

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | WEDNESDAY 6 | JANUARY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 26°C
Min: 22°C
Rainfall: 3 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Margazhi 22
Tithi: Ashtami,
Star: Hastham
Rahukalam:
12 noon to 1.30 pm
Yamagandam:
7.30 am to 9.00 am

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.15 am
Zohar: 12.17 pm
Asar: 3.28 pm
Maghrib: 5.53 pm
Isha: 7.09 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.57 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.33 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 12.10 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 12.04 PM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+16,817)	(+252)
1,03,74,386	1,50,138

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+820)
TN: 8,22,370 12,177

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

8,64,70,477

DEATHS

18,69,188

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
218

worldometers.info

TN monitoring borders for bird flu

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 5

Health secretary J Radhakrishnan urged the people not to panic over the possibility of bird flu coming to the State as the authorities were keeping a watch over it in the borders.

Speaking to the media at the DMS complex, where he was supervising the preparations for the launching the Covid-19 vaccine, he said Bird Flu cases have been now detected in Haryana and Kerala. Since the state shares a border with Kerala, 26 check posts had been set up to monitor the vehicles, cattle and birds entering through the districts of Kanyakumari, Tenkasi, Theni, Coimbatore and Nilgiris. Disinfectants were also used to prevent the spread of Bird Flu, he said.

COUNTER POINT



He will flag off the vaccination drive, but on one condition. Don't force him to take it first!

Pak ups activity; BSF sends more troops to Punjab border districts

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 5

Sensing increased activity on the Pakistan side along the border areas of Punjab, the Border Security Force (BSF) has rushed additional troops to the India-Pakistan border in Punjab sector. Sources said 4,000-5,000 more troops have been deployed in the sensitive border districts of

Gurdaspur, Pathankot, Amritsar and Taran Taran, "virtually sealing" the entire border.

Sources claimed they had specific intelligence inputs that Pakistan would try large-scale infiltration into Punjab and was now focusing on this region instead of the Kashmir Valley. The decision follows an intense security review for the border districts.

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CM's help sought to resolve Gudalur power



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Georgia election to decide fate of Biden presidency

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VVS expects century from Rohit



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Record rainfall inundates Chennai, suburban areas

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 5

Normal life was affected in Chennai and surrounding districts on Tuesday after incessant rains, billed as heaviest in 100 years, and resultant waterlogging inundated several low-lying areas. The authorities released water from the city reservoirs, including Chembarambakkam lake, to prevent further inundation. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) had predicted cloudy weather with light to moderate rains in the next 24 hours but the city recorded 6 cm of rain, much more than the expected 3.7 cm. A senior Regional Meteorological Centre official here said the rainfall was caused by an easterly trough.

Moderate rainfall is likely in several northern districts on Wednesday with Villupuram, Cuddalore and other neighbouring districts expected to receive isolated heavy showers.

According to weather expert Pradeep John, Chennai received a record rainfall in 100 years and it is the heaviest in January



Vehicles wade through a waterlogged GST road in Pallavaram after heavy rain lashes throughout the Chennai and its suburbs on Tuesday.

— E.K.SANJAY

since 1915. "There are no cyclone, depression or low pressure," he said. "Yet we have got over 7 times the rains than normal in January in less than 15 hours."

The sudden downpour prompted officials to release surplus water from the reservoirs around Chennai. Initially they released 500 cusecs of water from the Chembarambakkam dam

and later stepped it up to about 3,000 cusecs. Similarly, 1,500 cusecs were released from the Puzhal lake, and 2,970 cusecs from Poondi. PWD officials said. These reservoirs are the primary resources of Chennai's drinking water needs. Authorities have advised people residing in areas close to the banks of Adyar river and other channels that carry surplus water

from the reservoirs to be careful and not get close to the water bodies.

Water entered houses in a few low lying areas like Chitlapakkam and civic officials were engaged in clearing flooded subways and key intersections. After almost non-stop battering for hours together in some places, the rains stopped in most parts of the city and suburban localities after 3 pm.

ANOTHER MIN QUILTS MAMATA MINISTRY, TMC

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, JAN. 5

Former cricketer and West Bengal minister of state for sports and youth services Laxmi Ratan Shukla resigned from the ministry and quit the Trinamul Congress, in a shocking birthday blow to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, on Tuesday, the day she turned 66.

Mr Shukla is the second rebel minister after Shubhendu Adhikari to quit Ms Banerjee's ministry and party in less than two months. This left many in the TMC stunned, amid speculation about his switchover to the BJP.

The 39-year-old, one of the state's youngest MLAs, is among those in the rebel TMC camp with a clean image in Howrah who is likely to join the BJP in the presence of Union home minister Amit Shah on January 12. ■ **P4**

INDIA TO INVITE ANOTHER LEADER FOR R-DAY

Johnson cancels India trip as UK goes into strict lockdown

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, JAN. 5

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has cancelled his planned India visit later this month to be chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations due to the grim Covid-19 situation in Britain and the "speed at which the new coronavirus variant is spreading" that led to a fresh national lockdown, the British government said Tuesday. Mr Johnson had already spoken to Prime Minister Narendra Modi "to express his regret", it said, adding Mr Johnson hopes to visit India by June this year.

India is now expected to invite another foreign leader as chief guest for the January 26 parade.



New Delhi said Tuesday evening that in a phone conversation with Mr Modi, Mr Johnson "regretted his inability to attend ... in view of the changed Covid-19 context prevailing in UK", but said he was keen to "visit India in the near future".

New Delhi said "Prime Minister (Modi) expressed his understanding of the exceptional situation in

the UK, and conveyed his best wishes for the quick control of the pandemic spread", adding "he looked forward to receiving Prime Minister Johnson in India at the earliest opportunity after normalisation of the situation".

The invitation to Mr Johnson was announced during British foreign secretary Dominic Raab's visit to New Delhi last month.

The UK on Tuesday entered a tough new stay-at-home lockdown on Tuesday after Mr Johnson said it has been "both frustrating and alarming" to see the speed with which the new variant of the coronavirus is spreading and declared that hospitals in the country are under more pressure from the deadly virus than at any time in the pandemic.

EMBARGO GOES, QATAR EMIR LANDS IN SAUDI

Al-Ula (Saudi Arabia), Jan. 5: Qatar's ruling emir arrived in Saudi Arabia and was greeted with an embrace by the kingdom's crown prince on Tuesday, following an announcement that the kingdom would end its yearslong embargo on the Arab state.

The decision to open borders was the first major step toward ending the diplomatic crisis that has deeply divided US defense partners, frayed societal ties and torn apart a traditionally clubby alliance of Arab states. The arrival of Sheikh Tamim-bin-Hamad Al Thani to the kingdom's ancient desert city of Al-Ula was broadcast live on Saudi TV. He was seen descending from his plane and being greeted with a hug by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The emir is in Al-Ula for an annual summit of Arab leaders that is expected to produce a détente between Qatar and four Arab states. —AP

CISF to review Taj security after 4 wave saffron flags

● As part of the security protocol, all visitors to the ASI monument are checked using metal-detectors, they cannot carry posters or any writing material

New Delhi, Jan. 5: A day after four people were held for waving saffron flags on the Taj Mahal premises, the CISF, which has the responsibility to guard it, Tuesday said it will review its surveillance and intelligence gathering at the Mughal-era monument to ensure such incidents don't recur.

The four youths have been booked for allegedly promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion. "Since it's a security

breach, we have sought a report from the CISF in the next two to three days to understand what happened," Vasant Swarnkar, Superintending Archaeologist, ASI (Agra Circle), told PTI.

Police said the four youths who have been arrested are

members of a right-wing outfit and they had entered the Taj Mahal Monday afternoon through the Eastern Gate. They waved saffron flags and also uploaded a 10-second video of the act on YouTube.

As part of the security protocol, all visitors to the ASI

monument are checked using metal-detectors, they cannot carry posters or any writing material. However, the use of selfie-sticks is not banned. Physical checking has been stopped at the gates of Taj Mahal after it reopened for visitors following the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

"Tourists carry all kinds of clothes inside the premises. It is difficult to prevent them from carrying pieces of clothing like handker-

chiefs or dupattas and they can be of different colours and may have any religious connotation. "However, we are updating our surveillance around the site, increasing and intensifying intelligence gathering and even patrolling. There are some steps internally that we are contemplating to ensure that such incidents do not happen again," CISF commandant Yadav told PTI.



KAMAL SEEKS BLESSINGS

Kamal Haasan seeks blessings from freedom fighter and INA veteran Annasakaram Sivagami Ammal. She had joined Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's Indian national army then.

— DC
■ Report on P2

OTHER STORIES

Co-op bank
told to pay ₹1LDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 5

The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Cuddalore has directed the Primary Agriculture Co-operative Bank Ltd in the coastal district to pay ₹1 lakh to a person.

In a petition, P. Kannan of Semmandalam, Cuddalore stated that he deposited ₹7,027 with Vazhudalampattu Primary Agriculture Co-operative Bank Ltd., Karumatchipalayam, Kullanchavadi in 1998. The bank promised that on maturity after 20 years it would pay ₹1 lakh. Last year he approached the bank seeking the maturity amount, but it didn't give a reply. A notice was sent to the bank. Hence, he filed the complaint seeking direction to the bank to release the maturity amount.

In the reply, the bank denied the allegation and stated that as per the guidelines of RBI, the bank shall give only the prevailing rate of interest and not the rate of interest mentioned at the time of deposit. As per the circular dated November 30, 2003 and November 6, 2004 of the Registrar, Co-operative Society, Chennai an interest of 7 per cent was calculated on the deposit amount. It was informed to the complainant.

The interest was calculated at the rate of 13.5 percent upto 2004 and from January 1, 2005 he was entitled only 7 per cent interest. Hence the bank requested the commission to dismiss the complaint.

The bench comprising president, R.V.R. Deenadayalan and member T.V. Babu directed the bank to pay Rs 1 lakh towards the matured deposit amount and a sum of Rs 3,000 towards litigation expenses to the complainant in three months.

VJ Chitra's husband
Hemnath held
again in medical
seat fraud scamDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 5

The Central Crime Branch of Chennai Police on Tuesday arrested late actor-VJ Chitra's husband Hemnath in a medical college seat scam. Hemnath was arrested by the police on the charges of abetment to the Chitra's suicide. As the investigations into the Actor's death are still going, the CCB has arrested him on the charges of cheating.

According to the sources, Hemnath had collected an amount of ₹1.5 crore, while giving assurances to procure medical seats, with a complaint subsequently being filed by parents of students at the J.J. Nagar police station in Chennai in 2015.

The case has now been shifted to the Crime Branch's document and fraud prevention division, with Hemnath being arrested once again and taken for interrogation from Puzhal Jail where he was imprisoned.

It may be recalled that the popular television actor Chitra was found dead at the hotel room she was staying in, with her husband Hemnath, during the early hours of December 9. Six days later, her husband Hemnath was arrested by the police on the charges of abetment to suicide. Last week, Chithu's mother had submitted a letter to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister cell demanding a CB-CID enquiry into her daughter's death. Chitra's parents have stated that there needs to be transparency in the investigation of her case.

The case has now been shifted to the Crime Branch's document and fraud prevention division, with Hemnath being arrested once again and taken for interrogation from Puzhal Jail where he was imprisoned

On Tuesday, amid intense showers, vehicles moved at a snail's pace while bikers and drivers of auto-rickshaws and cars found it very difficult to negotiate roads covered by sheets of water in several areas

Margazhi rain stuns Chennaiites



KK Nagar



Madipakkam



TB hospital, Chromepet



GST road, Tambaram sanatorium

City reservoirs get 1,304 mcft
more water in a monthT. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 5

The reservoirs in the city received at least 1,304 Mcft additional water within a month after cyclone Nivar and subsequent floods forced the authorities to release water from the reservoirs including Chembarambakkam and Poondi.

A month after heavy rains once again forced the Public Works Department (PWD) to release water, the total storage level in the city reservoirs now stands at 10,986 Mcft against the total capacity of 11,757. This is double compared to last year's figure of just

5,734. The storage level was 9,682 Mcft on last December 4.

The PWD authorities on Tuesday said that more than 30 mm rainfall has been recorded in the catchment areas and both Chembarambakkam and Redhill reservoirs had been receiving 500 cusecs of water. The same amount of water will be released to the Adyar and the Kosasthalaiyar rivers to avoid a flood situation.

At the 140 ft- Poondi reservoir, the biggest in the city, the water level has now touched 3,135 Mcft (additional 268 Mcft in a month) from 2,867 Mcft (88 percent) on

December 4 against the full capacity of 3,231. The water level on the same day last year was 1,444 Mcft.

The water level in Chembarambakkam reservoir rose to 3,364 Mcft (additional 227 Mcft in a month) from 3,137 Mcft (86 percent) in a month against the total capacity of 3,645. The water level on the same day last year was 1,685.

