

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | THURSDAY 7 | JANUARY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 28°C
Min: 23°C
Rainfall: 0.5 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Margazhi 23
Tithi: Navami
Star: Chithirai
Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm
Yamagandam: 6 am to 7.30 am

PRAYERS

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

SUNSET TODAY 5.57 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.33 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 12.34 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 12.47 PM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+12,583)	(+121)
1,03,88,061	1,50,272

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+811)
TN: 8,23,181 12,188

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

8,72,15,449

DEATHS

18,83,304

218
worldometers.info

TN minister tests positive

Chennai: State food minister R Kamaraj tested positive for Covid-19 on Wednesday, according to sources. He has been admitted to a private hospital. Doctors said the minister was asymptomatic and under observation.

India provides ₹19.21 cr to Nepal as part of post-quake aid

Kathmandu: India on Wednesday provided a grant assistance of 30.66 crore Nepalese rupees (nearly INR 19.21 crore) to Nepal as part of its commitment towards reconstruction of educational institutions damaged during the 2015 earthquake. With this, India has reimbursed an amount of Nepalese rupees 819.8 million to Nepal towards educational sector reconstruction projects.

COUNTER

POINT



Let's invite Trump... he never supported our farmers agitation!



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HC to TN: Ready roadmap for tackling dengue menace



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UK denies bail for WikiLeaks Assange

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Rohit and India ready to change Sydney script



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BIRD FLU

Centre deploys teams to Kerala, Haryana

VINEETA PANDEY | DC NEW DELHI, JAN. 6

Union health ministry has deployed multi-disciplinary teams to the Avian Influenza affected Alappuzha and Kottayam districts of Kerala, and Panchkula in Haryana. The move comes shortly after the department of animal husbandry notified detection of Avian Influenza (H5N8), also known as bird flu, in the samples of dead poultry ducks from Alappuzha and Kottayam districts in Kerala, and from poultry samples from Panchkula in Haryana.

Besides, advisory has been issued to Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh where too cases of Avian Influenza have been detected, to avoid further spread of the infection.

According to the Union government, at present there are 12 epicentres of bird flu spread in four states.

In Rajasthan dead crows were found in Baran, Kota and Jhalawar; in Madhya Pradesh samples of dead crows were positive to avian influenza in Mandsaur, Indore, and Malwa; while in Himachal Pradesh samples of dead migratory birds tested positive in Kangra. Officials said in Kerala there are four epicenters in Kottayam, and Allapuzha.

“As per the report received, Kerala has already initiated control and containment operations from January 5, at epicentres and culling process is in operation,” officials in Union ministry of animal husbandry said.

They added the measures suggested to the affected states to contain the dis-

Poultry industry in TN in a quandary

T. SUDHEESH | DC CHENNAI, JAN. 6

Kerala’s decision to declare the outbreak of bird flu in Kuttanad region as state disaster has shock waves among poultry farmers in the state especially in Namakkal Zone, which has already been devastated by the pandemic Covid-19.

The outbreak in Kerala, fourth time in the past six years, had brought heavy distress in the state’s poultry farmers and traders especially West Tamil Nadu, from where huge consignments of eggs and meat are being transported to Kerala daily. ■ **P3**

ease and prevent further spread as per the Action Plan on avian influenza include strengthening the biosecurity of poultry farms, disinfection of affected areas, proper disposal of dead birds/carcasses, timely collection and submission of samples for confirmation and further surveillance, intensification of surveillance plan as well as the general guidelines for prevention of disease spread from affected birds to poultry and human.

Besides, coordination with forest department for reporting any unusual mortality of birds has also been suggested to the states. The other states were also requested to keep a vigil on any unusual mortality amongst birds and to report immediately to take necessary measures.

In India, the disease spreads mainly in winters through migratory birds.



Isro scientist says he was poisoned with deadly mix

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, JAN. 6

Making a startling revelation through a Facebook post, Odisha-born space scientist Tapan Misra has alleged that he was poisoned with a deadly chemical arsenic trioxide on May 23, 2017 at the headquarters of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) at Bangalore when he had gone there to attend a promotion interview.

“I was poisoned with deadly arsenic trioxide on May 23, 2017, during a promotion interview. Fatal dose was probably mixed with chutney along with dasai, in snacks after lunch. What followed was a nightmare lasting for almost two years. I suffered from severe loss of blood to the tune of 30 to 40 per cent through anal bleeding. I barely could come back from Zydzus Cadila Hospital in Ahmedabad. It was followed by severe breathing difficulty, unusual skin eruptions and skin shedding,” the scientist said in his January 5 Facebook post. “It was followed by loss of nails on feet and hands, terrible neurological issues due to hypoxia, skeletal pain, unusual sensations, one suspected heart attack and arsenic depositions and fungal infections on every inch of skin and internal organs,” he added. ■ **P5**

State told to open theatres with 50 per cent occupancy Centre strikes down TN’s order

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, JAN. 6

Tamil films ‘Master’ and ‘Eeswaran’ are unlikely to have grand openings with full house audiences during the Pongal week, as their lead actors Vijay and T.R. Silambarasan have aspired for, with the Union home ministry directing the state government to withdraw the permission given to cinema halls for screening movies with 100 per cent occupancy.

The state government’s order allowing 100 per cent occupancy amounted to dilution of the December 28 order of the ministry of home affairs’ issued under the Disaster Management Act of 2005, a letter to chief secretary K. Shanmugham from Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla on Wednesday said.

The letter urged the state government to issue necessary orders to bring its Covid-19 guidelines in line with the MHA guidelines that allow for only 50 per cent occupancy in cinema theatres and multiplexes and inform compliance to

CENTRE TELLS TN TO COMPLY WITH NORMS

TN government order of Jan. 4 allowing 100 per cent occupancy is violative of the Centre’s guidelines

No recommendation to open the theatres to full capacity was given by the medical professionals. We only recommended the opening of some classes in schools after Pongal.
— Dr P Kuganathan, member of the expert committee

the ministry.

The letter also referred to a Supreme Court order on state governments enforcing strict compliance of guidelines and standard operating procedures on Covid-appropriate behavior.

Earlier, Dr P Kuganathan, member of the expert committee in the state, told the media that no recommendation to open the theatres to full capacity was given by the medical professionals. “We only recommended the opening of some classes in

Govt must allow for only 50 per cent occupancy in cinema theatres
TN is told inform compliance to the Centre.

The screening of Master and Eeswaran is likely to be hit.

Govt took the decision to safeguard the livelihood of employees of the film industry
D Jayakumar, fisheries minister

schools regular protocols like checking the temperature of movie-goers with thermal scanners, making the wearing of facemasks mandatory and ensuring that maximum distance was maintained between people.

The government order issued on January 4, amending the GO dated December 31, said: ‘Based on the decrease in Covid-19 cases day by day, the Theatre Owners Association has represented to the government to increase the seating capacity of cinemas/the-

atres/multiplexes.’ However, the talk of the town was that the government that had issued the GO on December 31 for 50 per cent occupancy in theatres had a change of heart in four days after actors Vijay and Silambarasan made an appeal for allowing full house.

While the theatres were not getting enough viewers after they opened to 50 per cent capacity, the film industry feels that it was because no big ticket movies had hit the theatres after the lockdown. So they eagerly await the release of Vijay’s ‘Master’ and Silambarasan’s ‘Eeswaran’ to revive the industry itself. That is why they want to have 100 per cent capacity for the opening weeks.

Meanwhile, release of the trailer for ‘Master’ trended on Twitter under the hashtag ‘Mudinjaa Thoda Solara Paapom’ (I dare them to touch me), announcing that the film was releasing worldwide on January 13. The release of Eeswaran was also announced through #EeswaranPongal, proclaiming the arrival on January 14.

Fisheries minister D. Jayakumar defended the government decision saying that it was taken with a long term vision to save the livelihood of the employees of the film industry while revenue minister R.B. Uhayakumar said that strict action would be taken against those who violated the prescribed safety norms.

The government had told theatre owners to allow 100 per cent occupancy from January 10 by following the

SC to hear pleas on farm laws on Jan. 11

PARMOD KUMAR & SANJAY KAW | DC NEW DELHI, JAN. 6

Expressing concern over the deadlock between the agitating farmers and the government, the Supreme Court said on Wednesday that all petitions challenging the three new agricultural reform laws will be heard together on Monday, January 11.

A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde observed that “there is absolutely no improvement in the situa-



tion” regarding the farmers’ protest. The bench also said the court’s intention was to encourage and facilitate talks between farmers and the government.

The protests at Delhi’s borders have been going on for over five weeks, with union leaders saying their agitation against the three farm

laws will intensify in the coming days. The farmers will also hold a tractor march on Thursday in protest over the farm laws.

Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar, however, expressed hope that the protesters will understand that the idea behind the laws was to bring reforms in the agricultural sector and arrive at a solution after discussions.

In the Supreme Court, the bench initially indicated all pending matters regarding the legal challenge to the farm laws, as well as the agi-

tation now going on, will be taken up on Friday. But solicitor-general Tushar Mehta and attorney-general K.K. Venugopal objected to this.

Mr Venugopal told the court “there is good chance that parties may come to some conclusion in the near future”, as another round of talks was to be held on Friday. Mr Mehta argued that since “healthy talks are going on between the farmers and the Centre, it would not be advisable to take up the matters immediately” ■ **P5**

Democrats win one Georgia senate seat, lead in the second

Washington, Jan. 6: Democrat Rev. Raphael Warnock on Wednesday secured a crucial win in the senatorial race, becoming the first Black senator from Georgia and bringing his party within the reach of a majority in the US Senate ahead of President-elect Joe Biden’s inauguration.

Multiple news outlets on Wednesday morning projected 51-year-old Warnock, a senior pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, winner against Republican Senator Kelly Loeffler in the Georgia Senate runoff. He is the first African-American to represent Georgia in the US Senate.

When reports came last, Democrat Jon Ossof was leading Republican David Purdue by securing 50.2 per cent votes when 98 per cent of the total votes were counted. — *Agencies*

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, JAN. 6

Pitching for an “inclusive political outlook that encourages ethnic harmony” in a clear message to Colombo, visiting External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Wednesday said it “is in Sri Lanka’s own interest that the expectations of the Tamil people for equality, justice, peace and dignity within a united Sri Lanka are fulfilled”, adding that “India has been strongly committed to the unity, stability and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka”.

