutant Ramesh Mendis trudging back to the pavilion for nought with wicketkeeper Jos Buttler taking a one-handed diving catch towards his left. — AFP

## BRIEF SCORES

**Sri Lanka 381 in 139.3 overs** (Mathews 110, Dickwella 92, D. Perera 67; Anderson 6/40, Wood 3/84) vs **England 98/2 in 30 overs** (Bairstow batting 24, Root batting 67; Embuldeniya 2/33).



Neeraj Chopra in action in this file photo.

## Neeraj worried about Olympics

**New Delhi, Jan. 23:** Star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra on Saturday admitted that the uncertainty over the staging of the postponed Olympics due to Coronavirus creates anxiety but said he is proceeding with his preparations thinking that the Games will happen and he will give his 100 per cent.

There has been intense speculation over the staging of Tokyo Olympics in July-August with some reports suggesting that the Games may be scrapped while the organisers, the Japanese government and the International Olympic Committee insisting they will be held on schedule.

"There is some anxiety for sure. If Olympics is happening, the target is clear, I have to give my 100 per cent in Olympics. But by chance if Olympics is not held, I may plan differently," he said in an online interaction with reporters.

"There are sometimes this thought in mind that we are training so hard but Olympics may not happen," said the 23-year-old reigning Asian Games and Commonwealth Games gold medalist, who is currently training at Kalina Stadium in Bhubaneswar.

"I am just hoping that things move forward positively and Tokyo Games are held," he added.

**There is some anxiety for sure. If Olympics are happening, the target is clear, I have to give my 100 per cent at the Games. But by chance if Olympics are not held, I may plan differently.**

— **NEERAJ CHOPRA**  
star javelin thrower

Neeraj will be competing in his first Olympics and he has already qualified for the Tokyo Games early last year before the Covid-19 pandemic began. He said he will be disappointed if the Tokyo Olympics is cancelled.

"I was late in qualifying for 2016 Rio Olympics but my performance while winning the junior world championships in 2016 or even 1m less than that would have given me a medal.

"If Tokyo Olympics is cancelled, it will be like I have lost two chances to win a medal in Olympics," Neeraj said.

"If Olympics is happening, I will go for selective high intensity competitions against top javelin throwers who are going to take part in Olympics. It is important to have a consistent performance before Olympics," he further added. — PTI

## PIETERSEN SHARES DRAVID'S SPIN TRICKS

**New Delhi, Jan. 23:** With England set to tour India, former captain Kevin Pietersen on Saturday shared tips on how to go about tackling quality spin bowling given to him by Rahul Dravid some years ago.

Sharing the email sent to him by the Indian batting great in 2017, Pietersen urged the England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) to give it to struggling duo of Dom Sibley and Zak Crawley.

Sharing two pages of the email sent to him by Dravid, Pietersen wrote on his twitter handle: "Hey @england-cricket, print this and give it to Sibley

& Crawley. They can call me to discuss it at length if they want."

"Crawley & Sibley need to go find the email that Dravid sent me about playing spin. Changed my game," he wrote in an earlier tweet.

In his email, which was published in Pietersen's 2014 autobiography, Dravid had discussed how the England batsman should play spin.

"Against guys who bowled a bit quicker (and I grew up playing against Anil) I would look to go forward without committing or planting the front foot," Dravid had written in the email. — PTI

## Indian doubles pairs bow out in semifinal

**Bangkok, Jan. 23:** The Indian mixed doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Ashwini Ponnappa produced a spirited performance before going down narrowly to top seeds Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai in the semifinals of the Toyota Thailand Open here on Saturday.

Up against the world number three Thai pair, Satwik and Ashwini, who are ranked 36th, showed great skills and temperament as they scripted an extraordinary fightback after losing the opening game by a whisker.

However, in the end, Dechapol and Sapsiree prevailed 22-20, 18-21, 21-12 over the Indians in a 57-minute battle.

Satwik and Ashwini, who spent most of the last year away from the court in two different cities and could only practice together for a few weeks, on Friday became the first Indian mixed doubles pair to reach the semifinals of a BWF World Tour Super 1000 event. Earlier, the impressive run of Satwik and Chirag Shetty also came to an end after a close semifinal defeat in men's doubles.

The Indian pair, ranked 10th in the world, lost 18-21, 18-21 to world number nine Malaysian combination of Aaron Chia



Spain's Carolina Marin celebrates after winning her semi-final match against An Se-young from South Korea at the Toyota Thailand Open in Bangkok on Saturday. — Badminton Association of Thailand/AFP

## MARIN CLINCHES SPOT IN FINAL

Spain's fifth seed and former world number one Carolina Marin breezed into the final, beating South Korea's An Se-young 21-19, 21-15. She came out on top last week against top-

seeded Tai Tzu-ying, and continued her winning streak Saturday, maintaining her signature aggressive play against the seventh-seeded player.

An, an 18-year-old who was awarded "Most Promising Player" in 2019, was downcast after Saturday's defeat. — Agencies

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