At Redhill, the water level on Tuesday is 3,206 (additional 328 Mcft in a month) against the full capacity of 3,300 Mcft. The water level on December 4 was 2,878 (87 percent) while storage level was

2,536 in the same period last year.

The water level in Cholavaram is way high this year compared to last year. Now the level stands at 881 Mcft while the storage level in the same period last year was just 69 Mcft. Cholavaram has received at least 291 Mcft more water within a month as the water level on December 4 was 590 Mcft (54 percent full) against 1,081-full capacity.

According to the PWD officials, the situation is completely under control as they started releasing water in a controlled manner to maintain the water level due to rain forecast.

100% occupancy in theatres

Will take it up with revenue dept, says health secy

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR &
D. SEKAR | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 5

Was the state government's decision to allow 100 per cent occupancy in cinema halls – the first state to do it after the nationwide lockdown was imposed following the coronavirus pandemic – taken without consulting the matter with the health department?

It looks so, going by the statement of health secretary J. Radhakrishnan, who, when asked how social distancing could be maintained in the theatres if full occupancy was allowed, said: "I saw the GO issued by the revenue department and we will take up the matter with them."

Radhakrishnan was speaking to the media after overseeing the arrangements for the administration of Covid-19 vaccine at the DMS Complex on Tuesday when he said that they would look into the Government of India guidelines and standard operating procedures, besides the challenges in allowing 100 occupancy, and take it to the notice of the revenue department.

Open letter from doctor
goes viral on social mediaDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 5

Day after the state government decided to allow all theatres at 100 per cent capacity, an open letter to the government and actors Vijay and Simbu from "a tired resident doctor" went viral on the social media.

Aravindh Srinivas, junior resident doctor of Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research (per his FB profile), in his FB post, says, "I am tired. We are all tired. Thousands of doc-

some of them putting up angry posts in social media, one of them saying that health care professionals were already tired.

A Tirunelveli-based advocate is said to have sent in a complaint to the Governor, seeking registration of a case against Palaniswami, revenue minister R. B. Udhayakumar, actor Vijay and local administration minister S. P. Velumani under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

His contention was that corruption was involved in the decision of the government and that it was a criminal conspiracy.

Many social media users

tors like me are tired. Health care workers are tired. Police officials are tired. Sanitary workers are tired..." He criticized the decision as it would put the lives of fans at risk. He further said people are dying and it is not right to trade lives for money.

too expressed the doubt that the government was unfairly influenced by actor Vijay, whose next film 'Master' is scheduled to be released for Pongal. T R Silambarasan's film 'Eeswaran' is also due for release and he too had made a request to the government through a statement.

The general impression, however, was the move could accelerate spread of the Coronavirus, which has not actually been done away with in the State.

Some health experts the government could have waited for the vaccination to roll out before allowing the theatres to have a full house audience.

Two jailed for killing
endangered king cobraDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 5

Forest department officials arrested two persons for allegedly killing a five feet cobra near Thirukazhukundram in Chengalpet district.

The arrested persons allegedly demolished a snake anthill near Sri Thandumariamman temple on Sangumettu street in Thirukazhukundram, with poclain machine, when endangered King cobra inside the anthill was crushed.

J. Senthil (47), a resident of Thirukazhukundram owns land near Sri Thandumariamman temple. On Monday evening, he employed one S. Jayashankar (27) to level his land with a poclain

machine. Police sources said Jayashankar reportedly demolished an Anthill on Senthil's land. However, a five feet king cobra present inside the hill was found crushed under the debris.

Irrked locals, who witnessed the incident, surrounded the vehicle and staged a protest. People in the region have termed the incident as unfortunate as even spotting a king Cobra is rare. Thirukazhukundram police were called in to control the situation.

The police held talks with the locals and dispersed them. Chengalpet forest department officials were alerted about the incident.

A team headed forest

ranger D.Pandurangan arrived and inspected the spot. The officials confirmed the snake to be king cobra, a highly endangered species.

Forest officials said that king cobras are normally not spotted downhill and they need dense forest cover. It is very unfortunate that it was killed even though it didn't harm anyone. The forest ranger sent the carcass of the cobra to the Government veterinary hospital in the district. Senthil and Jayashankar were arrested under sections 9, 51, 59 of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972. The officials also seized the machine.

On Tuesday afternoon, the duo was produced before Chengalpet court and sent to prison.

CM's help sought to
resolve Gudalur powerB RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, JAN. 5

The Centre for Consumer, Human resources and Environment Protection (CCHPEP) at Gudalur, on the western border here, has urged Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami to intervene and resolve the power crisis and frequent disruption of power supply in the Gudalur belt, due to inefficient and insufficient power sub-station in Gudalur.

CCHPEP president, S Sivasubramaniam, said that the Gudalur revenue division in the Nilgiris has a population of over 2.50 lakh people. It has been struggling the most with frequent power disruptions. One of the major reasons for the situation is the non-availability of a 110 KV sub-station. The up-gradation of 66 KV sub-station to 110 KV sub-station has been a very



long pending (25 years), request of people here.

Late chief minister J Jayalalithaa in 2003, was kind enough to sanction Rs 1.63 crore for a 110 KV sub-station and inaugurated the project work during one of her visits to Ooty. But the work was abandoned mid-way by authorities who installed only 58 towers out of the total 98 towers required for the process. In these 17 years, several trees have grown up, which now needs the approval of a Central-empowered com-

mittee for felling, without which the remaining 40 towers cannot be installed. The project has not been moving forward for the approval of the empowered committee.

The present 66 KV sub-station which was installed in 1931, is very old and is not able to cater the requirement of the present population. This regular power disruption is causing hindrances to all sectors of life.

"In this regard, Gudalur residents have started sending one lakh e-mails to Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami to seek his personal intervention to resolve this issue. This request for a 110 KV sub-station is from the place where around 225 MW power is generated from TNEB hydro-power plants which includes Singara, Moyar and Pykara in Gudalur vicinity," added Sivasubramaniam

No titles, call me civil servant,
says Kamal in DharmapuriDC CORRESPONDENT
DHARMAPURI, JAN. 5

The Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) founder Kamal Haasan launched his election campaign here on Tuesday.

First, he visited the house of freedom fighter 'Annasakaram Sivagami Ammal', who joined the Indian national army of Subash Chandra Bose. Later, she returned to India and now stays with her relatives here in Dharmapuri.

After his meeting with the octogenarian, Kamal Haasan



told reporters, "Sivagami Ammal fought the British. I received her blessings for

victory in my battle against the corrupt."

Later, the actor attended a public meeting in Dharmapuri town.

Addressing the gathering there, Kamal Haasan said, "I have had many titles in my profession as an actor. Above all, I wish to be called with the new title 'civil servant'.

Commenting on the trend in the political arena, Kamal Haasan said, "Ministers are currently addressed with the title 'Honourable'. They should be given such title only after their tenure according to the good work

done by them. I wish to follow my views, and reject all previous titles (except civil servant) given to me."

He recalled the historical background of Dharmapuri district, and promised a museum of international standard and also make the district a global tourism hub. He wished to bring more socio-economic schemes for Dharmapuri, as this district, according to him, was used as the social laboratory in 1989 by introducing self-help groups before the project was expanded to other places in the state.

IN BRIEF

SDPI volunteers held in Tiruchy

Tiruchy, Jan. 5: The volunteers of the Socialist Democratic Party of India (SDPI) were taken into police custody when they attempted to lay siege to the passport seva kendra at Tiruchy on Tuesday in support of the agitation of the farmers at Delhi borders demanding repeal of farm laws. Imam R. Hassan, party's Tiruchy district president who led the agitation, told the media that Tuesday's demonstration was part of the party's nationwide stir from December 26 to January 5 with the slogan "Vivasayigal Virothan."

On the final day today, the district SDPI organised a stir at Tiruchy and conducted demonstrations, street corner meetings, etc, he added. Among others, party's district vice-president Pitchai Kani, general secretary Niyamathullah, secretary Mubarak, treasurer Kader and spokesperson Abdul Majid participated.

Collector inspects Jal Jeevan mission

G. SRINIVASAN | DC
THANJAVUR, JAN. 5

Under the Jal Jeevan mission, villages will have new overhead tanks and houses will get individual water pipe connections in every village in Orathanadu panchayat union in Thanjavur.

M. Govinda Rao, Thanjavur district collector, inspected the works going on in Therkunatham, Keelanatham and Azhivaikkal villages. He also inspected the water pump at high school at Azhivaikkal. At Kovilur, he inspected the construction of an overhead tank with a capacity of 60,000 litres, and Jal Jeevan works at Neduvakkottai, Melacolony, Madhavankudikadu, Naduthuru and Thirumangalakottai. At Melacolony, out of 223 water connections to be given, 96 had been completed. Ramasamy, executive engineer, accompanied the collector.

Stalin to storm more AIADMK citadels

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 5

DMK president M. K. Stalin, whose 'people's grama sabai meeting' at Municipal Administration Minister K. P. Velumani's constituency caused a kerfuffle triggering debates in social media, is now all set to storm into the bastions of the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister and other high profile ministers of the AIADMK ministry between January 7 and 10.

It was at the Thondamuthur 'gram sabha' that Stalin asked a woman who rose to ask questions as to where she came from, leading to an exchange of words that ended with the police escorting the woman out.

Though Stalin's query if she was sent by Velumani was later proved true through visual evidence of the woman seen with the powerful minister from the region, the DMK leader was trolled for not answering the woman's questions with some wondering what was wrong in an AIADMK member attending the meeting.

Now, Stalin has prepared a schedule from a series of

similar grama sabha meetings and on the first day he would be inside the bastion of Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami in Edappadi constituency. Palaniswami had averred that he would contest the next election, too, from Edappadi only.

Stalin would launch this round of 'meetings with people,' which the party has been organizing as part of its campaign for the Assembly elections, at Palacode, the constituency of Higher Education Minister K. P. Anbalagan, which would be on Thursday morning and go to Edappadi in the evening.

He would go to Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam's constituency, Bodinayakanur, on Saturday, January 9, evening, while in the forenoon of that day he would be at Thirumangalam, the constituency of R. B. Udhayakumar, Minister for Revenue and Disaster Management.

The DMK gram saba meetings, in which the focus would normally be on women participants who are encouraged to speak out by Stalin with the men standing around them, planned for Friday are at

Kumarapalayam in the morning and Viralmalai in the evening.

Kumarapalayam has returned Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar to the Assembly twice and Electricity Minister P. Thangamani is from Komarapalayam constituency. Stalin will wrap up the meetings in Chennai at Royapuram, which is the citadel of Fisheries Minister D. Jayakumar.

One of the reasons that the DMK has cherry picked the ministers' constituencies for its engagement with the public could be because Stalin has been talking more about corruption in such meetings, besides egging on the women speakers to come out with local problems.

When corruption is used as a tool to attack political opponents, it is easier to point fingers at Ministers, accusing them of amassing wealth, rather than ordinary MLAs, for painting the entire AIADMK Ministry as corrupt. However, since the constituencies would have been nurtured by the leaders, it would not be surprising if more wordy duels erupt at the coming meetings as it happened in Thondamuthur.



Minister for Animal Husbandry Udmalai K. Radhakrishnan, District Collector K. Vijayakarthy along with other officials distribute Pongal gifts in Udumalpet.

—DC

Elephant electrocuted in forest fringe TN village

Coimbatore, Jan 5: A 20-year-old male elephant was electrocuted after coming into contact with an illegal electric fence erected around a paddy field at a village on the city outskirts early Tuesday, forest officials said. Residents of

Semmedu village alerted forest department officials about the elephant in the area falling under Boluvampatti Forest range, they said.

Electricity board officials who also arrived at the scene found high voltage electricity was

illegally connected to the fence erected around the field of Durai alias Aruchamy, who is absconding after the incident, the officials said. A wild life offence report has been registered against the farmer, they added.

—PTI

Village police officers group inaugurated

ZAKEER HUSSAIN | DC
SALEM, JAN. 5

Seeking public help for the police to prevent crimes, Tamil Nadu special DGP, Rajesh Das, had directed the police department to appoint 'village police administrators' for every village, similar to the post of village administrative officers (VAOs) in the revenue department.

In a move towards realizing that, Superintendent of police Dr S. Deepa Ganiger had appointed 'village police

administrators' in the district, and the inaugural meet was held on Tuesday at Mallur Vengampatti near here.

Salem zone DIG Pradeep Kumar presided over the event and SP Dr. Deepa Ganiger welcomed the gathering. Tamil Nadu special DGP Rajesh Das spoke on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, DGP Rajesh Das said, "Village police administrators" have been appointed to monitor law and order in villages and also prevent theft. These officers would

frequently visit the villages and meet the public, and the public can freely interact with them. Information provided by the public can be of great help to the police in preventing crime."