EAM Jaishankar who is currently on a three day visit to Sri Lanka that began on Tuesday referred to the “commitments made by the Sri Lankan Government on meaningful devolution, including the 13th Amendment to the



Sri Lankan foreign minister Dinesh Gunawardena stands for a photograph with his Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar (left) after addressing a joint media briefing in Colombo on Wednesday. — *PTI*

Constitution”, pointing out that the “progress and prosperity of Sri Lanka will surely be advanced as a consequence”.

Seeking to reassure India, the Sri Lankan Government meanwhile reiterated during the visit

Modi earned his prime ministership: Pranab

New Delhi, Jan. 6: The decisive mandate the BJP got in two consecutive general elections in 2014 and 2019 indicated voters’ preference for political stability, according to former president Pranab Mukherjee, who said Narendra Modi “earned and achieved: the prime ministership.”

Mukherjee also said in his memoir that Narendra Modi became prime minister “through popular choice” unlike Manmohan Singh “who was offered the post by Sonia Gandhi”.

Every general election has its “importance because the issues that are debated during the polls reflect the various views and perceptions of the electorate”, Mukherjee wrote in his memoir “The Presidential Years, 2012-2017” which he completed before his death last year.

“... The 2014 verdict was historic for two reasons. First, after three decades, a contesting political party received a decisive mandate instead of a fractured one,” he wrote.

The second reason, he said,



is that the BJP emerged with a simple majority on its own in the Lok Sabha for the first time and was thus able to form the government, though it still did so by co-opting its allies.



“But the real winner was the electorate that came out in large numbers and voted decisively, thus indicating its preference for political stability, which it believed would

result in development-oriented politics,” the former Congress stalwart and union minister wrote in the book, which was released on Tuesday.

Mukherjee said he was also of the belief that people were dejected with coalitions and the behaviour of political parties changing sides for parochial gains. “Coalitions are often formed with the only common agenda of blocking a particular party or individual from coming to power.” — *PTI*

Kerala high court orders re-trial in Walayar case

Kochi, Jan. 6: The Kerala High Court on Wednesday ordered a re-trial in the Walayar case in which two minor sisters were found dead in their hut in 2017 after allegedly being sexually assaulted.

A Division Bench of Justices A. Hariprasad and M.R. Anitha allowed the appeals filed by the state government and the mother of the children

and set aside a Special Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Court order acquitting five accused in the case.

The court directed the accused to appear before the trial court on January 20.

It observed that there were serious lapses in the investigation and that the entire matter needs fresh consideration. — *PTI*

SHORT TAKES

Chitra's death case transferred to Central Crime Branch

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 6

Chennai City Police Commissioner Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal on Wednesday transferred the alleged suicide case of actor and VJ Chitra to the Central Crime Branch of the Chennai police. This move comes a day after VJ Chitra's husband Hemnath was arrested in another case of alleged medical seat fraud on Tuesday. He has allegedly swindled money from students on the promise of getting them medical college seats.

Snake on bike leaves rider shocked

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 6

A biker in Chennai got the shock of his life when he found a snake crawling on his hands while he was riding his two-wheeler.

The incident occurred near Mappedu village near Selaiyur and the biker, Kannan (35) was helped by the locals who were frightened too.

Kannan, a resident of Mappedu village had parked his bike outside his house on Tuesday, and it was during the time the snake made the vehicle its home. Around 1 pm on Wednesday, he started his bike and was riding to his workplace.

Within a few minutes into riding, Kannan spotted a snake crawling on his hands. Scared Kannan, lost control and fell down on the road. However, the snake silently coiled inside the headlight near the speed meter. Other motorists who witnessed the incident helped Kannan to get rid of the snake. There was a mass panic when the snake slithered into the crowd. However, people then realised that it was a non-venomous snake. When one of the motorists poked the snake, it fell on the ground and escaped from the area.



Employees of Government Connemara Public Library Egmore wear dhotis to celebrate International Dhoti Day on Wednesday.

— DC

Kerala man connected to SSI Wilson murder case held at airport

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 6

A 40-year-old man allegedly connected to the murder of Special Sub Inspector Wilson in Kanyakumari on January 8, 2020, was held at the Chennai airport on Wednesday.

The accused identified as Syed Alavi(40) a native of Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala arrived at the Chennai Airport from Dubai in a special flight in

the early hours of Wednesday.

According to the sources, Syed Alavi was involved in several criminal cases in Thiruvananthapuram and he reportedly absconded from the state. Later after his escape, the Thiruvananthapuram city commissioner issued a lookout circular against him. Upon landing at the Chennai Airport on Wednesday, the immigration officials here con-

firmed him to be accused passed on the information to the police.

On investigating the accused, he gave in serious information about the murder of Special Sub Inspector Wilson in Kanyakumari on January 8, 2020, and allegedly confessed his connection in the case. Subsequently, The NIA were alerted by the Chennai Police. Syed Alavi was handed over to the officials from NIA, the Airport sources said.

Pondy adds 34 new coronavirus cases, tally touches 38,334

Puducherry, Jan. 6: Puducherry registered 34 new infections on Wednesday pushing up the total caseload to 38,334.

However, no fresh deaths were reported. As many as 35 patients were discharged during the last 24 hours after

recovery, Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said in a release.

Puducherry region accounted for 22 cases out of the total 34 identified after screening of 3,557 samples followed by Karaikal 8 and Mahe 4.

— PTI

HC to TN: Ready roadmap for tackling dengue menace

J. STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, JAN. 6

Dealing with the matter pertains to the spread of dengue in the metropolis of Chennai and the perceived failure of the authorities to arrest such spread, the Madras high court on Wednesday said, "It is necessary for the health department of the state to convene a meeting of all municipal bodies, at least those of the principal towns in the state. In the wake of the pandemic and the use of technology, such meeting can be conducted on the virtual mode and a roadmap prepared to deal with the menace that is dengue".

The First Bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy was passing further interim orders, on

"It is necessary for the health department of the state to convene a meeting of all municipal bodies, at least those of the principal towns in the state. In the wake of the pandemic and the use of technology, such meeting can be conducted on the virtual mode and a roadmap prepared to deal with the menace that is dengue"

a Public Interest Litigation filed by advocate A. P. Surya prakasam, which sought a direction to the state government to appoint an expert committee of health and other experts in the field of public safety and communicable diseases to consider the efficacy/adequacy of the measures taken by the authorities in tackling the dengue menace in Tamil

Nadu.

In his petition, Surya-prakasam also sought a direction to the state government to provide free and immediate medical treatment to all the dengue affected people in private hospitals of their choice at the cost of the government and also pay a sum of Rs 10 lakh to all the dengue affected death cases in Tamil Nadu in the year 2019.

In its present order, the bench said indeed, the matter need not be confined to Chennai and may be seen to cover the entire state, including the other towns and cities, where migration leads to the additional people living in poor and unhygienic conditions, allowing stagnant water to remain and creating the breeding grounds for the larvae.

The bench said the secretary in the health

department should file a report when the matter appears next eight weeks hence. The Corporation of Chennai should also file a report to indicate the steps taken, particularly in clearing railway platforms in and around the city and other areas, where vehicles are parked and there may be stagnant water as a result thereof. Particular attention should be paid to areas occupied by fishermen since such areas have a tendency of larger collection of stagnant water. "Efforts may be made by the research body respondent (authorities) to explore the possibilities of developing a vaccine and a paper to indicate the measures to prevent the further spread of disease", the bench added and posted to March 3, 2021, further hearing of the case.

Lakes in Kanchi, Chengalpattu reach maximum capacity

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 6

For the first time in five years, most of the lakes in Chengalpattu and Kanchipuram districts have reached their maxi-

mum capacity. Among the 909 lakes, only 83 have clocked in 75 per cent water. Five lakes store 50 per cent, while the other 821 reservoirs are brimming. But, the partially filled lakes are

expected to get filled with a few more days of rainfall. The largest Madurantakam lake also reached its capacity twice in a short time and hence, officials had to divert the surplus water to

Kiliyaaru. Officials from the Public Works Department are positive that there would be enough water for agricultural activities this summer and there will not be any water shortage.

PIL to make mandatory PCR test for intl passengers

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JAN. 6

In the wake of a new variant of SARS-CoV-2 virus detected in United Kingdom, a PIL has been filed in the Madras high court to direct the authorities to conduct RT-PCR test compulsorily to all the international passengers and staff of the Aircraft

and Vessels coming from any country at the arrival port in India.

In his PIL, advocate B.Ramkumar Adityan also sought a direction to the authorities to announce it mandatory 7 days institutional quarantine for all the asymptomatic passengers arriving from any country at their own cost and conduct RT-PCR test

between 5th and 7th day after their landing at the cost of the quarantined passengers and sent home if the test results in a negative with the advice of 7 days of mandatory home quarantine.

The first bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy before whom the

PIL came up for hearing on Wednesday, has asked the Union government to take an expert opinion on institutional quarantine for all international passengers landing in the country to prevent the spread of new strain of Covid-19 and report to the court by January 18, 2021.

COFFEE-BREAK

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

Aries: Today is about growth and learning. Short travels are profitable and easy. Speculation yields bountiful results. Students' academic performances improve.

Taurus: Expect minor troubles and losses. Wait for some days before starting new ventures, or expect lots of trouble. Communicate slowly with your boss.

Gemini: You're grateful for a spiritual intervention. Circumstances cause completion of a cycle, bringing you good financial news. You will reach your goals.

Cancer: Take time to respond; it'll save many problems. Expect social invitations, but past failures make you wary of repeating them. Expect bad news about your work.

Leo: Expect some complications soon. You'll get angry with many people, which will lead to losses in contacts. Deal tactfully and diplomatically in situations.

Virgo: You find happiness in little things; spread it around. A close pal's support helps you through many upheavals. A parent's health improves. Stay positive; enjoy family time. Your career races ahead.

You share your b'day with

Bipasha Basu is an Indian film actress. She is known for her roles in the films like Raaz, Raaz 3D, Dhoom 2, Race, Alone, Aatma, Creature 3D, Bachna Ae Haseeno amongst others.