In her address, SP Dr S. Deepa Ganiger said that 350 'village police administrators' have been appointed in villages falling within the limits of Salem police. One officer has been assigned for a large village and in some cases one officer is in charge of three hamlets, according to the needs of the region.

An additional 50 officers are to be appointed.

The public can report all information on crime prevention, prohibition and law and order issues to the village police administrators, added SP Deepa Ganiger.

Special DGP Rajesh Das distributed free note books to 25 poor students at the event which was attended by senior members of the public and the police. Additional DSP Bhaskar, DSP Umashankar and other officials were present.



ROC.15691/2018/H.7

The following amendment is issued to the public notice already issued under sub section 2 of section 15 of Tamil Nadu Highways Act 2001 for the acquisition of 11306 Square Meters of Dry lands situated in Ladduvadi Village of Mohanur Taluk of Namakkal District for the formation of By-pass road to Namakkal Town as published in English daily "Deccan Chronicle" (Coimbatore Edition) dated 08.06.2018.

Dated: 16.12.2020

AMENDMENT
1. In the above said Notification, the following amendment is issued to the existing schedule.

District : Namakkal						Taluk : Mohanur										Village : Ladduvadi											
15(2) Notification already published														15(2) Notification to be read as													
Sl. No.	Survey No.	Proposed Sub-Division No.	Total Extent of the lands in (Sq.Mt.)	Total Extent of lands to be Acquired in (Sq.Mt.)	Classification of the lands	Name of the Pattadar as per 10-1 Chitta	Details of Buildings, Structures, Trees, Crops and Others	Boundaries for the proposed Acquisition lands				Sl. No.	Survey No.	Proposed Sub-Division No.	Total Extent of the lands in (Sq. Mt.)	Total Extent of the lands to be acquired in (Sq. Mt.)	Classification of the Lands	Name of the Pattadar as per 10(1) Chitta	Details of Buildings, Structures, Trees, Crops and Others	Boundaries for the proposed Acquisition lands							
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(N)	(E)	(S)	(W)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(N)	(E)	(S)	(W)				
1	105/5B	105/5B2	6600	175	Dry	Patta No.693 Velusamy S/o. Sellappa Gounder	Compound Wall (Part) Iron Gate-2 Thatched Shed (Part)	S.No. 105/5B1	S.No. 105/4B	S.No. 107	S.No. 105/7B	1	105/5B	105/5B2	6600	135	Dry	Patta No.693 Velusamy S/o. Sellappa Gounder	Compound Wall (Part), Iron Gate-2, Tin and Thatched roof Shed-1 Pomegranate small Tree-1	S.No. 105/5B1	S.No. 105/4B	S.No. 107	S.No. 105/7B				
2	105/7	105/7B	550	381	Dry	Patta No.5145 Palanisamy S/o. Palappa Gounder	-	S.No. 105/7A	S.No. 105/5B2	S.No. 107	S.No. 106	2	105/7	105/7B	550	318	Dry	Patta No.5301 Kaliyannan S/o. Palanisamy	-	S.No. 105/7A	S.No. 105/5B2	S.No. 107	S.No. 106				
3	106/2C	106/2C2	13750	2143	Dry	Patta No.259 Sengoda Gounder S/o. Mottaiya Gounder-1 Subramani S/o. Chinnusamy-2 Sengodan S/o. Nalliyanna Gounder-3 Nallathambi S/o. Kaliyanna Gounder-4	Well-1 Motor Room-1	S.No. 106/2C1	S.No. 105	S.No. 107	S.No. 89	3	106/2C	106/2C2	13750	2494	Dry	Patta No.5293 Sengoda Gounder S/o. Mottaiya Gounder-1 Sengodan S/o. Nalliyanna Gounder-2 Nallathambi S/o. Kaliyanna Gounder-3 Tamilarasu S/o. Subramani-4 Yuvaraj S/o. Subramani-5	Well-1, Motor Room-1, Borewell inside the Well-1, Cement Pipe Line	S.No. 106/2C1	S.No. 105	S.No. 107	S.No. 89				
4	111/1A1	111/1A1A	450	419	Dry	Patta No.422 Palaniyappan S/o. Chinna Gounder	-	S.No. 114	S.No. 111/1A2A	S.No. 111/1A3A	S.No. 112	4	111/1A1	111/1A1A	450	384	Dry	Patta No.422 Palaniyappan S/o. Chinna Gounder	Vel Vela Tree-1, Young Unja Tree-1	S.No. 114, 115	S.No. 111/1A2A	S.No. 111/1A3A	S.No. 112				
5	111/1A2	111/1A2A	450	130	Dry	Patta No.478 Sakthivel S/o. Periyannan-1 Pankajam W/o. Periyannan-2 Suganeshwari W/o. Meganathan-3	-	S.No. 115	S.No. 111/1A2B	S.No. 111/1A2B	S.No. 111/1A1A	5	111/1A2	111/1A2A	450	77	Dry	Patta No.478 Sakthivel S/o. Periyannan-1 Pankajam W/o. Periyannan-2 Suganeshwari W/o. Meganathan-3	Elanthai Tree-1, Pala Tree-1	S.No. 115	S.No. 111/1A2B	S.No. 111/1A2B	S.No. 111/1A1A				
6	111/1A3	111/1A3A	550	48	Dry	Patta No.478 Sakthivel S/o. Periyannan-1 Pankajam W/o. Periyannan-2 Suganeshwari W/o. Meganathan-3	-	S.No. 111/1A1A	S.No. 111/1A3B	S.No. 111/1A3B	S.No. 112	6	111/1A3	111/1A3A	550	9	Dry	Patta No.478 Sakthivel S/o. Periyannan-1 Pankajam W/o. Periyannan-2 Suganeshwari W/o. Meganathan-3	-	S.No. 111/1A1A	S.No. 111/1A3B	S.No. 111/1A3B	S.No. 112				
7	112/2B	112/2B2	3100	1485	Dry	Patta No.1411 Chinnusamy S/o. Velappa Gounder	Tapioca	S.No. 112/2B1	S.No. 112/2C	S.No. 112/2B3	S.No. 112/2E2	7	112/2B	112/2B2	3100	1410	Dry	Patta No.1411 Chinnusamy S/o. Velappa Gounder	Tapioca, Cement Pipe line	S.No. 112/2B1	S.No. 112/2C1	S.No. 112/2B3	S.No. 112/2E2				
8	112/2C	112/2C	100	100	Dry	Patta No.1412 Arasu S/o. Nallusamy	-	S.No. 112/3C2	S.No. 112/3C2	S.No. 112/2B2	S.No. 112/2B2	8	112/2C	112/2C1	100	99	Dry	Patta No.1412 Arasu S/o. Nallusamy	Tapioca	S.No. 112/3C2	S.No. 112/3C2	S.No. 112/2B2	S.No. 112/2B2				
9	112/2E	112/2E2	150	74.5	Dry	Patta No.1410 Chinnusamy S/o. Velappa Gounder-1 Arasu S/o. Nallusamy-2	-	S.No. 112/2E1	S.No. 112/2B2	S.No. 112/2E3	S.No. 112/3K2	9	112/2E	112/2E2	150	88	Dry	Patta No.1410 Chinnusamy S/o. Velappa Gounder-1 Arasu S/o. Nallusamy-2	-	S.No. 112/2E1	S.No. 112/2B2	S.No. 112/2E3	S.No. 112/3K2				
10	112/3A	112/3A2	150	38	Dry	Patta No.1410 Chinnusamy S/o. Velappa Gounder-1 Arasu S/o. Nallusamy-2	-	S.No. 114	S.No. 111	S.No. 112/3C2	S.No. 112/3A1	10	112/3A	112/3A2	150	47	Dry	Patta No.1410 Chinnusamy S/o. Velappa Gounder-1 Arasu S/o. Nallusamy-2	Young Neem Tree-1, Young Pala Tree-1	S.No. 114	S.No. 111	S.No. 112/3C2	S.No. 112/3A1				
11	112/3C	112/3C2	2000	1290	Dry	Patta No.1412 Arasu S/o. Nallusamy	Cement Pipe Line, Red Chili, Brinjal Onion, Kolikondai Poo	S.No. 112/3C1	S.No. 112/3A2	S.No. 112/3C3	S.No. 112/2C	11	112/3C	112/3C2	2000	1255	Dry	Patta No.1412 Arasu S/o. Nallusamy	Cement and PVC Pipe Line, Tapioca	S.No. 112/3C1	S.No. 111	S.No. 112/2C1	S.No. 112/2C1				
12	112/3D	112/3D1	900	3	Dry	Patta No.1411 Chinnusamy S/o. Velappa Gounder	Water Tank -1 Cement Pipe Line Tapioca	S.No. 112/3C2	S.No. 112/3D2	S.No. 112/3D2	S.No. 112/2B2	12	112/3D					Deleted	-	S.No. 112/3C1	S.No. 111	S.No. 112/2C1	S.No. 112/3B2				
13	112/3K	112/3K2	400	42	Dry	Patta No.1410 Chinnusamy S/o. Velappa Gounder-1 Arasu S/o. Nallusamy-2	-	S.No. 112/3K1	S.No. 112/2E2	S.No. 112/3K3	S.No. 112/3L2	13	112/3K	112/3K2	400	29.0	Dry	Patta No.1410 Chinnusamy S/o. Velappa Gounder-1 Arasu S/o. Nallusamy-2	-	S.No. 112/3K1	S.No. 112/2E2	S.No. 112/3K3	S.No. 112/3L2				
14	112/3L	112/3L2	6150	2269.5	Dry	Patta No.1498 Sakthivel S/o. Periyannan-1 Pankajam W/o. Periyannan-2 Suganeshwari W/o. Meganathan-3	East to West Kalkattu Barbed wire fencing Yielding Coconut Trees-4 Sappotta Tree-1 Guava Tree-1 Tapioca	S.No. 112/3L1	S.No. 112/3K2	S.No. 112/3L3	S.No. 113	14	112/3L	112/3L2	6150	2420	Dry	Patta No.1498 Sakthivel S/o. Periyannan-1 Pankajam W/o. Periyannan-2 Suganeshwari W/o. Meganathan-3	Kalkattu (Part), Barbed Wire Fencing-3, PVC Pipe Line, Yielding Coconut Trees-3, Guava Tree-1, Sappotta Tree-1, Neem Tree-1, Tapioca	S.No. 112/3L1	S.No. 112/3K2	S.No. 112/3L3	S.No. 112/4A, 113				
15	112/4	112/4A	3350	43	Dry	Patta No.478 Sakthivel S/o. Periyannan-1 Pankajam W/o. Periyannan-2 Suganeshwari W/o. Meganathan-3	South to North Compound Wall (Part)	S.No. 112/3L2	S.No. 112/4B	S.No. 112/4B	S.No. 113	15	112/4	112/4A	3350	19	Dry	Patta No.478 Sakthivel S/o. Periyannan-1 Pankajam W/o. Periyannan-2 Suganeshwari W/o. Meganathan-3	Compound Wall (Part)	S.No. 112/3L2	S.No. 112/4B	S.No. 112/4B	S.No. 113				
16	113/1B	113/1B2	18000	611	Dry	Patta No.337 Nallammal W/o. Kondan	Tin Shed (Part)-1, Compound Wall (Part) Yielding Coconut Trees-19, Drumstick Tree-1, Pappaya Tree-1	S.No. 113/1B1	S.No. 112	S.No. 113/3A	S.No. 113/2B2	16	113/1B	113/1B2	18000	580	Dry	Patta No.337 Nallammal W/o. Kondan	Tin roofed Shed -1 (Part), Yielding Coconut Trees-18, Drumstick Tree-1	S.No. 113/1B1	S.No. 112	S.No. 113/3A	S.No. 113/2B2				
17	113/2B	113/2B2	3350	728	Dry	Patta No.53 Periyasamy S/o. Karuppanna Gounder	Bore Well-1 Hollow Brick Compound Wall (Part) Barbed wire fencing Teak Trees-3 Yielding Coconut Trees-4 Young Tamarind Tree-1 Young Neem Tree-1	S.No. 113/2B1	S.No. 113/1B2	S.No. 108	S.No. 105	17	113/2B	113/2B2	3350	655	Dry	Patta No.53 Periyasamy S/o. Karuppanna Gounder	Borewell-1, Compound Wall, Barbed Wire Fencing, Iron Gate-1, PVC Pipe Line, Yielding Coconut Trees-4, Teak Trees-4, Yielding Tamarind Tree-1, Neem Tree-1	S.No. 113/2B1	S.No. 113/1B2	S.No. 108	S.No. 105				
18	113/3	113/3A	2000	981	Dry	Patta No.337 Nallammal W/o. Kondan	Neem Tree-1	S.No. 113/1B2	S.No. 112	S.No. 113/3B	S.No. 113/2B2	18	113/3	113/3A	2000	925	Dry	Patta No.337 Nallammal W/o. Kondan	Neem Tree-1, Young Pala Trees-2, Young Unja Tree-1	S.No. 112, 113/1B2	S.No. 112	S.No. 108, 113/3B	S.No. 113/2B2				
19	248/10A	248/10A1	2650	345	Dry	Patta No.154 Kolanthayee W/o. Muthusamy	Asbestos shed-2 Bath room-1 Water Tank-1 Neem Trees-3 Pala Trees-3 Unja Tree-1 Vathanarayanan Trees-10	S.No. 107	S.No. 248/10B	S.No. 248/10A2	S.No. 248/1	19	248/10A	248/10A1	2650	385	Dry	Patta No.154 Kolanthayee W/o. Muthusamy	Asbestos House-1, Asbestos roofed Shed-1, Bathroom-1, Water Tank-1, Pappaya Tree-1, Pala Trees-7, Neem Trees-3, Vathanarayanan Trees-10, Unja Tree-1	S.No. 107	S.No. 248/10B	S.No. 248/10A2	S.No. 248/1				
Total Extent of Dry Lands to be acquired ~ 11,306 Sq.Mts.												Total Extent of Dry Lands to be acquired ~ 11329 Sq.Mts.															
DIPRI/ 720 /LAND/2020																											
LAND ACQUISITION OFFICER / DISTRICT REVENUE OFFICER, NAMAKKAL																											

DIPR/ 720 /LAND/2020

LAND ACQUISITION OFFICER / DISTRICT REVENUE OFFICER, NAMAKKAL

SHORT TAKES

DEATH OF CROWS TRIGGERS PANIC IN MP VILLAGES

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JAN. 5

Panic has gripped many villages in Madhya Pradesh after scores of crows were found dead on the roads and farmlands in the past couple of days.

At least seven districts in the state have reported deaths of crows. "We have received reports of at least 400 crows deaths from seven districts in the state. The deaths were caused due to a virus", state animal husbandry director Dr R.K. Rokre said on Tuesday.

Samples of the dead crows retrieved from Khargone and Mandasaur were sent to the High Security Animal Disease Laboratory at Bhopal for tests to identify the virus that caused death of the birds, sources said.

Earlier, strains of H5N8 avian flu have been detected from the dead crows recovered from Indore.

The district officials in Indore have conducted a door-to-door survey within a radius of one km from the premises of a local college where maximum numbers of crows were found dead.

"No one has been found to have any symptoms. But, 10 people in the area have been found to have caught cough and cold", a senior district official said. The Indore zoo has been alerted to take necessary steps in view of the development.

PRAGYA EXEMPTED FROM COURT APPEARANCE

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, JAN. 5

A special NIA court in Mumbai on Tuesday granted exemption from regular personal appearance to BJP MP Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur during 2008 Malegaon bomb blast case trial. The court, however, asked Sadhvi Pragya, who had appeared before the court on Monday, to attend the court as and when directed. She had sought exemption on health and security issues.

After defying the court's directive to appear before it multiple times, Thakur appeared before a special NIA court on Monday.

The special judge P.R. Sitre granted her exemption from appearing before the court after Sadhvi's lawyer J.P. Mishra filed a written application pointing out that she has difficulty in travelling regularly due to her health and security reasons.

According to the lawyer, Thakur has multiple illnesses and is undergoing treatment at AIIMS. Even while she was in Mumbai (on Monday) she had undergone some tests at Kokilaben Hospital where doctors told her she was having multiple complications and needs to be treated by a team of doctors, the lawyer told the court.

Talking about threat to Thakur's life, the lawyer said that due to the threat, the Madhya Pradesh police has provided her six armed police personnel for her security.

Besides them, two personal aids accompany her wherever she goes. "It is very difficult for her to travel with all these security personnel," he added.

CLEARANCES TO CENTRAL VISTA VALID, SAYS SC

From Page 1

On December 7, last year the top court had allowed the Centre to proceed with the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the Central Vista project on December 10 after the government assured it that no construction or demolition work would commence till the apex court decides the pending pleas on the issue.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation stone for the new Parliament building and the construction is expected to be completed by 2022 at an estimated cost of Rs 971 crore.

The apex court had earlier said that any change at the ground level made by authorities for the Central Vista project will be "at their own risk".

It had made it clear that the fate of the project, which includes several new government buildings and a new Parliament House, will depend on its decision. The Centre had earlier argued that the project would "save money" which is paid as rent for housing central government ministries. — PTI

I-T DEPARTMENT QUIZZES VADRA FOR 2ND DAY

New Delhi, Jan. 5: The Income Tax department questioned Robert Vadra, son-in-law of Congress president Sonia Gandhi, for the second consecutive day on Tuesday in connection with its probe against him under the benami assets law, official sources said.

A team from the Chandigarh investigation unit of the department, that is handling the probe, was seen going inside Vadra's office in the Sukhdev Vihar area of the national capital around 3 pm. Vadra is married to Congress leader and Sonia Gandhi's daughter Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

After he was questioned on the first day on Monday, the 52-year-old had said the aim of the tax department's action was to "digress" from the "real issues" concerning the country like the farmers' agitation.

On Monday, he was questioned for about eight hours and his statement was recorded as part of the proceedings related to the Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act, sources had said.

Tax department sources had said Vadra was asked to join the investigation at their office but as he cited the prevailing Covid-19 restrictions, I-T officials decided to visit his premises. Officials had said the questioning was linked to the purchase of some land parcels by a firm linked to Vadra in Rajasthan's border town of Bikaner in which another central probe agency, the Enforcement Directorate, had filed a money laundering case in 2015.

The ED has questioned Vadra in this case in the past and had attached assets worth ₹4.62 crore of his firm Ms Sky Light Hospitality (P) Ltd (now LLP) in 2019. — PTI

Bird flu scare is back



Women carry dead ducks in a village in Alappuzha district of Kerala on Tuesday. A special team of health officials has been deployed to cull the birds, in order to contain the further spread of the Avian Influenza (bird flu), which has been detected in some parts. J&K sounded an alert and started collecting samples from migratory species after Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh also reported cases of the avian influenza. — PTI

Assam: Saikia loses status of LoP in Assembly

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, JAN. 5

With two Congress legislators joining BJP, Congress Legislature Party leader Debabrata Saikia has lost the status of Leader of the Opposition in the 126-member Assam Assembly.

In an official notification Assam Assembly secretariat said that the Assembly has withdrawn the status from Saikia as the present strength of the Congress is one less than the required number of 21 MLAs. Saikia represents Nazira constituency in eastern Assam.

The notification stated, "The present strength of the Indian National Congress Legislature Party, Assam Legislative Assembly, is not equal to the quorum fixed to constitute a sitting of the House that is one-sixth of the total number of Members of the House as required... therefore, the Speaker, Assam Legislative Assembly, has been pleased to withdraw the recognition of Debabrata Saikia, MLA, as Leader of the Opposition, with effect from January 1, 2021."

The Congress had won 26 seats in the 2016 Assembly elections to take the second spot after the BJP bagged 60 seats.

Six months later, Baith-alangso MLA Mansing Rongpi quit the Congress and got re-elected on a BJP ticket. In 2019, Jania MLA Abdul Khaleque resigned after winning the Barpeta Lok Sabha seat as the Congress candidate. The All India United Democratic Front's Rafiqul Islam won the seat in the by-election.

Between February and November 2020, the Congress' Sibsagar MLA Pranab Kumar Gogoi and former chief minister Tarun Gogoi, who represented Titabar, passed away. In December 2020, two Congress MLAs — Ajanta Neog (Golaghat) and Rajdeep Goala (Lakhimpur) — quit and joined the BJP.

Reacting to the notification Congress MP Abdul Khaleque said that it is not logical to withdraw the status. The notification of the acting secretary is illogical and that he has done it under the pressure of the government.

We cannot decide policy: SC

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, JAN. 5

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said that it was bound by the constitutional mandate and could not be called upon to govern as it has neither the powers nor the wherewithals and expertise in that regard.

"Courts operate within the boundaries defined by the Constitution. We cannot be called upon to govern. For, we have no wherewithal or prowess and expertise in that regard" said Justice A.M. Khanwilkar who authored the majority judgment upholding Modi's government's project for the construction of a new parliament building and the redevelopment of Central Vista.

Pointing out that the role of the court was "limited to examining the constitutionality including legality of the policy and govern-

ment actions", Justice Khanwilkar said, "the constitutionally envisaged system of 'checks and balances' has been completely misconstrued and misapplied in this case.

The principle of "checks and balances" posits two concepts - "check" and "balance". Whereas the former finds a manifestation in the concept of judicial review, the latter is derived from the well enshrined principle of separation of powers."

Making it clear that the courts should desist from venturing into the domain of the other organs of the state, Justice Khanwilkar said that the "political issues including regarding development policies of the government of the day must be debated in the Parliament, to which it is accountable. The role of the court is limited to examining the constitutionality including legality of the policy and government actions."

The right to development, Justice Khanwilkar said is a "basic human right" and no organ of the State is expected to become an "impediment" in the process of development "as long as the government proceeds in accordance with law".

The court said this in a postlude while referring to the arguments by one of the petitioners urging the court to ask the

government to spend funds being spent on the central vista project for other pressing issues.

"We are compelled to wonder if we, in the absence of a legal mandate, can dictate the government to desist from spending money on one project and instead use it for something else, or if we can ask the government to run their offices only from areas decided by this court, or if we can question the wisdom of the government in focusing on a particular direction of development."

It further said, "We are equally compelled to wonder if we can jump to put a full stop on execution of policy matters in the first instance without a demonstration of irreparable loss or urgent necessity, or if we can guide the government on moral or ethical matters without any legal basis."

A case of misplaced priorities: Cong

New Delhi, Jan. 5: Soon after the Supreme Court cleared the deck for the ambitious Central Vista project on Tuesday, the Congress said the project is not a legal issue but a case of misplaced priorities of "an autocrat seeking to etch his name in the annals of history".

The opposition party

also described the project as "a colossal waste of public money" in times of the coronavirus pandemic and an economic recession.

The Congress has been opposing the Central Vista project that involves the construction of a new Parliament building by

"The Rs 13,450 crore Central Vista Project is not a legalistic issue but a case of 'misplaced priorities' of a 'whimsical autocrat' seeking to etch his name in the annals of history with cement and mortar." Congress's chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala tweeted. Senior spokesperson of

the party Anand Sharma said, "We are living in strange times. No relief for the migrant labour, no Justice for India's farmers fighting for their rights in bitter cold, pouring rain, tear gas and braving lathis. As we approach 'Ganatantra Diwas' need to reflect on state of Republic." — PTI

WOMEN | RESCUERS

More than 100 women personnel have joined NDRF over the last few months

India gets its 1st women's team in disaster combat

New Delhi, Jan. 5: In yet another example of shattering of the proverbial glass ceiling, the first batch of over 100 women disaster combatants and rescuers have been inducted in the country's federal calamity force NDRF.

An all-woman team of freshly trained National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel was recently deployed for contingency duties on the banks of the Ganga river in Uttar Pradesh's Garh Mukteshwar town, a senior force officer said.

"The first women res-

cuers' team is already on ground. Recently, the UP government requisitioned an NDRF team and they (women) went there (Garh Mukteshwar). The team handled the rescue boats and related equipment," NDRF director general S.N. Pradhan said.

"These personnel have all the skills to be called complete rescuers," he said.

The move to include women personnel in the NDRF combat ranks was in the works for some time. The force, since it was raised over a decade

ago, was till now an all-male affair.

More than 100 women personnel have joined the NDRF over the last few months and they are being deputed with its battalions across the country as soon as they finish their pre-induction course and training, the DG said.

He said the numbers are expected to go over 200 women personnel in the near future.

The female personnel who are joining are in the constabulary and sub-officer (Sub Inspector and Inspector) ranks.

As per authorisation, each NDRF battalion of over 1,000 personnel can have 108 woman rescuers.

Pradhan, however, said as there are "pre-existing" vacancies in the feeder agencies or the paramilitary forces who send them to the disaster response force on deputation, it will take more time for the full strength of female combatants to join.

The DG said the women personnel will add to the strength and skills of the force in rescuing disaster victims and even in calamity mitigation.

"We can deploy both components of an all-woman NDRF team or a mix squad of male and female personnel for responding to a situation. We prefer the second because if there is complement of women personnel it makes a great difference on the ground where women, children and old persons are being rescued," Pradhan said.

"The skill sets of women are stronger in some aspects... so that can be leveraged especially in situations where women are victims," he said.