Libra: People are irritable; be patient. Looking at the bigger picture brings surprises. What you sow, so you reap. Some have necessary but beneficial travel.

Scorpio: Revisit business contracts. Work's challenging; positive results take time. Unexpected money's a blessing. You'll take on many works and may not complete it.

Sagittarius: Colleagues love and accept your ideas. Action-oriented plans take a while, but you're on track. Those in long-term relationships enjoy a trip.

Capricorn: Work brings good offers. Investments pay rich dividends. Avoiding gossip enhances your chances of a good reputation at work. You're impulsive in your speech and create waves wherever you go.

Aquarius: Be diplomatic and caring. Balance out work and play. Do old work-related things newly to break monotony. You'd spend more than you make today. The wheel of fortune turns against you for a while.

Pisces: Your outlook determines the success you attract. You manage differences without despair and use innovative ideas. Parental health requires extra attention. Postpone big financial deals. Testing times at work brings forth hidden talent.

QUICK CROSSWORD

Across
6. Claim (10)
8. Passé (5)
10. Venomous African snake (5)
13. Magician's shout (11)
14. Slightly inebriated (5)
17. Drive forward (5)
19. Warranted (10)
Down
1. Secretly conspire (4)
2. Blend, combine (4)

3. Soothing ointment (4)
4. Capture on camera (4)
5. Unable (9)
7. Edge (9)
9. Students' tests (5)
11. Frighten (5)
12. Retch (3)
15. Reach maximum (4)
16. Time period (4)
17. Ninth Greek letter (4)
18. Jetty (4)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

Across: 1. Saying, 3. Plus, 7. Pine, 8. Subdue, 10. Density, 13. Courage, 16. Thorns, 17. Once, 18. Crux, 19. Potato.
Down: 1. Sips, 2. Yonder, 4. Lids, 5. Sleuth, 6. Custard, 9. Astound, 11. Septic, 12. Agenda, 14. Tofu, 15. Memo.

Word Mine

**B
A A I
N R D G E**

TODAY'S RATINGS: 55 AVERAGE: 60
GOOD: 65 OUTSTANDING

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

Dealer: South
Vulnerable: Neither
Contract: 2H
Pass: 2H
Pass: 2H
Pass: 2H
Opening lead: A

jumble

GUCHO
ATGIN
GYTIZL
DOLCED

Yesterday's Jumbles: WEARY DRAFT MISHAP GLOOMY
Answer: Val was silent when Holly called her by her first name, even though — "MOM'S" THE WORD

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson

THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd

ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman

BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall

ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe

TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs

bridge
PHILLIP
ALDER

AVOIDING TEMPTATION FROM A TEXTBOOK

Mark Twain said, "There are several good protections against temptations, but the surest is cowardice." Bridge, though, is not a game for cowards. In today's deal, there is a tempting play that declarer must bravely avoid. What is it?

After a straightforward transfer auction, South is in two spades. West leads the heart ace, cashes the heart king and shifts to a trump.

After drawing trumps in two rounds, how should South continue? Transfers into the majors are such a good idea. In particular, they allow responder to show a game-going two-suiter below three no-trump. The only drawback is that they give the opponents more options. In this deal, if East had good hearts, he could double two hearts. (Transfers into the minors occur much less often because you need

at least a six-card suit. Also, the follow-ups are more complicated. Only use them if you play with a regular partner whose memory is nearly as good as yours! There is a temptation to take the diamond finesse, hoping to get eight tricks via five spades and three diamonds. But that puts the contract in jeopardy. If the finesse loses, a diamond back will force you to win a club trick, which is unlikely. (The

best approach is to lead the jack from the board, hoping that East does not cover when he has one honor.) Much better is to ruff the heart jack on the board, then to play three rounds of diamonds. Whichever defender has the diamond queen will be employed. He will have either to lead a club or to concede a ruff-and-sluff. Copyright United Feature Syndicate (Asia Features)

IN BRIEF

Sexagenarian trampled by jumbo

Erode, Jan. 6: A 64-year-old man was trampled to death by a wild elephant in anthiyur forest range in the district, forest officials said on Wednesday.

Arumugam of Ennamangalam forest area was tending to his cattle on Tuesday afternoon when the pachyderm suddenly emerged out of the bushes and attacked him, resulting in his death, they said.

Farmers in the area noticed the body of Arumugam and informed the forest officials who visited the spot and conducted a preliminary enquiry.

A case has been registered by the forest officials and investigation is on.

—PTI



MNM leader Kamal Haasan campaigns at Ambur in Tirupathur district on Wednesday. He said Makkal Needhi Maam will create history. He promised people proper hygiene and quality education if they voted his party to power.

—K.Senthil Nathan

Pollachi arrest, a jolt to AIADMK

Arulanandam removed from party

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, JAN. 6

The arrest of AIADMK's student wing office-bearer K. Arulanandam by the CBI, in connection with the sensational Pollachi sex scandal that broke out in February 2019, has come as a setback to the ruling party, particularly when campaigning for the Assembly elections has picked up momentum with the DMK and AIADMK trading charges against each other.

Just as the news of 34-year-old Arulanandam's arrest, along with T. Herine Paul (29) and P. Babu (27) broke, photographs of the Pollachi town student wing secretary with local administration minister S. P. Velumani started flooding social networking sites, pointing an accusing finger at the AIADMK in general.

Arulanandam was mentioned as a protégé of Velumani in social media posts. It was alleged that the former was running a couple of bars in Pollachi with the blessings of the latter. Though the AIADMK acted quickly and expelled Arulanandam from the primary membership of the party, the arrest trended on Twitter under the hashtag #Pollachirapists.

Angry tweekles gave vent

to their feelings by asking the government and court to hand over the 'rapists' to them so that they could be lynched in public while DMK supporters joined the bandwagon targeting the AIADMK for attack.

Political leaders too reacted strongly to the development. DMK President M. K. Stalin said that the wails of a young woman calling her tormentor as brother and pleading with him not to beat her were still ringing in the ears of the people, referring to the leaked videos that shook the collective conscience of the State in March 2019.

Giving a rundown of the scandal, Stalin said that more digging would bring to light the connections of AIADMK leaders with the culprits. All of them should be arrested with the view to ensuring the safety of women in the State, he added.

TNCC President K. S. Alagiri said the taint the scandal brought to the image of the State could be wiped out only by punishing the culprits and that the Madras High Court should monitor the investigations. It should be ensured AIADMK leaders did not interfere in the investigations and the accused are reportedly close to AIADMK leaders like Deputy Speaker Pollachi Jayaraman and

From P1

The shocking scandal came to light in February 2019, after a 19-year-old woman lodged a complaint with the police.

She had mentioned that four men forcibly removed her clothes in a car and video-graphed the act. Her complaint led to the unearthing of a major sex and extortion racket. The gang, comprising rich youth, used to befriend young girls on

Velumani, he said.

Makkal Neethi Maam founder Kamal Haasan tweeted that the silent screams of over 200 women caught in the Pollachi sex scandal has not subsided and added that the arrests of ruling party men should lead to justice for the victims and not be used for anything else.

AMMK leader T. T. V. Dinakaran said the CBI that has arrested three more persons after two years should act fast and bring to book the rest of those involved in the crime. An AMMK supporter referred to the newspaper advertisement issued by the government describing the State as a safe place for women to highlight the

social media and lured them to their farmhouse, where they sexually assaulted and video-graphed the victims to blackmail them later.

The Pollachi police had registered a case on February 24, 2019, based on the woman's complaint against four accused who had assaulted her.

A month after their arrest, a fifth accused was arrested and was said to have confessed to raping 'a few women' along with

irony.

The latest arrest of the three persons is seen as a new turn to the case that was taken up for investigation by the CBI in April 2019. Apart from the four persons arrested by the state police after the crime came to light — Sabarirajan, M. Sathesh, K. Thirunavukkarasu and T. Vasan Kumar — CBI had arrested R. Manimaran in May, 2019.

Though it was believed that the chargesheet had been filed, the latest arrest may lead to the uncovering of more ground in the crime, which primarily involved a group of men luring over 50 women to their nests, videographing them in

the other four.

On April 28, 2019, the case was transferred to CBI, after several women organisations and political parties demanded a CBI inquiry.

In a joint statement, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami and deputy chief minister O. Paneerselvam, said Arulanandam was removed from the membership of the party and asked the party cadre not to be in contact with him.

The mobile phones of the accused, who were picked up after a woman filed a complaint with the police, had several video clips of the victims being assaulted, exploited and threatened.

Initially several names of AIADMK leaders were banded about in the case but there was no definite evidence to nail any of them. Now, the arrest of the AIADMK functionary has come as a jolt to the party particularly in view of the publication of photographs as clinching evidence.



Lankan navy detains four TN fishermen for smuggling

DC CORRESPONDENT THOOTHUKUDI, JAN. 6

Four fishermen from Thoothukudi and Ramanathapuram districts, along with their boat, were detained by the Sri Lankan navy for smuggling turmeric and cardamom on Wednesday.

The four fishermen, Ranjith Kumar (40) of Thoothukudi, Santhosh (42) of Manapadu in Thoothukudi, Lourdhhu (42) from Lourdhammalpuram in Thoothukudi and Dharmar (64) of Pamban in Ramanathapuram district who ventured into the sea for fishing from Therespuram shore in Thoothukudi district on Tuesday evening were intercepted by the Sri Lankan navy in Jaffna peninsula for illegally crossing into the Sri Lankan waters.

The Sri Lankan navy also found 1,650 kilogram of

turmeric and 150 kilogram of cardamom kept hidden in the country craft. Suspecting that the consignment of the spices was being smuggled into the island nation, where turmeric import has been banned since December 2019, the Sri Lankan navy detained the four Indian fishermen along with their boats.

The detained fishermen, handed over to the intelligence unit of the Sri Lankan navy, were reportedly taken to the Delft island (Neduntheevu) for further interrogation.

It is to be noted that on last Sunday (January 3), the Thoothukudi police seized 1,000 kilogram of turmeric from a country craft from Therespuram shore in Thoothukudi district and arrested two for attempting to smuggle turmeric to Sri Lanka.

Nilgiris on high alert to tackle bird flu

DC CORRESPONDENT OOTY, JAN. 6

As an outbreak of bird flu in Kerala has triggered a scare of sorts amidst the Covid-19 fear, the Nilgiris is on high alert. The district administration has swung into action with precautionary measures as a team of officials is monitoring the entry of vehicles from Kerala and Karnataka into Nilgiris. The district administration suspended transport of chicken and other poul-

try products from Kerala and Karnataka to Nilgiris.

The Gudalur and Pandalur taluks on the western Nilgiris bordering Kerala and Karnataka have a tradition of good inter-state trade including transport of chicken, egg and ducks and related poultry products.

The team of officials including the veterinarians, revenue officials and cops began to man the entry of vehicles from Kerala and Karnataka sides into these two taluks

to monitor if somebody tries to transport poultry products clandestinely into Nilgiris. Disinfecting the vehicles crossing the inter-state borders has already begun.

Ms. J. Innocent Divya, the Collector of Nilgiris, said the district is on high alert in the aftermath of the bird flu outbreak in Kerala. She said special teams are monitoring the entry of vehicles in eight check-posts along the Nilgiris-Kerala border and Nilgiris-Karnataka bor-

der. The poultries in Nilgiris are instructed to adhere to the norms prescribed to prevent the spread of bird flu.

The poultry farmers are advised to contact the animal husbandry department if they come across any ailment to chicken and other avians in the farms. The hill residents should take adequate precautions to avoid spread of bird flu from avians to human beings. As of now the situation is normal in Nilgiris, she added.

Namakkal supplies 1.25 cr eggs with tight checks

From P1

V. Balasubrahmaniyam, AGM, National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC), Namakkal zone, said they supply 1.15-1 to 1.25 crore eggs every day. The officials are now allowing the products to cross borders with tight scrutiny. If the situation spreads it would certainly be a concern for the poultry farmers as almost half of Kerala's poultry product demand is supplied from Tamil Nadu. Our total daily

egg production now is 3.9 crore," he said.

"Currently, poultry farms here have not been affected. If the transport of products is banned, the fear is that overseas buyers will not be location-specific while banning the products. They will stay away from our shipments until the World Organisation for Animal Health declares the zone avian flu-free," he added.

Shanmugam, a poultry trader, said the bird flu reports came at a time when

the sector is already reeling under the Covid-19 outbreak. "Most of the farmers are doing business with the support of hatcheries in Kerala. So the development in Kerala will disrupt the business of Tamil Nadu farmers further," he added.

As per the data available with the AHD, Kerala, with a per capita consumption of 10.8 kg poultry meat, consumes 875 tonnes per day against a production of 321 tonnes. Kerala's daily requirement is at least 5,000

tonnes of meat. It is one of the highest consumers of meat in the country. Close to 80 per cent of the state's population is non-vegetarian. The domestic production of meat including beef, mutton and chicken is around 264.31 tonnes. Tamil Nadu is a major supplier to fill the gap between production and demand.

Dr. K.M. Dileep, Director, AHD, said that transportation of poultry products has been banned only within the affected districts.



CHHATTISGARH IS GROWING RAPIDLY

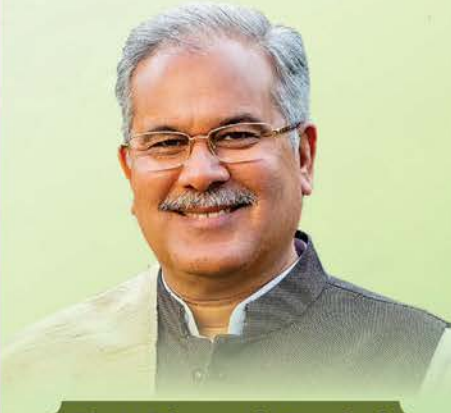
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Shri. Bhupesh Baghel
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh



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DECCAN Chronicle

7 JANUARY 2021

Scrap laws, ask farmers, don't skip due process

The seventh round of talks between the government and farmers protesting against the three new laws regulating agriculture in India on Monday produced no immediate result other than fixing the date for a new round. However, two things have emerged after the talks ended in stalemate: the government has offered to sit with the farmers' unions and discuss the laws "clause by clause"; two; Prime Minister Narendra Modi is understood to have directed officials in the agriculture ministry to look for an amicable solution to the issue.

Given Mr Modi's initiative and the offer to discuss the laws threadbare, it looks like an open approach to the issue could solve it so that the lakhs of farmers could call off their agitation they are holding now braving the gripping cold and pouring rains on the outskirts of the capital city. It could allow them to drop the plan to take out a tractor rally on the Republic Day and spare the nation from having to watch the spectre of more of its *annadatas* dying on the streets and adding to the present toll of 50.

Given Mr Modi's initiative and the offer to discuss the laws threadbare, it looks like an open approach to the issue could solve it

The catch, however, lies in the openness of the government. In our country, laws, especially those that have an implication for large sections of people, are passed after an elaborate process, which includes discussions in Parliament, parliamentary committees and even outside. This process, though painstakingly slow, ensures that the safeguards necessary to protect the interests of the stakeholders are not overlooked or omitted.

But the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, especially its second edition, does not seem to believe in such democratic niceties. Laws that sought to alter the basic idea of India such as the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019 and the virtual annulment of Article 370 of the Constitution were pushed through Houses of Parliament after a single day's discussion each.

As for the farm laws, the government has done too little to take the stakeholders into confidence. The government which is now willing to discuss the laws "clause by clause" had not bothered to persuade its own partners, resulting in the exit of the Shiromani Akali Dal, one of the oldest allies of the BJP, from the Cabinet and the NDA. The bill was not sent to the House committee either. Worse, there was no proper voting on the bill in the Upper House of the Parliament. The protesters have little reason to trust the government.

The NDA government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have spared no occasion to champion the farmers' cause. Mr Modi has long promised to double the income of farmers by 2022; Niti Aayog brought out an action plan in 2017 proposing to achieve it; and the first budget of the new government finance minister Nirmala Sitaraman presented in 2019 talked of promoting zero-based farming as a means to achieve the target. But the farmers saw little action on the ground. If the government is serious, and if farmers' welfare is its priority, then it should keep the laws in abeyance, sit with them and draft new ones that address their concerns.

Scale down the parade

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who had accepted India's invitation to be the chief guest for the Republic Day celebration this year, has had to back out unexpectedly on account of domestic compulsions caused by a renewed surge of Covid-19 infections in the UK. We sympathise with his situation. Since this is a last-minute problem, let us just be practical about it and not bother tearing our hair to find a suitable replacement at such a late stage.

There is no harm in saying pass this year. Since this is an unusual period for all of the world, the pandemic provides us a perfectly good reason to not go scouting for a dignitary after the British leader has been obliged to drop out.

Late in 2018, when US President Donald Trump informed us that he was unable to accept the invitation to be chief guest on account of scheduling difficulties, we were fortunate that President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa did not stand on ceremony and agreed to step in at a late hour. South Africa is a good friend and its President was most gracious. Nevertheless, the pandemic poses a problem for all and it is not fair to put friendly nations in a quandary by asking them when barely three weeks remain.

Although institutional memory may have faded in this regard, it may be recalled that in the years 1952, 1953, and 1966 no invitation was extended to an international dignitary to be chief guest. Of course, since then invitations have gone out each year. There have also been somewhat unusual situations. In 2018, for example, the ten leaders of Asean nations were collectively invited to be chief guest. In 1956, there were two chief guests — Britain's chancellor of the exchequer as well as the chief justice of Japan.

Hospitality being a part of diplomacy, Republic Day chief guests are chosen from countries that India may want to be especially solicitous toward for reasons of geopolitics or geo-economics in a given year. Not having one in a particular year just speaks of extraordinary circumstances.

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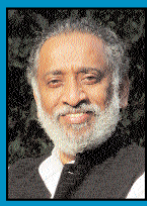
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Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



India's toppers no longer find civil services a dream career?

Is the civil service no longer a dream career for aspiring youngsters in India? The recent survey of national school board toppers over 20 years suggests that it may be so.

Of the 86 men and women who topped in their school board exams between 1995 and 2015, more than half live abroad, and most are working or pursuing advanced degrees in science and technology. Of those working most are in the tech sector, followed by medicine and finance. More than half grew up outside India's metros in Tier-II and Tier-III cities. No surprises there!

What is surprising is that only one of these toppers joined the civil service. Subhankar Mohapatra, who topped the Class X CBSE exam in 2006, chose to

become a civil servant (after studying at medical college). He cleared the IRS exam in 2016, the IPS in 2017 and finally the UPSC in 2018. The Odisha cadre officer is presently posted as sub-collector and SDM in Kandhamal, Odisha. Two others from the Toppers Club are preparing for the civil service exam. That's it.

Could it be that there are many more attractive alternative career paths available now that are more rewarding financially and career-wise than what the civil service can offer to our brightest? For decades, the civil services have enjoyed an unparalleled social standing. While there have always been officers who have quit the civil service for better opportunities outside the government in the private sector and even politics,

largely, the IAS and allied services have been a top draw, as seen in the lakhs of hopefuls who appear for the UPSC. But that seems to be changing now.

NEW TRANSFER POLICY FOR POLL-BOUND TAMIL NADU

The Election Commission has already started gearing up for the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections due in May 2021, starting with the babus who will be on election duty. In a recent letter to the state Chief Electoral Officer, Sathyabrata Sahoo, and chief secretary K. Shanmugam, the Election Commission has stressed the need for effective transfer of officers who have completed three years and to ensure that no officer is posted in their native district. Officers who are retiring within

six months and those who are facing disciplinary actions recommended by the Election Commission for earlier poll duty lapses should not be designated for poll duty. Further, officials who will complete three years in an election-related post before May 31 should be transferred.

Sources say that the Tamil Nadu government has transferred more than 50 IAS and IPS officers, including district collectors and district superintendents of police of more than 20 districts in the last two months.