He said the initial feedback to the first women's team in disaster combat has been good. "They are performing well. From initial feedback, I think they will be a great efficiency multiplier and also a great symbol of pride, inclusion and gender sensitivity which is also part of the Prime Minister's ten-point agenda for disaster response," he said.

The DG added the force is continuously creating women-oriented infrastructure at its existing and futuristic bases across the country. — PTI

Trinamul minister quits party

Laxmi Ratan Shukla resigns as minister on Didi's birthday

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, JAN. 5

As West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee turned 66 on Tuesday, former cricketer Laxmi Ratan Shukla resigned from her government as minister of state for sports and youth services and also quit the Trinamul Congress, in a shocking birthday blow ahead of the Assembly elections.

Shukla is the second rebel minister after Shubhendu Adhikari to quit Banerjee's Cabinet and party in less than two months. This left many in the TMC stunned, amid speculation about his switchover to the BJP.

The 39-year-old, one of the state's youngest MLAs, is among those from the rebel TMC camp with a clean image in Howrah who is likely to join the BJP in the presence of Union home minister Amit Shah on January 12. Shukla, in his resignation letter, said he wished to leave politics to devote more time to sports. He also quit as TMC Howrah (Urban) district chief.

Shukla, who joined the TMC nearly five years ago, won from Howrah North constituency in the 2016 Assembly polls and became a minister, has not yet resigned as an MLA.

Accepting his resignation, Banerjee forwarded it to Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, and said, "Laxmi is a good boy.

● SHUKLA IS second rebel minister after Shubhendu Adhikari to quit Mamata's Cabinet.

Seeking relief from politics, he resigned because he wants to return to cricket. That is what he wrote to me. I certainly want him also to play because he is from sports. My good wishes are with him. There is no misunderstanding in it."

Senior TMC MP Sougata Roy said, "I am sad to learn about Laxmi's resignation. He was a good cricketer and minister. He never shared his problems within the party. We urge him to withdraw his resignation. Let him be... though it's the CM's prerogative on who is in the Cabinet."

Standing by Shukla another rebel TMC MLA from Howrah, Baishali Dalmiya, alleged, "He faced obstacles in working freely and was hurt. There are some negative-minded people who once held posts in the party and are creating a disturbance. They don't allow anyone to work. They also belittle and oppose others."

The Bally legislator said, "Whenever we faced insults, it came from our own party leaders rather than the CPI(M), Congress or BJP. Tomorrow Laxmi may be called a traitor. But aren't those nibbling the party like terminates the actual traitors? They should be thrown out first."



Tejashwi Yadav

RJD TO TAKE OUT DHANYAWAD YATRA SOON

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, JAN. 5

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav is preparing to take out 'Dhanyawad Yatra' to thank people of the state for voting in favour of the party during recently held Assembly elections.

Sources said that the party is making preparations to take out the Yatra in a phased manner after Makarsankranti and workers have been asked to make necessary arrangements in their districts.

According to RJD spokesperson Shakti Yadav, "Tejashwi Yadav will thank the people of the state for making RJD a single largest party in Bihar. The idea is also to strengthen our party's base and seek public support in case a midterm poll is held in the state".

The RJD has been of the view that midterm election is likely in the state owing to the internal conflict within the NDA especially after six of the seven MLAs in Arunachal Pradesh joined the BJP in December. The NDA-led by Nitish Kumar had won 125 seats, three more than the number required to form the government in Bihar.

However, it was the RJD which emerged as the single largest party with 75 seats. The BJP became the second-largest party with 74 seats while Nitish Kumar's JD(U) slipped to number three position in the state.

After the results were declared in November, Tejashwi had issued an ultimatum to the NDA government led by Nitish Kumar to keep its poll promises of creating job opportunities.

SHORT TAKES

20 migrants sink en route Panama

Bogota: Rescue workers in Colombia are trying to locate more than 20 migrants whose boat sank as it tried to reach Panama. The sinking was reported on Monday by officials in Acandí, a municipality along the Gulf of Uraba, an inlet of the Caribbean sea that is lined by dense jungle. Thousands of undocumented migrants cross the gulf each year on small boats. Migrants traveling through the Uraba region are mostly trying to make it to the United States. Many come from Cuba and Haiti. But it is also common to see migrants from Africa and Asia along this route. Colombia's navy confirmed the shipwreck and says it is still trying to determine how many migrants were on the boat, and how many survived the accident.

Indian-American is Ohio senator

Washington: Niraj Antani has been sworn-in as Ohio's senator, making him the first Indian-American to serve in the state's Senate. Antani, 29, who was elected to the Ohio state Senate from the 6th District, was sworn-in on Monday. "I am so grateful to be able to represent the community in which I was born and raised as a State Senator," Antani said soon after being sworn-in. Antani will serve a full four-year term. "I will continue to work hard every day for each Ohioan so that they can have the opportunity to achieve their American dream. In this uncertain economic and health time, we must diligently strive to enact policies for the benefit of all Ohioans," Antani said. Antani formerly served as State Representative for the 42nd Ohio House District since 2014.

UK enters tough lockdown

New rules to stay in place till mid-Feb with review based on infection rates

London, Jan. 5: The UK entered a tough new stay-at-home lockdown on Tuesday after Prime Minister Boris Johnson said it has been "both frustrating and alarming" to see the speed with which the new variant of the Coronavirus is spreading and declared that hospitals in the country are under more pressure from the deadly virus than at any time in the pandemic.

While Scotland's new rules, which involve school and business closures become legal from Tuesday, England's rules — akin to the stringent measures of the first wave of the pandemic in March 2020 — become law in the early hours of Wednesday. However, Johnson has urged the public to begin following the strict work from home rules right away.

The new rules are expected to stay in place until mid-February with a review planned based on vaccine rollout data and infection rates. "Our scientists have confirmed this new variant is between 50 and 70 per cent more transmissible — that means you are much, much more likely to catch the virus and to pass it on," Johnson said in his televised address to the nation on Monday night. "We must therefore go into a national lockdown which is tough enough to contain this variant. That means the government is once again instructing you to stay at home. You may only leave home for limited reasons permitted in law, such as to shop for essentials, to work if you absolutely cannot work from home, to exercise, to seek medical assistance such as getting a Covid test, or to escape domestic abuse," he said.

The devolved regions of Wales and Northern Ireland were already



The Trafalgar square is empty as Britain enters a national lockdown in London on Tuesday. England's six-week lockdown, which began at midnight, emulates the first national Coronavirus curbs in place from March to June — but goes further than another instituted in November when schools remained open. — AFP

● **ACCORDING** to the latest data, in England alone, the number of Covid-19 patients in hospitals has increased by nearly a third in the last week, to almost 27,000.

under strict lockdown measures since the middle of last month.

According to the latest data, in England alone, the number of Covid-19 patients in hospitals has increased by nearly a third in the last week, to almost 27,000. That number is 40 per cent higher than the first peak of the pandemic in April. On December 29, more than 80,000 people tested positive for Covid across the UK — a new record — and the number of deaths is up by 20 per cent over the last week. — PTI

France promises speedy virus vaccination process

Paris, Jan. 5: Amid public outcry, France's health minister has promised an "exponential" acceleration of his country's slow Coronavirus vaccination process.

After barely 500 people in France were vaccinated in the first six days, Health Minister Olivier Veran defended the government's strategy of giving the vaccines first to residents of nursing homes. But he vowed on Tuesday to simplify a bureaucratic consent process blamed in part for France's lagging

vaccinations. Veran said the government will expand the number of vaccination centres and categories of people eligible for early vaccines, and allow people to sign up for vaccinations on an app or by phone. The growth of vaccinations in the coming days "will be exponential, rest assured," he said on RTL radio. But he insisted that the government would not forego safety guidelines in a country facing broad vaccine scepticism.

While neighbouring countries are imposing

strict new lockdowns amid surging infections, Veran said France is weighing its options and "cannot relax," but announced no new measures. Education Minister Jean-Michel Blanquer said on radio that he doesn't want to "deprive children of school." Veran said France has confirmed 10 or 15 cases of the new, more contagious virus variant identified in Britain, and that overall French infections and hospital rates are currently at a plateau. — AP

Georgia election to decide fate of Biden presidency

Atlanta, Jan. 5: Polls opened in the US state of Georgia on Tuesday in two runoff elections that will determine control of the US Senate and shape the first years of the new Democratic presidency — after a hard-fought campaign that pulled in Donald Trump and president-elect Joe Biden.

For nearly 20 years Georgia has voted reliably Republican in the presidential election and Senate contests.

But Biden pulled out a shock victory in Georgia in November, one of several states that he flipped to win the White House, and the races for the Senate have come down to the wire in the biggest, most expensive congressional runoffs in US history. Polls opened at 7:00 am (1200 GMT) in the southern state. A record three million-plus people have voted early, election officials say, and final results may not be known for several days.

A staggering \$832 million has been spent on the two contests, including spending in the primary and general elections, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

"The future of the country is on the line here," one of the Republican

candidates seeking re-election in Georgia, David Perdue, said on Tuesday morning. "This is the last line of defense for our way of life, really." The Republican and Democratic parties have made Georgia their political ground zero, with thousands of volunteers leaving no door unknocked and current and future presidents and vice presidents barnstorming the state for every last vote.

If Democrats flip both seats they win back the Senate, effectively handing Biden all levers of political power in Washington and helping him enact his ambitious legislative agenda.

"One state — one state! — can chart the course, not just for the next four years but for the next generation," Biden told a rally in Atlanta where he campaigned Monday with the races' two Democrats. Republicans argue that keeping Senate control would serve as a check on the incoming Biden administration.

"The stakes in this election could not be higher," Trump told a raucous rally in Dalton, Georgia hours after Biden's Atlanta showing. "Make sure your vote is counted." — AFP

China's ex-banker gets death for \$260 mn bribery

Beijing, Jan. 5: The former chairman of one of China's largest state-controlled asset management firms was sentenced to death on Tuesday for soliciting \$260 million in bribes, corruption, and also bigamy.

Lai Xiaomin, a former Communist Party member, gave a detailed televised confession on state broadcaster CCTV last January, which showed footage of safes and cabi-

nets stuffed with cash in a Beijing apartment allegedly belonging to him.

Lai had abused his position in attempting to obtain the vast sum, a court in the northern city of Tianjin said, describing the bribes as "extremely large" and labelling the circumstances "particularly serious".

He had shown "extreme malicious intent," the



Lai Xiaomin

court ruling added.

The former chairman of the Hong Kong-listed China Huarong Asset

Management Co. — a distressed debt group — was also found guilty of bigamy after living with a woman "as man and wife for long periods" outside of his marriage and fathering illegitimate children.

Huarong is one of four companies set up in 1999 to help clean up bad debt piles choking China's banking system, and the company later expanded into investment, loan and

property businesses.

Lai's downfall began in April 2018 as investigators removed him from his job and stripped him of his party position.

He was also alleged to have used his position to embezzle over 25 million yuan (\$3.8 million) in public funds between 2009 and 2018.

During his TV confession, Lai said he "did not spend a single penny, and just kept it there... I did

not dare to spend it." He had referred to the apartment where he kept the money as the "supermarket", given his regular visits there to deposit cash.

CCTV showed luxury cars and gold bars reportedly accepted as bribes by Lai, who worked in the central bank and the China Banking Regulatory Commission prior to his leadership roles in Huarong. — AFP

CHENNAI METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER-I, CONSTRUCTION WING,
TOWER-II, 9th FLOOR, EGMORE, CHENNAI - 600 008.

SEALED TENDER NOTICE Dt. 04.01.2021

Sealed Tenders are invited by the Superintending Engineer-I, Construction Wing, CMDA, Egmore, Chennai - 08, from Registered Contractors / Registered Reputed Agency under Two Cover System for the work of "1) Maintenance for Up Keeping, 2) Maintenance of Common Toilets & Drinking Water System and 3) Providing Security System in Puratchi Thalaivar Dr.MGR Bus Terminus at Koyambedu, Chennai-107".

Tender Notice No. : 7/2020-21 dt. 04.01.2021
Last date & Time of receipt : 21.01.2021 at 3.00 P.M.
Downloading by Free of Cost : From 07.01.2021 to 20.01.2021 upto 4.00 P.M.
For further details visit website : www.tenders.tn.gov.in

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER-I
CW, CMDA, Chennai-600 008.


DIPR/51/TENDER/2021

மதுரை மாநகராட்சி
மின்னணு ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளி அறிவிக்கை எண். 87/ 2020

மதுரை மாநகராட்சி கீழே குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள பணிகளுக்கு ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளி தகுதி வாய்ந்த ஒப்பந்ததாரர்களைப்பிடிப்பதற்கு ஆணையாளர் அவர்களால் வரவேற்கப்படுகின்றன.