A THORNY ISSUE

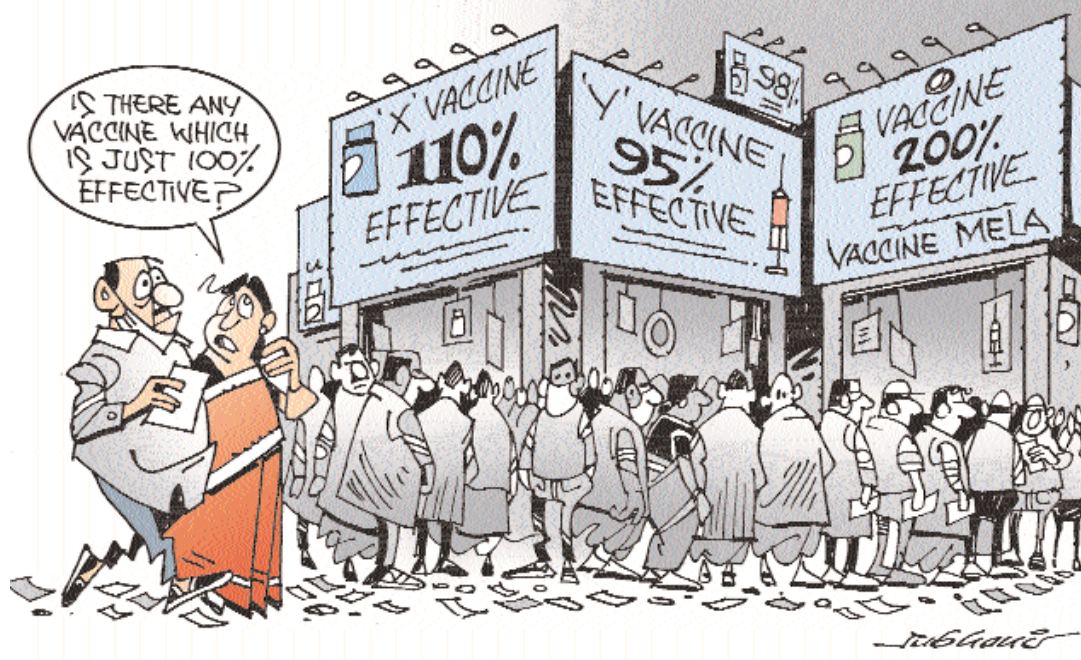
The Punjab government has appointed 1995-cadre IPS officer G. Nageswara Rao as secretary in the department of home affairs and justice, a post that has traditionally

been held by the IAS cadre. The appointment is part of a larger reshuffle of officers effected by the Congress government of Captain Amarinder Singh.

The move is unlikely to help in the long ongoing tussle between IAS and IPS officers. The IAS officers are likely to see this as another encroachment on their turf, a trend that has become more pronounced at the Centre after the Modi *sarkar* came to power. The rivalry between the two elite services — be it at the Central or state level — is also over issues like pay parity, promotions, central empanelment and avenues for deputation and training courses.

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

Subhani



Why trust needs to be the key word in 2021



Patralekha Chatterjee

Dev 360

India has a good story to tell when it comes to vaccines — it produces more than 60 per cent of all vaccines sold across the globe.

Why then has India's final approval of two Covid-19 vaccines kicked up such a storm, with many respected health experts and scientists calling it a hasty decision?

Unless you have been living under the rock the past few days, you probably know the answer.

In brief, last weekend, India's drugs regulator gave the green signal for the emergency use of two coronavirus vaccines. One, called Covishield, is developed by AstraZeneca-Oxford University and is being made in India by Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine producer by the number of doses produced.

The controversy, however, is more about the drug regulator's emergency approval to the second coronavirus vaccine, the indigenously produced Covaxin, before critical efficacy data of the third phase of clinical trials are out. Covaxin is being made by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research and the National Institute of Virology. Bharat Biotech is a well-known vaccine maker and has a track record of clinical trials in 20 countries.

But Covaxin has completed only two of the three required phases of clinical trials. The vaccine is safe. The critical Phase 3 trial, meant to test efficacy, started last November. The company expects to release the efficacy data by March.

What further complicates the situation is the drug regulator saying that Covaxin would be administered in "clinical trial mode". This has led to questions about whether those being vaccinated with Covaxin in the immediate future will, in effect, be taking

part in a clinical trial.

Why could India's regulatory authorities not wait for a few more weeks for all the three phases of the clinical trial to be over and approved an indigenous vaccine of proven efficacy?

Till date, there is no convincing answer.

Perplexingly, over the past few days, we have also been witnessing bizarre incidents such as the Drugs Controller-General of India not taking any questions from journalists at a press conference, and the two companies which have got the green signal engaging in a temporary slanging match about the merits of their respective vaccines.

All this plays havoc with public trust in oversight mechanisms when there are signs of vaccine hesitancy in the country.

How do we restore trust?

"Transparency breeds trust, and trust is very important during a health crisis like a pandemic," says virologist Shahid Jameel, director of the Trivedi School of Biosciences at Ashoka University. "Science does not work on beliefs. Science works on data, and we still don't have data on the efficacy of one of the approved vaccines. Science does not say it has answers to everything but there should be clear communication about what is not known, and this has to be communicated openly and transparently."

"A common man who does not understand the difference between the different vaccines needs to be told what exactly is known and what is not known," Dr Jameel adds. "Otherwise, there is a risk of vaccine hesitancy spreading."

Leena Menghaney, South Asia head of the access campaign at humanitarian organisation Médecins Sans Frontières, also points out that transparency is a key component to building trust. And it is important to adopt it as a public health strategy.

Ms Menghaney cites the example of the European Medicines Agency (EMA), that has set a minimum level of transparency for itself.

In many areas, the agency has decided to go beyond what the law requires. During the pandemic, EMA is implementing exceptional measures to maximise the transparency of its regulatory activities on treatments and vaccines for Covid-19 that are approved or are under evaluation. This includes making public the detailed minutes of various committee meetings. In 2019, the World Health Assembly adopted a resolution on improving the transparency of markets for medicines, vaccines and other health products in an effort to expand access. The resolution urges member states to enhance public sharing of information on actual prices paid by governments and other buyers for health products, and greater transparency on pharmaceutical patents, clinical trial results and other determinants of pricing along the value chain from laboratory to patient.

A trust deficit can arise due to multiple reasons, acting independently and together.

There is a lesson from India's victory in the battle against polio. Then too, there was a trust deficit in some quarters, though due to different reasons.

While researching a report on a sudden spurt of polio cases in parts of Uttar Pradesh in 2006, I saw firsthand how lack of trust could derail a public health intervention. Official explanations attributed the spike to rumours and fear among the Muslim minority. But a visit to Moradabad, one of the worst affected dis-

tricts in UP, offered nuanced insights into the reality of traditionally disadvantaged communities that have little contact with the healthcare system. Rumour mongers were exploiting grievances accumulated over years. This was among the most daunting challenges in the global battle against polio.

In a narrow bylane flanked by open sewers in Karula, in the outskirts of Moradabad, I met Muslim families who were convinced that a "geopolitical conspiracy" lurked behind the persistent attempts to give polio drops to their children. Many people told me they wanted to know why the government was so eager to protect their children against polio when it paid no heed to other ailments that struck them. There were rumours about the polio drop making male children impotent.

Frustration and rage at a dysfunctional healthcare system had morphed into irrational fear and distrust of "outsiders", including health workers and field operatives of international agencies. Muslim clerics in some local mosques in Uttar Pradesh had reportedly opposed the polio vaccine.

Distrust was dispelled through concerted trust-building efforts by civil society, universities like Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Millia Islamia, health officials and international agencies like Unicef, as Dr Jameel points out. Many respected Imams worked hard to build trust among communities resisting the vaccine.

Trust and transparency during a crisis mean that not only should the political and administrative leadership be decisive, it must also convincingly explain to all groups that whatever is being done is being done in their interest.

Opacity in decision-making, attempts to gloss over mistakes or polarise the populace on any count will punch holes in the trust narrative.

We must not let that happen in 2021.

The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@gmail.com.

LETTERS

WAR OF VACCINES

Apropos the editorial (*Vaccines spell hope, but govt must clarify doubts*, Jan. 5), it dwells at length the use of vaccines by both Oxford University and the Pune-based institute — leave alone both vying with each other to claim popularity for launching the vaccines. But it is a million-dollar query whether the vaccines have undergone a comprehensive load of clinical trials before launching the inoculation. As the editorial opined, unless evidence-based medicine is guaranteed, using it may spell disaster. As advocated, patience is the need of the hour.

E.S. Chandrasekaran, Chennai

CENTRAL VISTA PROJECT

THERE IS not even one per cent sense or substance in the criticism of M/s Anand Sharma and Randeep Surjewala that the proposed Central Vista scheme has been proposed to perpetuate the name of Narendra Modi in history. The much debated and criticised proposal of the Prime Minister has at last been granted judicial sanction though one judge in the three member Bench struck a note of discord. The Congress spokespersons should understand that all the heads of the governments do some construction work only for the benefit of posterity and future generations and they are well aware of the impermanence or limitations of human longevity. Hence their charge of craze for perpetuating his own memory on the part of NaMo is utterly meaningless, insensible and unwarranted.

Kooduthuraiyan, Chennai

DON MUST LEAVE GRACEFULLY

FROM THE moment the US presidential election was called in favor of the Democratic candidate Joe Biden, Trump's words and actions have raised apprehensions that he might refuse to leave the office. The recent revelation of the 'leaked phone conversation' wherein Trump literally begging Georgia's Secretary of State to 'alter' the votes result only underscores his desperation to cling on to power at any cost (*Trump must leave gracefully*, Jan. 6). A president, when his/her term is over, must make a dignified exit from office, else the country would face a constitutional crisis. Seemingly, when Biden is sworn into the presidency on Inauguration Day, Trump will become a civilian, and if he still attempts to remain in office, Biden, as the new commander-in-chief, will have the authority to order the military or Secret Service agents to physically remove him from the White House.

R. Sivakumar, Chennai

SHORT TAKES

EX-CONG MLA SAYS
11 OF 19 MLAS
MAY JOIN JD(U)

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, JAN. 6

Former Congress MLA Bharat Singh has created a flutter in the political circle by predicting a major split in the party. According to him around 11 MLAs of the party are in touch with the JD(U) leadership and may quit the Congress soon. He also alleged that Congress state president Madan Mohan Jha and senior party leader Ajit Singh are among those who may also defect to the JD(U).

Talking to reporters Singh said that, “Most of the candidates who contested Assembly elections on Congress ticket were outsiders. They got tickets by paying huge money and now after winning elections they are planning to quit and join hands with the ruling JD(U)”.

STEADY DECLINE IN
CORONAVIRUS
CASES

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 6

Thirteen more cases of new, mutated UK virus of Covid-19 have been detected in the samples of people who have travelled back from the United Kingdom taking the total number of cases infected with the new strain to 71.

India so far has reported 1,03,74,932 cases out of which 18,088 were detected in the last 24 hours. Till now 1,54,114 deaths have been recorded out of which 264 are fresh fatalities. The Union health ministry said there is a steady decline in the number of daily deaths in the country and less than 300 new deaths have been recorded in the country in the last 12 days.

Madhya Pradesh may bar hotels
from serving non-vegetarian food

State prohibits import of chicken from southern states

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
With agency inputs
BHOPAL, JAN. 6

Madhya Pradesh government on Wednesday imposed a ban on chicken imports from southern states for 10 days in view of avian flu scare in the state.

Official sources here said the state government was seriously contemplating to bar hotels and restaurants in the state from serving non-vegetarian food if the bird flu took the form of an epidemic form in the state.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan convened an emergency official meeting here to take stock of the situation in the wake of the reports of death of at least 400 crows and some other avian species in various parts of the state in the last couple of weeks.

“Avian flu has been detected in chicken in Kerala and some other southern states. We have taken a decision not to



A worker sprays disinfectant inside a poultry farm in view of Avian influenza, in the outskirts of Bhopal on Wednesday.

— PTI

allow transportation of chickens from these southern states to MP for 10 days”, Chouhan told reporters here.

Official sources said a decision to resume chick-

en imports from southern states would be taken after reviewing the bird flu situation in these states after 10 days.

Chouhan said there was no cause for worry in MP

since random inspections of poultry in the state has indicated that H5N8, called in common parlance as bird flu, has not been detected in chickens in the state so far. “We are

keeping a strict vigil on the situation”, he said.

Earlier at the review meeting, the Chief Minister ordered the authorities concerned to take precautionary measures to protect the poultry from the avian flu and step up vigil to prevent bird flu from taking epidemic form in the state.

He also directed the district collectors to remain in touch with poultry farm owners in their respective areas to ensure that they enforced guidelines issued by the Centre in their farms in view of outbreak of the disease.

Meanwhile, presence of H5N8 virus (a variant of avian influenza or bird flu) was found in the carcasses of crows in Mandsaur and Agar Malwa districts, an official said, citing test results of samples sent for laboratory analysis. A total of 155 dead crows in Indore have been found with the H5N8 virus since the pathogen was first detected in the state’s commercial hub a week back.

UP: 50-year-old
gangraped, killed
by priest, aides

Budaun (UP), Jan. 6: A 50-year-old anganwadi worker was gangraped and brutally murdered allegedly by a priest and his two accomplices in Budaun district of Uttar Pradesh, police said on Wednesday.

Two of the accused were arrested on Tuesday night after the post-mortem report confirmed rape while the priest is on the run, they said, adding that the woman’s leg and a rib bone were fractured and there were injuries in her private parts.

The incident, which triggered an instant hue and cry in the political circles, took place on Sunday and the matter came to light when her body was brought home at night. The FIR was registered two days later following which the duo was nabbed.

Opposition parties attacked the BJP government in the state and termed the incident “horrific” and “shameful”, with the Congress comparing it to the

Nirbhaya incident of 2012.

“The post-mortem report confirms rape and there are injuries in her private parts and a fracture in the leg,” Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Sankalp Sharma said. She suffered from a rib fracture too, he said, citing the autopsy report.

He said the station house officer (SHO) of Ughaiti police station has been suspended for “delay in informing higher authorities, laxity in taking action, dereliction of duty and failure in taking speedy action”.

“On Sunday, the 50-year-old woman, who had gone to a temple, was found dead under mysterious circumstances. Family members of the woman have accused the temple mahant (priest) and his accomplices of raping and murdering her. Based on this, a case was registered against the accused. Two of the accused persons were arrested on Tuesday night, while the mahant is still absconding,” he said.

ISRO scientist alleges poisoning

From Page 1

The scientist said he came out in public as he feared for his life post retirement after retirement this month.

According to Dr Misra, treatment was received in Zydus Cadilla, TMH-Mumbai and AIIMS-Delhi over a period of two years.

“Famed forensic specialist, Dr Sudhir Gupta told me that in his whole career, for the first time he was

seeing a live specimen of a survivor of assassination attempt with fatal dose of arsenic poisoning. I am thankful to them, as their info helped doctors to focus on exact remedy instead of scratching their heads with unusual signatures of my ailment,” he said in his post.

Mr Misra said he had learnt that this poison is given in molecular level suspension (crystal level is harmless) just after a

(Ministry of Home Affairs) security agency personnel met me and alerted me of Arsenic poisoning. I am thankful to them, as their info helped doctors to focus on exact remedy instead of scratching their heads with unusual signatures of my ailment,” he said in his post.

Mr Misra said he had learnt that this poison is given in molecular level suspension (crystal level is harmless) just after a

heavy meal. “It is a colourless, odourless, tasteless suspension and hence cannot even be suspected. It gets absorbed through the stomach during food ingestion, kills RBCs (red blood cells) immediately to such a large extent that the fine blood vessels are clogged, leading to heart attacks and strokes within two to three hours and the victim can easily be passed off as heart attack death,” he said.

SC to hear pleas on Jan. 11

From Page 1

This argument was backed by the A-G, who argued that “filing of response in court by the Centre could foreclose avenues of negotiations underway between the farmers and the Centre”. The bench finally scheduled a hearing of all pending matters related to the farm laws on Monday.

The bench was hearing

a petition by Delhi lawyer Manohar Lal Sharma, who injected a new element into the controversy by challenging a 1954 constitutional amendment that put agriculture in the Concurrent List, giving an advantage to the Centre to enact the farm laws on the subjects coming under the State List.

When the attorney-general wanted Mr Sharma’s petition thrown out, saying no state had objected

to the 75-year-old amendment, the CJJ quipped that the lawyer petitioner feels otherwise, that the Centre and the states are in collusion for the last 75 years.

CJJ Bobde said Mr Sharma is in the habit of filing “startling petitions”, and the “startling” point in this petition is the challenge to the 1954 amendment and issued a notice to the Centre to file its response.

WORLD

Democrats win first seat in battle for US Senate

Atlanta, Jan. 6: Joe Biden’s Democratic Party took a giant step Wednesday towards seizing control of the U.S. Senate as they won the first of two Georgia run-offs, hours before Congress was set to certify the president-elect’s victory over Donald Trump.

Reverend Raphael Warnock’s victory, projected by multiple US networks overnight, capped a grueling nine-week runoff campaign and puts Georgia’s other knife-edge race in the spotlight for its potential to impact the balance of power in Washington.

“I promise you this tonight: I am going to the

Senate to work for all of Georgia,” Warnock said in a livestream to supporters.

Should Republicans lose the second race it would be a political debacle just as Trump is expected to suffer another bitter blow when Congress affirms Biden’s Electoral College victory.

Warnock, 51, made history as just the third African American to win a Senate seat from the South. He defeated Kelly Loeffler, a 50-year-old businesswoman appointed to the Senate in December 2019.

With 98 percent of precincts reporting, Ossoff was 16,370 votes ahead, more than Biden’s victory

● **DEMOCRATS NEED** both candidates to prevail in order to snatch the Senate from the Republicans. If David Perdue holds on to win, Republicans preserve their Senate majority.

margin in Georgia for the presidential race. Analysts have said he was well placed to win, with many outstanding votes coming from staunchly Democratic-leaning Atlanta suburbs.

Democrat Jon Ossoff on Wednesday claimed victory in the second of two Georgia run-off votes, claiming a win that would give President-elect Joe

Biden control of the United States’ Senate.

“Georgia, thank so much for the confidence you have placed in me. I am honoured by your support, by your confidence, by your trust and I will look forward to serving you,” Ossoff said in a televised statement. Victory by both Democrats would be a major political upset in a GOP bastion that has been reliably Republican for two decades but which Biden won in an upset on November 3 as he marched to victory against Trump in the presidential race.

It would also send reverberations through

Washington and the nation, as it would essentially hand Biden’s Democrats the levers of power in the executive branch and both chambers of Congress.

“Epic disaster for the GOP of incalculable damage,” tweeted Matt Mackowiak, chairman of the Travis County, Texas, Republican Party, who has been critical of Trump suppressing the Republican vote by promoting unfounded allegations of election fraud. Warnock was ahead by 53,430 votes out of nearly 4.4 million cast, or more than one percent.

Loeffler however refused to concede. “It’s worth it for

this election to last into tomorrow, we’re going to make sure every vote is counted,” she told supporters. Democrats need both candidates to prevail in order to snatch the Senate from the Republicans. If David Perdue holds on to win, Republicans preserve their Senate majority.

“Georgia — The nation is looking to you to lead us forward,” tweeted President-elect Biden earlier on Tuesday.

“The power is in your hands,” wrote the 78-year-old Democrat, who like Trump visited the Peach State to rally supporters on the eve of the vote. — AFP

UK denies bail for
WikiLeaks Assange

London, Jan. 6: WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange must remain in custody in Britain, while the US appeals a court decision to block his extradition to face charges there for leaking secret documents, a judge in London ruled on Wednesday.

Judge Vanessa Baraitser, who on Monday refused to grant his extradition, told Westminster Magistrates Court that if released there were “substantial grounds” to suspect Assange would “fail to surrender” for future appeal hearings. “Mr Assange still has an incentive to abscond from these as yet unresolved proceedings,” she said.

“As a matter of fairness the United States must be able to challenge my deci-

sion. If Mr Assange absconds during this process then they will have lost the opportunity to do so.” Outside court, lawyer Stella Morris, Assange’s fiancée and the mother of two of his children, called the decision “a huge disappointment” and urged the US Justice Department to drop the charges. A lawyer for the US government earlier urged Baraitser not to release the controversial Australian publisher, and detailed how it planned to challenge her decision to block his extradition on mental health grounds.