பணியின் பெயர்	மதிப்பீட்டு தொகை (இலட்சத்தில்) (GST உட்பட)	ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளிகளின் சமர்ப்பிக்கும் நாள்	ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளிகளின் திறக்கப்படும் நாள்
Ma.Po.4/Est.514/20-21 மதுரை மாநகராட்சி, மண்டலம் எண்-4, வ.அ.எண்.78-ல் உள்ள பெரியார் பேருந்து நிலையத்தை சுற்றி அணுகு சாலை (தூர்சாலை) அமைத்தல்	97.09	06.01.2021 to 19.01.2021 3.00 PM	20.01.2021 3.30 PM

இதர விபரங்களை <https://tntenders.gov.in> என்ற இணையதளத்தில் தெரிந்து கொள்ளலாம்.
e-mail Address: commr.madurai@tn.gov.in Contact No: 0452-2532412
செ.ம.தொ.இ/32/ஒப்பந்தப்புள்ளி/2021 ஆணையாளர், மதுரை மாநகராட்சி

<div><div>ROC.15697/2018/H.7</div><div><div>GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU</div><div>HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT</div><div>LAND ACQUISITION OFFICER / DISTRICT REVENUE OFFICER, NAMAKKAL</div><div>AMENDMENT OF NOTIFICATION</div></div></div>																				Dated: 16.12.2020									
The following amendment is issued to the public notice already issued under sub section 2 of section 15 of Tamil Nadu Highways Act 2001 for the acquisition of 14969.0 Square Meters of Dry lands situated in Ladduvadi Village of Mohanur Taluk of Namakkal District for the formation of By-pass road to Namakkal Town as published in English daily " Deccan Chronicle " (Coimbatore Edition) dated 08.06.2018																													
<div>AMENDMENT</div> <div>1. In the above said Notification, the following amendment is issued to the existing schedule.</div>																													
District : Namakkal										Taluk : Mohanur					Village : Ladduvadi														
15(2) Notification already published										15(2) Notification to be read as																			
Sl. No.	Survey No.	Proposed Sub-Division No.	Total Extent of the lands in (Sq.Mt.)	Total Extent of lands to be Acquired in (Sq.Mt.)	Classification of the lands	Name of the Pattadar as per 10-1 Chitta	Details of Buildings, Structures, Trees, Crops and Others		Boundaries for the proposed Acquisition lands				Sl. No.	Survey No.	Proposed Sub-Division No.	Total Extent of the lands in (Sq. Mt.)	Total Extent of the lands to be acquired in (Sq. Mt.)	Classification of the Lands	Name of the Pattadar as per 10(1) Chitta	Details of Buildings, Structures, Trees, Crops and Others		Boundaries for the proposed Acquisition lands							
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)		(N)	(E)	(S)	(W)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(N)	(E)	(S)	(W)					
1	114/8A	114/8A2	1200	2	Dry	Patta No.1411 Chinnusamy S/o.Velappa Gounder	-		S.No. 114/8A1	S.No. 114/8B2	S.No. 112	114/8A1	1	114/8A	114/8A2	1200	10	Dry	Patta No.1411 Chinnusamy S/o.Velappa Gounder	-		S.No. 114/8A1	S.No. 114/8B2	S.No. 112	114/8A1				
2	114/8B	114/8B2	1550	318	Dry	Patta No.1412 Arasu S/o. Nallusamy	Unja Tree-1 Young Velvelam Tree-1		S.No. 114/8B1	S.No. 115	S.No. 111, 112	114/8A2	2	114/8B	114/8B2	1550	300	Dry	Patta No.1412 Arasu S/o. Nallusamy	Young Unja Trees-3		S.No. 114/8B1	S.No. 115	S.No. 111, 112	114/8A2 114/8B1				
3	115/2	115/2B	10900	3572	Dry	Patta No.1428 S.Malar W/o.P.Selvaraj	Pala Tree-1 Elanthal Tree-1 Nuna Tree-1 Young Neem Trees-2 Young Aaya Tree-1		S.No. 115/2A	S.No. 116	S.No. 115/2C 111	S.No. 114	3	115/2	115/2B	10900	3480	Dry	Patta No.1428 S.Malar W/o.P.Selvaraj	Young Unja Trees-15 Young Pala Trees-6 Young Neem Tree-1 Aaya Tree-1		S.No. 115/2A 115/23	S.No. 115/2C, 116	115/2C, 111	114, 115/2A				
4	116/3	116/3A	4200	224	Dry	Patta No.753 Palanisamy S/o.Karuppa Gounder-1 Thangammal W/o.Palanisamy-2 Muthusamy S/o.Kuppuchi Gounder-3 Rajkumar S/o.Palanisamy-4 Ramesh S/o.Palanisamy-5	Vela Tree-1		S.No. 117	S.No. 116/3B	S.No. 116/3B 116/1	S.No. 116/1	4	116/3	116/3A	4200	113	Dry	Patta No.753 Palanisamy S/o.Karuppa Gounder-1 Thangammal W/o.Palanisamy-2 Muthusamy S/o.Kuppuchi Gounder-3 Rajkumar S/o.Palanisamy-4 Ramesh S/o.Palanisamy-5	-		S.No. 117	S.No. 116/3B	S.No. 116/3B 116/1	S.No. 116/1				
5	117/5	117/5B	4450	276	Dry	Patta No.435 Palaniyandi S/o. Chinna Gounder	-		S.No. 117/6A	S.No. 117/6B	S.No. 116 117/1	S.No. 117/5A	5	117/5	117/5B	4450	408	Dry	Patta No.435 Palaniyandi S/o. Chinna Gounder	Vel Vela Tree-1 Young Unja Tree-1 Young Pala Trees-3		S.No. 117/5A	S.No. 117/6B	S.No. 116, 117/1	S.No. 117/5A				
6	117/6	117/6B	1700	1252	Dry	Patta No.536 Subramani S/o.Chinnusamy	-		S.No. 117/8C	S.No. 117/7A 117/7B 117/6C	S.No. 116	S.No. 117/5B 117/5A 117/6A	6	117/6	117/6B	1700	1322	Dry	Patta No.5292 Krishnan S/o. Subramani	-		S.No. 117/8B	S.No. 117/7A 117/6C	S.No. 116	S.No. 117/5B 117/6A				
7	117/7	117/7A	5350	237	Dry	Patta No.610 Ramasamy Gounder S/o.Nalli Gounder	Young Neem Trees-3		S.No. 117/8C	S.No. 117/7B	S.No. 117/6C	S.No. 117/6B	7	117/7	117/7A	5350	89	Dry	Patta No.610 Ramasamy Gounder S/o.Nalli Gounder	Young Neem Tree-1		S.No. 117/8B	S.No. 117/7B	S.No. 117/7B	S.No. 117/6B				
8	117/8	117/8C	6800	2641	Dry	Patta No.754 Chinnammal W/o.Naachi Gounder-1 Subramaniyam S/o.Naachi Gounder-2	Yielding Palm Trees-2 Young Neem Trees-3		S.No. 120	S.No. 117/8D	S.No. 117/7A 117/6B 117/4 117/8A	S.No. 117/8B	8	117/8	117/8B	6800	2477	Dry	Patta No.754 Subramaniyam S/o.Naachi Gounder	Young Neem Tree-1		S.No. 120	S.No. 117/8C	S.No. 117/7A 117/6B	S.No. 117/8A 117/8D 117/4B				
9	123/2	123/2B	27600	6397	Dry	Patta No.756 Subramaniam S/o.Ramasamy Gounder	Bore Well-1 PVC Pipe Line Yielding Coconut Trees-13 Young Coconut Tree-1 Nuna Trees-3 Young Neem Trees-20 Yielding Palm Trees-3 Unja Trees-6 Mavili Tree-1 Drumstick Trees-2 Sappotta Trees-5		S.No. 123/1	S.No. 124 123/2C	S.No. 120	S.No. 123/2A	9	123/2	123/2B	27600	6355	Dry	Patta No.756 Subramaniam S/o.Ramasamy Gounder	Bore Well-1 PVC Pipe Line Kalkattu-5 Yielding Coconut Trees-12 Young Coconut Tree-1 Nuna Trees-3 Young Neem Trees-22 Yielding Palm Trees-2 Unja Trees-10 Mavili Tree-1 Drumstick Trees-2 Sappotta Trees-5 Young Vel Vela Trees-2 Elanthal Trees-2 Young Pala Tree-1		S.No. 123/1	S.No. 124, 123/2C	S.No. 120	S.No. 123/2A				
10	124/2	124/2A	22150	50	Dry	Patta No.757 Periyasamy S/o. Chinna Gounder	Yielding Palm Trees-2 Young Neem Trees-2		S.No. 124/1	S.No. 124/2B	S.No. 124/2B	S.No. 123	10	124/2	124/2A	22150	66	Dry	Patta No.757 Periyasamy S/o. Chinna Gounder	Yielding Palm Trees-2 Young Neem Trees-2		S.No. 124/1	S.No. 124/2B	S.No. 124/2B	S.No. 123				
Total Extent of Dry Lands to be Acquired – 14,969 Sq.Mts.										Total Extent of Dry Lands to be acquired – 14620 Sq.Mts.																			
DIPR/ 721 /LAND/2020																				LAND ACQUISITION OFFICER / DISTRICT REVENUE OFFICER, NAMAKKAL									

DECCAN Chronicle

6 JANUARY 2021

Nod for Central Vista: SC gives govt latitude

In a 2-1 judgment, the Supreme Court on Tuesday approved the Modi government's deeply controversial Central Vista project, which is an egregious example of executive excess. This paves the way for the spending of ₹20,000 crore to build a new Parliament House, a new residence as well as a new office complex for the Prime Minister, a new residence for the vice-president, the demolition of some half-a-dozen fine standing buildings along the Rajpath lawns which house ministries, and their replacement along this majestic boulevard with new structures.

The government has not offered cogent reasons for a new house for the PM and the vice-president, but if news reports are anything to go by, then the explanation for a fancy home for the PM may be thought to be embedded in the notion of vanity, like the idea of a special aircraft for the exclusive use of the PM (on the lines of Air Force One of the US President).

Why a new Parliament House? The government's answer is that the present structure is old, it is not spacious enough, and the building also has problems to do with age (it is less than a hundred years old). Were extensions, renovations, not possible as are routinely done with the centuries-old British Parliament?

Why new government buildings? The official answer is that many departments of a ministry are scattered in the city and their being together will improve efficiency. No treatise of public administration or political science cites this as a reason for red tape and in-built deep inefficiencies in the Indian bureaucratic structure.

Either the top court did not sufficiently grill the government on these and related matters or the Supreme Court was too willing to see reason in the government's justifications, actions, and possible motives which have been ripped apart by the country's top experts in architecture, architectural design, city planning, conservationists, heritage professionals, environmentalists, besides retired top civil servants.

There is another important issue. Do we need to spend the officially estimated ₹20,000 crore on this blatantly futile venture when the economy is hovering around the negative growth territory? In the time of pandemic, is this the best use for the country's dwindling resources? Or, is this a foolish luxury the nation can ill afford?

The Central Vista in New Delhi leads the gaze down from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate and is regarded as among the most majestic views among the world's principal cities, with green lawns on either side for public use. It is crowded with grand heritage buildings, including the Houses of Parliament. If there is a no-go area for urban destruction, redesign of spaces and change of land use in New Delhi, it is this. Major changes here are akin to changing the land use of the Taj Mahal complex in Agra or the Vatican in Rome.

From start to finish, the technically required official permissions — pertaining to change in land use, and heritage and environmental clearances — have been rushed through in record time, cutting corners, as if magically. Opaqueness of procedure was rampant. To deliberate over such a venture, which strikes at the root of history and heritage, the Parliament was never summoned. But the Supreme Court is unseeing. Maximum government, minimum judiciary, is a sorry maxim.

Trump must leave gracefully

The US President Donald Trump's never-ending effort to overturn the result of an election that he has lost has become much more than an embarrassment to sane elements in his Republican Party. Mr Trump may seem like a drowning man flailing when his fate has been sealed but such antics are posing a serious threat to the very foundational principles that have governed the world's oldest working democracy tracing its election history 200-plus years. The President's phone call to Georgia's Secretary of State, Brad Raffensburger, asking him to change the result by somehow finding close to 12,000 votes for him is the most brazen abuse of power by a White House occupant, which warrants criminal prosecution. There has also been a fleeting thought in Mr Trump's growing bank of critics that he should be impeached before January 20, which is the date Joe Biden should be taking over.

The US presidential election was long over with all 50 states certifying their results. Mr Trump's legal challenges aimed at sowing doubts over an election that drew a record number of voters have been summarily dismissed by judges right across the country. Under the circumstances, what the country's elected representatives must do in Congress on Wednesday is to formally declare Mr Biden as the winner and ask Mr Trump to go home. He can leave his task of disrupting future elections to young and eager mavericks, who are taking after him in mocking the system and trying to subvert the will of the voters.