“We respectfully submit on behalf of the United States that there are insurmountable hurdles to Mr Assange being granted bail,” Clair Dobbin said. — AFP

Trump orders ban on 8 more Chinese apps

Washington, Jan. 6: President Donald Trump has signed an executive order barring transactions with eight Chinese apps including Alipay and WeChat Pay to protect America’s national security, citing the steps taken by India to ban more than 200 Chinese connected software applications.

Trump’s order said

action is needed to “deal with the national emergency” caused by the “pervasiveness of the spread” of apps created and controlled in China. The ban against the eight Chinese apps — Alipay, CamScanner, QQ Wallet, SHAREit, Tencent QQ, Vmate, WeChat Pay, and WPS Office — will come into effect in 45 days from on Tuesday. — PTI

W.H.O. SAYS CHINA
BLOCKS ENTRY FOR
VIRUS EXPERTS

Beijing, Jan. 6: An expert mission to China to probe the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic was in disarray on Wednesday after Beijing denied entry to the World Health Organisation team at the last minute despite months of painstaking negotiations.

Ten experts were due to arrive in China this week for the delicate, highly politicised task of establishing how and where the virus jumped from animals to humans.

But with a number of the team already in transit, China denied them entry visas, prodding WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, to say he was “very disappointed”.

China is determined to control the origin story of the virus, which has killed more than 1.8 million people around the world and laid waste to global economies.

The first cases of the Coronavirus were recorded in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019, prompting accusations of chaotic, secretive handling by Chinese authorities which led to its spread beyond China.

US President Donald Trump called the pandemic the “China virus”.

Despite the hail of criticism, Beijing has so far resisted pressure for an independent probe and instead has seeded doubt as to whether the pandemic even started inside its borders. — AFP

GREATER CHENNAI CORPORATION
PARKS DEPARTMENT

P.D.No.P2/1279/2020

e-TENDER NOTICE

Tenders are invited by the Superintending Engineer / Parks for the following work as per details furnished below:

Engaging Degree/Diploma in Agriculture/Horticulture (10 Nos.) for daily basis for a period of one year in Park Department

Approx. value of work in Rs. 37.10 Lakhs - E.M.D.: Rs.38,000/-

For more information see www.tntenders.gov.in and www.chennaiacorporation.gov.in

Due Date and Time for Submission of tender: 27.01.2021 upto 3.00 pm

Tender opening date and time : 29.01.2021 @ 3.30 pm.

DIPR/102/Tender/2021

Superintending Engineer (Parks)

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
THANJAVUR CITY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
THANJAVUR SMART CITY LIMITED
TENDER NOTICE

Bid Notice No.12494/2020/MCE4

Dated:30.12.2020

Sealed Tenders are invited by The Managing Director & Commissioner, Thanjavur City Municipal Corporation from the Registered Contractors E-submission is also permitted for the following work upto 3.00 PM on 22.01.2021. The Tenders will be opened by the Corporation Commissioner (or) his authorized official in the Corporation Office on the same day at 3.30 P.M. If the office happens to be closed on the date of receipt of the Tender specified, the Tender will be opened on next working day. The Contractor who wish to participate in the tender may download the tender documents through <https://tenders.gov.in> by using E-Token / Digital Signature Cards on or before 21.01.2021 upto 3.00 P.M. Any other information's may be obtained from the Corporation Executive Engineer, Thanjavur at the above office during office hours. The Managing Director & Corporation Commissioner has every right to cancel / postpone the Tender in view of Administrative reasons.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Estimate Cost (Rs.in Crore)	Earnest Money (Rs.in Lakhs)	Contractor Class
1.	Development of Storm Water Drainage at Divan Nagar in Thanjavur City Municipal Corporation	1.50	0.15	Class-I

DIPR/140/Tender/2021

Managing Director, Thanjavur Smart City Ltd.

GOLD AUCTION NOTICE

GSTN - 33AABCT0343B1Z5

Registered Office: 2nd Floor, Muthoot Chambers, Banerji Road, Kochi-682 018, Kerala, India. CIN:L65910KL1997PLC011300, Ph:+91 484 2396478.2394712, Fax:+91 484 2396506. mails@muthootgroup.com, www.muthootfinance.com

Notice is hereby given for the information of all concerned that Gold Ornaments pledged with under mentioned branches of the company, which were overdue for redemption and which have not been redeemed so far in spite of repeated notices, will be auctioned at the concerned branches on **19.01.2021 at 10.00 AM**

ALANGAYM -(TN)(3870)- MSL- 4218, 4225, 4297, 4302, 4332, 4420, AMBUR - NETHAJI ROAD(3637)- MSL- 5208, 5552, AMBUR(0693)- MSL- 19650, 20376, 20658, 20679, 20765, 20809, AMMOOR -(TN)(4298)- MSL- 3445, 3552, ARAKONAM -(TN)(3057)- MSL- 5043, ARCOL - ARNI ROAD(3614)- MSL- 4273, 4477, ARCOL(0521)- MSL- 23010, 23107, 23313, ARNI(0589)- MSL- 27987, 28074, 28092, 28112, 28209, 28232, 28357, 28515, 28594, CHENGAM -(TN)(4718)- MSL- 267, CHETPET(TN)(1836)- MSL- 10575, 11066, 11144, 11451, 11515, CHEYYAR(1418)- MSL- 9372, 9526, 9533, 9619, 9681, GUDIYATTOM(0621)- MSL- 20386, 20463, 20570, 20713, 21002, 21054, KANCHEEPURAM(0439)- MSL- 44234, 44333, 44502, 44571, 44577, 44759, KANCHEEPURAM-GANDHI ROAD(2438)- MSL- 4859, 5895, 5896, 6013, KANCHEEPURAM-TOWN(4190)- MSL- 2974, KATPADI-(TN)(2262)- MSL- 10699, 10963, 11081, 11109, 11110, 11111, 11259, 11276, 11292, 11324, 11365, 11366, 11367, 11388, 11443, 11454, 11536, 11543, 11547, 11594, 11628, 11639, 11686, 11696, 11872, 12224, LATTERI -(TN)(3789)- MSL- 2681, 2754, 2913, 2950, 2954, 3087, NEMILI -(TN)(3781)- MSL- 3143, PALLIKONDA -(TN)(3914)- MSL- 4036, 4091, PERNAM-BUT-(TN)(3960)- IPL- 115, 116, MSL- 4621, 4767, 4866, 4941, 4964, 5037, ZIP- 5, POLUR (PC)(1664)- MSL- 10972, 11377, 11638, 11639, 11694, 11798, 12289, 12296, 12368, 12470, 12618, 12658, 12771, 12787, RANIPET-(TN)(3032)- MSL- 3753, SHOLINGHUR -(TN)(3358)- MSL- 2393, 2394, 2399, 2422, 3588, 3882, 3894, 3914, 3963, THANDARAMPAT-TU -(TN)(4196)- MSL- 4090, THIMIRI -(TN)(3798)- MSL- 2873, 2967, 2980, 3193, TIRUPATTUR(0509)- MSL- 19855, 19950, 20018, 20145, 20204, 20378, 20405, UTHIRAMERUR -(TN)(4189)- MSL- 2779, VANDAVASI -(TN)(3994)- MSL- 5003, 5017, VANIAMBADI-(TN)(2736)- MSL- 8654, 9060, 9088, 9185, VELLORE - SANKARANPALAYAM ROAD(4173)- MSL- 4823, ZIP- 20, VELLORE TOWN-CMC(2466)- MSL- 6836, 6986, 7040, SML- 199, 200, WALAJAPET(TN)(1619)- MSL- 13319, 14642,

In case we are unable to conduct the auction at the branch on the notified date, the same will be conducted through **Shriram Automall India Ltd.,(SAMIL)** on their online auction platform <https://gold.samil.in> on **27.01.2021 between 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM** for recovering the outstanding amount. In case the auction process is not completed on **27.01.2021**, the same will be re-auctioned within 7 working days on the same terms and conditions without any further notice.

For further information, Terms & Conditions and getting registered to participate in auction, interested buyers may login to the website or contact the auction portal

Note: Customers can release the gold ornaments before the auction date (19.01.2021).

Place : **Vellore**

Date : **07.01.2021**

For Muthoot Finance Ltd,
Shriram Automall India Ltd.
Board approved Auctioneer

SHORT TAKES

Claire 1st female official in Tests

Sydney: Australia's Claire Polosak is set to become the first female match official in a men's Test match when she takes up the fourth umpire's role in the third Test between India and Australia starting here from Thursday.

The 32-year-old from New South Wales has already earned the distinction of being the first woman on-field umpire in a men's ODI match in ICC's Division 2 league between Namibia and Oman played at the Windhoek in 2019.

As per ICC rules for Test matches, the fourth umpire is appointed by the home cricket board from their nominees to the International Panel of ICC Umpires and from the host country.

Polosak, who is a resident of New South Wales's Goulburn city, has also had the distinction of being the first female match official in a men's List A game in Australia. — PTI

Indian shuttlers to start training

New Delhi: The entire Indian badminton contingent cleared the Covid-19 test on Wednesday and is set to begin training ahead of the Yonex Thailand Open, starting next week. The Indian team, part of the Green Zone, consisting of players and all stakeholders such as umpires, line judges, personnel from BWF, Badminton Association of Thailand, medical staff, and TV production crew, were tested after arrival in Bangkok.

The Asia leg in Bangkok consists of two Super 1000 events — Yonex Thailand Open (January 12-17) and Toyota Thailand Open (January 19-24) followed by the \$1,500,000 HSBC BWF World Tour Finals (January 27-31).

"The Asian Leg in Bangkok received a boost with all 824 participants in the Green Zone quarantine bubble testing negative for Covid-19," BWF said in a statement. — PTI

Woman footballer Alex catches Covid

Los Angeles: Alex Morgan, a two-time World Cup winner with the US women's football team, has tested positive for Covid-19, the star striker said on *Twitter* on Tuesday.

"Unfortunately, my family and I closed out 2020 learning that we had contracted Covid while in California over the holidays," Morgan, 31, said in a Tweet. "We are all in good spirits and recovering well. After our isolation is completed, I will follow US Soccer's return to play guidelines to ensure my body is fully recovered and I can join my teammates back on the field soon," the tweet added.