Such events as witnessed after the poll on November 3 are more in keeping with authoritarian parts of the planet and banana republics than in the citadel of freedom that the Capitol Hill housing the Senate, the Houses of Representatives and the Supreme Court represents. It is important for every part of the free world that the clownish Donald Trump depart the White House and allow the likes of his Vice-President Mike Pence to retain his dignity while preserving democracy in its very

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Subhani



Challenges for Modi as world faces Biden era



K.C. Singh

The new year brought some cheer for a Covid-infested world with several vaccines — Pfizer, Oxford-AstraZeneca and Moderna — cleared to join battle to counter the pandemic, which cost the planet a year of social freedom, economic growth and mental peace. However, a second spike across Europe and the United States, a bitter American presidential election and clever repositioning by China have left international relations in an uncertain flux. Meanwhile, global stock markets have soared, reflecting more a sanguine assessment of the future than the troubled present. The lone black swan is Donald Trump and Iran settling scores in the dying moments of Mr Trump's presidency, with unforeseen consequences.

Otherwise, three developments will condition global geopolitics hereafter. One, the swearing-in of Joe Biden as the next US President on January 20. Two, China quickly spearheading two major agreements; the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a trade agreement centred around the 10 Asean nations plus Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and China; and a Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) between the European Union and China. Both were under negotiation for almost a decade. While the former was finalised in mid-November 2020, days after the US election, the latter followed a month later. India was part of the negotiating process of the former, but chose in 2019 to walk out, dissatisfied with the guarantees available in a playing field that appeared to be tilted towards the better positioned producers of goods in China, South Korea and Japan. Three, the suc-

cess of the vaccination programme in pushing back the pandemic in developed Western countries, especially the US, and reviving jobs, demand and growth.

Normally, outgoing US Presidents lower their profile after their successor is elected and the two administrations create policy and implementation coordination through their transition teams. Mr Trump, who keeps repeating on the social media and whenever he's in front of a microphone that his win has been stolen, has undermined that seamless process, which undermines trust in the United States. Mr Biden's national security adviser (designate) Jake Sullivan tweeted on December 21 that they would "welcome early consultations with our European partners on our common concerns on China's practices". Despite that, the EU under the half-yearly presidency of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, 10 days later signed the CAI with China. This reflected both European concern that Mr Trump may have lost but Trumpism survives and can return the loser having polled 74 million votes, as indeed the European dependence on the Chinese market. While Chinese investment in Europe is 120 billion euros, European return investment in China is 140 billion euros. All but Ireland already had investment agreements with China, but these were to protect investments, whereas the CAI assures market access in goods and services and provides one set of rules for all 27 EU members.

China has also promised to enter the International Labour Organisation (ILO) accords on labour protection and thus satisfy the common complaint about forced labour. This undermines President-elect Biden's hope for a united front of democra-

cies and like-minded nations against China. All may not have been lost yet as the agreement will take time to be implemented. Similarly, by finessing the RCEP, China negated Mr Trump's attempt to isolate and decouple trade and investment from it. If the CAI sends a signal to the Nato allies of the US abandoning it on economic and trade issues, the RCEP has showed that even in its immediate Asian neighbourhood, and despite its expansionist and aggressive conduct, China has managed to use the carrot to offset the stick.

After four years of being Trump *bhaks*, where does it leave the Indian government? The disruption caused by Mr Trump even in the Islamic world, by exacerbating the Shia-Sunni and intra-Sunni divisions, has immediate implications for India on multiple counts, due to India having ridden the American wave rather than eke out an independent course. For instance, the excessive chumminess with the UAE and Saudi Arabia, built on existing excellent relations, begot increased counter-terror cooperation and their distancing from Pakistan. But the cost has been India damaging its bridges with Iran, Qatar and Turkey. Thus, like the rest of the world, India is now running to cover the exposed ground as the sun sets on the Trump administration. India's external affairs minister S. Jaishankar surfaced in Doha, Qatar, on December 27-28. This was not surprising as the last high-level visit was in 2016 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi went to Qatar. Since 2017, when Mr Trump began his foreign travel as President

by his visit to Riyadh, and the Saudis and Emiratis aligned against Qatar, India just followed their lead and ignored Qatar.

Nearer home, without Iran, any independent Afghan policy becomes a non-starter as India lacks any land connectivity. That will start becoming more apparent as the Taliban, gradually consolidating their hold over more areas in Afghanistan, take their fight-and-talk to the next level. They are waiting for the exit of US troops and financial aid and air cover to diminish before moving to finish the game.

Therefore, as the Indian government repositions to counter the new reality, it has some advantages and two major domestic drawbacks. The advantage is that the US also has less space remaining for manoeuvre, increasing India's value as a quasi-ally. NSA designate Jake Sullivan had on Fareed Zakaria's CNN programme articulated the Biden administration's worldview, debunking notions of a US decline, as they have the capacity for correction, renewal and improvement. The notion of "foreign policy for the middle class" is hearkening to core values and obtaining positive results for the people and the world. Foreign and domestic policies are intertwined.

All this could also be valid advice for the Modi government, that is nearing its two-year mark in its second term. The drawbacks are mainly two. It must win the trust of farmers and stop minority baiting by its various state governments and using bigotry as ballast for its electoral machine. Otherwise, while the Chinese have redeployed geopolitically, keeping one foot on India's neck in Ladakh, the US shall not show Trumpian indulgence for its majoritarianism. Meanwhile, more and more Indians are beginning to ask whether the Modi government is all theatre or really a defender of the people and national interests.

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

LETTERS

VACCINES FOR COVID-19

India has reached a very crucial phase in its battle against Covid- 9 pandemic as the country is all set to administer two indigenously made vaccines on three crore frontline and health workers in the coming weeks. While the two approved vaccines Covaxin and Covishield by Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) for emergence use have more similarities such as both have used an accentuated version of coronavirus, they could present different efficacy and safety challenges. Under these circumstances, it is very pertinent to monitor the adverse effects and possible variations in their immunogenicity. Considering the fact that two vaccines were approved for emergency use even as their final phase of trials are in progress and are yet to be over, we need to ensure monitoring and surveillance systems remain more robust and tweaked accordingly.

M. Jeyaram,Sholavandan

NOT A WISE DECISION

THE DECISION of the Tamil Nadu government to allow opening of all cinema theatres with full seating capacity never appears to be a wise and prudent one especially when the news media are full of the news of the spread of a new strain of Covid all over the world. Indicating that the world will continue to be under the threat of a new pandemic while the old corona virus itself has not yet been fully conquered over. The effect of the various anti-Covid serums invented by Indian scientists is yet to be ascertained and evaluated. In these circumstances the opening of theatres with full seating capacity is sure to nix and negate all the efforts made by the state government to contain the pandemic.

S. Nagarajan Iyer, Coimbatore

GONE TO DOGS

THIS REFERS to the report that the nose of a dead man was bitten off by a dog when the body was kept in the mortuary of Tiruvallur district government hospital. The matter came to light when the family members had arrived at the hospital to claim the body after post-mortem. The appalling conditions prevailing in our government hospitals are apt to give jitters to anyone. The cavalier attitude of doctors and others has to be seen to be believed. When the patients themselves do not get the desired attention, the manner in which the dead are dealt with is far from surprising. State health minister Dr C. Vijayabaskar, who is considered a go-getter, should give the GH officials a dressing down before things go beyond redemption.

P.G. Menon, Chennai

Sanjiwan Sahni



India requires key structural changes in way it is governed

A view is gaining wider acceptability that the precondition for sustainable, all-round progress in India is structural change in our governance model.

To understand this better and more simply, let's listen to what three eminent thinkers, who have vast experience in governance, in the government and in the private sector, in think tanks and more, have to say:

Arun Maira, who among multiple achievements was mandated when in the Planning Commission to catalyse fresh thinking on solving this problem, says: "What is the solution then? Going back to the basics, to the ground, and to the people. There are some good ideas emerging and being applied in many parts of the world. The essence is, realising that solutions at the top are not working – and cannot work with the present framework, they are built on a different frame."

Wajahat Habibullah, who was part of former PM Rajiv Gandhi's team in developing the panchayati raj concept, states: "The answer lies in more closely ensuring people's participation in governance as conceived by the Mahatma who identified the panchayat as an instrument of self-governance. That is still in my view the only viable alterna-

tive, but not in the form as it exists even after the 73rd and 74th Amendment."

Kiran Karnik brings a technology edge to the discussion: "To me a long-term solution is structural: we need to decentralise in a serious and substantial way. The framework exists in the constitutional amendments (73rd and 74th) that create a formal third layer of government by devolving powers to panchayats and urban bodies. If this can actually be implemented, by ensuring the 3 Fs needed (finance, functions and functionalities), we will have more accountable, transparent and effective governance and be substantially liberated from the whims and tyrannies of the Centre (or even states). Such decentralisation may not be sufficient by itself, but it is a necessary condition."

As a solution, he also refers to the influence of technology: "What is exciting is that new technologies make such decentralisation of politics and manufacturing possible. Dispersal of factories and offices, jobs close to home, decongestion of cities, less pollution, lower crime: these and many other consequences make this almost utopia. The vector is important; while a slower speed will mean that we may not get there for long, the direction is clear."

Recent economic thought is also from

a different route coming to a similar broad viewpoint. Arun Maira said productivity, particularly labour productivity, increases encouraged by policy initiatives, similar to what Japan did in the 1970s. Dr Rathin Roy emphasised that economic growth will arise from meeting the needs of the currently poorer, deprived sections of society in contrast to the limited higher net worth segment. These include: Low-cost housing; Food — a balanced basket of nutrition; Affordable clothing; Education; Healthcare. All these for the masses.

This emphasis, changed from catering to middle class needs, is also in the direction of meeting the needs of "the bottom of the pyramid".

"Small is beautiful" and profit at the bottom of the pyramid are thought processes which converge with such proposed structural changes.

There is enormous management literature and practice which highlights the need of decentralisation for success, rather than control and giving directions from the top. In other words, even in the corporate world, there is recognition of the desirability of decentralised structures. Therefore, there is underlying congruence in this thought process at multiple levels but is cur-

rently most deficient in government and most required in that domain.

While on all of the above, there can be little disagreement, the ground reality still requires some additional steps to help get there.

Assume there is merit in recognising that decentralisation is a central theme relevant and necessary for most (not all) forms of governance. The effort should be to see how this thought can be mainstreamed. Approaches are required from multiple directions which not only encourage it in their respective domains but also string it together as a national theme. This is a challenge which needs working upon.

Since this is a long-term challenge, the catalyst to get there must focus on young people. At one level, potential young leaders need to be won over.

In practice, as potential champions of the cause, think of Sachin Pilot, Raghav Chadha, Mahua Moitra, Kanhaiya Kumar and others from politics.

In the corporate world, talent is plentiful. The young have become unicorns — Vijay Shekhar Sharma, Paytm; the Bansals of Flipkart fame; Ritesh Aggarwal, Oyo. Young Indians are heading leading global corporations — Satya Narayana Nadella at Microsoft;

Sundar Pichai at Alphabet and Google; besides many others. They are already champions but need to be persuaded and inducted to champion this cause. Even in established business houses, control is going to the next generation — Roshni Nadar, HCL Technologies, Rishad Premji, Wipro. Several similar examples are available from the world of sports and entertainment. Some prominent names in the last category include Swara Bhaskar and Anurag Kashyap.

Diversified champions from amongst these need to be won over, who will highlight the underlying thought process in multiple domains and encourage its deployment. Their collective voice will have a better chance of making an impact. Therefore, there is a vital need for avenues and forums through which this can be exercised.

The key next steps, apart from the changes in the governing setup, without which nothing will happen, are winning over the younger generation, making champions from amongst them, and providing a collective forum to help make decentralisation a central artery.