Morgan is married to former Los Angeles Galaxy midfielder Servando Carrasco, and the couple have a seven-month old daughter, Charlie. — AFP

Kevin does well in Dakar's Wadi loop

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: After a fine stage on Tuesday, with a one-two for Joan Barreda and Ricky Brabec who claimed the top of the overall rally standings, Wednesday was the turn of Kevin Benavides. The Argentinean Monster Energy Honda Team rider finished the Dakar 2021 third stage in runner-up spot, just short of the leadership. The Wadi Ad-Dawasir loop, over 650 total kilometres, including 403 km against the clock, once again turned the Dakar standings on their head.

Live on TV

CRICKET

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

Big Bash League: Hobart Hurricanes vs Sydney Thunder from 12.40 pm; Brisbane Heat vs Melbourne Stars from 3.50 pm on Sony Ten 2, HD

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: Bengaluru FC vs East Bengal from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

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OPENING GAMBIT

Rohit and India ready to change Sydney script

Sydney, Jan. 6: Having touched nadir and zenith in a span of 10 days, Ajinkya Rahane's India will look to start afresh against Australia with the big-hitting Rohit Sharma's presence adding a new dimension to what promises to be an enthralling third Test starting here on Thursday. The Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG), despite being witness to some extraordinary batting performances from the touring Indian sides over the years, has not exactly been a happy hunting ground with six defeats. The lone win came a good 42 years back.

If Rahane's side can go 2-1 up and ensure the retention of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, it will be one of the finest hours in the history of Indian cricket. Making it even more special is the fact that the side has been without two world class performers and a senior pacer against a nearly full-strength Australian team.

Seldom has an Australian batting unit, that boasts of a player of Steve Smith's calibre, looked so circumspect and literally intimidated by an Indian bowling unit, which isn't operating at full-strength.

Pacer Navdeep Saini will make his debut here, replacing Umesh Yadav who went home following an injury.

The pressure is understandable as Australia are literally pushing a 70 per cent fit David Warner out there in the middle to combat fire with fire even as his statements make it clear that he is not at all comfortable with the idea.

And in this backdrop, enters Rohit Sharma, whose last couple of months have been loads of off-field drama.

But, his mere presence has added spring in the strides of the team and the youngsters in this current set-up swear by him.

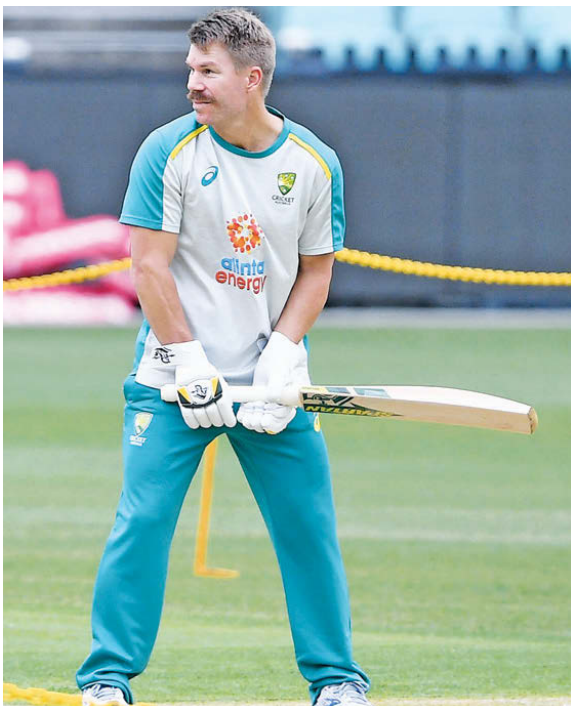
On the other hand, Australia need Smith to be back in form and someone like Travis Head to deliver as he has failed to get a hang of both pace and spin.

— PTI



India's Rohit Sharma prepares to bat in the nets during a training session at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Wednesday, ahead of the third Test against Australia.

— AFP



Australia's David Warner bats during a training session at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Wednesday.

— AFP

NUMBERS GAME

INDIA HAVE WON JUST ONE TEST AT SYDNEY CRICKET GROUND

- The third Test match of the series between India and Australia will be played at Sydney Cricket Ground from Thursday (January 7).
- Australia have a good record at this ground. They have won 60, lost 28 and drew 20 in 108 previous Test matches played here. India, on the other hand, have won just one, lost five and drew six in 12 previous Test matches.
- Australia have won six, lost one and drew three of their past 10 Test at this ground, the only loss having come against England in the disastrous 2010-11 Ashes series. The only team to have beaten Australia in Sydney Tests in the past 18 years was England, who did it in 2003 by winning the match by 225 runs and in 2011 by an innings and 83 runs.
- India's only victory at this ground came in 1977-78 when they beat Australia by an innings and two runs. The last Test match at this ground between the two teams in 2018-19 ended in a draw.

FOR THE RECORD

- Nathan Lyon who took 394 wickets at an average of 31.63 in 187 innings of 98 Tests, needs six wickets to become third Australian and 16th bowler overall to reach the 400 mark in Test cricket.
- Cheteshwar Pujara, who scored 5,903 runs at an average of 45.80 in 132 innings of 79 Tests, is 97 runs short of the 6,000 mark in Tests. He will become the 11th Indian and 69th batsman overall to reach this landmark.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

Captain Jinks all praise for Ashwin and Jadeja

Sydney, Jan. 6: The ever inquisitive Ravichandran Ashwin, who has a knack for learning new things, and much-improved batsman Ravindra Jadeja have stood out for India in the first two Tests against Australia, skipper Ajinkya Rahane said on Wednesday.

While Ashwin is currently leading the wicket-takers' chart with 10 scalps, Jadeja's half-century and the hundred plus stand with Rahane in the second Test formed the cornerstone of India's eight-wicket win in Melbourne. Rahane said, "He is

He is always looking to learn new things. He has good skills but is always looking to learn new things, and that's what makes Ashwin great.

— AJINKYA RAHANE
India's stand-in Test captain

always looking to learn new things. He has good skills but is always looking to learn new things, and that's what makes Ashwin great."

If Ashwin's improvisation has impressed Rahane, he is mighty pleased with Jadeja's Test match application which adds the necessary balance the team has often lacked.

"As a batsman

Ravindra Jadeja has improved a lot and that is a massive point as a team's perspective," Rahane said.

"When you know that your number seven can contribute with the bat, that becomes really easy for you to actually get that (decent) total and obviously in the field, you have seen him taking some brilliant catches. — PTI

Kiwis sweep series, claim No. 1 position

Christchurch (New Zealand), Jan. 6: Towering paceman Kyle Jamieson completed an 11-wicket match haul on Wednesday as New Zealand thrashed Pakistan in the second Test to become the world's top-ranked team. Jamieson was near unplayable in Pakistan's second innings, finishing with six for 48 after his five for 69 in the first innings, to give New Zealand victory by an innings and 176 runs.

The win inside four days in Christchurch, which completed a 2-0 series sweep, also con-

firmed New Zealand had overtaken Australia to be the world's number one Test side for the first time.

New Zealand batted Pakistan out of contention with a first innings 659 for six, with Williamson's masterful 238 supported by Henry Nicholls (157) and Daryl Mitchell (102 not out).

But there was still a chance Pakistan could force a draw until Jamieson took the ball.

Pakistan resumed the day at eight for one, needing to bat for the better part of two days to salvage a draw, but they

were never in the hunt. Trent Boult had night-watchman Mohammad Abbas out for three in the fifth over and after that the day was mainly about Jamieson, who recorded his best match performance.

After Abbas departed, Abid Ali and Azhar Ali looked to be laying the groundwork for a solid third-wicket stand and moved the score to 46 when Jamieson removed Abid for 26.

— AFP

BRIEF SCORES

Pakistan 297 & 186 in 81.4 overs (Zafar Gohar 37; Jamieson 3/48) lost to New Zealand 659/6 decl.

Tottenham ride on Son's exploits

London, Jan. 6: Jose Mourinho urged Tottenham to kick on after Son Heung-min fired them into the League Cup final with the decisive goal in a 2-0 win against Brentford on Tuesday.

Moussa Sissoko put Mourinho's team ahead in the semifinal at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

But Tottenham were still searching for the knockout blow against spirited second tier Brentford until Son netted with 20 minutes remaining.

Tottenham will face Manchester United or holders Manchester City, who meet in the second semifinal on Wednesday, at Wembley on April 25.

It will be the club's first domestic final since losing the 2015 League Cup showpiece against Chelsea, and their first final in any competition since the 2019 Champions League defeat against Liverpool in Madrid.

"The final is now in a pocket for three months, we have to wait for the final so we have to focus on what we have coming up," Mourinho said.

Mourinho, appointed in November 2019, is hoping to lead Tottenham to their first major trophy since the 2008 League Cup.

Brentford had already beaten four Premier League clubs in Southampton, Newcastle, Fulham and West

● **Son Heung-min and Moussa Sissoko of Tottenham Hotspur scored one goal each to blank Brentford 2-0.**

THE RESULTS

Tottenham Hotspur (Sissoko 12, Son 70) 2
Brentford 0

Bromwich Albion to reach their first domestic cup semifinal.

But Tottenham needed just 12 minutes to take the lead as Sergio Reguilon's pin-point cross from the left evaded Brentford defender Ethan Pinnock and found Sissoko, who finished his burst into the six-yard box with a powerful header into the top corner.

Tottenham pressed hard for a second goal and Son's long-range drive forced a good save from David Raya, who had to stretch to tip away Lucas Moura's deflected header just before half-time.

When Pinnock's header was clawed away by Hugo Lloris, Toney stabbed in the rebound from close-range, only for the Brentford striker's celebrations to be curtailed when his knee was seen to be in an offside position.

That tight decision proved the crucial moment as Son struck in the 70th minute. — AFP



Son Heung-min (right) of Tottenham Hotspur controls the ball during the EFL Cup semifinal against Brentford at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London on Tuesday. Tottenham carved out a 2-0 victory.

— AP

CAREER CHRONICLE

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Sami-Sabinsa Group, a pioneer and global leader in health science is looking for a Senior Process Manager (Pharmaceuticals) with 10+ years of experience in designing process equipment and utilities. The position will be based at Bengaluru. Only Qualified Chemical Engineers with sound knowledge in process design need apply. Interested candidates can mail their resume to baskaran@sami-sabinsagroup.com. For details visit www.samilabs.com.

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