The writer is a management and economic adviser

SHORT TAKES

Djokovic, Nadal to return for ATP Cup

Sydney: ATP Cup champion Novak Djokovic and runner-up Rafael Nadal are set to return for the season-opening men's team tennis event starting February 1, but the United States will be missing because of a change in format that has halved the field. The inaugural event last year featured 24 teams and was played in three Australian cities, with Djokovic's Serbia team beating Nadal and Spain in the final at Sydney's Ken Rosewall Arena. The second edition will involve 12 teams and be played entirely at Melbourne Park amid Covid-19 restrictions, along with WTA and ATP tournaments, in the week leading into the Australian Open. The draw will be held January 20, with teams divided into four groups. The winner of each round-robin group will advance to the semifinals. — *AP*

Bajrang's camp in US gets extension

New Delhi: Olympic-bound wrestler Bajrang Punia's training stint in the USA has been granted a one-month extension and will now go on till the first week of February, the Sports Authority of India said on Tuesday. Punia, who qualified for the Tokyo Games in the men's freestyle 65kg category, has been training at Cliff Kean Wrestling Club in Michigan since December 4. The additional one month training will cost ₹11.65 Lakhs and will be borne by the SAI. "This decision was taken at the Mission Olympic Cell meeting that took place last week," a press release from SAI said. "All facilities here are available, there is a gym, moreover I am getting very good sparring partners. The college boys who train here are good as well. I am getting access to everything I need to improve my level," Punia said. — *PTI*

No postponement of Australia F1 GP

Melbourne: Government officials in Australia are involved in live and active negotiations with Formula One organisers about the timing of the race that is scheduled to open the season on March 21 at Melbourne's Albert Park circuit. Media in Europe reported the Australian Grand Prix was likely to be postponed because of Covid-19 restrictions and staged later in the season. "As far as I know, there has been no decision made to cancel, move or otherwise with the Australian Grand Prix," Victoria state's Emergency Services minister Lisa Neville said on Tuesday. — *AP*

Mumbai City breeze past BFC

Goa: Mumbai City FC extended their unbeaten run in the Indian Super League with a comfortable 3-1 win over Bengaluru FC on Tuesday. Goals from Mourtada Fall (9'), Bipin Singh (15') and Bartholomew Ogbeche (84') helped Mumbai City remain unbeaten in their last eight games and climb to the top of the table. Sunil Chhetri (79') scored late but it wasn't enough to rescue BFC.

Live on TV

CRICKET

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

Big Bash League: Perth Scorchers vs Sydney Sixers from 1.45 pm on Sony Six

FOOTBALL

Italian League: Cagliari vs Benevento from 5 pm on Sony Ten 2; Crotone vs Roma from 5 pm on Sony Six; Sampdoria vs Inter Milan from 7.30 pm; Napoli vs Spezia from 10.30 pm; AC Milan vs Juventus from 1.15 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

Indian Super League: Kerala Blasters vs Odisha FC from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

WWE

NXT: Bouts from 6.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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PACERS' PUZZLE

Shardul, Saini up for 3rd seamer's slot, Rohit replaces Mayank

Sydney, Jan. 5: The Indian team management is weighing its options for the third pacer's slot with Shardul Thakur and Navdeep Saini in contention but Rohit Sharma is certain to replace Mayank Agarwal at the top of the order against Australia in the third Test starting here on Thursday.

While Agarwal's axing was only a matter of time after seven failures in last eight Test innings, the choice for the third pacer's slot has got a bit tricky with divergent opinions emerging on who could fit the role best in absence of an injured Umesh Yadav.

A few days back, Mumbai seamer and useful lower-order batsman Shardul Thakur was considered a favourite but it is learnt that there are some senior players, who feel that Saini, India's fastest bowler by a distance, could be used to unsettle the wobbly Australian batting line-up with his raw pace.

The Indian team had a net session at the overcast Sydney Cricket Ground on the day and all eyes were on Rohit Sharma, who looked pretty comfortable against both pace and spin.

The decision on the third pacer has been primarily delayed because on Tuesday, the SCG centre strip was covered due to overcast conditions.

On Wednesday, a look at the strip and the conditions will probably help them make a decisive choice.

If the conditions are overcast and there is bit more moisture on the strip, then Thakur is expected to be preferred.

If the track is on the flatter side, Saini, with his pace and ability to reverse the old ball, could prove to be a handful against a batting order that is struggling to put up even 200 runs on the board.

If Saini plays, it will be his debut in the longest format while for Thakur, it would be like a debut as he couldn't even finish his first over when it was officially his debut two years back.

There is a third angle to



Indian pacer Mohammed Siraj (left) talks to a teammate Navdeep Saini during a training session at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Tuesday, ahead of their third Test against Australia. — *AFP*

the pacer's debate and that is T. Natarajan, who has had a meteoric rise in the past four months. — *PTI*

India expected squad (from 12 in batting order): Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane (captain), Hanuma Vihari, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin, Mohammed Siraj, Jasprit Bumrah, Shardul Thakur/Navdeep Saini.

Langer hopeful of Warner return, Pucovski to debut

Sydney, Jan. 5: A 'warrior' that he is, David Warner has done everything to be ready and is likely to compete in the third Test against India, Australia head coach Justin Langer said on Tuesday and assured that lack of four-day cricket for the opener in the last few months is not a concern.

Langer also announced that young batsman Will Pucovski will make his Test debut on Thursday.

Both Warner and Pucovski, who was primed for Test debut in Adelaide, missed the first two Tests of the series due to a groin injury and concussion-related issues respectively.

"Very hopeful that David will be ready to go (for the third Test), he is a bit of a warrior, isn't he? I have said this since



Australia's David Warner (left) and Will Pucovski jog at a training session in Sydney on Tuesday. — *AFP*

day one that he is doing everything possible to be ready," Langer said at a virtual conference.

"He is moving pretty well. He is very determined to play. He loves the competition and he loves playing Test cricket.

— *PTI*

Saints add to leaders Liverpool's misery

Southampton, Jan. 5: Liverpool failed to win for the third consecutive Premier League game as Danny Ings's second-minute goal earned Southampton a 1-0 win at St. Mary's on Monday.

The English champions remain top of the table on goal difference over Manchester United, but have now played a game more than the Red Devils.

Southampton are only four points off the top as they moved up to sixth in a tightly bunched division with just seven points separating Liverpool from West Ham in 10th.

A famous win continued a fine season so far for the Saints.

A first league defeat in

three months may hasten Liverpool's search for a centre-back in the January transfer window.

Without the injured Virgil van Dijk, Joe Gomez and Joel Matip, Klopp started two of his first-choice midfielders from their title-winning campaign, Fabinho and Jordan Henderson, together at the heart of his defence.

Southampton had not scored in their last three games to temper their hopes of a push for European football, but took just two minutes to break the deadlock in style through former Liverpool striker Ings.

Liverpool did not deal with James Ward-



Southampton's Danny Ings (right) celebrates after scoring against Liverpool in an EPL match on Monday. — *AP*

Prowse's angled free-kick into the box and Ings perfectly hooked his shot over Alisson Becker into the far corner. Southampton had key

absentees themselves with goalkeeper Alex McCarthy missing due to a positive test for coronavirus, while Oriol Romeu, Jannik

WS EXPECTS CENTURY FROM ROHIT

New Delhi, Jan. 5: The Australian wickets suit Rohit Sharma's batting style and if he can see off the pacers with the new ball, the Indian vice-captain can conjure a big century in the Sydney Test, reckons former India batsman V.V.S. Laxman.

An injury during the IPL forced Rohit to miss a major part of the Australia tour, where India lost the ODI series, won the T20 assignment and the Test series is locked at 1-1.

"The Indian team will be very pleased to have Rohit Sharma back, especially when Virat is not there. You want more experience in the Indian dressing room, because now is the perfect opportunity for us to go 2-1 in Sydney and then probably win 3-1," Laxman said on *Star Sports*' show.

"Rohit himself would like to showcase his talent, because I always feel that his style of batting and talent is very suited for the Australian wicket."

"So, if he gets his eye in, if he sees through the new ball, I'm sure that a big hundred is on the cards as far as Rohit's batting is concerned."

Laxman also said that Indian team fought back in splendid fashion after the Adelaide Test debacle.

"See, a lot can be talked off the field but I think the reply, and a very a fitting reply has been given by the Indian team."

"It's obvious that once you're bowled out for 36, various cricket experts will think that Virat Kohli leaving the series and (Mohammed) Shami being ruled out, the Indian team could sort off disintegrate and could result in a very poor outing in the reminder of the series but credit to the entire team, support staff, the way they bounced back positively." — *PTI*

Aussie coach lauds 'disciplined' India

Sydney, Jan. 5: The series is level for now but Australia coach Justin Langer on Tuesday said India have been distinctly well-planned and disciplined, especially in bowling, so far even as his side races to address their batting woes ahead of the third Test.

Asked about Australia's low-scoring in the current series and if that is a concern, Langer cited various factors, the biggest being India's lethal accuracy with the ball.

"...their greatest strength over the last couple of series has been their discipline. They (India) have been so well disciplined...I have loved the last two Tests because the wickets have been a contest between bat and ball and you have got to work a bit harder and that is what Test cricket is all about," Langer said.

According to Langer, a former opening batsman, India have taken a straighter line to couple of their batters and have accordingly placed their fields.

"So, I think, there is the factor of the wickets that we have played on, there is certainly some seam movement, there was a little bit of swing in both those wickets. India have (has) taken a straighter line to a couple of our batters and set the fields accordingly."

He also praised India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin for his performance so far saying it is difficult to score quickly against great bowlers.

"The great bowlers are the ones who are hard to score against and (Jasprit) Bumrah is certainly up there at the moment, Ashwin is up there at the moment, we are aware of it," he said. — *PTI*

Kane's double ton puts Pak in shade

Christchurch (New Zealand), Jan. 5: Kane Williamson underscored his ranking as the world's premier batsman with a masterful double century as New Zealand took control of the second Test against Pakistan on Tuesday.

In between the showers at Hagley Oval in Christchurch, Williamson was in classic form, batting for nine hours 33 minutes for his 238 and leading New Zealand to an imposing 659 for six declared to lead Pakistan by 362.

At stumps on day three, the tourists were already in trouble at eight for one, with Kyle Jamieson adding to his five-wicket haul in the first innings by removing Shan Masood for a duck.

It was a relentless performance from Williamson, who became only the second New Zealander after Brendon McCullum to score four double centuries.

Daryl Mitchell, who wondered if he would ever get a bat while Williamson was at the crease, described his skipper as "a freak who's set us up with a chance to win".

Williamson delayed the declaration until Mitchell completed his maiden century and the all-rounder said despite his unbeaten 102 off 112 balls it remained a good pitch for the bowlers and should produce a result.

"If we put it in the right areas and bang those hard

● **It was a relentless performance from Kane Williamson, who became only the second New Zealander after Brendon McCullum to score four double centuries.**

lengths, there is a lot of pace there and hopefully we can put Pakistan under some pressure and see what happens," he said.

Williamson should have been out for 177 on the first ball after the first of two rain stoppages, but as has happened several times in the Test the chance was put down, this time by Azhar Ali, who earlier in the day had dropped Henry Nicholls short of his century.

Pakistan spinner Zafar Gohar, who went for an expensive 159 off 32 overs on debut, said the fielding errors hurt.

"The dropped catches cost us. There is no reason to drop catches but it happens in cricket," he said.

"Dropping Kane Williamson cost us a lot of big runs."

Williamson and Nicholls had rebuilt the innings after New Zealand were reduced to 71 for three on Monday's second day.

— *AFP*
Brief scores: Pakistan 297 & 8/1 (Abid 7 batting, Abbas 1 batting, Jamieson 1/1) **trail New Zealand 659/6 decl.** (Williamson 237, Nicholls 157, Mitchell 102 not out).



New Zealand's Kane Williamson en route to his 237 against Pakistan on Day Three of their second Test at Hagley Oval in Christchurch on Tuesday. — *AP*

SA clinch series as Lankans fade

Johannesburg, Jan. 5: South Africa beat Sri Lanka by 10 wickets inside three days in the second and final Test on Tuesday to clinch the series 2-0 and gain some revenge for a surprise loss to the Sri Lankans the last time they toured.

South Africa bowled Sri Lanka out for 211 in their second innings at the start of the day at the Wanderers, leaving the Proteas with a simple target of 67 to win.

South Africa got there without losing a wicket. Aiden Markram was 36 not out and Dean Elgar 31 not out.

Sri Lanka's hopes faded when captain Dimuth Karunaratne was out soon after making a century. Karunaratne led their resistance in the second innings with his 103 but he went less than five overs into the day, and with his exit Sri Lanka lost their last six wickets for 35 runs.

Pace bowler Lungi Ngidi finished with 4/44 for South Africa.

Sri Lanka started the day 150-4, with Karunaratne on 91, and had hopes of set-

ting South Africa a reasonably challenging target on a difficult Johannesburg pitch for batsmen.

The tourists weren't able to do that as Karunaratne fell early trying a pull shot off fast bowler Anrich Nortje. He succeeded only in looping a catch to Wiaan Mulder. His overnight partner Niroshan Dickwella was out four balls later and Lanka's resistance faded.

South Africa's run chase was relatively untroubled.

Markram was given out in the over before lunch to a catch in the slips by Kusal Mendis but that decision was overturned when video replays showed the ball touched the ground as Mendis took it low down.

South Africa completed a first Test series win in two years and since beating Pakistan in early 2019. A month later, they were shocked to lose 2-0 at home to Sri Lanka, who became the first Asian team to win a Test series in South Africa. — *AP*

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 157 & 211 (Karunaratne 103, Ngidi 4/44) **lost to South Africa 302 & 67/0** (Markram 36 not out).